How to create a successful eDM marketing strategy.

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Introduction.

Email marketing is a direct, personalised kind of marketing – which makes it an incredibly effective, powerful and valuable tool for marketers and businesses.

Studies suggest that for every dollar spent on email marketing, businesses see an average return of $42. That is an almost unbelievable average return and one that no business can afford to ignore.

The good news is that you don't need a Masters in marketing to understand, plan, create or execute a solid email marketing campaign. It certainly takes time and work, but it is relatively straight-forward when it comes to putting it all together, making eDM marketing an accessible and valuable strategy for Australian small businesses.

In this eBook, we'll take a deep dive into what eDM marketing is, how it can benefit your small business, examples of successful campaigns in Australia and how to create an email marketing strategy of your own.

Contents.

What is electronic direct mail (eDM)?

These emails can cover just about anything, but are often:

- Newsletters
- Sales/discount announcements
- New product launches & information
- Personalised follow-up emails (i.e. customers who recently browsed certain products or customers who have not made a purchase in a year or longer).

Personalised or not, direct emails follow many of the same general rules of other marketing materials.

For example, they should always remain on brand in terms of your tone and style and through any branding or imagery included in the email. They should also be reasonably short and to the point as people don't usually have the time or inclination to read long drawn-out emails.

A good eDM should also always have a strong call to action (CTA). That is, it should encourage the reader to take an action. For example:

- **Browse our sale items now**
- **Download eBook**
- **Call us for a quote today**
- **Buy now**
- **Learn more about this product**

If you're ever unsure about how an eDM should look, go no further than your own inbox. You have undoubtedly received at least one marketing email today, which should be on brand, short and to the point and contain a clear CTA.

Electronic direct mail (eDM) is simply marketing via email.

It is a rare form of marketing in that customers actually opt-in. That is to say, they agree to you sending them emails for marketing purposes.

This can improve the success of your eDMs as these customers have already had some form of interaction with your brand and have confirmed they are happy for you to get in touch.

The benefits of eDM marketing for small businesses.

The simple fact that eDM marketing can generate a return on investment (ROI) of $42 for every $1 spent is likely to interest most small business owners.

But there are far more benefits to be found in email marketing than just the ROI.

$ Low cost.

To start with, email marketing comes at a low cost, especially when compared with other forms of marketing, such as SEM, Display Ads or even social media ads.

When producing an eDM, you will need to invest in creating the content and sending it out, however these costs equate to approximately less than a cent per customer, so it's no wonder that this strategy can create such high returns.

The main outgoing associated with email marketing is the investment in the software used to set up and send your eDMs, which can range from approx. $10 – $1000 per month, depending on your needs and the size of your database.
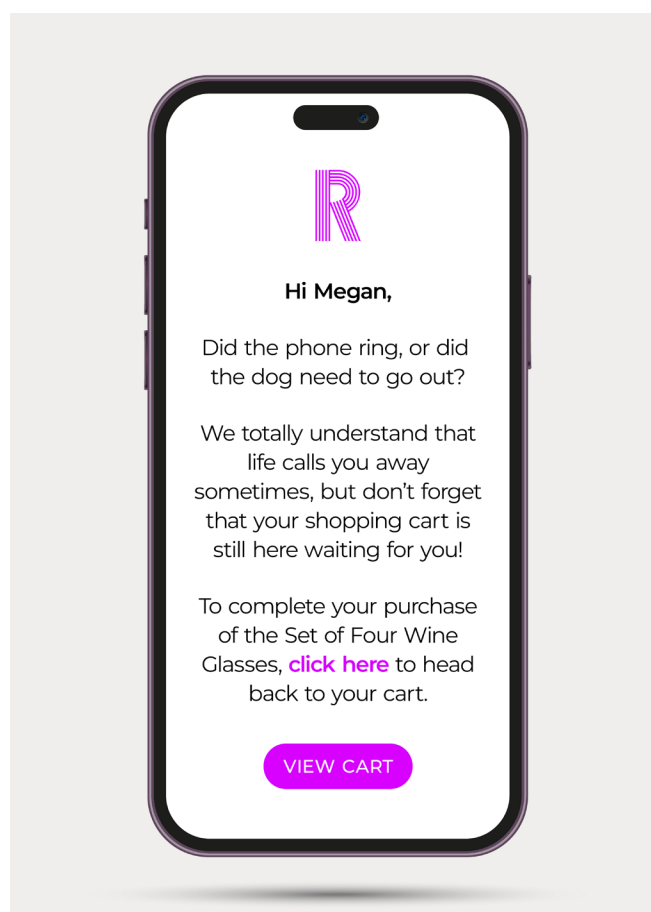
Personalisation.

One of the biggest benefits of email marketing is that it's a much more personalised approach to marketing than other platforms.

Not only can you begin emails by addressing your customers by name, but you can also segment your email database into smaller groups to send personalised batches, or even use your customer relationship

management (CRM) software to send automated follow-up emails when a customer abandons their cart or makes a purchase.

For example, your email could read as follows:

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Hi Megan,

Did the phone ring, or did the dog need to go out?

We totally understand that life calls you away sometimes, but don't forget that your shopping cart is still here waiting for you!

To complete your purchase of the Set of Four Wine Glasses, **click here** to head back to your cart.

VIEW CART

This ability to personalise your emails gives you a chance to nurture your customers and encourage them to return.

The benefits of eDM marketing for small businesses.
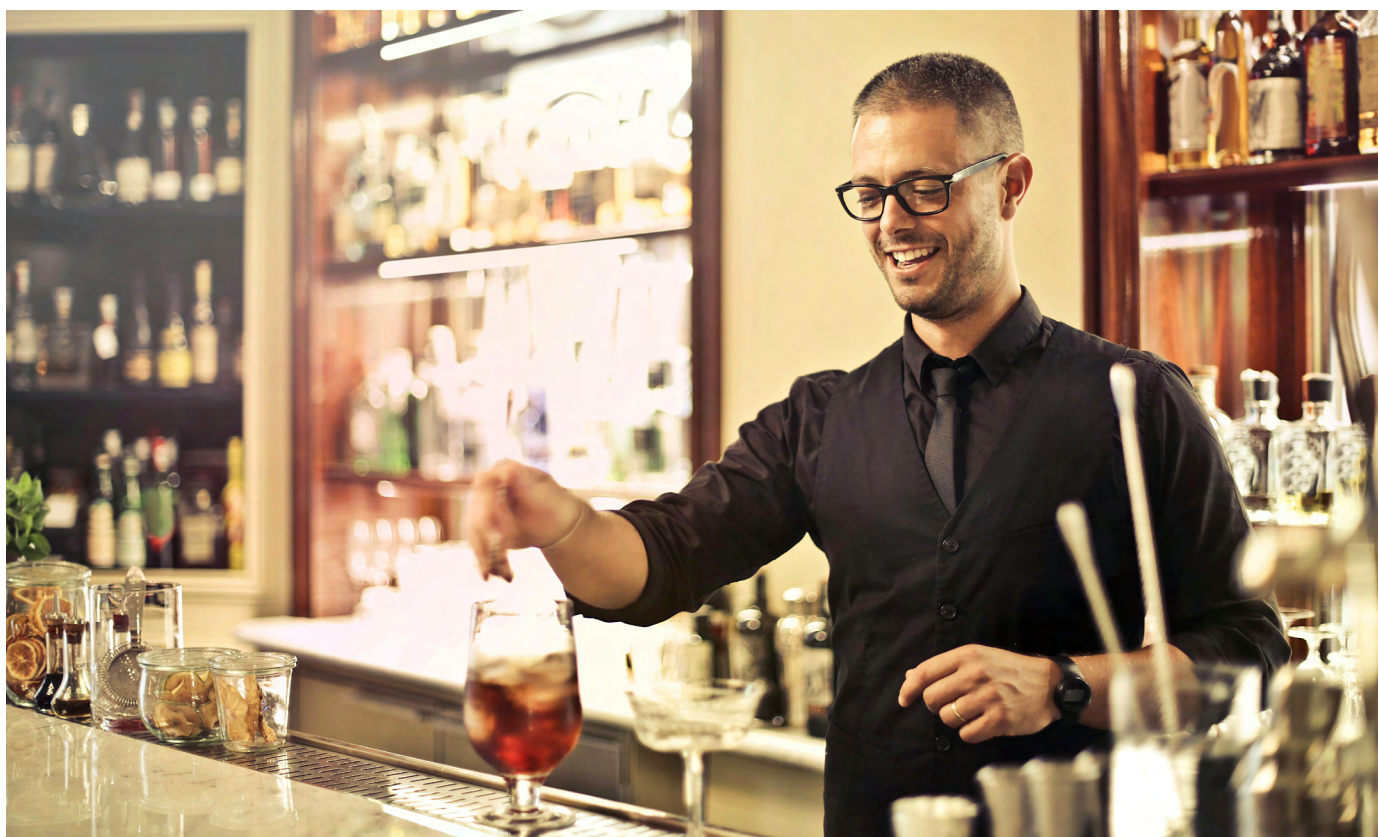
Improve your bottom line.

For small businesses, there are few goals as important or as difficult to reach as improving the bottom line. Making more sales is vital for maintaining the business through the growth stage and expanding it into the future, and email marketing can be a tool to achieve those sales.

In fact, in Australia, **64% of small businesses** specifically use eDMs as a straightforward way to reach and attract customers.

Once you start segmenting your campaigns (targeting eDMs to specific groups of customers or clients), the ROI improves dramatically, with one study showing that segmentation achieved a 760% increase in revenue.

Whether you're using an email to move a segment further along your sales funnel or encouraging them to take the final step and make a purchase, email marketing can have a positive impact on that all important bottom line.

How to create an eDM marketing campaign.

Segmentation is an important step, as it helps you target those who most need to see the message or who are most likely to act. If you don't segment, you risk communicating with those who don't want or need to see the message, which might encourage them to unsubscribe.

For example, if your goal was to reconnect with customers who haven't purchased something in a while, this would mean segmenting your audience into those who have not made a purchase in a specific timeframe.

You could also segment your audience based on geography, age, buying history or other factors.

Goal setting.

To create an email marketing campaign of your own, you need to start with a goal. Having a clear goal in mind will help to shape the campaign overall. Your goal could be to:

- Remind old customers of your products
- Update customers on a new product or service
- Boost sales for a specific product or service
- Share company news with a newsletter
- Inform customers of a sale or special deal (and encourage purchases)
- Encourage customers to do a free trial or request a quote
- Increase website traffic

Segment your audience.

Your chosen goal is important as it will help you with the next step – segmentation. Will all the addresses in your database receive this email or just a subset? If so, who?

Create your content.

You can create your own email content or contract out the task to a freelancer. Either way, the content should tick certain boxes to get the best results:

- Keep it concise and clear
- Aim for as few words as possible to get the message across
- Highlight the benefits to the reader
- Personalise the message wherever you can
- Write in your brand tone of voice
- Make your call/s to action clear and incisive
- Ensure every email offers something beneficial to the reader, whether it's entertainment, useful information or products/services at a discount (anything else may be seen as spam)

It's also important to consider adding imagery or video to your email to make it more engaging. While it will take more investment and work to add these elements, it really can pay off – for example, videos can increase your open rates by 19% and click-through rates by a massive 65%.

How to create an eDM marketing campaign.

Schedule your email.

There are good times and bad times to send out email marketing, so hitting 'send' as soon as you're finished putting it all together won't do you any favours.

When Campaign Monitor analysed more than 30 billion emails in 2019, they were able to compare the open rates and click-through rates for marketing emails sent all over the world.

They found that emails sent on Mondays had the highest open rate at 22%, and emails sent over the weekend had the lowest open rates at 20.5% on Saturdays and 20.3% on Sundays.

As for click-throughs, Tuesdays were the most successful with 2.4%. Weekends were again the least successful at 2.1%. A similar study by Get Response looked at the best times of day to send emails. This study showed that peaks for open rates and click-through rates were usually early in the day at around 6am or later in the day around 6pm.

So what's best for your customers? While you might start with sending emails on Mondays and Tuesdays, you can also experiment with your times and days to find the best schedule for your customers.

And don't forget to keep their demographics and what you know about them in mind.

For example, if they are typically in full-time work, they might come home and check their email at 6pm, but they could also be rushing to clear their inbox and get started on dinner, so a time later in the evening might be preferable. It's a good idea to run a few test eDMs at different times, depending on your audience, and assess which ones deliver the best open rates.
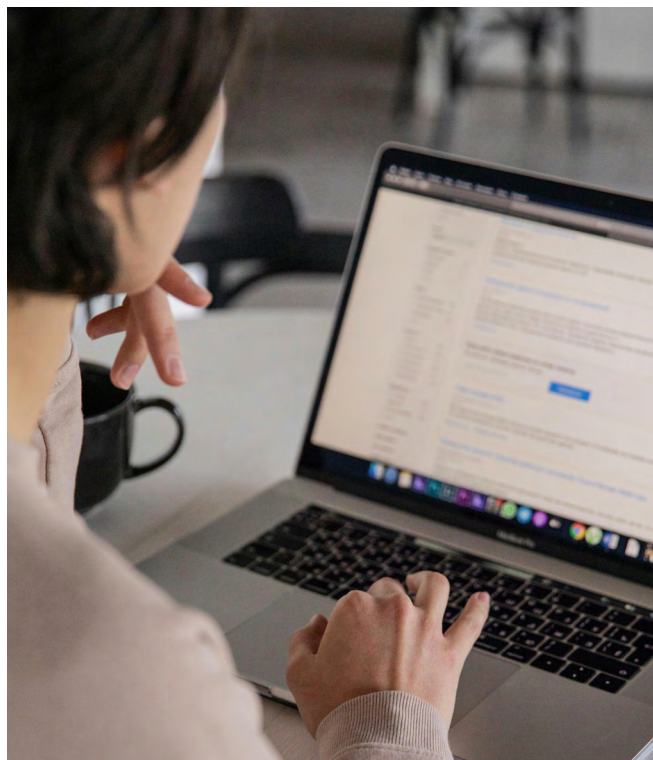
Double check everything.

Before considering the task finished, run back over the steps and double check everything.

With your goal in mind, have you segmented your audience as concisely as possible? Is your content free from errors, clear in its messaging and on brand? Have you scheduled your campaign to go out at a time that will best suit your audience's schedule?

It's easy for errors to slip through in the early stages when you're rushing to get everything done, so a final check can help to keep those issues from making it into your customers' inboxes.

Metrics to track for success.

Click-through rate (CTR).

This metric tracks how many people clicked on a link within your email. High CTRs suggest your email content is engaging and relevant to the recipients.

Conversion rate.

The percentage of email recipients who complete a desired action, such as making a purchase or signing up for a webinar. Tracking conversions helps you measure the ROI of your email campaigns.

Bounce rate.

This measures the percentage of emails that couldn't be delivered. A high bounce rate could indicate issues with your email list, such as invalid email addresses, and can negatively impact your sender reputation.

Unsubscribe rate.

Monitoring your unsubscribe rate helps you gauge how well your content resonates with your audience. A sudden increase in unsubscribes may signal that you're sending too many emails or that your content isn't aligned with subscriber expectations.

By regularly reviewing these metrics, you can optimise your email marketing efforts and ensure that you're effectively engaging with your audience.

Tracking the right metrics is essential for evaluating the success of your email campaigns. Here are the key metrics every small business should monitor:

Open rate.

The percentage of recipients who open your email. A good open rate typically indicates that your subject line and preview text are compelling enough to grab attention.

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Latest trends in email marketing.

To keep your email marketing strategy relevant, it's important to stay on top of emerging trends. Here are some key trends shaping email marketing in 2024:

AI-powered personalisation.

AI has transformed email marketing by enabling businesses to deliver more personalised content than ever before. AI can analyse subscriber behaviour and preferences to send the most relevant emails at the best time. For instance, AI tools can suggest optimal send times based on when your customers are most likely to engage and generate product recommendations tailored to individual subscribers.

Interactive email elements.

More brands are incorporating interactive elements into their emails, such as polls, surveys or embedded videos. These allow subscribers to engage with content without leaving the email itself, which boosts engagement and click-through rates. Interactive content is particularly effective in making emails more dynamic and fun to interact with.

Dark mode optimisation.

With more users opting for dark mode in their email clients, optimising your email design for both light and dark mode has become critical. Make sure your text is readable and your images appear correctly across both settings, ensuring an optimal viewing experience for all users.
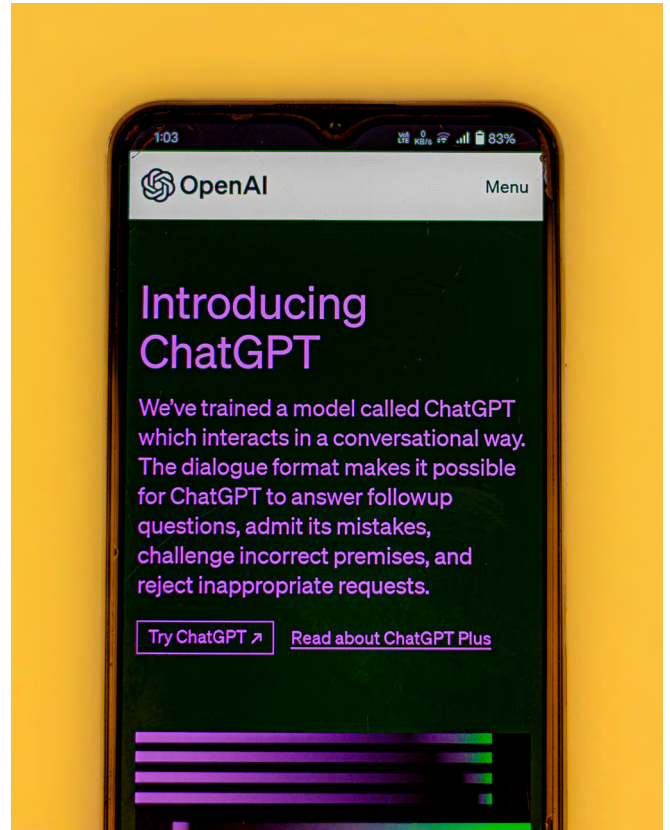
Mobile-first email design.

Since a majority of emails are now opened on mobile devices, focusing on mobile-first design has never been more important.

Keep layouts simple, ensure images are optimised for faster load times, and make call-to-action (CTA) buttons easily tappable on mobile screens.

Using automation effectively.

Welcome series.

Set up an automated welcome email series to greet new subscribers. This is your opportunity to make a positive first impression, introduce your brand and encourage initial engagement.

Cart abandonment emails.

For eCommerce businesses, cart abandonment emails are critical. Automate these emails to trigger when someone leaves an item in their cart without completing the purchase. Offering a discount or highlighting scarcity can help convert these potential customers.

Re-engagement campaigns.

Automation is also useful for re-engaging inactive subscribers. Set up automated emails to check in with customers who haven't interacted with your emails in a while, offering them incentives or asking them to update their preferences to stay engaged.

Personalised recommendations.

Based on subscriber behaviour (such as past purchases or browsing history), you can automate product recommendations that are personalised for each recipient, increasing the likelihood of conversion.

Email automation can save time while delivering relevant content to your audience at the right moment. Here's how to leverage automation to nurture leads and boost sales:

Email deliverability tips.

To maximise the success of your eDM campaigns, ensuring strong deliverability is key. Here are several tips to help keep your emails out of spam folders and improve your overall deliverability:

Avoid spam triggers in subject lines.

Certain words and phrases like 'FREE!!!' or excessive punctuation (!!!) can flag your email as spam. Stick to clear, concise subject lines and avoid over-promising or using sensational language.

Encourage subscribers to whitelist you.

Ask your subscribers to add your email address to their safe sender list or whitelist. This simple request can help prevent your emails from being flagged as junk or spam.

Use a double opt-in process.

Double opt-in ensures that only genuinely interested individuals are on your list. It requires new subscribers to confirm their email address before they start receiving your emails, leading to higher engagement rates and reducing the risk of bounces or spam complaints.

Maintain a clean email list.

Periodically remove inactive subscribers from your list. Keeping a lean, engaged email list helps improve your sender reputation, which in turn boosts deliverability rates.

eDM marketing checklist.

Here's your eDM marketing checklist for before, during and after you hit send:

✅ **One.** Begin with a clear goal in mind.

✅ **Two.** Segment your audience.

✅ **Three.** Create clear, concise content.

✅ **Four.** Include engaging imagery or video.

✅ **Five.** Check everything.

✅ **Six.** Schedule your email.

Once you've set the foundations of your email marketing strategy, you might need some help automating the process of sending your eDMs.

Thryv **offers trigger-based campaigns for your email marketing needs as well as a pre-made email library, detailed analytics and insights and more, giving you time back to focus on your business.**