

## Webinar Q&A: Email Marketing: The Workhorse of Online Communications

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**Q: How can you focus on one product or service and reduce the number of emails sent?**

*A: One way of doing this well is to do a “theme” for a specific email. A good example of this is if the email is based on educational opportunities, such as webinars, you can include more than one webinar offering in one email message. Although you’re adding more opportunities for members to take action, it is important to keep the message brief and concise, with prominent calls to action and very clear main points.*

**Q: What is the benefit to scheduling emails via your email service provider?**

*A: More than anything, scheduling emails is a time-saver that provides you the opportunity to make a plan when other organizational priorities need attention or when you have a heavy workload week. This ties to the importance of using an organization email schedule that is planned by you and your team.*

*This also allows you to experiment with the timing when people are going to get your message. A scheduler provides you a chance to see when members more actively engage with your emails and when they do not. Observing metrics such as open rates, click-to-open rates, or conversion rates can then help you decide when the best date and time is to send email in the future.*

**Q: Does an email preview in Outlook count as an open?**

*A: The team at Naylor agrees that a preview in Outlook does count as an open. If the viewer’s settings on the Outlook account allow images/video to be shown in preview, then it will register.*

**Q: In addition to using pictures or buttons as the hyperlinks you want people to click, do you think other rich media (videos, graphics, etc.) help increase click-through or open rates?**

*A: While rich media ads on websites do have higher click-through rates, you shouldn’t use rich media ads in newsletters and email marketing efforts. Embedded video or animation causes issues with deliverability and most email clients will strip the code from your email if they do deliver the newsletter to the recipient’s inbox. In regards to your website, rich media ads often have a higher click-through rate than plain graphics or text links. Also, video gets the attention of more people, while encouraging more interaction.*

**Q: Have you found that email recipients are more likely to click the “Forward to a Friend” link in the bottom of a marketing email versus simply forwarding the email, e.g., via Microsoft Outlook?**

*A: We have seen email recipients use both “Forward to a Friend” links as well as their email client’s forwarding function. Most email users are aware of email forwarding features within their email*

*client, so we recommend using your email's valuable real estate for other functions such as links to your association's website or online publications, or buttons that correspond to your desired conversion.*

**Q: We have some email addresses that don't work using Outlook but do work with other systems, e.g., AOL. What do you suggest to correct this problem?**

*A: Contact the recipients to ask them to list your association's email address as a safe sender within their email account.*

**Q: Is there any consideration for the use of alternate emails provided in someone's autoreply? (For example, if we get an out of office email from someone that offers a coworker's email address – can it be used?)**

*A: It's not a good idea to simply add a new email address you've received via auto-reply to your database because that individual has not given you consent to be emailed. They could mark your association as a spammer if you start sending them emails they did not ask to receive. This designation from enough random recipients will land you on many email service providers' blacklist, and you will not be able to successfully deliver email to anyone. In Canada, it is against the law (Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation) to email people without their express consent. You would need to reach out to this person in some way other than email to ask if you can start sending them emails first.*

*If your association is emailing an individual on a one-to-one basis (for example, to follow up about an event registration or a membership renewal) and you receive an out-of-office reply that refers you to someone not already in your email database, consider if the issue is urgent, or if can it wait until the original recipient is back in the office. If you do need to email their substitute right away, ask for their permission to send them information once your issue is resolved. Again, in Canada, this is required by law. Everywhere else, it is still a good idea to introduce yourself before sending them regular emails.*

**Q: Do you have any thoughts on how to apply this advice to membership renewal messages? It can be hard to focus on one great reason to renew but you want to show them the benefit of their action.**

*A: Consider sending members up for renewal a series of short emails that focus on one membership benefit each. It can take time for members to decide whether or not they're going to renew, and to gather the resources (funds for dues, permission from a manager to use working hours for association activity) needed to confidently renew membership. By sending a series of emails about the benefits of membership renewal along with links that direct members to the Web page(s) where they can renew online or learn how to renew offline, you can gently remind them to take action while giving them all the reasons they should stay a member of your association.*

If you have further questions, please contact Kelly Clark at [kclark@naylor.com](mailto:kclark@naylor.com) or Ferdinand Libunao at [filibunao@aha.org](mailto:filibunao@aha.org).

*Please note that the answers contained in this document reflect the views of Naylor Association Solutions, and are not necessarily the same views held by all industry professionals.*

