

# **EMAIL MARKETING 101**

## Maximizing Email Response Rates

---

*Webinar Questions and Answers Summary*



This document summarizes the questions that were asked during the session and offline in the recent Pinpointe webinar: "Email Marketing 101: Maximizing HTML Email Results". We had dozens of questions that we were not able to answer online, so if you posted a question that we didn't get to during the online session, please check here, as we've done our best to answer and address all questions that were asked.

**Q: HOW CAN WE GET A COPY OF THE SLIDES, AND ACCESS TO THE ON-DEMAND WEBINAR SESSION RECORDING FROM THIS WEBINAR?**

The slide deck, Q and A and on-demand webinar are all available at this location. Registration is not required. Please feel free to share this link:

<http://www.pinpointe.com/webinar-email-marketing-101-01-21-09>

**Q: CAN I SEND EMAIL TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT DIRECTLY REQUEST EMAIL FROM ME WITHOUT VIOLATING THE CAN-SPAM ACT?**

A: Yes. However, your correspondence must abide by these rules in order to remain compliant with CAN-SPAM regulations:

- The header (send-from address) must be accurate. It cannot be false or misleading.
- The subject line must also be accurate. It cannot be deceptive or misleading and must relate to the content.
- Any correspondence must have an opt-out method. The current CAN-SPAM regulation requires that opt-out requests be honored within 10 days. However as best practices, we recommend honoring any requests immediately. Most Email Service Providers, including Pinpointe, automatically manage opt-outs and will automatically remove contacts upon their request.
- Unsolicited Commercial Email (ie, sending correspondence to someone with whom you do not have a pre-existing business relationship and/or has not explicitly requested your correspondence) is fully permitted but must be identified as an advertisement, and must include a valid physical address and phone. In the latest ruling, a post office box is considered to be an acceptable postal address.

**Q: WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CAN-SPAM ACT?**

You can check the FTC website at: [www.ftc.gov/spam](http://www.ftc.gov/spam)

Or call toll-free: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

**Q: HOW HAS THE GROWTH IN BLACKBERRY AND OTHER HANDHELD DEVICES IMPACTED EMAIL DESIGN?**

A: The 'use scenario' we are seeing is that people use their mobile devices / smart phones / etc to do real-time checking (often skimming) of email and making a quick decision whether to keep the email and read it in more detail later, or delete it. They then go back and review / act upon more important emails from their desktop. Industry metrics indicate as many as 40% of Executives check their email on a Blackberry or similar device first. This means that, more than ever, it is critical to design emails with this in mind. Ensure that all correspondence is sent with both HTML and Text versions (using MIME). Most good ESPs, like Pinpointe, support this. The text and HTML versions can be different but ensure that the Text version is concise, includes a link to the web version of the email, and is designed for a narrow display.

**Q: YOU USED THE TERMS B2B AND B2C - WHAT DO THESE MEAN?**

"B2B" means 'Business to Business' - as in businesses communicating with other businesses, whereas B2C means 'Business to Consumer'.

**Q: CAN YOU SHARE STATISTICS ON SPAM COMPLAINTS OR OTHER REPUTATION ISSUES?**

Yes. ISPs who carry email traffic will generally "tolerate" a SPAM complaint rate of approximately 1 complaint per 1,000 ~ 5,000 emails. It is up to the sender or the Email Service provider to directly respond to any ISP requests regarding end user SPAM complaints.

At Pinpointe, we service B2B customers. We work closely with our business customers to ensure CAN-SPAM compliance, list integrity and email best practices. As a result, our spam complaint ratios are significantly better as we see only 1 complaint per 20,000 emails. In our testing, we have seen B2C (Business-to-Consumer) emails generate unusually high complaint ratios of 1 complaint per 100 emails. This is not uncommon as many consumers (e.g. @yahoo.com or @msn.com addresses) often hit the 'This is SPAM' button instead of deleting unwanted email, or opting out.

**Q: WHEN USING PINPOINTE'S ON-DEMAND EMAIL MARKETING SERVICE, CAN WE ATTACH A PDF FILE TO THE OUTBOUND EMAILS DURING THE CAMPAIGN?**

A: Yes. However, we recommend that you host the pdf and link to it in the body of your email. Most spam filters will automatically quarantine any attachments, including pdfs. Therefore your pdf will not reach your recipients. Pinpointe includes unlimited storage for document and image hosting.

**Q: IF WE DOWNLOAD CONTACTS FROM NETPROSPEX, CAN WE USE THE EMAIL CONTACTS TO POPULATE AN EXISTING LIST IN CONSTANT CONTACT?**

No. Constant Contact, Vertical Response, MailChimp and most other ESP's require that you use only 100% opt-in email addresses. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in your account being immediately terminated without refund. You can check each company's respective 'Terms of Use' policies on their websites.

Pinpointe is the only ESP that focuses exclusively on mid-market B2B companies, and we work only with qualified database vendors, like NetProspex. As a result, Pinpointe is able to permit use of non opt-in addresses as long as correspondence complies with CAN-SPAM regulations.

**Q: ARE ANALYTICS AND E-MAIL DEPLOYMENT HELP, REPORTS AND E-MAIL EFFECTIVENESS METRICS INCLUDED IN THE MONTHLY PRICING PACKAGES FOR PINPOINTE'S EMAIL SERVICES?**

A: yes, advanced reporting, help and effectiveness metrics are all standard features. If you would like to learn more, or to schedule a live 1 on 1 demonstration of Pinpointe, please contact us at: 408-834-7577 x125; [sales@pinpointe.com](mailto:sales@pinpointe.com) or [cstouffer@pinpointe.com](mailto:cstouffer@pinpointe.com).

**Q: WHAT THE "40/40/20 RULE" (SLIDE #9)?**

When sending email, 40% of the recipient's response is driven by the email title and send-from address; 40% of the response is driven by the 'call to action' (e.g., the 'offer' or links to click on for the recipient to learn more about the offer) and the remaining 20% of the email "value" is based on the actual content, which includes the text and graphical layout.

The lesson here is that, time spent on testing and optimizing the title and 'call to action' are well spent.

**Q: HOW DO YOU INSERT ALT TEXT WITHIN AN EMAIL?**

When impeding any images in your email correspondence, keep in mind that most email clients (Outlook, Entourage, Gmail, etc) by default have image display turned OFF. So, if your email includes images, the recipient will see only a box with a red 'X' where the image belongs, until they manually enable 'display images' in their email client.

That's why it is useful to add 'ALTErnate' text that will be displayed in the event the image is not displayed. To do this, simply add the following information to a graphic image within your email:

ALT="Insert your ALTErnate text here"

**Q: YOU MENTIONED (SLIDE #11) THAT CREATING EMAIL CONTENT IN MS WORD AND THEN DIRECTLY PASTING THE RESULTS INTO AN HTML EMAIL OR CAMPAIGN EDITOR MAY NOT WORK. CAN YOU CLARIFY?**

A: MS Word and Publisher are not designed or optimized for creating HTML content. If you create content in these products and then cut and paste the content into an HTML editor, and then look at the HTML content, you will see that they insert significant extraneous HTML formatting code. This code can cause some SPAM filters to block your content because it may look like garbage content to the SPAM filter.

Instead, consider either using an HTML editor or design product (MS Expression, or one of several Adobe products).

**Q: HOW MANY LINES LONG SHOULD AN EMAIL BE LIMITED TO?**

There is no set length, and it depends on the objective of the email. For example, a monthly update / newsletter format might be 1-2 pages. Be sure to put a list of topics at the beginning of the newsletter, so it is easy for the recipient to 'jump' to specific sections that may be of interest. A brief update, that is extending an offer to download a whitepaper or join an event, usually performs best if the email is short, to the point, and includes links to landing pages with additional information. Another common style is the 'educational, email blog's style. If you subscribe to 'The Motley Fool' for example, you've seen this. The writing style is personalized, 1 on 1 communication that typically covers a topic or two, and explains the topic in detail. This might be 2-4 pages long, and can include links to landing pages and external documents with additional supporting materials.

**Q: WHEN SENDING AN EMAIL IS IT BETTER TO USE A 'SEND FROM / REPLY TO' ADDRESS SUCH AS 'SALES@MYCOMPNY.COM' OR 'MY [NAME@MYCOMPANY.COM](#)'?**

A: In most cases, you will see better results by using a specific contact person (yourself for example) vs. a general address like 'support@' or 'sales@'. Keep in mind that your recipients take only a second or two to decide whether or not to open your email. If they do not recognize your company, they are likely to skip over the email. Also, general addresses are less personal, which reduces open rates.

Actual results. Based on analysis of various campaigns across our system we have seen that using a specific personal name vs. a general email address can improve the net open rate by 15% - 35% (or more).

**Q: DOES PINPOINTE INCLUDE SURVEY CAPABILITIES? DO YOU HAVE THE FUNCTIONALITY TO HANDLE SURVEYS AND RESULTS ATTACHED TO A DISTRIBUTED EMAIL?**

A: Pinpointe will be including survey capabilities in a release soon to be available. In the interim we recommend that our customers set up their surveys with SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). You can create and send the survey invitation and track results

in details from Pinpointe's email system, and simply host the questionnaire on SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is only \$19.95 / month. Pinpointe customers who send up to 50,000 emails / month can have a SurveyMonkey account included with their Pinpointe service, at no charge.

**Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 'HARD' BOUNCE AND A 'SOFT' BOUNCE?**

A: A 'Hard' bounce is a permanent fatal error such as - the domain no longer exists (company went out of business), the email does not exist (the person retired / left the company / died).

A 'Soft' bounce is typically an intermittent, temporary condition. For example, the recipient's email server might be temporarily overloaded or offline, or they may be over their inbox quota size.

Pinpointe automatically manages hard and soft bounces. Hard bounces are automatically flagged and removed from your list so that you do not 'waste' email credits sending to non-existent emails (doing so can also damage your email credibility). Soft bounces are automatically re-tried 3 times per campaign. After 3 campaigns (a total of 9 retries), if an email is still undeliverable, it is then flagged as a hard bounce.

**Q: CRAIG, IS IT CONSIDERED 'BEST PRACTICES' TO OFFER A WEB VERSION OF THE EMAIL IN CASE THE MAIL CLIENT CANNOT DISPLAY INTENDED EMAIL?**

Absolutely. Pinpointe's on-demand email service automatically creates an online version of each email campaign that is hosted on our system. A customized link to the web version can be easily inserted into all emails.

**Q: CAN YOU SUGGEST A GOOD TEXT TO IMAGE RATIO?**

A: There is no set, best ratio. Avoid using large image blocks. A guideline would be - use images only where necessary and use text wherever possible. In addition, you can use ALT tags for images - this will improve your text to image ratio.

Earlier SPAM filters relied heavily on specific keywords to determine how 'spammy' the email was. Spammers simply created images that included the spam words, or created an email that was a single big image. This allowed them to get by SPAM filters. However most SPAM filters now look at the amount of content that is text vs. images and if you are using a large number of images, content will often be considered SPAM.

**Q: IF 50% OF EMAIL CLIENTS BLOCK IMAGES BY DEFAULT, WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON REPORTED OPEN RATES?**

A: If images are blocked and the recipient does not download images, then the tracking image pixel will not be downloaded and the email open cannot be tracked. The result is that

actual open rates are / will be higher than what is reported. Presently there is no way around this.

**Q: WHAT QUALIFIES AS A CALL TO ACTION (CONTACT US, DOWNLOAD, ATTEND...)?**

A: A 'Call to Action' is your offer. For example, an offer a link to download a whitepaper, or registration to attend a Webinar, that is a call to action. A call to action might also be: "please call me at..." or "please email me at: ..." However we generally recommend using links within an email when possible because responses can then be directly and automatically tracked by Pinpointe.

**Q: WHAT'S A "GOOD" OPEN RATE, AND A "GOOD" CLICK-THROUGH RATE?**

A: There are so many factors that impact open rates that it is difficult to predict a 'good' vs. 'bad' open rate. It is more useful to look at your own open rates relative to other campaigns you are running to determine if one campaign is generally doing better / worse than others, based on net open rates and / or click through rates.

That said, assuming that you are following 'best practices' for the title, offer, content, send times, send frequency, list management etc, you might expect to see the following rough *unique* open rates (please refer to slide #15 for 3 specific list response rates):

- **Opt-in / managed list:** 20% - 45% open rates are common; 60%+ are achievable
- **Purchased/ rented list:** 8% - 14% per campaign, assuming you have purchased a high quality list that is not generated using 'web scraping' techniques. After a series of 4-6 campaigns, perhaps over a 2 month period, you might see that overall, 30% of the contacts have opened one or more emails.

**Q: WHAT IS CSS?**

A: "CSS" means Cascading Style Sheet. For web design, it is considered best practices to collect all style definitions and put them into a style sheet that can easily be referenced. However, email clients generally do not handle CSS styles well, if at all. Please refer to the next question for more information on why this is important.

**Q: WHAT'S THE DEFINITION OF AN INLINE STYLE?**

A: When creating web pages, it is considered 'best design practices' to create what are called CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), which include all style definitions. You then reference the 'CSS' style sheet.

However, most email clients do not use CSS style sheets properly, so any styles must be included 'inline' within your email document. 'Inline styles' are styles that are defined directly within your HTML email, and should be contained between the <BODY> tags. Styles can be

used to define fonts, font colors, spacing, table formatting etc that you may use repeatedly throughout an HTML document (or HTML emails).

## ***Pinpointe Questions***

### **Q: WHAT SETS PINPOINTE APART FROM LOW END SOLUTIONS LIKE CONSTANT CONTACT?**

A: Pinpointe offers the following advanced features and services:

- Pinpointe services B2B customers, so we are one of the only email vendors that permits the use of purchased lists from qualified database vendors like NetProspex. Constant Contact and others have Terms of Use policies that forbid using purchased lists, and standard policy is to disable your account without refund.
- Pinpointe offers automated A/B campaign testing, so you can try multiple variations of your campaigns automatically, and go with the version that produces the best results.
- Pinpointe transparently integrates with Google Analytics, so all of your campaigns can be tracked, monitored and analyzed within Google analytics.

### **Q: WHAT IS PINPOINTE'S PRICING?**

Pinpointe's pricing is based on the number of emails sent per month. There are no contracts, up front fees or long term commitments. Pricing ranges from \$69 / month for 5,000 emails to \$2,800 /month for 500,000 emails.

Full pricing information is available here: [www.pinpointe.com/get-started](http://www.pinpointe.com/get-started)

## ***NetProspex Questions***

### **Q: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR INDUSTRIES THAT ARE COVERED BY THE CONTACTS IN NETPROSPEX' DATABASE?**

A: The Netprospex industry categories can be seen on the search screen, here: <http://www.netprospex.com/searchContacts>

### **Q: DOES NETPROSPEX DATA INCLUDE PEOPLE IN THE REAL ESTATE AND MORTGAGE INDUSTRY?**

A: Yes. We have a large amount of contact records in real estate.

### **Q: DOES NETPROSPEX HAVE LISTS OF MD'S AND MEDICAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS?**

A: You can try job title search here: <http://www.netprospex.com/searchContacts>

**Q: WHEN SELECTING NETPROSPEX CONTACT RECORDS, IS IT POSSIBLE TO SELECT CONTACTS AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL, OR TITLE LEVEL, SUCH AS MANAGER/DIRECTOR CONTACTS?**

Yes.

**Q: HOW CURRENT IS THE NETPROSPEX DB? IS IT CONSTANTLY BEING CLEANED/UPDATED?**

A: The NetProspex database is updated daily. Nothing in the db is more than 2 years old. All records have an accuracy rating and our average accuracy rating is 78%.

You can try a search right here: <http://www.netprospex.com/searchContacts>

**Q: DOES NETPROSPEX MERGE/PURGE/AUGMENT CLIENT-PROVIDED LISTS?**

Yes. Please contact me at [ghalliwell@Netprospex.com](mailto:ghalliwell@Netprospex.com) for a specific quotation.

**Q: HOW REFINED ARE THE SELECTS ON THE NETPROSPEX DATABASE?**

A: You can try a sample query on our database. Please visit this link to try your specific query: <http://www.netprospex.com/searchContacts>

**Q: WHAT IS NETPROSPEX'S PRICING MODEL?**

A: Standard price is \$0.50/name. In higher volumes our pricing drops to \$0.25/name. Please contact NetProspex directly for a specific quotation: [ghalliwell@Netprospex.com](mailto:ghalliwell@Netprospex.com) / 888-826-4877.

**Q: ARE NETPROSPEX RECORDS THAT ARE DOWNLOADED FOR SINGLE USE OR DO THEY BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CLIENT?**

A: All Netprospex records you purchase and download are your property. You can use the records as many times as you wish. They are not for one time use (rental).

**Q: DOES NETPROSPEX HAVE CONTACTS FROM EUROPE AND UK AS WELL?**

A: Not presently.

**Q: DO NETPROSPEX CONTACT RECORDS INCLUDE CONTACTS' TITLES?**

A: Yes.

**Q: DOES THE NETPROSPEX DATABASE INCLUDE EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR CONTACTS?**

Yes.

- 75% of contacts have email addresses.
- 99% have phone numbers, of which 15% have direct dial phone numbers.
- When doing a selection / search, you can specify that you only want records with email address and/or phone.

## **EMAIL SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS**

If you decide to purchase email contacts, use a reputable ESP with the following services:

- Automatic bounce processing / removal
- Automatic and immediate unsubscribe handling
- Check terms of service to ensure your ESP allows you to send to contacts that have not opted in. For most ESPs, violating this policy means your account will be immediately suspended with no refund.

## **ABOUT PINPOINTE**

Pinpointe is a leading provider of on-demand email marketing automation software based in the heart of Silicon Valley, California. As former High Tech B2B marketers, we've been in your shoes. Our team has a passion for helping B2B marketing professionals communicate with existing customers and target new prospects through behavioural targeting, improved segmentation and message personalization.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

If you're a Business to Business marketer and are want to stay on top of the latest marketing trends, tips and best practices, then please sign up for our twice-a-month Tips 'n Tricks notes. We also run surveys of marketing and sales professionals. We ask what you and your peers are doing and share the results with all participants at no charge. Watch for your invitation to participate and learn.

Pinpointe Tips: [www.pinpointe.com/about/subscribe-to-pinpointe-tips](http://www.pinpointe.com/about/subscribe-to-pinpointe-tips)

## **CONTACTING PINPOINTE**

At present, we provide sales and support from 8am to 8pm PST, M-F. We can be reached 24x7 at:

Pinpointe Site: [www.pinpointe.com](http://www.pinpointe.com)

General Information: [info@pinpointe.com](mailto:info@pinpointe.com)

Sales: [sales@pinpointe.com](mailto:sales@pinpointe.com)

Please feel free to pass this handy pdf on to all your friends and enemies.

© 2009, Pinpointe. All Rights Reserved.