Email Marketing Case Studies: How 4 Companies Increased Their Open Rates

Here are the 4 case studies.

1. MailiGen increased email open rate from 20% to 29% by resending emails

- How did Mailigen increase its open rates from 20% to 29%?

  > Interestingly, the company used a simple technique that most email marketers don't use: "Behavioral segmentation."

- Behavioral segmentation is all about grouping your email subscribers distinctly, and create relevant and high-value email messages for them.

- To implement behavior segmentation, you must first collect user behavior data, such as which types of content a select group of people prefer, when they usually open their emails, whether or not they respond to your emails, and the like.

- Mailigen selected subscribers who hadn't opened their emails, and resent the email with an improved headline:

- **First step:** The company crafted an email to their subscribers about using symbols in email content. The subject line read "Make your emails stand out with symbols."

- **Second step:** This email performed fairly well, producing an open rate of 20.5%.

- Well, Mailigen wanted to see if they could improve on that rate. So they used their latest feature of behavioral segmentation to map out their email list.

- A week later, they selected all those who hadn't responded to the first email, tweaked the subject line to be more compelling – "send emails with awesome symbols in subject."

- The content of the email remained the same, and the email was resent to those who ignored the first one.

- About 8.6% of those who didn't open the first one responded. Altogether, the same email newsletter generated a 29.1% open rate, just by implementing a simple strategy.

- As a content marketer, blogger, information marketer or author, you can learn a lot from Mailigen's email marketing strategy.

- When sending emails to people, ask yourself this question: "why did they subscribe in the first place?"

- If you're able to answer that question, you'll be way ahead of your competition, because some of your competitors don't take that into consideration.

- They just wake up, create an email, paste the text into their email editor, and blast it out to everyone.

- List segmentation is powerful. If you need more proof, here are two more brands that followed the same approach:

i). Wok to Walk case study

Wok to Walk, a health food company, sent a newsletter with a subject line that invited recipients to call, make inquiries and order a meal. This email generated an open rate of 18.1%.

- But after using the Mailigen technique, they managed to got an additional 7.7% of subscribers excited, resulting in a healthier level of email engagement.

ii). Sending SMS to unresponsive subscribers

Another vital aspect of increasing email open rates is reaching out to people on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

- Euro Aptieka a pharmacy industry implemented this underutilized email marketing strategy.

- After sending an email newsletter and getting a 23.7% open rate, they decided to send SMS to those who hadn't opened the email. This dramatically increased their open rates.

To get the most out of SMS marketing, here are a few tips to live by:

i). Focus on one message per SMS: You really need a SMS text campaign. Conveying your marketing message in a more personal way will set you apart from the competition.

ii). Time your SMS correctly: Tools are good, and we encourage you to use them. But the only way to be 100% sure when your subscribers are ready to receive your SMS is by testing. Study your SMS statistics and analyze when people mostly engage with your text messages.

iii). Make it easy for customers to purchase products: One of the ways to encourage customers to buy when they receive your text message is by offering a discount.

- But if you offer a 20% discount, only to force your customers to jump through hoops to get it, they'll go somewhere else.

> **A quick note about promotional codes:** Most people offer promotional codes that are difficult to remember.

- Keep yours short and easy to remember. Ideally, codes should convey the value that you're delivering. For example, DEAL20 is far easier to remember than DEAL832077.

2. Digital Marketer increased email open rates by 3X with subject lines

- Is it possible to increase your email open rates by 3x whenever you send a newsletter? That's exactly what DigitalMarketer.com did.

- Digital Marketer used "11 tricks to double email conversions," and you can do the same thing.
- Here's how Digital Marketer increased its open rates by 3X:

1). Use proven email subject lines

Not all emails will be opened. It's just the reality of the situation. Most of your subscribers are also subscribed to many other email lists, too.

According to Richard Lindney, who wrote the Digital Marketer case study, every successful email subject line falls into one of these four categories:

a). Benefit-driven subject lines

The subject line has only one purpose: to state the benefit the recipient will get by opening the email. One of the 5 things customers look for in a product is its benefits. The same is true of emails.

Here are examples of benefit-driven or direct email subject lines:

- How to Write Blog Posts that Convert
- Start building your landing pages for $1
- A native ad in 60 minutes or less
- Steal these email templates....

b). Scarcity-based or urgency email subject lines

If there's a need to act now – say, a discount that expires on a particular upcoming date – you may want to use the urgency subject line style. It communicates urgency and gets people to act now.

Digital Marketer recommends that you use urgency/scarcity based subject lines every so often in your campaign to get more opens:

- Closing Down Soon!
- You're going to miss this?!?
- Final Notice (just hours left)
- 85% Off Sale ends at midnight

c). Proof or credibility subject lines

ReferralCandy shared the 12 ways you can infuse credibility into your marketing and get staggering results.

- Now's the right time to leverage that credibility. It's social proof that you know what you're doing. The same thing is at work behind video tutorials: they're a form of proof to prospects that you know what your stuff.

- You can simply speak about other people's successes in your subject line. Craft it in such a way as to get your recipients to believe those results are possible for them, too.

Here are some of the proof-based subject lines that helped Digital Marketer increase their open rates 3X:

- Mom of two "makes" $10K in 4 days

- This guy makes 6 figures per month?

- 23,247 leads in less than 30 days

Model these subject lines to create your own. Few inspirations for you:

- 250 comments "generated" $25k in 30 days

- 16,736 leads in less than 30 days

- This average guy makes 5 figure income monthly?

d). Blind or curiosity-based email subject lines

These subject lines have an almost magic-like ability to make people want to open. After all, if you hint that you know a secret, people will want to know it.

When writing email subject lines using this method, avoid revealing all the information in the subject.

Use these subject lines to tease the recipient. Here are a few typical examples:

- Less_____= More Sales

- Why he paid Facebook $37,973

- 1,322,956 free clicks from…

2). Using Unicode Symbols & Personalization

Digital Marketer advises that you use Unicode symbols – emoticons, objects, etc in the email subject lines.

- Facebook and other social media networks know the value and impact of Unicode symbols in communication. You can double click and paste Facebook Unicode symbols on your Facebook page – your fans will love it.

- These symbols (sometimes called glyphs) will add flavor to your subject line. It may look funny, but humor is one of the reasons why content gets opened, shared, and forwarded.

- **Personalization:** According to Adobe, 60% of marketers struggle to personalize content in real time, yet 77% believe real-time personalization is crucial.

- To avoid any of these scenarios, personalize the email subject line. When asked to prioritize one capability that will be most important to marketing in the future, one-third of marketers answered: "personalization."

- Take a look at these two subject lines:

You'll lose $3,000 in a week if…

and
Philip, you'll lose $3,000 in a week if…

- The personalized version that contains the recipient's name "Philip" will most certainly outperform the generic one.

3. David Huffman boosted open rates by 15 – 20% with content-packed emails

- David used a smart technique to boost open rates. He set out on a six-week test of email marketing to see what would happen. Within this period, David and his team ran an A/B split test of a headline.

- The goal was simple: to re-engage "cold leads." To build up strong interest in them, and show the benefits of their program using new and improved content, thus giving them the right information they need to make buying decisions.

- They were splited the metrics into two categories:

  - Primary: number of people who enrolled into the program (re-converted leads)

  - Secondary: click-through rates, average open rate, and unsubscribes

- They decided to send one useful email to subscribers every week for six weeks – alternating between non-gated (no form) content and gated content with a heavy call to action (e.g., click here to download eBook).

- Their results were pretty impressive:

  - Conversion rate on gated content increased by 5%, and 40 leads reconverted

- Generated 7 enrollments (equalling around $100k ROI)

- Got zero unsubscribes

- Click-through rate increased by 3.5%

- Open rates were consistent. Within the 6-week timeframe, open rate was in the 15 – 20% range, which were consistent with industry benchmarks for education sector.

- David listed these takeaways from his experience:

  - **Email frequency increase does not necessarily decrease open rates:** In other words, out list did not get tired of emails sent to them. Open rates in weeks five and six were comparable to week one as well as our general open rates.

  - **More direct headlines win:** In a simple A/B headline test, the more direct "tell not sell" headline performed close to 20% better than the salesy one. In this example, "Schedule your campus tour" performed better than "Take a test drive of our campus.

  - **Customers open emails with success stories.** Our most opened and highest: clicked through emails were a couple of video customer success stories. If you haven't already, you may want to start including these in your content plan. Keep it simple and publish them on your blog or website. Rather than a link to a YouTube video, put a link in the email to the page on your site where the video is hosted. That'll give you some click-through data as well as bringing the prospect back to your site.

  - **Bottom-line is YOU NEED MORE CONTENT:** In six weeks, we generated over $100,000 dollars in return merely by sending content-packed emails to our list of "cold leads." The content for this particular campaign was in the form of blog articles, two ebook offers,video success stories and invitations to events. The more you have, the fresher your approach.

4. Gregory Ciotti saw a 59% increase in email open rates with a single call to action

- Gregory Ciotti is one of those content marketers who don't give up or call it quits in the face of adversity. He increased email open rates for Sophistefunk newsletter by 59%.

- How? By being specific with one call to action. His click-through rates increased dramatically, along with overall engagement.

- If you want people to take action when you send email, you need to include a high-converting call to action. That's the gateway to your landing page. If you fail to include a button or link (preferably), you'll lose potential sales.

- The bottom line is to test your subject lines. Don't rely on just one and expect to see significant open rates. You should continually split test your email campaigns.

● Here's a table of subject line "do's and dont's" to give you clear idea:

Do's and don'ts of writing email subject lines	
The Dos: What you customer love	**The Don'ts: What your customer hate**
Keep it short and simple (4-15 characters)	Don t use FW: or RE: to misguide people.
Tell user whats inside.	Don't write in all caps.
Keep same text in subject lines.	Don't include exclamation marks
Ask Reader to perform an action.	Don't use spammy words like free or open immediately.
Test. test and test	Don't use symbols or strange characters
Invoke emotions (but not unnecessarily)	Don't use sales language
Ask Questions.	Don't use misleading subject lines
Be Creative.	Don't use your recipients' names
Be Useful and Honest.	Don't be too mysterious
Proofread	Don't send emails asking help