



# 12 Common Mistakes Made by Rookies

*If you're new to email marketing and even if you're not, take a few minutes to check out these mistakes, commonly made by rookies, that could have your important message end up in junk folders, or worse, have you blacklisted.*



## **Mistake:** Assuming That You Have Permission

Before sending out any email-marketing material, you must first have permission from every one of your intended recipients.

Permission means that people have requested that you send them email marketing. Before you invest any time and money in an email-marketing program, start getting permission from all of your intended email customers.

It's quite easy, and it will result in fewer complaints about spam, your emails being better delivered, less legal liability and—more importantly—more open and click results. Smart Email automatically asks for a permission reminder in your campaigns.

When creating a new email campaign list in Smart Email, you will have to include a reminder. And every time you manually add someone to your list, you'll have to promise us that your subscribers asked to receive your newsletter.

## **Mistake:** Sending Email Marketing With A Personal Reply-to Address

You spend a lot of time creating your email campaigns, so don't blow it by sending a big professional email campaign to your customers, and use your "@gmail.com" or "@hotmail.com" home email as a reply address.

Use your website's domain—you should already have email accounts set up under that domain. Some people set up an email address just for their newsletters eg. newsletter@yourdomain.com.

Don't have a website, then maybe you are not ready to send out email campaigns just yet.

## **Mistake:** Confusing Email Marketing & Transactional Emails

Do you have an e-commerce store and a list of customers who have purchased from you? They will be expecting transactional emails from you, but do you have their permission to send marketing – newsletters, promotions and coupons are all considered to be marketing.

If you do not, then you are sending spam or unsolicited commercial marketing. Make sure you understand the difference, don't be a spammer!

## **Mistake:** Rushing Through Your Campaign

The biggest mistakes happen when marketers rush through a campaign to get it out ASAP. Proper design and coding rules suffer.

The content is not well thought through, subject lines lack substance and the email lists are not thoroughly checked.

Why are these things important?

A good subject line is perhaps the most important factor with open rates.

Then there are the people on your lists who have forgotten who you are, never subscribed, don't remember subscribing or have not gotten an email from you in years. Studies show that up to 30% of these people will report your email as "junk". Which will then lead to your ISP being notified and then you will be blacklisted for spamming.

So take a breath and ensure that your list is perfect and your campaign is in top shape before pushing send.

## Mistake: Everyone Knows Who I Am

Has it been more than 6 months since you contact people on your list? Did you know, that those permissions are now stale? You will need to assume that these people have forgotten you. Send them a “Remember Me?” email.

This should jog their memory on who you are and that they signed up for newsletters, promotions, coupons etc. This is so much nicer than getting a huge newsletter out of the blue, as they are likely to report you for spamming.

## Mistake: “Of Course They Want To Hear From Me”

Did you get permission from everyone on your list, that it was ok for you to email them? If not, then you are making the assumption that they want to hear from you.

If this is the case, then you will end up being reported for spamming. If the people on your list did not specifically give you permission to send them emails, then it’s spam.

Even if you have spent hours compiling a list of people who you think would like to receive your emails, unless they have opted-in to receive your newsletter, promotions or coupons, then its spamming.

If you have a list of people who you think might like to receive your emails, but they are not opted-in, try sending them a personal email invitation, asking them to join your marketing list.

## Mistake: Buying Email Lists

You would think by now that everyone would know better than to purchase a “legitimate list of opt-in email addresses” from a sketchy website or email.

But there are still vendors selling lists of emails where they have asked their members if they would like to receive promotions, coupons and special offers from third parties. They then sell on these email addresses.

Technically, it is not illegal, but it’s definitely stupid. The correct way to handle offers from third parties is to send them onto your email list on their behalf.

Be wary of free or cheap lists of emails. The seller should be doing the delivery of your marketing for you, so that the recipients will recognise the sender and then you will not be reported for spamming.

## Mistake: Forgetting To Check the List Twice Before Sending

This one mainly applies to people or agencies sending emails on behalf of their clients. Did you know that you can still be held liable for sending spam on behalf of someone else?

If you send an email marketing campaign to an email list that is not permission based, you will be breaking our terms of use - and the law.

Use common sense when sending on behalf of someone else. If they are only a small business but their email list is 20,000 recipients, something is not right.

## Mistake: Not Testing on Multiple Platforms

Each email program could show your HTML email in a different way. It may look you send it to yourself at your Hotmail account, but gmail or yahoo, may view it As will different computers and operating systems, like PCs and Macs.

If you don’t have the budget to set the different testing platforms up yourself, try friends or volunteers at the office to test for you. Send them you test emails and provide you with some feedback.



good when differently.

asking get them to

## Mistake: “Blasting” Instead Of “Connecting”

When people say “blast,” we cringe. It usually means they just want to shoot out a heap of emails, whether people want to hear from them or not. Email marketing is all about getting permission from customers, sending them what they ask for, and listening to their feedback.

## Mistake: Writing Emails As If You Are A Used-Car Salesman

Small businesses often use email marketing as their first real attempt at marketing as it can be affordable. Unfortunately, small businesses don't have much marketing writing experience. Instead of thinking about how a larger company would word their email, they should think about what their customers would find useful in their emails. Avoid pushy slogans, like "Buy it now" or "Limited Time". They can be obnoxious and spam filters will punish you for content that is considered to be "spammy".

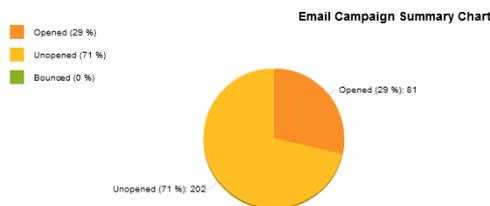
### How Spam Filters Think

"Spammy" content picked up by spam filters will almost always include, but is not limited to:

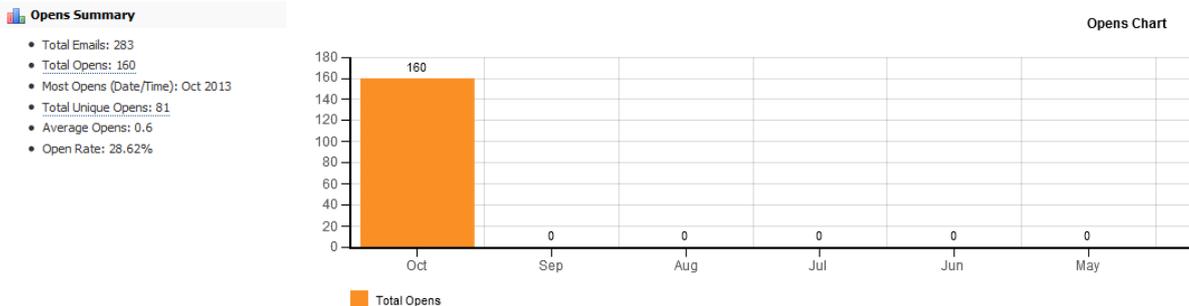
- Using excessive exclamation points!!!
- USING ALL CAPS - IS LIKE SHOUTING IN EMAIL.
- Sloppy HTML coding (usually happens when converting a Microsoft Word file into HTML)
- Using bright red and greens for fonts
- Having a subject line with the word "test" in it
- Sending a HTML email that includes nothing but one big image, with little or no text

## Mistake: Ignoring Email Campaign Reports

Sending out your email campaigns using Smart Email, will give you the added benefit of being able to measure the results after each campaign.



These results will show you the stats for open rates, conversions and click rates of your emails and will also let you know if they are getting caught in spam filters.



Make sure you check these stats after each and every email campaign. Keep an eye out for trends and make changes that may increase open rates, conversions and click rates. What day of the week do you get more open rates? What time of the day? Remember: to always check the stats and make changes as needed.



*Peter B Butler*

Smarter Enterprises

P: 08 9439 2820

E: peter@smarterwebsites.com.au