

# DIGITAL MARKETING GUIDE

FOR MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

A five-part industry guide to the biggest digital marketing opportunities available to medical technology marketers today

Part 4

## EMAIL MARKETING FOR MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



GREY MATTER MARKETING

MARKETING SMARTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS



The healthcare marketing landscape is undergoing a dramatic transition brought on, in part, by a wave of new regulations. Now, more than ever, it is important that medical technology companies and their customers evolve together. Manufacturers can no longer succeed by simply delivering incremental product and cost improvements and deploying a retail/detail sales force. Instead, hospitals and physicians are seeking broader, more strategic relationships with manufacturers.

Nothing lends itself better to this new buying process than digital marketing. Digital marketing initiatives allow manufacturers to engage with prospects earlier in the sales funnel to communicate their value offering while reducing the cost of sales. When done right, digital marketing aids in the discovery of meaningful insights, allowing you to engage customers better and cause changes in their behavior. The more meaningful customers find your solutions, the more profound and favorable these changes will be. As the campaign progresses, digital marketing also provides real-time access to performance metrics so marketers can maximize the efficiency of their investments.

In the spring of 2013, Grey Matter Marketing fielded an online survey of 108 marketing professionals employed by U.S. medical technology companies. Grey Matter Marketing requested that respondents share opinions and comment on current trends and challenges in digital marketing. Using the insights from this survey and experience in the field of digital marketing, Grey Matter Marketing has developed a five-part industry guide to provide medical technology marketers with a roadmap for the biggest digital marketing opportunities available today.

Part four of our five-part series shows medical technology professionals how to leverage email marketing to enhance their digital marketing strategy to reach, interact with and influence customers. Even more importantly, it gives readers the supporting evidence needed to recommend specific email marketing strategies to management and internal legal and regulatory teams.



## Email Marketing Defined

Remember the magic of email? When email first became popular, it revolutionized the way in which we communicate. Messages could be sent to friends, family members and colleagues near and far, in an instant and virtually for free. It is no surprise that email quickly became the ultimate marketing tool. It was low cost, instantaneous, and **100%** measurable – a marketer's dream!



But over the years, the magic has slowly faded. These days, inboxes are overrun with spam, and legitimate emails fight for attention. We set filters or simply ignore many of the marketing emails we receive day in and day out.

Yet, despite the challenges, and when done correctly, email marketing is still a very effective and efficient way to reach your prospects. In short, email marketing is a type of direct digital marketing used to attract and convert new customers, spread the word about promotions, advertise, and build loyalty to your brand.

## Why Email? Why Now?

Email is still one of the most popular activities online. Thanks to near universal adoption of mobile devices, checking email is often the first thing we do when we wake up in the morning and one of the last things we do before bed. Even as new communication platforms arise, **91%** of all U.S. consumers use email daily.<sup>1</sup>

No other communication platform is more widespread or heavily used than email — just try to think of someone who does not have an email address! So, without a doubt, your customers are using and accessing email regularly. Simply put, email should not be ignored.

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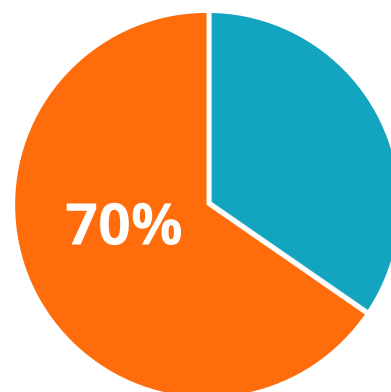
<sup>1</sup> ExactTarget.com. "The 2012 Channel Preference Survey." ExactTarget.com. 2012. Accessed October 7, 2014.



According to a 2012 American consumer survey by Ad Age and Ipsos Observer, patients in all age groups prefer to receive communications about healthcare via email. Next was mail, followed by phone and text messaging.<sup>2</sup>

Some medical technology organizations consider themselves business-to-business companies, though, and do not target patients directly. But this should not affect strategy: companies that target physicians can still greatly benefit from email marketing. Less than **10%** of doctors email industry professionals often, but almost **70%** read email at the office — creating a golden opportunity for industry professionals to open valuable conversations.<sup>3</sup> **One-third** of physicians have already incorporated email as a method to communicate with patients.<sup>4</sup>

**70% of doctors  
read email at the office**



With increased demands and heavier workloads, the time spent working in email is only expected to grow.

Given the history of email and its staggering usage rates, Grey Matter Marketing was not surprised when its Digital Marketing Survey found that medical technology marketers value the use of email in their overall marketing strategy. Nearly **58%** of respondents reported email to be very or extremely important. Only **11.5%** stated that they used no email marketing initiatives.

The most common email tactics reported were email newsletters and press release emails, at **69.2%** and **67.9%** respectively. Other tactics, used by nearly half of all respondents, included product announcements, offers, and discounts, and lead-nurturing emails.

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<sup>2</sup> Carmichael, Matt. "Why Health-Care Marketing Needs an Overhaul." AdAge.com. March 26, 2012. Accessed October 7, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> PharmaLeaders. "Healthcare Professionals Want to Hear from You... But How?" PharmaLeaders.net. June 2013. Accessed October 7, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Greenspun, Harry, Coughlin, Sheryl, and Stanley, Elizabeth. "Physician Adoption of Health Information Technology: Implications for Medical Practice Leaders and Business Partners." Deloitte Center for Health Solutions. 2013.



*Which types of EMAIL marketing initiatives are your company or brand currently engaged in?*

Answer Options	Response
Email newsletters	69.2%
Product announcements, offers, or discounts	48.7%
Lead nurturing emails	47.4%
News / Press release emails	67.9%
None, we are not currently engaging in email marketing	11.5%
Other	3.8%

*How important are EMAIL marketing initiatives to your overall marketing strategy?*

Answer Options	Response
Not at all important	2.9%
Slightly important	7.2%
Moderately important	31.9%
Very important	44.9%
Extremely important	13.0%

## You Can Thank Mobile

*Mobile devices are the primary reason that email has undergone a resurgence in popularity. Nearly 50% of all marketing emails today are opened on mobile devices.<sup>5</sup>*

*People are constantly using their phones to check email. Therefore, marketers must ensure that the mobile email experience is optimized. Seventy percent of consumers will unsubscribe from emails if they look bad on mobile devices. See the "It's a Mobile World" insert for more information on mobile email.*



<sup>5</sup> Jordan, Justine. "Mobile Opens Hit Record High of 47%." Litmus.com. September 10, 2013. Accessed October 15, 2014.



## *What Med Tech Marketers Need To Know About Email Marketing*

The case is clear: your customers are using email, so you should be leveraging it to drive business and compete effectively. In fact, most companies already are. But what do you need to know about this platform before you expand your efforts? What do medical technology marketing professionals need to take into account when implementing a strategic email marketing plan?

### *Lead Nurturing with Email*

When someone offers up their email address, through a landing page, at a trade show, via a referral card, or by some other method, they are often not ready to buy immediately. They are in the process of better educating themselves about your product or service, and they may be comparing your offering to your competitors'.

Email-based lead nurturing uses timed delivery of targeted messages that address the customers' informational needs and main barriers to purchase. A well-formulated lead-nurturing email campaign builds trust, drives preference, and moves your prospects along the buying process. If done right, they convert more frequently and at faster rates.

### *Steps to Successful Lead Nurturing with Email*

#### **Step 1: List Segmentation**

Segmenting your customers will ensure that your emails are relevant and safeguard against unsubscribes. Prospective patients can be segmented based on common demographic variables, such as age, gender, or household income, or by more detailed variables, such as disease state, distance to a medical institution, or psychographic profile. Common ways medical technology companies segment their healthcare professional lists are:

- **By institution type:** hospital, surgery center, university, etc.
- **By position:** physician, director of surgery, hospital CFO, etc.
- **By interest:** clinical outcomes, product features, financial, timeline to purchase, etc.



## Step 2: Subject Lines

One of the most important elements of an email is the subject line. If your subject line is weak, then your email may never be opened or may be filtered as junk mail. The best subject lines are short and descriptive. They provide the reader with a reason to explore your message further.

### Tips for successful subject lines:

- Be information-rich and captivating
- Keep it under 50 characters (including spaces)
- Include your company/brand name
- Avoid words like “guarantee,” “free,” “urgent,” and “order now,” which can be flagged as spam
- Studies show that “help,” “percent off,” and “reminder” can reduce open rates
- Providing localization, such as including a city name, can improve open rates

## Step 3: Valuable Content

Whether you are sending a special offer, announcing a new product or service, inviting recipients to an event, or sending a monthly e-newsletter, your email must provide value to your readers. Compelling content will ensure that your readers open your email, read the content, and even look forward to your next message.

- **Audit current content:** your company probably has data on what types of content resonate best with your audience. It could be data from sales on which types of promotions or discounts work the best. It could also be information from your website analytics or social media profiles.
- **Determine the length of your content:** it is important to get your message across, but be brief. Too much content can overwhelm your readers. Use short text blocks, bulleted lists, and headlines to break up content and make it visually appealing.
- **Balance your value with an offer:** use your content to blend value with an offer or call to action. Tactfully nudge the reader to take some action that drives them to the next step in the decision-making cycle.



## Information Overload

*Doctors and healthcare providers are being forced to adjust to a rapidly changing environment. Millions of newly insured patients have entered the healthcare system, placing a heavier workload on physicians. Demands for improved outcomes and the onboarding of new technologies leave professionals with even less time than before. While email has the opportunity to lessen the burden for physicians, do not expect them to waste valuable time with emails that offer little value or problem solving solutions — and certainly not with emails that create more work!*



*Companies in the best position to thrive in the new healthcare marketing landscape will be the ones who not only provide valuable products but also effectively communicate their value offering early and often to customers, throughout each stage of the customer life cycle.*

*Stay tuned for our next and final chapter on Content Marketing for tips on finding the right mix of messages, across the right channels, in order to maximize their return on marketing investment.*



# IT'S A MOBILE WORLD

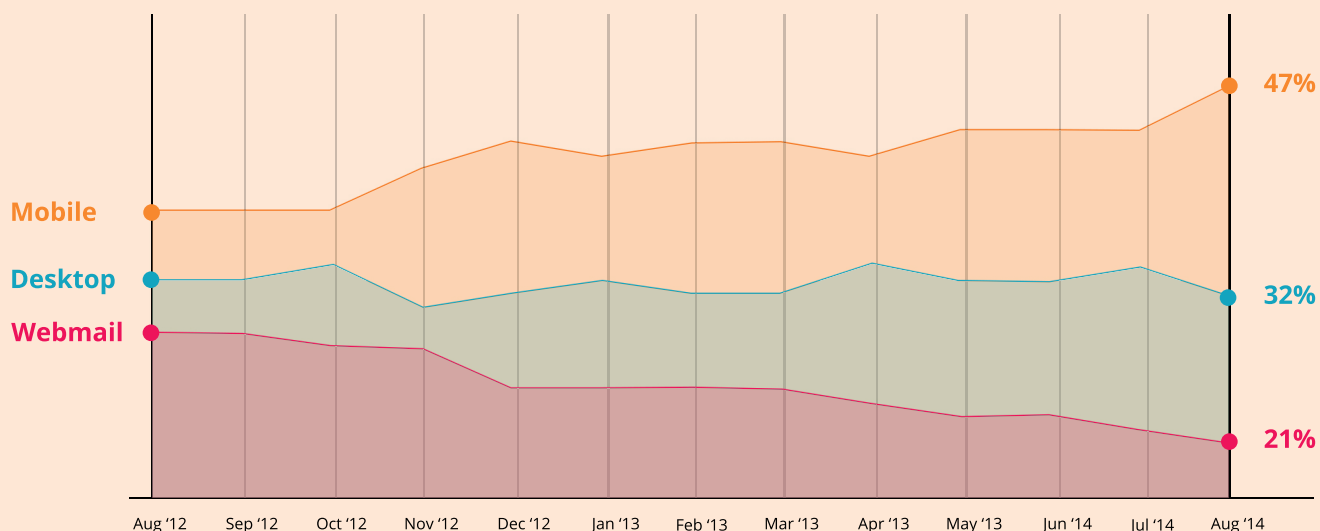
Nearly half of all emails are opened on mobile devices. The mobile experience should be top priority when writing and designing email messages. A simpler, more straightforward approach can produce great results.



Here are some tips for more effective mobile email:

- Take advantage of the message preview to summarize the value of opening the email.
- Keep your emails in a one-column format and enlarge the font size for easy reading on a smaller screen.
- Present your call-to-action above the fold, in a clear and straightforward manner.
- Use both buttons (sized to the iOS guidelines of at least 44 x 44 px) and text links to present your call-to-action.
- Give your readers the option to read your email in HTML or plain text.
- Avoid giant images. They take up precious real-estate and could flag your email as spam.
- Keep clickable elements in the center of the screen so a user's thumbs can easily reach them.

## Change in Overall Opens



Source: [www.litmus.com](http://www.litmus.com)



## Video In Demand

The popularity of video has extended itself to email. A recent study by Forrester Research, revealed that placing video content in email increased click-through rate by up to **300%**.<sup>6</sup> Experian's 2012 Digital Marketer Benchmark and Trend Report found that just including the word "video" in an email subject line can make it more likely that recipients will click through.<sup>7</sup>

Video is a more personal, more entertaining medium than text. It humanizes your brand and engages your audience. And it appeals to a wide variety of customers.

Despite the power of video, there are some technological limitations when including them in email. Most email programs cannot display embedded video content and will remove the code from your campaign. Here are a few solutions:

### Static Image (Click To View) Video:

This is the easiest and most common solution. You can design your email to look as though there is a video in it. When clicked on, it takes the reader to a page with the real video that is hosted on your website, a landing page, or YouTube.

### Video Merge Tags:

Here is another way you can share videos with subscribers: merge tags. YouTube and other popular sites use this tool, which generates an image that looks like a video player and links to content. This takes the place of directly embedding video into email messages. Clicking the image opens a new browser window, where the reader can watch your video.

### Optimized Video GIF (Video In Email):

Animated GIF images are handled the same as static JPG or PNG images by email clients, which means that they can be displayed in the preview pane and the body of the message itself without downloading as an attachment. But because they are animated images, rather than true video, they do not have sound. They can be large files that take a while to load. As embedded images, they might not be supported by all email clients. Finally, they can be costly to produce and send.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniels, David, Tulsiani, Bobby, Doty, Carlton, and Murphy, Emily. "As Seen In The Inbox: Assessing Video Email Opportunities." Forrester Research. May 4, 2009. Accessed October 7, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> "The 2012 Digital Marketer: Benchmark and Trend Report." Experian Marketing Services. April 5, 2012. Accessed October 7, 2014.



## *If Nothing Else*

By all accounts, email is alive and well. It is one of the most popular activities online, and it is the darling of marketers, especially healthcare marketers. Even with new communication channels popping up, email is only expected to grow.

Still, healthcare marketers need to keep up with the changes in the healthcare landscape, especially those that affect physicians and the decision-makers inside of medical institutions. Like most communication channels that involve technology, email should be a two-way dialogue between company and customer. When done right, email facilitates engagement and action.

Sending targeted messages that address customers' informational needs and main barriers to purchase can usher your customers along the buying process. Following best practices for email marketing and incorporating engaging content can ensure that your readers open your email, read the content, and even look forward to your next message.

If you are interested in learning more about digital marketing as it relates to medical technology companies — including the latest trends, ROI, and how to sell-in digital marketing to your management team— we're offering readers a free phone consultation. Email Grey Matter Marketing at [info@greymattermarketing.com](mailto:info@greymattermarketing.com) to set up a call.



## ABOUT GREY MATTER MARKETING

Grey Matter Marketing is a full-service, award-winning marketing agency working exclusively with medical technology companies. We provide the marketing architecture to build strong connections with providers and patients to drive adoption of innovative technology that improves lives. We have a proven track record in developing both traditional and digital plans that create compelling marketing experiences and drive business results. Our strength is finding the important truth in any communication effort, and translating that truth into something your customer understands, and more importantly, feels. Armed with this knowledge and insight, we roll up our sleeves and do what we do best: work hard, think strategically and deliver.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

In the spring of 2013, Grey Matter Marketing fielded an online survey of 108 marketing professionals employed by U.S. medical technology companies. Grey Matter Marketing requested opinions and information on current trends and challenges in digital marketing. The results of that survey combined with the changing digital landscape inspired this guide. Digital Marketing for Medical Technology Companies outlines how to communicate and engage with audiences in an interactive and relevant manner through email. Even more importantly, it gives readers the supporting evidence needed to recommend specific mobile strategies to management and internal legal and regulatory teams.

# Part 4 EMAIL MARKETING FOR MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

If you are interested in learning more about digital marketing as it relates to medical technology companies — including the latest trends, ROI, and how to sell-in digital marketing to your management team — we are offering readers a free phone consultation.

Email us at [info@greymattermarketing.com](mailto:info@greymattermarketing.com)

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