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Peter **Martin** marketing solution

# RESPONSIVE DESIGN EMAIL CAMPAIGNS: A Must-Have for 2014 Marketing

It isn't news that email marketing is a must-have for your budget. The return on investment in this category is through the roof. For every dollar spent, Experian calculates the average ROI is \$44.25. But it isn't enough to just send out emails through your CRM. It is becoming increasingly important for these emails to have a responsive design to reflect the changing times. So what does "responsive design" mean? It means if Joe Buyer opens an email on his iPhone, he should get the same viewing clarity as Sally Consumer opening on her tablet or PC. Your email message needs to be adaptive so it's clean — no matter which device it's opened on.

Across the nation, people are starting to use their devices to not only communicate on social networks, but to check their email and browse the Web. An average of 51 percent of people are opening their emails on a mobile device. In larger city areas, this number jumps dramatically. A recent study conducted on a 90-day campaign for the largest dealership group in Boston found that 73 percent of the emails in their market were read on a mobile device. This includes smartphones and tablets.

The click-through rates on email campaigns that are responsive saw an increase of 63 percent over ones that aren't. The impact of mobile on your email marketing efforts is complex, with a lot of variables to take into consideration. The best way to tackle this is to optimize your campaigns so they look good on multiple platforms. It's simple: if your emails are not responsive, you're losing money.

So what exactly does a mobile-responsive design look like? Let's take a look at a few examples. An example of a non mobile-responsive email would look like one you'd open on your computer, except that the same information is rendered on the (by comparison) tiny screen. In order for the user to view the email, they have to pinch and zoom to read the text. The small buttons are hard to click on and the functionality is just not good. A recent survey asked more than 1,000 consumers across the U.S. what they would do if they received an email like this. Not only did 70 percent say they would delete it immediately, but 18 percent said they would hit the "unsubscribe" button, regardless if they had previously subscribed to the mailing.

Now let's look at a mobile-responsive email design. This version of the email is clear to read without the need to pinch and zoom, because it is formatted for the screen the recipient is using. The buttons are sized perfectly for easy finger clicking. If there's a phone number included, it will be click activated so the receiver doesn't have to do anything extra. It's clean and appealing. Conversion rates for this type of email are impressive, as well, with 40 percent of people clicking. When you consider that 64 percent of decision-makers read their email via a mobile device, the importance of having a mobile responsive design cannot be ignored.

Along the same lines, not only should your email be responsively designed, but your Website needs to be upgraded to match, especially if you are providing links back to your site through the email. There is nothing worse than discovering an offer you really want to learn more about, clicking the link and not being able to seamlessly navigate the site it links to. This makes the offer almost instantly forgotten, as the user will almost immediately do something else that requires less effort.

Today's mobile-centric world requires a bit of change in the way we write emails and convey information, as well. With so many people owning high-powered devices and the expectation of

browsing the Web in a lightning-quick fashion, we need to make sure our emails are quick and to the point.

With non-responsive design, email not designed for mobile devices can seem very text-heavy. People in this day and age don't want to have to sit down and read a big long email to get to the selling point. They want the information up front in an easily scannable way. This type of smartphone behavior is referred to as "snacking." It doesn't tolerate dull moments of unimportant information, but rather relies on instant gratification. Responsive email meets the needs of a fast-paced world. It's short and simple. The user gets exactly what they're looking for as soon as they open the email.

If your CRM provider doesn't give you the ability to develop emails that are responsive, you really should enlist an outside source to do this. I also recommend that you test your emails before they go out in one of two ways. You can sign up for a platform that allows you to load your email in a preview pane and see what it looks like in various browsers and various email providers. A good one that we have found is Litmus. It's simple to use and saves a lot of time. Or, you can set up different email accounts in Yahoo, Gmail, and AOL and test it yourself. Whichever you choose, *always* remember to test your email before you hit the "send" button. Simple mistakes and design flaws can easily be corrected before a mass mailing is sent out.

So, if you're looking to boost engagement rates, increase your ROI and optimize your sales message, then it's time to get on the mobile-marketing train. I guarantee you will be happy with the results.

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