

EMAIL GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A

A/B split

When the list is divided into two segments, each of which is tested for different offers or creative.

Above-the-fold

The part of an e-mail or Web page that is visible without scrolling. It is generally a more desirable placement because of its visibility.

Acquisition versus retention

The presentation and content of an e-mail marketing message or campaign often depends on whether the objective is to acquire new customers or encourage loyalty and repeat purchases from existing customers. Acquisition efforts are more likely to focus on encouraging action, retention efforts on building relationships.

Alert

Is a short e-mail message that notifies subscribers of an event or special price.

ALT tag

HTML tag that provides alternative text when non-textual elements, typically images, cannot be displayed.

Application Service Provider (ASP)

A business-model a company specializes in, hosting software and/or hardware platforms/systems and then makes them available to other companies on a rental and or lease basis. An ASP arrangement allows for e-mail campaign set-up and deployment for "users" without requiring the "user" to invest in the underlying technological infrastructure.

B

Blacklist

Also known as "blocklist". The practice employed by Internet Service Providers of blocking an IP address or series of IP addresses to prevent the receipt of e-mail messages from a server that is suspected of transmitting SPAM.

Blocking/Filter

E-mails that are blocked are not processed through the ISP and are essentially prevented from reaching their addressed destination. This is also referred to as a "filter" to block SPAM.

Bounces

Number of e-mail messages that were unable to get past the recipient's e-mail server because of a delivery error, such as a full mailbox, or an expired or incorrect e-mail address. (see Hard and Soft bounce)

C

Calls to action

Words that offer the opportunity and encourage the prospect to take action. For example, "Click here to Purchase Now" or "Add this product to your wish list."

Campaign

A co-ordinated effort where the objective is to deliver a set of individual e-mail marketing messages to a specific audience containing a strategic or tactical communication. The purpose of a campaign can be to acquire, retain, cross-sell, stimulate usage, provide a customer-service message, build or reinforce a brand, etc.

Cell testing

When the list is divided into a number of discrete cells to allow for a robust test across multiple variables. To determine optimum response, conversion rate is measured for each cell, usually against a control cell to test "lift."

Click-through

When a prospect takes an action and clicks on a link.

Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

Also known in some quarters as the Clickthrough Ratio. CTR measures the rate at which links in an e-mail message are clicked on by recipients. CTRs are typically expressed in terms of the number of clicks as a percentage of the total number of messages delivered, i.e., divide the number of responses by the number of e-mails opened (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Conversion rate

The key metric to evaluate the effectiveness of a conversion effort (accepting a free gift, setting an appointment), reflecting the percentage of people converted into buyers (or subscribers, or whatever action is desired) out of the total population exposed to the conversion effort. For websites, the conversion rate is the number of visitors who took the desired action divided by the total number of visitors in a given time period (typically, per month). For e-mail marketing, the conversion rate is the number of people who take an action divided by the total number of people who received the e-mail. (Multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage.)

Co-registration

A negotiated arrangement in which companies collecting registration information from users (e-mail sign-up forms, shopping checkout process, etc.) include a separate box for users to check if they would also like to be added to a specific third-party opt-in.

CPA (or cost per acquisition)

A payment model in which payment is based solely on qualifying actions such as sales or registrations.

CPM (or cost per thousand)

In e-mail marketing, CPM commonly refers to the cost per 1,000 names on a given rental list. For example, a rental list priced at \$250 CPM would mean that the list owner charges \$.25 per e-mail address.

D**DNS**

Abbreviation for Domain Name Service (or System), a network of servers that translate web site names (such as www.quotientmarketing.com) into the IP (or Internet Protocol) addresses that are used to uniquely identify any device connected to the internet.

Double Opt-In

The method for acquiring and verifying subscriptions to e-mail lists that is widely seen as a best practice according to the principles of permission-based marketing. Under this system, subscribers enter their subscription and then must respond to a confirmation message.

F**E-zines**

Electronic newsletters or electronic versions of magazines. Some e-zines publish only in electronic format but many of the top traditional print publications also have e-zine versions.

F**False Positive**

A legitimate message mistakenly rejected or filtered as SPAM, either by an ISP or a recipient's anti-SPAM

program. The more stringent an anti-SPAM program, the higher the false-positive rate. Pivotal Veracity reports that 20% of legitimate messages from e-mail marketing are blocked.

Format (appearance)

E-mails currently can be delivered in plaintext format or HTML format. Consider the target audience to determine which is the appropriate format for any specific campaign.

Frequency

The intervals at which e-mail marketing efforts are repeated: weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.

G

Goal (objective) of e-mailing

The coherent, defined purpose, which allows targeting recipients appropriately, creating a unified and effective message and measuring the results. Each e-mail, as well as the overall campaign, should have a clear goal.

H

Hard bounce

A hard bounce is the failed delivery of an e-mail due to a permanent reason like a non-existent address.

Headers

The documentation that accompanies the body of an e-mail message. Headers contain information on the e-mail itself and the route its taken across the Internet. Recipients can normally see the "to" (identity of recipient), "from" (identity of sender) and "subject" (information in the subject line) headers in their inbox. You can modify these to influence their decision to open or delete an e-mail.

House list

A list that you built yourself from your current or prospective customers. Use it to market, cross-sell and up-sell and to establish a relationship with customers over time. Your house list is one of your most valuable assets. Typically these are opt-in in nature.

HTML

Hypertext Markup Language - is the standard language for publishing on the World Wide Web. Having gone through several stages of evolution, today's HTML has a wide range of features reflecting the needs of a very diverse and international community wishing to make information available on the Web.

L

Landing page

The page on a website where the visitor arrives (which may or may not be the home page). In terms of an e-mail campaign, one can think of the landing page as the page to which the e-mail directs the prospect via a link. A landing page must satisfy all the requirements pertaining to a home page.

Layout

The arrangement of elements in the communication, designed to optimize use of screen real estate within the prospect's e-mail client. Layout of an e-mail must take into account the fact that only a small portion of the content will appear in the visible window ("above the fold") and further reading requires the prospect to scroll down.

Links

Text links, hyperlinks, graphics or images which, when clicked or when pasted into the browser, direct the prospect to another online location. To be most effective in motivating action, links must be obvious to the visitor or recipient. When images or graphics are used as links, or when hyperlinks are used, always provide a corresponding text link as well.

List host

A service providing users with tools and facilities for distributing high volumes of e-mail and managing a list of e-mail addresses.

Load time

The length of time it takes for a page to open completely in the browser window.

Look and feel

The degree to which design, layout and functionality is appealing to prospects and fits the "image" the business is trying to portray.

M**MAPS RBL**

Mail Abuse Protection System Realtime Blackhole List - this 'balckhole' list is the concept that describes the place where traffic coming from known spammers (IP addresses) disappears. The most common reason for an IP address to get listed in the RBL is when it is used as a relay for sending spam.

Mailing list

A set of e-mail addresses designated for receiving specific e-mail messages.

Messages pushed

This term refers to the total number of messages that a server attempts to deliver during a particular e-mail campaign. Because of the organic nature of e-mail lists and the fact that recipient mail servers can be down, not all of the addresses on a list may be delivered.

Multi-part message

The deployment of both a plaintext and HTML version of an e-mail message. If the recipient's e-mail client can read HTML, the HTML version is served up, if the recipient's e-mail client is unable to read HTML, the plaintext version is opened.

N**Navigation**

The tabs, text and graphic hyperlinks that always let prospects know both where they are and where they can go. Navigation elements must always be available and obvious. Well-designed navigation will lead the prospect in the intended direction.

O**Open Rate**

The percentage of messages delivered in an HTML format (excludes plaintext e-mails) that are confirmed as having been opened by the recipient. This is ascertained by verifying that an invisible image in the message was displayed by the e-mail recipient.

Opt-in/Opt-out

Opt-in is the action a person takes when he or she actively agrees, by e-mail or other means, to receive communications. It requires tactics and mechanisms to encourage and allow people to become recipients. Opt-out is the action a person takes when he or she chooses not to receive communications. It requires tactics and mechanisms by which people can ask to be removed reliably from an e-mail list.

P**Percent bounced back**

The number of e-mails that were returned as undeliverable divided by the total number of e-mails sent, multiplied by 100.

Percent opened

The number of e-mails opened divided by the total number of e-mails sent, multiplied by 100.

Percent removes/opt-outs

The number of requests for opt-out or removal divided by the total number of e-mails sent, multiplied by 100.

Permission

The practice of only sending e-mail messages to those recipients who have agreed (or asked) to receive them. The definition of permission is the subject of considerable debate in the e-mail marketing community.

Plaintext

A message before encryption or after decryption, i.e. in its usual form which anyone or any system can read, as opposed to its encrypted form. The most common and readable form used for e-mail.

Personalization

The practice of writing the e-mail to make the recipient feel that it is more personal and was sent with him or her in mind. This might include using the recipient's name in the salutation or subject line, referring to previous purchases or correspondence, or offering recommendations based on previous buying patterns.

Phishing

Phishing is a type of deception designed to steal your valuable personal data, such as credit card numbers, passwords, account data, or other information. Phishing is typically carried out using e-mail (where the communication appears to come from a trusted website) or an instant message, although phone contact has been used as well.

Privacy

The quality or condition of being free from unsanctioned intrusion. Communications need to reassure the prospect through clear, accessible and enforced assurances so he/she can feel comfortable about providing personal information and transacting business. Please see [CMA Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice](#).

R**Readability**

The degree to which the copy is well-written as well as optimized for reading on the Web. The readability of text is affected by many factors including, but not limited to: the color of the text in relation to the background color, the font, the spacing between words and between lines of text, the length of lines of text, how blocky and dense the paragraphs appear, text justification, the complexity of the grammar and the education level of your audience.

Rental list (or acquisition list)

A third-party list of prospects or a targeted group of recipients who have opted-in to receive information about certain subjects or products. Using opt-in or permission-based rental lists, marketers can send e-mail messages to audiences targeted by interest category, profession, demographic information and more.

Rich media

E-mail messages that deliver a mix of sound, video and/or animation.

S**Scannable text (also called skimmable text)**

Highlighted, bolded, bulleted or otherwise visually-distinguished content that allows the reader to quickly scan block text and distill the overall point and essential features of the communication. More correctly, scannable text is "skimmable" text - text the reader can easily skim through to determine the essence of the communication.

Signature file (sig file)

A tagline or short block of text at the end of an e-mail message that identifies the sender and provides

additional information such as company name and contact information. Use it to convey a benefit and include a call-to-action with a link.

Soft Bounces

A type of bounceback that refers to e-mail messages that cannot be delivered during a particular campaign because the destination mailbox is not accepting mail. This usually happens when the mailbox is full, and is a common occurrence with free web-based e-mail clients.

SPAM/UCE

Unsolicited commercial e-mail. The term normally given to commercial e-mail sent without the recipient's permission. Those accused of sending UCE can run into trouble, ranging from impolite responses through loss of Internet access accounts to destruction of brands, reputations and public scorn.

Subject line

The title of the e-mail communication. This is the first (and hopefully not last) element of the communication recipients will see when they access their e-mail. It has to grab attention and be credible or the e-mail will not get opened.

T

Targeting

Sending the right message to the right recipient at the right time.

Timing

1. Scheduling the e-mail campaign to reach the audience at the most opportune time so it is most likely to be read. Timing might be seasonal (for example, vacation or school), dependent on holidays, etc. or mailings might go out on a standard schedule. Even the day of the week and what time of day the mailing goes out are important considerations: for example, a Friday afternoon mailing may be great for retailing customers, but bad for business-to-business customers. 2. Choosing the most appropriate interval between e-mails in a campaign, to maximize overall effectiveness.

Tracking

Collecting and evaluating the statistics from which one can measure the effectiveness of an e-mail or an e-mail campaign.

U

Unsubscribes

Those recipients that have asked (requested) to be removed from your mailing list.

Unique forwarders

The number of unique individuals who forwarded an e-mail.

V

Viral design

Elements and functions included in a communication that encourage and allow recipients to pass the offer along to others, thereby leveraging the marketing effort "tell a friend," "please forward," etc.

Viral effect

A measurable outcome of the degree to which recipients of a communication refer the offer, products, services or company to others.

Viral forwards

The number of referrals sent.

Viral responses

The number of recipients who received the referral, opened it and clicked on a link.

W**Whitelist**

An e-mail whitelist is a list of contacts that the user deems are acceptable to receive e-mail from and should not be sent to the trash folder. When a spam filter keeps a whitelist, mail from the listed e-mail addresses, domains, and/or IP address will always be allowed. Internet service providers also have whitelists that they use to filter e-mail to be delivered to their customers.