

Email A/B Testing Best Practices

By testing different types of content, times that you send emails, subject lines and names in the “from” line, you can see what resonates best with your audience. Don’t be afraid to be creative and test different tactics.

Many email service providers allow A/B testing – which means you can send slightly different emails to a small sub-section of your mailing list. This enables you to see which version of the email got a better response – and send the more effective version to your entire list.

Guidelines for testing new content:

1. Test one variable at a time

If you want to know the best subject line, the only difference between Test Email A and Test Email B is the subject line. If the copy differs from email A to B, you will not know what made the successful email stand out.

2. Select your test audience(s)

You can see how different audiences react to different content – but remember, only test one variable at a time.

3. Measure success carefully

When deciding which email performed best, it can be tempting to assume it’s the email with the most opens. This is a good metric if your goal is to share a note with your supporters, but if your goal is to raise money, be sure to choose the email that resulted in the most supporters making contributions or in the largest amount raised.

4. Keep testing

Once you get a result, you shouldn’t assume that it will always hold true for your list. People may have responded to the novelty of a new button, but still respond better to a donation link overall.

