

7 Steps to improve your email response rates

E-mail is a highly effective way to prospect for customers. But to turn a prospect into a customer you need your e-mails to get read, not deleted. You've got just 5-10 seconds to convince busy educational professionals that your e-mail contains something of value to them. These seven simple steps will help you craft e-mails that will improve your response rates.

1. **Become someone that's known** – Do prospects know your name or your company's name? People are much more likely to open an e-mail from someone that they know. This is where all your marketing efforts will pay off – with name recognition. Consistent email, direct mail and catalog campaigns; speaking at conferences; meeting with clients; blogging; tweeting; advertising; and your web site all help to establish your name recognition and improve your open rates. If your customers recognize you as a source of information and products that help them solve their needs they'll click on your latest e-mail.
2. **Make the subject line relevant and personal** – The subject line is critical. After the "from" line the subject line is what people base their decisions to open or not open. Make the subject line seem as if you're sending a personal e-mail rather than a mass e-mail. Be clear about the contents of your email message and avoid cute and clever subject lines. A subject line is not a headline of an ad. Don't be gimmicky – just tell people what's in it for them.
3. **Make it quick** – Keep your e-mail to less than 200 words. If your message is too long, or looks text heavy, you've given prospect the "I don't have the time to read this" excuse and they'll hit delete. Respect people's time. We all get hundreds of e-mails. Let your prospect know that you respect their time by keeping it short and to the point.
4. **Make it about them, not you** – Your subject line enticed your prospects to open your message, don't lose them now. Your first sentence must hook your readers and compel them to read on. So don't immediately tell them how great you are. Make your first sentence about their needs, issues and pain points.
5. **Know your audience** – The more targeted the group you're sending to the higher your response rates will be. Targeting enables you to tailor your message and offer more specifically to the intended audience. For example, the concerns and issues of a superintendent will be different from those of a curriculum specialist if you are marketing a curriculum product. Make the message appropriate for the audience.
6. **Make it simple and easy to take action** – Don't bury what you want a prospect to do once they've read your e-mail. Put your calls to action front and center in your e-mails. Keep them short, simple and direct. "Click here for a 30-day free trial", "Subscribe to our newsletter", "Click here to schedule a demo". These are all simple "calls to action" that don't imply that it will take a lot of the person's time.
7. **Start a relationship** – Allow the people receiving your e-mail to get to know you better. Include links to your website, your biography, your LinkedIn page, or your Twitter account. People tend to buy from people they like and know, allow your customers to get to know you.

Verlan Stephens
Managing Partner
303-223-3372 ext. 101
vstephens@agile-ed.com
www.agile-ed.com
www.linkedin.com/pub/verlan-stephens/2/a6/953