

THE POWER OF EMAIL

A Communication Strategy for Horticulturists

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Email marketing is often underrated, especially in industries like horticulture where hands-on work takes precedence over digital strategies. **Yet, email remains one of the most effective communication tools available, boasting a staggering 40% higher engagement rate compared to other channels like social media.** But how do you harness this power effectively? Let's explore why email is crucial, the best platforms to use, and some actionable tips to make your emails stand out.

FUN FACT



72% of consumers prefer receiving promotional content through email. Compared to 17% who prefer social media.

WHY EMAIL IS A GAME-CHANGER

Email marketing isn't just another way to reach your customers; it's a direct line to their inbox, where they're more likely to engage with your content. The reason email is so much more effective than social media at converting customers because emails feel more personal. It can be highly targeted and reach your audience without the distractions present on other platforms.

For horticulturists and our greenlife members, who often have limited time and resources, email offers a low-cost, high-return way to communicate with their customers, share seasonal stock lists, promote specials and new products.

DO YOU GET OUR EMAILS?

We regularly communicate with our members via email. If you feel you could be missing out on any of our emails please contact the office on (02) 9679 1472 or email info@ngina.com.au so we can look into it for you.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLATFORM

Sending bulk emails through Gmail or Outlook might seem convenient, but it can lead to your messages being marked as spam. These platforms are designed for personal use and have strict sending limits, typically around 100-500 emails per day. Exceeding these limits or sending emails without proper authentication can trigger spam filters, causing your emails to end up in junk folders. Additionally, without a proper unsubscribe option, required by email marketing laws, recipients may report your emails as spam. Avoid these issues by using a dedicated email marketing platform.

Selecting the right platform depends on your needs, budget, and how tech-savvy you are. Here's a breakdown of popular options:

Email Hosts (Outlook, Gmail)

- **Best For:** Simple communication, small lists, internal communication.
- **Cost:** Typically included with your existing subscription (Office 365, Google Workspace).
- **When to Use:** If your email list is small (under 100 contacts) and you only need basic sending capabilities. Ideal for internal updates or quick, informal customer communication.

Mailchimp

- **Best For:** Beginners, those needing easy-to-use templates, automation, and basic analytics.
- **Cost:** Free for up to 500 contacts, then starts at approximately \$39/month for 1,500 contacts.
- **When to Use:** When you want to create more visually appealing emails, automate follow-ups, or track open rates. Perfect for seasonal stock lists and promotions.

ActiveCampaign

- **Best For:** More advanced users, those needing robust automation and CRM features.
- **Cost:** Starts at approximately \$29/month for 1000 contacts.
- **When to Use:** If you're looking to segment your audience heavily, create complex workflows, or integrate email with other marketing tools. Ideal for nurseries with a larger customer base and the desire to personalise communications.



WHEN TO UPGRADE

If you're still using Outlook or Gmail for all your customer communication, it might be time to upgrade. Here's when you should consider switching to a dedicated email marketing platform:

You Need Automation: If sending personalised emails or reminders is becoming a hassle, automation tools like Mailchimp or ActiveCampaign can save you time.

Your List is Growing: Once you hit around 100-200 contacts, managing lists manually can be cumbersome. Email marketing platforms offer list management features that simplify this process.

You Want Analytics: Platforms like Mailchimp and ActiveCampaign allow you to track how many people open your emails, click on links, or make a purchase as a result. This data is invaluable for refining your strategy.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE EMAILS

To ensure your emails resonate with your audience and drive action, consider these tips:

Keep it Simple and Visual

Use clean, easy-to-read layouts. Include high-quality images of your seasonal stock and keep the text concise.

Personalise Your Content

Use customer names and tailor content to their preferences. For example, if a customer bought native plants last season, recommend similar species this year.

Include a Strong Call to Action

Whether it's to visit your nursery, purchase online, or download a catalogue, make sure your call to action is clear and easy to follow.

Test and Analyse

Send yourself a test email and read it on different devices. After sending, review metrics like open rates and click-through rates to improve future campaigns.

Email isn't just an add-on to your marketing strategy; it's a crucial tool that, when used correctly, can significantly boost your customer engagement and sales. By choosing the right platform and following best practices, even the most tech-averse horticulturist can create compelling, effective emails that resonate with their audience.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING AND REVIEWING YOUR EMAILS

Before you send out your email campaign, it's crucial to thoroughly test it to ensure it displays correctly and functions as intended:

Preview in the Email Editor

Most email marketing platforms, like Mailchimp or ActiveCampaign, offer a built-in preview tool to check how your email looks on desktop and mobile. Ensure alignment, image loading, and font consistency are correct.

Send Test Emails to Different Devices and Clients

Send a test email to yourself and colleagues using various devices (smartphones, tablets, desktops) and email clients (Gmail, Outlook, Apple Mail). This helps catch any layout issues that might not show up in the editor preview.

Check for Broken Links and Buttons

Ensure all links and buttons are clickable and lead to the correct destinations. Broken links can frustrate recipients and lead to lost engagement.

Review for Spelling, Grammar, and Tone

Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors, and ensure the tone matches your intended message—whether it's professional, friendly, or urgent.

Look Out for Load Times and Image Issues

Monitor how long your email takes to load, especially images. Slow load times can cause recipients to close the email before it fully loads. Compress large images if needed.

Test Your Email's Deliverability

Use tools to check if your email might be marked as spam. Adjust content, subject lines, or sender information to avoid spam filters.



Want more?

Check out this blog I wrote on "Tips for Creating Effective Seasonal Stock List Emails"

Businesses using automated welcome emails see 320% more revenue on average than those that don't!



FUN FACT