

How to Use Email Personalization to Boost Response

One of the sweetest sounds in the English language is a person's own name. That's why personalizing an email to your audience using someone's name can help boost your conversion rates.

But there's a catch: you need to walk a fine line, because over-using someone's name can also feel like an invasion of privacy. A person's name is very personal to them, so if someone uses it a lot, the red flags go up.

Perhaps you've experienced this yourself at some point in the past. When you first meet someone and use your name, that's acceptable. If they use your name again a little later, you start to feel like you're building a good rapport. But if they keep using your name, you get those sleazy salesman vibes and it makes you want to get away from the person.

The same goes for your emails that you send to your subscribers. If you use someone's name once or twice, you build rapport. If you overuse it, the strategy backfires and people feel uncomfortable.

So, with that in mind, let's talk about the right way (the conversion-boosting way) to personalize emails...

Check Your Email Records

The first thing you need to do is check that your subscribers are giving you real first names when they join your list.

Obviously, if someone's real name is "Jane" and they use the name "Mandy" when they fill out your opt-in form, you'll have no way of checking if they're giving you a real name.

Instead, what you're looking for are really obvious cases of someone giving you a false name. For example, they might use a name like "Mickey Mouse" or "Anonymous" or "Testing" or something along those lines. If it's obviously fake, then you'll want to do the following:

- Monitor the contact to see if they're active. Sometimes a person gives a fake name, but they're very much interested in your content. That's perfectly fine (see below for the next step).

If they're not active – and a re-engagement campaign doesn't help – then you may remove the entire contact. The person may have signed up just to get a freemium, or if you have a single opt-in system someone else may have signed their friend up for your list.

- Remove the false information. If the person is engaged and seems to be a genuine contact, then remove the fake first name so that it doesn't show up when you personalize emails.

Note: When you personalize emails, be sure that the content will look okay even if a name isn't included.

For example: "Hi, [Name]." This looks fine even if the name isn't included.

Another example: "[Name], what do you think?" This would look odd without the name, because of the comma and not having a capitalized first word.

Which brings us to the next point...

Personalize Once or Twice

As mentioned above, you don't want to overuse the subscriber's name. That's why using it once or twice in an email is generally a good rule of thumb.

Here are three different ways to use it:

- Put it in the subject line. This is a good way to capture someone's attention when they're skimming their inbox. E.G., "Do you know this secret [Name]?" (Note: proper grammar says there should be a comma there, but I left it out for times when we don't have a first name available.)

- Include it in the salutation. E.G., “Hi, [Name]”
- Embed it elsewhere in the content. E.G., “What do you think [Name]?”

Generally speaking, you should use it once in either the subject line or in the salutation. Then use it once more towards the middle or end of your content. When you embed it in content, put the name next to the most important thing you want the subscriber to read. That’s because someone who’s skimming your email will likely see their name in the middle of it, so they’ll stop and read the content surrounding it.

And finally...

Use the Word “You”

While you need to use the subscriber’s name sparingly (which makes it more effective), one word you can use generously to great effect is the word “you.” Whenever you use this word often, it means your content is focused on the reader – and that’s exactly what you want to do to keep readers interested and engaged.

Do this: check how many times you use words like “I” or “me,” and see if you can rewrite those sentences to be centered more on the reader by using the word “you.”

E.G., “I’ll teach my best dieting tips” becomes “you’ll discover the best dieting tips.”

Conclusion

As you just discovered, a very simple way to boost conversions is to use your subscriber’s name once or twice within each email you send. When you’re not using their name, then be sure you’re using the word “you” often to keep the focus on your reader, their problems, and how you can help them solve those problems.



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