

17 Keys to Creating A Profitable Promotional Calendar

So, you're going to build an email list... now what?

Some marketers just wing it, meaning they decide what they're going to send to their subscribers at the moment they sit down to craft an email. Failing to plan an email ahead of time won't hurt if you do it once in a blue moon. Truth is, however, the most successful email marketers plan their promotional calendar well ahead of time, anywhere from six months to a year in advance. And these are the folks that tend to have the most profitable lists.

So, with that in mind, you're about to discover how to plan out your own profitable promotional calendar. Read on...

1. Determine Your Goals

The first thing you need to do is decide on the primary and secondary goals for your mailing list. You'll define these goal in this order:

1. Define the overall goals for your mailing list as a whole. Note: you'll have different goals for each segment of your list. E.G., the goal of your prospect list is to get people to buy their first offer, while the goal of a customer list is to get repeat buys.
2. Define the goal for EACH sequence you intend to create.
3. Define the specific goal for EACH email you intend to create.

That way, you'll know that each email supports the goal of each sequence, and each sequence you create supports the overall goal for your mailing list.

For example, your overall mailing list goal might be to make \$X amount of money by promoting your offers as well as your partners' offers.

To support this goal, you plan on sending an email sequence for each offer you want to promote.

You then plan how each individual email will help you sell more of a particular offer.

So, start by writing down your goals. Then check out this next idea...

2. 7 Types of Email Sequences That Work

There are plenty of different sequences you can use to grow your relationship with your list and promote offers. Check out these popular types of sequences:

Onboarding. Here's where you send an initial sequence of emails to new customers to remind them of the benefits of the product they purchase, to show them how to get the most out of it, and to encourage them to start using it.

Indoctrination. This is a welcome series that you send to new subscribers to let them know what your business is about and how you can help them.

Ascension. This is the series you send immediately after a purchase to persuade a buyer to purchase more offers from you.

Special promos/sales sequences. This includes sequences for things like launch week specials, flash sales, holiday sales and similar events.

Fear-Logic-Gain. This is a three-part sales sequence, where each email appeals to a different emotion or rationale.

Objection handling. Here's where you raise and handle common objections (one objection per email).

Social proof sequence. This series is all about sharing case studies, testimonials and other proof.

Next...

3. 10 Questions to Ask Before Creating a Promotional Calendar

You've defined your goals and you know the different types of sequences that can help you achieve your goals. Now it's time to plan out your promotional calendar for at least the next six months.

Answer these questions:

Which of your own products will you promote?

How many emails will you send for each offer? (Be specific.)

Which of your partners' products will you promote?

How many emails will you send for each partner offer?

When will you promote each offer listed above? (E.G., a new launch needs to be promoted during that specific week, whereas an existing offer can fit anywhere into your calendar.)

What sort of sales/promos will you promote? Be specific.

Will you have any sequences tied to specific dates, such as a holiday sale? Of the offers that aren't tied to any specific date, is there a logical place they should fit into your calendar? For example, if you're promoting a fat-loss guide that's called "Get Ready for Bikini Season," then it makes sense to promote it a couple months before summer. Or if you're promoting something like a stop smoking guide, then it makes sense to make a big promotional push during the New Year when people are making resolutions.

Which of the above can go into your autoresponder, and which will need to be live broadcasts?

How will your indoctrination and onboarding sequences fit into the above?

Once you answer these questions, then you'll be able to plan a calendar that's designed to generate as many sales as possible.

Now read on to get more tips for refining your calendar...

4. Balance Autoresponder Messages With Live Broadcasts

Be aware of what sort of autoresponder messages your list is receiving when you send them live broadcasts. You need to balance these so that your audience doesn't become inundated with messages.

For example, you might segment your list so that those who are receiving onboarding messages every couple days aren't also hit with your live broadcasts. (Note: this is only temporary for a couple weeks – once someone is done with the onboarding sequence, then they can receive all your other emails too.)

5. Create Consistency/Continuity

When you're creating your emails and sequences, be sure everything about them matches the rest of your business. Your lead pages, lead magnets, blog posts, social media posts, products and everything else should all have a consistent message and overall feel (e.g., same writing voice).

TIP: If you're outsourcing some of this content, then tweak it as a needed to create a consistent message and voice. Whenever possible, hire the same writer to create all your content to help maintain consistency.

Here's the next set of ideas...

6. 8 Questions to Ask Yourself When Creating an Email Sequence

Before you plan a sequence, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the goal of this sequence?
- How many emails will be in the sequence?
- What is the outline for each email?

- How long will each email be?
- How will each email help my subscribers?
- What will the title (subject line) of each email be?
- What will the call to action look like?
- Will I offer any special incentives to get people to take action now?

Be sure you have good answers to these questions, as doing so will keep your sequence tight, focused and effective.

7. 15 Different Types of Email Formats

Your sequences can consist of a variety of content. Here are different types of emails that might show up in a sequence:

- Direct response (hard selling) emails.
- Product reviews.
- Product comparisons.
- Tips.
- How-to/tutorial.
- Lists (gear lists, resource lists, etc.).
- FAQ.
- Coaching Q&A.
- Announcements.
- "Last chance" emails.
- Anticipation emails (used at the beginning of a launch sequence).
- Cheat sheets.
- Checklists.
- Templates.
- Worksheets.

Next...

8. Pick the Right Sequence Length

Generally, your sequences should be around three to seven emails long for each product you promote. Ask yourself these questions to pick the right length:

What is the price of the offer? Higher prices = longer sequences.

Is this a new product? Use longer sequences if the audience is unfamiliar with the product.

Are the subscribers new to your list? Use longer sequences if the audience is new, shorter sequences for long-time subscribers or customers.

For example, if you're promoting a \$20 offer to your customer list, you can send three emails. On the other hand, if you're selling a \$197 offer to new subscribers, then you may send out a sequence of five to seven emails.

9. Promote Right Away

Some people think they should "nurture" their list before promoting anything. Truth is, you should promote offers right in the first email. That's because a good product recommendation helps subscribers. Why would you keep a solution from your subscribers that would really help them? Recommending solutions right away sets the right expectations, and grows your relationship when your audience sees that you're interested in helping them.

10. Craft Evergreen Content

When you're crafting sequences that you intend to upload to your autoresponder, be sure to craft evergreen content. This is content that won't get outdated – it will be just as good six months from now as it is today. To that end, be sure to share time-tested strategies and products in your evergreen sequences.

11. Consider Retention Strategies

As you develop your sequences, you'll want to keep an eye towards retaining your subscribers so that they continue opening and reading your emails. Here are four ways to do it:

- Focus on helping your subscribers and customers FIRST (e.g., no recommending subpar solutions just to line your own pockets).
- Send high-quality content that impresses readers.
- Offer occasional surprise freemiums and perks like exclusive discounts.
- Encourage interaction on another platform (like your blog or even a subscribers-only Facebook group) so that subscribers feel special and like they're part of a community.

Next...

12. Create Regular Features

You want to train your subscribers to open your emails. One way to do that is to create a regular feature that's sure to be popular with them. (You may need to do some research and experimentation to find out what your audience responds to the best.)

For example, you might have a weekly Q&A session, where subscribers send niche questions to you all throughout the week, and you answer them on Fridays.

Another idea: secure exclusive discounts on popular products in your niche, and create a "featured product" promo each week or every couple weeks, where you offer deep discounts to your subscribers only.

13. Send Test Messages

Before you publish an email, always send test messages to yourself and look at them on a variety of devices. Check for formatting errors, ensure that personalization or other coding works, be sure the link is correct, and be sure it's proofed and polished.

14. Follow Up with Subscribers

As you plan your calendar with respect to live broadcasts, you'll want to build in a "follow up" cushion into your sequences. This is a day where you send follow up emails specifically to people who didn't open your last email or those who didn't click on the link. Generally, you'll send these emails about 48 hours after you sent the last email.

15. Build Your Production Calendar

Your promotional calendar lists the days you intend to publish certain emails. As you build this calendar, you'll also want to build your production calendar. This is the calendar that lists the days you need to write or outsource emails and which days you'll proof them so that they go out on time.

NOTE: It's a good idea to create emails about two weeks in advance. That way, if you or your freelancer falls ill or has an emergency, you've still got content in place for two weeks to keep your publishing calendar on track.

16. Check Your Stats

One big key to your success is to ensure that people are reading through your entire email sequences. To figure this out, you'll need to keep an eye on your email stats. If people aren't reading the entire sequence, then where are they dropping out? Can you figure out why they drop out at that point? And how can you improve your sequence so that subscribers keep reading?

17. Publish on a Regular Schedule

Your emails should go out on a regular schedule, according to the expectations you've set for your readers. Most marketers in most niches find that publishing once or twice per week works well (e.g., Tuesdays, or Tuesdays and Thursdays for twice-per-week publishing).

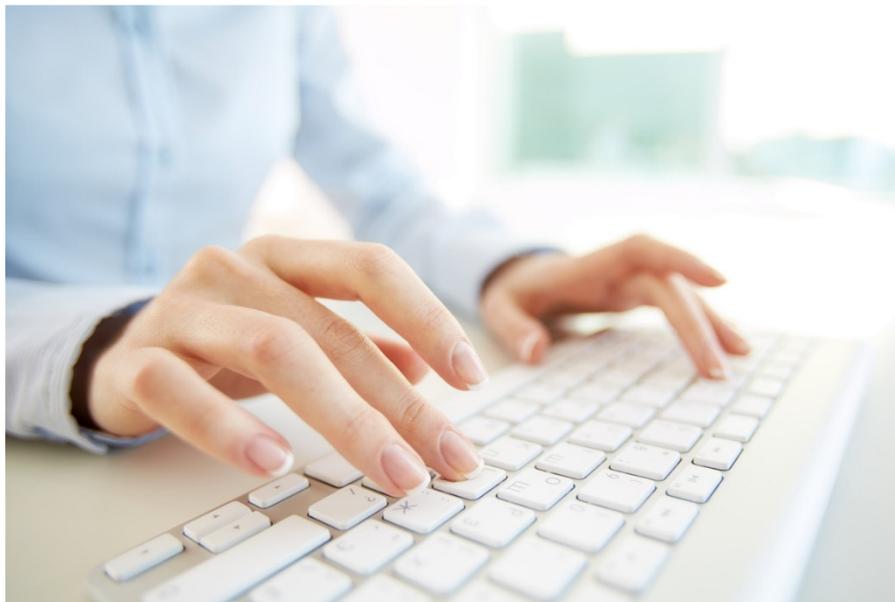
However, when you have special sequences (like a launch), then your sequences will be spaced differently, as generally you'll send out a new email every one to three days. Same goes for the welcome series and

onboarding sequence, as it's important to send emails close together to help build name recognition and trust.

As you develop your calendar, be sure to keep these tips in mind so that subscribers aren't receiving too many emails in one week.

Conclusion

As the saying goes, "failing to plan is like planning to fail." That's why you'll want to create your promotional calendar based on all the tips you just learned. So, set some time aside in the next day or two and get it done!



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