



Email Newsletter Basics

Tips for
Small Business
Marketing Success



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Introduction

This guide covers the essentials of email newsletters for small business marketing: how to set goals, plan content, design messages, and measure results.

The goal is to clarify what matters most so you can evaluate your current efforts and make informed decisions about your next steps.





TL;DR

The Goal

Every email needs a clear goal. Choose one specific action you want the reader to take.

Build Curiosity

Keep subject lines under 40 characters and pre-headers between 30–55 characters.

Design for Accessibility & Mobile

Use 18px font for your main text and never center-align large blocks of copy. Don't turn all of your text into an image. Create content that works on desktop and mobile devices.

Performance

Don't rely on one metric to determine how successful your email was. Look at the big picture.

The Rules

Work with a compliance expert to ensure you are following current laws.

No matter the size of your business, follow GDPR

Make sure your emails and forms comply with laws (GDPR, CAN-SPAM). Use an email platform that supports one-click unsubscribe.

Every email footer should include:

- Your business name and address
- Optional in some jurisdictions (check your local laws): company registration or VAT number
- A link to your Privacy Policy
- An unsubscribe link
- A statement about the purpose of the message and why the user is receiving it. Example: "You are receiving this message because you signed up to receive newsletters from Company Name."

Every form must include:

- A marketing consent checkbox

We are not legal experts. While we can't help you write your policies, we can help ensure your website, forms, and emails are compliant.



Marketing strategy

Know your audience

Know who you're emailing. Group contacts by similar habits or engagement. Segmentation is key to strong marketing.

Have a clear goal

Every newsletter should have one clear goal. Decide the action you want readers to take: visit a page, sign up, download, or get in touch.

Once you have a goal, plan content that supports it.

Make a plan

Plan content ahead to save time and stay consistent. Leave room to adjust for timely updates or changes.

When and how often

There's no perfect send time. Consistency matters most. Start with once a month or every other week, then monitor results to adjust.

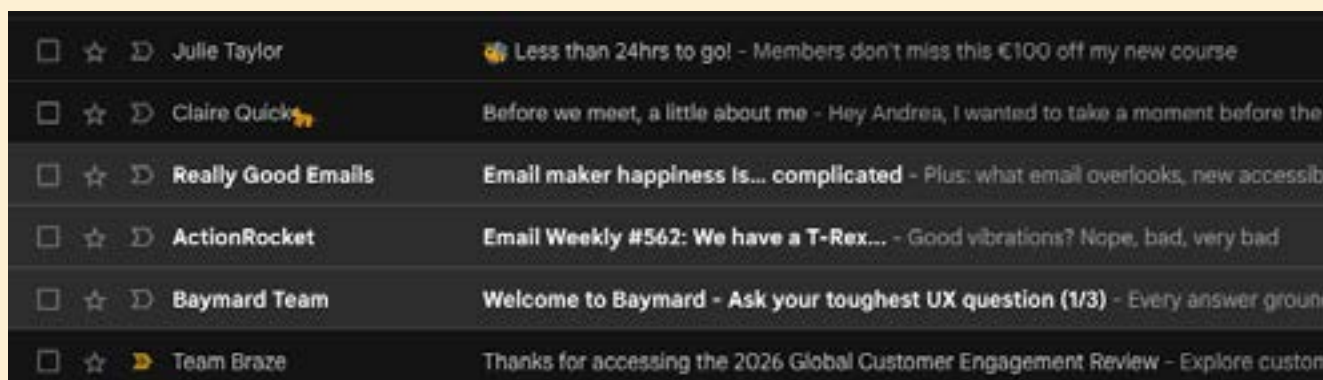
Your sender name

Using a generic Gmail address for business can unintentionally trigger red flags, as it's a common tactic used by scammers. Similarly, using a vague Sender Name, like just your first name or "Info," often isn't enough for a customer to remember who you are

Try this instead:

- Use a branded address like **anna@theteacompany.nl** or **hello@theteacompany.nl**.
- Use "Anna from The Tea Company" or simply "The Tea Company."

Small changes build trust and show your messages are legitimate.



Email copy

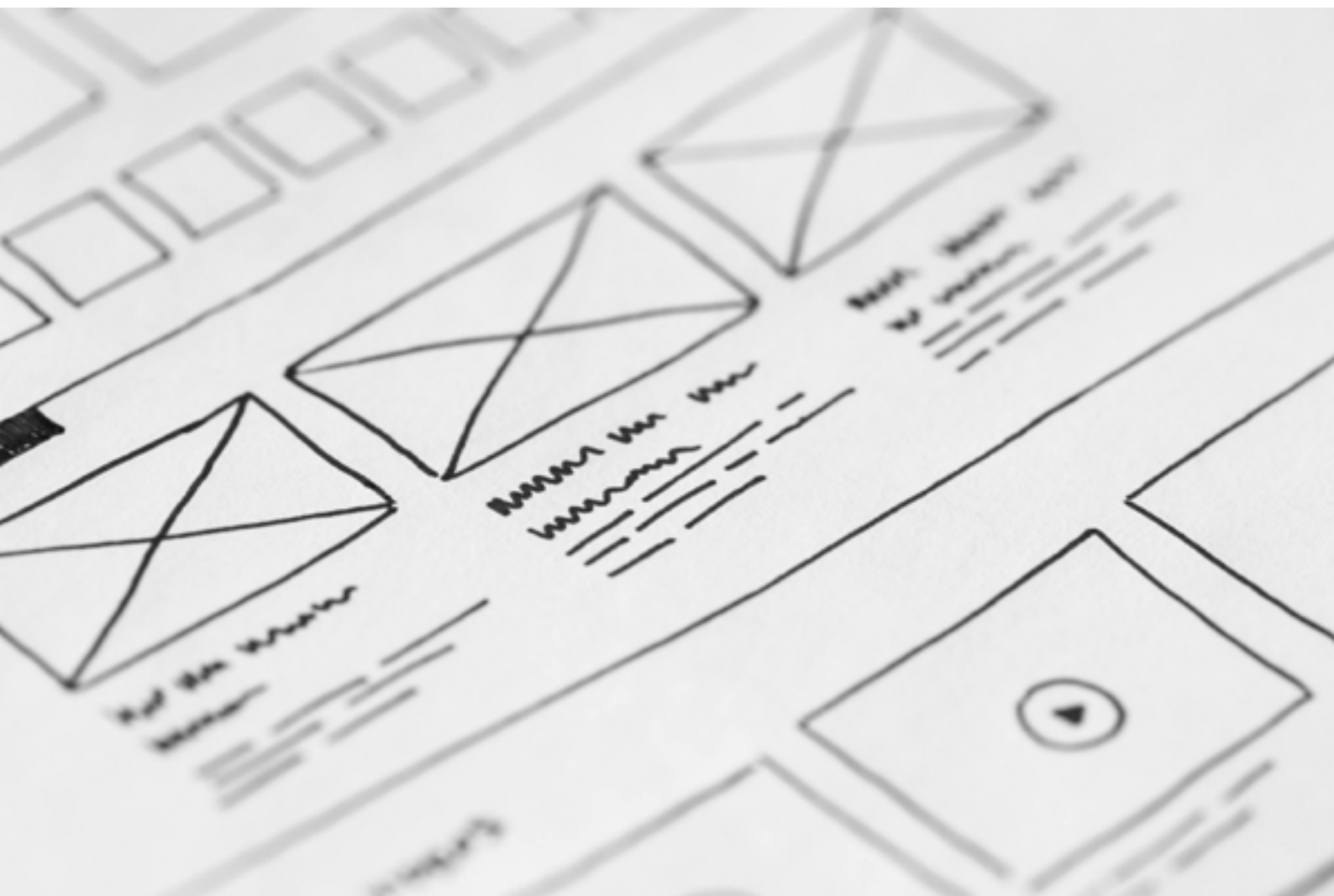
Don't give everything away

Give enough information to spark curiosity or urgency, so readers want to click for more.

Make calls to action descriptive enough to inform your readers about what they are doing next:

- Download Our Guide
- Register Today
- Continue Reading

Subject lines and pre-headers should hint at your message. Keep subject lines under 40 characters; pre-headers, 30–55 characters.



Email design

Keep the design simple

When people sign up for newsletters, the expectation is that the message will have a similar look and feel to a periodical. Newsletters provide insights and information, much like a traditional newspaper would.

Use one main image for your lead story. Add images for other stories only if they add value and you have rights to use them.

Design with accessibility in mind; design for everyone. According to the World Health Organization, about 16% of the global population has a disability.

Use font size hierarchy to make text easy to scan. Never center-align large blocks of text. For example:

- H1 (heading 1): 48px
- H2 (heading 2): 36px
- H3 (heading 3): 24px
- Paragraph: 18px

Accent elements with brand colors, but always check color contrast for readability. Avoid low-contrast combinations (like yellow on white).

If you use text as an image, limit it to a word or two and add alt text. Images with large areas of text are hard to read and not accessible.

Test and monitor

Always test your message

Test every message for errors and broken links. Use your email tool's preview features to check how it appears on different devices.

Monitoring your newsletter

Review newsletter performance regularly to see what's working. Don't rely on open rate alone; it's actually not very reliable because of things like bot clicks.

Here are the metrics to focus on:

Deliverability Rate

The percentage of emails that do not bounce. Keep in mind, an email delivered to a spam folder is still delivered successfully.

If you're above 98%, you're doing great.



Open Rate

The percentage of recipients who opened your email (though this can be affected by things like AI 'auto-opens' and images not being downloaded).

Aim for 20-40%, but use it to spot trends, not as an absolute measure of success.

Click-Through Rate (CTR)

The percentage of people who clicked a link in your email. This number can also sometimes be artificially inflated by bot clicks.

3-5% is a good sign of engagement.

Post-click Conversion Rate

The percentage of people who clicked on a message and then completed a desired action (like making a purchase or signing up).

This is best measured against your own historical data, as benchmarks can vary widely by industry and campaign.





Unsubscribe Rate

The rate at which people opt out of your emails. Unsubscribes aren't bad, but too many may indicate customers aren't happy with your content.

Under 0.2% is healthy.

Spam Complaint Rate

The rate at which recipients mark your email as spam, which damages your sender reputation.

Aim for under 0.1%.

Bounce Rate

Bounce Rate is the percentage of emails that couldn't be delivered. This is a combination of two types of bounces: hard and soft. Soft bounces are relatively harmless to your reputation and are usually temporary errors, such as a full mailbox. Hard bounces can damage your reputation and are caused by permanent failures, like a mailbox being closed.

Target under 0.5% for hard bounces.

Using AI for email

AI can be a huge asset to your marketing efforts. Aside from utilizing AI to help write subject lines and draft copy, it can help analyze your data and discover trends; just be careful not to upload any personal data to AI agents.

AI gives averages. For an email strategy that works best for your audience, speak with a human.

Some systems even have built-in AI that creates automated message journeys, makes product recommendations to end users, and optimizes send times.

Remember: When using AI to create marketing strategies, it's great at giving averages. The advice you get is "one-size-fits-most." When you want one-size-fits-me, connect with a human who knows email.

Conclusion

Email marketing works, but only when it's done right. If you're ready to build a strategy that actually connects with your audience and drives results, let's talk.

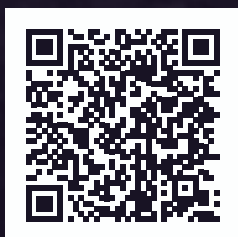
Visit www.littlenudgemarketing.nl/our-services to see how we can help with your email marketing needs.

Services to fit your needs

Hourly Rate

Our regular hourly rate is **€75 + 21% VAT**, where applicable

One-hour Marketing Consultation



We'll do some discovery work to identify your next best steps on one goal. Scan the QR code or [schedule now](#).

€125 + 21% VAT

Lead Nurture Tune-up

For those who have an active email system in place and need help optimizing or fixing one nurture flow (up to 5 emails).

€900 + 21% VAT

Lead Nurture Starter

End-to-end setup of a new email system and one new lead-nurture automation (up to 5 emails).

€2,250 + 21% VAT

Monthly Retainers

We offer several monthly retainer packages. Schedule a free, [30-minute consultation](#) to learn more.



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