

# Creating Your Email Marketing Plan

A Quick Checklist

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Companies spend a great deal of time planning their offline activities, but often neglect the email-marketing calendar. Many prefer that email marketing be more spontaneous, and in fact, do themselves an injustice. By dedicating time to construct your email-marketing calendar now, your future email campaigns will benefit from utilizing the correct “timing” to ensure emails are more relevant to consumers. In this whitepaper, we will define a list of email marketing activities to identify so that you are better equipped to customize your calendar.

When preparing your email-marketing calendar, there are a few things to consider:

- Internal & External Events
- Industry Events
- Seasonality
- Prospect & Customer Activities

All of these factors are essential to building your calendar in order to ensure that you reduce churn, identify opportunities when to send, and increase relevance.

## Internal Events

An important consideration is your internal calendar of planned changes. Do you have any new product/service releases or store openings scheduled for the upcoming year? What does your budgeting cycle resemble for the planned fiscal year? While a new logo may not be of importance to a customer, the availability of a new feature within your website, such as site-to-store purchase, may be. If you already are aware of what’s planned for your fiscal year, be certain to include it in the email-marketing calendar as well as any appropriate segments. If you are opening a store in California, it probably isn’t relevant content to your East Coast customers. By planning your email marketing touches for your internal events ahead of time, you create a much more fluid multi-channel campaign.

## External Events

What is going on in your direct community or the community at-large? Be aware of major sporting events, elections, or even major TV events (such as the Oscar’s). All can assist you in creating email themes for your customers. Be cautious though, although a die-hard sports fanatic may appreciate a World Series themed email campaign, a mother of three with no time to watch sports may not. Remember your audience and segment accordingly.

## Industry Events

Industry events are a necessary B2B email marketer’s tool. Are there industry tradeshows or reports that are scheduled for the year? If so, take advantage of having a fluid marketing campaign now. If you can identify the activity, you can create the content and create interest using your email marketing. Often, companies wait until the last minute to add the email channel, hence, the campaigns may not be as seamless as desired.

## Seasonality

Grab a calendar and check out major, and a few minor, holidays and how they integrate into your email marketing plan. What are the local schools schedules? If you can determine those ahead of time, you can really have fun creating seasonal promotions. It’s also essential in determining when you are going to email, at what frequency and what the overall expected return will be. If you want to do a countdown to Christmas, or 12 days of savings, know when to start that campaign prior to the



holidays hitting you quickly. Also identify what the seasons and holidays signal to your audience and the impact that they have on your buying cycles. For a B2C email marketer, the holidays may mean an increase in online activity and responsiveness to email marketing, but to the B2B email marketer, it may indicate a lull in activity.

## Prospect/Customer Activities

Identifying your prospects and customers preferred buying seasons and non-purchase times is key in planning your email marketing. You can also gather data and determine what automated messages you would like to send throughout the year. By identifying those ahead of time, you can create the campaigns and automate the messages. A good example is a drugstore company that sells hair products. They know that the average consumer has to re-purchase shampoo and conditioner every 32 days. That company can create an auto-campaign offering the customer a discount while reminding them that it is time to re-order. Scheduling it ahead of time, allows you to engage in your automated messages and affect how they perform. Take a look at the customer and prospect data that you are collecting and determine the information that you will use to create campaigns throughout the year. Other data can include:

- Customer/Prospect Behavior
- Demographics
- Preferences
- Personas

## Building Your Email Marketing Plan

Once you've collected all the appropriate data and have determined your schedule, it's time to create a plan. Your plan may include:

- Date
- Department
- Campaign (subject line, call-to-action)
- Format (newsletter, promotional)
- List & List Size
- Segments (buyers vs. non-buyers, transactional, etc.)
- Tracking Or Source Code

Don't know where to get started? [Download our Email Marketing Plan Template today!](#)

Regardless of what events and activities you decide to base your email-marketing calendar on, always remember the importance of relevance. Email really is a profit center and the more relevant experiences you can provide by having a well-organized plan will only increase your profit margin.

## About Bronto Software

Bronto Software is an industry-leading email marketing service provider. Since its' founding in 2002, Bronto has simplified email marketing for businesses and organizations by offering a powerful, easy-to-use, email marketing solution together with industry-leading client services. The exceptional deliverability, detailed analytics and robust feature set of the Bronto application enables marketers in retail and other industries to easily and effectively implement email marketing that results in a positive ROI and business growth.

