

be a hotel email marketing pro

The simple fact is, email marketing works. It is also the easiest way to connect with loyal guests ongoing.

Enclosed is a handy pre-send check list and some tried and tested key email marketing tips to help you become an email superstar and gain stronger results.

more engaged subscribers = more potential guests



quick pre-send check list

Use this handy pre-send check list as a guide to simplify and bullet proof every new email campaign you create and send out.

NEW CAMPAIGN

- SUBJECT LINE** - check for typos, make it intriguing, short and to the point
- FROM NAME & EMAIL ADDRESS** - ensure company related
- TEMPLATE** - select your custom responsive template

CONTENT

- LAYOUT SECTIONS** - add the required layout sections to add in your content, delete unused ones
- BODY COPY** - add personalisation (first name), check for typos, readability
- HEADINGS** - are they linked correctly?
- CALL TO ACTION BUTTONS** - are they linked correctly?
- IMAGES** - do you have permission to use the images? are they linked correctly? do they have alt text?
- GUEST REVIEW** - have you added the latest guest review?

DEFINE RECIPIENTS

- LISTS** - segment and then select the lists you wish to send your email to
- PMS DATABASE** - ensure the latest past guest database from your PMS has been uploaded
- OTA EMAIL ADDRESSES** - ensure emails from OTA bookings are collected upon check-in and imported

TESTING

- PREVIEW** - ensure you preview the email, via the online preview link
- LINKS** - test all links
- TEST EMAIL** - send a test email to yourself and someone else - a set of fresh eyes, helps pick up anything you have accidentally missed, don't forward the email as the styling breaks
- TWEAK & RE-TEST** - until approved

SCHEDULE / SEND

- SCHEDULE** - your campaign to send immediately or at a time in the future, avoid holidays when people are away and Mondays and Fridays

POST-SEND

- ANALYTICS & INSIGHTS** - see how your campaign performed and compare results against previous campaigns



the pro email secrets...

subject lines

Keep it short, approx 6 to 10 words, approx 55 characters. Make it intriguing and to the point (not a long sentence), use power words (awesome, exclusive, special offer, etc), avoid spam words (free, buy, sale, etc), personalise (insert subscriber's name or you, your, we), avoid using all upper-case (considered shouting), excessive punctuation marks (!!!!!), try using emoji's (be conservative, not excessive). We found this [cool headline analyser](#), but don't take it as gospel, you know your guests best.

a/b testing

Pebble can help with A/B split testing subject lines: add personalisation ('First Name' or 'Hi Friend' as the fallback), add Re: (can help move your email to the new 'focussed' folder in some online browsers) or try two different subject lines. We set a number / percentage of A & B to be sent out and the one with the most engagement wins and the remaining subscribers will be sent the winning subject line. Contact us for more information on A/B testing.

"from" email address

Your subscribers want to know you are not SPAM and you are human. Put a legit 'from' name and 'from' email address, either your hotel/business name and email or your name / job position and email. Make sure your domain name is authenticated from your 3rd party sender.

responsive template

Select the appropriate template, add in your required sections (1 column, 2 column, with image, without, etc) and then begin adding in your content and images, etc. Delete any sections you do not wish to use. If there are any elements of the email that you are unable to update, we will have to update them for you, as they are most likely embedded template sections. Generally the header and footer sections. Most common updates include - updating social media links or contact details / phone number, etc. Email us and we will make these updates for you.

content

Always make sure you copy and paste clean text from a text editing program with plain text e.g. NotePad (PC) or TextEdit (Mac), avoid word or email or another website as this breaks the styling. Don't be text heavy, think mobile first, balance image size and text. Check spelling, grammar, all text links work (correctly linked), headings are linked, content is compelling / makes sense / easily read, short and to the point as you want your subscribers to click through to your website for more information. Intro: add personalisation ('Dear First Name' or 'Dear Guest' as the fall-back). Ensure all fonts and colours are correct style and on brand.

images

Sized and optimised correctly, sourced correctly, not taken from Google image search or other websites unless you have their approval to do so (especially for events). Recommended: use your own photography or imagery or purchase stock photography (to avoid any copyright infringements, fines do happen), we can help you with this.

links

Make sure all links - link back to your website, not a third party site. Linking back directly to your website is great for SEO, Google likes this, it sees your website is popular and ranks it more favourably. Simply create a specific landing page (special, what's on, news) page to link back to, then you can link out to any third party sites from there (i.e. events, for more details, etc). Always use the full link when adding hyper links in emails, include (https://) - eg. <https://www.pebbledesign.com.au/>

timings

You can choose to send your email straight away (instantly) or schedule it via a date and time in the future. Notify any departments in your business that may be directly affected by the email blast, ie. reception or sales for increased incoming calls, enquiries, etc. Good times to send emails are 11am Tuesday & Thursday, however every email campaign is different. You may have an unbeatable last minute food & beverage offer for the weekend that would be perfect to email on a Friday morning. Test different times and see what is achieving the best results. Avoid Monday morning, school holidays and public holidays.



segment lists

Your subscribers aren't all alike. It is super important to segment and create lists like leisure guests, corporate, wedding, restaurant or by location. You can even create lists of your most loyal customers and reward and take care of them even more. Or create OTA lists of people that originally booked via these channels and put them in an automated email funnel to convert them to book direct with you. This can increase open rates, click rates and conversion rates dramatically. Remove booking.com and other OTA emails.

post-send stats

Analytics & statistics are very important to see how well your email went and what you can improve on next time. Under the 'campaign' menu, click on each sent campaign to view results. The top 'insights' menu also provides juicy in-depth statistics and compares against previous campaigns. This tool is gold when it comes to making sure you are improving your email marketing skills and driving more traffic to your website, but most importantly connecting as best you can with your guests and giving them what they want. Keep an eye on the open rate, click rate and the click to open rate. You can drill down further and see which lists are engaging the most. Don't forget to also check your Google Analytics account for a spike in website visitors which correlate with your email blasts.

Benchmark - Monthly Newsletter - average: open rate: 36% / click rate: 15%.

Benchmark - One Off Promotion - average: open rate: 49% / click rate: 26%.

consistency

Google recognises websites that are popular and visited regularly so it's important for SEO to actively drive more visitors to your website. People love to stay informed, especially from their favourite hotel, we all love to be reminded of the good things in life. It's not just our job but our obligation to ensure we make our guests happy and connect with them often so that they feel as though they belong. The trick is to be consistent and engaging, so your subscribers don't become stale or bored, but not too overwhelming and in your face (sending an email everyday), as this may become annoying and your subscribers may jump ship (higher unsubscribe rate). We recommend sending a monthly newsletter plus a monthly once off promotion.

what to include

Monthly Newsletter: a new blog post, any upcoming events, latest guest review, latest selection of photos, a unique special or social media competition and book direct / best rate guaranteed banner.

Monthly Promotion: choose between a unique special or a social media competition. 72hr/48hr/24hr exclusive offers can promote urgency (countdown timer), animated GIF promo banners and CTA buttons are great for grabbing attention, which all link to a specific special offer landing page. Social media competitions can range from Facebook like or comment competitions or Instagram best photo competitions (including your hotel hashtag). We find once off promotions tend to perform and convert better, as there is one key focus, linking back to one location, with no other distractions. Give us a call to discuss.

special offers

Special offers should always be new and exciting - not the same one re-used over and over, subscribers get bored very quickly and you will have less engagement / less click rates. Email specials should be short and sweet to act as teasers and create interest without giving the whole offer away. Intrigue is key. Giving away the special in the email is bad for click rates and for driving traffic to your website (in turn bad for SEO). Tailor seasonal specials, Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring, use compelling content directly related to that season. Always make your offer awesome, a compelling discount and a list of great incentives to help sell it (at least 3) - eg. unlimited free wifi, free bottle of wine, complimentary buffet breakfast, free parking, etc.

juicy email extras

Here are a few juicy extras Pebble can help to boost your email marketing strategies:

- Animated GIF's - 5 second video footage, promo banners, CTA buttons, book direct / best rate guaranteed footer banners
- Automated email journeys for new subscribers
- Pre & post stay automated e-triggers
- 72 hour sales with landing page and countdown timer
- Video in email - currently working in IOS, Mac, iPhone, iPad, etc
- Social competitions - FB likes, Instagram, etc





we are here to help make you an email pro...

do you need an email refresh?

Pebble offer coaching and refresher email training sessions. Just ask us! We want you to be an email marketing superstar through enabling you with the industry knowledge and tools needed to grow your business.

already an online marketing machine?

If you're already an online marketing machine but would appreciate another set of eyes. Once you've created an email, flick it our way and we'll pass on our feedback, so you can super charge for the best results.

pebble insights

If you're hungry for more tips, we've written many helpful blog posts on email best practices, visit: pebbledesign.com/insights

still sounds too hard?

Don't worry, we love this stuff and can do it all for you.
Feel free to contact us and we'll look after you.

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