

Email's not dead: The way you're using it is



By [Ross Sibbald](#)

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Email is dead. If I'd believed that phrase any of the countless times I've heard it since 2010, I probably wouldn't have a job right now. Everything from SMS to instant messaging, social media, and office productivity solutions has threatened to kill email at one point or another.



Source: pixabay.com

In reality, the idea that email is dead couldn't be further from the truth. In 2021, nearly 320 billion emails were sent a day. Additionally, 99% of the world's 4 billion-plus email users check their inboxes at least once a day, with some checking as many as 20 times a day. Add in the fact that email has a return on investment of around 4,200% and it becomes easy to see that email is very definitely not dead.

So, if you're not seeing results from email and everyone in your organisation is convinced that it's dead, what's really going on? In all likelihood, the problem isn't email but the way you're using it.

When email doesn't work

If, for example, you're still using a "one size fits all" approach to email that treats every customer the same way, you're not going to experience much joy. These "spray and pray" forms of email marketing have lost all relevance, and have zero resonance with customers. Today's customers demand hyper-personalisation and expect relevant content from service providers to suit their unique requirements.

But it might not just be the kind of emails you're sending that are hampering your email efforts. The way you're formatting your emails may also play a role. As recently as 2020, for example, one in five emails weren't optimised for mobile. In a world where almost everyone carries a device capable of sending and receiving email at all times, that's unforgivable. It's even more of a problem in a market like South Africa, where nearly 90% of households exclusively have cellphones and more than 64% rely on mobile devices for internet access.

Of course, avoiding these two mistakes alone doesn't mean you're using email effectively. It simply means you're not engaging in bad email practice.

Hyper-personal, engaging, relevant

If you're going to get the most out of email, you have to remember what it is that you're trying to achieve. The primary goal of any form of communication is to engage with your customers. In order to do that, you have to send out something that they actually want to engage with.

That, in turn, means sending emails that are not only hyper-personal to them, but also relevant to their wants and needs at the moment they receive it.

There are some tools and tactics organisations can use to ensure that they're achieving these goals. These include:

- Make it hyper-personal - With intelligent use of real-time data, dynamic content, and database segmentation, organisations can ensure that they're sending out messages perfectly tailored to each individual customer, at the ideal time.
- Automate it - Making sure that the customer receives communication at the right time doesn't mean that you need to have staff hovering over the send button. Automating email is easier than ever and can be triggered by purchases, site visits, and information requests.
- Integrate it into the multichannel experience - Remember, email is just one of the channels you have at your disposal. It should be as seamlessly integrated with those channels as possible.
- Mobile first, always - I've already highlighted how important it is for email to be easily accessible on mobile devices. But there are other benefits to a mobile-first strategy too. When you design your content for mobile readers, it's likely to be more focused. It can also help when it comes to creating clear Call To Action buttons and well-crafted subject lines and preheader copy.

It's also critical that every piece of email communication sent out by your organisation has the same look, feel, and tone, regardless of which department it comes from.

No sign of email's demise

So, the next time someone tells you that email's dead, know that there's a very good chance that they don't know what they're talking about. Utilised correctly, email promises to continue to be a high-performing, cost-effective way to increase customer engagement. That's true now and it's likely to still be true for some time to come.

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Commercial Director at Tiltle

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