

Bulk emailing: by no means a straightforward and simple affair

 By [JD Engelbrecht](#)

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Apart from the actual message, bulk emailing, although widely used, is by no means a straightforward and simple affair.



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Older than the internet itself, email has stood the test of time and is as relevant today, for both personal and business communication, as it was for the purpose it served some 50 years ago.

The ability to use this medium, as we do today, to share information in the form of text, documents, graphics and other rich media is a result of ongoing improvement – an evolution that continues today.

This constant enhancement has secured a spot for email as the channel of choice for communication and marketing teams, for sound employee engagement within organisations, and for effective marketing that's externally focused.

Bulk emailing: requires careful consideration

Despite all that the internet has to offer, email remains the most important application and is still the most widely used facility with hundreds of millions of people internationally using email, making it the hardest channel to ignore.

A single email exchange between two individuals may require a level of consideration and creativity to get a message across, but it is in a point-to-multipoint scenario where a blend of art and science is required to ensure that the emailed message attains the very purpose that it was crafted for.

This is true for both employee engagement and marketing teams that disseminate bulk emailers.

Properly setting up and managing accurate recipient databases, managing subscribe and unsubscribe lists and processes, and adhering to applicable compliance, in terms of the POPI Act locally and the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), needs careful consideration. All this while still ensuring that your message lands accurately and achieves what it set out to achieve.

Perhaps the bulk emailing *modus operandi* needs to evolve too.

Personalisation is key

The shift, from deploying only the fundamentals of bulk emailing and evolving it to a platform that would be more sophisticated and useful, is paramount to reaching new levels of recipient engagement.

Personalisation, for instance, is an aspect that is key to more effective mailer campaigns.

Research conducted by Accenture indicates that 75% of consumers are more likely to buy from a retailer that recognises them by name, recommends products or services based on past purchases, or knows their purchase history. This speaks directly to the need for personalisation. In addition, other research, attributed to Instapage, states that 90% higher customer retention rates can come from omnichannel marketing automation.

This implies that personalisation is the start for this kind of communication – companies can see great returns when they shift beyond personalising messaging to automating them too.

Meeting your goals optimally

If, as an organisation, you're set up for bulk emailing and are currently using it to reach your audiences, does that mean that your desired goal is being met optimally? How would you know if it is?

The answers to a few simple questions can lead you to discover the levels of efficiency and effectiveness of a bulk emailing effort:

- How sophisticated is the recipient database?
- Are you still populating and managing your database on a spreadsheet?
- Have you implemented an effective way to deal with and limit email bounce-backs?
- What is this effort costing your organisation in terms of resource allocation and time?
- Is there any unnecessary and wasteful expenditure associated with how you manage bulk emailing? Email is, after all, a relatively affordable communication channel.
- Does your company comply with the applicable regulations that govern this space?
- Are you able to quantify and measure the effectiveness of each email campaign?

If the answers to a few or more of these questions are not favourable, then it's time to rethink your bulk emailing strategy. Strategically plotting a path, where bulk emailing is concerned, is also vital for companies that have not yet started to use bulk emailing as a channel.

Trajectory for growth

In our experience, the trajectory for growth in terms of email marketing skills for marketing heads and internal

communication managers will advance, usually incrementally, from bulk communicator to message personaliser, and ultimately to communication automator.

- Bulk Communicator: creates and distributes basic emails. They need the basics to help them manage their database (subscribes and unsubscribes), and to create, send, and schedule their communications. They're not necessarily very experienced with benchmarks or analytics and have limited knowledge about personalisation or automation.
- Message Personaliser: someone who's got a routine going with the basics of bulk email and has just started dipping their toes into personalising their messages using tagging, segmenting, and filtering lists. They've started understanding the value of personalisation, but they need guidance on how to implement it in the system, education on best practices with their data, and examples of how they can use it in their messages.
- Communication Automator: an advanced email marketing professional who's dabbled in personalisation enough to see the value in maximising it across the full customer lifecycle using automated journeys. This is the end game in achieving the best outcomes for effective and optimised email marketing.

ABOUT JD ENGELBRECHT

JanDirk (JD) Engelbrecht is a commercial technologist who is passionate about finding creative solutions to problems. His experience in digital product development and commercialisation has allowed him to work with various South African market leaders in media, ecommerce, advertising, data science, and agriculture.

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