

The Art of Sending Effective Email Newsletters:

As an artist, there is no end to the number of social media outlets where you can send updates to fans through. From Twitter, to Facebook, to MySpace, it's hard to judge which networks your fans pay attention to the most (let alone the time it takes to keep info consistent across all of them!) Email newsletters are different because not only has email consistently proven to be the most effective direct marketing channel to fans, but email also offers artists the ability to better target each fan.

Writing effective email newsletters can be tricky though. So, I want to share some thoughts on what makes a great email newsletter vs. a boring one that fans are going to not pay attention to.

First, the most important thing, whether you are releasing a new song/album, promoting an upcoming show, or just want to say hello to your fans, is to set a goal for what you want fans to take away from your newsletter. In the marketing world we call this a "Call to Action" and it basically means you've got your fans attention for about 30 seconds (at best) so you want to make it as clear and obvious as possible what exactly you want fans to do once their done reading your newsletter.

Examples of calls-to-action could be a link to iTunes to encourage fans to buy your new single, a link to buy tickets to a show (even better if it is targeted to their area), or even just a link to a YouTube video of your music that you want them to go watch. Your newsletters call-to-action can be whatever you want it to be, but make sure you are only putting in 1 or 2 so fans don't get confused – and ALWAYS be sure that you are making it easy and obvious for the fan to understand the action you want them to take!

Now that you know you need one or two clear "Calls to Action" in your newsletter, it's time to cover how you can encourage fans to read your whole newsletter, and thus really get to know what it is you want them to know/do...

Effective email campaigns strike an important balance between text and visuals (ie. photos, graphics, etc). Tons of boring text is going to lose the attention of your fans fast, and an overwhelming collage of visuals may get their attention but really isn't going to help you reinforce your "Calls to Action". As such, you need to find a happy medium between text and visuals. Pictures from the road and links to videos express much more than a block of text, and can be skimmed through quickly, which is good - and when you pair these kinds of visuals/links with text that gives context then your newsletter is sure to be a winner!

A great example of a FanBridge client with great email newsletters is British sensation Imogen Heap. She makes it easy for her fans to follow through with the call-to-action by providing easy to follow directions and all the necessary links and information.



Another innovative use of visuals in her newsletter was including a section that had (big & clear) links to her social networks, so that fans could find more info about her music other places on the web. With just a single click from her email newsletter, her fans are taken to her Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube pages. This is a clever, easy and effective way to encourage your fans to become your “Friend” or “Follower” on different social networks, and ultimately highlights the kind of things you can be doing in your own newsletters to be getting the most value out of email campaigns you send out.



So let's recap.

In order to make the most effective e-mail campaign possible, follow these three steps:

1. Set a Goal

Ask yourself: What is 'success' for this campaign?

2. Create a call-to-action.

Ask yourself: What do I want fans to DO as a result of reading this campaign?

3. Don't just tell fans what you're up to, **SHOW** them!

Ask yourself: Would I read this campaign if another artist sent it to me?

Three Things to Always Include in Your Email Newsletters:

1. Always let fans know what you've been up to! Bottom line: fans aren't mind readers, so if you want them to know about all the crazy adventures you've been getting into, then tell them directly, or better yet, **SHOW** them with photos, etc. Remember, you don't have to tell them everything, but a little insight into your daily life will help fans relate to you -and getting fans to relate to you is the first step in creating a stronger fan relationship.

2. Are you going on tour? Include your tour dates! The more a fan sees the tour dates the less likely they are to forget about an upcoming show in their area. Did you just release a new song/album? Include "exclusive" info about the song/album! Well, I think you get the picture... bonus points by the way if you make sure to always include direct links in your newsletter to where fans can buy tickets, get more info, etc. (aka your call-to-action!)

3. Link to your social networks! It's always good to have more friends and fans on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, etc. While email is the most effective channel when it comes to getting your fans attention, these other networks certainly also give you other opportunities to get your message heard. So, make it super easy for fans to connect with you on these networks. A good rule of thumb in marketing is that the easier you make it for your clients to do what you want, the more likely they are to do it!

What Are "Campaign Analytics" and How can I Use Them?

One of the questions that we get the most here at FanBridge is “How do I know if these email campaigns are even effective?” The campaign analytics tool is here to help. Not only are you able to see how many people open your email, you are also able to see who! Crazy, right? You can also see which fans clicked on the links throughout your newsletters, who forwarded the email along to their fans, and which fans unsubscribed - and that's just some of what the analytics tool helps you do.

That's all sunshine and puppies, but what do I do with this information you ask? Well, understanding which fans interact with your newsletters and how/when enables you to see what is working (or not working) in your newsletters and ultimately helps you target your messages to fans better. For instance, our analytics tool lets you create custom groups for fans who don't open your newsletters, making it easy to target these fans directly and send follow up newsletters that have the goal of getting them interested again - like maybe you offer these fans a free new song to get them excited again. Alternatively, knowing which fans are opening your campaigns and clicking links in them enables you to reward your most loyal fans and encourage them to help spread the word about your music - so, maybe for your more loyal fans you give them access to free tickets or exclusive content.