

The Welcome Email

by Lisa Wester, Strategic Development Director



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First impressions are vital and so many times the welcome email is overlooked. Recently I subscribed to a variety of retail establishments, restaurants and hotels to evaluate email design and content.

I was surprised to receive a welcome email from only about 30% of the 35 companies I subscribed to. What this tells me is that the relationship I'd like to begin isn't that important to them and they'll get around to sending me the information I requested when they're ready. Not a very good first impression.

Taking the time to thank and welcome your new subscribers confirms their request and reiterates the information they should expect to receive and when. The creative design and content of the welcome email should incorporate the culture you have identified as being vital to your organization. This establishes the tone of your relationship and, as a customer touchpoint, should mimic the experience they would receive if they were to walk into your retail space or utilize the service you provide. In many cases, a welcome series of emails is used to bring your subscriber into your sales pipeline to become acquainted with your company and vice versa.

A good welcome email does not have to utilize HTML design; the content is what matters. If using HTML, it's important your text version is worded to express the same points.

Ideas of content to include:

- Use a creative subject line - "Welcome! We're glad you're here!" or "Lisa, welcome to a new experience."
- Write the email using your voice (your personality).
- Thank them for subscribing.
- Set expectations for content and frequency.
- Invite them to share their story with you by updating their preferences, allowing you to get to know them. Collecting this information assists with offering content based on their interests, improving engagement.
- Direct them to your website to learn more about your company.

Most email service providers (ESP) have the ability to trigger this welcome email instantly upon subscribing through your website. If you acquire your new subscribers elsewhere - for example, a handwritten list at your retail space or company booth at a recent convention - it's important to send your welcome email within 1 week. Timing is everything. If you wait too long, they're going to forget they wanted to receive information from you in the first place and treat your email as spam. This defeats your entire purpose.

For more information about welcome email campaigns or how to trigger your welcome campaign using ExactTarget, please contact Lisa Wester at lisa@inboxorange.com or Bill Powell at bill@inboxorange.com.

