



What we'll talk about

- How email works
- Getting Delivered
- Getting Opened
- Getting Click throughs
- Getting Conversions
- Metrics & Analytics
- Ways to use email
- Beyond email

E-mail in 2010

- **107 trillion** emails sent in 2010
- **294 billion** average number of messages per day
- **1.88 billion** email users worldwide
- **89.1%** of emails are spam
- **262 billion** spam emails per day

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12 benefits of email marketing for hotels

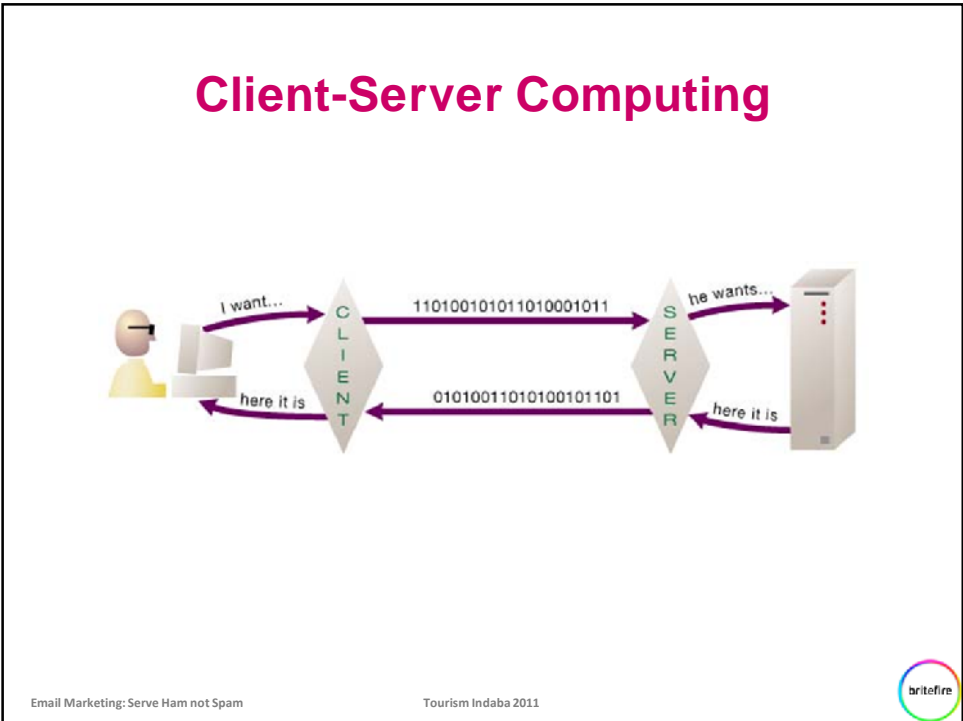
1. Cost-efficient and fast
2. Effective branding tool for creating top-of-mind awareness
3. Builds loyal relationships with existing guests through personalized communications
4. Assists in providing superior guest service
5. Powerful vehicle in eliciting direct responses
6. Provides the ability to send highly targeted offers to very specific audiences
7. Drives action and profits
8. Can function as an automated sales force
9. Encourages direct bookings
10. Makes tracking metrics easy
11. Makes testing your different messages simple
12. Encourages guest feedback

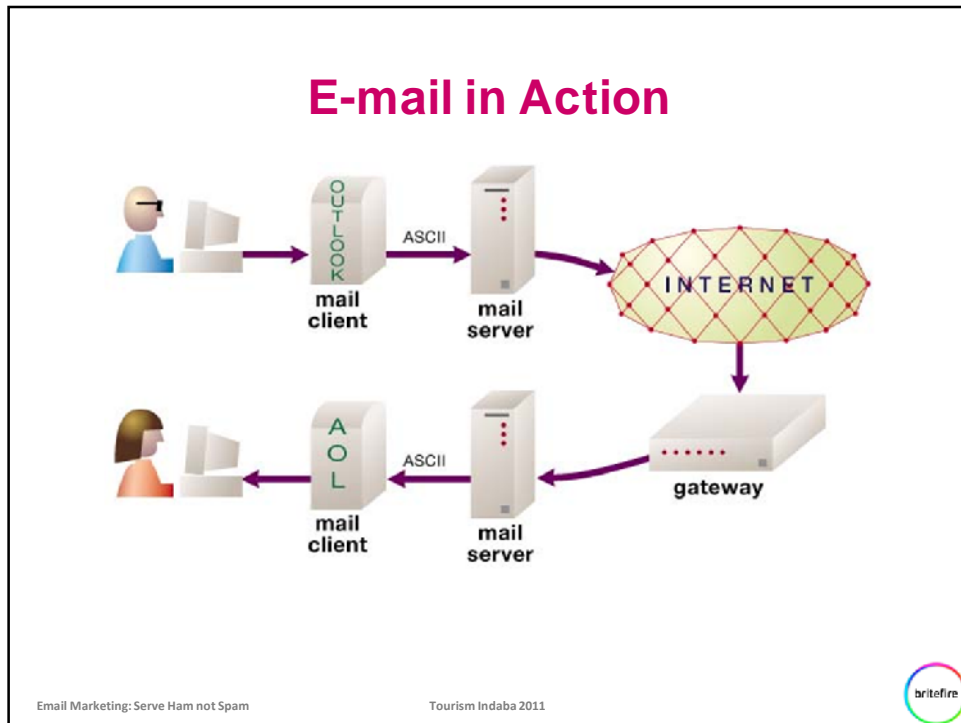
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How Email Works





Getting Delivered



Definition of Spam:
Unsolicited mass market email

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Ethics and Spam

Commonly accepted best practices of ethical mass mailers include:

- Provide truthful message headers, subjects, content
- Provide an obvious, simple unsubscribe process (one click is ideal)
- Always actually de-list unsubscribers
- Provide physical address of sending company
- Provide easily-accessed transparent spam / privacy policy
- Use opt-in addresses only, ideally double opt-in, never use opt-out
- Never use third-party lists unless you know they are opt-in
- Don't harvest or scrape addresses from the web
- Don't provide addresses to third parties without express permission

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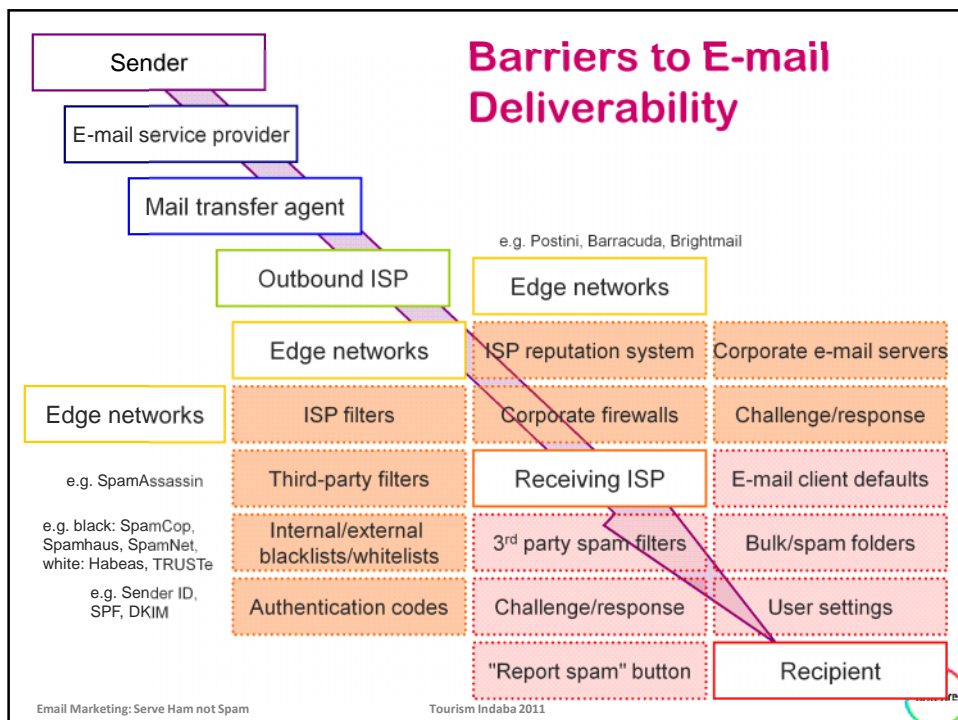


Consumer Protection Act (CPA) and Protection of Personal Information Bill (POPI)

- Aims to protect **processing of personal information** (i.e. collection, receipt, recording, organisation, storage, updating, modification, retrieval, alteration, use, dissemination and merging)
- Marketing communications to an **existing customer** may only be sent if a business provided the customer with an **opportunity to opt-out** of such further communications at the time when his or her contact information was first obtained.
- Each marketing communication sent to customers must include **opt-out instructions**.
- Such direct marketing communications may only be used for a **purpose disclosed** at the time the contact information was obtained, e.g. to promote similar products and services sold by the same business.

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Maximising Delivery

Never delivered to 100 percent of addressees

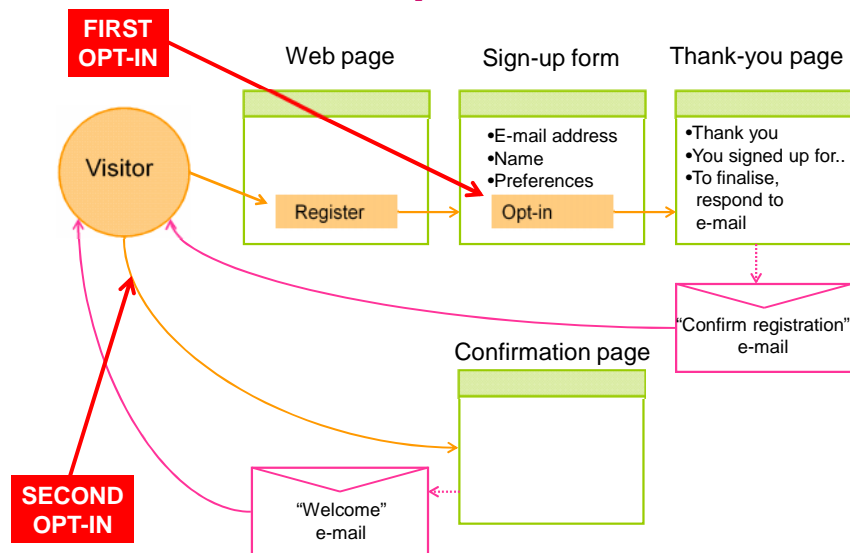
Can minimise non-delivered percent

Permission based

- double opt-in process
- opt-in records (date, time, subscriber's IP address, sign-up page, confirmation)
- specify what the opt-in is for (nature of e-mail, frequency value)
- link to a sample
- never pre-check boxes
- link to your privacy policy
- repeat in the welcome message



Double Opt-In Process



Maximising Delivery

Cleanse your lists

- simple unsubscribe process, and automatically remove
- provide a simple profile update process
- analyse delivery metrics
- monitor all your mailboxes
- remove hard bounces automatically

Verify, authenticate and behave yourself

- use anti-phishing verification (SPF or Sender ID)
- respond to complaints immediately
- make privacy and opt-in policies transparent
- check for blacklisting (www.DNSstuff.com)
- Register on www.abuse.net
- use e-mail accreditation agencies (e.g. www.Habeas.com, www.TRUSTe.org)



SpamAssassin

- Runs each e-mail message through hundreds of tests, analyzes headers, text, and HTML code, checks domains and IP addresses against DNS blacklists
- Tries for a balanced view (positive and negative points are allocated)
- SpamAssassin gives you credit points for being registered with corporate whitelists and certification agencies (e.g. Habeas)

Some big point scorers to avoid:

- message send date 12-24 hours before the receive date
- subject line or body IN ALL CAPS
- subject line contains "As Seen"
- subject line starts with "Free"
- t e x t w i t h g a p s
- message has bad coding
- HTML font size is large
- message includes "risk free" or "see for yourself"
- a URL or e-mail address contains "remove" (e.g. <mailto:remove@britefire.com>)
- message mentions Oprah Winfrey with an exclamation mark..



Getting Opened

Subject Line Principles

- **Focus creative effort on the subject line.**
 - 50 characters - don't waste them!
 - 15 characters for mobile phone or Blackberry users
 - Put company or brand in "from" line.
- **Be significant:** Something important, timely, or valuable.
- **Intrigue:** Compete for attention
- **Build trust:** Be credible, don't over-promise or over-hype.
- **Support action:** Reflect your goals and call to action.
- **Show empathy:** Address the personal needs and interests of recipients as individuals.

Tips for Subject Lines

1. Synergise with the “from” line.
2. Front-load your subject line.
3. Personalise subject lines based on interests.
4. Sometimes boring works best
5. Say what’s inside (avoid “October Newsletter”) but don’t overdo it
6. Set a deadline (“only four days left”).
7. Don’t trigger spam filters.
8. Don't over-promise.
9. Don’t do your subject line last!
10. Review historical subject-line performance.
11. Test!



Getting Click-throughs

Design

Does the overall **style and tone** of the email fit my brand's personality?

Visual design should **enhance** (not define) the interaction and **user experience**

Can recipients quickly and easily **grasp** my proposition, without reading it?

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Customer centric design

Create minimum performance specifications

- Browser/mail-client/version tested
- Width of message (600 pixels?)
- Length of message (scroll or not?)
- Bandwidth-conscious
- Preview-window tested
- Image-blocking tested
- Spamfilter tested

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Creative

- Have a strong call to action
- Keep the messaging simple and clean
- Is your email an end or a launch platform? Think through the entire user experience - where will clickers go?
- Exploit multi-layered social media as click-bait. Link to:
 - PowerPoint on SlideShare.net
 - Facebook Page
 - LinkedIn profile
 - YouTube channel
 - Twitter account
 - Flickr images
 - Document downloads
 - Blog / podcasts
 - Google Earth / Google Maps / Google Streetview



Writing Copy for E-mail

- **Write for the template**
 - Allow for standard boilerplate information
 - Cut word count to fit capacity
 - Build the landing page at the same time.
- **Activate the Impulse to Buy**
 - Buying decisions are rarely rational.
 - Aim for impulse action.
 - Lots of "clickables" ([hyperlinks](#), not buttons)
 - Emphasise the single most compelling thing to do



HTML E-mail Best Practices

FORMAT

- Ideally, code e-mails by hand or use good tools like Dreamweaver or HomeSite (avoid MicroSoft tools like Word that create poor HTML)
- Avoid nested tables.
- Do not use canvas background images
- Avoid Cascading Style Sheets.
- Keep HTML e-mails to 600 to 650 pixels wide.
- Keep message file size under 100 KB.
- Link to images hosted outside the message, don't embed them.



Getting Conversions

HTML E-mail Best Practices

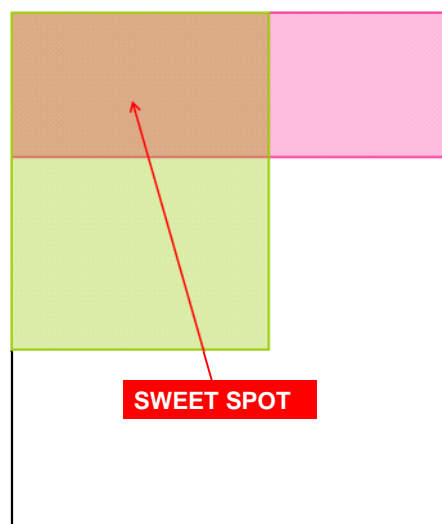
USABILITY

- Validate HTML code (free tool at <http://validator.w3.org/>).
- Link to an online version of your message AND to a mobile version.
- View your e-mail in as many e-mail client environments as possible (Lyris E-mail Advisor at <http://www.lyris.com/products/e-mailadvisor/>, or SiteVista's <http://sitevista.com/e-mail.asp>).
- Avoid scripting (active code such as forms).
- ALWAYS send a plain text version as well, using MIME encoding.
- Design for the preview pane AND for image suppression



Preview Pane & Disabled Images -- Design Implications

- 75% of e-mail readers who use the preview pane use it in a **horizontal format**





HTML E-mail Best Practices

FUNCTIONALITY

- Provide many clickable links.
- Include send-to-a-friend and share-with-your-network
- Include a subscriber-management section after the footer (contact, change my e-mail address, update my profile, unsubscribe).



Lists

E-mail List-Building Basics

1. Quality beats quantity - keep lists clean
2. Exploit all opportunities and points of contact.
3. Provide the benefits for signing up to the list (updates, exclusive offers, preferred service)
4. Always get permission, ideally double opt-in.
5. Ask for only the necessary data
6. Have a list data enhancement strategy to build your existing customer profiles.
7. Have a reactivation strategy for inactive recipients.
8. Be useful and provide benefits.
9. Have a loyalty/viral strategy to get recipients to engage friends.
10. Always convey trustworthiness, state privacy policies.

Building Permission-Based E-mail Lists

- Sign-up form or link on each page of your sites (web, social etc)
- Promote benefits on the sign-up page
- Offer opt-in incentives
- Add opt-in check boxes on all your correspondence / documents
- Include "Send to a Friend" and "Share With to Your Network" options
- Include information and a link to your newsletter in Press Releases
- Encourage e-mail subscriptions on all print ads, business cards
- Add "Subscribe to our e-mail newsletter" to e-mail signatures -- for all employees (use wisestamp.com)



Management & Analytics

Objectives

- What are our strategic e-mail marketing objectives? What's the *business* purpose?
- What customer problems or desires will we address?
- What are the dimensions and time frames by which we will measure success?

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DIY Tools: Mailchimp.com

The screenshot shows the Mailchimp dashboard for an account with a monthly budget of 5,001 - 10,000 and 9,862 subscribers. The dashboard includes a 'Create Campaign' button, a 'List Growth' bar chart, and a 'Chimp Chatter' feed with the following items:

- 37 new members subscribed to your lists since your last login. Feels good to be loved.
- Your campaign "Indaba2006A" got a 100% click rate. Your best ever! Ka-ching! Yeah baby yeah!
- 1 person unsubscribed from your lists since your last login. Maybe they're just not into you.
- Your campaign "Indaba2006A" got a 100% open rate. Your best ever! You deserve a raise.
- Campaign "Corporate Durban 2010" was delivered to 37 emails Apr 23, at 5:05PM. Time for a banana break.
- Campaign "April 10 PR" was delivered to 9 emails Apr 23, at 1:00PM. Time for a banana break.
- Campaign "Britefire INDABA10 Special" was delivered to 2789 emails Apr 22, at 3:55PM. Time for

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Beyond Open Rates

- Don't obsess only about open rates
- Success lies in conversion rates
- Structure your campaign and analytics to measure every decision-making step in the path to your objective:
 - Delivery rate = quality of list, code, spam-proofing
 - Open rate = quality of subject line, loyalty
 - Clickthrough rate = quality of content, design, calls to action
 - Landing page clickthrough rate = quality of landing page
 - Conversion = quality of process
- Measure the net impact of the campaign, not just the front end performance



Industry Benchmarks

- Open rate: 27.5%
- Click rate: 7.17%
- Abuse complaints: 0.08%
- Unsubscribe rate: 0.49%



Ways to use email..

Ways to use email

- Direct response tool - one of the best ways you can drive direct bookings
- Use it as a feedback and research tool. Gather guest feedback, look for new ideas, do some market research.
- Relationship building: send loyal guests special offers, notify them about new features, provide insider information, create top of mind awareness
- Provide superior guest service: from the time they book to follow up when they leave
- Up-sell
- Offer competitions

Examples

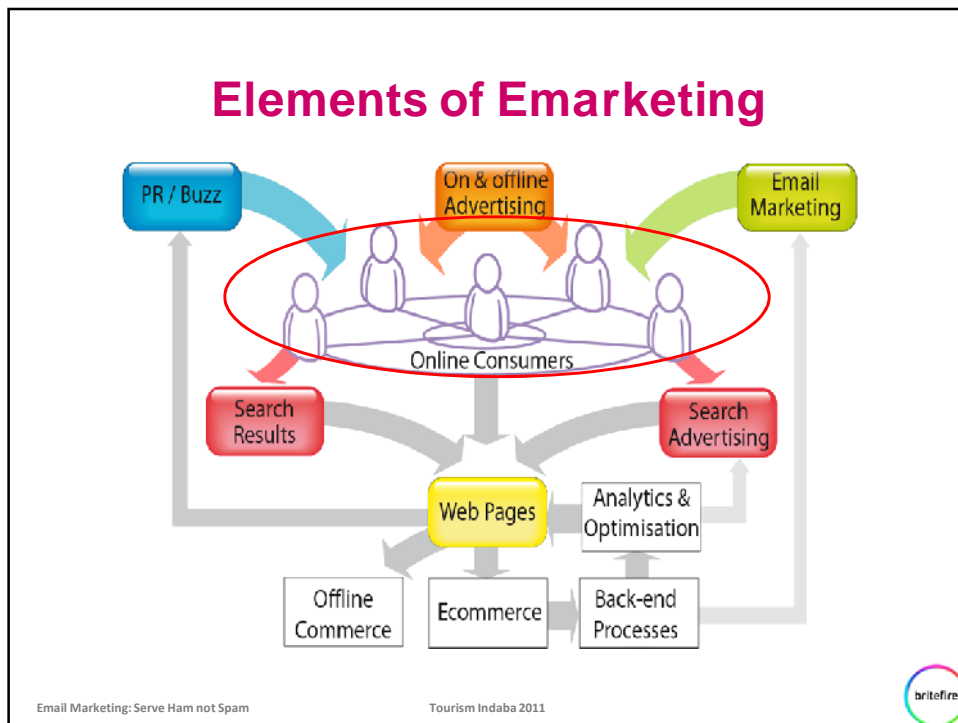
- **Kimpton Hotels**
 - Segment list into 7 affinity groups (incl wine, pets, dining, eco issues, packages) - and sent very customised emails based on individual preferences.
- **Broadmoor Hotel**
 - Sales leads at a trade show. Swiped badges. Sent 3 emails: instant follow up with incentive (digital camera). Week later - are you a winner? 3 weeks after show another contest (4-day stay)
- **Monmouth Plantation**
 - Focus on selling lavish experience and less on price. Sensory overloading experiences.

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Beyond Email..



Some common mistakes

- Not having permission
- Confusing transactional emails with email marketing
- Being in a rush
- Assuming people actually want to hear from you
- Assuming people know who you are
- Purchasing email lists
- Forgetting to double check the list before sending
- Thinking 'blast' instead of 'relationship'
- Writing like a used car salesman
- Forgetting to test
- Ignoring analytics



Please, Please, Please

- I'm busy, I don't have much time
- My inbox is sacred to me. I use it to interact with family, friends and colleagues
- I'm not that keen to hear from a company that I don't know and that wants to sell me something.
- What's in it for me. I do want to hear about stuff that will help me.
- Please ask permission and have me confirm it before you add me to a list
- Don't email me constantly
- If you send me something I don't want, I will consider it to be spam... even if I did opt into your list
- Make it easy for me to leave
- If I like your content, I'll stay

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Thank You!