

9 Things

YOU SHOULD NEVER DO IN ENTERPRISE EMAIL MARKETING



And What to Do Instead



Common Mistakes in Enterprise Email Marketing (And How to Fix Them)

Even experienced enterprise marketers can make mistakes that negatively impact email performance. From neglected automations to outdated design choices, these hidden pitfalls can weaken engagement, damage sender reputation, and ultimately lead to lost revenue.

Many of these issues aren't accidents, but rather the result of choices made along the way — a shortcut taken to meet a deadline, a focus on bigger numbers, or an assumption that never got revisited. Over time, these small decisions can add up and undermine both your strategy and consistency. Recognizing and correcting them is the first step toward a more consistent, high-performing email marketing program.

1. Winback campaigns with no added value

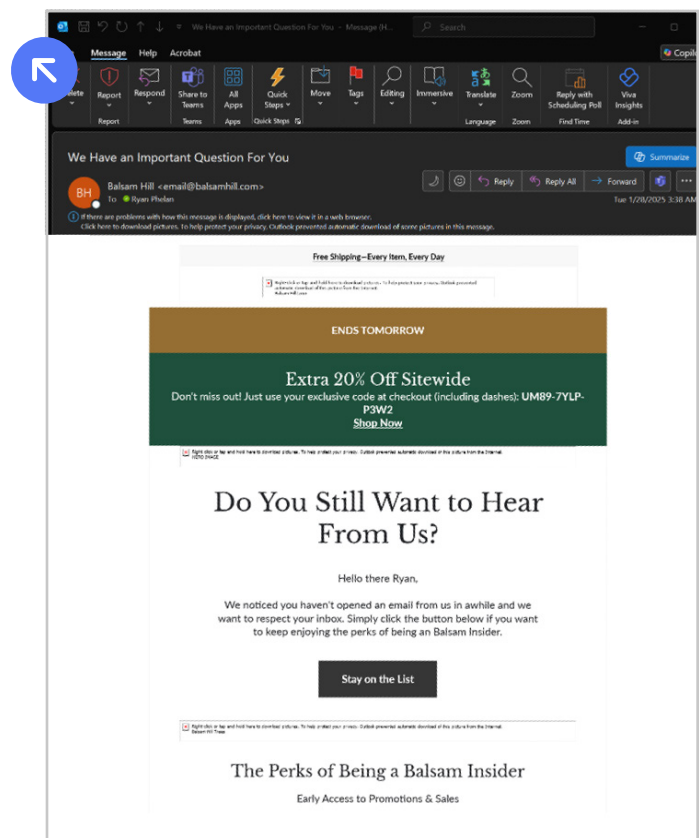
X The mistake: Sending “We miss you” emails without substance

Winback campaigns are a key part of every enterprise email marketing strategy, but many fail to deliver meaningful results. A bland “We miss you!” message offers little value and can even remind subscribers why they disengaged in the first place.

Too often, these emails lack relevance or incentive, which makes them feel more like an obligation than a re-engagement effort. Or they're sent to people who've been disengaged for so long, there's no hope of getting them back.

How to fix it:

Make winback campaigns feel personal, intentional, and timely. Reference the customer's past engagement or product interest and offer a clear reason to return — a personalized offer, an updated product line, or helpful new content.



Selling a higher priced item that doesn't need regular replenishment? Your winback campaign should reflect that.



Test subject lines and timing windows to see when disengaged contacts are most receptive, and don't hesitate to suppress or remove unresponsive subscribers. In enterprise email marketing, quality always outweighs quantity. Sometimes, pruning your list is the healthiest move you can make.

2. Automations running on autopilot

X The mistake: Not regularly reviewing and adjusting automations

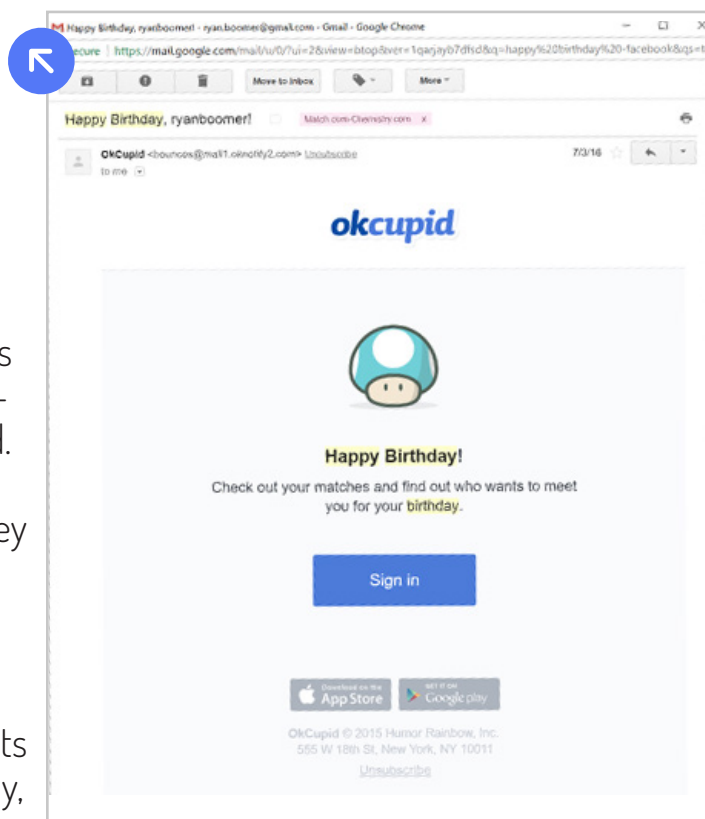
Automations are a key piece of any enterprise email marketing program, but even the most sophisticated workflows can backfire if they aren't regularly reviewed. Over time, outdated triggers, irrelevant content, or too many automated sends can create audience fatigue and frustration.

One great example is birthday emails. Birthdays are great opportunities to engage customers — especially when there's genuine value included. But sending a birthday email to everyone on your list, no matter how long it's been since they last engaged? That doesn't feel personal — it feels out of touch.

How to fix it:

Build quarterly or semiannual automation audits into your calendar. Review triggers, update copy, and check that your emails are targeted to the appropriate segments.

Put a clear segmentation strategy in place for every automation (including engagement-based rules) and use suppression rules to prevent customers from receiving multiple automated emails in a short window. Modern enterprise email marketing systems are powerful, but they still need human oversight to make sure you're not sending a birthday email to someone who hasn't engaged with you for five years.



If it's been several years (or more) since someone last logged in or opened an email from you, skip the automated birthday message.

3. Loyalty emails that lose momentum

X The mistake: Abandoning meaningful loyalty emails because they take time



Loyalty is bigger than points and perks. Your most loyal customers aren't just the ones who've signed up for a rewards program — they're the ones who consistently engage, purchase, and advocate for your brand.

A well-crafted loyalty email reminds customers why they value your brand. It can celebrate milestones, share personalized summaries, or simply acknowledge their ongoing trust. Think of those year-in-review emails that highlight a customer's activity — whether the hours spent in the sky with an airline or number of visits to the gym or the top genre of music on a streaming app. When executed well, these emails spark emotion, reinforce connection, and remind customers they're part of something special.

Yet too many brands abandon great loyalty emails because of data challenges or operational hurdles. Maybe the integration got messy or the data wasn't perfectly clean, so you abandoned the email entirely.

How to fix it:

Don't limit your loyalty strategy to a formal rewards program. Identify your true loyal segment based on engagement, purchase frequency, and relationship history and build emails that recognize their ongoing value.

Don't abandon highly customized and engaging emails to your loyal customers. This annual loyalty email was fantastic, but it no longer exists.

If a legacy loyalty campaign worked well in the past, don't let it fade. Refresh the design, update or even simplify the data sources, and keep it going. Consistency reinforces loyalty over time.

4. Transactional emails that stop at the transaction

X The mistake: Overlooking the power (and profit) of transactional emails

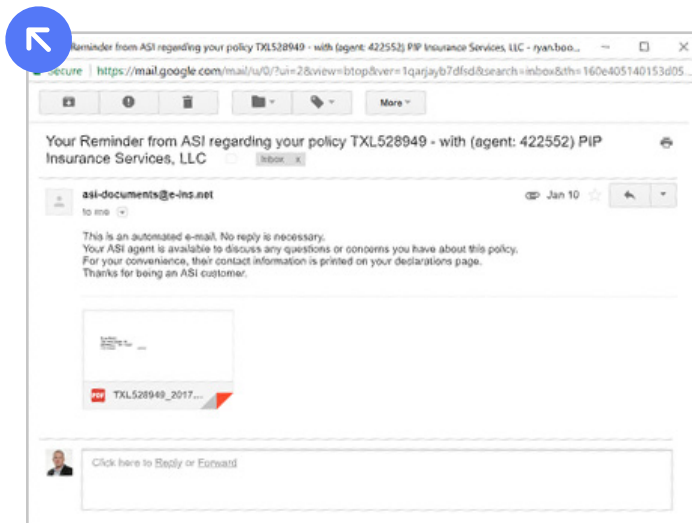
Transactional emails relate to actions your customer has taken — purchases, password resets, shipping notifications — or critical account updates from your brand. But they also represent some of the highest open rates in all of enterprise email marketing. Too often, enterprise marketers overlook the opportunity to reinforce the brand and build customer loyalty through these high-value touchpoints.

When treated as an afterthought, transactional emails miss their full potential. Generic plain-text confirmations or cryptic subject lines not only look untrustworthy — they fail to capitalize on a huge opportunity for your brand. These are the emails your customers actually open, and they're a key revenue driver — research shows transactional and triggered emails can generate more than half of an enterprise email program's annual revenue. Every confirmation, shipping notice, or receipt is a chance to engage your customer, build brand loyalty, and even cross-sell in a way that feels natural and helpful.

How to fix it:

Your transactional emails should be both informative and on-brand. Reinforce your company's commitment to customer satisfaction. Include relevant next steps or resources, such as a link to your return policy or product care tips. Where relevant, include some related products or other cross-sell opportunity, but keep it to less than 20% of the total email and check with your legal team to ensure compliance.

Make sure the look and feel of the email aligns with your brand so people know it's from you. Write a subject line that makes it easy to find in the inbox if your customer is searching for it later. Think about how you can build trust and ensure satisfaction in the email copy.



**Legit email or spam? It's really hard to tell.
Make sure your subject line and content are
clear and add value for the customer.**

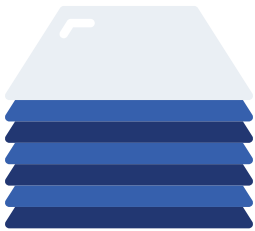
5. Sending browse abandon emails too quickly

X The mistake: Not including intent to buy in browse abandon triggers

When browse abandon functionality first appeared 20 years ago, it felt revolutionary that you could send a follow-up email to someone browsing your product. Back then, if people were browsing, that usually meant they intended to buy something. But browse behaviors have changed a lot in the past 20 years, and sending a browse abandon email for a casual product view doesn't make sense.

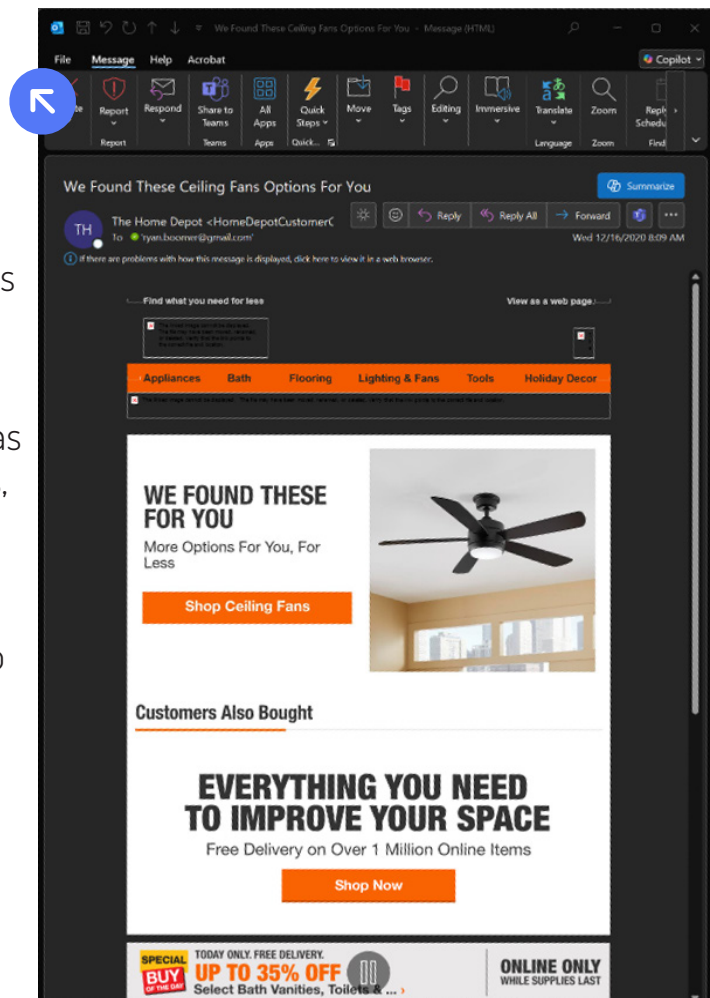
How to fix it:

Use behavioral signals to identify genuine purchase intent. Looking at just one ceiling fan probably means I'm looking at a product a friend shared or accidentally clicked on a popup, but looking at five different ceiling fans signals intent.



Set minimum thresholds — such as multiple page views, time on site, or repeat visits — before triggering a browse abandon email. Also

think about refining your messaging based on the customer's history. A returning buyer deserves a different tone and offer than a first-time visitor for browse abandon to be more effective. By focusing on intent rather than simple browse activity, enterprise email marketers can send targeted emails that better support the customer journey.



Don't trigger those browse abandon emails too quickly — looking at a single product page does not indicate intent.



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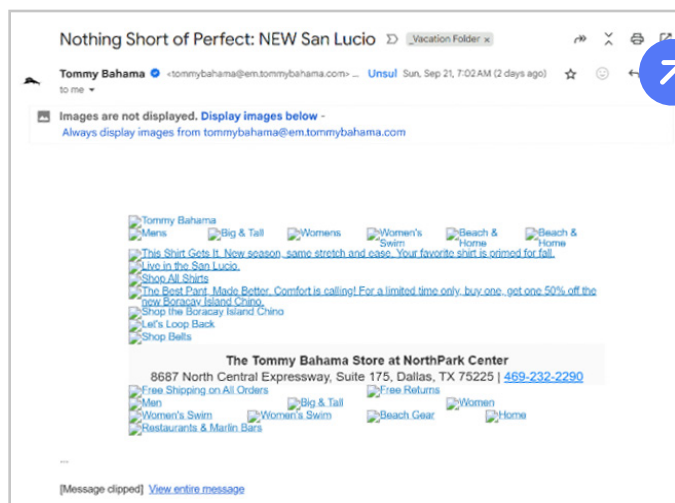
email
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6. Image-only emails that leave subscribers in the dark

X The mistake: Letting design overshadow the subscriber experience



Imagine this is a welcome email and someone's first introduction to your brand. Yes, it happens, and it's not a good first impression.

How to fix it:

Design for balance. Use live text for key content and CTAs, and make sure every image has descriptive alt text for accessibility. Test your emails with images turned off to ensure the message still makes sense.

If your team isn't sure how to combine images and text effectively, bring in someone who knows how to code hybrid designs that look great and perform well. It's a specialized skill worth the investment, because a well-structured, accessible email ensures your message gets through to the subscriber, no matter the inbox, platform, or device.

Over the past several years, image-only emails have made an unfortunate comeback. While they may look great in a design file, they completely fall apart in the inbox. When images are blocked by default, which happens frequently in enterprise environments running Outlook, those carefully crafted layouts collapse into a blank grid. If you don't have adequate alt text on every image, your email not only loses impact but also violates accessibility standards.

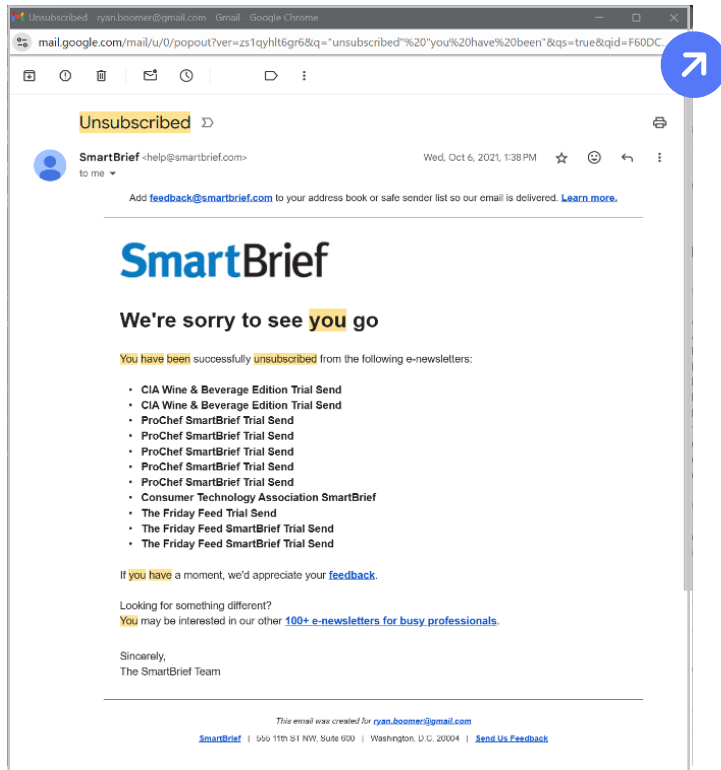
If your welcome email is image-only, you're losing ground immediately because their first impression is a bunch of empty boxes. When subscribers can't read or interact with your content, it damages both engagement and trust. Image-only designs are more than just a visual issue — they're a missed opportunity to connect.



7. Unsubscribe practices that make you look desperate

X The mistake: Sending unsubscribe confirmation emails

A subscriber who opts out is giving you clear feedback. Sending a confirmation email to say goodbye — or worse, asking them to reconsider — can damage trust and brand perception. Yet far too many enterprise brands still send an unsubscribe confirmation email.

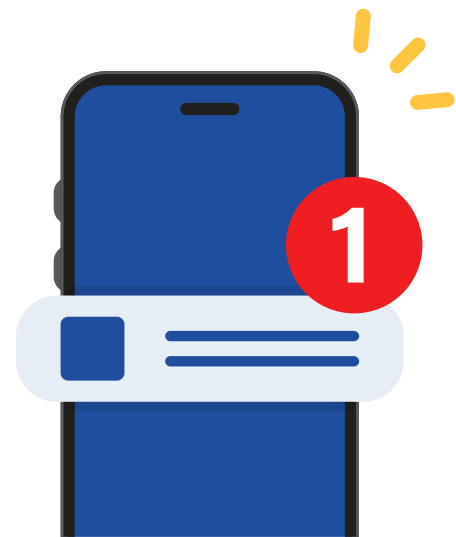


How to fix it:

Skip the follow-up email and provide a clear, easy unsubscribe process. Use your unsubscribe page to provide meaningful options — for example, reducing the frequency of emails per week or allowing subscribers to choose topics of interest. Respecting subscriber choice is a hallmark of responsible enterprise email marketing.

One potential exception to this rule is regulated industries like financial services or healthcare, where compliance standards may require a confirmation email.

Don't want any of these email newsletters?
Try one of our other 100+ newsletters!



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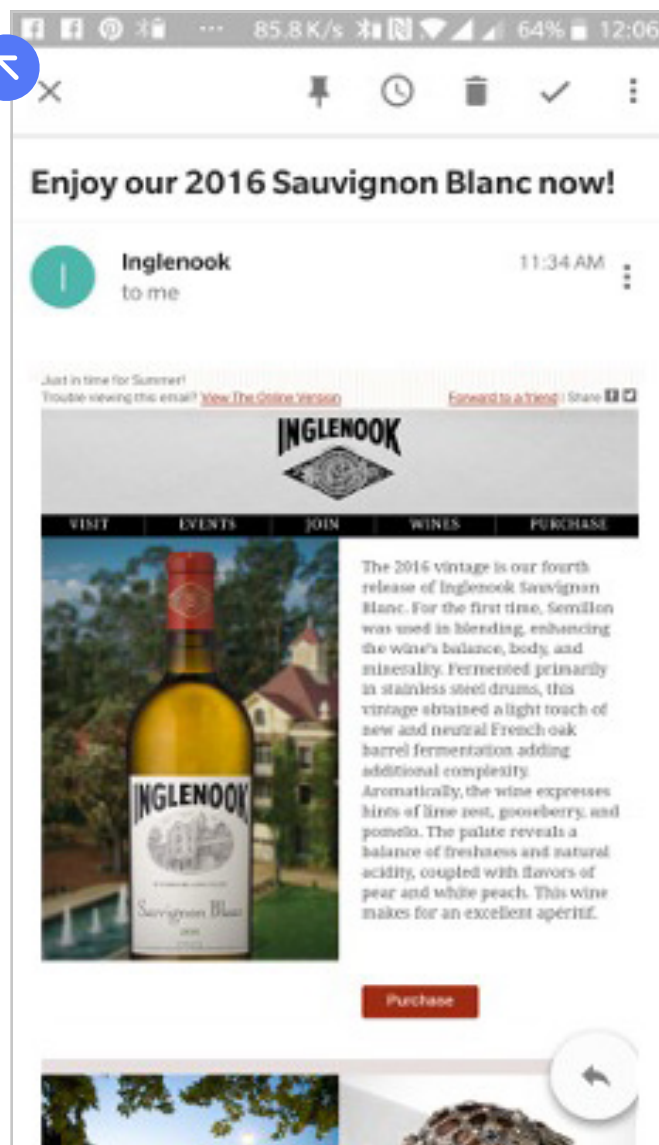
8. Emails that don't fit the screen

X The mistake: Designing emails that mobile users can't read

More than half of all emails are opened on a mobile device, yet it's still an afterthought even for many large brands. If subscribers have to pinch, zoom, or scroll sideways, they'll likely just close and delete your email.

How to fix it:

Take a mobile-first approach. Use responsive design so your layout adapts to any screen size. Keep subject lines and headlines short, use large buttons, and break up text for easy scanning. Before sending, preview your email on multiple devices, especially smaller phones. Enterprise email marketing demands a consistent, high-quality experience on every screen.



9. Buying lists

X The mistake: Paying for subscribers instead of building your list organically

Paying for subscribers is the shortcut that never pays off. Buying, renting, or scraping lists might seem like a way to scale quickly, but it leads to poor engagement, deliverability issues, and long-term damage to your sender reputation. Buying a list is never a good idea. Never.

How to fix it:

Build your email list organically by offering value to subscribers. Collect email addresses through gated content, loyalty programs, event signups, and customer transactions. Use transparent privacy practices and honor subscriber preferences to establish trust.

That text is tiny and basically unreadable on a mobile device, which means your email won't get read.



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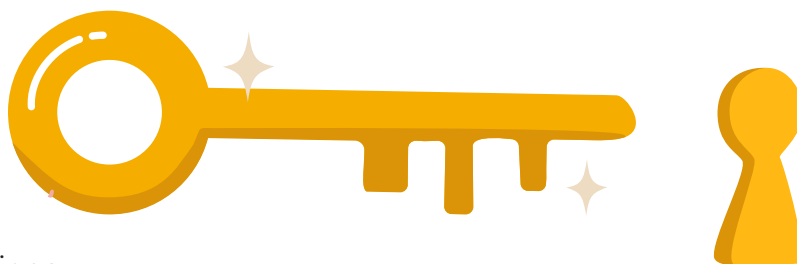
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Permission-based email marketing with clear consent protects your brand and leads to better ROI over time because sustainable growth always beats temporary reach.

Key takeaways

Avoiding these pitfalls isn't just about improving metrics — it's about reinforcing brand integrity and creating meaningful customer connections.



Enterprise email marketing thrives on a balance of strategy and creativity and respect for your audience. Every message is an opportunity to strengthen your relationship, whether it's a promotional send to most of your list or a highly refined and targeted automation to your most loyal customers.

By regularly auditing your campaigns, understanding the customer journey, and optimizing for accessibility, you can ensure your email marketing program remains strategic, compliant, and customer focused

The result? A stronger, more effective email program built for long - term success.

About RPE Origin

We are the industry's only vendor-agnostic, email-centric agency serving enterprise companies throughout their digital journey. We aim to be an indispensable partner for enterprise and agency clients who rely on email for success. Whether you need help choosing a new ESP, enhancing automated B2C or B2B customer journeys, or connecting data points across your tech stack, we help you move from simple to sophisticated to drive more revenue through email marketing.

Our team lives email every day, and that includes both email marketing and maximizing the connective tissue across all digital channels. With our customized approach and flexible services, we can do everything from one piece of the puzzle to the entire picture.



Need help with using AI to better target marketing emails?

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