

# Mailchimp for Newbies

## 7 TIPS

Just starting out with Mailchimp Forever Free? Here are 7 tips to save you 1000 headaches!

### 1. Assess your target audience BEFORE you ask them to subscribe.

Think long-term about what kinds of campaigns you will eventually send before you ask for your first subscriber. Here's why: If you are strictly trying to funnel people to a single purchase, then current wisdom says just ask for name and email (or maybe only email). However, if you are trying to build an audience for a variety of informative content, as your list grows, it will become more effective to reach out to different "groups" of subscribers. For example, a nonprofit organic agriculture newsletter may want to target researchers to receive science news and farm managers to receive best practice tips. This information (researcher vs. farm manager) is easily obtained by making it a required field in the list sign-up form. If you wait until after your first couple hundred (or thousand) subscribers, getting this information from all of them is practically impossible.

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/lists/signup-forms/how-the-form-builder-works>

### 2. Good idea to use a double opt-in process to obtain subscribers.

Double opt-in is when Mailchimp automatically sends a message to the email address of a new subscriber to confirm the subscription. It prevents fraud as well as email mistakes. Mailchimp is a permission based ESP, and permission should be express and verifiable. Using double opt-in signups means that Mailchimp will track these permissions for you. You'll have a date and time stamp for each subscriber on your list. Plus there are other reasons to use Mailchimp signup forms (see point #1).

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/lists/signup-forms/about-double-opt-in>

### 3. Keep it clean.

While creating your campaign, use the "Paste from Rich Text Editor" button to insert text copied from another source such as a word doc. This will prevent formatting problems by stripping out any hidden code contained in your text.

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/design/prevent-formatting-problems-with-paste-from-rich-text>

### 4. Replicate your campaign!

Once you've got an initial layout you like and some or all of your content plugged in, it's a GREAT idea to replicate your campaign! That way, if any mistakes occur as you are fine-tuning you'll have a good copy to come back to. When moving up the Mailchimp learning curve, sometimes it's easier to start over than to figure out what went wrong -- particularly if you are operating under a deadline!

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/ways-to-build/replicate-a-campaign-or-automation>

### 5. No free spam check in Mailchimp? No problem!

Mailchimp used to provide a spam filter checker to their Forever Free accounts, but that has now gone away. Instead, replicate your campaign and send it first to both yourself and to Mail-Tester. (Create a list you use just for testing, but don't use the word "test" in your list name or test campaign, it's a spam filter trigger.) Mail-tester will then give your campaign a "spammyness" rating on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being least spammy - anything from ~7 to 10 is considered pretty good). If there are problems, their analysis will point out why.

More here: <http://www.mail-tester.com/>

### 6. Consider including a subscribe link in your campaign.

It's amazing how many campaigns do not! Although Mailchimp recommends that you provide a "forward this message" link, which makes it possible for people to subscribe, most recipients will not use that link because it's far simpler to just hit their ESP's forward button. A subscribe link ensures that people who are forwarded campaigns the usual way will be able to both view your news *and* subscribe. Two simple ways of adding the option to sign-up: create a "sign up" button or add a link to your footer content: "Did a friend send you this news? Click here if you'd like to subscribe."

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/content-blocks/use-footer-content-blocks>

### 7. Always preview your campaign! Then . . . Test. Test. Test.

Enter preview mode to look at desktop and mobile layout. If your mobile layout is too wide, you probably need to check your photos or overall width to make sure nothing is over 600 pixels wide. Next use the link checker to test all your links. It's a handy tool that let's you see the link landing page without ever leaving Mailchimp. Links to PDFs will not preview, but you can click directly on the link to be sure it works. Last, but definitely not least, send a test - or one or two (but no more than 12 per campaign allowed to a Forever Free account -- tests are counted by individual email receipt, so keep that in mind). It's also not a bad idea to open and review your test email directly from your phone and computer.

More here: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/previews-and-tests/preview-and-test-your-email-campaign>

