

Email reactivation

Best practices guide



Experian

Marketing Services

Win your customers back!

According to a recent Marketing Sherpa report, up to 75 percent of email subscribers are inactive, with retail brands attaining the highest amount of engaged subscribers.



Is your brand capturing your disengaged and hard-to-reach customers?

In this email reactivation guide, we will uncover best practices, tips and recommendations for implementing successful reactivation campaigns. All content in this report is based on an in-depth analysis of industry statistics and the success our clients have seen in their various campaigns.

Who are your inactive subscribers?

At a high level, an inactive is a subscriber who no longer reads your brand's email, but hasn't asked to stop receiving it. How long that inactivity has been going on doesn't really matter; the fact that the customer is no longer interested in engaging with the messages being sent from your brand does.

But marketers should not give up hope on these customers, because while they may not be actively engaging with your brand, they also have not taken any action to unsubscribe, or worse, reported your mail as spam to their email provider.

Why subscribers go inactive:

I can't even remember the last time I saw an email from this brand. Oh well, **next!**

This brand emails **WAY** too much. **Ignore!**

These messages just really do not appeal to me. Isn't there anything new? Do they even **know me at all?**



What is reactivation?

Reconnect, win-back, re-engagement, reactivation. As an email marketer, you've most likely heard all of these terms and understand that to your customers they all essentially mean the same thing; we want you back! To the marketer, reactivation is the process of defining "inactives" within an email file, followed by making efforts via email to re-engage those inactive subscribers.

Why does reactivation matter?

Reactivation campaigns represent one of the highest ROI opportunities in Marketing at a notably small cost. Past buyers open, click and transact at much higher rates than non-buyers. In fact, transaction rates for buyers are almost double compared to non buyers. The bottom-line? It's always easier to retain an existing customer than obtain a new one.

In addition, having a substantial amount of inactive subscribers can pose great deliverability and ROI concerns, such as:

- Poor engagement rates
- Low Inbox Placement Rate (IPR)
- Risk of old data converting to spam traps
- Internet Service Providers (ISPs) reclaiming accounts over time



QUICK TIP

Data from the Direct Marketing Association supports the common marketing belief that it's more cost-effective to cultivate existing customers than to find new ones due to the high cost of acquisition.

ROI

Reactivation campaigns represent one of the highest ROI opportunities in marketing at a relatively low cost

\$28.50

Median ROI for customer emails was \$28.50 per dollar spent

\$55.24

The mean cost for customer acquisition is \$55.24

Source: eMarketer "Email Marketing Benchmarks: Key Data, Trends and Metrics" (2013)

QUICK TIP

Experian Marketing Services also encourages marketers to analyze their customer data over the past two years in order to identify seasonal or holiday-only purchasers.

Define segments

As a fundamental and first step to creating a successful reactivation program, Experian Marketing Services' experts recommend that a brand segments its email subscribers based on different levels of activity while formulating a relevant approach to re-engage each segment. For example, you can segment your email subscribers based on the following criteria:



Clickers who haven't purchased in **90 days**

Non-openers who have not clicked or purchased in **90 days**



Openers who haven't clicked or purchased in **90 days**

Make an impact

QUICK TIP

Offer an incentive that makes an impact. If you can, test offers to see what discount amount motivates users to buy. If you don't have a discounted offer available, consider offering a free service, download, or upgrade.

Marketers can use a variety of reactivation tactics to ensure their brand stands out from all the marketing noise. Sending inactive customers an enticing offer, for example, is a strategy employed by many brands that has seen a lot of success. In a recent Experian study of 44 clients sending reactivation campaigns, those including an offer in the subject line boosted engagement rates for almost all campaigns.

In addition to the subject line that reads: "We miss you, please confirm your email subscription!", The Children's Place also prominently displays a "15 percent off" savings offer and free shipping on all orders made during the brand's big, back-to-school Labor Day sale.



Engaging subject lines

Experian Marketing Services analyzed reactivation subject lines and found that 13 of the top-25 subject lines with the highest transaction rates included 'we miss you', while only two of the bottom 25 included those words. In the same Experian study, the best performing offers were those with free shipping.



Subject line type 1: WE MISS YOU, AND WE WANT YOU TO SEE WHAT'S NEW



Subject line type 2: WE HAVE A CONFESSION...AND AN OFFER YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



Subject line type 3: WE HATE SPAM, TOO. LET US KNOW IF YOU WANT TO STAY ON FILE

The mobility factor

According to a recent Experian Marketing Services' research [report](#), 50 percent of consumers check and read email on mobile devices and this number is only increasing. It's extremely important for brands to make it easy for users to click through or take advantage of an offer through a mobile interface.

In the example to the right, Urban Outfitters takes a playful approach with its email creative. As you can see, the email is designed to mimic the look and feel of a mobile phone and includes large, tappable links, buttons, and a clever yet simple call-to-action that is easy to interact with.



QUICK TIP

Put your content first. Explain to the customer why they should be visiting your site or buying from you again. Do you have new features? Are there sales they may be interested in? Peak their interest by letting them know what's new!

58%

58 percent of email marketers are not designing for mobile devices

Source: MarketingSherpa 2013 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

50%

On average, 50 percent of consumers read email on a mobile device

Source: Ericsson Mobility Report June 2013

80%

80 percent of consumers delete emails that don't render well on a mobile device

Source: Ericsson Mobility Report June 2013

Confirmed opt-in

QUICK TIP

Remember to keep your word—if you communicate that your brand will remove a customer from its email subscriber list when action is not taken, then make sure you do just that!

In the past, Confirmed Opt-In (COI) mailings have been used as a conservative means to verify users' identities by having them click through an email after the email subscription sign-up process. However, many companies now send a COI mailing as the last email in a reactivation series to re-engage inactive subscribers and ensure continued deliverability.



American Eagle Outfitters® sends emails to inactive subscribers asking them to “click to confirm” their subscription. This is a good example of a COI mailing designed to re-engage inactive subscribers and ensure continued deliverability.

QUICK TIP

High levels of email address inaccuracy results in deliverability issues. Experian's Email Insights and Data Quality both help validate the accuracy of opted-in names and identify if a user is simply dormant or "dead."

3.3x

COI mailings have 3.3x higher click rates than other reactivation mailings

Source: Return Path's Global Email Deliverability Benchmark Report, 2H 2011

76.5%

Only 76.5 percent of commercial email is delivered to the inbox

Source: Return Path's Global Email Deliverability Benchmark Report, 2H 2011

24%

Email blocked /flagged as spam increases 24 percent year over year




Source: Experian Marketing Services

Welcome back!

If and when your users do re-engage, thank them for coming back! Peak their interest by telling them what's new and reintroduce them to your brand and your communications. Remember, [welcome emails](#) series garner 86 percent higher open rates than regular promotional mailings!






Carnival Cruise Lines reintroduces itself in a welcome email that features the social networks, new offers and deals its customers can take advantage of.

Welcome back! View this email in [web browser](#)

Carnival FUN FOR ALL. ALL FOR FUN.   

WELCOME BACK WE'VE CHANGED SINCE YOU'VE GONE

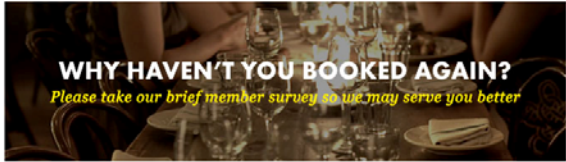
Now's a great time to get back into the sail of things. There are now more places than ever to get your Carnival cruising fun fix. Let's run through a few:

-  **Facebook** You can connect with more Carnival cruisers on Facebook, where the fun flows daily, than anywhere else. Over one million have already "Liked" us - how about you? [Like Carnival on Facebook](#)
-  **Twitter** If you like your cruise news short and (excuse us) tweet, @CarnivalCruise on Twitter is your place! Do you follow? If you do, expect great stuff like news, deals and fun - not to mention answers to your questions - coming atcha daily. [Follow Carnival on Twitter](#)
-  **Funville** The epicenter of fun, and a great resource for cruising info and discussion. Featuring one fun-filled forum frequented by some of the greatest cruising minds this side of Carnival Headquarters. Funville is all "Fun Ship" cruising, all the time. [Explore Funville today](#)
-  **YouTube** Everyone knows the greatest place to kick back with a frosty umbrella drink is a Carnival cruise. The second greatest place... is in front of your computer, as you check out all the fun on Carnival's YouTube channel! [Subscribe on YouTube](#)
-  **Past Guest Offer** You already know how much fun you can have. Now have it for less! [Get a Great Deal!](#)

The survey

Customers love taking surveys! Experian Marketing Services has found that surveys bring in more than 2x the clicks and almost 2x the revenue per email over regular promotional emails. In the example below, Smarter Dining asks its inactive customers to complete a survey to help the brand improve its email communications and the overall customer experience.

SMARTER DINING



WHY HAVEN'T YOU BOOKED AGAIN?
Please take our brief member survey so we may serve you better

We've noticed that you haven't booked a second reservation with our service and we're hoping to understand why. Our team recognizes that there are always steps we can take to improve your satisfaction with our service, so your feedback is truly invaluable to us.

Please help us serve you better by completing this brief survey and telling us what's kept you from making another reservation with Savored. As always, thank you for supporting Savored!

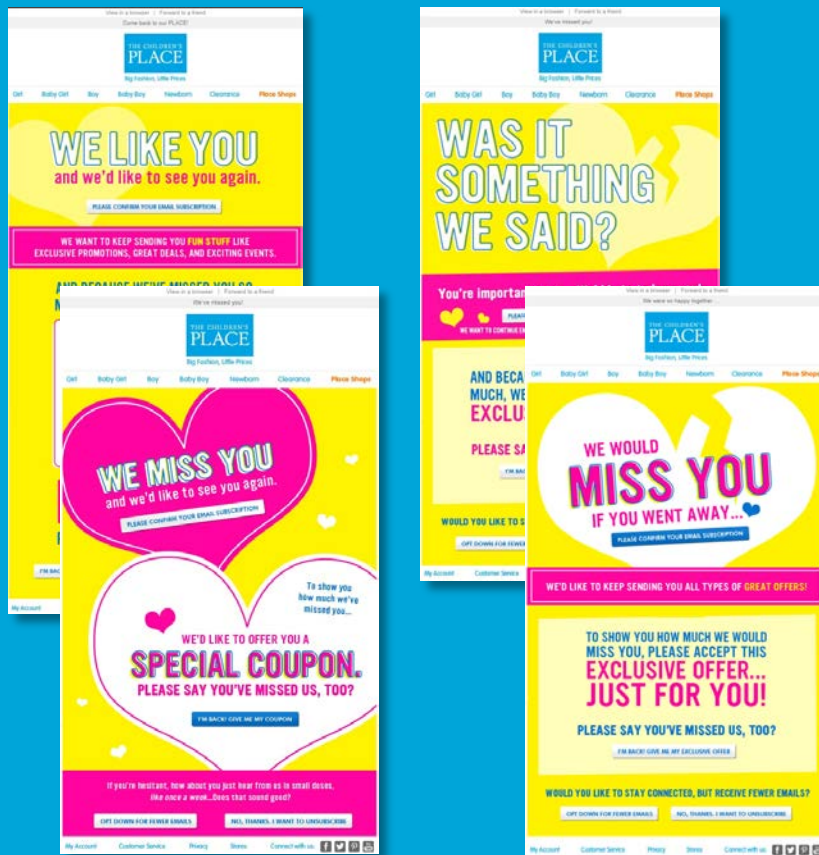
TAKE OUR SURVEY

The series

QUICK TIP

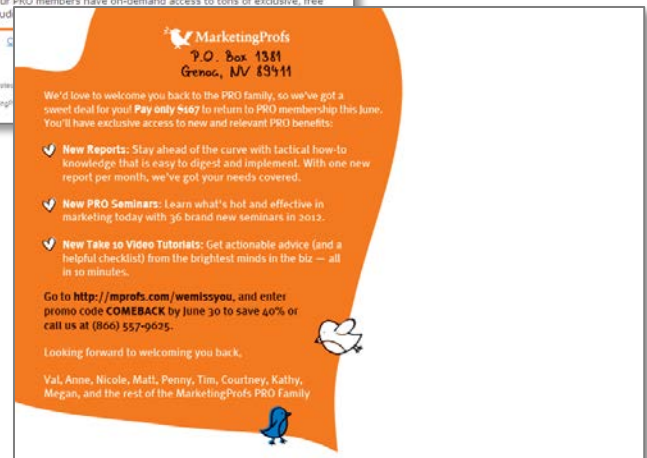
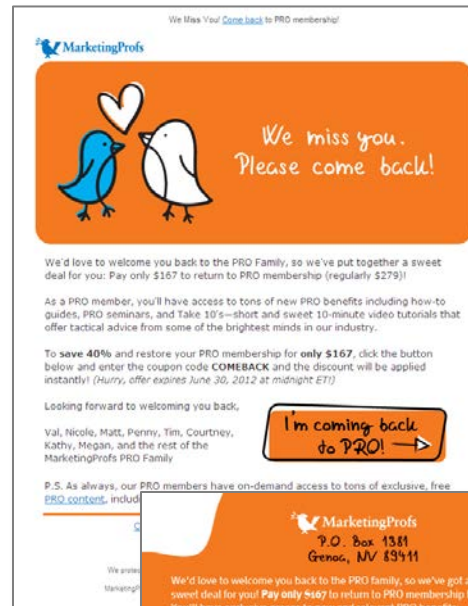
Timing consideration:
Based on Experian Marketing Services' primary research, reactivation campaigns sent once per quarter had the highest open, click and transaction rates.

It's important to remember that inactive customers most likely will not click on the very first email you send, so it is wise to consider sending reactivation campaigns in a series like the example below. The language you use also can become increasingly more direct and urgent as the series continues.



Beyond email

Engaging users across channels is also advisable. For example, MarketingProfs sends users a direct mail piece in addition to an email in order to further incite its subscribers to reactivate.



Reducing future inactivity

At this point, the importance of maintaining the engagement of existing customers and limiting the number of inactives should be clear. From ROI to deliverability, minimizing inactive subscribers is key to your marketing success. Over time, it is crucial for your brand to continuously employ smart reactivation tactics that prevent customers from being inactive. Be sure to recognize the reasons they disengage in the first place:

- **Source:** Do you have certain sources that are bringing in more inactive users or “bad” names than others?
- **Opt-in process:** What are your opt-in practices? Are you automatically opting users in?
- **Welcome program:** Are you welcoming new users in real time? Are you reminding them of how and where they signed up for your email program? Welcome series emails have both high open rates and have shown to keep subscribers on your list
- **Early identification of inactives:** Don't start when it's too late. Have a strategy in place and employ it before a person lapses for too long
- **Message variety:** Sending your users the same types of messages day in and day out is a sure way to fatigue and bore them into becoming inactive subscribers on your list

About Experian Marketing Services

Experian Marketing Services is a leading global provider of consumer insights, targeting, data quality and cross-channel marketing. We help organizations intelligently interact with today's empowered and hyperconnected consumers. By helping marketers identify their best customers, find more of them, and then coordinate seamless and intelligent interactions across the most appropriate channels, Experian Marketing Services' clients can deepen customer loyalty, strengthen brand advocacy and maximize profits.

If you are looking for strategic or tactical guidance to create more intelligent interactions with your customers through integrated email tactics, contact your Experian Marketing Services account team, call 1 866 626 6479 or visit us online at www.experian.com/marketingservices.





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