



A quick guide to...

Split Testing Messages

In this guide...

Learn how you can get the best results from your email campaign by testing it first! Just create up to five messages, with different personalization techniques, subjects, and styles. GetResponse will test each version for you, then automatically select and send the best!

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1. To Send the Best – Split Test!

According to our 2010 Email Marketing Trends, only 25.9% of respondents plan to use split testing to reduce the negative impact of inbox clutter. Now we know they don't speak for you, but that metric worried us. So we decided to try and boost the numbers with a little more information!

Here's one great reason to Split Test more often: Based on our recent study of GetResponse emails, we all know that subject lines matter, and personalization works. In fact, emails with personalized subject lines averaged 26% higher open rates and over 130% higher CTRs than emails without personalized subject lines. But we also know that once you get beyond the obvious first name, thinking of something short for the subject line that will make every person open your email is NOT easy! And we also heard that you're going to increase segmentation and email targeting, which is great, but requires even MORE personalization.

So why not come up with your best efforts, and let GetResponse try them out for you?! It doesn't take long, and it certainly reduces the chances of your wonderful campaign being tossed into the junk folder, or worse, flagged as SPAM. Don't risk it!

Speaking of spam, here's another good reason to Split Test: Those dreaded SPAM words are changing all the time, so unless you're checking in daily, a good way to see if your subject lines will pass the filters is to Split Test! Don't risk your reputation simply because you think you have to hurry and move on to your next marketing task.

Think about how much in lost sales and sign ups are at stake!

Okay, enough lecturing, but before we go into the logistics and benefits of finding out which versions of your email will perform best – before you send – let's review a few Split Testing Basics.



1.1 What is split testing?

Split Testing, or A/B testing as some call it, is the testing of different versions of your email to see which one delivers the best results –typically opens, click throughs, and sales or purchases. GetResponse customers can actually test up to 5 versions each of a message variable, however you can test as many or as few variables as you think is necessary:

- Subject lines (impacts open rates!)
- Headlines
- From fields (company and/or names)
- Body copy content (message)
- Body copy length
- Template design/format
- Media, e.g. audio-video, photos, graphics etc.
- Text vs buttons for calls to action
- Type and number of products offered
- Price points, discounts, etc.
- Links (variety, number, type)
- Delivery days/times (to test days of week, send all versions out in same week)

1.2 How it works

Each version of one variable is sent to a small segment of your list or to your test group (if you have one). If you have a sufficiently large list, GetResponse can “split” the tests among equal portions of, say, 30% of your total list, but never more than 50%. After all, if only a few of your versions do well, you need to have someone left to prospect! The key is to always send each version of a variable to the same test group. If this is sounding like an algebra problem, let’s try one out.

Example:

Let’s say your list contains 1000 contacts and you’d like 30% of them to take part in the test. For this campaign, you only need to test two versions of your subject line, so:

1. A total of 300 subscribers will take part in your Split Test.
2. The first message will be sent to 150 subscribers, the second to the remaining 150. Note: you are not allowed to send the first message to 100 and the second to 200 subscribers, hence the name Split Test (or Groups A & B)!
3. The message with the best results will be sent to the 700 subscribers who did not take part in the Split Test. Again, you can choose which versions to send after reviewing the results, or let GetResponse do it for you automatically, based purely on the results.

1.3 Benefits of split testing

- Improved response and conversion rates
- Increased sales, revenue, and re-orders
- Enhanced brand loyalty
- Increased customer retention
- Brand Reputation

And don't forget, what you learn through Split Testing can be applied to future campaigns and newsletters, ensuring continuous improvement and professional development. You can also re-use successful titles, subject lines, messages, and graphics! That's a HUGE time saver!

So please don't waste time and money or risk your reputation simply because you think you have to hurry onto your next marketing task. Believe me, they'll be waiting for you when you're done! Split Test and go back to your work with the confidence that you've done everything in your power to ensure your success.

2. Split Testing Examples

Now that you know what split testing is, and what it can do for your email marketing, let's take a some examples of what to split test and why.

2.1 Subject line

This is the most popular test field because when you get it right, you increase your open rates. There are lots of approaches to subject lines, so let's look at a few, but we do encourage you to use GetResponse mail merge to personalize whenever possible:

1. Practical, useful approach: "How to Triple Your CTRs".
2. Dramatic phrase with personalization: "Are Your Emails Irrelevant, Delores?"
3. Curiosity with personalization: "John, We Have the Answer to Your Question!"

More tests may include subject lines with your product or company brand name, a modified call to action (Love diamonds? You'll want these!), or anything you think will make your recipients open your email first!

Tip: Test up to 5 versions of each approach to make sure you're sending the best out to your larger audience...but please be careful and beware of those SPAM words!

2.2 From field

Believe it or not, you have multiple options here as well! Sure, you need to clearly identify yourself by company or product name, or other familiar brand or campaign title; but there are also ways to cut through that inbox clutter with a little creativity and, of course, personalization!

1. From: Name plus Company: "Sara Jonson from XYZ Travel".
2. From: Prestige title plus Company: "From the President of XYZ Travel".
3. From: Product name plus sender: "Your XZY Destination Team".

Tip: Whatever you decide to use in the From line, don't forget it still has to link to your actual email address so the subscriber can respond. After all, that's the goal here!

2.3 Offers and discounts

Getting this right is crucial! We all know the “99 cent” trick, right? What we mean is that it not only matters how big a discount you offer, but also how you present it. There are literally hundreds of ways to go here, so try to put yourself in the potential buyers’ shoes: what would make you want to learn more, or even better, purchase on the spot? Here are a variety of options to get you thinking:

1. Offer: 20% off OR a \$xx discount? It depends partly on the total cost. For example: if 20% is only \$8, so what! But is it’s \$20, I’m listening. So use your best sales instincts!
2. Offer: BOGO (buy one/get one) OR Half Off! (50%). Will your wholesale price get a nice downward bump if you increase sales of certain items? Is it end of year and time to slash inventory? Or are these customers affluent and would simply like the convenience of “2 for 1”? And on and on...you get the picture!
3. Offer: Bundling – means that you will offer a reduced price if customer purchases additional similar (or same) products. This works great when you include recommendations based on behavioral targeting or purchase history!
4. Offer: Different products. I know, this sounds a bit random, as most of you know which products you want to offer and when, BUT...perhaps you could change the color or style slightly, to see what variations attract?

Tip: Important! As with any test, make sure that everything except your test field is constant. In other words, when you test subject lines, don’t change your From fields or offers in any of your test versions.

2.4 Email length

There’s a ton of advice out there on length, but it’s so relative, we think it’s just wiser to split test. Sure, shorter is usually better, but what if you have a riveting story to tell, or a great review to share, and you don’t want to make your readers hop around?

1. Length: Try offering a “taste”, with an invitation to “Read more...”.
2. Length: Or offer loads of variety in short sections, ala USA TODAY? These “content bites” can be easily consumed in a single email, as long as they’re relevant!
3. Length: Try the “instalment” approach if you’re running a bit long. Test a version that offers Part I, but promises Part II in the next bulletin or newsletter.

Tip: Not sure if ALL your content is engaging? Try this: cut it in half, then split test the long and short versions. Chances are you cut the boring stuff all by yourself!

2.5 Design, format and fonts

Okay, now you can test your design, graphics, layout, colors, media, HTML versus plain text – all the cool stuff that can make a huge difference! This is self explanatory, so let's move on...

Tip: It's usually smart to save this for next-to-last because everything else could impact your design, especially length, so play it safe and wait.

2.6 Sending time

Many of you don't do this, but it's very revealing. It's easy to get stats on best days and times to send, right, so why not try out a few to see if you can get an edge?! Just remember that these "times" can vary by industry. For example, Friday may work great for Entertainment or Restaurants, but not for Health and Wellness products

Tip: More than any other factor, timing can fluctuate based on the season, holidays, economy, region, etc. So if you're testing different days out, make sure to do it within the same week to get some consistency in the overall conditions.

We hope this gets you motivated to split test more often. Or at least helps you decide which areas to test to optimize your results. And, of course, if you're completely confident in your campaign positioning, go for it!

But keep this in mind, your competitors aren't using this feature enough according to most ESPs, so why not get a marketing advantage, starting NOW!





3. Get Started Split Testing

To get started split testing, go to messages in the menu-bar and click send split test.

A list of your existing split tests will be displayed, along with the status.

Edit or delete any split test by clicking the links to the far right.

Messages

-  Create Newsletter
-  Newsletter History
-  Send Split-test
-  Preload

List of your Split-Tests

Name	Status	Send On	Mode	Options
summer sale	not finished	2009-07-24 16:08:43	auto	edit split test delete split test
super seat sale	not finished	2009-07-24 16:09:06	auto	edit split test delete split test

Split-Test Name: Create New Split-Test

3.1 Select recipients

To start a new split test, enter a name and click create new split test.

Split-Test Name: Create New Split-Test

First, select which contacts should receive this message from your list of campaigns.

Next Step Click next step to continue.

1 Select Recipients 2 Manage Messages

- Select all contacts list
- sunholidayusa [+]
- exotic_holiday [+]

3.2 Manage messages

The split test can have between two and five messages.

You can click to create a new message now, or to use an existing message.

1 Select Recipients 2 Manage Messages

Split Test Settings

To set your split settings, choose at first at least 2 messages. You have selected **46739** recipients.

[create new message](#) or [use an existing message](#)
(For your split test you must have at least 2 messages.)

3.3 Use existing messages

Choose a message type from your existing follow-ups or newsletters.

Choose type: Follow-up 

- Follow-up
- Newsletter

Select the message you would like to open and click get message.

Subject	Ratings	Created on	Options
Visit Europe, it's the experience of a lifetime!	0.00	2009-07-08 01:49:29	get message

3.4 Edit the message

The message will open into the editor.

You can change the from field, subject line and message contents.

In this split test example we will keep the first message the same.

From: Sunny Holiday <sunholidayusa@microwerkz.com>

Subject: Visit Europe, it's the experience of a lifetime!

Plain Text Wrap long lines Personalize

Hi there [[firstname]],

Never been to Europe before?
It's something you will remember for the rest of your life.

NEXT STEP Click next step to continue.


3.5 Add the second message

The first message will appear in the split test list.

To add the second message, click use an existing message again and select it from the list that is displayed.

create new message or **use an existing message**
(For your split test you must have at least 2 messages.)

Messages

Message Subject	Created On	Options
Visit Europe, it's the experience of a lifetime!	2009-07-24 16:17:29	edit 

Total messages: 1 of 5

3.6 Edit the second message

For this split test example, we will select the same existing message and it will open into the editor.

Subject: Visit Europe, you will love it!

Plain Text Wrap long lines Personalize

Hi there [[firstname]],

This time we will enter a new subject line for the message to see how results compare to the first version.

NEXT STEP Click next step to continue.

3.7 Split test settings

Now that the second message has been added, the split test settings will be displayed.

Choose the number of recipients who should receive the initial split test.

For example, selecting 30% will send each message version to 15% of the contacts.

The actual contact and message numbers are displayed below.

Split Test Settings

30 Value of percent is between 30 and 50

Options
 Manual Automatic
 After sending split-test, decide on best option for sending message.

Your split test settings:

Total selection of your contacts:	46739
Selected percent:	30 %
Contacts count per percent:	14021
Selected / Created Messages:	2
Percent per message:	15 %
Contacts percent per message:	7010

3.8 Manual or automatic results

The best performing message can be sent manually or automatically to the remainder of the recipients.

If you choose automatic, you can set the number of days to wait before the message is sent.

The best performing message can be based on the highest open ratio or click ratio. If you have enabled sales tracking in your account, the message with the best sale quantity or sale income can be used.

Options
 Manual Automatic
 Send email to remaining group after: 7 days.
 Auto send message with higher: **Open Ratio**

- Open Ratio
- Click Ratio
- Sale Quantity Ratio
- Sale Income Ratio

3.9 Send the split test

NEXT STEP After selecting your split test settings, click next step to continue.

Choose whether you would like to send the split test newsletter immediately, or set a later delivery date and time.

Send this Newsletter immediately
 Set the delivery date/time

Click save newsletter to continue.

PREVIOUS STEP

SAVE NEWSLETTER

3.10 Monitor the results

To monitor the results of your split test, go to messages in the menu-bar and click send split test.

The completed and in progress split tests will be displayed.

Click show split stats to the far left.

Messages

- Create Newsletter
- Newsletter History
- Send Split-test**
- Preload

List of your Split-Tests

Name	Status	Send On	Mode	Options	
summer sale	not finished	2009-07-24 16:08:43	auto	edit split test	delete split test
europa	in progress (stage 1)	2009-07-24 16:25:02	auto	show split stats	

The stats will show the number of message opened and links clicked. Sale quantity or sale income will appear if sales tracking is enabled in the account. To immediately send the best performing message, click send to rest.

Data for split-test: europa

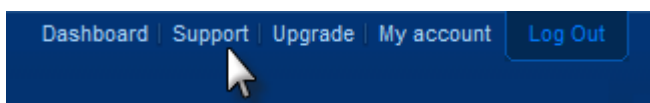
All results: 2

My split messages:

Subject	Sent	Opened	Clicked	Sale Quantities	Sale Incomes	Options
Visit Europe, it's the experience of a lifetime!	0	0	0	0	0	send to rest
Visit Europe, you will love it!	0	0	0	0	0	send to rest

5. Help and information

Start by clicking the **Support** link at the top of the page.



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