

Introduction

You may not like it when people unsubscribe from the email list you've spent hundreds of hours cultivating, but the fact of the matter is that you have to let them go. In fact, you should make it easy for them, even easier than it was to sign up. More importantly, you should recognize that every unsubscriber is an opportunity.

Why make it easy to unsubscribe?

For starters, you want to leave the customer with a positive impression of your brand. Even the unsubscribe process should show how much you care about your customers' experience.

The other reason to make unsubscribing easy is because you enjoy keeping your money, and [the CAN-SPAM act of 2003](#) requires that all email newsletters have **specific and easily understood instructions for unsubscribers**. You are also required to include an unsubscribe option that will stop ALL commercial messages from your business.

How is an unsubsubscriber an opportunity?

Every time someone unsubscribes, you have a chance to learn something. Most email marketing software lets you set up a survey for leaving subscribers, so you can figure out why they left. This makes it easy to spot trends of unsubscribers and potentially segment people like them into another, more targeted list.

There's also an immediate opportunity to leave your customer with a more positive impression of your brand and even to get them following you on social media or through another channel.

Body

Best Practices For Unsubscribers

1. Make the unsubscribe link obvious

Now, we're not suggesting that you put the unsubscribe link at the top of every email in bright, bold lettering, but it should be easy to find and obviously an unsubscribe link. Most newsletters have theirs at the bottom, so customers will look there first. Make sure they find what they're looking for.

If you use the List-Unsubscribe mechanism(which is highly recommended and used by most email marketing software) there will also be an unsubscribe link at the top of every email you send.

2. Add an "Update your Preferences" link

Think about it. Why do you unsubscribe from newsletters? Sometimes it's because the newsletter isn't useful to you anymore or because you've come to genuinely hate the brand, but most of the time it's pure self-defence – you just want to have more room in your inbox. Your customers are the same way. Give them a chance to change their relationship with you instead of ending it.

Not sure what types of alternatives you should provide? Here are a few of the most commonly used options:

- **Change email address** – Sometimes people simply need to be reached at a different email address. Without this option, they have to unsubscribe and re-subscribe to your email list.
- **Frequency** – Since most people are trying to clear their inbox, offering them a lower frequency option is a great idea. If your regular mailing list receives daily emails, offer a weekly summary option. If your emails go out weekly, offer a bimonthly or monthly option. You may even choose to offer all of these options.
- **Pause** – This allows your customers to stop receiving emails temporarily, allowing them to go on vacation without returning to 300 emails from you.
- **Format** – Many people now read most of their email on phones or tablets, so they might want to switch from HTML to a more easily read rich text format.
- **Alternative Emails** – If you have more than one newsletter, give your customers the chance to switch newsletters. Depending on your email software you might even be able to set up a profile where customers can easily change the newsletters they're subscribed to.
- **Channel** – There are many different ways for your customers to connect with you (at least, there should be). Offer them an opportunity to switch to an email RSS feed, connect with you on social media, or even receive direct mail.

3. Ask for feedback

Remember when we talked about unsubscribes being a learning opportunity? Well, this is how you learn. Most email marketing software lets you customize your unsubscribe page and even add a single question survey. You can make this survey either multiple choice or a text box, but if you make it multiple choice be sure to add an "Other" option so people can mention things you haven't thought of.

4. Add social media buttons to the unsubscribe page

Since we already know most of your unsubscribers are trying to clear their inbox, giving them another way to follow you is a great idea. Grab some `free social media buttons` and put them in an obvious place on the unsubscribe page. Not front and centre, but pretty close – you don't want your customers to miss them.

5. Don't send email confirmation

An email confirming the unsubscribe and including a re-subscription link might seem like a good idea, but nobody ever clicks the link and this just becomes another email they have to delete.

6. Make sure all unsubscribes take immediate effect

Technically CAN-Spam and CASL(the Canadian equivalent) both allow you up to 10 days for unsubscribes to legally take effect, but if somebody's unsubscribed from your email list, you don't want them to receive even one more email. Any email sent during this time will likely be flagged as spam.

7. Make unsubscribe lists permanent

CASL only requires unsubscribe links to work for 60 days and CAN-Spam has an even lower requirement of 60 days, but "the link doesn't work" should never be why somebody's still subscribed to your newsletter. Set your unsubscribe links to remain valid forever.

Conclusion/Call-to-action

Spending hours or even days perfecting your unsubscribe emails and page may not sound profitable, but every unsubscriber can become an opportunity almost as valuable as a new subscriber if you're willing to put in the work.

Want to learn more about how you can make the most of every unsubscribe – or how to stop people from unsubscribing in the first place? Check out our [free guide on creating a great email program](#).

Metadescription

Learn to see the opportunity in every unsubscribe – and take advantage of it.