A/B Testing for Beginners: Getting Started with Email Testing

Informa Engage Best Practice
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What is A/B Testing?

A/B testing, also known as split testing, is a method of comparing two different versions of a webpage, email campaign, or marketing message to determine which one performs better. By dividing your audience into two groups and showing each a version, you can gather data on which version generates more clicks, conversions, or other key performance indicators (KPIs).

A/B testing is a valuable tool for businesses to optimize marketing campaigns and improve overall conversion rates. By making data-driven decisions and testing different variations of a campaign, companies can ensure that their marketing strategies are effective and generating the desired results per each campaign.

Why should we utilize A/B testing?

A/B testing allows businesses to make data-driven decisions about marketing strategies. By testing different variations of a campaign, companies can determine which elements (such as headlines, calls to action, or imagery) are most effective at driving conversions and traffic or reducing optouts. This data can then be used to optimize future campaigns, resulting in higher conversion rates and improved ROI. A/B testing also helps avoid assumptions or guesswork, which can lead to ineffective or even harmful marketing campaigns.

How to do A/B testing?

To perform A/B testing, follow these steps:

- Identify the goal: Decide what you want to achieve with your campaign, such as increasing click-through rates or driving more sales.
- Create two variations: Create two versions of your campaign that differ in one key aspect, such as the headline, call-to-action, layout, or subject line.

- Split your audience: First separate your audience into the test group and then the non-test group. Divide the test segment randomly into two groups call variants.
- Show each group one of the two versions. (Your individual variants should not be less than 1,000.)
- Gather data: Monitor the performance of each variant by tracking relevant KPIs, such as click-through rates, conversion rates, or revenue generated. Make sure you give each variant its own keycode / UTM so you can easily track conversion rates.
- Analyze results: After a predetermined amount of time (typically 48 hours), compare the data from both variations to determine which version performed better. Consider external factors that were affected as well. For example, if the goal is to drive improved clicks, but there was also an increase in optouts, include this in the comparison.
- Implement changes: Use the results of your A/B testing to make changes to future campaigns and continue to test and refine your marketing strategies over time.

When you set up your segment, follow the 80/20 rule – this is known as the Pareto Principle. In layman terms, focus on the 20% that will bring you 80% of the results. 10% of your audience will receive variant A and 10% will receive variant B. Depending on which variant performed best, the rest of the 80% will be sent to the remaining group of your audience. If you want to go even further, you can take the 80% and run another A/B test to get an even better result.

Email testing best practices: 4 ideas to A/B test in your email campaigns

Determining the type of A/B testing for your email campaign depends on the specific goals and objectives of the campaign. However, 4 types of A/B testing for email campaigns are:

1. **Subject line testing:** This involves testing two different subject lines to see which one generates higher open rates. (Consider testing your preheader as well.)

Things to test in your subject line:
QUESTIONS:
    [A] Top 5 Backup and DRaaS Considerations for Your Company
    [B] Have you considered DRaaS for you company?
NUMBERS OR EMOJIS:
    [A] [30-Page Report] Small Business Software Trends
    [B] ✨ The Results Are In! 30-Page Benchmark Results
URGENCY:

[A] Download your copy of Cyber-Threats that Could be Impacting Your Business
[B] ATTN – This eBook expires soon

2. **Content testing:** This involves testing two different versions of the email's content to see which one generates higher click-through rates or click-to-open rates. Content testing can involve testing different images, calls-to-action, or messaging / personalization to determine what works best with your larger target audience.

Things to test in your content / copy:
CALL TO ACTION:
 o Buy Now / Purchase / Add to Cart
 o Download Now / Watch Now / Gimme this

COLORS:
Try testing different button colors, it's said that red increases CTR, however, the color in your email should match your landing page so your customer doesn't get confused.

IMAGES:
 o image of people versus product
 o text on image versus no text
 o colorful versus black and white
 o animated GIF versus static image

3. **Sender name testing:** This involves testing two different sender names to see which one
generates higher open rates and click-to-open rates. Sender name testing can help determine whether recipients are more likely to open an email from a specific individual or a company.

Things to test as your sender's name:
SENDERS NAME / FULL NAME / EMAIL ADDRESS:
 [A] Company Name
 [B] Marketers / Editors Name / Sales Rep
 [A] Lauren
 [B] Lauren Majid
 [A] info@informa.com
 [B] lauren.majid@informa.com

4. **Timing testing:** This involves testing two different send times to see which one generates higher open and click-through rates. Timing testing can help determine the

optimal time to send an email based on when the target audience is most likely to engage; one thing to keep in mind when building your segment is time zones.
How long should I run my test for?

The length of time to run an A/B email test depends on the size of the email list and the number of test variations being tested. As a general rule of thumb, it is recommended to run the test for at least 48 hours to ensure that a sufficient number of recipients have had the opportunity to receive and engage with the email.

However, some factors to consider when determining the length of time to run an A/B email test include:

- Sample size: The larger the email list, the longer the test should run to ensure that enough recipients have received and engaged with the email.
- Statistical significance: It's important to ensure that the test results are statistically significant, meaning that the results are not due to chance but rather are a true reflection of the effectiveness of each test variation.

3 Examples of A/B Testing:

1. Subject Line Testing:

   [A] RSVP First_Name_ _QUICK_12!! A Seat Has Opened Up for You
   [B] Extended! Last Chance to Register

Variant	Open Rate
A	32.72%
B	9.75%

2. Copy Length / Tone:

   [A] short copy
   [B] long copy

Variant	Click Through Rate	Click to Open Rate
A	1.02%	5.94%
B	1.44%	7.16%

3. HTML / Plain Text:
   [A] plain text
   [B] HTML

Variant	Click Through Rate	Click to Open Rate
A	0.83%	10.71%
B	0.88%	73.33%

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Better Service, Bigger Margins, and Easy Expansion for Managed Service Provider Cloud Comrade:
http://app.info.pentontech.com/e/er?s=1885539667&lid=101579&elqTrackId=89a40454&e284b189528623b104a4885&elq=3d94e1ffa38b443c9e3607640e093a78&elqaic=

Government Clouds for Federal Agencies: The Public Sector Guide to IaaS Success: http://app.info.pentontech.com/e/er?s=1885539667&lid=101578&elqTrackId=8733e737b9b745974c12f83f091f3383&elq=3d94e1ffa38b443c9e3607640e093a78&elqaid=

The Cloud Infrastructure Report 2020: http://app.info.pentontech.com/e/er?s=1885539667&lid=101577&elqTrackId=c5e0e80d6681401a8d824ef0dd42b686&elq=3d94e1ffa38b443c9e3607640e093a78&elqaid=

Enjoy!
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Better Service, Bigger Margins, and Easy Expansion for Managed Service Provider Cloud Comrade

Government Clouds for Federal Agencies: The Public Sector Guide to IaaS Success

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Questions?

Have questions or interesting in learning more? Contact Lauren Majid or the campaign marketer currently promoting your 1st party digital programs to learn more about what works with your audience.