

WHITE PAPER:

**Ten Tips for More Effective Physician  
Email Marketing**

### Did you know?

Physicians respond mostly to *personalized* content. Customize your email campaign by including statistics, case studies, or product features. This will help reel physicians in.

Marketing to physicians is no easy task—not only are they hard to reach, but they have limited attention spans for content that doesn’t immediately resonate with them. Yet with more and more physicians engaging with vendor content via digital channels, there has never been a better time to perfect email marketing techniques for optimum results.

MedData Group deploys over 20 million email messages for dozens of demand generation campaigns on behalf of our clients each quarter. Our client campaigns span the medical technology, medical device, medical education and pharmaceutical sectors. Drawing on insights gleaned from this wealth of data, the following ten tips encompass important best practices for successfully marketing to physicians via email.

#### 1. Personalize the message to your audience

Physicians respond more frequently to content offers that are personalized or at least tailored or relevant to their individual specialty, and as a result, it’s important to be mindful of the physician’s specialty in developing email marketing offers. If your product or service is relevant to many specialties—such as an EHR platform or practice management solution—it is important tailor your communications by segment to tie the message to each individual specialty group you are looking to engage.

Valuable elements to customize in your campaign include statistics, case studies, or products or product features to highlight. If nothing else, modifying the body of the email to refer to the specialty group will let your recipient know you are mindful of how your solution fits their specialty area. More sophisticated email service providers and customer relationship management platforms will allow you to do some of this customization dynamically without having to create multiple versions of each mailing. Otherwise, your database marketing partner can work with you to accomplish this objective.

**Short & Sweet:**

Don't lose your audience by using a lengthy subject title. Instead, make your subject line between a 50-70 character maximum. This will prevent readers from losing their attention spans.

**2. Make your email content concise and factual**

Physicians respond best to concise, factual communications. Citing reputable third party data or industry reports helps build interest and trust, driving recipients to register and download your content. Physician time is limited, so being able to quickly and clearly articulate the value that the physicians will receive from reading your content will help optimize your conversion rates, as will minimizing the use of marketing jargon.

**3. Optimize subject lines**

Writing subject lines is both art and science: it is important to write a subject line that is compelling, and also to test and adjust along the way. In MedData Group's mailings, we find that using 'challenge' phrases work very well with physicians. For example, a subject line could read: *"EHR: Are you part of the 4% that have had a successful implementation?"* Touching upon areas of concern shows that you understand their pain, and it implies you have a solution to propose.

Character length is also important, and knowing the percentage of your audience on a mobile device will further guide your optimal subject line length. A good rule of thumb is to keep your subject lines at a 50-70 character maximum. Knowing that the number of character the recipient will actually see is highly variable, try to keep the main topical focus far forward in the subject.

Lastly, you can A/B test your subject lines by creating two of the exact same email, changing only the subject line, and analyzing your open rates to see if one subject resonates better with your audience.

**4. Keep mobile top-of-mind**

We all know mobile technology is important. In our recent physician survey, we found that 93% of physicians use their mobile device for professional purposes, with 58% using iPhones and 23% using Android phones.

Developing email content with mobile in mind is especially important with physicians when you are reaching them through their personal email addresses.



**Pay attention to detail:**

Make sure your email platform supports responsive design. By presenting different layouts for mobile vs. desktop users, it will be more visually appealing for your customers and potential customers.

In our last quarter's data, over 56% of our physicians viewed our client emails on a mobile device. This information should help guide you on a range of decisions such as graphic density and layout, the positioning of the call to action, and the length of the email itself. It is also critical to ensure that your email platform supports responsive design, allowing you to present different creative layouts for mobile vs. desktop users. The extra time and effort spent to optimize content for each platform will produce worthwhile results.

### **5. Plan for a long tail of response**

When analyzing direct-to-physician email marketing data, we've always been amazed at how long a time period after the initial drop recipients are still opening and responding to a campaign. In some cases, we've seen meaningful open and click through rates *weeks* after the initial email. Keep this in mind as it relates to the availability of the content asset and the frequency of mail drops to avoid over-mailing.

### **6. Understand mail drop times**

Just as we talked about tailoring messaging based on specialty, drop times are also highly unique based on the specialty group. From our mailings to physicians across virtually all specialty areas, MedData Group has amassed a wealth of information that we use to optimize mail drops for our client mailings. Because different specialty areas exhibit different behaviors and patterns in how and when they respond to emails, segmenting your mailings by specialty and then testing drop times allows you to learn the segment's unique characteristics. Along the way, you may discover some surprising optimum drop times.

In a best-case scenario, your email service provider or customer relationship management tool will allow for predictive mailing where it learns and adapts to each recipient based on prior behaviors. However, even without this functionality, there is a tremendous range of customization you can deploy to achieve improved results.

**Be aware:**

Spam fills up email accounts on a daily basis. Make sure you only use basic HTML and stay away from using CSS code. CSS code is a red flag for most spam filters and most viewers will hesitate to even open the email

## 7. Nurture your leads

Once you or your marketing partners have generated the initial lead, continual and sensible nurture communications are critical to ensure meaningful brand awareness. Given the high probability that a physician will initially open email on a mobile device, it is a best practice to follow up with a thank you email within a few hours with an access link to the original content so the recipient can download it to a their computer or another device.

It is also important to plan for multiple touches with different content offers over time. Whether you have this content in-house or need to source it externally, having different types of content to promote to your audience will improve your engagement. In the campaigns MedData group lead for our clients, we see open rates between 40-60% and click-through rates of 10-25% for follow on outreach.

## 8. Keep it simple to improve deliverability

With spam and content type filtering algorithms constantly changing and being ever more restrictive, it is important to keep the following in mind to optimize deliverability of your message:

- Use only basic HTML
- Do not use any CSS code (red flag for most spam filters)
- Avoid JavaScript, Submission Forms, Layers, or Rich Media
- Minimize graphics and keep graphic-to-text ratio under 25%
- Be extremely careful of spam stop words ([click here for a good example list](#))

## 9. Highlight credentials and peer opinions

The credentials and background of the content author are important to highlight when marketing content to a physician audience. When the author credentials and affiliations are clear and concise, there is a marked increase in click-through rates and conversions. When available, a photograph with relative honorifics and professional affiliations also helps increase results.

## 10. Streamline registration

In any content marketing program—to physicians or otherwise—the design, layout and length of the registration form is a critical factor in determining conversions. With physicians in particular, make sure your registration form only asks what is necessary. Use technology solutions such as server-side lookup based on a unique identifier to append relevant data without adding more work for the recipient. Also, based on your own or other third party databases, decide what additional information you can collect *post-registration* rather than requiring it at the point of download.

It's also important to consider the questions that can be made optional. MedData group has found extremely high response rates for optional qualifying questions, but only when they make sense in the context of the content and landing page.

### **About MedData Group**

MedData Group provides demand generation and data services for providers of healthcare technology, medical devices, medical education and others looking to engage with hard-to-reach physicians and other healthcare professionals.

### **Demand Generation Programs**

Our unique demand generation programs leverage valuable, informative content and a multi-channel engagement approach that generates warmer, higher quality leads. We offer a performance-based lead generation model, which means we are only successful when our clients are successful.

### **Data Licensing**

For clients in need of high quality healthcare contacts to fuel their marketing and sales programs, we offer flexible and affordable access to a robust database of physicians, healthcare administrators and executives, and healthcare IT professionals.

*Interested in learning more about how we can help? [Read more](#) about our services or [contact us](#) today.*

### **Helpful Tip:**

Be efficient with your content. Make sure your registration form only asks what's necessary. Get straight to the point. If you are going to post questions, then they should be made optional.