

WHITE PAPER:

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

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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. 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. Acknowledge physician specialty areas**

Physicians respond more frequently to content offers that are 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 offered across 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.

### **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:



**56% of MedData Group physicians viewed email on a mobile device. The vast majority of them used iPhones to check their email, with Android being a distant second.**

*“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 subjects 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, 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. It’s especially important with physicians if you are reaching them through their personal email addresses. In our last quarter’s data, 56% of our physicians viewed email on a mobile device. The vast majority of them used iPhones to check their email, with Android being a distant second. Knowing this will guide you on a range of decisions about graphic density and layout, whether your platform supports dynamic rendering based on device, and whether the asset you’re promoting is optimized for mobile consumption.

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

We’ve always been amazed in direct-to-physician email marketing how long the time period is after initial drop that the recipients will open and respond 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 tailoring messaging based on specialty is important, drop times are also highly unique based on the specialty group. For example, surgeons open and respond to email very differently than family practitioners. Segmenting your mailings by specialty and then testing them allows you to learn about these unique characteristics. Along the way, you may discover some surprising optimum drop times.



**When the author credentials and affiliations are clear and concise, there is a marked increase in click-through rates and conversions.**

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.

### **7. Nurture your leads**

Once you or your marketing partners have generated the initial front-of-the-funnel 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 manages for our clients, we see open rates between 40-60% and click-through rates of 10-25% for these types of follow-on outreach.

### **8. Provide incentives**

Physicians are just like the rest of us, and contests and other financial incentives can work, when used appropriately. Choosing these incentives will depend on the context of your content asset, as well as regulations for that particular prospect segment. When these incentives are appropriate, don't shy away from them. Our clients have found that incentives as low as a \$10 e-Certificates can lift conversion rates by as much as 6-10 times the original rate. Of course, it is critical to keep in mind how to word and present incentives to ensure you are not flagged as spam or worse, blocked or black-listed by an ISP.

### **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.



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## **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, like server-side lookup based on a unique identifier to append relevant data. 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 solid response rates for optional qualifying questions, 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 using a fundamentally unique approach.

MedData Group publishes Medical Product Guide, the industry's go-to resource that provides clinicians and healthcare professionals with meaningful vendor, product and industry information. By distributing meaningful content to healthcare professionals, we are able to collect more data, glean deeper insights, and reach larger audiences than any other demand generation service. Using behavioral analytics and big-data techniques, our proprietary content and lead management system produces unrivaled insights that we apply to best-in-class marketing practices to achieve unmatched results towards helping our clients reach their business goals.

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