# Growing your ecommerce business with email

dotdigital
engagement cloud

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# Growing your ecommerce business with email

What drives the success of email marketing for ecommerce retailers is its unique ability to connect different data, enrich insight and profile customers. This creates a harmonious customer journey that drives brand value and delivers ROI.

Automating aspects of your email marketing enables you to create compelling one-to-one conversations with your customers at huge scale, from the initial sign-up to longer-term loyalty schemes that increase brand advocacy.

Despite rumours of decline, email continues to be the most powerful of the online channels. And the results reported by marketers speak for themselves: the average ROI for every pound spent on email marketing is £42 (DMA, 2019). Now you can see the important role email plays in your ecommerce strategy.

The average ROI for every pound spent on email marketing is £42
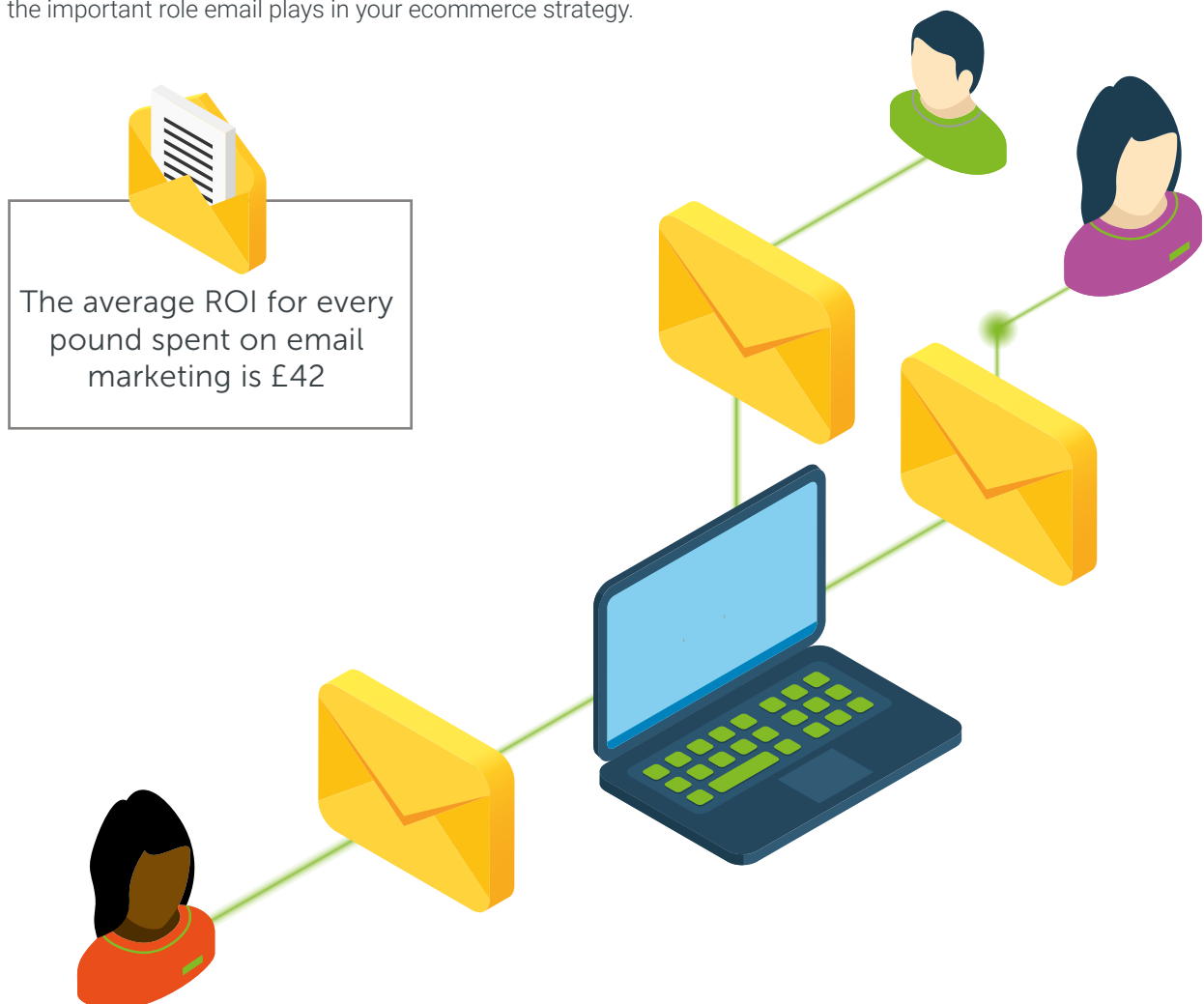
# Growing your contact list

A contact list sets the foundations of your email marketing and is pivotal to its success. The golden rule here is quality over quantity. While it may appear good to have lots of contacts, it's wise to focus on contacts who proactively interact with your brand, using behavioral data to communicate with them effectively.

In an omnichannel world, marketers are faced with tracking prospects and customers in a bid to bridge known and unknown data. Not only does the email address act as a unique contact identifier, it also provides the ability to harness powerful customer data. Context is the new king and without the right depth of insight, it's impossible to deliver relevant, engaging content to your contacts.

**Here are five practical ways to drive up your list acquisition and enrich your contact records:**

### 1. Popovers

Adding a popover to your website is a tried-and-tested way to increase sign-ups. For instance, our client Barbour acquired 20,000 new contacts within three months of implementing its newsletter sign-up popup.

Incorporating an inviting offer into the sign-up process is a popular incentive to encourage people to hand over their details. It doesn't necessarily have to be a discount if you're concerned that this could undermine brand value; a 'free-delivery' offer might be more suitable, for instance. In Engagement Cloud, a quick-and-easy way to create a popover is through our Surveys & Forms tool. Inherent to the platform, this feature aggregates sign-ups automatically and feeds them into your account without the need for developers or coders. It's as simple as that!

### 2. In-store collection

If you have physical stores, you have an opportunity that's not to be missed: the collection of customers' email addresses. This could be done via a self-service iPad or on your POS system – either way, it's a great technique to grow your marketing database at the point of purchase.

If done precisely, you'll be able to connect customers' offline and online shopping habits, providing a fuller picture that'll give you the insight to target and re-market to them effectively.

### 3. E-receipts

Like the method above, offering in-store e-receipts is a practical way to track customers' 'bricks-and-mortar' purchase activity and, in doing so, contributes to the single customer view. Customers who don't necessarily want to consent to your marketing communications can still opt in to receive transactional emails.

### 4. Forms

Forms are a great way to acquire new contacts, as well as enrich the information you hold on existing customers. From preference centers to feedback forms, surveys can help you stay relevant and improve the customer journey.

An email welcome series, for instance, is the perfect opportunity to ask customers what type of content they'd like to receive, ensuring your messages are well suited to their interests.

Likewise, asking for customers' feedback after a purchase is a nice touch as it shows that you care about them and value their views. dotdigital's customer Grenson included a feedback form in its post-purchase program, where it invited customers to evaluate the online shopping experience. This has helped the brand reiterate its core values, while improving the user experience (UX) and product offering.

### 5. Social media and competitions

Hosting contests and competitions on your social networks is an effective method to grow your contact list organically. Thanks to the sharing capabilities between friends and followers, social platforms can help you broaden your brand's reach to related audiences, maximizing email sign-ups.

For example, you might want to do a simple prize draw through a promoted Facebook post to get likes, follows and email addresses. Alternatively, you could promote a photo contest on Instagram to produce some great user-generated content (UGC), helping to develop your online brand community.

# Email marketing basics

Email is a proven way to drive ecommerce growth – but first you need your messages to be opened. Here are some simple rules and tips that'll get you over this hurdle.

### Use a 'Friendly from' name

The 'from' or sender name is the inbox field that tells the customer who's sent them a message. If the sender isn't clear or recognizable, your subscriber may dismiss it as spam. To avoid this and build trust, ensure your 'friendly from' name is consistent and on brand.

### Try stand-out subject lines

Make sure the subject line reflects the email's contents and ensure it's engaging enough to motivate the subscriber to open it. Your email is competing against countless others in the inbox; consumers receive an average of around 30 brand emails a week[1]. As a result, your subject line needs to stand out from the crowd. If you're worried about how this might impact your results, it's sensible to A/B test different variations to see what works best for your brand.

### Make use of pre-header text space

The pre-header is a short summary that follows the subject line within the inbox display, indicating the email's contents. In the 'mobile era', with over 50% of emails now opened on smartphones[2], it's important for ecommerce retailers to use the pre-header text as a tease to boost opens. Like subject lines, you can A/B test the pre-header to see what grabs the subscriber's attention.

"If the pre-header isn't included, the text will fall to the next item displayed, such as 'unsubscribe from this email', which is not as positive as a catchy snippet of text".

Ger Ashby, Creative Director at dotdigital.

1. Consumer Email Tracker Report – DMA, 2017
2. State of Email Report – Litmus, 2017

# Automated email programs that'll grow your business

We've sourced 10 of the best revenue-driving email programs used by successful ecommerce retailers across the globe. From a triggered welcome message to re-engagement programs that reignite the love for your brand, you can automate emails to communicate throughout the customer lifecycle.

## 1. Welcome program

A welcome program is the most important automation to implement; not only is it thoughtful to thank a subscriber for signing up, it's a prime opportunity to introduce your brand and collect valuable customer data, such as click-through behavior and preferences. In doing so, you'll be creating the right first impression and maximizing your chances of turning prospects into customers.

**Sending a welcome email:**

- Reassures prospects by communicating the benefits of joining your mailing list
- Builds brand credibility by showcasing your customer reviews, UGC and links to social media communities
- Entices prospects with current offers, such as a welcome discount code
- Brings the subscriber closer to your brand, by sharing inspirational tips, product line previews and invitations to exclusive events

Consumers expect to receive a 'thank you' for signing up at the very least. What's more, welcome campaigns enjoy a substantially higher open rate than other types of marketing messages – in 2017, the average open rate for acquisition emails surged to 72%[3]. Despite this, some brands still fail to send a welcome email and this was evident from our study of 100 retailers in the 2017 'Hitting The Mark' benchmark report: 14 didn't thank us for signing up.

2017, the average open rate for acquisition emails surged to 72%.



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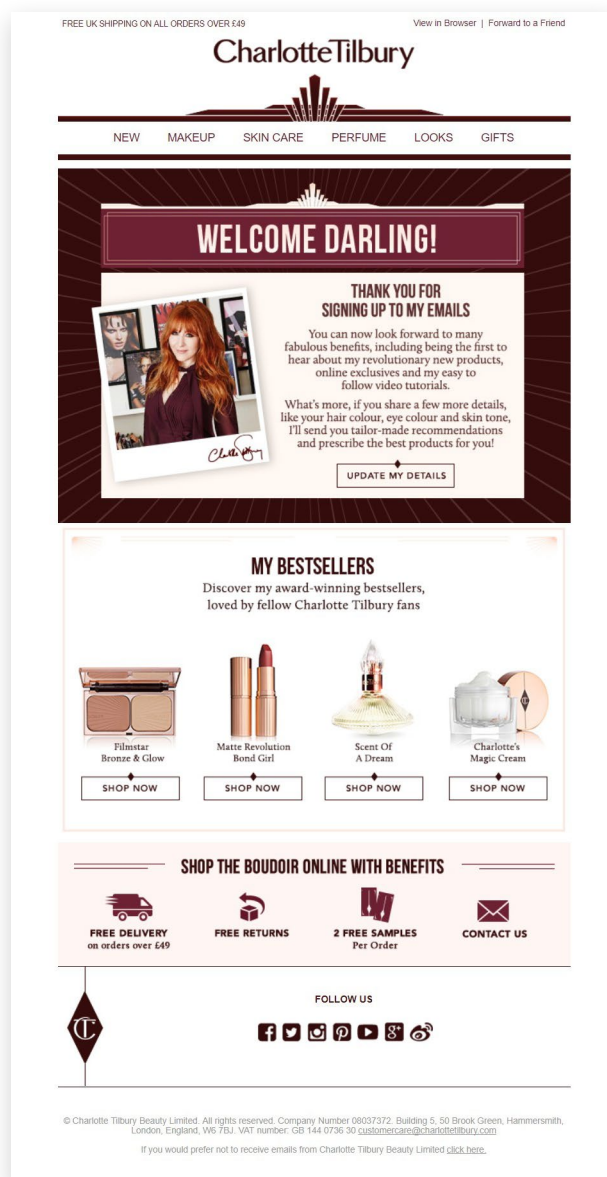
Charlotte Tilbury's striking welcome email follows best-practice from top to bottom. This stylish, on-brand communication warmly welcomes the subscriber, inviting them to share details such as hair colour, eye colour and skin tone, ensuring that future product recommendations are super-relevant.

3. eMarkerter: Email total open rates, by message type, Q1 2017

## 2. Transactional emails

Transactional emails are triggered off the back of a customer-initiated action, such as a purchase, but you'll find that many brand examples are generic and uninspiring. A bog-standard transactional email can disrupt the brand experience customers have had thus far and it's something that's easily fixed if you feed your transactional data into your email marketing automation platform. Engagement Cloud's transactional email feature enables you to send on-brand communications that mirror your marketing's creative tone, plus you can also:

- Say thank you to the customer for their purchase
- Confirm payment, product details and delivery
- Introduce the customer to your social media communities
- Encourage customers to sign up to your marketing emails during this 'honeymoon period'
- Focus on all-star customer service (being proactive and providing contact details can help you solve any potential issues and avoid negative reviews and social mentions)



### BOODLES
1798

Dear Guest,

Thank you for your recent Boodles order. The team will email you with an update on its status within the next 48 hours.

If you would like to specify a delivery day please just let us know and we will endeavour to accommodate this.

If you would like any further assistance or information in the meantime, please contact a member of the team at onlineteam@boodles.com or on 020 7493 3240.

Kind regards
The Boodles Online Team

### Your Order #1000001549

Placed on 18 October 2017 11:22:24 GMT+01:00

**Billing Info**

erica cactus
19 kirkstall road
london, sw2 4hd
United Kingdom
T: 07903300000

**Shipping Info**

erica cactus
19 kirkstall road
london, sw2 4hd
United Kingdom
T: 07903300000

**Payment Method**

Bank Transfer Payment
Please make your transfer using the relevant details.

Bank: Barclays Bank

48 & 50B Lord Street
Liverpool
L2 1TD

Sort Code: 20-51-01
Account Number: 03913392
Account Name: Boodle & Dunthorne Ltd.

IBAN: GB75 BARC 2051 0103 9133 92
SWIFT code: BARCGB22

| Items | Qty | Price |
|---|---|---|
| **Love Letter White Gold Pendant** SKU: 0638600WDCA | 1 | £600.00 |
| *LettersOptions* E | | |
| | Subtotal | £500.00 |
| | Shipping & Handling | £0.00 |
| | Tax | £100.00 |
| | **Grand Total** | **£600.00** |

onlineteam@boodles.com
+44(0)20 7493 3240

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## 3. Post-purchase programs

A post-purchase program engages with the customer at a different stage of the lifecycle compared to the welcome program, however they both share similar principles. Intended to build further credibility, a post-purchase email makes the customer feel excited about the product they've just bought and brings them even closer to your brand.

**Benefits:**

• Saying 'thank you' to the customer for their purchase drives loyalty and brand advocacy

• Providing tips on the product that's been purchased adds brand value and minimizes returns

• Recommending other products can develop repeat purchase opportunities, however this should be done subtly

• Collecting additional data at this point allows you to further personalize the online experience of your customers

Reaching out to customers after a purchase is not only polite, but it can go a long way to make their online shopping experience a memorable one. It's a great opportunity for you to re-energize the customer relationship and ensure your brand is front of mind.

One way to do this is to create and send a survey to collect valuable feedback on the purchase, as it can help drive improvements to your website, the checkout process and product offering.

**Here are a few considerations:**

- Ensure the email is timely so the customer's experience remains fresh – within a couple of days of delivery is ideal if it makes sense for your product offering

- Including an image of the product purchased brings visual relevancy to the email, and reminds the customer which item they're reviewing

- Provide customer service details so that the customer can resolve any issues directly with you, avoiding potentially negative reviews

- Incentives are an effective way to boost customers' response rate, making reviews seem less of a chore

- Use marketing automation to thank them after they've left feedback – this ensures the customer experience is consistent



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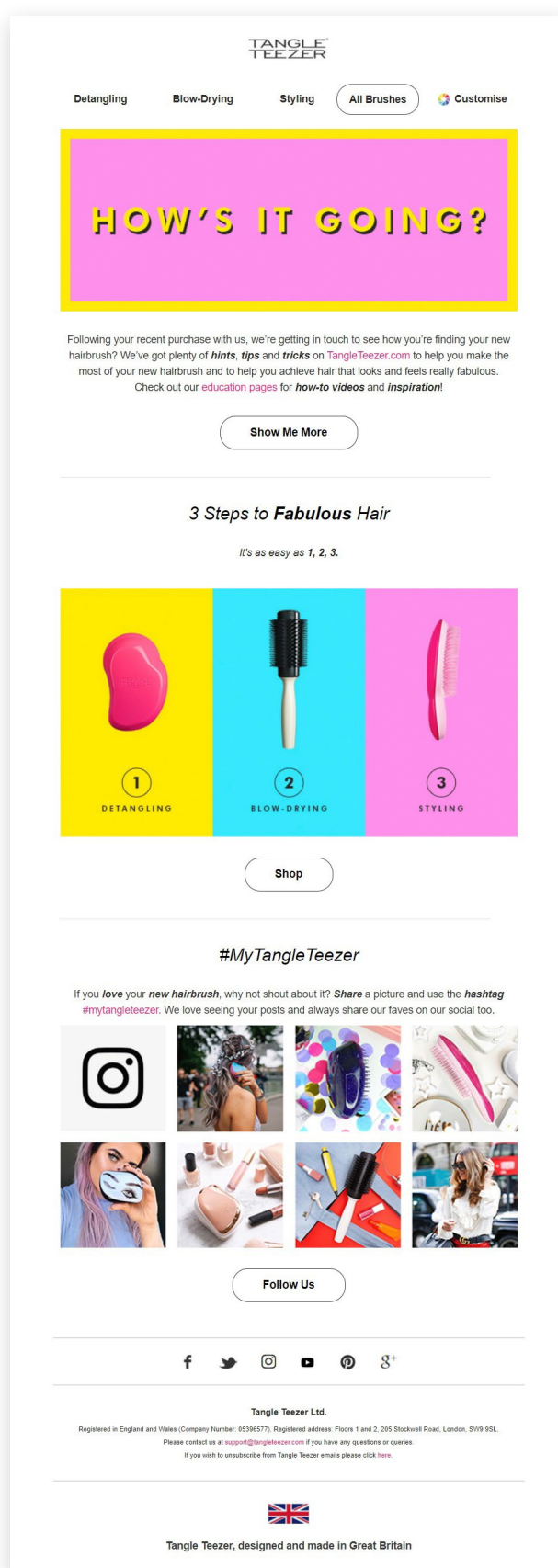
With product-focused tips and a great use of UGC, Tangle Teezer does a brilliant job of maximizing brand advocacy through its post-purchase email.
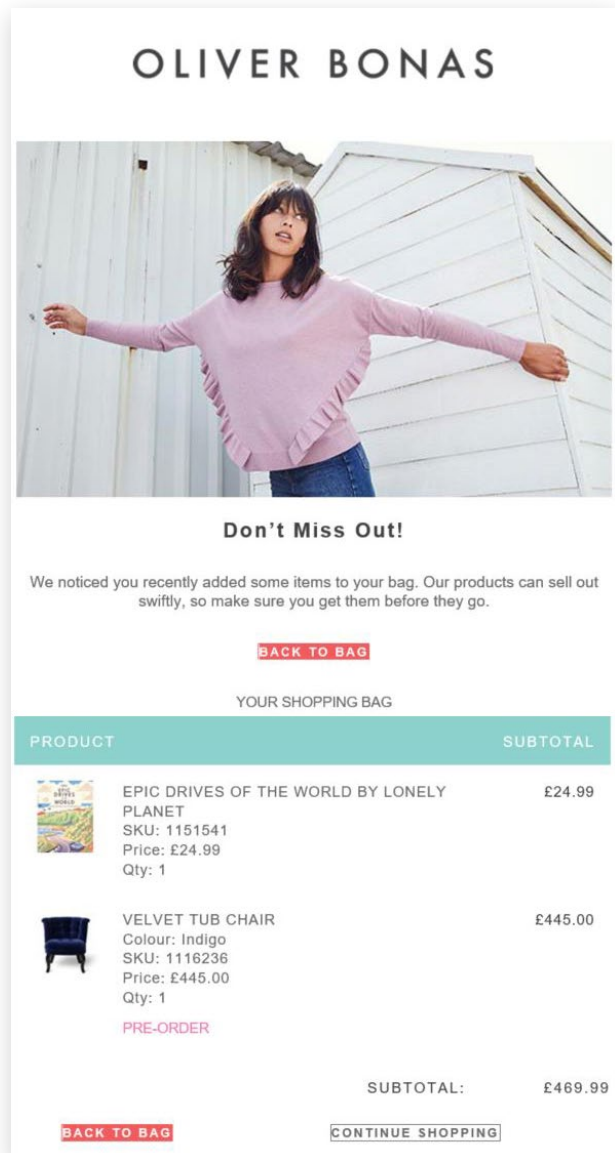
## 4. Abandoned cart programs

As consumers, various factors can cause us to abandon the checkout process - from unexpected shipping costs to difficult site navigation.

What percentage of shopping carts do you think are abandoned online? The industry average is a staggering 77%[4] (Source: Econsultancy, 2017). An effective abandoned cart program focuses on minimizing that number by addressing the reasons why your customer might've quit before buying.

**These emails can:**

- Remind the visitor that the items in their cart have been saved, so if they wish to check out it'll be quick and easy
- Summarise the delivery options and explain the suitability and value for money of each
- Reemphasize brand credibility by providing links to reviews, testimonials and social media communities
- Reinforce the fear of missing out by employing urgency into the message; you could include a limited-time offer or a product stock alert
- Recommend related items alongside the contents of the customer's saved cart to show them more options or increase the value of their order

Try sending the first reminder message within an hour of the cart being abandoned, and then test and adapt based on your results. Depending on your brand, you may want to implement a two-stage or three-stage abandoned cart program, as they can be effective in re-engaging prospects.

A typical abandoned cart program would look like this:
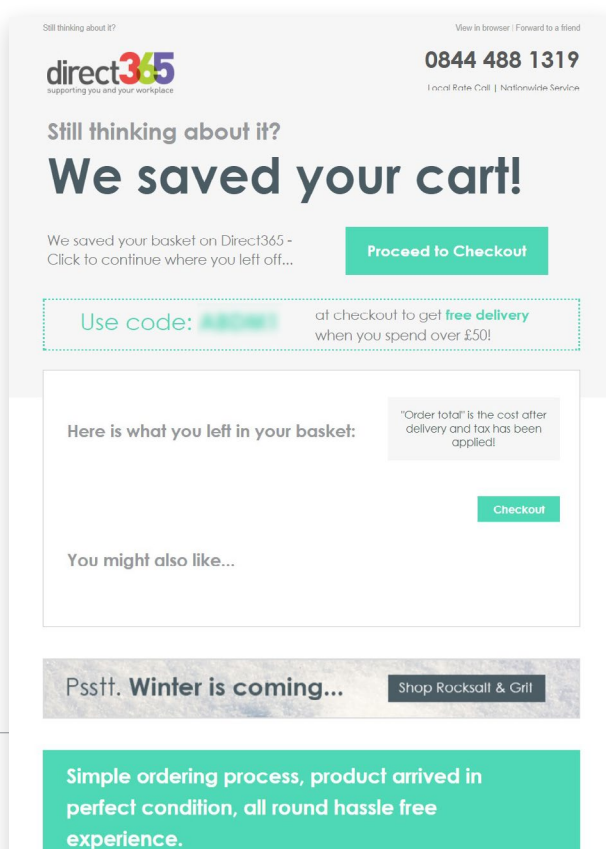
**Triggered email 1**

Sent within an hour of the cart abandonment. Reach out to your customer to see if they need any help, and remind them of the items in the cart. Provide a clear CTA for them to return to the cart and complete their purchase.

**Triggered email 2**

Sent one day after the first email. Point out that the contents of their cart are still saved, and some benefits of shopping with you over a competitor.

**Triggered email 3**

Sent one week after the second email, offering your customer a unique discount code to urge them to complete the sale.

4. https://www.econsultancy.com/blog/69561-why-online-shoppers-abandon-their-baskets-and-how-to-stop-them

## 5. Abandoned browse

Customers who browse your website and then leave aren't necessary lost forever – they can be tempted back. With Engagement Cloud's web-tracking behavior tool, you can set up an effective abandoned browse program that sends customers relevant content based on their browse history. The intention is to lure them back and encourage them to take the desired action.

Customers to target are those who look ripe for conversion – i.e. have browsed a product catalogue or an event booking page. Although they may not have demonstrated the same level of buying intent as the abandoned cart visitor, the ROI can still be healthy.

**Elements to include in your abandoned browse emails to wavering customers:**

- Send an email soon after abandonment – within one hour is ideal
- Help the customer choose the right product/service by making suggestions based on the data you hold
- Educate them about your brand – make sure your email design reflects your website and incorporates relevant, inspirational content
- Provide them with customer service information such as contact center opening hours and link them to reviews and testimonials
- Let customers know about additional benefits attached to the product or service – this could be a special offer or free delivery/returns

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The National Gallery's abandoned browse emails maximize conversion through an intelligent use of behavioral data. After the webpage is abandoned, a triggered email is sent to the subscriber reminding them to book the exhibition they were viewing online. The message will differ depending on people's credentials; for example, members are incentivized to book their free members' ticket, whereas non-members are prompted to either buy a ticket or become a member and then book for free.
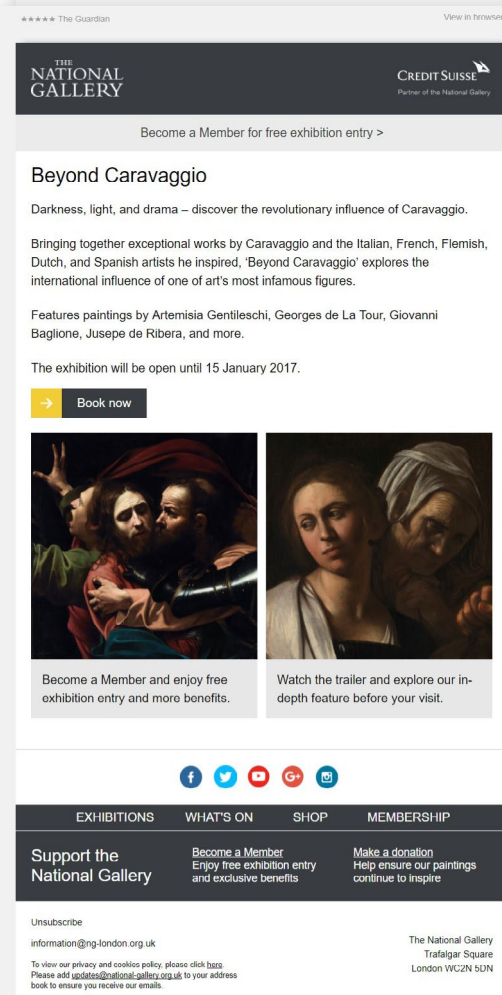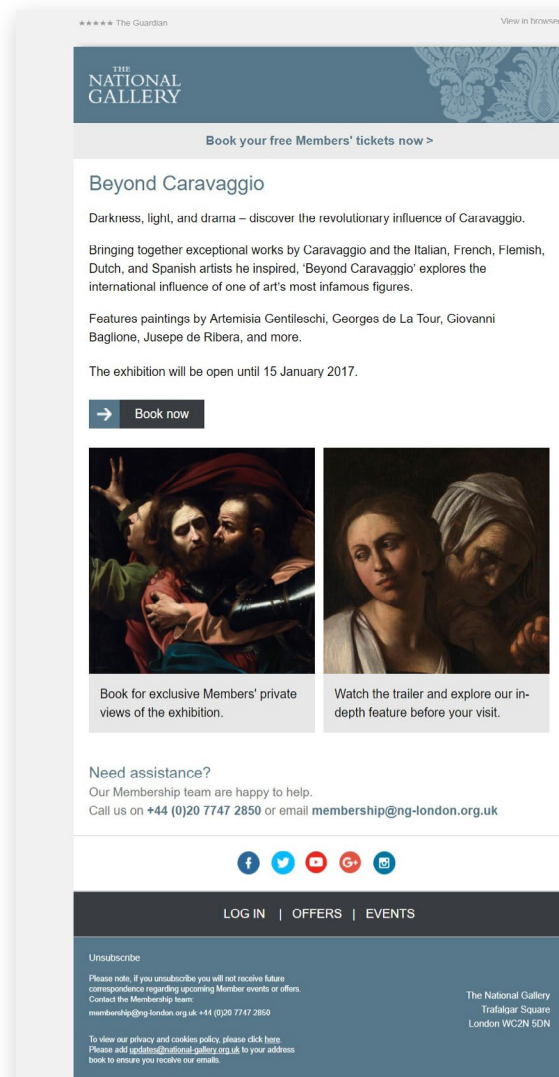
## 6. Product replenishment programs

Marketing automation is a super-effective way of increasing repeat sales and recurring revenue, particularly if your products have a short lifespan and need to be replenished. Examples include make-up, moisturisers and baby clothes.

**A powerful replenishment program will help you to:**

- Pinpoint the product lifecycle and the common triggers for re-stocking

- Segment customers based on their buying habits i.e. those who re-stock earlier or more frequently – and build corresponding programs that tailor each group

- Test incentives and CTAs to maximize conversions – for example, the performance of discount codes may vary depending on the audience

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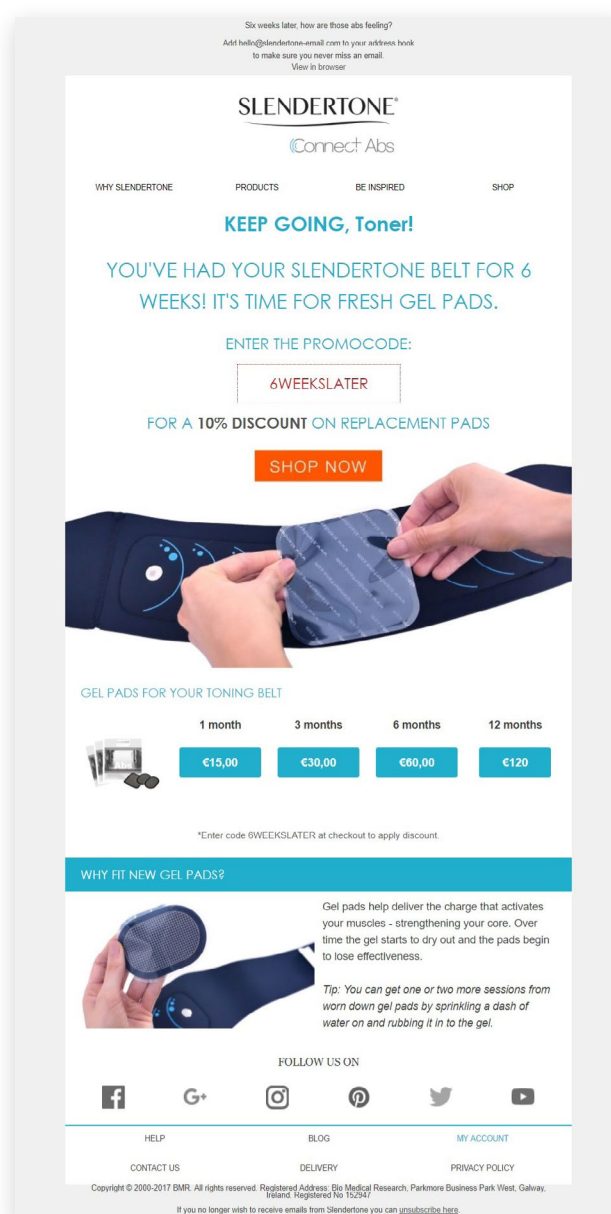
This replenishment email from Slendertone is on point; the tailored message is motivating the customer to continue their toning regime, urging them to replace the gel pads of their belt with a promotional discount code.

## 7. Customer retention

### Brand building

When setting up a customer retention program, the focus isn't on sales but rather on building that all-important customer relationship which'll pay dividends in the long term. By keeping your brand at the forefront of customers' minds, you can convert their initial indifference into advocacy. To achieve this, value-added content should be the star of the show.

**Here are some value-add content ideas that can give your brand some great exposure:**

- Contests and prize draws
- Video content
- Event invitations with a customer exclusivity factor
- UGC, such as Instagram posts
- New product reviews
- Identification of possible pain-points with an aim to rectify them
- Customer feedback forms – crucial in implementing a successful retention program that runs off the back of transactional and customer profiling data
- Product how-to guides/care hints and tips

### VIP customers

Segmentation allows you to group likeminded customers based on their credentials and target them with the most appropriate products and content. For example, by segmenting your customers based on high spend, you can create an automation program that rewards their greater loyalty. The RFM[5] model – when applied to email marketing – helps us understand who our first-rate customers are and who we should focus on retaining. For instance, your ideal VIP customer might be one whose average order value (AOV) is over £500, who purchases twice a month, and whose last purchase was two weeks ago. By investing in retaining your VIP segment, you'll be maximizing your email revenue generation.

**Your marketing automation platform helps you to focus the necessary data points to profile your best customers:**

- Most recent purchases and visits
- Overall frequency of purchases and visits
- Average order value (AOV)
- Total lifetime spend
- Email marketing engagement – e.g. opens and click-throughs
- Product returns
- Reviews and social engagement

### Loyalty program

As an online retailer, introducing a loyalty scheme based on points is a must. By utilizing your contacts' preferences and purchase history, you're able to set up an email automation that incentivizes and rewards customer loyally. Depending on the stickiness of the customer, you may want to create different programs that encourage them to spend more and earn more.



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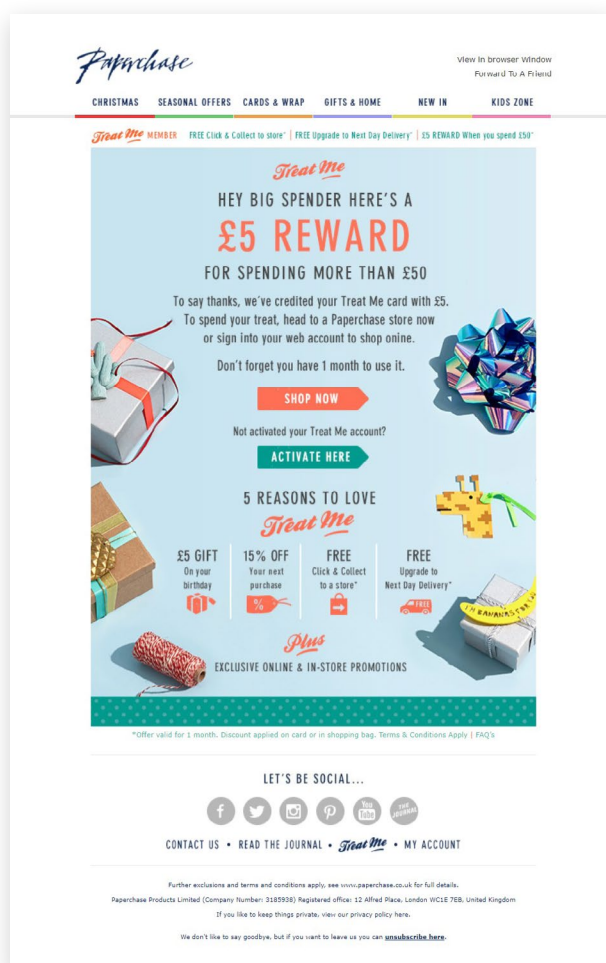
Paperchase's retention strategy is focused on growing customer loyalty. This email rewards the customer for their recent purchase with a £5 gift, which can be used once their 'treat me' card has been activated. Paperchase's loyalty scheme treats customers with a birthday gift, a discount off their next purchase and a free upgrade to next-day delivery.

5. Recency, frequency, monetary

## 8. Recommendation and upsell programs

Personalizing your content around an individual customer is a proven revenue-driving technique. With a marketing automation platform that seamlessly syncs your ecommerce data, it's quick and easy to leverage your customers' online behavior, combine their preferences, and push smart and predictive product recommendations.

### Here are a few pointers to kickstart your programs:

- Test your cross-sell/upsell automation program by segmenting on AOV or last order date, to identify those groups that are likelier to buy from you again
- Base purchase recommendations on explicit preferences, product categories browsed, products added to carts, added to wishlists, previously purchased
- Pull in images of recommended products
- Incorporate value-added content that complements the recommendations
- Link through to customer reviews that rate the recommended purchases
- Encourage customers to leave reviews that widen your P2P marketing (peer-to-peer)
- Test the use of unique promotion discount codes in cross-sell/upsell email programs

## 9. Lost customer

It's inevitable that some customers will stray from your brand over time. However, with the right marketing tech in place, you'll be able to re-target customers and reignite their interest before they become 'lost'. To understand who's a prime target, use the last purchased date and last login date from your ecommerce platform to trigger a customer 'winback' program.

- Drive relevant and personalized messages based on customers' aggregated behavioural and purchase history
- Stimulate re-engagement by offering incentives such as money-off discounts
- Learn and adapt: capture customer feedback on why they lapsed
- Include compelling value-added content that inspires customers and builds brand advocacy

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We really liked Wild and Gorgeous's 'miss you' email – the tone of voice is warm and the look and feel is inviting. What's more, the message tempts the lapsed customer to return with a promotional discount code.
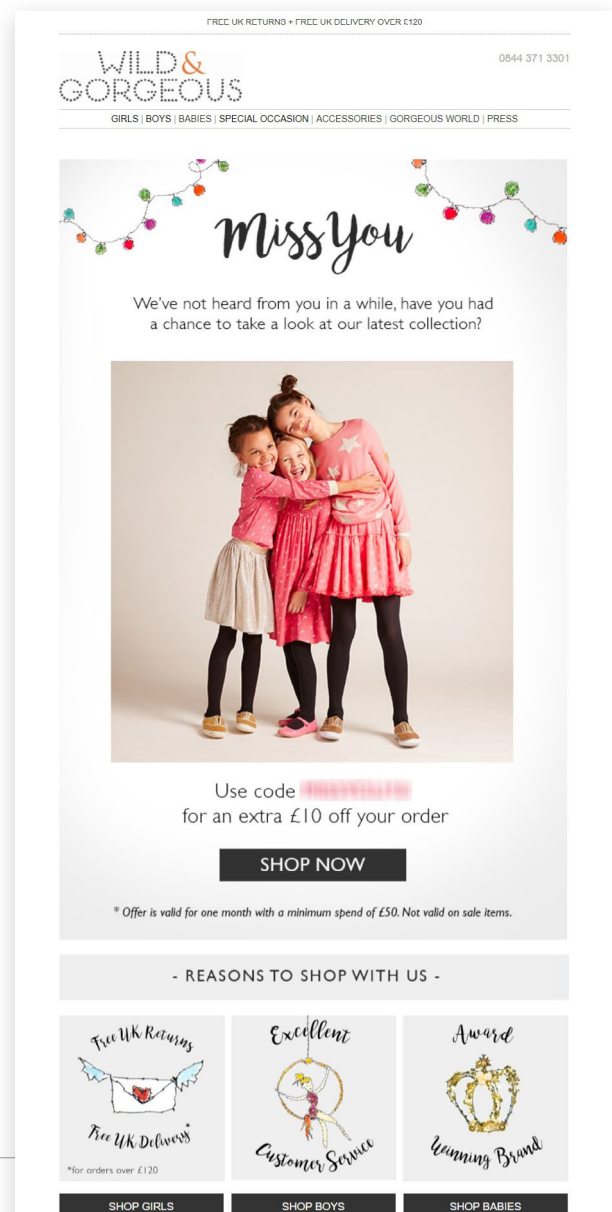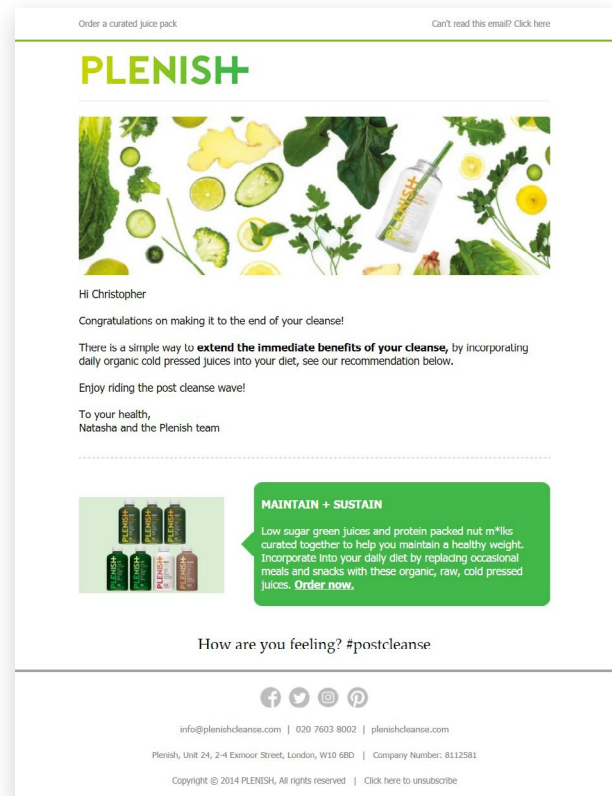
## 10. Date-driven programs

### Personalized date programs

Emails triggered by dates that are meaningful to the customer – such as birthdays or anniversaries – are simple quick-wins that generate that all-important excitement factor. Delivering content that is date-sensitive isn't just relevant to the customer, but it also taps into their emotions and has a higher likelihood of engagement.

### Here are some tips on how to implement a date-based program:

• Offer a unique discount code, free sample or gift to celebrate the occasion

• Encourage the customer to spend some of their birthday money on your site

• Invite them to create and share wishlists with friends and relatives

• Recommend products based on an important life milestone or where the customer sits in the lifecycle

### Calendar-driven programs

The holidays represent a profitable time of year for retailers and, as such, justify separate automation programs for specific celebrations such as Halloween or Valentine's Day. Date-triggered emails really start to intensify between November and December, with brands homing in on seasonal shopping rituals such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Every key holiday is a great opportunity for brands to show off their creative flair: Barbour's loveable 'The Snowman and The Snowdog' film is a wonderful example which sparks that feel-good factor.

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Jo Jo Maman Bébé implemented a 'pregnancy calendar' program which pushes tips, advice and product recommendations to customers based around their due date. From preparing the nursery to baby shower inspiration, these highly relevant and meaningful messages tap into every important stage of the customer's pregnancy.

## When it's okay to 'send to all'

Marketing automation has revolutionized email, allowing brands to massively scale their communication output. It enables you to move away from the 'all-purpose' kinds of marketing emails to well-timed, personalized content that has a greater effect on the end recipient. Having said that, there are still occasions where mass sends to your contact list are appropriate and will be well received by your audience.

### Newsletters

If your brand consistently publishes blog posts and other types of content that rouse interest among customers, then a regular newsletter highlighting a snippet of the most popular pieces could be an effective way to keep subscribers engaged. It's advisable to change the 'friendly from' name to something that signposts the email as a newsletter.

### Information emails

If there's been a key change to your business that'll affect customers, it's important to tell them. This could be an update to your Terms and Conditions or a new guaranteed next-day delivery service, for instance. The latter may well help convert prospects into paying customers and encourage existing ones to repeat purchase.

Here at dotdigital, we deliver our own monthly newsletter called 'dotdigital digest' which includes the latest news about our product and links to download recently published content. We consistently achieve an average click rate of around 21%. Given that we're not offering an incentive or a special offer, this is a very positive sign of engagement.

### Product launches

Got a new product innovation you want to shout about? If your brand sells one product type, such as a range of TVs, your customers have already shown interest in what you do; after all, they joined your mailing list. A product launch email featuring next-generation products could capture the curious and motivate them to re-purchase or upgrade.

### Email is the essence of ecommerce

We hope that this guide has highlighted the importance of email marketing automation in your ecommerce strategy.

The first step is to grow your contact list organically with quality leads and use all the tools available to you to enrich your data. There's no doubt that the right data will help your opportunities flourish, allowing you to develop meaningful relationships with your customers; whether it's encouraging that initial sale, delivering inspirational content or reviving lapsed customers.

### Seasonal events

For annual events such as Halloween and the Holidays, 'spooktacular' or festive emails are more playful and light-hearted and are suitable to send to every customer.

# The power of integrated email marketing automation at your fingertips

With a wide range of ecommerce integrations available to customers, dotdigital's commitment to empowering marketers is stronger than ever.

dotdigital Engagement Cloud offers a robust integration with Magento, of which we're a Premier Technology Partner. Through seamless connectivity, you can synchronize rich customer data in real-time, enjoy enhanced segmentation, and drive powerful, hyper-targeted messages to key contacts.

**What's more, dotdigital Engagement Cloud offers the Commerce Flow connector for:**

Magento
An Adobe Company

shopify

shopifyplus

WOO COMMERCE

BIGCOMMERCE

shopware

Engagement Cloud's Commerce Flow syncs two of your company's most powerful systems: your email marketing automation software and ecommerce platform. Our team will help you connect the two platforms and once set up, your contact, product and order data automatically flows into your account to supercharge your marketing.

At dotdigital, we're committed to continually developing our best-in-class integrations, ensuring marketers are firmly at the steering wheel.
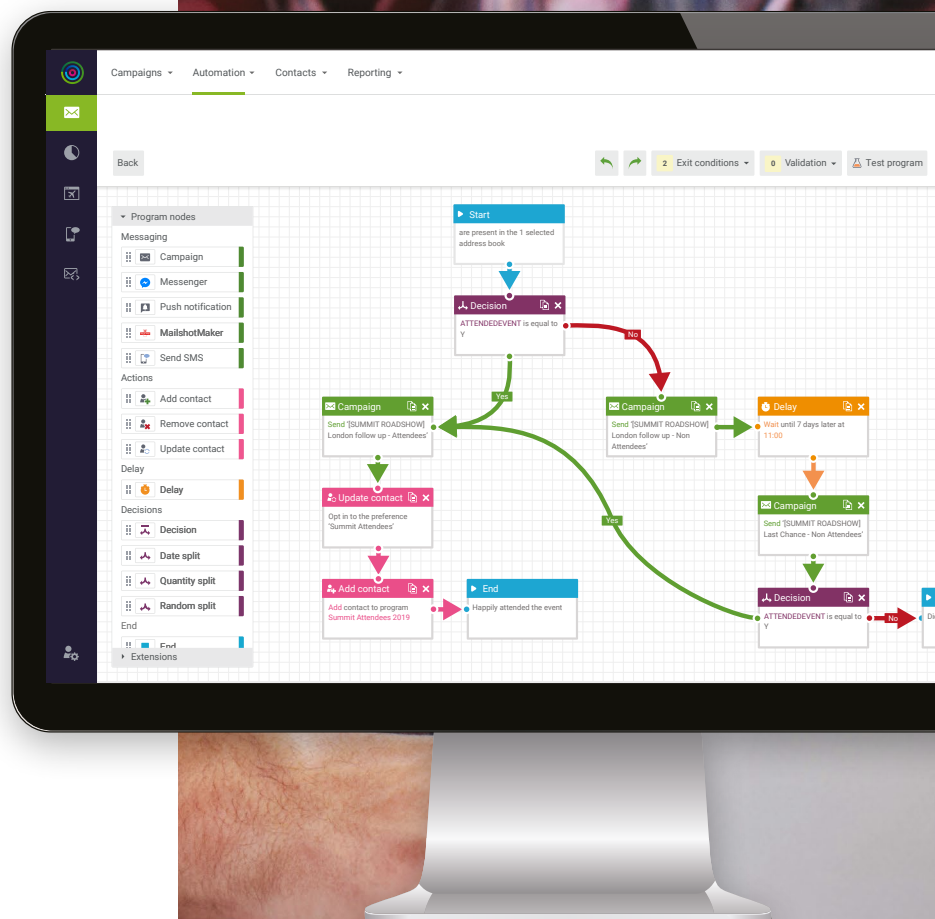
# The dotdigital difference

**Empowering technology**
Super-powerful and easy to use – so you can do it all yourself.

**Learning**
We help you get smarter with inspiring events and action-packed content.

**Service**
If you're busy or short-staffed, we can do it all for you.

**Expertise**
We've been by your side for 20 years; our combined heritage and experience puts you in good hands.

**Innovation**
Our freedom to innovate means we're always looking ahead.

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