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Vividus specialises in healthcare marketing for hospitals, medical centres, GP and specialist practices, and healthcare businesses.



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## NEW RESEARCH SUPPORTS EMAIL MARKETING FOR MEDICAL PRACTICES

VIVIDUS MARKETING DIRECTOR JASON BORODY OUTLINES THE BEST WAY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EMAIL MARKETING.

Regular, planned, intentional communications directly influence the relationship you have with patients and referral sources. This in turn impacts trust, reputation, and awareness, which are important factors in referral patterns and treatment acceptance.

Email (and electronic newsletters) remain an important communication channel with 91 per cent of people checking their email daily, 66 per cent selecting services and products as a result of email communications, and subscription rate growth of 11 per cent in the last year (according to a study by Yesmail).

Many practices however have questions about how they can use email communications more effectively.

Recent studies of more than 100 billion emails sent in 2014 and 2015 by more than 650,000 business across 40 countries to business and business to consumer entities, reveals that sending more personalised email campaigns can result in open rates being lifted by nearly 150 per cent. The study also demonstrated that mobile design and sender's industry significantly impact open rates.

Segmenting email lists to create customised email campaigns is a commonly accepted best practice and this study supports that theory. Campaigns sent to 35 or fewer subscribers (suggesting segmentation), have the highest open rate on average (55 per cent), far exceeding the overall average open rate (22 per cent). Meanwhile, campaigns sent to more than 7,500 subscribers (suggesting low personalisation) averaged about a 14 per cent open rate.

This study provides strong proof that personalising email campaigns in order to speak directly to specific interests and wants of a subscriber, strengthens your relationship with subscribers, facilitates meaningful education, creates more authentic connections, and results in better campaign performance.

Medical practices generally enjoy higher click-through rates than other industries. This same trend is true among average open rates:

- Religious organisations 38 per cent
- Medical services 32 per cent

- Non-profit 29 per cent
- Professional services 26 per cent
- Retail 18 per cent

Medical practices generally have a passionate and engaged subscriber base that values regular updates and educational communications. Examples of relevant, meaningful communications that will inevitably result in higher open rates might include promotional emails, content-based newsletters, automated emails, and transactional messages such as:

- A GP providing seasonal information on flu and allergy seasons, or local health trends such as an increase in chickenpox cases.
- Obstetricians using an automated weekly email campaign to provide updates on baby's development and changes mum may be experiencing.
- Orthopaedic surgeons providing a multi-message automated campaign outlining recovery stages, visitation reminders and exercise suggestions post surgery.
- New patients receiving pre-visit forms and instructions, and then a post-visit electronic practice information kit with their electronic receipt.

Mobile devices now make up more than half of all opens. Smartphones account for 39 per cent of all email opens, and tablets account for 12 per cent. Research also suggests that up to 75 per cent of subscribers will delete an email if it cannot be easily read on a mobile device. The combination of these results provides a clear conclusion – medical practices must have a mobile-first mindset when it comes to their email marketing. I would also recommend that this mobile-first mentality must also extend to practice websites.

Email marketing is a vital component of your practice's marketing mix for educating, building relationship and reputation management. For best results and return on investment, ensure that you provide your segmented audiences with engaging and meaningful content that is optimised for mobile devices. For more email marketing advice download our free guide at [www.vividus.com.au/healthcare-email-guide](http://www.vividus.com.au/healthcare-email-guide).