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## UNDERGROUND ECOM RESOURCES

11 Tough Questions  
Every Ecom Brand Needs To Ask  
Email Marketing Agencies

# 11 Tough Questions Every Ecom Brand Needs To Ask *Before* Partnering With An Ecom Email Marketing Agency

## 1. Do You Conduct A Brand Review?

To be profitable - and simultaneously sustain and build the reputation and relationship with your list, a thorough brand review is a must before any design or copy is created. Before any campaign or automation is sent, your partners need to understand the story of your brand, the philosophy, voice, tone, colors, fonts and ideologies of your brand in order to seamlessly communicate those items within each and every email that is sent. To ignore this is to risk irreparable harm to your brand and reputation as well as your lists receptivity to your marketing in future.

## 2. Tell Me About Your Domain & Technical Email Deliverability Knowledge?

What happens if you send emails and you land in the spam folder? Among the top items that are important to understand is how to make sure your domain health and email deliverability are in tip top condition year round. Things like making sure you are not blacklisted, that your domain has all the vital text records like DMARC, DKIM and SPF correctly installed on your DNS settings and keeping a close watch on them is crucial to your email marketing success.

Apart from the domain technicalities, you need to keep a close watch on how your emails are being sent, and everything from frequency and timing is not only important to the short term success but also to the long-term profitability as well.

### **3. How Do You Utilize Segmentation Within Your Email Marketing?**

Most email marketing today looks reminiscent of the holiday e-cards from the 90's. The only customization is really the first name. Apart from that, most emails today are "mass blasted" out to the entire list, ignoring a host of crucial elements that can dramatically boost your conversions by a factor of 20-30% per month.

Imagine if you were able to send a specific email campaign to different individuals on your list, based upon the specific actions that they have taken. What would that mean to your revenue and how would that increase your value in the eyes of your list? Understanding segmentation means understanding how to parse and delineate between behaviors and send the most relevant campaigns at the level of the individual, not the entire list.

### **4. Are You Creating Custom Designs Or Have You Used These Email Designs Before?**

You may already be aware of the fact that most agencies are using baseline templates to run all of their campaigns. The problem that creates is that you are no longer adhering to your brand in terms of tone, language, design elements and stylization. Check for cookie cutter approaches by asking if they are creating your email designs individually, or if they are using templates as their base.

### **5. Do You Offer An ROI, Money-Back Guarantee?**

Email marketing done right is predictable, safe and reliable and if you are working with an experienced agency, they will always put their money where their mouth is. Look for accountability, look for progress reports and a project manager who is in touch with you each month to review your revenue generated as a result of marketing campaigns and automations deployed.

## 6. Do You Have A GDPR & CAN-SPAM Act Compliant Best Practices Policy?

The average GDPR fine in 2019 is €66,000. Many can be significantly higher than that based upon the amount of emails that were sent in violation of those laws. For CAN-SPAM Act violations, fines begin at \$16,000 with no maximum penalty. What this means, is that your email marketing agency needs to be fully aware of both liabilities and how to operate within the law.

## 7. How Does Your Team Handle Campaign Planning?

The answer you're looking for is "flexible and dynamic". Most agencies you come across for efficiency sake will plan out your content weeks or even months in advance. What this means is that you are unable to react to and seize short term opportunities because of a lack of flexibility. What this really means is opportunities and revenue get left on the table because of a static archaic approach that benefits the agency and leaves your brand on the sidelines.

## 8. Do You Use In-House Copywriters & Designers (Or Do You Outsource)?

Quality control and quality assurance are two items that are discarded the moment a company begins to outsource its work to freelancers and one-man armies. Your email marketing agency needs to have a clear cut methodology in house, with systems and policies that are managed, enacted and enforced - all in-house. Although freelancers can be a cheap way to get work done, this is a high-risk approach with virtually no upside to the client (you). Long standing, experienced and trained staff members who have been on payroll on a long term basis are the key to making sure that your brand is treated with respect, that your list is nurtured and revenue is strategically maximized each and every month.

## 9. Are You A Real Company - Or Is This A Garage Start-Up?

Every great company today started out small -- and we get that. But with that said, you need an email marketing agency that is not reliant upon one individual to ensure your success. You need to look for a well-balanced, systematized and trained team that will not drop your results based upon the owner/sole proprietor "travelling", "sick" or simply lacking the initial luster that was shown at the beginning of the relationship. When you are looking for predictable, consistent results over the long term, you need to look one layer deeper and look for a predictable, systematized and trained in-house team.

## 10. Does Your Agency Have Data Handling Safeguards In Place & How Are They Enforced?

Your email list is a revenue generating asset of your business that you have invested in acquiring. So you wouldn't hand it over to just anyone, would you? It is vital that there are systems in place within the organization you are working with, clear and defined, that relate to data handling to ensure that your list is confidential, that your list will never be shared, rented, sold or downloaded. A good place to check if you are unsure, is in the contract that you will sign with the agency.

## 11. Are You Partnered With Klaviyo & Shopify?

Being recognized as a Klaviyo and Shopify Partner is important, it shows that the company you are working with has generated enough experience with and built a relationship with these two cornerstones of your ecommerce brand's success. As a result of this, your agency will have received high level training directly from them and will constantly be up to date with the most crucial areas of email marketing, conversion, revenue generation and best practices.

To book in your discovery call with the Underground Ecom team, please [click this link](#).