

Getting Started with Email Marketing

Everything You Need to
Know to Engage Your
Customers



Importance of Email Marketing

In 2022, there are 4.3 billion active email addresses globally. With almost half of the world's population able to communicate via email, this is the perfect place to reach your audience across multiple generations.

So why do people sign up for emails? The answer is simple. Consumers want to interact with companies and receive education, promotions, and information on products and services. Emails are more personal than advertisements, but not too invasive like a phone call.

And the popularity of email as a marketing tool just keeps increasing. In fact, 78% of marketers have seen increased engagement in email over the last 12 months.¹ This means the opportunity to connect with prospects from all generations is only growing stronger.

Demand For Email in 2022

Not only do a large majority of people have email, but those who have it are checking their inboxes constantly. In 2019, the average person spends around **143 minutes per day** checking their personal email.² That leaves a window of over an hour and a half for you to connect with potential buyers. Beyond that, the average person checks their email **15 times per day**.³ Once again, that's 15 chances to connect directly with your customers.

Your buyers are on their email, checking it multiple times per day. As a dealership, email is an essential tool in communicating with your customers.

Email is also a cost effective way to connect with potential buyers. For every \$1 spent on email marketing, you can expect a \$36 return.⁴ On average, a mid-size business can expect to spend \$9 - \$1,000 per month on email marketing if they self-manage their campaigns.⁵

How Does Your Audience Interact with Email?



Millennials: 26-41

93% of people aged 25-44 own an email account⁶

More than 1/3 check their email before they get out of bed (CNN)⁷



Gen X: 42-57

92% of Gen X-ers say they have used email in the past month⁸

That was this generation's social media



Boomer: 58-67

95% of boomers use email⁶

This generation is more likely to read newsletters and manage their finances via email⁹

How to Get Started: Email Content

Create Valuable Content

Every email should have different content elements that will resonate with your consumers. This doesn't mean your content needs to be a novel. You don't have time to write lengthy content, and your consumers don't have time to read it. So, you create content that is easily digestible.

Evergreen content refers to copy created that will stand the test of time. You can create listicles or how-to articles that will live on your website. You can also create seasonal content that can be re-shared every season. Sharing articles via email is a great way to drive traffic to your site and decrease the amount of time spent writing content.



Evergreen content ideas:

- Listicles
- Industry-related articles
- Best practices/how-to's

Seasonal content ideas:

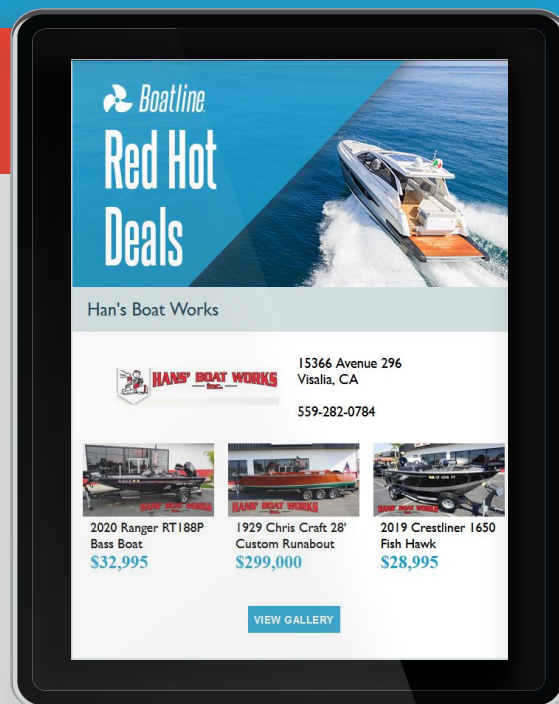
- Best Winter Boating Destinations
- How to Stay Cool While Boating in the Summer
- Best Restaurants With Boat Docks

Share Your Services

You can also use emails to promote your parts and services departments. Consumers engage with emails because they want to know about everything your dealership offers. If you are including new listings, include new parts and accessories you are getting in. A current customer may not be ready to buy a new boat, but might appreciate knowing new parts they can add to theirs. Emails are meant to engage and inform so keep your consumers up to date by including all parts of your dealership offerings.

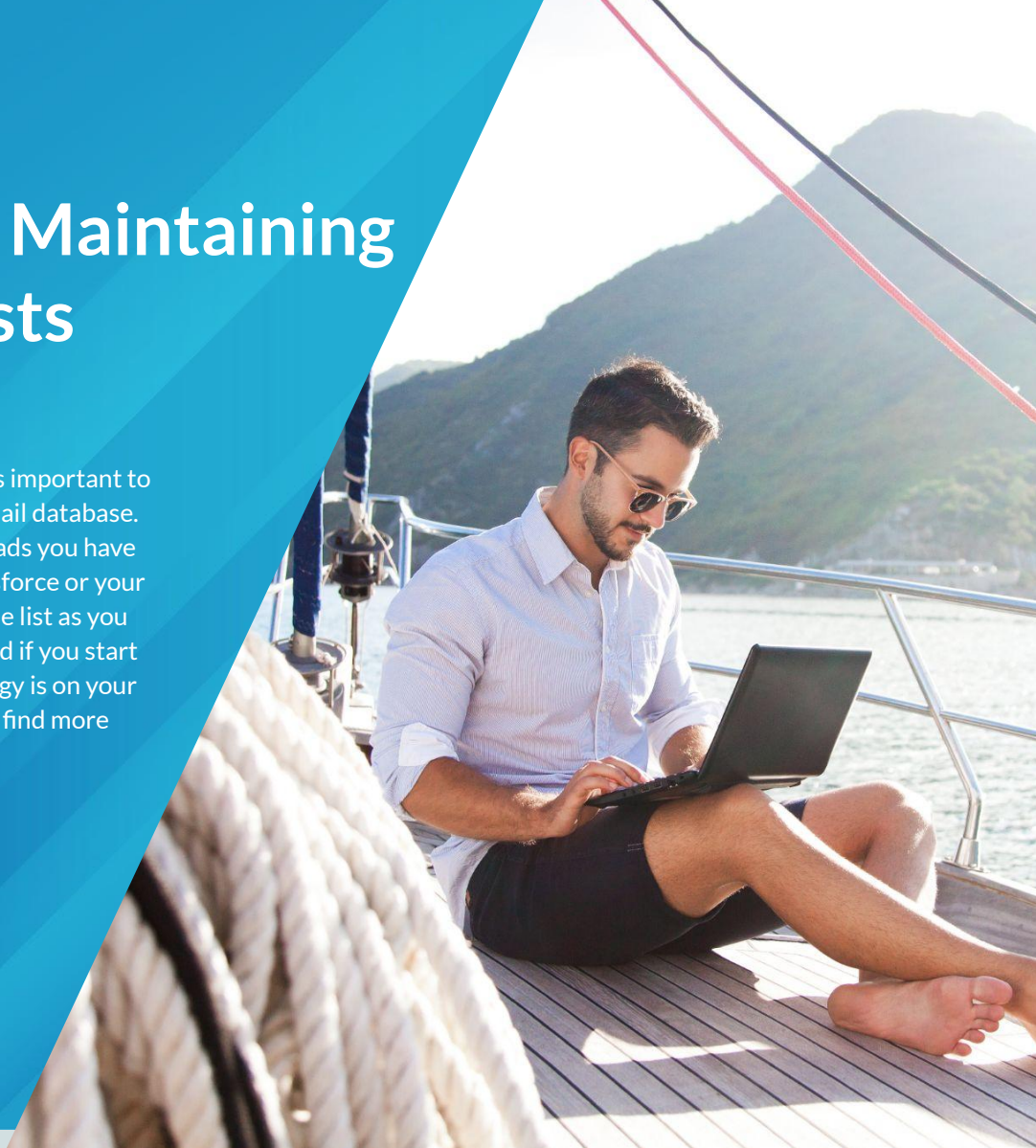
Share Your Listings

Another way to engage your consumers through email is by sharing your listings. Your email subscribers are in the market for watercrafts, so use that to your advantage. Emails are a great way for consumers to stay connected with your dealership throughout the entire buying process. You can share new inventory or price reduced inventory as a first look to your email database. Email is also a fantastic place to get eyes on pieces you are having a hard time moving. Maybe your customer is thinking about upgrading their unit, but hasn't really started researching. Sending them this email allows you to hone in on that zero moment of truth before they can begin researching anywhere else.



Building and Maintaining Customer Lists

When building your email strategy, it's important to think about who will make up your email database. You can use current customers and leads you have been collecting. Pull emails from Salesforce or your CRM to start, and continue to grow the list as you do more business. Don't be intimidated if you start with a small list; now that email strategy is on your mind, your dealership will continue to find more ways to grow your list.



Growing the List Further



Ask for emails on your social media



Encourage your subscribers to share your email



Use contests to incentivize people to enter their email (giveaways, surveys, or quizzes)



Include a link to sign up on your employee's signature and on your website



Ask for feedback after a purchase



Collect emails at trade shows and fairs

Segmenting Your Customer Base

Create a Send List



Prospective
Customers



Current
Customers

As you build your list, you will eventually want to start segmenting your customers based on their needs and how you wish to communicate to them. This will allow you to focus on your goals with each audience. For example, you might want to send loyal customers maintenance and lifestyle content, parts and services information, and new listings for when they're ready to upgrade. For prospective customers, you may want to send listicles and lifestyle content that helps them imagine themselves on a new boat, as well as industry-related content that frames you as a leader in the space who can be trusted as a first choice when they decide to buy. To start, segment your email database into prospective customers and current customers. Once you get more robust lists, you can further segment the list by model and brand preferences. Segmenting your list can get as granular as you'd like!

A/B Testing

You will want to use your send lists to test what works and what doesn't work. A/B testing involves using two variations of one email, sending them to two lists to see which performs better. This might mean using two different headers or changing the body of the email. It could also mean keeping one email focused on listings and the other focused on what your customers prefer to interact with. It's important to keep the change relatively small, so that if one email performs better than the other, you can point to the exact detail that contributed to the improved performance. This helps to keep your emails fresh, engaging and relevant to your audience. The more you learn what your subscribers enjoy, the better you can create curated emails that people want to receive, open and click through!

Never Bounce

Before you begin sending emails, run your initial lists through Neverbounce. This is a platform that will scan your list to ensure all emails are active and able to receive emails. This will help you ensure you are starting with a clean list of emails. The platform you use to send out your emails should also start to flag some of these deactivated and spam emails. However, most of these have a threshold for the amount of fake emails you can send to, so you need to keep your list clean.

Since you are often paying per email address, running through Neverbounce will ensure you are not paying to send to invalid email addresses. Neverbounce requires payment for each email you run through it, but there is a free option available that alerts you when emails look invalid. After the initial run through, you can simply run the lists you collect from trade shows and contests.

Email Service Providers

Email Service Providers (ESP) offer software to create, develop, and implement email marketing strategies. Many have free starting packages. Some that are available to use are:



Things to Consider When Choosing Your ESP

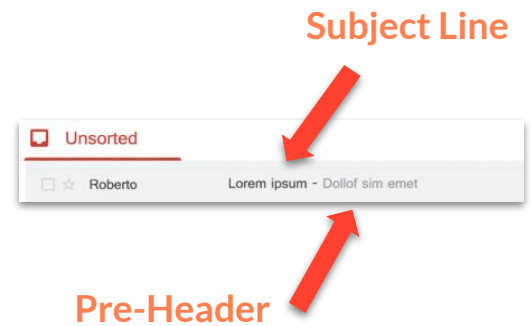
Your business is different from other businesses for a variety of reasons, so we can't say which email service provider is best for your dealership. However, here are some things to consider when deciding on an ESP to use:

- **How big is your list size?**
If you are starting out with a small email list, you probably don't need to have the most advanced software until your list begins to grow. You can start out on small packages and work your way up.
- **What does the support look like?**
If you are new to email, you might be spending some time asking their representatives about the product. Don't be afraid to call their numbers and spend some time asking their reps about the product. If you don't have a good experience calling to ask about the product, things might not improve once you are a customer. Get to know your providers before signing up.
- **Do they have pre-made templates?**
Designing emails can be intimidating—that's where an ESP comes in. Your ESP can provide you with pre-made templates to make the job easier.
- **Do they have reports that will help you understand your success?**
You will need to track how your email campaigns are performing, and an ESP can help you with that. Make sure their reporting gives you the information in a digestible manner, making sure you are able to measure your success.
- **GDPR and CCPA Compliance**
It is important that when someone unsubscribes, you need to be able to clear data with your provider as well.
- **Don't be afraid of trial and error with ESPs**
Check any cancellation clauses you might be stuck in. If you don't like your provider after a few months, make sure you know how difficult or simple it would be to make a switch.

How to Structure Your Emails

Subject Lines & Pre- Headers

Building emails begins with eye-catching subject lines that draw your audience's attention in and entices them to read everything else you have to offer. The subject line is the emboldened, quick line that peaks the reader's interest. The subject line is followed by a pre-header, which is usually a little bit longer and serves as a follow-up to your header (so the two should match!). When you create the header and pre-header, you want to make them humorous, enticing, and informative.



Headers

Spam-Triggering Words in Your Headers

Certain words can trigger your email to go to spam, so you'll want to avoid using those words together. Lists of spam triggering words are available online, but here are some of the words:

- Free
- Discount
- Save \$
- Profits
- Lose
- Solution

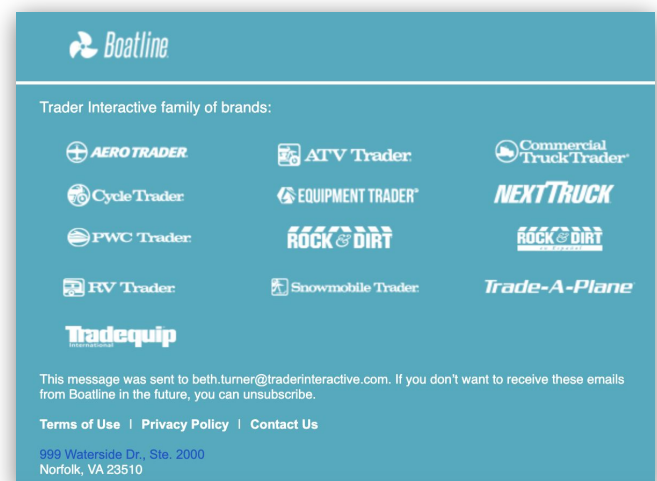
Body

We discussed content ideas previously, but what makes up the body of an email? Simply put, your emails can consist of whatever you'd like to share. You can send special offers, customer reviews, inventory listings, or content from your blog. Before sending an email, ask yourself, "What action do I want my customers to take from this email?". Once you've answered this question, you can include some CTAs, or calls to action. This short message directs your customer to the next step you want them to take, whether it's downloading an app or visiting your website. could be as simple as "Download App" or "View Listing".

[VIEW LISTING](#)[Download Now](#)[Learn More](#)

Footers

The footer of an email is a great place to house your regular links in every email you send. You'll want to include your company logo, as well as information about your services. Be sure to adhere to FCC guidelines by including an unsubscribe link in your footer. You should also include your contact information including your address, phone number, email, and more. Using an ESP you can create this once and then automatically include it in every promotional email you send.



Structure Your Email - HTML & Plain Text

When structuring your emails, it's important to know the difference between HTML and plain text. Email recipients can choose how they receive emails, so you must ensure that you create two types of email to appeal to both audiences. Your ESP will have pre-made templates you can use.

HTML

HTML stands for Hyper Text Markup Language. These emails are web pages and email templates are coded so that text is formatted and images are added. With everything being formatted already, you'll start with the header and address. Next, you'll add in your content. This can be any deals going on, articles you've created, or new inventory you have listed. To make things stand out, embolden any text you want the reader to be drawn to. At the end of the email, you can add your call to action. The CTA should entice readers to take whatever action is listed. Whether that is "Don't miss out" announcing a sale or "Learn More Here" to promote content, you want to ensure your reader has a clear action to take. At the end of the email, you'll want to create a standard signature that includes your logo, address, phone number, email address, and an unsubscribe button.



PRE HEADER
HERE
HEADER CONTENT HERE
Hi {{first_name}},

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

CALL OUT CONTENT GOES HERE

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Plain Text

Plain text emails are regular text emails. There are no options for formatting such as bold, italics, underlines, or special layout options. The plain email can be structured the same way as HTML emails. The main difference is that a plain text looks much more like a standard email, except there is no coloring. Think of this as a different format of the same email. Instead of creating two pieces of content, you can simply send the same email in two different formats.

Federal Trade Commission Regulations



The CAN-SPAM Act

The CAN-SPAM Act is a law that sets the rules for commercial email, establishes requirements for commercial messages, gives recipients the right to opt out, and spells out tough penalties for violations. If you don't follow these rules, you could wind up in SPAM folders or, in extreme cases, be fined by the federal government. This act went into effect in 2003 to establish requirements for commercial messaging and grant recipients the right to have you stop emailing them.



What Applies

Not all emails apply to this rule. This covers only commercial messaging. That means emails sent for the purpose of a sale would not fall in this category. For example, if a customer reaches out to you around a unit or service, CAN-SPAM would not apply. Commercial messaging, according to the law, is defined as "any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service." This includes emails that promote content on your website. An example would include sending emails to former and current customer that announce new or used units. Any of these emails must adhere to FTC regulations.



What Happens When Violated

Since the CAN-SPAM act deals with protecting the customer, violators are subject to hefty fines. In fact, one company settled for \$2.9 million in 2008.¹ While consumers can't sue you themselves, they can place a complaint with the FTC. After a thorough investigation, the FTC can fine you on their behalf. All that being said, this shouldn't scare you and there are some simple rules to follow that will help you avoid being fined.

How to Avoid the Hot Seat

- **Don't misrepresent yourself to the recipient.** The sender address shouldn't be a phony alias, but rather the customer should know this email is coming from your dealership.
- **Don't be misleading with subject lines.** Of course you want your recipients to open your emails. It may be enticing to say "free" even if you have nothing available for free. If your subject line states it, your email should support it so your customers don't feel duped. Regardless of CAN-SPAM, this will help your consumers feel like they can trust your emails.
- **Identify the email as an ad.** The law gives a lot of leeway here, but you must be transparent and inform the recipient that your email is an ad. You don't have to explicitly state it, but make sure you state that you're running a promotion if there is promotional content in your email.
- **Add your location.** Your company's signature (address) is required in all of your emails. If you're using an ESP, there should be a section to add this automatically
- **Provide opt out option.** This can't be stressed enough. You **MUST** have an opt-out option. If someone unsubscribes from your list, attend to it promptly or you will be in violation of the CAN-SPAM Act.

Metrics & Reporting

What's Included in an Email Report

Your email service provider will provide you with reports based on your email performance. Depending on what ESP you choose, these reports will vary. Understanding the results of your email marketing efforts will help you to optimize your email performance. Some common measurements include:

Sent vs. Deliverable	This measures how many of your emails actually land in an inbox
Bounces	This shows how many of your emails sent bounced back. Remember that some ESPs will have a threshold for this, and this is where running your lists through neverbounce is important.
Opens	This report shows how many people opened your email.
Source of the Open	Did they open from mobile, tablet, desktop, or smartphone? Knowing this can help inform you about your customer.
Engagement KPIs	
Open Rate	This shows how many people are opening and reading through your email.
Click Through Rate	This shows how many people are clicking on your CTAs and links back to your website and inventory/promotions.

What Are Your Goals?

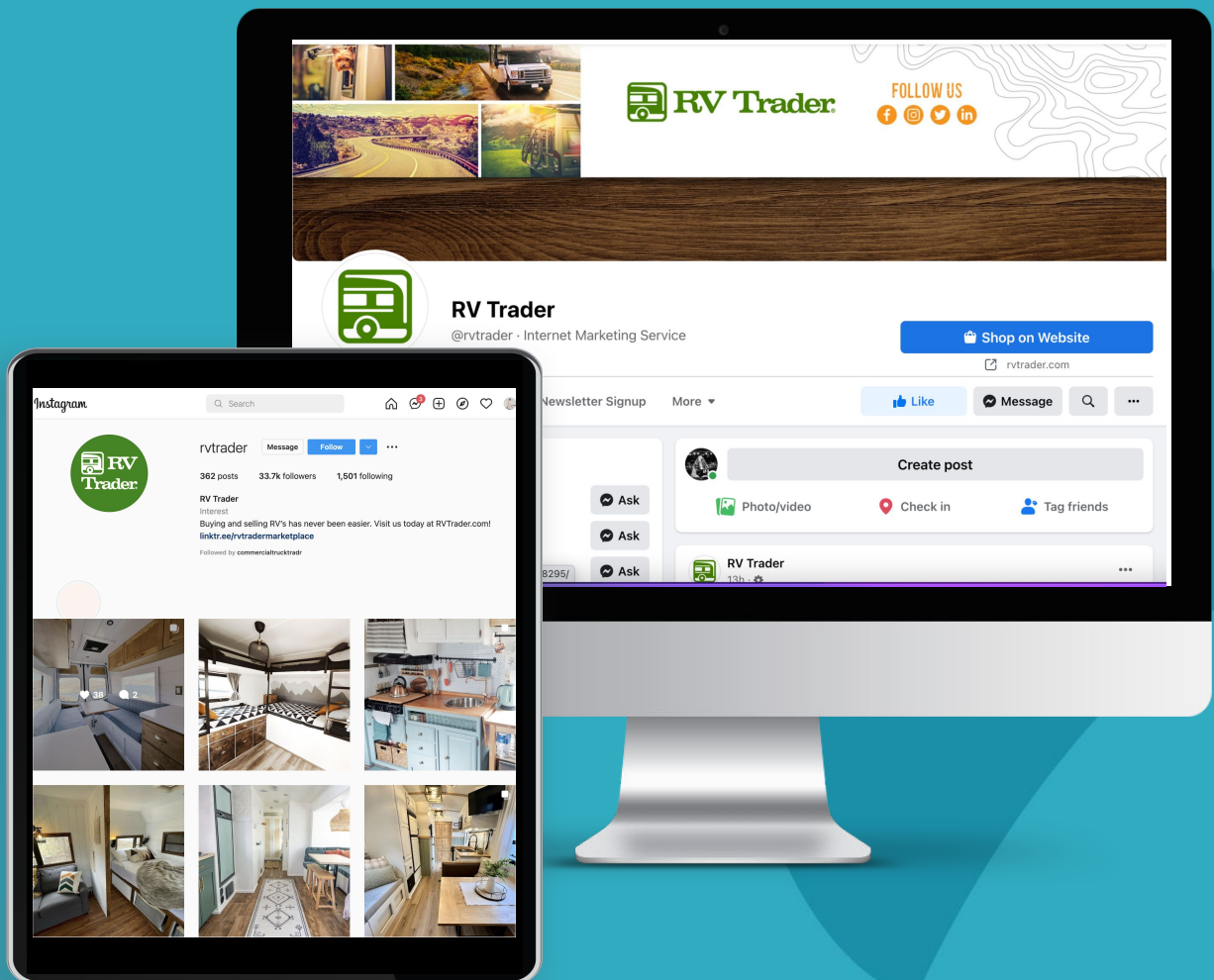
Before you can decide what to measure, you must have a purpose. Do you want to increase website traffic? Boost sales? Strengthen your relationship with customers or build credibility? The purpose of sending emails will help you determine the best way to measure how close you are to meeting or exceeding your goals. Determining your goals will also help you determine what mix of content, listings, and outside sources should be in your emails.

Once you determine your goals, you can focus on the metrics that are most transparent if you are meeting those goals. If you are focusing on increasing website traffic - focus on the click through rates of your emails. This will show how many people are clicking through on your listings to look at more at your website. If you are focusing on authenticity and brand awareness, you want people to open your email and read the information you are providing them. You want them to continue to rely on you as the expert. If you are looking to boost sales, the engagement rate will be your best option. The engagement rate shows how many people clicked through the email.

As you measure your email engagement, watch for what works. Did one email perform really well? What did you get right in that message? How can you mimic that in future emails? Test out different mixes of content in your email to see what performs best. Emails should be ever changing until you find what works best for your business.

Who We Are

Boatline® is backed by Trader Interactive's 30 + years of experience delivering MILLIONS of leads to dealers in the recreational and commercial industries, and built from stern to bow with cutting-edge web technology. Boatline is the newest and most innovative platform to deliver leads to your business.



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We offer the largest audience of active and engaged in-market consumers searching for units they need for their lifestyle and livelihood - and provide the tools and solutions needed to attract, engage, influence, and convert them more effectively.