The Power of the Welcome Email

It's simple right?

When a new member joins your Association, you fire off a quick message and move on to the next thing on your to-do list. Wrong! **This is an enormously valuable opportunity that only happens once.**

A welcome email is categorized as a 'triggered' email, which is generated based on a *meaningful change or event in a customer behavior or profile*. Triggered emails are very different from 'business-as-usual' (BAU) emails. For one, **triggered emails typically get 3x the open rate as BAU promotional emails. They also have 135%* higher click-through rates than BAU emails.**

Because triggered emails are personal and occur at an early stage in the member relationship before email fatigue sets in, you have a great opportunity to make a positive impression. Don't pass it up.

The Subject Line

Never underestimate the importance of the subject line.

In the battle of the inbox, you're fighting for attention. An engaging subject line makes all the difference. It should catch the reader's attention, thank them for joining, and give them a reason to open your email. Try something like, *"Thanks for joining. Now what?"*

It's welcoming and hints at answering an important question that's likely on their mind.

Use a Recognizable Sender Name and Email Address

The sender name is just as visible as the subject line in an inbox. On mobile devices, it's even *more* visible. The sender name also greatly impacts open rates. Be sure to use a real person's

The Power of the Welcome Email

name with the organization's name. For example, "Marcy from GrowthZone" is far more effective than "Marcy" or "The GrowthZone Team".

Note: Choose a "from" address that you'll want to use for a long time.

A 'no-reply' email address is not okay. So be sure to use an address that can be replied to. A generic address is okay, but using a specific person's email address is best. People are more likely to reply if they know it's going to a real person. If you must use a generic address, try *hello@associationname.com* because it's eye-catching and friendly. Consider going a step further and including a phone number. This reinforces to the new member that you want to hear from them. Better yet, invite them to reply (more on this under *Call to Action*).

Branding

This is your chance to reinforce your brand. Shine the spotlight on your Association with eye-catching images, your logo, and tagline. Using borders? Your colors are crucial for making sure your brand is recognizable. **Everything from the subject line to the logo should brand your Association.**

Make Sure Future Emails Get Through

The best of the best in email marketing will sometimes fall victim to SPAM filters. If your email service provider has it, **use a SPAM checker** to increase the likelihood of your email making it to your new member's inbox. The welcome email can also be an opportunity to ask to be added to their trusted contacts (sometimes referred to as whitelisting).

Be Mobile Friendly

With the proliferation of smartphones and mobile email readership, **consider how your emails display on mobile devices** when crafting your campaigns. It is also important to keep in mind that mobile screens are smaller, so your subject lines should be shorter as well.

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Hello? IS THIS THING ON?

The Power of the Welcome Email

Add Social Media Buttons

Ask members to follow your Association on social media. This is not a radical, breakthrough technique, but it works—and it benefits both of you. It's the ideal time to grow those relationships beyond the inbox—across all of your social channels. It also gives you a nice safety net if they decide to unsubscribe from your email list later (avoid this by following the guidelines under *Reinforce Their Decision*).

This is also a bulls-eye for your Association. **You have the chance to turn each new member into a fan or follower**, and members are given more opportunities for connecting with you online.

Make It Genuine

An email from a person is more authentic than one from an organization. **Tone and language are key—keep it conversational and let the message flow naturally** while reflecting your Association's personality.

Remember, what works in person also works online. You're building a relationship here, so make sure your online presence also treats people like people.

Your welcome email should have a personalized greeting; it's a small gesture that goes a long way. Address the new member by name. It suggests a personal connection, plus people love to see their own name. Most email programs make this easy to implement. If you can fit it in more than once, do so! But keep it simple and honest by being sincere.

Avoid using *'We'* or *'I'*; Use *'You'*...a lot. New members don't necessarily care about you or the

The Power of the Welcome Email

Association (yet). They're interested in what the Association can do for them. It's subtle, but makes a big difference psychologically. You're assuming this role because you're emphasizing what you can do for them and not what they can do for you.

Reinforce Their Decision

Say thank you. Express how excited you are to have them as a member. Reiterate that they're part of something special and aren't just a number. This goes a long way in establishing a strong relationship.

Remind them that it's a partnership and you're working on their behalf. **Let them know the kind of content the Association will be sending and how frequently they can expect to hear from you.** Is the email getting too long? Read more under the *Magic Formula* section.

Doing these things will increase readership and reduce opt-outs.

Provide Tips

Remember, new members join to gain something, so help them right away. Just like you would in person, show them around. Remind them of benefits they can take advantage of immediately. You have their attention. This is a great time to offer tips on what they can do *right now* to get the most out of their membership.

Call to Action

Ask the easiest, yet most valuable question. Use your new member's enthusiasm to learn "What can the Association do for you?" Even if only 1 out of

The Power of the Welcome Email

10 members respond, it will provide data to help you recognize trends and spot weaknesses in your program.

The Magic Formula

The best welcome emails have something in common: Short and to the point.

Don't overload new members by sending too much information. **The average recipient spends 20 seconds scanning an email.** Make your message count by focusing on welcoming them. It should be no more than a few paragraphs. Have too much to say for one email? Consider a series of welcome emails. The following subjects often yield positive results:

- Welcome!
- Join us on Social!
- You're going to get great content!

Remember, the average open rate for a welcome email is between 50-60%. Subsequent emails won't command this level of engagement, so remain cognizant of email fatigue.

The Power of the Welcome Email

It's All Yours

Have you done everything right so far? If so, your members will be more excited than ever about receiving updates from your Association.

Follow the steps in this post and remember this is *your* welcome email. **It's *your* opportunity to introduce your Association, so make it memorable!**

Let us know about your welcome email campaign. Experiencing success or have suggestions? Please share your story with us!

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