

A Call to Action

You're busy. Your CPE credits are lean as you look at your two-year closing window of opportunity. You're working on an audit that has aged you, but not like a fine wine. And those month-end closing tasks have turned antacids into a food group.

Despite all this, you don't get a pass on marketing your services. Promoting your practice is part of running your business—whether you're the owner or a worker bee.

As a CPA, you're likely aware of other letters that are shorthand for business models: B2B (Business-to-business), B2G (Business-to-government) and B2C (Business-to-consumer).

These business models tell you where the wild things—your clients—really are, and how to best market your services.

Two other reasons to go all-in on marketing are customer service and client retention. Your clients view you as a thought leader, so they expect you to be a regular communicator and provide quality information.

This means you need to feed the marketing machine with a consistent flow of new and updated content.

Equal Time for Email Marketing

Along with adding machines, gone are the days when simply providing excellent service constituted a solid marketing plan.

You may not be familiar with marketing plans, but you've likely seen one in action that involves something you use each day: Email. Do you know what constitutes a solid marketing plan? Exactly. A solid marketing plan. Further, a solid marketing plan delineating a selection of channels. We call this cross-channel marketing in the biz.

Because email figures heavily into everyone's life, it stands to reason that email marketing should figure heavily into your marketing plan.

While social media garners an enormous amount of attention with its plethora of possibilities, it's no substitute for email—the broccoli of business communications. As a



highly relevant channel email marketing is good for your business.

Billions of business emails are sent daily—128.8 billion, to be exact—and that number is rising, despite what those social media influencer whippersnappers might tell you. Statistics are plentiful supporting the fact that email marketing should figure heavily into your integrated marketing plan:

- Wordstream recently reported 86 percent of business professionals prefer to use email when communicating for business purposes (wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/06/29/email-marketing-statistics).
- HubSpot reports 73 percent of millennials prefer communications from businesses come via email (blog.hubspot.com/marketing/email-marketing-stats).
- When Constant Contact polled professionals, 80 percent stated email marketing drives customer acquisition and retention (blogs.constantcontact.com/email-marketing-stats/).

This graphic provides even more stats showing how successful email can be: selfsuccesstips.com/2018/12/28/email-marketing-statistics-that-prove-its-still-an

Why Email Can Be Your Best Marketing Friend

[effective-marketing-strategy-infographic-business-2-community/](#).

How can you make email work for you? Here are some simple—yet powerful—tips:

- Using emojis—sparingly—in your subject line, and even body of your email, can elicit maximum engagement.
- Writing your emails in second person: "You," "your" and "yours" puts the focus on the client instead of the sender.
- Converting your call to action—what you want the reader of the email to do—to a button format will garner a better click-through rate.
- At least a dozen studies say deploying email blasts on Tuesday is the sweet spot of the week.

There's another huge reason why you should be running to your marketing team: The global market.

Though you're a California CPA, you are effectively part of the global market because you deal with finances. The numbers and information relevant to your profession and the industries you serve transcend geographical boundaries.

The real "virtual reality" is that doing business virtually *is* your reality. This means you need cost-effective, efficient and timely messaging.

A quick online search for email marketing effectiveness will net you the oft-quoted statistic that email is the third-most influential source of information for B2B audiences, behind only personal referrals and industry thought leaders.

You can utilize all three of these elements to get the most out of your marketing efforts.

Your opt-in list counts as personal referrals, you're the industry thought leader, and your email will deliver the goods by using the real marketing Call of the Wild: The Call to Action. The CTA.

How to Divide Your Email to Make That CTA Work For You

Use journalism's beloved Five Ws, and that

A Call to Action

all-important 1-H to construct your message.

- **WHO** are you? You've started a conversation, so why not engage in a personable manner, diving in with the reason your audience should care about what you have to say.
- **WHAT** pain points are you addressing? Use information gleaned from client conversations to present relevant client-centric information.
- **WHEN** will you be available for an interaction? Let them know if you're speaking somewhere, have just published an article or if you're offering a training.
- **WHERE** can they find information about you? Invite them to find information online about you and your organization.
- **WHY** are you contacting them? Be direct and authentic with your messaging. There's no need to be sales-y, trite or hum-drum. No one likes that.
- **HOW** should they proceed? This is where your CTA comes into play. Never leave the "schedule email" button without it. You always want your email recipients to take some sort of action, whether it's scheduling a meeting, downloading some information or registering for a class you may be leading. And make it easy.

It's Less About Sales and More About Information

While you may be on the other side of the virtual wall, you're still engaging in a two-way conversation.

Sending emails to all of your clients isn't being thorough. All-inclusive is great for vacations and education, but not email campaigns. Segmentation—dividing your audience by the type of work you do, or can do, for them, or by geography—is the best way to go. It's not a one-message-fits-all process.

And speaking of campaigns, don't just fire off an opening email salvo, leaving your audience wondering and waiting ... and waiting. Engage with them multiple times for an ongoing dialogue.

As important as the CTA is, we need to address one more important element: the audience.

Think, "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it ...," when it comes to your audience. If you don't have the right audience, no one will "hear" your email.

Remember, if you're doing your job right your clients want to hear from you. In fact, it may be argued when you don't weigh in on trends and emerging issues, they will find you remiss in your duties. For you, it's plain and simple a missed service offering. Think of your thought leadership content as more of a streaming service than an on-demand offering.

It's time to get a sticky note in front of you and draft a bite-sized 1-2-3 action plan:

1. **Meet** with your marketing team. You say you don't have a team? There's no time like the present to pull one together.
2. **Create** an integrated marketing plan that includes email marketing.
3. **Plan** your strategy by relying upon best practices, market research, collaborative conversations with stakeholders and lessons learned from past marketing efforts. 