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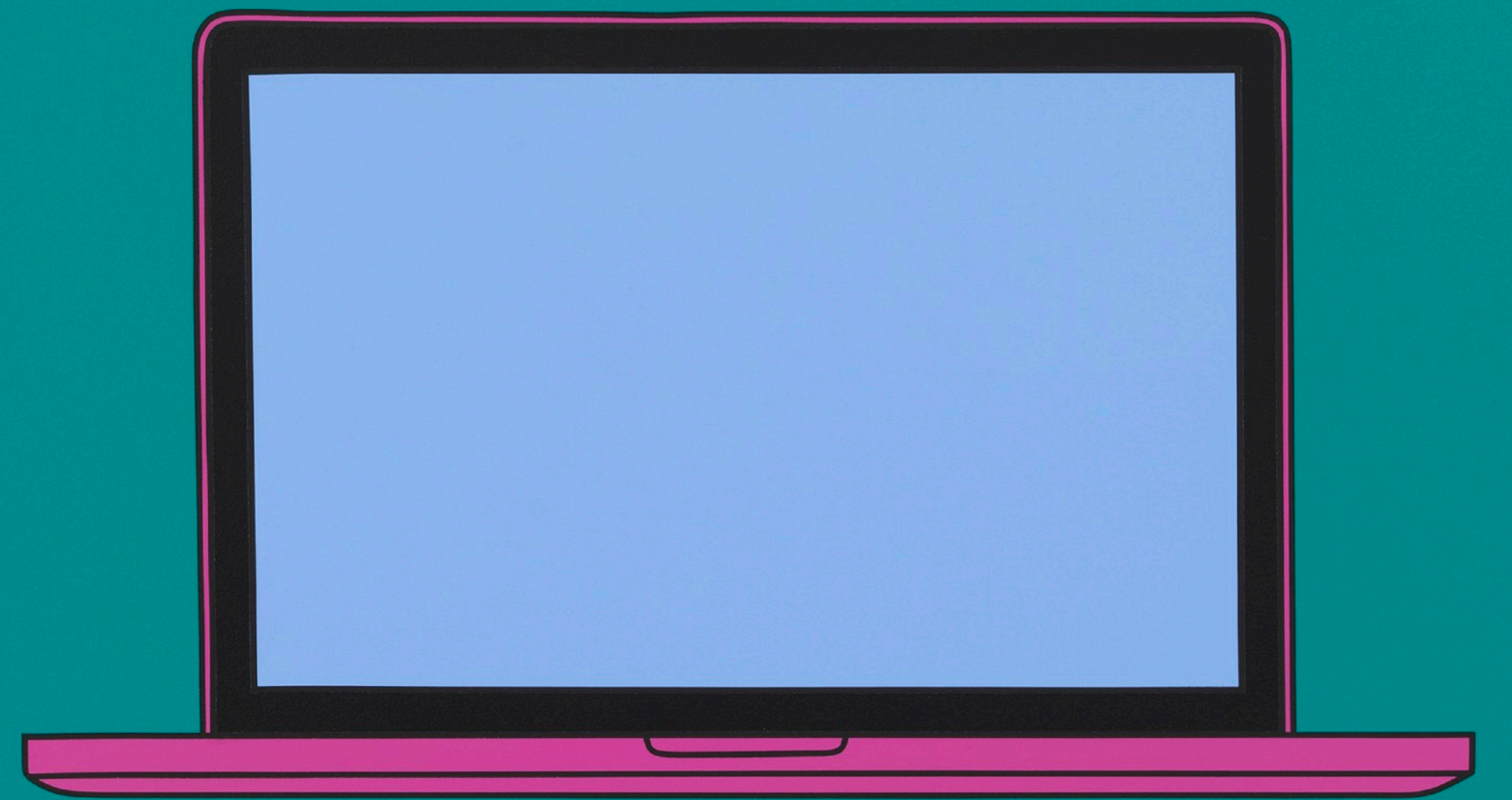
From Newsletter to Nurture Program: How to Build Lasting Collector Relationships Through Email

What's Covered

Introduction

If you work for an art business, chances are you know that email marketing is one of the easiest, most effective ways to communicate with your collector audience. But how effective is it at speeding up your sales cycle and keeping the brand of your business and your artists top of mind for collectors?

With digital correspondence cementing itself as the primary means of communication in today's art world, it's essential to invest in and optimize your email marketing. One of the best ways to do this is with a lead nurture program, which you can build and integrate into your existing email marketing program.

Ro/Lu, *Nature/Nurture (after shapes), 2012.* Image courtesy of Patrick Parrish Gallery.

What is a lead nurture program?

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Lead Nurturing is the process of understanding and nurturing customers at every stage of the sales funnel and buyer journey.

Lead nurturing programs leverage marketing content and automation to engage customers and drive them through the sales cycle naturally until they are ready to make a purchase.

Marketing automation allows you to curate a series of emails to automatically send to your subscribers and clients at a regular cadence, making it essential to execute an effective lead nurture program. Designing a series of emails may seem like a feat in and of itself, but automation actually reduces your workload and drives more sales for your business long-term.

David Hockney, *Pad Drawing No. 778, 17th April,* 2010-2019. Courtesy of Hang-Up Gallery.

What should a lead nurture program do?

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For art businesses, a well-executed lead nurture program should:

Educate your subscribers
Depending on the demographics and expertise of your subscriber base, your content can educate collectors on your artists, your gallery program, and collecting in general.

Engage your audience regularly
In a study from Genius.com, 66% of buyers indicated that "consistent and relevant communication provided by sales and marketing organizations is a key influence in choosing a solution provider."[1]

Strengthen brand awareness and build trust
People tend to buy from businesses they know and trust. Now that communication primarily happens digitally, it's important to view your lead nurture program as a primary avenue to develop trust with your subscribers and build awareness of your gallery's ethos, program, and artists.

Reduce the average time it takes a collector to buy an artwork
When you successfully engage your collectors, you set your art business up to increase the number of sales and the average sale price. According to Hubspot, subscribers that go through lead nurture programs are nearly 25% quicker to purchase than non-nurtured subscribers and spend 9% more on average once they make a purchase.[2]

Strengthen your art business with data-driven insights about your customers' interests.
Once your lead nurture program is up and running, you'll be able to extract more reliable insights into engagement because every subscriber will receive the same emails. Over time, your emails will be sent to more subscribers, which will give you more reliable data. Additionally, lead nurture programs allow you to access each individual subscriber's engagement with emails. This can be used to inform your approach to the subscriber for future sales conversations.

[1] 9 Benefits of Lead Nurturing, Hubspot
[2] Ibid

What type of content to include in your lead nurture program–

What type of content to include in your lead nurture program

Before designing your lead nurture program, think carefully about the story you want to tell new collectors—for example, consider what you'd say to a new collector if you had a few hours to chat. Intertwine this story harmoniously throughout all of your marketing communications to build awareness about what sets your art business and artists apart, and ultimately earn the loyalty of your audience.

To start planning the content of your lead nurture program, map out your current marketing calendar with all communications your audience receives from you, such as newsletters, invitations, social media posts, and any other cross-channel content you produce. This may include:

➡ Artist profiles
➡ Exhibition Overviews
➡ Virtual Gallery Tours
➡ Artwork spotlights
➡ Gallery history

Then look through your email, social, and website performance to date. Which pieces of content—such as emails, artist pages, exhibitions, and viewing rooms—had the highest amount of engagement, including email opens, page views, click-throughs, or replies? Make a note of these topics, their subject lines, and any overlapping trends or themes you see. If they are evergreen and still relevant (e.g., not about a previous fair booth), make sure to include that content (or similar) in your lead nurture program.

PRO TIP

Your emails don't need to "give it all away"–your ultimate goal should be to drive your clients to reach out to you, your website, or to a marketplace like Artsy where they can easily buy a work.

How to build out your lead nurture program–

How to build out your lead nurture program

Once you have completed the steps above, map out the content for your lead nurture program. Successful lead nurture programs include a series of at least 15 emails. Afterwards, refer to your current marketing calendar to plan out the frequency and calendar for your lead nurture program.

Your goal should be to communicate with your customers regularly so they are consistently engaged with your brand. However, you don't want to overdo it and increase unsubscribes. For example, you can aim to send one to two emails a week, or one email every two weeks. Avoid sending more than one email per day.

Design your emails for your lead nurture program—including the order in which they're sent—with your clients and subscribers in mind. Say you just signed up to receive emails from an art business. What would you want to learn about first, and how would you want to be engaged? If you're stuck, take a look at our Gallery's Guide to Content Creation for tried-and-true content ideas.

PRO TIP
Free project management programs like Airtable offer excellent content calendar templates that allow you to assign and tag collaborators, which makes for clear and efficient project management and execution. For copy editing, Grammarly offers free grammar checks.
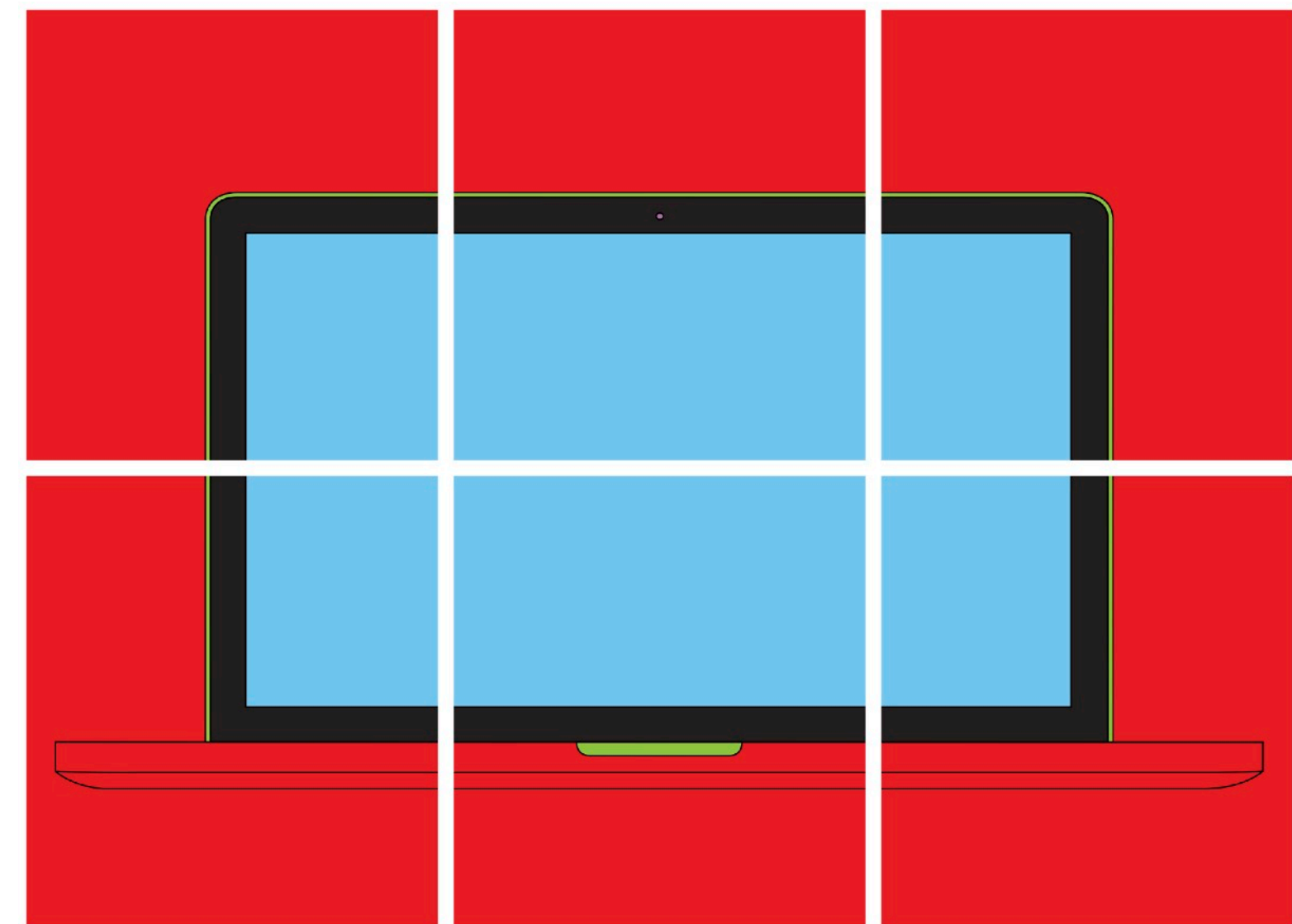
Michael Craig Martin, *Laoptop*, 2016, Image courtesy of Cristea Roberts Gallery.

The anatomy of a good email–

The anatomy of a good email

FROM NAME

Make sure it's immediately clear who this email is coming from.

SUBJECT LINE

Subject lines are the gateways of engagement. If you don't get it right, your audience won't see your emails at all. Pique your audience's interest with our 10 Tips for Open-Worthy Subject Lines.

PRE-HEADER

This is the text section that shows a "preview" of the email content. It can be used to complement the subject line and further entice your clients to open the email.
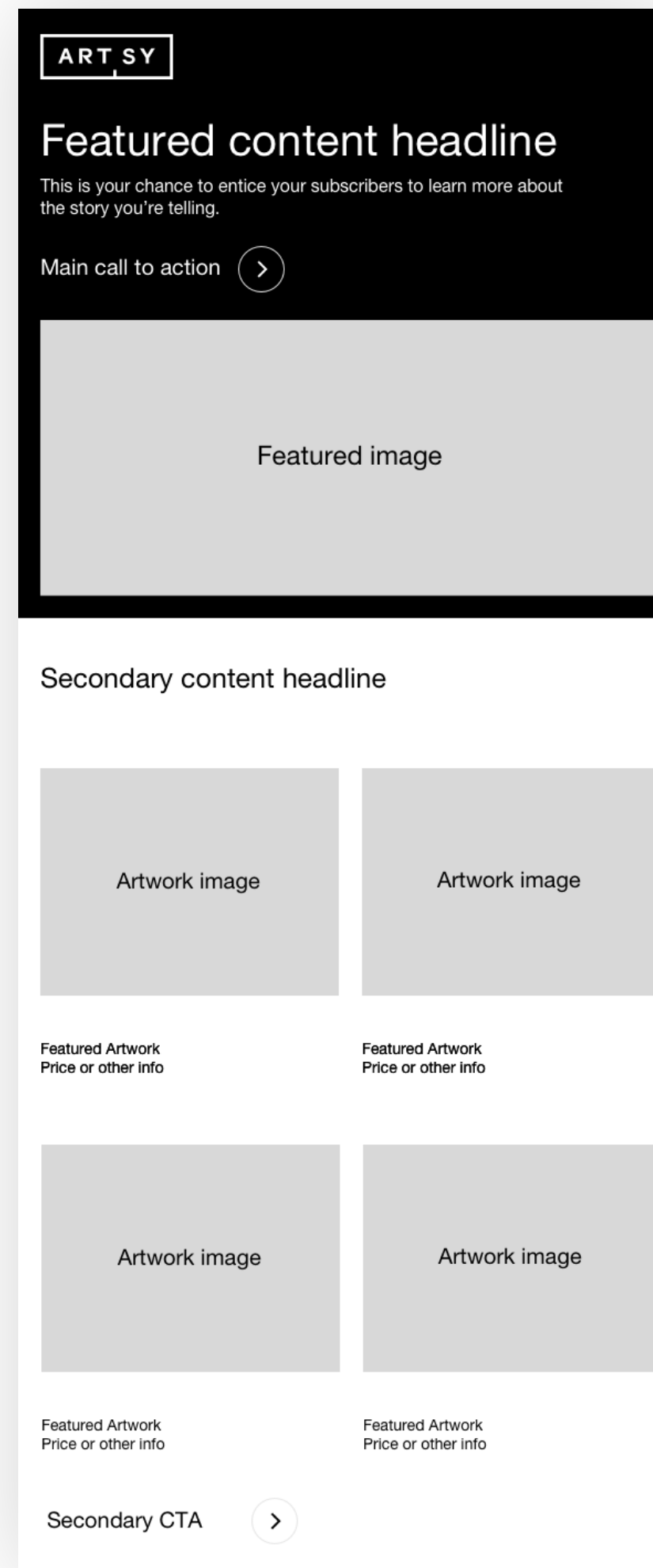
IMAGES

Place an interesting image or two in the email, but don't go overboard. Longer emails with lots of images tend to have lower engagement.

BONUS

This template is mobile responsive, meaning that various components render in different sizes depending on the width of the screen an email subscriber is using. A mobile-first approach is recommended as nearly half of email recipients use their mobile devices to read the content.

Artsy for Galleries   One gallery proves that limited foot traffic doesn't mean fewer sales

ART SY

Featured content headline
This is your chance to entice your subscribers to learn more about the story you're telling.

Main call to action ⟩

Featured image

Secondary content headline

Artwork image   Artwork image

Featured Artwork   Featured Artwork
Price or other info   Price or other info

Artwork image   Artwork image

Featured Artwork   Featured Artwork
Price or other info   Price or other info

Secondary CTA ⟩

HEADLINE

Write out your main message you want subscribers to focus on. Make it compelling and concise, and increase the font size.

EMAIL COPY AND CALLS TO ACTION

Keep email copy short and to the point. Succinct email body copy is a copywriting best practice, even for long-form or educational content.

Clear calls to action or buttons are very important to drive traffic to the destination page. Include one or two CTAs to the content you are referring to in your email. Make sure your header or footer includes a link to your business's homepage.

STYLE

There are only two font colors, the fonts are easy to read, all fonts are identical, and bold and italicized fonts are used sparingly.

Marketing automation for your lead nurture program—

Marketing automation for your lead nurture program–

Marketing automation varies from platform to platform, and there are many different automation services that range in price and sophistication. Pick the best marketing automation software for your art business with your budget, goals, and experience in mind.

A few leading platforms to consider are:

- – Hubspot
- – Mailchimp
- – Marketo
- – Constant Contact
- – Sailthru
- – Snovio

Anne Vieux, *Automated Curve, 2017.* Courtesy of The Hole.

Measuring the success of your lead nurture program–

Measuring the success of your lead nurture program

As more of your subscribers receive your lead nurture program, you'll be able to see which emails and content interest your clients—and which topics they are not interested in. Review your email performance regularly (ideally at least once a month) to ensure you are optimizing engagement and presenting the most relevant, interesting information to your subscribers and clients. For more information on creating great emails and tracking your emails' performance, see The Gallery's Guide to Email Marketing.

THE TOP EMAIL PERFORMANCE METRICS TO PAY ATTENTION TO:

CLICK-THROUGH RATE (CTR)
The number of clients that opened your email divided by the number of clients it was delivered to.

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (CTO)
The breakdown of clients that opened your email and consequently clicked on a button or link.

UNSUBSCRIBE
The number of clients that unsubscribed from your newsletter after receiving an email.