



## ***About to appoint an email marketing bureau?***

### ***12 Crucial Questions to help find the right partner***

While the advantages of outsourcing are great – choosing the right partner or supplier when you've taken the decision to outsource your email marketing effort is not so easy. Get it wrong and you're in danger of damaging brand reputation and client relations, get it right and you'll do nothing but enhance these things.

The process of email marketing is explained in the Wired-Up In-house or Outsource? fact sheet ([http://www.frontwire.com/docs/factsheet\\_DIY\\_dispatch.pdf](http://www.frontwire.com/docs/factsheet_DIY_dispatch.pdf)) but for those marketers without direct experience of email dispatch the dangers of being dazzled by range, competitive prices and sheer confusion in the sector may result in appointing anything but the best organisation for your needs.

To help sort the wheat from the chaff, Frontwire has prepared a list of 12 crucial questions to ask those that make it to your short list.

#### ***1. How many email campaigns have you run?***

If the answer is less than 20 the bureau has not nearly enough experience. Give them your business and the chances are they will be learning from their mistakes at your expense. The better agencies should be able to supply case studies and client testimonials to validate any claims.

#### ***2. What objectives have you achieved for previous clients?***

If the only answer a potential supplier can come up with is 'brand building', be wary. A good email marketing company will be able to provide metrics to demonstrate objectives set as part of the brief and met through creative and technical solutions. Ask to see an example of how they will show you campaign results like open rates, click through to web site, data capture, viral activity and forwards.

#### ***3. What research has the company undertaken into the market?***

Those email marketing companies that are really serious about their business will have an understanding of the marketplace beyond their own direct experience of it. Alongside using secondary research (which is readily available to all) committed email marketers will have undertaken primary research to build their own understanding of best practise and the most effective email marketing methods. Without this they are hardly a position to advise you on what will work.

#### ***4. What are your recommendations for a strong 'call to action'?***

The mailing is not an end in itself and the better companies will be looking at ways to add value to the data you supply by crafting an effective call to action. Less experienced email marketers will focus mostly on the message itself and getting it out.

#### ***5. Can I subscribe to your company's email newsletter?***

If they cannot do for themselves what they claim they can do for you proceed with caution. The quality of their own email marketing will provide a good indication of the quality of any campaign they may run for you.



## ***6. How do you locate appropriate data for acquisition campaigns?***

If you're running an acquisition campaign, you will know that the quality of the original data is key to its success. Established companies will have a range of relationships and processes in place through which suitable lists can be bought or built.

For more on lists see the Frontwire Guide to List-building:  
[http://www.frontwire.com/docs/factsheet\\_lisbuilding.pdf](http://www.frontwire.com/docs/factsheet_lisbuilding.pdf)

## ***7. Do other list brokers allow you to manage their email lists?***

If one or more lists are being sourced from list brokers it is imperative that the email marketing bureau is able to dedupe them against any others that you will be using. If not, you are likely to be seen to be delivering several copies of a messages to the same person.

## ***8. What is your longest running retention campaign***

If a company on your short list's longest-running retention campaign is less than a year be very careful about using them for your own retention campaign.

## ***9. How do you manage 'unsubscribes'?***

The better organisations will have a process in place to differentiate between opt-out to a specific campaign or opt-out to all communications from your company. If they don't make the distinction their inadequacies could result in you losing permission to communicate with customers and prospects in the future on other campaigns

## ***10. What software and technology platform do you use?***

Each campaign requires different functionality in terms of tracking, links and so on. Those email marketing companies using an off-the-shelf solution will be limited in terms of the functions they can use. Better to go with a supplier with their own software and technology since they have more control over adapting and extending the functionality to meet your needs for current and future campaigns.

## ***11. What are your testing processes?***

Probably the most complex aspect of email marketing is testing. It needs to be undertaken to ensure all manner of computers and email types are able to receive and read your campaign. And where HTML cannot be read an alternative needs to be provided – be it plain text and/or a link to a web page. Unless the tests are carried out thoroughly you can be sure a number of recipients will not see the email as it was intended to be seen, if they see it at all.

## ***12. What bandwidth will you make available to serve images to your email?***

As the number of images in an email goes up a greater bandwidth is required, and this rises in direct proportion to the number of emails dispatched. If the email marketing company does not have at least 100MB connection to a major internet backbone, your images will not be displayed if lots of people open your message at the same time.



### **About Frontwire**

Frontwire helps organisations acquire and retain customers in more cost effective ways using digital marketing solutions (with e-mail, SMS and streaming video). Frontwire's core services include: Strategy & Planning, List Building and Rental, Data Management, Design & Editorial, Message Dispatch & Tracking, Response Management, Research & Analysis.

To find out more about our solutions, clients and case studies please visit our web site [www.frontwire.com](http://www.frontwire.com) or call Jason Meads on 020 7368 9700.

Frontwire and its agents have used their best efforts in collecting and preparing the information published herein. However, Frontwire does not assume, and hereby disclaims, any and all liability for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other causes.