

## When to Switch Email Campaign Service Providers

Whether your nonprofit is considering switching email campaign service providers (ESPs)—or signing up for a service in the first place—there are a number of factors to keep in mind. The market is saturated with providers waiting in line to tell you why their service is superior.

***But, how do you choose a new vendor? How do you know whether it's worth switching at all?***

(Just a note: When we talk about email campaign service providers, we're referring to an email marketing service or tool used for sending messages to large audiences. This is not a discussion about personal email systems—Outlook versus others, and so on.)

### **How to Know if You Need a Change**

There are two basic tip-offs that it's time to say good-bye to your current email provider:

1. When you're no longer satisfied with the ESP
2. When the ESP cannot meet your needs

What might cause this discontent? Marketers may have more specific reasons: price, customer service, deliverability and/or a need for more integrated services. As marketers in the nonprofit sector, cost is generally toward the top of the list in the initial decision-making process.

Here's the problem with hinging your decision on price alone: Many people view email as an inexpensive resource, and they end up with a cut-rate service provider. You need to educate yourself before you "get what you pay for," so to speak.

Here are a few problem areas to keep an eye on:

- Recognizing deliverability problems
- Not getting a high level of customer service
- Making sure you have the opportunity to brand your emails, as opposed to using generic email templates

### **When to Give Your ESP a Second Chance**

Whether you have reached the end of your rope with your current ESP or are simply considering shopping around for an alternative, here is a mini-quiz to determine if switching is the right move:

### **\$1 out, \$25 in**

On average, for every dollar nonprofits invest in Network for Good's online giving services, they receive more than 25 dollars from donors.

### **\$71 million**

Last year more than 31,000 nonprofits raised \$71 million using Network for Good's online fundraising services.

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1. **Are you using all of the available tools and resources in your email campaign program?** Many ESPs come with survey functionality, in-depth reporting and search and segments tools to help you hone your email messaging and bolster your overall email marketing strategy. Be sure you have a good handle on all of the tools you have prior to jumping ship – you may realize you need them and will miss them if you sign on with an ESP that does not provide them.
2. **Are you sure it's the ESP's fault?** Take some time to evaluate whether your strategy or execution of your email marketing is failing due to the service or some strategic questions and uncertainties you have. For example, if your campaigns are experiencing a high bounce and/or opt-out rate, it may not be the fault of the ESP. Have you enacted permission-based mailing policies? What other list-building practices might you need to tweak?

### Steps to Take if You Do Make the Switch

Here is a quick checklist of activities to complete to prepare for a switch:

- Gather data on current e-marketing efforts and discuss what was lacking with the previous vendor.
- Ask colleagues and friends for references.
- Export invalid (bounced) e-mail addresses and opt-outs from the old ESP and import clean addresses to the new ESP.
- Create templates to keep consistency and implement a seamless transition for customers.

### A Potential Choice

Did this article sum up some of your email frustrations? Poor customer service? Deliverability rates not up to par?

Consider Network for Good's solution: ***EmailNow powered by Emma***. At just \$29.95/month for up to 20,000 emails and all the surveys you can put together, you've got delivery, design and support teams on your side. Contact us if you have any questions, and be sure to check out a free webinar to learn more (click the sticky note at [www.fundraising123.org/npo](http://www.fundraising123.org/npo)).

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