You're listening to the Keep Optimising podcast. To increase your traffic, improve your conversion rate and grow your profits.

Hello and welcome. If you’re looking to improve the performance and return on investment of your marketing, then you are in the right place. I’m Chloe Thomas, the host of this marketing focused podcast, and it’s very, very cool to have you tuning in to our very first episode.

I’ve been working on the idea for this podcast for over a year now and actively making it happen for the last couple of months. So it’s brilliant, absolutely awesome to finally have reached the point where I get to share it with you, because until it gets heard by and helps marketing managers like you, it really doesn’t exist.

There really is no point to it at all because I’ve created it all to help you. So it’s personally awesome we’ve reached this point. So thank you very, very, very, very much for hitting the play button. Now because our show is brand new. I am running a big competition where you could win a Keep Optimising podcast T-shirt. Oh yes. T-shirts are up for grabs. If you want to enter that and stay tuned to the very end of the episode to find out how to do it.

Now, in this episode, I’m talking to Chad S White about some of the key lessons from his bestselling book. Email Marketing Rules. Because this month, every episode we release is all about email marketing.
Keep Optimising Podcast: https://keepoptimising.com

[00:01:25.840] - Chloe Thomas

In today's episode, Chad and I are discussing some of the lessons from his book, focusing in on the key areas that separate the great email marketers from the good ones. That's going to include what to do with your inactive subscribers. What stats to benchmark against. And why you should be focusing on subscriber value rather than campaign performance. We're just about to meet today's guest. But before we do, please check out the sponsors.

[00:01:53.000] - Chloe Thomas

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[00:02:30.080] - Chloe Thomas

Today, I'm testing with e-mail marketing expert Chad S White, author of the Bestseller email marketing rules, checklists frameworks and 150 Best Practices for Business Success.

[00:02:40.930] - Chloe Thomas

It's now in its third edition. Now by day, Chad is the head of research at Oracle CX Marketing Consulting. And in 2018 was named the email experience council's email marketer Thought Leader of the Year. Hello, Chad.

[00:02:55.690] - Chad S White

Hello, Chloe. Thanks for having me on.

[00:02:57.870] - Chloe Thomas

It's great to have you here. I mean, that addition best practice book. It was a no brainer to get you here to talk e-mail marketing. And to help the listeners take the email marketing to it's next level. But before we get some, some advice for them, how did you end up working in email marketing?

[00:03:15.760] - Chad S White

So, like all good e-mail marketers, I fell into the industry. There's sort of a running joke that no one tries to be in all marketer. They just sort of get like tapped on the shoulder, sort of accidentally fall into it. And that's that's definitely how it happened with me. I used to be a journalist. I worked at Dow Jones and Conde Nast. Both of which are big publishers here in the US. And I covered retail and
technology and we used to sign up for all the retailers e-mail marketing programs to get an idea of what they were doing because they would announce things to their customers the e-mail.

[00:03:55.960] - Chad S White
So it was a great way to get leads for stories. And I did that for a number of years. And then my brother started a blog. This was during the early days of blogs and being a good competitive brother that I am. I said, hey, if my brother can do this. I can do this, too. And his is just like a personal blog. When I felt like I could I could do something else. And, you know, what would I write about?

[00:04:25.720] - Chad S White
And I decide, hey, well, you know, I get all these e-mails from retailers I bet I could write about, you know, what they're doing in their e-mail marketing programs. And so I did. And I started what's called the retail e-mail blog. And I ran that for six and a half years, posting over 3000 blog posts about what retailers were doing there, you know, marketing programs. And during that time, you know, I got hired by the email experience council during its early months.

[00:04:54.280] - Chad S White
So it's like employee number three at the easy. And then from there, I went on to join the Direct Marketing Association and then got it with an agency, which then got acquired by responses, which is now owned by Oracle. Anyway, that was sort of my my way into the industry. So I come at it. I'm not an actual e-mail marketer. I study and work with e-mail marketers. So just to be transparent. But yes, I am a I'm a journalist by trade that I've been doing research and observing the marketing industry now for almost 15 years.

[00:05:34.600] - Chad S White
I've written three editions of Email Marketing Rules and tons of research reports. I've been close to another thousand blogs. So that's how I how I fell into the industry. And I know that that's not all that unusual compared to a lot of other people who, again, are working on on a Web staff or working somewhere else and marketing. And one day they're process, hey, you know, we need someone to work on this. This e-mail marketing stuff.

[00:06:01.660] - Chad S White
Then they then get tapped and move over and try to do their best.

[00:06:07.020] - Chloe Thomas
Let's go to them as both a lot of people have ended up in e-mail by accident. I think once you start to really get into it, it becomes quite hard to leave. You know, people do stick around.
That is definitely true. And so I was back in mid-March, I was presenting at the UnSpam Conference, which is run by Really Good Emails, and they had done a survey and they let me present their results, which was awesome. And one of the findings was that there were a lot of marketers, you know, marketers who anticipated still being in email marketing like five years from now. And I thought that would really spoke well to kind of the stickiness of e-mail marketing.

But also, I think to like this is kind of like sort of a little bit like treasured arcane knowledge, like email marketing is not like other marketing channels. It has a lot of like quirks and nuances. And if you can learn all those sort of quirks and nuances, it makes you quite valuable. And so we’re finding that a lot of email marketers are staying in email marketing, which is great. And then others are sort of, you know, graduating, you know, up the ladder and becoming, you know, VPs of marketing.

And that’s great, because email marketing is all about at its heart sort of data and, you know, and CRM and, you know, segmentation and personalization and. Know all this sort of data driven, you know, action and those are exactly the skills that you need to have if you are going to become VP of marketing or head of marketing and sort of go up the food chain. So I think it’s great if you stay in your own marketing.

I think that’s fantastic. I think there's lots of opportunities there. And if you want to take those skills up the chain, I think there's also great possibilities there. I think, email marketing is just a fantastic industry to be in. Whether or not you plan on being for short of the long term or you plan on, you know, getting the skills necessary to do something higher.

I'm a great lover of email marketing myself. And so you see, you mentioned skills there are a few times, which means I think we should probably get into your book because to my mind, it's it's an amazing handbook for anyone who wants to take that e-mail marketing up a level. It's one I say occasionally I come across a book I wish I'd written myself. And this is one of those. It's like having having read it. well, I'm like, well, I'm not going to bother writing an e-mail book now because this one this one does what I wanted to do.
So I but I also know that it's going to be sitting on my desk for a long time to come because it eats one which you can dip back into and grab another nugget. So I think we should share some of those nuggets with the audience. But what I would want to start with is Chad, what let you to decide to write that first edition of the book all the way back in 2013.

[00:08:59.260] - Chad S White
Yeah. So sort of the over writing principle of the book is that best practices exist. I’m a firm believer in best practices, and way back, you know, in 2012, 2011, like a lot of people were sort of redefining what's the term best practices meant. I started to hear people saying like, well, the best practice is the practice that works best for your company. And that's not really true. That's not what a best practices like. I feel at best practices exist at the industry level.

[00:09:33.180] - Chad S White
That's sort of like crowd wisdom of what works and doesn't work. And it doesn't mean that you have to follow the best practice, and that doesn't mean that you can't tweak it or bend it. You know, people, you know, sort of glorify like bending and breaking rules. And I think that's kind of a little bit over done, over glorified. But the idea is that, you know, there is sort of a, generally speaking, best way to do something.

[00:09:59.680] - Chad S White
And it doesn't mean that you have to do that. It's not dogma or anything. But people were really kind of like dogging on on best practices. So I really wanted to make the point that, you know, there are a large number of things in email marketing that are really like very wise things to do. And it doesn't mean you have to, but they’re very wise. Things do great starting points, right. If you don’t know what to do.

[00:10:25.050] - Chad S White
Start here. Do this thing. If you don’t, in the absence of any other knowledge, do this thing and you’ll probably be OK. Now, you could experiment and innovate and you might be able to kind of bend or break a rule. That’s great. But if you don’t know where to start, do this thing. And so I really wanted to, you know, really stand up for best practices, sort of explain what I think the term means and how you can use them as a fantastic starting place, a safe starting place for, you know, how to set up your business and, you know, definitely opportunities to bend and break the rules.

[00:11:01.140] - Chad S White
Most of the rules are not worth trying to bend or break. And I did want to draw some hard lines between some rules that I thought were sort of unbreakable around permission. And, like, you know, how things are absolutely supposed to work. And then everything else, which I feel like is a bit more a bit more fluid. But I wanted to give people like a safe place to start from.
And I think it's something I've, you know, everything email marketing as a practitioner rather than as a bit of a study but definitely as a practitioner for well over a decade now. And I find, you know, working with different companies, advising on how to improve things.

And what I find is that a lot of the time, people just get stuck in a rut. And I think that's where your books are quite cool is that if you stuck in a rut, literally open it, flip the pages and you will find the best practice that you're probably not doing or you've forgotten about to take it to the next level, say. So, let's get into some of the advice in the book. And you have a whole section about the rules that separate great marketers from good marketers.

And I think that's what already is most know best. How do they go from being a good email marketing, being a great email marketing? to say of all the bits in that section of the book. What would you would you pick out as being an absolute critical one to grab onto?

So I think a great place to really start. And I did spend a lot of times or agonizing over sort of the order of. Rules and the orders of the sections, because they're sort of grouped. And, you know, when I start with success metrics and even email marketing metrics and I do feel like that is a very foundational place to start. Sometimes it doesn't seem like people totally understand what they're trying to accomplish with their e-mail marketing or or how they're going to measure it.

You mean to what they're doing? The whole. The boss said we have to send out one e-mail a week. So long as we send one email a week, we'll be okay.

Yeah. So, yeah, definitely when you get bosses involved and bosses don't always understand how know marketing is supposed to work. But, you know, for instance, you know, usually there's like there are program goals that's usually revolved around revenue. In most cases.

But you could have an email that could be highly successful and doesn't drive any direct revenue at all. And so it's about, you know, kind of understanding, you know, how different campaigns can
affect things downstream, how you kind of build a dialogue across several emails, especially if it's like an automated triggered program, but really kind of understanding what what you’re trying to achieve and then linking that very firmly to metrics. I do feel like like open rates are one of the most misunderstood metrics.

[00:13:52.450] - Chad S White

Opens have a lot of value for sure. But too often people get in this mode of thinking that, like that’s like the most important one to optimize or they get confused about open rates in relation to subject lines. I can’t tell you how many times I hear people’s say that they’re like AB testing their subject clients and like their victory metric is opens, which I think it’s just a horrible, horrible thing to do because, you know, the subject lines that tend to get the most opens tend to be the most vague.

[00:14:25.600] - Chad S White

Like we are creatures that are attracted to questions or are very curious. So if you’re very vague with a subject line, you could really drive a short term boost and opens. But that’s not what you're trying to do with an e-mail marketing relationship. You're trying to build a business relationship. And therefore, I always try to encourage people to have very descriptive subject lines and to gauge their subject lines by how they drive at least clicks, if not even lowered on the funnel to conversions, but usually clicks is is pretty indicative of whether or not you’re connecting your subject line with the body of your email.

[00:15:02.760] - Chad S White

But people who, you know, keep looking like, you know, if you're using the wrong metrics can really send you down the wrong strategy past for how to use all the various parts of the email marketing. So analytics, super important, understanding what it is you’re trying to do in terms of your goals and connecting those with your your KPI is all that I feel like. And this is a very sound place to start.

[00:15:54.040] - Chloe Thomas

And I kind of felt when you're saying about subscriber value rather than campaign performance, that’s kind of the first step on creating higher quality content.
Yeah. I think a lot of a lot of businesses think that they managed campaigns when what they really do is manage customers, or at least they should. I don't remember who it was that years and years ago I heard a guy talk about how, like the retailers of the future understand that they're not managing inventory, they're managing customers. And this is whole idea of like, you know what, like sort of the old school retailer would do as they would acquire products and then they would try to find people to sell the product to.

And what the evolved retailer does is they have customers and they try to find products to sell to their customers. So it's sort of turning that relationship on its head. Where you start with customers, you have they are the underpinnings of your business, not the things that you're selling, but your customer base is the underpinning of your business. And therefore, you're always trying to serve your customers and find products that they want to buy. I think that's just a genius way to think about everything you do.

And in the world of email, I think that means focusing on subscribers and managing your relationship with them. And so, yeah, content marketing, you know, other types of relationship building, exercise, progressive profiling, or you try to figure out what what are you interested in? Those are those are activities that aren't going to yield anything. As part of that campaign. But they make your future campaigns stronger because they give, you know, intel on how to better serve your subscribers.

So, yeah, I'm I'm a huge proponent of subscriber or lifetime value. You know, looking at how long you're keeping subscribers on your list, how much revenue they generate while they're on your list. And that gets you in the right frame of mind for creating campaigns that are really have them in mind versus having yourself in mind and how you want to drive revenue for yourself. Like, I feel like it puts you in the wrong frame of mind to really be successful long term.

It's sort of a long term versus short term split there. If you're focused on campaigns, you have a short term focus on your company and if you're focused on subscribers and you have more of a long term focus on overall business success.

And I think the often when companies get focused on campaigns, then it becomes a little bit of a barrier to investing time on welcome sequences and post purchase sequences, because it's like, well,
the time I spend doing that, I could spend doing a campaign and a campaign drives me x rather than seeing that more global perspective. But chad, the next thing I want to pick up on in that kind of KPI arena was something which which I say a lot. So I love the fact you had a section on it which was about benchmarking against yourself, not anybody else, because a lot of people get obsessed with someone else's stats. So can you give us give us your take on why that's a bad idea.

[00:18:57.930] - Chad S White

Yeah. So, yeah, we are very benchmark obsessed for sure. And it's kind of to our detriment in general. So over the years I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of different brands and be at a lot of different companies, have different customer bases. Well, one of the things that's become just painfully clear to me is that everybody's business is different. Especially true right now. You see how certain companies have been so highly negatively impacted by the pandemic and other ones that are more neutral and some are actually thriving in this environment.

[00:19:34.170] - Chad S White

And, you know, it varies by industry, but also by sort of financial situation. Stronger companies that have stronger financial situations are taking on different strategies. So every company is different. So that's number one. But in an email, everybody manages their e-mail marketing program different, differently, and they manage their e-mail marketing lists differently. So, for instance, you know, going back to like open rates, which again, is a useful metric, but it is the most easily manipulated.

[00:20:05.610] - Chad S White

I could go into any company and double their open rates like tomorrow. And it's just as simple as like not emailing with people who don't tend to open your e-mails. So if you manage your inactive subscribers more tightly than another brand, your open rates are going to be higher. It's just that simple, like. So these are just numbers like numbers can be manipulated based on how you manage your business. And, you know, the goals and content that you're sending out.

[00:20:38.910] - Chad S White

So, yeah, I'm not a huge fan of benchmarks. Most of them are honestly not helpful. Know some of them. Some of them are for sure, but most of them are not. And so, yeah, definitely it's about sort of personal improvements if you have access to benchmarks that are from companies in your same industry of your same size. That's good. But today, that's generally not so easy to get hold of, especially if you're in a particular industry or at a particular size.

[00:21:16.030] - Chad S White

Yeah, especially if you're a larger company. I feel like it makes less and less sense because you tend to have fewer and fewer competitors that are at that same level. But if you're a small business, a
small e-commerce business, maybe, maybe that benchmark is useful. But I think self-improvement is really the goal with benchmarks.

[00:21:34.070] - Chloe Thomas

And you mentioned that about managing Inactives on our list, which I think is something which a lot of businesses overlook because they get a bit obsessed with how many do we send the email to this week rather than how many should we see this week? So, what's your and your advice around managing on Inactives?

[00:21:54.810] - Chad S White

I think, you know, in Europe, definitely there are a little bit more enlightened than we are here in the US, in the US. There’s, I think, still this frame of thinking that, hey, that person gave us permission to e-mail them. And until they actively tell us they that they don’t want us to, we will continue to e-mail them and on the U.S. or to new laws to the contrary in the EU.

[00:22:26.530] - Chad S White

There are laws now that say that you can't endlessly e-mail people. It’s a pretty simple ideas that at a certain point silence means that permission has lapse. It's just kind of that simple. But people get wrapped up in like, you know, what's like legally allowed. And people don't like to see their lists. Plus, size fall. They like to see it always growing. The way that I talk about lists is about list productivity. It's this idea that, you know, if I if I lose one hundred of my best subscribers and replace them with 100 low value subscribers, your list size hasn't changed.

[00:23:13.720] - Chad S White

But your list productivity has gone down because you have replaced some high value subscribers with low value subscribers. So you should be looking at how productive your list is. And I think if you have that kind of a lens, it becomes a lot easier to let go of inactive subscribers because by their very nature, they’re not delivering any value. I think at the same time, while there aren't any laws that say you can’t keep inactive forever, the inbox providers are providing great incentives for us not to keep these people on because engagement based filtering is everywhere and is a huge component of how inbox providers decide where to root.

[00:24:05.270] - Chad S White

You’re at your email to whether to the inbox, to the junk folder or just to block it entirely. And, you know, Gmail is definitely probably the harshest master for sure. And they definitely, definitely weight heavily engagement. So you could actually be hurting yourself by holding on to inactives for too long. And it really varies depending on how frequently you send emails, posts and bunch other factors. That sort of the biggest one. But you can actually, you know, by trying to like, you know,
have a bigger list size and mailing more people, you could actually be hurting the productivity of your e-mail program and diminish your revenue because you could have deliverability issues.

[00:24:55.220] - Chloe Thomas

And when we’re talking about these inactive people is depressing. We’re talking about people who aren’t opening or clicking. And I guess we’ll be going back maybe a year or two years or less than that, would you say?

[00:25:07.060] - Chad S White

Yeah. So that’s where it really depends on per program. If you are a like deal a day retailer or if you’re sending it like, you know, kind of a daily frequency, we find that generally you’re going to hit that point where inactivity is going to hurt you much sooner. Could be as soon as three months could be around. You know, I think typically maybe around six months, it really can vary. But if you’re sending, you know, once a week, yeah.

[00:25:36.100] - Chad S White

You could be able to send two and actives for it for much longer. Like, you know, up to around two years. It can really kind of varies. And you kind of, you know, kind of see these things are always evolving. And, you know, it could be that like, oh, you don’t have any problems at Outlook.com but you’re having problems at Gmail And so you have to kind of play to the individual inboxes boxes as well.

[00:25:56.830] - Chad S White

But yes, the frequency is sort of the biggest factor, but also sort of overall volume. Know the larger your volume is, the more you get scrutinized by the inbox writers.

[00:26:07.980] - Chloe Thomas

So guys, if you’ve never done any inactivity management, now is the time to go and take a look at your database, see see what it’s looking like.

[00:26:16.570] - Chad S White

For sure. And especially, again, if you’re in the in the EU, there are laws like GDPR includes no mentions of this. So you want to make sure you’re not violating GDPR. That’s generally not a good thing.

[00:26:31.260] - Chloe Thomas
Yeah, generally not a good thing all.

[00:26:32.860] - Chad S White
And those fines are pretty hefty.

[00:26:34.930] - Chloe Thomas
They are. And Chad, you mentioned about, you know, you lose a hundred people off list, that were
good and you gain 100 terrible people onto your list. Obviously getting subscribers is something
which we’re always looking to do is even marketers And you've got some some good advice around
getting those engaged subscribers, not just any old volume, because, you know, it's like you're saying
you could improve anyone's over write overnight by getting rid of the inactives. I think any of us
could very quickly add 10000 people to someone’s someone’s list given the budget. but they're not
might not be worth adding.

[00:27:07.930] - Chad S White
Yes, that's absolutely true. So generally speaking, your best subscribers are going to be the places
where your customers are. So I always say, like subscriber acquisition sources are the best are the
ones that are closest to either your fulfillment operations. So stores. eCommerce or customer
service? A call center or whoever else, you know, your service and your customers and and it's for
the very simple reason that, like, that's where your customers are. That's where people who are
transacting with you are.

[00:27:42.790] - Chad S White
So, you know, getting people who visit your restaurants to sign up for, you know, is a good thing
because there are already customers, because they're at your restaurant buying food from you or,
you know, getting people to sign up. You know, at the point of sale and retail is good or even better,
like during checkout on line because it’s even easier there. Those are all fantastic places because
those are customers. So they're already familiar with your brand.

[00:28:10.810] - Chad S White
They’re already sort of sold on on the value that you bring to the table because they are transacting
with you. Those are going to be your best subscribers. And the further you get away from those
operations, the dicier the quality becomes. So there are good ways to do list rental, but list rental is
often done poorly or wrong in many cases where it almost is like just buying lists. You have like the
list purchase. Folks have figured out that like, oh, buying lists, quote unquote is a bad thing.

[00:28:42.940] - Chad S White
So we'll just call ourselves list rental instead and be a little bit more legitimate. So you do need to be careful when you're doing any kind of, you know, list rental type deal to make sure that everything is aligned the way it should be. But like, you know, that's a case where you're no longer talking to your customers, you're talking to somebody else's customers. So there is, by its very nature, like this sort of unfamiliarity.

[00:29:08.620] - Chad S White

So getting people to sign up for your brand, that way you need to do different education. I think, you know, at that point, doing a double often makes more sense that people understand Kovar registration is the same way as current stations when you have a sign up on somebody else's Website. Again, that is also kind of inherently dicey because they may not understand who you are or they think they understand who you are. So there's a lot of opportunities for misunderstandings or wrong expectations.

[00:29:39.160] - Chad S White

So the further you go away from your own operations, the dicier it is. And I think that also includes on social because people engage with brands on social for different reasons and they may come to a social conversation not truly knowing what your brand is all about, and the value that you offer. So by focusing, you know, I think in general on those acquisition sources closest to your business, you do well, those the ones you spend most your time optimising and trying to make sure that they are as friction free as possible.

[00:30:09.490] - Chad S White

That is time well spent. And frankly, when we find that people have deliverability problems, often it's either because they're managing their inactives poorly or because they have a subscriber acquisition source that is bad, that they they got a bunch of people from from this source over here or they found a list, quote unquote. That happens quite a lot. We found this lists. They don't know much about it. Let's send it to these people. They opted in at some point.

[00:30:43.780] - Chad S White

That's when you're gonna get in trouble. So those those tend to be like the two big sources of deliverability issues.

[00:30:51.370] - Chloe Thomas

Oh and some, and Chad, we're going to pause for a reminder of our sponsors and then we're going to get talking about the wider world of e-mail marketing.

[00:31:00.260] - Chloe Thomas
It's safe to say that most of us have been doing more shopping online lately. And if you're an e-commerce brand, that means you might be seeing more first time customers. But once they made that first purchase, how do you keep them coming back? Well, that's what Klaviyo is for. Klaviyo is the ultimate email and SMS marketing platform for e-commerce brands.

[00:31:17.980] - Chloe Thomas
It gives you the tools to build your contact lists and memorable emails, automate key messages a more way, way more, whether you are launching a new business or taking your brand to the next level. Klaviyo can help you get growing faster. And it's free to get started. Visit Klaviyo.com/masterplan to create your free account. That's K L A V I Y O.com/masterplan.

[00:31:42.310] - Chloe Thomas
OK Chad, so far we've talked about a couple of the areas in your book, email marketing rules. But now you get to wow us with your insight and knowledge about the whole of e-mail marketing, say, for the following questions, your answers can be literally anything to do with email marketing. So, Chad, are you ready?

[00:31:58.280] - Chad S White
I'm ready.

[00:31:59.280] - Chloe Thomas
OK. So let's start with e-mail marketing Newbie advice. If we've inspired someone to take that first step with e-mail marketing, what do they need to know to give themselves the best chance of success?

[00:32:11.270] - Chad S White
Yeah, I think I would go back to, like, understanding e-mail metrics and goals. I do think that that's foundational. It's hard to be successful if you don't understand how the goals connect with the metrics. I think that's that's really key and is and is different. Like the metrics that we use in email marketing are different than you use and in other channels. So I think that's important, along with maybe understanding the basics of permission. Because that also is very different, especially if you're coming from, you know, either a direct marketing or some type of advertising channel, because permission is something that can kind of throw people off like a permission is really super critical to email marketing in a way that it's a non-issue And a lot of sort of advertising type channels.

[00:33:00.660] - Chloe Thomas
OK. And now once you've started, of course, with your e-mail marketing, you've got to keep optimising. So what's your favorite way to improve e-mail marketing performance?
You know, it's kind of simple. And I was just AB testing is a really good way to find areas that you can improve and AB testing. This is just when you you take what you've been doing and you challenge it with it with something different. And it can be really simple. If you do AB testing with subject lines, you're just saying which of two subject lines your audience prefers. But you can also be the color buttons or the text with a call to action that's in a button.

Could be a different hero. Images, it gives you a slightly different layout. You can get progressively sort of more radical in the changes that you present. That's a great way to make incremental improvements or to try to make some sort of radical improvement. Call them like local maximums versus global maximums. Like whatever you’re doing, you're on a hill. And if you make really small changes, you could try to get to the top of that hill. But if you try something radical, you might find that, hey, there's another hill nearby that even taller, that's better.

And so if you make a radical change, you might find that new hill. That's better. But if you make a bunch of small ones, it helps you get closer to the top of the hill you're on. So, yeah, testing is really key. And I guess the other thing I would say there is that most of the AB testing that happens is with broadcast and segmented campaigns. We tend to see that automated campaigns don’t get a lot of AB testing love.

I think that's a missed opportunity because your your trigger e-mail programs are incredibly productive. They're really high, otherwise, much higher otherwise in your broadcast campaigns. And so any sort of incremental improvements that you can make on your triggered campaigns actually pay even more dividends. So it's it can be slightly more difficult to test those because they’re sort of ongoing living campaigns. But you'll get much greater results by investing some time in that. I think that is one of the other really big fundamental misunderstandings about email is that we sometimes really get bogged down like the day to day of sending out broadcast campaigns when for a lot of programs, the most important campaigns are those automated programs that they set up and often unfortunately sort of forget about.

They've been over time sort of lauded as sort of statten forget. And I hate that terminology because it doesn’t understand that these email programs are living programs. All right. They live for a period of time. And so they need care and nurture. And you've got to pay attention to them. And you got you’ve got to feed them and give them attention and you got to optimize them. You got to check on them, make sure they're not breaking.
[00:35:53.140] - Chad S White
You know, if you make changes to your Web site, you could find that you have a broken link. And one of your automated e-mails is just, you know, churning away, you know, totally unknowing that it's now disconnected from what you're trying to do or you have. You know, I've seen automated emails that have like an outdated logo, which is not a good look. So it could be like really simple cosmetic things, but then also like really fundamental things, like broken link.

[00:36:15.320] - Chad S White
So, yeah. So when you do your testing, make sure you include your triggered campaigns because the testing you do on those is really going to give you great returns.

[00:36:41.420] - Chad S White
Yeah, it's tough to just pick one and also a fully recognized and not everybody has like the same level of sophistication, and I think in a perfect world, you know, something like a subscriber lifetime value is what we should all be gunning for. But I, I fully acknowledge and not everyone, you know, has that calculation because it's not necessarily the simplest thing to arrive at. So but in general, I would say the further down the funnel you can go, the better. Again, opens as a success.

[00:37:16.370] - Chad S White
KPI is only truly useful and like diagnosing deliverability problems, to be honest. So I hope everyone's going lower down the funnel, at least using Clicks, if not using conversions. But again, it's kind of depends on your business and what it is that you're trying to drive. So, you know, if you're an e-commerce operation, then you should totally be paying attention to conversions and, you know, revenue per subscriber or revenue per campaign, something if that's really good.

[00:37:47.280] - Chad S White
But obviously, there's lots of brands that don't sell directly. So if you're a CPG company or, you know, you're selling through, you know, your brand that then sells to retailers, you're not selling directly. Your KPI is might be all around, you know, clicks and getting engagements and, like, sort of inspiring people to use their products and either noble Nobelways or in the ways that they were intended to be used. So think about, you know, a brand of a flower, right?
Like flowers, just flower. And nobody buys flower. Right. What they're buying is cookies and bread. Right. It's because of what it can become. And so if you're a flower brand, hopefully you're using your e-mail marketing program to inspire people with all the different ways that they can transform your flower into something amazing. And so in the confines of that, you'd be looking probably like, you know, time on list and clicks and things like that.

There's those signs of engagement that you're, you know, inspiring your audience to continue to love your product.

Awesome. And then finally Chad. Crystal ball time. What's coming up in the next six to 12 months that we should be getting ready for in email marketing?

Yeah, I sort of was dreading this question because everything is topsy turvy right now. Yeah, there's lots of reasons to be concerned about the future. I mean, the good news is that email marketing continues to be a very effective way to engage with your customers. And so your investments in email are safe. I think that, once again, email has proven that it's still a very healthy and vibrant channel and that all the naysayers are just running their lips.

So it continues to do well, even in this crazy environment we're all currently in. But in the next six to 12 months, I mean, I think that the thing that everyone should be paying attention to right now is, is how to get nimble and how to get close to subscribers. And so there's you can say, I believe you. It's kind of two recommendations. That would be one to really pay attention to your analytics and especially by sort of geosegment and by sort of persona based segmentation.

You really kind of dive, you know, try and drill in to your analytics and get a good understanding of exactly what is going on with your customers, because everybody's in sort of like very different places, depending on where they are in the world. You know, here in the US, we have all the states and some cities like opening, reopening on different schedules. So geographically, people are in different places mentally, but also some people have very different attitudes than than others about what they're prepared to do and what they're concerned about and what they're valuing.
So I think, like some persona based tracking is also very wise. And so that's. So that's really key. Understand your customers right now. I think it’s especially vital going forward. And the other thing on sort of the getting nimble side of things is to really re-evaluate your e-mail production workflow and try to simplify it. You know, if you're using templates, know, make sure that those are good and solid and helping you create e-mails more quickly.

[00:41:29.540] - Chad S White

We always recommend using a modular email architectures is where you sort of build emails, kind of like stacking Legos. So you have various components that you kind of pull in and some. email service writers have sort of kind of woozy editors that are sort of like that. But you can certainly kind of do that through coding modules as well. They sometimes are called snippets. Also, things like Parshall's try to get more technical. But like that's sort of like Lego assembly is really wise when we've done these recently for some of our clients.

[00:42:05.310] - Chad S White

We've cut our production time by 25 percent. So it's a pretty significant, accelerator. And whether or not you are facing sort of financial cost cutting needs or whether or not you're just trying to get more nimble so you can kind of react to your audience better, speeding up production is wise. And I think I would also sort of simultaneously say try to avoid things that dramatically balloon production time. So I know that some folks are very excited about AMP for email.

[00:42:40.710] - Chad S White

I think long term amp for email is really exciting. I think now is exactly the wrong time to be experimenting with that. It's a brand new coding language of essentially code. A new version, a new mind type of your email. So it's a lot more work. And when you're trying to, everyone seems to be really trying to be nimble right now. Like adding things that balloon production time like that seems really unwise. So, yeah, try to try to keep it a little simple if you can, and definitely do the things that allow that process to move along.

[00:43:15.900] - Chad S White

And I think I'd also say that also keep an eye on how many cooks you have in the kitchen. I think right now everyone's like super nervous about saying the wrong thing. And so a lot more people are involved in like reviews and approvals. I understand that. But that does add a huge amount of drag to the velocity of your production. So just kind of keep that in mind. Like maybe you need to be a little bit more careful with maybe you don't need, like, five new layers of approvals, maybe only one additional layer of approval. So maybe think about it.

[00:43:51.830] - Chloe Thomas
It'll be depressing to improve your template, save 25 percent of your time, and then all of that get taken up on approval rounds.

[00:43:58.690] - Chad S White

And I’m afraid that there's quite a bit of that happening right now. In the end, people are justifiably concerned about, like saying the wrong thing. And there definitely is a high cost cutting crosses, you know, insensitive or profiteering or what have you. But at the same time, you know, people do your programs are trying to, like, speed things up. So it's a if you want to make sure that you've got the right balance there.

[00:44:25.930] - Chloe Thomas

Cool. Well Chad, we have very nearly at the end of the. Could you please let the listeners know what they can find, you and Oracle, if they want to get in touch?

[00:44:33.740] - Chad S White

Sure. So I'm pretty easy to find. You can find me at emailmarketingrules.com. You can also find me on Twitter at Chad S White and on LinkedIn, Chad S White. Yeah, I’d love to love to connect with anyone who is listening. Anyone who wants to talk about email. And obviously you can find Oracle at Oracle.com. You know, OracleCX Marketing Consulting, where a group of 500 consultants within Oracle, it's all focused on marketing, digital marketing.

[00:45:05.640] - Chad S White

And you see you can find us at Oracle.com/marketingclub.

[00:45:11.530] - Chloe Thomas

Cool. And then your book email marketing rules. I know it's on Amazon it's selling is a paperback. I've got one in my hand right now. Is it a Kindle and audio?

[00:45:20.340] - Chad S White

There isn't an audio version, but there is a Kindle edition. Yes.

[00:45:23.890] - Chloe Thomas

Cool, guys. You can find all of that at Amazon.com as well. Well Chad, thank you so much for being on the Keep Optimising podcast today. It's been excellent and fascinating chatting to you about your insights into e-mail marketing. Thank you.
[00:45:38.550] - Chad S White
Thank you for having me.

[00:45:40.840] - Chad S White
So how cool was that to get to catch up with Chad? I must admit I’m a little star struck. As an author on Amazon, I spent quite a considerable amount of time on there looking at where my books ranking. He he’s ranking other places. What books are selling well, what people are reviewing on books, you know. And as part of the podcast, I wanna spend quite a bit of time on there looking for guests.

[00:46:01.430] - Chad S White
And Chris’s book email marketing rules is one of those which I’m constantly seeing and constantly going, oh, hand. If I can ever get him on the podcast, I bet you never say no. And they’re never quite getting around to ask. So I am I'm a little bit starstruck and overwhelmed. He came on and was able to, you know, give such great advice and it's such a cool place to start our brand new podcast. And this first month where we're focusing on e-mail marketing, if you want to get links, which of course you do, to what we’ve discussed to get the full transcript of the episode, that's everything we talked about in written format.

[00:46:31.880] - Chloe Thomas
SO you can print it often, keep it and any important notes and all the rest of it just go to keepoptimising.com where you can access everything there is to do with this episode. That's keepoptimising.com with an S, not a Z. Of course, I’d also love to know what you think. This podcast is brand new out the gate, and I would really love to know what you think about it. So the easiest way to do that is via Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #keepoptimising again, optimising with an S not Z now as part of my mission to help you improve your marketing.

[00:47:06.740] - Chloe Thomas
I've invited our email marketing specialist, Chad, from this episode and my other 4 email marketing specialists in episodes two, three, four, five. Coming up very soon, in fact, two and three you can listen to right now, four and five in the next couple of weeks. I've invited all five of them to join us for a Q&A webinar at the end of the month. Now, this is your chance to get your questions answered. Now, I know a lot of you love the questions I ask, but I'm sure you've got some of your own.
So maybe you've taken the dealing with Inactivates that we talked about today and you've started implementing. You've got some detailed questions about that. We'll come along to the webinar and you'll get the chance to ask that question and get the answer right from Chad in the webinar. How cool is that? So to do that to to sign up for the webinar, find exactly where it is, et cetera, et cetera, head to keepoptimising.com again with an S not Z (you're going to get so bored to be saying that over the coming months).

But there on the website, keepoptimising.com. You will find out all the details with the webinar. And if the webinar is already happened, you'll be able to play it back and have a listen to the questions that the other listeners asked. And also, I'm really looking forward to getting to connect with some of you guys during the webinar because it's not very two way podcast. I'm loving the fact we're going to get to do better, connecting a bit of catching up on that.

Now, thank you so much for tuning in, even to this first ever episode of the Keep Optimising podcast.

If you're new to the podcast, which you probably are right now, because a lot of people like to start with Episode one, and if you're listening to this, students, enough is gone. It's pretty much anything you listen to. If you are new to the podcast, do checkout episode three, which is definitely live right now with Louise Read from Klaviyo, because in that one we're focusing in on how email marketing can help a D2C brand. That's a direct to consumer brand.

And I think there's a lot of lessons in there which are really going to help you build on what we've been discussing in this episode. Please do also tell your fellow marketers is about the show, because I want to help as many marketers as possible to improve the performance of their marketing.

One of the easiest ways to spread the word is to take part in our launch competition. So kudos to you for holding out right to the end. Find out how you can enter our competition to win a Keep Optimising Podcast T-shirt. Yes, we are giving away a T-shirt every week in July and August to be in with a chance of winning. It's pretty straightforward. This is what you need to do. Find this show on Apple podcast.
So search for Keep Optimising subscribe, rate and review the show. Now, you don't have to give us five stars to win. You just gotta write and review and subscribe. I don't mind. I want your honest feedback on your honest reviews of the show. I don't want you to think if you don't put five stars, I'm not going to pull you out the hat. We work picking the winners randomly. So a nice, honest rating and review unsubscribe to the show.

[00:49:59.990] - Chloe Thomas

All that on Apple podcast. Take a screengrab of your review and then share that screen grab on Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag. #Keepoptimising. That's hash. K E E P O P T I M I S I N G Okay, so hash K E E P O P T I M I S I N G. We're going to then gather up all the entries and each Wednesday I'll be picking the winner until the 2nd of September 2020.

[00:50:35.420] - Chloe Thomas

One winner every Wednesday from now until the 2nd of September. So the sooner you do it, the more chances you have to win. Full details about the competition and everything else to do with the show or keepoptimising.com with an S and not Z. I hope I get to send a T-Shirt very soon. Have a great week. And make sure you listen to the next episode so I can help you to keep optimising your marketing.

[00:51:03.560]

Access everything Keep Optimising at keepoptimising.com that's with an S not Z.