

PERSONALISING BULK EMAIL

INTRODUCTION

Some people will tell you that personalising an email is as simple as putting a person's name at the top. Others that rely on their email communications to create income have very sophisticated ways of personalising email and having the recipient (almost) believe that the email has been written just for them because it contains so much information that is specific to them.

Your personal definition will probably lie somewhere between. There is no doubt that some forward planning will be required to reap the advantages of personalising messages when mass communicating.

REGULARLY OCCURRING EMAILS

The easiest way to manage regularly occurring email messages is to use the signature function in Outlook. Create a series of signatures, which are in fact entire emails written specifically for different events or circumstances and personalise them with names and other details before sending to your recipients. This is especially useful if the emails are being sent out as a follow up to a telephone conversation, particularly in the accounts or customer service areas of your business.

To create a signature in Outlook Express select Tools on the menu and scroll down to select Options. Click on the Signatures tab to create and edit your standard signatures.

If you have complex information to convey to your recipients you may wish to combine one or more signatures. There does not seem to be any limit to the number of signatures you can create or use in an email.

USING MS WORD TO PERSONALISE BULK EMAIL

If you have ever used the Mail Merge function in MS Word to create a batch of personalised letters you will be able to create bulk personalised email in exactly the same way. Instead of merging your documents to the printer, or to a new file for printing letters you simply merge to electronic mail.

We recommend using Excel to manage your email data base as it is more user friendly when it comes to sorting your recipients into groups. This functionality makes it possible to create highly personalised email messages.

If you have not used Mail Merge before you can find detailed instructions in the MS Word Help files, under Mail_merge.

Below we show an example of a very personalised email that was produced using MS Mail Merge. The highlighted text has been merged from the Excel spreadsheet data base.

Attention Sharon Bright
Account Number 999999

Dear Sharon,

Because you have been a regular customer of ours since the summer of 1999 we wanted to thank you for your past business by giving you first offer on a leather briefcase that matches the diary binder that you purchased from us in March of this year.

You may have seen the briefcase, it was originally priced at \$289 but we are able to offer it to you now for just \$209. You can see a picture of the briefcase and read further details at www.yourcompany.com.au/briefcase.htm

If you would like to take advantage of this special price we can have your briefcase delivered to you by the end of the week. Of course, our normal trading terms apply and you can return it for a refund should the briefcase not meet your requirements.

Your contact and credit card details are held securely on file, so if you would like to order the briefcase you can do so simply by replying to this email giving your authority to deduct the sum of \$209 from your credit card. Delivery will be provided free of charge.

Thank you for your business, we assure you of our best service and attention at all times.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Wright
Marketing Manager
YourCompany Leatherwear

Tel: 1800 999 999

P.S. Should you prefer not to receive such information from us in future please let us know by responding to this email. We promise to action your request immediately.

As you can see this email would work just as well for someone who had already bought the briefcase for \$289 and could be interested in the matching diary binder that you are offering on special for \$59 instead of the usual \$89. Email customerservice@webassets.com.au for a copy of the Excel spreadsheet that was used to create the emails.

CONCLUSION

The email successfully conveys to the customer that you know and therefore care about the existing business relationship between them and YourCompany. Now the customer is not silly and she will not believe for a minute that Evelyn sat down and wrote this email just for her. But the customer will believe that she is more than just a past transaction.

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She will probably surmise that YourCompany keeps accurate records, is well organised, is efficient, turns over its stock regularly, recognises customer requirements and values the loyalty of their client base. This is not a bad way to have your customers think of you.