

Discipleship Ministries Email Guidelines

Introduction

Email is one of our most effective marketing tools we have available within the agency.

However, before you begin sending out campaigns, the Communications Team wants to share some basic guidelines around email marketing to ensure your campaigns are compliant with our agency standards.

FAQs:

- **How do I send an email to a list?** – Fill out the Email Intake form to get the process started. Michael McSwain the agency Marketing Director can assist you if you have questions.
Intake form: www.umcdiscipleship.org/communications-resources/email-intake-form
- **Can I email any list of my choosing?**
No, even though subscribers give their permission to Discipleship Ministries, we only send them the topics they've requested. We don't abuse our subscribers' consent.
- **Can I download an email list?**
No, to ensure accurate lists, eliminating email fatigue, and to uphold brand standards the Communications team at Discipleship Ministries manages all out going emails through our email service provider.
- **Who owns the email lists?**
Discipleship Ministries owns the email lists. The lists are managed by the Communications Team. List management at Discipleship Ministries isn't focused on ownership or who can email the list, but on gaining permission of people who own the email address and fulfilling the expectations of that permission.
- **Why can't I send an email from my personal/work email account?**
You can send emails to individuals and even small groups of people from your personal accounts. However, emails sent to large groups, sent all at once, that are one-way communication (not in response to a message initiated by the constituent) are considered bulk email. Sending bulk email through a corporate email system can result in all email from the agency being blocked by many, if not all, internet service providers. The Communications Team works hard to gain respect of those who have chosen to give us their email address and to make all group emails (and email campaigns) meet our brand standards.

Discipleship Ministries Guidelines:

Email Management

- Discipleship Ministries uses an Email Service Provider (ESP), a third-party service with the technology and processes to send bulk email successfully. All ESPs require their customers to follow certain rules regarding how they collect and use email addresses.

- The most important rule all ESPs enforce is: All contacts in an email list must give their consent to receive email. Adding people to a list without their consent is prohibited.
- It's not just a matter of collecting the email address but of also collecting consent – the subscriber's permission for us to communicate with them.

Agency Design Standards

All messages are consistent in frequency, appearance, and tone. All emails come from one entity – Discipleship Ministries. Subscribers recognize our messages and learn to expect them.

Obtaining Subscriber Consent

Consent is most easily given when subscribers understand what they are giving permission for and believe they'll receive something of value in exchange. Therefore, list management at Discipleship Ministries is focused on gaining permission and fulfilling the expectations of that permission. How the list can be used is determined by the permission we are granted. We follow industry best practices to gain and keep subscriber permission.

Subscribers give their consent to one entity – Discipleship Ministries.

Consent isn't collected by work units or departments; instead, subscribers choose their email preferences from a set of topics. Subscribers have a simplified, seamless experience across the agency. There is clear and defined consent: "send me these emails – only."

We respect subscribers' preferences.

Even though subscribers give their permission to Discipleship Ministries, we only send them the topics they've requested. We don't abuse our subscribers' consent.

Intentional Sending

We pay attention to email fatigue – sending too many emails too close together.

We understand that our subscribers have limited time and attention – so we're judicious in scheduling the number of emails sent. There is a single calendar for email production and sending, to minimize subscriber fatigue and guarantee that every email sent isn't competing for attention against other agency emails.

List Management

- We're focused on list quality rather than quantity.
- We pay attention to subscribers who stop opening our emails or whose interests have changed. We remove individuals who no longer open our emails, and we invite constituents to review their preferences regularly. This increases the likelihood that subscribers will care about and read our messages.
- Adhering to these best practices lets us grow a health list of constituents, eager to receive our messages.

For Questions Contact Michael McSwain, Strategic Marketing Director
mmcswain@umcdiscipleship.org