

HOW OCEAN CONSERVANCY IS USING MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOLS TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

Ocean Conservancy is focused on solving some of the greatest threats facing the ocean. They create science-based solutions for a healthy ocean and the wildlife and communities that depend on it. Focused on bringing people, science and policy together — they defend critical legislation and mobilize thousands of volunteers in a yearly international beach clean up.

This case study shows how Clare Boczon at Ocean Conservancy together with consultant Ashleigh Lambert at **Beaconfire RED** (and accredited Engaging Networks partner) took a deep dive into **email marketing automation** wizardry which saw the organization's engagement increase.

Addressing the problem of unsubscribes

Ocean Conservancy was having problems with people unsubscribing from their email lists. Additionally, supporters who had been with them for a year were not really engaging.

New to marketing automation, Clare explained that previous supporters could have joined as an Ocean Partner (the organization's monthly giving program). Those donors would then receive a 'make an extra donation' email right after. This must have been a little confusing, and perhaps off-putting!

People were rapidly falling out of their lists at a higher rate than they would have liked.

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Clare says that, “their deliverability had not been great and those who were interacting enough to fall into their queries may have not been loving the content. It was not what those audiences were looking for.”

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When paid acquisitions were leaving marketing lists they realized their audience was simply not engaged. Something had to be done.

ACCORDING TO EPSILON, AUTOMATED EMAILS HAVE A 70.5% HIGHER OPEN RATE AND 152% HIGHER CLICK-THROUGH RATE THAN STANDARD MESSAGES.

Engaging your audience with the right content through marketing automation

Clare and Ashleigh began by scrutinizing the organization's list hygiene. They knew they needed more than just a 'set it and forget it' approach.

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Ashleigh noted, “it is not as easy as just putting a message together; you have to see if it's working.”

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They wanted to curate the experience for people as soon as they joined and they found the easiest way to start was with automation.

Ashleigh implemented a set of unique welcome series' organized into different streams based on how the supporter came onto the list. One series was for those who had found Ocean Conservancy organically through the website, or at an event. The second was for those who had donated. The donors were provided with a little more curated content which might inspire another donation. Another series was for those who had come in via one of the ocean clean-up events or apps (like CleanSwell). The last series was for paid acquisitions, the aim for this series was to make it feel like a natural flow from the source of the acquisition to Ocean Conservancy.

Each audience received a simple variation in the series; for example, people using their CleanSwell app received a message saying 'Thank you for saying yes to our ocean by using our CleanSwell app.'

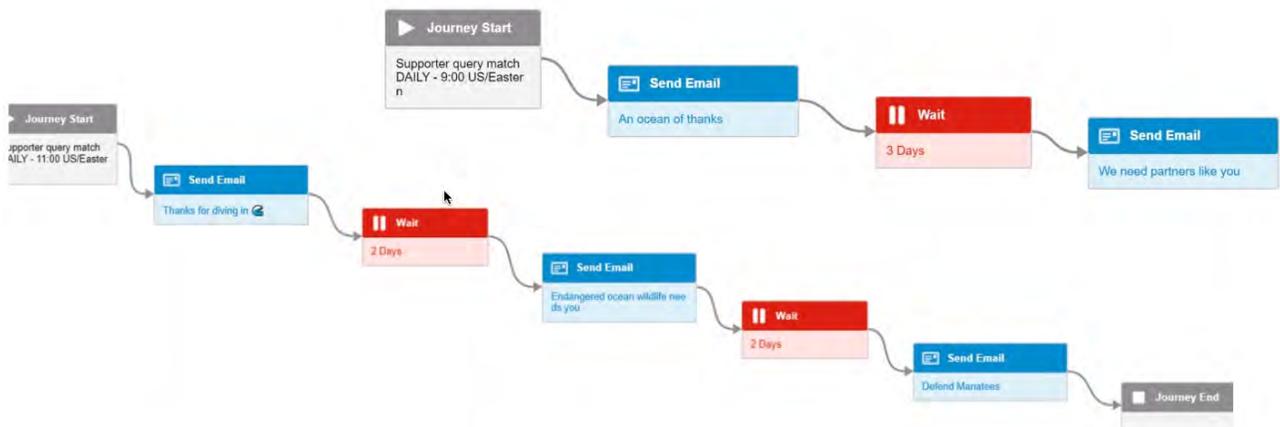
In addition, Ocean Conservancy found they could take some of the burdens off their content team. They used old tricks on a new audience by repurposing old content in each marketing automation.

**ACCORDING TO THE LENSKOLD GROUP, SENDING
AUTOMATED EMAILS HELPS MARKETERS REPURPOSE
61% MORE CONTENT OVER OTHER MARKETERS.**

Repurposing old content was the solution for ease and speed in making several different welcome series email marketing automations for different audiences. They continued using what they knew worked – strong imagery, a good engagement arc and programmatic content with topics that resonated. Clare knew that mixed emails got a good response so she repurposed some content that featured the CEO and also included the Director of the Trash Free Seas program. Instead of conjuring something new, the charity took what had proven to be successful and made it as easy as possible to generate as many curated Welcome Series as needed to treat people differently and hopefully keep them engaged.

Ocean Conservancy wished to improve sustainable cultivation with some of their most engaged supporters known as Ocean Partners (monthly donors). The solution was the Ocean Partner automation launch which was a 45-day journey with exclusive content just for monthly donors. This involved experimenting with some new tricks in the way they communicated with these important donors. The donors got emails with specific content:

- Welcome to the Ocean Partner family
- Engagement-content reading
- Advocacy alert-take action
- Event-join us
- Engagement-survey
- Donate-one-time gift
- Engagement-watch video
- Cultivation-special content
- Cultivation-thank you, thank you!



Something the Ocean Conservancy team appreciated in developing the email marketing automation program was being able to test content on Ocean Partners. They had been going back and forth on whether to use a fish recipe because some of their list was likely to not eat fish at all and some would eat sustainable fish and like to see a recipe. They could test to see if the Ocean Partners complained or unsubscribed (they didn't!) and then take that out of the automation.

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Clare says, “that is part of the magic of automation, in real-time, we can respond to what is happening, not just set and forget.”

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Ashleigh recommended doing the same QA for email marketing automation streams as they would for regular email marketing. Use normal review methods such as copy, creative, and rendering and allow time for a series to fully run. They advised creating test case constituents and test email addresses as new opt-ins. Then check it regularly in the first cycle.

Engaging Networks Client Support Team was invaluable in the process as well. There were concerns about things like editing an automation once it is already running. Client Support was able to tell them it is better to stop the automation, make the edit and then re-run it.

Using Engagement Scores for the Win

When Clare and Ashleigh looked closely at the numbers from the new marketing automations, they saw the largest numbers of people in the ES5 and 6 categories. They wanted to understand what was making their supporters shift from an ES2 to an ES5. It was time to re-engage their audience at this stage before they fell into the dead zone of ES10 and 11.

ES is short for Engagement Score. This is a tool in Engaging Networks that ranks supporters on your email list based on how they interact with your emails. ES1 are your most active supporters, ES11 are pretty much dead weight on your file. Engagement Scores allow you to set a plan for list hygiene, re-engage inactive supporters and establish queries to focus on cultivating specific segments before they fall off.

- ES1 Anyone who has converted any landing page from an email in the last 3 months.
- ES2 Anyone who has clicked on two or more emails in the last 3 months.
- ES3 Anyone who has clicked on one email in the last 3 months.
- ES4 Anyone who has converted any landing page from an email in the last 4-6 months.
- ES5 Anyone who has clicked on two or more emails in the last 4-6 months.
- ES6 Anyone who has clicked on one email in the last 4-6 months.
- ES7 Anyone who has converted any landing page from an email in the last 7-12 months.
- ES8 Anyone who has clicked on two or more emails in the last 7-12 months.
- ES9 Anyone who has clicked on one email in the last 7-12 months.
- ES10 Anyone who has opened an email in the last 12 months.
- ES11 All other “opted in” records that have been on file for at least 12 months.

Ocean Conservancy decided to use a high-performing survey. This was just one email sent out to the ES5 category of supporters.



Clare says “People love taking surveys and we know we get a good response rate on them and *bonus* we get some data after they have filled it out.”



They specifically sent the survey out to only the ES5 category as they knew that people at this level of engagement would do something which involved three or four clicks. The ES6 category was given something which was actionable with only one click.

The screenshot shows a survey interface for Ocean Conservancy. At the top, there's a header with the Ocean Conservancy logo and a photo of five penguins. Below the photo, the text reads "Test your knowledge..." and "How much do you really know about penguins?". The form includes fields for "First Name" and "Last Name", an "Email" field, and a multiple-choice question: "How many species of penguin are there?" with options 4, 7, 19, and 26.



Now, it was time to tackle those in the ES10 and 11 categories. They borrowed a trick from commercial business – asking explicitly if they still wanted to be on the organization’s list with a clear YES or NO button to answer. The email was made cute and fun being sent from ‘Shelly’, their chief sea turtle. This helped remind people that once they were indeed interested in Ocean Conservancy and... do they want to be again?

Real Results with Email Marketing Automations

After implementing all these strategies, Ocean Conservancy achieved impressive results across all messages:

Average re-engagement: 15%

Average open rate: 14.89%

Average CTR: 12.94%

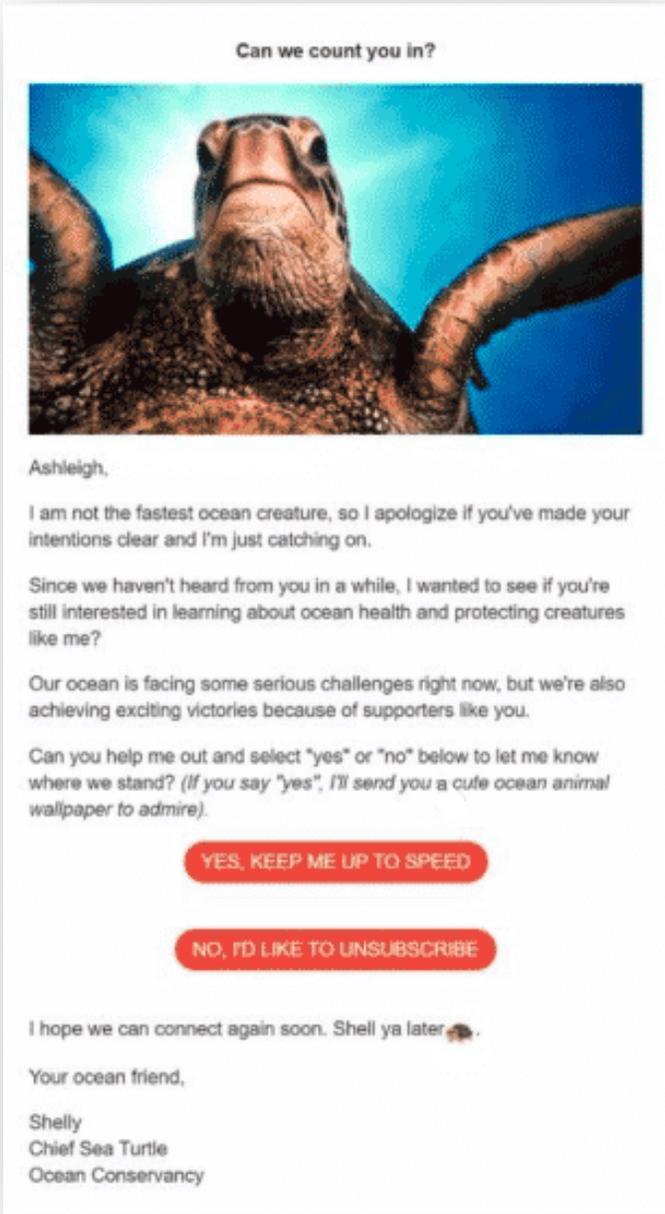
The very positive results came from a combination of email marketing automation and good list hygiene. They also got excellent engagement rate results in four ES categories:

ES5 19.27%

ES6 18.24%

ES10 17.37%

ES11 6.13%



Ashleigh and Clare could see that the engagement drops the further down you get to the ES11 group. This was not a surprise nor do they see this as a problem; They say that's part of the magic of automation because it is possible to pause or stop an automation as the team sees fit. At the moment they don't want to risk aspects of the list hygiene by re-engaging 11's at this time. They know that they can easily launch relaunch automation for that stream with some adjustments when the time is right.

Clare, Ashleigh and the team at Ocean Conservancy achieved excellent re-engagement results after implementing marketing automation. Their problem of people falling off email lists was solved through a strategy of good list hygiene, segmenting their audience into different streams and using automation to repurpose content quickly for each email series.

Thank You.

At Engaging Networks, we're proud to work with great charities like Ocean Conservancy. Visit oceanconservancy.org to learn more about this cause and their exciting work.