



proprietary

POV: Determining the Optimal Testing Method for Email Campaigns

DECEMBER 2014



FOR BEST RESULTS, TEST AND OPTIMIZE EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

WHY MARKETERS SHOULD TEST

Email may be viewed as one of the more conventional channels in the modern pharma marketers' toolbox, but it also remains one of the most effective. Though email is widely used in the industry, many marketers fail to take full advantage of the potential power of email campaigns because they fail to test. Testing allows marketers to optimize based on real-time results. Without testing, marketers miss the opportunity to improve the quality of creative and/or content that users receive. Testing, learning and optimizing enables marketers to let data drive key decisions, ensuring email campaigns perform as effectively and efficiently as possible.

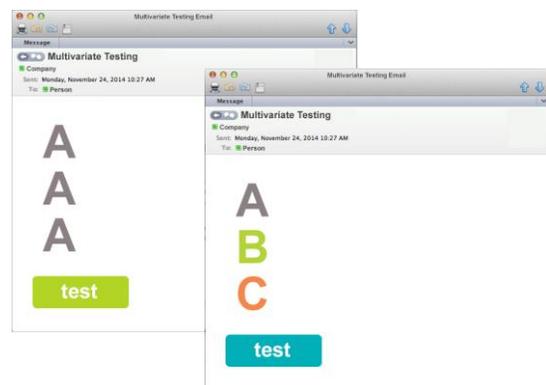
This POV reviews two different methods of testing email campaigns and the factors that marketers should consider.

A/B TESTING VS. MULTIVARIATE TESTING

A/B testing and multivariate Testing are two of the most common methodologies used in email testing. Although similar, there are slight differences between these mechanisms, so marketers should do their research before selecting one or the other.

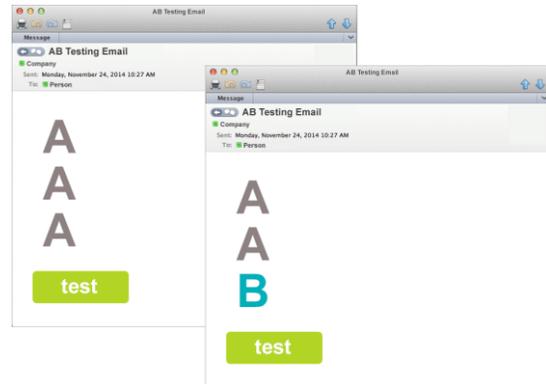
- + **Multivariate testing: the ability to test multiple variables within an email.** The contrasts within

each multivariate test tend to incorporate subtle changes (e.g., changing the color of a button, adjusting the subject line, editing the call-to-action, etc.). In order to determine a winner from a multivariate test, the sample size must reach statistical significance, which requires sufficient subscriber volumes. The findings of each test provide insights that inform and enhance subsequent emails.





- + **A/B testing: the ability to test one variable at a time.** A/B testing focuses on just one variable at a time (e.g., subject lines, button colors, calls-to-action, etc.). This strategy allows the marketer to reach statistically relevant decisions between options more quickly, as the subscriber base is only split in two.



WHICH METHODOLOGY SHOULD YOU USE?

There are various factors to consider when choosing A/B testing versus multivariate testing. All considerations should be based on the objective of the email marketing campaign. Reference the table below to determine which strategy would be best for your campaign.

Consideration	Multivariate Testing	A/B Testing
Sample Size	Multivariate testing is conducive to larger sample sizes . Without a large sample size, it will take more time to reach statistical significance, which translates to more time with the less effective design in front of subscribers.	When you have smaller lists, A/B testing can be preferential because you can reach statistically significant volumes more quickly by testing one variable at a time, rather than splitting the list further with multiple variables.
Campaign Length of Time	In order to be effective with a multivariate test, it's best to use this method on an ongoing campaign where the test results will inform further test variables to maximize long-term subscriber engagement.	A/B testing is a good solution for shorter campaigns. It's also a great alternative when your campaign needs fast results . You can, however, run it for a longer length of time if needed.
Creative Implications	Since there are multiple variables being tested at one time, the creative changes between each test should be subtle. This method is best-suited when you are optimizing a proven design to ensure maximum return.	As you continue to test different iterations, A/B testing gives you more flexibility to make drastic changes and adjustments in your design.
Test Setup	It is a bit more time-intensive to set up a multivariate test because of all of the different factors that are being considered during the test.	Due to the single variable that's being isolated in an A/B test, the setup time is a lot faster and could be more efficient for campaign goals.



Both methodologies can be complex to manage and execute. Therefore, it's imperative to first clearly define campaign objectives and then develop a hypothesis to test against. The hypothesis will ensure that the goals of the campaign are being met.

RECOMMENDATION FOR BRANDS

While there isn't a one-size-fits-all method for testing, it is an important tactic for brands to consider, one that can boost the success of your campaign. Testing allows the marketer to capture and incorporate information (e.g., HCPs prefer orange call-to-action buttons versus blue call-to-action buttons) from current email subscribers and measure email performance optimization (e.g., opens, click-thrus, etc.).

Email testing is an important component of the marketing mix, allowing us to drive the most engagement from every email sent. This is particularly important for the pharma industry, where consumers may be only open to messaging during a specific window of the patient journey. Missing that window can be the difference between positive patient outcomes and nonadherence. Pharma marketers often cite the concern of LMR (legal/medical/regulatory) review requirements as a reason to avoid testing, but the benefits outweigh the challenges. When testing is planned from the inception of an email campaign, LMR requirements can be easily accommodated for all planned design iterations at one time. Often all that is needed to streamline the process for approvals is a walk-through of the test objectives and various versions and variables.

It's our goal to simplify the life of the consumer by providing them with insightful and useful content, and testing ultimately benefits the end user. Utilizing a testing methodology is still one of the most effective tactics to optimize campaigns, ensuring relevant content reaches and engages subscribers.

© Intouch Solutions 2014
Author: Vanessa Rizi, CRM analyst

 **Kansas City**
913.317.9700

 **Chicago**
312.540.6900

 **New York**
646.795.3600

www.intouchsol.com
email: info@intouchsol.com
blog: intouchsoul.com
twitter: [@intouchsol](https://twitter.com/intouchsol)