

GUIDE TO  
EMAIL  
AUTOMATIONS  
FOR EVENT  
MARKETERS









# Why Automate?

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We often see that email automations aren't at the top of event marketers' priorities, and we get it. You're juggling multiple events, artists, or venues that each have their own, diverse promotion schedules, meaning you're left with limited bandwidth to do more than the standard event announcements. And why should you? Email blasts promoting the latest artists and shows have seemed to traditionally perform well for you, bringing in ticket sales and engaging your attendees.

## The Disadvantage of Only Sending Promotional Event Blasts

In actuality, sending only mass emails to your full list hurts your sender reputation, which in turn damages your email deliverability. This means that less people are actually seeing your email in their inbox, because it's landing in spam.

Email engagement is a key factor in determining deliverability, and, therefore, your email marketing success. When a subscriber opens your email or clicks a link, that sends a message to their Internet Service Provider (ISP) that your email is "good."

Conversely, if your recipients aren't opening or engaging with your emails, or are marking them as spam, that indicates to ISPs that your emails are "bad" and increases the likelihood of your emails being sent to spam. When you send generic promotional blasts to subscribers who may or may not be interested in the content, you are likely to see more of this "bad" engagement, damaging your sender reputation.

Think of it this way: when a fan receives ten emails about events they aren't interested in before getting an email they care about, they're likely not engaging with those first ten emails at all. That means when that next email is sent - the email they'd actually be interested in - it's more likely to end up in spam, and losing you a potential ticket sale.

That's why leveraging automations can be so powerful in your email strategy - they help you email customers at exactly the right moments when they're most likely to open and click your emails.

## **What is an Automation?**

An email automation is an email or series of emails that automatically sends to subscribers when they meet a specific set of predetermined conditions. Emails can be set to trigger based on essentially any data you have on subscribers, like when a new subscriber joins your list, purchases a ticket, or when it's their birthday.



Automations are a hands-off tool that help you send the right email to the right person at the right time, showing your subscribers that you care about them sending relevant content. Build your email, set your parameters, and let your ESP do the sending. This allows you to build an email marketing strategy that feels like a personalized experience for each subscriber, since every email is triggered by their unique action. For example, when a new subscriber joins your list, you can automatically send them a welcome email. When they purchase a ticket, you can automatically send them a thank you with more information about the event. Or maybe you send a celebratory discount on their birthday.

## **The Myth that Automations Take a Lot of Work**

We hear time and time again from event marketers that automations are too much work. In reality, they take a similar amount of work as designing an email blast, but bring in exponentially more value since they're constantly running in the background.

Like a blast, you need to know the segment you want to target and what email content will provide value to them. From there, you can set the journey to trigger at the moment this segment will find the most value from your email (with some thought into a subject line and email template, of course).

Not convinced? Automated emails are shown to drive 320% more revenue per email than non-automated promotional emails, proving that they're a powerful tool you can use to drive ticket sales. All while remaining hands-off. The beauty of an email automation is the freedom you have after setting one up - all you need to do is check in occasionally to make sure it's on the right track, but otherwise, the automation does the rest of the work.

To get you started, we've broken down three simple but foundational automations every event marketer should leverage in their email strategy.



# Welcome Email Automation

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Welcome automations prime your email for that good deliverability and higher overall engagement we mentioned above. These automations send welcome emails to subscribers who have just signed up to be the first to know about event updates and ticket releases, so they're a captive audience ready to engage with your brand. You could even say they're expecting to hear from you right away, with stats showing that 74% of consumers expect a welcome email when they subscribe.

**“ Welcome automations boost your email engagement, with 3x more opens, clicks and revenue per email compared to non-automated emails.**

Not only are welcome automations expected, they also boost your email engagement, with three times more opens, clicks, and revenue per email compared to regular promotional email campaigns, including a whopping 91% average open rate. This makes welcome automations a great way to kickstart your brand's relationship with a new subscriber, while also improving your deliverability overall.



A single welcome email is a great start, but a series will ultimately have more potential to engage subscribers long-term. Here's a sample three-email series to get you inspired:

## **Email 1: Thanks for signing up**

Your "thanks for signing up" email is a great opportunity to share more about the event, artist, or venue fans subscribed to. You should also reiterate what subscribers can expect to hear about, whether that's first access to tickets or lineup announcements, so future promotions don't come as a surprise.

We recommend keeping welcome emails concise and digestible in order to drive clicks. Including a "Confirm Your Subscription" button is a surefire way to boost your click-through rate as well.

Seeing what people interact with here will also let you segment for more targeted messaging in the future (e.g. retargeting subscribers who click on VIP packages with VIP ticketing promotions).

## **Email 2: A closer look at your events brand**

It's easy to slip into the mindset that fans are only interested in specific artists or events, and not the organization putting

them together. But your brand has a lot to offer that subscribers may be interested in, whether you run another festival or similar events at the same venue, and this is a great opportunity to cross-promote. If you run annual events, you can easily give subscribers a peek at what's coming up.

Ultimately, this email is a great opportunity for subscribers to connect with the story and persona behind your brand.

### **Email 3: Social proof**

Almost nothing drives human behavior more than social proof. Sharing fan-generated content from past events instills a sense of FOMO to draw subscribers in, and builds a powerful case for them to engage with your brand. Sending this type of email in your welcome series is a simple yet effective way to convince subscribers to purchase tickets so they can join in on your event experience.



# Abandoned Cart Email Automation

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According to Eventbrite, up to 70% of people who start a checkout don't buy tickets at all. That's a lot of potential revenue lost (two to four trillion dollars a year from abandoned carts!) that you can recover with a simple abandoned cart email automation.

Abandoned cart automations trigger when a fan adds a ticket to their cart without completing their purchase. Your ESP will typically let you set a time delay between when a fan abandons their cart and when your emails are sent (we recommend a delay of 3 hours for the best click-through rate), so your emails will hit inboxes at exactly the right time.

With an average open rate of 43% and click rate of 20%, abandoned cart automations are a prime example of how you can leverage automations to boost engagement, which in turn will improve your deliverability.

The best part about abandoned cart emails? They're being sent to fans who have shown purchase intent; they've already added the ticket to their cart! That's why abandoned cart



emails average a 10% conversion rate - that's a lot of ticket sales you could be recovering.

You can also create an automated abandoned cart series, where your automation sends multiple emails over a period of time. Setting up an automation containing three cart abandonment emails is proven to maximize your revenue, with research showing that a three-step abandoned cart email series brings in 69% more revenue than a single-step abandoned cart automation. In this case, sending these emails around the same time of day that your customer added the tickets to their cart is your best guess for when they'll be shopping again.

Here are a few options you might consider when deciding how to approach your abandoned cart emails:

- A straightforward reminder to purchase
- A discount or promotion
- A sense of urgency (e.g. ticket sales are limited, Friday tickets are almost sold out)
- Instilling FOMO with social shares from previous events

Whether you send one abandoned cart email or a series of three, you'll be well on your way to recovering lost ticketing revenue.



# Winback Email Automation

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You may be surprised to hear that an average of 66% of marketers' email lists are inactive. That's a huge chunk of your list that isn't opening or engaging with your emails. It's easy to treat these inactive subscribers like everyone else on your email list, but continuing to send them artist announcements and event promotions when they show no signs of engaging will damage your email deliverability.

**“ Winback emails show high success rates, with 45% of subscribers who received a winback campaign opening a subsequent message.**

The chances of these subscribers engaging with your blasts again on their own again are very slim. At this point, you should instead push them into a winback automation to re-engage them, getting them to look forward to future communications from your brand. Remember, these fans showed interest in your emails before, so there's a high chance you can pique their interest again with the right content.

Winback emails show high success rates, with 45% of subscribers who received a winback campaign opening a subsequent message. This means that 45% of the fans who aren't engaging with your emails, currently harming your overall deliverability and retention, could be brought back with the right communications. Plus, it costs 5x more to obtain a new customer than to retain one, making winback automations a valuable tool that can have a major effect on your bottom line.

If you're basing your winback automations on the last time a purchase was made, you should coordinate them with your brand's buying cycle. If a customer hasn't made a purchase within whatever period of time feels meaningful for your brand (e.g. 90 days), it is probably time to send them a winback email. If you only run annual events, you might consider basing this on venue instead.

To get started, you'll first need to build a segment of inactive subscribers. Hive automatically buckets your subscribers by engagement level, but if you're on a different ESP, you'll need to create a segment to capture customers who haven't opened or clicked an email in a while (e.g. subscribers who haven't opened or clicked your last 10 emails). This will ensure you don't continue including inactive subscribers in your main email blasts, and creates the segment that will trigger your winback automation.



Remember, the goal of a winback email series is to send emails designed specifically to appeal to subscribers and get them to re-engage with your brand. You'll need to think about what types of content will best get them to open and click. This can vary for every brand, but think along the lines of:

- Your brand values: what sets you apart from other events or venues?
- Discount codes: are your fans price-sensitive?
- Exclusivity: do your fans respond well to exclusive content or limited access offers?

You'll be able to leverage the things your fans care about to form the steps of your winback email series. Here's a good jumping off point:

### **Email 1: Sent after a subscriber doesn't open or click your last 10 emails**

The actual timing of your first email will depend on how often you send emails; if you send less frequent email, you may want to send after 5 emails.

The basis of this email can be pretty simple - what are the reasons that may have gotten a fan to subscribe in the first place? You can reiterate this value using good copy and a CTA in order to re-engage.

Typically, a link to your preference centre that lets fans change the frequency of your sends and/or the types of emails they receive from you does the trick. You could also try a simple reminder linking back to your event or venue website with a 'Still interested in hearing from us?' CTA.

If you have a preference centre, subscribers can use this opportunity to control the types of emails they want to receive, and even opt into segments like genres they're interested in.

### **Email 2: Sent 2 days after winback email #1**

If your first email isn't enough to hook them, a discount or promo code for your future events might be the extra push they need to re-engage again. Everyone loves a discount!

### **Email 3: Sent one week after winback email #2**

This email is your last opportunity to grab your fans' attention. We recommend pulling out all the stops - an increased discount, sense of urgency ("last chance"), or even an invite to be a VIP might finally do it. If you're opting to offer a higher discount, this email would contain the highest discount you're willing to offer.

If fans don't engage with your final winback email, best



practice is to exclude them from future sends. At this point, the chance of re-engaging is extremely low, and sending to them will hurt your deliverability.



# Caveats & Next Steps

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We know that email marketing for events can be complex and multifaceted. You may be sending email as a venue, event, or artist, all while trying to balance these communications with external factors. We've included the three most frequent aspects event marketers should consider below.

## 1. Communications from ticketing platforms

If you're on a ticketing platform separate from your ESP, it's likely that the ticketing platform is also sending emails to your list that you have no control over. Getting in touch with your ticketing platform about how to turn off certain non-transactional marketing emails will allow you control your marketing and data from one platform, so that you don't bombard subscribers with too many emails.

This way, you have full control of the design and timing of your promotional emails, and you can keep them distinct from transactional emails (think: purchase confirmations) that the ticketing platform is sending.

## 2. Mixed messages

You may also have subscribers entering multiple email flows. Someone could receive promotional emails for an event at the same time they've signed up for one of your lists. You can decide if you want to leave new subscribers entering a welcome series or at-risk subscribers entering a winback series out of other marketing emails while they go through your automated email flows, so you have more control over their experience.

## 3. Bandwidth

Building three emails for each automation may seem intimidating at first. Many event marketers are juggling channels other than email, and your team may not have the capacity to build a full series for each automation all at once. To get started, try designing just one email for each automation. You can see how they perform and continue building your series from there.

## Next Steps

Once your email automations are officially running, keep an eye on them over the first few weeks to see how subscribers are engaging and determine where you can optimize. If you've built a full series, there could be a specific step that



outperforms the rest, or there could be one that's underperforming. You may even find you want to change the timeframe of when a subscriber is deemed inactive.

These factors are unique to every events brand, so keep your eyes open and don't be afraid to make updates whenever they feel right. You know your audience best!

Aside from setup and these tweaks, automations are largely hands-off, unlike most other marketing emails. That's why email automations are a simple and effective way to engage your fans at the right time, all while boosting ticketing revenue without regularly adding anything extra to your workload.

# The Power of Automations

## *An Infographic*

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Automated emails are shown to **drive 320% more revenue per email than other promotional emails**. From welcome to winback emails, here's why you should leverage automations in your email strategy.



### WELCOME EMAILS

**3x more opens, clicks, and revenue**

per email compared to regular promotional email campaigns

**91% average open rate**

making welcome emails the highest engaged email of all marketing emails for brands



### ABANDONED CART

**2 to 4 trillion dollars of revenue**

is lost every year from abandoned carts





## ABANDONED CART CONT'D

**70% of fans who start a checkout don't buy tickets at all**

that's a lot of potential revenue you could recover

**43% average open rate**

**20% average click rate**

**3-step abandoned cart automations bring in 69% more revenue**

compared to a single-step abandoned cart automation

**10% average conversion rate**



## WINBACK EMAILS

**it costs 5x more to obtain a new customer than retain one**

**66% of marketers' lists are inactive**



WINBACK EMAILS CONT'D

**45% of subscribers who receive  
a winback campaign open a  
subsequent message**









