



Spend One Marketing Dollar, Get \$44.25 in Return

By Susan Saldibar

Get a \$44.25 return on one dollar? Only if you keep it clean.

Actually, I'm talking about emails or, more specifically, about your email practices and your database. As an experienced digital marketer, Sean Ochester, Executive VP of Digital and Integrated Strategy for [Sage Age](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) is still a big believer in the power of emails. He wants everyone to know that:

1. Email marketing is far from dead.
2. You can still reach people through a well-executed email campaign who you cannot reach any other way.

And, yes, according to the Direct Marketing Association, for every dollar spent, \$44.25 is the average return on investment. For a marketing platform written off by some as being "past its prime", that's not a bad ROI.

Sean remarked in a recent Sage Age article, "Some of the best-practices we employ are often 'below the radar' of those in the senior living industry, but can have a significant impact on their email marketing results. As one example, did you know that email database 'hygiene' plays a highly important role in email performance and ROI. Just as healthy living practices positively impact human health and performance, so do performance-enhancing cleaning and hygiene activities in the digital realm."

Makes sense. Who can't point to a "dirty" database or two with a lot of old addresses that keep bouncing back? You know you need to weed them out, but who has time? Sean stresses that now more than ever, it's

important for marketers to take the time to play by the rules and keep their emails and databases squeaky clean.

Here is what Sean recommends for those who consider themselves to be limping along with old email messaging and even older lists.

Basic Email Database Hygiene 101: Keep it Clean

First, here is something you may not realize. I'm not sure I did. By not regularly removing invalid and inactive email addresses you may be setting yourself up for big trouble. Because the IP address sending bad emails can get labeled with a negative "reputation factor". And even a few bad ones can taint the rest of your list, Sean explains. If they are sent from the same IP or domain, the good get labeled along with the bad. Here are Sean's tips:

- Keep spam words out. Make sure your spam lists are up to date. They do change!
- Use reputable service providers.
- Create a consistent schedule for cleaning your list. Here's how:
 - One time: Create an automated "welcome" email. Make sure you include verbiage on the sign-up form so that subscribers can check their in boxes for your email.
 - Every few sends: Check bounces and domain reports for inbox placement issues.
 - Monthly to quarterly: Run a search for "inactives" on your mailing list. Be sure to remove those emails from your active lists.

This is important stuff. Most communities are still using email programs. And they could be working so much more effectively with a little work on the back end.

But the real take away here is not to give up on email. I'd spend a buck to get \$44.25, wouldn't you?

Sage Age has an entire article on best practices for email programs. You can read the article [here](#).



This article has been brought to you by [Sage Age Strategies](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).