

∞MMUNICATOR
SOPHISTICATION SCALE

A framework for ambitious email marketers

Using the Sophistication Scale

As you'll no doubt know, email is an amazing marketing channel.

It's consistently quoted by reputable sources as one of, if not the, best performing marketing channels for return on investment. It has more users than Facebook, Twitter and Instagram combined and, when given the choice, customers actually prefer to view marketing communications via email.

(The sources for each can be found in our Definitive Guide To Why We Love Email)

For those reasons and a whole lot more, email has become a popular choice for marketers to spend time developing.

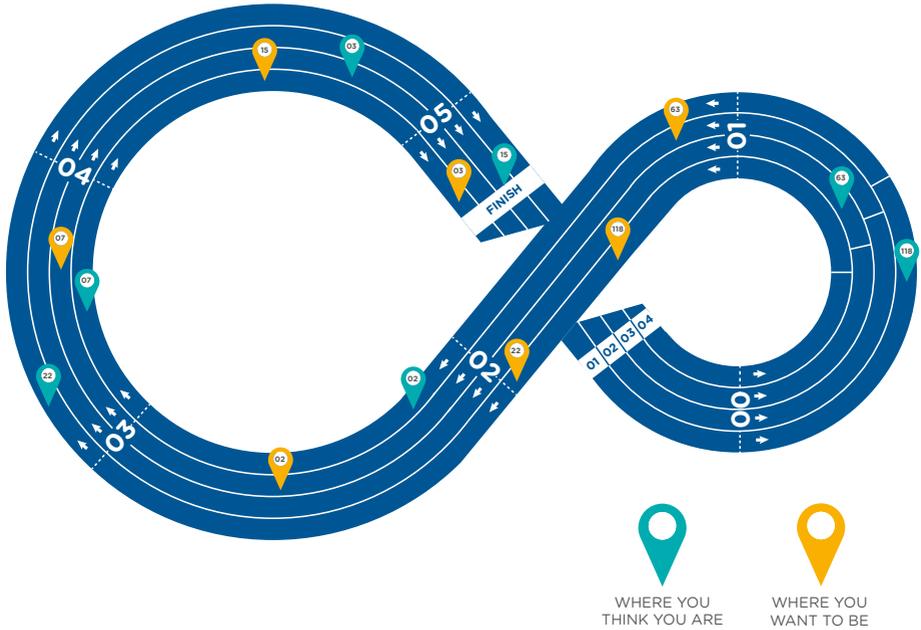
The problem is, however; for whatever reason, a lot of brands have yet to fully master the channel and it's potential.

This is where the Communicator sophistication scale comes in. It's a framework designed to help ambitious email marketers **define** their current situation and help them **prioritise** their progression.

This short guide is a brief introduction to the scale on its own.

 **COMMUNICATOR**

THE SCALE



STAGE: 0 HIT & HOPE



STAGE: 1 BLASTERS



STAGE: 2 DISPATCHERS



STAGE: 3 CAMPAIGNERS



STAGE: 4 AUTOMATERS



STAGE: 5 CULTURED KINGS



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SOPHISTICATION SCALE

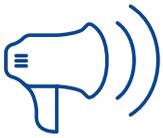
FROM THE STARTING BLOCKS
TO THE FINISH LINE



STAGE: **O** HIT & HOPE

- Sales-orientated, short-term focused emailing.
- Email is treated purely as a cheaper alternative to direct mail.

Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	No use of (likely only collects email addresses)
Segmentation	No use of
Automation	No use of
Data Acquisition	Likely to only collect email addresses
Testing	No use of
KPIs	Unlikely to monitor email performance



STAGE: 1 BLASTERS

- Volume-focused emailing, quality over quantity.
- Unsophisticated newsletters sent to entire database.

Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	Basic – use of first name in introduction only
Segmentation	Basic – little or no use of; sends to inactive subscribers
Automation	Single welcome trigger
Data Acquisition	Likely to collect only email address and name(s)
Testing	Basic – occasional split subject lines, no strategy behind testing
KPIs	If monitors performance, looks at list growth and open rates



STAGE: 2 DISPATCHERS

- Sales/promotional-heavy emails with adequate use of best practices.
- Appreciates email as a channel that makes money.

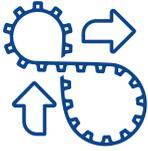
Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	Basic but looking to use more than just first name where possible
Segmentation	Basic – occasionally excludes some recipients from sends (likely behavioural or gender-orientated)
Automation	1-3 triggers – welcome, birthday, abandoned basket
Data Acquisition	May allocate small budget for incentivisation
	Collects more than email and name, collected at point of sign up
Testing	Basic – occasional split subject lines, ad-hoc testing
KPIs	Basic – likely to monitor list growth, open rates and click rates



STAGE: 3 CAMPAIGNERS

- More customer-orientated emailing than sales-orientated.
- Email appreciated as high-performing channel – likely to send more than one dispatch for each marketing campaign.

Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	Moderate – actively collect preferences, interested in using more (e.g. real-time)
Segmentation	Moderate – use of some segments or behavioural targeting
Automation	3+ automated triggers, interested in using more (e.g. RSS/website mirroring)
Data Acquisition	Allocates budget towards sophisticated forms and incentivised signups
	Defined data collection priorities, collected in two phases
Testing	Moderate – hypothesis-based testing to learn for future
KPIs	Moderate – likely to monitor list growth, open/click rates, delivery and email clients



STAGE: 4 AUTOMATERS

- Quality, not quantity. The primary goal is to improve a customers' digital journey.
- Focused on saving time with email, and consequently increasing ROI.

Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	Dynamic content driven from CRM/BI systems
Segmentation	Clearly-defined segments targeted, high behavioural targeting
Automation	High – lifecycle campaigns and product recommendations
Data Acquisition	Allocates budget towards sophisticated forms and incentivised signups
	Defined data collection priorities, collected in 2+ phases
Testing	Allocates time to optimise automated campaigns
KPIs	List growth focused towards additional data in targeted segments
	Mailing list engagement, inbox placement, list growth
	Aiming to achieve results above benchmark KPIs



STAGE: 5 CULTURED KINGS

- Has a defined email marketing strategy and customer journey, closely aligned to corporate strategy. Focused on further implementing and optimising desired customer journeys.
- Will have significant marketing budget dedicated to email channel, reflective of ROI.

Likely tactics:	
Personalisation	Rely on CRM/BI systems, innovative early adopters to new technology
Segmentation	5+ segments targeted, high behavioural targeting
Automation	High – customer journey defined, few ad-hoc campaigns needed
Data Acquisition	Allocates budget; sophisticated forms and incentivised signups
	Defined data collection priorities, collected in 2+ phases
Testing	More time optimising automated campaigns, less ad-hoc work
KPIs	Cross-channel interactions, mailing list engagement

The scale

What next?

The Communicator sophistication scale is designed for ambitious email marketers. It's there to help identify a brand's current situation and establish where it could and should progress to.

We're here to help our customers achieve their targets. Once established, your Account Manager will work with you to ensure you're set up for success – co-ordinating anything you'll need along the way and also to monitor progress against time.

The more you can share with your Account Manager from the beginning, the more they can help you achieve your ambitions.

We're your Strategic Email Service Partner and we're here for you!





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