

# 2012: Surviving the Email Marketing Apocalypse

 By [Wikus Engelbrecht](#)

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Mark my words. We have crossed the threshold - there are just about 11 months left until it all goes up in smoke.



The Mayan calendar predicts the end of days arriving promptly in December 2012. This is quite a big deal to many people, for obvious reasons, and will affect your decisions on choices such as whether to pay off your debts, buy a sports car, quit your job to spend your final months on a beach, etc.

So amid all the end cometh' prophecies, I thought I'd share some ideas on how to keep up a successful email campaign even if it all does go up in smithereens.

Here are 5 emailing tips to prepare you for the end of the world as we know it:

## 1. Have a contingency plan

No matter how experienced or professional you are, the day will come when the sky turns dark, the earth trembles, and the four horsemen of the apocalypse descend on the world around you. In other words; an email marketing campaign will go bad. Way bad.

What's your worst case scenario strategy? How will you be reacting in the event of the unthinkable? What will you do if someone presses the "=" button on the sum of all fears and, in an instant, it suddenly all adds up?

Whether you've sent your newsletter to the wrong list, had spammy words in your headline without checking your deliverability score, or whether you forgot to test for broken links - there's a lot that can potentially go wrong in any email campaign.

When this happens, you need a back-up plan. So, for example, in case a faulty mailer ever reaches your subscribers' inbox, it's useful to have a brief, pre-written apology letter on hand to notify readers immediately that you are experiencing technical difficulties, that they should disregard your last send and wait for the corrected version...It may save your life.

## **2. Don't push the red button**

In popular fiction, almost every end of the world type situation is inevitably averted with the use of some or other high-yield explosive.

When it comes to emailing however, bombing tactics have never solved anything. No matter how much you want your communication plan to succeed, blasting out emails to people that didn't give you permission to do so is the fastest way to get blocked by spam filters.

Getting removed from a blacklist is a lot easier said than done, so email bombardment is one of the sure-fire ways to seal your own demise as a direct marketer.

If you want to have a critical impact on your target, make sure you are only sending to those who have made it onto your list via an opt-in (or better yet, double opt-in) procedure.

Email marketing is a business that is based on trust and the voluntary agreement of subscribers to get promotional emails, and building trust from the beginning means acquiring email addresses by legitimate means.

Once you have cleansed your list of those who have not expressly opted in for it, segmenting readers into groups of people with similar interests is the next step to ensure that you are only sending individually-targeted messages - which is vital to long term emailing survival.

Not everyone signs up to your newsletter for the same reasons; they live in different places, have different behavioral patterns and they like different products. Proper list segmentation will lead to explosion-free improved open rates and campaign ROI.

## **3. Beware the monkey**

There is a school of thought which has proposed that with the pending doom of mankind, our primate cousins will see the gap in the market, stop aping around and begin running the show.

Yes indeed, the end of days might just be the perfect opportunity for planet Earth to come under new, banana-munching management.

But how will you know you can trust your new providers? What will tell you that they can give you everything you need and that they won't go gorilla at the first sign of trouble?

If you ever have any doubts that all the monkey love they can give is not the best choice for your emailing prosperity, then it's time to compare and seek alternatives.

Even when times are tough and ESPs are few, there will always be a number of them in operation, which will give you freedom of choice to find the best fit for your company as long as you are actively looking for a good deal.

There's no better time than the complete annihilation of society to make some changes and get a fresh start. So shop around. Does your ESP give you all the features and integrations you need? Is their pricing structure the most affordable, their newsletter editor the most flexible and their support staff the most helpful? If not, then it's time to ditch that monkey. Don't stay with an ESP that fools around.

## **4. Always carry your zombie spray**

'End of the World' situations are usually when ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night tend to crop up.

Believe it or not, there are already some basic rules for surviving in the likely event of a post-apocalyptic zombified wasteland - as codified by undead maestro and founder of email marketing agency, Indiemark, Scott Hardigree; where he shares a slightly modified version of typical zombie survival tips, making them applicable to email marketing.

Included are such golden guidelines like that it takes at least two gunshots to safely deal with a zombie - which is the same when dealing with customers and prospects in that you've got to hit them again and again (and again) to demonstrate your value.

For more in-depth expertise about dealing with zombies, see [Zombie Survival Guide for Email Marketers](#).

## 5. Embrace the End

As the great philosophers tell us, real happiness is within living every moment to the fullest, which is (of course) equally true for the passage of time after the final countdown.

But let's face it, even if you have a flamethrower, food to last you through 50 years of nuclear winter and all the other essentials; with the surplus of hazards that will be accompanying the fall of man it won't be that easy to stay alive and any given moment could still be your last.

However, just because it's the apocalypse, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't stop to smell the roses, take joy in the little things or take time off for some R&R.

Life is short, so have fun creating your newsletters and send every email like it could be the final one you ever do.

## ABOUT WIKUS ENGELBRECHT

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