

GDPR from an email marketer's perspective

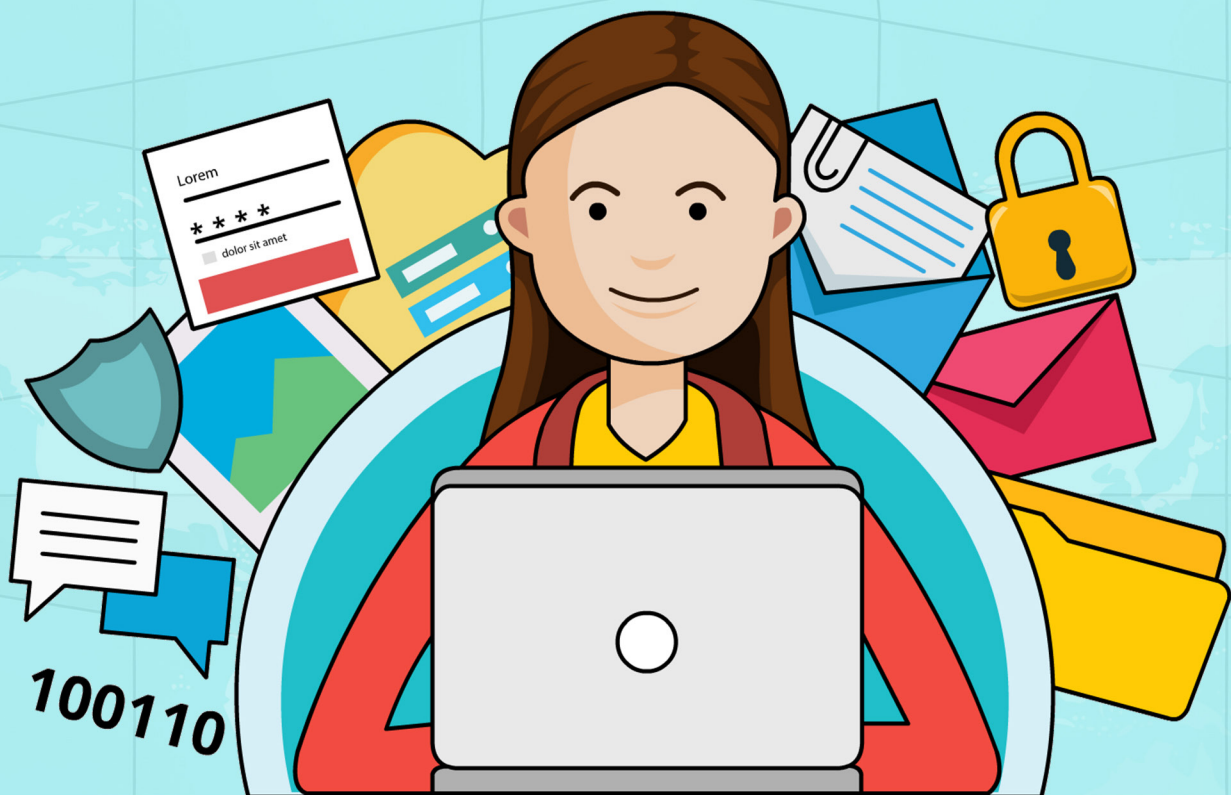


Table of content

Introduction.....	01
What's GDPR and how does it affect email marketers?.....	01
Business scenarios.....	01
Steps to get ready for GDPR.....	02

Introduction

“What’s GDPR?”

“Is GDPR for me?”

“What happens to my business after GDPR?”

These are some of the questions that keep reverberating in our heads as the whole world is making noise about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which will come into effect from the 25th of May, 2018. There is a general consensus that this law’s stringency will make the lives of marketers more difficult, but if you give it some thought, you’ll find it is actually the other way round—GDPR has set a path for marketers to be more transparent with their customers while improving brand reputation.

So, what’s GDPR and how does it affect (read: help) email marketers?

GDPR is a regulation that intends to help citizens of the European Union (EU) countries take complete control over how their personal data is being used by organizations. As an email marketer, you should be careful about what data you collect about your subscribers, how you gather and store it, and how you put it into use.

Now, let’s consider a couple of scenarios to understand when a business has to adhere to GDPR. These scenarios hold true for both B2B and B2C models.

Company A: Your business is based in one of the EU countries—a localized business, dealing only with the local people.

Company B: Your business is not EU based, but you have customers in the EU regions.

Company C: Your business is based in one of the EU countries, but your customer list is a mix of people from different geographies.

Company D: Your business is not EU based, and your customers are all from the US or RoW.

If you fall under the first three categories, then, yes, it is important and mandatory that you comply with GDPR. Even if you fall under the 4th category, it is a good practice to follow this law, because it helps you refresh your customer data, gain their confidence, and build a name for your brand.

Here are a few simple steps that you can take to get ready for GDPR:

1. Use double-opt-in sign-up forms to capture details.

Sign-up forms that follow a double-opt-in system are a boon to your business. Double opt-in makes sure subscribers give an email confirmation once they sign up for your service. They will only be added to your mailing list after confirmation. This tremendously helps you build a list of active subscribers.

2. Mention how you know your subscribers.

It is common for people to forget how they know you and why they receive emails from you, which can result in a direct unsubscribe. So, remind them of who you are, and why they are receiving this email. You can do this by adding a note in the footer mentioning which email list they are part of.

3. Add email preferences in your welcome emails.

When you send out welcome emails to your new subscribers, always give an option for them to choose what they want to receive from you in terms of the content and how often they would like your emails to hit their inboxes.

4. Include an unsubscribe link in every communication.

People might change their minds after subscribing to a service, or they might have mistakenly submitted a form—having an unsubscribe link will help them back out from your emails at any time. This way, you give them the power to choose you, and in turn, reduce the number of spam complaints.

5. Give subscribers the provision to update profiles.

Whether a subscriber wants to add more information to their profiles, or edit what is already there, or even delete what they think is unnecessary—let them own their data. Provide an option to update their profiles in the emails so they can modify the data as and when needed. This will help you gather valid and up-to-date information about your subscribers.

6. Obtain subscriber's consent before running promotions.

Permission-based email marketing is the best form of marketing; it reaffirms your brand's commitment to being ethically sound. Your mailing lists might contain a mix of people you directly know, the ones you meet at an event, your webinar attendees, or those who come through word-of-mouth. It is very important to seek their consent before sending any promotional emails. And it doesn't stop there, you also have to clearly state why you are obtaining their consent. Getting consent and recording it might seem like a daunting task, but it is worth it. In the process, you also scrub your mailing lists of inactive subscribers.

Disclaimer: GDPR security requirements are vast and complex and Zoho Campaigns has given its best solutions to help with compliance. You should in no way take the above mentioned information as legal advice. We always recommend that you approach legal counsel to advise on the best ways to ensure GDPR compliance.

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For more information on how you can be GDPR compliant
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