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Email Marketing Guide

How to Maximize Your Email Marketing Success

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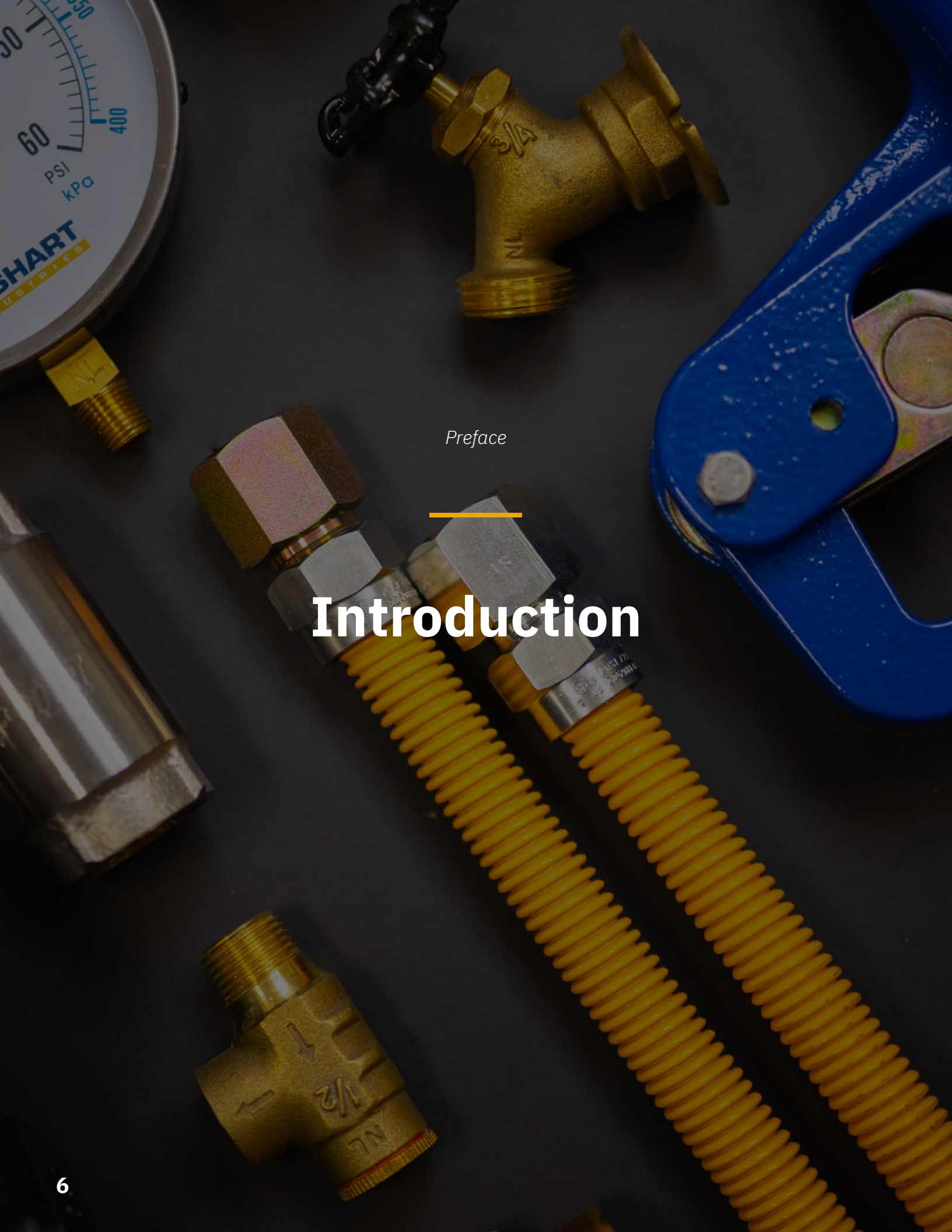
Preface

Introduction

Using email to market your business is an often under-utilized tactic, but one that can be very effective if done properly. Thankfully, even to dip your toes into the process is not very difficult.

Whether you have a CRM tool that runs your business, or you send out emails from your work inbox, you can still take advantage of many of the techniques and principles in this guide to begin email marketing effectively.

The type of email marketing we'll be discussing in this guide errs on the side of being an Outbound marketing principle: that is, one where the seller is actively going out and seeking new customers (similar, in essence, to billboard ads or flyers). In this guide, we won't be touching on automated email marketing (much more easily considered an Inbound marketing tactic, where the potential customer is only being contacted after having first sought you out). The approach to these two techniques are wildly different and require different tactics to succeed.

Now, like with anything in life, your mileage may vary. What's worked for Boshart (as outlined here) may not be the most effective approach for you! It's always, always advised to track the marketing data you deem relevant and take note of what works and what doesn't. No strategy needs to be implemented longer than it's deemed useful.

In this guide, we've compiled some of the most important factors we try to balance when utilizing email marketing, and we firmly believe the vast majority of them are going to be useful to you; especially if you're at the beginning or mid-way of your email marketing journey.

Determine Your KPIs

KPIs, or Key Performance Indicators, are the metrics that you determine are the most useful in measuring the success or failure of something (could be literally anything: this is not an exclusively marketing term). When it comes to email marketing, you're going to want to know what metrics matter most to you so that you can tailor your strategy around that.

If you're not making an effort to track (or at least periodically check-in on) certain KPIs that you've chosen, you're not really going to have a working strategy as much as you are going to have a vanity strategy. While it might look (and feel) like you're working hard and achieving a lot, you might be putting a lot of energy into something with very little return on the investment of your time.

At a glance, here are 3 of the most common email marketing KPIs that marketers track.

*Note that these metrics can only be tracked if using an email marketing platform or CRM. If you are just sending classic emails from your work account, you won't have access to these analytics.

Open Rate
This refers to how many of your recipients actually opened up the email you sent them. Yes—it is very common that you won't have 100% of your subscribers open your email (in fact, it's not just common, it's practically a guarantee). Every open rate will vary from company to company, but start tracking yours with each blast and you'll start to identify trends.

Click Through Rate
A CTR refers to the quantity of people that, after opening your email, click on a link you've put in the email that will take them through to a web page of some kind. Not every email you send will be sent with the desire that people click on a link, but generally speaking, most will be. Experimenting with different ways of inserting links (plain text, hyperlink, clickable image) will allow you to see what kind of factors affect your CTR.

Unsubscribe Rate
It's not uncommon that every email blast you send out might have some recipients unsubscribing from your list. We'll touch more on this later, but a small unsubscribe rate is actually not always a bad thing. A big unsubscribe rate, or a spike in unsubscribe rate, should be an indication of your audience's response to your email.

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Advance Your PEX

Stainless Steel PEX Fittings

Chapter 2

Spread Out Your Blasts

As much as we want to make sales on a new product instantaneously, it's important to remember that overwhelming your email subscribers or customers with frequent email blasts is going to turn them off very quickly.

For this reason, it's really important that you spread out your email blasts over a number of weeks to give your subscribers ample time to warm up to the idea of what you're selling.

Typically, we don't recommend sending out email blasts more frequently than one per week. Especially if you're emailing about the same product with each blast, you really don't want to overwhelm your subscribers by reaching out too frequently.

When it comes to promoting a new product, you probably don't want to go more than 2 weeks between promotional email blasts. Anything too spaced out likely runs the risk of your customer forgetting about the product and having to re-learn about it for the first time with every blast.

Whatever the frequency you decide for your promotional campaign, the biggest principle you want to employ is not overwhelming your audience with too many notifications. You won't be winning any new sales by doing so.

Morning Emails Perform Better

Everyone's got a different opinion on this one, but we'll share ours here with a bit of explanation.

Our favourite time of day to send out email blasts is early in the morning: think 6 or 7am. Why that time?

If we're assuming the average person ends working for the day at 5 o'clock, all of the emails that are sent between 5pm and 9am the next morning (when the average person checks into work) are going to collect in a pile. If you receive 3 emails in that time, they're going to appear in reverse-chronological order at the top of your email inbox.

How do you ensure your email is at the top of the list? Send it shortly before you predict your recipient is going to check their email inboxes. We've found that scheduling between 6am and 7am (where possible) gives us enough time to catch the early birds but not be so early that we risk having a huge volume of emails end up on top of ours.

It really is a matter of experimentation, and if you're tracking the analytics of open rates and click through rates, you'll quickly determine what time of day your email blasts get the most reactions (or, more accurately, when your audience is most active and primed to open your email).

Avoid Mondays & Fridays (Generally)

It's important to realize that not every morning is ideal for email blasts. We suggest steering clear of Mondays and Fridays (where possible) for simple reasons as explained.

Mondays
Remember how we just discussed the idea of emails accumulating when your recipient is not actively monitoring their email inbox? The same thing is doubly true for Monday mornings, because your recipient is likely dealing with all of the emails that pile up over the course of the weekend (which, if we're using our brains, logic would dictate are not being sent by

people working, but are emails being sent by automatic blast). Monday mornings can be an overwhelming time of the week for people to receive emails. It might be smart to avoid them.

Fridays
Sometimes people will take a Friday off of work in order to get a jump start on the weekend. Other times, by the end of an exhausting work week, they just won't pay as much attention to anything not-urgent in their email inbox. Chances are, your email blast isn't going to be considered urgent, and might not get as much attention as it would mid-week. Of course: this is heavily anecdotal, and you should use your own experience to guide your decision.

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Hidden Strengths of a

Better Gear Clamp

Intriguing Subject Lines are Vital to Success

We could quote a multitude of studies that show just how important an intriguing, fascinating, reaction-inducing email subject line is in order to drive up open rates, but you get the idea. Take our word for it: the subject line of your email is one of the most important things about your entire email.

Your subject line is the first thing people read when you send them an email. It's the thing they'll read that determines if they're interested enough to click and keep reading, or if it sounds too mundane and they want to pass on it.

If there's one part of your email blast that should receive a (seemingly) disproportionate amount of effort for how simple the finished product is, this is it.

The best email subject lines create a small bit of mystery, contain a joke, or otherwise promise to offer a ton of value if your reader simply clicks on the email.

They're hard to get right, but when you strike that perfect balance, you'll see it in your KPIs.

Emojis Can Be Your Friend

Don't underestimate the power of slipping an emoji into a subject line. These little pops of colour provide a very abstract visual representation of what a recipient might expect to find inside their email.

Especially if many of your competitors aren't using emojis in their email subject lines, it's just another small way to stand out when you're fighting for your recipient's attention.

Email Bodies That Deliver

As much as we've just gone on about the importance of a subject line, you will quickly violate the trust of your audience and see your open rate drop if the body of your email doesn't deliver on the promises of your subject line.

It's important that you're adding something of value to the customer (not just to you) when you're emailing them. People tend to subscribe to email lists because they want to be educated, or they want to be informed about something new or interesting. It's important that every email you send accomplishes one of those things.

If you are attempting to push your email traffic over to a web page, this might be one of the few times that leaving your reader hanging in the email actually benefits you. If you can create a cliffhanger that can only be satisfied through clicking on the link, you're probably off to a great start.

The point is: just because it's advantageous to you to be emailing your customer, doesn't mean it's advantageous for them to be reading.

In order to protect your KPIs and to get the most out of the effort you use to email market, only email when you have something valuable to share. (Yes, as long as you don't abuse it, reminders about products can be considered valuable.)

Use a CRM (or At Least BCC)

If you're not using a Customer Relationship Manager tool (like Hubspot.com, our CRM of choice), you're really missing out on the opportunity to streamline and organize all of your communications about your customer database. There's so much that a CRM can offer your company, and email marketing is only a very small sliver of that. We highly recommend looking into a CRM of some kind if you've never thought of it before.

When it comes to email marketing, CRMs can be really helpful to create and send out your email blasts, and to track who got what email. If you setup your contacts properly, you can filter groups of people in a multitude of ways, which allows you to get very specific and tailored with your email blasts (something that almost always leads to more success; although it requires considerably more effort).

CRMs can also give other people in your organization the ability to see what emails were sent, and the individual email analytic information (open rate, click through rate, unsubscribe rate) each time your marketing department sends out an email.

With a CRM, you also typically have the ability to customize certain attributes like a contact's first name in the body of the email, which is something that you don't get to do without a CRM.

While we could go on and on about the benefits of a CRM, we fully understand that, especially if you're not using one, it takes a ton of time and energy to implement one into your organization.

If you're sending out email blasts simply using your Microsoft Outlook or Gmail account, be absolutely certain to BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) the group of people you're emailing. If you simply CC everyone you want to contact, you create two really bad situations:

*Giving Away Your Contact List*
Now you've completely aired—to everyone on the email list—who else you're emailing with promotional information. Particularly if you work in a highly competitive industry or know that tensions can run high between your customers, this can have a lot of really negative repercussions. It also gives them the ability to contact each other.
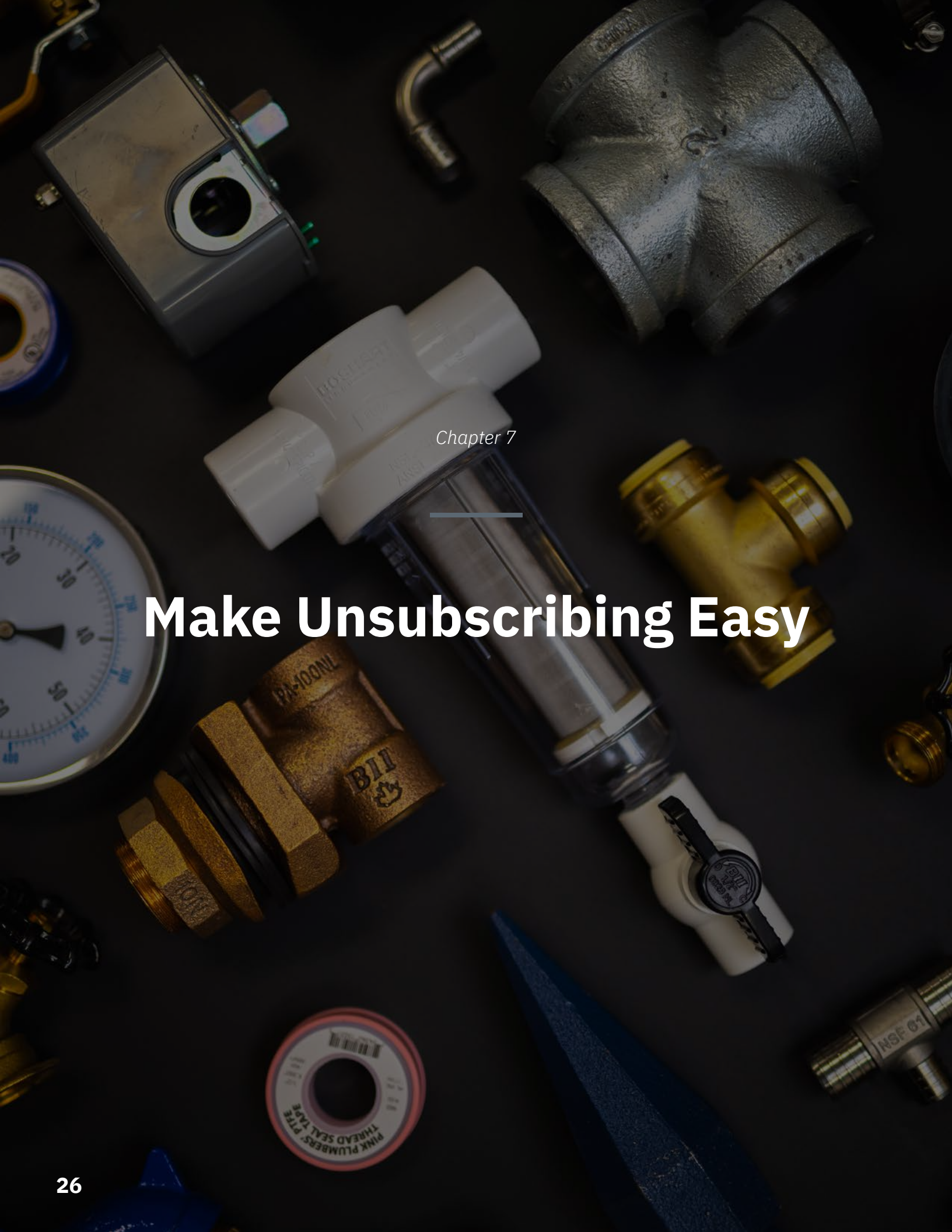
Reply All-ing the Whole Group
There's nothing worse than when 300 people start Reply All-ing to an email thread that they should've been BCC'd on. Now you, as the instigator of the email blast, cannot stop other people from notifying every other recipient if they BCC. This can become a really bad place to be if you aren't careful.

If the dangers of accidentally CCing a large group of people in an email (and the lack of analytic tools) aren't reason enough for you to consider using a CRM, be warned that you're playing a dangerous game, and you should proceed with the utmost caution.

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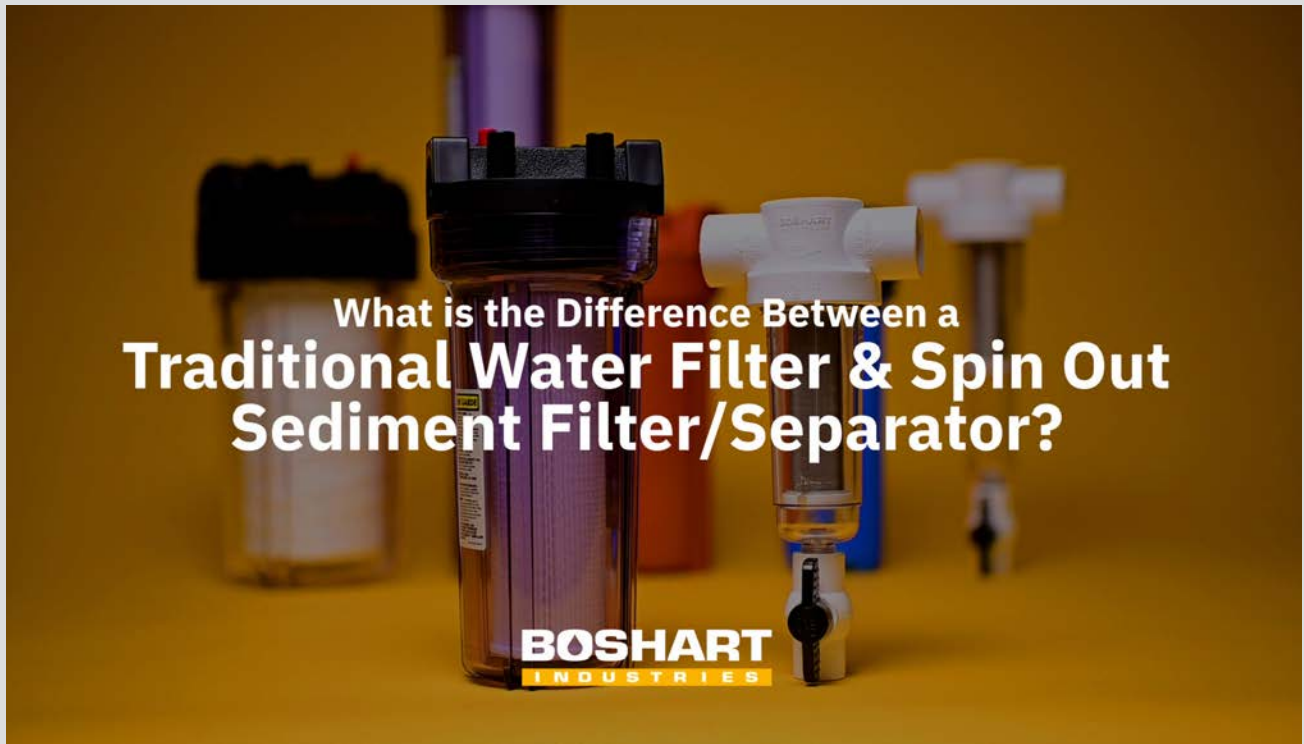
Water Filtration Series

Make Unsubscribing Easy

This final principle is going to sound counterintuitive at first, but believe us when we say it's an important thought for every marketer to consider.

Make it easy for your recipients to remove themselves from your email list. If someone has determined that they don't want to be contacted in this way (or for this reason), it's important to let them off the train as quickly as possible. Here's why.

• You injure the relationship with that email recipient if you continue contacting them against their will
• They won't open your emails, nor click through them, if you keep them on; thus your KPIs will suffer
• You don't want to talk to people who don't want to talk to you. It's that simple. Someone uninterested in talking to you isn't a qualified lead

By giving people the opportunity to unsubscribe really easily, you preserve a little bit of the relationship by showing them you're a decent human being (or company) that doesn't want to force anyone into anything (even something as simple as reading an email they've determined they aren't interested in).

A big unsubscribe rate is probably a strong indicator that your email blast had very little value to your customer. This can be disappointing at first, but if you use it to redirect your efforts in the future, it's the best way to turn a loss into a win.

Ensure that an unsubscribe button is plainly visible at the bottom of every email blast you send out, and that it actually leads to an easy unsubscribe process for the recipient. You cause a great amount of frustration and damage if you make it feel like jumping through hoops to get off of someone's email list. Don't be that company.

Postface

Summary

Email marketing isn't a walk in the park, but it can be incredibly valuable if you're willing to put in the time and effort to make it happen.
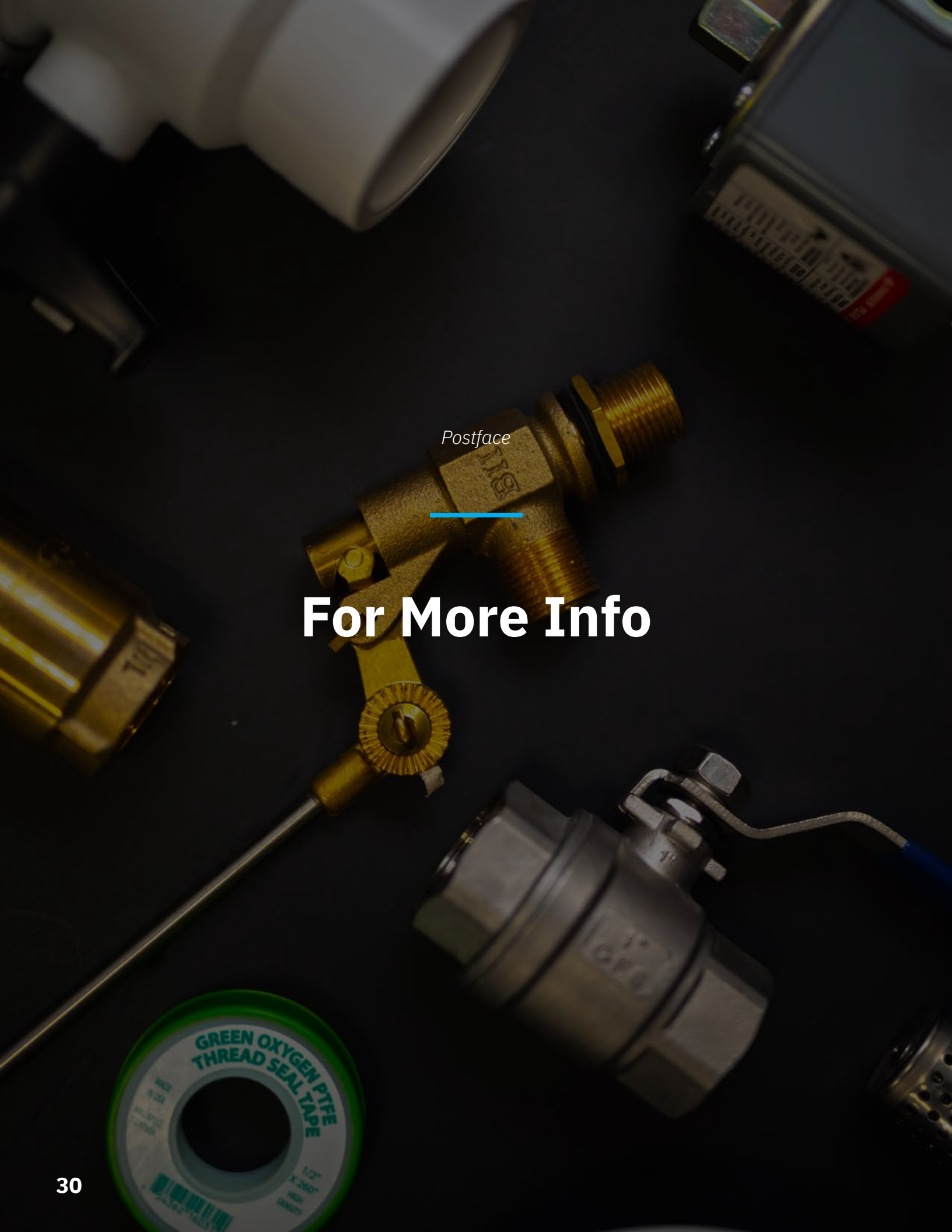
One of the greatest strengths of email marketing is that fewer competitors are vying for space in someone's inbox as opposed to vying for their attention on social media. Thus, when you're in an environment where you have less people crowding around you, it's easier to stand out.

Email also allows you much more important analytics (compared to something like social media) which is the only way to know that your efforts are succeeding.

We love email marketing, and it's a constant experimentation to determine what works and what doesn't.

Make an effort to connect with other marketers that utilize email as a tactic and learn from them. Again—we are not the be-all-end-all on the subject. What we've shared here has been hard-learned through many different experiments. We hope it's helpful to you on your journey.

Happy emailing!

Postface

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Boshart Accelerator was created to share our wealth of knowledge and experience on sales, marketing, and running a business in the plumbing wholesaler industry. We are always expanding our library of content on Accelerator to equip you with what you need to succeed.

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