

Recommendations: Next Steps in the Project

As a result of the data collected from the online survey and comparative analysis, the following recommendations should be considered in order to advance the project and create a new email marketing editor application.

More customization

During the survey, multiple participants suggested that they would like the platform to be more customizable. As indicated in the data, advanced customization leads to higher satisfaction. According to one user, “I would like to see more customization. I understand that MailChimp has to use standard fonts so most email clients can translate the code, but I would like to see our newsletters stand out a bit more from all the other MailChimp newsletters.” Therefore, providing users with standard email features and allowing them to design their communications without limitations is recommended. To do this, it is suggested that the platform employ a model similar to graphic design software. Users are given a series of tools and a blank canvas, which allows them to design as they see fit. The platform will offer some guidance and best practices, but in general, the user will have much more flexibility to customize their email. This will be considered an advanced feature so that people are not required to use it.

Deriving features from the comparative analysis

The comparative analysis revealed both qualitative and quantitative findings. To get the most out of the analysis, the research team sifted through each of the 13 feature categories and identified which platforms offer the most efficient, effective and usable features. Below is a compiled list of ideal email application features for the new platform:

- Ability to stylize all sections/content blocks without having to repeat the process
- A drag arrow appears as the user hovers over a block allowing the user to move content blocks
- Ability to manually resize images by clicking and dragging
- Ability to add photo galleries and multiple image styles
- Format spacers and dividers within the email itself (inline feature)
- Robust icon library and free stock images
- A RGB color editor
- A navigation bar that allows users to go back/forward and indicates where a user is in the email design process
- Mobile/desktop previews, along with the ability to render emails on different clients
- A manual save button, auto-save feature and undo/redo option
- A feature that auto-tabulates data into charts/infographics for users

Problem statement

Most drag and drop editing platforms, which give users some flexibility to configure content blocks when creating emails, are not as customizable and/or easy-to-use as people require.

Key research questions

1. What tools, features and services do designers value and use when creating visual and/or interactive content?
2. When using email marketing services, what constraints do designers feel limits their ability to create fully customizable HTML emails?
3. When creating an email, what drag and drop features are used?
4. How do people approach the email design process?
5. What causes people to get frustrated with the platform?

Recommendations: Next Steps in the Project (Continued)

Prioritizing features

To ensure that the most valued features are prioritized and developed by order of importance, it is recommended that the research team reference the scatter plot quadrants from the Kano model. Features should be prioritized in the following order: must-be > performance > attractive > indifferent. This particular order ensures a user-centric design process as it accounts for survey participant preferences.

WYSIWYG editor

As indicated during the Kano model exercise, users value an easy-to-use text editor. As a result, designing an efficient editor should be a high priority. Based on the top 10 WYSIWYG editor features from the survey, it is recommended that all 10 features be included within the application's editor. Conversely, the remaining 11 features, which were not as commonly used, should be accessible by clicking on an "advanced text options" tool bar.

Visual style

80% of users prefer Campaign Monitor's visual style. As a result, the new application layout should use whites, grays and blacks. Additionally, the application's feature icons should be minimal, clean and include both graphics and text.

Marketing the product

Based on the survey results, people strongly value a platform that is customizable, affordable and includes advanced content editing features and metrics. Therefore, the new platform must also leverage and promote each of these features and functions.

Additional research

While the online survey and comparative analysis produced valuable insights into the email marketplace, people's habits, experiences, frustrations and preferences, additional research should be conducted to strengthen the preliminary findings. In order to identify exactly which features and tools should be created for the new platform, a series of usability tests are recommended. Testing should be performed on current platforms, as well as on prototype designs. Conducting usability testing will allow the research team to compare and evaluate how people perform tasks on the platforms. Additionally, in order to enhance and validate the open-ended survey questions, it is recommended that one-on-one interviews take place. Interviews can be used to create personas and provide additional qualitative insights regarding people's behaviors and attitudes. Interviews may also offer insights into new platform features and tools.

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Key research questions

1. What tools, features and services do designers value and use when creating visual and/or interactive content?
2. When using email marketing services, what constraints do designers feel limits their ability to create fully customizable HTML emails?
3. When creating an email, what drag and drop features are used?
4. How do people approach the email design process?
5. What causes people to get frustrated with the platform?