



A guide to building

# **Preference Centers**

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.CLOUD

## Introduction

Whether you're deploying emails, mobile messages or push notifications or any form of electronic communication, having the ability to deliver relevant content to your subscribers will help boost your open rates, click-throughs, and engagement. More importantly, it'll help strengthen your brand.

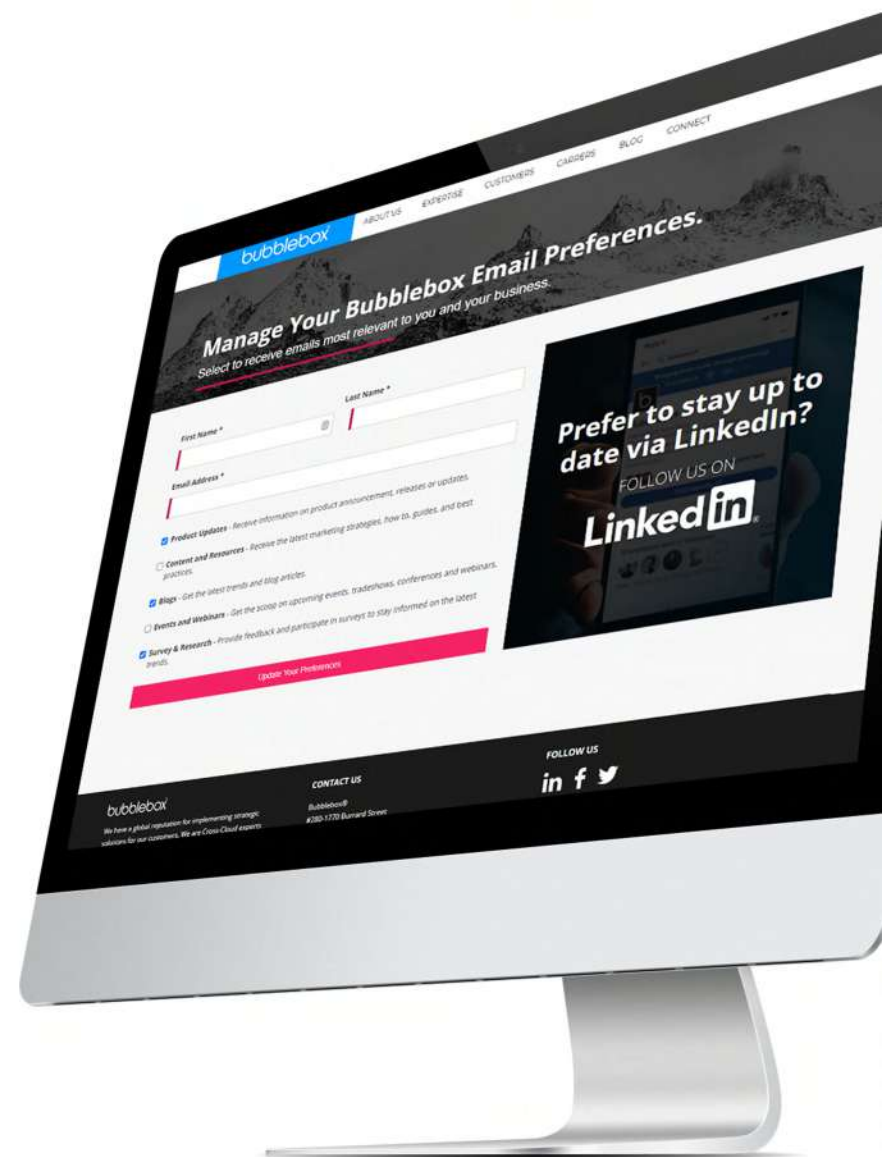
Your marketing team has invested a lot of time, effort, money and energy to grow your subscriber base. You don't want to lose subscribers as quickly as you're gaining them due to irrelevant content.

It's essential to give your subscribers a choice, easily done with a preference center.

## What is a Preference Center?

A preference center is a page within a website or an application that allows your subscribers to change their subscription details. Preference centers allow subscribers to opt-in or opt-out (unsubscribe) from different channels such as emails or SMS messages and choose the frequency of emails or messages they want to receive from you (the sender). View as if you're giving your customers a way to adjust elements of their user experience with your brand.

Essentially, it's an easy way for your subscribers to go to a portal to control what they are receiving and how they are receiving the message.



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## Why do people subscribe to emails or mobile messages?

In Hubspot's 2020 State of Marketing Report, Hubspot asked consumers why they would most commonly subscribe to marketing emails or newsletters? Their findings:

- 28% want to receive sales notification, promo codes, or coupons from a company<sup>1</sup>
- 25% want branded content such as blogs, videos, graphics<sup>2</sup>
- 16% want to receive company news announcements includes press releases, information about the staff, posts<sup>3</sup>
- 10% selected all of the above - Mixes of Content, Promotion, and Company New<sup>4</sup>
- 14% select other<sup>5</sup>

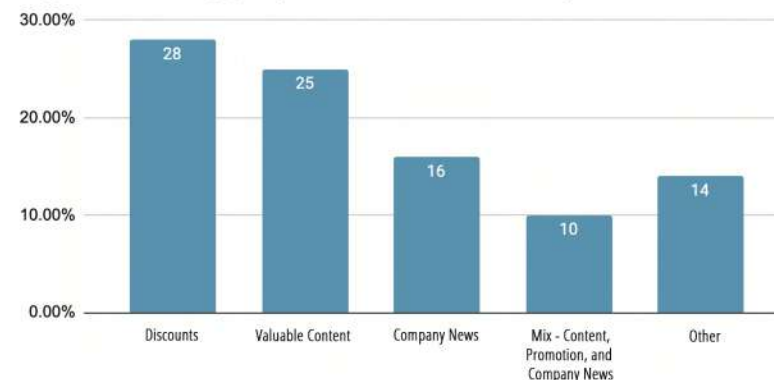
## When asked the common reasons why their subscribers are unsubscribing:

- 54% Emails coming too frequently<sup>6</sup>
- 49% Content became to repetitive or boring<sup>7</sup>
- 47% Too many emails and needed to get off some companies list<sup>8</sup>
- 25% The content wasn't relevant to me from the start<sup>9</sup>
- 24% Prefer to seek out information instead of having companies push information<sup>10</sup>
- 22% Signed up for a one-time offer<sup>11</sup>

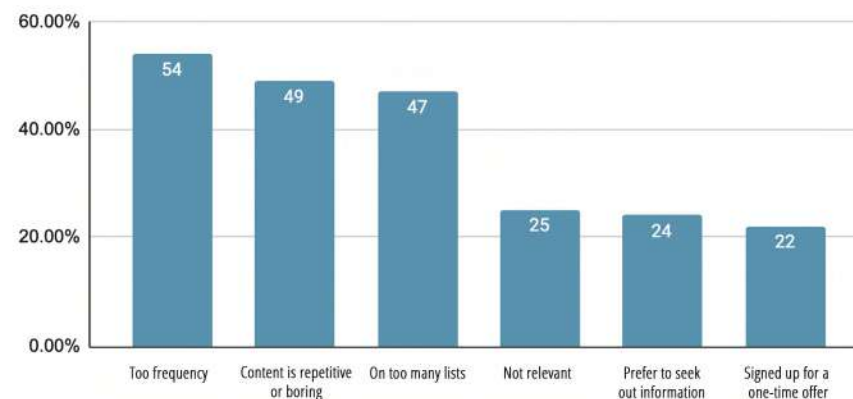
<sup>1</sup> to <sup>5</sup>: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/why-consumers-subscribe-to-email>

<sup>6</sup> to <sup>11</sup>: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34022/28-Quick-Tips-for-Customizing-Your-Email-Preference-Center.aspx>

Top reasons why people subscribe to subscription lists



Top reasons why people unsubscribe from subscription lists



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# PERSONALIZE YOUR SUBSCRIBERS PREFERENCE CENTERS WITH DYNAMIC CONTENT

## The benefits of having a preference center

Your marketing team invested a lot of time, effort, money and energy to grow your subscriber base. You don't want to lose subscribers as quickly as you're gaining them due to irrelevant content.

At the same time, it's understandable if preference centers seem like a bad idea for companies. You're making it easy for subscribers to opt-out from receiving messages after you've spent energy building campaigns to draw them in.

Here's an opportunity to personalize your preference center with **dynamic content**. With Bubblebox, we could help you personalize every aspect of your preference center. For example:

- Display your subscriber's email address in the email field (and allow them to edit)
- Suggest other subscription lists that your subscribers may be interested in, based on their current subscriptions
- Display a customer "Thank you page" message depending on the subscriptions they join or unsubscribe.



## Let's be honest.

The reality is that there will be people who subscribe that don't want to hear from you. And, that's okay. Don't make it difficult for them. You won't win them over by making it difficult to unsubscribe.

Instead, your goal should be to build up your subscription lists made up of individuals who will have strong engagement with your brand and are looking to receive relevant content from you.

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## Preference centers are tools that give your subscribers a choice. How?

### Subscribers are unsubscribing because they're dissatisfied with your brand.

#### Are they?

What if, perhaps instead, these subscribers do like your brand. What they're genuinely dissatisfied about is the frequency and not the content. Or maybe they like to receive different types of content instead. They're more interested in receiving discounts and promotional emails instead of company news.

But what if you had other options? With a well-designed preference center, you could set limits on the number of messages that the company sends. An example could be daily emails or texts, and you send them an email once a week. If a subscriber is satisfied with a brand and can personalize their experience, a preference center can differentiate between a loyal user and an unsubscribe.

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## Preference centers are tools that give your subscribers a choice. How?

### Allow your subscribers the opportunity to self-personalize their experience.

#### Your subscribers know themselves the best.

Let's pause for a moment. As marketers, we spend a lot of time and money trying to understand our prospects and customers. We collect demographic and behavioural information. We collect and track a lot of information through various marketing campaigns and channels. All so that we could get better at communicating with our subscribers and do a better job at sending the right message at the right time.

What if your prospects and customers can access their preference center, where they can fill in their information about themselves.

If they'd like to receive a SMS message instead of an email, let them choose that option. If they'd like to only know about special promotions, they can let you know, and you can stop sending them company announcements. By sending them information that matters to them and not a broad notification, it'll increase the subscriber's likelihood to engage and continue to be a loyal fan since you're sending them information that is relevant and valuable.

The screenshot shows a user interface for managing email preferences. At the top, there is a 'COMPANY LOGO' placeholder. Below it, the title 'Manage your email preferences' is displayed, followed by a placeholder text: 'Cras mattis consectetur purus sit amet fermentum. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit.' The main content area lists several categories with toggle switches to the right:

- Product launch announcements and special offers** (Get discounts and early access to products): ON
- Coaching** (Get discounts and early access to products): ON
- Certifications** (Get discounts and early access to products): OFF
- ProCoach Software** (Get discounts and early access to products): ON
- Physical products** (Get discounts and early access to products): ON
- Free research, articles, and infographics** (Get discounts and early access to products): ON

At the bottom of the list is a blue button labeled 'SAVE PREFERENCES'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Don't want to receive more emails?' (Get discounts and early access to products) with a grey button labeled 'UNSUBSCRIBE FROM ALL'.

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## Preference centers are tools that give your subscribers a choice. How?

### Preference centers help you build a trusted relationship with your subscribers.

We've also heard many subscribers not trusting companies because they don't know how an organization has collected their information and their intended use. Instead, by involving the subscriber and allowing them to fill in the information themselves, you're developing a rapport, building a relationship and establishing trust by giving them full control over the data they allow companies to use.

When you provide subscribers with access to a preference center, that allows them to explicitly express their preferences — and signals that you care what those preferences are.

COMPANY LOGO

**CUSTOMIZE YOUR EMAIL PREFERENCES**

Do you need to update your contact info?

First Name  Last Name

Email Address

Select one...  ZIP Code

**HOW CAN WE KEEP YOU UPDATED?**

☐ **Newsletter:** Insider access, behind the scenes stories, backstage videos, exclusive pre-sales, lottery updates.

☐ **Ticket offers:** Special offers for a wide variety of Broadway and off-Broadway shows.

**Would you like specialized email updates?**

Choose all that apply:

☐ Discounts ☐ Plays

☐ Premium Seating ☐ Concerts

☐ Musicals ☐ Comedy

☐ Great group discounts for groups of 10+

If you no longer want to receive email updates from us, please...

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## How To Organize Your Preference Center

There is no one right way to build a preference center. What's important is to give your subscribers the ability to let you know the best way to reach out to them. Rule of thumb when designing your preference center, keep the following three factors in mind:

### 1. CHANNEL

Suppose your company sends messages using only one channel. In that case, there isn't a difference between a preference center or giving your subscribers the option to opt-out of receiving messages from the one channel.

Though from companies that use multiple channels to communicate with their subscribers to increase engagement, this might make more sense by allowing your customers to easily opt-in or out of each channel you use. By doing this, your subscribers will most likely engage with your brand.

### 2. TOPICS

If your company only sends messages announcing a sale to your subscribers, then there may not be a benefit to letting your subscribers determine what type of content they'd like to receive.

Either they'll opt-in to get the sale announcement, or they won't want it and opt-out. Though for companies that send a variety of messages, enabling your subscribers to sign up for content that interests them the most, this will drive up engagement by allowing your subscribers to self-personalize the type of content they want to build up the rapport and relationship..

### 3. FREQUENCY

Avoid frustrating your subscribers by sending them too many messages. Provide the option for your subscribers to set a maximum number of messages they could receive during a specific period. Say, for example, a subscriber may like to receive your sale messages via push notifications, though say you're a retail brand that is frequently promoting sales items due to the volume of things you have to offer.

Instead of having a subscriber opt-out, give them the option to set a limit or a cap to the number of sales items pushed to them each day or week. Keep your subscribers engaged and decrease the likelihood of a lost sales opportunity.

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## How to get people to use your preference center

A preference center is key to managing your email deliverability and building a trusted relationship with your subscribers. As marketers, we know that we need to educate and drive awareness to the tool before subscribers set their preferences. Consider building a welcome email or onboarding email journey. There's no better way to start on the right foot with your subscribers than by asking them how they'd prefer to receive communications moving forward.

Though don't stop there and only communicate to new users that you've added as part of the onboarding or welcome process, from time to time, remember your loyal and older users. Remind them about their preference center. It isn't uncommon for older users to change their minds about how they'd like to receive information over time or perhaps update their personal information.

Another good time to communicate and remind subscribers about the preference center could.

### Common preference center issues to key an eye on

A well-designed preference center should align with your company's marketing and communication strategies, but it also needs to consider how your subscribers want to receive information. Finding the right balance for your brand and your subscribers will likely take time. It makes sense to keep iterating on your preference center as you learn more about how your audience receives information and uses it.

Here are few potential issues to watch out for:

#### 1. GIVING YOUR SUBSCRIBERS TOO MUCH CHOICE

It's essential to make sure you're not giving subscribers more options than they need. With an excessive number of options, subscribers are often paralyzed and find it hard to choose. That means that a preference center that gives customers too much control might ironically end up being used less, reducing its value to your audience and your brand.

#### 2. NOT RESPECTING THE PREFERENCES THAT YOUR SUBSCRIBERS HAVE INDICATED

Your preference center can only serve its purpose if your company implements the preferences that your subscribers have identified. A subscriber isn't going to feel like your brand respects them and values them if you send them more messages than they indicated they want or deliver content on topics they're not interested in receiving. For example, your subscriber identified that they'd like to receive emails on Monday because you send weekly newsletters. Still, suppose you start sending two or three emails a week on different days. In that case, it means that you don't respect their choice selection and personalize the experience your subscriber has selected, meaning you don't value their input. Ensure that the messaging options you give your subscribers reflect how you message them—otherwise, your preference center has no value to the subscriber.

What's even more annoying is continuing to send commercial emails to customers who have indicated they don't want to receive them. Avoid causing more damage to your brand's reputation, and opens you up to legal fines.

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## HOW CUSTOMER-FACING DEPARTMENTS CAN PLAY A ROLE IN EDUCATING AND KEEPING CUSTOMER PREFERENCE CENTERS UP TO DATE.

Your marketing and communications departments aren't the only business units that could educate and drive awareness to the preference center. It ties back to our previous point to drive awareness or education to loyal or older users about our preference center.

Include in your call script a reminder or update your on-hold message to educate callers of the preference center and how they could access the landing page.

Alternatively, if your company is sending post-call emails, ensure it's built into the email journey to educate and drive awareness.

Here is an example of a subscriber history built into your lead and contact object of your Salesforce instance. The subscriber history will provide visibility to not only your marketers but also your customer-facing representatives. They may frequently get calls or questions to where, when and how an individual's information is collected and used. The subscriber history will provide an at a glance view, including the date and time stamp associated with the last action taken. It'll help reduce potential escalations and help your organization stay compliant with anti-spam legislation such as the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation in Canada or the CAN-SPAM Act in the US.

**Pro tip:** There are many different ways to build a subscriber history. Think about the long term and whether you have in-house or external partners supporting future edits or changes. If you have access to technical developers, you may decide to go down the route of leveraging VisualForce and include a cloud page as part of the Anti-Spam Information section of your contact and lead object, such as below.

Contact

Jane Smith

Phone (3)

Email

jane.smith@companyabc.com

Account Name

Company ABC

Contact Owner

Matthew Campbell

Details

Activity

Feed

Subscriber History

Product Updates

Content And Resources

Blogs

Events and Webinars

Survey and Research

Opted Out from SurveyAndResearch

12/11/2020 12:40:31 PM

Opted in to SurveyAndResearch

12/14/2020 4:17:12 PM

Opted Out from ContentAndResources

12/14/2020 4:17:52 PM

Opted Out from EventsAndWebinars

12/14/2020 4:17:52 PM

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A less complicated way to display your company subscriber history is to have your Admin leverage the Lightning App Builder. Your Admin can create a standard report by taking the base URL available in the lightning app builder and appending the current record ID to the base URL. It'll enable the Admin to display the subscriber history report from Salesforce Marketing Cloud.

**Interested in setting this configuration up or need help, connect with us.**

### Configuration explanation:

- Once a report is done in SFMC: the URL is composed of a **report base URL** and a Contact/Lead Id:  
<https://pub.s6.exacttarget.com/3s0n2ezjxxx?id=0034V00002YmeY9xxx>
- A Lightning component was developed to :
  - Allow admins insert the SFMC this url they want to show in a Contact or Lead Lightning Page (A 'Subscriber History' tab was created in the Lightning Page edition Page).
  - The lightning component automatically detects the current contact/lead id to re-build the right URL being accessed via IFrame.

Subscriber History	
Opted Out from SurveyAndResearch	10/16/2025 12:40:31 PM
Opted in to SurveyAndResearch	10/16/2025 4:17:12 PM
Opted Out from ContentAndResources	10/16/2025 4:17:02 PM
Opted Out from EventsAndWebinars	10/16/2025 4:17:02 PM

Page > LC\_SFMC\_Report

baseURL

<https://pub.s6.exacttarget.com/3s0n2ezjmy>

Contact Jane Smith

SW Predictive Score Phone (3) Email jane.smith@companyabc.com Account Name Company ABC Contact Owner Matthew Campbell

Post

Share an update...

Details Activity Feed Subscriber History

> Contact Information

> Contact Profile Information

▼ Anti-Spam Information

Email Opt Out

Email Hard-bounced

Do Not Call

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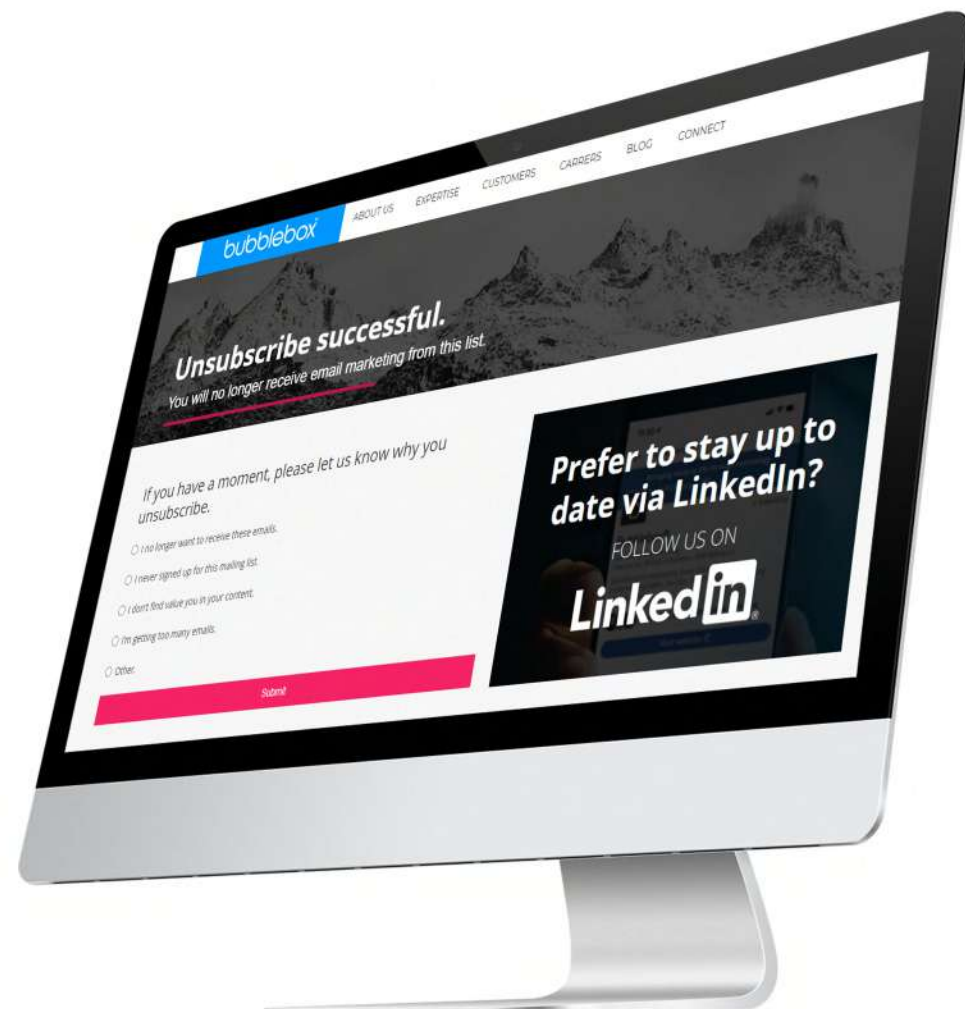
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## UNDERSTAND WHY YOUR SUBSCRIBERS ARE UNSUBSCRIBING

It's important to understand why your customers are opting out. Without their feedback, you won't know in detail why they are leaving. Without that information, it'll be hard for your marketing and communication teams to optimize and get better at improving their execution.

Again, start with a few reasons that you've heard from your subscribers and continually optimize your unsubscribe reasons to better understand the reason. What's important is to ensure that you share the feedback to the respective team, identify an individual to own the issue and hold them accountable to resolve and improve user experience.



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## Ready to build your custom preference center?

If you're already using Salesforce - Leverage Marketing Cloud, Cloud Pages and AmpScripts to build your own preference center to engage with your audience.

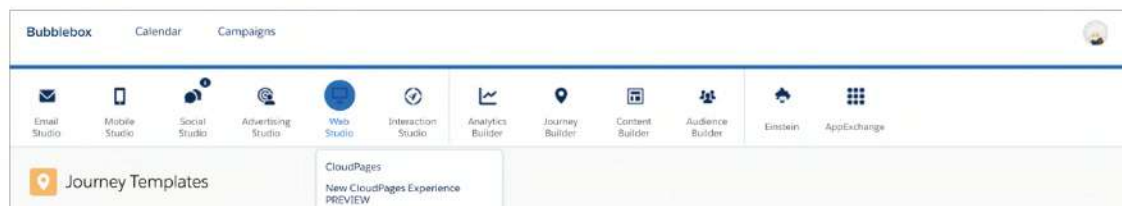
How to get started

### Before you begin

Determine what you're trying to achieve, the data you have available, how you'd like to use it, and the type of information you'd like to collect.

### Create Cloud Pages

The first step is to create a Cloud Page in Marketing Cloud. Think of Cloud Pages as a landing page where you can create and publish content. Start by going into your Marketing Cloud, select **Web Studio > Cloud Pages**.



All you have to do, is to create a new collection and a landing page. This landing page will be your preference center.

Select **Create Collection**. If you're wondering what a Collection is, I like to view it like a folder where I can keep all my content, creation of landing pages, microsites, images, content blocks all in one place. Set up your collection by giving it a name and a description that can be easily identifiable by other users in the future. **Click Save**.



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## Ready to build your custom preference center?

Create Collection

\* Collection Name  
Company Name Preference Centre

Description  
Custom Preference Centre

Cancel Save

You've now set up your Preference Center Collection

Collections

Collection Name	Created Date
Company Name Preference Centre	Modified last: Jan 24, 2021 10:43 AM Created: Jan 24, 2021 10:43 AM

Time to get started on creating your Preference Center Landing Page using Content Builder.

Open up your Preference Center collection and follow the steps to create your customer landing page.

Create Content

\* Name  
Preference Center Landing Page

Description

\* Editor  
☒ Content Builder  
 Gain access to our new cross-channel editing experience for Landing Pages. Landing Pages created in Content Builder cannot be edited via the CloudPages editor.  
☐ Classic Editor

Cancel Back Next

You have the option to select the type of layout that aligns best with your brand and brand website. Select Save.

Create Content

Select Layout

Blank Basic 3 Row Basic 2 Column **Right Sidebar** Left Sidebar

Basic 3 Column Multi-Row 2 Column

Cancel Back Save

From here, you can now begin to drag and drop your Content Blocks to create your content including:

- Button
- Free Form
- HTML
- Image
- Smart Capture
- Text
- Social Follow
- Social Share

Optionally, you use the **Content** tab to drag saved content saved in a content area.

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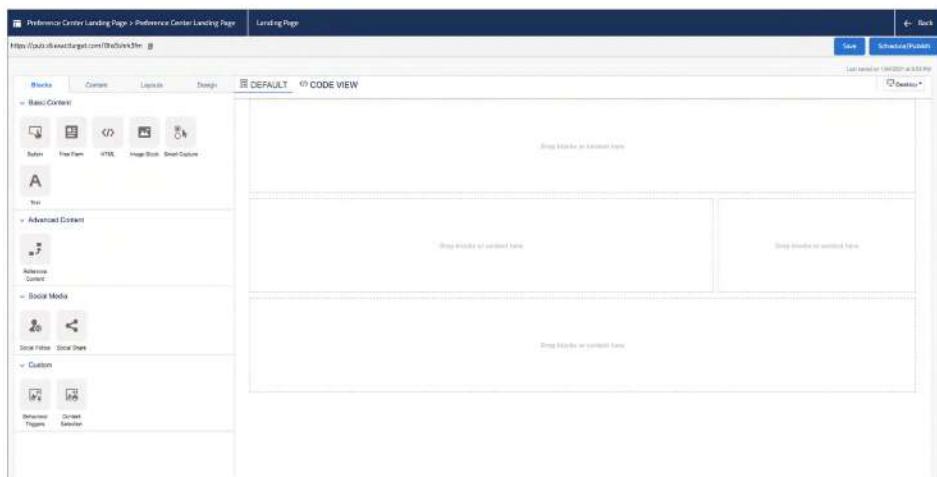
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## Ready to build your custom preference center?



Once you're happy with the Content you've created. Click Schedule/Publish. Which enables you to immediately make your content page visible by all or scheduled to a later date.

### Learn more

Learn how you can leverage custom preference centers to ensure your subscribers get personalized content that matters to them. Create a custom preference center and use their responses to add them to relevant lists or data extensions.

If you're a Salesforce user, and need help building a preference center into your organization,

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