

Email Guidelines For Your Next Email Campaign

Keep it relevant.

Readers of email are merciless. If your messages are not targeted to their needs, they will quickly delete your message or, worse yet, they may unsubscribe from your mailing list. To increase the relevance of your messages, think about how to make creative connections with what's going on in your readers' world. Possibilities include holiday and seasonal promotions, connections to major news stories and entertainment events.

Optimize text for scan ability.

Remember, most visitors won't read your entire email but will simply scan it, looking for clues to quickly answer their questions. For best results, use short blocks of text and bullets to make your message easier to scan. A call to action should be visible "above the fold" - that is, within the first screen full of information that the reader will see. Make sure that any links are clearly formatted as clickable links. If you're using images for links, make sure they look clickable as well (for example, a button that contains the words "more information" or "order now").

Subject Line

Subject lines- recommend no more than 35 characters (including spaces). This is the most important element in your email campaign below are some tips to help come up with a successful subject line.

Ask a question

Asking a question is a subject line technique that works well because it gives the customer something to think about. Your question should be something on almost every customer's mind. And by opening your email, they're answering that question through their interest. You can even answer the question in your subject line. Here are a few examples of question-type subject lines:

Running through too much toner? We can help

Need a cool backpack for Fall? We've got 'em

Need a better body for summer? This workout works

All of the subject lines above ask a question, give an answer, and all come in under 55 characters. Ask a question and you'll see your open rates improve.

Use the phrase "customer fave(s)" to sate curiosity

Most human beings are at least curious over what other people are buying. If a product has a huge audience and gets tons of good marks from customers, most likely your recipient will be more inclined to buy it. For this reason, we believe that a "customer favorite" product, featured in a subject line, is an easy sell. To make this tactic even more effective, use this phrase in a list subject line (see below).

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Make it a list

A list is an easy way to offer something of value, sell a product or service, and not seem too obvious about it. A list gives a customer a subconscious message that your email is organized in a way that makes it an easy read. They'll be more compelled to open your email if they know ahead of time that they'll not be facing a wall of text. Add products or services to this list and you'll not only get them interested in opening your email, but you can showcase various products at the same time. Here are some good examples:

Top 5 customer favs for Spring

10 products you can't live without

3 ways to save money on toner

From Line

- From lines recommended no more than 55 characters (including spaces)
- From line should include your company name or brand
- Use a consistent from line because recipients might have white listed you.

Triggers for Spam Filters

Avoid usage of the following words in the subject line and body of your email

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| • WORDS IN ALL CAPS | • reasonable priced | • new – improved |
| • exclamation marks ! | • bargain | • special invitation |
| • \$\$ | • best | • what are you waiting for |
| • 100% | • congratulations | • while supplies last |
| • free mortgage | • free | • discount |
| • limited time | • no cost | • winner |
| • click here! | • no fee | • you have been selected |
| • click here now! | • no obligation | • single image emails |
| • act now | • guaranteed | • low ratio of text to images |
| • affordable | | |

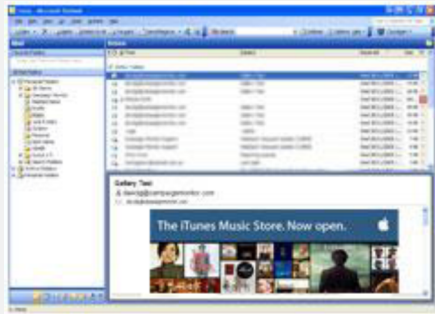
Basic Design

- Ensure your most compelling content is at the top (and preferably to the left).
- Call to action should show in the initial email view pane without scrolling.
- Include your "offline" contact information, including your physical mailing address, phone number, etc. It will help people remember who you are and they might trust your unsubscribe link more, instead of reporting your email as spam.
- Ensure this content is at the top (and preferably to the left) of your design.
- Make sure this content is text-based and can always be read.

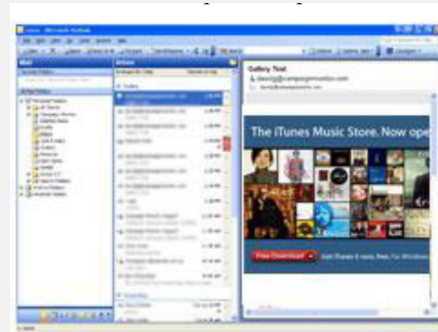
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Email Preview Panes

Allow for different preview panes. Design for the preview pane of email applications. Most recipients will be viewing your email from within an email preview pane, very few will view your message in full screen mode, unless you've already caught their interest. Email designs should be 600px wide or less. More people use horizontal than vertical preview panes



Horizontal preview pane



Vertical preview pane

HTML

- Email Clients all display HTML email a little different.
- Maximum mailing size is 65kb, which includes the actual HTML document plus all images
- The return of tables: Code using "old school" rules of website design with <tables> and spacer images.
- Keep your email design simple
- Source code should be as tidy as possible so the spam filters won't throw your code into the junk folder.
Remove all comments.
- Composition of HTML documents in WYSIWYG programs such as Microsoft Office product is strongly discouraged and a may incur additional charges to clean up the html code.
- Use only the HTML you'd use in between the body tags <body> </body> do not add to the body tag ie <body bg color="#333333" text="#009999" margin="0" padding="0"> Browser-based email applications (like Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo!Mail, etc) strip out HTML, HEAD, and BODY tags so they won't interfere with their own web page design.
- Use a table that contains all the internal layout tables, for example, one column with three rows for the header, content, and footer. This keeps the email together in one chunk of html. Pieces of the layout are less likely to wander when displayed in some email programs.
- Declare width, cell padding, and cell spacing for all tables and table cells.
- Background Images: Most email clients now block background images
- Include all links and UTM codes in the creative prior to sending to us

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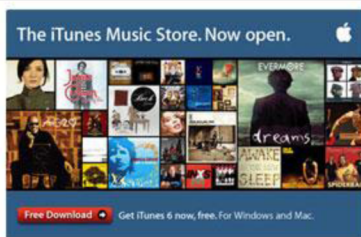
CSS (not recommended)

- CSS SPANs and DIVs should not be used. HTML tables and spacer images should be used for positioning instead of CSS.
- Use inline CSS sparingly for basic font formatting and design coding to fail gracefully, stick to old school formatting and design.
- Linked CSS styles may never be used.

Images

Your message should be understandable even if the images aren't visible. Many ISPs and email clients have images turned off/blocked by default and users will never see images in any emails you send them

- Never use images for important content like headlines, links and any calls to action.
- Always add the height and width to the image to ensure that the blank placeholder image doesn't throw your design out.



Images enabled



Images Disabled (with ALT tag)



Images disabled (no ALT tag)

- Always optimize the image file size. Make sure you use GIF and JPG correctly to get the lowest file size. Use JPG only for photos and images containing gradient colors. GIF - for plain sharp images.
- Use only absolute paths - Image files don't get sent along with HTML email as attachments. You host images on your server, then code the HTML in your email to point to them with absolute paths. In other words, you code something like this: `` instead of like this: ``
- Store the email images on a web server, preferably in a folder separate from website images, for example, in /images/email not /images. And don't delete them. Some people open emails weeks or months later, the same way people use bookmarks to return to websites.

Links

Use the target="_blank" attribute for the HTML A tags so that people reading with a webmail service don't have the requested page appear within their webmail interface.

Scripting

JavaScript, ActiveX, Flash, and embedded movie files won't work. Don't shoot the messenger---we're just telling you the truth. The reason they won't work reliably is just about everybody has anti-virus applications that block that stuff from running.