

# THE MUST-HAVE GUIDE

## FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EMAILS



DEEP DIVE INTO THE  
**12**  
CORE COMPONENTS  
OF AN  
EXCEPTIONAL EMAIL



**marsden**  
marketing





## EMAIL IS DEAD... LONG LIVE EMAIL...



A few years ago, marketers were proclaiming the death of email. **INSTEAD OF FADING AWAY, EMAIL MARKETING EVOLVED.** The development of inbound marketing and digital tools to track engagement gave businesses the opportunity to create permission-based lists.



Instead of spam-bombing a huge volume of purchased email lists, businesses with high ROI are using email as a way of communicating with prospects who have already demonstrated interest in products or solutions by filling out a form. In addition, analytics reveal granular specifics about what a prospect is interested in and where they are in the sales cycle. That means emails can be targeted to a prospect's interests and behavior.





## THE ROI FACTOR

Every activity undertaken in marketing is measured in time and money and results. So what steps can be taken to ensure an investment in email marketing has a payoff? The answer lies in maximizing conversion and click-through rates.

Creating a highly effective email marketing campaign involves a strategy piece that is often ignored. High ROI email marketing gives more than lip service to all the steps necessary to be successful, including:

- Great Copy
- Great Layout
- Visually Appealing CTAs

➡ *According to a 2013 National DMA email report, 89% of marketers consider email important to their organizational goals.*



## LET'S GET STARTED!

On the next page, you will find a printable checklist displaying 12 components of a highly effective email. It's a big picture look at how great email marketing is built.

Interested in diving into details? Continue reading for further strategies and tips.

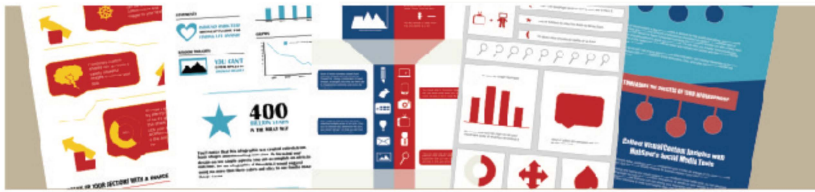
### DID YOU KNOW?

*By 2016, there will be 4.3 billion email accounts according to the Radicati Group, a leading technology research company.*

# HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EMAILS

2. [From: Carol Casey

1. [Subject: How to Create Five Fabulous Infographics in PowerPoint



4. Lynne,

5. Would You Like A Free PowerPoint Template to Help You Design Infographics?

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## HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EMAILS

- ☒ 1. A Clear, Attention-Grabbing Email Subject Line
- ☐ 2. Actual Person as the Sender
- ☐ 3. Company Branding
- ☐ 4. Personalized Salutation & Content
- ☐ 5. Appropriate Segment
- ☐ 6. Value Proposition & Context
- ☐ 7. Obvious, Focused Call-to-Action
- ☐ 8. Relevant Image
- ☐ 9. Social Sharing Buttons/Links
- ☐ 10. Secondary Call-to-Action
- ☐ 11. Link to Privacy Policy
- ☐ 12. Unsubscribe Link



## 1. ATTENTION-GRABBING SUBJECT LINE

The Radicati Group, a technology research company, reports that 1.9 billion non-spam emails are sent everyday. To break through this noise, you must develop a compelling subject line that inspires prospects to engage by clicking open the email. If you don't capture your target's attention in the subject line, the work you've done on all the other parts of your highly effective email will be wasted effort.



## 7 SUBJECT LINE STRATEGIES:

1. **ROLE PLAY:** Sit in the prospect chair. The key to generating click-through is to ask a question your prospect cares about or tease the answer to a question that matches up with a prospect interest or pain point.
2. **PERSONALIZE:** Consider including the first name of prospects the email subject line. According to Dan Zarrella's Science of Email research, adding a name in the subject line significantly increases click-through rates.
3. **USE ACTIONABLE LANGUAGE:** Action words conveying urgency and excitement inspire more clicks.
4. **BE EXPLICIT:** Clearly spell out what the email contains. You want the reader to understand exactly what they will get when they open your email.





## 7 SUBJECT LINE STRATEGIES (CONT.):

5. **GET CREATIVE:** Provocative or humorous subject lines can be effective. Include a few in the mix, and when possible compare click-through rates with a more traditional approach.
6. **BE CONSISTENT:** Your email subject line is making a promise to your reader about what you will deliver in your message. Make sure that you make good on that commitment. Although provocative approaches can be effective, don't overdo them. If people think they have been cheated by your subject lines, they will stop opening your emails and may unsubscribe.
7. **AVOID SPAM TRIGGERS:** Email spammers rely heavily on certain words to boost open rates. In response, email providers employ special spam filters. Avoid words like "Cash," "Quote," and "Free" so your communications don't inadvertently get caught by a spam trap.





## 2. CHOOSE AN ACTUAL PERSON AS THE SENDER

The name you include in the “From” field of your email can have a huge impact on overall open rates. HubSpot conducted a number of A/B tests on its emails, and found that sending emails from an actual person increases both the open and click-through rates. What has been proven to *reduce* click-through rates is using “donotreply.com” as the return address. Consider it a “worst” practice in most circumstances.



### 3 SENDER STRATEGIES:

1. **EXPERIMENT:** Test different “from” senders. Watch your open rates to determine if people prefer someone they hear from frequently, such as the relationship manager or sales rep, or if your company CEO nets more clicks.
2. **HEY, IT’S US:** You may find that your best email open rates actually come from a combination of a person’s name and company name, e.g., Sydney Graham, Marsden & Associates. If you are creating compelling content, people will frequently look forward to your regular email communications, and open your messages because it comes from your company – so fly the “Hey, it’s us!” flag for better open rates.
3. **BE PREPARED TO RESPOND:** Finally, whomever you choose to include as your sender, be conscious that people will expect an answer to any emailed replies, so create a dedicated email for those responses and assign someone to monitor it and respond.



## HAVE FUN:

Scoutmob uses a light-hearted approach to send emails. For their Shoppe, they send emails from [sweatervest@scoutmob.com](mailto:sweatervest@scoutmob.com).



Whether you choose to send emails from a person or try a more creative approach like Scoutmob, just make sure it is authentic to your brand.



### 3. COMPANY BRANDING

Email marketing templates should reinforce the overall company brand. You want the people opening your email to recognize who you are by visual and copy cues. While they don't need to be identical, the design elements in your emails should reflect your company's style.

#### 3 BRANDING STRATEGIES:

1. **COPY:** Be consistent with language and tone in copywriting.
2. **TEMPLATES:** Use email templates that have been designed to include company colors and logo
3. **DESIGN ELEMENTS:** Use caution with design elements. Too many big images can create issues with loading time.

**HOWDY  
JANE!**



**HEY,  
ITS US!**

## 4. PERSONALIZED SALUTATION & CONTENT

According to HubSpot's Science of Email research, including a person's first name in your email greeting improves click-through rates by 14%. Despite the impressive benefits of email personalization, a surprising 68% of marketers aren't utilizing personalized content in their email marketing. Website analytics give marketers the ability to monitor the interest prospects have in specific topics by tracking what pages they visit and what assets they click on. So it is not just about personalizing the salutation. It's about personalizing email content by sending targeted information that matches up with prospect interest.



## 5. LIST SEGMENTING

Marketing automation tools are the key that unlocks big data for marketers and allows them to segment prospects into lists. But these tools vary in the level of sophistication they provide so businesses should perform due diligence and decide which tool best meets their needs and budget.

Your list database most likely includes both customers and prospects – all of whom are at varying stages of their buying cycles. Segmentation is extremely effective in boosting email performance metrics. A HubSpot analysis finds that 39% of email marketers who practice list segmentation see better open rates, while 28% have reduced opt-out and unsubscribe rates.



## 8 KEY SEGMENTATION ELEMENTS:

1. **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:** Personal data such as geography, age, gender, job function, industry, seniority, etc. can all offer insight on what kind of email content will be most interesting to your target audience.
2. **PERSONAS:** The best marketing strategies are built around detailed buyer personas of customers and prospects. Use these targeted personas to design email content that appeals to specific challenges and concerns.
3. **PURCHASE HISTORY:** Purchase history can be used to target thank-you and cross-sell emails. In your secondary CTAs, recommend additional services or complementary products your customer might enjoy based on past purchases.





## 8 KEY SEGMENTATION ELEMENTS (CONT.):

4. **SALES CYCLE STAGE:** Set up separate lead nurturing tracks for those at the top, middle, and bottom of your sales funnel. By providing information linked to common questions your prospects face along their decision-making process, you will better push your leads down the funnel, and ultimately close sales.
5. **CONTENT ENGAGEMENT:** Look at your email analytics. Is there a specific segment that always downloads a certain kind of content?  
What can you infer about these content trends to improve email list performance? New marketing automation, email workflows, and triggered smart lists make collecting and segmenting your email database more efficient and automated.



## 8 KEY SEGMENTATION ELEMENTS (CONT.):

6. **DEVICE AND BROWSER COMPATIBILITY:** When thinking about segmentation, consider the wide range of devices and browsers used by prospects. Are your emails optimized for mobile? Half of all unique opens occurred on a mobile device based on a email benchmark study by Experian Marketing Services.
7. **IMAGES:** We are moving to a place where a majority of prospects can easily open emails with images, but not all prospects. It's still best practices to program text separately from images and to keep images simple and limited.
8. **VIDEOS:** When it comes videos, JavaScript is not always supported by email hosting companies. Limit your videos to animated Gifs which are something like a flip book of images and a "work around" that allows moving pictures. But even Gifs are not always supported by every platform but it is the most commonly used method amongst marketers.



## 6. VALUE PROPOSITION & CONTEXT



Email content should immediately address what your offer is, and why it's valuable. It should clearly explain what your value proposition is, what you are offering and what action you want your user to take.





## 6 VALUE PROPOSITION STRATEGIES:

1. **CLEARLY HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE PROPOSITION:** The value email recipients will get from downloading your ebook, purchasing your product, etc. This opening sentence lets the reader know the offer purpose, the cost, and how they can access the offer.
2. **INCORPORATE STATISTICS:** Use statistics to emphasize what problem the offer is solving.
3. **SIMPLIFY COPY AND VISUALS:** Multiple messages turn readers away. Choose one or two messages to explain your value proposition.
4. **LINKS:** Include multiple ways prospects can get your offer, since some prospects prefer clicking on hyperlinks rather than a download button.



## 6 VALUE PROPOSITION STRATEGIES:

5. **BULLET POINTS:** Use bullet points to break up the text and emphasize key takeaways.
6. **CONTEXT:** In addition to developing a compelling value proposition, email copy should provide context on why your reader has received this email. People have notoriously short memories when it comes to what links they've clicked or what pages they've visited. Acknowledging why they are receiving your email (i.e. they are a blog subscriber or previously downloaded an asset) reduces anxiety.



## 7. OBVIOUS CALL TO ACTION

Your email should have a single conversion goal, whether it is to download an offer, sign up for a webinar, or purchase a product. Calls-to-action are presented to prospects via a button, a link, or an image. This is the critical step that triggers an action to get the prospect into your permission based marketing, so make sure it is prominently displayed. Great design, strong word choice, and concise sentences will get you better click-through rates.



### 3 KEY CALL-TO-ACTION ELEMENTS:

1. **POSITION:** Place the CTA in the top third of the email layout – what we call “above the fold” and immediately after the value proposition.
2. **COPY:** As a general rule of thumb, a CTA should run between 90 and 150 characters. Tell the reader specifically what action they must take to receive the offer and create a sense of urgency using words such as “now”, “today”, etc. Be sure to tie the CTA to the offer itself (e.g. for a live webinar, say “Register for the Webinar Now” or “Reserve Your Seat Today.”)
3. **DESIGN:** Make sure the button is visually distinct from the rest of the email template. Your CTA should be the largest button on a given page. Use bright colors to make your button stand out from your copy. And be sure to incorporate blank space around your content and button so that your CTA stands out.





## 8. CHOOSE RELEVANT IMAGES



Visual cues are great tools to engage your prospects. HubSpot Science of Email Marketing research reveals that 65% of people prefer emails with mostly images rather than text.

An interesting bit of brain research may provide the clue to why visuals are so powerful: 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and visuals are processed 60,000X faster in the brain than text according to 3M Corporation and Zabisco.



## 9. SOCIAL SHARING BUTTONS/LINKS

Social sharing buttons and links are great tools for expanding email marketing reach. They should be part of a larger strategy you create that outlines what actions you are looking for from prospects. Make it easy for your list to share your offers with their own networks by using clearly identified buttons that match up to the social channels where your prospects engage.

It's also a smart tactic to encourage your email subscribers to follow you on Twitter, "like" your Facebook page, subscribe to your YouTube channel, or follow your company updates on LinkedIn.



## 10. SECONDARY CALL-TO-ACTION

The key to a secondary call-to-action is to make sure it compliments, but doesn't compete with, the primary objective of your email. If you clutter the page with too many CTAs, you will confuse your reader, and they will likely become frustrated and stop reading. But adding a smaller secondary CTA can boost engagement by capturing prospects that the primary CTA has not captured or provide an additional offer that coincides with the primary CTA.



## 11. LINK TO PRIVACY POLICY



It's important to remember that many people you are sending emails to may not be comfortable filling in private information on an anonymous email page.

Even a savvy online audience may have concerns about privacy as many have received spam emails or other unsolicited marketing at one point or another. Give email subscribers peace of mind and a sense of security by including a link to your company's privacy policy. In the privacy policy, tell subscribers exactly what you will do with their email address plus any other precautions you take that you think will help alleviate privacy concerns.



## 12. UNSUBSCRIBE LINK

You **MUST** add an unsubscribe link to the bottom of every email marketing message. Sending an email without an unsubscribe link violates CAN-SPAM regulations, can significantly damage your email sender credibility, and can potentially leave your company open to costly fees or litigation.

In addition to being a legal requirement, adding an unsubscribe link is a smart email practice. You only want to send emails to people who actually want to hear from you. Don't try to trick people into staying on your list – make your unsubscribe link clearly visible and offer a simple unsubscribing process.



## CONCLUSION

Consumers remain committed to their email inboxes. In fact, 77% of readers prefer being marketed to via email than any other channel according to a study by ExactTarget. Your email list is your most engaged audience – they have opted into your lead generation and agreed to let you market to them. Treat your lists like the valuable resource they are by optimizing all parts of the email process. The reward will be a highly effective email marketing program that nurtures prospects into sales.

### NEXT STEPS



DOWNLOAD OUR  
MARKETING GUIDE:

