

Chapter 4 - Constructing an Effective Marketing Email

B5 C4 - 1

483

Most imp. step in executing email marketing strategy
= deciding how to design & lay-out your email content
Entails choosing a format (newsletter, event invite)
that matches your message
& placing content in visually appealing arrangement
Email design = imp. cuz viewers scan & read
Viewer needs to pay attention long enough
to grasp your message or
to take action

This chapter shows

how to organize & design email content so audience
can easily scan & understand message. Also

how to brand emails to enhance bus. image & identity

Designing emails to enhance scannability & identity
requires HTML. If not a programmer,

check ESP's email templates. Then,

customize format with own layout & design elements

I. Creating From and Subject Lines that Get Noticed

= begins with placing familiar & motivating info in
header = portion of email that contains

484

From line

From address

Subject line

Messages & code inserted by email programs

Email programs display header info so users can

sort &

prioritize } emails & decide whether to view & } each
open

(484)

When used appropriately header helps audience to identify you as a trustworthy sender and to determine whether email = worth merited attention. You can't control all the header info but can control

1. From line - line of text that tells recipient whom the email is from

485

2. From address - email address assoc. with sender
some programs display both #1+2. some either 1 or 2

3. Email server's From address = IP address

= unique # that identifies server you use to send emails
Most ISPs use this to verify sender = legit. commercial sender or whether = reported as sending unsolicited mail

A. Filling out the From line

altering the From line ensures that most E. programs display enough info for audience to identify you & trust you as source of your emails

changing From line = matter of typing sender info into email applications account options

and - ISPs allow you to create unique header info for each specific email campaign

Ask yourself how your audience = most likely to recognize you & then craft From line to include that info

Include the following info so emails = familiar to audience

1. Your name - if you're the only employee or if audience = most likely to identify with you personally
2. The name of your business - if audience knows bus. but not you personally. spell out initials if nec.

3. Your name and your business name - if you're a personal representative of large, well-known franchise
Ex. Steve - Sunset Travel
4. Representative name - if you have multiple representatives whom your customers & prospects know by name - divide lists by representative & use most familiar representative's name for each email list
5. Your location - use geography if part of large org or have multiple locations & audience is likely to recognize individual's names
Ex. Sunset Travel, Denver
6. Your Web site domain - if audience will recognize this better than your name or business name. If domain name uses initials, abbreviations or alternate spelling, may want full bus. name also
- 488 7. Your email address - you can create an email address that serves as your From line. Use one that identifies who you are and what you're sending
Ex. newsletter@yourname.com - if audience recognizes you
coupons@yourbusinessname.com - if "recognizes bus. name"
event invitation@repname. businessname.com - if audience recognizes representative & bus. name
announcement@yourdomain.com - if audience recognizes your domain name

Remember CAN-SPAM laws prohibit you from misrepresenting
Send from a verified email address
Make sure From line accurately represents you

B. Writing a subject line

- gives audience a hint of content in email
- Most effective ones prompt audience to open email to look for specific info

Most email programs only display first 30-50 characters
 State the immed. benefit of opening the email
 to create a sense of urgency and
 tell audience that email is imp.

489 Save the info highlighting benefits of p/s for body
 Creating a sense of urgency only if used infrequently
 + inform audience of the subject

Ex. What you need to know now about Denver RE
 Flower sale - early entry information
 Last chance to register vs. seminar invitation
 Tomorrow's tips for remodeling your kitchen today

490 Test your subject line by sending
 different subject line to a small sample

Ex. for 1000 subscribers, send one line to 100 and
 another to a second 100. Wait a day or two.
 Send other 800 to subject line with best response

Look at your junk folder to see what spammers do
 so you don't inadvertently use same techniques!

Avoid these mistakes

1. Excessive punctuation (!!! or ??)
2. Symbols (\$, #)
3. Words with capital letters
4. Your recipient's first name in subject line

5. Using RE, unless email is a response to another
6. A blank subject line
7. Vague subject lines that trick reader into opening
 - a. Hey you
 - b. Check this out
 - c. RE:
 - d. Personal info
 - e. Hi!

491

CAN-SPAM prohibits subject lines that = likely to mislead a recipient acting reasonably under the circumstances about a material fact regarding contents or subject matter.

II. Branding Your Emails to Enhance Your Image

Branding = use of graphic design elements to give business a consistent & unique identity while forming a mental image of your business' personality

Ex. graphics & logos unique to your business
 text & fonts that differentiate your bus.
 colors used consistently to give bus. an identity

Keep email branding consistent over time and use following sections to match your identity & the expectations of your audience

Process requires using HTML: Most ESPs allow you to customize your email templates

If not using ESP, a web designer can create a custom look.

A. Matching your emails to your brand

All your bus. communication should contain a ^{consistent} branding
 Gives audience confidence
 Makes business more memorable

Design emails to match brand in following ways

492

1. Include your logo in your emails - position in upper left or top center
2. Use colors from your logo in emails - for borders, backgrounds, fonts. Create a palette of colors
Ex. www.EmailTrainer.com

493

3. Use colors from your Website in emails
4. Match Web site offers with your email offers
5. Match your print communications to emails if sending to follow up or reinforce email message
6. Use fonts that match your brand in emails.
Use same fonts for same visual anchors.
use only 2-3 diff. fonts
7. Make sure emails reflect your bus. personality
Consider using a copywriter to maintain your image
Tell him what tone should be used

Serious or humorous

Professional or casual

Formal or friendly

Exclusive or universal

Urgent or customary

Insistent or politely persuasive

B. Maintaining brand consistency with multiple E. formats

Each format must match brand for audience recognition.

But should differ enough so audience can tell the appropriate amt. of urgency in each

Ex. lengthy newsletter format - can read it later
event invitation - read it now

494 Way to brand multiple email formats

1. Use same top-bar image with slightly diff. color for each format

2. Change colors in logo slightly

495 3. Use slightly diff. colors for backgrounds + borders

4. Use graphical text to create unique title for each format

Aside - Making the difference just noticeable

494 Ex. Coca-Cola bottles from 1950s to today - big difference
But, company keeps researching to keep up with consumer preferences

Still, can't change branding on bottles too rapidly
Marketing experts use concept known as ^{brands} the just-noticeable difference to change ^{over time}
Change just enough to be noticeable
but not enough to be unrecognizable

When Web site gets a 'face lift' change email's branding elements slowly over time so audience still recognizes them as change takes place

III. The ABC's of E-Mail Layout

495 Consumers focus attention to email content by using layout as a guide for their eyes

Email heat map shows marketing experts which areas of email = likely to draw most interest
= image generated by special device that tracks eye movements when someone looks at email

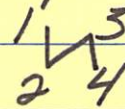
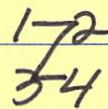
Ex. www.eyetools.com

Uses diff. colors + shading to show which part of email gets the most attention

Visualize your content positioning by mentally dividing each of email templates into quadrants

Then position your visual anchors + related content acc. to order in which consumers tend to focus their attention in each quadrant

496 Most consumers begin reading in upper left + continue reading either down or across, depending on the strength of the visual anchors



Because upper L gets most attention, display your most imp. content in this quadrant

1. Display your brand-name, logo, other identifying content so audience can easily recognize source

2. Begin email with a main headline

497 3. Include email's main call to action

- = statement that asks audience to do something
- = inc. or references main valuable offers
- = prompts audience where to look if main content resides elsewhere

4. Place the strongest visual anchors - images, headlines, icons, bullets, + graphics

= can reinforce audience's perception of your most imp. content. Ex. anchor arrow

5. Limit the size of images - ^{small enough so it} allows 1st lines of text

6. Show audience where to look next - use navigation links + text

498

Aside - Using columns to organize your content
 Unless you organize visual anchors + related content
 into patterns, your audience + effectively prioritizing
 additional content th at anchors try to emphasize
 Using columns allows audience to locate diff.
 groups of content as they scan
 Most ESPs provide templates with lots of column-based layouts

IV. Including Images in Your Emails

Images can enhance the look + feel of emails
 + help to reinforce messages contained in body
 = strong visual anchors that help communicate main message
 + divide text in to more easily-scanned sections
 Proper positioning makes email appear moving + easy to read
 Arbitrarily placed images = cumbersome to scan
 + can cause email to appear cluttered
 Requires more than an eye for design
 Can cause deliverability issues
 + make email slow to download
 so - make sure images = ready to include!

A. Choosing a file format for your images

Images = graphic files that graphics programs
 can read + display on a computer screen
 Make sure they're formatted for use in email

499

1. Use file format that email browsers can read

File Format = type of compression used to limit
 amt. of data required to store image on computer
 Compression changes amt. of space image takes up ^{when} stored
 + causes graphics to display differently

(499)

- a. JPEG - JPEG - Jt. Pictures Expert Group - standard for internet & email + works well for most images
- b. GIF - Graphic Interchange Format - best for images with only a few colors
- c. PNG - Portable Network Graphics - similar to GIF but displays colors more effectively

If image is in 1 of these 3 formats use graphic design application or image editor to save it as a JPEG

2. Check your file size

File size of image refers to amt. of data image contains measured in kilobytes. Should be $\leq 50K$.

- a. Reduce the dimensions of image
- b. Reduce image resolution to 72 dpi

Image resolution (dots or pixels per inch)

Refers to how many dots or pixels are in each inch. The more dots, the more detail. However, more dots require more data so download & display more slowly.

72 dpi is good for computer display but fuzzy for printing. Link image to pdf version of 300 dpi if images are to be printed.

B. Don't embed: Referencing your images

Never embed images as a file or attached to email. Causes higher % to land in junk folders!

Instead, use image references that point to images stored in public folder on web server.

Image reference = line of HTML that tells computer

500

to display an image that's located in a folder
on a remote server

imagename.jpg

Ex: `background</sup> images
Use folder address on server or find reference in HTML

V. Including Text in Your Emails

(501)

Text = mandatory in email marketing messages

Applying HTML design elements is a balance

Too little - email appears difficult to read

Too many - email more difficult to understand - ^{dis- >}tracting

Used correctly, diff. fonts & text styles create moods
& change tone of words you use

1) Headlines can help entice audience to
to read longer sections of text or
take action on your email content

2) Paragraphs of text gives audience imp. info
helps them form opinions &
gives them compelling reasons to purchase p/s

502

3) Links in emails let audience click keywords
to take action on content of email
without having to use another medium

Choose fitting text elements to enrich email's meaning
as well as ensure your text communicates
main idea of email quickly & effectively

To be effective apply deliberate use of fonts & styles

Fonts = graphical representations of letters in alphabet

1. Make words more legible Useful for:

2. Give words more emphasis

3. Suggest moods & emotions to reinforce words

4. Brand emails & make them look professional

Can also alter fonts by applying diff. style elements

Need to apply fonts & styles using HTML

Ex. `<Font color=" " Face=" " size="5" style=" " >Text </Font>`

Good rule of thumb - make headlines 2 to 4 pt. larger
Most ESPs allow you to apply style + specify fonts by
using font tools in a special user interface

503 Any font specified must be on user's computer

Use fonts that are common to majority of computers
Can use graphics design software to create image of text
but use sparingly - takes longer to download
+ won't display unless recipient enables images

Including too many diff. fonts → disorderly + cluttered
Use only 2-3 fonts: 1 for all headlines,
+ another for body text

504 Aside - Making your emails accessible

Emails may need to be written with accessibility
or in separate versions to be "readable" by all

1. Provide a link to a text only version at beginning
with summary of content. Describe any graphic content
2. Use image descriptions - alt text - esp. if contains text
3. Use easy to read font + point sizes + absolute!
4. Use sufficient contrast bet. text and background colors
5. Provide a link to text-only transcript of any audio
6. Make sure forms to be filled in are tabbed in logical order
Minimizing # of keystrokes nec. to complete form
7. Keep email designs short, concise, easy to scan

See: www.w3.org/WAI for accessibility requirements

VI. Including Links in Your Emails

505

Make it easy for your audience to take action!

Placing links in body of email gives easy ways to

- 1) View specific pages on Web site
- 2) Download files + additional info
- 3) Order your p/s by clicking thru from your email to an online shopping cart
- 4) Jump to specific sections of email by clicking instead of scrolling

Tip - email links can be tracked back to clicker when you use an ESP. See Chapter 6

A. Using text links

506

= clickable words or phrases that result in certain action when clicked. Use HTML to tell computer what to do when someone clicks link

Ex. `<a href="http://www.yourwebsite.com">Link Text </a>`

Most ESPs allow you to add a link w/o typing HTML code by highlighting the text + then typing address of link.

Most email programs + ESPs allow you to enter a URL into a user interface, + program adds HTML

To link to a landing page on your Website:

1. Open browser + navigate to pg. where link should point
2. Highlight all of text in browser's address bar
3. Copy text

507

4. Paste URL into email program's link-creation ^{user} interface

One of most imp. thing about text links = choosing the appropriate words to name the link

(507)

1. Name your links intuitively - "what you click = what you get"
 - a. If link downloads file, inc. file type in (). ex. MoreInfoonProduct (PDF)
 - b. If link takes reader to Website where he might have to search or scroll to view info: include directions in your link
ex. Details on blog (scroll to article 5)
 - c. If link requires additional clicks or action after initial click - name link describing 1st step of process
Ex. Read 3 steps to donating your car
 - d. If linking to an email address - inc. E address in link w/ opens resident email program, and users in Web based email program & use it
Ex. Email us at company@yourdomain.com

508

2. Name links using text in your articles & headlines
Ex. Renew your chapter membership and Read more
3. Name links to give info about the clicker
Since email links = trackable back to clicker, makes click reports more meaningful
Ex. Are your kids under 12? Read about best places to golf
4. Name links by describing immediate benefits of clicking
Give audience a good reason to click → 1 clicks!
Ex. Shop on our Website and receive an additional 10% off and free shipping

509

Aside: Text only, please - for portable devices, filters, firewalls
Use ESP that allows subscribers to choose format
Some allow you to create & edit text-only versions

B. Adding Making your images into links
 509 Consumers like to click images, so making them clickable gives audience more opportunities to engage in your info
 Requires using an image tag `<img>` combined with a URL link tag `<a href>` in HTML

Ex. `

 `

If not familiar with coding, use ESP with user interface for creating links

510 Tips for making image links more effective

1. Make image links intuitive - if + make destination clear use text link or tell audience what happens when click it
2. Link logo to your website - most people expect it!
 Easy way to access your homepage info
3. Link single images to more or larger images. Make sure content related to images states or implies it links to more

C. adding navigation links

= HTML links that allow audience to jump to visual anchors within body of email

If emails have headlines or content that audience needs to scroll to for viewing inc. nav. links to

1) Highlight content audience + see immediately

2) Allow audience to access info by clicking vs. scrolling

You can also include links to your website to allow your audience to jump from email to specific content on the website

(510)

Navigation links are actually HTML anchor tags
Anchor Links = HTML tags that reference a specific portion of content within an HTML document + automatically scroll the browser to top of ^{referenced} content
 To create an anchor link - create a name for anchor using an anchor tag + place anchor in website code at beginning of content you want to link to
 Then add link to email text that points to anchor
 Using HTML or Web site editor, follow these basic steps

1. Use anchor tag to place your anchor + include name attribute to identify anchor's name
 Use 1st word of headline or section of content for name so you can remember how to name your anchor link!

511

- a. To set the anchor in text, include an `<a>` anchor tag with a name attribute within `<p>` tags

Ex `<p><a name="anchorname">Headline/Title </p>`

- b. To name an image as an anchor include name attribute within the image tag

``

2. Create anchor link by inserting `<a>` anchor tag in HTML email text with href attribute pointing to anchor name specified in step 1, preceded by # character

- a. To create a TOC link that scrolls to anchor tag:

`<a href="#anchorname">TOC link text </a>`

- b. To create navigation link that scrolls to anchor link on web

`<a href="http://www.yourwebsite.com/page.html#anchorname">navigation link text </a>`

- D. Including a table of contents in your e-mails
 (511) Email TOC - special group of navigation links that lists headlines, each linked to a diff. section of content within email.
- TOCs = nec. when email has lots of content that audience has to scroll to view. If need it - are you sending too much info?
- If so, cutting down content and frequency may be a better solution to making emails easier to scan.
- 512 If can't v content, using a TOC = great way to summarizing your content and allow audience to find & access content that ^{most} interests them.
1. Include a heading above TOC
 Ex. Quick Links or Find it Fast
 2. Keep link headlines short
 Use first few words of article headlines or Repeat short headlines as main headlines & then use subheadings in articles to ^{main headlines} expansion
 - 513 3. Make your link headlines clear -
 Must clearly communicate what content readers will see
 Clever links to generate curiosity = hard to understand
 May cause disappointment if linked message $\neq$ meet clicker's expectations
 4. Keep TOC above the scroll line - pt at bottom of audience's screen where content $\neq$ visible w/ scrolling
 Whole pt. of TOC = avoid scrolling! If TOC = beyond the preview pane, email has too much content

- R. Linking to files in your email
- (513) Attaching files = reserved for personal emails to small # of people at a time
- Most email programs have security settings that send email with attached files → junk folder if program suspects it's a commercial email
- But you can still use files by linking to them within content
- To link to a downloadable file (if accessible on web)
- 1) Open Web browser & navigate to page that contains link to your file
 - 2) Copy the link
 - 3) Paste shortcut into email program's link-creation user interface

If file is already on your website:

- 1) Upload file to a public folder on your server
- 2) Type location of file in to email program's link creation user interface

ex: http://www.yourdomain.com/public/site/public_files/file.pdf

1. Linking to video files

Video - powerful selling tool but deliverability = a challenge if try to send it all

Instead - insert screenshot image of video and include a link to play the video on your website

If video has sound, warn people before they click it

2. Linking to sound files

Sound files allow audience to multitask should be hosted on website & linked to

515

soothing music or other mood elements can distract from more imp. clicks, so be sure sound helps you communicate your message

If message itself = your sound file, link user to your Web site so user can surf your valuable info while listening to your message. See Book VI, C 7

3. Linking to document files

PDFs (Portable Document Format) files = most popular

Don't attach to your marketing emails!

Link to their location on your Website

Be sure to tell users that click → download

If short summarized article in your newsletter ends with link to entire article, include (PDF) or an icon that indicates doc. will download

If info is long + content sought + on pg, show where
Ex. Read entire article (PDF page 3)