

Fifteen Quick Tips to Help Marketing Emails Stand Out

Who doesn't have a cluttered email inbox these days? Walk away from your computer for a few hours for a meeting, miss a day of work or take a vacation and the unread messages pile up.

If it's happening to you it's also happening to the customers and prospects you're trying to reach through marketing emails. They're busy, too. They also have crowded email inboxes. So when your email arrives, how can you make it stand out and get noticed in a long list of unread messages?

Follow these quick tips to motivate customers and prospects to open, read and act upon your marketing emails.

"From" Line

The "From" line, along with the "Subject" line, are the two most important elements that determine whether recipients open your email. Do recipients value or even recognize who the email is from? Is it about something that is important and urgent to them?

1. Use your company name or branding (such as title of your e-newsletter) in the "From" line to make your email immediately recognizable to customers and prospects who have opted into your email communications.
2. Avoid generic email addresses in the "From" line (such as info@company.com) or a person's name — unless you're sure that name will be recognized by recipients.

"Subject" Line

3. Look to the news to learn how to write compelling subject lines. Notice they are action oriented as well as informative, and include subjects and verbs.
4. Avoid bland or generic subject lines. Your goal is to stand out in the inbox.
5. Personalize subject lines. If you have the capability to do so, you may consider including the recipient's name in the subject line (David, our new product catalog is now online).

Preview Pane

More and more email programs have a preview pane feature, and more users are taking advantage of it to check out the top few inches of an email before deciding whether to open it or not.

6. Consider the top left of your email the most important area. It's what recipients who use the preview pane will check out first. Use it for teaser copy or to put the most compelling content you have.
7. Reduce the size of your graphic masthead or eliminate graphics from the top of the email to support users who block images from showing in HTML emails.
8. Replace graphics with HTML colors.

HTML

Many marketers send HTML emails because they offer graphic branding and layout advantages. Open and click-through rates also can be tracked.

9. Keep HTML code as simple as possible. The more bells and whistles you put in, the more likely your email will get blocked or not display properly for the recipient. No scripts, no style sheets, no animations.
10. Render your emails for mobile devices. Reading email on mobile devices is now the norm. By making your email communications mobile-friendly, you make it simple for your recipients to review your communication on any device.

Email Body

11. Personalize the top. Start off with “Dear David” or “Hello David.”
12. Eliminate generic links. Strike out the “click here” links and replace with “download the white paper.”
13. Restate your offer in multiple ways and in several places. If you’re inviting recipients to a Webinar, use a button that links to the registration form (don’t forget the ALT tag on the image). Maybe the button says “Register for Webinar.” Put in a text link as well. Maybe it says, “Sign up before registration closes tomorrow.” Place your offer near the top of the email as well as further down.
14. Load up on links to your Web site. Most marketing emails try to drive recipients back to your Web site. Give them lots of reasons to go there by providing links to different types of valuable content.

That’s fourteen tips. What’s number fifteen? It actually should be number one, because it’s the most important one of all:

15. Be relevant. The number-one way to stand out is to send emails that contain relevant, useful content to your prospects and customers, such as white papers, articles, how-to’s or special offers. If you understand your audience’s information needs and work to meet or exceed them, prospects and customers will look forward to getting your emails and will hunt them down in their inbox clutter.