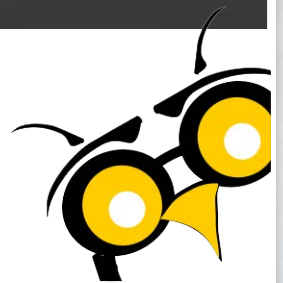




# Designing a Marketing Email That Works

Tips for designing marketing emails that get opened and help your business grow.



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BEST PRACTICES GUIDE | SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



First impressions matter.

And when someone opens your marketing email for the first time, what they see is going to determine what they do next.

Chances are you'll want them to read your email and take a next step. Maybe you want them to visit your website, register for an event, or buy something.

This is where a beautiful, professional-looking email designed to drive action is crucial and that's why we made a guide dedicated to helping you make the right impression with every email you send.

We'll take you through the reasons email subscribers delete emails and how you can encourage people to take those next steps.

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# The Reasons Readers Trash Your Emails

Let's start off with a heartbreakingly obvious fact: people make snap judgements about whether or not to read your emails based on a quick glance.

That's how everyone reads emails these days. We choose an email message, give it a two-second glance, then decide if it's worth our time.

If it is, we keep it and read it. If not, we hit the delete key and send the email to the trash.

How can you keep your email out of the trash? The secret is good design. In those first two seconds, email design is all your reader sees.

## 1. Forgetting to say hello

Your emails should feature an instantly-recognizable, consistent header image. Over time, your header image will be associated with the high-quality information you share.

Ideally, this email header should relate to the business or product your reader signed up to learn more about. So if you're a dog groomer and you have a special email newsletter just for poodle owners, your header should identify the information you'll share and look visually related to your overall dog groomer brand.

## 2. Hard-to-read fonts

Your email newsletter's main goal is to communicate, but what if the words are hard to read?

Be sure to avoid these two errors:

### Using fonts that are too small.

This is especially important if some of your readers are older, and may have eyesight problems. And with so many emails being viewed on smartphones, it makes sense to increase font sizes.

### Using too many fonts.

Combining too many different fonts makes your email look messy.

Pare it down to no more than two fonts, and only use the italic and bold styles to add variety.



### 3. Color catastrophes

For your email to look professional and inviting, you have to master color.

The biggest color mistakes are choosing ones that are overly bright or florescent.

Don't use too many colors, either. Use a color palette with two dominant colors and tone down the rest.

Finally, don't use light text on a dark ground.

The most readable combination is dark text on a light ground.

### 4. Muddled information

When a reader glances at your email, they should know right away which information is the most important, what they should look at next, and what's the least important.

Make this obvious by using a large, bold headlines for newsletter's main topics.

### 5. Awful images

There's nothing that says "an amateur designed this email" like cheap-o clip art.

### 6. No base to stand on

Featuring your contact information, your company mission, and your social media profiles in a consistent footer area in every email makes you look professional.

### 7. Frequent makeovers

Once you've got an email looking good, resist the urge to keep changing it. Choose a look and stick to it for a while so people recognize who the email is coming from.

### Make your emails 'keepers'

Use these tips to create a recognizable brand experience with every message you send. It's the best way to ensure that the great information you share doesn't end up in the virtual trash heap.



# Email Design in Action

So, what does all of this look like in action?

To find out, we interviewed Mari Irizarry, the Director of Communication for ReelWorks, a nonprofit dedicated to offering teen filmmakers the resources they need to turn their dreams into a reality.

## 1. Email newsletters aren't the same as regular newsletters

When ReelWorks started sending email newsletters, the content was very similar to regular, direct mail newsletters.

"We thought emails had to mimic newsletters," Mari says. "But we decided it's more about grabbing attention, not creating a big newsletter with different links and pages.

## 2. Things need to be focused

Emails from ReelWorks slowly evolved into focused, concise newsletters.

"We found out that the longer the email was, the less likely it was for people to actually get the information in it," Mari explains. "If we send out emails about a specific topic, then it can reach the right people a lot better."

## 3. Make things visual

Mari started using email newsletters as a way to showcase ReelWorks' projects.

"Putting up a nice image really helps grab attention," she says.

Mari was able to take the design tips she had learned over the years and create the Reel Works newsletter that goes out today.

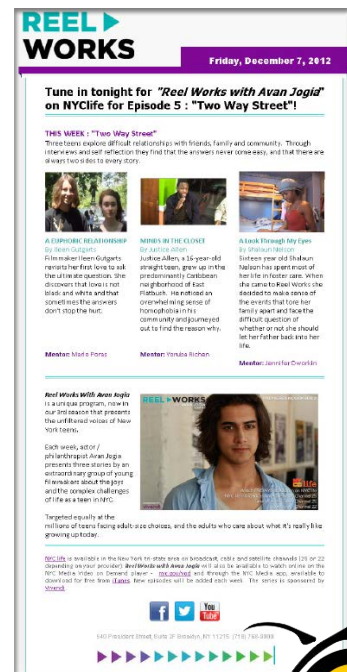
### 2008



### 2009



### 2013



# 5 Simple Tips for Mobile-Friendly Emails

Smartphone usage is sky-rocketing, and with it, so is the number of people that are reading email on a mobile device.

According to Litmus, 43% of email is now opened on a mobile device. That number is up 138% from 2010, and I think it's a pretty safe bet that it's going to continue to grow.

This means that you need to be creating emails that are mobile friendly. A mobile-friendly email is an email that displays optimally between a desktop/laptop and a mobile device, ensuring that it will look great regardless of where your customers and prospects read it.

## 1. Be as concise as possible in both design and content

Having a clear and concise message should be a staple of any email, but it's even more important when designing for mobile. Screen real estate is very valuable on mobile (this is going to be a common theme), so keep the design very clean and simple and focus on the essentials.

## 2. Use a single column template

Because of the limited real estate you get with a mobile device, it's generally better to use simple layouts. Often times with multi-column layouts (2 columns and more) your readers will have to zoom or scroll on their smartphone to see everything. Using a single column template will make your content much more flexible for all screen sizes.

## 3. Use a single, clear call to action

Make sure to include a clear call to action, and put it near the top of your email. Tell your readers what you want them to do, and make it really easy for them to do so. Whatever the action you want them to take, just make sure it's loud and clear. And remember—with mobile, the finger is the new mouse, so make sure it's really easy to click.

## 4. Avoid tiny fonts

Make sure your text can be read easily. Use a minimum of size 11pt font for body text and 22pt for headlines. We also recommend using a strong

contrast of colors, like dark text on a light background. Many people turn down the brightness level on the mobile device to help conserve battery—and they are often reading on the go outside in the sunlight—so a strong contrast of colors will be easier to read.

## 5. Take it easy on images

Only use the images that are essential to your email. Here's why: Apple's iOS automatically enables images to display by default, but many other mobile device platforms—like Android—turn images off by default. If your email has a bunch of images in it, they might just look like chunks of white space. Because of this, we always recommend including image descriptions (also known as alt text) to let people know what the image is even when it's not being displayed.

A good tip is to always preview your email and make sure it still looks great, even if none of the images are displayed.



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