

## USCD Extension – Email Marketing

### 11 Tips to Make Your Email Messages Meaningful and Relevant

1. Use your company or brand name in the "from" line, which tells recipients who sent the email.
2. Write a brief (six words or less is ideal) subject line that accurately represents the message's major content. Longer subject lines are OK, just make sure each word is critical and the most important are in the first 50 characters – those that follow will get cut off in many email clients. Include the email's title, if it has one (such as a newsletter title). If you can't, then include your company, division or brand name in the "from" line. List it first here.
3. Keep HTML-format messages as simple as possible. The more gizmos you pack into an HTML message -- superfluous images, graphics, sound or video -- the more likely something won't work on your recipients' computers. Store rich-media content on the Web; limit image size and use colors that reflect your logo.
4. In HTML messages, use alt tags and support text around images so that readers whose email clients block images by default will still get the gist of your message. Many email clients will also block alt tags, so good use of text is key.
5. If you offer a text version (and you should), make sure the content includes links to all of your core functions and tasks. Don't force readers to click to the Web version of your newsletter to receive its benefits or manage their subscriptions.
6. Load up on relevant links. If your goal is to funnel readers to your Web site, give them many access points, such as two or three order buttons sprinkled around a promo message instead of just one, or links to related information on your site. You've probably got a wealth of info at your site; make it easy for your readers to find it.
7. Lose the generic action button. Instead of "click here," use descriptive terms such as "Order now!" or "subscribe me!" or "Get white paper here." Be explicit about the actions you want users to take.
8. Test each email message before you send it, in different browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, etc.), email clients (Outlook, Lotus Notes, Gmail, Yahoo!) and platforms (Macintosh and PC). Click each link; watch out for oddities and inconsistencies in the way images load (or don't load) and in text fonts and widths.
9. Adhere to your users' preferences for frequency, format and content. If you keep sending promo

offers to people who signed up just for the newsletter, you'll lose them.

10. However, you can promote your other publications in your messages, as long as those promos don't get in the way of the main content. For example, add a brief product offer at the end or side of a newsletter or announcement message, or list headlines from relevant news stories in a promotional-offer message. This way, you can promote other products and services without committing readers to extra emails. 80/20 Rule Applies.
11. Help readers manage your information. Include a forward-to-a-friend link in messages where appropriate and a print option that links to a printer-friendly version of an HTML message. Label those functions, either with icons or brief text.

Source: EmailLabs.com

## **More Tips**

1. **Make It Personal:** Write in the first person, use some warmth or humor. Make the email fun to read. People connect with people easier than they connect with brands.
2. **CSS/Style Sheets** – Don't use them.
3. **HTML Emails** should be between 500 and 600 pixels in width.
4. **Personalize your subject lines.**
5. **Watch out for spam terms** such as "free", "cards accepted", "order today", etc. These go straight to the junk box.
6. **Have strong landing pages**, and avoid the home page if possible.
7. **More links = Better:** Emails with 25 or more links had an open rate of 12 percent higher than those containing fewer than 25 links, and a click-through rate of 29 percent higher than for emails with fewer than 25 links. Source: EmailLabs.com
8. **More on Subject Lines:** The key finding: subject lines shorter than 50 characters in length led to increased open and click-through rates. Source: EmailLabs.com
9. **Even MORE on Subject Lines:** Test at least 4 different subject lines to determine what works the best for your blast.
10. **Brag about your Privacy Policy.**
11. **The best days to email** are Tuesday and Wednesday.



## Indispensable Tools

- Preamailer: <http://code.dunae.ca/premailer.web/>
- Campaign Monitor: <http://www.campaignmonitor.com/>
- Email Software: Constant Contact, Blue Hornet, MJD Interactive Agency's Email Marketing Software ;-)