

Designing the Perfect Email

How to design marketing emails that look great and deliver real results



First impressions matter. And when someone opens your email, what they see is going to determine what they do next.

If you're using an email marketing service like Constant Contact to do your email marketing, you're in luck.

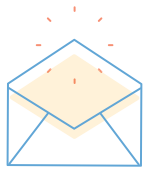
Unlike personal email accounts (like Gmail, Yahoo, or AOL) email marketing services give you tools to create emails that look great in any inbox — whether someone is reading on a desktop, laptop, or mobile device.

Once you get familiar with how these tools work, you can make decisions about how to design your emails. What colors or fonts will you use? How will you incorporate your brand? How can you organize your layout to make it easy for people to read?

This guide will give you the advice you need to create emails that make you look great and deliver real results.

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Designing the Perfect Email: Get Your Email Opened

Designing the perfect email isn't just about finding the right images and colors for your message. Design begins in the inbox — before someone even clicks to open. In this section, we'll take a look at a few best practices to help your emails stand out and get opened.

1. Choose a recognizable 'from name'

The number one reason people open email is because they recognize who it's from. Be sure to use a name your subscriber is going to recognize. This could be your business name, the name of a person the email is from, or a combination of both. Example: Dave from Constant Contact. [Find out how to make your emails more recognizable in the inbox.](#)

2. Use a branded 'from email address'

To look the most professional we recommend using an email address with your company domain such as @yourcompanyname.com. If you have no other choice than to use a free webmail domain (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, Comcast, etc.), we advise you to avoid using Yahoo and AOL due to the higher likelihood of delivery problems.

3. Invest in your subject line

Your subject line should catch the recipient's attention and give them a compelling reason to open. 50 characters is the sweet spot for subject lines, but emphasize the first 32 to account for mobile device cutoffs (32 characters for iPhone, 40 for Android). A good rule of thumb is 4-7 words.

Tip: Keep your email from looking like spam. Avoid using excessive capitalization (in other words, WRITING IN ALL CAPS) and repetitive punctuation (for example, excessive use of ..., !!!, and ???). [Find out how to write subject lines that get your email opened.](#)

4. Utilize preheader text

The preheader is the line of text that appears beneath the subject line in the mobile inbox. Most mobile inboxes display 75-100 characters, but focus on the first 5-8 words to catch the reader's attention and entice them to open.

[Find out how to use a preheader to get your email opened.](#)



Designing the Perfect Email: Get Your Email Read

After someone clicks to open your email, there are a number of factors that will determine whether or not they decide to read it.

According to a 2014 Constant Contact survey, 75 percent of people will delete emails that don't look good on a mobile device. If you're not designing emails to work on any device, you could be putting your business at a disadvantage. Here are a few important rules to follow to design emails that actually get read.

1. Choose the right template

With the majority of emails opened on a mobile device, it's important to use templates that are either mobile responsive (which means the email adapts based on the size of the screen it's being displayed on) or a single-column template that offers a mobile-friendly experience. Emails sent through Constant Contact provide a mobile-responsive layout for the people receiving your emails. [Find out how to choose the perfect email template.](#)

2. Brand your email

Branding your emails will help your business stand out in a crowded inbox. Every email should include your logo at the top of your message — that way if someone clicks to preview your email, they'll recognize it's coming from you. Also be sure to select colors that match or complement the colors in your logo. [Find out how to effectively brand your email.](#)

3. Control your fonts

Keep your design looking professional. Avoid using too many fonts. More than four can make your design look busy. A good rule of thumb is to use one font style for headlines and another for body copy. [Find out how to choose the right fonts for your email.](#)

4. Find the right balance of colors

Too many colors can make your email look disorganized and difficult to read. Other than black, restrict yourself to a max of four colors for fonts — a different color for headlines, body text, buttons, and links. For background colors, it's always best to use a lighter color background with a darker text. [Find out how to create winning color schemes for your email.](#)



Designing the Perfect Email: Lead Readers to Action

Constant Contact uses data from millions of emails that are sent from our service each day to better understand what works best for driving real email marketing results. Find out how you can use this information to create emails that not only get read but also lead people to take action.

1. Don't overdo it with images

A recent analysis of 2.1 million Constant Contact customer emails found that emails with 1-3 images see the highest click-through rate. Choose an eye-catching image that supports your message. [Find out how the number of images in your email can impact click-through rates.](#)

Tip: Always include an image description in case their email program disables images. The description can also entice readers to click on the link associated with the image.

2. Keep your email copy concise

People will quickly scan your email — especially when reading on a mobile device. Keep your email clear and concise to ensure your emails are easy-to-read and lead people to take action. On average, emails with 20 lines of text or less (or about 1,200 characters) see the highest click-through rates. [Find out how to keep your email copy clear and concise.](#)

3. Include one primary call to action

Your email should include one clear action for the reader to take. That primary call to action should be one of the first things people see when opening your email. Position your main link toward the top of your email so that it's visible without the reader having to scroll to read more. [Find out how to format your email for small screens and short attention spans.](#)

Tip: A recent analysis of Constant Contact customer emails found that adding more than 5-7 links (excluding links to social media bios) has a minimal impact on click-through rate. Emails with 1-3 links see the highest numbers of clicks per link.

4. Include relevant social links

Even if your email doesn't include a specific call to action, it's a best practice to include links to your other online presences (website, blog, social media) to make sure you reach your audience everywhere they are. [Find out how to add social media buttons to your next email.](#)



Designing the Perfect Email: Get Your Emails Delivered

In addition to making your emails look great, effective email design will also improve the chances of your emails making it to the inbox. Keep these best practices in mind for your next email.

1. Be careful of attachment sizes

Many email clients limit the size of the attachment your readers can receive. Stick to an attachment size of 10mb or below to avoid any delivery issues with your message.

2. Audit your body content

Avoid using words in your body content that might identify your email as spam. Avoid excessive and repetitive use of: ALL CAPS, 10 (or more) CAPS in a row, or 4 (or more) of the same punctuation mark in a row.

Tip: Be sure to use a balance of text and images, and not just a single image without any supporting text. This is a tactic that's commonly used by spammers and can get your message flagged as spam. [Find out why using a single-image email is a bad idea.](#)

3. Test your links

Make sure your readers get to where they're trying to go. Be sure to use the proper URL structure (for example, <http://yourwebpage.com>) and point to a valid webpage when including links in your emails. Constant Contact allows you test all links before you send.

4. Use the right 'reply to' email address

When someone replies to your email, the reply should reach a real person. Avoid using email addresses such as: no-reply@yourbusiness.com, bounce@yourbusiness.com, noreply@yourbusiness.com, or donotreply@yourbusiness.com.

5. Include a link to unsubscribe

Since email marketing is a permission-based vehicle, legally all messages must include a simple mechanism for subscribers to opt out. All email messages sent with Constant Contact include a link that allows people to unsubscribe easily.

Design the Perfect Email: A Checklist for Success

Use this checklist for your next email.

Single-column template: Choose a template that looks great on mobile.

Subject line: Use 50 characters or less, emphasize first 32-40 characters to account for mobile.

From name: Use a recognizable 'from name' and email address.

Preheader: Focus on the first 5-8 words to entice people to open.

Logo placement: Place logo at the top of your email.

Fonts: Use fewer than 4 fonts.

Fewer than 3 images: Don't overdo it. Use 1-3 images.

20 lines of text or less: Keep your copy concise with 20 lines of text or less.

Action above the scroll: Include a primary call to action for people to take.

No more than 3-5 links: Position your most important links at the top of your email.

Use social media buttons: Make it easy to connect with you on social media.

Subject: Add yoga to your summer to-do list.

Preheader: Sign up for our July classes online today.

From: Half Moon Yoga (yoga@halfmoonyoga.com)



Summer yoga class schedules

Summer is only a few weeks away! Check out our new class schedule and relax this summer with the yoga class that's right for you.

Sign Up for Summer Classes Today

Yoga for Kids

Every weekday @ 10 am

Work out with your family! Kids ages 6-10 and their caregivers will learn basic yoga poses, breathing and flexibility.

Vinyasa Flow

Every Monday & Wednesday @ 6 pm

This class is based in the tradition of Vinyasa yoga, which focuses on strength, flexibility and balance. Suitable for all levels.

Power Yoga

Every Thursday @ 6 pm

Power Yoga is a fast-paced class that uses traditional yoga poses, but is a complete workout for your muscles. Suitable for all levels.

Half Moon Yoga | 20 Main St., Waltham, MA | 781-555-YOGA | [Email](#) | [Website](#)





Design Resources to Make You Look Like a Pro in the Inbox

If you want to design the perfect email, you need to make sure you have the tools and resources to help you do it.

Here are four tools you can use to put these email design best practices to work.

Constant Contact's Email Campaign Optimizer

Constant Contact's Email Campaign Optimizer gives you confidence that the emails you're designing will give you the results you want. Simply submit your email and our Email Campaign Optimizer will evaluate your email based on industry best practices and data from millions of emails that are sent by Constant Contact every day.

[Submit your email to be evaluated today.](#)

Customizable Email Templates

Constant Contact offers hundreds of professionally-designed email templates that make it easy to create emails that look great in any inbox. You can find our mobile-friendly email templates by searching 'mobile' in the Constant Contact template picker.

[Log in to start using our email templates today.](#)

Mobile Email Template Design

Let our experts take care of the design work for you. Our custom design services gives you the chance to have a template created that matches your website and looks great on a mobile device.

[Request your custom mobile template today.](#)

Email Design Best Practices

From picking the right template to finding the right colors and images, we have the advice you need to design emails that make your business look professional and deliver real results.

[Find our latest resources here.](#)

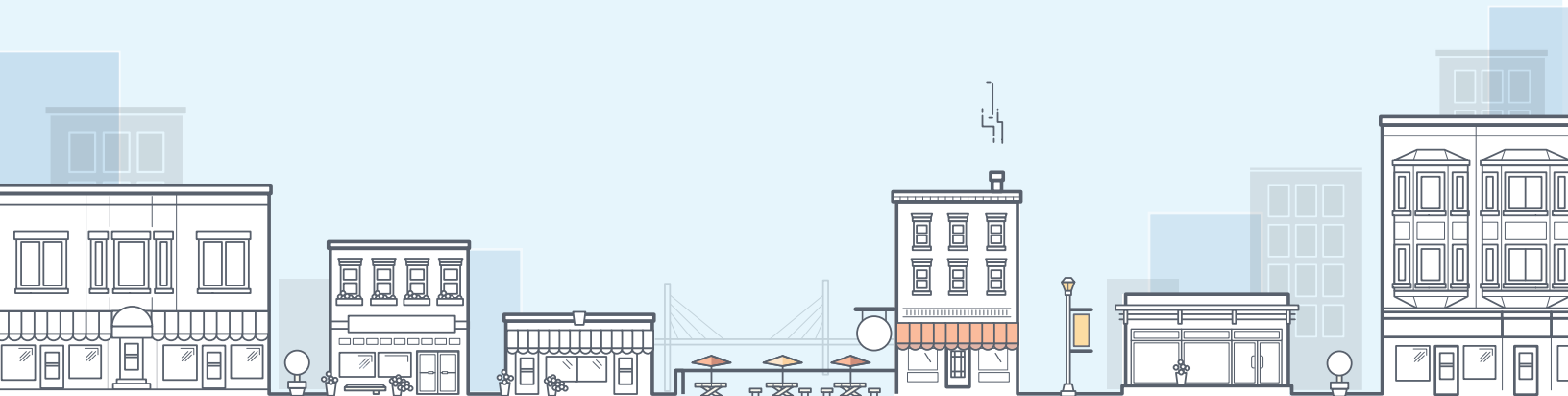
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