EMAIL SUBJECT LINES



Benchmark

THE KEY TO BETTER CONTENT AND BETTER RESULTS

Today's email marketer is extremely busy. Many of us are up to our necks trying to keep our mailing lists in order, monitor the latest trends to determine which are worthy, and focus on a killer design for our next campaign. We have so much on our plates that it becomes easy to overlook the importance of writing quality copy. It is copy that will motivate the subscriber to take the action that enables us to meet our objectives. And the more we ask of the recipient, the more detailed (and compelling) that request needs to be.

Copy is crucial to a marketer's success on multiple fronts. It must persuade the user to click the link in your search advertisement, follow the call to action on your landing page, and go through with the purchase of your offer. If you're an email marketer, effective copy is what gets you through the door and connects you to an audience of engaged readers who will respond to your message.

In this guide, we will highlight how effective copy can improve your subject lines, email content, and results.

THE SUBJECT LINE: YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION

Most consumers have dozens if not hundreds of unread messages sitting in their inbox. Why all the chaos? They do not feel enticed to open them. The email's subject lines lack the pizzazz that should have driven them to want to know more.

Whether it is a newsletter, sales offer, or update, your **subject line** deserves the utmost attention. You don't want to be the

marketer who views it as a mere afterthought and ends up wondering why their open rates are suffering. It doesn't matter what you have waiting for the recipient inside. If your subject line does not compel them to open the message, they will never even see it. A poor subject line could negate all the hard work you put into your inner content.

Cranking out punchy subject lines for every **email campaign** is not necessarily a walk in the park. However, it is a skill you must learn to master quickly. Inboxes everywhere are overflowing, so it is up to you to make sure your message stands out from all the hubbub competing for the subscriber's attention. Being able to stand out on a consistent basis requires working knowledge of the dos and don'ts of subject line writing.

PROVIDE A DETAILED PREVIEW

An email subject line is similar to the synopsis on the back of a book. It provides a detailed preview that lets the potential reader know what the book is all about. A good subject line should do the same. It should act as a summary of your newsletter, offer, or update. There is no time for fluff here. The recipient needs to know whether or not your message is worth their time. You must be specific about what's on the other side of that subject line.

SHOW VALUE FROM THE JUMP

People are dealing with hectic work schedules, trying to hold down the household, and shuffling through tons of email messages on top of it all. The point is that most of them are short on time. When they see your message in their inbox, all they really want to know is what's in it for them. In this case,



they want to know how they will personally benefit from opening your message. Fail to explain and they won't. It's as simple as that.

A well written subject line let's a potential reader know what's in store, value and all. On first glance, the busy subscriber needs to know if reading your message will help them make money, save money, or uncover some valuable information before they even give you the time of day. Therefore, the number one goal of your subject line should be telling them what they will gain by opening your message. Be it tips, news, or savings, you must provide a specific reason for them to give you play.

KEEP IT PROFESSIONAL

You may find yourself tempted to write zany, over the top subject lines to get the subscriber's attention. Some email marketers take this approach believing that the recipient will be so amazed by their wit that they will instantly want to open the message and learn more about what's behind it. Unfortunately, being too punchy and creative could work against you in this regard. What appeals to some could be offensive or totally confusing to others. Keep your subject lines professional, compelling, and focused on the point you're trying to get across.

THE SHORTER THE BETTER

You have the luxury of 140 characters to get your message across on Twitter. Facebook is even more generous, giving you up to 400 through the newsfeed. With an email subject line, you're lucky if you get 75 characters max, and that's pushing it in most cases. The actual character limit is dependent on the



mail client and the user's defined settings, but you are left stuck with a very small window no matter how you slight it.

In the email marketing community, one of the cardinal rules of subject lines is to keep them short and sweet. Try to make them no longer than 50 characters at the most. Almost all email clients will cut off subject lines at around 67 characters and this is a gamble you do not want to take. Once the recipient sees your subject line chopped off, you are unprofessional and unreliable in their eyes. Having such a small window can actually be a good thing. It gives you an opportunity to create a subject line that gets your whole point across in as few words as possible, the point that compels the recipient to open your message and become a reader.

DON'T BE SPAMMY

Some of those unread messages sitting in the consumer's inbox are just taking up space before being handed their final fate, which is either a trip to the virtual trashcan or spam folder. Disengaged subscribers are clicking away to delete and quarantine unappealing messages sent by the same marketers they opted-in with because they look like spam on the surface. You could suffer the same fate if your subject lines scream spam.

There are three simple things you can do prevent your message from looking like another piece of worthless junkmail:

- Curb Your Enthusiasm You want to create a degree of excitement and urgency, but utilizing CAPS or exclamation points in your subject lines is not the way to go about it. This will only make it seem as if you are yelling at the subscriber. (It is also a gross failure of email etiquette.)
- Beware of Word Triggers There are certain words and phrases that should be left out of your subject line. Because they have been associated with spam, using them could prevent your message from ever reaching its final destination. "Free," "Click Here," "Guarantee," "Subscribe,"



- and "Order Now" are just a few of many that could cause trouble for your campaigns.
- 3. Don't Mislead the Reader Being a spammer isn't all bad, you can say. Some have had success, and most of the time that success is the direct result of tricking the reader into thinking a message is something it is not. Subject line gimmicks might increase your open rates, but if the reader doesn't find what yo u promised in that message, a lack of responses could be the least of your worries.

INJECT YOUR BRAND'S PERSONALITY

As marketers, we all want subscribers to open and act on our message. And even though we are indeed working our **email marketing strategy**, getting them to take the desired action doesn't always have to involve obvious marketing. A well crafted subject line that gives a friendly recommendation might be enough to get the recipient to open your message, read what you have to say, and proceed to the next step. Personalization is the name of the game here, and when used correctly, it can improve your performance dramatically.

Following are some simple ways you can add personality to your subject lines:

Establish Familiarity – Incorporating your brand's personality doesn't always have to involve highlighting the brand itself. For example, if the editor's column of your newsletter generates a lot of reaction, a simple subject line like "Your Company Newsletter: Solid Tips from Bob" could encourage a high number of opens from your audience who have come to recognize the brand from Bob's personality. They instantly know they can count on great tips in addition to his unique approach to the subject.

Solve Their Problem – If your audience is comprised of small



business owners, maybe they are struggling to acquire new customers. In this case, a subject line like "Are You a Marketer Who Wants to Close More Deals?" could raise interest. Although you are posing this question to your entire audience, the business owners who really are having a tough time closing the deal will feel like you're talking to them personally.

Be Creative – There are plenty of creative ways to entice the subscriber to want to know more without coming out and asking them to open your message. For instance, if you operate a flower shop, "Save 25% on Assorted Roses" clearly expresses the benefit of reading your offer. Even if you only send this type of offer once a month, subscribers who have to come to know your brand for sending deals will recognize and open your message if they want to take advantage.

Email service providers and email marketing software programs make it incredibly easy to include the recipient's name in the subject line. However, effective personalization goes far beyond greeting them by name. It's more about being personal in your tone. People still love to receive email, and getting a message from someone they feel like they know is even better. You don't have to know your subscribers like a friend to approach them on a personal level and talk to them like one.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

You will be doing a major disservice to your captivating subject lines if the content in your message does not deliver. A well written subject line will convince the reader to give you a moment of their time, but it is your content that will encourage them to go even further. It's like the intriguing story that follows the detailed synopsis of the book we talked about earlier.

Following are some ways to make sure your subject lines and content are connected and flow in a seamless transition:

Initiate the Conversation – You do not have to be a seasoned copywriter to be a successful email marketer. All you need to be is a professional who understands what your audience wants and how to convey it in language they understand. Of course you may have to switch up your tone depending on the segment, but being conversational and genuine in your approach will enable you to strike up powerful dialogue whether you are communicating with business executives or parents looking to save money on school supplies.

Get Right to the Point – Email users have a habit of scanning over messages instead of reading them entirely. Whether you want to blame it on hectic schedules or being made lazy by the luxuries of today's on-demand world, your content must always be clear, concise and to the point. Even if you have a lot to say, you want to get to the juicy details immediately. Trying to cram everything into an email window gets tough, but you can maintain clarity by breaking your text up with bullet points, making sound use of colors and graphics, and taking advantage of good old white space.

Incorporate and Maintain Your Unique Voice – No matter what you're selling, you need to develop a voice that speaks to your audience. This voice should reflect the identity of your brand and remain consistent across your **email campaigns**. Is it the voice of your company CEO, editor, or the marketing team? While you could try to develop a different voice for each role, switching personalities may cause confusion and leave you with a brand identity crisis on your hands.

Find Balance Between Text and Images – Beautiful images can work together with ordinarily boring copy and turn your email newsletter into a winner. With that said, this is only the case when your newsletter has an optimal balance of text and images. Having too many images or images that are too large could trigger a spam filter. If your message is composed of long blocks of text and o ne small, barely noticeable photo, the lackluster response may be equivalent to using no images at all. Being able to find that perfect middle ground is essential.

Present Your Offers Wisely – Email is a great promotional tool, but how you present its offers will play a huge role in

determining the success of your promotions. Your focus here should be getting the reader out of the inbox and into the next stage of the customer cycle. Should you start off promoting your solution without diving into the benefits first? Will the subscriber still be interested after reading your introduction? Actual placement of your offer can be a tricky endeavor but the key is making sure you are crystal clear and do not distract the reader. This is definitely not the time to pour your five best calls to action into one message.

Create Actionable Content – Whether your aim is to sell, entertain, or simply provide information, your content should convince the reader to take a specific action. While being able to concisely explain the features of your solution is good, clearly outlining the benefits is what will get them to react. Your copy, call to action, and supporting elements must tell them exactly what they need to do next. You want to create content that drives the reader to explore your website and take the action that mee ts your defined objective.

TEST, ADAPT, AND IMPROVE

Although we have extensively covered tightening up your content based on many of the universal best practices, nothing in the digital world is ever etched in stone. For example, it may be absolutely necessary to switch up your voice if the diversity of your list so calls for it. On a similar note, select terms that trigger spam filters for other s could be exactly what it takes to get your message opened. It should be your audience who dictates your approach, and the most reliable way to find out what works for them is progressive testing.

Regularly conduct comparative tests of your subject lines, message copy, and content in general to gauge how your audience is responding. Take the results, apply accordingly, and you will continually provide them with the content that best matches up to their needs and preferences.

The internet and your email are primarily visual mediums. A slick design and **custom HTML templates** can do wonders for your online marketing plan, but they won't be enough to sustain subscribers who want more substance with their style. Ultimately, your service or products will be your main selling points, and how you approach prospects, how you engage them, how you excite them, will depend entirely on how you communicate with them.

ABOUT BENCHMARK EMAIL

Take powerful features by the dozen, sophisticated list management, hundreds of email templates, ultra-precise reports and dazzling email and video email. Now, package all that together for an extremely affordable price. Sound appealing? That's us.

There's a reason – or 100 – that more than 73,000 users trust us with their email marketing campaigns. With a second-tonone feature set, headache-free tools that make every campaign a snap and extremely reasonable price plans, we're the email marketing service for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

At Benchmark, we're more than email marketing experts, we're innovators. Our main aim is to perfect our email marketing service, but we also follow social networking, search engine optimization (SEO) and Web 2.0 just so our 100% Web-based software is completely compatible with the ever-changing Internet world.

No other service gives you this robust, standard range of features ... for FREE! With our Free List Plan 2,000 you can have up to 2,000 contacts and send up to 14,000 emails per month. Start today at www.benchmarkemail.com/register.



CONTACT US

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