

Email Marketing Best Practices: From Deliverability to Creative, Part 2

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This is the final installment of a two-part series on best practices in email marketing. [Part 1](#), which was published in the Aug. 28 edition of All About eMail, focused on deliverability and reputation. Part 2 examines creative design and campaign management best practices.



The often breakneck pace of email marketing demands a disciplined approach to creative design — one that relies on the use of templates, style guidelines and a repository of approved, preformatted images. What's more, a good email designer is fully aware of the limitations of HTML but exhibits creative flair even within the confines of the medium. Here are some best practices around creative design and campaign management.

Optimize the use of images. Never substitute images for important text-like headlines, links and calls to action, because they're likely to be turned off when emails are opened. Descriptive alt text ensures that messages are communicated even when images are blocked. Very large images may impede load times and trigger blocking by ISPs, so they're best avoided. Include whitelisting instructions in preheader text to encourage recipients to add you to their address books so future emails render each time.

Ensure that your offer is visible and immediately understood. Place your strongest offers in text form above the fold — preferably in the top-left corner where the eye naturally focuses. As an alternative, include a text-based link to a web version in the same general area.

Create an effective quality control process, and stick to it — even when pressed for time. To ensure that your email renders as designed, test it in each of the major ISPs in a preview pane, full screen, and with images turned on and off. Click on each link to ensure that it resolves to the intended destination.

Make the most of your subject lines. Subject lines and from addresses determine if your emails are opened, so make a compelling first impression. Use your brand name in the from address for easy recognition and shorter subject lines for instant readability. Don't underestimate the positive subliminal aspects of these components, even when your email doesn't get opened.



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