

## Email marketing best practices

Email marketing has evolved far past your grandmother's chain email and has become an integral part of most business's marketing plan. According to HubSpot, [91% of consumers still use email daily](#). It's no wonder [37% of brands increased their email budget in 2023](#).

Callout: 91% still use email daily.  
37% of brands increased their email budget in 2023.

However, like with any marketing avenue, an email marketing campaign is only as effective as the methods used to direct it.

Below are some things we use to keep our B2B email marketing compliant, cohesive, clean, and most importantly, the best conversion tool in your marketing toolkit.

### Design:

*Don't forget your logo.*

Showing your logo is like showing your brand's face. This allows users to easily set you apart from other brands in their inboxes—a key component in creating a strong brand identity.

*Use brand colors.*

Much like a logo, the brand colors help to further distinguish your brand. Think [MailChimp's yellow](#) or [UPS's brown and gold](#). Using brand colors throughout your design helps to create an easily distinguishable and branded cohesiveness.

*Consider hierarchy.*

Organize the importance of the content in your email by using different text sizes, weights, and colors. Additional elements like a relevant header image, icons, and buttons can help a busy reader quickly identify the key messaging and easily locate CTAs when scanning through their inbox.

*Keep it simple.*

Because many are viewing your email on their mobile devices, keeping your design simpler is best. That way, recipients can focus on the content rather than the design elements. Keeping your copy at the forefront of your design will keep recipients engaged in your message, rather than distracted by its design elements.

This is also why we recommend fewer than three typefaces throughout your email. By keeping typefaces predictable, the look will be more cohesive and easier to digest.

While it can be fun to add extra design pizzazz to your email, keep in mind many people are reading your message on their mobile devices. What may look engaging on a 15” computer screen may look overwhelming when viewed on a smaller mobile screen.

In a similar vein, we recommend using a text-to-image ratio of 4:1. Too many images may be distracting for your audience, and they will not have the energy to read the message you’re trying to send.

*But not too simple.*

Refrain from using a single jpg or only images in your emails.

Image-only emails are often flagged as spam, so they may not ever make it to the recipient. This will be difficult for those with visual impairments to read, as well as for those with images turned off in their inbox settings. If you absolutely must, be sure your [alt text](#) is robust enough to get the full message across if they [don’t have images turned on](#).

With that in mind, [ensure you’re compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). This means the [information found in your email is equally accessible no matter your accessibility level](#). This can look like designing with screen readers in mind and picking fonts that are easy to read. A great place to start is to add [alt text](#) to your images and use an [ADA color contrast tester](#) to assess the color compliance within your email. More details about ADA compliance can be found [here](#).

*Keep an email around 500-650 px wide.*

The industry standard viewport size for major email platforms is 500-600px This means you should design your email for a 500-600 px window.

*Make it responsive.*

Evaluate how your email appears on a variety of screen sizes including desktop, mobile, and tablets. If you are using platforms such as Mailchimp or Constant Contact, they will automatically create a mobile preview within the builder. For custom-coded emails, media queries can be used in the CSS to create a responsive layout.

Because there are many variables when it comes to responsiveness, you should always test your emails before sending. If you don’t have these devices on hand, or if you’d like to test on a specific screen size you don’t have access to, we recommend trying [Litmus](#) if your budget allows.

*Image Size Considerations*

Unfortunately there isn’t one universal rule that applies to all email clients, but emails with large images may be more likely to go to spam. Large images increase the size of an email, which some spam filters may flag as unwanted content.

Images in high quantities or with minimal accompanying text can also trigger spam filters if the ratio of text to images is part of the filtering process. [According to Mailjet](#), it's best to target a 60/40 text-to-image ratio and to keep images under 200KB.

That said, it can be difficult to keep animated gifs under 200KB. To reduce the size of a gif, consider using simple transitions to limit the number of frames. You can also design them with a limited color pallet in mind. [Here are a few tips](#) that will help keep gif file sizes smaller.

**Callout:**

- 1) Don't forget your logo.
- 2) Use brand colors.
- 3) Keep it simple, but not too simple.
- 4) Design your email to fit in a 500-650px window.
- 5) Make it mobile responsive, then test. Then test again.

### **Staying CAN-SPAM Compliant**

[CAN-SPAM](#) protects email recipients from receiving unwanted commercial messages in their inbox. This includes B2C emails as well as B2B. Luckily for us, many of the CAN-SPAM compliance measures just make sense and follow what is shown to be common email marketing etiquette. When used properly, they can be used to build trust with your audience naturally.

Overall, CAN-SPAM is there to make sure users have opted into your emails before receiving, and that you're not actively deceiving them within your message. Many of the CAN-SPAM protocols, when followed properly, can build trust between you and your audience, so it's a win-win.

**Callout: CAN-SPAM protects email recipients from receiving unwanted commercial messages and helps to hold you accountable in following best email marketing practices.**

Make sure your From, Reply-To, and routing information belong to your organization, and reflect the business that is being reflected in the email content.

*Use email opt-ins before sending.*

Be sure all recipients, even if they're general business emails, have opted in to receive your emails. Technically, if a recipient wanted to sue you over an email they did not opt in to receive, they'd be able to because you've breached CAN-SPAM compliance.

Legal aside, think of it like an in-person conversation. You wouldn't walk into your neighbor's house before they invite you in. They could, technically, call the cops for trespassing, but the more likely scenario is that it would make your relationship very strained, and they probably wouldn't be too keen on inviting you over in the future. Treat your email lists as such—only step into their inbox if they've invited you in first.

*Include an unsubscribe link.*

Include an easy-to-access unsubscribe link. Don't make it awkward for those who want to stop the conversation. If they want to leave, but you don't make it easy for them, they will block you. If you're blocked regularly, this will impact your sending reputation and may cause you to land in the spam folder.

Include your contact info and location in the footer. Again, don't forget to include the unsubscribe link in the email footer. This is one place recipients expect to see it, if you don't include it at the top of the email.

**Callout:**

- 1) Ensure from, reply-to, and routing information belong to your organization.
- 2) Use email opt-ins before sending.
- 3) Include an unsubscribe link.
- 4) Be honest and transparent in what you'd like to communicate to your audience.

**Audience:**

*Address them by name.*

Dynamic content allows you to speak to your audience on a more personal level, using the information you've gathered on them.

In B2B, this may look a bit different as you're often speaking to multiple people through one person. Find out what interests this one specific person in a business setting, what they'd be most likely to pass on to key decision makers, and what they'd like to know more of. You can do this through reports on click throughs, or you can ask them directly through a survey.

*Keep it fresh.*

As soon as you receive email addresses, make sure you send them a welcome email ASAP, within a few hours after signing up—to ensure they still remember who you are, and why they signed up. If you reach out to them when they're engaged in your message, there's a high chance they'll stay engaged if your messaging hits them right.

*But don't get too fresh.*

After sending out your welcome email, you still need to do the work to introduce your new audience to what you'll be sending them. Don't immediately start bombarding them with daily emails after one welcome email. We recommend a welcome series, where you slowly introduce your new subscribers to your brand over a series of emails. [Here are some best practices on B2B Welcome Emails.](#)

A welcome series is also a great way to get to know your audience through their engagement, and to give them a wide look at what you can provide them.

### *Segment your audience.*

Even though you're often speaking to multiple people when sending a B2B email—including the recipient and key stakeholders they communicate with—you still need to know what that one recipient cares about the most out of your vast list of offerings. For example, if you sell shipping containers, it would be helpful to know the size of the company and what their shipping preferences then proceed accordingly by sending them information relevant to their needs. If you are able to speak more directly to their needs, the more likely you'll be to convert them into regular buyers.

### **Callout:**

- 1) Address your audience by name.
- 2) Contact them as soon as they sign up.
- 3) Get to know them through a welcome series.
- 4) Segment your list to provide your audience only with the information they need.

### **Content:**

While most B2C emails are connecting with your recipient directly, B2B emails are focused on the entire purchasing team. That means the buying journey is much longer than the normal B2C journey contained within an individual purchaser simply because you have more minds to win over.

This also means things like promotions, discounts, and sale announcement emails may feel a bit strange when directed at a business.

In B2B, you need to inform your recipient why your product is the best product. When the recipient is armed with that knowledge, they'll be able to relay to their purchasing team. When done properly, educational information like whitepapers, trend reports, and how-to guides help set you as an industry authority in the eyes of your recipients.

### *Introduce yourself and your message.*

Use a subject line that lets users know what will be in the email. Not only is this kind to your recipients, but it also keeps your emails CAN-SPAM compliant.

### *Don't forget the CTA.*

Every email should be a conversation, and the recipient's next course of action should be clear. Are they signing up for your service? Are they reading your whitepaper? Are they submitting a glowing five-star review?

Make it simple for your recipient to know what to do after reading your email to keep the conversation going. [Here are some helpful tips in crafting a good CTA.](#)

*Test. Test. Test.*

Sometimes, the only way to know if content will work for your audience is to test it. This is where [A/B tests](#) make successes much more clear. Test two ideas or test multiple ideas across a random selection within your audience to see what they prefer.

It's also important to test the content of your emails on multiple platforms and devices, ensuring your message resonates no matter which environment it's viewed within.

*Don't give it all away.*

Nobody wants to read a novel when they open an email. While on average more B2B emails are opened on computers, and are often longer than the typical B2C email, a large percent still view their B2B emails on mobile. Respect their time and their will to scroll. Keep it concise or drive visitors to a blog if you have more to say.

Keep it professional, easy to read, and on-brand. Think of sending a B2B email like having a casual coffee with your client. If they opened the email, they're interested. Let them know what you have to offer.

**Callout:**

- 1) Use the subject line to introduce the topic.
- 2) Don't forget a call to action to guide your audience.
- 3) Test your email to ensure it's resonating with your audience and that it looks good in multiple environments.
- 4) Keep it concise and professional.

**Reporting:**

*Use individual email reports for a micro look.*

There are still things you can do to improve your email marketing journey after you hit send. Your report is the key to how successful or unsuccessful your message was with your particular audience. Things like high click-throughs and opens can mean your email resonated with your audience. High levels of unsubscribes or low open rates could mean perhaps you didn't hit your target audience.

Consistently low open rates could mean you're landing in the spam folder, and it might be a good time to check your sender score. We'd recommend using a free service like SenderScore, or if you have a Litmus account, you can also test your sender score through there.

*Use monthly email reports for a macro look.*

Monthly reports will give you a larger snapshot on if you're resonating with your target audience. If your open rates are high, click through rates are high, and your subscriber list is growing, that might mean you're onto something.

This is also a good time to see if any emails resonated particularly well with your audience. Think of your email marketing experience as a relationship with your subscribers. The longer they're on your list, the better you get to know them and know how to resonate with them best.

On the opposite side, if there are emails with low opens or click throughs, then that would be a good indicator that it didn't resonate with your audience well.

**Callout:**

- 1) Use individual email reports for a micro look.
- 2) Use monthly, quarterly, or annual reports for a macro look.

**CTA:** An email marketing campaign is only as good as its execution. At Catch-22 Creative, we work with you to find a marketing method that best fits your B2B marketing journey to resonate with your customers more effectively.

Interested in revamping your email marketing program? We can help. [\[contact link\]](#)