



Email Design Checklist

A lot goes into a simple email. To ensure that your emails capture your reader's attention, follow these tips and best practices.



STEP ONE: Setup

SUBJECT LINE

- This is your first impression. Make it personal and memorable.
- Tell your recipients what's in it for them, whether it's a great deal, a solution to make their lives easier, or a new product they'll love.
- Be concise and use no more than 50 characters.
- Avoid using all caps and excess punctuation, which can make your email look like spam. Limit punctuation to no more than 3 marks per subject line.

PREHEADER TEXT

- Email preheader text is a small line of text that appears after the subject line in an email inbox. The preheader is a preview of what the email is about.
- Keep it short. The ideal preheader text length is 40 - 100 characters.
- Use it to build curiosity and add context to your subject line. Don't repeat the subject line or your 'From Name'.
- Choose to display it in the body of the email or just in the preview pane.

Landscape Co.

Subject Line

Preheader text.

Mon 9:00 AM



COPY

- Email copy should be driven by your audience's needs and interests. What matters to them? How will your product or service solve a problem, fill a need, or deliver value to them?
- Follow brand guidelines to maintain consistent tone of voice.
- Always spell-check and look for typos and grammatical mistakes.
- Consider how your message will be perceived by your audience to avoid issues.

PERSONALIZATION

- Email marketing offers a great opportunity for personalization.
- Use data to send more personalized content offers based on recipients' behaviors, wants, and needs.
- Use dynamic coding to personalize different areas of your email: Subject line, preheader, body copy, images, etc.
- Close your email by giving your recipients the feeling that it came from a real person as opposed to just a brand.

LANDING PAGE

- Typically, the reason you are sending an email is in hopes the recipient will follow it back to your website.
- For product- or service-specific emails, link the email to a related landing page as opposed to the home page of your website.
- The landing page should restate the call-to-action from your email.
- Make sure this page has the same look and feel as your email design. Just like the email, keep the landing page short and to the point.

STEP TWO: Layout and Formatting

EMAIL LAYOUT

- Briefly sketch a mockup of your email before you start coding.
- Use white space to create chunks of content.
- Use the inverted pyramid model to guide the recipient to the call to action.
- Create hierarchy by adding weight and size to the most important elements.

CODING

- Use basic HTML tags for coding. The use of tables is very important. Do not use float tags.
- Elements such as traditional CSS, JavaScript, ActiveX, Flash, animated GIFs, nested background colors, background images, and embedded videos do not work as effectively for email. It is recommended to keep email coding as simple as possible.
- Avoid the use of CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) or code styles inline. Email applications like Gmail will strip out all styling within the <head> tag where the CSS is typically placed.



EMAIL WIDTH & SIZE

- Adhere to the email max width of 700 pixels, though 600-640 pixels is recommended.
- The overall size of the email file should not exceed 75KB.

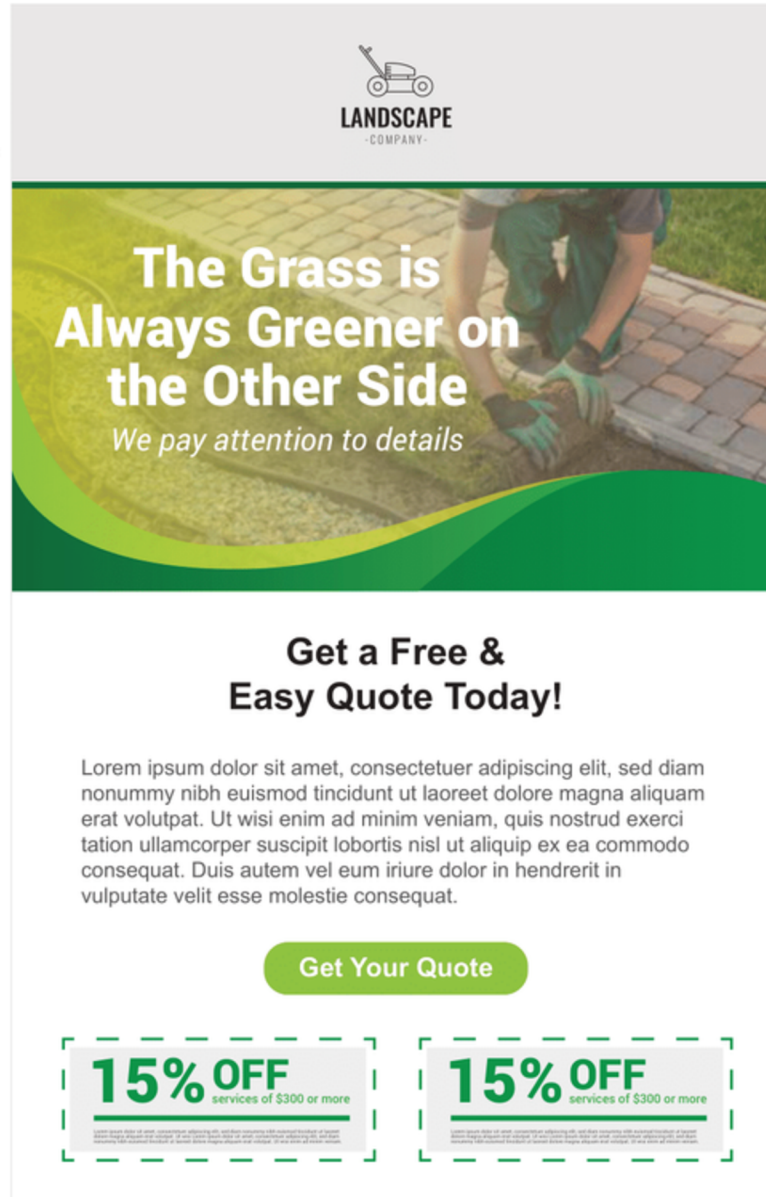
FOOTER

- The email footer contains important information about your brand.
- Include your business's contact information, including your physical address, link to your website, and your contact email address.
- Include a clear, easy-to-find Unsubscribe link so recipients can opt out. To be CAN-SPAM compliant, Unsubscribe links must operate for 30 days following the completion of your campaign and unsubscribe requests must be processed within 10 days.
- Include a statement to let recipients know why they are getting your email (Example: "You are receiving this email because you subscribed to XYZ blog.")
- Include links to your social networks and any other important web links.
- The copyright link doesn't have to stand out boldly, but it is best practice to include the copyright mark ©, the year, and the copyright owner (your business).
- It is good practice to link directly to your company's privacy policy so recipients can get information about how you store their information.

STEP THREE: Visuals

IMAGERY

- Use a balance of text and imagery. Only about 40% of the content of an email should be graphics.
- Graphics should be manually styled and coded.
- Minimize the number of fonts, sizes, and colors. Not only will the design look busy and unprofessional, but spam filters will be more likely to block an email with excessive styling.
- Follow these technical design tips to ensure your email is viewable by your intended recipients:
 - Avoid using background images.
 - Optimize image file sizes for quick load times.
 - Use Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) for icons and logos when possible.
 - Apply alt text for each image in the case that they don't load for the recipient.
 - Keep images crisp by using image attributes.
 - Save graphics with large blocks of flat color as GIF files.



WHITE SPACE

- Incorporate plenty of white space for a clean look that visually separates design elements.
- Add ample whitespace around elements to encourage click-throughs.
- Apply text padding to calls to action; the standard is 20px.

DESIGNING FOR Dark Mode

- Dark Mode is an option for desktops and for mobile devices (using Android 10 and iOS 13 operating systems or newer) that enables users to change the background color from light to dark.
- Here are some tips to ensure that important elements of your message are viewable in Dark Mode:
 - Don't use black button text with a transparent background.
 - Apply light shadows to black buttons.
 - Use contrasting button borders.
 - Use a colorful background.
 - Apply a colorful background to the container with the button.

VIDEO AND GIFS

- Use a static image with a play button that links to the video on a YouTube channel or other platform.
- Also consider using an animated GIF that is hyperlinked to the video.
- To embed the video directly in your email, use HTML5.
- Only animate what you need to keep file sizes under control.

STEP FOUR: Optimization

WEB-SAFE FONTS & Fallback Fonts

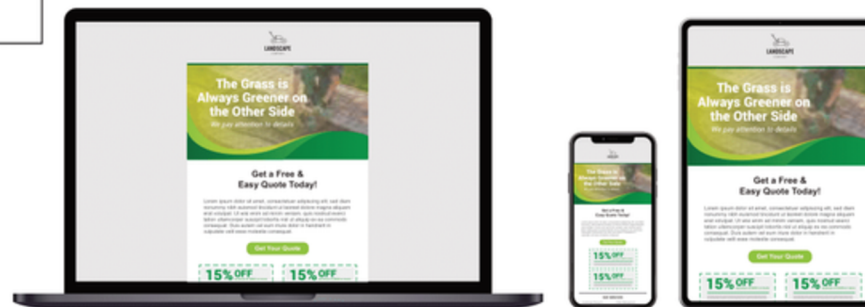
- Use universal web-safe fonts such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, or Times New Roman to ensure that all recipients can view your message, regardless of the fonts installed on their device.
- Set web-safe fallbacks for unsupportive email clients.

MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

- Use a responsive template optimized for both desktop and mobile devices.
- Make sure your images aren't too small or hard to see.
- Increase the size of the body copy if it's small on desktop emails (16px is a good size for mobile).

CALL TO ACTION (CTA)

- Make sure your CTA copy is specific and benefit-focused. Active verbs work best.
- Keep buttons large enough for easy click-ability on mobile.
- Choose an accent color to make it stand out and use adequate padding.
- Pay attention to the placement to encourage click-throughs.



LINKS

- Prominently display hyperlinks in multiple locations to drive customers to your landing page.
- Add UTM Codes to track the performance of campaigns and content.
- Check each link to ensure it goes where it should (on desktop and mobile).
- Style links using pseudo-classes (for example, active, hover, link, and visited) to obtain better visibility into user engagement.
- Consider adding hyperlinks to dates, email addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Include a View in Browser link at the top of the email as a viewing workaround. (Example: "If you are having trouble viewing this email, click here.")

ACCESSIBILITY

- Be mindful of people with disabilities as well as audio readers.
- Maintain a logical reading order.
- Apply role attributes in the code, such as "role=presentation," so that important elements can be understood by assistive technologies and their users.
- Apply alt text to all images.
- Feature meaningful link text.

TESTING

- Be sure to test your email rendering via various platforms (Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo!, etc.).
- Test your offers, subject lines, copy, and imagery often to increase your open and click rates.
- Run A/B split tests to easily determine which components are working best.

METRICS THAT MATTER

Delivery Rate:

Indicates the strength and health of your list and collection methods.
96% Industry Average

Open Rate:

Indicates interest in your brand or your content.
15% Industry Average

Click Rate:

Indicates interest in the content of your message or your offer.
2.5% Industry Average

Industry averages are based on loyalty email marketing communications.

STATS



53%
of emails

are opened on
mobile devices.



Call-to-action buttons,
as opposed to text links,
can boost conversion by

more than
25%



1/3
of clicks

that occur in an
email happen on a
mobile device.



Consumers receive an average of

100
emails per week
from brands.



Using email emojis in
subject lines can result in

56%
higher open rates.

CAN-SPAM Compliance

Follow these guidelines to minimize the risk of violating CAN-SPAM laws:

- Avoid use of false or misleading header information.
- Avoid use of deceptive or unrelated subject lines.
- Identify the message as an advertisement.
- Provide a physical address and phone number.
- Include an opt-out mechanism.
- Honor all opt-out requests promptly.
- Monitor what others are doing on your behalf.

For more information on the CAN-SPAM Act, please visit <http://business.ftc.gov/documents/bus61-can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>

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