Email Creative Best Practices

Email Design

Single Column
A single column design is best practice for most emails (other than product-based or newsletter style) and is much easier to optimize for mobile devices.

Dimensions
For best optimization on desktop keep your email's maximum width between 600px - 650px with responsive design.

Missing/Blocked Images
Assume some images will be initially blocked by email clients, or that certain images will completely fail to load. If images aren't downloaded, it may be impossible to get your message across. To prevent this, include descriptive alt text in your images. Alt text is a word of phrase used within an HTML code to describe the appearance and function of an image.

Images & Text
Use a combination of images and text, a creative made up of only images is not ideal. A good image to text ratio to follow is 70/30.

Fonts
Use basic, cross-platform fonts such as Arial, Verdana, Georgia, and Times New Roman. See here for a referral site of universally accepted fonts.

Avoid Elements that require Javascript or Flash
Javascript and Flash are largely unsupported by email clients, there is a very good chance that either the email will be blocked by spam or the email client will not display the content correctly.

Preheader
Preheader text is the short summary of text that follows the subject line in your email inbox view. Ideal preheader text length is between 50-100 characters.

Physical Mailing Address
Including a physical email address is required to be CAN-SPAM compliant.

Unsubscribe Link
Don't forget to add an unsubscribe link! You don't want to continue emailing people who don't want to read your emails. It's also illegal to push commercial emails without unsubscribe emails.

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Email Development

Table Element
Code all structure using basic HTML tables. Tables are by far the most reliable way to achieve a consistent layout across many different email browsers . For more complicated layouts, you should nest tables to build complex structures.

Framework
There are two common approaches to coding an email layout for mobile optimization, responsive and hybrid email design.

Responsive Emails

Use fluid tables and images to make content flow across different screen sizes. By using CSS media queries, the width of the fixed-width can be adapted to various screen sizes.

Hybrid Coding

Uses fluid tables and images but, in contrast to responsive emails, those tables and images are fluid by default. Instead of using media queries, hybrid coding favors Microsoft conditional comments to restrain fluid tables on larger screens.

CSS
Use in-line CSS styling elements such as cellpadding, valign, and line-height.

File Size
Keep email file size under 100kb. Consider removing redundant or unused styles or moving some of the content of the email to a landing page. If the email is under this limit, it is more likely to pass through spam filters by remaining lightweight.

Test, Test, Test
The only way to know your email will look great everywhere is to test it.

For additional information see **here** for email best practices.