



*Email marketing*  
*Best practice guide*

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Hello there, and welcome to the Campaignmaster Email Marketing Best Practice guide.*

Whether you're totally new to email marketing, or consider yourself an email aficionado, we're confident that we can give you some great advice by sharing our knowledge on email marketing best practises.

But why should you listen to us, and who are we anyway?!

We're Campaignmaster, an email marketing company based in London, UK. We're passionate about email and over the years we've learned a thing or two about sending well designed, beautiful and successful email campaigns. This guide is completely impartial, and as such you don't need to be one of our customers to use it. However, we would be thrilled to have you on board, come and visit us at [www.campaignmaster.co.uk](http://www.campaignmaster.co.uk).

Anyone who utilises any form of email marketing will find something useful in this guide. Whether you're sending huge [monthly newsletters](#) or small [event invitations](#), our recommendations in this guide will help your email campaignsto look their best, play nicely with spam filters and arrive safely in their recipient's inbox.

#### What to expect from this guide

This guide focuses on design and coding recommendations, rather than the theory behind email marketing itself. We consider these recommendations to be best practice for sending regular email communications to a large amount of recipients.

#### A quick note for web designers

If you're coming from the world of web design we'd like to give you a couple of quick warnings. Firstly, HTML email is based upon the older [HTML4.01](#), and secondly, most email clients have a woeful disregard for any type of modern web standards. Be prepared to rewind your coding skills back a decade or so. We're going to be coding with honest-to-goodness [tables](#), [deprecated tags](#) and all the things that would make a modern web-designer blush.

If you thought getting people to upgrade their web browser was tough, email clients are a similar, if not greater, challenge. Plenty of people are still using email clients as old as Outlook 2000. To avoid alienating recipients, you'll want to create campaigns that render correctly across as many email clients as possible.

Don't let this history lesson get you down though, there are plenty of tricks you can use to create stunning, effective campaigns that work across a wide range of clients.

So, once you've left your shiny new HTML5 book in the corner, dust off that VHS of *Friends* and read on.

## THE ANATOMY OF A PERFECT EMAIL

When designing for email, there are some solid guidelines that you can follow to give your campaigns a functional and compelling structure. Below we have outlined the main elements of a standard email. These guidelines will give you a good idea of how to design your email, but don't let them restrict you. Feel free to experiment!

### Width

Keep the width of your email around 500-600 pixels. Many of your recipients will be viewing their email in a restricted width 'preview pane', so you'll want to make sure your content fits within this and does not get cut off.

### From name & Subject Line

An effective [from name](#) and [subject line](#) is crucial to getting the best open rate. When recipients scan their inbox, they use this information to decide if they want to read an email, delete it or mark it as spam. By using AB testing you can find the best [from name](#) and [subject line](#) combination to maximise your open rates.

Avoid spammy words in your subject line such as free, offer, earn, bonus, quote, insurance, guaranteed etc... Also avoid using ALL CAPS and excess punctuation!!!!

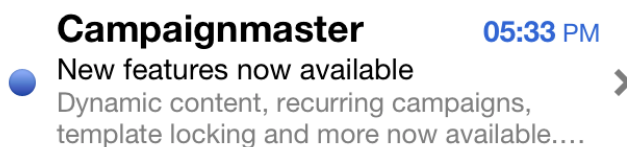


Figure 1 - An effective 'from name', subject line and snippet

### Snippets

Along with a [from name](#) and [subject line](#), some email clients (Gmail, iOS Mail) also show a small text preview of an email, known as a [snippet](#). If you want to customise this, place a 1x1px transparent GIF at the top of your code, with ALT text. This ALT text will be displayed in your inbox [snippet](#), but hidden in the body of your email.

### Pre-header text

If a recipient is having issues viewing an email, adding a [view online](#) link will to enable them to view the email in their web browser. Adding [forward to a friend](#) and [add to safe senders](#) links are also useful. You may wish to consider inserting a reminder to let recipients know why they are receiving an email e.g. "You're receiving this email because you're subscribed to our monthly newsletter".

### Main logo & Navigation

Include a [logo](#) so recipients can quickly identify your brand. A [navigation bar](#) is a great way to add the contents/index of an email. [Anchor links](#) will allow recipients

to access the information they want quickly. Alternatively you can place external links in a navigation bar to drive traffic back to your website e.g. [About us](#), [Services](#), [Contact Us](#) etc...

#### Main call to action

The main focus of an email should be its primary [call to action](#). This is usually a large button, graphic or text area that the recipient will click on. Ensure recipients do not have to scroll down in order to see your primary call to action.

#### Main body

Avoid using lots of text. Keep body copy short and to the point, use clear headings, short paragraphs and bullet points to get your message across quickly and easily. If you have a lot of text to share, host this on an external web page and use the email as a [taster](#) or [preview](#) to entice recipients to click through and read more.

#### Social Links

Including [forward to a friend](#) and [social networking links](#) are a great way to encourage recipients to share your content with others. This will increase the reach of a campaign, and could potentially send it viral.

#### Footer

Include [terms and conditions](#), [disclaimers](#) and [subscribe/unsubscribe](#) links here. [Unsubscribe](#) links should be clearly visible. You may want to include a [subscribe](#) link so recipients that have received your email via a forward can join the mailing list. Including a valid [postal address](#) and [phone number](#) will give your email additional credibility.

## HTML EMAIL EXAMPLE

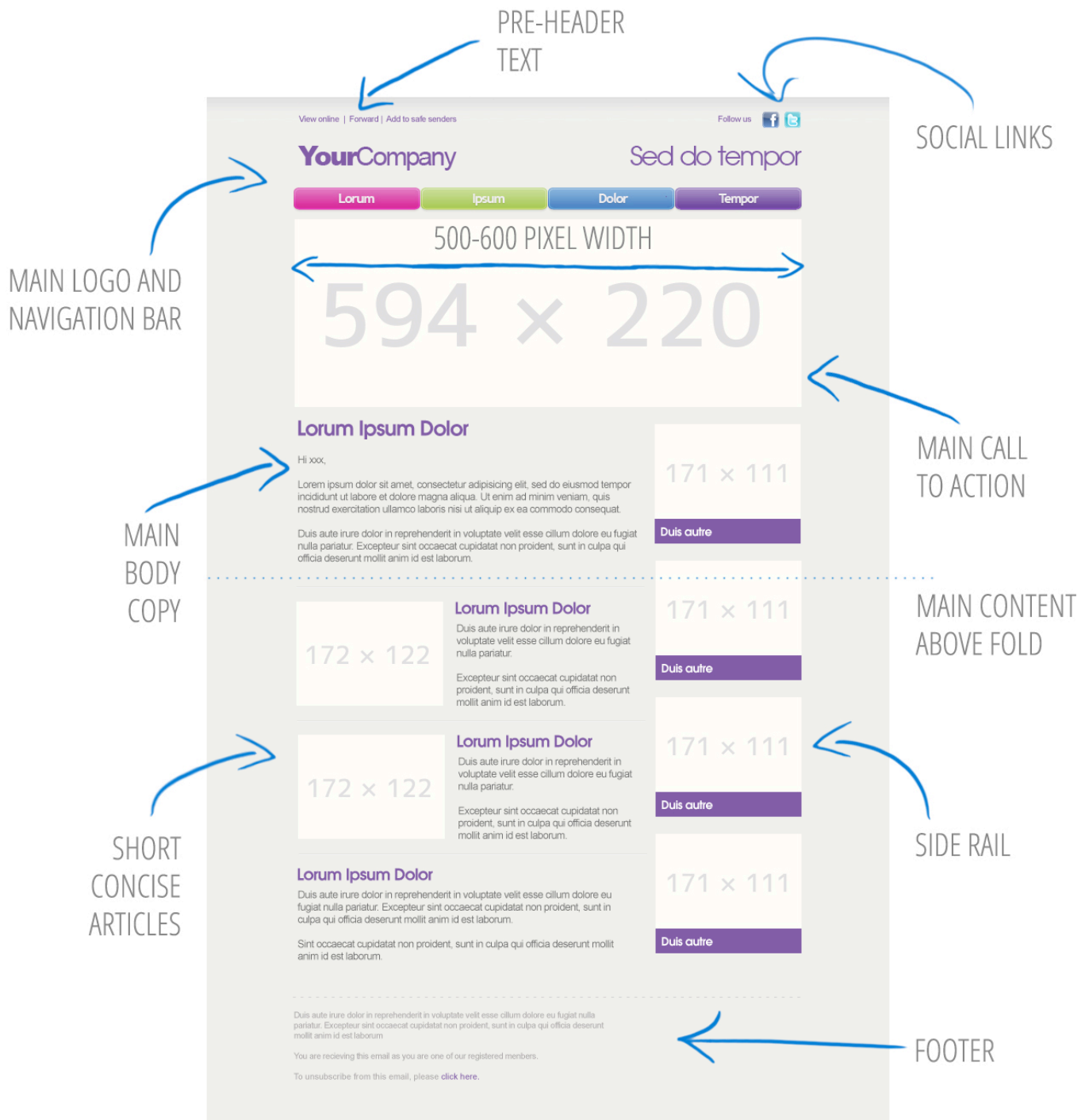


Figure 2 - A clean, concise and effective email layout

## TEXT, HTML & MULTIPART EMAIL

Emails can be sent in three different formats:

### Text

A text email is comprised entirely of basic unformatted text. It does not allow images, colours, hyperlinks, tables or text formatting. Designed in the early days of email, the text only format is slowly losing relevance as more modern email platforms introduce support for HTML based email.

Having said this, it's still important to include a text version of an email. Many older desktop clients, strict corporate email servers and last generation mobile devices will still insist on displaying the text only version of emails.

### HTML

This is the most common form of email. Built on the same technology as the web, HTML emails allow you to send an all-singing, all-dancing email very similar to a web page.

Images, colours, hyperlinks, tables and text formatting allow you to create much more vibrant and visually engaging emails.

### Multipart

A multipart email gives us the best of both worlds, by sending one email containing both the HTML and text version of campaign. Once received, the recipient's email client will automatically display the preferred version.



## HTML EMAIL

The version of HTML used in email communications is [HTML 4.01](#). As mentioned earlier in the guide, this means that there are some pretty old email clients out there that you will need to cater for by using older code and deprecated tags.

### Quick tips

- \* BODY and HTML tags are often removed in web mail clients, so you can leave these out.
- \* Use break `<BR>` tags instead of paragraph `<P>` tags. Paragraph tags can behave erratically, and are often collapsed in some email clients. Double break tags are a more robust way to creating new paragraphs. Use an empty space (as in the space used between words when typing) on blank lines to stop them from collapsing.
- \* If campaign content is being sourced from Microsoft Office or Outlook, be sure to paste all content into Notepad/TextEdit (or any other basic text editor) and re-copy and paste it into your editor. Doing this removes XML code that is incompatible with email. Re-apply the font, colour, text size etc... with your email content editor.

## CSS

CSS has very weak support in many email clients ([we're looking at you Outlook](#)), so keep this in mind when designing and testing your campaigns. External CSS sheets are a definite no-no, so use inline CSS on your HTML element tags for best results. Internal style sheets can work, but you may need to double up with inline CSS to get the best cross-client compatibility.

```
01. <A style="color:#aaccee; text-decoration: none" href=....
```

## TABLES

Due to weak CSS support in email clients, use tables for structuring your email instead of DIVs.

Using DIV's or centralised cells to align your main email content can be a bit unpredictable when testing across different email clients. Use a 100% width, 5 column table to create a stable, centralised container. Use a bgcolor on the table to set your main background colour.

```
01. <TABLE cellSpacing="0" cellPadding="0" width="100%" bgcolor="#aaccee">
02. <TBODY>
03. <TR>
04. <TD>&nbsp;</TD>
05. <TD width="25">&nbsp;</TD>
06. <TD width="600">Content Here</TD>
07. <TD width="25">&nbsp;</TD>
08. <TD>&nbsp;</TD>
09. </TR>
10. </TBODY>
11. </TABLE>
```

**Percentages** The container table should be the only table in your design that uses a percentage for its width. All other tables should have a specified pixel width.

**Spacing & Padding** Set your cellspacing and cellpadding to 0. This will line up cell content by removing gaps between cells. This is especially vital for sliced images.

**Table stacking** Keep table layout as simple as possible.

Instead of using one large complicated table, filled with row and column spans, use multiple small tables stacked on top of one another. This will make the campaign easier to edit in the future and provide better email client compatibility.

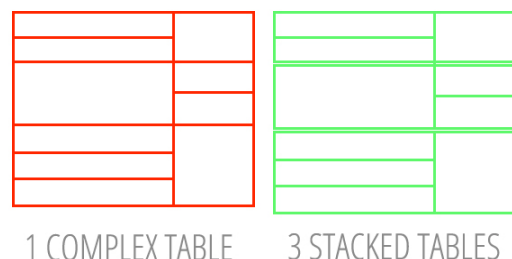


Figure 3 – Stacked tables are easier to edit and enhance cross-client compatibility

### Widths & Heights

Ensure that the sum of the widths and heights on your cells match the width and height of their table. While all cells should have specified widths (with the exception of your container table's outer two cells). Heights can be left blank to allow for expanding content such as text.

### Nested tables

It's perfectly safe to nest tables within tables, but avoid nesting tables any deeper than 4 layers to avoid rendering issues.

### Cell alignment

Rather than using padding or CSS to align cell content, use the older align and vAlign tags when specifying vertical and horizontal alignment in a cell.

```
01. <TD vAlign="top" align="left"></TD>
```

## IMAGES

Images are a great way to make your emails more engaging. They are your best weapon for getting around some of the restrictions of ageing HTML 4.01 code. Gradients, rounded corners, buttons, custom fonts and more are all possible using images.

Refrain from sending your email as ONE BIG IMAGE as it will most likely be deleted by content filters or marked as spam.

### Image formats

JPEG and GIF are the only two image formats that you'll really need. Steer clear of PNG images as they are not supported in Lotus Notes 6 or 7.

### Blocked images

A vast majority of email clients will block images by default. Make sure your email still makes sense if your images can't load. Specify [background colours](#) on table cells containing images to maintain the structure of your email.

### Dimensions

While you can upload a large image, and squash it down with HTML/CSS, it's best to use images that are the correct size by default. This avoids slow loading, distorted looking images.

Remember to add height and width dimensions of each image in their <IMG> tag. Email clients will use these dimensions to display [placeholders](#) if images cannot be loaded, maintaining the structure of your campaign

### File size

Keep images below 70kb to ensure they load quickly on slow internet connections. If you want to include a large complex image, slice it into small parts and insert it into a table.

### Slicing

Any large images should be sliced up into smaller sections and placed within a table. As well as allowing faster loading, different links can be added to each slice of the image.

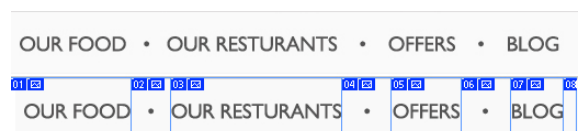


Figure 4 - Slicing an image allows multiple links to be added, without using an image map.

ALT text	Use ALT text on images to provide some context for recipients who have not loaded images. This can be a description of an image, or the text contained within it.
Block level	For images that are being aligned, such as sliced images in a table, add the inline <code>&lt;IMG style="display:block"&gt;</code> CSS element to display them at block level. This will stop gaps appearing between images.
GIF animation	While all webmail clients (Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo etc...) support GIF animation, Outlook 2007/2010 does not. Instead playing the animation, Outlook will only display the first frame.
Image maps	Image maps are a great way to add links to complex image, but they have somewhat patchy support in email clients. Especially if images are off by default. If you can, slice an image into separate parts, put it in a table, and link the individual slices.
Usable fonts	Unless you're in love with Arial and Times New Roman, email is pretty limited in font selection. Luckily, you can use any font you like by placing it inside an image (Although we beg you not to use <a href="#">Comic Sans</a> ).
Text/Image ratio	Content filters scan the text content of an email while assessing it for spam/security purposes. If you have a large number of images and little text, this will increase the probability of your email being marked as spam or filtered out. As content filters cannot scan the content of an image easily, make sure you balance your image/text ratio proportionately.

## FONTS

When using a specific font in an email campaign, it must also be installed on the recipients email device in order for them to see it. This leaves us with a somewhat limited font selection. New CSS techniques that allow you to load any font onto your recipients' device, such as [@font-face](#), do not work with HTML email.

So what fonts are safe to use? Luckily, most computers that have been produced since 1998 have a common set of fonts that can be used in email marketing. A list of email safe fonts for both PC and Mac can be found in Appendix A of this guide.

### Fallback fonts

In the event that a recipient does not have a specific font installed, fallback fonts can be added into CSS code. This fallback font will be displayed if the primary font is unavailable.

```
style="font-family:"Lucida Console", "Courier New", monospace
```

### Custom fonts

The easiest way to use an unsupported font is to place it in an image. Try not to put too much text in images though, balance out the text/image ratio of your email to avoid upsetting spam filters.

### Font size

Keeping the main text content of your email below 12pt (HTML size 3, 10px) will appease spam filters, who may think you are SHOUTING if you use giant text. Larger text such as headings should be placed into a heading tag, [<H1><H2>](#), and styled with inline CSS. If you need to use huge text, you can place it in images.

### Font size metric

Using [point pt](#) can cause your font size to render at different sizes, this can be especially difficult if your text has to fit in a cell with strict dimensions. To keep your font size rendering consistently across different platforms, use [pixels px](#) to control the size of your text.

## HYPERLINKS

When inserting a hyperlink into a campaign, use inline styling to control the formatting of the link. Many email clients force their own styling onto hyperlinks, so it's important to declare custom styles to keep your email looking consistent.

```
01. <A style="color:#aaccee; text-decoration:none" href="http://... >
```

It's impossible to set pseudo classes for inline CSS (a:link, a:visited, a:hover), so these will need to be placed in an internal style sheet at the top of your email. These should be nested in the parent/container table <TBODY> tag inside a <STYLE> tag.

- URLs should always include the http:// prefix at the beginning
- Use domains on a URL (<http://www.campaignmaster.co.uk>) rather than IP addresses (<http://85.56.85.223>).
- Where possible, track all URLs to monitor recipient activity.

## UNSUPPORTED ELEMENTS

We have already touched upon some of the older HTML elements that must be used when designing an email, but there are some other limitations you'll want to be aware of.

**Forms** Form fields cannot be placed inside an email. Host these externally and provide a link to the form instead.

**Flash** Flash content is not supported in any email client. If you wish to display animation in your campaign, you can use small, simple animated [GIFs](#). However, keep in mind that these do not animate [Outlook2007/2010](#).

**Javascript** Javascript is not tolerated by any email client, and will almost certainly upset your recipients spam filter. Avoid.

**Video** While video in the HTML5 `<VIDEO>` tag is widely reject by most email clients, video can be played in Apple Mail, iOS Mail and Outlook 2011 for Mac. ([Bet you weren't expecting that!](#))

When using the HTML5 `<VIDEO>` tag, you can specify a [fallback image](#) for email clients that do not support it.

We recommend using a fallback image of your video 'playing' in a media player, e.g. YouTube, with a large [PLAY](#) icon to encourage clicking. You can then link this fallback image to the web page containing the video.

```
01. <video width="300" poster="cmvideo.jpg" controls autoplay>
02. <source src="http://campaignmaster.com/video.mp4" type="video/mp4" />
03.
04. <!-- Fallback -->
05. <a href="http://mydomain.com"></a>
06. </video>
```



## TEXT EMAIL

As the use of HTML email clients has increased; text email has become less relevant. As a result, when you launch a standard multipart email, the majority of your recipients will be able to view the HTML version of your campaign.

However, it's still important to include a text only version of each email you send. Many email addresses are still accessed by older desktop clients and mobile devices (such as text-only Blackberry devices), especially if your recipients are located in a strict corporate environment or a developing country. Text emails are also favoured by those with disabilities.

- \* Keep your text email short and punchy. Use it as a taster for the full-fat HTML version of your email by providing a [view online](#) link.
- \* Use CAPITALS , --symbols-- or punctuation to clearly mark out titles and headings.
- \* Avoid including navigation links from your HTML email to avoid clutter.
- \* URLs must be listed in full as hyperlinks cannot be created.
- \* Use dashed lines to separate your content.
- \* Simple [ASCII art](#) can be used to replace images and logos.
- \* If you know you're sending to recipients who can only receive text emails, feel free to include additional text.
- \* Don't forget to include unsubscribe link.

Below is an example of a well constructed, simple text email.

## TEXT EMAIL EXAMPLE

View online:

<http://info.campaignmaster.co.uk/rp/EmailId=128266>

-----  
CAMPAIGNMASTER MARCH UPDATE  
-----

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

<http://www.campaignmaster.co.uk/great>

-----  
NEW FEATURES  
-----

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

<http://www.campaignmaster.co.uk/amazing>

-----  
COMPETITION  
-----

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

<http://www.campaignmaster.co.uk/brilliant>

For more news check out the full newsletter below:

<http://info.campaignmaster.co.uk/rp/EmailId=128266>

Unsubscribe:

<http://info.campaignmaster.co.uk/rp/EmailId=128266&Unsub>

## MOBILE EMAIL

Designing email for mobile devices is more important than ever. With smart phone sales dominating the tech industry, millions of people are now accessing their email on the go. According to Canalsys, in 2011 smart phones outsold desktops, notebooks and tablets, with a total of 487.7 million sold. A 62% growth on smart phone sales in 2010.

Mobile devices are a relatively new platform for email, and as such it's important to keep their restrictions in mind when creating a campaign for the smaller screen. While you could send your standard HTML email to mobile users, you can really maximise your campaigns effectiveness by creating a version that's optimised for mobile devices.

By using the CSS `@media` selector, you can apply screen resolution specific styles for mobile devices. While most modern mobile devices honour the `@media` selector, some don't (such as the Android Gmail app) so be sure to test thoroughly.

Include the `!important` declaration to override any inline styles for traditional desktop clients.



Figure 5 - Keep mobile email designs 'app' like in appearance

```
01. @media only screen and (max-device-width: 480px) {  
02.   .table { width: 350px !important; }  
03.   .remove { display: none !important; }  
04. }
```

## Mobile email tips

- \* Use a short subject line with punchy keywords
- \* Be aware of smaller screen resolutions, keep designs nice and simple
- \* Use a maximum width of 300-350 pixels
- \* Use a one column structure for content
- \* Don't include any pre-header text such as a [view online](#) or [safe senders](#) link
- \* Use large fonts
- \* Recipients will be on-the-go, so try to get your message across using the least amount of content possible
- \* Make buttons and links large with a good amount of spacing between them to cater for touch screen users
- \* If external webpage links are used make sure they are also optimised for mobile. A simple layout, no flash content etc...
- \* Collect email addresses known to use mobile email by using text-in services, iPhone and Android free app advertising etc...
- \* As always, include an unsubscribe

## ACCESSIBILITY

Good email design will always cater for the broadest spectrum of recipients. This includes recipients who have accessibility requirements. Ensuring that recipients with disabilities can perceive, understand and navigate your campaign is something that all email marketers should strive for.

The tips below will help you optimise your campaigns for disabled recipients. This will allow them to view your campaigns clearly, as well as making it easier for screen readers to dictate their content.

- \* Always include a well designed text version of your email.
- \* Place ALT text on all images.
- \* Use a high contrast between text and background colours.
- \* If you have a large amount of visually impaired recipients, make it easy for screen readers to dictate their content. Keep table nesting and stacking to a minimum. You can still create a compelling, multi-column email with four tables.
- \* If you are avoiding nested tables, you'll need to use heading tags <H> to segment your content. These will be picked up by screen readers and the recipient will be informed that they are viewing new content. An empty heading tag, followed by your content title will act as a hook for the screen reader.

```
01. <h></h> Title content
```

- \* When adding links, include a tooltip for a screen reader to dictate, rather than a long URL.

```
01. <A title="Enter competition here"
    href="http:// www.campaignmaster.co.uk/compo">Enter now!</a>
```

- \* Make sure your HTML email maintains its structure if the text is up scaled.

## TESTING

One of the most important, and often overlooked, aspects of launching an email campaign is testing. Testing allows you to ensure your email renders correctly across all email clients. The last thing you want to send to your recipients is a broken campaign.

By testing all of your campaigns thoroughly, you can make sure that your email renders correctly for each of your recipients.

Your recipients will be opening campaigns on a vast array of email clients on different platforms. [Outlook 2000-2011](#), [Lotus Notes](#), [Gmail](#), [Hotmail](#) and [Yahoo!](#) are just a small handful of available email clients, not to mention different platforms such as [PC](#), [Mac](#), [iPhone](#), [Blackberry](#) etc...

All of these email clients render email in their own unique way, so it's important to test on as many as possible. Something that looks perfect in [Hotmail](#) and [Outlook](#) may look totally broken in [Gmail](#) and [Apple Mail](#).

Most popular webmail services ([Gmail](#), [Hotmail](#), [Yahoo!](#) etc...) allow you to create a free account. We strongly recommend that you do this with as many of these providers as possible to ensure that all campaigns render correctly for your recipients.

Install multiple popular email clients to further enhance your testing. The more email clients and platforms you can test with, the better, especially if you have a large recipient list.

- \* Test in as many email clients as possible. Outlook, Lotus Notes, Thunderbird, Apple Mail, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo are just some of the [available clients](#).
- \* Outlook and Lotus Notes are very business based. Webmail services such as Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo are more consumer based.
- \* Services that render emails for you may be convenient, but they can be expensive and their rendering engines are not always up to date.
- \* Create free webmail accounts for a reliable live test.
- \* Access webmail tests in a variety of browsers, such as Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer and Safari.
- \* If you can't identify the cause of a rendering error, browser extensions like [Fire Bug](#) will let you inspect your HTML code thoroughly.

Please note: Fire Bug is not endorsed or supported by Campaignmaster UK

## MANAGING UNSUBSCRIBES

We understand it's important to keep hold of as many recipients as possible, but it's just as important to allow people to unsubscribe easily. You don't want to be sending campaigns to a list filled with disinterested and increasingly frustrated customers.

Make your unsubscribe link visible and clear. By making it difficult for recipients to unsubscribe, your email will:

- \* Have an increased chance of being marked as spam, affecting your deliverability in the future.
- \* Frustrate your recipients, who will become increasingly unhappy with your brand.
- \* Cost money. Uninterested recipients will lower your average click-through rate.

In the EU and US it is a legal requirement for you to include a method for your recipients to unsubscribe.

Allow your recipients to unsubscribe themselves, by clicking a link or filling out a form. Try to avoid using a 'reply to unsubscribe' email, as these are less effective.

To reduce the amount of recipients unsubscribing to your campaigns, provide a link to a [subscription management form](#) instead of a [universal unsubscribe link](#). A subscription management form will allow your recipients to opt in and out of your email lists, rather than unsubscribing from all future communications.

## SPAM

Email is a hugely effective and very low cost marketing channel. Due to its free and successful nature, it's often abused by people sending unsolicited email, or spam. As a result, email service providers use stringent content checkers to filter out spam before it reaches a recipients inbox.

This is obviously not where you want legitimate email to end up. By following a few rules you can ensure that your email does not look like spam to content checkers and gets delivered to your intended recipients.

- \* Do not use overly large font sizes or ALL CAPS in your email.
- \* Avoid using spammy keywords in your subject line such as free, offer, earn, bonus, quote, insurance, guaranteed etc... Also avoid using ALL CAPS and excess punctuation!!!!
- \* Do not send your email campaign out as one big image, construct your email in HTML and keep a balanced image/text ratio.
- \* Include a direct unsubscribe link, rather than a [reply to unsubscribe](#) email address
- \* If purchasing a recipient list to send to, verify its source and validity.
- \* Avoid [spoofing](#) by using a [from address](#) that matches your [sending domain](#) e.g. if you're sending from @email.business.com, your [from address](#) should match this.

Be responsible and use a permission based email marketing model. In other words, ***don't be a spammer***. This means making sure that you only send email to recipients who have opted into your mailing list and are expecting to hear from you. In many countries, sending unsolicited email is a criminal offence.

Email marketing is at its most successful when you're sending messages to recipients who want to hear from you. Forcefully spamming will affect your deliverability rate in the future, as email service providers begin treating your sending domain with more caution. Future emails will be treated as spam, and your sending domain and IP will eventually be blacklisted.



## PLATFORM SPECIFIC FIXES

Each email client or platform uses its own rendering engine to decide how to display the HTML contained within an email. This means that the way your email is displayed can vary (sometimes widely!) between each client.

Email clients tend to act in their own way and have unique behaviour patterns. Below are some tips on how to avoid common, eccentricities, of the most popular email clients.

### Hotmail

- If heading tags are used (<H1><H2> etc...) without any CSS, Hotmail will turn them **green**. Override this by using an inline style on each heading with an **!important** declaration.

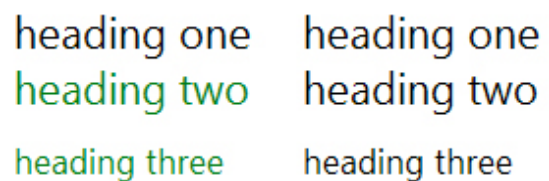


Figure 6 - Hotmail gets nauseous with unstyled headings

```
<H2 style="color:#aaccee !important">Hello!</H2>
```

### Gmail

- Gmail has a telephone VoIP tool built into its interface and automatically turns a phone number into a blue, underlined hyperlink. This allows the Gmail user to click the link and dial from within Gmail.



Figure 7- Helpful for users, but not designers!

Avoid this by applying a **dummy hyperlink**, styled in the same way as the surrounding text.

```
01. <A style="font-family: arial; color:#ffffff; text-decoration:none"
href="#">0208 555 555</a>
```

## Outlook 2007/2010

The devil's email client! Due to its dependance on the Microsoft Word rendering engine, Outlook is notorious for its poor email standards and is brimming with all manner of odd quirks. This issue is compounded by the fact that it is [the de-facto](#) email client for most businesses.

If you are targeting a lot of businesses, take some time to research Outlook's limitations to be certain that your campaign is going to look the way it should.

- \* Be aware that Outlook will not support animated GIFs, background images and a ton of CSS such as float and position.
- \* Any table with a height larger than 23.7 inches (Yes, Outlook measures email in inches) or approximately 1,790 pixels will be displayed with a large break in its content. Avoid this by stacking tables before they reach 23.7 inches in height.



Figure 8 - Outlook creates a large break in tables over 23.7 inches in height

## iOS Mail (for iPhone, iPad and iPod)

### Minimum text size

By default, the minimum font size that iOS Mail will display is 13px. Anything below that will be automatically up scaled to increase readability. As thoughtful as this is it can break the layout of an email. Thankfully this behaviour can be overridden by using the CSS below.

```
01. <style type="text/css">
02.   div, p, a, li, td { -webkit-text-size-adjust:none; }
```

### Hairline cell borders

If background colours are used on individual cells within a table, iOS Mail will occasionally display (depending on zoom level) hairline borders between each cell. This colour is essentially bleeding through from behind the table.

This can be avoided by either removing these background colours from each cell, or nesting the table in a cell with the same background colour.

## DON'T FORGET TO EXPERIMENT!

This guide provides good all-round email marketing recommendations for any individual or business. These are the guidelines that we swear by and use on a day to day basis, but having said that there's always room for some experimentation!

When it comes to email marketing, the variables for a successful campaign are plentiful. What are you sending? Who are you sending to? When are you sending it? Is that the *right* shade of green? Try slowly evolving your campaigns through AB testing to see what your recipients respond to. By optimising your campaign to suit your target audience, you'll see much better recipient activity.

Your recipients may not like a more traditional design and go nuts for an email that breaks all the rules. Except that rule about spam. We can guarantee they won't like that.

## APPENDIX A

## Email safe fonts

**Windows fonts** / **Mac fonts** / *Font family*

[illegible]

Source: [www.ampsoft.net](http://www.ampsoft.net) - <http://www.ampsoft.net/webdesign-l/WindowsMacFonts.html>

<sup>1</sup> Georgia and Trebuchet MS are bundled with Windows 2000/XP and they are also included in the IE font pack (and bundled with other MS applications), so they are quite common in Windows 98 systems.

<sup>2</sup> Symbolic fonts are only displayed in Internet Explorer, in other browsers a font substitute is used instead (although the Symbol font does work in Opera and the Webdings works in Safari).

<sup>3</sup> Book Antiqua is almost exactly the same font that Palatino Linotype, Palatino Linotype is included in Windows 2000/XP while Book Antiqua was bundled with Windows 98.

<sup>4</sup> These fonts are not TrueType fonts but bitmap fonts, so they won't look well when using some font sizes (they are designed for 8, 10, 12, 14, 18 and 24 point sizes at 96 DPI).

<sup>5</sup> These fonts work in Safari but only when using the normal font style, and not with bold or italic styles. Comic Sans MS works in bold but not in italic. Other Mac browsers seems to emulate properly the styles not provided by the font (thanks to Christian Fecteau for the tip).

<sup>6</sup> These fonts are present in Mac OS X only if **Classic** is installed (thanks to Julian Gonggrijp for the corrections).