

The Art (and Science) of Effective Email Subject Lines

As the volume of email content continues to swell, it's more important than ever to write attention-getting, eyeball-attracting email subject lines. So open your mind to these eleven expert tips from three major league email authorities. Then buckle yourself in for an email open rate that just might blow your doors off.

Our first four tips come from a company that knows a thing or two about email: **Digital Marketer**

1 Appeal to the reader's self-interest. The best way to arouse a reader's interest is to "speak to a specific benefit your audience will gain by opening the email. Self-interest subject lines help pre-qualify openers by giving them a clue about your email's body content."

2 Create some curiosity. Subject lines constructed around curiosity "pique the interest of subscribers without giving away too much information, leading to higher opens."

3 Make a compelling offer. Don't hold back: You have one chance to convince the reader that reading your email is worth their while. Digital Marketer writes: "When you are giving something away or selling something your subscribers would be interested in, directly stating that in your subject line is a great way to convince them to open the email and learn more."

4 Make it urgent, or scarce. There's a reason content marketers urge customers to "Act Now!" Because it works. Create subject lines "that communicate urgency and scarcity"—encouraging readers to, well, act now!

Our next four come from content marketing powerhouse **HubSpot**

5 Keep it short and sweet. "Email subject lines will get cut off if they're too long, particularly on mobile devices." HubSpot also points out that more than two-thirds of all emails are now opened on mobile devices, leading them to suggest "using subject lines with fewer than 50 characters to make sure the people scanning your emails read the entire subject line."

6 Use a familiar sender name. While not technically part of the subject line, readers tend to scan the sender name and subject line in rapid succession. "Thanks to the amount of spam email people get these days, most people hesitate to open email from unfamiliar senders."

7 Tell them what it's all about. This is especially helpful when your website visitor decides to download an offer that's sent by email. HubSpot's reasoning: "It's a great idea to use a subject line that says something like, 'Your new ebook inside!' or, 'Your guide awaits!'" In other words, make sure the reader knows something they want is inside that email.

8 Act now! Get the reader going by leading with an action-oriented verb. "Subject lines that begin with action verbs tend to be a lot more enticing, and your emails could be drastically more clickable by adding a vibrant verb at the beginning."

These final three tips are supplied by online advertising specialist **WordStream** in their blog.

9 Controversial or even shocking subject lines. WordStream advises that "Controversy (sometimes) sells, and it most certainly grabs attention." Just make sure you think things through by making sure your "wow, did they just say that?" subject line startles readers in a way that grabs their attention—without being a turnoff.

10 Harness the number advantage. Why do numbers and lists work in your subject lines? WordStream explains, "Incorporating numbers into your subject line attracts attention, as our brains are naturally drawn to digits. This tends to be why top 10 lists are so successful—lists are easier for our brains to process and they create curiosity, in addition to providing the promise of a quick and easy read."

11 Develop multiple subject line options. WordStream recommends applying the same discipline to crafting subject lines as you would to any piece of content: Writing at least ten subject lines before selecting the one that works best.

Now that you're up to speed on the subject, there's no good excuse to subject your readers to flat, boring subject lines!