

How to design an effective eDM, email marketing campaign? Tips, best practices of the email layout

Email marketing has been the hottest topic amongst marketers for years. There has been heavy discussion about the coding, the copywriting. But still the design is responsible for 18% of the success of an eDM campaign. And by design we mean structure, graphic elements and some general outline.

Images

The combination of the growing popularity of image spam and the continued trend towards email clients blocking images by default means that a large percentage of the recipients may not even receive the email. Those that do will more than likely see a big broken image. So the design should be developed accordingly: the pictures should not overtake the 40% of the email and the email better be understandable even without the images seen. Marketing Sherpa research also cites that visitors read more content of emails containing images and the text next to the image got the most views.

So images shouldn't be used for important content like headlines, links and calls-to-action. Also helps to use alt text for all images and always include the width and height so blank placeholder images don't throw your email out when images are disabled.

And always include a text-based link to a web version at the top of your email or a txt version of the mail attached.

Preview pane

It is also important to **optimize the email for the preview pane**:

- the most important parts (headline, lead, offer, short list of benefits, one picture) should be placed in the upper 350 pxs, preferably balanced to the left.
- keep the width of the HTML message under 650 pixels so the design does not potentially get cut off in the preview panels for the recipients.
- Test your design in a preview pane, full screen and with images turned on and off and tweak the structure accordingly.

Call to action

The most important part of an eDM is the call to action. That motivates viewers to undertake a definite action. The design should support the marketing goals, usually to convince the viewer to click on the call to action button. So the design helps defining the focus point and leads the eye towards the call to action.

- The call to action text should be a hot link button. By using buttons instead of links can increase click through rates by more than 60%.

- Remember the button should be text!
- The call to action should be repeated 3 or 5 times, preferable 3 times.
- The call to action should contain the benefit, keyword, or phrase. Instead of saying “forward” or “submit” put: “Try XXXX Free!” “Get the report today!”
- Design call to action button eye catchy: make it large, colorful, have the button and the text framed.
- Readers are often likely to click on logos, product image and brand names, make them hyperlinked.

Mobile

18% of business decision makers check their emails on their mobile according to JupiterResearch. Design for mobile and blackberry as well: put the headline and the offer in text at the top of the email, so those who check their mails on mobile can still read the most important message and act accordingly..

Advertising in newsletter

The best place to position an ad in a newsletter is the top left corner, but findings show that attention drops significantly after the third viewing. Use different ad types: text and graphical ones, with different layouts...Have a few templates with different arrangement and ad formats and change them regularly.

eDM, email design check list:

Security

Privacy policies in footer
Easy unsubscribe link in footer
Authentication in the footer
Txt version attached or the link to the html version on website on top of the email, if the eDM not seen correctly

From line:

Personal name – if known
Name of company
Brand name

Subject line

35-25 character long
formatting of special characters checked

header:

name of company
tagline
company url
email

Content

Shorter than 50 words, or if it is a complex offer than is between 50 and 500 words
Text/image arány is more than 60%
Interactive elements: polls, tools, registration forms
Bullet points
Structured content, paragraph, bold lettering
Click buttons
Avoid long hotlinks
3 or 5 calls to actions
Use big and colorful calls to actions
Headline on top, less than 49 characters

Footer:

Key contacts
Unsubscribe links
Forward it to a friend
If it is a newsletter – the teaser of next issue

Technical information

Html, CCS clear coding, no frames
Keep the message size under 50KB for consumer emails and under 75KB for

business.