

8 Things You Can Do to Improve Email Readership NOW!

1. Ask to be added to recipient's safe-senders list or address book. Most email clients won't block email from a sender listed on the recipient's personal whitelist or in the address book. Whitelisted email also appears with properly rendered images.

2. Provide a link to an archived version of the message on a Web site. You can never be completely sure recipients actually see your email messages as you intended. Always add the link at the top of your email "*go here to view email as a web page*" Hosting your newsletter, offer, or announcement on your Web site provides a second chance and may be a step readers are more likely to take, over whitelisting you or changing their email client's default settings to read your message in full-screen or with images.

3. Provide a feedback email address or other contact. A contact address gives subscribers another way to reach you to report a problem, especially with unsubscribing. That link may prevent someone from hitting the "report spam" button in desperation. Example: "Please contact our customer care department at customercare@domain.com if you wish to modify your subscription."

4. Provide a link to update profiles or change addresses. This practice gives the recipient an option other than unsubscribing from your list. Over 30 percent of subscribers are estimated to change their preferred email address annually.

5. Design your email messages for either the preview pane or blocked images. If you don't optimize your messages for preview-pane reading, many readers won't see some or all the message content. In addition, most major desktop and web email clients now block images by default. Only 30 percent of business readers have changed their settings to permit default image loading. Use those "alt" tags!

6. Use a recognizable sender email address. The best practice here is to use an email address that includes your company name, whether it's before or after the "@" sign, as well as the email purpose ("offers@XYZ.com," "newsletter@XYZ.com"). Don't use a generic name ("reply@," "info@"), and constrain the address to 16 characters or fewer so the entirety is visible in the inbox. Monitor the mailbox the address points to for live replies, spam complaints, unsubscribes, and comments.

7. Use a best-practice subject line. Subject lines can make the difference between opening a message, deleting it, or reporting it as spam. A best-practice subject line clearly identifies the email's purpose and could reduce false spam complaints. Key elements include:

- o Personalization
- o A brand, such as the company or newsletter name
- o Enticement to open
- o Content description (lead article or main offer)
- o Call to action; tell a story
- o No spam elements, including all capital letters or excess punctuation

8. Offer readers an email administration center in their messages. You can tie up many

deliverability best practices outlined here into a neat bundle by using an email administration center, a standard list of essential information that includes these items:

- o E-mail address the message was sent to (helps with unsubscribing if your page doesn't automatically load the address)
- o Contact information: company name, street address, mailing address, telephone, email address, and phone number
- o Unsubscribe or profile-update link
- o Link to privacy policy or brief privacy statement

eMARKETINGWERX is a consultancy that helps clients develop winning email strategies and implement those campaigns to reach their desired CBI's.

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