



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE OPEN RATE.

Best Practices, Tactics and Tips
for Writing Better Subject Lines.

THEY'RE SHORT, THEY BETTER BE SWEET, AND THEY CAN MAKE OR BREAK AN EMAIL.

Of course, we're talking about subject lines. Most of us have found out the hard way that it doesn't matter how much strategy, creativity and work goes into an email; if it's not paired with the right subject line, it's not going to get read. There is no magic bullet to writing the perfect subject line. But, there are some tactics that, if employed, can get you closer to that open.

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STAY 40.

40 characters, that is—that's the number of characters an iPhone user sees in the Subject Line (SL) when they look at their phone. It's a good idea to make this your median character count.

Pro Tip: Try supershort SLs and superlong ones for an inbox standout.

PUNCTUATION PRINCIPLES.

Some notes on periods and exclamation points.

First, from a study by Smart Insights: periods don't have much of an influence on open rates. Moreover, to get best results, the research suggests that using periods sparingly, on somewhere between 20%-40% of your subject lines, will increase your scores.

Exclamation points bring attention to your email, and can also raise open rates—when they're used sparingly.

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TEASE THE OFFER.



Give your readers a reason to open without giving away everything in the email. If you have a two-part deal, tease part of it in the SL. That way you give your readers a reason to open.

EX: 'This is on us.'
'This will change your mind.'

PERSON TO PERSON.



Yes, it's proven that personalization works, but not every time. Mix up using the reader's first name and key phrases like "Just for you" and "for customers like you."

Pro Tip: Use personalization after you've engaged with the customer. They know you; they feel comfortable with you. New customers or prospects may find it creepy.

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KICK OFF WITH A **BANG!**

Do you have a message that needs attention? (Of course, you do) Then start out with an interrupting word.

EX: SNAP! Here's a product you'll love.
YEAH! Something new is here.

CTA's ALL DAY.

If you want an action, ask for an action. Use a CTA as your SL to get the response you're looking for.

NEW NEVER FAILS.



An age old advertising adage: if you can say “New” then do it.

Winning Words: Brand New, Latest, Special, Special Invitation
Not So Winning Words: Good, perfect, perfect gift, exciting



ASK QUESTIONS?

Ending your SL with a question mark has been proven to raise response by 11%. Questions create interest, interest raises your open rate.

Proven Winning Words: What, Do, Can
These Words Get Less Response: Where, Who, Don't

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TO EMOJI, OR NOT TO EMOJI.

Like personalization, we know those cute little pix can raise response rates, but not across the board.

Pro Tip: Dig deep. Don't just use hearts and smiley faces. Find a picture that really illustrates what you want to say.

1. LISTS

2. ARE

3. LIT.

People love a countdown. Whether it's 5 reasons to watch *Game of Thrones* tonight, 5 tips for dating on Saturdays or 5 ways to clean your room faster, it gets clicks.

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BRING AN EMPTY SUITCASE.

Sometimes No-nos in prose are Yeses in SLs. Starting or hanging your sentence with an “empty suitcase” can create serious interest.

EX: This is a premiere you can't miss; Here's what you need to rewind shows This will change your mind.



MAKE THEM FEEL GOOD.

It's like Don Draper said, “Advertising is a big billboard by the side of the road that screams ‘You're okay! Whatever you're doing it's okay.’ Readers respond to being made to feel like what you're offering will make their life better. Use words like Winner, Winning, Exclusive. Here are some examples: An exclusive deal just for customers like you.; Winners bundle.

EX: A birthday treat for your friends and family, This is on us, You're eligible

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A large, light gray hourglass graphic is centered on the left side of the page. Inside the top bulb of the hourglass, there are several small gray circles of varying sizes, representing sand or time passing. The text 'THE CLOCK IS TICKING.' is positioned within the lower bulb of the hourglass.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING.

Use time to your advantage.
In offer-based SLs, try a time limit.

EX: Last Chance, Limited-Time, Last-Minute, and Hurry.

THE NAME GAME.

It may seem counterintuitive (because it probably appears in the address line), but putting a brand name in the SL can lift response, especially when it comes to new customers or prospects.

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TAKE YOUR TIME.

Don't spend a few minutes writing out SLs after you've finished your email. Spend some time and craft them. Remember, if someone doesn't respond to your SL, they won't even read the email.

Pro Tip: Try writing the SLs before you write your email.



IMAGINE THE READER.

Okay, this may sound trite, but at the end of the day, you're talking to people, telling them about awesome things they can do with their entertainment and cool stuff they can watch on TV. They're like your friends, like your family.

Pro Tip: So, treat them that way. If you really wanted your friend to notice you, and you were following the rules of marketing, and you only had 40 characters to do it in, what would you say?

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HERE'S TO IMPROVED OPEN RATES.

Yes, the key to improving response and interaction with your emails is the subject line. And, any marketer who treats their subjects lines as an afterthought will probably be in for some low open rates. On the flip side, if you put the same hard work into your subject lines as you put into the rest of the email, you'll likely see a positive shift.

Now, it's time to get writing. Use the tips in this book.
Get creative. And test, test, test.

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[Footnote]

1. eMarketer: Oct 2017, Driving Customer Engagement Roundup. Growth and Retention with Data, Analytics and AI

[Additional Source Materials]

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