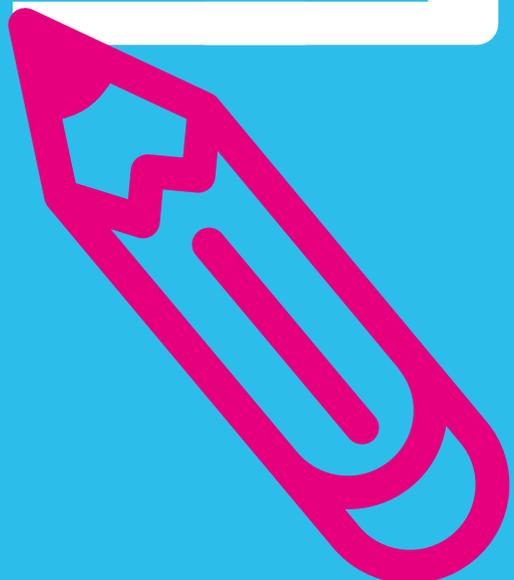
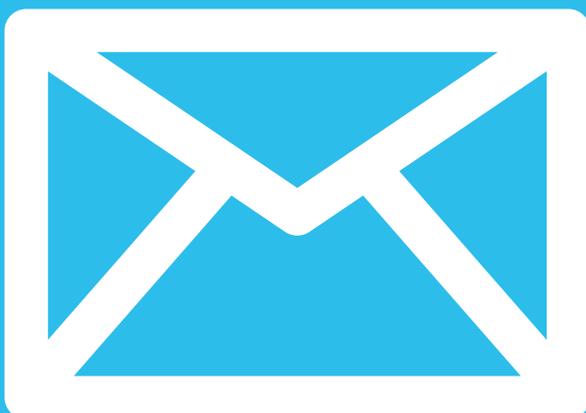
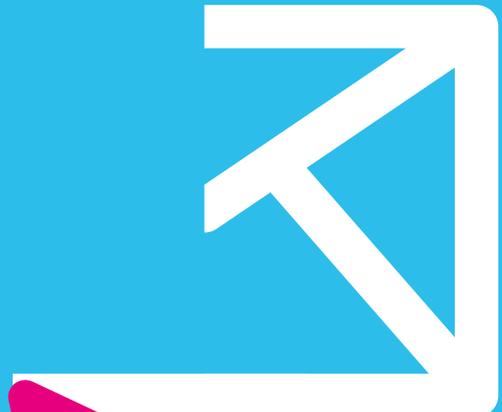
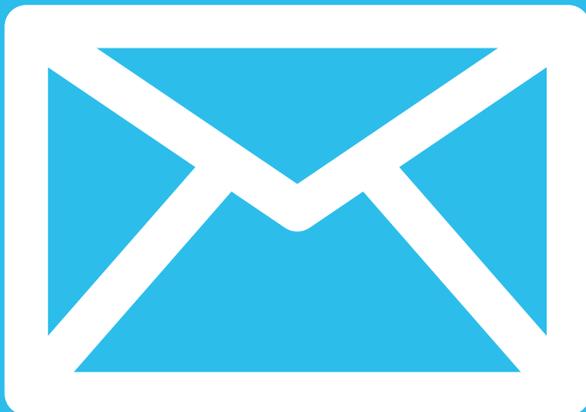
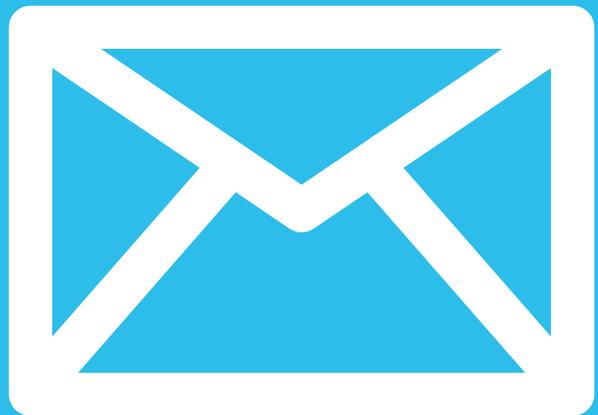
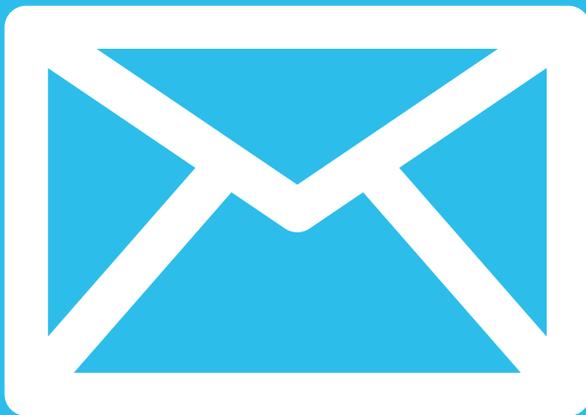


Avoid! The 5 don'ts of email design



Avoid! The 5 don'ts of email design

The internet is teeming with blog posts, guides, lookbooks, Slideshares and webinars that are dedicated to helping you design the perfect email. These resources are crammed full of tips on everything from the ideal email hierarchy to the best buttons for conversion. But many of them fail to focus on the email design don'ts, which are often overlooked and can have a huge impact on the success of your campaigns.

Stop your emails from falling prey to silly, avoidable mistakes and take note of these five common design faux pas.

1. Image-only emails

As much as you might want to 'guarantee' that your email will look the same in all clients and on all devices, image-only emails are generally bad practice.

Here are just a few reasons why you should try to avoid them:

- Filters are likely to mark your email as spam, which means it won't get delivered and will harm your sender reputation
- Some email clients (Outlook, for example) won't display your email images, and others have them automatically turned off
- You lose out on valuable pre-header (preview) text that gives your email a better chance of being opened
- Images can be slow to load, depending on your recipient's connection
- If the email has landed in the inbox of a recipient's mobile device yet they open it offline (on the tube, for instance), there'll be nothing to see and it's likely to be dismissed or deleted. Emails that are part text, part image (HTML built) will still be able to be read.
- Receivers won't be able to do keyword searches for your email if they want to read it again



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

Heritage clothing label Aquascutum includes a large image in its email, however the brand also provides separate text, alt tags and links that enable the recipient to understand what the email is about if the image doesn't load, and click through if they wish.



2. Too many CTAs

It's common to want to cover all bases in your email, especially if it's a newsletter. But who really reads every detail in a marketing email (or on a web page, in fact)? In 2008, user experience research organization Nielsen Norman Group did an extensive study on how much of a web page the average user actually reads: the result was 28%.

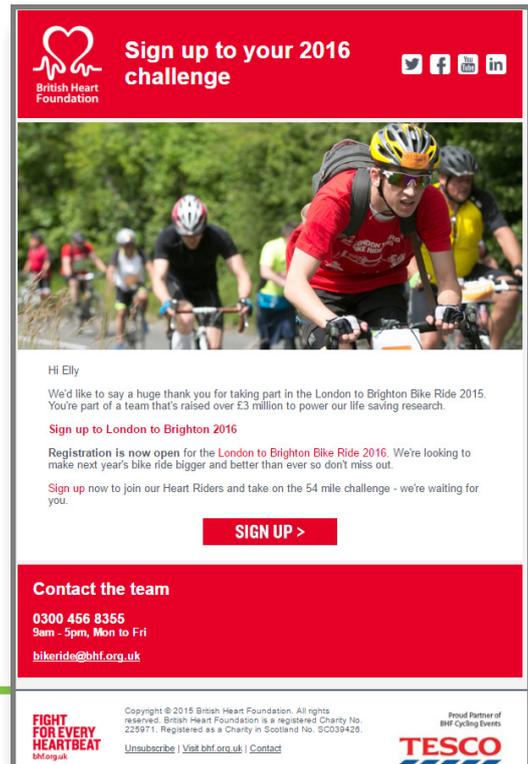
The ultimate aim of an email is to hook people in and then drive them to a relevant landing page as quickly as you can. Headers, subheaders and a large CTA button or two usually do a sound job of guiding users in the right direction – particularly if the email is opened on a device with a small screen. Adding links within body copy can also work, as they're less distracting, but try to limit these also.

As the title of Steve Krug's famous web usability book declares, 'Don't Make Me Think!'



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

This email by the British Heart Foundation makes it really clear what action it wants the recipient to take. There's one clear message and a red CTA button you simply can't miss.



3. Non-responsive email templates

If you've not responded to the mobile device boom (which, we must add, happened many years ago now), then you're way behind the times.

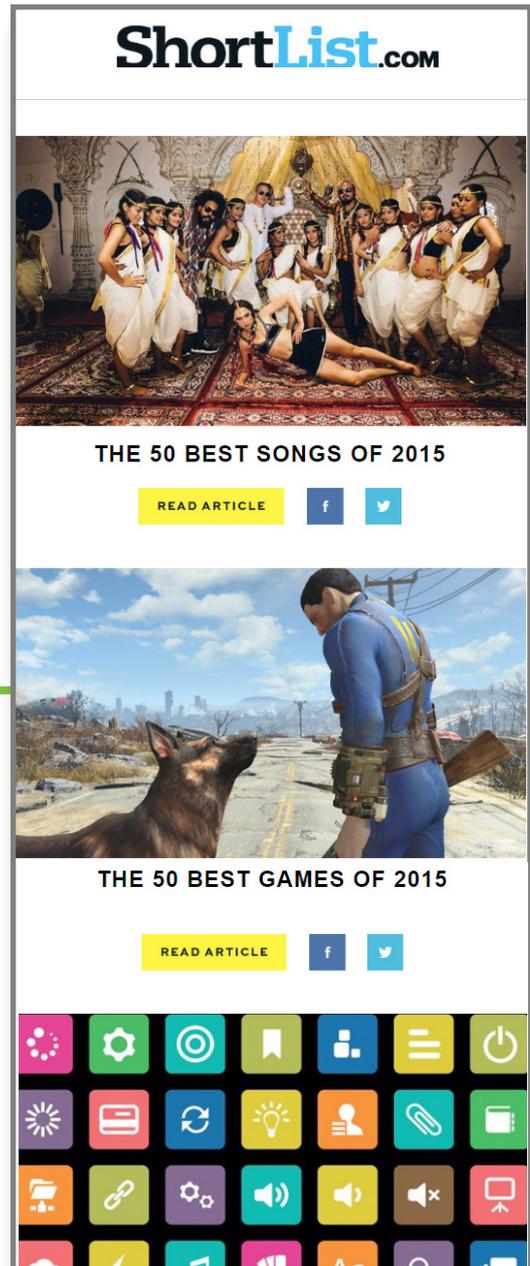
According to eMailmonday's '2016 ultimate mobile email stats', mobile will account for 15 to 70% of email opens (depending on target audience, product and email type, of course). This growth is hard to ignore and if you're not following this important email best practice, it's time to make the introduction of mobile-friendly email templates a priority. There are a number of routes you can take when it comes to designing responsive email layouts:

- **Fixed responsive layouts** – you can create a suite of fixed templates which meet your common email layouts. The difference is that these responsive layouts will respond to the device they're viewed on – for example, if your email has two columns then on a mobile everything will 'stack' to create one column.
- **Fluid layouts** – fill the percent of the screen with the right content to fit the email client. These layouts stretch and shrink smoothly, filling the entire screen as a window is dragged and condensed.
- **A combination of fixed and fluid layouts** – self-explanatory, although far more design and coding expertise is required. Fixed and fluid layouts use CSS media queries to display a fixed layout for screens over a certain size, and a fluid layout to cover smaller screens.
- **Use pre-built responsive email templates** – the dotmailer platform offers a bank of responsive, editable templates. Plus the EasyEditor email creation tool ensures mobile layouts are consistent across all devices.



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

This newsletter by ShortList Media is a fantastic example of responsive design, working beautifully on all different devices and screen sizes.



4. Hiding the unsubscribe link

There's not a company out there that willingly wants prospects and customers to leave its mailing list. So it can be tempting to want to hide or make the email unsubscribe link as inconspicuous as possible.

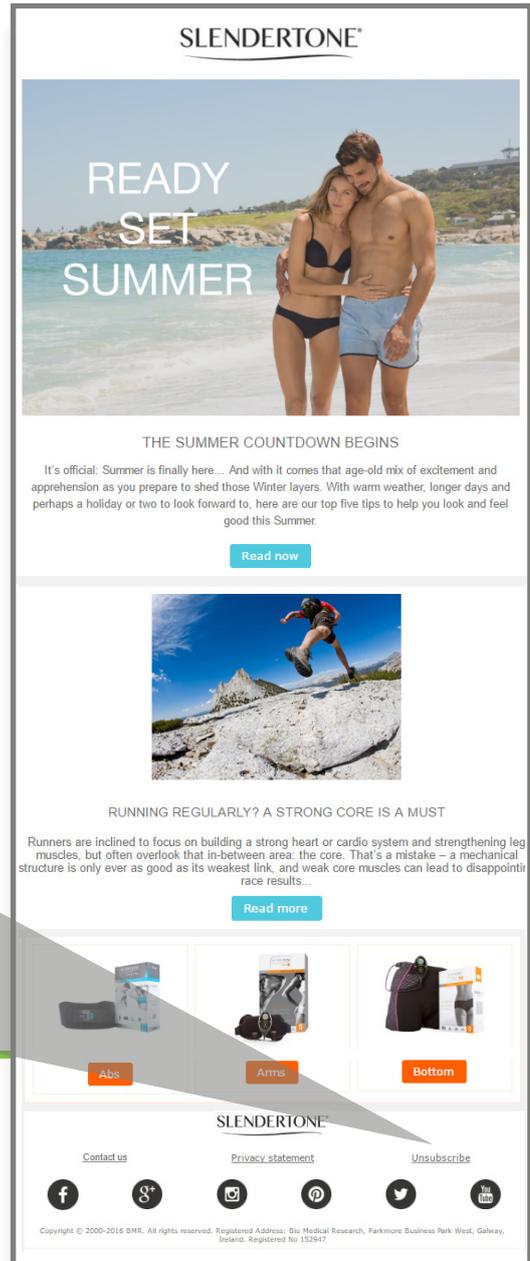
If someone wants to unsubscribe then, at this point, I'm sure there's little you can do to dissuade them. In fact, you're just giving your subscribers even more reason to mark your email as spam. And spam complaints are detrimental to your sender reputation, which could lead to you being banned from emailing temporarily or indefinitely.

Therefore, factor into your email design/s that the unsubscribe link or button should always be clearly visible.



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

Slendertone's unsubscribe link is easy to see and sits within the brand's main email footer, above the social sharing buttons.



5. Forgetting about branding

Many of today's email marketing platforms have made it extremely easy to customize your creatives. For instance, dotmailer's EasyEditor includes a color picker with literally thousands of variables. It can be easy to get carried away with such a vast amount of color choice, particularly if you want your emails to really stand out, but this can result in your company's branding going right out of the window.

Branding is an important factor in ensuring your company is recognizable and trustworthy. In a 2015 Email Tracking Report published by the UK DMA, a third of survey respondents said they receive more than 40 emails a week from brands they trust. And a further 17% stated they receive around 70 or more a week. That's a significant number of emails for people to sift through, and reinforces how fundamental to deliver email creatives that are aligned to your branding. Fail on that front and your emails run the risk of being deleted or, worse still, marked as spam.

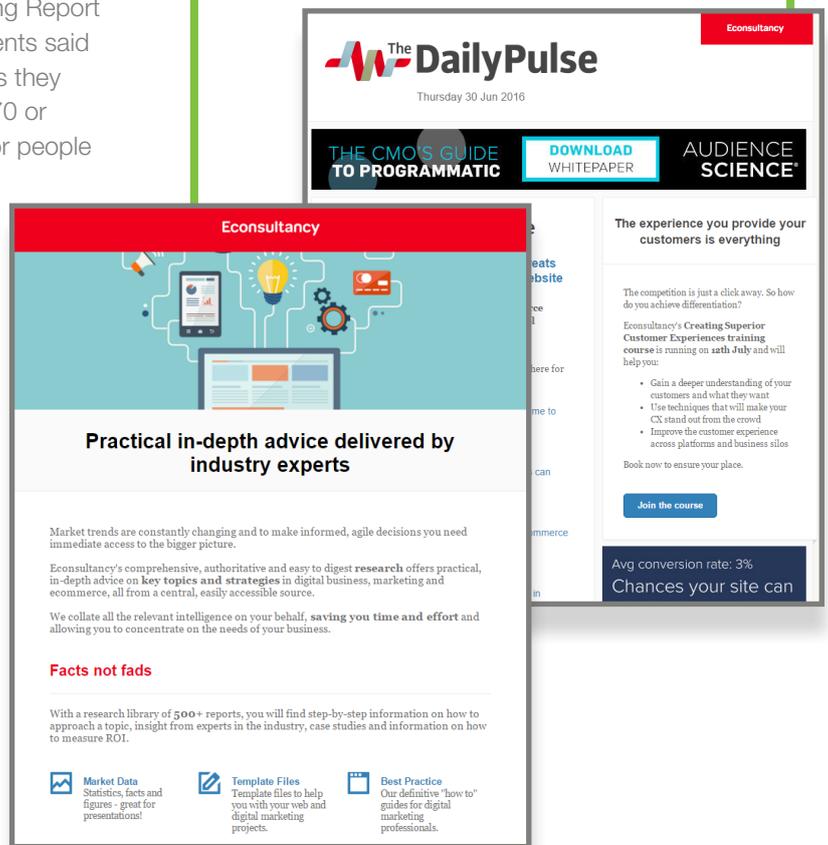
User-centric design wins

There are plenty more email design pitfalls that we haven't mentioned in this guide. Putting yourself in the user's shoes and applying your common sense is often the best way to redefine your email design and overall strategy. Ask yourself: What do users want to do once they've read your content? And what will frustrate them?



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

These are two very different emails from Econsultancy, however the consistency in design and colors – even though very clean and simple – means you can instantly recognize that they were sent by the same brand.



A platform built by marketers, for marketers

As marketers ourselves, we understand what you need. A flexible platform that helps you create, automate, test and send emails in minutes. With dotmailer that's exactly what you get.

- So easy to use, you'll be up and running in minutes
- Gives you time back to plan your future marketing
- Integrates quickly and easily with your existing system
- Solutions for corporates and SMEs

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