dotmailer

BEST PRACTICE CHEATSHEET

First Impressions Count

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Capture your audience with killer subject lines – the 2017 reboot

This is no throwback! We've brought one of our favorite cheatsheets up to speed with the latest insights.

What a racket!

According to the DMA's Consumer Email Tracker Report 2016, 38% of consumers claim to receive over 41 marketing emails to their inbox per week. If the reality is anything like this estimation, then cutting through the noise is more important than ever. What's more, with 40% opening less than a quarter of the emails they receive from brands, you need to be working harder to engage your contact list – before it's too late.

Stand out from the crowd.

The subject line is your brand's first impression, and we all know how crucial it is to get that right. After all, what's the point of creating a beautiful email design, some killer copy, and an irresistible CTA, if the only person to see it is the trash monster? The cold, hard truth of today is that one third of consumers will delete an email after reading its subject. ☹

At dotmailer, we like to believe that a new year means a new start. 2017 provides a great opportunity to reevaluate your first impression. Let's get cracking!

Back to the drawing board

Begin by categorizing the types of marketing emails your company sends. This is a good way to begin thinking about the role subject lines play in achieving ROI. For example, you will probably send some of the following:

- Acquisition/opt-in emails
- Informational/content-led emails
- Retention campaigns
- Sales/promotional emails
- Welcome campaigns
- Win-back campaigns

Your subject lines will need to be as on-brand as any other piece of marketing collateral you create. Take this opportunity to think about how your brand would communicate the categories listed above. Is your style short and sweet? Are you forever cracking jokes? Maintaining a consistent tone of voice in the inbox helps to build a friendly rapport with your recipient.

Communicate the story

It might only be a handful of words, but the variety of ways in which you can convey your first impression is staggering. That being said, we've all seen it executed badly. So to narrow it down, here are five key techniques you can use to get your message across:

Humour:

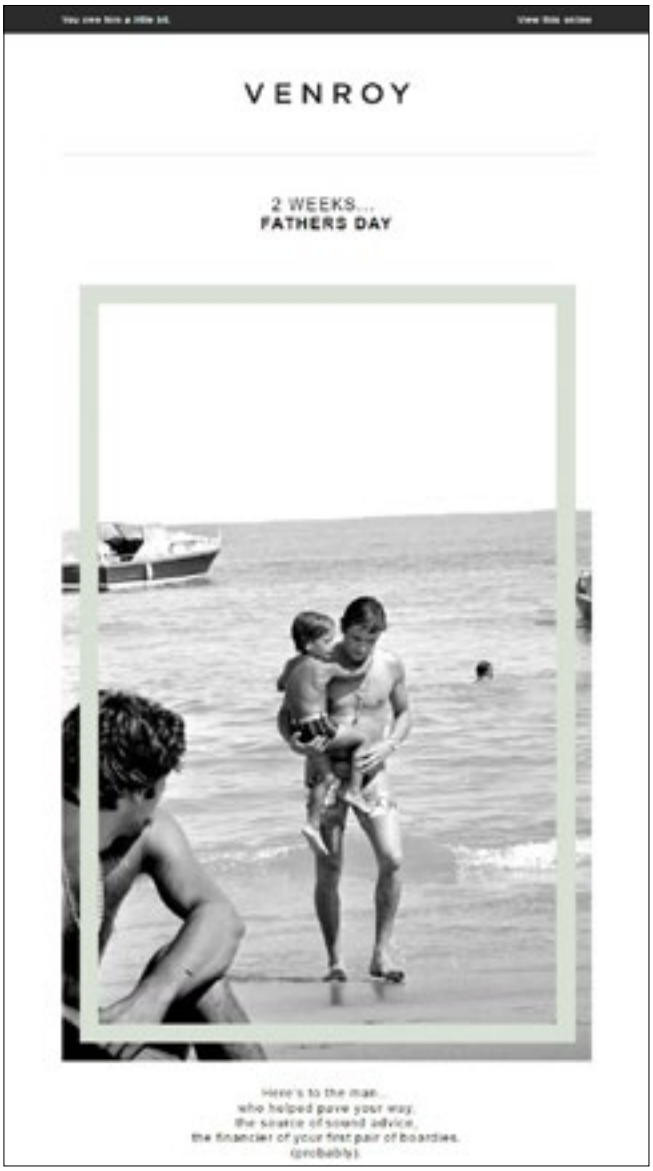
Make 'em laugh (if your branding permits the use of light jesting)! Humor is a great tactic to employ when the moment is right. After trawling through a busy inbox of generic subject lines, a bit of the giggler treatment could mean the difference between an open and a delete. We love this example from Scribbler, producers of "great designs and edgy humor":

Subject: Let's avo-cuddle!

Emotional:

Even if you're made of stone, there's some subjects that you just can't keep from tugging at your heart-strings. Celebration periods like Valentine's Day, Mother's, and Father's Day mark prime time for emotive email marketing. This subject line from men's leisurewear brand Venroy provides a great example:

Subject: Don't forget the big fella!



Personalized:

We've all heard the disheartening statistic that 84% of consumers find less than half of their emails interesting or relevant. 2017 deserves a more positive approach. Here's what we know: 57% of consumers said they will open an email if the subject or topic looks interesting; once opened, the highest reported action is to click through on a CTA (65%). Relevancy returns, and a great way to drive relevant email marketing is through personalization tactics. Pulling in the recipient's first name, although still great practice, is not the party trick it once was. Think about how you can use tools like dotmailer's Segment Builder to inform your subject line approach. We love this from Slendertone, a brand who truly prioritize personalization:

Subject: Chosen for you: 40% off Face Toner Pads

Discount-led:

Who doesn't <3 a bargain? The top reasons for consumers to share their details with brands are, consistently, money off and % off discounts, followed by free delivery and free samples.

Links of London US have cracked the code with this subject line, which frames the discount as an exclusive opportunity for the recipient to take the initiative to access:

Subject: Gain Access – up to 60% off!

Functional:

98% of consumers agree that functional emails, such as transactional notices, are always best served by email. It's important to keep these messages, well, functional. For example, be sure to include the order number or product name in the subject line. However, just as you'd ensure that the design and content inside the transactional email reflects your brand, you should also think about how your functional subject line can do the same. Remember that transactional emails receive eight times more opens and clicks than any other type of email; they're not to be overlooked!

Time to test, test, test!

You might think you know your audiences inside-out, but can you really say what they react best to?

Split testing your subject lines gives you a better insight into your recipients' preferences. Make sure you see what works and what doesn't. You can do this in a flash with dotmailer's multi-variate testing abilities; no guesswork, no hard work.

Get recognized, always.

It's easy to assume that everyone recognizes your brand, especially when you're living and breathing it on a daily basis. But a busy inbox can dilute your story, so make sure you're using a recognizable 'friendly from' (sender) name. This helps to build trust, and will undoubtedly generate a more positive reception than *?????* when your messages arrive.

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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