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Subject Line Cheatsheet

LOREM IPSUM
COUNTY COUNCIL

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HOW POWERFUL IS YOUR SUBJECT LINE?

Is your subject line unique or remarkable? Unique and remarkable is always the utopia to aim for, but this is a difficult to consistently achieve. Other ways to achieve cut through with a subject line, like the title of this section is to ask a question. If you ask a question of your recipient, then the question activates a different part of their brain and there is an additional psychological motivation to engage with you.

Best Practices

A subject line is the single most important aspect of an email marketing campaign. You have approximately 3 seconds to make an impact in the inbox, to motivate your recipient to open your email.

An email campaign is a journey, If your subject line and preview text do not hook your audience enough to open your email; your email design, content and any links will not be seen by the recipient.

Imagine your subject line as the front page headline of a newspaper. Does it immediately get the attention of the reader? The preview text is then like a sub-headline, supporting that main headline.

The Statistics

Before we get started, lets take a moment to put your email in context:

An estimated 333.2 billion emails will be sent and received per day in 2022. Email statistics predict that by 2025, this number will reach 376.4 billion.

An average person receives 100 - 120 emails per day.

On average, professionals check their email 15 times per day, or every 37 minutes.

Viewing all opened emails received in a span of one year for just one second will take 330 years.

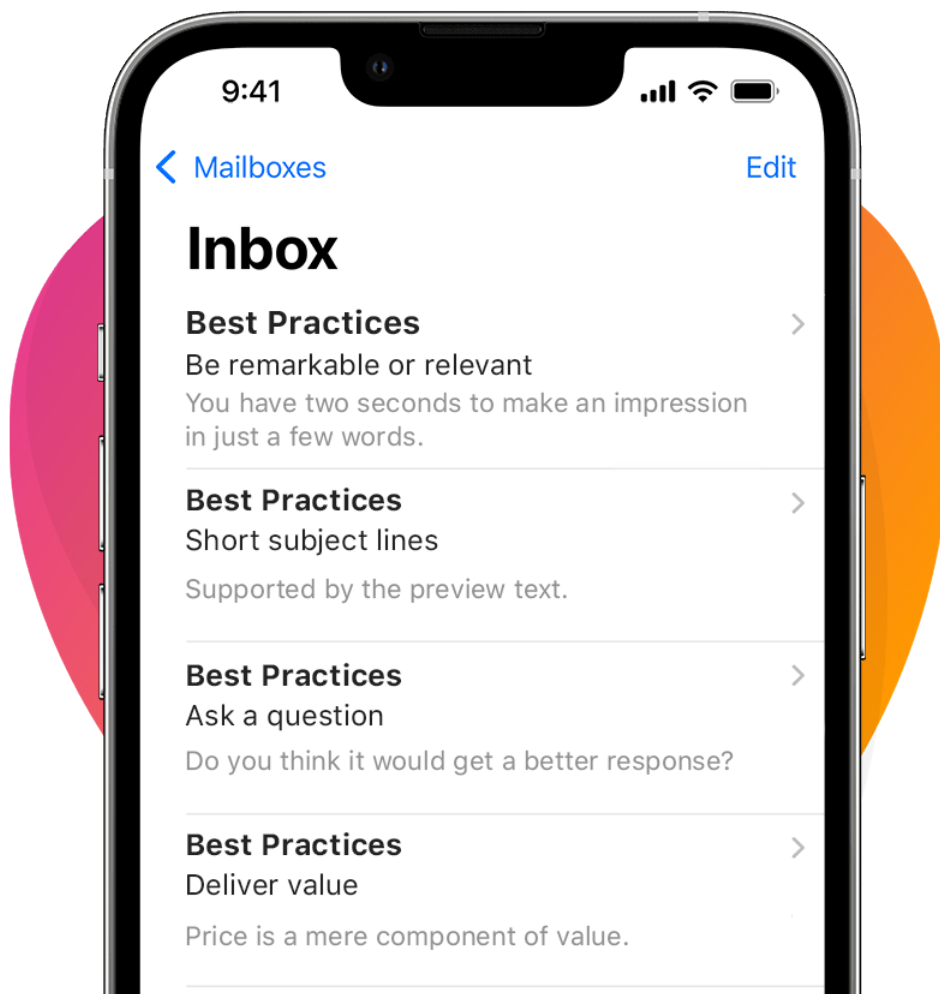e·shot

Best Practices Tips

Walk in their shoes.

Think of each email as a process, in which catching your recipients' attention is the first step. The subject line is about THEM, not you. What do they want to know, not what you want to tell them. Personalisation is a great way to highlight the relevance of your message, whether you references their location, account or name - they can see that this email deserves more than a 3 second glance.

Get the length right

You'll need to do some testing to determine the optimal length for your customer base, but we recommend no more than 4 words and 60 characters. A few more words or a few less doesn't won't adversely affect your results too much, but too many words (over 20) or no words at all will cause a problem.

9:41

< Mailboxes   Edit

Inbox

Best Practices   >
Be remarkable or relevant
You have two seconds to make an impression
in just a few words.

Best Practices   >
Short subject lines
Supported by the preview text.

Best Practices   >
Ask a question
Do you think it would get a better response?

Best Practices   >
Deliver value
Price is a mere component of value.

Best Practice Tips

Preview text is Important

Preview text is usually the first couple of lines of the email itself, but this can be overruled to show specific text to support the subject line.

Instead of wasting this space, use it to support the subject line and encourage readers to open the email.

Is your subject line unique or remarkable?

Ditch the housekeeping. Think about the value of each word in getting readers to open and click on your email. Many subject lines contain text which is more housekeeping for the sender than compelling for the reader.

Common examples of housekeeping subject lines:

July Newsletter   *Latest news on [subject]*   *Update from [brand]*

Test your subject lines

You can test word length, questions, humorous tone versus something more to the point, word choice, use or not of emoji or any other number of factors. Build up a picture of what your audience responds to use your on-going learnings to optimise your campaigns.

Split test for success

When optimising your subject line, use split testing to get statistically valid data. Other variables such as audience and time of sending can have a big effect on results, so just pit two subject lines against each other like for like. If you are testing, don't change too many things in one go or you won't know what made the difference.

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"Email is an essential communication channel. We've seen increased email engagement throughout the pandemic, and this looks set to be a trend that is here to stay. Having a specialist like e-shot share their wealth of experience adds expert knowledge that can help us keep ahead in the ways we serve our residents and raise the standards in our sector."
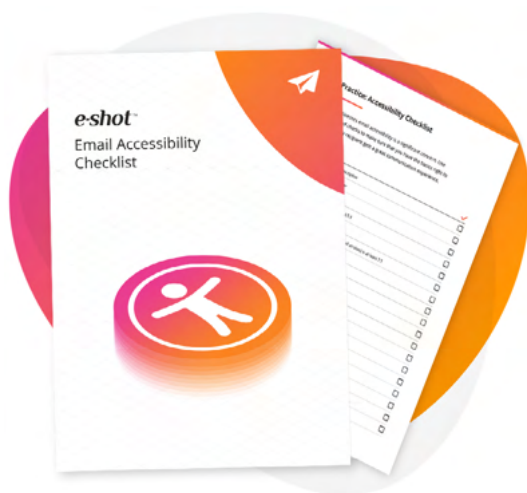
Andy Allsopp,
Chair Of LG Comms,
Head of Proffession for Communications & Engagement
Essex County Council

Additional Resources

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