

Email Marketing - hints and tips



Welcome...

Here at Schools Marketing Company, we send emails out to schools every working day, so we see a lot of marketing emails and messaging.

As well as having an attractive email offering, there are other things you should bear in mind when composing your email. Here are some hints and tips that may be useful to you.



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Email look and feel

Text or images

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to the best overall structure of marketing emails. Some people prefer a predominantly text email, whilst others choose to use a mix of images and text. Whilst there are no clear statistical benefits to using one over the other, it is important to consider your offer, messaging and branding when deciding the look you want, for each individual email. Whatever your design preferences, keep your message clear, your content engaging and your CTAs enticing and prominent, and make sure your email displays well for desktop, tablet and mobiles.

Personalisation

If it makes sense in your email context, you can personalise it with the recipient's title and surname, or perhaps insert the school name or Local Authority into the email content too, making it feel more relevant and personal. Personalisation is shown to increase email engagement levels, which in return, will impact positively on your results.

Long or short content

How long should your email be? It's important that you get your message across quickly – as, with the increasing demands on people's time, an email that's succinct and to the point is likely to be more successful.

If you want to provide additional information, include a link to a downloadable pdf, or let your website do the heavy lifting by including a link or button to a suitable landing page for your email send.

If your email does need to be longer - make sure the opening paragraph is engaging enough to make them want to read-on and include a CTA (Call to Action) early in the email – as well as further down – so they have more than one opportunity to respond.





Calls To Action - CTAs

The objective of a marketing email is to get recipients to do something, so make this clear and obvious. And make it easy for them. Don't make the first thing they have to do, is fill in a long form, or ask for more information than is required. You can always capture additional information later.

You might want them to click through to your website, ask for more information, sign up for something, or place an order. If so, that's your call to action (CTA). But don't just put it at the end. Use a combination of buttons and text links, potentially placing various CTA response options, at different places in the email.

And if they are not ready to enquire right now, they might be interested in your offering in the future, so remember to put a 'bail out' option in your email content – some information they can ask you for now, or look at, that doesn't require an immediate purchase or heavy commitment. These things may encourage them to get in touch with you, so you have a warm prospect for the future.

And keep your verbs active, for example: "find out here" and "discover more", can be far more effective than a bland "further information". Take care when you use "buy now" though. Studies suggest that a less presumptive "see options and pricing" can be more effective in many instances.

Engaging content

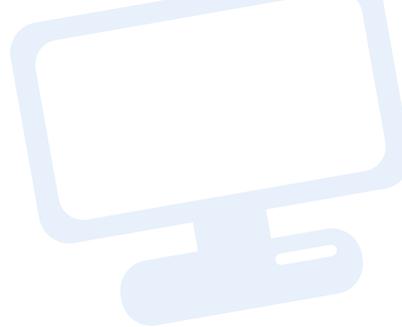
Links to survey results, testimonials, videos, competitions and white papers always perform well. You'll not be surprised that links to free offers are also popular! What about your website landing page? Is it up to scratch? Is the message consistent? Do visitors know what to do next? We have seen successful campaigns falter, because the landing page wasn't tailored to, or didn't match, the email campaign.

You might want to consider creating a bespoke landing page, just for your email to schools. That way, you keep the language and message entirely in tune with your email's main theme. This is especially true if you have many parts to your business, as if you want schools to believe you have products and services that are just right for them – a 'schools focused' landing page could make all the difference.

And - if you do direct them to a web form, keep it short and simple. The more questions or parts there are to complete on a form, the less likely they are to do so.

Ask us about [SMC OneClick](#) – our pre-filled web response form, which makes responding quick and easy.





Lead Magnets

Lead magnets attract prospects to your email offering and encourage them to get in touch with you, or click to download new resources, or find out more.

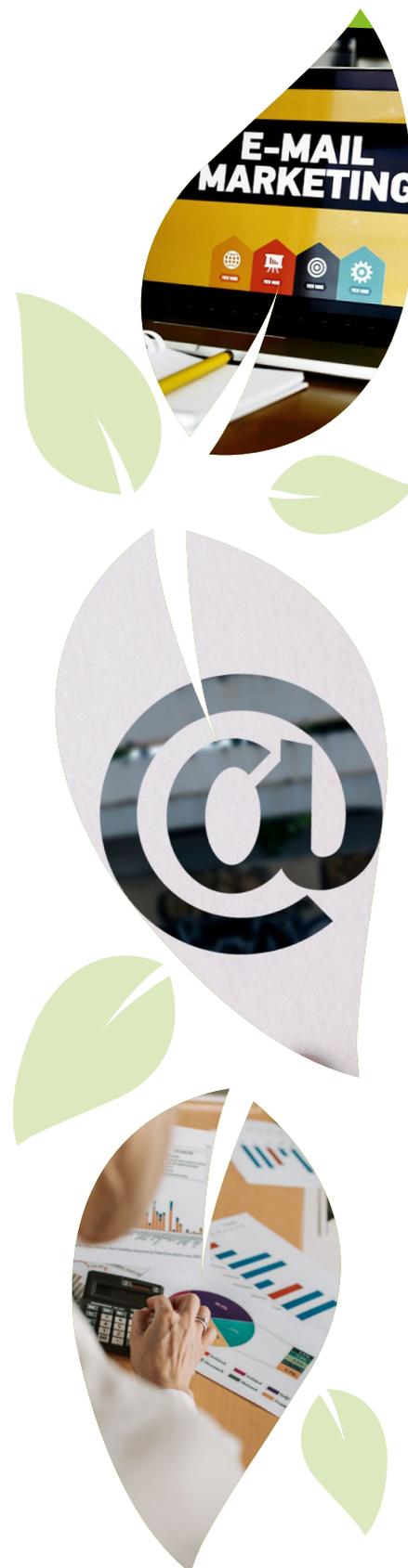
Think about creating a lead magnet that is relevant, useful, and makes your prospects' lives easier. Here are a few **types of lead magnets** you could create:

-  Ebooks.
-  Whitepapers.
-  Infographics.
-  Reports or studies.
-  Checklists.
-  Templates.
-  Webinars or courses.
-  Free Tools & Training.

Subject lines

However attractive and informative your email content is, the decision on whether or not to open it is based on who the email is from and the **subject line**. That's often all they see in their inbox. So, make it count.

The subject line has one job and one job only – to get them to open the email. So, think about your subject line, make sure it displays well on all screen sizes and don't make it too long, or it may be truncated on mobile devices.





Subject line inspirations

- 🍃 Solve their problem: e.g. "Your local IT supplier with FREE next day delivery"
- 💧 Use a deadline: e.g. "25% discount until the end of this month"
- 🍃 Consider including an emoji/emoticon: studies show this can make your email stand out in inboxes
- 💧 As a rule, use sentence case: capitals (sparingly) are for emphasis
- 🍃 Consider AB testing: if your sample size is large enough for meaningful results
- 💧 Use questions: especially ones that make them curious
- 🍃 Include a relevant keyword: e.g. "school trips"
- 💧 Add urgency: e.g. "10% off this month only"
- 🍃 Use FOMO (fear of missing out): e.g. "only 10 dates left this term"
- 💧 Use "evidence" statements: e.g. 50 "Outstanding" schools are already using our software"

Pre-header

You'll often see emails displaying some additional text within the list view of an inbox. This is either the first few lines of the email, or more often, the pre-header.

The pre-header (or preview text/preview line) is a line of text you can generally add-in to your email content. It won't show on your email when open, but it can be displayed in the inbox view.

A pre-header can be standalone, or it can expand on your subject line or complement it in a certain way. Here's an example:

Subject line: Key trends for the new school year

Pre-header: See the full results from our most recent survey

As well as improving open rates, making use of the pre-header can prevent your email header showing HTML code at the top of the email, or parts of links – which is never that motivating – and we want them to open your email!





Sender 'From' name (what they see in their inbox).

Many businesses opt for their company name as the sender from name, or their brand or product name if that's stronger, more well known, or more relevant to the offering. Alternatively, you might decide to send the email from a personal name, as that might seem more approachable.

Mobile responsiveness

c. 55% of emails are now opened on mobile

It's important that your email is designed to be mobile responsive. Otherwise your message may be too small to read, forcing the recipient to zoom the screen, scrolling left and right to view the content. Not a great way to read your marketing email.

For example, content may 'stack' on a smartphone. Two blocks of content may be next to each other when displayed on a full-size monitor or laptop, but a smartphone will display them one above the other. This avoids needing a horizontal scrollbar.

Correctly coded HTML mobile responsive email content will enable images to re-size automatically for different screen sizes and resolutions. And text will automatically adjust to remain readable. You can even hide certain content (such as large tables) if they wouldn't display well on a mobile.





Avoiding SPAM traps

Emails can be classed as SPAM for a myriad of reasons (or for no reason in particular - other than the rules at the recipient server on a given day).

Certain words in the content can increase risk. 'Test' for example.

Overall file size (the weight of email) can be a factor. Some image files can be quite 'large' in terms of their MB "weight". You must therefore use a suitable image resolution and image size in your email, to avoid creating a 'physically' weighty email.

Balance of text to images is also used in spam indicators.

Broken links, or a lack of Alt Tags* – imbalance between text and images.

The domain or IP address of the mail server or email gateway not being verified.

At Schools Marketing Company we've been managing client email campaigns for over 18 years. We use our own dedicated servers, email gateways and trusted IP addresses. We use DKIM (Domain Key Identified Mail) DMARC and SPF to secure the emails we send on your behalf. This allows the email servers receiving our emails, to validate that emails are coming from a trusted server, thereby helping avoid SPAM traps.

There are also online tools where you can check the spam score of your email prior to sending it too (such as www.mail-tester.com) again a useful precaution.

All emails produced by our team are tested using MailTester as a matter of course.

*Alt Tags are the image descriptions that show (or read as audible cues for the visually impaired) when images don't automatically download. So, if your image is offering a 10% discount, state this in your alt tag too. Having Alt Tags on your images helps avoid spam traps.



About Schools Marketing Company

Established in 2005, Schools Marketing Company have been helping businesses and organisations send postal campaigns and get email marketing messages in front of key, named, school contacts and decision makers for almost 2 decades.

GDPR & PECR

Email marketing is governed by the GDPR and the PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations).

Schools Marketing Company, a division of Family Marketing Ltd, registered in England no. 5491020. Registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, registration number: Z9153578. We hold email data for corporate bodies and corporate staff. Our data is managed in accordance with both GDPR and PECR.



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