

Email Design

Do Design for the inbox - know the limitations of each email client.

Caution Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) as support varies among email clients.

Do If CSS is used, be sure to use inline styles only.

Don't Use Meta tags.

Don't Use form elements.

Don't Use Java, JavaScript, Frames, ActiveX, ASP, PHP, Cache Busters, or Dynamic HTML.

Don't Embed Flash or other rich media files into the message.

Do Link the email message to a landing page containing Flash and rich media files.

Do Use title tags in URL links.

Do Use <p> </p> tags instead of <div> </div> to align text.

Do Use valid HTML and close all tags.

Do Review all HTML code prior to deployment.

Do Ensure all personalization and dynamic content code is correct prior to deployment.

Do Remove all unnecessary HTML code.

Caution Try not to format messages wider than 600 pixels.

Do Keep the message under 40k.

Do Keep important messaging and main calls-to-action above the fold in the top 300 pixels.

Don't Use rowspans or colspans.

Do Use tables in the HTML code for spacing and layout.

Caution Be careful when using multiple nested tables as they may not render correctly.

Do Try to use both text and images in the message instead of making the message on big image.

Do Keep the images in .gif or .jpg format.

Do Store images on a web server and ensure image links contain the full URL, not just the local reference.

Do Include height and width parameters for all images.

Do Use alt tags for all images.

Do Use background colors in both the body and tables.

Don't Use image maps.

Caution Format fonts without CSS, or with inline styles if CSS is used.

Don't Use invisible text by matching the font color to the background color.

Do If the message contains background images in table cells, be sure to also include background colors for Outlook 2007 users.

Do Ensure the message contains pass-along functionality to keep formatting in place when the message is forwarded.

Do Include a browser link to a web version of the message in the email's pre-header.

Do Include important messaging, such as your offer, a brief statement summarizing your message, and/or the safe sender message, in the email's pre-header.

Don't Attach documents to the email message.

Do Link documents to the message.

Do Run messages through Spam Score prior to deployment.

Do Test emails in different email clients prior to deployment.

Do Test all links in the message prior to deployment.

Do Keep message design simple and clean and easy to read.

Do Include a text-only version of your message.

Do Use graphic designers who are knowledgeable and experienced with email marketing to design your HTML templates as many web designers are not aware of all of the best practices for email marketing.

Do Write clear calls-to-action and keep the offer visible above the fold.

Don't Distract the recipients from completing a call-to-action by including too many different offers, graphics, etc.

Do Provide a consistent look between your HTML emails, landing pages, and web site.

Do Use templates to ensure emails remain consistent across your organization.