BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

A checklist before sending an email to your subscribers

You've composed a great email. Your goal is to mobilize as many of your subscribers as possible to click the call-to-action (CTA) button, go to your website, and do something.

Donate. Register for an event. Download an eBook. Sign up to volunteer.

But before you hit "send," there are a few things you should double and triple-check. The checklist below will help you deliver emails that deliver results.

Before You Hit Send

1 Subject Line

35% of people open emails based on the subject line alone.

Think about that: If your subject line stinks, one-third of your subscribers won't even bother opening your email. So many lost opportunities to build relationships with subscribers.

Your subject lines need to shine. So before sending, craft multiple subject lines. If you're not going to A/B test them, at least you'll have a few to choose from.

Here are several types of subject lines which engage people:

- ✓ Clever and catchy

- ✓ Short and sweet

- ✓ Ask a question: Open-ended is better. If it's yes or no, a subscriber will answer the subject line question with no need to open the email.

- ✓ Include data, numbers, or stats

- ✓ Create curiosity

Boring subject lines? Steer clear of them.

If you're not sure whether your subject line will attract opens, use a tool to test them.

There are many tools to use, each with its distinct way of measuring the efficacy of a subject line. For example:

✓   SubjectLine.com

✓   Email Subject Line Tester

2   **From and Reply-To Addresses are Critical**

Email is a one-to-one communication between someone at your organization (examples: CEO, development director, program manager) and an individual subscriber. Therefore, the email address of the sender and the reply-to address should be personalized!

When you use a generic email address (examples: info@, office@, news@), you're indicating to your subscriber that they're just another person receiving your email, not someone you care to connect with.

Additionally, you're implying you're not interested in a subscriber's feedback. Very, very few people will reply to those generic email addresses. But if the email comes from rachel@yourorgrocks.org, subscribers feel as if the email is being sent to them directly by Rachel. A greater chance for a response.

Build those relationships!

3   **Easy to Skim and Scan**

Please consider how you read emails: You skim, scan, find what interests you, read a little, and then quickly decide if you want to take action. All of that occurs within a few precious seconds.

Know who else reads emails like that? Your email subscribers. Before you send your email, confirm:

✓   There's a lot of whitespace so it's easily scannable

✓   Your paragraphs are short—no longer than three sentences if possible

✓   Titles are bolded and CTAs stand out

✓   You're using a large font size (remember older readers, people with disabilities, and those reading your email on the smaller phone screen)

4 Personalization

Do you have your subscriber's first name? Use it!

Open the email by addressing them directly. That can help increase your click-through rate by up to 35%. Personalization = more people taking action.

Know what builds relationships? When you address people by their names!

5 Spelling Mistakes

Check and double-check all content before hitting "send." Yes, mistakes will happen, but at least you did your best to prevent them.

6 Test All Links

This can be very frustrating for subscribers: They like what they see and read. They want to take action. They click the CTA button and…nothing. Or worse, they are taken to the wrong destination.
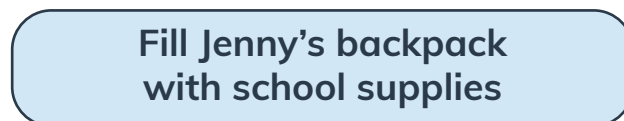
Send yourself a test email and make sure all the links are working properly.

7 CTA Button

If you received a fundraising email from an organization and you had a choice of CTA buttons to click on:

Give Now   OR   **Fill Jenny's backpack with school supplies**
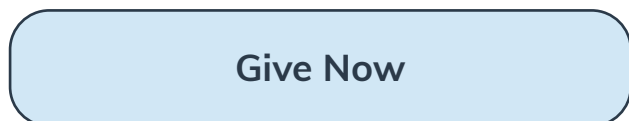
Which would you click?

Don't use boring language in your CTAs! Want people to take action? Make sure your call-to-action will mobilize them to click and convert.

8 **Segmentation**

Think about your organization's donors: annual donors, monthly givers, major donors, and many more. They're not the same!

So why send every subscriber the same email?!

Is your email part of a fundraising campaign? You can use the same basic story but tailor it to the specific segment the subscriber is from.

What does the data say?

✓ Segmented campaigns have a 50% higher click-through rate than untargeted campaigns

✓ Segmented campaigns can increase revenue by up to 760%

Just as you'd check your CRM database and segment your donors for a direct mail fundraising packet, do the same with email.

9 **Test on Different Devices**

50% of all emails are read on a mobile device. Test your emails on phones, tablets, and desktop computers. Check to see that the email is easily readable, no matter the device.

All ready? Go ahead and click "send!"

Checklist

☐ **Subject line:** Will it inspire subscribers to open and learn more?

☐ **From and reply-to email addresses:** Make sure to use a person's email, not a generic one.

☐ **Easy to skim:** Everyone scans email. Make it simple for your subscribers to do so.

☐ **Personalization:** Open the email by addressing the subscriber by their first name. This helps build the relationship!

☐ **Spelling mistakes:** Easily avoidable with a double and triple-check.

☐ **Links:** Test to make sure all links are active and link to the page where you want to send traffic.

☐ **CTA button:** Does the call-to-action language encourage people to click and take the action you want?

☐ **Segmentation:** Personalization isn't enough. Divide your email subscribers into groups and address them accordingly.

☐ **Test on different devices**: Make sure your email can be easily viewed on phones, tablets, and computers.

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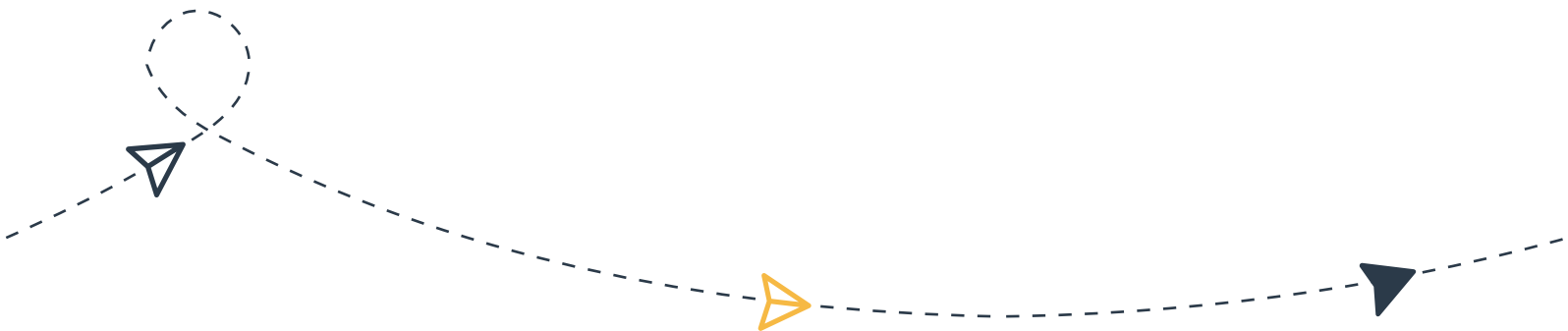
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