

Indicate a relevant, catchy, spam alternative subject line.

Subject line should be 50 characters or less, including spaces. Most email readers will only preview the first 30 characters or less.

Your email subject line is the first thing subscribers see in their inbox, and that can be the moment they decide to open it, ignore it or delete it. In addition, there is a risk that most HTML designers will spend all their time battling with rendering problems in Outlook or CSS in Gmail, forgetting to consider the importance of a good subject line. Next to the "from" address--which should be a recognizable company name--once again, the subject line **will** determine whether your e-mail gets opened:

- 1. Keep it short and sweet.** Do your best to keep your subject lines under 50 characters, including spaces, as most e-mail clients display 50 characters or less(but will only preview the first 30 characters or LESS). Keep your subject line short and sweet.
- 2. Be specific.** A vague subject line is a waste of prime real estate. A great example of this that I see often is monthly newsletters with subject lines like "The Green Thumb Newsletter: June 2007." This tells the receiver nothing about what they'll find when they open the e-mail and gives them very little reason to do so. A better approach for a newsletter like this is, "The Green Thumb: 3 Tips for Summer Gardening."
- 3. Write it last.** Many e-mail marketing services prompt you to write your subject line first as you're building your e-mail. I encourage you to come back to it when you're done with your e-mail content. It's important to determine all the elements of your e-mail first, then look for the most compelling topic to highlight in the subject line. When you're done with the body of your e-mail, read it over and pick the nugget that'll entice your readers to learn more by opening your message.
- 4. Take some time.** Don't just dash off your subject lines. Considering how important they are, take some time to think about them and write several--at least three or four--before choosing which one to use. Once you have a few subject lines you like, run them by a friend or colleague and see which one they think is most compelling.
- 5. Test it.** When you have two strong yet different subject lines, test them. Split your list in half and use a different subject line for each group. After a number of tests like this, you'll have a very good idea of what works for the people on your list. And the better you know your audience, the more effectively you can communicate with them.

6. Use of Free. As far as the word “free” goes: We definitely recommend not using “FREE” as the first word in the subject line. The word “free” is usually okay to use, but most email marketing platforms recommend not using it as the first word. Does this mean that “Free shipping” will trip a spam filter? Probably not. But it’s a safe bet that “ORDER NOW FREE SHIPPING!!!!” will.

The good news is that most of our accounts have high enough Sender Scores and IP Reputations that the use “free” wouldn’t be an issue, so the ISPs should also take these into consideration. They know that our IPs are established, white-listed, and are used legitimately. However, because this is software-driven, any best practices that can follow in order to not risk tripping their filters is recommended.

The next time you're tempted to rush through the process of writing a subject line, think about the number of e-mails you get every day. After the effort you've put into composing your e-mail, don't you want to ensure people open and read it? Writing a great subject line can be very challenging since you only have a few words to make it compelling, urgent and specific. Furthermore, always remember that you do not want to sound too sales-like nor do you want to mislead your readers, and damage your reputation. You could be spamming your audience and not even know it.

More and more words and phrases are being flagged as "spam" words by various email programs, and will automatically block your valuable marketing message, and your recipients may never see your email. What we’ve found is that the ISPs (in particular the Big 4: Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, and AOL) have greatly increased their ability to scan subject lines for keywords/phrases and formatting errors in order to pre-filter out potential spam before it reaches their customers. All of these filters are software driven with little or no human review/interaction, so part of our recommended successful "in-boxing" strategy is to take steps that help keep your legitimate message from looking like/being interpreted as spam.

We want to help you avoid this fate. Below are some of the most common offenders, and safe alternatives for you to use.

Spam to Avoid	Alternatives to this word
Do not repeat words	Be succinct, try to avoid 'spam' words.
Do not use all caps	Keep everything in lowercase if possible.
Do not use !, \$, or 100%	Keep punctuation to a minimum.
affordable	Reasonably priced, reasonable,

Importance of a GOOD SUBJECT LINE

	within your means, inexpensive
Bargain or best prices	Good deal, good buy
click here*	Go here, learn how, visit here
congratulations	Well done
debt	Owe, arrears, bills, deficit, due, liability
financing	Banking, expenditure, expenses, funding
free! for free?, for free! Or no obligation	No-cost or no-fee
guaranteed	Proven, certain, attested, affirmed, confirmed, insured
insurance	Coverage, assurance, warranty, safeguard
investment	Expenditure, expense, asset, grant
just released	New-improved
loan	Loan-plan, lending
low interest	Low risk
new car	New automobile
opportunity	Prospect opening, break, chance, occasion
paying too much	Over expenditure
permanent low interest	Definite low interest, preset
pre-approved	Pre-accepted, authorized, confirmed, credited
refinancing	Funding, outlay
special invitation	Proposal
unbelievable	Astounding, amazing, wonderful, awesome