

Whitepaper

Preheader

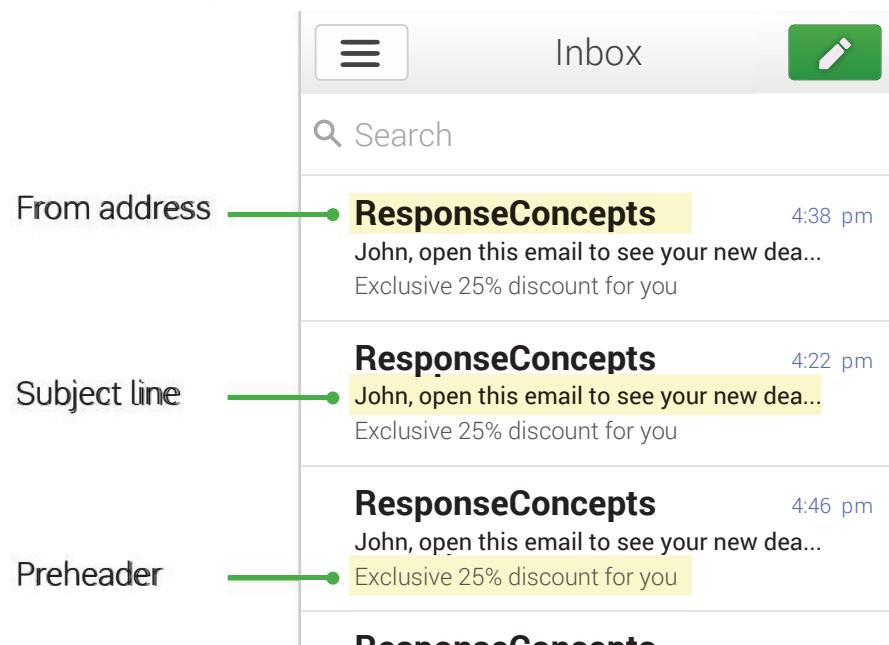
The Preheader

When marketers are optimizing their email marketing campaigns, one of the first parts they will focus on is the subject line. There's a good reason for this: Email subject lines have a huge influence over the success or failure of a campaign. An email subject line can, in fact, make or break an email's success. More information about **subject lines, from address** or more email topics in our other Whitepapers.

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Preheaders are almost completely neglected. This is strange because when you look at an inbox, much of what you see is preheader text. The preheader can be seen as the important little brother of the subject line. It's the first piece of text within the <body> of the email and you will often find it above the header of the email. The preheader will give your recipients their first impression. And in doing so, in combination with a good subject line will stimulate higher open rates. When you compare the subject line with Batman, the preheader would be Robin. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of marketers that do not create a preheader or are satisfied with the generic "if you're having trouble viewing this email..." sentence shown. Although this is not bad, it will not encourage the recipient to open the email.

The Preheader



General Tips

Short and to the point

A preheader does not have a character limit, but keep in mind that the number of characters displayed varies depending on the email client. For example Gmail has a character limit of 100 for both the subject line and preheader. So a long subject line prevents the preheader from displaying correctly. We advise you to use a preheader of 85-100 characters.

Complementing the subject line

The shorter the subject line, the better chance you have it performs. The preheader allows you to add some extra context to your message while keeping your subject line length perfect.

Sell secondary content

You might have attractive secondary offers or content that are not mentioned in the subject line. Use the preheader to promote and focus attention on them.

Call to action

In general, the best preheaders start with a call to action. Then include a short summary of what your email is about, followed by a link to the landing page. The summary should directly supports the call to action.

Personalize

You can personalize almost everything in an email. We do this for the subject line, the from address, the content of the email itself. Now start personalizing the preheader?

Personal message

A personalized note in your preheader mirrors what your readers see when they get emails from friends and family and is less likely to offend people who might be turned off by personalized subject lines.

Tease the content of your email

If your subject line is not having the desired effect, the preheader text will give you another chance to encourage readers to open your email. Use it to capture and summarize the main point of your email with some teasing information.

Offer an incentive

Want to motivate customers to buy? Offer them something they can't resist. A great deal or an incentive. It's no secret that people sign up to email lists because they expect to get something valuable in return. Show and promote them that deal or exclusive content

Repeating yourself

Marketers sometimes make the mistake of using the preheader to repeat the subject line. This doesn't add value for readers, so use the preheader to give them something fresh that will catch their eye. Never repeat yourself!

A dynamic preheader

With a dynamic preheader you go into the advanced part, by adding conditions to it. Depending on the condition values of the receiver, for example male/ female. It's determined which subject line or in this case preheader is shown.

Symbols

Start using symbols or emoji in your preheader. Now that many of us have emoji-friendly mobile devices and regularly read our email on them, it's become an increasingly popular tactic for attracting attention in crowded inboxes.

Visible preheader text

A preheader is added to the body of the email. This means that the text will not only be displayed below the subject line, but also in the top of the email. Some of you might already be thinking about hiding this preheader text in the email by giving it the same color as the background. This is known as the invisible preheader. A visible preheader is one that will have a contrasting color to his background. We advise you to use the visible version, for the simple reason that SPAM filters check for hidden content (text that use the same color as the background).

Request to “whitelist”

You might want the encourage the recipients to add the sender to an address book, safe sender list or equivalent to ensure inbox delivery. You can also use the preheader for this.

Check and Test

The best tip we can give you is to test your work. Perform some A/B tests and see what your customers are triggered by. And don't forget to let other people with a fresh view in your company read the preheader. This will lead to new insights and may point out mistakes you overlooked.

Example Preheaders

IKEA

Subject: Set the table with style!
Preheader: Your IKEA store has everything you need to make springtime gatherings truly unforgettable.

This preheader introduces the main message of the newsletter and expands the subject line. This is also a great example of a seasonal message tailored to the spring.

SAMSUNG

Subject: [name], Your Samsung Moments of Wonder
Preheader: Discover Smart TV, the revolutionary Series 9 laptop and more. [Mobile View](#)

This preheader enforces the subject line with more specific details. And as secondary content it also allows recipients to go to the mobile version.

Mazda

Subject: What do you drive?
Preheader: We believe if it's not worth driving, it's not worth building. Join Us on Facebook.

Question in the subject line followed by a teaser that triggers the reader in the preheader. To finish off, they also bring the attention to other communication channels, in this case Facebook.

Banana Republic

Subject: 3 great brands – and savings all around!
Preheader: 35% off at Banana Republic & Gap; 30% off at Old Navy.

This is a great example of expanding on your subject line, by offering an incentive.

UncommonGoods

Subject: Special Delivery
Preheader: Email not rolling out the welcome mat? Click here

The goals of this preheader is of course the same as “having problems reading this...” but it uses humor and it’s a nice change to the normal standardized versions out there.

Ballard Designs

Subject: Save 20% on Everything that Hangs on the Wall

Preheader: Plus save on all Rugs. [My Account](#) | [Mobile version](#) | [Web Version](#)

In this situation the preheader is selling a secondary content. And because there is still enough space it also has a call to action to your account, mobile and web version.

Shoebuy Private

Subject: You're Invited – Up to 75% off Propét, ASICS, Lucchese...

Preheader: Shop now – this event ends Thursday Mar. 6th at 4pm!

First off, this preheader start with a call to action, followed up by showing a sense of urgency.

JetBlue

Subject: It's Just a Matter of Facts

Preheader: For consistent delivery, add jetblueairways@email.jetblue.com to your address book.

Some preheaders encourage people to add the sender to an address book or safe sender list. Be sure to use subscriber-friendly language.