

# Whitepaper

Subject Line

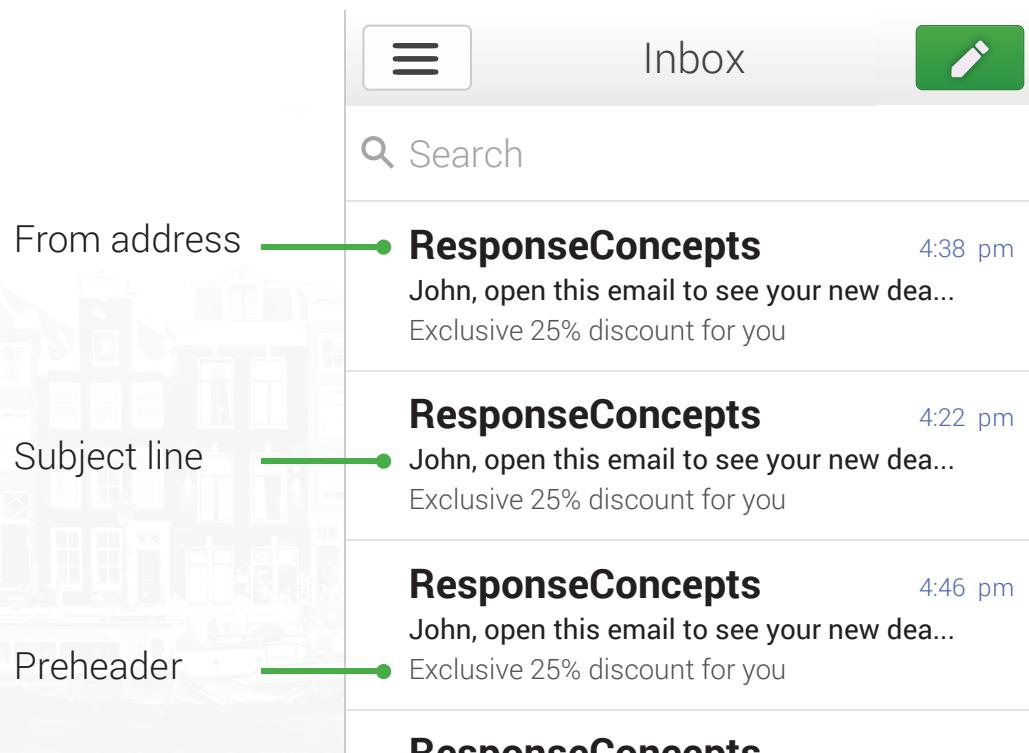
## The Subject Line

The average Internet user is bombarded with dozens of emails every day. Because of this, most people have developed a spam defence and tune out when they sense an email is trying to sell them something. But then, what makes consumers want to open your email? An effective subject line!

When receiving an email, one of the first decisions you make is: do I open the email or will this be a waste of my time? This decision is based entirely on the effectiveness and creativeness of the subject line. Granted, there are other elements of an email that makes people open emails, for example the **sender address** and **preheader**. But in this whitepaper we will focus solely on the importance of the subject line. Want to learn more about preheader and from address?

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Email marketing experts openly admit that there's no secret to creating subject lines that will guarantee you good open rates. In fact writing subject lines is one of the hardest things to do. But luckily there are a few tips and tricks that will have a positive effect on your open and click rates. Let's take a look at them.



## General Tips

### Trigger curiosity

The purpose of the subject line is getting people to open your email. The key here is to make them curious. Think about what would trigger your curiosity. A basic rule: don't describe everything that you are trying to sell in your subject line, but trigger them to wanting to find out more.

### Keep it relevant

This might sound cliché, but your subject line should describe the subject of your email. The receiver should immediately know what the email is about. Try to put yourself in the shoes of the receiver. What would trigger you to open?

### Short and to the point

Shorter is better! Aim for 50 characters or less. Making the subject line longer runs the risk of having the end cut off, especially if a recipient is using a mobile device to check their email.

Keep the message straightforward and avoid splashy promotional phrases. Subject lines with 4 to 10 words produce the best open rates.

### Increase frequency during the holidays

During the holidays we suggest you raise the frequency of your send out's. During this time of the year more purchases are done and the average order value is higher. You want to make sure that they spend their money at your company and not the competitor. During the holidays, you can email your database (almost) every day. The more often they see your name in their inbox, the higher chance they will remember your brand.

### Show a sense of urgency

Your subject lines should trigger customers to open your email immediately. To do so, you need to use urgent language. Motivate them to open the email now or risk missing out on something special. For example, send out emails:

- ✓ with limited time offers
- ✓ that give discounts for the first few to respond
- ✓ with action words
- ✓ showing a limited supply of products

### Personalise

The open rates of emails with personalised subject lines is around 20 percent higher than those without personalisation. Research has found that personalising both the first and last name has the biggest impact, followed by personalisation of last-name and first-name only.

## Capital letters and exclamation marks

Try to refrain from using all capital letters, or exclamation marks in your subject lines. In normal everyday life you would also hate being yelled at.

## Tone of voice

Use the correct tone of voice, use the word "you". This gives the email a friendly and more conversational tone. For example: "Are you ready for the time of your life?"

## Write actively

Avoid phrases containing words like: may, can and become. Write actively, this keeps the subject line compact. For example: "Ends Today: Take 20% off your entire order".

## Symbols

Using symbols or emoji in the subject line is a great way to attract that little bit of extra attention. Keep in mind that not all email clients support symbols, if a character isn't supported the recipient will see a □ character instead.

## Solve a problem

What problem does your product solve? The recipients will pay more attention to your email if you can solve a (common) problem for them. For example: "Cut your electric bill in half with this new energy monitor".

Offer an incentive

Want your customers to buy from you? Offer them something they can't resist, a great deal or an incentive. A couple of examples are:

- ✓ a gift with a purchase
- ✓ a subscription to a loyalty program
- ✓ a percentage off their purchase
- ✓ an actual discount on their purchase.

## Ask a question

Questions are always good to encourage subscribers to open your email. It makes them think about the question and possible answer. Furthermore it gives the idea that opening the email will provide them with the answer, as long as the question was open-ended.

### **Words to avoid (if possible)**

Recipients have the power to delete your email or mark it as "SPAM". But in some cases, your email does not reach the recipients inbox at all. One of the reasons may be a handful of words that can trigger certain SPAM folders when used in the subject line.

Some examples: Percent off, reminder, help, buy, clearance, earn \$, make \$, earn, cash, claim, collect, income, get out of, increase your, prescriptions, free, millions and urgent. The principle of avoiding words is a bit outdated and there are a lot of discussions on the relevance in relation to email authentication (SPF & DKIM). But to be on the save side, try to refrain from them. If you need to use one of these words, then please do not start the subject line with them.

### **Check and Test**

The best tip we can give: Test your work! Perform some A/B or split-run tests and see what triggers your customers. Don't forget to let other people with a fresh view in your company read the subject line. This will lead to new insights and may point out mistakes you overlooked.

### **Last minute**

The final tip may sound straight forward, but this is still happening in 50% of the companies. Start your preparation in time! When the previous mailing is send out, start thinking about the new mailing and it's subject line.

## Example Subject Lines

### **"Hey"**

Imagine getting an email like this in your inbox, with a personal name as the sender address. It's overly familiar, which makes you wonder, "What would this person have to say to me? I've got to click this now."

### ***Don't open this email***

Ever been told to not do something? Being asked to refrain from something can actually have the opposite effect. You now want to do that even more.

### ***Uh-oh, your prescription is expiring***

This subject line performs best when send at the right time. The subject line gives the impression to be helpful and friendly and not as a company trying to sell you something.

### ***Deals that make us proud (unlike our nephew, Steve)***

This subject line is there to make you laugh and it works because it's completely unexpected.

### ***Happy Birthday [NAME] – Special gift for you!***

Personalisation works! According to multiple studies, emails that included the first name of the recipient in their subject line had higher open and click rates than emails that did not.

### ***You're missing out on ...***

The points can be anything you want. In the end most people don't want to miss out on things, especially if those things could save them money. Earn \$10,000 a Year renting out your house during your holiday. Examples of the benefit subject line are everywhere. They generally contain an implied promise.

### ***Tired of Making Your Boss Rich?***

Question subject lines generally perform good because they trigger the reader to find out the answer. Most of the time, the reader already knows the answer, and your subject line is only feeding their need for confirmation.

### ***Your New Year's Resolutions for Losing Weight***

Seasonal subject line always perform good. And just like the subject line above, even after the season, you can still refer and use it to trigger the reader.

### ***10 ways to improve your income***

Many of the factors that make up a good blog post title also make a good email subject line. Besides that, our brains are naturally drawn to digits. This tends to be why top 10 lists are so successful.