

# HOW TO DESIGN YOUR EMAILS



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## EMAIL DESIGN



**Congratulations! You've gotten your subscribers to open your emails. Now, what do they see? Think about not only how your content reads, but also what it looks like.**

While it's true that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, here are a few basics to guide you to design success:

- Think about the width of your email. Most common is 600 pixels.
- Remember that Flash, JavaScript, video and other rich media won't work in an HTML email.
- Focus on what will appear "above the fold" in the preview pane on desktop computers, laptops, and on mobile devices.
- Pretty is not always better; sometimes text-heavy emails can be quite effective. Publisher's Clearing House often uses text-heavy emails that get 40% open rates and 87% click-to-open rates!
- Provide a plain text version for subscribers who simply don't like HTML versions.

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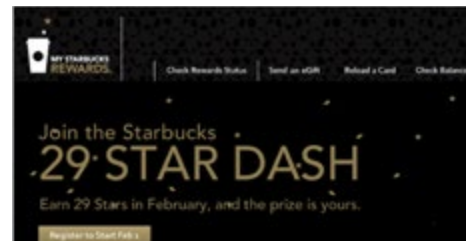
### Images

Most email clients now block all images by default, so users must take the initiative to unblock if they want to see them. The semi-good news, according to David Daniels of The Relevancy Group: “55% of consumers stated that they turn on the images in the emails that they receive, which rivals the 57% of consumers who state they check their primary personal email account on their mobile devices.”

Nonetheless, many recipients will be looking at your emails without images. Here are a few steps you can take to respond:

- **Create bulletproof buttons** that look like images but are actually cleverly formatted HTML. The buttons ensure that subscribers will see the most important points of your email, regardless of whether or not they’ve blocked images. The folks at Mass Transmit have created a cool bulletproof button generator. Give it a try!

- **Use image “alt” tags** so that recipients who’ve blocked images know what they’re missing. For example, a picture of a red cashmere sweater could have an alt tag that reads, “red cashmere sweater.” If you’re offering 15% off of the price of that sweater, the alt tag should definitely read, “15% off red cashmere sweater.”
- **Test animated GIFs.** Starbucks used animated GIFs in a February 2012 email. We can’t animate the example for you in this guide but, if you squint, you can probably imagine the stars “falling” down the page.



- **Get creative with images-off design.** Check out what the creative team at [Pizza Express](#) did:



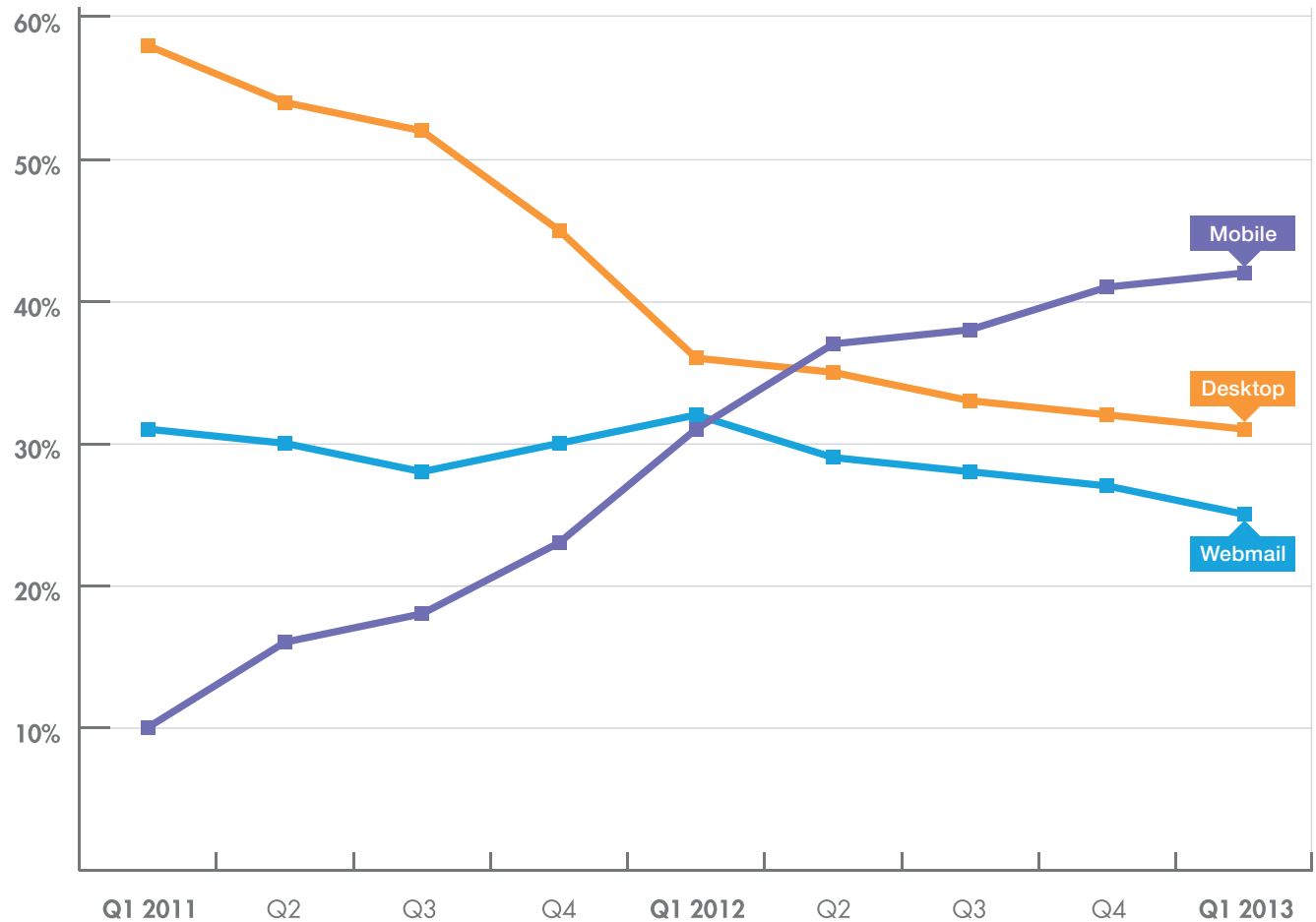
Once again, it comes back to trust. In order to get subscribers to care enough about your images to download them, they must have confidence in your content.

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## MOBILE DESIGN

Eighty-one percent of people read their emails on mobile devices, and **41% of commercial emails were opened on devices** in the second half of 2012. This is up from 27% a year earlier, and from 13% at the end of 2010. When we see the numbers for 2013 and beyond they are sure to be even higher.

Yet even with all this explosive growth in mobile email, **58% of email marketers are still not designing for it**. And MarketingSherpa reports that 31% of marketers don't even know their mobile email open rate!



Source: [Litmus](#)

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## MOBILE DESIGN

### Scalable and Responsive Design

There are two common design options for mobile — scalable or responsive:

- **Scalable:** The layout is clickable and the type is readable, even when reduced 50% in size. Scalable design avoids large widths and includes big type and big buttons.
- **Responsive:** The layout of a page responds based on the proportions of the screen on which it's presented. This design is becoming increasingly common for use in emails, as well as on websites.

### Media Queries

Media queries allow you to control the layout and display of your email based on the mobile device that is being used to open it. However, it's important to know that not all mobile email clients support media queries. Style Campaign, a company that specializes in responsive email design, maintains a good list of what is supported by various clients.

You can also use media queries to fine-tune your code with designs for specific devices and situations, including horizontal vs. vertical layout, and even iPad-specific layouts. Media queries also let you include mobile-specific CSS to handle single-column layouts and widths under 600 pixels. But there are a few things to remember when using media queries:

- Most people access mobile email on 320 x 480 pixel screens.
- If a device does not support responsive design, then it will be scaled. So it's worth thinking about a scalable design, nonetheless.

- Readers use their fingers to select items, so use pronounced image buttons and keep them simple. Links and buttons with a minimum target area of 44 x 44 pixels (per Apple guidelines) are ideal.
- Make sure images are readable when resized, or include mobile-specific images. The minimum font size displayed on iPhones is 13 pixels; anything smaller will be upscaled and could break your layout.
- Use *display: none*; to hide any part of the design that is unnecessary for email. Extra callouts and social sharing buttons may work on a desktop or laptop computer, but can clutter a mobile experience.
- Pay attention to the pre-header — the preview shown in many mobile email clients. Give your pre-header language the same care and attention that you apply to your subject line, and avoid simply displaying 'view in browser' text.



### @media Support Across Mobile Apps

iPhone native	✓
iPad native	✓
Android 2.1 native	—
Android 2.2 native	✓
Android 2.3 native	✓
Android 4.x native	✓
Gmail mobile apps	—
Mailbox iOS app	✓
Yahoo! mobile apps	—
Windows Mobile 7	—
Windows Mobile 7.5	✓
Windows Mobile 8	—
BlackBerry OS 6	✓
BlackBerry OS 7	✓
BlackBerry Z10	✓
Kindle Fire native	✓

Source: [stylecampaign.com](http://stylecampaign.com)

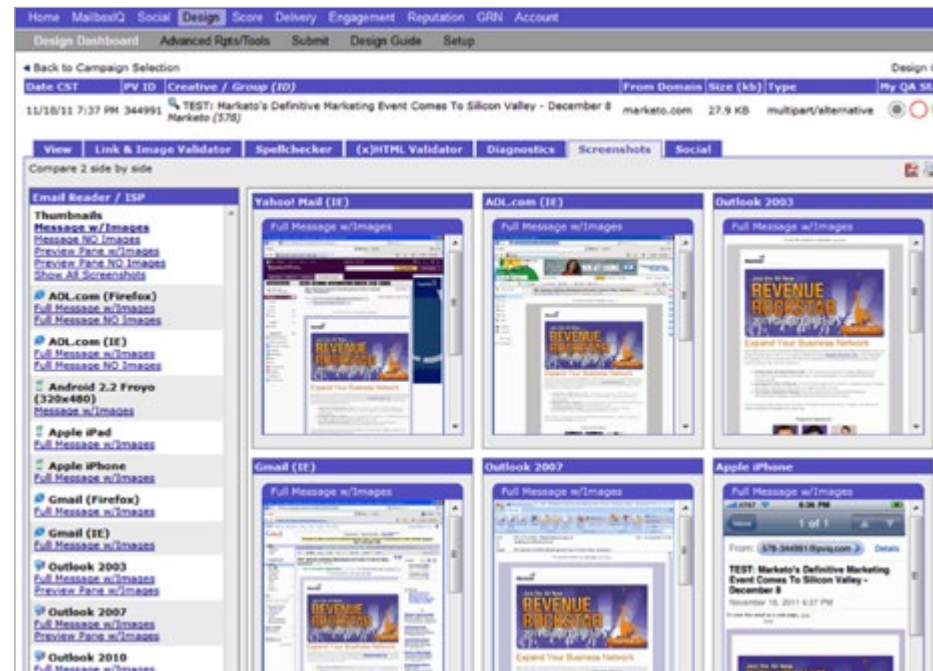
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## DESIGN TESTING

### Design Testing across Clients

One of the most frustrating things about designing for email is that you have little control over what your audience actually sees. There are a lot of different email clients across desktop and mobile and tons of variation in how they display HTML and handle previews panes. To make things worse, users can customize email appearance by changing font size and turning images on or off. The same email client can even display messages differently from ISP to ISP! If there's one thing you can be sure of, it's that your email doesn't look the same to all subscribers.

You can't control everything, but you can test your design across different clients. With enough resources, you could do this manually, but, better yet, you can use a tool such as [Marketo's Email Deliverability Power Pack](#) to automate the testing process. Here's what the output of our tool looks like.



Source: Marketo Email Deliverability Power Pack



### The 6 Golden Rules of Mobile Email

by: **Simms Jenkins**

**CEO & Founder of BrightWave Marketing**

I believe mobile to be the biggest thing to ever impact email. It can also affect your brand since email closely ties to how your brand is perceived. If you send too many emails, offer a poor user experience, bad rendering, etc., your brand equity can suffer. Good mobile email drives revenue. According to Adobe, 71% said mobile purchasing decisions are most influenced by emails from companies. That is huge!

1. Smartphone owners are more likely to read emails than make calls
2. Consumers read more emails on mobile devices than a browser or desktop
3. How your email looks on smartphones matters to consumers
4. Understand where your subscribers read your email to determine the right approach
5. What you are trying to accomplish in your mobile email should impact your approach & strategy
6. Device matters and behavior varies

## **Marketing Software. Easy, Powerful, Complete.**

Marketo, (NASDAQ MKTO) uniquely provides an easy-to-use, powerful and complete marketing software platform that propels fast-growing small companies and global enterprises alike. Marketo® marketing automation and sales effectiveness software streamlines marketing processes, delivers more campaigns, generates more win-ready leads, and improves sales performance. With proven technology, comprehensive services and expert guidance, Marketo helps thousands of companies around the world turn marketing from a cost center into a revenue driver.



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