

Webinar

How To Get More Emails Opened
And Acted Upon



Summary

Non-operational emails face a significant challenge: - only 15% of them get read¹

This trend has been on a downward curve for a few years. Email providers are using increasingly powerful AI to help 'filter' our inboxes. Meaning we see only the emails we really want to see. Great from a consumer point of view but not a prospecting one.

We've provided this short handout as a follow up to our webinar on email reading rates. Bringing together the most immediately useful insights and practical tools the web has to offer, helping you improve your email success.

Spam Filters

Spam filters are complex systems, looking at thousands of aspects of your email before deciding what to do with it. However, you can break these aspects into three simple categories to consider:

Your Email Address – are all the certificates in place, do domain registrations match up and have you ever been marked as spam?

Your Reputation – What do your recipients tend to do with your emails? Ignore them, delete without reading or do they engage by reading, replying or forwarding them on?

Your Content – Do you have spam words or phrases, are the html and images all properly set up and appropriate. The biggest advances of AI are now also focused on identifying the purpose of your email to 'filter' it into the right tab of an inbox.

So, what can you do to navigate these three hurdles?

¹ <http://bit.ly/2C1NmL5>

Spam Filter Tips

1. Review your email setup

www.mail-tester.com will review your email reputation and technical setup. Flagging any technical inconsistencies or your appearance on various spam blacklists. **Ignoring any issues here will render most of the following advice pointless because spam filter put a lot of weight on these things.**

To use the tool simply send an email to the provided address. If it's all green, move straight onto the next tip because you're fine. Any red or amber issues need forwarding on to your technical people using the link provided at the bottom of your results page.

2. Protect your reputation

Email providers track how many of your emails are ignored or deleted without reading. The higher the frequency of being ignored the more likely all your emails will be treated as low priority and shoved in some clutter folder.

Removing disengaged subscribers from your subscription lists will boost your engagement ratios and see all your emails treated with higher importance. Even the one to one emails you send.

If you struggle to get backing for this, try and at least move the disengaged onto a lower frequency list that emails quarterly rather than monthly/weekly.

3. Content: Check, check and check again

The internet has several tools to review an email before sending. I recommend you run your emails through the following.

- www.mail-tester.com – this mainly looks to the content structure of your email, especially Html and image to text ratios. Both are important when it comes to the filters.
- www.hemingwayapp.com – Emails need to be short and to the point. This tool will review the words used in your email and recommend improvements to make it shorter and punchier.

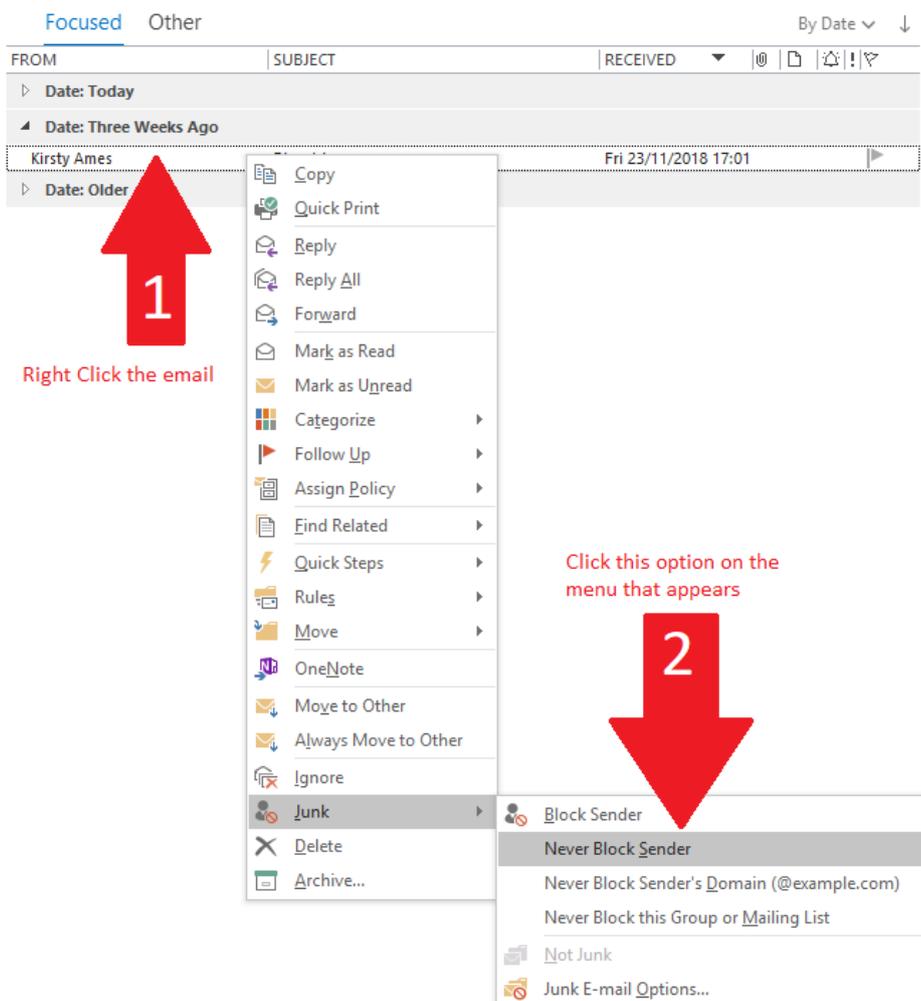
Safe senders List

There is one sure-fire way to get your email into the inbox of your contact and that is have them add you to their Safe Sender List. Being on this list is a free pass through the spam filter and well worth a little bit of effort to acquire.

If you suspect you're hitting the spam and in conversation with the prospect it's a simple two-step process for them to add you. I recommend running it a few times on your own emails to practice then talk some colleagues through it.

1. Ask them to find an email from you and right click it
2. A menu will appear. Select Junk -> Never Block Sender. (3rd from bottom)

Easy, and to help here is a screenshot of what you will be walking them through.



Subject Lines

Assuming your email navigates the filters and makes it to a targets main inbox it faces the next great challenge. Namely the 120 other emails that have landed in your prospects inbox that day².

The subject line is all you can use to overcome this challenge. Fortunately, the research is extensive on subject lines. Findings do vary between industries, country and purpose of the email but I have plucked some of the more consistent findings to give you three tips which can improve the open rate of your emails.

1. Personal

Personalise each email you send to the recipient, the psychological idea behind this is implicit egoism. Basically, we prefer things that are somehow connected to us. Name and Job title are obvious and powerful influencers whilst referencing the recipient's terminology and priorities is also a subtler form of personalisation.

For example, an email promoting a webinar on running events which generate more business development opportunities may send two emails based on the audience role.

- Sales role = "How to close more leads in time for Q4"
- Marketing role = "5 tips for boosting event ROI"

2. Short

The commonly held view is the shorter the subject line the more likely it will be opened, but it's not backed by the data³. **Don't sacrifice a compelling subject line for the sake of brevity.**

However, 54% of emails are read on mobile and 35 characters is the cut off for most inbox displays. So, make sure your 'hook' is within the first 35 characters.

² <http://bit.ly/2C2w7td>

³ <http://bit.ly/2LeUxCV>

3. Test

Just a few tweaks to a subject line can have nearly 20% difference in open rates⁴. These changes are subtle but significant, so I recommend you run any subject line through www.sendcheckit.com first.

However, you'll need to start conducting A/B tests to determine what works best with your audience.

As many as you can

During the research I found several very good articles on creating new subject lines that are impactful, and I've linked my favourites below.

- Hubspot - [sales email subject lines that get prospects to open, read and respond](#)
- Digital Marketer - [101 best email subject lines](#)
- Co-Schedule - [Catchy Blog Titles](#)

I wouldn't recommend straight copying but they will provide the inspiration to turn a blank sheet of paper into a first attempt. The real trick, the secret used by the biggest online marketers comes after you've written that first attempt.

Write another 24 different subject lines - for one email it sounds a lot, but it's worth it.

But this is a consistent piece of advice and trying it you find that you write a lot of mediocre and rubbish subjects, but you'll also get some gems to use in your A/B tests.

⁴ <http://bit.ly/2C2ojl4>

Timings

The time that you send an email can have a significant impact on open rates. The research available provides some good times to start testing with, but again you should be testing your clients and prospects to find out the optimum for your specific industry and target group.

Best Times

1. **6am** - Catches the early starters who check email first thing (54%) and for those that hit the inbox first thing on arriving at work.
2. **10am** – More likely to coincide with the post early meeting, coffee run, crisis management. Odds are your email will be arriving as they are looking at the inbox.
3. **2pm** - The worst of the day is over, and energy drained people take on the relatively 'easy' task of emails where they can have a sense of achievement quickly.
4. **8pm – 12am** - Many of us scan emails as they come in over the evening, and if yours is an email that may take a few minutes to read an article or watch a video that's much more likely in the relaxed atmosphere of home than the office.

Best Days

There are two distinct groups for the best day to send emails. I would go so far as to say they are exact opposites; the best day for one is the worst day for the other

Entrepreneurs/workaholics

Weekends are prime time for these people, with Saturday getting nearly 45% open rates and Sunday almost 35%. Compared to the weekdays which all hover in the 20-25% boundaries this is a huge step up for a little co-ordination.

Everyone Else

If your target isn't considering the needs of their employer or business 24/7, then we see the inverse is true. Weekends are the worst performers, at just over 5% open rates.

Compare that to the nearly 20% read rate that the midweek trio of Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday enjoy, and you can see that there isn't a 'one size fits all' strategy.

Where to Start

If your target market is mid to upper level management then start out by testing your email open rates with the following A/B test

1. Tuesday – 10am
2. Thursday – 8pm

If your target are SME owners or C-level decision makers, then start by testing the following email open rates

1. Saturday – 12am
2. Sunday – 6pm

Once you've got some data keep testing to identify if your targets all have an optimum or form clear groups, some preferring out of hours to in hours emails or weekdays over weekends.