3 WAYS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH EMAIL

We asked students about commercial client emails they get from us.

UCAS

HERE ARE 3 KEY FINDINGS:

1. Make a connection

Students told us emails that spoke to them personally and related to their interests were best:

👎 "Long, seemingly unimportant information. Not feeling as if it relates to me in any way."

👍 "If the email is addressed directly to me and is based on what I am interested in."

Our research shows that **personalising email with the recipient's name or subject of interest** can increase open rates by up to 4%. **Using a pre-header** also helps grab attention and can improve open rates by up to 7%.

2. Be clear

75% of email views are on mobile and many students have expressed to us their want for clearer content: (statistics from Inbox Monster February 2024)

👎 "Having too much information or them being too bland with no colour"

👍 "Punchy, relevant title and eye-catching design and content."

A one column or responsive design ensures email creative works on any device. **Snappy content, clear calls to action and use of buttons** also improve engagement – especially on mobile. With the average email read time being 14 seconds it is key to display important facts in the clearest and most concise way possible. (Statistics from Inbox Monster February 2024)

3. Stay relevant

Students used the word 'relevant' / 'irrelevant' 220 times when asked about email engagement:

👎 "If it has a lot of wording that is mostly useless and has no imagery or some sort of media."

👍 "Straight to the point, provide interesting, relevant, and fun information."

Targeting your campaign and tailoring your message to that audience is key to improving relevance and driving engagement. **Imagery can also be a really good way to get a message across quickly**.

For help with your marketing campaign contact: **01242 544 881** / **services@ucas.ac.uk** or see our website for more **creative tips & specifications**.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Think about subject line length

It is key to consider mobile opens when you put together your subject line. With around 75% of email opens happening on mobile, subject lines need to convey a lot in a short space. 40 characters is a good length to aim for. (Email statistics from Inbox Monster February 2024)

2. Make good use of pre headers

A third of what recipients see in their inbox when your email lands in it is the pre-header. Use this extra space to add some extra details, such as a call to action, to entice your recipient to open your email.

3. Avoid spam words

Free, £, cashback, using all capital letters can all trigger spam filters in inboxes. This can mean your email doesn't land in someone's inbox but makes its way into Junk, potentially meaning it goes unseen.

4. Design your email for mobile

Think about how long a recipient may spend scrolling before they get to the first potential area to engage. Place buttons and call to actions high up in the email, don't leave them until after long paragraphs of text or recipients may not make it to them.

5. Carefully consider your targeting when retargeting

Resending the same email to all who received your first email may drive people to mark the email as spam. It's far better to retarget those who did engage with new content which follows on from the first send they received, creating a clear customer journey or, retarget those who did not engage with a new subject line or fresh email content to provide them with something new and different.

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BEST
PRACTICES
CONTINUED...

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ACCESSIBILITY

Considering accessible content is a simple & quick a way to make content more logical, more readable, and generally more usable for all – and might improve engagement!

Here are our top 5 tips to make your emails accessible for all & create the best user experience.

1. Include Alt Text on your images

Alt text can help describe images that a visually impaired user may not be able to see i.e., a screen reader will read the descriptions aloud. Be descriptive with alt text but keep the user experience in mind. If you need multiple sentences to describe an image's message, it probably belongs in the text of the email.

2. Check your colour contrast

It is important to ensure that you choose colours of high contrast when layering them on top of each other. You can use online contrast checkers to check text vs background colours, these will help make recommendations where needed. Those who can't see colour might miss the message so it should be used alongside something such bold or italics, to ensure the meaning can be understood by all.

3. Think about text layout

Text formatting & layout is key. It can be harder for people with dyslexia to read centre-aligned text - even on mobile. Headers, buttons & things to highlight are okay to be centred, but for body text keep this left aligned. Keep language concise and clear and avoid big paragraphs of text.

4. Consider Mobile Opens

75% of UCAS opens take place on mobile. The wording of CTAs is important - 'Click here' may make sense when using a laptop or desktop, but less so for a mobile device. Text length and positioning of call-to-action buttons is especially important when read times average around 14 seconds – recipients may not scroll through all your content if it's too long. [Statistics from Inbox Monster Feb 2024]

5. Use images & GIFs appropriately

Flashing GIFs could cause problems for those with epilepsy. If using them stick to slower animations & fewer rotations.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the international standards organisation for the internet. Their accessibility guidelines recommend that web content does not:

▶ Contain anything that flashes more than 3 times in any 1 second period or

▶ Flash below the general flash and red flash thresholds.