

General Guidelines

Use a fixed width of 600 pixels

600 pixels is the recommended email width. If it's any wider, smaller screen/resolution viewers may need to scroll right when viewing the email. Set the master table's width to 600px or under.

Use fully qualified URLs

Please make sure to use the fully qualified URLs for tags such as "a," "img," etc.

For example:

Incorrect: ``

Correct: ``

Do not use JavaScript

Do not use JavaScript in your email campaigns, as many email clients disable it.

Do not use DHTML

Messages using DHTML require consistent tag interpretation for the email message to function and appear properly. Due to differing interpretation of tags, as well as the inability of some email applications to support DHTML, we do not suggest the use of DHTML in messages at this time.

Do not use forms

If a form is required in the email, our suggestion is to replicate the form as an image and make it clickable. This will give every subscriber the same functionality.

Do not use rich media such as video, inline audio, or Flash

Instead, post a link that connects directly to this type of media. Many recipients will not have a compatible platform, email software, or the correct version needed to render them correctly. Please note that Flash does not work in web-based email, as it requires an activeX object and many email programs/accounts disable activeX.

Avoid using a single large image for your email

For those who read their email offline or who block images, try to at least incorporate some HTML text into the message so they can still see what you have to offer. In addition emails created with a single large image have a greater chance of being filtered as spam. If your email is mostly image-based, at the very *least* slice your image into multiple images and display them using multiple image tags.

Do not use layers (DIV tags)

Using DIVs will require CSS formatting, which does not render properly in most popular email clients. Keeping your emails table-based will help ensure that your formatting will display properly in most popular email clients.

Design emails for above the fold and to read top-to-bottom and left-to-right

Make sure the top portion of the email carries your key message. Design your email to read top-to-bottom and left-to-right

Keep the file to a reasonable size

Try to keep emails less than 50 kbytes. But larger emails up to 100 kbytes generally won't cause filtering or loading issues.

If your HTML is large, you run the risk of having the message filtered as a virus.

Link to a web version of your email message

This will benefit recipients whose email clients don't render your email properly, no matter how carefully it is formatted.

Also put the link to the web version of the email near the top for maximum visibility.

Image Guidelines

Keep image sizes small

This will help keep the rendering time low.

Acceptable image formats: GIF, JPEG, or PNG and image maps

Use image alt tags and border="0" for linked images

Use a short action-oriented phrase describing an image in case the image doesn't display due to image blocking or slow loading time. Adding a border of 0 to an tag wrapped in an <a> tag will prevent unattractive default borders from being assigned to your images in certain email clients.

For example:

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Do not add width and height attributes to your images

Adding a width and a height to your tags is fine in most cases; however, this may complicate editing in many email campaigns requiring the updating of images.

Avoid using background images

Background images will not render in some popular email clients (such as Outlook 2007). Create the email's look and structure in a way that makes good visual use of well-placed image tags.

Table Guidelines

Do Not Use colspans/rowspans

Strategically nest tables to simulate the results usually achieved by the use of "colspans" and "rowspans."

Use basic HTML to format tables and table cells

Assign a width and height, in pixels, to every table and table cell in your email. In most cases, using height="0" is sufficient. In table cells, it's always best to also include "valign" and "align" attributes. Setting these attributes will help ensure that your layout will render consistently across various email clients.

Table example: <table width="600" height="0" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0" align="center">

Table cell example 1: <td width="50" height="0" valign="top" align="left">

Table cell example 2: <td width="50" height="50" valign="top" align="left">

Use inline CSS to format table borders

For example: <table width="600" height="800" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0" style="border: 1px solid #000000;">

Style Guidelines

Limit the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Avoid using CSS for most page formatting. It is best to format as many page elements as possible using basic HTML instead of CSS. This will help ensure that the email's formatting will remain more consistent across most popular email clients. Some CSS styles such as border, font-weight, text-decoration, and color, may be used inline—but should not be embedded in the head of your HTML document.

Use tags to format text

For example: text

Use tags and inline styles together to format text links

An inline style may be used in your <a> tag to reinforce the formatting you specified in your tag.

For example:

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<a href="#" style="text-decoration: underline; color: #000000;"><font face="arial" size="2" color="#000000">link</font></a>
```

Use • for bulleted lists instead of

This will help keep bullet points consistent across email clients.