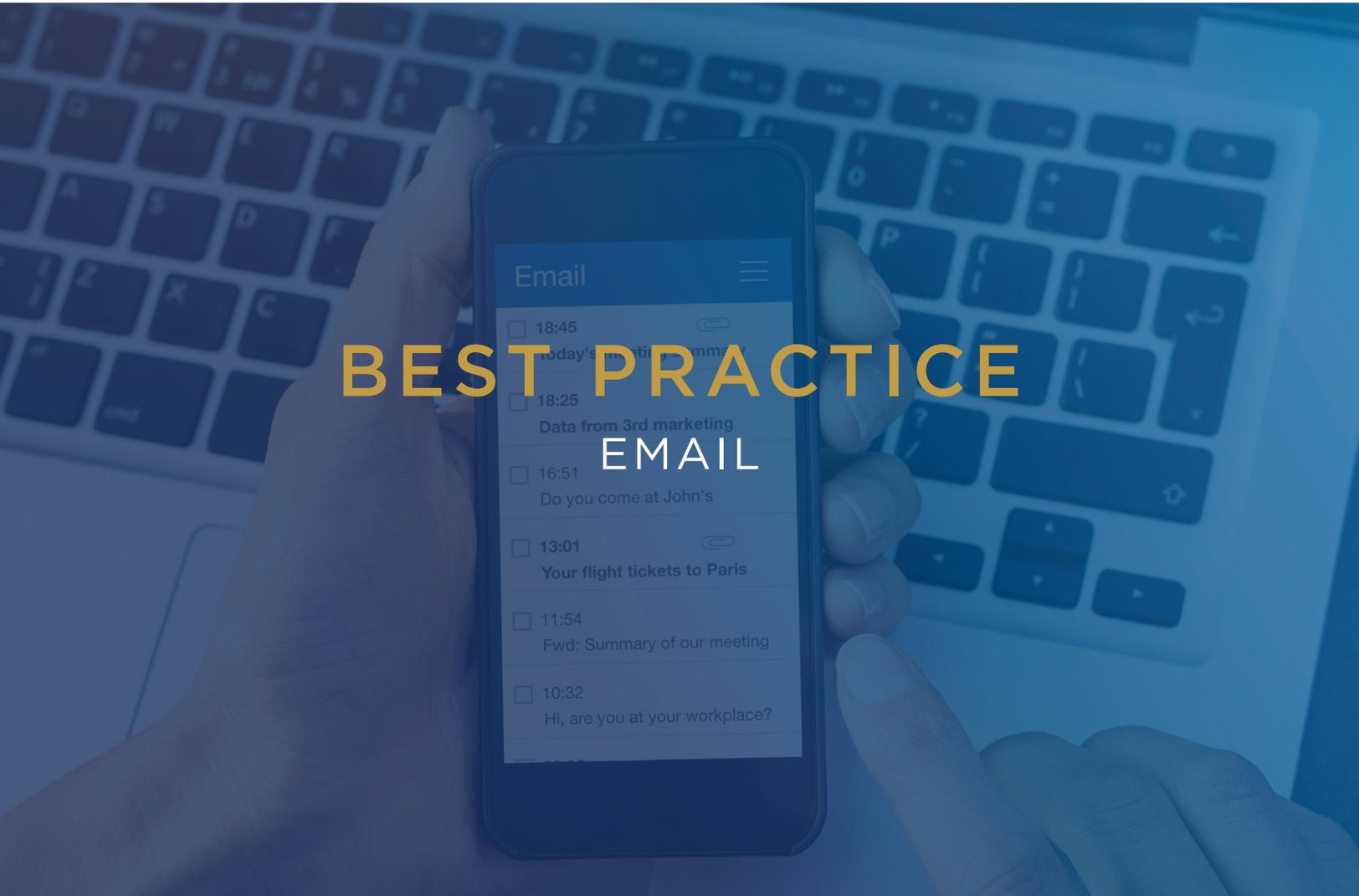


**BEST PRACTICE**  
EMAIL



There's a lot to consider when writing an email campaign that's geared toward sales. This guide can help you understand best practices, avoid common pitfalls and create email marketing campaigns that better connect with prospects and clients.

**GENERAL TIPS**



- **Subject lines:** They're key to getting your email opened. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:
  - » Keep it simple. Resist the urge to overuse CAPS or unnecessary punctuation, and avoid words or phrases that can trigger spam filters (“act now,” “call now,” “buy,” etc.).
  - » Keep it short. The ideal length for a subject line is 41 - 50 characters
  - » Emojis and symbols are an option — they can make your subject lines more personal and engaging when appropriate. Just make sure the emoji you have in mind is supported by all major email carriers.
- **Premade templates:** Pre-built email templates make it easy to build emails in just minutes. With a couple of clicks, you can create and send emails, newsletters, announcements, offers and more.
- **Personalization:** This doesn't just mean inserting someone's name into the subject line. It can also include changing content based on user behaviors, or simply segmenting your lists to send more personalized content to specific audiences.





- **Don't purchase email or contact lists:** All email platform user agreements explicitly prohibit purchasing lists. With CCPA, GDPR and strict privacy rules in place, email marketers may only send marketing emails to those who have expressly and explicitly opted in to receive email communications. Violations of these rules can result in high SPAM reporting, IP blacklisting by ESPs and ultimately the sender being kicked off the sending email platform. CAN-SPAM legislation also allows for fines to be assessed for this type of marketing tactic.
- **Ensure the sending domains in the email platform have all appropriate SPF, DKIM and DMARC information:** These are all ways to authenticate mail servers. They prove that you are a legitimate sender, that your identity has not been compromised and that you're not sending emails on behalf of someone else. These anti-spam measures are becoming increasingly important and will one day be required by all mail services and servers.
- **Use confirmed opt-ins rather than single opt-ins, whenever possible:** Confirmed opt-ins are when a confirmation message is sent to a subscriber to confirm that they want to receive your messages in their inbox. With the California Consumers Protection Act (CCPA) and other privacy regulations around the country, confirmed opt-ins are becoming more important and will help protect your company against incurring fines.
- **Be clear who is emailing:** Make sure your sender name clearly identifies who (what company) is actually sending the communication.
- **Don't over-send:** A consistent, yet measured, email schedule will keep you top-of-mind with your audience, without overwhelming them. You want to be supplying subscribers with unique, interesting content that effectively nurtures leads, prospects or customers.

## CAN-SPAM compliance requires:

- Clear, non-deceptive subject lines
- No false or misleading header information
- Sender's valid physical postal address on the email
- Inclusion of an easy opt-out or unsubscribe mechanism — these should be processed within 10 days



- **Keep your list clean:** Regularly update your mailing lists. Promptly remove any hard bounced or blocked emails, and purge emails of those who don't engage with you.





Accessibility should always be a top priority in your email marketing efforts, but it's especially important for senior audiences.

- **Use appropriate ALT text:** ALT text, or alternative text, is a brief, backup description of an image that displays when the recipient has images blocked or turned off by default.

If your image serves a functional purpose with no live text to support it, then minimal ALT text should be included. But, in instances where images simply support the live text and add no functional value (such as decorative bullets, ornamentals, etc.), empty ALT tags should be programmed.

- **Use 15 or 16-pixel text in body of emails:** 15-pixel text is the minimum recommendation for readability, and CMS requires nothing smaller than 16-pixel text for Medicare communications.
- **Technical set-up in HTML:** Maintain a logical structure to the HTML, declare the content type and language (e.g., EN for English) and include “role” on table elements. These items will help screen readers correctly read the content of the email in logical order, with appropriate context and in the correct language.
- **Use appropriate color contrast:** Color is key to readability. This is especially true for older audiences, people with color blindness or those with other visual impairments. Tone-on-tone content (e.g., dark blue text against a light blue background) should be avoided whenever possible. Generally, the more contrast there is between the text and the background, the easier it will be for all audiences to read.
- **Use the aria-label attribute (Accessible Rich Internet Applications labels):** Aria labels add extra descriptive information to HTML elements to enhance the experience for people using screen readers. Aria labels are very powerful and can help screen readers more accurately read content in a way that is consumable and makes sense to the user.
- **Use left-align (flush-left) copy:** Justified and centered content can be very difficult for recipients with dyslexia to read. Centered text should be limited to no more than two lines, and is generally only used for headers or subheads, not body paragraphs.
- **Use bulletproof buttons:** Bulletproof buttons are HTML buttons that will display regardless of whether images are turned on or not. Image-based buttons should be avoided.



Solid email copy and design is not only relevant and looks great, it can also deliver higher clickthrough rates. Here are a few guidelines to consider:

600 px

Trouble viewing this? [Read this email online.](#)

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- OTC: Up to \$75 to spend on over-the-counter items from Aetna's health and wellness catalog each quarter
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**ESPAÑOL (SPANISH):** ATENCIÓN: Si usted habla español, se encuentran disponibles servicios gratuitos de asistencia de idiomas. Visite nuestro sitio web en [www.AetnaMedicare.com](http://www.AetnaMedicare.com) o llame al número de teléfono que se indica en este material.

- Try to keep emails widths in the 600- to 700-pixel range.
- Consider a “mobile first” design strategy, reviewing the email as it would be viewed on a mobile device. Generally, one-column layouts are the best option.
- Try to stick to two typefaces, if possible.
- Use appropriate personalization to create a feeling of one-to-one communication.
- Keep your emails short, concise and to the point. Let the reader quickly know what action you want them to take.
- Keep important content and CTAs above the fold, or in one screen (especially important for mobile).
- Use appropriate white space.
- Avoid unnecessary imagery.
- Give readers every opportunity to click through. Make headlines and images clickable, as well as buttons. With the number of emails being consumed on mobile devices, it is usually a good idea to make TFNs click-to-call.
- Make sure the reader knows who is communicating with them by including your logo and/or company name near the top of the email.
- Write concise, compelling headlines and preview text. This helps engage the recipient and encourage them to open the email.

## Video in Email

Provide links to video content. Due to limited support for video in email clients, bandwidth and security issues, as well as other considerations, it is best practice to link out to video content. This typically gives users the best possible video experience. Usually this is accomplished by having a thumbnail image with a play button that links out to YouTube, Vimeo or wherever the video file is hosted.

For questions or assistance in your email marketing, reach out to ThomasArts to help with everything from email strategy to deployment.



For any questions, please contact  
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Example