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# Best Practices [1]

Consider the guidelines below when developing your email communication strategy. For additional resources, visit the eComm Wiki [2] or contact your eComm Specialist [3].

- Audience
- Subject and From Information
- Content
- Photos and Graphics
- Scheduling
- Tracking

## Selecting Your Audience

Emails should be sent to the smallest group of individuals possible while still reaching the intended audience. Work with your eComm Specialist [3] to build reports that segment your audience and maximize the effectiveness of your communications.

Examples of strategic audience segmentation include:

- If your email pertains to faculty or staff in a particular school or college, send your email only to those faculty and staff, not to all faculty and staff.
- If your email pertains to all students in a particular major or class year, send your email only to those students, not to all students.
- If your email pertains to alumni who graduated in a specific year from a specific program, send your email only to those alumni, not to all alumni.

## Choosing a Subject Line

Your email design starts with what people see right away: the subject line. Your email subject should be something that grabs your constituents' attention and gets them interested enough to keep reading.

*From "The Email Design Best Practices You Need to Know [4]"*

Make your subject line informative so that it offers something of value, but not so long that it gives away too much or reduces your readers' interest. The ideal email subject should be a good, interesting summary that tells people what they can expect from reading your email in the fewest possible characters.

Remember, your email subject isn't the only thing a constituent sees when they see your email in their inbox. The other elements likely to show up are your name (or the sender's name) and a snippet of the beginning of your email. Those elements are also important when

it comes to getting constituents to actually read your emails.

You may choose to keep your “From” name the same throughout all of your emails for consistency, or consider using that opportunity to get even more specific about what constituents can expect from your email.

Keep in mind that the sender’s name field should always include your brand name or something recognizable so subscribers know exactly who sent the email, and that it’s from a sender they trust and subscribe to. Then, the first line of your email can be another opportunity to pique subscribers’ interest about what your email has to offer.

## Creating Your Content

Strive to create content that is meaningful and relevant for your readers. You can use functionality such as A/B testing and dynamic content to experiment with your messages to ensure they are truly engaging your audience. Contact your eComm Specialist [3] for more information.

Some best practices for creating your content include the following:

- Keep your message short and to-the-point. Readers are more likely to engage with content at the beginning/top of your message, so limit the need to scroll when possible.
- Limit the number of links in your message to only the ones that are most relevant to your content. No more than 5-10 links per email will generally increase your click rate.
- Ensure the timeliness of your content. Relevant and recent information is more useful than outdated content. If the news happened before your previous e-communication, it's outdated.
- Make sure that your email compels recipients to take a specific action, such as donate to the university, enroll in a class, register for an event, engage on social media, etc.
- Design an email that is appealing to your audience, that looks professional, and that meets CU brand standards. For examples of well-designed emails visit our Wiki post " Really Good Emails [5]."

## Working with Images

Photos give you the opportunity to brand your emails, make them more visually interesting, and get constituents interested in your offerings. Regardless of what you want your photos to accomplish, you need to make sure they display properly in emails.

*From "The Email Design Best Practices You Need to Know [4]"*

Photos and graphics should have excellent resolution no matter their size and high quality enough to get a point across — but not so large that they slow down your email’s load time. You should also consider whether or not they actually add something essential to your emails. If you’re just using them to take up space, you may be slowing down the loading process and wasting valuable real estate. You can see more specifications about header and email image recommendations here [6].

## Scheduling Your Message

Schedule your message based on email send reports that indicate when your audience is most likely to engage with the content. Work with your eComm Specialist [3] to access your email send data and make decisions about future sends accordingly.

Examples of strategic email scheduling include:

- Consider the time that might work best for your audience. For example, faculty and staff are most likely to engage with your email during business hours.
- For smaller email sends, the best time to send a message is between 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Determine how frequently you would like to have email campaigns. Don't send too many, but make sure you're sending them often enough. Sending too often may result in unsubscribes. Use your email send data to guide this decision. Your eComm Specialist can assist you in getting the information you need to guide your future efforts.

## Tracking Your Success

Like anything else in higher education, finding the best email design for your school, college, or program is an ongoing process. You'll likely need to make adjustments over time to keep your constituents happy and interested.

*From "The Email Design Best Practices You Need to Know [4]"*

Analytics data can provide insights about the effectiveness of your email designs. If you find engagement is consistently higher on emails that use just one or two photos, or if you see the highest open rates when you use a certain format for subject lines, take those metrics as signs you're doing something right. Make sure you constantly review your results to find the email design best practices that work for your brand.

**Groups audience:**
eComm

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**Source URL:**https://www.cu.edu/ecomm/guidelines/best-practices

**Links**
[1] https://www.cu.edu/ecomm/guidelines/best-practices [2] https://www.cu.edu/blog/ecomm-wiki [3] https://www.cu.edu/ecomm/submit-help-ticket [4] https://www.salesforce.com/products/marketing-cloud/best-practices/email-design-best-practices/ [5] https://www.cu.edu/blog/ecomm-wiki/tips-tricks-really-good-emails [6] https://www.salesforce.com/products/marketing-cloud/best-practices/email-design-best-practices/?d=marketingcloud.com/blog/email-design-best-practices&internal=true