

Email Best Practices: A Guide for GMAC™ GradSelect Users

Tips for Email Success

Last Updated: May 2023



You've got the leads... Now what?

It's time to nurture them!

When it comes to lead nurturing, one size certainly does not fit all. Strategically nurturing your leads can significantly improve results. Here are our top five tactics:

- 1. Targeted content:** Tailor intriguing, entertaining, and delightful content to target audience members so you can identify the most-qualified leads.
- 2. Multiple Touches:** Boost touches with a mix of content types and channels to increase your interactions and engagement among target audience members.
- 3. Timely Follow Ups:** Follow up with your leads in a timely manner to keep them engaged and interested as well as keep your brand top of mind.
- 4. Personalized Emails:** Personalize your emails to improve engagement.
- 5. Multi-channel lead nurturing:** Reach and nurture your audience where they are — on multiple channels — in addition to email.

Source: [hubspot.com](https://www.hubspot.com)

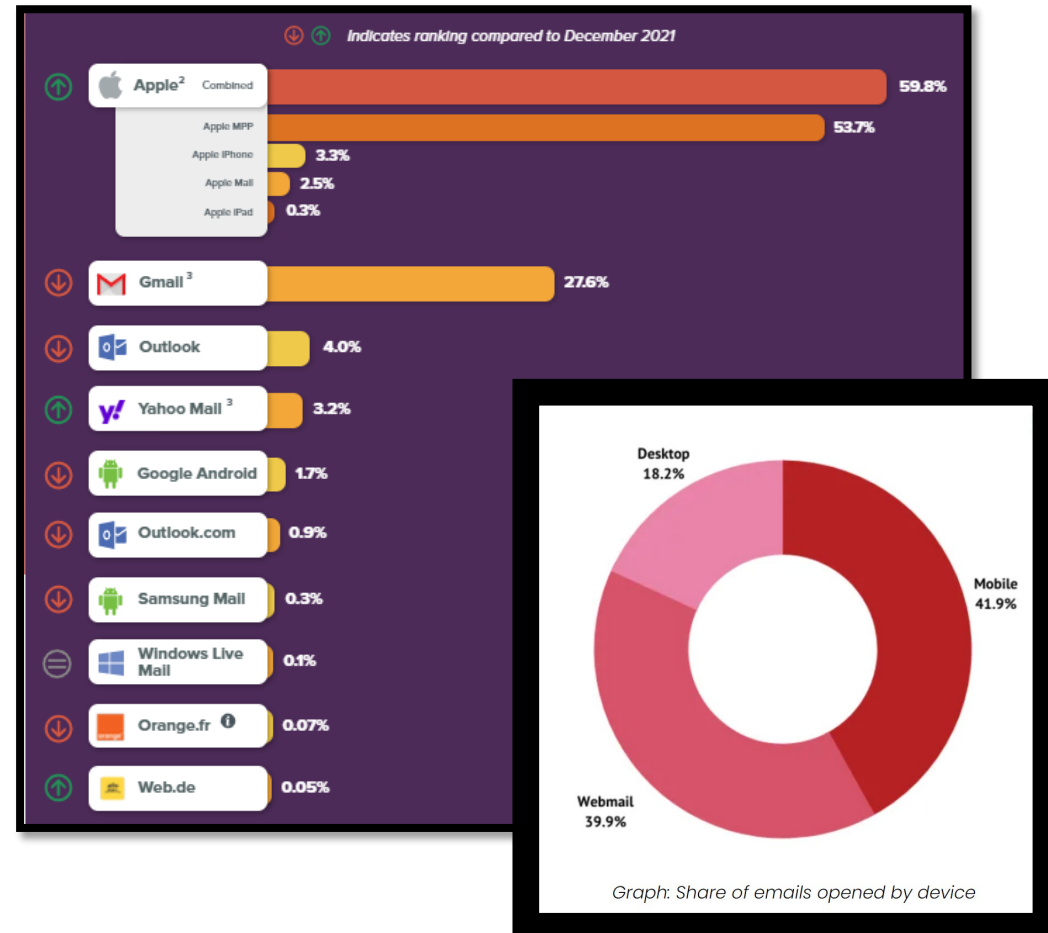
79% of marketers list email marketing in their top 3 most effective marketing channels.
Email Marketing will be the focus of this guide.

Mobile Optimization

49% of all email opens are on a mobile device (7% increase from last year)

Email systems track open rates and click rates by device type. As you can see in the example below, people are much more likely to engage with email on their mobile device. Think of where people will be receiving your email (e.g. desktop, phones) and who is your target audience (**67% of Gen Zers check email on their phones**) to cater your content and format based on that to improve results and engagement.

Pro tip: test your emails on your own phone!



Personalize for Greater Impact

Personalizing the email subject line can increase response rate by 26%.

Personalizing your emails is proven to increase your open and click-through rates and can have a measurable impact on your ROI and revenue.

Personalization refers to using information you have about candidates to craft the content of your message (from something basic like their first name to other factors such as where they live – delivering the email at a local time for international candidates, for example).

The [GradSelect Download File](#) contains more than **30 fields** that you can use to personalize your emails and get better results from your campaigns.

Helpful GradSelect fields for personalizing communication

- First Name and Last Name
- GMAT Test Date
- Undergraduate Graduation Date
- Undergraduate Major(s)
- Degree Type, Concentration, and Format Objectives
- Industry and Function Background and Objectives
- Employer and Undergraduate Institution
- ... and more!

Capture Interest with Compelling Subject Lines

The point of a subject line is to grab the attention of your readers, provide value and summarize what they are going to read once they open the email.

69% of email recipients can tell if an email is spam by its subject line. Subject lines should be attention grabbers but not be misleading – although a catchy subject line can lead to higher open rates, if it doesn't align with the message inside, there will be a negative effect on Unsubscribes and Spam reporting.

Here are some basic “best practices” on subject lines →

Topic	Best Practice
Length	<50 characters, or even <30
Personalization	First Name, Last Name
Sender name	Actual Name – not “Admissions Team”
Sense of urgency	Words such as “Now,” or “Last Chance” can increase opens and conversion
Use numbers	Using numbered lists (e.g. “7 Reasons to Apply Now!”) can result in uptick

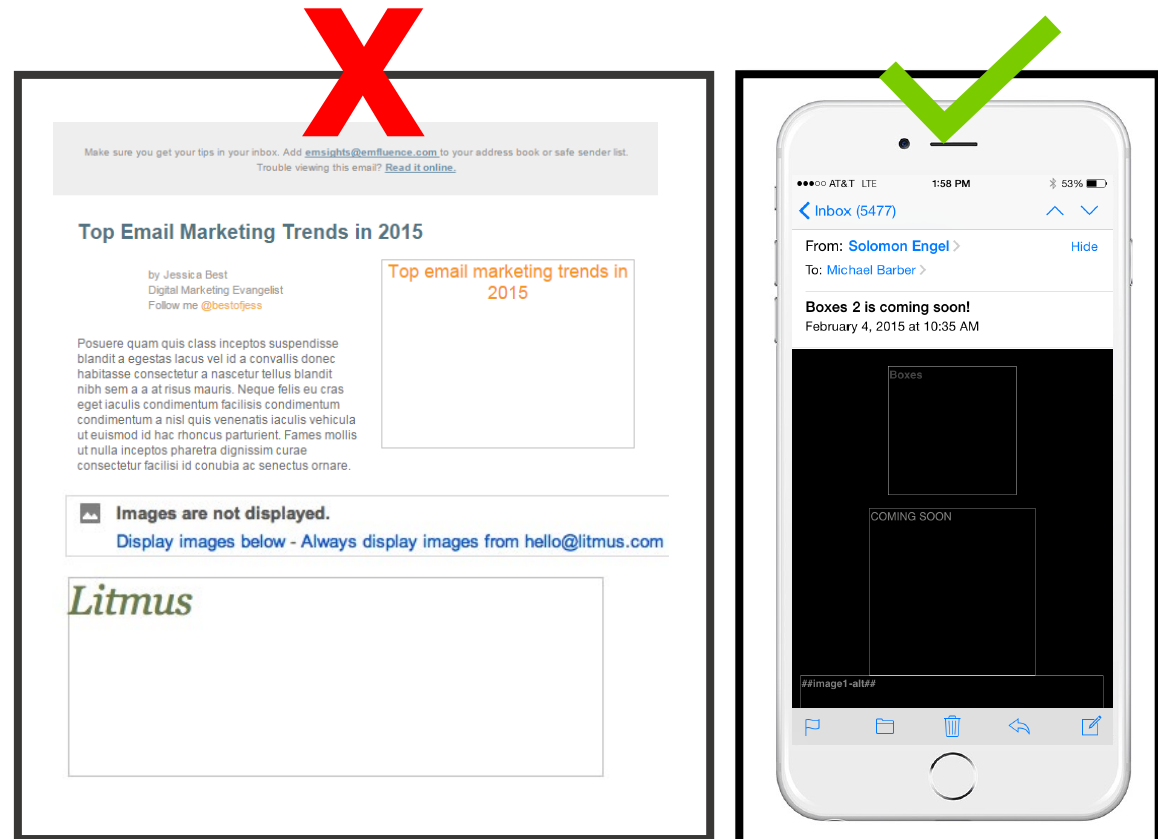
[Subjectline.com](https://subjectline.com) is a great free resource that has tested over 5 million subject lines with a unique rating system that will score your subject line on a scale from 0-100, with helpful tricks for improvement.

Don't forget about Alt Text

Alternative text (ALT or alt text) is simply the text displayed when an image is not loaded in an email (or on a website).

Most email clients block images by default, requiring a reader to expressly give permission to download and view the images. Using descriptive alt text helps get your message across, even when images are not displayed. It is also helpful for accessibility for visually impaired readers (64% of marketers consider accessibility when creating their emails).

Be sure to test your emails with images turned off and turned on to see how an email will look to your recipients.

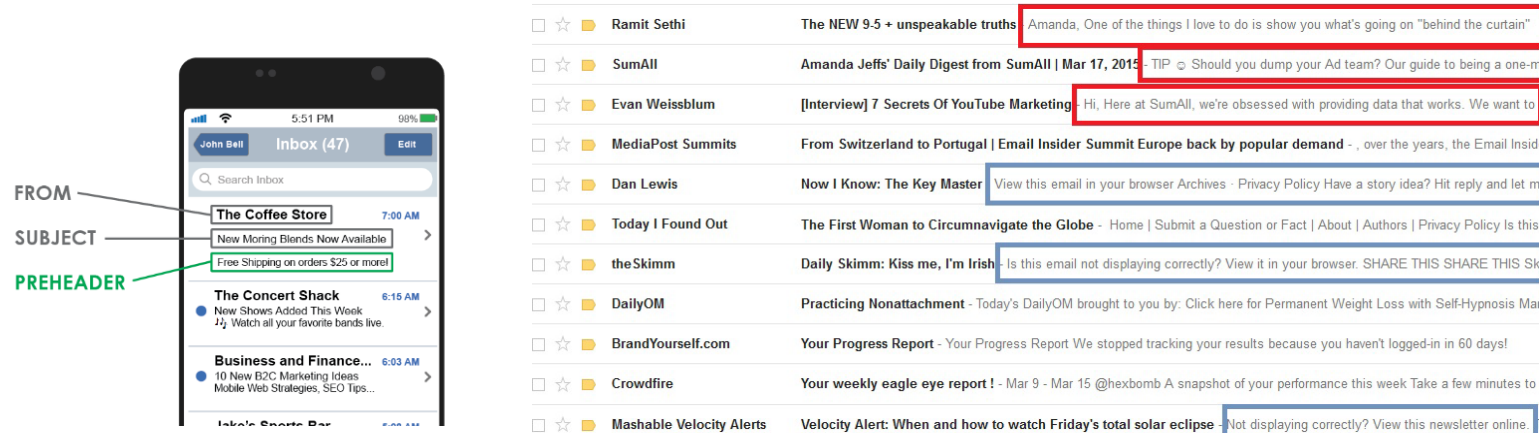


Communicate with Preheaders

A preheader is a preview of what the email is about.

It is a short line of text that is usually displayed before a recipient even opens an email – like a smaller, secondary subject line. Make sure you format your preheader to support your subject line and messaging and relevant to your audience and describes what is in the body of the email.

Leaving the preheader blank can lead to autogenerated ones that are unappealing or inappropriate.



[Active campaign](#) has a helpful best practices guide to guide you through the creation of preheaders . Here is [another resource with examples to avoid](#) while creating preheaders.

Content and Call to Action

Align your content and call to action to your business objectives and specific segmented, targeted audience.

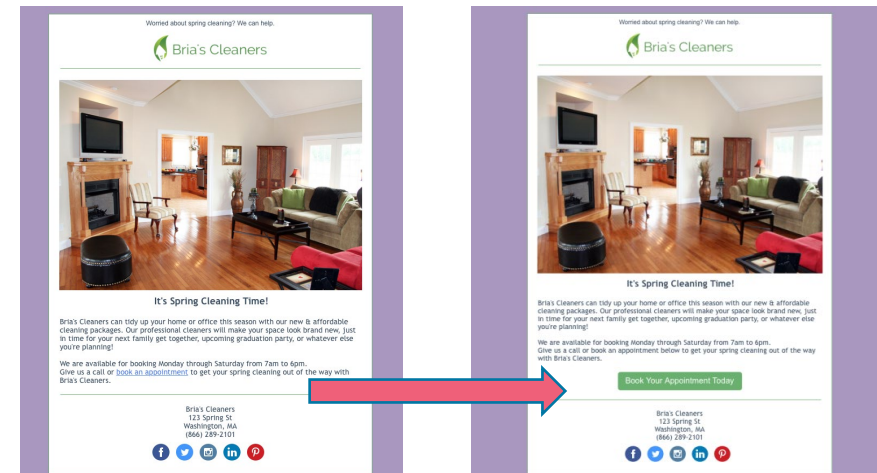
Many schools (and companies) make the mistake of sending blast emails with all the information anyone would ever want to know about their program – and it is too overwhelming, and the message gets lost.

Give recipients content that is relevant to them and that they care about. You can learn a lot about candidates and their goals and values by looking at the [GradSelect fields in your Download File](#).

Content copy tips:

- Keep it short
- Put compelling content “above the fold”
- Try using the first person.
- Create urgency (8 spots left – RSVP now)
- Use action-oriented call to action like “Reserve your Spot” and NOT descriptive text – like “Click Here”
- Link to a specific landing page – not your generic homepage

Source: [protocol80.com](#), [campaignmonitor.com](#)



Emails with a single call-to-action increased clicks by 371% and sales by 1,617%

Graduate
Management
Admission
Council™

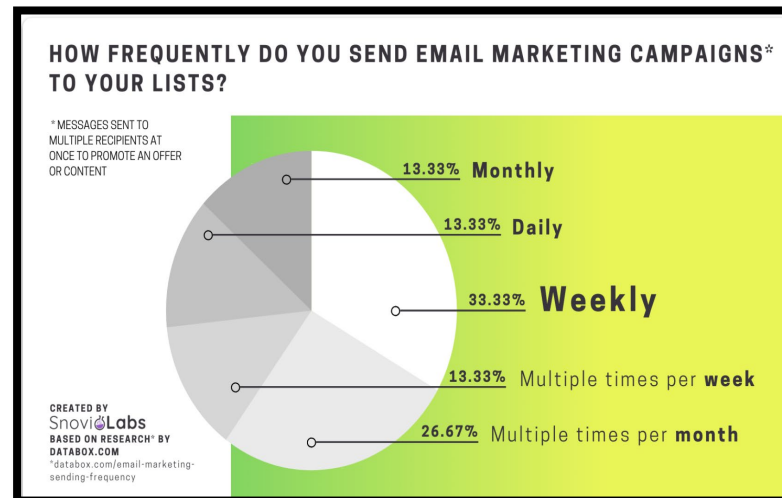
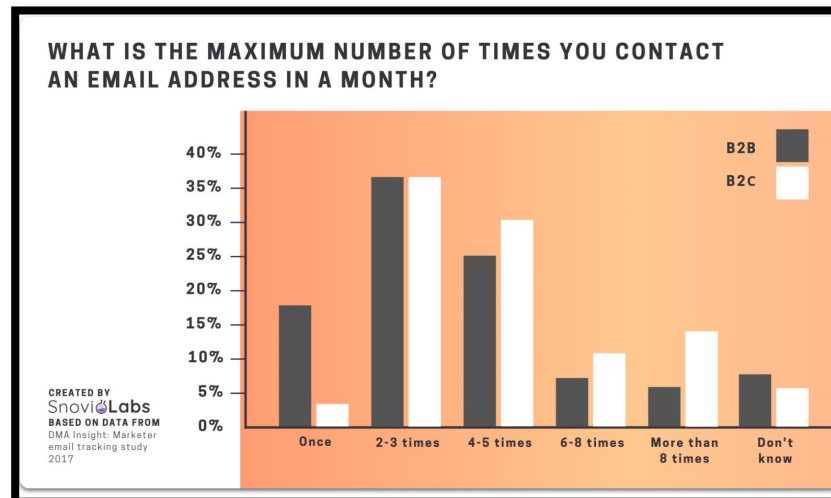
How often should I email?

More is more.

How many emails do you send to the same recipients in a given campaign? Many marketers end campaigns after 2-3 emails or remove contacts within a specific time frame (e.g. one year).

Unless a recipient unsubscribes, it could be effective to email them many more times and over a longer time period. Especially with a decision such as business school, some people have longer journeys – and you want the email to reach them when they are ready. We have heard of customers converting through email after as long as 7 years!

For promotional emails, **most businesses surveyed send between 1-5 emails per month**. Consumers want to receive emails at least weekly, with a majority wanting to receive emails multiple times per month.



Source: lean-labs.com, snov.io/blog.com

Email Campaign Creation Checklist

Planning an email campaign

- ☐ Set business objectives
- ☐ Identify, segment and target your audience
- ☐ Define appropriate measurement criteria

Ensuring email deliverability

- ☐ Audit existing deliverability and presence on blacklists; correct issues
- ☐ Set up dedicated IP addresses, secure mail servers, feedback loops and other infrastructure
- ☐ Set up DKIM and SPF for DMARC authentication compliance

Crafting email content and structure

- ☐ Ensure that emails are optimized to display on mobile devices

- ☐ Personalize emails appropriately using GradSelect data fields
- ☐ Use a subject line that is short, attention-grabbing, and to-the-point
- ☐ Include descriptive alt text on all images
- ☐ Write a compelling and relevant preheader
- ☐ Include a specific call to action that aligns with business goals
- ☐ Plan email frequency and timing to reach contacts repeatedly
- ☐ Use A/B testing to continuously improve

Measure your results

- ☐ Compare your campaign results to previous similar campaigns
- ☐ Compare your results to our email benchmarks

Want More Information?

Click here to receive the entire Email Best Practices Guide

If you have any questions, click here to contact us directly at gmacconnect@gmac.com