You've Got Mail: Mastering the Art of Email Marketing

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Nice to meet you!

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Don't be overwhelmed
What we're going to do

• The State of Email and Best Practices
• Beginner Strategies
• Intermediate Skills
• Advanced Tactics
Let's get into it

Email revenue = 13% of all online giving in 2018

For animal/wildlife nonprofits

• 17% of online revenue is generated by email

Last year, nonprofits sent an average:

• 25 fundraising emails
• 10 advocacy emails
• 11 newsletters
• 13 other
You cannot email people without their permission.

**Opt-in** means you have permission to email. **Opt-out** means you do not have permission.

This is the law. **CAN-SPAM Act of 2003** requires unsubscribe option on every email, and prohibits the use of lists acquired without permission or falsifying sender information.

*Not sure if you have permission? Don’t send the email.*
Let's start with...

BEST PRACTICES
Best Practices

Subject lines

- 50 characters or less
- Make it clear what your email is about
- Use an action verb and/or second person (“You”)

Examples:
- You did it!
- Be a lifesaver
- Easy ways to help animals
Best Practices

Keep it simple for skimmers (AKA most people)

• Use concise copy that clearly tells the reader what you want them to do.
• Skimmers use text links to get the gist of an email: link action-oriented words!
• Include a text link in the first 1-2 paragraphs
• Include a P.S.
• Limit your CTAS to one per email – don't confuse the reader by asking for too many things at once.
Best Practices

Formatting and tone:
• Personalize the salutation
• Include a signer.
• Be donor centric.
  – “You make [X] possible.” instead of “We do [X].”
• Use buttons:
  – Action-oriented language
  – First-person whenever possible
Best Practices

Be mobile friendly:
• 53% of emails are opened on mobile
• Use a mobile-responsive template
• Use buttons: They are easy to click on mobile!
• Preview your email on a mobile device before sending.

Source: https://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/email-marketing/2018/12/70-email-marketing-stats-you-need-to-know/
So you want to send an email...

BEGINNER STRATEGIES
Step #1: Get an email platform

Mailchimp is easy and free for under 2K list.

• Includes your email signup form
• Simple templates
• Audience management
• Metrics (CTR, open rate, unsubscribes, etc.)
• Offers nonprofit discount for paid plans
Step #2: Learn to code (a little)

• Find someone (like a volunteer) who can tweak email code.

• Take a free online class to learn basics.

• Knowing a little bit of HTML will go a long way, even if you are using a template.
Basics for Beginners

Step #3: Build your email list

• Use the forms provided by your email platform.
• Add the sign-up form to your website.
• Include email opt-in on donation forms, adoption and volunteer forms.
• Bring an email sign-up sheet to your events (and get them added quickly).
• Use affirmative opt-in language: “Yes, I want to receive email updates from [org name]”
Basics for Beginners
Step #4: Create an email template

- Include your logo in the header.
- Always include an unsubscribe link and your mailing address.
- Adding ratings logos can help with credibility.
- Don’t forget social media buttons.
- Make sure it’s mobile friendly!
  - A one-column layout is an easy mobile template.
Step #5: Develop a QA process

- Make sure you are sending test emails to at least a few people.
- Who will review your emails? Who has final approval?
- Check your test email on different email platforms, browsers and devices.
- Test every link!
- Document your process and follow it every time.
Step #6: Build a basic schedule

- Think about how often you want to email.
  - You don’t need to send a high volume, but you want to be familiar in the inbox.

- What kind of information and opportunities will be interesting and engaging to your audience?

- Consider your bandwidth and amount of content available to you.
Types of emails to consider:

- Newsletter
- Fundraising appeals
- Adoption promotions
- Events
- Fun stuff just because
- Stewardship (say thank you!)

You don’t need to send every type.
Only send what makes sense for your organization.
Basics for Beginners

Tips for newsletters

• Choose a set number of stories to include and keep the text minimal.
• Focus on linking people to your site to read the full content.
• Use your newsletter to take the place of one-off emails for events and announcements.
• Include adoption and foster information!
• Include a donate button.
Short and sweet with links to learn more
4th of July Pet Safety Tips

More pets are separated from their families on 4th of July than any other time of the year. Here are 3 easy ways you can protect your pet during the festivities:

1. Put a collar and ID tag on all pets (even indoor ones)
   This will make your animal easily identifiable as a pet, and not a stray, if he or she gets lost.

2. Microchip Your Pet—and register it!
   Microchips are only effective if your pet’s registration is current. Visit Found Animals to register or update your pet’s microchip information — it’s free!

3. Keep Fido & Fluffy away from fireworks!
   Loud noises are scary; make sure your pets have a quiet hideaway inside your house to retreat to when they get stressed. Keep it stocked with toys and a blanket.
Basic types of fundraising appeals

• **The story-based appeal**
  – Share a success story about an individual animal, ask your supporters to help animals like Scruffy.

• **The urgent, tangible appeal***
  – Share a tangible need (new kennels, costly medical procedure for Scruffy) and ask supporters to help fund it.

*Note: This will be restricted revenue.*
Abandoned and Alone, Scooter Looks to You for Help

Dear Natalie,

There’s nothing worse than a helpless, sweet animal being abandoned all alone. This is the heartbreaking story of Scooter, the five-year-old terrier mix who was rescued in Mountain City, Tennessee. Scooter was found alone in a pop-up trailer suffering in immense discomfort, with little hair covering his red-colored body and face. **However, with the support of animal lovers like you, Scooter won’t be alone anymore.**

DONATE NOW
We Need You Now

Vulnerable Kittens Are Struggling to Survive

DONATE

It's the height of kitten season, and the ASPCA Kitten Nursery has opened our doors to hundreds of vulnerable kittens. Many are too young to survive on their own. Kittens like these are just some of the thousands of at-risk felines across the country who are waiting for love and care. **They need us more than ever, and we need you to help give animals like these the relief and second chances that they need.**

During this time of year, countless young kittens will rely on compassion from people like you as we continue to rescue, care for and protect them. [Today we]
Ready to take it up a notch?

INTERMEDIATE SKILLS
Step #7: Determine your voice and cadence

• Take the time to consider the tone of your emails:
  – What emotion do you want to inspire in your readers?
  – What types of imagery does your org feel comfortable sharing?

• Plan for a healthy mix of appeals, stewardship, newsletter and other messages.
Step #8: Set up a welcome series

• Create an automated set of emails for new subscribers.

• Introduce them to your organization and set the stage for what to expect from your emails.

• Suppress these folks from your other emails during their welcome series window.
Dear Natalie,

Thank you for joining our wonderful online community — a caring, compassionate group of animal lovers!

Get ready to be part of all the life-saving, heart warming work we do at North Shore Animal League America, including:

We answer the cries of animals in overcrowded municipal shelters, puppy mills, and natural disasters locally, across the country, and around the world.
Welcome to the Heifer International team, Natalie. We’re going to do some amazing things together. But first:

Did you know that just one animal has the power to transform the future?

It’s true. A single goat, heifer, cow or chick can have an enormous impact when combined with the training and support of the Heifer International community.

Take two minutes to watch this video and find out how:
Step #9: Segment your emails

- When we first start sending email, we usually send the same thing to everyone – mostly because of scale and bandwidth.
- As your program matures and you collect more data about your subscribers, you can start to segment your email.
- Send subscribers more relevant content based on who they are.
Step #9: Segment your emails

• Segment based on:
  – How they were acquired (e.g., event attendees)
  – Where they live
  – If they have adopted from you
  – Whether they are a donor or not, and at what level
Let's get fancy.

ADVANCED TACTICS
Step #10: Start tracking your own metrics (and compare to others)

- Create your monthly reporting template.
- Track your metrics for monthly and yearly comparisons.
- See how your rates compare to those in the M+R Benchmarks Report.
- Brainstorm ideas for improving your metrics.
Step #11: Start A/B testing

• Start with a goal in mind - what results do you want to see?

• Test only 1 variable at a time (keeping everything else identical).

• Test as large a sample as you can for more accurate results.
Step #11: Start A/B testing

Types of things to test:

• Different types of animal imagery
• Short-form copy vs. long-form copy
• Sender name – from your org vs. from a person at your org
• Topic of the subject line (dog or cat?)
• Different CTAs (“donate now” vs “give today”)

Advanced Tactics
Step #11: Start A/B testing

• Measure results by open rate, click rate, or response rate, depending on your goal.

• Check for statistical significance.
  – Use this tool: M+R Chi-Square Tool:
    https://www.mrss.com/toolshed/chi-squared-test

• Keep testing!
Step #12: Pay attention to deliverability

• If you have people on your list who aren’t opening or engaging with your emails, ESPs like Gmail will start to penalize you.

• Keep an eye on spam complaint rates.

• Find inactives (people who haven’t opened or clicked in 90 or 180 days) and start to exclude them.
Step #13: Experiment with trends

Animated GIFs:

• They’re a fun way to add movement and interest to your email.

• GIFs can be very subtle or impactful, depending on design.

• Some ESPs, like older versions of Outlook, will only show the first frame, so make sure it’s a good one!
Advanced Tactics

Step #13: Experiment with trends

• Try an infographic or imagery heavy layout
  – Useful when you have lots of information or statistics to convey.
What happens when you give an animal through Heifer?

Right now, 795 million people go hungry each year. *Your gift changes that.*

1. You give an animal to a family in need – along with training and supplies.

2. That animal’s milk, eggs or wool provide much-needed income...

3. ...helping parents pay for nutritious meals, medicines and even send their children to school.
Step #13: Experiment with trends

• Take some strategic risks:

• Trying something new is a great opportunity for A/B testing.

• Experiment with a different layout or design.

• Try a fun emoji in your subject line and see if your open rate changes.
Step #14: Try a resend with a lift note

• An easy strategy to get more mileage out of a high performing email is to... send it again!

• Add a lift note at the top of the email to get attention

• Don't try this with an underperforming email!
With just hours to go until Thanksgiving, I know you’re probably in the final stages of preparation for your family celebrations. But I’m reaching out one more time to ask for your help because we’re still short of our goal.

Your gift before midnight tonight can help put food on the table for a family facing hunger – Ameriprise Financial can even match your donation up to $100,000 to double your impact and help more struggling families through the Feeding America network of food banks.

I hope you’ll consider renewing your support with a last-minute gift of $20 to help a family facing hunger this Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Nielsen

Can’t view this? Read it online.

GOAL: $100,000

Time is running out to reach our $100,000 Thanksgiving goal.

It’s looking like we may not make it, and I’m getting worried. We’re so close – but there’s very little time left to raise what we need to help provide meals this Thanksgiving and food and groceries year-round through the Feeding America network of food banks.

Renew your support today and help families in need celebrate Thanksgiving with a nutritious, filling meal. Remember, your impact can be DOUBLED thanks to Ameriprise Financial. Make your gift of $20 before it’s too late. >>
Step #15: Stay inspired

• Subscribe to emails from organizations that you admire to keep yourself inspired.

• Take inspiration and ideas from business and e-commerce emails, not only non-profits.

• Blogs and sites to follow:
  – Really Good Emails: https://reallygoodemails.com
  – Litmus: https://litmus.com/blog
Free coding courses & tutorials

- Code Academy: Learn HTML
  (https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-html)
- Code Academy: Learn CSS
  (https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-css)
- HTML Email Design from MailChimp (accessible with free trial)
  (https://teamtreehouse.com/library/html-email-design)
- Modern HTML email coding tutorials
  (https://blog.edmdesigner.com/tag/modern-html-email-tutorial/)

2019 M+R Benchmarks Report
(https://mrbenchmarks.com/)
Questions?