Hints and Tips for Successful Email Creative Design

Increased inbox competition means that it is now more important than ever to ensure your email is well designed. Design is not just about how pretty the email looks but also about the usability of the email. In this 'Ask the Experts' article Teradata experts outline the basics of email design to ensure your email campaigns are welcomed by the recipient and actioned.

1) Email Copy

– Make sure you use at least two call to action points in the text and make them clear
– Keep it short; write your copy and then half it.
– Send a plain text email with the HTML one
– Never copy text from web pages or Microsoft Word
– Remember special characters should be defined using the HTML escape codes i.e. £, & etc.

2) Subject lines

– Use concise subject lines, emphasising the recipient's benefit and prompt the recipient to take action
– Avoid using 'spammy' words such as 'call now' or 'free'
– Steer clear of using misleading subject lines
– Do not exceed 50 characters in the subject line
– Try not to use capitals
– Take the opportunity to personalise and use your companies name where possible

3) HTML

– Do not use Javascript or Flash as most email clients don't accept it
– Using forms in HTML emails should be avoided – include a link to a website form instead
– Keep your email creative width to 600 pixels – anything wider will mean force the user to scroll horizontally which never feels comfortable in an email unless you have a newsletter which is designed for horizontal scrolling only
– Use background colours which will render automatically
– Avoid all unnecessary embedded tables, rows or columns
– Use inline styling not CSS – simple layouts work the best

4) Images

– Images are important for branding purpose but increasingly email clients don't display images within an email automatically. Therefore the message of your email needs to be conveyed in both text and image so the message is still legible if images are turned off.
– Always host the images rather than embed them, then link to the images within the HTML code
– Never use a single image as a creative
– Remember background images do not render in some browsers
– Avoid big images – it may be necessary to slice a large image into smaller images
– Use 'Alt' tags to explain content if image is blocked
– Always test with images both on and off and make necessary design changes

5) General

– Create a single path to your offer. Your landing page needs to be designed to prevent visitors leaving therefore eliminate links to other resources, navigation bars, etc.
– Do not use forms in the creative as they will be stripped out
– URLs should be no longer than 255 characters, which includes the opening http://
– Always provide a link to a landing page with company information
– Test, test, test

Optimising your email campaigns should be part of an ongoing process. Take it step by step, make some changes then track the results and optimise. For more a comprehensive guide to email design download Teradata's whitepaper 'Six Steps to Sending Success: The Definitive Guide to Email Design'.

This article is a summary of Teradata's newsletter "Inside the Marketing Cloud". If this article was forwarded to you as a recommendation and you wish to receive further news from the email marketing sector yourself you can **subscribe here**.