Demographica
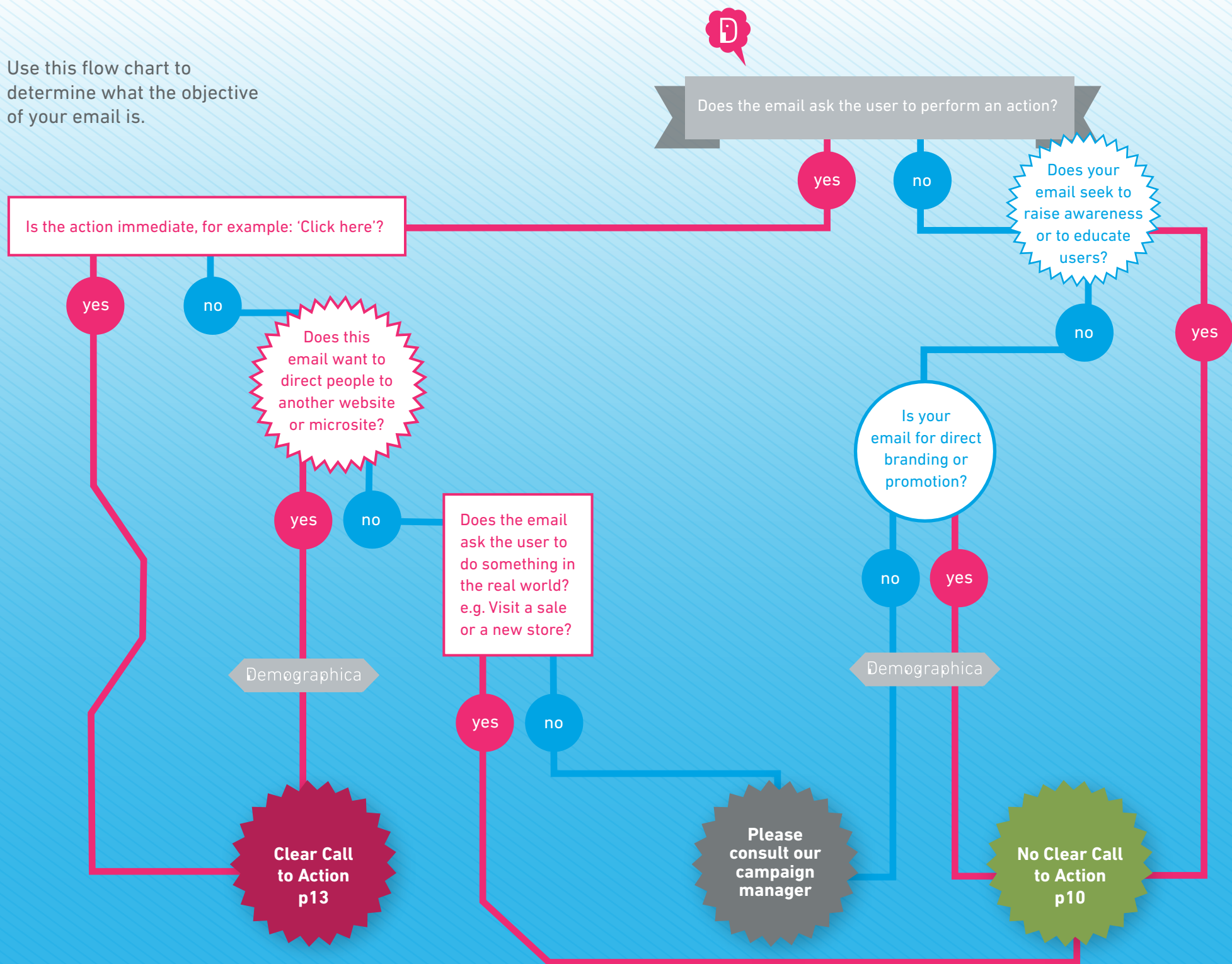
Email Design Bible

Edition #1

Use this flow chart to determine what the objective of your email is.

Does the email ask the user to perform an action?

yes — Is the action immediate, for example: 'Click here'?

no — Does your email seek to raise awareness or to educate users?

Is the action immediate, for example: 'Click here'?

yes

no — Does this email want to direct people to another website or microsite?

Does this email want to direct people to another website or microsite?

yes

no — Does the email ask the user to do something in the real world? e.g. Visit a sale or a new store?

Demographica

Does the email ask the user to do something in the real world? e.g. Visit a sale or a new store?

yes

no

Does your email seek to raise awareness or to educate users?

no — Is your email for direct branding or promotion?

yes

Is your email for direct branding or promotion?

no

yes

Demographica

Clear Call to Action p13

Please consult our campaign manager

No Clear Call to Action p10
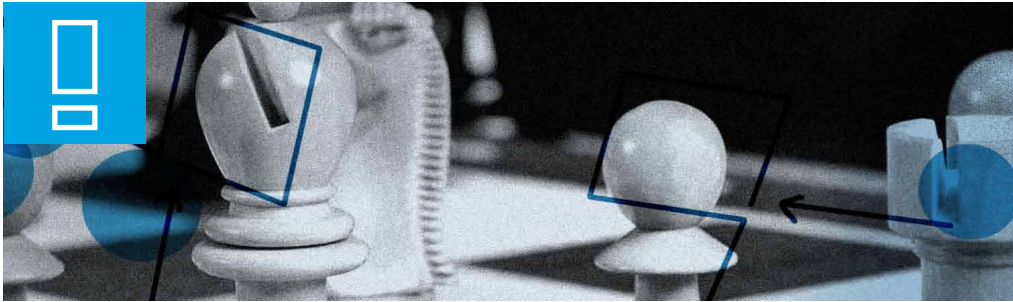
Demographica

Email Design Bible Edition #1

CONTENTS

1. WHY DESIGNING FOR EMAIL IS IMPORTANT

HTML email design is not as simple as just attaching an HTML file, adding a couple of images and clicking send. An effective email is designed with two key considerations in mind. They are:

1. The goal of the email; and
2. The intended recipient.

The Goal
The first step is to identify what the primary goal for your email campaign is. Do you want the recipient to click through to another website? Do you want them to visit your store for a sale? Do you want them to print out your email? It is vital that your email is designed to ensure that your desired outcome is met.

The Recipient
People have different email accounts. All email accounts have different ways to block emails that they think are spam. It is up to the designer to make sure that your email is designed in the most optimal way to ensure that it gets into a recipient's inbox. [Email design and coding is only half the problem – the other half is server reputations, but that is for another pink paper]. A well-designed email gives recipients a positive experience when interacting with your brand.

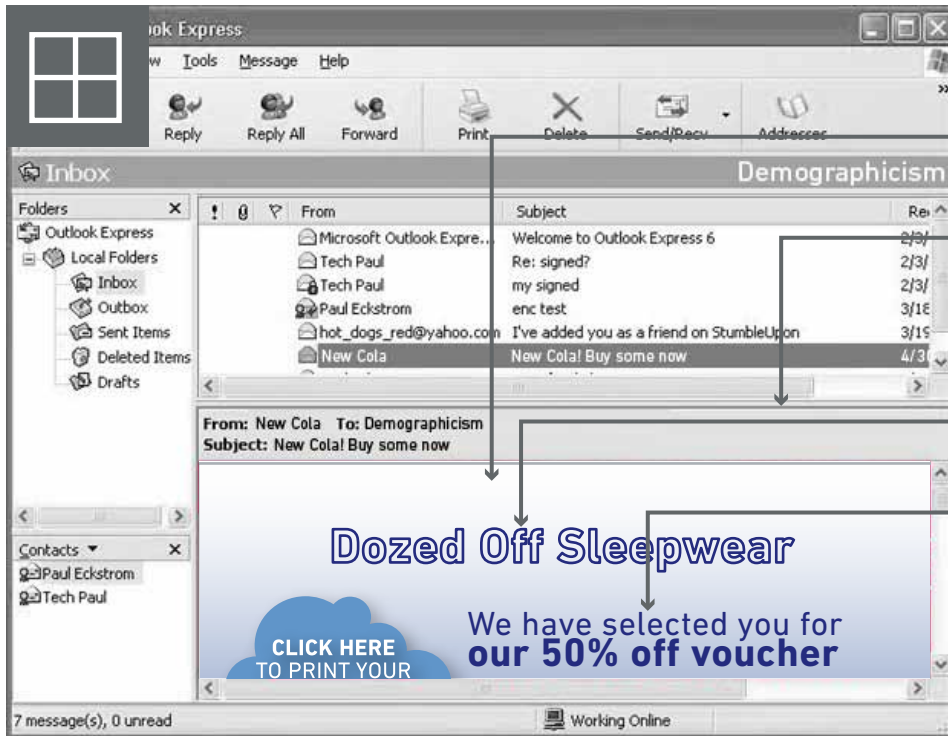# 2. USING MULTIPLE CHANNELS FOR YOUR BRAND
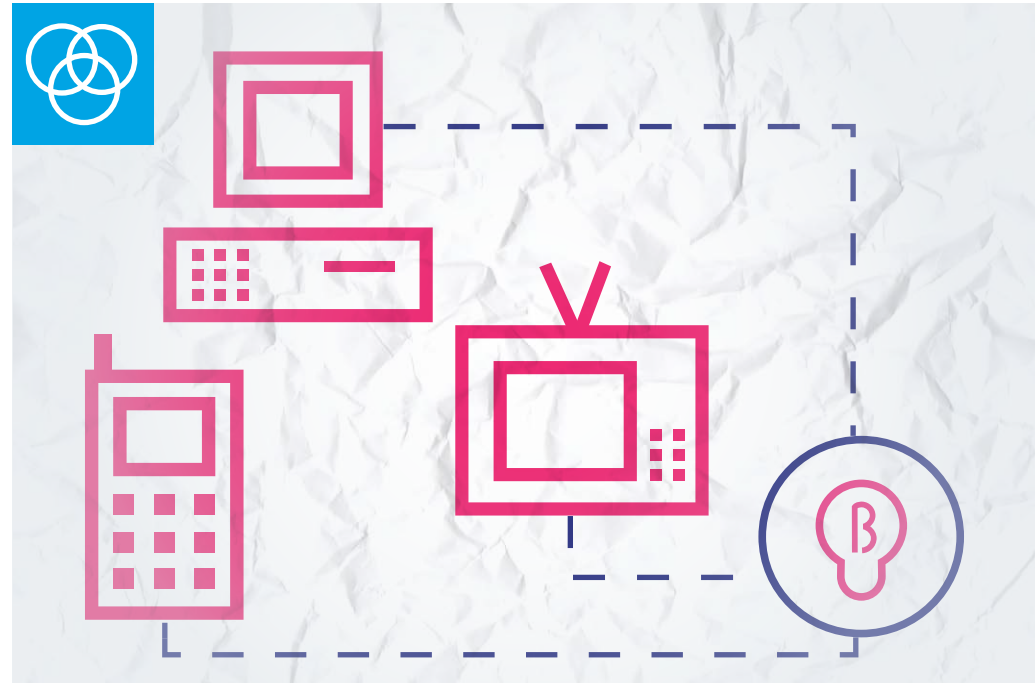
A successful brand is most often one that advertises across multiple media channels. Brand consistency across all communication platforms encourages a positive brand experience by building credibility and brand awareness.

Your 'BIG' idea should be executed specifically to each media channel across multiple platforms. While elements of design for web or print campaigns can be used across mediums, there needs to be a clear distinction when designing for email. Simply put, when you design your email campaign, specific email-centric design parameters must be utilised. This builds brand recognition, consistency and loyalty, as well as helping to achieve the goal of your overall campaign, across every medium that you use.

3.WHY THE PREVIEW PANE IS IMPORTANT

Your emailer

Preview pane

Logo and other branding

Main offer visible

Whole mailer

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for
our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE
TO PRINT YOUR
VOUCHER

○ Print your voucher
◉ Visit a **Dozed Off Sleepwear** store today
◉ Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

The preview pane is your first impression, so make sure it's a good one!
Many recipients initially see your email in a small preview pane, no more
than a couple of centimetres in width or height. It is therefore important to
ensure that your key content (such as your main value proposition), is
visible to encourage the recipient to open the email.

4.TALKING TO YOUR TARGET MARKET

Dear Wendy

so sorry to hear about your cat Misty...

Do you know your customer? If your email is targeted to meet these goals, you are already a step ahead of your competitors. When you are in a busy shop you ignore all the talking around you, but as soon as you hear your name your ears perk up and suddenly you are listening. This is no different in emails. You need to design with your target market in mind and talk to them directly, otherwise you risk falling into the background noise of your recipient's inbox.

5.SUBJECT LINE THEORY

There are simple rules when creating an email subject line, such as not exceeding 50 characters and limiting punctuation and capital letters. Sadly, it is not that simple. Recipients are becoming more informed and trickier to please.

The rule we have created is called **V.A.L.U.E.**

Value – Sell the benefits of the product or service, and encourage the recipient to open the email. Creating a sense of curiosity and urgency won't work if no benefit is offered in return.

Applicable – Relevance is the most important element of a subject line. Writing a suitable subject line that the recipient can relate to will increase open rates. It needs to be applicable to the person you are trying to reach.

Lead – The subject line needs to lead the person to open the email. It needs to spark their curiosity by asking a question. However, readers will distrust you (and reach for the report-spam button) if your subject line doesn't reflect the actual email content.

Urgency – Urgency is extremely influential when combined with applicability or value, because it creates an immediate response before the dreaded drop-off.

Emotion – By tying all the other elements, as well as the tone of your brand together with emotion, you will find a genuine connection between the content and your audience.

A good subject line should adhere to at least two of these five rules.

6.GENERAL GUIDELINES

These general guidelines are good to follow with any email design. They allow the designer to produce the most optimal email that will get into the recipient's inbox as well as getting the recipient to open the email and engage with the brand. Depending on the goal of your campaign, these guidelines should be modified according to that goal.

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE
TO PRINT YOUR
VOUCHER

- Print your voucher
- Visit a **Dozed Off Sleepwear** store today
- Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

Prioritise Your Content:
Use the 1/3 rule: divide your email space horizontally into thirds and put your most important content in the top two thirds of your email. The top and middle third of your email are the most valuable because they are what the recipient sees first in preview mode and when they open the email.

Email Layout Size:
The area of the email that is visible to the viewer without scrolling ('above the fold') is the top third of your email and is the most valuable section in your email. Make sure you include information that will sell the benefits of your product or service (a special, a chance to win or a clear value-add). This will encourage the recipient to read further. More information on products or services can be included using a click-through.
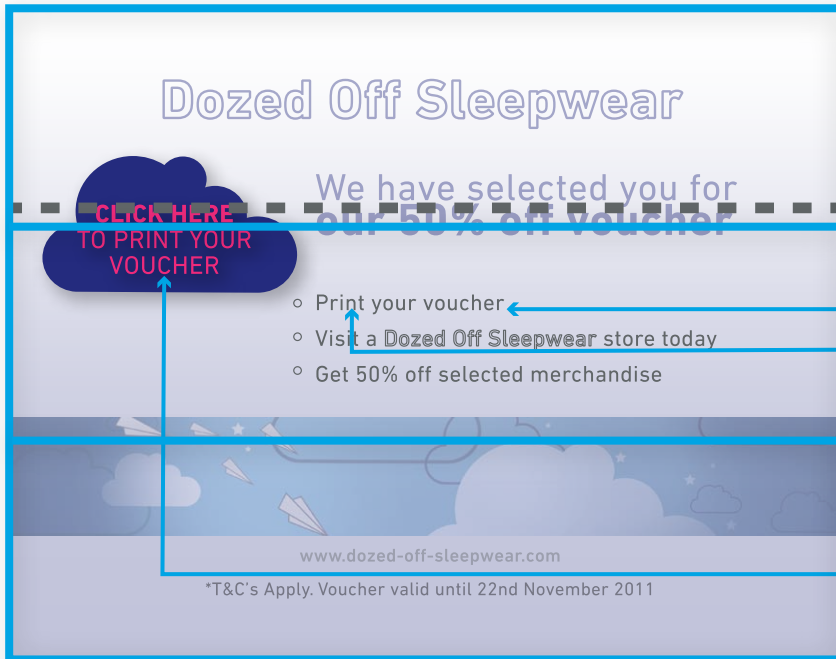
In general, do not exceed 700px width because it is the most compatible with the majority of 'email accounts'. There are no restrictions on the length of your email but it is recommended to keep them short to avoid too much scrolling.

Text-to-Image Ratio :
The text to image ratio is the amount of plain text you include in your email design, compared with how many images you include. Generally, the ratio we recommend is 60:40 (text to image). A higher text ratio results in a lower spam rating score, which increases the likelihood of your email reaching the recipient's inbox, rather than their junk mail box. This is one of the significant differences when designing for email versus designing for print or web.

6.GENERAL GUIDELINES

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for
our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE
TO PRINT YOUR
VOUCHER

- Print your voucher
- Visit a Dozed Off Sleepwear store today
- Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

Universal Fonts:
Fonts that are used in email design should be universal to ensure better compatibility. This is because if special fonts aren't installed on the computer or phone where the email is being viewed, the font will default to universal fonts and potentially ruin the layout and look of the email. If a special font needs to be used, it is best to embed it in an image.

Spam Words:
It may seem obvious to say: "Do not include 'spam words' in your email". However, most people only have a vague idea of what these 'spam words' might be. Believe it or not, words like 'hidden', 'diet', 'insurance', 'free' or 'competition' and many more can add up to a high spam rating when combined with other elements. The trick is to eliminate as many of these potential words and phrases as possible.

Best practice is to double-check your copy against a comprehensive list of spam words, which you can find by googling 'spam words'. Feel free to speak to our campaign managers if you are unsure about your copywriting and remember, if your copywriting needs 'spam words', make sure to embed them in images.

Inverted Colour Text:
Using inverted colour text is a good way to draw attention to an important area or a 'call to action' in your email. Make sure that your inverted colour text is as legible as possible. As a rule, dark text on a light background is the most readable combination.

When using light text on a dark background, make sure you increase the leading and tracking, as well as decrease your font weight. This applies to all widths of measure. Letterforms need to be wider apart, lighter in weight and have more space between the lines.

6.GENERAL GUIDELINES
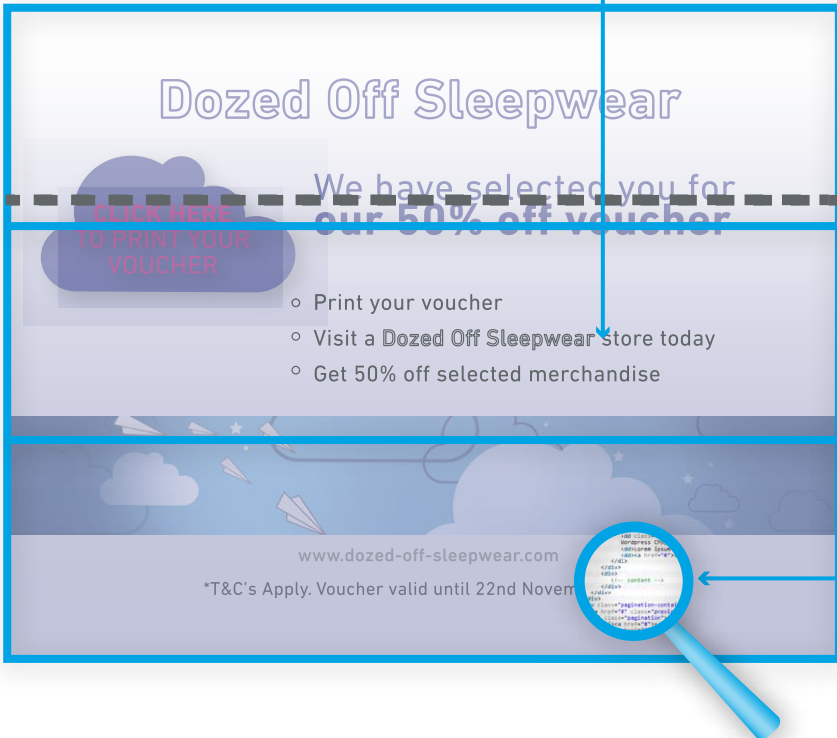
Text Version:
You must include a text version in notepad format, including the links.
This is for people who don't have images enabled in their browsers file.

Using Tables in HTML Design:
Using tables for your email layout is the most consistently supported format in email design because of more rigorous email standards and rules.

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for
our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE
TO PRINT YOUR
VOUCHER

- Print your voucher
- Visit a Dozed Off Sleepwear store today
- Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd Novem

7.NO CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

This email is used for direct branding, educational purposes and awareness, or to inform your audience of something (e.g. a store opening).

LAMA
sandwich shop

New Store Opening in Olde Country Mall

22nd October 2011

Shop 22, Upper Level, Olde Country Mall, Olde Road, Lama City

Tel: 555-0505 www.lamasandwichshop.com

BARKELYBUG

50% Sale
Now on at all
Barkely Bug Stores

Click here for store listings   www.barkelybug.com   Sale Ends 22 August 2011

7.NO CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

LAMA
sandwich shop

New Store Opening in
Olde Country Mall
22nd October 2011

Shop 22, Upper Level, Olde Country Mall, Olde Road, Lama City
Tel: 555-0505 www.lamasandwichshop.com

Prioritise Your Content:
Use the 1/3 rule: divide your email space horizontally into thirds and put the most important content in the top two thirds of your email.
The top and middle third of your email are the most valuable because they are what the recipient sees first in preview mode and when they open the email.

Prominent Logo:
Your email is an extension of your brand. A prominent logo increases brand awareness and can reduce spam complaints if the recipient knows that the email is coming from a company that they know and trust. If the recipient has a positive experience reading your email, a logo can encourage a positive brand association and brand loyalty.

Prominent Headline:
Your headline is the most important element of your email. Over five times as many people will read your headline than will read your email.
Some important features of a good headline include:

Clarity - Get to the point, be clear and concise.

Quality - The content of your copy should be relevant.

Prominence - The headline must instantly catch the intended recipient's attention.

Legibility - Your headline should be as easy to read as your logo.

7.NO CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

LAMA
sandwich shop

New Store Opening in
Olde Country Mall
22nd October 2011

Shop 22, Upper Level, Olde Country Mall, Olde Road, Lama City
Tel: 555-0505 www.lamasandwichshop.com

Branding:
Your email should clearly place your brand in the recipient's mind. There should be overt (such as obvious logos) and covert (such as brand colours and special fonts) branding associations throughout your email. This is easily done through the effective and email-design-specific use of your logo, fonts, colours and a clear brand tone in your copywriting.

Descriptive Copy:
Keep your copywriting short. Only include the most vital information in it. As a rule of thumb, use bullet points to allow viewers to skim over it and to absorb it better.

Maximum Image Ratio:
Your text-to-image ratio should not be more than 60:40 (text to image). Please refer to the section under General Guidelines for more information.

'More Info' Links:
Every email should have 'More Info' links that lead to your website, Twitter or Facebook page. Although these links are not of primary importance, they should be at the bottom of the email for recipients who want more information.

8. CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

This email's intent is to get the recipient to take immediate action. Examples of this include directing the recipient to another website, such as Facebook, or asking the recipient to print a voucher.

Dozed Off Sleepwear

CLICK HERE TO PRINT YOUR VOUCHER

We have selected you for **our 50% off voucher**

- Print your voucher
- Visit a Dozed Off Sleepwear store today
- Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

INTRODUCING THE NEW SOFASODA FLAVOUR
TANGERINE CREME

SofaSoda

CLICK HERE TO TRY TANGERINE CREME

- It's tasty
- It's fresh
- It's available at your local store

join us on **facebook**

SofaSoda

8. CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for
our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE
TO PRINT YOUR
VOUCHER

○ Print your voucher
○ Visit a Dozed Off Sleepwear store today
○ Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

Call to Action Position:
In this type of email your call to action is your main goal because you want the recipient to complete a specific action. Your call to action should be:

• Above the fold (top third of your email); or
• In a highly visible location in the middle third of your email
  (refer to General Guidelines for more information on prioritising your content).

Be sure to take the average email window size into account. If people have to search for the call to action, it will negatively impact your conversions.

Prioritise Your Content:
Use the 1/3 rule: divide your email space horizontally into thirds and put your most important content in the top two thirds of your email. The top and middle third of your email are the most valuable because they are what the recipient sees first in preview mode and when they open the email.

Call to Action Buttons:
Your call to action should be a button rather than simple text. Many conversions have been lost because designers don't use buttons effectively. A well-designed call to action button :

• Is eye-catching and encourages the recipient to get in touch;
• Decreases the chance of your email being picked up by spam filters because you can embed spam words like "click here" or "win this prize" as an image rather than text; and
• Encourages a higher response - links should be embedded in a button because recipients are subconsciously drawn to click it. Make sure your call to action link indicates where the recipient will land (such as a Facebook button or a 'Click here for a quote' button) as confusion will lead to higher drop-off rates.

8. CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

Dozed Off Sleepwear

We have selected you for our 50% off voucher

CLICK HERE TO PRINT YOUR VOUCHER

- Print your voucher
- Visit a **Dozed Off Sleepwear** store today
- Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

Colour:
The area where you would like the recipient to complete the action must visually 'jump out' at them. To do this, try utilising clashing and contrasting colours. Your call to action should be in a contrasting colour to your main text to stand out and draw attention. Try playing with inverted colour buttons and be sure to see the notes under General Guidelines: Inverted Colour Text when using this.

Why Click:
The reasons why you want your viewers to click your call to action button should be clearly stated before they get to the call to action. Place the reasons to click in the top third of your email; this can include copywriting, a headline and a great visual. This will improve your 'click-through' rate.

Copywriting:
Your 'Why Click' messaging should be concise and to the point. Make a compelling case to follow the call to action in as few words as possible, using language that is consistent with your brand voice. Write in an active voice to convince your recipient to be decisive. Let them know what they will find when they follow the call to action and the benefits of doing so.

Minimal Copy:
When it comes to copywriting for email, less is more. Most recipients won't read entire paragraphs of copy and usually skim to see what is of interest to them or to see if it answers their questions.

You will only be able to effectively communicate with recipients through concise, punchy and exciting copy. If you write it in an active voice, you have an even better chance.

8. CLEAR CALL TO ACTION – DESIGN GUIDELINES

Dozed Off Sleepwear

CLICK HERE
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We have selected you for
our 50% off voucher

○ Print your voucher
○ Visit a **Dozed Off Sleepwear** store today
○ Get 50% off selected merchandise

www.dozed-off-sleepwear.com

*T&C's Apply. Voucher valid until 22nd November 2011

Using Bullet Points:
Bullet points perform well because they allow you to relay the most important information in an accessible and concise manner. Here are some important tips when using bullet points:

• Most recipients skim or scan. They won't read entire paragraphs of copy so bullet points help to get vital information across.
• Line lengths should be balanced and proportionate between each of the bullet points.
• Complete sentences are not required.
• Studies show that your readers' eyes see the first two bullet points and the last bullet point in your list. Organise your bullet points accordingly.
• Place keywords and keyword phrases of major points first in each bullet's copy.
• Start each bullet point with a different word. Using different and major keywords helps to differentiate each point, breaking monotony when scanning and increasing influence.

Text-to-Image Ratio:
In a clear call to action email, the text-to-image ratio is less than usual - 70:30 (text to image). Keep the email layout fairly empty by leaving a lot of blank space around your call to action and using bullet points for the most successful results.

Branding:
Your branding should be clear throughout this kind of email, but less prominent than it would be for an email with no call to action. Make use of brand voice and subtle logo placement to communicate your brand.

Secondary Links:
Many emails have more than one link, which could lead to your website, Twitter or Facebook page. Since these links are not of primary importance, they should be at the bottom of the email for recipients who want more information. They can also be designed as buttons to encourage a higher click-through rate.

9. GLOSSARY

A Above the fold: The section of an email that is visible without scrolling. Elements that are positioned 'below the fold' are not seen when the email is first opened.

B Big idea: The main creative concept that needs to be implemented across all communication platforms.

Buttons: Embedded images that are clickable and designed to resemble a real keyboard button.

C Call to action: Copy used in advertising to encourage a person to complete an action defined by the advertiser. Call to action words are verbs such as 'Click here', 'Buy Now', 'Enter Now' or 'Click to download'.

Characters: These include spaces, letters, numbers and punctuation.

Click-through: The process of clicking an online advertisement that leads to the advertiser's programmed and specified destination, for example a website. While the click-through is

often the most immediate response to an advertisement, it is not the only interaction.

Click-through rate: Click-through rate or CTR is a way of measuring the success of an online advertising campaign. A CTR is obtained by dividing the number of users who clicked on an advert on a web page by the number of times the advert was delivered (impressions).

Communication platforms: Various advertising spaces, including: TV, radio, print media, outdoor media and online.

Conversions: The act of converting a recipient into a customer, or at least taking that visitor a step closer to customer acquisition (for example, convincing them to sign up for your email newsletter).

Copywriting: In advertising, copy refers to the text or words used in an advertisement to promote a product, person, business, or an idea. Copywriting is the method of carefully selecting, editing and writing those words. The body copy refers to the actual paragraphs of supporting text

that add facts and benefits to the headline and contribute to the greater concept of the email.

E Email accounts: These can be web-based, such as Gmail or Hotmail, or computer-based, such as Outlook or Opera. There are thousands of email account providers in operation and each has a different set of rules.

Email space: This is the entire visual space in which you are intending to design your email. Generally, it takes the format of a square or rectangular space but sometimes design elements break the borders of the email for visual appeal.

Embed: In terms of high-level computer languages, to embed means to incorporate an essential element (image, font, video) into a website or email through code. Embedding is useful when you need to use a non-universal font or spam words. By translating these elements into an embedded image you can avoid spam filters and prevent your font from changing to a universal one on delivery.

H Headline: An advertising headline is designed to be the first copy that the potential customer reads. A headline must be written well in order to be effective and draw the reader into the advert.

HTML email: Hyper Text Markup Language or HTML allows designers to format the appearance of email messages using computer code. Senders can also use HTML to track the number of message views or how many times recipients click on a link.

I Images: These include photographs, pictures, buttons, special font text or any visual element in your email. Image files are composed of either pixel or vector data. There are many digital image file formats, including jpeg, gif, tiff, png, bmp, raw, to name but a few. Image file formats are a standardised means of organising and storing images.

Inbox: The main folder in which your incoming mail is stored. Getting a marketing email to a recipient's inbox is the main goal and specialty of most email media houses. They ensure that

9. GLOSSARY

your email does not land in the recipient's junk mail box and they prevent it from being stopped by the ISP's Spam Filter.

Inverted colour text: Inverted colour text is text in the clashing or complementary colour to the background and surrounding colour text. It is primarily used to highlight or make a particular part stand out. Standard rules about colour and font weighting apply, such as not using text paler than the background it sits on.

L Links: A link is a connection from a hypertext file or document to another online location or file. A link is typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image on the screen.

M Main value proposition: A marketing statement that summarises why a consumer should buy a product or use a service. This statement should convince a potential consumer that a particular product or service will add more value than other similar offerings.

P Pixel width: Pixels per inch (PPI) or pixel density is a measurement of the resolution of a computer monitor's display.

Plain text: Text in an email message that includes no formatting code.

Preview pane: The visible portion of the email message before you open it.

R Recipient: The person whom you intend to receive your email in their inbox.

S Scroll: Refer to 'Above the Fold'.

Spam / Junkmail: Unsolicited email, often of a commercial nature, sent indiscriminately to multiple mailing lists or individuals.

Spam rating score: Many internet service providers have implemented filtering software that 'scans' email for certain 'triggers', which may include certain words, phrases, formatting and aggressive writing styles. To combat

this, most email media houses use software to scan their emails before sending, which gives them a spam rating score according to these potential triggers. The email can then be adjusted before being sent, by changing the copy and formatting.

Spam words: Words that typically occur in spam emails and trigger spam word filters. If the filter finds such a word in an email's subject or body it marks it as spam. Some popular spam words include 'sex' and 'Viagra', as well as much more obscure words.

Subject line: The field at the top of an email template in which the title or subject of the email is shown in the inbox before the email message is seen.

T Tables: The HTML table model allows designers to arrange data into rows and columns of cells. This data includes text, preformatted text, images, links, forms, form fields and other tables. Each table may have an associated caption that provides a short description of the table's purpose.

Target market: A group of customers at whom a business has decided to aim its marketing efforts and ultimately its merchandise.

U Universal fonts: These are fonts that all computers have without having to install them specially, such as Arial and Times New Roman.

W Window size: Once the email is opened, the window size is the size of the box in which the recipient is viewing your email.

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