

## Cracking the Code: Better Email Subject Lines

What do email subject lines and blind dates have in common? You rarely recover from a bad first impression.

Much of it starts with the expectations of your recipients. If they've opted in for a newsletter or educational content, chances

are they won't be thrilled with pure "Last-Chance Savings!!" promotions — and vice versa. Customers expecting special offers and discounts may not be amenable to sifting through your latest company news or an industry trend report, no matter how informative.

### Segmenting for success

Obviously, knowing your customers — or giving them the choice of what types of information they receive — is a key piece of the puzzle when it comes to boosting open rates with a snappy subject line.

But, if you're not able to mount that level of sophistication in your marketing, all is not lost. There are some general best practices for crafting subject lines that can increase the likelihood of your email marketing success.

Aside from the "From" line, your subject line is probably the most important factor in determining whether or not your email

gets opened. With most email programs allowing about 50 characters in a subject line, make sure that your key message is delivered within those first 50 characters.



Pundits disagree on things like whether or not you should use the word "you" in a subject line (DM vets say yes; others deem it spammy) but are unanimous on elements

like brevity and benefits. Here's a rundown of things to keep in mind when composing your next email subject line:

**Tell it like it is.** A good subject line should describe what's actually in the email. This may sound obvious, but take an informal survey and you'll see that lots of emailers break this fundamental rule.

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boatload of practical tips during a recent "Blogging for Business" webinar. Here's a quick recap of the tips that really resonated:

Why blog? Marketers, according to Volpe, are moving away from solely outbound "disruptive marketing" — commercials, telemarketing, direct mail. Instead, we're seeking effective ways to attract people into our worlds with what Volpe terms "in-bound" efforts.

From search engines and the blogosphere to social networking, there's a whole new world of media tools and toys out there. And it's your job to use these channels to get found by new customers.

In addition to SEO benefits, blogging helps you develop a presence where likely

*(cont'd on p. 2)*

## Business Blogging: Pertinent or Passe?

Worried that you've missed the blogging boat? Fear not — it's never too late to indulge your inner scribe and put this powerful marketing tool to work for your business.

But where to start? Mike Volpe of HubSpot, an inbound marketing software developer based in Cambridge, MA, offered a

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## Business Blogging (from p. 1)

prospects might hang out — and encourages other people to further the conversation, making your marketing message that much more effective.

So, how do you make the most of blogging from a business perspective? Volpe identifies these three steps to success:

1. Read blogs relevant to your industry.
2. Comment on them.
3. Create and maintain your own blog.

### Getting in on the conversation

Clearly, there's tons of information in the blogosphere. The trick is finding and following the relevant stuff without spending a ton of time. Volpe suggests setting up an RSS reader as your home page (try [google.com/reader](http://google.com/reader)), then using it to search for and subscribe to relevant blogs.



Another timesaver: Search sites like [blogsearch.google.com](http://blogsearch.google.com) for your company, product name, or industry terms of interest, then paste the search result link into your RSS reader for an easy way to monitor relevant results. Do the same for sites like [digg.com](http://digg.com) to see what others are saying.

Now that you've found relevant blogs, it's time to start a conversation by posting comments there. Your goal? To increase the value of the article, says Volpe, by sharing a concrete example, debating a point, or asking a pertinent question.

### Birth of a blog

The final step, of course, is the launch of your own blog. Volpe cautions against sites in which you don't own the domain name, in the event that you ever want to move your blog or change service providers.

Once the mechanics are nailed down (Volpe does a great job, by the way, of subtly selling HubSpot's own robust services), it's time to write.

Generating regular content is one of the biggest obstacles to starting a blog, but there are a few proven ways to come up with ideas. Consider sharing a recent experience, responding to a frequently asked question, or commenting on and linking to other blog posts that might be of interest to your readers.

Titles of articles, like email subject lines, can make or break your posting, so shoot for clever, enticing, or keyword-rich titles. In terms of posting frequency, more is better. Volpe recommends weekly postings at a minimum, especially if your goal is to build readership.

### Gauging your success

There are a number of ways to analyze whether your blog is a hit, but part of that depends on why you're blogging. If you're interested in SEO, a good metric is the number of inbound links (the number of other web pages that link to yours). For lead generation, keep an eye on the number of visitors and subscribers.

Blogging can be a lonely labor of love at first, especially if writing is not your forte. But stick with it, keep a handy list of story ideas when they pop into your head, and get ready to feel the love when the comments — and leads — start pouring in.

Source: [HubSpot.com](http://HubSpot.com)



We're always on the lookout for the cool, unusual, and useful to add to your marketing arsenal. Here are two tools worth a look:

### Virtual Events 365

What do you do if you'd like to host an event, but don't think you can get all your attendees in one place? Virtual Events 365 from CGS lets you create a virtual event — keynotes, workshops, product demos, and more — that's accessible using a standard web browser. It's interactive, too, so attendees can ask questions and interact with others online.

Virtual events like these put nearly any audience within reach. For example, if you're a vendor on the East Coast, you can invite potential West Coast customers to your event without asking them to incur travel costs. The world just got a little smaller — and your prospect pool a whole lot bigger.

Source: [cgsinc.com/virtualevents365](http://cgsinc.com/virtualevents365)

### Books are Marketing Tools

We may be up to our eyeballs in MP3s, iPhones, and laptops, but books still connote a certain value — maybe more so today than ever before. And it's that high perceived value that often makes a book the ideal marketing tool.

Looking for a unique prospecting tool, corporate gift, or educational premium? Michigan-based Jenkins Group's publishing and licensing services can help you customize and brand an existing title, or even publish your own book. Who knew blogging could lead to this? (See related article at left).

Whether it's a cookbook, coffee table book, or an educational text, Jenkins can help you create a branded marketing tool that's tailored for page count and size and includes your corporate logo.

Source: [booksaremarketingtools.com](http://booksaremarketingtools.com)

## Cracking the Subject Line Code (from p. 1)

**Give 'em what they want.** Make sure readers know up front that the email contains information they've requested, expressed an interest in, or subscribed to.

**Be creative.** People respond to creativity, so if there's a way to be clever without being overly cute or sales-y, go for it.

**Think like the recipient.** What would entice you to open an email? Chances are some of the same things would appeal to your audience.

**Bowl them over with benefits.** Answer the big question, "What's in it for me?" by stating a compelling product benefit in the subject line. For example, if you've developed a tool to help businesses get online fast, you might try a bold statement like this: "Build and launch your web site in under an hour."

**Keep it short.** Just because you've got 50 characters in a subject line, that doesn't mean you should use them all. If it's possible to state your case faster, then do it — your window of opportunity is only seconds.

Conversely, don't be terse if your message warrants chattiness. Again, it's all about the expectations of your particular audience — not some hard-and-fast rule.

**Make it personal.** If you've got the recipient's name, then by all means use it. Personalizing a subject line increases your odds of success. What else do you know about the recipient? Use previous responses, buying behavior, and other information

you've gleaned about the prospect, and write a subject line tailored to their particular interests. One warning: Going overboard can quickly veer into creepy stalker territory, so use personalization tactics beyond a first name judiciously.

**Be a tease.** If you're sending an email newsletter that contains multiple stories, be sure whatever article mentioned in your subject line appears toward the bottom of your message. That way, recipients must scan the whole newsletter, increasing your

chances that something else will catch their eye.

**No empty promises.** If your subject line is successful and a reader actually opens your email, nothing will turn them off faster than realizing that they've just fallen for a come-on. So make sure you can deliver on whatever your subject line promises.

**Testing, testing.** If you have the resources to test subject lines, do so. The results could provide valuable insight into what works and what doesn't — and your customers' expectations regarding your email communications.

As you can no doubt personally attest, email in-boxes fill up fast. That's why it's so important to come up with a subject line that says "Pick me!" With a little diligence and some trial and error, you'll get to the point where your prospects are opening more of your messages than ever before — putting you one step closer to a closed deal.



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## JetBlue: Two Paws Up

Half a million American pets fly each year, according to the latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation. And JetBlue has done a masterful marketing job trying to capture a piece of this potentially lucrative pie.

A few months ago, the carrier launched JetPaws, a free program catering to traveling pets and their humans. Freebies include hip bag tags for your pet carrier, a pet-specific travel checklist, and a downloadable guide to pet-friendly hotels, restaurants, parks, and even animal hospitals in some of JetBlue's major hub cities.

Simple, inexpensive, and effective. Nice job, JetBlue, especially the small touches — like labeling the site's buttons as "Fetch" rather than the banal "Learn More."

Source: [jetblue.com/jetpaws](http://jetblue.com/jetpaws)



“ Have the nerve to go into unexplored territory.  
Be brave enough to live life creatively.

Alan Alda

”



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## Inside: Cracking the Code on Better Email Subject Lines

## Stretching Your Exhibit Dollars: Tips from the Pros

“Doing more with less” is now the business norm rather than the exception. So when it comes to your trade show budget, how can you choose wisely when tasked with cutting 5%, 10%, or more?

Thanks to Scott Price of Skyline NJ, Fahoury Ink’s resource for smart tradeshow solutions, for these timely tips on what to cut and what to protect:

**Measurement is your friend.** If you’ve measured your trade show program’s performance, you can make more informed decisions — eliminating underperforming shows and trimming booth space at larger shows, especially if fewer attendees are expected.

**Rent your exhibit properties** to avoid large capital expenditures right now, and add flexibility in adjusting booth size as needed. **Modular exhibits** can also lower your shipping, drayage, storage and refurbishing costs.

Looking for a bright side to the current economic slowdown? Fewer attendees at a show means **less tire-kickers and more qualified traffic.** Your booth staffers will have an easier time getting better leads.

Don’t automatically cut your **promotion budgets** — both pre-show and at-show — before doing some serious calculating. If promotions have accounted for 10% of your budgets but bring in 30% of

your qualified leads, then trimming your promotion spending will actually reduce your ROI.

**Extend your exhibit’s reach** before and after every show by setting up an event-specific microsite. Use the site to preview what attendees will see and allow them to set up an appointment with your booth staff before the show even starts.

Finally, **write a brief statement** of your measurement objectives before each show, and share it with your exhibit house. You’ll be on the same page before starting design — and more likely to get an exhibit that helps deliver the results you need.

Source: skylinenj.com

