



Are you ready to stop sending boring emails that don't convert?

Here are 49 proven techniques to help you be more persuasive in your emails.

Think of this as your personal email marketing "hot sheet."

They are all winners.

These bite-sized, tested and proven techniques, work for any kind of email campaign: welcome emails, drip campaigns, a sales campaign, a donor appeal campaign, a new product launch, onboarding emails for a new client or member, a newsletter, or simply trying to wake up a dead email list with a reactivation campaign.

You can start using any one of these tips **today**.

And, here's the real beauty of this list...

You don't have to use all of these tips at once to see a boost in your conversions from your email list (read: more buyers, members, donors, volunteers, or subscribers).

Use one, two, three, or 12 of these tips...because marginal gains add up.

Here's what I mean: say just even one of these tips boosts your conversions by 1.5% for any one campaign. Multiply that by even just seven of the 49, and it can snowball into a 10% or better bump.

What's not to love about that?

#1 Your email must have value to your reader (not just value for you)

What is value to your reader? A discount, breaking news, humor, an inspiring story, a revealing tidbit, a big reveal or secret, or a chance to be a better person.

#2 Keep your email to ONE topic

Keep your email to one topic and your reader is more likely to take the action you want. News digests and newsletters excepted.

#3 Offer only ONE call-to-action

Offer a single call-to-action, but in multiple places in your email, and give your readers both text links and buttons with the same call-to-action. It boosts your click-throughs.

#4 Do ask for action, though

Always ask your reader to do something, even if it's a soft-ask to "share" or re-opt in for another freebie, or join you on social media, or watch a video.

#5 Write to ONE person

It doesn't matter if your email list has 50 subscribers or 250,000. Always write to ONE person in a conversational tone. If you know the type of reader you attract, speak to them using their language; otherwise, write like you would talk to your best friend. Your readers will love you for that.

#6 ONE person versus millions

We humans have greater compassion for one person that needs help rather than one million. Seriously, it's been tested. As a nonprofit, use a single story to make your point about need. We feel able to help one child starving in Mali. When it's millions, it's too overwhelming.

#7 Inspire your reader with emotion

We buy on emotion and justify with logic. Ask yourself what emotion first inspired your readers to subscribe, buy, donate to you, or just find you? What were they feeling when they turned to Google to find you? That's a good starting emotion. Still not sure? The emotions of anticipation, surprise, joy, and admiration get the best responses from readers and on social media. Write email copy or use images that inspire those emotions and then watch your opens and click-throughs to see what emotions are strongest with your readers.

#8 Benefits sell, features tell (you need both)

You can increase conversions from your emails by leading with what the features of your product, service, or mission actually "do" for your reader. My favorite quote is, "No one buys a mattress. They buy a good night's sleep." Focus on the good night's sleep in your email copy, but not 100% at the expense of features because features assure your reader you can deliver on the goods, such as a good night's sleep.

#9 Stop agonizing over your email template

Agonizing over what email template you should use? Two columns or three? How tall to make your header? Do you use a sidebar or not? Consider skipping an email template in favor of an email that looks like you personally wrote it to your reader. The absence of images and templates improves your deliver-ability. It's easiest to skip a template if you are a professional service, nonprofit, or solopreneur. If you're in retail, you do need a nicely branded email template, so carry on with your agonizing about a clean design.

#10 Images

Just like templates, retailers rely heavily on images in emails, but they are optional for the rest of us. Fewer images keep you out of spam filters, so only use an image if you really need one. Be sure to write a compelling caption or include your call-to-action in the caption since captions are read 300 times more than your copy. If possible, don't include an image in your email until your reader has opened two or three of your emails or added you to their safe-sender list.

#11 You look good on mobile (or you should)

50% of your readers or more are reading your email on their mobile phone or iPad. If you have great opens, but low click-throughs, the culprit might be that your email is hard to read on a phone, so you lose your reader before they click. We almost never "go

back” and read an email later on our desktop, so you get one bite at the apple. Mobile and response templates are easy to get and use these days, so use them.

#12 Use stories in your emails

Stories in your email are a "gold mine." Stories in any copy writing are a gold mine. Stories induce trust and make you relatable, plus they are entertaining! You can tell your own stories, stories about your members or clients, or stories about celebrities that make the point you want to make. Mix it up!

#13 Subject lines that tell your reader a benefit get opened the most

As do subject lines that use the word "you."

#14 Write at least five subject lines before picking and using the best one

You can use the one that came in second for your pre-header, or better yet...

#15 Boost opens by resending the same email with a different subject line

Resend an email to your subscribers who didn't open your first email with a different subject line to boost your opens to get the most out of a really good, important email. (this is what I do)

#16 Test your email subject lines (it's easier to do than you think)

Split A/B testing has been made super-easy to do by almost all email senders. But even if technology is a mental barrier for you, try this tech-crunched person's way to split A/B test your emails. Pick two subject lines to test. Send one subject line to 10% of your readers. Send the second email to a different 10% of your readers. Wait a few hours to see which subject line got opened the most. Use that subject line to send your email out to the remaining 80% of your readers.

#17 Spend 50% of the time you spend writing your email on just writing your subject line

Because what doesn't get opened, never gets clicked. Write at least 5 versions of your subject line to pick the top two. Test the top two, or use one of them for your pre-header.

#18 Subject lines aren't the only thing that affect your email open rates

"From" and pre-headers play a major role in getting your emails opened.

#19 Use your pre-header

Because it gets read on mobile phones, which are probably 50% of your opens. Your default can be, "Add us to your email list to get all our emails" or "This email is best viewed with images turned on." Better yet, consider using your second or third best subject line or another benefit driven reason to open the email. I try to keep it to 40 characters or less. But it's okay if your pre-header drops to two lines.

#20 "From" is a big deal

64% of readers surveyed said they opened an email because of who it's from versus 47% who opened the email because of the subject line. Always make your "From" a person, unless you're a major brand like Apple or Target. Your emails will perform better if they are from a live person, better yet, a recognizable person. We all like to do business with someone we know, like, and trust.

#21 Hook 'em

Your email needs a good "hook." A hook is your opening sentence or paragraph designed to "hook" your reader. Remember, your mobile readers will see your first sentence, so make it memorable. Good hooks are totally unpredictable, bold, and curiosity inducing. Learn more about how to write memorable hooks here ([link back to webinar registration](#)).

#22 Paint a picture

Your readers will love you for painting a picture for them. Give them visual details. How did it smell? How does it feel texture-wise? How did it sound? Was it ear-piercing? How did it taste? Was there a nasty after-taste like cough syrup? Speaking of cough syrup, is there a metaphor or simile you can use to paint the picture? Use it.

#23 Social proof

Social proof is critical for any online relationship. We can't shake your hand, see your eyes, watch your body language, so we all rely on social proof of: testimonials; star ratings; reviews; trust logos, such as VeriSign seals, the Better Business Bureau seal, awards, logos of your clients, or logos of news organizations or magazines that have featured you; or finally, just how many subscribers you have or people you've served. No social proof = no deal.

#24 Urgency and scarcity are powerful, but only when authentic

Something like 40% of us don't start Christmas shopping until the week before Christmas. Gah. 40% of all charitable donations are made in December—and most of that is the last week of the tax year. We humans wait until the last minute for everything, so be sure your reader knows what their deadline is, or if you have limited supplies. This will encourage them to click sooner rather than later. Still... you'll see most sales or donations come in at the last minute. Do your reader a favor and just be clear about supplies, cutoffs, and deadlines.

#25 Loss aversion

Your readers have a tendency to strongly prefer avoiding losses to acquiring gains. Most studies suggest that losses are twice as powerful, psychologically, as gains. You can create authentic urgency by offering early bird pricing or bonuses that they will lose if they don't act quickly, to get your readers to register or buy.

#26 Calls-to-action work best when there's an implied value

"Sign-up" is blah. "Get your 30-day free trial" works better. "Register" is blah. "Register with 25% off until midnight" is much better.

#27 Ask for exactly what you want

We're too busy to read minds. Get directly to the point and watch your click-throughs skyrocket. Urgency is also essential. "Now," "Today," "By midnight," "Before supplies run out"—all work for urgency.

#28 P.S.

Your P.S. is some of the most read copy in your email. Use your P.S. to reinforce your value and benefit, and insert a link to your single call-to-action.

#29 Consistency matters more than frequency when deciding how often to email your list.

#30 Your new subscribers are hottest in the first 10 days after they subscribe

Your time is well spent creating a brilliant onboarding or welcome email series because that's when your subscribers are the most engaged with you and likely to convert.

#31 Most unsubscribes are blamed on "too many" emails

The second most frequently given reason is "content not relevant." I think they are one and the same because no one complains about frequent emails when they are getting value out of them.

#32 Bumping your frequency with seasonal email campaigns is expected by your readers.

Knock yourself out.

#33 No more than 20% (or 4:1) of your emails should be sales promotion (unless you are major retailer)

But, here's the deal: If every email you send gives your reader value, copy-writing gurus say that your email can evolve to the point where there is no difference between offering value and promotion in the same email. If you're a retailer, by all means send me 50% off coupons anytime you want.

#34 Stop sending email blasts!

No more sending every email you write to everyone on your list (unless you've got breaking news or something really big to share). Your readers only want relevant information in their inbox and you hurt your reputation with your reader, and the likelihood they'll open your next email, when you send them emails that aren't relevant to them or chock full of value.

#35 Segment your emails by your subscribers' behavior

Getting all your readers to take action on every campaign isn't realistic. What you want is to connect with the 20% or 30% or 40% of your readers that are really "ready" or in the mood to buy, donate, become a member right now, or take the action you want them to take. One super-easy way you can do this is to send your first email of a campaign to all your readers, but then only continue to send campaign emails to the people who opened or clicked-through your original email.

#36 Better yet, segment your list by geography

Did you know that emails segmented by geography (your neighborhood, city, or your state) often get more opens and click-throughs than emails that are personalized with your reader's first name. Seriously. Local is relevant to your reader. It's easy enough to

test on your email list; most email providers track the location of your subscribers, so you don't even have to ask your subscriber. Just do it.

#37 Or, segment your email list by interest

If you know your readers' interest, segment by it. Nothing dings your credibility more than sending pre-natal vitamin offers to a 56 year old man.

#38 Or, segment your email list by how your reader subscribed to you

Not sure what interests your reader? Segmenting by geography isn't a fit for you. Maybe you're just sending a goodwill email or newsletter? Then segment by how your reader originally subscribed to you. Was it on your website? Through a special campaign? Did you give away a freebie on a particular topic? If you don't remember, watch what they open and respond to, to get an idea of their interest.

#39 Or (ca-ching) segment by how "aware" your reader is

Segmenting by awareness is email marketing on steroids. If you know how "aware" your readers are, you're talking their language and converting at a phenomenal rate. This is one of those "aha" moments. It makes sense. Marketing wiz Eugene Schwartz identified the five levels of awareness as: Most-Aware is when your reader knows your product, service, or mission and only needs to know the pricing, terms, and deadline; Product-Aware is where your reader knows what you sell, but isn't sure it's right for her; Solution-Aware is when your reader knows the results she wants, but doesn't yet know that your product or service provides it; Problem-Aware is when your reader knows he has a problem, but doesn't yet know there's a solution; Completely Unaware is where your reader has no knowledge of any problem or solution (for example, we were all completely unaware of how handy tablets were before Apple introduced the iPad).

#40 Spring clean your inactive subscribers out of your primary email list

Something like 20% of your email list is going to go bad every year because people move, lose interest, change jobs, and sometimes even die. Remove your bounces out of your system with each email drop to protect your email reputation. Move your readers with good email addresses but that haven't opened an email in six months or more to a different list. Try sending a reactivation email campaign to reengage these readers rather than continuing to send them emails that aren't working for them.

#41 How you doin'?

If you're starting out, the most important email metrics to follow are: opens, click-throughs, conversions, and unsubscribes. Everything else is "nice to have" until your email program gets more sophisticated.

#42 Open rates that drop below 20% are a red flag

It depends on your industry, but generally speaking, you might have an old list, too many bad addresses, bad subject lines, or a bad reputation for irrelevant content is causing your open rates to drop below 20%. Troubleshoot it. Segmented emails should get open rates above 30%.

#43 Your "voice" is a competitive advantage

Develop your email "voice" because your readers need to know, like, and trust you before they'll buy from you or donate to you. Your "voice" will also help you stand out from the crowd and differentiate you from the competition. Your "voice" is the timing, phrases, and vocabulary that you use in your writing. Learn more about developing your unique voice here. (link to webinar)

#44 "A little bit of both"

It's important to have your own distinctive voice, but you also have to resonate with your target audience. Use their language 50% or more of the time in your writing. If you want to learn how to use the language, timing, and pop culture references your audience uses, [click here](#).

#45 Proven email copy writing formulas

Did you know that there are at least 20 copy writing formulas that are proven to be persuasive? My three favorites for email marketing are the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and PAS (Problem, Agitate, Solve) and Star, Story, Solution. I'll share more about these formulas in the coming weeks. Stay tuned.

#46 People hate to be hemmed in...

It's been proven that if you remind your reader that they are free to choose, you eliminate any perceived threat or pushiness and boost your click-throughs by double! At the right moment, which is not all the time, remind your readers that..."But, you are free to choose."

#47 Create a dedicated landing page for each email campaign

This sure-fire tip gives you the chance to keep your messaging, images, colors all the same from email to landing page to limit any confusion by your reader when they make that all important leap over to your landing page (where your real conversions takes place). It's easier than you think to create a custom landing page in minutes with plugins like Thrive Themes Landing Pages, or Word Press ProfitBuilder, or hosted services like LeadPages and Unbounce.

#48 A high converting landing page includes...

A headline that absolutely nails the benefit for your reader. Use your subhead to validate your headline (how its delivered, when can you start, what your reader will look like after) or to tell your reader about your urgency and scarcity element; the benefits of buying or donating restated in easy-to-read bullets; a "hero" image or video (I prefer image); social proof as in trust logos, testimonials, money-back guarantees; NO other links to allow your reader to jump off this page; a strong call-to-action that starts with a verb and implies value to your reader, if they click; the email submit box or if applicable, shopping cart fields that start "above the fold;" and finally, a sentence or phrase to your reader that you will never sell or rent their email address and instead will guard it with your life.

#49 Review your spam score for each email

Email companies almost always automatically score your email for spam. Take out words and images that trigger spam filters. If your email sender doesn't offer testing, here's one of many [free spam score](#) tools available online. Do everything you can to get your email into your readers' inbox, even if it means rewriting your copy or subject line.

Want to learn more?

Sign up to get even more free goodness like this right here.