Custom Email Blast Guidelines for Advertisers

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

1. **HTML File**
   a. Email must be submitted in HTML file format.
   b. Recommended width **600-798 pixels** for desktop, though widths of 500-1280 pixels can be accommodated.
   c. Maximum file size of **100KB**.
   d. *Please review complete formatting and development requirements on Page 2.*

2. **Subject Line**
   a. Include only letters, numbers or standard punctuation.
      i. Special characters and emojis can be incorporated upon request, but are not recommended for optimal rendering across platforms.
   b. Recommended length of **40-70 characters**, with the most important keywords first.
   c. Effective subject lines will use concrete and action-oriented language.
   d. A/B testing of two (2) subject lines per send is available at no added cost.

3. **Seed List/Test List**
   a. Names and email addresses of the people who should receive the test and/or final send.

4. **Target Send Date**
   a. This date should be determined in advance and approved by your sales representative and NCM production.

5. **Preferred List Segment**
   a. We can segment by occupation, geography, brand, job title and more.
   b. Please confer with your sales representative and/or NCM list manager.

6. **Image Files** *(optional)*
   a. Images should be saved at **72 dpi resolution** as web-optimized **JPG, PNG or static/animated GIF.**
   b. These can be provided as a backup for the NCM production team or if you will not be hosting your own images (client-side hosting is preferred).

7. **Suppression List** *(optional)*
   a. Providing any email addresses that have already opted-out of previous emails from your company protects both parties from CAN-SPAM, GDPR and state data privacy regulation violations and improves open/click-through rates.

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UNSUPPORTED

The following are <u>not</u> supported across all email platforms and <u>will not be accepted</u>:

- Emails in non-HTML format, such as: PDFs, image files, Outlook files, Microsoft Word docs…
- Emails comprised entirely of one or more image files, with no editable text or non-image elements.
- Imported or externally linked custom/non-standard fonts (such as Google Fonts).
- Externally linked CSS files and stylesheets.
- Javascript or non-CSS scripting of any kind.
- Flash or other rich media embedded in the email.
- Base tags and anchor tags.
- Colors that hinder readability, such as text in a color that is too similar to the background.

BEST PRACTICES

Keep the following best practices in mind for <u>optimal email rendering and performance</u>:

- **Design your email for all screens.** Your desktop email should be set to a width of 600-798 pixels so it displays comfortably within the preview-pane size used by most email platforms.

- **Design for the mobile user.** Does your email scale well? Is it responsive or at least readable on a smallscreen? Are your links easy to press with a thumb?

- **Less is more.** Opt for a simple layout with <u>one</u> clear message, visual focus and call-to-action, descriptive headlines and short paragraphs to keep your readers' attention.

- **Highlight your call-to-action.** Display your main call-to-action "above the fold" or in a position visible before needing to scroll. Make your call-to-action stand out with unique formatting or by displaying the link as a button. Link any other relevant elements to increase click-through.

- **Assume images will be initially blocked by most email platforms.** Many email platforms do not initially display images, and require the user to click somewhere to approve/load them. Before they load, images may display their descriptive ALT Tags (ex. *alt="Facebook icon"*), so these should always be included, relevant and descriptive. This is also partly why it is important to have non-image elements in your email, and include text that conveys your message and CTA. Note that background images are not as widely supported.

- **Keep fonts simple.** Use standard fonts that will render across all platforms, such as Arial, Verdana, and Times New Roman. Google Fonts are still not supported by all platforms.

- **Write with spam filters in mind.** Avoid words and phrases such as "Buy Now," "Sale," "Rebate," "Discount," "New" and "Click here." These may get your email flagged as spam, hinder deliverability and can turn readers off from your message.

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FAQ

WHY CAN'T I USE IMAGE-ONLY EMAILS FOR MY EMAIL'S DESIGN?

HTML emails that are made up of one large image file or several small image files without HTML text **will not be sent** due to the high likelihood of spam or bouncebacks. Many email platforms also do not initially display images, and require the user to click somewhere to approve/load them; images may even be blocked from downloading due to personal settings or company firewalls. In these cases, recipients would open a blank email. We recommend the email HTML should be no more than 40% images to 60% HTML text.

WHERE WILL IMAGES BE HOSTED?

We prefer for images to be hosted on your servers, in which case we only need the HTML file, with full absolute image filepaths (http://domain...). If the image is to be hosted by NCM, we need all of the image files, optimized for web use. Images hosted by NCM will be housed on the photo server domain, http://industrialpix.com.

HOW SHOULD I FORMAT IMAGES?

Image files should be 72 dpi resolution and in JPG, PNG or GIF format. Please ensure images are set to RGB, which is preferred for web, and not CMYK. Both static and animated GIF formats are accepted, however, as GIF animation does not render on all email platforms, please ensure the first frame of the GIF contains the important message you wish to convey. The preferred method of submission is to have image links as absolute URLs in the HTML. Please consider it takes time and good Internet bandwidth to fully load image files, so use images less than 100KB in size for a good experience.

WHO WILL MY EMAIL BE "FROM" IN THE RECIPIENTS' INBOXES?

Our default "from" name will appear as the magazine brand name + "Link" (Ex. "GPS World Link"). All emails sent on behalf of NCM's advertising partners will have the default address northcoastmedia@ncm-partners.com. We use a consistent sender name and email address that subscribers are familiar with to maintain their trust.

WILL YOU ALTER MY EMAIL IN ANY WAY?

NCM provides an opt-out link to recipients and will place standard legalese at the bottom of all outbound emails. NCM reserves the right to edit emails to match our specs, optimize display, and/or to meet accepted best practices in email marketing. You will always have a chance to approve any changes before a final send is made.

Have questions about these requirements? Email Tami Liss at tliss@northcoastmedia.net to discuss, or ask your sales rep about our creative services.