

Email A/B Testing Best Practices

By testing different types of content, times that you send emails, subject lines and names in the “from” line, you can see what resonates best with your audience. Don’t be afraid to be creative and test different tactics.

Many email service providers allow A/B testing – which means you can send slightly different emails to a small sub-section of your mailing list. This enables you to see which version of the email got a better response – and send the more effective version to your entire list.

Guidelines for testing new content:

1. Test one variable at a time

If you want to know the best subject line, the only difference between Test Email A and Test Email B is the subject line. If the copy differs from email A to B, you will not know what made the successful email stand out.

2. Select your test audience(s)

You can see how different audiences react to different content – but remember, only test one variable at a time.

3. Measure success carefully

When deciding which email performed best, it can be tempting to assume it’s the email with the most opens. This is a good metric if your goal is to share a note with your supporters, but if your goal is to raise money, be sure to choose the email that resulted in the most supporters making contributions or in the largest amount raised.

4. Keep testing

Once you get a result, you shouldn’t assume that it will always hold true for your list. People may have responded to the novelty of a new button, but still respond better to a donation link overall.



Email Best Practices

Email is the fastest, most cost-effective way to reach a wide audience. Some popular email platforms include MailChimp, Send in Blue, NationBuilder, NGP and Constant Contact.

These best practices will help increase responses and boost your email program.

When writing your email, remember to:

- **Be intentional.** Email should be considered only if you have a tangible action for your supporters to take.
- **Be responsive.** Emails always perform better when they are sent at key moments - in reaction to happenings in the news or a new development. Leverage these moments. Give your audience an opportunity to act and engage.
- **Be thoughtful.** Your audience is looking to you for tangible next steps. They also want to know if their participation mattered. Report back on a fundraising campaign and how their support helped move the needle on an issue.
- **Be respectful.** This is an audience that voluntarily subscribed to your program. So give them a reason to continue following you. Be local, moment-driven and strategic with what you're asking them to do.
 - › Don't waste their time with repetitive actions, especially ones that they've taken.

Email Drafting:

Before you write an email, decide the primary intention. Do you want to raise money? Do you want people to take action? Or do you want to share a story? That intention will help focus your email.

One email = one idea.

Be specific and get straight to the point. Your subscribers/followers don't want a comprehensive summary of your About page, but they may be motivated to donate when they read your plan to improve the quality of public education by hiring more teachers. Let them know what action you want them to take and how it helps move the needle on an issue they care about.

Present the problem, solution and a call to action. Keep in mind that the solution should be realistic and match the scale of the problem. Show them what you can achieve with their help and you'll earn their donations, time and trust.

Always speak from the heart, and be authentic.

We are driven to act by our values and emotions. Hearing statistics about the harmful effects of a policy might rally people to oppose it, but consider storytelling to show how the policy affects people's lives.

For example: Tell the story of one of your constituents whose family might lose healthcare coverage when they need it the most. Not all appeals have to be negative. You can also motivate your audience by telling the story of the staffer or supporter that embodies your mission.



Email Planning & Reporting:

Keep your editorial calendar up to date and track your metrics so you know what content is performing best.

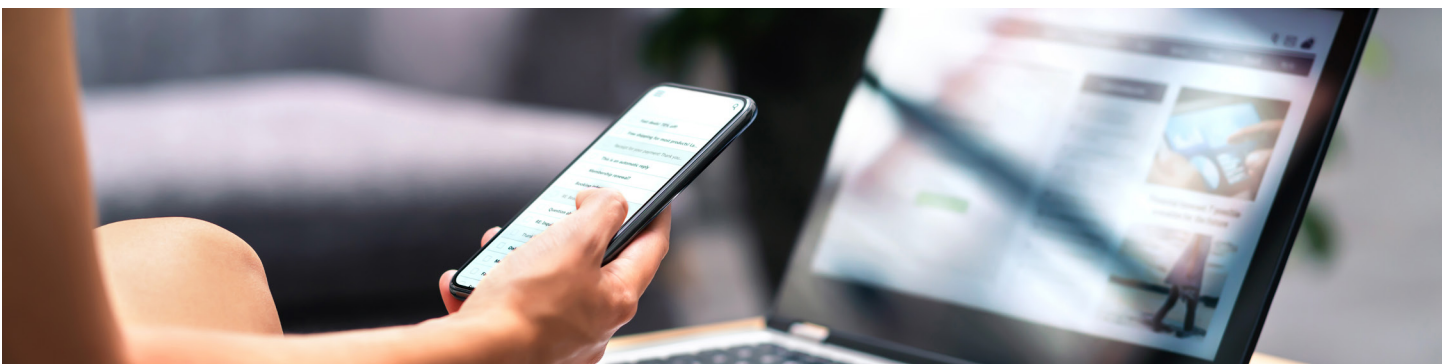
- A well organized calendar can help with internal reviews, so someone can go in and review all content for the week at once.
- It can also be helpful for writing and scheduling your emails ahead of time.

For a sample email calendar and reporting template, [click here](#).

Email “Quality Assurance” Checklist

Use a quality assurance checklist to ensure your email is proofed and ready to send:

- ❑ Check the sender
- ❑ Check the subject line
- ❑ Check the preheader (the email preview which shows up in some email in-boxes)
- ❑ Check the header: is the logo right? Is the logo clickable to your homepage?
- ❑ If sending to multiple lists, make sure the number of estimated recipients seems right
- ❑ Read the content of the HTML version and check it against the copy document – checking for all formatting and copy
- ❑ Proofread: Check the content of the email for typos or grammar
- ❑ Check all photos (if applicable) and make sure they have “alt text” – a field you can fill out which describes the photo for accessibility
- ❑ Make sure the footer includes the disclaimer, the address and an unsubscribe link
- ❑ Click all the links in the footer, including contact information. Are they correct?
- ❑ Click all the links and make sure they open in a new tab and go to the correct landing page
- ❑ Complete the sequence for the landing page – does the sequence make sense?
- ❑ Check links for source codes (if tracking your website traffic)
- ❑ Open a test of the email on your phone – does it look good?
- ❑ Check the sender against the signature. Make sure they match
- ❑ If scheduling your email in advance, ensure you send at the correct time



Social Media Best Practices

Best Practices

- You should post about the same topic on various platforms, but tailor your content to make the most out of each platform.
 - Facebook: Use images, tags and spacing to help make your post visually appealing. Longer posts will do well if you have a good first sentence “hook” that entices your followers to keep reading.
 - Instagram: You’ll need a strong, striking image, so you don’t need to post on Instagram as frequently. Make sure you use hashtags and tag other accounts.
 - LinkedIn: Keep it professional. No image is necessary, but links to stories and blogs can go a long way.
- **Post consistently.** Social media networks reward those that post consistently and get consistent engagement. Posting once a day on Twitter and a couple of times a week on Facebook/Instagram is sufficient.
- **There are free scheduling tools** on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter that enable you to schedule content for a week or a month in advance. See links to scheduling tools below.
- **Double down on what works.** If you see that your audience is reacting well to a certain type of content or messaging, post more of that type of content.
- **Tell stories.** For example, share a story about a volunteer making a real impact in your community, or a member of your community who was impacted by your work. Then let others know how they can join and get involved, too.
- **Include a call to action.** Every post should have a call to action. These include:
 - Learn more:
 - Join us:
 - Get involved:
 - Sign up now:
 - Read the full story:
- **Keep an editorial calendar:** Consistency is key to building trust. Make an editorial calendar to ensure content is scheduled, even on your busiest days. A well-organized calendar also can help with internal reviews (so someone can go in and review all content for the week at once) and help you track metrics.

For a sample social media editorial calendar and reporting template, [click here](#).



Social Media Resources

**Editing pictures? Creating graphics?
Explore these free or low-cost tools
to help develop graphics:**

- [Canva](#)
- [easel.ly](#)
- [Pixlr](#)
- [Sprout social sizing guide](#)

Scheduling tools:

- [Instagram Creator Studio](#)
- [Facebook Creator Studio](#)
- [Tweetdeck](#)
- [Hootsuite](#)
- [Sprout Social](#)

Looking for inclusive stock photos?

- [Nappy.co](#)
- [Broadly Gender Photos](#)

**Want to read up on social media
trends and tips?**

- [Sign up for Sprout Social newsletter](#)

