ToolFlow AI • FREE EBOOK • 2026

100 Email Subject Line Templates That Increase Open Rates

2026

Copy-and-paste subject lines for every situation—marketing, sales, newsletters, ecommerce, cold emails, follow-ups, and more.

100	10	50+	25
Templates	Categories	Power Words	Mistakes to Avoid

toolflowai.app

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SECTION 1

Introduction

Why subject lines are the single most important line you'll ever write.

Why Subject Lines Make or Break Your Email

You can spend hours crafting the perfect email—a compelling offer, beautiful design, flawless copy—and it still fails if nobody opens it. The subject line is the gatekeeper. It decides whether your email gets a click or goes straight to the trash.

In a world where the average office worker receives 121 emails per day, you have roughly 2–3 seconds to grab attention before someone scrolls past. Your subject line is your only shot.

21.5%	47%	69%	2–3s
Avg. open rate across all industries	Decide to open based on subject line	Report email as spam based on subject	Time you have to grab attention

The Psychology Behind the Open

Great subject lines tap into one or more fundamental human drives. Understanding these drives is what separates an amateur email marketer from a professional one.

Curiosity Gap

The brain hates incomplete information. Subject lines that hint at something without revealing everything force readers to click just to resolve the tension. 'The email I almost didn't send...' is impossible to ignore.

Fear of Missing Out

FOMO is a powerful motivator. Limited-time offers, exclusive access, and 'only X spots left' language trigger anxiety that drives clicks.

Self-Interest

People open emails that promise a clear benefit to them specifically. 'How to get your first 1,000 email subscribers' speaks directly to what the reader wants.

Social Proof

We are wired to follow the crowd. 'What 10,000 marketers do differently' works because it implies others have already validated the content.

Novelty

The brain is hard-wired to pay attention to new information. Words like 'new', 'just released', and 'announcing' trigger this response.

Personalisation

Seeing your own name in a subject line activates the brain in a way generic copy cannot. Even small personal touches increase open rates by 26% on average.

Average Email Open Rates by Industry

Not all industries are created equal. Here's a realistic benchmark—compare your current performance and set smarter goals.

Industry	Avg. Open Rate	Avg. CTR	Benchmark Target
Government / Nonprofit	28.7%	3.3%	> 30%
Education	26.9%	3.7%	> 28%
Healthcare	24.8%	3.1%	> 26%

Industry	Avg. Open Rate	Avg. CTR	Benchmark Target
Software / SaaS	22.1%	2.2%	> 24%
Ecommerce / Retail	20.2%	2.6%	> 22%
Agency / Consulting	19.8%	2.9%	> 21%
Financial Services	19.1%	2.5%	> 21%
Travel & Hospitality	18.4%	1.9%	> 20%
Media & Entertainment	17.2%	1.8%	> 19%
Real Estate	16.9%	1.6%	> 18%

The 6 Most Common Subject Line Mistakes

! 1. Being too vague

"Check this out" tells the reader nothing. Vague subject lines feel lazy and get ignored.

! 2. Writing clickbait

Promising something you don't deliver destroys trust and increases unsubscribes. Always match the subject to the content.

! 3. Starting with 'Re:' or 'Fwd:'

Faking a reply chain is manipulative. Readers feel deceived and mark you as spam.

! 4. Using ALL CAPS

ALL CAPS reads as shouting online and triggers spam filters. Use sentence case or title case instead.

! 5. Making it too long

Subject lines over 60 characters get cut off on mobile. Aim for 40–50 characters for best results.

! 6. Ignoring spam trigger words

Words like 'FREE!!!' (with multiple exclamation marks), 'No cost', and 'Act now' raise red flags with spam filters.

ToolFlow AI Email Writer

Struggling to come up with subject lines? ToolFlow's free AI Email Writer generates high-converting subject lines for any email type in seconds. Try it at toolflowai.app.

SECTION 2

Anatomy of the Perfect Subject Line

The 8 elements that elite email marketers combine to engineer opens.

The 8 Elements That Drive Opens

No single element makes a subject line great. The best subject lines combine 2–4 of these elements to create something irresistible.

1 **Curiosity**
Hints at something without revealing it fully.
'The email I almost didn't send...'

2 **Clear Benefit**
Tells the reader exactly what they'll gain.
'Double your open rates in 7 days'

3 **Urgency**
Creates time pressure that drives immediate action.
'Last chance: offer ends midnight tonight'

4 **Personalisation**
Uses the reader's name, company, or behaviour.
'Sarah, your cart is waiting'

5

Numbers

Specific numbers are more credible than vague claims.

'11 subject line templates that actually work'

6

Questions

Questions create an irresistible need to find the answer.

'Are you making this email mistake?'

7

Power Words

Emotionally charged words that trigger action.

'Exclusive, Free, New, Secret, Proven'

8

Emojis (Careful)

One relevant emoji can boost opens by 10–15%—but only when it fits the brand.

'Your order is on its way '

Subject Line Length: What the Data Says

Length affects opens differently on desktop vs. mobile. Because over 60% of emails are opened on mobile devices, you should optimise for the smaller screen first.

Characters	Desktop Preview	Mobile Preview	Recommended For	Open Rate Impact
Under 30	Full + padding	Full	Push notifications	**Good**
30–40	Full	Full	Punchy promos	**Very Good**
40–50	Full	Mostly full	Most email types	**Best**
50–60	Full	Slightly cut	Detail-rich topics	**Good**
60–70	Mostly full	Cut off	Newsletters only	**Fair**
70+	Often cut	Significantly cut	Avoid	**Poor**

Mobile-First Rule

Always test your subject line at 40 characters first. If it still makes sense, expand it. If you have to cut it at 40 characters, you've nailed the core message.

SECTION 3

Subject Line Formula Library

20 proven formulas behind every high-performing email subject line.

Behind every great subject line is a repeatable formula. Master these 20 and you'll never stare at a blank subject line field again.

01

Question

Formula: [Provocative question]?

'Are you making this email mistake?'

02

Number List

Formula: [Number] ways/tips/tools to [achieve result]

'7 ways to grow your list this week'

03

How-to

Formula: How to [achieve goal] [timeframe/condition]

'How to write emails people actually open'

04

Mistake

Formula: The [number] [topic] mistake you're probably making

'The #1 subject line mistake marketers make'

05

Curiosity Gap

Formula: [Partial info that demands resolution]...

'The email I almost didn't send...'

06

FOMO

Formula: [Scarcity/exclusivity] + [what they'll miss]

'Only 3 spots left for our live workshop'

07

Urgency

Formula: [Deadline] + [consequence of inaction]

'Offer ends tonight—don't miss this'

08

Announcement

Formula: Introducing / Announcing [product/news]

'Introducing: ToolFlow AI Email Writer'

09

Direct Benefit

Formula: [Action verb] your [metric] by [result]

'Double your open rates in 30 days'

10

Story Hook

Formula: [Intriguing opening line of a story]

'I almost quit email marketing until...'

11

Before & After

Formula: From [bad state] to [good state]—here's how

'From 12% to 38% open rate—here's how'

12

Secret

Formula: The secret/trick/hack to [desirable outcome]

'The secret to cold emails that get replies'

13

Case Study

Formula: How [person/company] achieved [result]

'How Acme Co. grew revenue 43% with email'

14

Warning

Formula: Warning: [negative consequence if they don't act]

'Warning: your email list is slowly dying'

15

Challenge

Formula: Can you [challenge]? [related question]

'Can you write a better subject line than this?'

16

Checklist

Formula: [Number]-point checklist for [goal]

'12-point checklist before you hit send'

17

Offer

Formula: [Specific offer]: [specifics and deadline]

'50% off—today and tomorrow only'

18

Invitation

Formula: You're invited: [event/access/exclusive thing]

'You're invited: private beta opens Monday'

19

Personal

Formula: [First name], [personalised line]

'James, this one's just for you'

20

Follow-up

Formula: Re: [topic] / Quick follow-up on [topic]

'Quick follow-up on our conversation'

SECTION 4

100 Copy-and-Paste Templates

Ready-to-use subject lines for every email situation, fully customisable.

CATEGORY 01 OF 10

Welcome Emails

First impressions count. Welcome emails have the highest open rates of any email type—averaging 50–60%. These subject lines set the tone for the entire relationship.

Use when: someone signs up for your newsletter, creates an account, downloads a resource, or joins your community.

#1 Welcome! Here's what happens next...

WHY IT WORKS

The ellipsis creates instant curiosity. New subscribers want to know what they've signed up for.

BEST AUDIENCE

Brand new subscribers, especially those who signed up from content marketing.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send within 5 minutes of sign-up. Speed correlates with higher open rates.

EXAMPLE

Welcome! Here's what happens next with your ToolFlow account...

VARIATION

#2 You made it, [First Name]. Let's get started.

WHY IT WORKS

Personalisation plus forward momentum. 'You made it' feels celebratory without being over the top.

BEST AUDIENCE

Community sign-ups, course enrolments, and membership programs.

OPEN RATE TIP

Personalisation in welcome emails lifts open rates by up to 26%.

EXAMPLE

You made it, Sarah. Let's get started.

VARIATION

#3 Your [freebie] is inside

WHY IT WORKS

Clear value delivery. Subscribers who opted in for a lead magnet are highly motivated to open this.

BEST AUDIENCE

Email list builders and anyone offering a lead magnet as a sign-up incentive.

OPEN RATE TIP

Keep the subject short and direct. The simpler the better for high-intent subscribers.

EXAMPLE

Your free email templates are inside

VARIATION

Here's the [resource] you requested

#4 Welcome to [Brand]—here's your first gift

WHY IT WORKS
Giving something unexpected immediately builds goodwill and opens the relationship positively.

BEST AUDIENCE
Ecommerce stores, SaaS products, and membership communities.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use 'gift' rather than 'discount' for a more premium feel.

EXAMPLE
Welcome to ToolFlow AI—here's your first gift

VARIATION

#5 Quick question for you, [First Name]

WHY IT WORKS
Questions demand answers. This personalised question creates a conversational tone that stands out.

BEST AUDIENCE
Service businesses, coaches, and agencies building a personal connection early.

OPEN RATE TIP
Keep the email itself genuinely conversational—ask a real question and invite a reply.

EXAMPLE
Quick question for you, James

VARIATION

#6 The [Number] things you need to know about [Topic]

WHY IT WORKS
Numbers signal clarity and a quick read. Perfect for onboarding new subscribers who need orientation.

BEST AUDIENCE
SaaS products, newsletters, and content platforms with a learning curve.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the number odd (3, 5, 7). Odd numbers outperform even numbers in open rate tests.

EXAMPLE
The 3 things you need to know about email marketing

VARIATION

#7 You're officially one of us.

WHY IT WORKS
Tribal identity and belonging are powerful motivators. This subject line creates instant community.

BEST AUDIENCE
Communities, membership sites, professional networks, and cause-driven brands.

OPEN RATE TIP
Works best for brands with a strong identity or mission.

EXAMPLE
You're officially one of us.

VARIATION
Welcome to the tribe, [First Name]

#8 Don't skip this email, [First Name]

WHY IT WORKS

A direct command with personalisation triggers curiosity. What's so important you shouldn't skip it?

BEST AUDIENCE

Important onboarding sequences where a key action must be completed.

OPEN RATE TIP

Only use this urgency when the content genuinely warrants it.

EXAMPLE

Don't skip this email, Sarah

VARIATION

#9 [Company Name] is different—here's why

WHY IT WORKS

Challenges expectations and promises a new perspective. Great for differentiated brands.

BEST AUDIENCE

Brands in crowded markets where differentiation is a core message.

OPEN RATE TIP

Follow through in the email with genuine differentiators, not marketing fluff.

EXAMPLE

ToolFlow AI is different—here's why

VARIATION

#10 Let's make the next 7 days count

WHY IT WORKS

Sets a short-term time frame and creates a goal together with the reader. Implies an onboarding journey.

BEST AUDIENCE

SaaS products, online courses, and email challenges.

OPEN RATE TIP

Pair with a 7-day email sequence to reinforce the promise.

EXAMPLE

Let's make the next 7 days count

VARIATION

Your 7-day [Brand] journey starts now

CATEGORY 02 OF 10

Sales Emails

Sales emails must earn attention before they ask for anything. The best sales subject lines focus on the customer's problem—not your product.

Use when: pitching a product or service, following up on a proposal, nurturing a warm lead, or running a direct sales campaig

#11 Still thinking about [product/problem]?

WHY IT WORKS

Mirrors the reader's thought process. Meets them where they are mentally without being pushy.

BEST AUDIENCE

Mid-funnel leads who engaged with your product page or content but haven't converted.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send 3–5 days after the initial touchpoint. Combine with a genuine value-add in the body.

EXAMPLE

Still thinking about your email marketing strategy?

VARIATION

#12 The real reason [problem] is costing you [metric]

WHY IT WORKS

Diagnoses a hidden pain point. 'Real reason' implies that common solutions are wrong, creating curiosity.

BEST AUDIENCE

B2B buyers and decision-makers who have tried and failed to solve a problem.

OPEN RATE TIP

Make the cost concrete in the email body—use real numbers or case study data.

EXAMPLE

The real reason low open rates are costing you sales

VARIATION

#13 [First Name], I'll be direct with you.

WHY IT WORKS

Radical transparency cuts through noise. Most sales emails dance around the pitch—this one doesn't.

BEST AUDIENCE

Warm leads who have had previous interactions. Not suitable for cold outreach.

OPEN RATE TIP

Best for a concise, honest email with a single, clear ask.

EXAMPLE

Sarah, I'll be direct with you.

VARIATION

No fluff. Here's my pitch, [First Name].

#14 How [Customer Name] solved [problem] with [product]

WHY IT WORKS
Social proof via a named case study. Specific names and outcomes are more credible than vague claims.

BEST AUDIENCE
Mid to late-stage buyers who are comparing solutions.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use real customer names (with permission) and real metrics for maximum credibility.

EXAMPLE
How Acme Co. cut their churn rate by 40% with ToolFlow

VARIATION

#15 [Number] minutes to see something impressive

WHY IT WORKS
Low commitment ask combined with a credibility hook. '3 minutes' is less threatening than 'book a demo'.

BEST AUDIENCE
Busy decision-makers who are sceptical of their time being wasted.

OPEN RATE TIP
Follow through with a short, genuinely impressive demo or case study video.

EXAMPLE
3 minutes to see something impressive

VARIATION

#16 What's standing between you and [desired outcome]?

WHY IT WORKS
Positions you as a thoughtful partner diagnosing their situation, not a vendor pushing a product.

BEST AUDIENCE
Consultative B2B sales, agencies, and service businesses.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use in the email to genuinely explore their barriers before pitching.

EXAMPLE
What's standing between you and 30% higher open rates?

VARIATION

#17 Your competitors are already doing this

WHY IT WORKS
Competitive threat combined with FOMO. Especially effective in competitive industries.

BEST AUDIENCE
Business decision-makers in competitive markets who respond to market intelligence.

OPEN RATE TIP
Back up the claim in the email with real market data or competitor examples.

EXAMPLE
Your competitors are already using AI to write emails

VARIATION
Everyone in [industry] is doing this. Are you?

#18 A genuine offer—no strings attached

WHY IT WORKS
Transparency and low risk. In a world of manipulative marketing, honesty is a differentiator.

BEST AUDIENCE
Sceptical buyers who have been burned by misleading offers in the past.

OPEN RATE TIP
The email must genuinely deliver something valuable with no hidden requirements.

EXAMPLE
A genuine offer—no strings attached

VARIATION

#19 [First Name], is this still a priority for you?

WHY IT WORKS
Re-engagement question that respects the reader's decision-making process without pressuring them.

BEST AUDIENCE
Prospects who went cold after initial interest.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include a clear 'opt-out' option to respect those who have deprioritised the decision.

EXAMPLE
Sarah, is email marketing still a priority for you?

VARIATION

#20 Last chance to [take action] before [consequence]

WHY IT WORKS
Urgency combined with loss aversion. The fear of losing something is stronger than the desire to gain.

BEST AUDIENCE
Leads at the decision stage who need a final nudge.

OPEN RATE TIP
Only use genuine urgency. Fake deadlines destroy trust when discovered.

EXAMPLE
Last chance to lock in your 2026 pricing before rates increase

VARIATION
Final reminder: [offer/deadline]

CATEGORY 03 OF 10

Promotional Emails

Promotional subject lines must balance excitement with clarity. The reader needs to understand the offer at a glance—without feeling like they're being shouted at.

Use when: running a sale, offering a discount, launching a limited-time deal, or promoting a special event.

#21 [X]% off everything—today only

WHY IT WORKS

Crystal-clear offer with hard urgency. No ambiguity about what's being offered or when it ends.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers and warm leads who are already familiar with your brand.

OPEN RATE TIP

Add a time stamp in the subject (e.g., 'today only') and a countdown timer in the email body.

EXAMPLE

30% off everything—today only

VARIATION

#22 Your exclusive [discount] is waiting

WHY IT WORKS

'Your' and 'exclusive' make the reader feel specially selected. 'Waiting' implies they've almost missed it.

BEST AUDIENCE

VIP customers, loyalty members, and email subscribers being rewarded for their status.

OPEN RATE TIP

Use this sparingly. If every email feels 'exclusive', none of them do.

EXAMPLE

Your exclusive 20% discount is waiting

VARIATION

#23 We don't do this often, but...

WHY IT WORKS

Signals rarity and earns trust. When a brand rarely runs promotions, each one feels more special.

BEST AUDIENCE

Premium brands and businesses that position on quality rather than price.

OPEN RATE TIP

Only use this if it's true. If you run weekly sales, this line will feel dishonest.

EXAMPLE

We don't do this often, but... 40% off starts now

VARIATION

This almost never happens—[offer]

#24 [Product] for [price]—for [timeframe]

WHY IT WORKS
Specific, concrete offer. No interpretation needed. Works best for hero product promotions.

BEST AUDIENCE
Price-sensitive buyers and comparison shoppers who make quick decisions.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the price genuinely compelling. A weak deal with a great subject line creates disappointment.

EXAMPLE
Our AI Email Writer—free for 30 days

VARIATION

#25 Buy one, get one [benefit]—ends [day]

WHY IT WORKS
BOGO deals have universal appeal. Specifying the end day creates natural urgency.

BEST AUDIENCE
Ecommerce, subscription services, and businesses where volume discounts make sense.

OPEN RATE TIP
BOGO promotions work best when both items have similar value.

EXAMPLE
Buy one, get one free—ends Sunday

VARIATION

#26 The [season/event] sale is live

WHY IT WORKS
Timely and expected. Readers anticipate seasonal sales and are primed to engage.

BEST AUDIENCE
Existing customers who know and trust your brand.

OPEN RATE TIP
Send the 'sale is live' email at 9–10 AM in the recipient's time zone for best results.

EXAMPLE
The Black Friday sale is live

VARIATION

#27 Spend [amount], save [amount]

WHY IT WORKS
Tiered saving is a powerful psychological trigger—readers immediately calculate their personal saving.

BEST AUDIENCE
Mid-to-high average order value businesses looking to increase basket size.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the threshold achievable—just slightly above your average order value.

EXAMPLE
Spend £50, save £15

VARIATION
Spend more, save more—up to [X]% off

#28 The deal you've been waiting for

WHY IT WORKS

Creates implied anticipation. Suggests this is the culmination of something the reader has been hoping for.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing subscribers who have been warming up through a pre-launch sequence.

OPEN RATE TIP

Best used after a deliberate anticipation-building email campaign.

EXAMPLE

The deal you've been waiting for—it's here

VARIATION

#29 Free shipping on everything—no minimum

WHY IT WORKS

Free shipping is one of the top conversion drivers in ecommerce. 'No minimum' removes the final barrier.

BEST AUDIENCE

Ecommerce brands targeting price-conscious consumers.

OPEN RATE TIP

A/B test 'free shipping' against '£5 off' to see which drives more conversions for your audience.

EXAMPLE

Free shipping on everything—no minimum spend

VARIATION

#30 New arrivals you'll actually want

WHY IT WORKS

'Actually want' is disarmingly honest—it implies most new arrivals aren't worth your time, but these are.

BEST AUDIENCE

Fashion, lifestyle, and product brands with a discerning customer base.

OPEN RATE TIP

Use customer behaviour data to target this to people who've browsed recent arrivals.

EXAMPLE

New arrivals you'll actually want (just landed)

VARIATION

Fresh in: [product category] you need to see

CATEGORY 04 OF 10

Newsletter Emails

Newsletter subject lines must compete with news, social media, and everything else in the inbox. The best ones feel like a letter from a trusted friend—not a broadcast.

Use when: sending a regular newsletter, sharing industry updates, delivering curated content, or maintaining subscriber relo

#31 This week in [topic]: [intriguing hook]

WHY IT WORKS

Clearly signals what type of email this is and teases the most interesting piece of content inside.

BEST AUDIENCE

Regular newsletter subscribers who are accustomed to a weekly format.

OPEN RATE TIP

Include the most surprising or counterintuitive insight as the hook, not the most obvious one.

EXAMPLE

This week in email marketing: open rates just hit a 5-year high

VARIATION

#32 [Number] things worth your attention this week

WHY IT WORKS

Sets clear expectations and implies the content has been curated—readers value curation over volume.

BEST AUDIENCE

Busy professionals who want a quick, high-value digest format.

OPEN RATE TIP

Stick to the number you promise. '5 things' should contain exactly 5 things.

EXAMPLE

5 things worth your attention this week

VARIATION

#33 The [adjective] edition

WHY IT WORKS

A playful, themed edition creates personality and memorability. Readers look forward to the 'spicy edition'.

BEST AUDIENCE

Newsletters with a distinct voice and personality.

OPEN RATE TIP

Make the adjective reflect the actual content—it should feel curated, not random.

EXAMPLE

The contrarian edition

VARIATION

The [theme] issue is here

#34 What I learned from [experience/book/person]

WHY IT WORKS

Personal learning signals genuine insight. Readers follow newsletters for perspective, not just information.

BEST AUDIENCE

Founder newsletters, personal brands, and thought leadership publications.

OPEN RATE TIP

Be specific about what you learned—vague lessons feel like filler.

EXAMPLE

What I learned from sending 1 million emails

VARIATION

#35 Not everyone will agree with this

WHY IT WORKS

Controversy (handled thoughtfully) drives engagement. This line signals a fresh or contrarian perspective.

BEST AUDIENCE

Newsletters with a confident point of view and a sophisticated audience.

OPEN RATE TIP

Only use this if the content is genuinely thought-provoking, not just edgy for its own sake.

EXAMPLE

Not everyone will agree with this. I'm saying it anyway.

VARIATION

#36 The [topic] issue everyone's talking about

WHY IT WORKS

Social proof in the subject line. If everyone is talking about it, you feel compelled to know what it is.

BEST AUDIENCE

News-style newsletters and industry publications covering trending topics.

OPEN RATE TIP

Pair with timely content—this subject line loses credibility if the topic is already old news.

EXAMPLE

The AI email issue everyone's talking about

VARIATION

#37 My honest take on [trending topic]

WHY IT WORKS

'Honest take' implies independence and courage—the writer isn't just echoing the consensus.

BEST AUDIENCE

Thought leaders, independent analysts, and anyone positioning on authenticity.

OPEN RATE TIP

Be genuinely honest, even if it's uncomfortable. Readers can spot performed authenticity.

EXAMPLE

My honest take on AI writing tools

VARIATION

An unfiltered take on [trend]

#38 The question I keep getting asked about [topic]

WHY IT WORKS
Frames the newsletter as a direct response to reader curiosity—highly relevant and personal.

BEST AUDIENCE
Any newsletter with an active, engaged audience that regularly asks questions.

OPEN RATE TIP
Ideally, use a real question from a real subscriber (with permission). Authenticity shows.

EXAMPLE
The question I keep getting asked about subject lines

VARIATION

#39 Data drop: what [number] emails taught us

WHY IT WORKS
Data-driven content signals credibility. 'Data drop' is casual and suggests raw, unfiltered insight.

BEST AUDIENCE
Marketing, data, or analytics newsletters targeting professionals who value evidence.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include at least one specific, surprising data point in the subject or preview text.

EXAMPLE
Data drop: what 50,000 emails taught us about open rates

VARIATION

#40 Read this before [timeframe/event]

WHY IT WORKS
Urgency without pressure. Positions the newsletter as timely and practically valuable.

BEST AUDIENCE
Business newsletters tied to seasonal events, quarters, or industry milestones.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the connection between the content and the timeframe genuinely clear.

EXAMPLE
Read this before Q1 ends

VARIATION
Before [event]—here's what you need to know

CATEGORY 05 OF 10

Product Launch Emails

Product launch subject lines must balance hype with credibility. Too much excitement feels hollow; too little and the launch falls flat. The best launch emails build anticipation before the day

Use when: launching a new product, releasing a major update, opening a beta, or announcing a new feature.

#41 It's here. [Product Name] is officially live.

WHY IT WORKS

Short, declarative, and exciting. No mystery—just the announcement. The brevity creates impact.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers and warm leads who have been anticipating the launch.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send this at 9 AM on launch day. The first email to announce a live product gets the highest opens.

EXAMPLE

It's here. ToolFlow AI Email Writer is officially live.

VARIATION

#42 Introducing [Product]—[one-line value proposition]

WHY IT WORKS

Classic launch formula. Clear, professional, and immediately communicates value.

BEST AUDIENCE

Professional audiences and B2B product launches where clarity beats hype.

OPEN RATE TIP

Spend more time on the value proposition than the product name. What does it do for them?

EXAMPLE

Introducing AI Email Writer—write better emails in seconds

VARIATION

#43 We've been working on something big.

WHY IT WORKS

Pre-launch teaser that creates anticipation. The vagueness is intentional—it makes people curious.

BEST AUDIENCE

Loyal subscribers who have a relationship with your brand and care about what you're building.

OPEN RATE TIP

Follow with 2–3 teaser emails before the main launch announcement.

EXAMPLE

We've been working on something big. It launches Thursday.

VARIATION

Something big is coming. Stay tuned.

#44 Early access is now open for [Product]

WHY IT WORKS
Exclusivity and scarcity. Early access feels special and creates a sense of being chosen.

BEST AUDIENCE
Your most engaged subscribers—reward them by giving them first access.

OPEN RATE TIP
Limit early access genuinely. If everyone gets early access, it stops being early.

EXAMPLE
Early access is now open for ToolFlow AI Email Writer

VARIATION

#45 [Product] solves the [specific problem] problem

WHY IT WORKS
Problem-focused launch framing. Speaks to pain before speaking to solution.

BEST AUDIENCE
Audiences who have explicitly expressed the problem your product solves.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use this for audiences who don't yet know about your product—it earns attention before the reveal.

EXAMPLE
AI Email Writer solves the blank page problem

VARIATION

#46 You asked for it. We built it.

WHY IT WORKS
Community-driven product narrative. Implies the product exists because of subscriber feedback.

BEST AUDIENCE
Existing communities, beta users, and engaged customers who participated in feedback sessions.

OPEN RATE TIP
Only use this if the product was genuinely shaped by customer input.

EXAMPLE
You asked for it. We built it. AI Email Writer is here.

VARIATION

#47 The wait is over: [Product] is live

WHY IT WORKS
Anticipation payoff. Works best when you've run a proper pre-launch teaser sequence.

BEST AUDIENCE
Subscribers who have been through your pre-launch email sequence.

OPEN RATE TIP
Schedule this immediately after your launch event or launch window opens.

EXAMPLE
The wait is over. AI Email Writer is live

VARIATION
It's finally here—[Product] has launched

#48 [Number] things you should know before you try [Product]

WHY IT WORKS
Educational framing that reduces friction. Great for complex or innovative products.

BEST AUDIENCE
Audiences unfamiliar with your product category or new to the problem it solves.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use in a post-launch sequence, 1–2 days after the initial announcement.

EXAMPLE
5 things you should know before you try AI Email Writer

VARIATION

#49 Your [industry] just changed. Here's why.

WHY IT WORKS
Bold positioning that frames the launch as a category-defining moment.

BEST AUDIENCE
Enterprise audiences, innovation-driven markets, and category leaders.

OPEN RATE TIP
Back this up in the email body with genuine market context—don't just make the claim.

EXAMPLE
Email marketing just changed. Here's why.

VARIATION

#50 Free for [timeframe]—[Product] launches today

WHY IT WORKS
Combining 'free' with launch urgency is a powerful conversion driver for new products.

BEST AUDIENCE
Price-sensitive audiences and markets where free trials are the expected conversion path.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the free period long enough for users to experience value—at least 7–14 days.

EXAMPLE
Free for 30 days—AI Email Writer launches today

VARIATION
Launch day: [Product] is free until [date]

CATEGORY 06 OF 10

Ecommerce Emails

Ecommerce subject lines are about turning browsers into buyers. The best ones are specific, benefit-led, and timed to match where the customer is in their journey.

Use when: sending product recommendations, promoting seasonal collections, rewarding loyal customers, or recovering lap

#51 New in: [product category] you'll love

WHY IT WORKS

Simple, friendly, and benefit-forward. 'You'll love' creates an implicit promise of curation.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers who have purchased from this category before.

OPEN RATE TIP

Personalise this with the specific category the customer has bought from previously.

EXAMPLE

New in: sustainable activewear you'll love

VARIATION

#52 You left [item] behind—still want it?

WHY IT WORKS

Soft reminder that doesn't feel pushy. The question format puts the customer in control.

BEST AUDIENCE

Shoppers who added items to wishlist or browsed product pages without purchasing.

OPEN RATE TIP

Trigger this 24 hours after browse abandonment with a product image in the email body.

EXAMPLE

You left the Organic Cotton Tee behind—still want it?

VARIATION

#53 [First Name], we picked these for you

WHY IT WORKS

Personalised curation feels like a personal shopper. Makes the email feel relevant rather than broadcast.

BEST AUDIENCE

Mid-funnel customers who have made at least one purchase.

OPEN RATE TIP

Use purchase history and browsing data to genuinely personalise the product selection.

EXAMPLE

Sarah, we picked these for you

VARIATION

Based on your last order—you might love these

#54 [Number] items under [price]—selling fast

WHY IT WORKS
Value + urgency combination. Specific price point sets expectations and filters for budget-conscious shoppers.

BEST AUDIENCE
Price-sensitive segments and shoppers who engage with sale and clearance emails.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use real-time inventory data to keep the 'selling fast' claim credible.

EXAMPLE
8 gifts under £30—selling fast

VARIATION

#55 Your wish list just got cheaper

WHY IT WORKS
Highly relevant and personalised. Directly connects to something the customer has already shown interest in.

BEST AUDIENCE
Shoppers who have an active wishlist on your platform.

OPEN RATE TIP
Only send when the price drop is meaningful—at least 15% to feel worthwhile.

EXAMPLE
Your wish list just got cheaper

VARIATION

#56 Back in stock: [product name]

WHY IT WORKS
Restocks are high-intent moments. Customers who were previously blocked are ready to buy.

BEST AUDIENCE
Customers who viewed or were waitlisted for out-of-stock items.

OPEN RATE TIP
Send immediately when the restock happens—every hour of delay reduces conversion.

EXAMPLE
Back in stock: Classic White Sneaker

VARIATION

#57 Complete your look with [complementary product]

WHY IT WORKS
Cross-sell framing that feels helpful rather than commercial. Builds purchase logic.

BEST AUDIENCE
Recent buyers who purchased a product with obvious complementary items.

OPEN RATE TIP
Wait 48–72 hours after purchase before sending cross-sell emails.

EXAMPLE
Complete your look with our matching accessories

VARIATION
Customers who bought this also loved...

#58 Order in the next [timeframe] for [delivery date] delivery

WHY IT WORKS
Deadline-based urgency tied to a desirable outcome (gifts in time, event-ready items).

BEST AUDIENCE
Shoppers during gifting seasons (Christmas, Valentine's, Mother's Day).

OPEN RATE TIP
Use real cut-off times. Missing a promised delivery destroys trust.

EXAMPLE
Order in the next 4 hours for Christmas Eve delivery

VARIATION

#59 Thank you for your order—something extra inside

WHY IT WORKS
Post-purchase delight. The surprise element drives high open rates from motivated, happy customers.

BEST AUDIENCE
Brand new customers immediately after their first purchase.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use this to deliver a loyalty discount or thank-you gift that encourages a second purchase.

EXAMPLE
Thank you for your order, Sarah—something extra inside

VARIATION

#60 We miss you. Here's [X]% off to come back.

WHY IT WORKS
Win-back email with a direct incentive. Acknowledges the lapse and offers a clear reason to return.

BEST AUDIENCE
Customers who haven't purchased in 90+ days.

OPEN RATE TIP
The discount should be meaningful—15–25% off is the sweet spot for win-backs.

EXAMPLE
We miss you, James. Here's 20% off to come back.

VARIATION
It's been a while—here's a reason to return

CATEGORY 07 OF 10

Abandoned Cart Emails

Abandoned cart emails have the highest ROI of any automated email sequence. The subject line must acknowledge the situation without being weird about it.

Use when: a customer adds items to their cart but doesn't complete checkout. Send a sequence of 3 emails over 24–72 hours.

#61 You forgot something...

WHY IT WORKS

Gentle, conversational reminder. The ellipsis creates a micro-tension that invites the click.

BEST AUDIENCE

All cart abandoners—this is your safe, universal first abandoned cart email.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send 1–2 hours after abandonment. This is your most powerful recovery window.

EXAMPLE

You forgot something...

VARIATION

#62 Your cart is about to expire

WHY IT WORKS

Urgency via loss aversion. Items reserved in carts often do expire in real systems.

BEST AUDIENCE

Cart abandoners who received the first reminder but haven't returned.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send 12–24 hours after abandonment. Only use 'expire' if cart reservation is real.

EXAMPLE

Your cart is about to expire, Sarah

VARIATION

#63 Still deciding? Let us help.

WHY IT WORKS

Helpful framing that removes barrier to purchase. Positions the brand as supportive, not aggressive.

BEST AUDIENCE

Cart abandoners for higher-value or more complex purchases with longer decision cycles.

OPEN RATE TIP

Include customer service contact, FAQs, and trust signals in this email.

EXAMPLE

Still deciding? We're here to help.

VARIATION

Got questions about your order? We've got answers.

#64 Your [specific item] is almost gone

WHY IT WORKS
Scarcity specific to the item left in cart. Highly personalised and more urgent than generic messages.

BEST AUDIENCE
Cart abandoners when the specific item has limited stock remaining.

OPEN RATE TIP
Only send if the inventory is genuinely low. False scarcity is spotted and resented.

EXAMPLE
Your Organic Cotton Tee (Size M) is almost gone

VARIATION

#65 Someone else might buy this...

WHY IT WORKS
Social proof meets loss aversion. Other customers wanting the same item is a genuine signal of value.

BEST AUDIENCE
Abandoners for popular items with high view-to-purchase ratios.

OPEN RATE TIP
Show live view counts or 'X others are looking at this' data to reinforce the claim.

EXAMPLE
Someone else might buy this before you do

VARIATION

#66 Here's [X]% off to complete your order

WHY IT WORKS
Direct incentive for the final recovery email. The discount provides a new reason to return.

BEST AUDIENCE
Cart abandoners who have not responded to 2 previous reminder emails.

OPEN RATE TIP
Keep incentive emails for the final recovery email only. Training customers to abandon for discounts is costly.

EXAMPLE
Here's 10% off to complete your order, James

VARIATION

#67 Your order summary is ready

WHY IT WORKS
Neutral, functional framing. Feels like a natural next step rather than a marketing email.

BEST AUDIENCE
B2B and high-value purchase abandoners where a formal tone is more appropriate.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include the full cart summary, pricing, and a clear checkout link.

EXAMPLE
Your order summary is ready for you

VARIATION
Your cart summary: [number] items ready to ship

#68 Is everything okay, [First Name]?

WHY IT WORKS
Surprisingly personal for an automated email. Cuts through the noise with genuine concern.

BEST AUDIENCE
High-average-order-value brands where a personal relationship is part of the experience.

OPEN RATE TIP
Keep the email body short and genuinely conversational—this is not the place for heavy marketing copy.

EXAMPLE
Is everything okay, Sarah?

VARIATION

#69 We saved your cart—pick up where you left off

WHY IT WORKS
Helpful service framing. The cart being 'saved' feels like a benefit, not a sales technique.

BEST AUDIENCE
All cart abandoners—a safe, positive framing for any brand or product type.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include a clear CTA button that returns directly to the checkout page.

EXAMPLE
We saved your cart—pick up where you left off

VARIATION

#70 Final reminder: your cart is about to disappear

WHY IT WORKS
Last-chance framing with clear consequence. The word 'disappear' is more vivid than 'expire'.

BEST AUDIENCE
Cart abandoners receiving the third and final email in your sequence.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include your best reason to complete the purchase—discount, guarantee, or strong social proof.

EXAMPLE
Final reminder. your cart disappears tonight

VARIATION
Last chance to grab your [product]

CATEGORY 08 OF 10

Follow-up Emails

Follow-up emails are the most underused tool in email marketing. Done well, they're not annoying—they're helpful. The key is adding new value with every follow-up.

Use when: following up after a meeting, sales conversation, content download, webinar, or proposal.

#71 Following up on [topic]

WHY IT WORKS

Clear, professional, and zero ambiguity. The recipient knows exactly what this email is about.

BEST AUDIENCE

Professional B2B follow-ups where clarity and respect for the recipient's time are priorities.

OPEN RATE TIP

Include a one-line summary of context so the recipient doesn't have to search their memory.

EXAMPLE

Following up on our email marketing conversation

VARIATION

#72 I promised I'd send this over

WHY IT WORKS

Callback to a commitment made in person or on a call. Implies the email has something valuable inside.

BEST AUDIENCE

Post-meeting follow-ups where a specific resource or next step was promised.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send within 24 hours of the commitment being made for maximum relevance.

EXAMPLE

I promised I'd send this over—here it is

VARIATION

#73 [First Name], one thing I forgot to mention

WHY IT WORKS

Creates instant curiosity. What was important enough to warrant a separate email?

BEST AUDIENCE

Warm follow-ups where you genuinely have an additional insight or offer.

OPEN RATE TIP

Only use this if you have something genuinely valuable to add—not as a pretext.

EXAMPLE

Sarah, one thing I forgot to mention yesterday

VARIATION

One more thing I wanted to share with you

#74 Did my last email land okay?

WHY IT WORKS
Disarmingly direct check-in that avoids passive-aggressive 'just following up' energy.

BEST AUDIENCE
Cold or warm prospects who didn't respond to your previous email.

OPEN RATE TIP
Send 3–5 days after the original email with no response.

EXAMPLE
Did my last email land okay, James?

VARIATION

#75 Still interested in [topic/offer]?

WHY IT WORKS
Respectful re-engagement that puts the decision in the reader's hands.

BEST AUDIENCE
Prospects who expressed initial interest but went quiet.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include a clear opt-out option for those who have lost interest.

EXAMPLE
Still interested in improving your open rates?

VARIATION

#76 Here's the next step we discussed

WHY IT WORKS
Action-oriented follow-up that keeps momentum going after a positive conversation.

BEST AUDIENCE
Post-meeting or post-call follow-ups with an agreed action plan.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use a numbered list of next steps in the email body for clarity.

EXAMPLE
Here's the next step we discussed on Tuesday

VARIATION

#77 You might have missed this

WHY IT WORKS
Gentle re-send framing that gives the reader an out—it implies the first email got lost, not ignored.

BEST AUDIENCE
Second follow-up emails when the first didn't get a response.

OPEN RATE TIP
Change at least one element of the original email (subject, angle, or CTA) before resending.

EXAMPLE
You might have missed this, [First Name]

VARIATION
In case this got buried...

#78 Quick question about [topic]

WHY IT WORKS

'Quick question' implies low commitment and often outperforms traditional follow-up subject lines.

BEST AUDIENCE

B2B follow-ups where you need a simple yes/no or piece of information.

OPEN RATE TIP

Ask literally one question in the email body. More than one dilutes response rates.

EXAMPLE

Quick question about your email marketing setup

VARIATION

#79 Worth a second look?

WHY IT WORKS

Non-pressurising second-chance framing. Works well when your first email contained a specific proposal.

BEST AUDIENCE

Proposals, pitches, and offers that received no initial response.

OPEN RATE TIP

Include something new—an updated proposal, a case study, or a different angle.

EXAMPLE

Worth a second look? (Updated proposal inside)

VARIATION

#80 This is my last email on [topic]

WHY IT WORKS

Break-up email that creates urgency through finality. Often generates the highest response rate in a sequence.

BEST AUDIENCE

Final email in a cold outreach or lead nurturing sequence.

OPEN RATE TIP

Be genuine—this should actually be your last follow-up on this topic.

EXAMPLE

This is my last email about email open rates

VARIATION

Closing the loop on [topic], [First Name]

CATEGORY 09 OF 10

Seasonal & Holiday Emails

Seasonal emails compete in the most crowded inbox of the year. Standing out requires originality—most brands send nearly identical seasonal subject lines, so even small departures

Use during: Christmas, Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Back to School, New Year, and other seaso

#81 Our Black Friday deal is better than last year

WHY IT WORKS

Year-over-year comparison creates both credibility and genuine curiosity.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers who experienced last year's promotion.

OPEN RATE TIP

Make sure the deal is genuinely better than last year. This is a testable claim.

EXAMPLE

Our Black Friday deal is better than last year. Here's why.

VARIATION

#82 The gift that actually gets used

WHY IT WORKS

Identifies and solves a genuine gifting anxiety—nobody wants to give a useless gift.

BEST AUDIENCE

Gift-givers during Christmas and other gifting occasions.

OPEN RATE TIP

Pair with your most practical, high-utility product.

EXAMPLE

The gift that actually gets used (and loved)

VARIATION

#83 No stress gifting—sorted in 5 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Addresses the emotional pain point of gift shopping: stress and time pressure.

BEST AUDIENCE

Last-minute shoppers and people who find gifting overwhelming.

OPEN RATE TIP

Include a curated gift guide in the email to back up the '5 minutes' promise.

EXAMPLE

No stress gifting sorted in 5 minutes

VARIATION

Done in minutes: stress-free gifts for everyone

#84 New year, better [area of life]

WHY IT WORKS

New Year resolution hook. Connects your product to an aspiration rather than a transaction.

BEST AUDIENCE

New Year email campaigns where self-improvement is the natural emotional context.

OPEN RATE TIP

Be specific about the area of life—'New year, better emails' beats 'New year, better you'.

EXAMPLE

New year, better email open rates

VARIATION

#85 Valentine's Day is [X] days away

WHY IT WORKS

Countdown urgency. As the number decreases over your campaign, urgency naturally increases.

BEST AUDIENCE

Anyone selling giftable products or experiences with a romantic angle.

OPEN RATE TIP

Start your countdown at 14 days and send 3–4 emails as the deadline approaches.

EXAMPLE

Valentine's Day is 7 days away—gifts they'll love

VARIATION

#86 Our Christmas closing dates (and a surprise)

WHY IT WORKS

Practical information people actually want combined with a curiosity hook.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers who need to know when to order for guaranteed delivery.

OPEN RATE TIP

The surprise element must be genuine—a discount, gift, or unexpected benefit.

EXAMPLE

Our Christmas closing dates—and a little surprise inside

VARIATION

#87 The post-Christmas sale starts now

WHY IT WORKS

Timely and expected. Shoppers who missed Christmas deals are primed for Boxing Day and January sales.

BEST AUDIENCE

Existing customers ready to spend their Christmas gift vouchers and cash.

OPEN RATE TIP

Send at midnight on Christmas Day or 6 AM on Boxing Day for first-mover advantage.

EXAMPLE

The post-Christmas sale starts now—up to 40% off

VARIATION

Christmas is over. The sale has started.

#88 Treat yourself this [holiday/season]

WHY IT WORKS
Permission to be self-indulgent. Particularly effective around self-care occasions.

BEST AUDIENCE
Segments who have purchased self-care, lifestyle, or premium items before.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use in contrast to gift-focused emails. Targeting self-purchasers is often more profitable.

EXAMPLE
Treat yourself this Valentine's Day

VARIATION

#89 Happy [holiday]—something inside just for you

WHY IT WORKS
Celebratory greeting combined with personalised offer. Warm and functional simultaneously.

BEST AUDIENCE
Loyal customers and VIP segments being rewarded during key holidays.

OPEN RATE TIP
The 'just for you' element should be genuinely personalised or exclusive.

EXAMPLE
Happy Mother's Day—something inside just for you

VARIATION

#90 Don't leave your [holiday] shopping to chance

WHY IT WORKS
Risk framing that motivates proactive shoppers. 'Chance' implies there's a better way.

BEST AUDIENCE
Mid-funnel shoppers who are considering but haven't committed to a purchase.

OPEN RATE TIP
Include a buying guide or recommendation quiz in the email body.

EXAMPLE
Don't leave your Christmas shopping to chance

VARIATION
Too important to leave to chance—shop [occasion] smarter

CATEGORY 10 OF 10

Cold Outreach Emails

Cold email subject lines have the hardest job of all—you're interrupting a stranger's day with no existing relationship. The best cold subject lines are short, specific, and don't try too hard.

Use when: reaching out to potential customers, partners, journalists, investors, or collaborators who don't yet know you.

#91 [Mutual connection] suggested I reach out

WHY IT WORKS

The strongest cold email opener available. A mutual connection transfers trust instantly.

BEST AUDIENCE

Prospects who share a connection with you—colleagues, clients, or community members.

OPEN RATE TIP

Only use this when the connection is real and has given genuine approval.

EXAMPLE

David Chen suggested I reach out to you

VARIATION

#92 Quick question about [prospect's company]

WHY IT WORKS

Specific and low-commitment. Implies you've done your research and have something relevant to say.

BEST AUDIENCE

B2B prospects in a specific company or industry you've researched.

OPEN RATE TIP

The question in the email must be genuinely relevant to their business situation.

EXAMPLE

Quick question about Acme Co.'s email marketing strategy

VARIATION

#93 Saw your [content/post/article]—had a thought

WHY IT WORKS

Genuine personalisation based on something the prospect has created or published.

BEST AUDIENCE

Content creators, founders, and executives who publish publicly.

OPEN RATE TIP

The thought you share must be genuine and valuable—not a pretext for a pitch.

EXAMPLE

Saw your tweet about email marketing—had a thought

VARIATION

Read your article on [topic]—this made me think of you

#94 [Specific result] for [similar company] in [timeframe]

WHY IT WORKS
Specific social proof that's directly relevant to the prospect's world.

BEST AUDIENCE
B2B prospects in industries where you have documented results.

OPEN RATE TIP
Make the result specific—percentages and timeframes beat vague claims every time.

EXAMPLE
43% open rate improvement for SaaS companies in 60 days

VARIATION

#95 [First Name]—[one-line hypothesis about their situation]

WHY IT WORKS
Shows you understand their situation without making assumptions. Highly personalised.

BEST AUDIENCE
Strategic prospects where you've done significant research.

OPEN RATE TIP
The hypothesis must be based on real research—not assumptions.

EXAMPLE
James—I think your email welcome sequence might be leaving money on the table

VARIATION

#96 Idea for [company name]

WHY IT WORKS
Genuinely useful framing. People don't ignore good ideas. The brevity is intentional.

BEST AUDIENCE
Creative prospects and startup founders who respond well to direct, idea-driven outreach.

OPEN RATE TIP
The idea in the email body must be genuinely insightful and immediately applicable.

EXAMPLE
Idea for Acme Co.'s newsletter strategy

VARIATION

#97 Not trying to sell you anything (yet)

WHY IT WORKS
Radical transparency that disarms defences. The '(yet)' creates a light, knowing humour.

BEST AUDIENCE
Prospects who are likely to be sceptical of cold email—typically senior executives.

OPEN RATE TIP
Use only if your email genuinely leads with value before any ask.

EXAMPLE
Not trying to sell you anything (yet)—just sharing something useful

VARIATION
No pitch. Just something you might find interesting.

#98 Congrats on [specific achievement, First Name]

WHY IT WORKS
Genuine congratulation based on a real trigger event—funding, launch, award, or hiring.

BEST AUDIENCE
Prospects who have recently achieved something publicly notable.

OPEN RATE TIP
Send within 48 hours of the trigger event for maximum relevance.

EXAMPLE
Congrats on the Series A, Sarah—wanted to share something relevant

VARIATION

#99 Your [specific pain point] doesn't have to be this hard

WHY IT WORKS
Pain-first framing that shows empathy before solution. Specific to the prospect's role.

BEST AUDIENCE
Prospects with a well-understood pain point common to their role or industry.

OPEN RATE TIP
Research the specific pain point for their role—don't guess.

EXAMPLE
Your email list growth doesn't have to be this hard

VARIATION

#100 [First Name], 2 minutes. Genuinely.

WHY IT WORKS
Low-commitment ask with a self-aware qualifier. 'Genuinely' signals honesty and humility.

BEST AUDIENCE
Busy executives and decision-makers who have heard '2 minutes' before but need reassurance.

OPEN RATE TIP
Your email body must be readable in under 2 minutes. Respect the promise.

EXAMPLE
Sarah, 2 minutes. Genuinely worth it.

VARIATION
[First Name], just 2 things I wanted you to see

SECTION 5

50 Power Words That Increase Opens

The emotionally charged vocabulary of high-performing subject lines.

Power words are specific vocabulary that trigger an emotional response in the reader. They make ordinary subject lines feel urgent, exclusive, or compelling. Here are 50 of the most effective ones—grouped by the emotion they trigger.

URGENCY & SCARCITY

Ends tonight	**Last chance**	**Expiring**	**Limited**
Now	**Today only**	**Almost gone**	**Final**
Deadline	**Closing**		

EXCLUSIVITY

Exclusive	**VIP**	**Members only**	**Private**
Insider	**Invitation**	**Access**	**Selected**
Elite	**Reserved**		

VALUE & BENEFIT

Free	Save	Bonus	Earn
Reward	Gift	Complimentary	Value
Profit	Win		

CURIOSITY

Secret	Revealed	Discover	Untold
Hidden	What nobody tells	The truth	Behind the scenes
Unusual	Surprising		

TRUST & AUTHORITY

Proven	Guaranteed	Expert	Official
Trusted	Certified	Results	Data-backed
Research	Award-winning		

Use Power Words Selectively

One or two power words per subject line is effective. Three or more starts to feel manipulative—and may trigger spam filters. Pair power words with specifics: 'Exclusive' alone is weak; 'Exclusive access to our new AI tool' is compelling.

SECTION 6

Subject Line Length Guide

What the data says about optimal length for desktop and mobile.

Desktop vs. Mobile: What Gets Cut Off

Email clients display different amounts of your subject line depending on the device and client. Understanding these limits is essential for avoiding truncation at the worst possible moment.

Desktop Email Clients

Email Client	Subject Line Chars Shown	Preview Text Chars
Gmail (desktop)	~70 characters	~110 characters
Outlook 365	~60 characters	~100 characters
Apple Mail (Mac)	~65 characters	~120 characters
Yahoo Mail	~55 characters	~100 characters
Outlook 2019	~50–55 characters	None

Mobile Email Clients

Email Client	Subject Line Chars Shown	Preview Text Chars
iOS Mail	~41 characters	~90 characters
Gmail (Android)	~40 characters	~95 characters
Gmail (iOS)	~43 characters	~90 characters
Samsung Mail	~38 characters	~85 characters
Outlook (mobile)	~40 characters	~90 characters

The 40-Character Mobile Test

Write your subject line. Count the characters. If the key message is clear within the first 40 characters, you're optimised for mobile. If not, rewrite until it is.

SECTION 7

Emoji Guide

When to use them, which ones work, and what to avoid.

Do Emojis Actually Work?

Yes—with caveats. Research consistently shows that a single, relevant emoji in a subject line can increase open rates by 10–15% when used sparingly and in context. The key word is 'sparingly'. Brands that use emojis in every email see diminishing returns.

Emojis That Improve Open Rates

Emoji	Name	Best Used For	Effect
	Package	Shipping & order confirmations	**+12% avg opens**
	Party Popper	Launches, announcements, wins	**+11% avg opens**
	Lightning	Urgency, speed, instant results	**+10% avg opens**
	Fire	Hot deals, trending content	**+9% avg opens**
	Lightbulb	Tips, ideas, insights	**+8% avg opens**
	Check Mark	Checklists, confirmations	**+8% avg opens**
	Gift	Seasonal, promotions, surprises	**+11% avg opens**
	Eyes	Curiosity, 'look at this'	**+10% avg opens**

Emoji	Name	Best Used For	Effect
	Bar Chart	Data, reports, statistics	**+7% avg opens**
	Rocket	Launches, growth, speed	**+9% avg opens**

Emojis That Hurt Deliverability

Emoji	Problem	Better Alternative
	Multiple punctuation = spam filter trigger	Use once, sparingly
	Money bag = high spam score in many filters	Use or instead
	Money face = strong spam association	Avoid for promotions
	Double exclamation = aggressive tone	Single ! or none
	Innuendo risk, inappropriate for most brands	Avoid unless adult brand

> **One Emoji Rule**
>
> Use a maximum of one emoji per subject line, and always place it at the beginning or end—never in the middle. Test with a small segment first before sending to your full list.

SECTION 8

Personalisation Guide

Beyond the first name: 7 ways to make every subject line feel written for one person.

Personalisation in email marketing goes far beyond inserting someone's first name. Modern email platforms allow you to personalise based on behaviour, location, purchase history, and more. Here's how to use each type effectively.

1. First Name	*[First Name], this one's for you*
The most common and still effective. Even a 26% open rate lift is significant at scale.	Use a fallback value ('there' or 'friend') for contacts without a name.
2. Company Name	*A quick idea for [Company Name]*
Highly effective in B2B outreach. Shows you've done your research.	Use a contact enrichment tool to fill in missing company names.
3. Location	*Top email events happening in [City] this month*
Localised subject lines are relevant and feel personal even to strangers.	Most ESP platforms support location personalisation via merge tags.
4. Industry	*[Industry] professionals are doing this differently*

Industry-specific subject lines outperform generic ones because they speak a shared language.	Segment your list by industry and create 3–5 tailored versions.
5. Recent Purchase	*Loving your [product]? Here's what goes with it*
Triggers based on what the customer already bought—extremely relevant and trusted.	Trigger post-purchase emails 3–7 days after delivery.
6. Browsing Interest	*You looked at this [X] times—want to know more?*
Retargeting via email using browse history is one of the highest-ROI tactics available.	Only use this if your ESP is correctly tracking page views.
7. Behaviour / Stage	*Still on the free plan, [First Name]?*
Lifecycle-based personalisation matches the email to where the reader is in their journey.	Map your email sequences to clear funnel stages for best results.

SECTION 9

A/B Testing Guide

How to run tests that produce results you can actually trust.

Why Most A/B Tests Fail

The most common mistake in email A/B testing is testing too many variables at once, or using a sample size too small to produce statistically significant results. Here's how to do it properly.

1

Test one variable at a time

Subject line length vs. length. Question vs. statement. Emoji vs. no emoji. Never test two changes simultaneously—you won't know which change drove the result.

2

Use a large enough sample size

Aim for at least 1,000 contacts per variant (2,000 total). Smaller samples produce unreliable results. Use a statistical significance calculator before declaring a winner.

3

Set your winning metric upfront

Decide before you test whether you're optimising for open rate, click-through rate (CTR), or conversions. Don't switch metrics after seeing results.

4

Run tests at the same time

Avoid testing Version A at 9 AM and Version B at 3 PM—time of day affects open rates. Split your audience randomly and send both versions simultaneously.

5

Wait for statistical significance

Don't call a winner after 2 hours. Wait 24–48 hours for email engagement to stabilise before analysing results.

6

Document and build a knowledge base

Every test you run teaches you something about your audience. Build a simple spreadsheet of test results—over time this becomes your competitive advantage.

A/B Testing: What to Test and Expected Impact

What to Test	Effort	Expected Open Rate Impact	Priority
Subject line length	Low	+5–15%	**High**
Question vs. statement	Low	+5–12%	**High**
Personalisation (name)	Low	+10–26%	**Very High**
Emoji vs. no emoji	Low	+5–15%	**High**
Curiosity vs. direct benefit	Low	+10–20%	**Very High**
Send time (day of week)	Medium	+5–20%	**High**
Send time (time of day)	Medium	+5–15%	**High**
From name (brand vs. person)	Low	+5–30%	**Very High**
Preview text variation	Low	+3–8%	**Medium**
Urgency vs. no urgency	Low	+5–15%	**High**

ToolFlow AI Email Writer

Use ToolFlow's AI Email Writer to generate multiple subject line variants instantly—then A/B test the best two. It's free, fast, and works directly in your browser at toolflowai.app.

SECTION 10

25 Subject Line Mistakes

Every mistake, explained—and exactly how to fix each one.

! 1. Being too vague

Problem: Your subject line doesn't hint at any benefit or hook. 'Check this out' could mean anything.
Fix: Add a specific benefit or curiosity hook: 'Check this out—it doubled our open rates'

! 2. Using clickbait

Problem: You promise something exciting and deliver something disappointing. One-way ticket to unsubscribes.
Fix: Match subject line to content. If the body can't deliver on the promise, rewrite the subject.

! 3. Writing in ALL CAPS

Problem: ALL CAPS reads as aggressive and triggers spam filters across most major email platforms.
Fix: Use sentence case or title case. Emphasis can be achieved with strong word choice, not capitalisation.

! 4. Faking a reply thread (Re: or Fwd:)

Problem: Writing 'Re:' when there's no previous conversation is deceptive. Readers feel manipulated.
Fix: Earn opens through genuine value, not tricks. Real replies use real subject lines.

! 5. Making it too long

Problem: Subject lines over 60 characters get cut off on mobile, hiding your most compelling words.
Fix: Aim for 40–50 characters. Put the benefit or hook in the first 40 characters.

! 6. Making it too short and vague

Problem: 'Hey' or 'Important update' tell the reader nothing valuable.
Fix: Short is great—but short AND specific is better. 'Deals end tonight' is short and specific.

! 7. Ignoring spam trigger words

Problem: Words like 'FREE!!!', 'Winner!', 'Guaranteed cash' raise your spam score significantly.
Fix: Use 'complimentary' instead of free. Use 'exclusive' instead of guaranteed. Avoid multiple exclamation marks.

! 8. Overpromising

Problem: Claiming 'This will change your life' or '1000% results' damages credibility.
Fix: Make specific, believable claims. '37% higher open rates, on average' is more credible than 'transform everything'.

! 9. Not testing subject lines

Problem: Sending the same subject line style to all subscribers without A/B testing leaves revenue on the table.
Fix: A/B test every email to at least 10–20% of your list before sending to the remainder.

! 10. Using a no-reply sender address

Problem: A no-reply address signals that you don't want conversation. It reduces trust and reply rates.
Fix: Send from a real human email address—or at minimum a monitored brand address.

! 11. Starting every email with the person's name

Problem: When every email starts with '[Name]'—the personalisation loses its power.
Fix: Use name personalisation strategically—reserve it for your most important emails.

! 12. Ignoring preview text

Problem: Preview text is free subject line real estate. Ignoring it wastes a massive opportunity.
Fix: Write 90–100 characters of preview text that continues and deepens the subject line hook.

! 13. Sending at the wrong time

Problem: Sending a B2B email at 11 PM or a promotional email on a Monday morning reduces open rates.
Fix: Test your specific audience. General benchmarks: Tuesday–Thursday 9–11 AM for B2B; Tuesday/Thursday 2–4 PM for ecommerce.

! 14. Using exclamation marks excessively

Problem: Multiple!!!! exclamation marks feel cheap and trigger spam filters.
Fix: Use at most one exclamation mark per subject line, and only when it genuinely reflects the tone.

! 15. Not segmenting your list

Problem: Sending the same email to 100,000 people with very different needs produces average results.
Fix: Segment by at least 3–5 key variables (purchase history, engagement, industry, location).

! 16. Copying competitors' subject lines

Problem: If your competitor tests and finds a winning line, you're just copying a test result—with a different brand.
Fix: Study competitor patterns for inspiration, then create your own original angles.

! 17. Never using urgency

Problem: Without any urgency, readers file your email away to 'read later'—and never do.
Fix: Add genuine urgency to at least 20–30% of your campaigns. Fake urgency is worse than none.

! 18. Always using urgency

Problem: If every email is 'LAST CHANCE!', nothing is ever actually urgent.
Fix: Reserve urgency language for emails where it's genuinely true.

! 19. Neglecting mobile preview

Problem: A subject line that works on desktop often fails on mobile where it gets truncated.
Fix: Preview every subject line in both desktop and mobile before sending.

! 20. Using jargon unfamiliar to readers

Problem: Industry jargon that your reader doesn't use creates distance instead of connection.
Fix: Write in the language your customers use. Read their support tickets and reviews for authentic vocabulary.

! 21. Forgetting the preview text separator

Problem: Without a visual break, the email's header or unsubscribe link appears as preview text.
Fix: Add a preview text separator (invisible spacer characters) to prevent body content bleeding into the preview.

! 22. Sending too frequently

Problem: When subscribers receive too many emails, they start ignoring them without unsubscribing—a zombie list.
Fix: Find your audience's ideal frequency. For most brands, 1–4 emails per month is optimal.

! 23. Sending too infrequently

Problem: If subscribers go weeks without hearing from you, they forget who you are—and mark you as spam when you return.
Fix: Maintain a minimum cadence of once per month, even if it's just a short update.

! 24. Not reading your own subject line aloud

Problem: Subject lines that look fine in writing often sound awkward or confusing when spoken.
Fix: Read every subject line aloud before sending. If it sounds odd, rewrite it.

! 25. Giving up on email after one bad campaign

Problem: One low open rate doesn't mean email marketing doesn't work—it means this subject line didn't resonate.
Fix: Treat every email as a data point. Keep testing and iterating.

SECTION 11

Pre-Send Checklist

Tick every box before you hit send.

Use this checklist every time you send a campaign. Print it out, save it, or bookmark this page.

- [ ] Subject line is under 50 characters (ideally 40 for mobile)
- [ ] Key benefit or hook appears in the first 40 characters
- [ ] No ALL CAPS (unless it's a single word for emphasis)
- [ ] Preview text is written (90–100 characters, continues the subject line hook)
- [ ] No spam trigger words (free!!!, guaranteed, act now with exclamation)
- [ ] No more than one exclamation mark
- [ ] If personalised: fallback value is set for contacts without the field
- [ ] If urgent: the deadline is real
- [ ] If claiming exclusivity: the offer is genuinely exclusive
- [ ] Emoji: maximum of one, placed at beginning or end
- [ ] Subject line has been read aloud (sounds natural and clear)
- [ ] Subject line previewed on mobile (first 40 characters still compelling)

- [ ] A/B test is set up (if list has 2,000+ contacts)
- [ ] Send time is appropriate for your audience and time zone
- [ ] Sender name is recognisable and from a real or monitored address
- [ ] Email body delivers on the subject line promise
- [ ] Unsubscribe link is present and working
- [ ] Preview email has been sent to yourself or a test list
- [ ] Spelling and grammar have been reviewed
- [ ] Campaign is tracked with UTM parameters (if driving web traffic)

Save This Page

Print this checklist and keep it next to your computer, or bookmark this page on your device. The 3 minutes it takes to run through this list will save you from sending a campaign you'll regret.

SECTION 12

Printable Cheat Sheet

Everything you need to know about subject lines on one page.

BEST LENGTHS	BEST FORMULAS	TOP POWER WORDS
Mobile: 30–40 chars Desktop: 40–60 chars Ideal: 40–50 chars Avoid: 70+ chars	Question Number + benefit How-to Curiosity gap Benefit + urgency	Exclusive / Secret Free / Save New / Introducing Last chance / Today only Proven / Guaranteed
BEST PRACTICES	**BIGGEST MISTAKES**	**QUICK FORMULAS**
1 emoji max (start or end) Personalise strategically A/B test every email Write preview text always Send at the right time	Too vague or too long Clickbait (misleading) ALL CAPS Multiple exclamation!!!!! Fake 'Re:' or 'Fwd:'	[Name], [benefit] [Number] ways to [goal] The [X] mistake to avoid [Hook]... (curiosity) Last chance: [offer]

SECTION 13

Frequently Asked Questions

15 practical questions about email subject lines—answered.

How long should an email subject line be?

For most emails, 40–50 characters is the sweet spot. This ensures the full subject line is visible on mobile devices (which account for over 60% of email opens) while still having enough room to communicate your hook. For very punchy urgency-based emails, 30–40 characters can work well. Avoid going beyond 60 characters unless your audience is primarily desktop-based.

Do emojis increase open rates?

Yes, when used correctly. A single, relevant emoji can increase open rates by 10–15%. The key rules: use a maximum of one per subject line, place it at the beginning or end, ensure it's relevant to the content, and test it with a segment before sending to your full list. Emoji effectiveness also varies by industry—consumer brands tend to see better results than financial services or healthcare.

Should I use ALL CAPS in subject lines?

No. ALL CAPS reads as shouting and is consistently flagged by spam filters. If you want to emphasise a single word, using it in caps occasionally can work (e.g., 'Our BIGGEST sale ever'), but full subject lines in caps should always be avoided.

Do numbers really work in subject lines?

Yes—consistently. Numbers make subject lines more specific, more credible, and easier to process quickly. '7 tips for better email open rates' outperforms 'Tips for better email open rates' in virtually every test. Odd numbers (3, 5, 7, 11) tend to outperform even numbers.

Should I personalise every email with the recipient's name?

Not necessarily. First-name personalisation in every email trains subscribers to ignore it—it becomes noise. Use it strategically: in your most important emails, in abandoned cart recovery, and when addressing a specific individual situation. Reserve it for emails where the personal touch genuinely adds value.

Can spam words reduce deliverability?

Yes. Words associated with spam—particularly when combined with other signals like multiple exclamation marks, ALL CAPS, or certain formatting—can reduce your sender reputation and inbox placement. Phrases like 'FREE!!!', 'Act now', 'Limited time offer' (spelled exactly that way repeatedly), and 'No cost' are common triggers. Use alternatives: 'complimentary' instead of free, 'today' instead of 'act now'.

What's the best day and time to send email?

It depends on your audience. For B2B, Tuesday and Thursday between 9–11 AM in the recipient's time zone consistently perform well. For ecommerce and consumer emails, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons (2–4 PM) and Sunday evenings (7–9 PM) often outperform. The most reliable answer is to A/B test your specific audience—the data from your own list always beats general benchmarks.

How many emails should I be sending per month?

For most businesses, 2–4 emails per month strikes the right balance between staying top-of-mind and not overwhelming subscribers. Ecommerce brands with active promotions can go higher (6–8 per month) without seeing high unsubscribe rates if the content is consistently valuable. The key is setting expectations during sign-up—and then meeting them.

What's preview text and how do I use it?

Preview text is the short snippet of text that appears in the inbox after the subject line. It's essentially a second subject line. Write 90–100 characters of preview text that continues or deepens the hook in your subject line. If you don't set it manually, most email clients will pull the first text from your email body—often an unsubscribe link or 'view in browser' link.

Should I use question marks in subject lines?

Questions can be very effective when they're genuinely interesting to the reader. 'Are you making this email mistake?' works because readers want to know if they are. Avoid questions that feel rhetorical or obvious ('Do you want higher open rates?'). The best questions tap into a specific concern, curiosity, or aspiration your audience has.

Does using Re: or Fwd: in subject lines work?

It works in the short term—these prefixes do increase open rates initially because they imply a continued conversation. But it's deceptive. When readers realise there was no previous email, trust is broken and unsubscribe rates increase. The long-term damage to your sender reputation and subscriber relationship is not worth the short-term open rate bump.

How do I reduce my spam score?

Avoid spam trigger words, don't use ALL CAPS, limit exclamation marks to one, send from a reputable domain, maintain good list hygiene (remove unengaged contacts), avoid image-only emails, and never buy email lists. Using a dedicated sending domain with proper SPF, DKIM, and DMARC records is also essential for strong deliverability.

What is a good email open rate?

The average email open rate across all industries is approximately 21.5%. A rate above 25% is considered good; above 30% is excellent. However, benchmarks vary significantly by industry—nonprofit and government emails often see 30%+ while retail and ecommerce average closer to 20%. Focus on improvement over time rather than hitting a universal benchmark.

How do I re-engage subscribers who stopped opening my emails?

Send a specific re-engagement campaign with a direct, honest subject line like 'Are we breaking up?' or 'Is this still relevant to you?' Offer a clear reason to re-engage (an exclusive offer, an important update, or a simple invitation to update their preferences). After 2–3 re-engagement attempts, remove non-openers from your active list. Keeping disengaged contacts hurts your sender reputation.

Can ToolFlow AI help me write better subject lines?

Yes. ToolFlow's free AI Email Writer generates subject lines, full emails, follow-ups, newsletters, and cold outreach at toolflowai.app. You can input your topic, target audience, and tone, and the AI produces multiple options instantly. It's particularly useful for testing different angles—you can generate 10 subject line variations in the time it would normally take to write two. Try it free at toolflowai.app.

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