



## Email Design

### *Digital Marketing Best Practices*

**Goal:** Improve performance metrics and increase customer engagement with well-designed email messages.

**Strategy:** Optimize the design of email messages to boost engagement and click-through rates and maximize conversions.

*Email marketing is an extremely effective channel, with the ability to reach a large number of customers with highly targeted, personal messages. But even the best campaigns must compete for clicks in crowded customer inboxes. With well-designed messages that attract attention and drive conversions, energy utilities can cut through the clutter to deliver successful results.*

### **Anatomy of an Email Message**

Every email message should follow standard formatting conventions, both to meet customers' expectations and to comply with technical and legal regulations (such as CAN-SPAM).

- **Sender Name and Address:** Clearly identify the energy utility or affiliated program.
- **Subject Line:** Relevant, compelling and actionable; 50 to 70 characters.
- **Preheader:** Summary of contents, 35 to 100 characters, that's consistent with the subject line and inspires action.
- **Footer:** Must include a mailing address and prominent unsubscribe link.





## Make it Easy to Read

Customers open messages using a wide variety of email clients and apps, on a variety of devices, in a variety of situations. In every case your design needs to be clear and legible.

- Always utilize mobile-optimized design. More than 63% of residential customers read emails from their energy utility on smartphones.
- Email attention spans are short. Most customers spend less than 8 second reading an email from their energy utility. Make your point instantly.
- Use web-safe fonts to ensure compatibility; body text should be 14 to 16 points.
- Add alt tags to all images to improve clarity for customers who have images turned off and to ensure compliance for vision-impaired customers.

## Eye-Catching Simplicity

Messages need to be attractive, but designs should also be simple and restrained. Complicated color schemes or intricate images won't display well on all email clients and smartphones.

- When using overlapping or adjacent colors allow for enough contrast to be differentiated by the vision-impaired.
- Don't be afraid of white space. An airy design prevents your email from looking crowded and allows customers to distinguish the important elements (such as the CTA).
- Place your logo in the top-left corner, where customers expect to see it. This quickly reassures them that the message is from a company they trust.
- Always use a compelling hero image to attract attention, pique customer interest and help tell your story. All-text messages are easy to dismiss as gray and uninspired.
- Do not embed important text within an image; keep text and visual elements separate. Some email clients do not automatically render images.
- An animated GIF can be more effective than a still image. Keep GIF image sizes small, limiting the number of frames and compressing the file, to reduce email load times.

## CTAs that Convert

The goal of your email isn't to be read and enjoyed — it's to drive conversions. Optimize calls-to-action within messages and ensure they lead to specific landing pages where customers can quickly and easily complete a sign-up or purchase.

- Make sure the intention of the CTA is clear and recognizable, such as "buy now" or "get started." Customers should know exactly why they are clicking and where to click.
- The CTA button should stand out from the rest of the email, preferably using a dark color on a light background, and it should be large enough that customers won't miss it.

*Recommendations based on Questline research and performance metrics.*

*For more, see the annual [Energy Utility Benchmarks Report](#).*

