Wedding Sales and Marketing Professionals

HOW TO WRITE EMAIL HEADLINES THAT GENERATE SALES

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Email Workbook

It all starts with the Subject Line.

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Fact:

- **Sales professionals spend 86% of their time writing the body of each email**
- **Sales professionals spend 6% of their time on the signature of each email**
- **Sales professionals only invest 8% of their time composing an effective subject line**

Introduction

Please don't take this personally. The majority of the business development emails you send to clients will **never** be open or read.

THE PROBLEM

Take a breath! It has nothing to do with you or your company. The reason your emails are not being open and read is 100% tied to the volume of email your clients and prospects currently receive. In fact, companies that send out thousands of emails at one time are thrilled by a 2% to 3% open and response rate.

THE GOOD NEWS

Yes! There is good news!

You are about to learn a very effective strategy that will immediately double or triple the number of your emails that are opened and acted upon. Better yet, it won't cost you a single cent. All you need to invest is a little more time and creativity.

THE STRATEGY

It's simple. *Focus the majority of your creative effort on your email's subject line.* Researchers conclusively know this strategy works because they have tested and retested it for over two decades.

Busy prospects make the decision to open an email primarily based on the subject line. 80% of the time they will read the subject line and immediately skip to the next email. All your words, pictures, or clickable links go unseen.

So what makes a winning subject line? Well, first it's length. According to a recent study by MailChimp.com, the ideal subject line length is between 6 and 10 words. More specifically, they report that it should be 50 or fewer characters. According to Constant Contact, email subject lines with 50 or fewer characters enjoy a 76% higher open rate vs. those with 50 or more.

Email Tactic #1- Use Your Client's Name

The single most effective tactic you can use to improve any email subject line is to include your prospect or customer's name. Research has conclusively proven that this specific tactic is most effective when the name is at the beginning of the subject line.

Why is this tactic so successful? It's basically attributed to psychology 101. Most of us can look at 100 lines of dense, crowded text and immediately see our own name.

When your prospects name is at the beginning of a subject line they will see it. This tactic immediately communicates this one email is explicitly for them.

One frequent question is whether to use a prospect's first or full name. The consensus among today's most successful email copywriter is as follows. If you have a strong relationship with the recipient, it's okay to use just their first name. If you are prospecting for new business or have had only preliminary contact, go with the first and last name.

For example:

- **Mr. Thompson, I have discovered the perfect resort for your family.**
- **Jim, USAir's airfare to Orlando just dropped.**
- **Mrs. Smith, I have 3 restaurants for your anniversary dinner**

For our first exercise, take three emails that you have previously sent to a prospect or new customer and we rewrite the subject- placing the client's name at the beginning. Remember to stay within 50 characters.

Email Tactic #2 - It's About You

Frequently you will not know your prospects name. For example, if a prospect or former client has just visited your website, requested additional information and only left an email address. Or, you received a request for additional information and no name was cited.

With these common situations you can employ a tactic that many email copywriters believe delivers the second most powerful email subject line. You simply insert the word "you" or "your" within the subject. You and your visually communicate that the email was written specifically for your prospect.

For example:

- **Your guide to Historical Williamsburg**
- **You now have full access to our negotiated rates**
- **Your vacation is now my top priority**

For this exercise, rewrite your original three emails subject lines and include the words you or your.

Email Tactic #3 - Add a Number

The next strategy is the most popular with professional email copywriters. Better yet, it's also the most widespread tactic used by bloggers and editors to attract readers to their content. In fact, it's likely that you have rarely gone a day in the last 5 years without seeing this tactic used in newspapers, magazines direct-mail, Facebook, email or blogs.

Incorporating a number into your subject line attracts attention. Why? Our brains are naturally drawn to numbers. This tends to be why top 10 lists are so successful. Lists are easier for our brains to process and they stimulate curiosity by providing the promise of a quick and easy read.

Numbers written as digits vs. words are a time-honored marketing trigger to get us to pay attention. When you use a number in a subject, line you predictably hook the other person's interest. Numbers reach directly into our unconscious and say, "Hay! This message is important."

For Example:

- **10 Reasons why you should meet at an extended-stay hotel vs. a resort**
- **5 extraordinary restaurants in Aruba**
- **3 ways to cut your business airfare in half**
- **5 remarkable oceanfront rooms still available for the week of April 3**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

For this exercise rewrite your original three emails and create a subject line that includes a number.

Email Tactic #4 - How To

Professional copywriters have been tracking the effectiveness of email subject lines since the mid-1970s. One outcome has not wavered in over 40 years. Placing the words "how-to "at the beginning of an email subject line has a dependable track record of success. The how-to subject line is specific, it promises to reveal how to achieve a benefit. Many copywriters will tell you that it's literally impossible to write a bad how -to email subject line.

This tactic is also frequently used by publishers and editors to capture their readers' attention. One research firm tested this tactic by sending out several thousand marketing emails. Half carried the standard email subject line. The other half had the words "How to" placed on the front of the subject line. The emails with the subject line containing "How to" generated 70% more sales vs. the email without.

Amazon offers over 2.4 million titles containing the words How To. Once again, it's psychology 101. We are instinctively drawn to subject lines that will educate us or teach us how to acquire a benefit.

For Example:

- **How To Become Debt Free in 90 Days or Less**
- **How to Live at the Beach**
- **How to shop like a local**

In this exercise let's return to our original three emails and rewrite the subject lines by building on the words "How to" in the front. In the event that your three subject lines will not work with the words added in - feel free to create a brand-new subject.

Email Tactic #5 – Ask a Question

According to Benchmark Email Marketing, "Asking a question in your subject line works well because it gives the customer something to think about. Your question should be something on almost every customer's mind."

Using a question in your subject line is also a great way to make a more personal connection with the people opening your emails. Rather than telling people what you have or how you're able to help them, ask a question that gets their attention and entices them to learn more.

For Example:

- **Looking for discount airfare?**
- **How would you spend a 10% commission on a 12,000 booking?**
- **Do you need an immediate family vacation?**
- **Mr. Smith, did you know we're keeping your suite on hold for next year?**

In this exercise look at each of your three original email subject lines and rewrite them in the form of a question. As always, if you can create a better subject line from scratch, feel free to do so!

Email Tactic #6 - News

One email subject formula that consistently delivers results is centered on our curiosity for news and announcements. According to Direct Marketing IQ, the **words** "new", "news", “announcement” or “announcing” have a strong appeal to most consumers.” Place them at the beginning of your subject line and you will immediately draw attention. I recently received an email from a favorite coffee purveyor with the subject line,

For Example:

- **Breaking News! Limited time offer on new 5 bedroom villa in St. Barts**
- **Announcement - Chief Roy to offer private in room dining to AMEX cardholders**
- **Announcing [Company Name’s] Brand New [Product/Service]**

In this exercise create 3 subject lines that will resonate with your prospects and are fashioned as news or an important announcement.

De-Spam your email subject line.

Hubspot.com reports that “Writing the subject lines for your emails can be one of the most stressful steps of email marketing.” Sales professionals have to be very careful not to use words that will trigger SPAM filters? If they can cause your email to skip the recipients' inboxes and land straight in their SPAM box. One of easiest ways to avoid SPAM filters is to carefully choose the words used in your email's subject line. Trigger words are known to cause problems and increase the chances of your email getting caught in a SPAM trap. By avoiding these you can dramatically increase your chances of getting beyond SPAM filters.

According to 5W Public Relations, the most common email trigger words are:

- Free
- Sale
- Click here
- Satisfaction
- Dear
- Buy
- Opportunity
- Cheap
- Cost
- Discount

Your email surely won’t get read if it’s sent to spam, so a double check is well worth the effort. In addition, Email Marketing Specialist, Alli Heinz, advises against using CAPS or exclamation points, as they come off spam and unprofessional.

Both Constant Contact and MailChimp.com come with spam-checker tools that you can use to thoroughly scan your email for spammy keywords, plus all the other stuff that spam filters look for. Running one test before you send your campaign can save you lots of time and money. In short order, you’ll remember the most common words that trigger spam blocker.