



# EzyMsg Design Guidelines

## Overall design

- **Keep email width under 650 pixels**  
You need to design for the preview pane and it doesn't get much wider than that.
- **Design above the fold**  
Make sure your key elements are at the top (logo, call-to-action, navigation, primary subject matter, etc.) and by top we mean, the first 300 pixels.
- **Keep it short**  
Don't overload your email with content. Use it as a tool to drive recipients to your website or landing page. Most people prefer to read large amounts of text in a web browser as opposed to their inbox. Give them a taste and a "Read more here..." link.
- **Keep it simple**  
Don't try and design a complex html masterpiece and expect everyone to see it the same way you do. The more difficult your email is to code, the more difficult it will be to see across the many email clients.

## Images

- **Don't use images for important content such as headlines, links, or call-to-action**  
If you do, make sure there is a link to view the html version online. Chances are images may be turned off making the key elements of your email useless.
- **Use alt text for your images**  
Include alt tags with your images and make it say something compelling about the subject matter like "see this motorcycle in action".
- **Use image widths & heights**  
This way your design is not thrown off too bad if blank placeholders are used in place of your images.
- **Optimize your images**  
Make sure your image file sizes are as small as you can get without losing their visual integrity. Large images should be cut up into smaller, more downloadable sizes. No one wants to wait 10 seconds to see your 100kb jpeg.
- **Background Images**  
Avoid using them. Many email clients do not allow.

## Text Content

- **Balancing act**  
Include an even balance of images and text. The email campaign that is sent as one image tends to end up in a Junk or SPAM file.
- **Avoid gimmicky phrases like "Act Now" and "Special Clearance" in your emails**  
Spam filters look for these key words when diagnosing a potentially unsafe email.
- **Avoid invisible text**  
This is another trick spammers use and has become an instant flag for spam filters.
- **Make it compelling**  
A no-brainer, but often overlooked. The more compelling your text is, the more your recipient will ignore possible design problems, be less likely to hit the delete button, and more likely to click your call-to-action.



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## Best Practice

- **Provide a link to view your email online**

Always give your recipient this option. Often even after every step is taken to ensure proper design, an email client will mangle an email. It happens. Make this a text link at the top of every email.

- **Unsubscribe Option**

You must include an unsubscribe option in every email as well as your company name and address. EzyMsg have the unsubscribe feature automatically built into your email footer.

- **Forward to a friend**

What better way to reach more recipients than by adding a simple link to let others share your message? It's also a good idea to include a "subscribe" option so the friend can subscribe to the mailing list. What better way to ensure deliverability and build your list?

- **Subject Lines take first place**

Without an accurate and compelling Subject Line, the chances of your email being viewed are very low. Give people a reason to open your email by branding your subject line and by highlighting the most important part of your message. Anything longer than 35 characters (and spaces do count) will get cut off for many recipients.

- **Table of Contents**

For scrolling newsletter-type emails, include a list of anchors at the top of the email so that users can easily navigate throughout the email.

- **Update Profile**

Include a link for the subscriber to update their details. Allow recipients to add or change an email address and other profile details.

## Testing Testing Testing

- **Test your email to various email clients and see which ones work best**

Send your email to various email clients such as hotmail, gmail and yahoo. Each email client will render the email differently and you should therefore design accordingly.

- **Try turning images off to see what your email will look like**

This will give you a reference for designing around this common occurrence.

- **Use Spam-evaluation services**

EzyMsg features SpamAssassin, a tool you can use to evaluate your email message's spam score and how likely it is that it will be flagged as spam. SpamAssassin will give you an explanation for any scores received to allow you to fix the problem and design accordingly. When previewing your message select the 'Content Analysis' button to view your SpamAssassin score.





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## HTML Do's and Dont's (mostly Dont's)

- **Code emails by hand**

Many "WYSIWYG" editors will typically add in a lot of extra code that is not compatible with many email clients and cause your email to display poorly. Never use the "Save as Webpage" feature of Microsoft Word. Dreamweaver is usually ok, but have a working knowledge of HTML so you can check for code that shouldn't be there.

- **Don't use Javascript or other dynamic scripts**

Even if a SPAM filter happens to let your email through untouched, most email clients will not allow these scripts to function.

- **No Flash, Quicktime, Windows Media, Etc**

By default, the ability to view these rich media platforms in email is turned off in most email clients. Provide a link to view your rich media on a custom webpage.

- **Avoid excessive CSS**

Many email clients strip out Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) or overwrite them. If you must use them, embed them inside the body and not the header. And use them for simple attributes like text style, color, and sizing. Use inline styles and put them in your <td> tags.

- **Avoid complex colspans and rowspans**

Some email clients will choke on these and they can make content revisions a nightmare for the next edition. Use them sparingly.

- **No body attributes**

Most applications strip out everything that's not in between the body tags. So if you want to make a background green, do it with a stretch table background or or CSS.

- **Don't embed images**

Host images on your website or let your email service provider host them for you. Then make sure your image paths point to the full URL: (<http://www.yourwebsite.com/yourimage.jpg>)

- **Avoid 1x1 pixel spacers**

Some spammers use them and they may get your email flagged.

## Happy Designing!

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