



The Secrets for Creating Captivating Subject Lines

Each email in an inbox has about two seconds to capture attention. We want to know who it sent it and what it's about – instantly.

We all have favorites in our inbox and will open every email from that beloved source without even reading the subject line. Then, there is a large percentage that requires more information to get us to commit our time and attention. Sometimes we ask ourselves, "Why did I ever sign up for that?" and then promptly delete and ignore. Eventually, we decide to unsubscribe.

This is where the **subject line** becomes so vital to this process. The majority of our email needs some sort of enticement to get opened. That is the purpose of this section.

Our goal is to be in that first category, the "favorites" - but that is rare. The reality is that we need to be more than a name they recognize. We also need to create a subject line that automatically spurs enough extra interest to get that email opened. It must bridge the gap and cause a reaction leading to engagement. **The subject line has to do the heavy lifting for most of us.**

Here are a few ideas to help make the lifting easier:

1. **Keep it Short and Descriptive:** Your subject line should have no more than 7-10 words or 40 characters. Most email providers will truncate, or cut off, subject lines with greater than 60 characters. Shorter is better, but a one word subject line can have a poor open rate.
2. **Entice the Reader to Read Further:** A subject line should act as a teaser or state a benefit of opening the email. It can contain an "offer" as long as it does not contain spam-like characteristics. Avoid using words like sales, discounts, free, or act now, which can trigger problems. Subject lines with these kinds of words often go straight to the spam file.
3. **Consider the question technique. Do you _____? Have you? Will you? Did you?** Starting with a question is a great way to entice your subscriber to open your email. Think of subject lines that you see on magazines. It is hard to ignore magazine "Calls to Action" like: "How do you stay in love after 25 years of marriage?" That subject appeals to both the newlywed and those who are in a loveless 25-year marriage, right?

Other examples:

Think about your art and your collectors. What would move them? How about, "What's best for keeping art glass clean?" If you are a glass artist, you could turn this into several different emails over time: "Will your Art Glass survive an Earthquake?", "Can your Art Glass be display outdoors year round?", "Does sunlight on your Art Glass fade the colors?"

Do you sell wood sculptures, or mixed media wall hangings? Whatever your art medium, there are do's and don'ts for caring and displaying. Even if they don't yet collect your work, they may already have collected other artist's pieces or simply want to know more about the subject.

They will usually find the value of this important information is worthy of clicking on the link to your website.

- 4. Create mystery:** If I know who you are and have a positive relationship with you, I am open to all kinds of enticements. So a leading comment that insinuates a significant “reveal” is in the email will be hard to resist. This will be easier to accomplish if you blog. It will be tied closely with your deeper message on that blog.

Example:

You just completed a painting using only a palette knife as an experiment. A subject line that would create mystery might be, “Like spreading butter - but better”. The first image they see has you spreading some rich color on a piece of bread with a table knife. The line below is simple: “I found a whole new way to look at my bread and butter”. The link to your site says, “See my transformation”.

- 5. Appeal to Human Nature with a teaser:** “3 Things That Art Collectors Want”, “3 Questions to Ask before You Buy Art”, or “5 Tips to Make Hanging Art a Breeze”. Security is always something we are focused on, so anything related to the word secure will prompt responses. “Top experts share tips on insuring art collections.”
- 6. Use trigger words:** These are those words that we all want to further investigate. Best, most, greatest, wildest, happiest, lowest, highest, richest, cheapest, oldest, newest, and the list goes on and on. You can add “-est” to just about any word! How you put them into subject lines is an exercise of logarithmic proportions. The words are triggers, but need to work into your message and relate to your art and medium. Example: “The Newest Piece in my Studio” or “Video of the Wildest Blown Glass Techniques” And the word Video is a MAJOR trigger, by the way!

Several examples used here require you to have the content to continue the conversation in the email and in a link to your blog or website. Use them as inspiration in creating that content, perhaps curating from your own resources. You could potentially use tips or ideas shared on other websites and blogs, turning that information into a blog post of your own, giving credit where due. If you pull 5 tips from 5 different sites, and organize it into a blog post, and you have new, original content with great information for your readers.

Don’t overlook sharing anything of value that will create increased trust between you and your subscribers. They want your point of view, your insights, and your expertise whenever possible. You owe it to them to have subject lines that make them race to open your emails.

One last tip: Keep your voice memo app ready and waiting: subject lines come from out of the blue all the time. Be ready to turn them into great emails!