



Creating Content for Emails – it's like baking a cake!

There are some basic ingredients that make all cakes yummy: flour, sugar, eggs, and lots of love are always needed. But, the basic recipe is the springboard. Creativity and a good recipe can take the basics from just another chocolate cake to something irresistible.

Your batter might include bananas, or chocolate, or walnuts – or all three! You might have icing that is espresso chocolate, banana cream cheese, or just plain chocolate. But you can get too creative and make things too complicated. Ever had a chocolate and pumpkin cake with a blueberry icing? Creating emails and “folding in” too many elements can also ruin the results.

Your best results will come from keeping things simple as you plan your email content. The fewer “flavors” the better. This is the list from the course which is truly just the beginning:

- Studio moments
- Half-finished art in progress
- Before and after photos of artwork
- A visit to a local art show
- The process of hanging your art at a gallery
- An opening (yours or anyone's)
- Pictures of objects or places that inspire your art
- Your favorite classical artist and why they inspire you
- A photo (with permission) of someone who just bought your art
- Photos of your art in its new home with a collector (and a testimonial!)
- If you have a pet - they are an instant hit!

Now let's add to the above recipes – as always, these will relate to your art or art in general:

- A Book review (about the arts, history of the arts, biography of an artist...)
- A Movie review – same as above
- A reference to the latest music choice that you listen to when creating – this can be several emails over time and why it's important to your process
- Foods/snacks you bring into the studio
- Things you do to relax or get in the mood to create
- Clothes/gear you wear in the studio if your art requires special clothes or gear
- Any news about your career
- Any news about your latest completed art piece

- Pictures of your “tools”: printing press, jeweler’s bench, kiln, brushes, sewing machine, drawing board, mock-ups, armature for sculpting, storage area for raw materials, and so forth. Just about anything that shows how dedicated, purposeful, and invested you are in your art will thrill, intrigue, and create increased trust in you and your art.
- Videos of you using your tools. 30 seconds is plenty!
- Packing and/or crating your art in your studio or at a service you hire. 4 - 5 pics will be a great visual. First pic can be the object, second the materials you will use. Click-through should go to your website for the next two or more photos.
- If you teach classes – show your class room and even some students at work (with permission). This area of interest - classes - could be a whole separate list!
- Pictures of your signature on your work can lead to all kinds of topics.

This list is far from complete. You can just about discuss anything to do with art, the arts, your art, your hopes, your accomplishments, your routine, your world.

For your best results – the all-important click-through to your website – simply follow these simple rules:

1. Optimize for mobile readers
2. Create a subject line that can’t be ignored
3. Have an “above the scroll” logo/id and if possible a photo related to your topic.
4. Have a place to send people to learn more about your topic or your art.
5. Keep it short, keep it one topic, and keep them wanting more so they will click-through.

YOU are fascinating. You are intriguing. You are way ahead of most other industries when it comes to “connecting” to your subscribers. How boring would your topics be if you ran an appliance store or sold car insurance? Could you even have such a long list of topics?

Content for a “Selling Email” is not much different

When your marketing calendar reveals it’s time for a “selling” email (one in 4 or 5 emails), you use the same 5 rules with an emphasis on keeping it short and simple. Have a reason why people will want to pay attention and so something now:

- An offer of some kind of savings: free shipping, half-off framing, or anything that has value. If you have production work that can be made in multiples, you can even consider offering a small percentage off on that artwork. (Resist discounting original art or one-of-a-kind work higher-end work. The list you send to will include collectors who feel they have “invested” in your work.)
- A strong CTA (call to action) that motivates and creates a sense of urgency.

- Limit the time period for this offer. If you sell from a shopping cart, include a coupon code that has an expiration date. If possible, include a “coupon” in the email and put the code in that coupon and make that your CTA.
- If you have a shopping cart and a “gift-priced” item, the CTA should go straight to the piece for them to buy.
- If you have work that is more expensive and your technique takes time for completion, the CTA should go to a landing page that is only about the actual work you are offering. A “rare” offer of a new piece deserves a full page celebrating its completion and giving people a chance to learn more about it. The size, the medium, the price, the costs for shipping, and what the offer is if they buy within a certain time period.
- Everything in this “selling” email should focus on the benefits that your subscribers, and only your subscribers, have because they subscribed. This is what they have been “waiting for” and you can certainly remind them of that fact.

Combining your messages: folding a sales message into an information message

This is within the realm of possibilities, but must be subtle. Every email you send will naturally have links to your website. The opportunity for someone to go straight to your shopping cart area can be included in an informational email. However, you need to have it as a “P.S.” and not part of the focus in an informational message.

We have included some sample emails in these bonus materials. They show how and where you would include links for purchasing. The basic concept is simple. If every email is about buy now, buy this new thing, buy something, you are seen as only wanting their money and giving them little to nothing in return for their dollars. You have broken the trust and stifled the ability to build a relationship.

However, the larger your list, the more likely someone may have an occasion in their life that can benefit by purchasing from you today. Perhaps they are going to a baby shower in a week and want your hand-crocheted baby blanket. You must have a link so they can direct themselves to investigate purchasing.

You can have a full block somewhere that is a permanent feature in your template that just keeps that door open for your subscribers. It’s not “selling” actively; it’s just a place that invites people to your website. It can also be a single line after your signature: “Visit my website anytime – always something exciting going on there.” That line should be a live link direct to your site.

Emails are a means of communication that can be very intimate. This is a legitimate relationship – permission based - and you are sending it to people who truly are interested in hearing from you. Eventually, they will have some need to purchase art. It should be easy. It is easy when you are front and center and in their inbox regularly and have built that trust as you share your world with them.