

Optimization of e-mail marketing of JUSTFAB in European countries

Iuliia Pogorelova



Author Luliia Pogorelova	
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<p>This is a product-based thesis commissioned by a European subsidiary of an American company called JUSTFAB, a fashion subscription ecommerce web site and fashion brand. The company's objective is to optimize e-mail marketing communication, introduce new techniques and attract new customers as a result.</p> <p>This project is aimed at researching new effective methods of customer acquisition in the context of JUSTFAB's target group.</p> <p>The result of the thesis is a concise e-mail marketing guide with effective tips and suggestions on successful e-mail marketing communication. The case company reserves the decision to use this guide when creating campaigns.</p> <p>The theoretical base is built on secondary sources (books, reports and online sources) and reveals key points and definitions of e-mail marketing, such as general rules, main elements, A/B testing and spam, without which a complete understanding of the topic is impossible.</p> <p>A huge number of newsletters from companies from all over the world was analyzed and filtered, from which the most apposite examples of successful marketing communication were selected, redone and improved for the possibility of applying them to JUSTFAB's audience. Benchmarking is used as a tool in the lack of suitable written material about modern techniques in e-mail marketing.</p> <p>Each audience may have its own preferences; therefore, all borrowed methods should be carefully selected and tested to determine their effectiveness for a specific group of people. The largest part of this work was devoted to the selection of the most functional methods and their testing on the target group of the case company.</p> <p>The e-mail marketing guide provides concise and clear tips and advice on communication, e-mail elements and A/B testing. It covers pressing issues such as significant changes and further company adaptation after the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018.</p> <p>The details of the current situation of the company, as part of the consequences of GDPR, were obtained from a primary source, an EU CRM Specialist in JUSTFAB. She mentioned how the changes affected the statistics and what is being done to eliminate the problems.</p>	
Keywords E-mail marketing, newsletter, A/B testing, e-mail elements, spam regulations.	

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1 Introduction

In this chapter, the thesis topic, project objective and project tasks will be discussed. Moreover, the project scope will be explained along with the key concepts and benefits to various stakeholders, which this thesis provides. Finally, the case company will be introduced together with the international aspect that it brings to the thesis.

1.1 Background

This thesis is a product-based study commissioned by European subsidiary of American company JUSTFAB. In 2017 the author conducted an internship in the company. While working in JUSTFAB as a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) Marketing Assistant, the author has realized that JUSTFAB was in need of optimization of several important e-mail marketing matters. Getting deeper in the topic, the author has found the ultimate solutions that were implemented by other companies, which might be benchmarked in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The aim of this thesis is to create a guide, which includes tips and suggestions for successful e-mail marketing communication and special modern techniques, based on JUSTFAB practices, best practices on the market and author's suggestion to current e-mail marketing system in JUSTFAB.

1.2 Project objective

Thesis objective is to deliver a guide with all vital elements of complicated e-mail marketing world, which can help companies outstand in current realities, which includes optimization suggestion for a case company and receive company's evaluation feedback. Author's personal objective is to add value to the company, to help them improve the process and keep the existing and acquire new customers.

Author's thesis is product based with the guide as a final product. However, a great amount of the research was conducted.

The research problem is the inefficiency of existing e-mail marketing processes. Moreover, European Union has implemented The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which contains new opt-in regulations that drastically change the way e-mail marketing is conducted in Europe.

Therefore, new recommendations are essential for successfully overcoming arising obstacles.

In the thesis, it is important to investigate the theoretical aspects of e-mail marketing and factors effecting it, data protection regulations, basic e-mail elements, A/B tests and list creations, the ways of conducting e-mail marketing communication in specific European countries.

The project tasks are:

PT 1. Establishing the theoretical framework: The first step is researching reliable literature about e-mail marketing planning and studying the examples of the competitors and other companies.

PT 2. Investigating the current e-mail marketing situation of JUSTFAB in the markets that the case company is present in: Furthermore, the author has conducted the interview (appendix 1) with EU CRM Specialist of JUSTFAB Europe to evaluate the current situation and analyze company's future actions.

PT 3. Conducting practical tests on e-mail elements for their further optimization: Based on current and best practices several A/B test were carried out in order to understand the process of A/B testing and find the best solution.

PT 4. Formulating the e-mail marketing plan for JUSTFAB EU: The ultimate e-mail marketing plan was created.

PT 5. Presenting the plan to the client company: The e-mail marketing plan and suggestions will be presented to the company. Based on the company's feedback, the changes will be made.

PT 6. Evaluating the project: Finally, the author will assess the entire project.

Table 1 below presents the theoretical framework, project management methods and outcomes for each project task.

Table 1. Overlay matrix (Pogorelova 2019)

Project Task	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
PT 1. Establishing the theoretical framework	Writing the theoretical framework	Desktop study	Theoretical framework
PT 2. Investigating the current CRM situation of JUSTFAB in the markets that the case company is present in	Utilization of the theoretical framework	Analysis of CRM activities and multiple interviews	Information about the company's situation, actions and plans
PT 3. Conducting practical tests on e-mail elements for their further optimization	Utilization of the theoretical framework	Analysis of activities, interviews, tests, desktop research	Most efficient e-mail marketing solutions based on A/B tests
PT 4. Formulating the e-mail marketing plan for JUSTFAB EU	Utilization of the theoretical framework	Plan production	CRM plan
PT 5. Presenting the plan to the client company		Plan presentation to the company	Plan presentation and company's feedback
PT 6. Evaluating the project		Author's assessment	Project assessment

1.3 Project scope

The author is working with a company that focuses only on women's shoes (80%) and apparel production for 17-35 years old ladies. Hence, their product range is already a limitation as it narrows down the target audience.

The work is conducted in several countries with the same type of content, translated to the country's language. The case countries were defined together with a company, all gathered results from France, Spain, UK and Germany and added up to find the average results of all campaigns (taking into account that these countries follow the same pattern in e-mail marketing communication). This work is shaped for the specific target audiences and countries' current e-mail marketing (opt-in) situation. The author of the work is fluent in both English and French and can fully understand all content communicated to the customer.

The mostly used channel for communication is e-mailing. Therefore, the thesis is limited to one particular marketing communications channel - e-mail communication. In the course of work, mainly promotional e-mails were considered. However, all mentioned information, tips and advice can be applied to e-mails of different types, such as

relational (newsletters, surveys, re-engagement e-mails), transactional e-mails (templates with welcome e-mails, order confirmation, receipts, drip e-mails) and, finally, promotional (sales, offers, product announcement).

1.4 International aspect

The thesis was written in cooperation with the international company, which is situated in Barcelona, Spain, while the research was conducted for other countries, such as the UK, France mostly, Spain and Germany in some particular cases. The thesis has the required international aspect.

1.5 Benefits

The company will receive a plan with suggestions that can be fully or partially used after the changes in the European regulations. It will provide new fresh ideas, save time and money on the research. The implementation of new e-mailing activities will definitely benefit the major stakeholders – firm owners and managers by maximizing profits (Boulding, Staelin, Ehret & Johnston, 2005).

Moreover, it will give the author a possibility to conduct a marketing research, understand how the tools work and apply all the knowledge acquired in Haaga-Helia UAS into practice.

The aim of the thesis is to create a plan that will benefit the second key stakeholder of relevance to e-mail marketing – customer. Implemented ideas should maximize utility/value (Boulding et al, 2005).

Hopefully, the final product will help JUSTFAB optimize their processes, so new and existing customers can stay satisfied by the company's products.

1.6 Risk analysis

The main problem is to collect the primary data, the first-hand information as data collection should be conducted through the interviews and tests. It is difficult to reach needed audience, be heard and receive the information. To manage this risk, author worked directly with the company and analyzed already existing data on the countries. There was always the risk that the author would not be able to find reliable information about the case country, target audiences and behavioral patterns as the information could be not disclosed or could be in another language rather than English. However,

the company provided the information that they have already had in possession that could be used. Moreover, only reliable literature and sources were checked.

The case company has given the permission on using their confidential information aside from the exact profits. However, the change in profits can be mentioned without stating the numbers.

1.7 Key concepts

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a business process of identifying, selecting, engaging, acquiring and retaining customers through bringing the value into the communication (Bodenberg 2002, 10).

In addition, Boulding and colleagues (2005, 157) put already existed definitions together and composed one combined definition: **CRM** relates to strategy, the management of the dual creating of value, the intelligent use of data and technology, the acquisition of customer knowledge and the diffusion of this knowledge to the appropriate (long-term) relationships with specific customers and/or customer groups, and the integration of processes across the many areas of the firm and across the network of firms that collaborate to generate customer value.

An e-mail newsletter is a form of communication that contains content that is distributed to subscribers by e-mail on regular basis with the motive of generating sales or producing indirect benefits for the sending organization (Yudkin 2002, 13).

A/B testing (split testing) is a type of testing, which involves sending version A or control version to one subsample of a list and version B or test version to a different subsample (Hanna, Swain & Smith 2015, 83). Version A (control) is a usual variant used on daily basis. Based on results of A/B testing 'winner' version becomes a control one until another test is conducted. Split testing is always held on one element of e-mail to get clear results.

Open rates (OR) are e-mail metrics, which are determined by a snippet of code in HTML emails that tracks when your image(s) shows up in someone's inbox (Jenkins 2008, 146). OR is a significant part of analytics as it determines following customers' action and future purchases. On the other hand, opening a newsletter does not always lead to a converted consumer. Normally subject lines influence open rates.

Click through rate (CTR) is the number of people who click on a link in e-mail to go to another website, compared to the total number of people who opened e-mail (Cambridge Business English Dictionary). A lot of factors can affect CTR, such as interesting offer, clear call-to-action (CTA), attractive pictures, unusual layout and many more. CTR has direct influence on conversion rate (CR).

Conversion rate (CR) is the number of sales of a product compared to the number of people who visit a website to look at that product (Cambridge Business English Dictionary). This is the final step before a client's purchase. Usually e-mail itself does not influence this metric, CR can be determined by such aspects as clients' attitude to a collection, speed of web site, distracting page, difficult path to checkout and so on. It is vital to take this account while analyzing campaigns' results, because even if a created e-mail is perfect in every sense, other factors can interrupt smooth client's conversion. That is why before selling anything through e-mails, all steps that happen after a click on a link should be checked.

1.8 Case company

According to Techstyle Fashion Group official website (2017), JUSTFAB is the subsidiary of American company - Techstyle, which is acting as a parent company for online subscription service brands such as JUSTFAB, Fabletics (active wear), FabKids and ShoeDazzle.

JUSTFAB was created in the USA in 2010 by Don Ressler and Adam Goldenberg as one of the first world's shoes subscription services. Nowadays the company operates in the USA, Canada, the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

TechStyle (originally named as JUSTFAB) was one of the first fast-fashion online companies. The business is built on the subscription service, at the first purchase the customer has an option of becoming a VIP-member in order to get different kinds of perks of the membership. The VIP-members are not obliged to buy, they can easily skip the month before the 5th day of the current month. In case the month is not skipped, the client is charged the membership fee that goes to customer's account as a credit that can be used anytime by the client on the website.

TechStyle group has a wide range of products from shoes to active wear and kids' clothes. JUSTFAB itself offers shoes, apparel, bags and jewellery for women. The clothes sizes vary from 36 to 52 and shoes from 36 to 43 with the option of the wide width and wide calf (launching big sizes was one of the latest initiatives). The collection is updated every month with addition of the new styles every week. One of JUSTFAB's main goal is to deliver personalized styles. Each month the clients receive new updated personalized Boutique according to Her choices and preferences.

The company has a young and dynamic team of around 100 people in Europe and around 300 globally, working in European offices: Barcelona, Berlin, London and in Los Angeles, USA.

The thesis topic was discussed with the CRM Marketing manager and CRM and Online Marketing Director.

2 Theoretical journey of JUSTFAB to effective e-mail marketing

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for creating the product of this thesis will be explained and illustrated. Moreover, the list of useful sources will be mentioned.

2.1 E-mail marketing

When people hear about e-mail marketing, the first thing that appears in their head is spam. Hundreds of digital letters with irrelevant information, trying to push useless products. It is crucial to understand that spam and e-mail marketing are two different things. The first is illegal and ineffective, where the second is a real business instrument. The real question is how to differentiate them in real life. Nowadays it is hard to understand what should be considered as spam. People do not tend to notice whether they have agreed to receive the news and it is hard to state if the received information is commercial or not. Consumers do not track their online actions, where they have ticked 'I want to receive newsletters', where they have left their e-mail address or on which websites they have registered lately. However, customers do care about how they are treated, about useful information and respect of their privacy. Hence, to differentiate e-mail marketing and spam, we should view them through the prism of trust, loyalty and respect.

Every company should remember that thoughtless sending of e-mails is not marketing. E-mail marketing is a regular process of forming relationships with consumers with the help of electronic mail (Kot 2018, 13). The key elements here are regularity and relationships. All key steps in e-mail marketing should be constant or regular. The aim of these steps is to maintain or at least not to spoil the relationships with consumers.

Moreover, e-mail marketing is not just bombing clients with offers. Everybody remembers that the e-mails should sell something, but, unfortunately, some forget about holding people's attention and maintaining interest to newsletters.

2.2 E-mail effectiveness

E-mail marketing can be considered as a very effective business tool for several reasons. First of all, practically everybody (audience that is usually targeted) in modern world is using electronic mail. In 2017 the number of e-mail users was 3.7 billion and it is expected to grow up to 4.1 in 2021, while the average of accounts per user is around 1.8 (The Radicati Group 2017, 3).

Furthermore, while being a lot less expensive than other marketing channels, e-mail can bring profit. Data & Marketing Association states that e-mail is still the first marketing channel for return on investment, which can reach up to 300% ROI. In 'E-mail Marketing Industry Census 2018' by Econsultancy and Adestra (2018, 5) it is mentioned that most of the companies prefer e-mail marketing to other marketing channels in terms of ROI and assess the performance of the campaigns as 'excellent' or 'good'.

The proper use of e-mail marketing can contribute to positive changes such as increase of the site traffic, boost in sales, decrease in promotion expenses and improvement of relationships with customers (customer loyalty gain).

Deal (2014, 3) states that e-mail is the digital workhorse, paying the most attention on its effect on customer retention. According to his research, e-mail marketing is the most effective at retention (56% of the respondents considered e-mail the best tool for this purpose), followed by social media marketing (37%) and content marketing (32%). (Deal 2014, 9-10).

In addition, e-mail can reach a mass audience, while keeping personalized approach due to smart segmentation. Personalization, in turn, is a very effective way to reach out to customers (Sahni, Wheeler & Chintagunta 2018, 1).

Moreover, e-mail marketing campaigns can be easily measured and tracked, which is very useful in strategy planning, showing if the way how it is used should be improved and which part should be changed based on different metrics (for instance, subject line based on open rate, content on click rate or landing page on conversion rate).

E-mail remains one of the most top-performing tools and can ensure financial benefits and improve relationships with customers with the correct and efficient use of all its capabilities.

2.2.1 E-mail marketing objectives

The main goal of e-mail marketing is to increase in sales, especially in retail with online shop. E-mail newsletters can generate sales by offering discounts, introducing new products or explaining all the benefits of goods.

Another pursued objective is acquisition of new customers. The obstacle is that customers should leave their e-mail addresses and agree to receive newsletters. However,

all companies have lots of leads, people who have left their e-mail addresses (for instance for an offer) but have never bought anything. They can be 'hot' leads, who are genuinely interested in the products and ready to buy or they can be considered as 'cold' leads, who are continuing to receive letters, but they need something worthy (a great offer) to become customers. Hence, e-mail marketing can become a tool for getting new consumers.

Moreover, e-mail marketing can build brand awareness and brand recognition. It involves people who left their addresses without paying attention, so the company should tell more about the products and the business. It is a great opportunity to capture these clients who are only half on board. It is crucial to constantly remind people about the company, better to use things in the e-mail that attract attention, such as well-known logo, bright pictures or strong text, something that instantly reminds people of the company. After seeing these elements several times, people remember them unwillingly, and firstly think about the company when it comes the time to buy goods from this product category.

Furthermore, trust and loyalty can be built and strengthened through programs, offers, regular relationships. People should always feel the company's presence, so they can turn to it when they need to buy something. It includes a lot of healthy and right commitment from the company, for instance, well thought through offers that people really need.

Finally, using e-mail marketing companies can provide additional services to their customers by sending different manuals, links to interesting web sources or videos, which positively affects the company-client relationship.

2.2.2 Main problems e-mail marketers face

When dealing with this sphere of product or service promotion, professionals always encounter following problems, which we may consider as general problems.

Going from the beginning, when the e-mail is sent to the end when a lead becomes a consumer, the first obstacle is unopened letters. There could be numerous reasons, why the potential customers are not even bothered to read a key message of a marketer. It could be a weak subject line or offer, a simple mistake in the sentence or an emoji that are not displayed properly on a specific device or sending at the wrong time, when the last thing a potential consumer can do is to open e-mails.

A major thing a professional e-mail marketer should be able to distinguish from this list of reasons is getting into a spam folder, as it is technically the reasons why the emails are not opened but the message cannot be even seen. Dealing with subject lines and thinking of catchy words will not help if this problem is not detected in the first place. It can be tracked in e-mail marketing software by checking open rates classified by e-mail service in each country (with different domains) or all together. If they drastically fall down in one day, it can be a ban introduced by a certain e-mail service, if there is no any other internal mistake made when programming an e-mail). Earlier this ban is noticed, easier it is to fix it by taking out the group of people who tend to not open e-mails from the regular lists for a period of time.

Another problem arises, when the first objective is reached, a person opens a letter but never clicks on the link. Quite common and easiest to determine reason is a broken link, when a person is not able to reach the final destination of the link. That is why testing part of the e-mail preparation process in one of the most important ones and should be done extremely carefully. Even if the link works well, people might simply not like what is offered in the e-mail. Considering it is a newsletter with some new products, it works like a catalogue, technically e-mail is built correctly but customers are not interested in investing money in this product or service. This can be analyzed through surveys or just tracked through several campaigns, even though an assumption is not a right way to make final conclusions. Sometimes it goes deeper and should be profoundly tested. People may not feel comfortable about the format, it can be too long or not informative, CTA (call-to-action) might be hidden and not obvious, there can be too many photos that people prefer just to close the tab without trying to understand what the letter is about. A/B testing is the best tool in finding the best options, which work with the target audience.

Finally, the main aim is to convert a lead to a customer, so when it does not happen, all the work goes down the drain. It can happen for several reasons. Starting from a technical one, when the offer is announced but it does not work on the website or is complicated to active. Even a slow web-site can become an obstacle in converting clients. Furthermore, in the age of fierce competition companies are trying to come up with the most interesting offers, which sound appealing to the client and attract their attention. Sometimes they are made just to get the client to read an e-mail, where the real offer has several 'buts', when the terms and conditions are not crystal clear, and discounts only look valuable but do not give real deals to clients. This can lead not only to low conversion, but also to worse thing, such as bad reputation. Word of mouth can

have strong effect on the business and it is better to be positive, stigma of being 'liars' can stick for a very long time.

2.3 SWOT analysis of e-mail marketing

In order to proceed with the optimization of the e-mail marketing communication it is essential to identify all issues connected with it with a SWOT analysis.

2.3.1 Strengths

As mentioned earlier, e-mail is a very effective business and marketing tool that can help achieve great results in increasing sales or attracting new clients. It is a low-cost tool with high ROI. All e-mails can be customized, personalized and micro-targeted, which makes e-mail a very effective individual marketing channel. Modern marketing platforms for e-mailing allow marketers to track their campaigns accurately and precisely to analyze whether the dialogue with the clients is successfully established. Hence, e-mail can be considered as a CRM tool that could establish strong relationships with customers and promote positive dialogue.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

The most important thing that makes e-mail weaker than other marketing tools is the probability that newsletter will be noticed, the one single factor which can be altered to get attention is subject line, hence, marketers need to be incredibly creative to interest people. In addition, nowadays the technology used in marketing is highly developed, marketers can communicate with customers via different channels and it is hard to predict all possible services that clients may use in order to adapt the e-mail communication to them (for instance, different browsers, marketing platforms, devices themselves).

2.3.3 Opportunities

Throughout the years e-mail has been growing as a channel for business communication and communication with customers. According to Radicati Group (2017, 2) the number of business and consumer e-mails sent and received in 2017 was around 270 billion and is going to reach 320 billion in 2021. In E-mail Statistics report (2017, 3) they mention that the half of world's population is using e-mail nowadays. Furthermore, the survey conducted by MarketingSherpa in 2015 found out that 60% of respondents prefer to receive marketing messages via e-mail, which leaves a great number of opportunities for marketers.

2.3.4 Threats

In 21st century in the era of Internet it is difficult to keep all personal information in secret. Consumers are becoming more conscious about sharing their private details, which leads in raising barriers between companies, marketing platforms and customers. In addition, it is getting harder to pass spam check, more factors are taken into account, such as usefulness of communicated information, proposed offer, possibility of scam and all e-mail platforms are pushing this bar up every year.

In May 2018 new laws concerning data protection were introduced. European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) replaces outdated privacy laws and gives greater protection and transparency to Internet users, which, on the other side, changes how business work online. The changes affect e-mail marketing as well, customers gain more control of what they are willing to share, they become consent of the type of information the company acquires as individuals should give and businesses should ask for permission to use personal information. (European General Data Regulation 2018). For instance, all e-mail sign up forms should be opt-in from now on, which means that companies cannot pre-check the box, where the user agrees to receive newsletters or other sort of information, which can significantly affect all online business and lead to drop in sales, conversion and other companies' targets. Finally, e-mail communication can be perceived as old-fashioned, which affects people how are following trends in every sphere of life. All the aspects reviewed are summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of E-mail Marketing (Pogorelova 2019)

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost tool • High ROI • Customization • Personalization • Micro-targeting • Measurability • Builds strong relationships as a CRM tool 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to get noticed • Technical limitations
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing marketing channel • Used by half of world's population • People prefer to receive offers by e-mail 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News privacy laws (EU GDPR) • Spam barriers • Old-fashioned channel

2.4 Main elements

All e-mails that are sent in business environment have its own structure and rules. If we are talking about promotional e-mails or newsletters, they have elements, which are

suggested to be present, such as subject line (SL), preheader, main image (or main information), terms and conditions (T&C, if there is any type of promotion running at the moment), unsubscribe button and some other minor things. As few things can be altered in the e-mail, the marketers should be creative with all these elements listed above. There are some rules and tips to achieve high engagement with the e-mail correspondence.

2.4.1 Subject line

Subject line (SL) can be considered as one of the most important elements in the e-mail marketing as it is the first thing that receivers see, which subsequently determines whether people open a letter, skip or just delete it, meaning that the open rate (OR) depends mostly on the subject line.

The main hurdle is only few options of altering the subject line for better results. Subject lines should be short and clear, there should be call-to action or something that catches one's eye. While going through a long list of e-mails received, nobody stops to read a long sentence, especially if the letter is a newsletter or a promo, which is initially has zero interest for a client. It should be able to stop reader's attention by an interesting sale promo, a "loud" statement or a funny word-game. The latest trends, which will be reviewed later in the best examples and benchmarking part is adding emojis and capturing attention by making the letter look as it is an answer (Re:) or a notification ((1) notification).

The subject line is the face of the whole e-mail, other parts will not be even seen if the this first part is failed.

The other thing, which is not connected to SL directly but is seen at the same time is the name of the sender. Before the mailing of letters is it essential to check whether the sender is a person or a company (both is acceptable, the first is even better for personalization), if it looks professional enough.

The list of actions that can be done is short but every company faces the same problem, tries new options that should be always taken into account and implemented wisely.

Finally, obvious but still important thing is to avoid mistakes in the SL, emojis that are not shown and cut phrases because of the limit of characters or screen that does not show the second part of the sentence, which automatically leads to a loss of meaning.

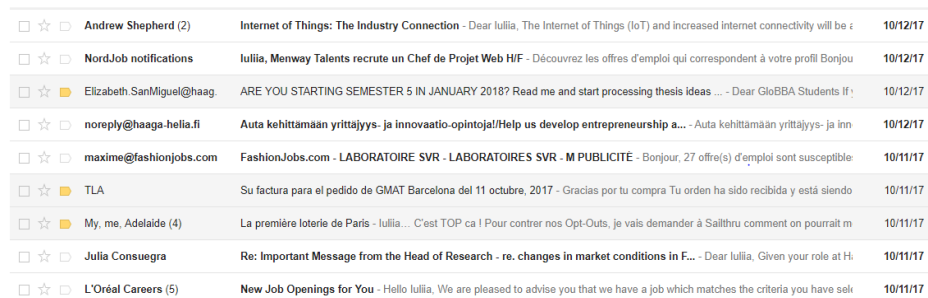
2.4.2 Sub-header

Sub-header or preheader or alternatively Johnsons Box can contain more information to an on-going promo, contact information, some essential details.

Moreover, it should always have a link to a web version of an e-mail if the letter cannot be seen on a certain device, browser or e-mail service provider. This option seems useless at the first place but it can contribute to customer retention. People often feel unease when the page or picture is not loading. According to Patel's research (2018), 'How Loading Time Affects Your Bottom Line', 40% of people abandon loading websites (pages, pictures, mails and everything else that can take time to show up on the screen) after 3 seconds of waiting. It can cost a lot of money to a company. For instance, Amazon calculated that one more second of loading time can cost \$1.6 billion to a company (Eaton 2012).

This element of e-mail goes along with the subject line as it is displayed in several e-mail service providers in the list of received messages. It can be a short summary of the whole e-mail, which can help sender attract more people and receiver decide whether to open an e-mail or not, which is beneficial for both sides.

For better understanding here is a screenshot of how it looks in Gmail service provider (figure 1).



<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Andrew Shepherd (2)	Internet of Things: The Industry Connection - Dear Iulia, The Internet of Things (IoT) and increased internet connectivity will be :	10/12/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NordJob notifications	Iulia, Menway Talents recrute un Chef de Projet Web H/F - Découvrez les offres d'emploi qui correspondent à votre profil Bonjour	10/12/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth.SanMiguel@haag.	ARE YOU STARTING SEMESTER 5 IN JANUARY 2018? Read me and start processing thesis ideas ... - Dear GloBBA Students If :	10/12/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	noreply@haaga-helia.fi	Auta kehittämään yritys- ja innovaatio-opintoja! Help us develop entrepreneurship a... - Auta kehittämään yritys- ja inn	10/12/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	maxime@fashionjobs.com	FashionJobs.com - LABORATOIRE SVR - LABORATOIRES SVR - M PUBLICITE - Bonjour, 27 offre(s) d'emploi sont susceptible	10/11/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TLA	Su factura para el pedido de GMAT Barcelona del 11 octubre, 2017 - Gracias por tu compra Tu orden ha sido recibida y está siendo	10/11/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	My, me, Adelaide (4)	La première loterie de Paris - Iulia... C'est TOP ça ! Pour contrer nos Opt-Outs, je vais demander à Saillthru comment on pourrait m	10/11/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Julia Consuegra	Re: Important Message from the Head of Research - re. changes in market conditions in F... - Dear Iulia, Given your role at H	10/11/17
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	L'Oréal Careers (5)	New Job Openings for You - Hello Iulia, We are pleased to advise you that we have a job which matches the criteria you have sel	10/11/17

Figure 1. Gmail inbox desktop interface with displayed subject line and preheader (Gmail 2019)

2.4.3 Body (main information or image)

It is essential to include only useful information in the body, as if a client decided to open an e-mail, it will be the first part that will be checked and evaluated. The best body content should be the combination of text and images, as the plain text is boring, but

it should always accompany the images as in some e-mail service providers the pictures are turned off by default to maximize loading speed. Overloading a message with information or products, which have no interest for client can lead to the loss of customers. The question which raises is how to know whether consumers would like to see this or that information. Here comes A/B (sometimes even C) tests, which is one of the biggest topics in e-mail marketing. However, when the test is conducted there is already a list of things that should be checked. To create this list in the first place, company should carefully study the market or carry out a market research.

2.4.4 Call-to-action

There should always be a reason to send an e-mail, either company wants to sell anything, communicate any important information or tell a story. Hence, it is essential to include call-to-action, so the receivers can act and feel as a part of something important, as they take part in the actual dialogue.

Call-to-action can be a big central button, a link or a picture, something that attracts people's attention. It is the core of the message, as all the conversion comes from it. It is suggested to have not more than one call-to-action as many different links or buttons can cause some confusion. Confused people prefer to leave or skip the e-mail if they are not completely sure what they should do or what a company wants to communicate.

2.4.5 Logo

Logo (Isaacs 2015) is a must-have in all correspondence as it is an extremely important psychological moment. People tend to remember things through the associations and, moreover, more people see something, better they remember it. Here comes one of the key tasks of the e-mail – create a link between your company (logo) and something that attracts clients such as good quality, nice design or informative e-mails, for instance. The bond that was skillfully created, benefits company in different ways, it can bring more profit or keep the level of customer retention really high.

The author has already mentioned that the header is the most important part of the e-mail, which affects a lot client's actions. Even if a client decides to continue reading an e-mail, there should be something that captures attention to keep the client interested.

2.4.6 Terms and conditions, unsubscribe link and privacy policy

Usually newsletters and all promotional e-mails include offers or state something that includes different conditions for the execution of something. Terms and conditions (T&C) are always needed in these cases, in order to clarify the details, indicate the exact conditions and protect the company in case of contentious issues. T&C should be made by a person who understand legal issues and they are vital to be checked before sending.

Moreover, unsubscribe link is a minor element and may not be the most important thing in terms of marketing (on the contrary, it leads to loss of clients) but it is indeed indispensable element. Ignoring it can lead to legal problems, with new regulations it became even more serious in 2018.

Finally, it is crucial to check that e-mails include privacy policy that covers everything that a company collects from customers and what is done with this information; it is a subject to legal regulations as well.

2.5 General rules of e-mail marketing

2.5.1 Creating a strategy

To make campaign the most effective and take everything of it, it is essential to create several strategies. Firstly, strategy of attracting subscribers and keeping them and then sales strategy. Generally, the strategies are created for three months ahead.

While creating a first strategy, the following points should be taken into account:

- instruments to attract subscribers,
- subscription pages and forms to gather subscribers,
- what to offer in change of e-mail address,
- free (announces on partner websites, social media) and payed (contextual advertising, advertising in other mailings),
- budget of campaigns and payed instruments,
- how to maximize effects of using free instruments.

Strategy of retaining subscribers consist of these elements:

- types of letters to use (regular mailings, offers and discounts, letters made for particular segments or letter connected with special events,
- series of welcome-letters that a person gets after subscription (so-called Drips), how many of them, their aim and what is included in each,
- time period between mailings, repetition of each kind of letter.

Finally, sales strategy is about

- goods and services offered in the next three months,
- offers, discounts and their conditions and restrictions,
- connecting discount with the type of letter, how and when the offer is announced.

For instance, regular mailing is set on each Tuesday. In each letter there is a series of useful tips and one offer announce. There is a link leading to a website page with detailed description of the offer.

Letters connected with different event can be mailing for Christmas or Mother's Day. It is advised to create offers for these days as well.

After the purchase a client receives several letters about the order, some additional goods or services, something matching or something that creates a good combination with the bought item.

2.5.2 Data collection and preparation process, planning

This step is completely about content and what kind of information people receive. It is better to create a calendar with all kinds of mailings, so all holidays, important dates and event mailings can be seen at once. It helps not to repeat letters and create informative up-to-date mailings. Different segments can have various colours in the calendar in order to differentiate them easily. JUSTFAB successfully uses this practice and here is the example of one of the months. Firstly, one should find or come up with topics and write texts for mailings for next several months. Case company, JUSTFAB practices another way in their special case. There are two departments, European and US. Hence, European office follows US calendar. European calendar is created one month in advance in cooperation with US office with special additions (as holiday celebrated only on Eastern part of world) or changes (for instance, based on different weather conditions –it is colder in France than in Los Angeles in November).

Secondly, all offers should be thought through because they should be connected with holidays or special dates (Black Friday, Cyber Monday) and the percentage of discount should be calculated based on desired revenue. Behind one offer lies a lot of work, from coming up with the content to creating offers on the website. It includes design work for newsletters and banners on the website. Finally, all the plans should be communicated to other departments. In JUSTFAB the calendar is created with one or several representatives of each department, so everybody is aware of events in the calendar and peculiarities or each mailing. Another important thing, which should be showed in the calendar is all the tests, elements, segments or time tested.

2.5.3 Technical questions

The main instrument in e-mail marketing is a software used for sending newsletters out. There are a lot of them nowadays and sometimes it can become a problem how to choose one.

There are several features that should be in every e-mail marketing software, such as templates, ability to retrieve and analyze information, mobile-friendly features and ability to automate tasks (without these features successful e-mail marketing cannot be achieved). Templates are really useful for companies without web-designers, there is a possibility of choosing and adding any element of the e-mail (subject line, picture, text and else) and then changing it for one's needs. Bigger companies prefer to have individually designed newsletters with written html code. Hence, company's size can define whether template or html code is used.

Furthermore, surprisingly the main part of e-mail marketing is not actual newsletters but what happens after they are received by customers – the results. They include how many people opened letters, clicked on them, bought something, how A/B tests worked and what to change to improve the results. All the changes in e-mail elements, strategy, lists should not be done blindly but based on the results. Every e-mail marketing software should provide the results of e-mail campaigns and basic report of sent e-mails. Based on this information company can create a detailed weekly or monthly report of all the emails sent.

2.6 Testing

E-mail marketing is a functional instrument for deep understand of customers' psychology. It is possible to get detailed information on what clients reach the most, what they are interested in or what concerns them with the right approach. According to Kot (2018, 57), there are two approaches: contemplation and testing.

If there is no time (or desire in most of the cases) for tests, contemplation can be used. In the sense of e-mail marketing, it means randomly changing elements and strategies, reviewing the effectiveness of the e-mail on the surface. This approach can create a vision but it never shows the real figures, which cannot be used as a base for a content/media plan and strategy.

Testing is more active and consistent. All the elements of the e-mail mentioned in the previous chapter can be and should be tested to determine the most effective options and create successful campaigns.

Sometimes it is hard to choose between two variants without actual numbers. The most used tests are A/B testing or split tests, where there are two elements tested, for instance, a subject line or the CTA.

One important thing is that only elements can be tested because only this way it is possible to understand what has affected the result.

Moreover, two different types can go under tests: regular newsletters and so-called selling letters.

2.6.1 Regular newsletters

First of all, it is essential to determine what kind of statistics we want to get about regular mailing newsletters. It can be:

- Subscribers' preferences. What do they perceive better: real life examples or tips? Long theoretical paragraphs or selection of useful links?
- Letter size. One or three paragraphs, the whole page or several screens of text?
- Newsletter writing style. Friendly, humorous, lightly cynical or teasing?
- Days and hours, when clients open and spend more time on letters. Weekends or weekdays, mornings or evenings?

2.6.2 Selling newsletters

The author is talking about testing the following types of letters:

- selling letters and series of letters;
- event letters;
- welcome letters.

The usual strategy of creating a test includes following steps:

Creating a control letter is a first step. Testing means the control of changes. In other words, how much something increases or decreases compared to the base. The question is what is this base and the answer is this control letter, which is sent to subscribers and the results are measured later. This is not an ideal letter, it is just what would be a foundation for further comparisons. After the series of experiments new better options become control versions, which should be tested as a step to an ideal letter.

The next step is to create a list of newsletter parts for testing. There are thousand questions that can be answered only after proper tests. For instance, what the most effective days of the week for send outs are, how the sales can change if photos are added to the letter, how the conversion is affected if the letter is sent out in html or as a plain text.

2.6.3 Elements to test in the first place

First, it is important to test the offer, the type of goods, additional services, bonuses and anything that can add some value and benefit the results of the campaign.

The second thing to test should be prices as there are always clients that are unhappy with the offered prices. It is crucial to find the line where customers stop to buy, so the price is maximized, but sales are up. The other thing to take into account round numbers against unrounded ones.

Returns guarantees should be tested as well. The marketers state that presence of guarantees has a positive effect on customer reactions.

Benefits are practically the most principal part of any sales. Depending on the kind of business various bonuses or discounts can be applied, it becomes the next thing to compare in the control and test versions.

The next thing that can easily have a separate book is a subject line. The field of testing subject lines is enormous, different styles and ways to tell the main thing can be used. Modern subject lines are full of emoji and other attracting attention features. Furthermore, text versus html is another battle to send to clients. The second version involves some knowledge of the basic computer language but generally is more visually attractive, yet to state this surely test is required.

Next three elements are the parts of physiological factor based on visual senses. Any kind of pictures can drastically change the effect of newsletters, the positivity of it can only be understood by experiment. Another visual element that is directly connected with click rate is the presence of buttons or links, on which customers click more, the research can include color, length and position of the element.

As mentioned earlier, CTA (call-to-action) is a direct tunnel between newsletter and sales page (which can eventually lead to order). It certainly can work better in specific

condition, in particular parts of the e-mail. Whether it should be the first thing the client notices when opening mail or it should at the end of newsletter is another subject for A/B test.

Moreover, it is obvious all people have different habits and prefer contrasting things, such as short and laconic or long and informative newsletters, for instance.

Finally, behavioral patterns strongly influence the statistics, such as open and click rate. By conducting the test, marketer has to find out the best day and time to send out various type of letters. It only seems difficult without structured tests but comparing the results can give a real vivid picture of the situation and boost sales.

2.7 Spam folder and how to avoid getting in it

When talking about e-mail marketing it is crucial to remember about spam filters that e-mail services use to protect their customers from unwanted and sometimes even dangerous e-mails. To make them the most effective, barriers built are really high and they are becoming even harder to bypass. Companies should obey special rules to be able to reach a final consumer and react quickly if they get in a spam folder or it can leave a great negative effect in the future on deliverability.

2.7.1 Reasons for getting in the spam folder

The natural and completely understandable desire of e-mail marketers (and any other people) is to cover the largest number of people; therefore, people without knowledge or experience create long lists without differentiation. These lists are usually blocked. Companies need to show e-mail services that lists are built in the right way with full permission of all participants of mailing (Hayes 2013, 23). Therefore, if there is no permission to send newsletters, information is suspicious, some forbidden trigger words are used (such as “free”), then there is a great possibility of getting into spam (Kristensen 2018). These reasons can be considered as main, even though there is a great number of causes that can lead to the “hell” of e-mail specialists. Most common cases are reviewed below.

2.7.2 Lack of permission

“The first rule about fight club is you don’t talk about fight club.” (Palahniuk 1996, 72). Everybody knows this famous quote and what it means. The first rule of e-mail marketing is to talk about permission for sending any letters and to make sure that clients give

it to a company (tick the box). Knowing this fact explains why buying and using ready-made lists from third parties are prohibited.

When a person ticks the box, he or she opts-in. It was not such a big deal before to make a person agree to receive mailings because the box could be pre-ticked, meaning that a person was opted-in by default. To decline getting mailings, the tick should be removed. Recent laws drastically changed the situation. A 2018 reform of EU data protection rules has amended the whole system. One of the things affected by new legislation was this tick box, which is empty starting from May 25th 2018. This means that when a person makes a registration, he or she is not opt-in by default.

Figure 2 below shows how it looks on UK website.

The image shows a subscription form on the left and a promotional banner on the right. The form is titled "ALMOST DONE!" and offers a "new vip member exclusive" of "your first style from £9". It includes fields for "First Name", "Email", and "Password" (with a 6-character minimum requirement). Below the fields are two checkboxes: "Yes, I want to receive fashion tips and offers up to 75% off by email and understand I may opt out at any time." and "I have read the Terms & Conditions and consent to the Privacy Policy". A pink "SIGN UP AND SHOP" button is at the bottom. The banner on the right features a background of shoes and text: "PLUS SIGN UP AND GET 75% Off Your first Item". It also states "IT'S FREE TO JOIN. HUNDREDS OF STYLES TO CHOOSE. NEW STYLES ADDED WEEKLY."

Figure 2. JUSTFAB subscription form with opt-in boxes (JUSTFAB 2019)

After filling in all the empty fields, a lead should put two ticks to be subscribed. Psychologically people put two ticks without even reading, because without accepting Terms & Conditions a person cannot proceed. However, as it was expected, fewer number of people subscribe to newsletter willingly. In order to gain people back JUSTFAB must come up with new catching ideas. Author is going to offer some creative suggestions and thoughts.

Obedying this rule is a crucial step in avoiding spam folder. Moreover, if a company breaks this rule (or any other data protection and anti-spam rule), it can be fined, for example, in the UK up to £500,000 (Cazalet 2018).

In addition, even if a person is opted-in, there should always be an opt-out link, which usually looks like 'Unsubscribe' button.

2.7.3 Clear basic information

When creating an e-mail, it is vital not only to think about content, but also about what a customer sees, when an e-mail lands in the inbox. Fields such as "From", "To" and subject line should be correctly and clearly filled with no sign of misleading. Company's name, e-mail address and domain name should be transparent to receivers, so they know how they are "taking" with. (Kristensen 2018)

2.7.4 Forbidden words in subject line

There is a long list of spam trigger words that are better to be avoided in subject lines, which consists of about 500 words. Some of them people tend to use mistakenly more often than others, even though it is totally understandable, as some words seem to be very catchy.

Firstly, it is important to mention the word 'free', which is so attempting in marketing context. People react more on free goods or services, but adding this word in SL can lead to a spam folder. It does not mean that companies should not use such offers but it is better to communicate this offer in other words. In addition, words with financial aspects should not be used as well, for example, cheap, cost, price, profit etc.

Spam trigger words can be divided into groups, such as financial, which was described above, employment (earn, income, extra cash), general (problem, satisfaction, success), greetings (dear, friend), marketing (click, opt-in, spam, open), medical (Viagra, medicine, online pharmacy), numbers (100% free, billion, #1), offers (prize, terms and conditions, winner), call-to-action (get, compare, cancel), description (fantastic deal, certified, amazing), sense of urgency (act now, for only, do it today) and nouns (phone, legal, casino) (Rubin 2012).

These words and phrases are just a small part of the list, which can be easily found on the Internet. It is easy to check it while writing a subject line and it can save time and money.

3 Project management methods

This chapter describes in detail the project management methods, which are required to analyze and optimize e—mail marketing system in JUSTFAB. It includes the research target and A/B testing process.

3.1 Research target

The main objective is to analyze JUSTFAB current newsletters and deliver e-mail marketing guide (appendix 2). This should help the organization increase efficiency of e-mailings.

The research is based mostly on benchmarking, implementation of the most successful colleagues' methods and checking their relevance on JUSTFAB's target audience by conducting A/B tests.

Many studies and guides about e-mail marketing can be found on the Internet. Although, they can be useful, they usually include general techniques. In a highly competitive environment, companies must stand out to be prosperous in their sphere. The aim of the guide is to show unusual methods and add working suggestions that are applicable in current realities without going through outdated processes.

Furthermore, the research requires not only in-depth understanding of marketing and people's psychology, but also detailed and complete comprehension of e-mail marketing, which is quite narrow topic, which demands a separate additional education since it is studied superficially at the university.

3.2 E-mail marketing guide development process

This section is focused on outlining how to create a structured e-mail marketing guide with all recent techniques that have real working power. The planning process and the theoretical framework are included. All mentioned techniques were benchmarked or partially taken from other successful examples and redesigned according to company's needs. The figure 3 below shows a chart of the search and collection of information for the e-mail marketing guide.

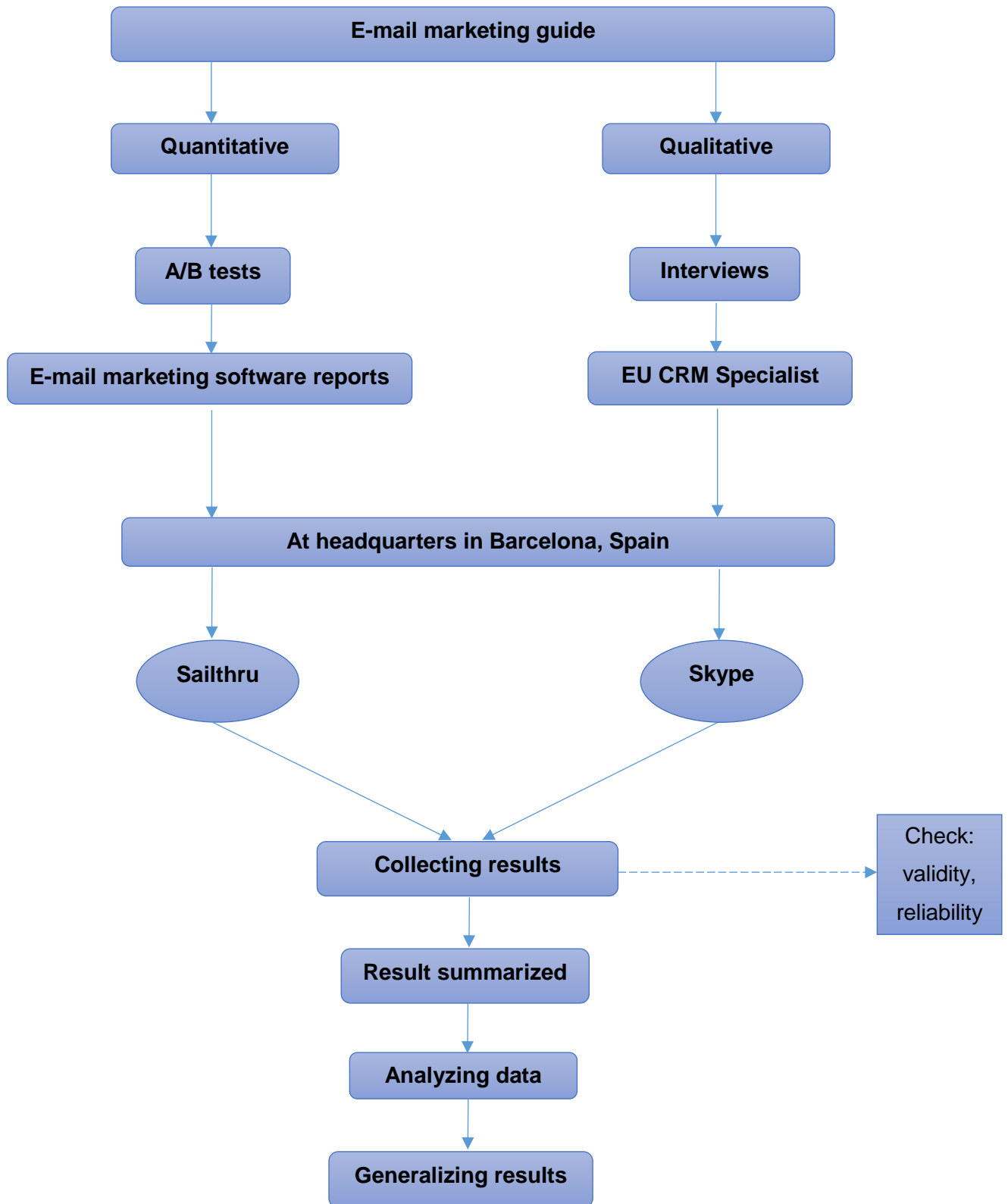


Figure 3. Project management design (Pogorelova 2019)

Information research will include both quantitative and qualitative research. For the quantitative research results of A/B tests on different e-mail elements will be analyzed,

they will show exact numbers, which will prove or disprove the effectiveness of a particular method on JUSTFAB's audience. Qualitative research will be used to investigate company's current situation and its aims. To get all this information, EU CRM Specialist will be interviewed via Skype as she occupies a high position, has access to information, sees a long-term perspective, but at the same time takes part in daily tasks, and understands the current situation at the company in her competencies

3.3 Stages of the e-mail marketing guide development

This subchapter contains all stages of information search and analysis and guide development process. Table 3 below displays all steps and entire management plan.

Table 3. Research Methods Summary (Pogorelova 2019)

Project task	Research	Theory Analysis	A/B tests	Interview	Guide development	Project evaluation
Information source	Books, articles, reports	Data from research	Sailthru, weekly reports	Skype Interview	E-mail marketing techniques	Author, Thesis Advisor
Implementation method	Reading, analyzing	Analysis of e-mail marketing possibilities	A/B tests results	Interviewing EU CRM Specialist	Benchmarking	Assessment of the thesis
Task outcome	Company's weak sides reveal	E-mail system strengthening suggestions	Specific tips for company	Learning company's current situation	Creating the e-mail marketing guide	Making corrections
Project outcome	Developing an e-mail marketing guide with suggestions					

Firstly, current situation on the market will be analyzed to determine trends and competition. Superficial study will show opportunities and space for development. At the same time, weak sides of the company's e-mail marketing communication will be seen. Researching competitors will help identify on-going tendencies, methods and techniques that can be tested on JUSTFAB's audience.

The second stage is aimed at combining main rules with modern trends to avoid the probability of failure at the initial stage. It is vital to study and understand e-mail basics. However, to succeed companies should focus on offbeat approaches, as detachment from a huge number of emails is crucial. At the end, all gain knowledge will form clear suggestions both in general and for individual elements.

The third step encompasses the application of all acquired knowledge in practice. Borrowed or invented techniques may seem as working in theory, but should always be tested on specific audience, whose preferences can dramatically differ on practice. This part combines the search for best examples from competitors, their elaboration and improvement and testing on JUSTFAB's audience.

Next stage is aimed at company's analysis and modifications made in e-mail marketing communication due to recent changes in private data regulations. New law (General Data Protection Regulation) is still fresh in the mind of e-mail marketers and has made big changes in the work of European companies. It is very important to understand what the changes were and how to adapt to them in modern realities. Hence, a separate part is devoted to this topic. To understand the effect of this law on JUSTFAB, EU CRM Specialist will be interviewed. From the interview it will be clear how successfully the company was able to adapt and what else needs to be improved. Based on the results of the analysis, proposals relevant to this stage of adaptation will be given.

The fifth step includes the formulation of a short e-mail marketing guide based on the information from the initial stages. It should have effective methods and modern techniques, which work on closing gaps and strengthening weak sides.

The final stage of the process is project evaluation. The e-mail marketing guide's effectiveness is assessed at this step. The guide can be used as a cheat sheet that can be resorted at any time to improve e-mail marketing communication.

4 Benchmarking of best practices in e-mail marketing by element and A/B testing

Throughout several years JUSTFAB has been developing a tested universal guide for all e-mail interactions with clients. Furthermore, CRM department is always researching for novelties and testing them. However, it does not take a lot of time to notice that JUSTFAB is not using all possibilities of modern market, where millions of new ideas are laying on the surface.

The author's plan is to research and mention below all successful examples of each e-mail element, compare them to case company practices and review all outright mistakes that the company keep making from one letter to another.

During last several years author was interested in e-mail marketing and paid attention to how it is done by different companies. What is interesting, big companies are not aiming for creativity, probably because they get enough attention due to high interest to their brands.

4.1 Subject line (SL) and preheader

The element that start everything is subject line, the reason why the e-mail can be left unopened. There are general rules that all marketers are trying obey while creating mailings, such as short but descriptive SLs without forbidden words, but it gets harder and harder to intrigue people with only couple of words.

4.1.1 Wording and style

To interest people subject lines should tell stories or scream about benefits for clients (Hayes 2013, 46). Great SLs can make people laugh only with couple of words. One of the best examples, in author's opinion, is The Hustle. It is a portal that sends one e-mail per day on tech or business topic after subscription. Even though portal's topics can be intriguing for people who have subscribed willingly, it is not always their first choice in inbox full of hundreds newsletters. The Hustle use one of the best techniques ever created – humour.

Here are some examples of subject lines of newsletters that have caught author's attention (figures 4-7):

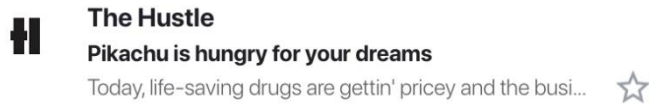


Figure 4. Catchy subject line from The Hustle (The Hustle 2019)

Everybody knows about Pokémons or Pikachu, people would be interested what it could be about and why it is in their inbox. It can have only two effects on people, they get surprised and open it immediately or they get angry because of childish type of content. Usually nice things, which remind people about childhood, recall good memories, which lead to positive perception of newsletter. This is a good example of working not only with humour and jokes, but also with psychological factor, even if it does not seem like this in the first place. Remember to stay on the topic while getting creative, subject lines should always reflect the main theme. In the example above The Hustle really talks about Pokémon company's new app, which is tracking people's sleep and turns into new kind of entertainment.

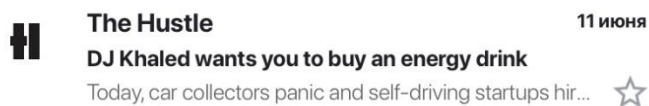


Figure 5. Catchy subject line from The Hustle (The Hustle 2019)

Another example is a newsletter that tells about artists entering Billboard's list only by selling (giving away) music albums through different bundles, such as selling them with energy drinks in DJ Khaled's case, for example. Subject line is directly connected with e-mail's theme, but is written in interesting way, where everyone will ask a question: 'Why does DJ Khaled want me to buy an energy drink?'. That is the trigger that makes people open the newsletter.

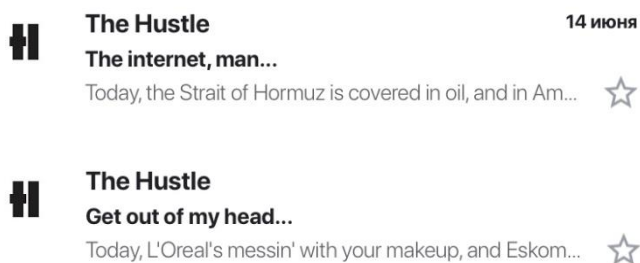


Figure 6 and 7. Catchy subject lines and preheaders from The Hustle (The Hustle 2019)

Here are other wonderful subject lines from The Hustle, another thing worth mentioning is their preheaders, which are shown in inbox. Usually companies repeat newsletters' main topics in both SLs and preheaders, which can seem heavy and scare off customers. The Hustle came up with an idea of leaving only funny and creative part in preheaders. In all their newsletters and it is seen on four screenshots shown above they use strange and at the same time appealing facts that are not connected with the topic but can attract people. They start in the same manner "Today..." like it is a news bulletin.

Speaking about JUSTFAB, most of their SLs usually are made in simple and clear way, which is good on the one hand, as it is an e-mail marketing rule but old. All newsletters are written in four languages: English, German, French and Dutch, some of them are translated in Swedish, Dutch and Danish. Here are some examples from JUSTFAB UK (Figure 8):

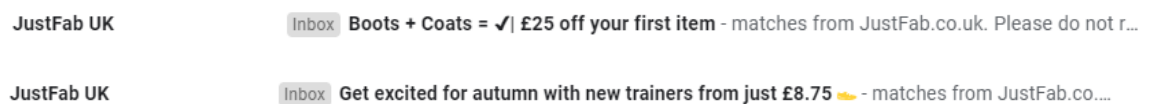


Figure 8. Common JUSTFAB subject lines (JUSTFAB 2019)

These kind of newsletters are interesting for people who are looking for boots or trainers at the moment, some people may start thinking about buying something after these subject lines (inculcation of needs), but the rest of them will not open this letter as it does not concern them. While if a company makes them at least open it, a customer can stay due to some other factors, for example, pictures can be colourful and visually attracting, some models of clothing can be especially appealing or body text can be alluring. The fact is when a person opens a letter; more factors that can bait perspective customers and lead to a possible sale or collection of contact information appear.

Author's suggestion for JUSTFAB is to stay one the topic but add some creativity. Some subject lines attracted author's attention no matter what the topic was. Exemplified can be found on figure 9:



Figure 9. Eye-catching subject lines (JUSTFAB 2019)

Even though a person might not think about anything at the moment, this SL contains some mystery and is begging a potential client to open it.

What a person sees, when opens the e-mail is shown on figure 10:

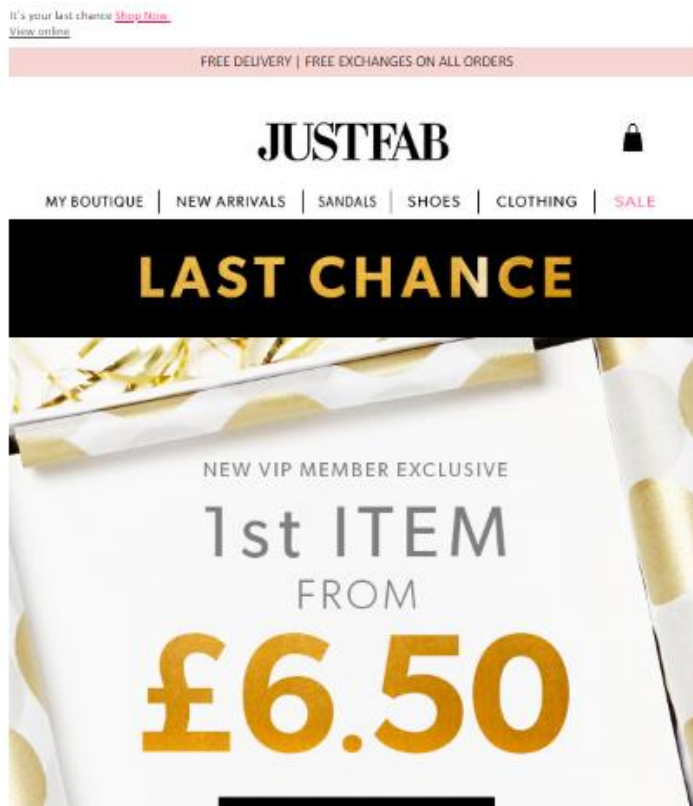


Figure 10. Common JUSTFAB e-mail newsletter with an offer (JUSTFAB 2019)

It is a simple offer (in value, not in wording) that JUSTFAB has on daily basis. Some parts are visually appealing, such as festive colours, which gives a sense of holidays like it is a present. Words “Last Chance” suggest that it is an offer, which is expiring soon, it adds some sense of urgency, when a great part of people stop thinking whether they are need of anything in the store, they just buy something because they think they need to do it.

A report from Experian shows that these kind of e-mails increase open rates up to 14% (when urgent call is mentioned in SL as well) and double even conversion rates. It is most effective to mention not only a discount, but also a time limit of the offer (not only qualitative, as in the example above).

All these factors most possibly make a possible client go to website and check the collection and it is already more than a halfway. It is a small example on how all elements work for each other.

The second good example is presented on figure 11.



Figure 11. Good example of JUSTFAB newsletter's subject line (JUSTFAB 2019)

Main audience of case company's website is young girls from 17 to 35, who follow all trends that come from social media, who has their role models from Instagram. They want to be influencers as well. That is why this subject line is extremely strong; it touches modern issues and affects a lot target audience. Unfortunately, JUSTFAB does not develop this topic in creating an influencer program; it was just an alluring subject line to check some clothes that Instagram influencers were wearing. It could be a good marketing, only if JUSTFAB worked with a bit more famous women that have a wider audience. The only thing that can still save some audience and bring some money is "Private Sale" label in the corner (figure 12).

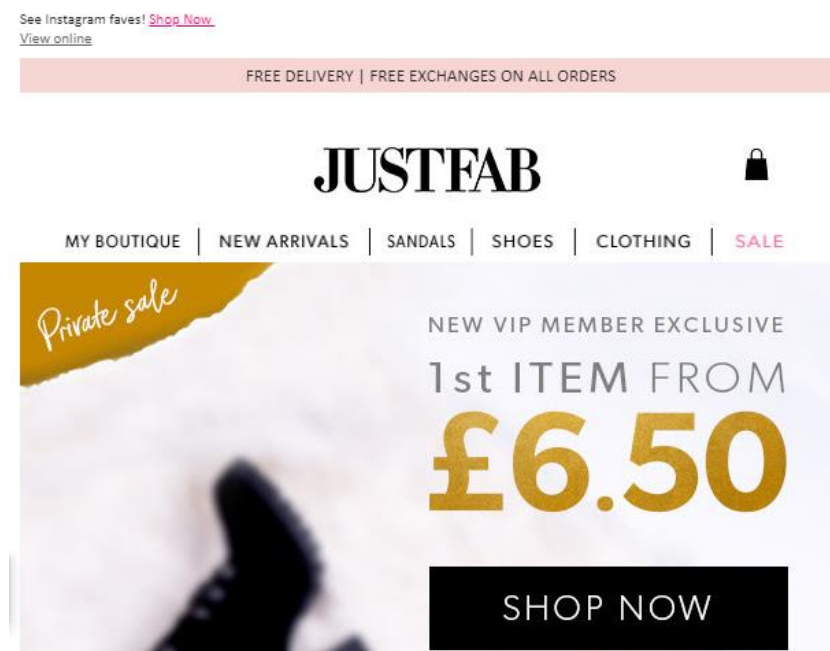


Figure 12. JUSTFAB newsletter with an offer from recent sales (JUSTFAB 2019)

It makes this e-mail a bit personalized and make people matter; word 'sale' may have its role as well.

These were two amazing examples of subject lines from JUSTFAB that differently influenced on customers' action afterwards, which confirms the fact that every element and step of e-mailing process is significant for a final result.

JUSTFAB should start to think a bit out of box and minimize talking with clients directly with items that they are trying to sell. They do not need to show people what they have, but make people want to buy what they sell on their website.

4.1.2 Special techniques

In addition to right words, creative and funny style, there are several other methods that can help diversify all same headings and take the most of e-mail marketing.

An integral part of modern life are smart phones with never-ending text messages, notifications and SMS language with emoji.

4.1.2.1 Emoji

In the world of texting, emoji – signs that communicate emotions and reactions and play a huge role. People substitute words by graphic signs to make messages shorter and clearer. It was just a matter of time until this trend comes to e-mail marketing. Chasing clients' attention companies add emoji everywhere, which can affect differently on open rates.

While scrolling through newsletters that come in incredible numbers, people more likely focus their attention on colourful signs that visually differentiate newsletters from other e-mails in the list. This statement can be checked on figure 13.

FORZIERI	🕒 Начинается Сейчас // 3 ДНЯ - DREAM SALE - 30% Off Full Price Items / Extra 20% Off Sale ...
JustFab	¿Qué te vas a poner en agosto? -85% en el primer artículo - Nueva colección de agosto. Échale ...
NewBeautyBox	🌟 Спешите забрать свой MULTI SILVER box по специальной цене! ❤️ - Бесплатная доставка...
Яндекс.Афиша	Третий выбор и еще 5 спектаклей в Санкт-Петербурге - Спектакли для вас Прозвучал тр...
Booking.com	Going somewhere, Iulia? Grab a deal with us - ...
NET-A-PORTER	Over 300 new arrivals today - New arrivals from Luisa Beccaria, The Row, Prada, Stella McCartn...
Pimkie	El camuflaje es el estampado del momento: ¡atrévete! 🌟 - Reafirma tu estilo Ver la versión onli...

Figure 13. Subject lines with and without emoji (Gmail 2019)

Without even reading the SLs, the first thing that eyes notice is a message from NewBeautyBox with surrounding emoji and then a message from Pimkie with a 'sun' emoji at the end of the sentence. These SLs are in Russian and Spanish respectively that confirms the statement that words have no impact in this case.

According to the research made by Experian, 56 % of brands that use emoji in SLs have increased open rates.

Although JUSTFAB is using emoji in their communication (figures 14 and 15), there are some critical moments that should be taken into account while planning future campaigns.



Figure 14. Usage of emoji in JUSTFAB subject lines (JUSTFAB 2019)



Figure 15. Usage of emoji in JUSTFAB subject lines (JUSTFAB 2019)

Based on author's observations in order to benefit an e-mail campaign it is better to follow several simple rules, such as:

1. Do not overuse signs in the communication with clients as they may perceive it too be to childish and familiar as can be seen on figure 16.



Figure 16. Example of overuse of emoji in author's inbox (NewBeautyBox 2019)

According to Braze research completed in 2016, women are likely to react more positively to emoji. JUSTFAB's target audience consists completely from women, which gives a little bit of freedom in using emoji.

2. Be sure to add emoji that everybody sees.

The great variety of smartphones, tablets, computers, e-mail platforms and e-mail services play an important role in technical development but make commercial e-mail communication more complex because of difficulties with displaying characters.

As an example, a wrapped gift emoji is taken on figure 17 and 18.

Jeffree Star Lucky Dip 📺

Figure 17. A gift-wrapped emoji displayed on desktop version of mail.ru and Gmail e-mail service provider (Beauty Bay 2019)

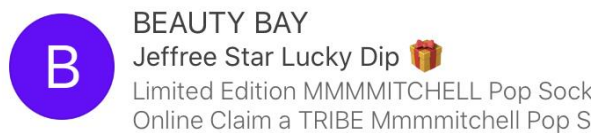


Figure 18. A gift-wrapped emoji displayed on Apple's iPhone (Beauty Bay 2019)

A win-win option is to use the most common emoticons that are supported by all devices and platforms. What is more vital is to test all e-mails on several e-mail services on desktop and mobile version. It can seem like extra work but on practice, it is quick and can save from a lot of unpleasant incident like on figure 19.

JustFab
Pisa fuerte y con garbo ?? ♀ -75% en el primer par •
Tacones de vértigo. Ver Ahora Ver online ENVÍOS GRATIS
| CAMBIOS GRATIS EN TODOS LOS PEDIDOS Todos los...

Figure 19. Incorrectly rendered emoji in one of JUSTFAB's subject lines (JUSTFAB 2019)

Emoji can be a great instrument that can set a new style to company's SLs, tell a story and diversify a boring inbox but it should be used wisely, following all rules and common sense.

4.1.2.2 Notification style

In the situation of high competition, companies are trying to attract customers' attention by all possible methods.

Another interesting technique that author noticed while analyzing current trends in e-mail marketing is adding a notification sign, such as, '(1) message'.

It can be anything that makes a newsletter artificially more personal like in social media, a message, notification or invitation, it can be a 'reply' marked as 'RE:'. Example by Hotels.com in showed on figure 20 and Urban Outfitters on figure 21.

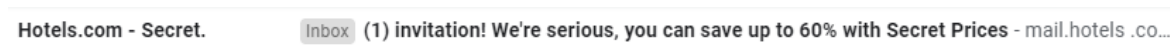


Figure 20. Usage of 'notification' style in Hotels.com usage (Hotels.com 2019)



Figure 21. A fake sign of reply used by Urban Outfitters (Urban Outfitters 2019)

This scheme can seem as a working option as it completes the task, it catches people's eye. However, when using this technique e-mail marketers should be aware of certain pitfalls. According to Specht's and Litmus Software and Fluent research 54% of respondents felt 'cheated and tricked' by e-mail's SL, when opening a newsletter. Companies are trying to wrongly personalize e-mails by adding RE: or FWD: in SLs. This method covers the commercial nature of newsletters, makes it look like it is coming not from a company but a person you might know, a friend.

It obviously increases OR as customers think that the letter is personal and important, but the trickiest thing comes next. Either something else in the newsletter draws client's attention and potential customer stays and possibly converts; or he or she leaves immediately feeling deceived. In the worst case, the company loses this customer and the letter goes to spam.

In author's opinion, using RE: or FWD: should be avoided in e-mail communication because it is definitely ethically wrong and imposes companies as liars. However, using different notification styles as '(1) invitation' and 'new message' as this method draws a connection between e-mails and social media notifications but cannot be confused, which means that customers will see the SL and message but will not feel tricked after opening an e-mail.

The idea of adding notification style to SLs seemed unusual to whole CRM department, so everybody was interested to test it in action. Back in 2017, when author was completing the internship, the first A/B test on notification style was conducted, '(1) New Message' was added to the SL (figure 22).

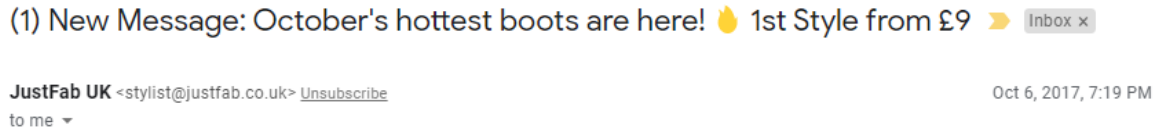


Figure 22. First JUSTFAB's A/B test on notification style in SL (JUSTFAB 2017)

Open rates were practically two times higher for test version, which was a great win. As expected clicks were lower, which is the reason, why subject lines like this should not often be used; some customers may perceive them as misleading.

4.2 Body of e-mail

Main things about body that should be mentioned and can be tested are links, visuals, copy and different triggers.

4.2.1 Scarcity effect

One example of a trigger is a scarcity effect, when company is pushing clients to buy something until there is enough stock or until the offer is on (figure 23). According to neuromarketing glossary Convertize, scarcity effect makes people place a higher value on goods that are in short supply. It is quite a universal trigger that can be effectively tested in different parts of e-mail, such as subject lines, preheader, banners and bodies.



Figure 23. Example of using scarcity effect on the main image of Forever 21 newsletter (Forever 21 2019)

These artificial time frames work as a reminder and additional kick, which makes people stop putting the purchase off. Sometimes this technique can be too fierce or not so well thought through.

Here is a common example of a newsletter with a specific timeframe – a newsletter from online cosmetics shop FeelUnique (figure 24). In this case, time frames are too tight, which creates a great possibility that this offer is not going to work. The main problem is the technological aspect: e-mail marketing softwares might have some delay in mailings, especially when dealing with great volumes of newsletters. The campaign, where customer receives offer after its ends, will not certainly have positive results and feedback.

FeelUnique tested this kind of sales throughout the day, which could be annoying, even if letters come on time and offer works. Sending five e-mails in five letters is a bright sign that the e-mail marketing strategy is not right in a company.

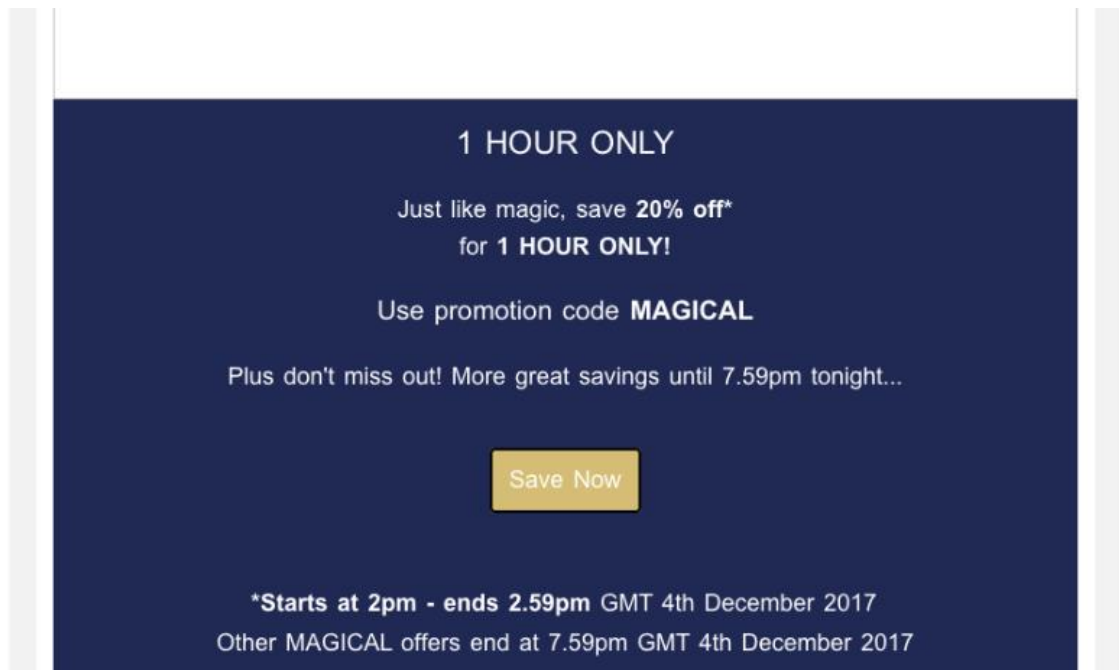


Figure 24. Flash offer from FeelUnique based on scarcity effect (FeelUnique 2017)

4.2.1.1 A/B test 1. Scarcity effect

Based on primary information and guesses, it could be said that scarcity effect is an effective instrument in e-mail marketing communication. People cannot allow themselves to miss something out; this phenomenon is called accordingly – ‘Fear of Missing Out’ (FOMO). It is ‘a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experience from which one is absent’, according to Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan & Gladwell (2013). As stated in the research by Canadian magazine Strategy (2015), 60% of millennials make immediate purchase because of FOMO triggered by something in the e-mail or website. This information is intriguing and can be implemented in JUSTFAB services. Author has conducted an A/B test on VIP segment of JUSTFAB on May 22 2019, where test version included a scarcity trigger (‘low inventory’ sticker) in the body of the e-mail, which communicated to receivers that there were few items of each product in stock (figure 25).

So popular. [Want them too.](#)
[View online](#)

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £35 | FREE EXCHANGES ON ALL ORDERS

JUSTFAB

MY BOUTIQUE | NEW ARRIVALS | SANDALS | SHOES | CLOTHING | SALE

MAY BESTSELLERS

are here

LET'S SEE THEM

THE STYLES YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

LOW INVENTORY

SHOP NOW

ALL SHOES

SANDALS

ALL HEELS

DRESSES

DENIM

You are receiving this email because you signed up for personalised matches from [Justfab.co.uk](#).
 Please do not reply to this email as we're unable to respond from this address.
 For additional assistance, [contact us](#).

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

LOW INVENTORY

Figure 25. E-mail with the 'low inventory' sticker (JUSTFAB 2019)

Surprisingly, the results of this campaign were not successful as expected (table 3).

Table 4. Results of A/B test of scarcity campaign for VIP segment (JUSTFAB weekly report 2019)

MERGED	CONTROL	TEST	Δ	Conf.
DELIVERED			-0.23%	
EST. OPENS			-0.96%	
CLICKS	2,080	1,929	-7.26%	
OPEN RATE	12.87%	12.78%	-0.74%	77%
CLICK RATE	12.94%	12.11%	-6.36%	99%
CTR	1.67%	1.55%	-7.05%	
PURCHASES	59	52	-11.86%	
AOV			11.23%	
CONVERSION/CLICK	2.84%	2.70%	-4.97%	61%
CONVERION / SENT	0.05%	0.04%	-11.66%	75%
REVENUE			-1.97%	
RPM			-1.75%	

According to the table 4, click-through-rate (CTR) was lower (1.55%) in test version than control (1.67%), which was anticipated to be boosted by the scarcity trigger. Practically all values, except AOV (average order value) were worse in version B. Possible explanations of this can be client preferences, a mistake made while choosing styles, too small stickers that did not attract necessary attention, placing stickers on each product that looked like a hoax or upcoming summer sale that makes people save money. JUSTFAB left control version without sticker, even though there was a point to re-test this campaign.

Examples like this should not cross implementations, but should be properly analyzed and developed. In instance, supposedly people are so used to companies playing on their FOMO that they do not pay attention on static information on website or e-mail that tries to push them. In this case, marketers can use interactive triggers that change after people's actions and inspire more confidence, such as Booking.com with rooms and time counting (figure 26).

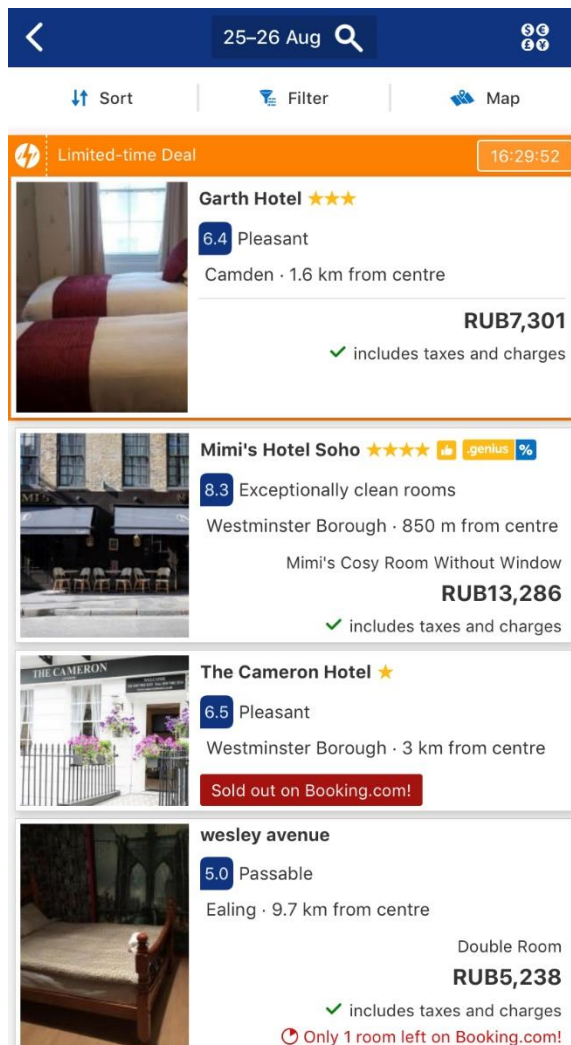


Figure 26. Interface of Booking.com application with rooms and time counting

If quality-related scarcity does not work on given audience, time-related triggers can be tested on different e-mail elements (Booking.com 2019)

4.2.2 Visuals

While creating a body of an e-mail, most effort should be made to create captivating visuals, pictures or GIFs. They should reflect the main topic, be understandable without reading the text, memorable and match the general style of the company.

A banner or an image is a first thing that a receiver notices, therefore main idea through words, signs or pictures can be communicated through them.

According to Nausedaite, Chief Marketing Officer of MailerLite, an e-mail marketing service, images in newsletters can be used to set the right mood by placing the attributes of certain scenes, using accurate colours or filters (figure 27).



Figure 27. Farfetch newsletter visuals that set elegant and party mood straight away (Farfetch 2019)

Pictures and other variations, such as collages and GIFs, are a great tool to express feelings and tell what cannot be communicated by words, to appeal to your target audience.

As stated by Bradford in his research 'Reaching the Visual Learner: Teaching Property Through Art' 65% of people are visual learners. Moreover, research made by 3M Corporation (1997) declares that human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than it does text. It means that the most effective way to interact with people through showing them something that they can rapidly scan by their eyes. In a highly competitive situation e-mail marketers should learn how to deliver the message to customers instantly, because people do not have time to go through all e-mails in their inbox. Newsletters fates are decided in one moment, first glance at SL selects e-mails that will be viewed. Second peek quickly examines whether the content of a message is engaging for receivers. Although a long e-mail text can be well constructed and full of right thoughts, it could not even be read if something does not stop viewers' attention at it. Visuals play a key role in this part of a cycle, they act as anchors and quickly convince clients to stay and then review additional text.

Mostly main images transmit a main topic of newsletter and offer as they are considered to be common decisive factors. Most attention should be paid on selling offer, if it is valuable for customers, clear and well communicated. During sales time all commercial proposals should take the largest part of main image as they are of most interest for customers. If an offer is not one-time but is repeated at regular intervals, it can be added to any design by placing a ready-made banner in any part of an e-mail. However, banners can be a tricky thing that can perform worse results than a main image offer. It can be explained by the fact that when people see lots of different elements and details, they automatically focus their attention on the main thing, mentally chipping off all the unnecessary. There is a great possibility that during the first reading small additional banners, stickers and notes might be left unnoticed, which has an extremely negative effect on all statistics, because the main driver of conversion is not seen.

4.2.2.1 A/B test 2. Offer on main image or banner

On the one hand, it is easier and faster to add a banner with an offer to all e-mails no matter what is the main topic, on the other hand it can affect not in a positive way the whole campaign. An A/B test was carried out to determine the best option in this situation.

The original, control version (figure 28) had the banner that was added to all e-mails during the specific period of time at the top of newsletters before main image. Test version (figure 29) had the offer integrated in the main image stating only the value of proposal. Creatives of both variants are displayed below.

Did you know? New arrivals! [Shop Now](#)
View online

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £35 | FREE EXCHANGES ON ALL ORDERS

JUSTFAB

MY BOUTIQUE | NEW ARRIVALS | SANDALS | SHOES | CLOTHING | SALE

2 ITEMS FOR £24
sitewide

SHOP NOW

APRIL
NEW ARRIVALS

SHOP NOW

It's up to you: shop or skip by the 5th of every month to avoid a £35 charge.
All charges become member credits that can be used anytime!

SPRING HAS SPRUNG AND SO HAVE OUR NEW ARRIVALS!

SHOP NOW

Figure 28. A (control) version with a banner (JUSTFAB 2019)

Double the fun! [Shop Now](#)
View online

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £35 | FREE EXCHANGES ON ALL ORDERS

JUSTFAB

MY BOUTIQUE | NEW ARRIVALS | SANDALS | SHOES | CLOTHING | SALE

Shoetastic!

2 FOR £24

SHOP NOW

It's up to you: shop or skip by the 5th of every month to avoid a £35 charge.
All charges become member credits that can be used anytime!

SHOP NOW

Figure 29. B (test) version with main image offer (JUSTFAB 2019)

Results of this A/B test (table 5) were predictable because of the reasons mentioned earlier.

Table 5. Results of A/B test of banner/main image campaign (JUSTFAB weekly report 2019)

MERGED	CONTROL	TEST	Δ	Conf.
DELIVERED			-0.17%	
EST. OPENS			-2.69%	
CLICKS	2,913	2,995	2.81%	
OPEN RATE	11.41%	11.12%	-2.52%	
CLICK RATE	3.00%	3.17%	5.66%	99%
CTR	0.34%	0.35%	2.99%	
PURCHASES	23	25	8.70%	
AOV			53.30%	
CONVERSION/CLICK	0.79%	0.83%	5.72%	58%
CONVERION / SENT	0.00%	0.00%	8.88%	
REVENUE			66.63%	
RPM			66.92%	

Based on the results, it can be definitely said that the B version with the offer on main image was a great winner. To analyze the success of this campaign, CTR and both of conversion metrics should be taken into account as OR and other statistics, which include actions of receivers before opening newsletter, were not anyhow affected by the completed research. Based on quite clear numbers, all activity created by customers who received version B was the direct effect of the offer location. People clicked on the e-mail around 3% more than on the version with the banner and, what is more important, conversion per click is 5,72% more and conversion per sent e-mail is 8,88% more, which led to higher revenue.

All facts and statistics considered, it was decided by JUSTFAB to set the B version as control and integrate all offers directly in the main image further on.

4.2.3 Links

Crucial things that are hidden from the naked eye but have a huge impact on the entire campaign are links and hyperlinks.

Link is a word or image on a website that can take you to another document or website (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary), where hyperlink is a connection that allows you to move easily between two computer documents or two pages on the internet (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus).

They guide e-mail receivers from the starting point of potential customers to the final stage of buyers. One link, which leads to wrong destination or is broken, immediately causes a loss of a customer. The dangerous point is that they are not visible when opening a newsletter, therefore e-mail marketers often forget to check the links.

It was mentioned earlier in the paper that all templates and newsletters have to be tested manually before sending them out. In addition to copy, pictures and compliance with the stated technical specifications, it is necessary to check all links. This process may seem tedious and long but it is better to be always sure that customers come where companies invite them, otherwise everything can be in vain.

According to Pergolino (2009), all links can be classified in three groups:

- Contextual links that are relevant to the content, should accurately lead to right product pages, collection and promotion. Usually, it is the most clickable links, so it is better to put them in the top of the e-mail.
- Bonus Content Links are additional links that are not directly connected by the main content. It could be a link to a side project, webinar or bonus programme.
- Permanent links are links that present in all e-mails, usually they stand for social media networks. It is vital to remember to include unsubscribe link in all e-mails as permanent link in order to comply with the rules.

It is a common situation, when a customer opens an e-mail but cannot click on what interests him or her. It happens because a part of an e-mail can be left unlinked. Not only names should lead to, for example, product pages, but also pictures next to them, because it is more likely that a customer clicks on the element that attracts more attention. Hence, one of the rules of e-mail marketing is to link every element that can arouse interest. Lindsey Kolowich from HubSpot suggest to always hyperlink e-mails' images.

The necessity of linking every possible element to the right page naturally manifests itself in a particular design with clear understandable elements, white spaces, concise text and large call-to-action buttons (Hodgekiss, 2019).

Russian Zara's newsletter (figure 30) for knitwear collection is a perfect example of this design, where all the links are clear.

ZARA



The Great Knitwear — изысканные базовые трикотажные модели из ткани высочайшего качества

[ПОСМОТРЕТЬ КАМПАНИЮ](#)

Figure 30. Zara's knitwear newsletter is a perfect example of clear and concise design (Zara 2019)

Call-to-action link (button) is the main link of a newsletter, it should always go to the page that corresponds to the main topic. In order to be noticeable this button should be big, eye-catching, clear, concise and in some sense motivational in order to encourage a client to go to a desired page (Campaign Monitor, 2019).

One tip that is rarely included in e-mail marketing guides is to make sure that CTA is seen as soon as a newsletter is opened, it should always be so to speak in the first screen. Newsletter from French Birchbox (figure 31) perfectly illustrates the example.

BIRCHBOX ♦

Beauté givrée

En novembre, vos 5 miniatures beauté comptent bien vous réconforter. Attention : sa sélection d'exception peut déclencher de grands frissons.

DÉCOUVRIR LA BOX



Un best-seller Rituals dans toutes les box

JE LA VEUX !

Birchbox c'est toujours...

- 13,90€ livraison comprise
- sans engagement
- 5 miniatures beauté sélectionnées rien que pour vous !

JE LA VEUX

f 📷

Figure 31. Birchbox newsletter with a great CTA location (Birchbox 2019)

There should not be too many call-to-action buttons because it can confuse the client. Newsletter can have one main CTA and some additional that correspond to the main topic. If an e-mail is long, same CTAs can be repeated. Most common format that works well in practice is to have neutral CTAs to specific products or product ranges and finalize newsletter with one general CTA that leads to the entire collection. One of the variations can be seen below in the newsletter of Nisolo (figure 32).

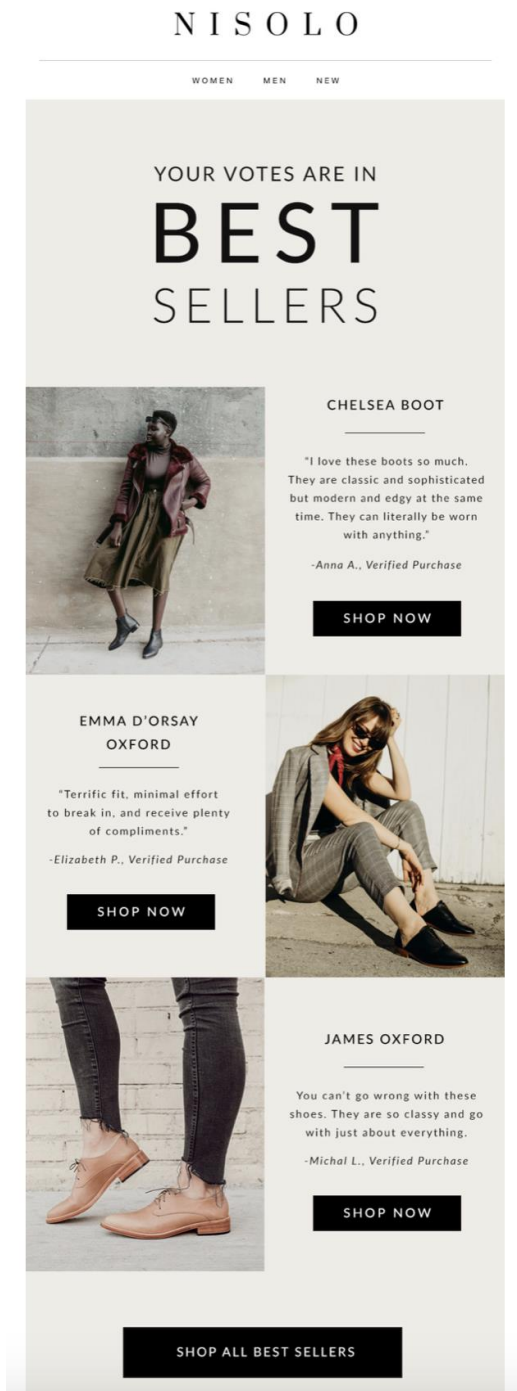


Figure 32. Nisolo newsletter with a good combination of CTAs (Nisolo 2019)

An article by Kolowich (2018) mentions a significant detail: while creating an e-mail it is better to take in mind to add text behind CTAs and images. If they do not work and receivers cannot see them for any reason, at least customers can understand what should in the place of a broken element and click.

Morey's article from MailPoet mentions that links should be chosen and added in the way that helps customers save time and easily access information they look for. Smart link building is one of the secrets of high conversion.

It is essential to research target audience preferences even in the matter of links in e-mails. A/B tests can be carried out by adding hyperlinks to different sections of website, specific products or entire collections or product ranges. Conversion rates show how different links with the same design and copy might change the situation. Some people would prefer clear way to the exact product they liked, the others would like to have a choice and have some time to decide between different options, only tests can show which group your customers belong to.

4.2.3.1 A/B test 3. Links to different web site tabs

In order to maximize conversion rates and revenue as a result, e-mail marketers should take care of fulfilling customers' needs and interests. To know these it is vital to A/B test different options.

JUSTFAB is famous for their selection of boots for reasonable prices, it is the main shoes category and the most profitable section of the website.

Next A/B has same SL, design and copy, the only thing changes is the final destination of the link. Control version leads to bestseller products and the test version is linking to the boots category selection. This choice is relevant because the main image displays boots and it is the right time of the year ('boot season'), in some other cases it could be inappropriate. Links should always match the subject of e-mails.

The design of A/B tested newsletter can be found below (figure 33).

Sundays are for shopping! [Shop Now](#).
[View online](#)

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS £35 & OVER
FREE EXCHANGES ON ALL ORDERS

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £35 | FREE EXCHANGES ON ALL ORDERS

JUSTFAB



MY BOUTIQUE | NEW ARRIVALS | SANDALS | SHOES | CLOTHING | SALE

BACK TO COOL

1ST ITEM
FROM **£8.75**

SHOP NOW ▶

NEW VIP MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

NEW STYLES
HAVE JUST LANDED!

SHOP NOW ▶

MUST-HAVE
Sunday!

SHOP NOW ▶

It's up to you: shop or skip by the 5th of every month to avoid a £35 charge.
All charges become member credits that can be used anytime!

Figure 33. Design of JUSTFAB's newsletter (JUSTFAB 2019)

Bestsellers section is a strong page, which has a high conversion and attracts women's attention. People always like to follow trends and if something is bought by lots of customers, then it should be fashionable by default. Unfortunately, this technique can be used to manipulate clients to buy less popular goods and help clean the stock. JUSTFAB's bestsellers page is made according to the real clients' purchases.

Summarized results of this campaign can be found below (table 6).

Table 6. Results of A/B test 3 on links (JUSTFAB weekly report 2019)

MERGED	CONTROL	TEST	Δ	Conf.
DELIVERED			0.25%	
EST. OPENS			-0.61%	
CLICKS	2,647	2,636	-0.42%	
OPEN RATE	9.12%	9.04%	-0.85%	
CLICK RATE	3.88%	3.89%	0.19%	
CTR	0.35%	0.35%	-0.66%	
PURCHASES	25	29	16.00%	
AOV			166.71%	
CONVERSION/CLICK	0.94%	1.10%	16.48%	72%
CONVERION / SENT	0.00%	0.00%	15.72%	71%
REVENUE			209.38%	
RPM			208.62%	100%

As expected OR and CR are flat and as mentioned earlier, these statistics have absolutely no impact on the campaign. Conversion per click and conversion per sent e-mail, which are about 16% higher for the test version with the link to boots section, show customers' preferences. It does not mean that all e-mails afterwards should be linked to this page, this test helped determine the most popular and significant part of company's goods, which in the future the company can periodically use to meet both customers' needs for the product and company's - for high sales.

5 GDPR and its impact on e-mail marketing

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a privacy law that controls usage of personal data (Official Journal of the European Union). All organizations that work with any personal information of EU citizens are subject to GDPR.

New regulations received a lot of attention after they have been announced. According to European Commission's official website, GDPR was mentioned 300,000 times in media in 2018, which is 3 times more than Mark Zuckerberg, for example, and the day when regulations came into effect, GDPR was searched more than Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian in Google (Figure 33). The main reason for this could be the level of severity that this law carries. Article 83 of the General Data Protection Regulation mentions two tiers of administrative fines: 'up to 10 000 000 EUR, or in the case of an undertaking, up to 2 % of the total worldwide annual turnover of the preceding financial year, whichever is higher' or 'up to 20 000 000 EUR, or in the case of an undertaking, up to 4 % of the total worldwide annual turnover of the preceding financial year, whichever is higher'. The numbers are serious and could not be ignored. Even though GDPR is not the first data ruling, it does bring many changes that may be 'inconvenient' for companies.

Companies were given two years (from May 24th 2016 to May 25th 2018) to adapt to novelties. All changes should have been made before this date, after it companies started to receive warnings.

GDPR affects e-mail from multiple sides. Talking about electronic mail in general, as stated in a complete guide to GDPR (GDPR.EU), firstly, companies should provide the security to their clients, which means elimination of the possibility of information leakage.

Secondly, all companies should take care of e-mail data erasure, as it can be stored for 'no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed'.

Furthermore, the most important for e-mail marketing thing is spam regulations. All information communicated to clients should be transparent. Consent on provision of information should be given freely. It should be 'specific, informed and unambiguous' as written in the text of Regulation.

According to MacDonald from SuperOffice CRM System, all these theses include specific actions, such as:

- Getting new permissions from old customers, who were opted-in by default with pre-checked boxes of e-mail subscription. Consent was not needed from customers who subscribed willingly before May 25th 2018.
- Removing a pre-tick from subscription forms. From May 25th 2018 consumers should explicitly opt-in and tick this box, which means that they deliberately agree to receive letters from a company. Good news is customers should not confirm two times their subscription (however, it seems like a next step in tightening regulations in protection of personal information).
- Rethinking automated e-mails. Marketers should be careful, when using personal information to make major corrections that were not approved by customers (prices, subscriptions and so on).
- Putting in order opting-out. All clients have a right to stop receiving e-mails and 'a right to be forgotten'. It was protected by the law before and only got more important with GDPR.

There are only few things, but the impact of them is beyond imaginable on e-mail marketing. JUSTFAB is subject to these changes and a great part of the company is working with European customers. According to Justine Lefel, EU CRM Specialist, JUSTFAB was preparing for the changes from the first announcement in 2016. Company filtered all lists, updated privacy policy, terms & conditions and developed strategies to attract opted-out clients and increase efficiency of e-mail marketing communication. Despite this, consequences were bitter, subscriptions rates abruptly fell down. There is still lots of room for improvement, in terms of customer acquisition and retention and creating a symbiosis of useful and commercial content.

In order to stay competitive, companies should adapt to new environment and revise strategies. Several working measures can be implemented in e-mail marketing to attract new subscribers, according to MacDonald.

First of all, marketers should examine all e-mail lists and remove subscribers, who were not opted-in willingly (although it should be made by May 25thth 2018, better do it late than never).

Secondly, it is vital to stick to legal ways of obtaining new subscribers, so marketers should never buy ready e-mailing lists.

To be more specific with actions, to get customers' e-mails, companies should be ready to offer something in return, some captivating material, such as guides or catalogues.

Furthermore, companies can become more useful by implementing pop-ups and aiming them at particular segments of subscribers. Push notifications can be sent for people who

have not subscribed at first. There is a possibility that a customer has already seen that had changed the opinion about the subscription.

It is crucial to ask only what is needed, so companies should not forget to analyze what they are asking their clients and if this information is practical and handy.

The easiest thing to do is to be transparent and ask customers directly if they want to stay with the company and be subscribed. Sending a clear letter with the exact question helps to determine real clients, who are intrigued more than others.

Moreover, the smart thing to do is to put different opt-out options, meaning not only add unsubscribe button that completely stops sending all e-mail, but also as many as possible options on content customers receive, frequency of e-mails, their forms and so on. This helps keep subscribers, because a customer may not like only one thing in e-mailing, but due to lack of options, forced to unsubscribe from everything.

6 Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the entire project, evaluating and assessing it and the research progress.

6.1 Product assessment

The project and the e-mail marketing guide include a number of useful tips and suggestions that could be applied to JUSTFAB's e-mail marketing communication system. The advantage of this guide is a collection of only modern methods that could definitely help the company stand out among others on the market, in other words, it is its competitive advantage.

The study is based on a theoretical and practical approach, which revealed some flaws even in the basic points and made it possible to correct old problems and open up new opportunities in e-mail marketing communication system.

6.2 Case company's feedback

The case company studied the concise completed e-mail marketing guidebook. EU CRM Specialist and CRM Manager found the information useful, well structured and, at some points, completely new to the company. It was mentioned that the good thing is that the book includes many ideas that can be used any time and tested, especially considering that already conducted tests showed interesting results.

The guide will be distributed throughout the CRM department, so that employees can consult and use the ideas proposed, when creating new campaigns.

6.3 Process assessment

The project was limited to narrow specific topic and complicated by the lack of useful literature that would not include basic well-known topics. Mutually beneficial cooperation with the case company helped gather valuable information, the analysis of which revealed significant things, which were mentioned in the e-mail marketing guide.

6.4 Reflection on learning

One of the most difficult parts was deciding on what to include in the short guide, as basic e-mail information is accessible to everyone and does not bear any benefit in the modern world. It was decided to focus on clear and understandable instructions and unusual ideas

for immediate implementation by the case company, which turned out to be the right decision.

E-mail marketing is quite peculiar theme that is not widely studied in schools. While dealing with e-mail marketing campaigns, marketers study other communication channels, web-design, psychology and technical issues in software programs. One small channel opens the whole new world of opportunities. The author was glad to receive an opportunity to be acquainted with such a tool. Six months internship and painstaking work on this project made from the author an expert in e-mail marketing communication, which is a good advantage in the future, since there are very few people who have encountered such concentrated work on e-mails.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview with the EU CRM Specialist of JUSTFAB

Below are the questions from Skype interview with the representative of the e-mail marketing and CRM department of JUSTFAB.

1. What is the impact of GDPR for JUSTFAB?
2. How did your department get prepared before the law came into effect on May 25th, 2018?
3. What was changed?
4. How did the changes effect the numbers (subscribers in particular) and overall purchases?
5. Which elements are still upon improvement after law regulations?

Appendix 2. E-mail marketing guide

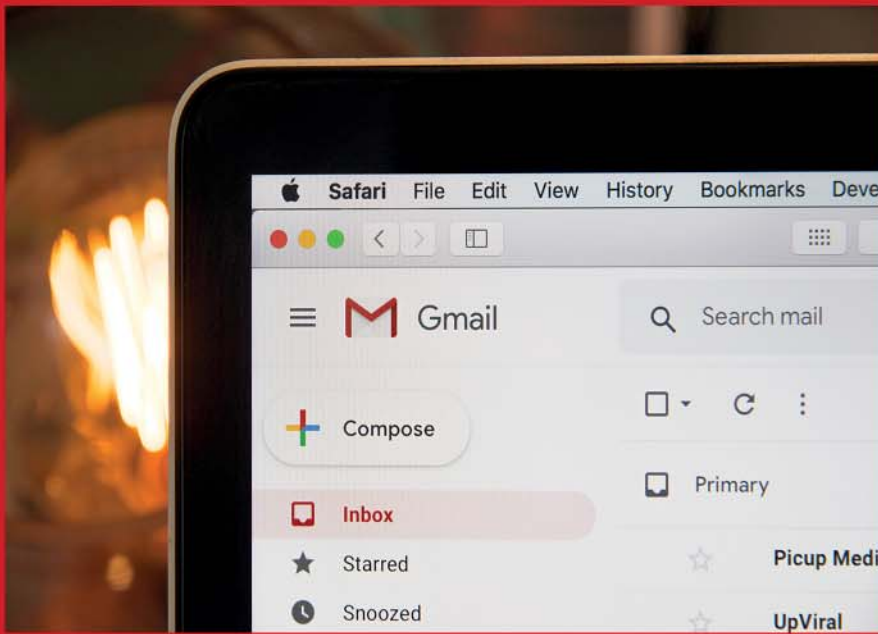


PHOTO BY WEBAROO.COM.AU ON UNSPLASH



PHOTO BY AUSTIN DISTEL ON UNSPLASH

E-mail marketing guide

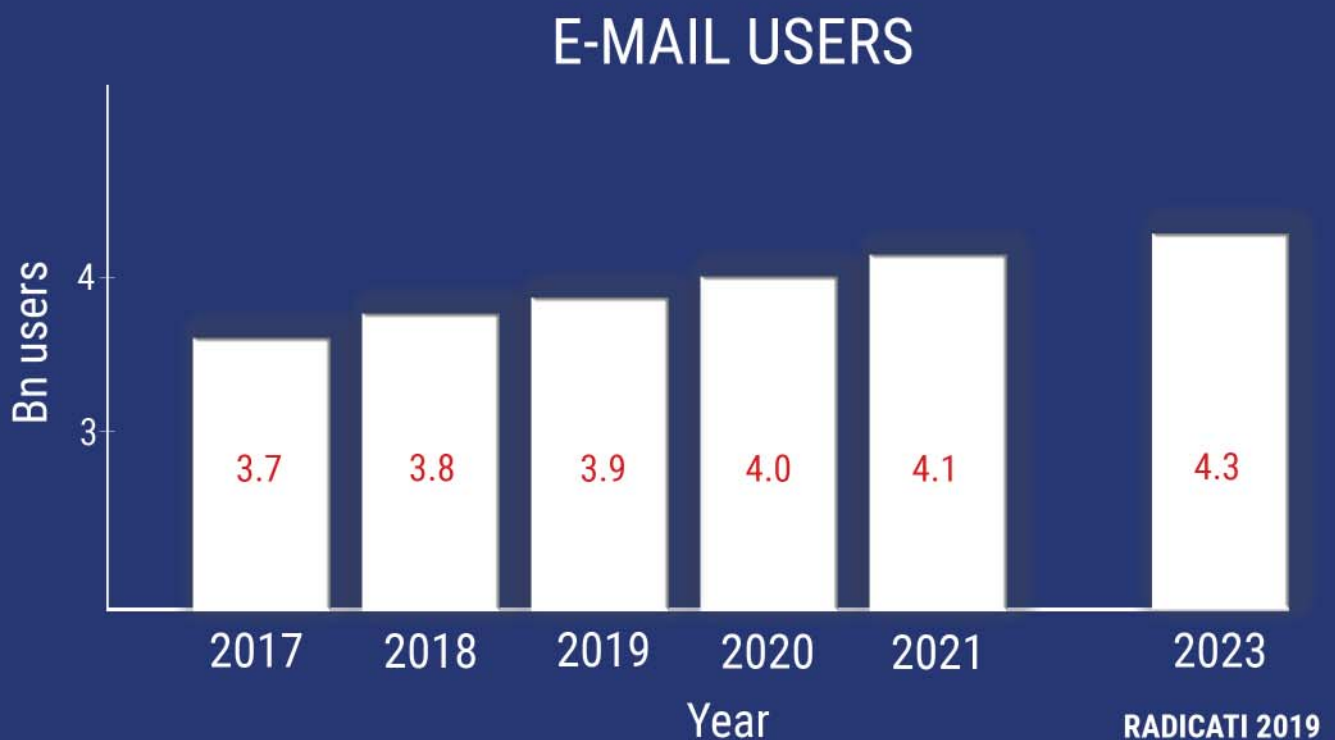
IULIA POGORELOVA
2019

E-MAIL MARKETING

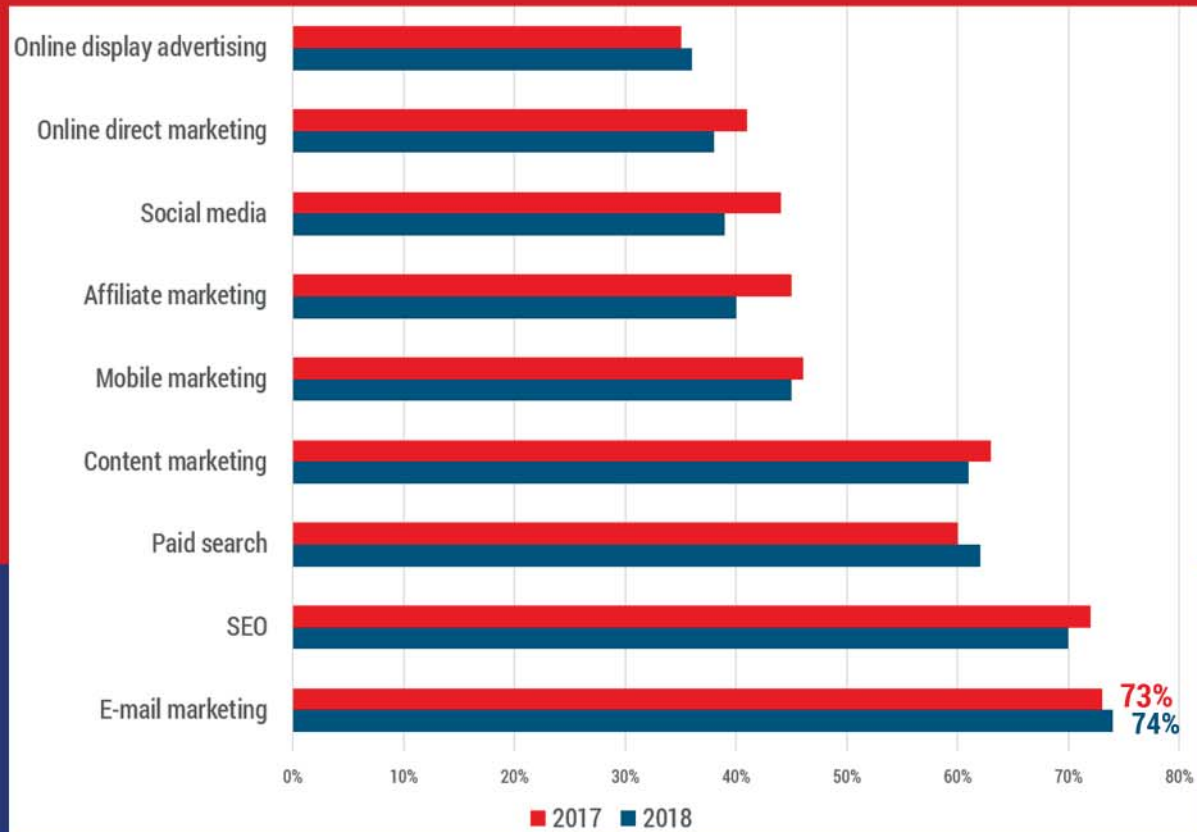
IS A REGULAR PROCESS OF FORMING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONSUMERS WITH THE HELP OF ELECTRONIC MAIL (KOT 2013, 13).

E-MAIL EFFECTIVENESS

THE NUMBER OF E-MAIL USERS IS ONLY GROWING EACH YEAR.

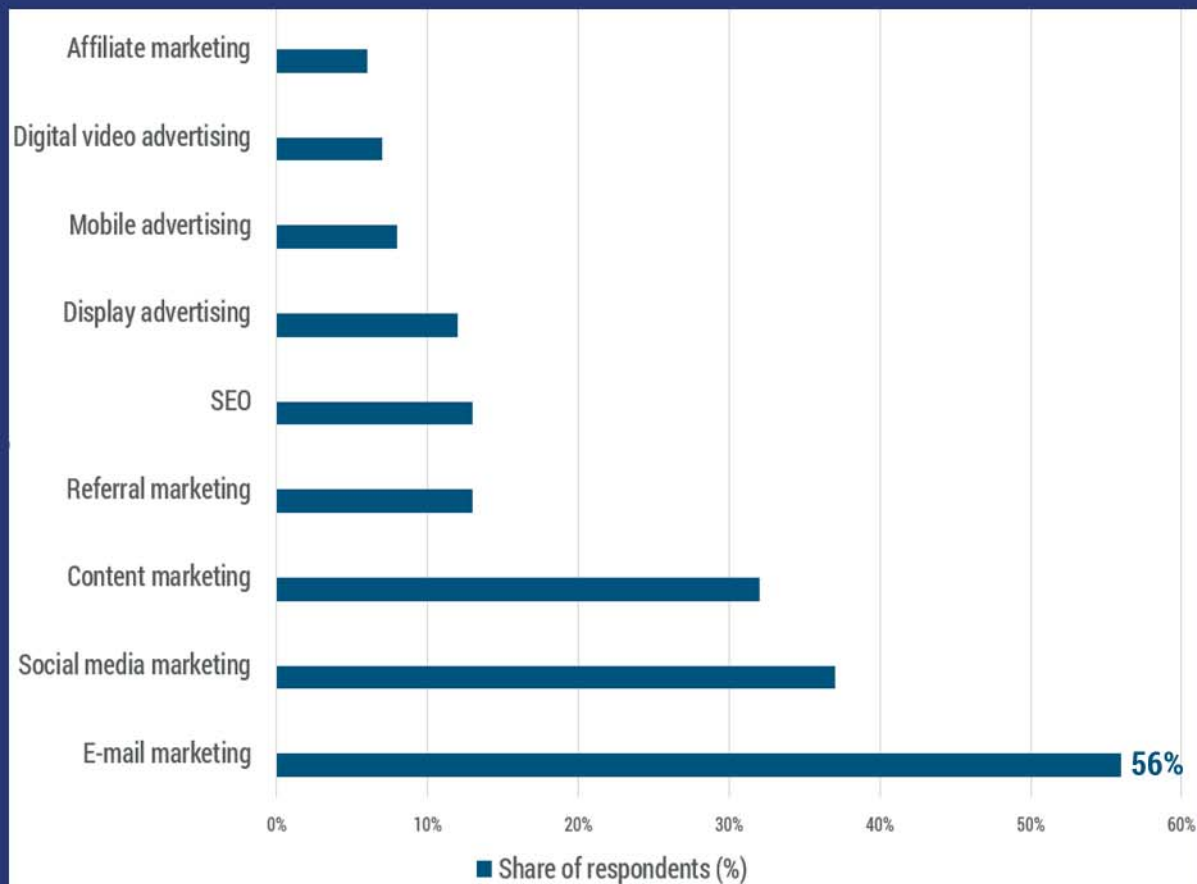


PROPORTION OF COMPANY RESPONDENTS RATING CHANNELS AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD FOR ROI



ECONSULTANCY AND ADESTRA 2018

DIGITAL MARKETING PROGRAMS MOST EFFECTIVE AT RETENTION



GIGAOM RESEARCH 2014

TYPES OF E-MAILS IN E-MAIL MARKETING:

- **promotional** (sales, offers, announcements, exclusive promo messages)
- **relational** (newsletters, surveys, re-engagement e-mails)
- **transactional** (welcome, order confirmations, receipts, drip e-mails)

All these e-mails are important and needed in e-mail marketing communication. Although in this guide promotional e-mails used as examples, all tips can be applied to any type of electronic mail.

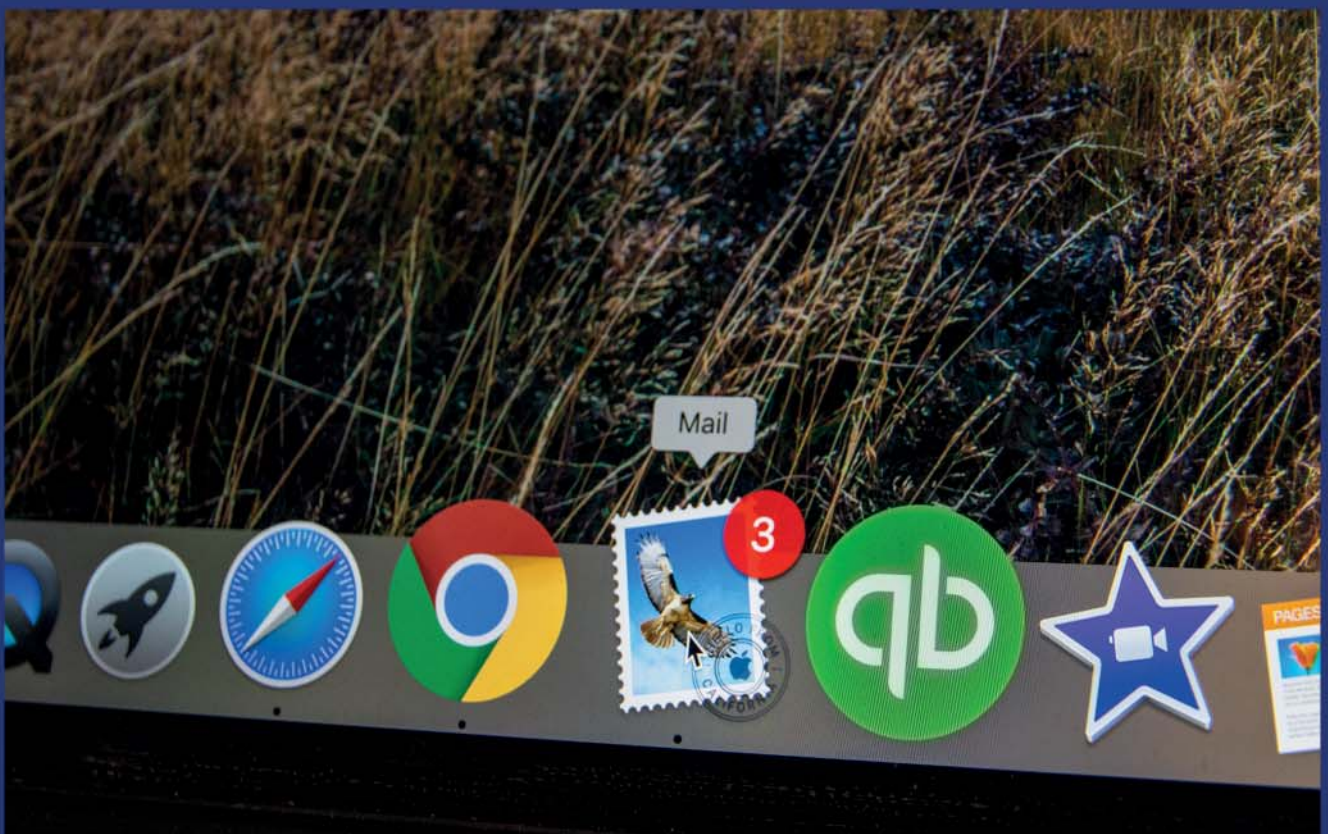


PHOTO BY WEBAROO.COM.AU ON UNSPLASH

E-MAIL ELEMENTS

1 SUBJECT LINE

- short
- clear
- captivating
- could be personalized

3 LOGO

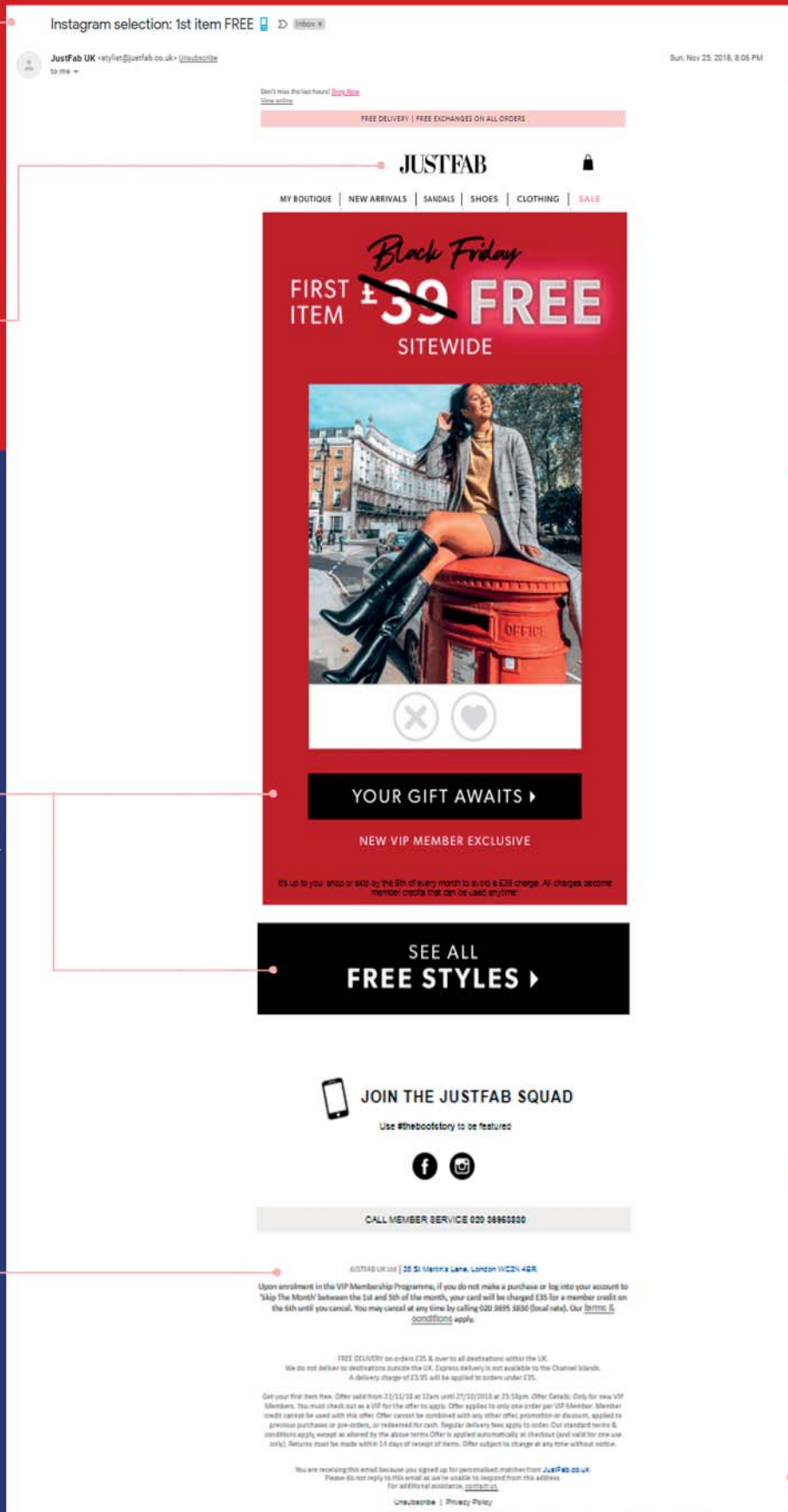
- creates a bond between company and client through e-mails

5 CALL-TO-ACTION

- noticeable
- clear
- urging to click

7 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- include details and conditions of on-going promotion



2 PRE-HEADER

- short summary of email
- is displayed in inbox
- should include a link to web-version

4 BODY

- eye-catching graphics
- organized layout
- featured content: main topic of e-mail
- may include main offer

6 SOCIAL LINKS

- vital to create a connection through all possible channels

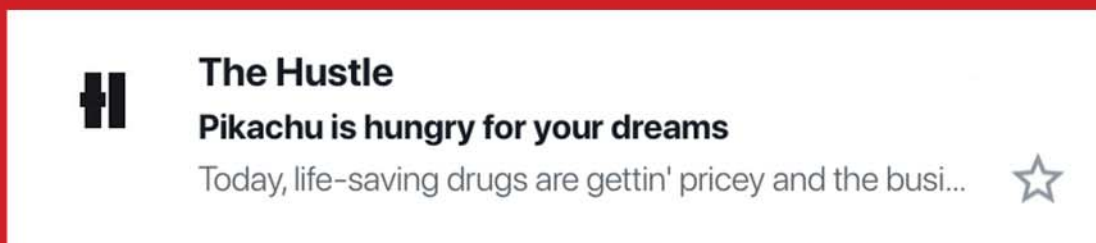
8 UNSUBSCRIBE LINK

- must always be included
- may offer subscription options

BENCHMARKING OF BEST PRACTICES

SUBJECT LINE (SL)

- Catchy wording



SUBJECT LINE FROM THE HUSTLE 2019

- Emoji



SUBJECT LINE FROM ANTHROPOLOGIE EUROPE 2019

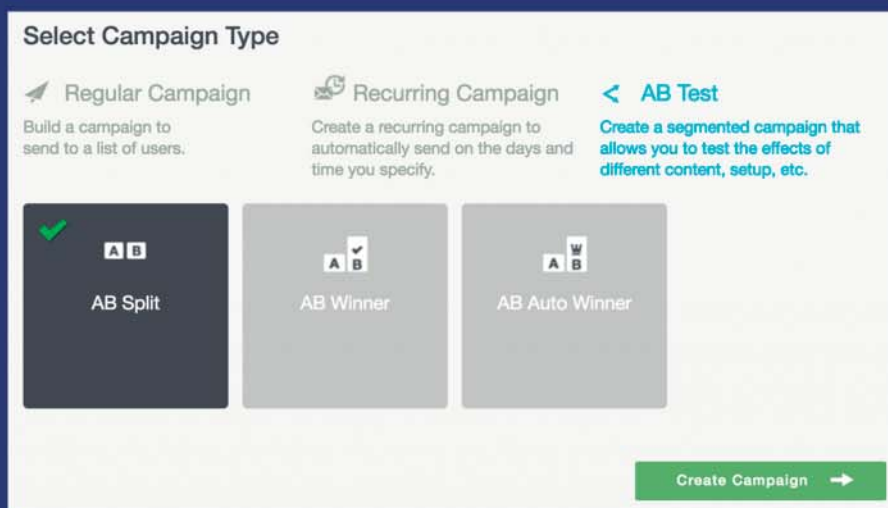
- Notification style



SUBJECT LINE FROM HOTELS.COM 2019

POSSIBLE A/B TESTS

- SL with a customer's name vs without it (personalization)
- SL with a notification sign vs without it
- Emojis vs no emojis
- Offer in SL vs no offer
- Including urgency vs no time frames
- Short SL vs long SL with details



A/B TEST SELECTION PAGE FROM E-MAIL SERVICE PROVIDERSAILTHRU.COM

E-MAIL BODY

•Offer

YOUR FAVES, FOR LESS

SPEND £100 GET £20 OFF	SPEND £200 GET £45 OFF	SPEND £300 GET £75 OFF
---	---	---

OFFER FROM ANTHROPOLOGIE EUROPE 2019

•Great visuals

NISOLO

WOMEN MEN SALE

We're celebrating
FALL'S ARRIVAL
Take 25% off your next purchase

SHOP NOW


Use code FALL25 at checkout



NISOLO NEWSLETTER 2019

AWAY Shop Gifts

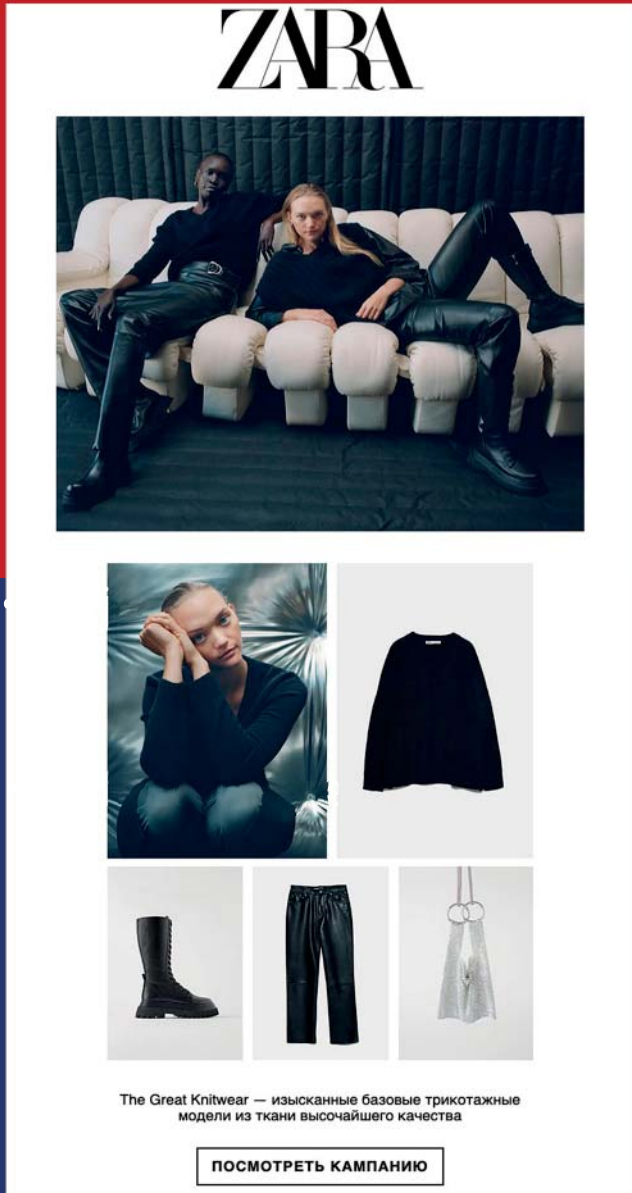
A perfect fit



Away suitcases are designed to make your travels easier, for life. All you have to do is pick the ones that are right for you.

AWAY NEWSLETTER 2019

•Organized layout

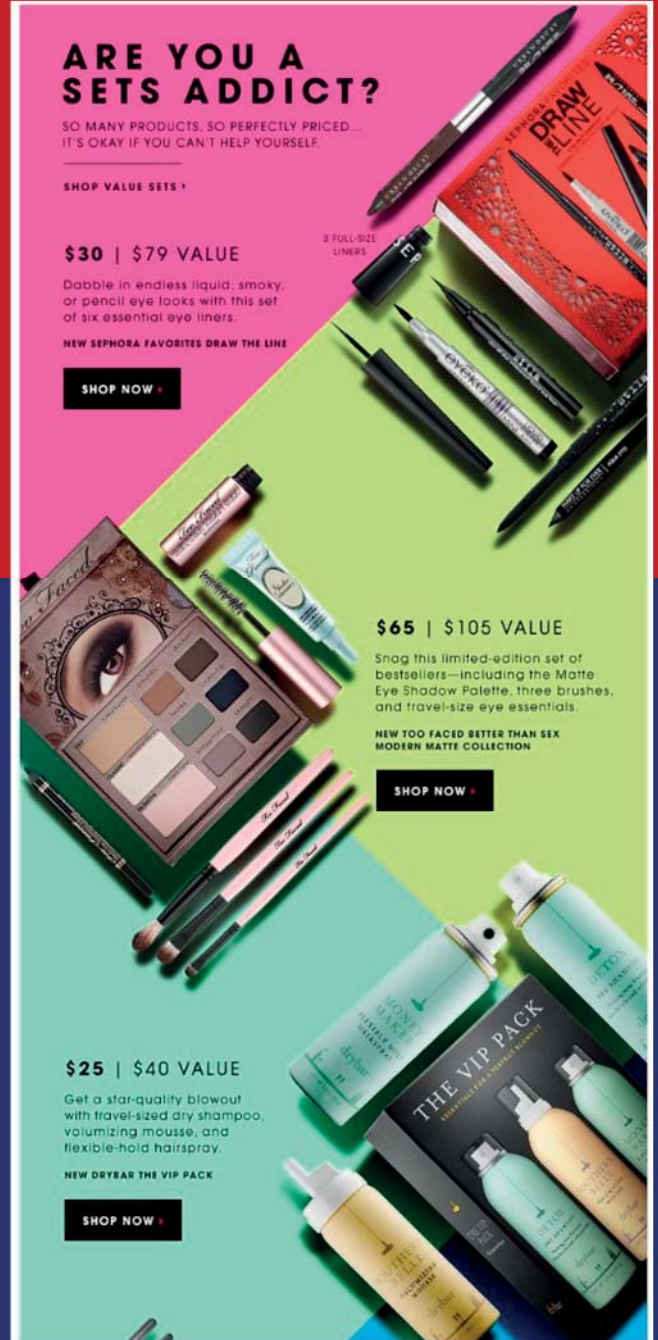


ZARA

The Great Knitwear — изысканные базовые трикотажные модели из ткани высочайшего качества

[ПОСМОТРЕТЬ КАМПАНИЮ](#)

ZARA NEWSLETTER 2019



ARE YOU A SETS ADDICT?
SO MANY PRODUCTS, SO PERFECTLY PRICED... IT'S OKAY IF YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELF.

SHOP VALUE SETS >

\$30 | \$79 VALUE
Dabble in endless liquid, smoky, or pencil eye looks with this set of six essential eye liners.

NEW SEPHORA FAVORITES DRAW THE LINE

[SHOP NOW >](#)

\$65 | \$105 VALUE
Snag this limited-edition set of bestsellers—including the Matte Eye Shadow Palette, three brushes, and travel-size eye essentials.

NEW TOO FACED BETTER THAN SEX MODERN MATTE COLLECTION

[SHOP NOW >](#)

\$25 | \$40 VALUE
Get a star-quality blowout with travel-sized dry shampoo, volumizing mousse, and flexible-hold hairspray.

NEW DRYBAR THE VIP PACK

[SHOP NOW >](#)

SEPHORA NEWSLETTER 2018

•Scarcity effect



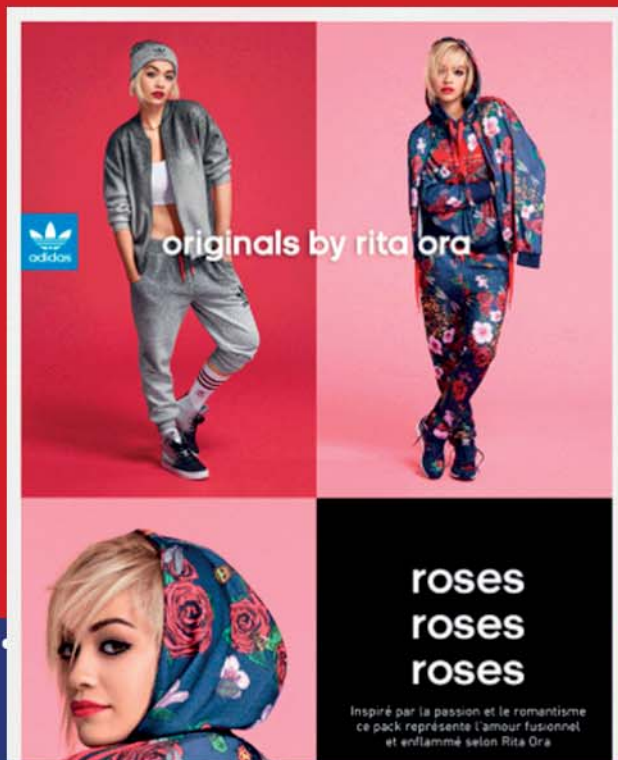
TODAY ONLY!

FREE DELIVERY*

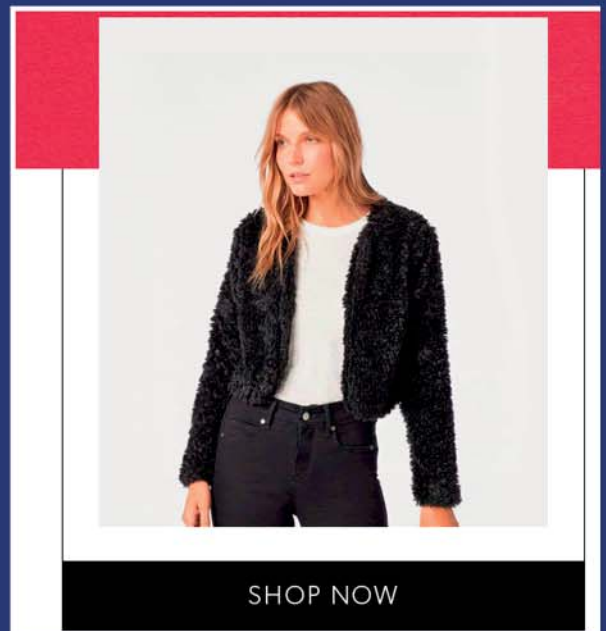
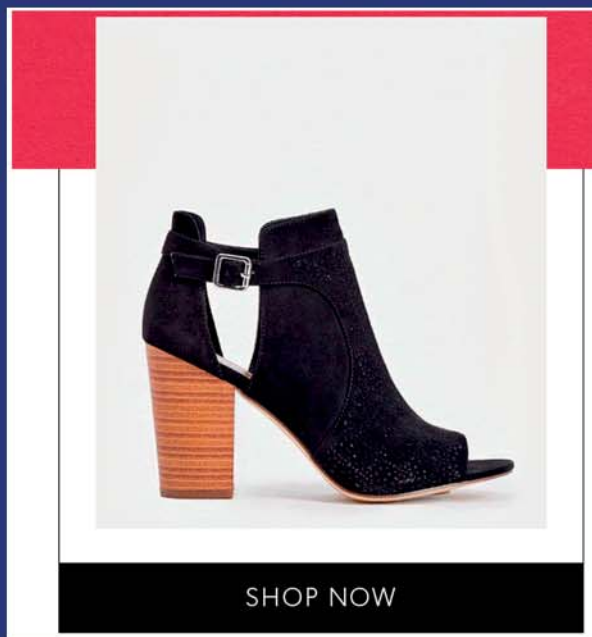
on orders of €21 or more!

FOREVER 21 NEWSLETTER 2018

•Dynamic Content, GIFs



GIF IN ADIDAS NEWSLETTER 2019



GIF IN JUSTFAB NEWSLETTER 2018

POSSIBLE A/B TESTS

- GIF vs static image
- One main image vs product selection
- Offer on banner vs offer on main image
- Links to products vs links to entire collections
- One CTA vs several different CTAs
- Long vs short e-mails
- Text only vs text + visuals (rare cases)

CALL-TO-ACTION (CTA)


- Short, clear, urging to click
- Should be seen on the first 'screen' (it should be seen without scrolling down)

BIRCHBOX ♦

Beauté givrée

En novembre, vos 5 miniatures beauté comptent bien vous réconforter. Attention : sa sélection d'exception peut déclencher de grands frissons.

DÉCOUVRIR LA BOX



Un best-seller Rituals dans toutes les box

JE LA VEUX !

Birchbox c'est toujours...

- 13,90€ livraison comprise
- sans engagement
- 5 miniatures beauté sélectionnées rien que pour vous !


JE LA VEUX

f Instagram

BIRCHBOX NEWSLETTER 2019

See what others are saying about


@nisoloshoes



AMA WOVEN MULE

"They're classic, they go with anything, and they're comfortable."
- Brianna B.


SHOP NOW



ECUADOR HUARACHE SANDAL

"This is my second pair and they are everything I love in a summer sandal. Comfortable, fit great and goes with everything!"
- Kirstin M.

SHOP NOW



@jess.colligan

NISOLO NEWSLETTER 2019

POSSIBLE A/B TESTS

- One CTA vs several different CTAs
- Button design
- Location of CTA
- Size of CTA
- Wording
- Length
- Narrative vs imperative tone

OTHER A/B TESTS

- Day and time of mailing



PHOTO BY ICONS8 TEAM ON UNSPLASH

- Mailings to different segments, various list segmentation
- Offer formulation (percents vs amount)



ANTROPOLOGIE EUROPE NEWSLETTER 2019



ANTROPOLOGIE EUROPE NEWSLETTER 2019

- Sending e-mail from a person vs a company
- Mobile responsive designs
- Header links vs no header links

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

IS A PRIVACY LAW THAT CONTROLS USAGE OF PERSONAL DATA BY COMPANIES IN EU (OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION).

MAIN ACTIONS:

- Getting new permissions from customers, who were opted-in by default with pre-checked boxes of e-mail subscription.
- Removing a pre-tick from subscription forms.
- Rethinking automated e-mails.
- Putting in order opting-out. All clients have a right to stop receiving e-mails and 'a right to be forgotten'.

GDPR SAVED E-MAIL MARKETING BECAUSE:

- It leads to smart segmentation, where quality matters, not the quantity of subscribers.
- Companies were forced to focus more on content they create and make it more personalized, which is always more valued by people.
- Need to develop high-performing e-mail strategies, which only was advantageous to all companies.

SUGGESTIONS AFTER GDPR CHANGES:

1. Examine all e-mail lists and remove subscribers, who were not opted-in willingly.
2. Never buy ready e-mailing lists.
3. Prepare some captivating material, such as guides and catalogues in return to people's e-mail addresses.
4. Implement pop-up windows.
5. Analyze if information that company is asking is practical and useful.
6. Ask customers directly if they want to stay with the company and be subscribed. Sending a clear letter with the exact question helps to determine real clients, who are interested more than others.
7. Put different opt-out options on content, frequency of e-mails, their forms and so on.



PHOTO BY JOSHUA FULLER ON UNSPLASH