



# charity views

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PAGE 2 THE MIGHTY EMAIL

PAGE 3 OPTIMIZE FOR MOBILE

PAGE 5 DIVE DEEPER

PAGE 9 TIPS & TRICKS

PAGE 10 CONTACT IAA





# Nonprofit Marketing & the Mighty Email

▶ *Don't believe the hype. Email is not dead.*

*In fact, it's still a very powerful marketing tool for nonprofit organizations. Email can be an effective way to convey a meaningful targeted message and get your foot in the door. Most of the time, email is reaching out to folks who've already shown at least some interest in your cause, but don't yet have a relationship with you.*

*But for an email to hit its mark, it has to be executed extremely carefully. On the one hand, our increasingly connected world of smartphones and tablets means email is always just a tap away. You'd be hard-pressed to find someone without an email app on their phone.*

*On the other hand, our increasingly connected world means there are far more distractions taking time away from our already busy lives. Email marketing has to pop. It has to sing. It has to grab your readers right at the subject line,*

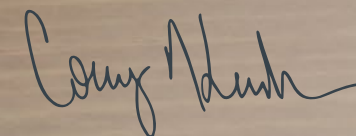
*carry them through to the important message, and compel them to take action. Fail to do that, and it's just another lost opportunity.*

*So what makes a good email? How can nonprofits take their email marketing strategy to the next level and really stand out? This issue of Charity Views discusses how mobile devices are having a major effect on the way consumers interact with email and what nonprofits can do to make sure they're appealing to mobile users' needs.*

*We'll also go behind the scenes of an email campaign and outline some of the more important considerations your nonprofit should have when designing email strategy. There's a great deal to think about when planning your approach, but if you calibrate it just right, your charitable organization stands to benefit considerably from greater donor engagement and a rise in first-time contributors.*

*Regards,*

**COREY KUSABA**  
NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR





# Now's the Time to Optimize

▶ **When it comes to email marketing, nonprofits are doing quite well.** According to the popular email marketing service MailChimp, nonprofit organizations see an open rate of nearly 25%, which is actually pretty good.

That means nonprofits are continuing to find success in engaging their donors and prospects via email. But as mobile technology has evolved, so too has the way in which consumers interact with their emails. A recent study by Litmus Software, Inc. found that 56% of emails are being opened on mobile devices. The key takeaway that any marketer should pull from that statistic is that in order to continue to connect with their target audience through email, they must deliver a remarkable mobile email experience.

But how can nonprofit organizations achieve that? For starters, the email has to be mobile friendly. If it's beautiful on a computer but doesn't work well on a mobile device, you've already lost them. Forcing someone to zoom or scroll sideways is never a good idea. Emails need to be responsive. Approaching design and copy with a mobile-first mentality is becoming imperative.



## the Mobile Email Experience



# Now's the Time to Optimize the Mobile Email Experience

**After you've ensured your email looks great and functions properly on mobile, it's time to get down to the business of words.** Everything starts with the subject line. It has to pique a reader's curiosity, make them want to open the email to find out more. But remember, we're dealing with mobile devices, so the subject line needs to be concise and frontloaded with the most compelling information because they often get cut off when displayed on a phone.

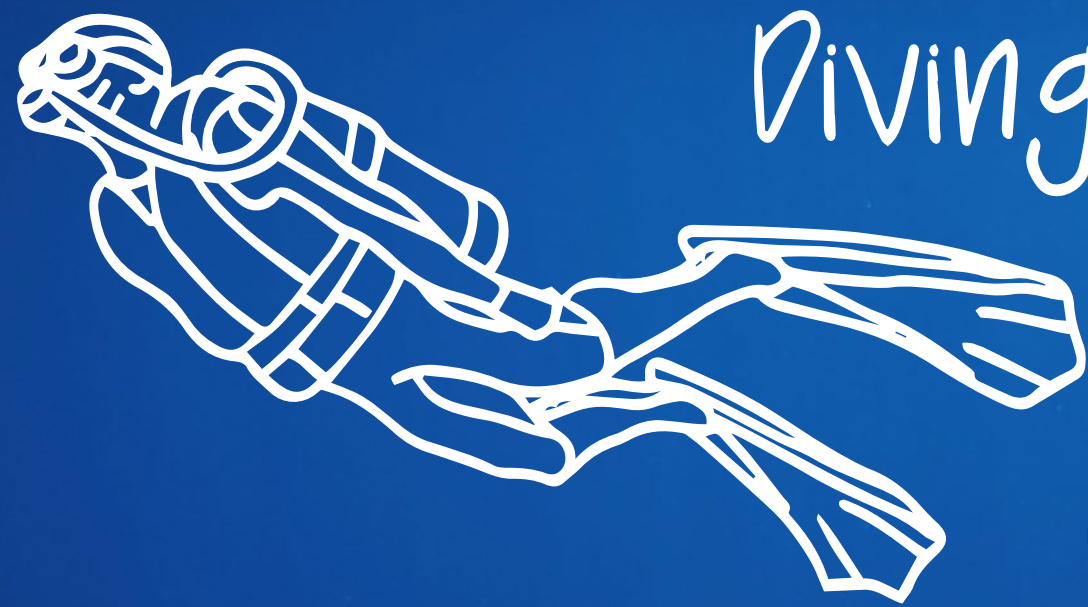
*Once a reader gets inside, it's important to make sure buttons are sized right for fingers, that links drive to mobile-friendly landing pages, and that the message can be quickly read and understood.*

Mobile email marketing works the same way as traditional email marketing. It's just that now is the time to optimize for mobile devices. The trends are clear. It's estimated that by 2020, 6.1 billion people on this planet will have a smartphone. Additionally, email fundraising accounted for 27% of online revenue in 2015, up an astounding 25%. When you do the math, it illustrates a tremendous opportunity to drive even greater proceeds for your charity.

There will be two different kinds of charities going forward: those who embrace mobile technology and succeed by adapting and optimizing their marketing, and those who get passed by. Mobile isn't a fad. Unlike consumers shirking digital music for the warm, full sound of vinyl, you don't have to worry about folks ditching phones for a clunky desktop computer.

So take a moment to assess your email approach early this year. If you find there are some things you could do differently to make for a better mobile experience, go for it. When it comes to expanding your opportunities to collect donations, there's no time like the present. ◀◀





# Diving Into the Deep End



So, you've gone and crafted a great email. Great copy and attention-grabbing design. You've fed it into your email client. But are you ready to hit send?

We all want our emails to catch as many eyes as possible. Unfortunately, we can't just rely on the messaging presented in our emails. There's a multitude of factors behind the scenes that you can utilize to make the most of your email marketing efforts.



Diving Into the Deep End:

# Subject Line

The subject line of your email is what will first catch someone's eye, but it has to compete with all the other subject lines in their inbox, too. And it's certainly important: [33% of email recipients open an email based on its subject line alone.](#)

So even if it seems like a small part of your overall campaign, it deserves some thought. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

**Short and sweet.** Subject lines are often cut off in inboxes – especially on mobile, [where 56% of emails are opened.](#) So keep the important stuff to the front and leave the rest for the email body.

**Ready, set, action.** Subject lines are the first thing that recipients see, but they function much like a CTA. When you prompt your reader to do something...well, they're more likely to do it. This is why subject lines that inspire urgency or excitement tend to do well.

**Watch your words.** According to [MailChimp's study of 24 billion sent emails,](#) using the word "donate" in a subject line has a negative impact on open rates. The words "helping" and "fundraising" perform much better. Definitely something to keep in mind for nonprofits.



Diving Into the Deep End:

# Email List



Unfortunately, not everybody on your list is interested in everything you send them. And that's okay. Instead of having one general list, having multiple lists fine-tuned to that audience's preferences makes a [key difference to your results](#). To really understand who's behind that jumble of letters and numbers at Gmail or Yahoo, you need to do some legwork. Your open rates and lead generation will reflect it.

**Ask the right questions.** You're already asking for their email address. Take it a step further and let them pick the topics they're interested in, provide their industry, and/or whether they'll consider donating or attending events. This type of information is easy to gather through the form your readers see when they sign up for your emails.

**Get in touch.** How about the email addresses you already have? It never hurts to send out a simple email asking recipients about their email preferences. Personalization is a high priority, and many individuals are glad to tailor their options to see the content that's most relevant to them.

**Check it twice.** Once you've gathered the information you need, don't let it stagnate. Circumstances change, jobs change, and people change. Keep a close eye on your metrics. Ask for updates. Always be refining. The more information you gather about your recipients, the more confident you'll be that your emails are reaching the right targets.



Diving Into the Deep End:

# Test, Test, & Test Again



There are all sorts of statistics out there, but the best way to see which emails get the most traction is by testing them out. By singling out individual variables, there's less guesswork involved when an email does particularly well (or not).

**Utilize A/B testing.** Stuck between two subject lines? Don't leave it up to intuition. Sending out each one to a different list of recipients and seeing which one performs better offers a wealth of information. Even testing out whether your audience opens title-case subject lines versus all-lowercase works toward building a knowledge base to draw upon for later emails.

**One variable at a time.** Sending out two completely different emails can leave you guessing why one was more successful than the other. But picking out variable—a subject line, an image, or CTA—to alter gives you something concrete to point to when one email performs better.

**Take action.** Running these types of experiments is always fun, but also let it inform your future promotions. Testing your emails is a quantifiable way to prove their value, and it lets your campaign shine without the being muddled by individual preferences. You'll be confident in the work that you're doing while also driving results for your organization. ◀◀



- Now that you know all about optimizing your nonprofit's email strategy, let's turn things up a notch. Here are some ways you can make your email content more effective.

# TIPS & TRICKS



## GET TO THE POINT

As you now know, it all starts with a short and frontloaded subject line. But the same goes for the body of the email! The first few sentences are everything. Get your point across fast, or you'll lose readers even faster.



## WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Along those same lines, make sure the point of your email is valuable enough to share. And more importantly, stick to just one big idea per email—rather than cramming multiple topics into one muddled message.



## STATEMENTS > QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions aren't nearly as effective as confident statements. If you have information to share about your nonprofit, use it to captivate your readers! No need to ask them what they know/want first.





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