Email Design
Digital Marketing Best Practices

Goal: Improve performance metrics and increase customer engagement with well-designed email messages.

Strategy: Optimize the design of email messages to boost engagement and click-through rates and maximize conversions.

Email marketing is an extremely effective channel, with the ability to reach a large number of customers with highly targeted, personal messages. But even the best campaigns must compete for clicks in crowded customer inboxes. With well-designed messages that attract attention and drive conversions, energy utilities can cut through the clutter to deliver successful results.

Anatomy of an Email Message
Every email message should follow standard formatting conventions, both to meet customers' expectations and to comply with technical and legal regulations (such as CAN-SPAM).

- **Sender Name and Address**: Clearly identify the energy utility or affiliated program.
- **Subject Line**: Relevant, compelling and actionable; 50 to 70 characters.
- **Preheader**: Summary of contents, 35 to 100 characters, that's consistent with the subject line and inspires action.
- **Footer**: Must include a mailing address and prominent unsubscribe link.

From Name	From Address
Subject Line	
Preheader	
Message Body	
Footer	

Make it Easy to Read

Customers open messages using a wide variety of email clients and apps, on a variety of devices, in a variety of situations. In every case your design needs to be clear and legible.

- Always utilize mobile-optimized design. More than 63% of residential customers read emails from their energy utility on smartphones.
- Email attention spans are short. Most customers spend less than 8 second reading an email from their energy utility. Make your point instantly.
- Use web-safe fonts to ensure compatibility; body text should be 14 to 16 points.
- Add alt tags to all images to improve clarity for customers who have images turned off and to ensure compliance for vision-impaired customers.

Eye-Catching Simplicity

Messages need to be attractive, but designs should also be simple and restrained. Complicated color schemes or intricate images won't display well on all email clients and smartphones.

- When using overlapping or adjacent colors allow for enough contrast to be differentiated by the vision-impaired.
- Don't be afraid of white space. An airy design prevents your email from looking crowded and allows customers to distinguish the important elements (such as the CTA).
- Place your logo in the top-left corner, where customers expect to see it. This quickly reassures them that the message is from a company they trust.
- Always use a compelling hero image to attract attention, pique customer interest and help tell your story. All-text messages are easy to dismiss as gray and uninspired.
- Do not embed important text within an image; keep text and visual elements separate. Some email clients do not automatically render images.
- An animated GIF can be more effective than a still image. Keep GIF image sizes small, limiting the number of frames and compressing the file, to reduce email load times.

CTAs that Convert

The goal of your email isn't to be read and enjoyed — it's to drive conversions. Optimize calls-to-action within messages and ensure they lead to specific landing pages where customers can quickly and easily complete a sign-up or purchase.

- Make sure the intention of the CTA is clear and recognizable, such as "buy now" or "get started." Customers should know exactly why they are clicking and where to click.
- The CTA button should stand out from the rest of the email, preferably using a dark color on a light background, and it should be large enough that customers won't miss it.

All results and recommendations based on Questline performance metrics.
For more, see the annual Energy Utility Email Benchmarks Report.