

# BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

## An email checklist for public sector communicators

Email is one of the most-effective communication channels for the public sector to reach, engage, and move audiences to take action. But with high-traffic inboxes, increasing mobility, and shortening attention spans, email has to work even harder to get people to open, read, click, and act. Not to worry. Whether emailing 500 or 500,000 people, this pre-send checklist will help give emails the boost they need to grab audience attention—and keep it.



### The inbox: capture attention, get opens.



#### From name: make it clear who is sending

The “from name” is the display that appears in the audience’s inbox. Let subscribers know the message comes from a trusted source by using the organisation, department, or division name.

#### Email address: be recognisable

Deliverability can hinge upon the sending reputation of an email domain. Make sure the organisation’s digital communications provider uses reputable IP addresses that are only used for sending government information.

#### Subject lines: concise, simple, and descriptive

The subject line makes a big first impression... 64 percent of people will decide if they’ll open the message based on this alone! Limit to 50 characters at eight words or less. Highlight attention-grabbing content, avoid spam trigger words like “FREE,” and test different options!

#### Preheader: succinct and compelling

Many email clients, including Gmail, display a preview text snippet in the inbox. Pulled from the email’s text, the preheader should add context and build on the subject line so audiences are enticed by what’s inside. Aim for 75 characters or less.



### The content, layout, and design: keep it simple, make it visual.



#### Balance headlines and text

In most cases, emails should be quick reads that guide subscribers to an intended action. Balance headlines, subheads, and succinct paragraphs to make for easy reading and clear calls-to-action (CTAs).

#### Put the most-compelling content at the top

The “above the fold” area (the top 2–4 inches or 300–500 pixels of your email) is a great place to spotlight content. Place key messages and primary CTAs here so the audience can take action without scrolling.

### Optimise scannability

Use a vertical, single-column layout and avoid long newsletter formats to keep quick-scrolling audiences engaged.

### Use a reader-friendly width

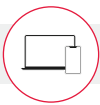
The audience shouldn't have to scroll to the left or right to read messages. Stick to an email width of 500–700 pixels.

### Leverage white space and images

Design elements like white space unclutter messages, while images attract interest and quickly convey subject matter. Use both to complement content and boost engagement.

### Call out clickable elements visually

Clickable elements should be bold and easy to see. Don't crowd clickables. Instead, use arrows, buttons, images, and icons to draw attention and encourage action.



## The experience: optimise across audiences.



### Make emails mobile friendly

An increasing number of people read emails on smartphones. Optimise the mobile experience by using short snippets of text, a mobile-friendly font and size (14 pixels), and easy-to-tap buttons.

### Offer a landing page version

Providing a link to a hosted web version of the email is extremely helpful to anyone who doesn't have images enabled. It offers the audience one more way to view content in an environment that works best for them.

### Test and analyse results

Changes to layout, content, and subject lines can positively impact the number of people who open and act on messages. Testing and data analysis are powerful tools when it comes to identifying what motivates an audience to click.



## The footer: more opportunities to build the audience.



### Include email preference options before the unsubscribe link

Offering email preference options, such as topic-specific unsubscribes and frequency settings, can help you deliver a more relevant email experience to reduce unsubscribes.

### Make content easy to share

Grow an engaged audience by giving subscribers quick and easy ways to share messages on social media. Include links to relevant social accounts and encourage specific actions with words like "tweet," "post," or "share."

For more ways to boost your digital communication success, visit [granicus.uk](https://granicus.uk) or get in touch with us at [info@granicus.com](mailto:info@granicus.com).