Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs:
From Creative Optimization to Authentication and AI

November 2025

202.365.0423
JJ@EmailOpShop.com

*McAfees Knob
Catawba, VA*

Overview

Strategy		Video in Email
Segmentation	Personalization / Customization	Automation
Performance Metrics	Creative Optimization	AI in Email Marketing

Welcome

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Mabry Mill with pond
Blue Ridge Parkway
Virginia

More Effective Email Marketing

EMAIL
Optimization
SHOP
BY JEANNE JENNINGS

➢ Strategic and Tactical Consulting

➢ Fractional Director/VP Role

➢ Workshop Training

➢ *Free Blog and Email Newsletter*

www.EmailOpShop.com

EOS NL MAEM Offer

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Welcome

Doing Email Marketing?

Welcome

| Doing Email Marketing? | Outlook? ESP? | Biggest Challenge? |

Strategy

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Farmington on the Green
Purcellville, VA

Strategy

? A plan, not just a calendar

+ Keeps you focused on business goals

Strategy

Start here: **Simple Plan**

- Define your goal(s)
- Know your audience(s)
- Choose your email types
- Create a simple cadence
- Track a few key metrics

Arthur Bryant's BBQ: Email Strategy Plan

1. Goal(s)

- **Primary:** Drive direct **sales of the BBQ Sampler for 8** via Goldbelly
- **Secondary:** Encourage first-time buyers to become repeat customers

2. Audience(s)

Segment	Description	Messaging Focus
Food Lovers / BBQ Enthusiasts	Ages 25–55, nationwide, can't access KC BBQ locally	"Get the real deal, legendary BBQ without the airfare"
Holiday Entertainers	Hosting friends/family at home	"Feed your crew without the stress, just heat & eat"
Corporate / Office Planners	Buying food for team events or gifting clients	"Office holiday party solved. Legendary. Easy. Delicious."

3. Email Types

- **Welcome / onboarding flow** for new subscribers
- **Promotional / offer emails** highlighting key benefits, urgency (e.g. "Order by Dec 18 for delivery by Christmas")
- **Newsletter** to keep the brand top-of-mind, provide value without a purchase
- **Abandoned browse/cart follow-up** (if possible via Goldbelly pixel or segmenting)
- **Post-purchase Follow-up** to confirm they had a good experience, gather testimonials and referrals, encourage repeat orders

Strategy

Start here: **Simple Plan**

- Define your goal(s)
- Know your audience(s)
- Choose your email types
- Create a simple cadence
- Track a few key metrics

4. Create a Simple Cadence

Email Type	Frequency / Timing	Purpose
Welcome Series	3-email series triggered on new signup	Introduce the brand, tell the Arthur Bryant's story, share a testimonial (Ted Lasso, anyone?), and close with a first-time buyer incentive.
Promotional Campaign Emails	Once per month (plus 1–2 bonus sends around key holidays)	Highlight seasonal offers, time-limited promotions, and specialty bundles (e.g. "Game Day Grub," "Father's Day Feast," "Labor Day Cookout Kit"). Drives urgency and sales.
Monthly Newsletter	Once per month	Tell the story of the brand, share behind-the-scenes content, tips for heating/serving BBQ, spotlight happy customers, and announce any new product drops or sauce flavors.
Abandoned Cart Flow	Triggered within 1–6 hours of cart abandonment	Stronger follow-up: "Don't leave the BBQ behind." Optionally include incentive (free shipping, bonus item) to complete purchase.

5. Track a Few Key Metrics

- **Business Metrics**
  - **Conversion Rate**— from email send quantity to Goldbelly order completion page
  - **Revenue-per-email** — Goldbelly affiliate tracking or UTM-based attribution
  - **Repeat-order-intent** — tracked via post-purchase surveys or follow-up email engagement
- **Diagnostic Metrics**
  - **Open Rate** – directional measure of inbox appeal
  - **Click-through Rate (CTR)** — gauge interest in key benefits/offers
  - **Unsubscribe Rate** – negative signal on frequency and/or content
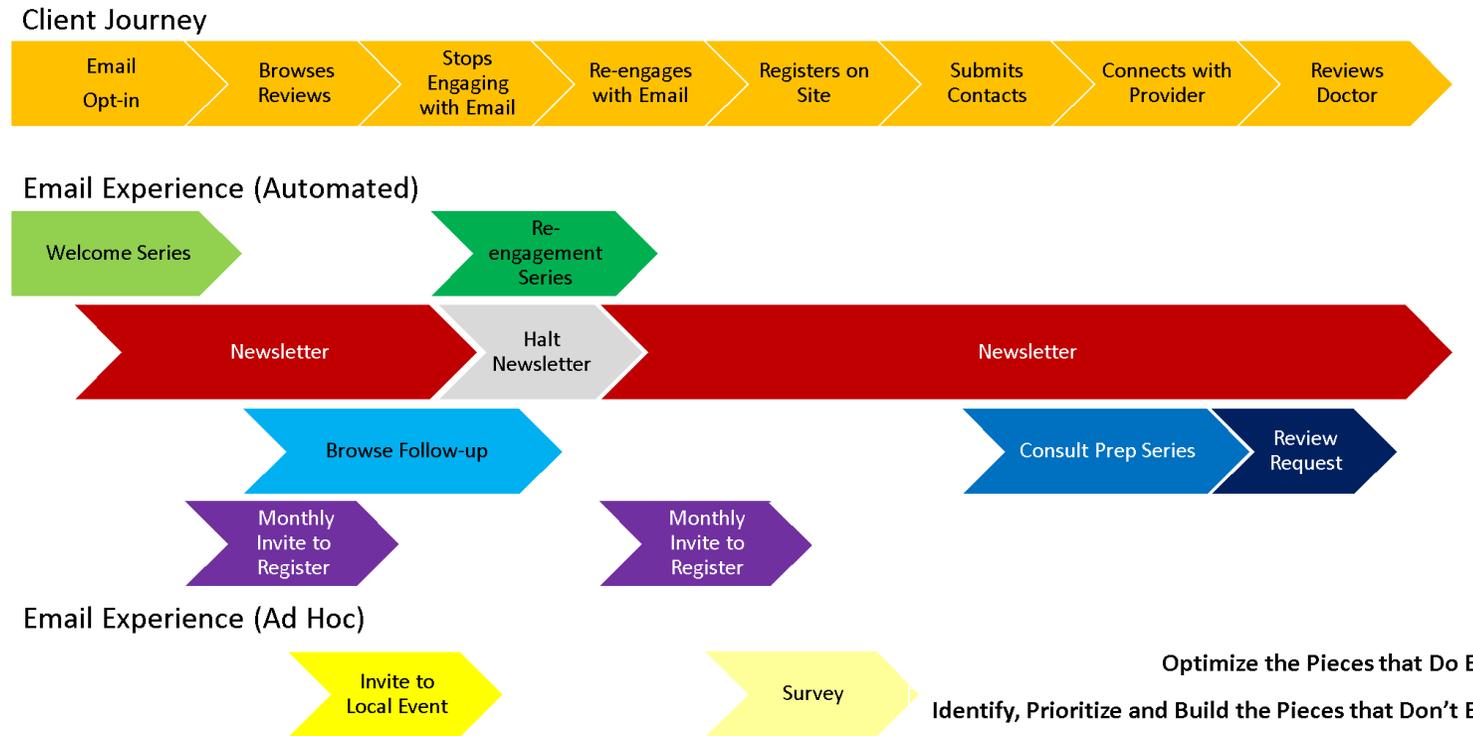 - **Spam Complaint Rate** – negative signal on frequency and/or content

Strategy

Advanced: **Next-Level Campaigns**

- Align Email to the Customer Journey
- Enhance Automation
- Do A/B Split Testing

Client Journey and Email Experience (Just the Beginning)

Client Journey

| Email Opt-in | Browses Reviews | Stops Engaging with Email | Re-engages with Email | Registers on Site | Submits Contacts | Connects with Provider | Reviews Doctor |

Email Experience (Automated)

- Welcome Series
- Re-engagement Series
- Newsletter
- Halt Newsletter
- Newsletter
- Browse Follow-up
- Consult Prep Series
- Review Request
- Monthly Invite to Register
- Monthly Invite to Register

Email Experience (Ad Hoc)

- Invite to Local Event
- Survey

Optimize the Pieces that Do Exist

Identify, Prioritize and Build the Pieces that Don't Exist

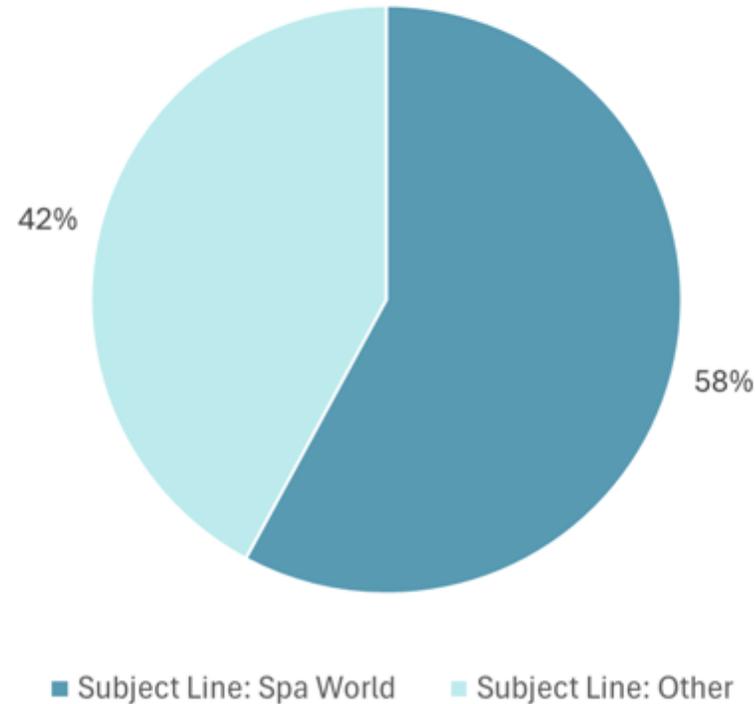Continue to Test and Optimize on an Ongoing Basis

Strategy

1 Month | **133** Email Messages

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Planning Emails in isolation

- Confusing frequency with effectiveness

- No strategic messaging hierarchy

Subject Line Themes
Emails Received from Groupon, July 2025

42%

58%

■ Subject Line: Spa World ■ Subject Line: Other

Groupon
Indulge in Total Relaxation at Spa World - Your O...   7/6/2025
<https://groupon.com/analytic/track.gif?p=1&ut...

Beauty Bliss
Indulge in Total Relaxation at Spa World - Your O...   7/6/2025
<https://groupon.com/analytic/track.gif?p=1&ut...

Groupon
Indulge in Total Relaxation at Spa World - Your O...   7/6/2025
<https://groupon.com/analytic/track.gif?p=1&ut...

Groupon Washington DC
Indulge in Total Relaxation at Spa World - Your O...   7/6/2025
<https://groupon.com/analytic/track.gif?p=1&ut...

Beauty Bliss
Indulge in Total Relaxation at Spa World - Your O...   7/5/2025
<https://groupon.com/analytic/track.gif?p=1&ut...

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Source: When a Brand Mistakes Email Frequency For Strategy, Jeanne Jennings, Email Optimization Shop blog

Video in Email

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Roanoke, VA

Video in Email

? Video within (or sort of within) an email

\+ Boosts engagement, good for storytelling

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Video in Email

Start here:
Low-Lift Use Cases

- Customer testimonials
- Welcome messages
- "Top 3 Things..." roundups

Video
in Email

Advanced:
Power Uses

- Video that plays in the email

- Segment and target videos

- Dynamic personalization

Source: Eyemail.com
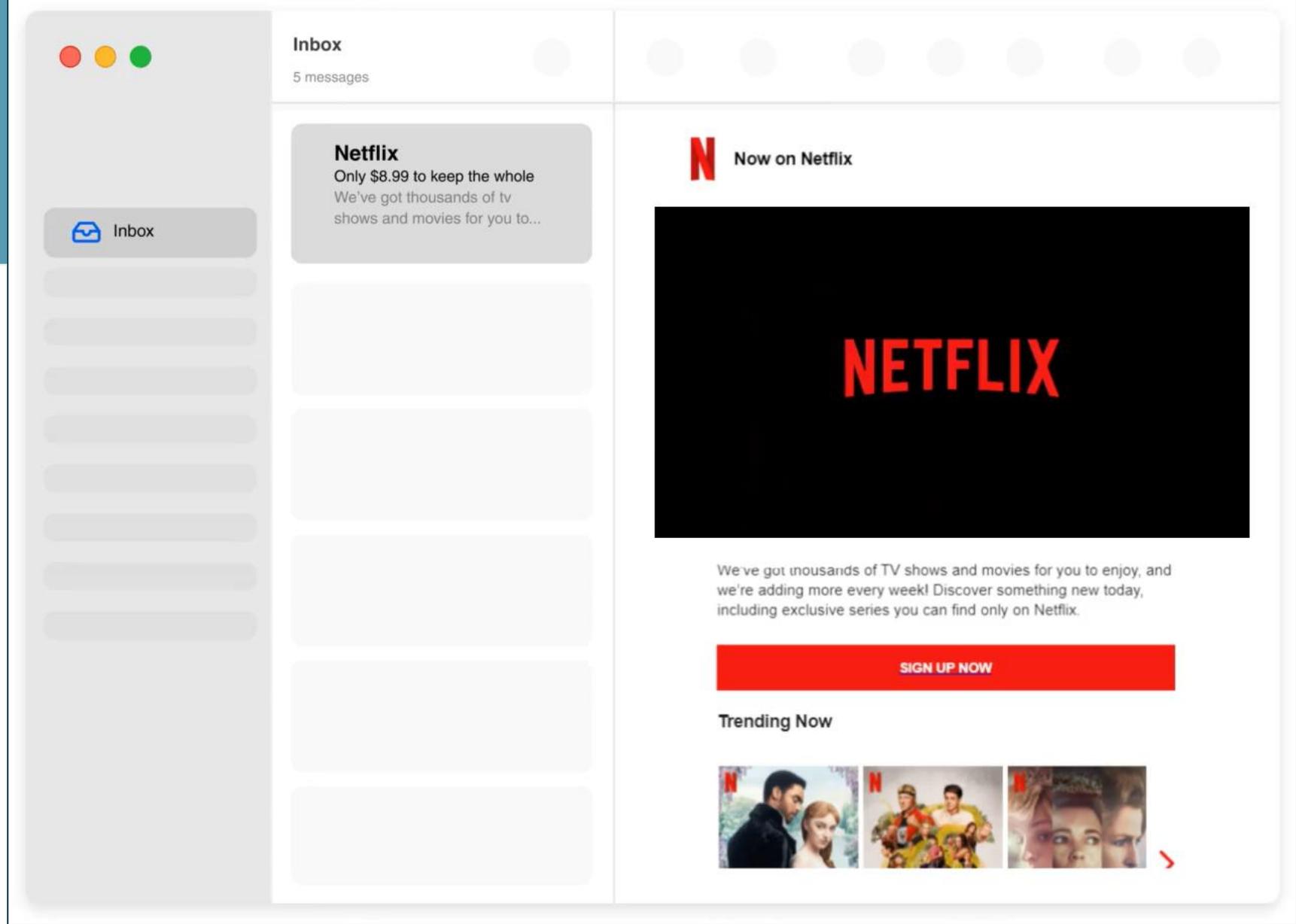
Video in Email

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Using video with CTA ONLY at the end – or no CTA at all

- Poor mobile experience

- Generic content that's not worth the click

Segmentation

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Virginia Beach, VA
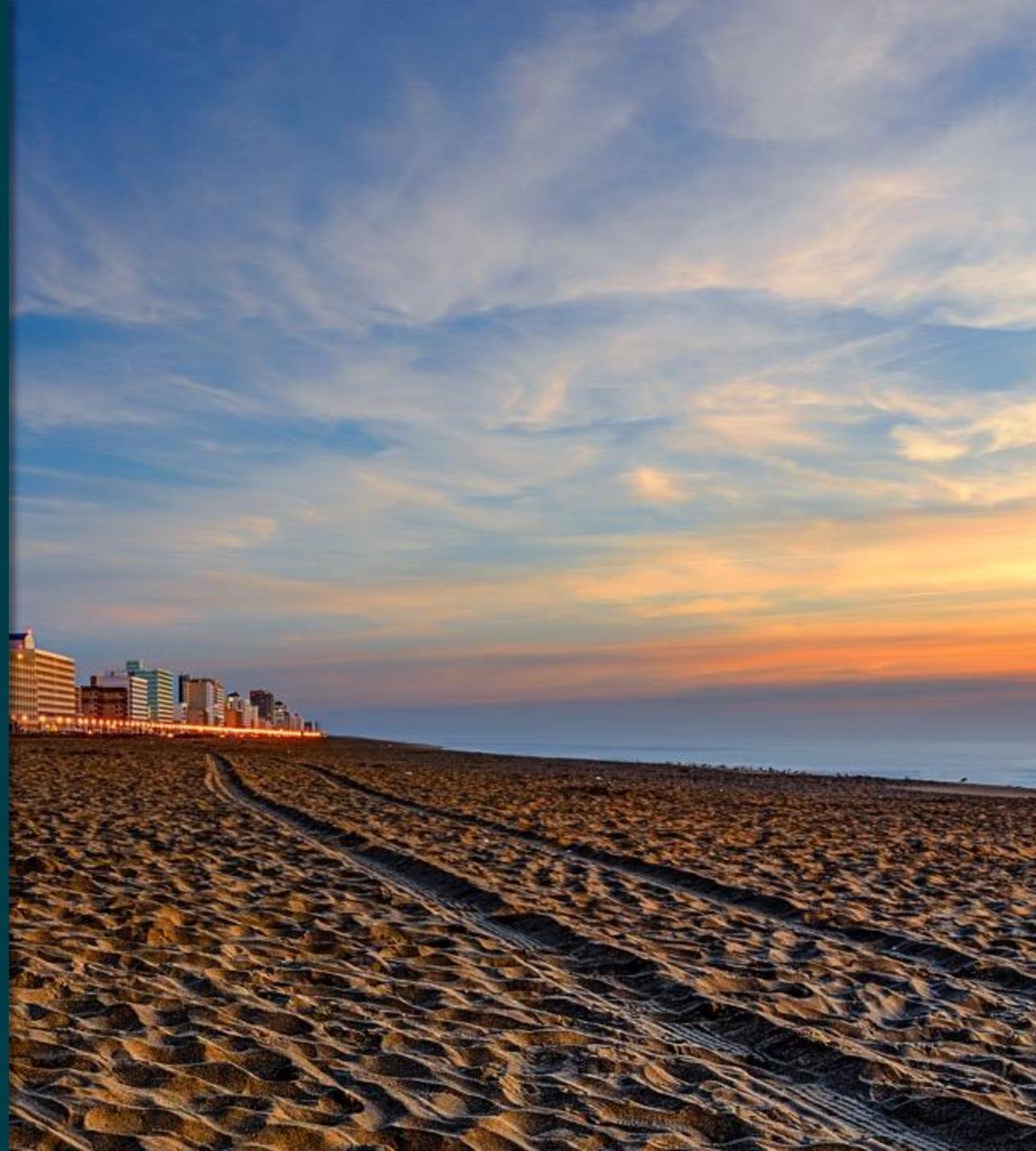
Segmentation

? Breaking your list into groups to target content

+ Increased relevance and engagement

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Segmentation

Start here: **Behavior-based**

- **Engaged:** Clicked recently

- **Unengaged**: Have not clicked recently

- **Dormant**: Have not clicked in a long time

August 26, 2025

👋 Is it time to say Goodbye to All About Email?

I haven't heard from you in a bit. Do you still want to receive All About Email?

Simon Harper

Hey Jeanne.

I've noticed you've been a bit quiet lately, and honestly, I miss having you around.

I've shared some amazing stuff recently, and I'd hate for you to miss out.

Click below to confirm you'd like to keep receiving updates from All About Email.

Keep Me Subscribed

Segmentation

Advanced:

- Start with one segmentation strategy
- Target content based on data
- Test against non-segmented to confirm efficacy

Behavioral Data	Declared Data	Inferred Data
Lookalike and Modeled Data	Operational or Internal Flags	

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Segmentation

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Mistakes to Avoid:

- Over-segmenting
- Pretend Segmentation
- Never updating your segments

Still Feeling the Pain of the Attack on Change Healthcare?

Dear ,

The ransomware attack on Change Healthcare sent shockwaves through the healthcare industry. Even months later, many providers are still grappling with the aftermath.

PRN Funding has helped numerous people in the last 6 months bridge cash flow gaps and invest in growth by **providing one-time, short-term, cash infusions.**

Our Short-Term Financing Options Offer:

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Personalization / Customization

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Personalization / Customization

(?) Tailoring content specifically to a person or group

(+) More relevance = more engagement

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Personalization / Customization

Start here: **First name**

- If you don't have it, start asking
- You need data to personalize or customize your email

Personalization / Customization

Advanced:

- Start with one personalization or customization strategy

- Use dynamic content to implement

- Test against non-personalized / customized to confirm efficacy

Reported	Observed
Appended	Extrapolated

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Personalization / Customization

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Fake Customization
- Name Failures
- Over-personalizing (Creepy)

2021

365 days add up to a lot of little things

365 days add up to a lot things

opportunity to serve you in
e you enjoy these highlights
as much as we do.

You **loved spice and everything nice** in 2021

Looks like your go-to was our Spicy Chicken Sandwich.

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Automation

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Petersburg, VA

Automation

?

Email Sends Triggered by an Event

+

More relevance
=
more engagement

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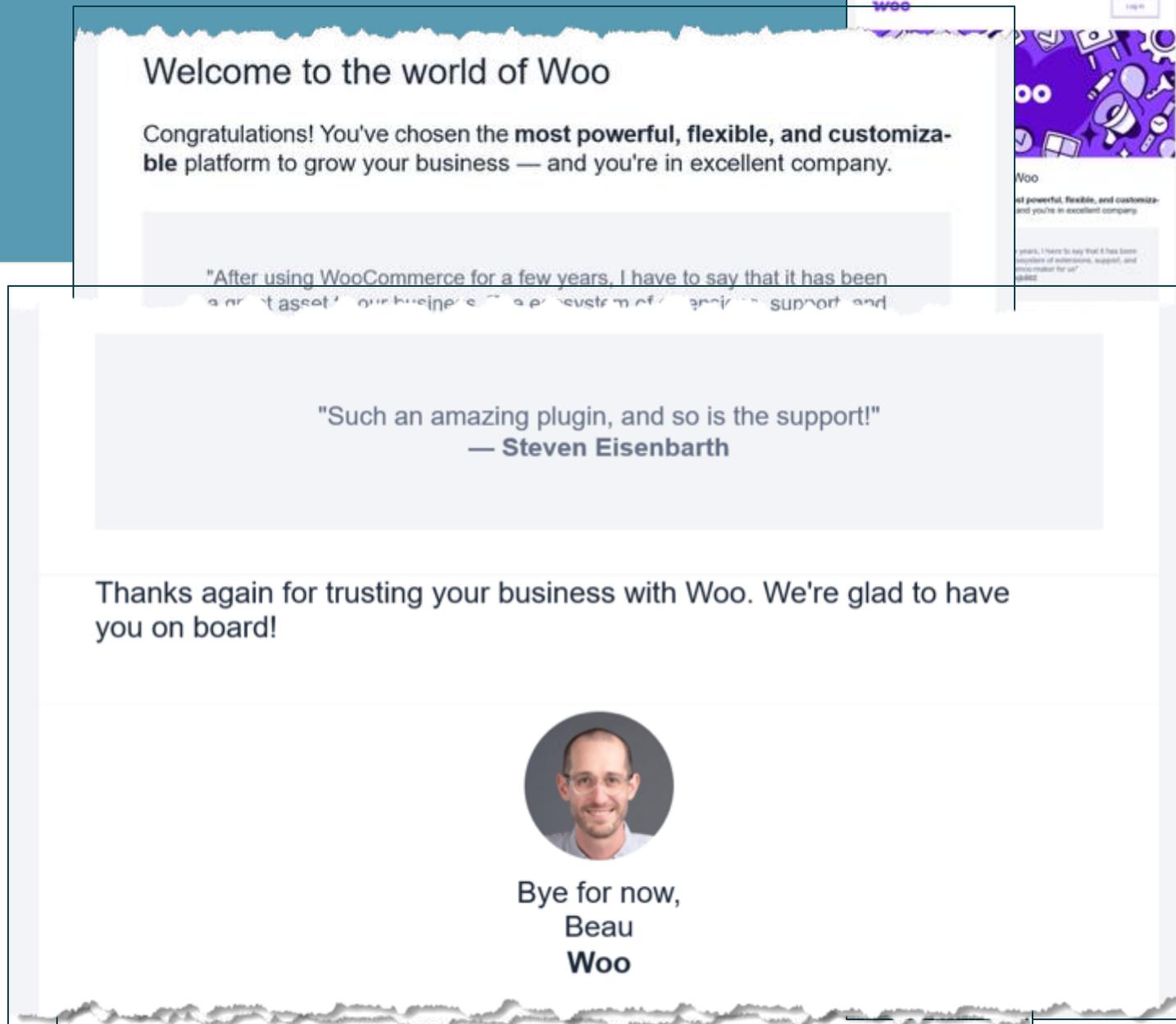
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Automation

Start here: **Welcome Email**

- Success is about the content, not the automation

- Get the relationship off on the right foot

Welcome to the world of Woo

Congratulations! You've chosen the **most powerful, flexible, and customizable** platform to grow your business — and you're in excellent company.

"After using WooCommerce for a few years, I have to say that it has been a great asset...

"Such an amazing plugin, and so is the support!"
— Steven Eisenbarth

Thanks again for trusting your business with Woo. We're glad to have you on board!

Bye for now,
Beau
Woo

Source: Proven Case Study: Why Welcome Emails Outperform and Convert Better, Jeanne Jennings, Email Optimization Shop blog
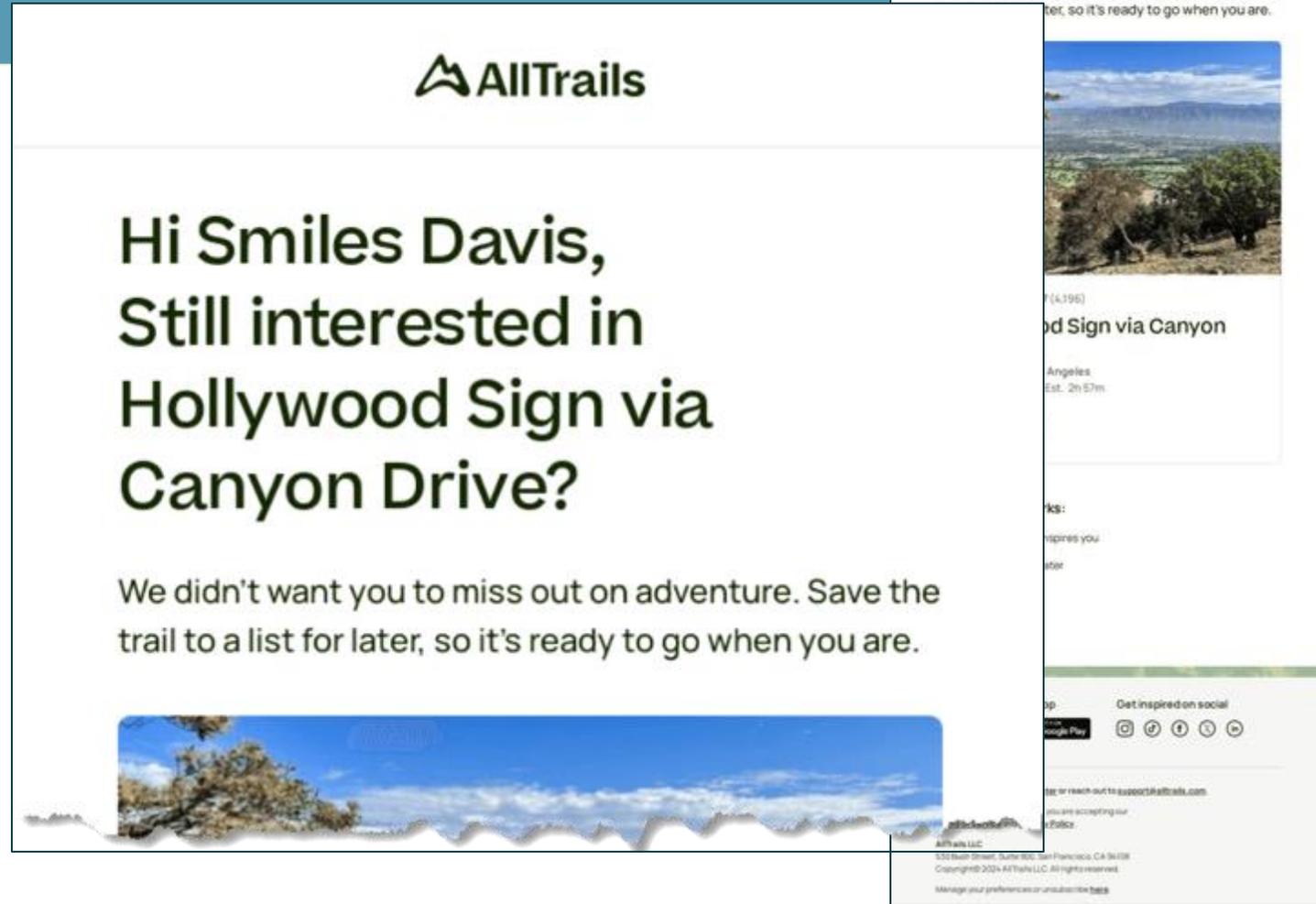
Automation

Advanced: **Browse Abandon**

- Requires integration with your website and cookies

Automation

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Overloading subscribers
- Never updating content
- Not taking other sends into account

Days from Free Sign-up	Online Library Upsell Campaign	
	Effort #	Key Message / Offer
0	1	Welcome with username and password, request for email confirmation
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6 (Holiday)		
7		
8		
9		
9		
10		
11	2	Upsell offer, 64% off
12 (Holiday)		
13		
14		

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Automation

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Overloading subscribers
- Never updating content
- Not taking other sends into account

Days from Free Sign-up	Online Library Upsell Campaign		Other Message From The Brand
	Effort #	Key Message / Offer	Key Message/Offer
0	1	Welcome with username and password, request for email confirmation	
1			Free Online Library 1-year subscription with purchase of <other product>
2			Email #1: 50% off online library
2			Email #2: Free Live Event (22 days from now)
3			
4			
5			
6 (Holiday)			
7			Email #1: 50% off online library
7			Email #2: Free Live Event (17 days from now)
8			Free Live Event (16 days from now)
9			50% off online library
9			50% off online library ending soon
10			
11	2	Upsell offer, 64% off	
12 (Holiday)			
13			Free Live Event (9 days from now)
14			

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Performance Metrics

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

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Norfolk, VA

Performance Metrics

? Measure success of your email program

+ Learn what works and what doesn't

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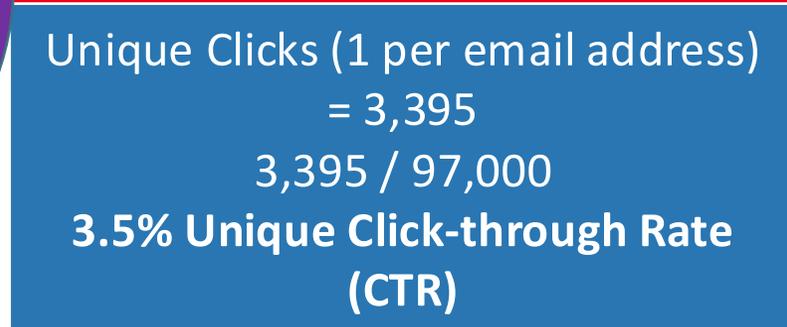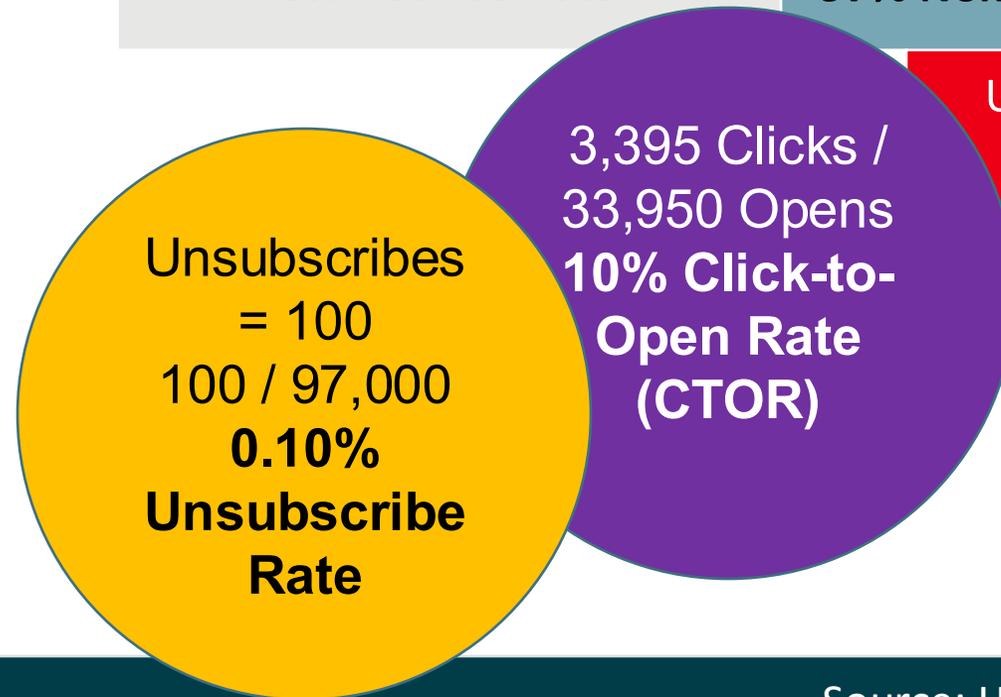
Performance Metrics

Start here:
Diagnostic Metrics

Show you how recipients engaged (or didn't) with your email

Quantity Sent = 100,000	
Bounces (Not Delivered) = 3,000 3,000 / 100,000 **3% Bounce Rate**	Assumed Delivered (Accepted) = 97,000 97,000 / 100,000 **97% Non-Bounce or Assumed Delivered Rate**

Unique Opens (1 per email address)
= 33,950
33,950 / 97,000
35% Unique Open Rate

Unique Clicks (1 per email address)
= 3,395
3,395 / 97,000
3.5% Unique Click-through Rate (CTR)

3,395 Clicks / 33,950 Opens
10% Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR)

Unsubscribes
= 100
100 / 97,000
0.10% Unsubscribe Rate

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Performance Metrics

Advanced: **Business Metrics**

- Measure the bottom-line impact of your campaigns
- Your KPI should always be a business, not a diagnostic, metric

Conversions = 1,455
1,455 / 97,000
1.5% Conversion Rate

Revenue = $100,000

Total Cost of Sales = $50,000
($100,000 / $50,000) - 1
100% Return on Investment (ROI)

Total Cost of Ad Spend = $25,000
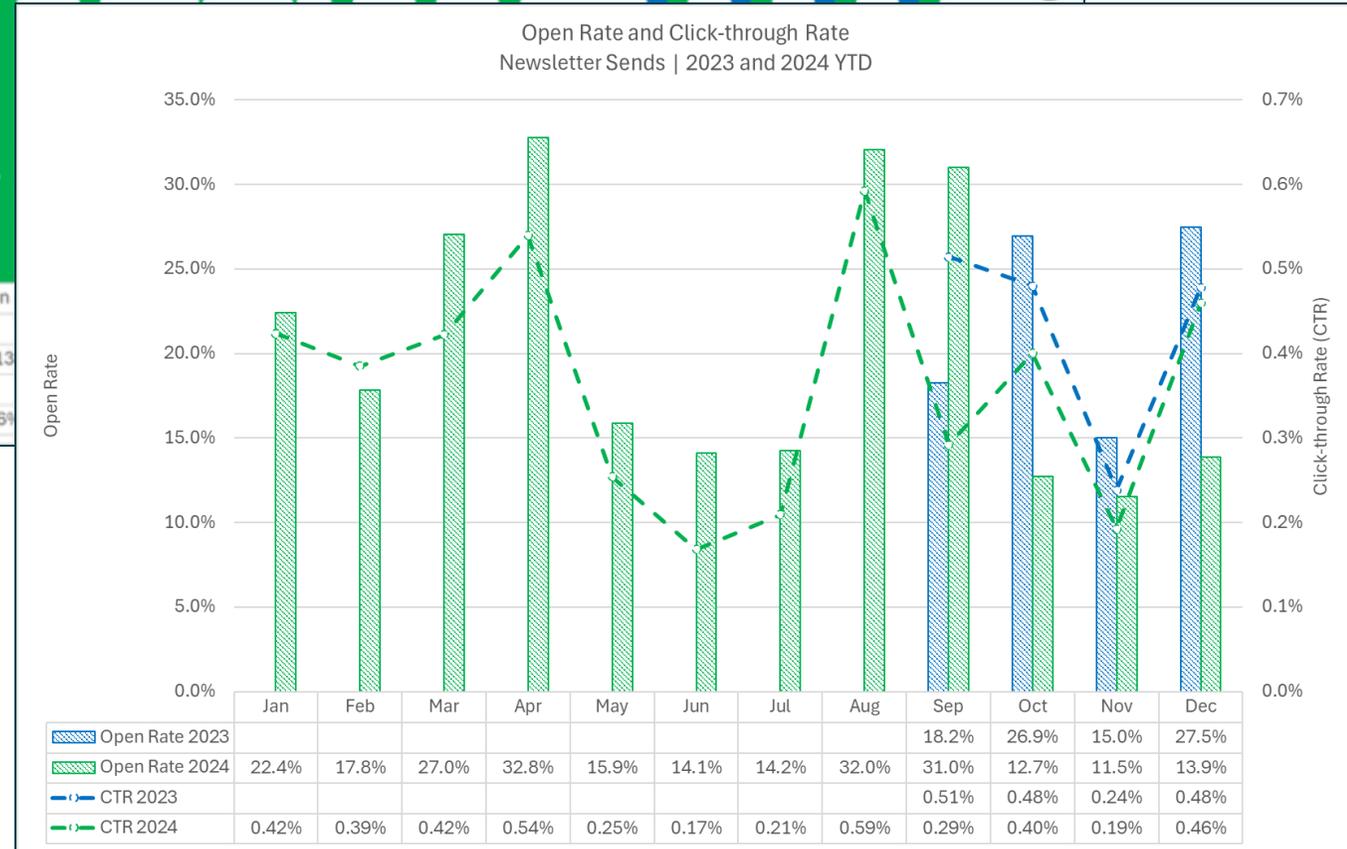($100,000 / $25,000) – 1
300% Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)

Total Quantity of Email Sent = 100,000
$100,000 / 100,000
$1.00 Revenue per Email (RPE)

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Performance Metrics

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Obsessing over open rate

- Ignoring segment-specific performance

- Not tying email to business impact

Send Quantity and Conversion Rate (Leads)
Newsletter Sends | 2023 and 2024 YTD

	Jan
Send Q 2023	
Send Q 2024	14,13
CR (Leads) 2023	
CR (Leads) 2024	0.36%

Open Rate and Click-through Rate
Newsletter Sends | 2023 and 2024 YTD

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open Rate 2023									18.2%	26.9%	15.0%	27.5%
Open Rate 2024	22.4%	17.8%	27.0%	32.8%	15.9%	14.1%	14.2%	32.0%	31.0%	12.7%	11.5%	13.9%
CTR 2023									0.51%	0.48%	0.24%	0.48%
CTR 2024	0.42%	0.39%	0.42%	0.54%	0.25%	0.17%	0.21%	0.59%	0.29%	0.40%	0.19%	0.46%

Source: How to Calculate Email Marketing Metrics, Jeanne Jennings, Email Optimization Shop blog

Creative Optimization

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Railroad Bridge on the James River
Richmond, VA

Creative Optimization

? Designing your emails to drive action

+ Presents your message clearly

Creative Optimization

Start here: **Core Best Practices**
1. Good color contrast
2. Logical hierarchy and eye path
3. Buttons instead of links
4. White space
5. Image optimization
6. Responsive design
7. Effective inbox view

Inbox View Elements	Not so Good	Better
Friendly From Address	Do-not-reply@washingtonian.com	Newsletter, Washingtonian
Subject Line	June 2025 Newsletter	Best Cheap Eats, Top Home Sales, and more…
Preheader Text	<https:www.mysite.com/images/logo for…	DC Theatre Week, Shutdown Specials, and more

Creative Optimization

	Subject Line
Control	12 Days of Christmas Day 9 – 20% Off Every Order!
Test	20% Off Every Order – 12 Days of Christmas Day 9!

Advanced: **Next-level Tweaks**

1. Dynamic / conditional blocks
2. Micro-animations / subtle motion
3. Visual consistency across flow
4. Module design systems / template blocks
5. Design for dark mode / accessibility
6. Do A/B split tests on 'design performance'
7. Design for 'preheader bleed' and preview text

Revenue-per-thousand-emails-sent (RPME) Subject Line Test

14.4% Lift in RPME

	Control	Test
RPME	$21.84	$24.99
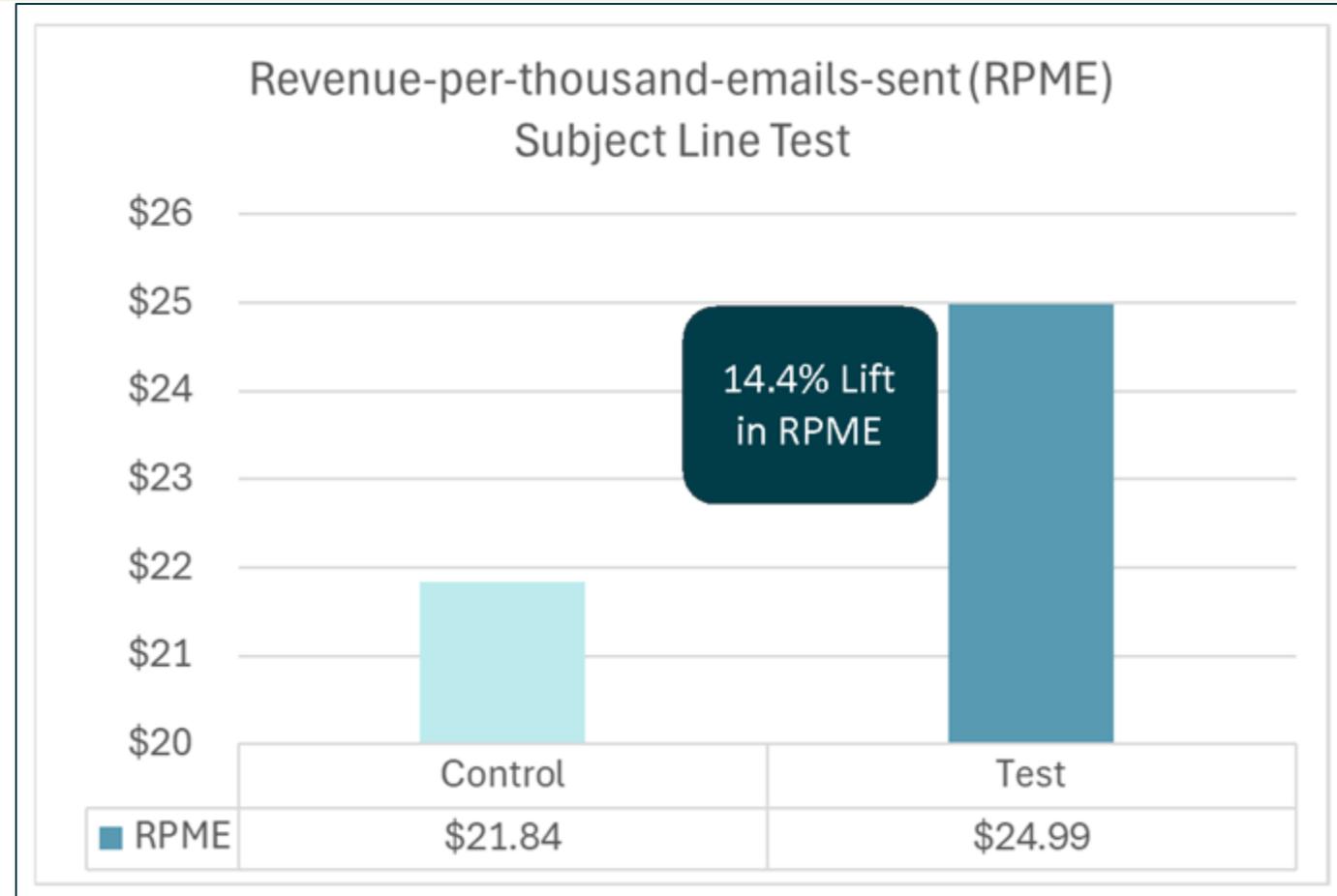
Creative Optimization

⚠️

Mistakes to Avoid:

- All-image emails

- Tiny buttons

- Broken layouts due to rendering issues

- Design that distracts instead of supports

Source: How to Calculate Email Marketing Metrics, Jeanne Jennings, Email Optimization Shop blog
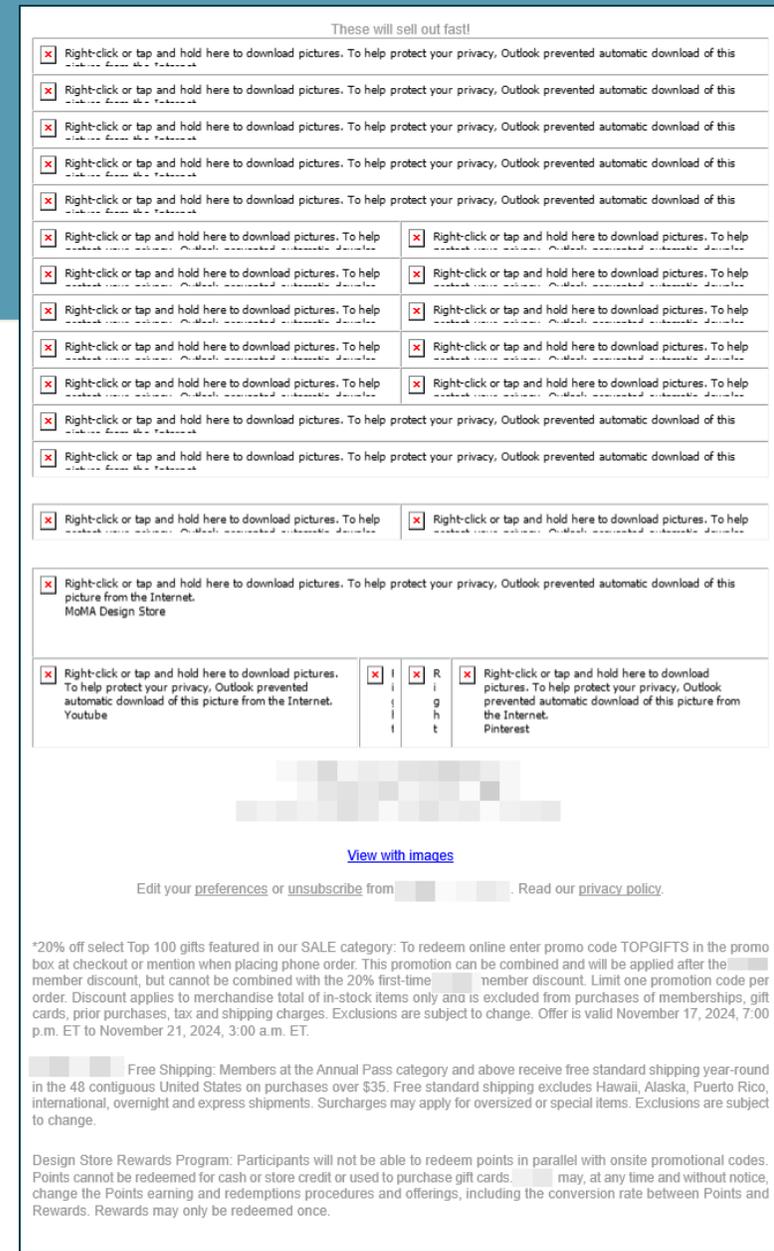
AI in Email Marketing

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs

Market Square and City Hall
Old Town Alexandria, VA

AI in Email Marketing

?

Not just copywriting…

- Research
- Ideation
- Repetitive Tasks

- Categorization
- Optimization
- And more

+

Saves time without jeopardizing quality (when done correctly)

AI in Email Marketing

Start here: **Basic Use Cases**

1. Content curation / newsletter research

2. Drafting structural frameworks, brief, outlines

3. Organizing open-ended responses / survey data

Newsletter Curator ⌄

Newsletter Content Brief
Google Docs

Hi! Can you help find some content for a client newsletter -- here's
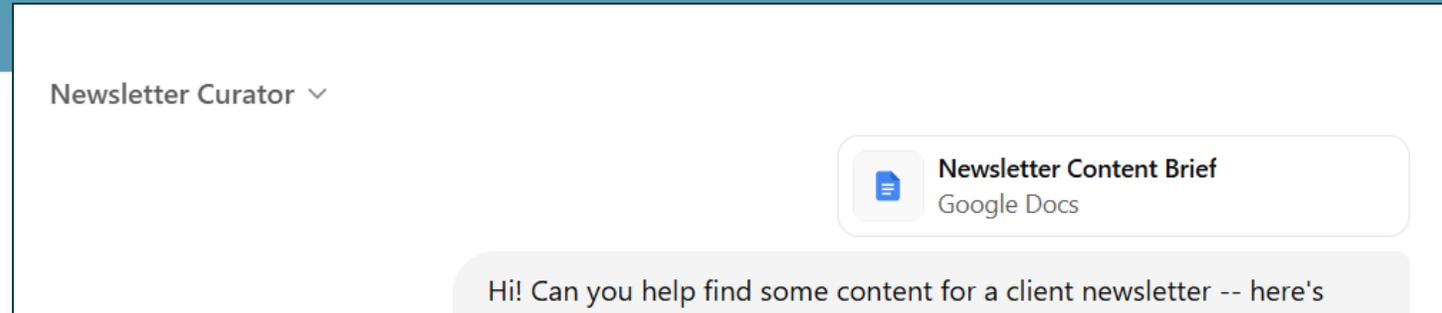
Audience	Title	Author	Publication	Publication Date	URL	Summary	Newsletter Blurb
General	Scenario Planning is Getting a Stress Test		Financial Times	12-May-2025	https://www.ft.com/content/70879a6e-8ce7-4bfe-bd61-22b46c909260	Discusses how traditional scenario planning is evolving amid unprecedented uncertainties like AI disruption and geopolitical tensions, emphasizing the need for micro-scenario planning and stress-testing individual assumptions.	Explore why traditional business planning may not be enough in 2025 — and what smarter companies are doing to prepare for multiple financial futures.
General	How to Retire When You Own a Business		Investopedia	9-May-2025	https://www.investopedia.com/how-to-retire-when-you-own-a-business-11714013	Offers guidance for business owners on retirement planning, including setting clear goals, saving outside the business, and developing a well-structured exit strategy.	Thinking long term? Learn smart steps business owners can take today to plan for a successful and stress-free retirement.
General	Tariffs Are Starting to Raise Prices. More Increases Could Come in Waves.	Barron's Staff	Barron's	May 8, 2025	https://www.barrons.com/advisor/articles/tariffs-consumer-price-increase-35dd40e5	Explores how recent tariffs are beginning to impact consumer prices and the potential for further increases.	Learn about the ripple effects of tariffs on pricing and how to prepare your business for potential cost escalations.
General	I'm a Financial Advisor — Here's the Biggest Factor That Can Make or Break Your Retirement		Business Insider	7-May-2025	https://www.businessinsider.com/retirement-planning-financial-advisor-grow-wealth-hustle-saving-inflation-2025-5	Highlights the importance of having a clear sense of purpose and structured activities post-career for a successful retirement, beyond just financial planning.	It's not just about saving money. Discover the surprising factor that plays a huge role in retirement success — especially for entrepreneurs.
General	Why Cash Flow Management Is Critical for SMBs in 2025		LinkedIn	6-May-2025	https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-cash-flow-management-critical-smbs-2025-what-you-can-mosenson-xrmde/	Emphasizes the importance of cash flow management for small and medium-sized businesses in 2025, highlighting its role in maintaining operations and financial health.	Cash flow isn't just a finance problem — it's the lifeline of your business. Learn why managing it well is more critical than ever.

Source: AI for Marketing: New Use Case #3 – Identify Great Newsletter Content in Less Time, Jeanne Jennings, Email Optimization Shop blog

Smarter Email Marketing for DMOs:
From Creative Optimization to Authentication and AI
November 2025

202.365.0423
JJ@EmailOpShop.com

Coastal Salt Marsh
Virginia

Thanks for joining us! Questions?