HubSpot

100 EMAIL SUBJECT

LINES WE ACTUALLY
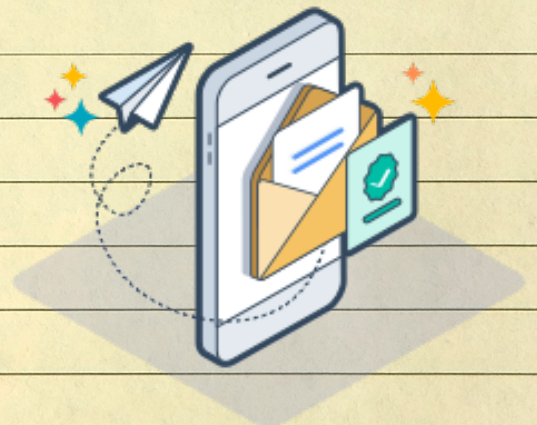
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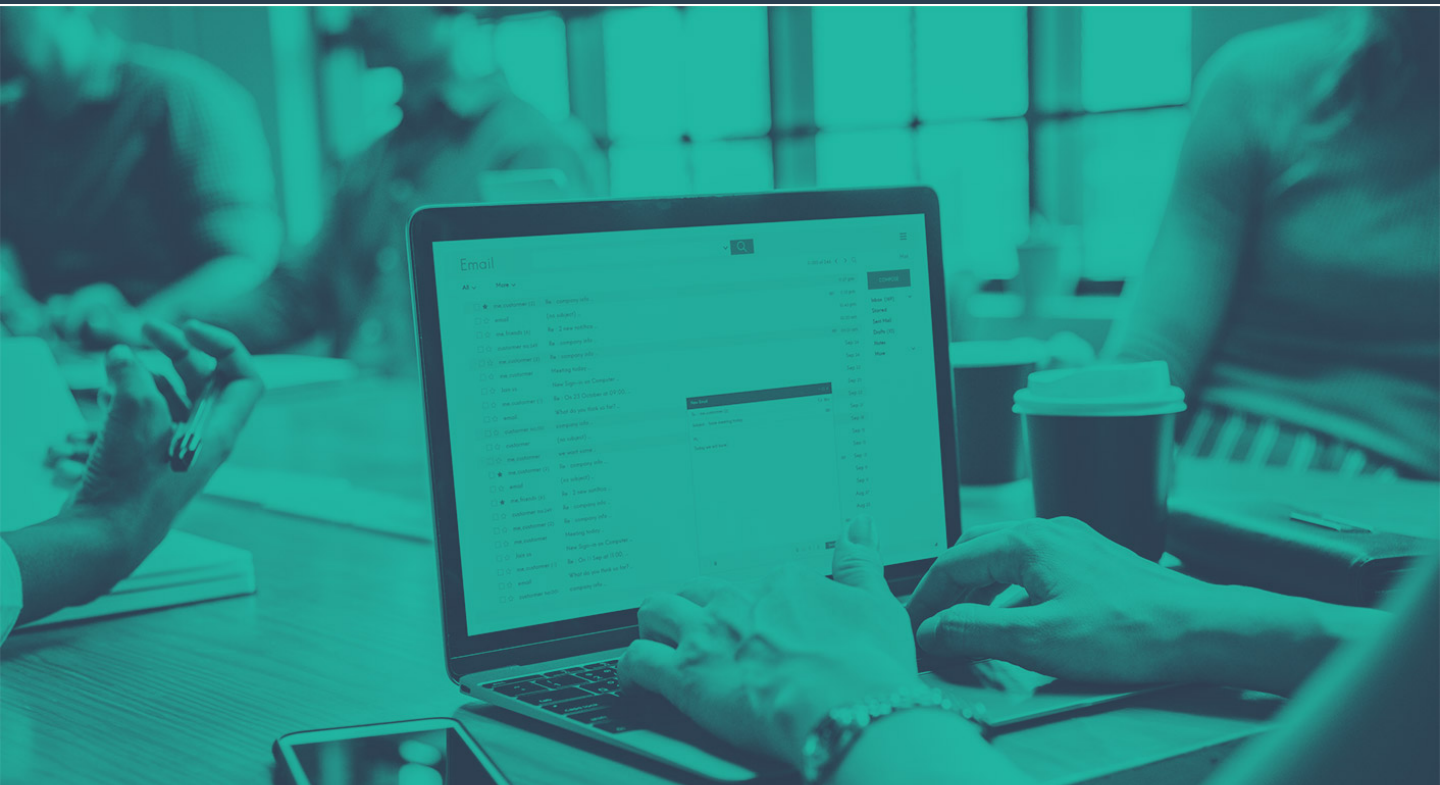
INTRODUCTION

281 billion.

That's the total number of business and consumer emails sent and received per day in 2018, [according to The Radicati Group.](#)

That's nearly 200,000 emails *a minute* -- and over 3,000 emails *per second*.

What's more, that number is forecasted to grow to over 333 billion per day by the end of 2022.

As a marketer you're probably thinking a few things at this point: 1) How am I ever going to achieve inbox zero? 2) Forget my inbox, my how am I going to make sure our business emails stand a chance in our recipients' inboxes with all that competition taking up space?

Well, let us start by offering you a bit of good news to take the edge off: According to [a report from HubSpot Research, 46% of consumers still want to see email content from brands or businesses they support.](#)

Phew. Okay. So despite all that clutter, you've still got a shot at earning people's attention -- but it's not going to come easy.

And perhaps more than ever before, your subject line has got to shine.

To help you get a sense of exactly what that means in today's modern and messy inbox, we've pulled together 100 email subject lines that we couldn't help but click. We've organized these successful subject lines into seven different categories to help you understand what to aim for in your word choice and positioning.

But first … a lesson in short copy.

A SHORT LESSON ON WRITING SHORT COPY
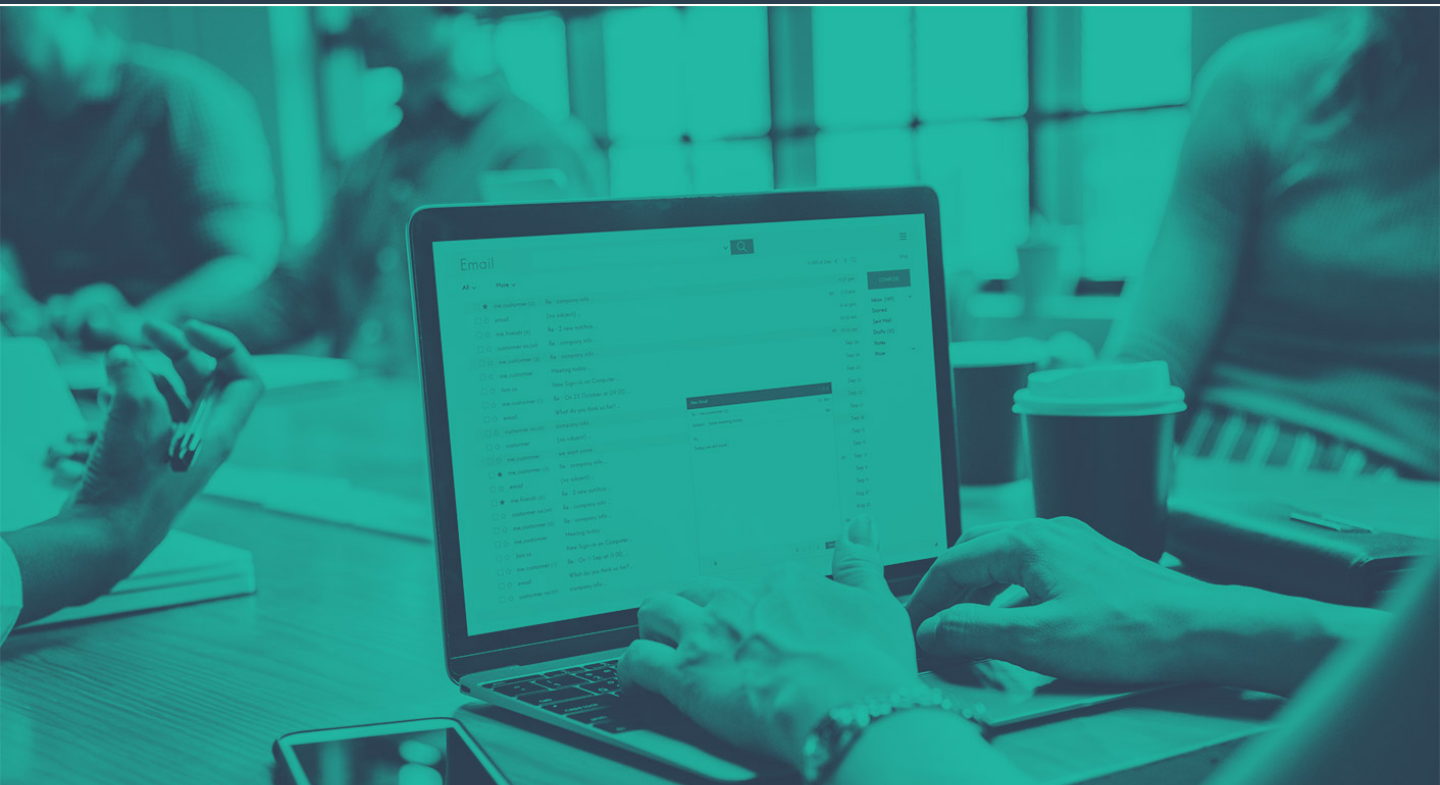
You and your audience have something in common: You want to write less, and they want to read less.

And email subject lines -- like blog post titles, tweet, and meta descriptions -- don't take up a whole lot of space.

For this reason, you'd think they must be easy to whip up. Everyone is capable of stringing together a few words, right?

 Wrong.

As it turns out, writing short copy takes more than just good writing skills -- it requires a deep understanding of your target customer and a knack for translating a larger message into a few words designed to strike the right chord.

To help you train your brain to write more concisely, we recommend pulling up a long-form piece of content and running through the following steps:

- Remove adverbs, adjectives, pronouns & prepositions.
- Replace phrases with one word.
- Use numerals instead of writing out numbers.

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

Below, we'll walk you through what it looks like to cut a blog excerpt down into a tweet, a meta description, and finally, a subject line.

The point of this exercise is to explore the ways in which content can be reduced without losing its purpose.

>> Blog Excerpt:

"You did it.

You've been spearheading your organization's content marketing efforts for a while now, and your team's performance has convinced your boss to fully adopt content marketing.

There's one small problem, though: your boss wants you to write and present a content marketing plan to her, but you've never done something like that before. You don't even know where to start.

Fortunately, we've curated the best content marketing plans to help you write a concrete marketing plan that's rooted in data and produces real results."

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

>> Tweet:

"We've curated sample content marketing plans to help you write one that produces real results: [link to article here]"

>> Meta Description:

"Learn how to write a concrete content marketing plan that's rooted in data and produces results."

>> Subject Lines:

✧ *What to include in your content marketing plan.*

✧ *The Content Marketing Plan Framework You've Wished For*

✧ *Here's what your content marketing plan is missing…*

✧ *Need a Content Marketing Plan? Read This.*

✧ *How to Structure a Content Marketing Plan*

Psttt: If you really do need help with your marketing plan, try this free marketing plan generator.

7 TYPES OF SUBJECT LINES EXPLAINED (+ 100 EXAMPLES)
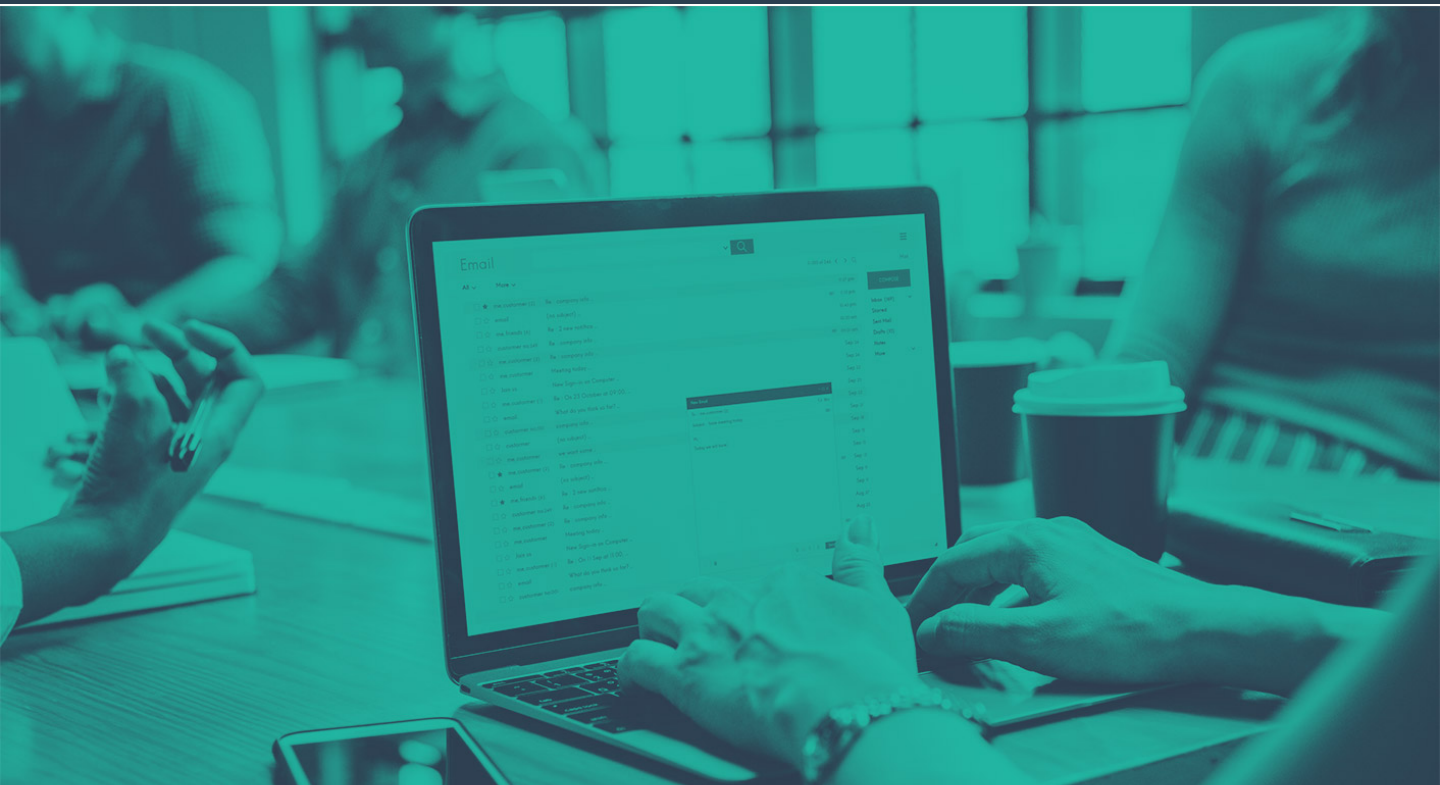
FOMO
SUBJECT LINES

FOMO -- the fear of missing out -- is a powerful motivator.

Thanks to our psychological bent toward loss aversion, people react much more strongly when they feel they're about to lose something they already have then when they expect to gain something.

If you want to capture the attention of your recipients, use your subject line to highlight what they stand to lose if they don't open the email.

And remember: The more valuable the offer is, the more nervous the recipient will feel about giving it up.

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ JustFab: "By Invitation Only: Exclusive Rewards Inside!"

- ✧ Ibotta: "Don't let this $5 bonus slip away!"

- ✧ J.Crew Factory: "Click it or miss it, people: Over 500 styles under $25 is ending!"

- ✧ Book of the Month: "May's best books are just too good to miss."

- ✧ InstantBoss Club: "NEVER AGAIN SALE"

- ✧ Uber: "Grab a ride pass before they're gone"

- ✧ Shoes of Prey: "In case you missed these…"

- ✧ Crate and Barrel: "2x the rewards, 2 brands, 5 days only."

- ✧ Airbnb: "Barnstable is in high demand for August"

- ✧ AMC Theatres: "Hurry, Get Your Tickets to SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY Fan Event!"

- ✧ Charles Tyrwhitt: "Shirts for $39 ENDS MIDNIGHT"

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Killington: "Season Pass Savings Disappear Thursday"

- ✧ Verizon Wireless: "[Name], your home is missing these easy upgrades."

- ✧ BaubleBar: "You're a winner!"

- ✧ Groupon: "Starbucks – By Invite Only"

- ✧ Dollar Shave Club: "We want to give you money."

- ✧ Poshmark: "Your discounts EXPIRE SOON."

CURIOUS SUBJECT LINES

Curiosity prompts action -- and in the world of email, action often equates to better engagement rates.

Curiosity is powerful. It's the force that leads you to stay up late watching the next episode of that exciting show. It's the push that keeps you turning pages in a good book. It's the seed that prompts you to Facebook stalk your former classmates to see what they are up to.

"Curiosity keeps our mind engaged to work out the implications," explains psychologist Gary Klein. And in order to work out the implications, recipients need to clickthrough to gather more information about what's there.

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ UX Collective: "Your fingerprints are all over the place"

- ✧ Select All: "The Two Possible Futures of Virtual Reality"

- ✧ Refinery29 Everywhere: "The $1,000 hair trend with a dirty little secret"

- ✧ Book of the Month: "Our most riveting book this month."

- ✧ Sephora Insider: "You NEED to see this new eye treatment."

- ✧ Madewell: "Everyone's gonna ask you about these"

- ✧ Hiten from Product Habits: "2 hours before launch and we are still scrambling"

- ✧ Instant Boss Club: "80 likes to 458 likes SAY WHAT?"

- ✧ Intercom: "Are you making this landing page mistake?"

- ✧ Zillow: "The truth about moving expenses"

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

✧ LinkedIn: "This is how much working from home saves you"

✧ BuzzFeed Books: "A very ~controversial~ opinion

✧ LOFT: "Just wait till you see these skirts"

✧ Pocket: "How to Sleep. Sleep for Success. Why Eight Hours a Night Isn't Enough"

✧ Tory Burch: "This. Is. It."

✧ Apartment Therapy: "Why You Should Keep Your Clothes in the Freezer."

FUNNY SUBJECT LINES

Your recipients' email inboxes are inundated with ordinary subject lines all day, every day.

So how do you pique their interest in a sea of sameness?

Humor.

But remember: When using funny email subject lines, it's important to know your audience.

While humor is a great way to appeal to your recipients' emotions and engage them in a memorable way, you want to ensure the joke resonates without offending or alienating anyone.

SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Free People: "'Can I PLEASE borrow?!' - everyone you know"

- ✧ Funny or DIe: "Revised policy regarding jean shorts at work"

- ✧ Dollar Shave Club: "Open up and say wowie zowie!"

- ✧ NextDraft: "In Flawed We Trust"

- ✧ Brooks Brothers: "Up to 40% off trousers & sport coats. It's a tailor-made sale."

- ✧ Grubhub: "Breaking chews! We found new restaurants near you!"

- ✧ NextDraft: "OMGodfather"

- ✧ Red Sox Ticketing: "Come to Fenway May 2 - we won't tell your boss!"

- ✧ Dollar Shave Club: "What to Do When You're the Sweaty, Smelly Guy at the Gym"

- ✧ Nordstrom Rack: "Ray-Ban up to 50% off. Get in a new frame of mind."

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

✧ The Bouqs Company: "Pow-pop-boom-crack-fsss" (Note: This was for a 4th of July sale.)

✧ Crate and Barrel: "New planters? Oh, kale yeah."

✧ Groupon: "Hey… Were You Gonna Delete This?"

PAIN POINT SUBJECT LINES

These days, businesses and individuals alike are constantly looking for ways to do more, see more, and earn more.

And as a marketer, it's up to you to identify the obstacles that prevent them from doing so and use those insights to position your product or service as part of the solution.

At the end of the day, people want to feel like their problems are recognized and being taken care of -- and what better place to serve up that type of assurance than right in their inbox.

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ J.Crew: "Your summer outfit dilemmas SOLVED"

- ✧ Groupon Experiences: "Fun to Help You Survive the Holidays"

- ✧ Terrain: "Your all-weather dining solution."

- ✧ Qapital: "Don't think about saving. Save without thinking."

- ✧ ByRegina: "Struggling with a business decision? I made you a 1-page framework to help."

- ✧ Le Tote: "Monday-Friday Style Simplified"

- ✧ Domino's: "No address? No problem. Now Domino's can deliver to over 150,000 Domino's Hotspots."

- ✧ Adobe Stock: "Beautiful brochures made faster"

- ✧ Verizon Wireless: "Enjoy NBA games right at your fingertips."

- ✧ Vidyard: "Engaging your prospects can be hard. Video makes it easy."

- ✧ Grubhub: "Sit back and let someone else do the cooking"

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Yelp: "Keep From Melting With These Iced Drinks."

- ✧ Grubhub: "Repeat meal syndrome? We understand."

REENGAGEMENT SUBJECT LINES

Subscriber inactivity happens to the best of us.

Sometimes we see loyal subscribers gradually slip away as the demands of their job increase or change. Other times we see people drop off because the content fails to meet their needs. For that reason, re-engagement emails are critical to list health and maintenance.

While there are a number of ways to re-engage a contact -- from highlighting an improvement in your product to promoting a discount to inviting them to revisit the items in their cart -- you have to get creative with your subject line if you want to re-spark their interest.

SEE IT IN ACTION:

✧ Dollar Shave Club: "Hey, did you forget to open this?"

✧ The Bouqs Company: "Can You Believe It's Been a Month?"

✧ Chubbies Shorts: "Lemme Teleport You Back to Your Cart. Free Of Charge."

✧ LinkedIn: "[Name], people are looking at your LinkedIn profile"

✧ Groupon: "Still Interested in That Deal?"

✧ ClassPass: "New things are happening!"

✧ Airbnb: "Pick up where you left off"

✧ DraftKings: "[Name], you have an undrafted contest entry!"

✧ Vail Resorts: "Come Back This Winter With an Exclusive Deal, [Name]"

✧ Glassdoor: "It's Been A While…"

✧ Marriott Rewards: "We've missed you, [Name]! Please come back!"

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

✧ Dote Shopping: "Your shopping bag misses you."

✧ Star Market: "Exciting changes are on the way!"

EMOJI
SUBJECT LINES

Emojis have quickly become powerful communication tools, making it easier for businesses to convey emotion in situations where they are strapped for space.

Aside from the fact that emojis create contrast in your recipients' inbox, research has found that emoji usage can actually help make your message more memorable:

An academic study found that participants who were sent messages with emojis scored higher on memory than those who were sent messages without emojis.

When it comes to selecting the perfect emoji for your subject line, it's best to do some testing of your own, though [research from HubSpot's social team](#) revealed the following emojis lead to the most link clicks:

RANK	EMOJI	NAME
1	🐙	Octopus
2	🐴	Horse Head
3	👖	Jeans
4	🍒	Cherries
5	🚂	Steam Locomotive
6	🏳️	White Flag
7	🌉	Bridge at Night
8	🆓	Free Sign
9	👇	Backhand Index Finger Pointing Down
10	🎫	Admission Ticket

Note: Some browsers do not support the use of emoji, so they might not display properly. Make sure to test by previewing your email in other clients, and be as clear as possible in your subject lines by not replacing important words with emojis.

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Crate and Barrel: "Up to 40% off 🏖️ + 30% off 🍹 + 15% off 🛍️ + Free 🚚 "

- ✧ StubHub: "🚨 Great deal alert! Zac Brown Band at Fenway Park for a steal."

- ✧ ClassPass: "Go from 🌱 to 🌳 for just $4"

- ✧ Dunkin Donuts: " 🍦 We're screaming…"

- ✧ Instacart: "🍝🍞🌽 Market Basket: Save $10 off your next order"

- ✧ JustFly.com: "✈️ SEAT SALE: Boston to Las Vegas!"

- ✧ Yummly: "🍓 Berry impressive summer recipes"

- ✧ BuzzFeed News: "Instagram will let you mute your friends' baby pics 🙌 "

- ✧ IMPACT Branding & Design: "IMPACT Live: Last week to save 💰 "

- ✧ Hotjar: "Customise your visitor feedback experience 😠😃😍 "

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Wayfair: "😳 JUNE CLEARANCE ENDS TONIGHT."

- ✧ Wish: " 90% off store prices… Today's top 5 discounts on summer sunglasses 😎"

- ✧ Nordstrom Rack: "🌙Up to 75% OFF ends tonight 🌙"

- ✧ Product Hunt Daily: "World's first flying car 🚁👀"

SOCIAL PROOF SUBJECT LINES

Social proof is the idea that people will adapt their behavior according to what other people are doing.

When we see a line of customers waiting to eat at a restaurant or a photo of a celebrity drinking a certain brand of coffee, it lends an air of gravitas and quality to the product, doesn't it? But there's more to it than that. In fact, [according to Buffer](#), there are actually five different types of social proof: Expert Social Proof, Celebrity Social Proof, User Social Proof, "Wisdom of the Crowds" Social Proof, and "Wisdom of your Friends" Social Proof.

While the type of social proof you employ in your subject line will depend on the offer you're promoting, the key is to focus on removing doubt by highlighting evidence.

SEE IT IN ACTION:

- ✧ Patagonia: "Top reviewed styles from customers like you"

- ✧ HelloFresh: "Pssst… your friends are cooking up a storm!"

- ✧ GolfNow: "You deserve some golf this week (top picks inside)"

- ✧ Yummly: "Most Popular Recipes this Week"

- ✧ Airbnb: "Make it a good night with John Legend and Airbnb"

- ✧ Yummly: "Simple recipes from popular chefs"

- ✧ Zillow: "5 homes that are trending right now"

- ✧ Lenny: "Rachel McAdams and Rachel Weisz on the Female Gaze"

- ✧ Inc: "18 Habits Highly Successful People Have (And the Rest of Us Probably Don't)"

- ✧ Adobe: Adobe named a Leader in customer analytics"

⚡ SEE IT IN ACTION:

✧ Instant Boss Club: "See what our clients are saying…"

✧ Sephora: "The people have spoken: these are their faves"

✧ Target: "Moms are loving these fave maternity looks."

✧ Wish: "Whoa… These are the most wanted handbags this year."

CONCLUSION
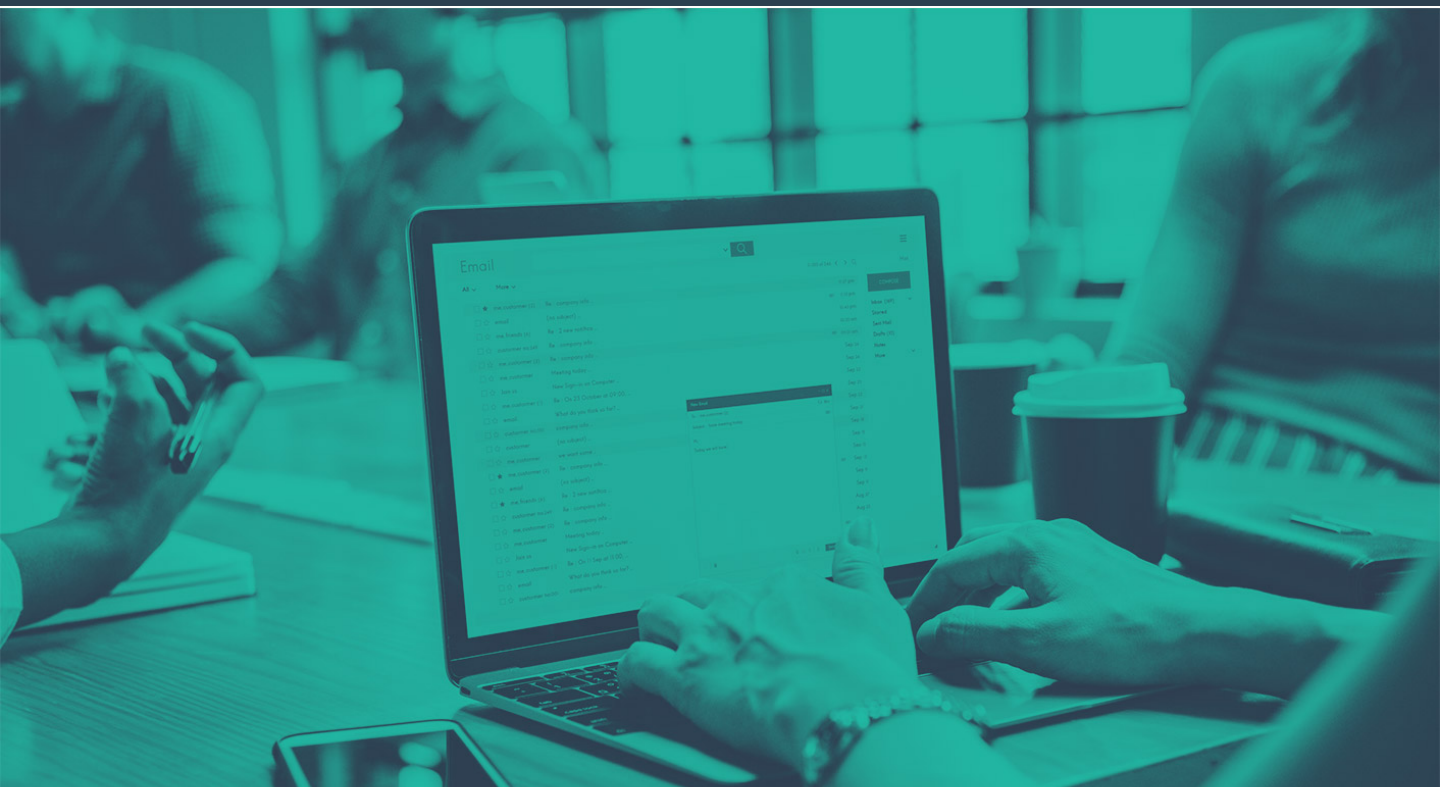
To ensure your email promotion efforts make an impact, you need to invest time to get the subject line just right.

After all, if your emails are left unopened, your content will never earn the recognition it deserves.

We hope that the examples in this guide helped to spark some fresh, new ideas for your next subject line. And we recommend subscribing to the mailing lists for a couple of the brands we featured to keep the inspiration coming. While there is no exact science when it comes to writing a clickable subject line, there's a lot that can be learned by keeping tabs on the subject lines that drive you to take action.

Happy emailing, friends. We're rooting for you.