



HOW TO IDENTIFY BAD SUBJECT LINES & HOW TO FIX THEM

Some say you should spend as much time writing your subject line as you do the rest of your email content. Save yourself a little time with this cheat sheet

PROBLEM: THE SUBJECT LINE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING MEANINGFUL

Examples:

- Your June hot pics
- Recap

SOLUTION: BE SPECIFIC!

Let the recipient know exactly what the email is about, reveal a little information to entice them and then leave them with a sense that there is more to learn.

Examples:

- Anna Sinclair and 5 others viewed your profile
- Quiz: Is This Headline About Kim K or Pokémon Go?

PROBLEM: THE SUBJECT LINE READS LIKE MARKETING SPEAK

Consider the following subject line: "Verify your subscription! Don't miss out on the latest from CrunchBase." Clearly CrunchBase wants the recipient to verify their subscription so they can be marketed to at a later date. A savvy marketer might see that and — depending on how many emails they already waded through on a daily basis — avoid opening the email.

SOLUTION: USE REAL, CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE

Examples:

- Markus, we found the key...
- Yipee! Will Doolittle just followed you 100



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PROBLEM:

THE EMAIL IS COMPETING WITH ALL THE OTHER EMAILS IN THE RECIPIENT'S INBOX

SOLUTION: THINK ABOUT PATTERN DISRUPTION

The key is not to parrot subject lines that have worked in the past, like Obama's now-famous, "Hey" subject line. Instead try to understand the psychological patterns of your recipients and create content that disrupts those patterns using curiosity, humor and brand names.

Examples:

- **In defense of mouth breathers**
- **T-Mobile is Oprah**

PROBLEM: THE SUBJECT LINE COMES ACROSS AS IMPERSONAL

SOLUTION: THINK LIKE A CO-WORKER

Most people's internal spam filters can pick out a stuffy promotional email from a mile away, so use "Re:", "Fwd:" and other trigger keywords in subject lines to mimic those that they'd receive from a co-worker.

Examples:

- **Urgent: a special snack deal just for your office**
- **Re: the changing landscape of email marketing**

See the *CTAConf 2016* talk this cheat sheet is based on [here](#).