Making The Most Of Messages

Lauren Lentini | APR 25 2019

Here's a staggering statistic: "Mobile email will account for 24 to 77% of email opens, depending on your target audience, product and email type," according to eMailmonday. That means, if you want your messaging campaign to succeed, you have to think about your mobile users. But you can't afford to forget about your desktop readers, either. Fortunately, Messages makes it easy to accommodate both!

I've been digging through articles from some of the biggest names in email marketing, to see how their advice translates to Messages. Here's what I've found.

Email width

"We recommend that you keep your email's maximum width close to 600px. This width should give you plenty of space for content and will fit nicely on most web and desktop clients," says Email on Acid.

Your message width is easy to manage in the template and message editor on the Settings tab. Use the slider under "Content area width" to increase or decrease the width of the message. You can stick to 600px, or go all the way up to 900px for some wide-screen viewing (if you really want to).

Personalized subject line

According to Campaign Monitor, "Emails with personalized subject lines are 26% more likely to be opened."

With Messages, you can easily personalize your subject line on the Message Details screen. Just use the "First Name" and/or "Last Name" buttons below the subject line input field on the Message Details screen.

Troubleshooting missing posts in Feeds

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Checking the boxes: New Forms vs. Forms Manager

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Message Details

Subject | %firstname%, check out our latest news

Add Personalization ⓘ | First Name | Last Name

Video

MailChimp points out, "Autoplay and click-to-play media won't play in an inbox unless your subscriber's email client supports HTML5 <video> and <audio> tags. Only one major email client, Apple Mail, supports these tags, so it's best to avoid embedded media and consider an alternative."
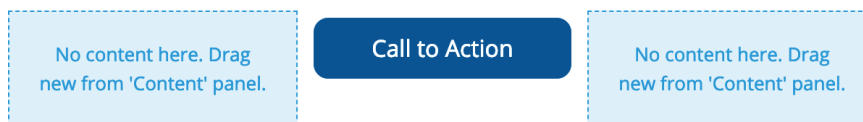
Messages has an innovative solution to this issue. If you have a Vimeo or YouTube video you want to include in a message, add a "Video" block to your content area. Then paste in the video URL, and Messages will automatically insert the video thumbnail and overlay a "play" icon for you. What's more, you can customize the play icon! It won't play in the email itself, but it's an easy, attractive way to link out to the video.
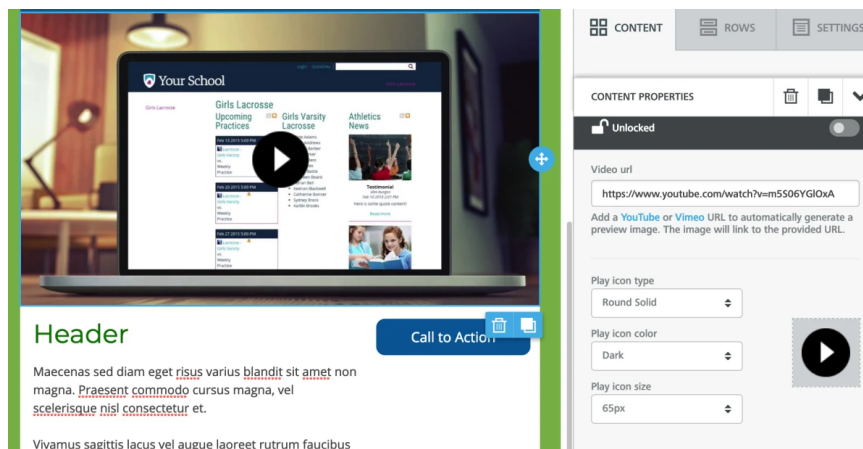
White space

Another recommendation from Campaign Monitor: "Adding ample white space around the elements in your email encourages click-throughs by separating them visually from other elements in your email and helping focus the reader's attention on them at the right time."

Have you tried adding columns to your message and then leaving them blank? It looks a little funny in the editing interface, but it's an easy way to add white space around a button, for example. And when users are viewing it on a mobile device, those empty columns collapse away to nothing!

No content here. Drag new from 'Content' panel. | **Call to Action** | No content here. Drag new from 'Content' panel.

Limiting mobile version

Mailbakery advises putting your most important call to action above the fold, and even limiting the content that you include on the mobile version. "If your emails are typically full of products and offers, consider limiting their number for the mobile version. Remember, your desktop assortment doesn't have to match the one on mobile. Think about user experience on mobile and what's optimal for it," they say.

How do you optimize for the mobile experience and the desktop experience in the same email? Easy! Make use of the "Hide on Desktop/Mobile" buttons in the content settings for elements that won't look great on a small device. Without hiding any of the content that's integral to the message, you can still create an experience that's flexible for a desktop viewer, while being streamlined and easy-to-read for

a smartphone reader. Conversely, you can hide content from the desktop version if it's only applicable to mobile users, such as a "text to give" button.
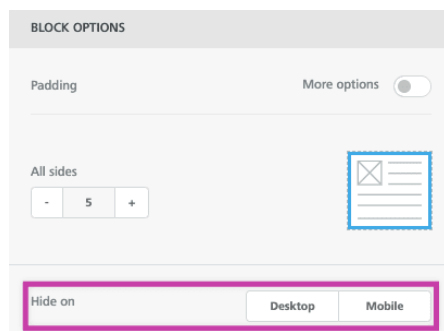
Social media links

"Even though it will be a small percentage of clicks from your email, it is always a best practice to show your audience where else they can follow your company. ... Select the ones that your company uses the most (there's no need to show every single social profile your company has). Social icons that match your branding or the rest of the email is a nice touch," says Campaign Monitor.

Using the Messages "Social" block, you can easily add a customized set of social media icons to your message. Choose from a wide variety of built-in social media icons, or upload a custom one! Any size image will be automatically scaled to match the other icons. Select the style of icon that matches your branding and the rest of your message, as well.
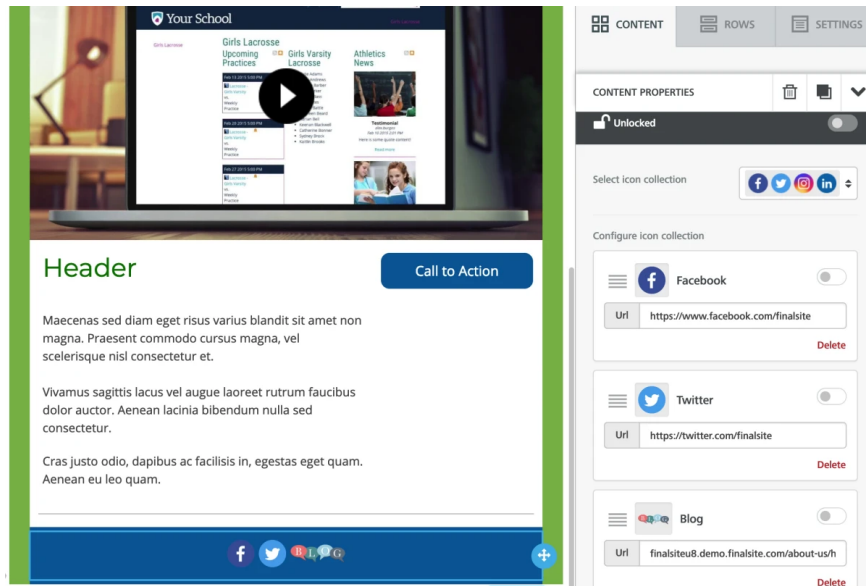
Images

"Every image in your email should reinforce your business values and brand. Look for ways to include your company colors and logo in images, so your contacts will immediately think of your business. While you'll want to use original images whenever you can, there are also great sites you can use to find professional-looking stock photography that won't damage your brand," according to Constant Contact.

If you don't have just the right image at your fingertips when you go to create your message, you can easily find a perfect free photo with Messages' newest feature. Add your "Image" block, click to browse for an image, navigate to the folder you want to store the image in...then click "Search free photos." This feature searches three of the best sites that offer high-quality photos made available under a Creative Commons Zero license. That means you can use them for free, for whatever you want! Simply choose the image you like, import it into Resources right from there, and insert it into your message.
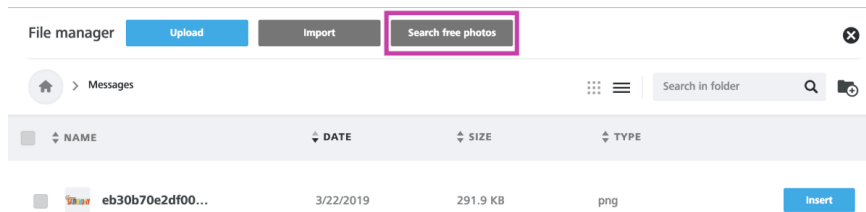
HTML and CSS

"Unlike the web, which has just a few browsers handling most traffic, emails are read in a huge variety of email applications, or clients. … The problem with email design is that all of these email clients support different subsets of HTML and CSS. And the difference in support is oftentimes drastic," according to Litmus.

While it sometimes looks like an HTML email is a full-fledged website in your inbox, it's important to keep in mind the differences between an email and a webpage. Advanced features that you can implement on your site -- like forms, Javascript, and iframes -- won't work in an email. At the end of the day, the best thing you can do with an email is encourage the reader to visit your website, where they can have the full experience of these features.

There's plenty of advice out there, but taking advantage of the features in Messages will get you on the right path to making great emails.
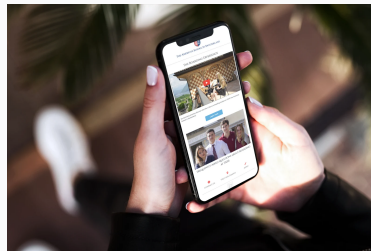
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