

# GREEN 4



**Best Practice Series**  
Successful Email Campaign Design



## Overview

First impressions count - particularly in the world of email marketing, where all it takes is a few seconds for someone to decide whether or not to open an email campaign or hit the dreaded delete button - sending that killer campaign you've been working on for weeks, into a big black hole for good.

To mitigate such a scenario, this white paper outlines some fundamental practices that you need to consider when building your next email campaign. These elements all play an equally crucial role in creating a strong, valuable campaign with a great user journey at the heart of it all.

## Brand Optimisation

This is where our user journey starts - it may seem obvious but it can be overlooked. The from name, from address and subject line all work hand-in-hand to start the user journey off on the right foot.

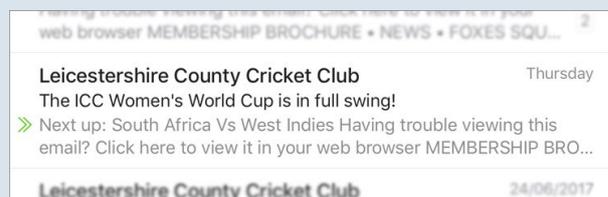
For new recipients, this is your chance to introduce your brand and create a long-lasting first impression. For current recipients who have already engaged with your brand, this is an opportunity to provide brand familiarity so users can easily identify your emails in their crowded inbox.



## Teaser Text

To open or not to open? We've now introduced the brand and we've got a striking subject line, who wouldn't want to open the email?! You may find that some users need extra encouragement to make that final decision, this is where teaser text comes in.

Teaser text is a small snippet of text which is pulled into a preview pane on your email inbox. Typically, email clients will pull in the first 100 characters or less - so use it wisely. See it as an opportunity to build and strengthen your subject line.

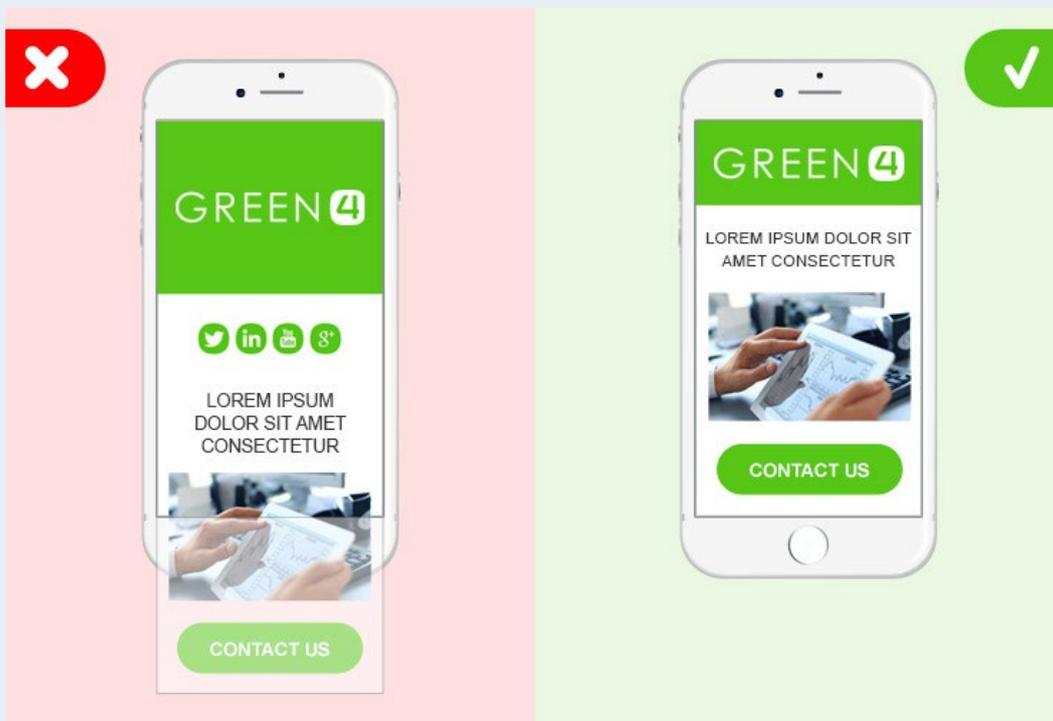




## Layout

Stick with simple grids. We should all be focusing on a mobile-first approach when designing emails.

Mobile responsive email templates allow columns to be stacked when viewed on a mobile device. This means our viewing window reduces dramatically compared to viewing an email on a desktop device - where you'd be able to see 3 columns of content all on one row, for example. Another good reason for keeping your emails short, sweet and snappy - less scrolling = happy users.



Think about what you want your users to see first and in what order, make sure this content is above the fold. This content should focus on your core message, followed by supporting content beneath.

In terms of desktop devices, a hierarchy for creating a simplified, clean layout for your emails is as follows:

- > One Column = main content
- > Two Column = supporting or related content
- > Three Columns = less prominent content i.e. social icons

## White Space

A controversial aspect of design is white space. While us designers crave it, many people see it as a waste of space and therefore like to fill it with more content. Here are just a few reasons why we should all embrace the space:

### Creates Visual Separation

White space allows elements to breathe. It creates clear visual segmentation in order to break up your content in a more digestible way, allowing the users to skim read and easily find what they're looking for.

### Enhances Legibility

Margins, padding, line-height and font sizes are all elements which can be manipulated to increase text readability. Increasing the line height of your text for example is a very subtle way of adding micro white space to create a more readable chunk of text.

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### Unlocks the Imagination

White space can provoke something we all have - an imagination. By creating white space the users mind is free to roam and create a story of what you're telling them which will hopefully result in the user engaging with the brand on a more emotional level and therefore being more inclined to click through.

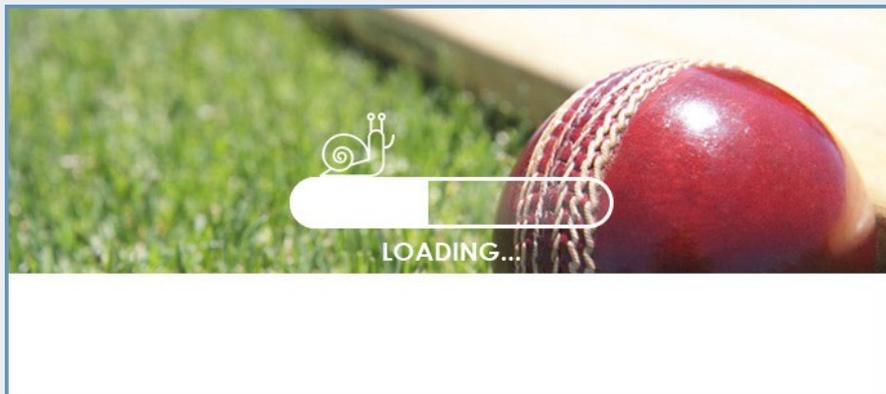
Want to find out more about the importance of white space? Here's a great blog post from The Paper Mill Store which explains all the [principles behind white space within design](#).

## Imagery

Images speak louder than words - fact! Including images within the design of your email can transform a newsletter from drab to fab. That doesn't mean you should design the email as one big image... it's all about getting the right balance.

Imagery and graphics should be used to complement the message of your email and add extra value - consider including bold, concise graphics with offers, headline or call to actions (CTAs) on them to draw the users into the content.

Create your images at the correct dimensions needed for the email and save them for web to optimise the file size... this will help reduce the email load time.



Don't forget to include descriptive ALT tags on all images - images might not show up all of the time. Images may get blocked or a screen reader may be in use for a visually impaired reader, by providing an ALT tag on the image you are providing the user with a description of what the image was.

## Content

Short and snappy is key for email content. Users don't want to be scrolling for what feels like a lifetime in order to reach the end of the email.

Make use of bold headlines and sub-headers to separate different content along with short sentences and paragraphs. If you've got more to say, simply link content through to a web page, driving traffic to your website can only be a good thing - don't try and cram it all in otherwise you risk putting the user off when they first open the email and they're presented with big paragraphs of text.

Top tip: ensure your font size is at least 14px to provide good readability on mobile devices.

## Call to Actions

Now we've caught the user's attention with a striking email and relevant content, it's time to encourage them to progress onto the next path along the user journey.

Call to actions should stand out from the rest of the content and should give a clear indication of where the user will navigate once clicked on. Avoid the use of 'click here' buttons, remember if a screen reader is switched on, this won't provide any indication to the user about where that link will take them. Instead, try using descriptive links related to the content i.e. '10 Top Tips for Email Design'.

Whilst we're on the subject of clicking, it's also important to think about the mobile-first approach with buttons. Buttons should have a minimum height of 45px to cater for touch devices and allow for easy tapping.



## Footer

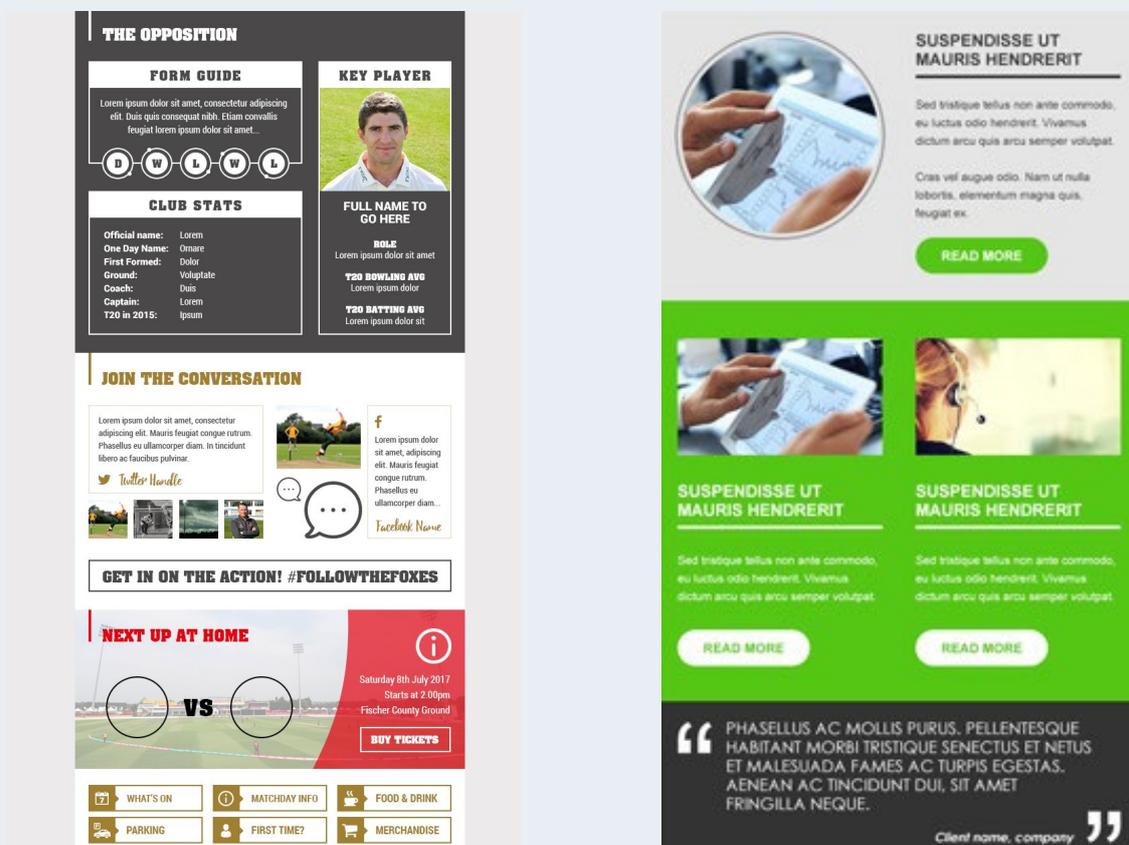
Just because it's the end of the email, doesn't mean it's goodbye. The footer of your email should provide the user with additional information they might need to continue their relationship with your brand, whether that's encouraging a click through to your website, social icons for them to be able to share content or contact details for them to get in touch - the footer still plays an important role in the journey.

Equally, if your user doesn't want to receive any more emails (we know break-ups are hard) you should provide a clear unsubscribe button for them to be able to stop receiving communications easily. A hidden or a frustrating unsubscribe process can result in your emails being marked as SPAM. [Here are some best practices to providing your users with a trustworthy unsubscribe link.](#)

## Forward Thinking with Colour

Long gone are the days of deciding what background colour to have your white, pristine email sit on.

Over recent years we've seen this focus shift and more people using blocks of colour to break up main content within an email and simply picking a neutral colour for the main background - which, if most people are viewing emails on their mobile or tablet devices, they won't be seeing anyway as the content will span the full width of the device.



## The User Journey Doesn't Stop There

Once your user's have decided to continue their journey from the email campaign to your website, the user journey should continue to be a seamless process. Your website should provide familiarity and ease of use throughout.

By implementing website tracking, we're able to store attributes about your visitors as well as how the website is performing. We have the ability to track the user from start to finish in order to analyse and constantly make improvements to the user journey.



## The Personal Approach

We specialise in creating a personalised, customer focused journey from start to finish. Our team of experts will work closely with you to discover your requirements and more importantly, put them into action! Get in touch to find out how we can help you.

Authored by Katie Manning. Katie works as part of the Digital team at Green 4. She works with our customers to design and deliver successful digital campaigns across a range of platforms.

## About Green 4

At Green 4 we enable our customers to utilise data to build improved fan and visitor relationships and create compelling digital journeys across the sport, leisure and attraction industries. As your partner, we are committed to your success and focused on delivering results using cutting edge, insight led strategies.

## Contact Details

### Head Office - UK

16-17 Midland Court  
Central Park  
Lutterworth  
Leicestershire  
LE17 4PN

**T:** +44 (0) 845 508 8149

**E:** [marketing@green4solutions.com](mailto:marketing@green4solutions.com)

**W:** [www.green4solutions.com](http://www.green4solutions.com)

### North America

1000 Peachtree Industrial Blvd  
Suite 6 #438  
Suwanee  
GA  
30024