

# THE SECRET SCIENCE TO EMAIL MARKETING TO LIVE EVENTS



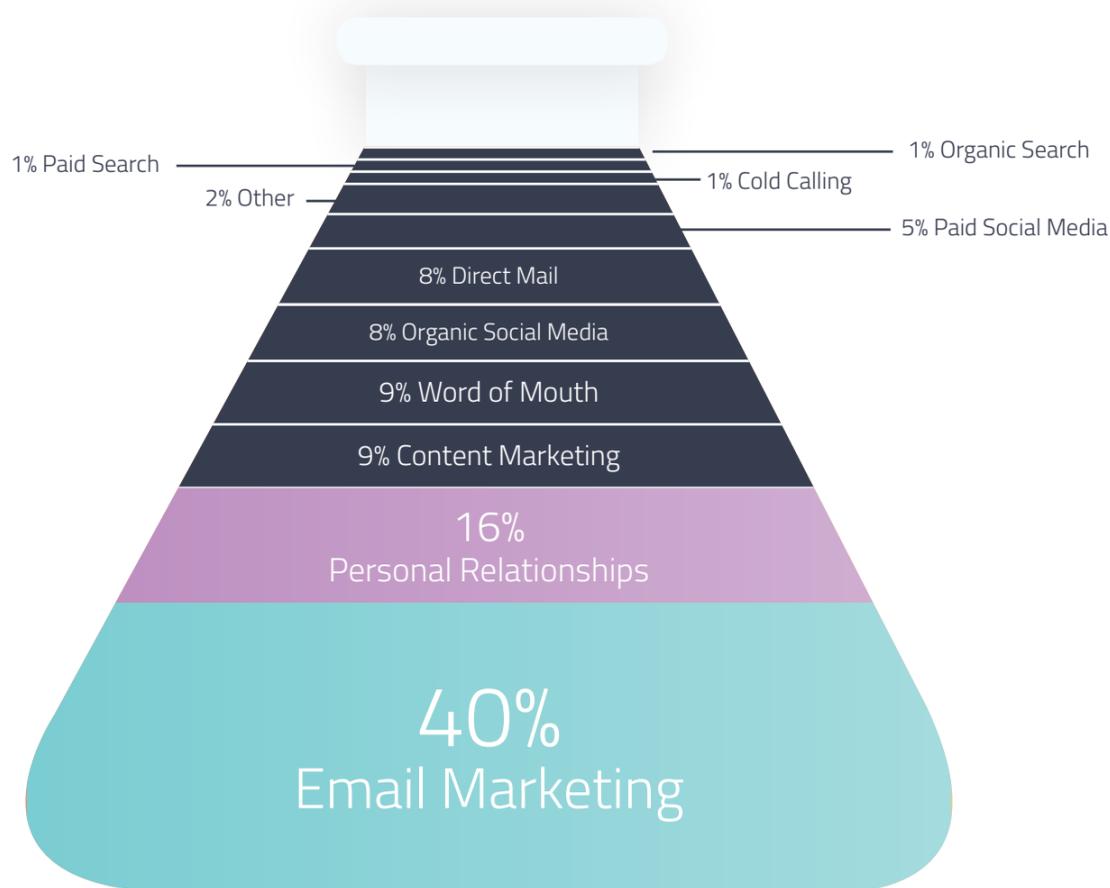
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# INTRODUCTION

It really is no secret. Email has long been the go-to form of communication for modern day businesses and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. By the end of 2017, there will be **269 billion** emails sent and received every single day and by 2021, that will reach **319.6 billion**.<sup>1</sup> So it's safe to say that email is here to stay. Now what you should be asking yourself is: *What do these statistics have to do with event marketing?*

Great question! According to the [2018 Event Marketing Industry Report](#), most marketers believe email is the single-most effective channel for promoting events.



**Q: What is the most effective channel to promote an event?<sup>2</sup>**

The challenge now becomes maintaining a sound strategy in the midst of an ever-changing industry. That's where this ebook comes into play.

In the following pages you will discover ways to optimize, segment, and measure your email campaigns to maximize performance. You will explore topics such as quality email content, appealing design, audience segmentation, and post-campaign analysis along your journey towards mastering email marketing as an event marketer.

If you have any questions regarding email marketing for event organizers, feel free to drop us a line at [marketing@bizzabo.com](mailto:marketing@bizzabo.com). Enjoy the read!



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Bizzabo

<sup>1</sup> The Radcati Group, Inc: Email Statistics Report, 2017-2021, 2017.  
<sup>2</sup> Bizzabo: [Event Marketing 2018: Benchmarks and Trends](#), 2017.

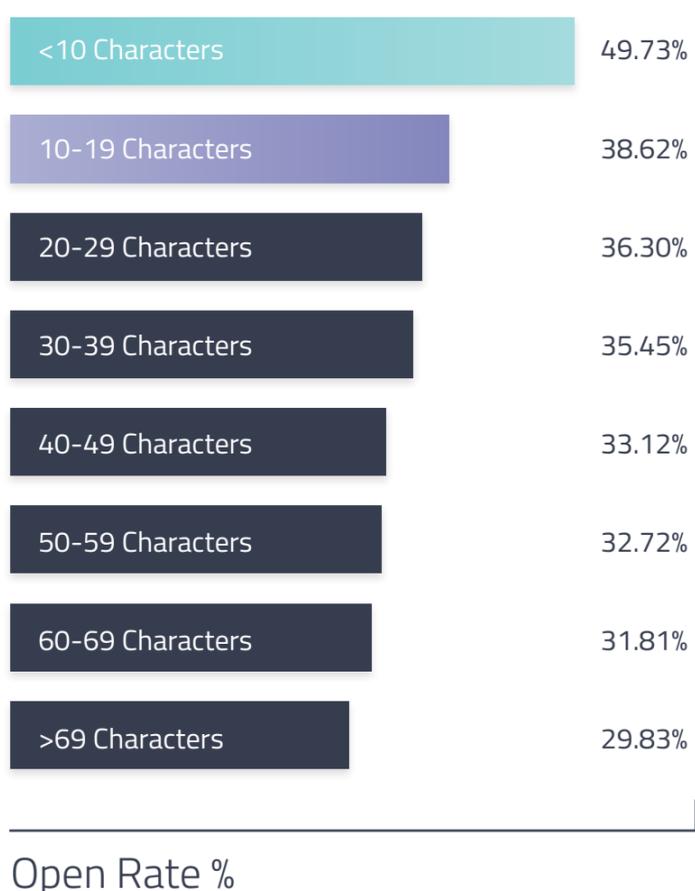
# OPTIMIZE CONTENT

As an event marketer, how do you ensure that email recipients engage with the message you are conveying? Given the variety of audience with which event marketers need to stay connected, being able to capture the attention of specific stakeholders through quality content is the best way to ensure a successful event.

At the end of the day, email is another form of content and it's important to keep in the mind the multiple aspects of a great email. How long should the subject line be? What's the difference between good and bad email design? Where should the CTA be included? Taking all of this into consideration, this section dives into the tips and best practices that result in stellar email content.



## SHORT, PUNCHY SUBJECT LINES



When sending an email, the opportunity to make a strong first impression comes before the actual email content. The subject line is the first thing the recipient sees and optimizing it will play a large role in yielding high open rates.

Keeping a short subject line tends to result in stronger click-through rates. According to one study, emails with subject lines less than 10 characters long had open rates of nearly **50%**.<sup>3</sup> In fact, there was a direct correlation between the shortness of the subject line and the email open rate, as shown in the chart on the left.

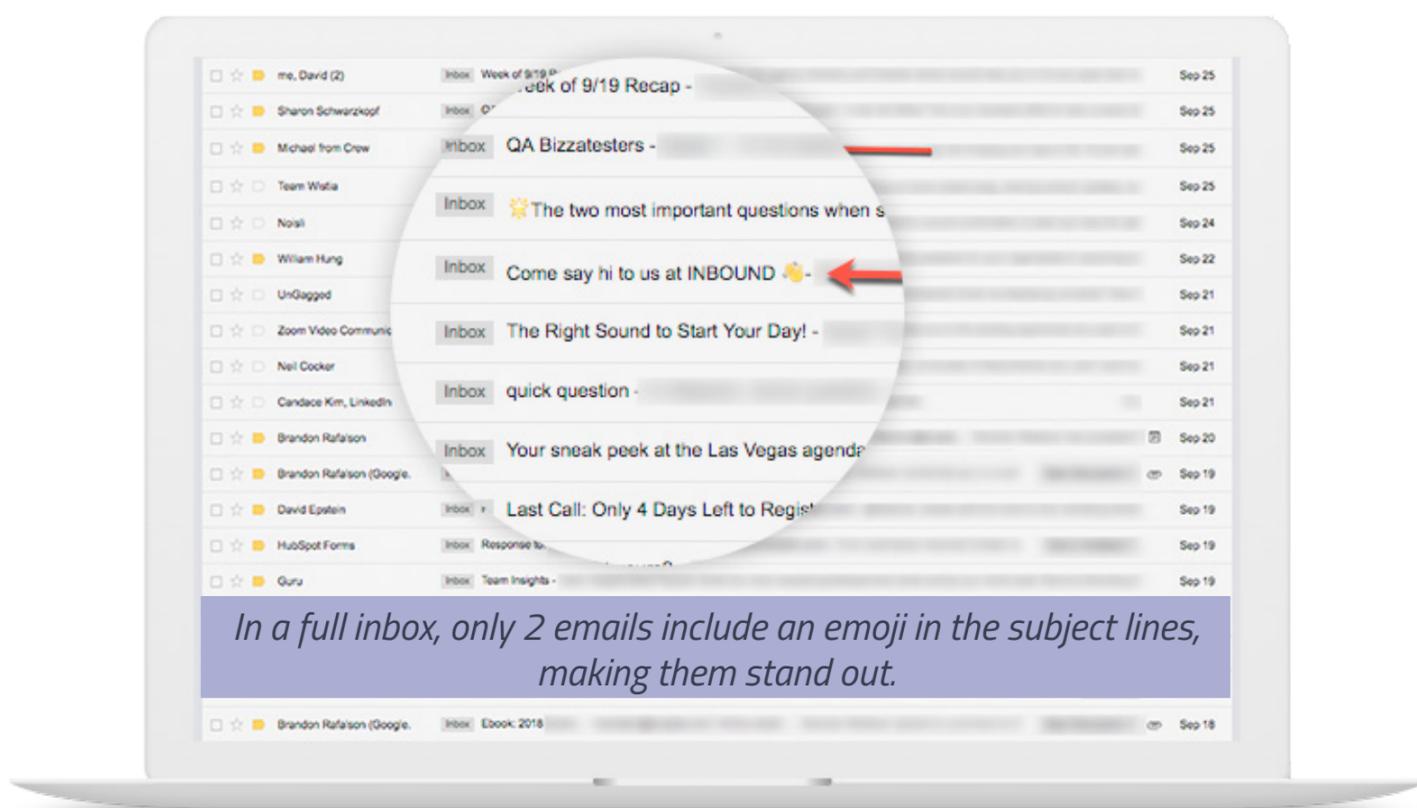
<sup>3</sup> Informz: 2014 Association Email Marketing Benchmark Report

Below you can find a few examples of short subject lines used by top companies. Think of creative ways to utilize short, punchy subject lines that stays true to your brand and message.

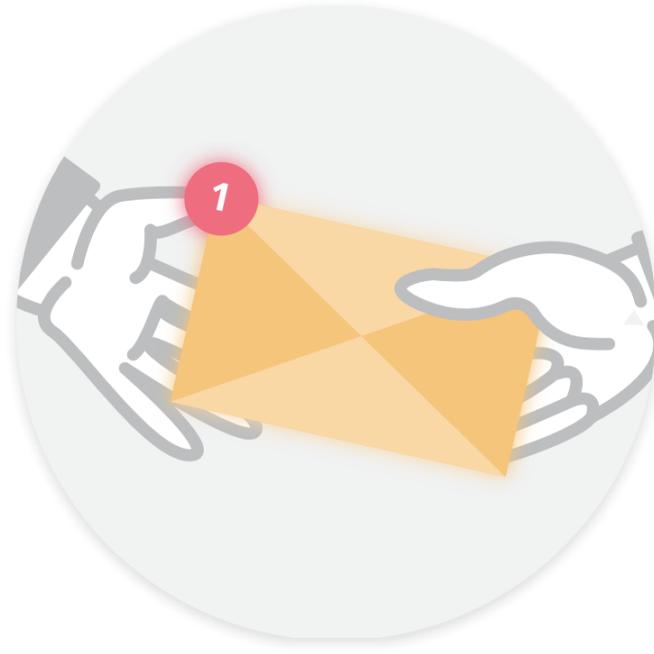
Company	Subject Line	Character Count
ELITE DAILY	"Cry Baby."	9
 Chromatik	"LOL"	3
	"Lighten Up"	10
	"\$10"	3

Though correlation never equals causation, it's worth noting the relation between having a short, to-the-point subject line and high open rates. One of the core components of successful event marketing is the ability to keep things simple and memorable for attendees so applying the same principle to email subject lines makes perfect sense.

Another aspect to consider when thinking of a subject line is including an emoji. Though there is not yet enough statistics to show if emojis in subject lines help increase open rates, plenty of companies are nonetheless are adopting it as a strategy. Because using emojis in subject lines is a relatively new method, doing so will help your email stand out in a jam-packed inbox.



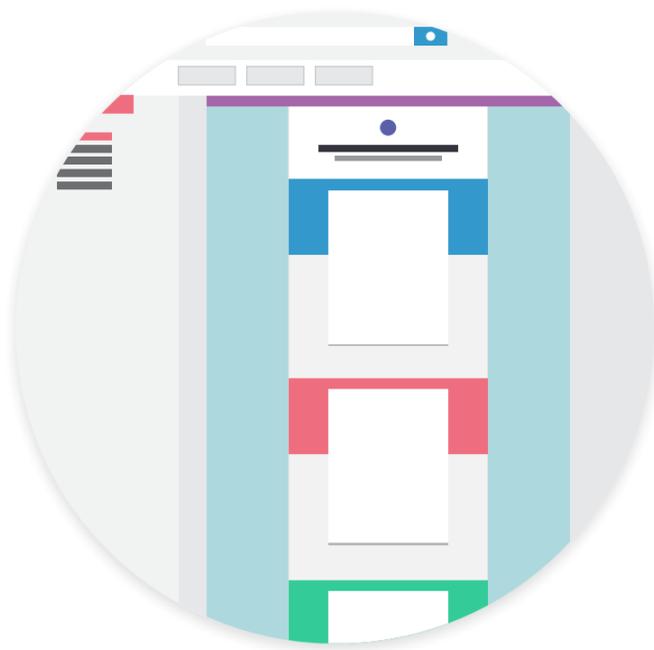
Of course this does not mean to indiscriminately include a 😊 or a 🎉 in every single subject line. Cute little images are by no means the panacea to low email open rates (unfortunately...) However, as long as using an emoji aligns with your message, brand voice, and target audience, then it is a solution definitely worth exploring.



## PERSONALIZE THE MESSAGE

A constant struggle when sending mass emails is the loss of personal touch. No one likes being sent generic messages that don't seem to address them in any particular way. To avoid this, take advantage of the personalization capabilities that many email automation platforms are now capable of.

Including the recipient's name in the subject line or within the email is always a great attention-grabber. Inserting the recipient's company name in the body of the emails is another good way to maximize engagement. According to a study conducted by Campaign Monitor, emails with personalized subject lines are **26%** more likely to be opened than emails with generic subject lines<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, research done by Aberdeen shows that personalized emails improved click-through rates by an average of **14%** and improved conversions by an average of **10%**.<sup>5</sup>



## CREATE EYE-CATCHING EMAIL DESIGN

While personalization is one way to grab the attention of your audience, aesthetically impressive emails can be just as effective. The overall design of your emails is just as

<sup>4</sup> Campaign Monitor: The New Rules of Email Marketing, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Aberdeen: B2B Social Media Marketing: Are We There Yet?, 2015.

important as the words in the message. Just having a few blocks of text with a call-to-action button at the bottom will not be enough to persuade the reader to engage with your email.

Unfortunately, there are many instances where organizers miss the opportunity for high engagement due to poorly designed emails. It's important for readers to understand that marketing emails are different from the traditional email sent to a colleague. Marketing emails should be beautifully designed pieces of content that excite, inform and encourage recipients to visit an event website, register for an event.

To ensure outstanding email design, it may be worthwhile to hire a graphic designer. If you're choosing to design on your own, here are a few things to keep in mind when creating your masterpiece:



**Craft an enticing email header**



**Keep a consistent design theme**

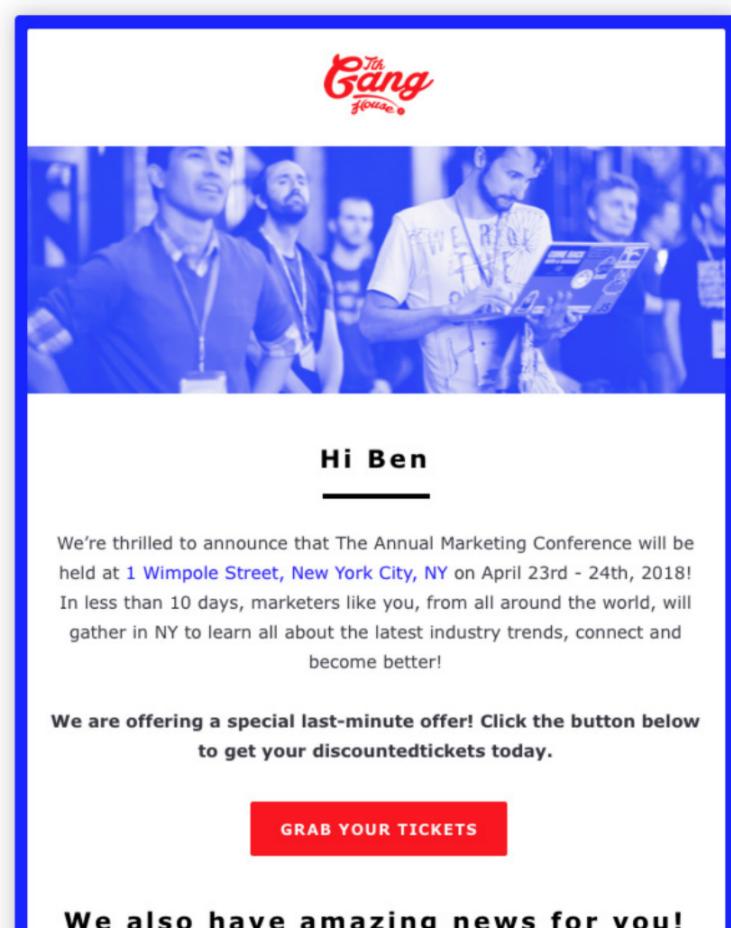


**Apply accented colors throughout**

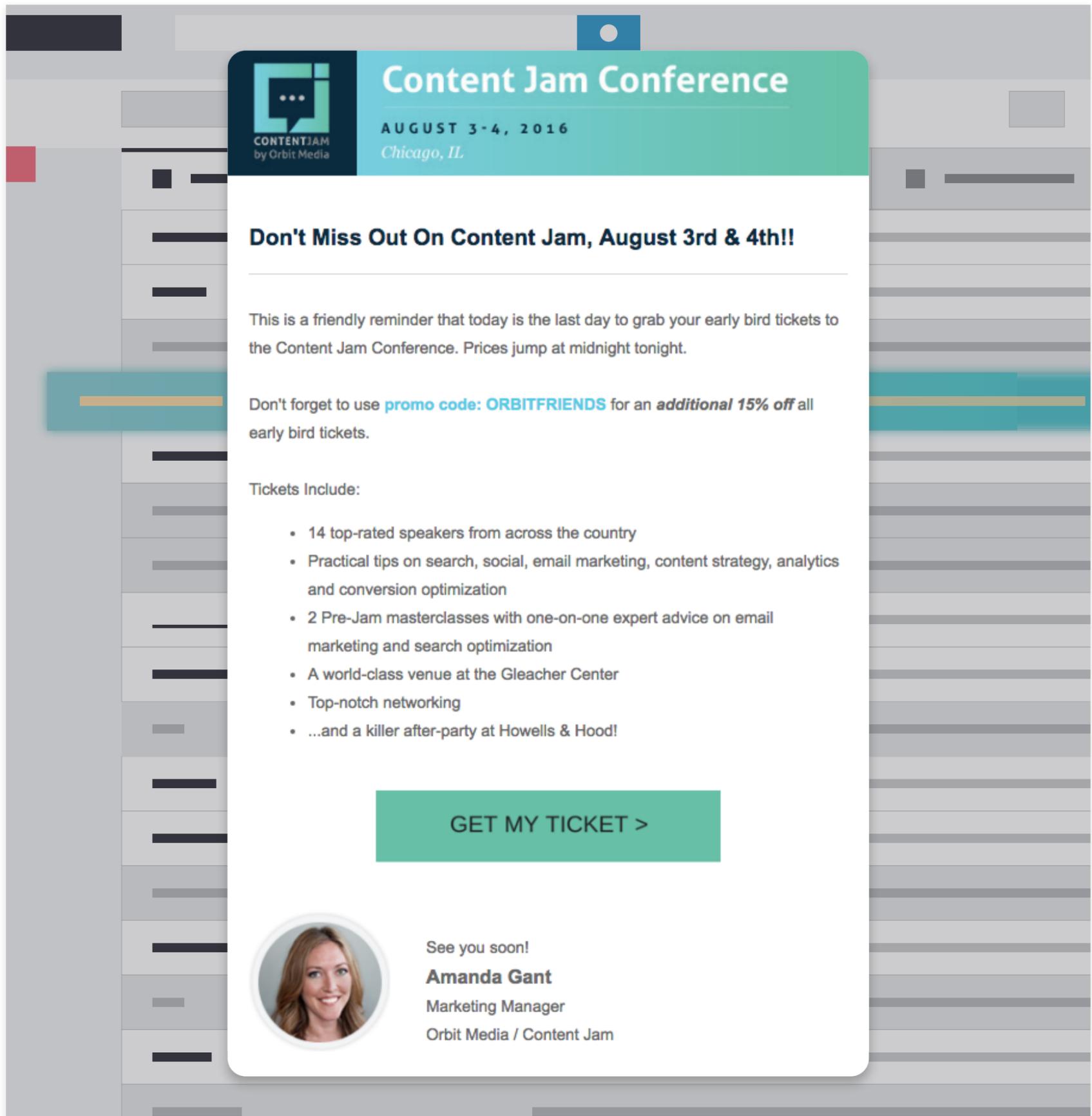


**Stick to a simple, sleek email aesthetic**

To keep things easier for you as an event marketer, make sure to use an email marketing platform or event management software that provides well-designed email templates. Using templates will save you plenty of time as well as keep your designs consistent throughout your campaign. To the right is an example of one of Bizzabo's new email design templates that will launch in 2018.



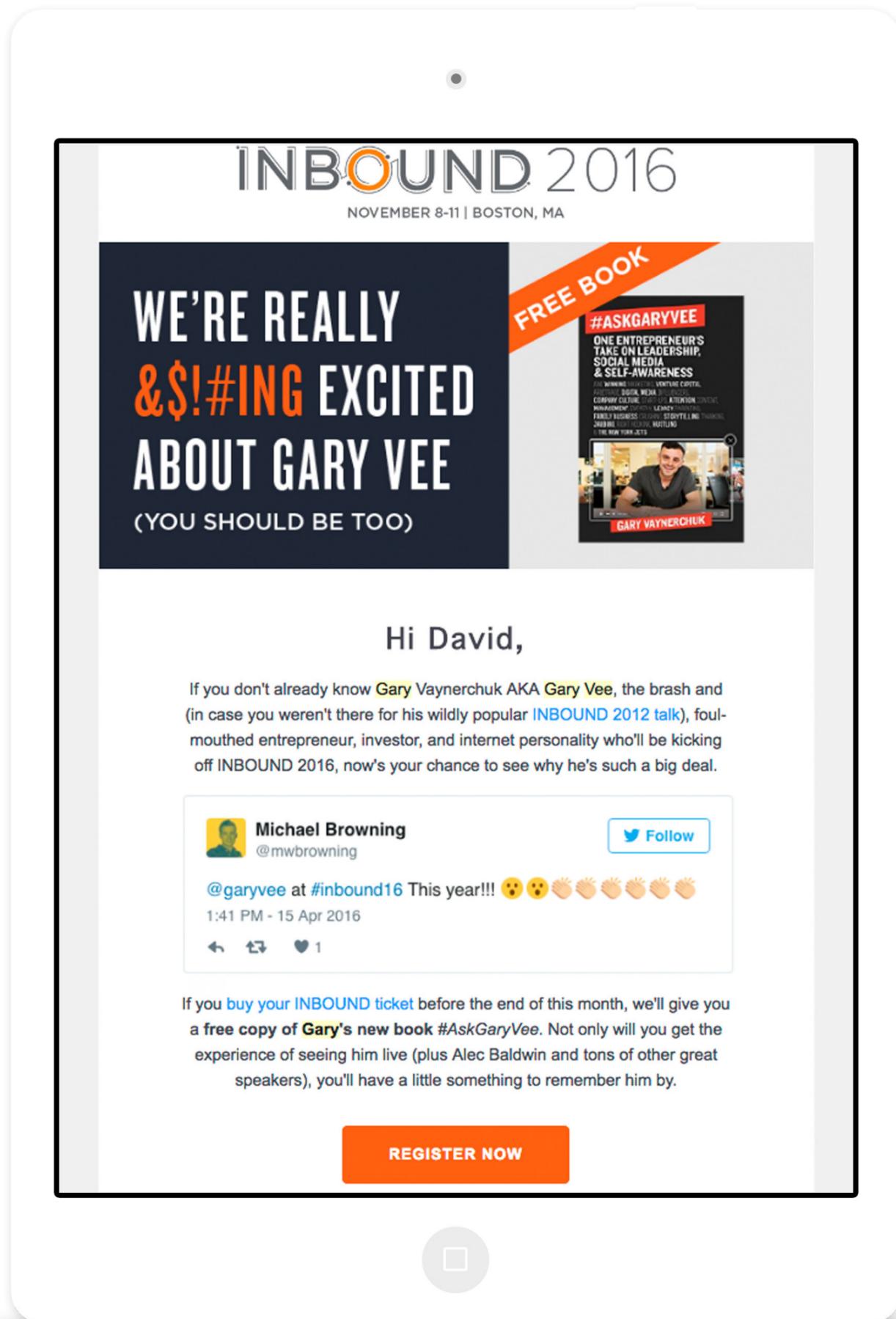
As additional sources of inspiration, below you'll find two examples of exceptional emails that hold true to the rules of good email design. Both emails are invitations to register for a large user conference. Notice how simple yet engaging both of these emails are as well as the different elements that are included besides just the text.



### 1. Orbit Media Content Jam Conference

Orbit Media is a consulting company that helps businesses improve digital marketing strategy. They hosted an event about content marketing and invited contacts to attend while offering a 15% discount off of registration fees. The email looks professional, highlights key information with bullet points and features a clear CTA (Get My Ticket).

In addition, the email is humanized thanks to the head shot below the CTA. In an era where email feels increasingly impersonal, adding humanizing touches like a headshot, or an actual "from" email address instead of the standard "no reply" can go a long way.



## 2. HubSpot INBOUND Conference

Hubspot is a marketing automation company that hosts an annual user conference in Boston. Approximately 10,000 business people attend each year to learn about marketing and sales best-practices. One of the keynote speakers presenting at a recent INBOUND is Gary Vaynerchuk, a successful and outspoken entrepreneur.

To promote the event, and one of the most popular speakers presenting at INBOUND, the Hubspot team created the well-designed email above. It features an attention grabbing header image that offers a free copy of Mr. Vaynerchuk's latest book. It also features an embedded Tweet as a way of offering social proof and of building excitement among email recipients. Of course, as with all of the examples in this article, the email features a clear CTA encouraging recipients to register to the event.

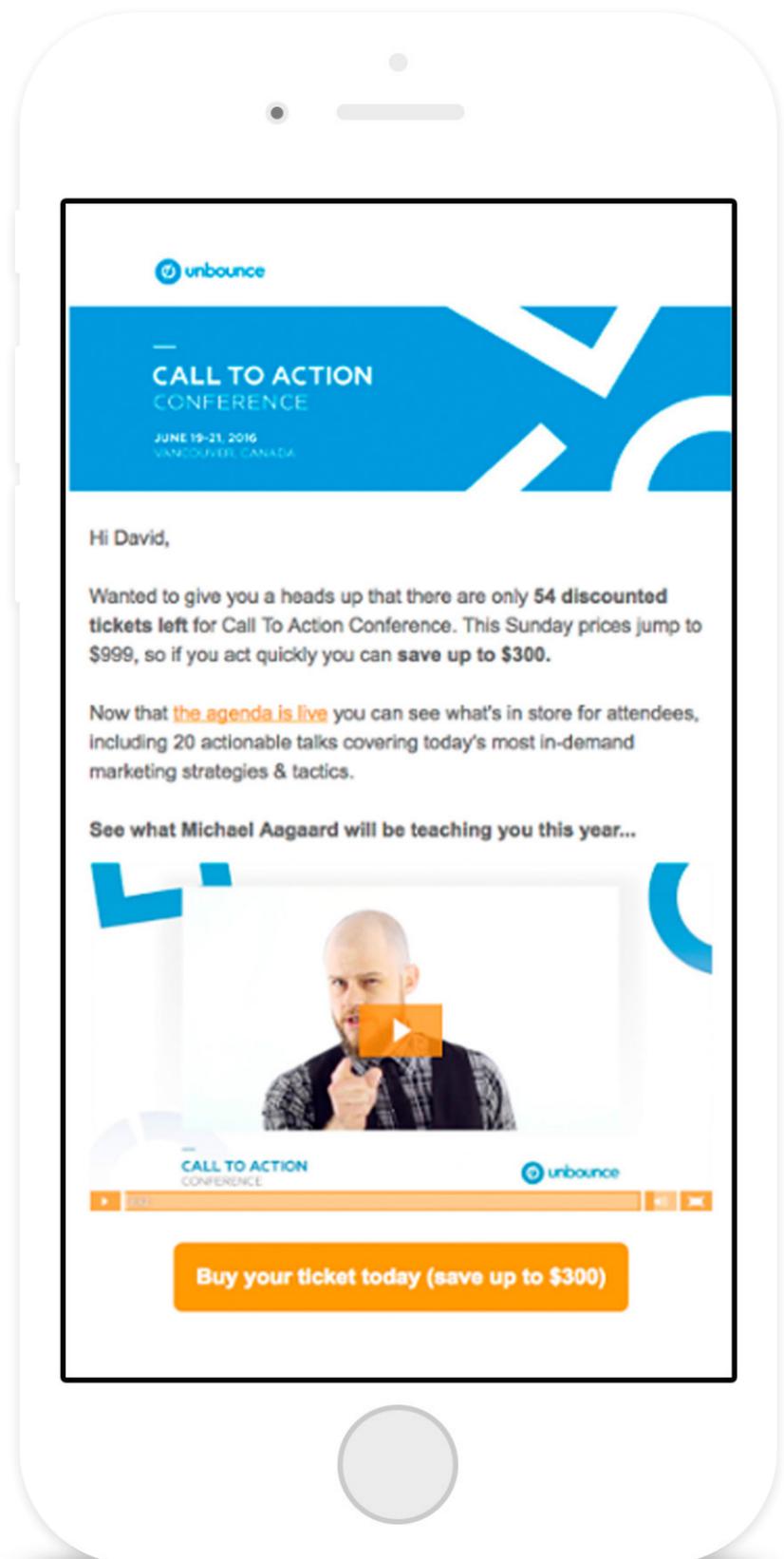


## INCLUDE AN ENGAGING VIDEO

As made evident by the email examples above, a message can be conveyed with more than just words. Especially when your reader has a full inbox to read through, keeping your email short and engaging with a central visual element can do much to enhance the reader's experience.

Video is a great way to engage a reader as soon as they open the email. According to a study done by Syndacast, having the word "video" in the email subject line increased click-through rates by **65%**.<sup>6</sup> If the email is inviting them to register for the event, include a "sizzler video" that showcases highlights from the previous year's event. Or if your email campaign is intended for prospective speakers, record a high quality video of yourself or a team member warmly welcoming them to apply for a speaking panel at your event. Using video to communicate your message makes the email feel more personable and engaging.

This example shows how UnBounce, a marketing technology company, uses video directly addressing readers to register for the event. The video shows one of their speakers, Michael Aagaard, explaining what he'll be teaching them at the conference.



6 Syndacast: Video Marketing Statistics, 2015..

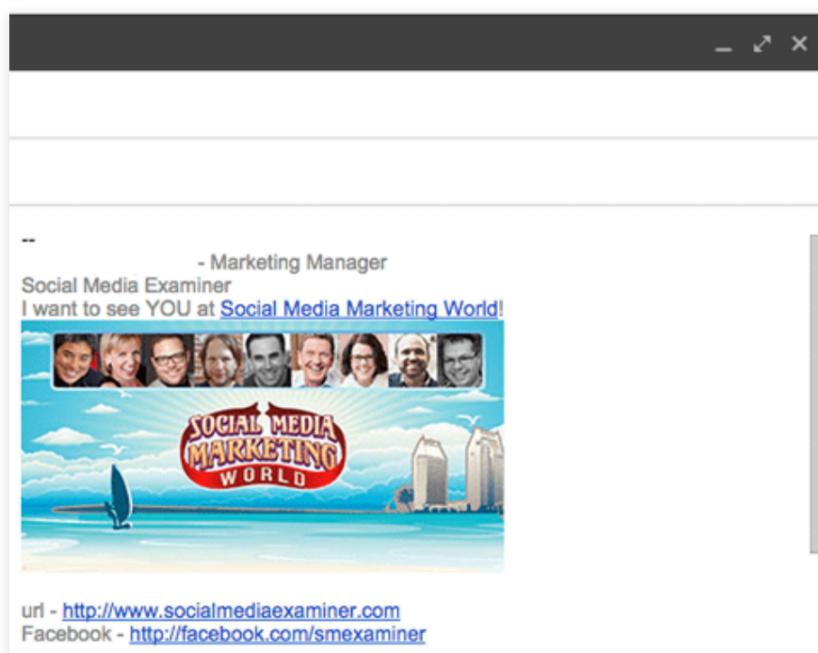
It's important to note that most email providers do not allow videos to be embedded in the email. **Gmail**, which holds **40%** of the email market share, does not have the functionality and neither does **Outlook** (23%) or **Yahoo** (21%).<sup>7</sup> Therefore in order for recipients to view a video in email, the image must hyperlink to a another page where the video is hosted. For the Unbounce example above, readers were directed to this [link](#) after clicking on the image.

Despite this small technical work around, video is still a fantastic resource for event planners to leverage. People have proven time and time again that they are much willing to engage with an email that has a video as opposed to one that does not.



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE

Remember that every part of the email is an opportunity for you to engage the reader. The email signature is often overlooked piece of real estate that can have significant impact on engaging the recipient. Below you can see how Social Media Marketing World uses the email signature to their advantage.



After conveying the core message, use your email signature to offer an additional link to the reader. This may lead to the event website, social media channels, or a sponsorship application page. The point is to take advantage of this portion of the email and to not pass up an opportunity to offer something to the reader.

7 GoAnimate: Embedding Video In Email - A Comprehensive Guide, 2015.

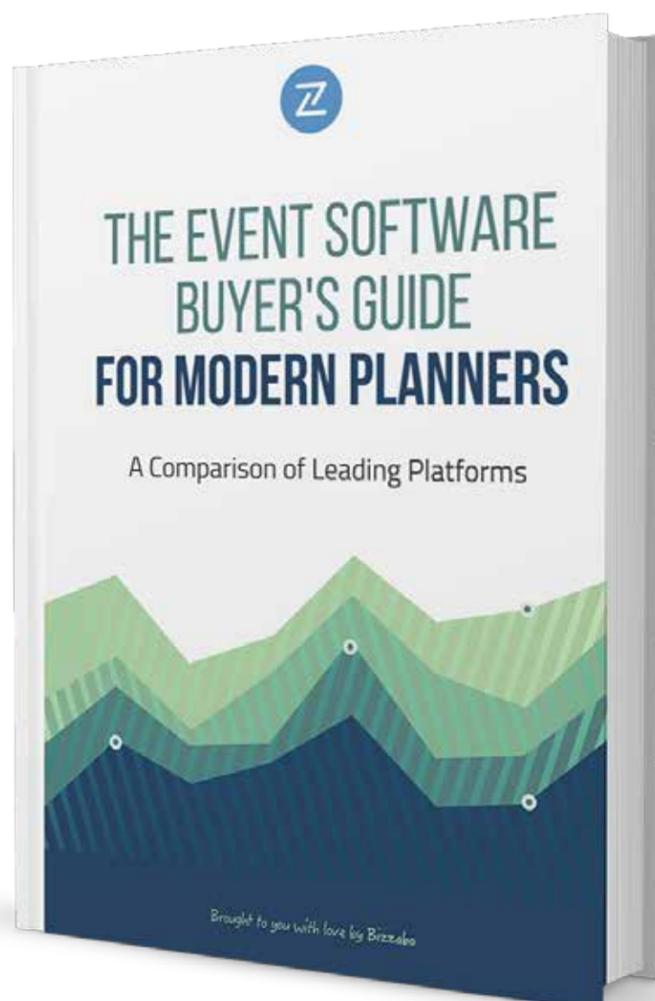


# COMPARE EVENT SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

*Read the event tech benchmark report*

READ THE REPORT

- A head-to-head comparison of leading platforms using 3rd party data.
- Data-driven reporting that highlights future event tech trends to look out for.
- 70 questions to ask event tech salespeople.



# SEGMENT AUDIENCES

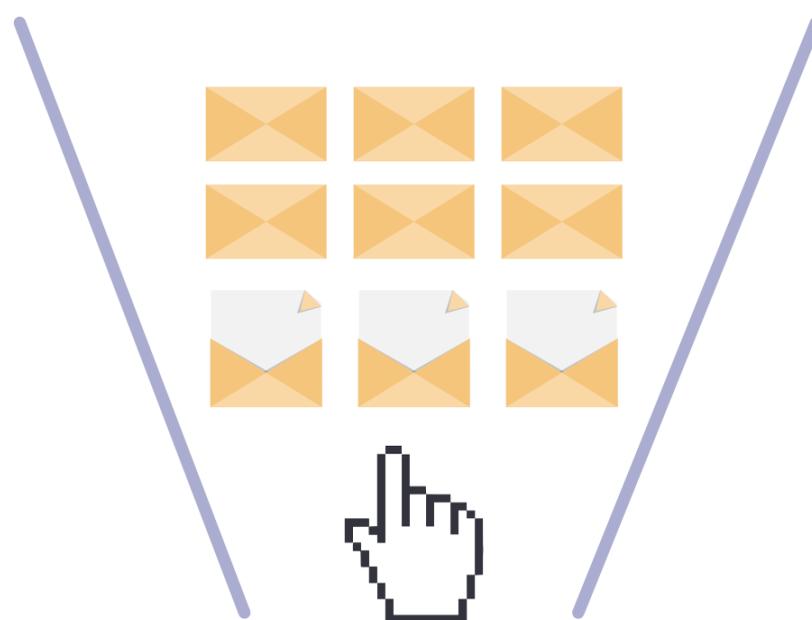
Now that you are well aware of the components that make up a well composed email, the next step is to craft the message so that it is relevant for the intended audience. Event marketers always have a variety of readers to communicate with and the more intentional you are with your segmentation, the more engagement you will receive from your target audience. The most important part of email segmentation is to know how you are going to slice your database of recipients.

If you are a seasoned event marketer, you will most likely have hundreds if not thousands of contacts stored somewhere. And of course, not all of your contacts are alike. Some are past event sponsors, others are die-hard event evangelists, and others have never attended an event you've organized. So why would you send all of these groups the same email?

Before even creating the campaign, know the message you intend to convey to each target and determine the best ways to do so.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EMAILS ARE SEGMENTED?

The data clearly shows that segmented campaigns have a much higher performance than non-segmented campaigns. A recent study by MailChimp, a leading email marketing platform, found that emails that were segmented were opened **14%** more often and that once opened, people clicked on links in the email over **100%** more often.<sup>8</sup>

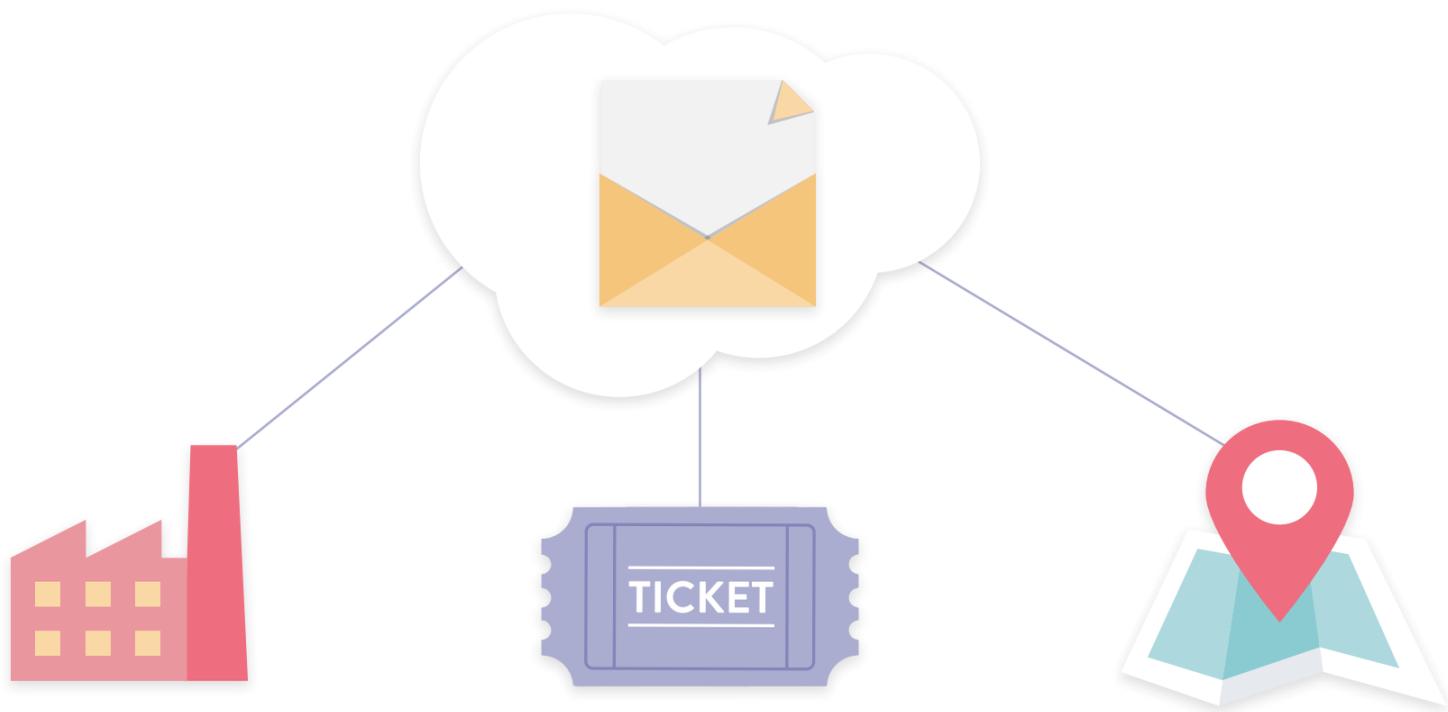


To put those numbers in perspective, if you're emailing 1,000 people, and 400 people of that group usually open your emails, a segmented campaign would yield 56 more opens than normal. Let's assume that usually of the people who open the email, 20 click on a link in the email. A 100% increase would mean 20 more clicks. Who wouldn't want to double their click-through rate? Yes, 20 clicks may sound insignificant but for some organizers even one more click that leads to a registration can mean thousands of dollars more in revenue. Segmenting emails can have a big impact on your event ROI.

<sup>8</sup> Mailchimp: Effects of List Segmentation On Email Marketing Stats, 2017.

# WAYS EVENT PLANNERS CAN SEGMENT MARKETING EMAILS

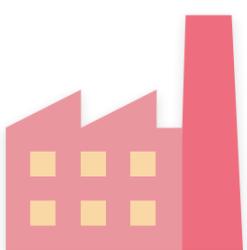
Event organizers have a number of email segmentation options at their disposal. Note that all of the options listed below could be combined for even more specific segmentation.



**Ticket Type:** You may want to convey different information to different ticket holders. Perhaps logistical information is different for VIP registrants compared to Early Bird registrants. The out-dated way of communicating with different ticket holders has been to send one email that is divided into sections. This is no longer an effective solution. People have limited attention spans and will quickly disengage with emails that contain irrelevant information. Instead, segment your emails and convey only what is necessary to each ticket holder.



**Location:** When promoting an event, it may make sense to focus on reaching out to contacts located near the venue first. You could also promote virtual passes to those attendees located far away from the venue. Emails segmented by location can help to streamline logistics on registration day and make sure that all aspects of the event run smoothly.



**Industry:** Perhaps the event you're organizing will have multiple tracks by industry. Or perhaps certain exhibitors attending want to speak with specific verticals. Exhibitors can be promoted most effectively when emails are sent to contacts segmented by industry. Keep close track of the types of industries that are showing interest in your event and use that data as a means to craft personalized messages for those specific audiences.



**Job Function:** This should be an obvious one. Perhaps certain sessions will appeal only to CMOs, or different people holding different job functions in the same industry will want to know about specific sessions at the event you're planning.



**Contact Role:** Depending on the event CRM platform you are using, you may be able to assign a specific role to a contact. Bizzabo's platform, for example, allows users to assign roles like "attendee," "speaker," "sponsor," and many others including customer roles. This makes sharing event updates with the right group more logical and the content more relevant for the intended recipient.



**Age:** As we've discussed in other blog posts, different demographics want to be communicated with in different ways. Segmenting emails by age can help you communicate with contacts in their preferred style. Doing so will also ensure that you are using the appropriate tone and verbiage for the intended reader.



**Lead Status / Hot Lead:** For those using a sophisticated event registration software, it may be possible to identify contacts who began the registration process but abandoned it. If it is possible to identify these contacts, sending them a follow up email reminding them to register is a great way to increase registration rates and recover otherwise lost revenue. Within Bizzabo's platform, these attendees are labeled as "Hot Leads" and can be segmented into a campaign of its own.

## USING ACCURATE DATA TO OPTIMIZE SEGMENTATION

All of this is to say that effective segmentation is not possible without the proper data. It is only with clean, granular data that segmented emails can result in successful campaigns. The key to gathering this type of information is through a high performance event management platform that provides the proper functionality.

Bizzabo's platform allows the event marketer to receive in-depth insights about their audience through detailed registration forms, survey responses, and live event polling questions. This reservoir of data allows event marketers to create email campaigns specific to target audiences, as mentioned in the previous section. For example, let's say that you as the event organizer are looking to provide a special offering to marketing VP's from the consumer goods industry. Creating this email campaign would be as simple as choosing the corresponding dropdown field and selecting the desired property, as shown in the image on the next page.



Select message type



Compose message



Select contacts



Preview & send

Lists **Contacts**

Search for Contacts

Advanced Search ^

AND

AND

AND

+ AND

+ OR

Capabilities such as these make for a much smoother and logical email marketing process. With the right event management platform, segmented campaigns can be properly planned and successfully executed.



# Discover The Future of Event Marketing

- Data-driven reporting sourced from 420+ survey responses from top event marketers.
- Industry insights and trends to help inform your event marketing decisions.
- An exclusive look into where the event marketing industry is headed.



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# MEASURE RESULTS

Now that we've discussed all of the tools, tips, and tricks that will help you to create and conduct an email campaign, we will now take a look at the definition of a successful campaign. What are your key performance indicators and metrics of success? Is the focus on open rates? Click-through rates? Registrations? There are countless statistics that can reflect the performance for every email campaign. It's time to see how we can measure and analyze them.

## EMAIL MARKETING KPIS

Which KPIs are relevant will differ depending on the targeted recipient, but that is all the more reason to specifically define your metrics for success before launching your campaign. There must always be a way to properly measure performance and the clearer that is prior to the launch, the easier it will be to determine the success of the initiative. At the end of the day, having measurable results is the most important factor in ensuring the success of future campaigns.

**Open Rate:** According to a study done by MailChimp, the average open rate for emails within the events industry is **21.21%**.<sup>9</sup> This is a helpful benchmark to keep in mind as you monitor the performance of your campaigns. When people receive an email, the very first option is to either open it or not. Thus, open rates are usually a core metric of interest for many event marketers.

As discussed earlier in this ebook, subject lines are the very first impression that readers

9 MailChimp: Email Marketing Benchmarks, 2017.

have before even opening the email. Emails with a low open rate could be an indication that the email subject line simply was not compelling. It may also mean that the sent email did not reach recipients' inbox because it went to a spam folder or because many of the email addresses were incorrect. In order to maintain an accurate open rate statistic, make sure to double-check that each campaign is being received by the intended audience and opening correctly.

**Click-Through Rates:** After having opened the email, the next intended step for the recipient is to click-through to another page of content outside of the email. Whether that is an event website, a sponsorship package document, or a speaker application form, the goal of your emails as an event marketer should be to lead your reader to more content. Thus, click-through rates are key to measuring the recipient's willingness to further engage with your content. Most times this rate is measured by how many times readers are clicking the CTA button within the email or any other links you've included. Having tracking links for such CTA's is crucial to measuring their performance.

According to the aforementioned MailChimp study, the average click-through rate for events industry emails is **2.33%**. If recipients are clicking on CTA buttons at a rate lower than two percent, there is room to improve your email content. Perhaps the button is not sufficiently visible or the offering is not clearly articulated in the email. Continue to think of creative ways (perhaps through A/B testing) to improve your click-through rate to **2%** or great.

**Response rates:** As an event marketer, sometimes you're looking for more than just a click. Certain campaigns will require an actual written response from your readers, such as campaigns dedicated to securing sponsors or hiring speakers. For highly targeted and personalized emails such as these, your metric for success should be a fully written response. And because these responses are much harder to obtain, make sure that your email content is as personalized and optimized as possible on all counts.

**Unsubscribe rates:** An often overlooked metric in email campaigns is the unsubscribe rate. Make sure to keep track of those who are completely unsubscribing from your emails altogether. Though this is never an encouraging statistic to pay attention to, doing so will indicate whether your audience was the right target in the first place. If you see that people are unsubscribing to your emails at a higher rate than the industry average, which according to MailChimp is **0.28%**, then your strategy must be revisited.

**A/B testing:** While this is not a specific rate like the previously mentioned metrics, it is nonetheless an imperative part of measuring and analyzing the success of your email campaigns. Improving upon all of the aforementioned metrics will require you to understand which strategies perform highly and which do not. This entails conducting A/B testing for all types of variables.

If you'd like to determine the impact that the subject line's word length has on email open

rates, run a campaign in which the subject line is **10** characters or less and another in which the line is more than **10** characters. If the goal is to optimize the CTA button, run two separate campaigns in which the buttons are completely different.



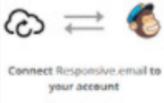
The most important thing to keep in mind when conducting A/B testing is to make sure that you hold all other variables constant. For example, if you are testing to see which CTA button yields a higher click-through rate, make sure that every other detail remains the exact same for both emails. This will ensure that you are receiving clean data from your experiment which will then ultimately determine which option will yield a better campaign performance.

## INTEGRATING WITH EVENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

When it comes to measuring the impact of your email campaigns, the key is to ensure that all of the necessary data is easily accessible across platforms. The first step to this would be to invest in an email marketing platform, such as MailChimp, Campaign Monitor or HubSpot, that would help you measure and track all of your campaigns.

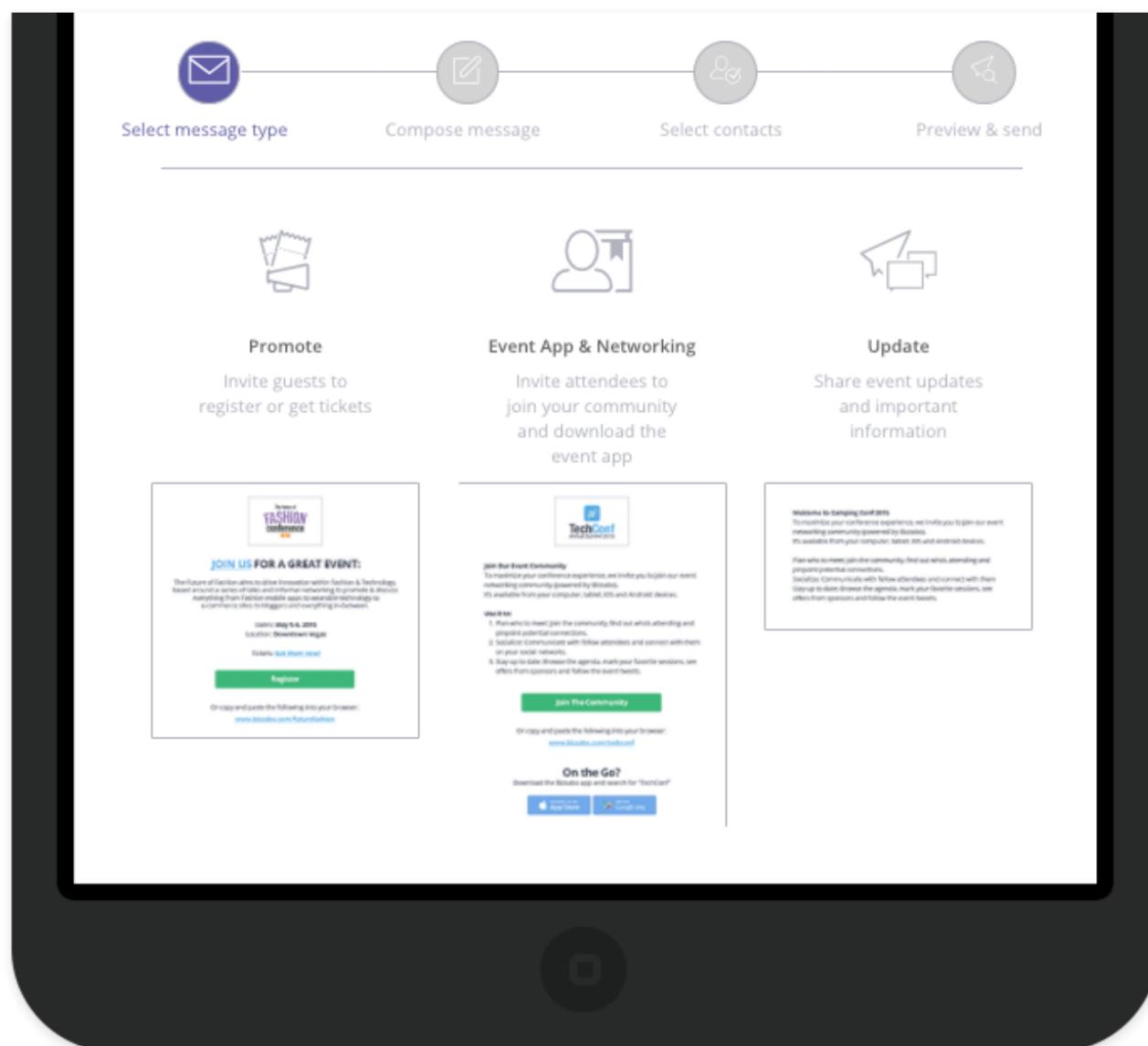
More specifically, integrating your email marketing platform with your event management software would offer the best results in terms of clean data and insightful analytics. Without such an integration, you would have to manually export data into spread sheets, reorganize, and then import the data into the event management platform. To avoid tedious tasks like these, integrate your email marketing platform with your event management software for an ideal solution.

For example, Bizzabo has a MailChimp integration that provides multiple functionalities to improve backend processes. This allows you to sync your Bizzabo contacts to MailChimp, giving you the power to communicate with event attendees through a separate yet integrated

 <p>Connect Responsive.email to your account</p>	 <p><b>BIZZABO</b></p>		
<p><b>Responsive.email to MailChimp</b></p> <p>Create error-free, custom HTML emails in Responsive.email Studio and export them directly to MailChimp <small>FREE</small></p> <p><a href="#">Learn More →</a></p>	<p><b>Bizzabo Sync for MailChimp</b></p> <p>Communicate with your event attendees easily and wisely by syncing your Bizzabo contacts to MailChimp</p> <p><a href="#">Learn More →</a></p>	<p><b>FollowUpBoss by PieSync</b></p> <p>With PieSync, every contact you add in FollowUpBoss automatically gets added or updated in MailChimp, and vice versa.</p> <p><a href="#">Learn More →</a></p>	<p><b>TableUp</b></p> <p>Our integration will allow our customers to use data in our CRM to send targeted emails from their MailChimp account. <small>FREE</small></p> <p><a href="#">Learn More →</a></p>

MailChimp platform. This is just one of over 750 software integrations that Bizzabo offers.

Though integrations are highly impactful, what would be even better for you as an event marketer would be if your event management software contained a native email marketing feature. Bizzabo's platform offers the ability to create segmented campaigns based on message type as well as contact level.



The screenshot displays a user interface for creating an email campaign. At the top, a horizontal flow shows four steps: 'Select message type', 'Compose message', 'Select contacts', and 'Preview & send'. Below this, three message type options are presented with icons and brief descriptions:

- Promote:** Invite guests to register or get tickets. The preview shows an email for 'Street Fashion Conference' with a 'Register' button.
- Event App & Networking:** Invite attendees to join your community and download the event app. The preview shows an email for 'TechConf' with a 'Join the Community' button and app download links.
- Update:** Share event updates and important information. The preview shows an email titled 'Welcome to Camping Trail 2015' with event details.

# CONCLUSION

An event marketer's job is to be an expert communicator with multiple types of audiences. For this reason, email marketing is a crucial tool for all event marketers to master. Though there are many aspects to a well-executed email campaign, exceptional email marketing will always come down to the three main components: optimize, segment, and measure.

We hope this ebook provided you with plenty of ways to thoroughly understand those three factors and inspired different types of email strategies that will best fit your needs as an event marketer. There is never an end point when it comes to learning a topic as broad as this one but we're confident that the contents of this ebook have steered you in the right direction.

Now that you've learned the core fundamentals, it's time to put these lessons into action. Make sure your events software includes robust email marketing features and native integrations that will ensure consistently successful campaigns. If all of this is already in place, hit send and good luck!

**Have any questions?**

Get in touch with us!





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Simon Kamsky  
Marketer



2017 Shortlist for best  
CONFERENCE TECH  
EVENT NETWORKING TECH  
EVENT MARKETING TECH



2015  
BEST EVENT  
MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

2015 & 2016  
FAVORITE TECH SUPPLIER