

Net Atlantic :: Visual Guide

Your Subject Line is Terrible

And Why The View From
The Inbox is so Important



First impressions are tough.

But, as the old adage goes, they sure do count. At job interviews, client meetings, and, heck, first dates, the few minutes spent in the beginning are of the utmost importance as they will decide how the rest of your encounter (however professional or personal) will go. It's the words that come out of your mouth and how you carry yourself during that time that will help determine your value as a candidate (or, in the case of the more romantic scenario, if you win yourself a second date). Even something as simple as the handshake you offer upon initially meeting will factor into whether or not you're considered worthy of someone's attention.

When it comes to email marketing, it's the same thing. First impressions still count. Here, though, **your subject line is your handshake.**

Ask yourself:

Do you come on too strong with your subject line? Is your grip, as it were, a little too aggressive? Do your words come off as bombastic, insincere and, as a result, off-putting? Does your handshake take too long or shake too much? Or is it comparable to a dead fish? Do you leave a limp, cold and impersonal impression on your readership? Is your subject line like a wishy-washy manual greeting, weak and forgettable? Does the handshake of your message fail to garner any notice?

Why does any of this matter?

No matter what the platform, there are two things about your email that are guaranteed to be seen from the inbox: **the subject line** and **the From name.**

And there's a lot riding on this dynamic duo as it's these two things that determine whether or not your email is even opened. **This is how your email makes its first impression.** And while so much of your email marketing efforts can be focused on the message that you so carefully crafted, meticulously stringing engaging copy together and pairing it with equally enticing calls-to-action, it'll all be for naught if your mailings don't even get clicked on. That said, don't you think your subject line and From address merit more than a mere afterthought?

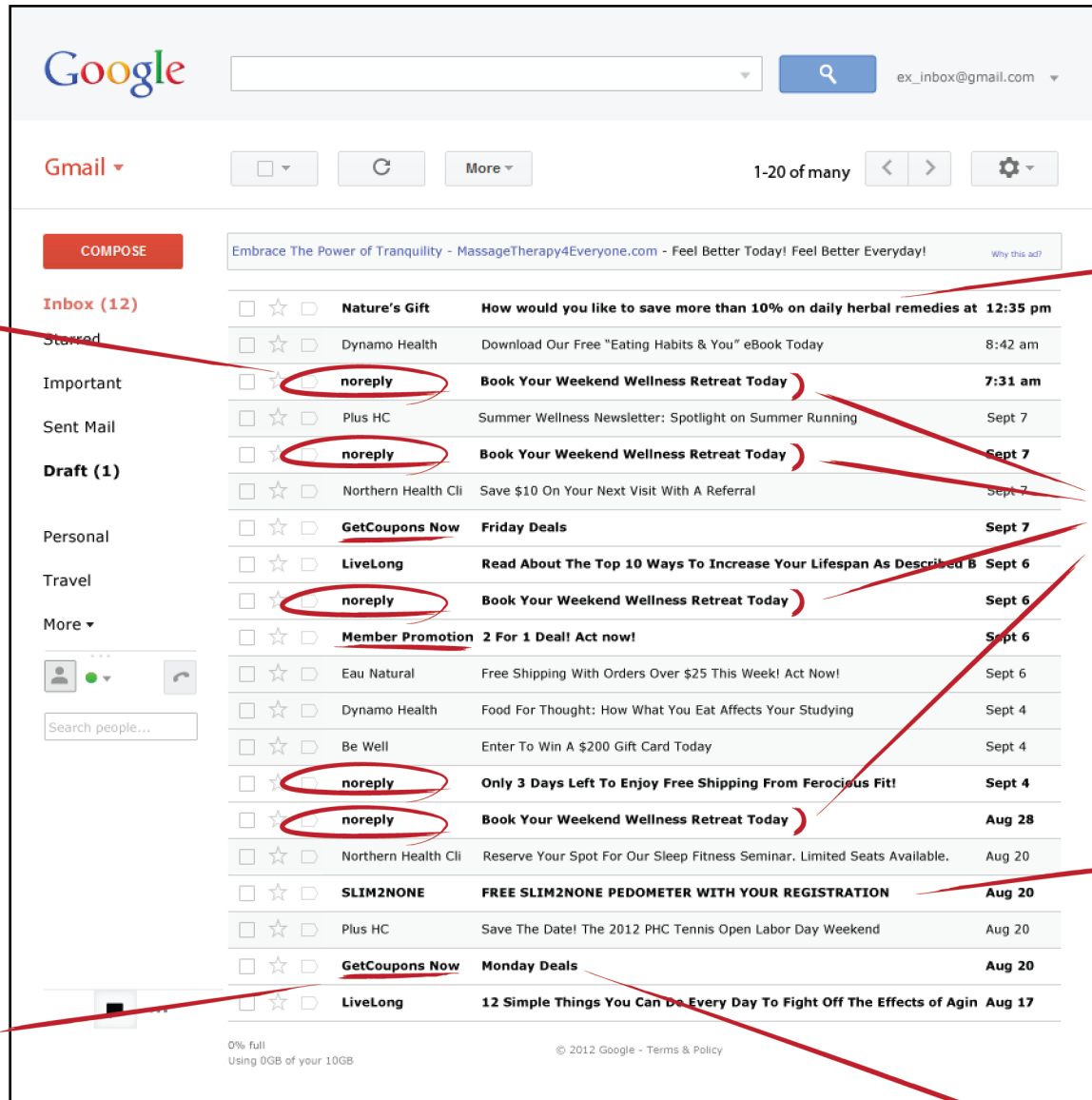
In this visual guide, we've put together an inbox screenshot of a couple examples of poorly executed subject lines and From addresses for your review. They're not pretty. Sadly, just as they are awful they are just as common in the email marketing space.

As we examine some of these crimes committed against email marketing best practices, we'll also go over the reasons why these are problematic and provide you with some strategies to get around them and otherwise address the very issues they bring.

First impressions don't have to be so tough.

Well, with **email**, anyway.

Your Subject Line is Terrible And Why The View From The Inbox is so Important



"noreply" isn't a name

WHO IS THIS?

if you're not sending spam (AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE) you should try not to look as though you are

identifying yourself by your deal just makes you look like SPAM

the subject line is WAY TOO LONG

literally the SAME EXACT subject line four times

ALL-CAPS? seriously? spam much?

BOOOOORING!

REALLY LONG SUBJECT LINES

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

The say that brevity is the soul of wit. It seems logical then that the opposite would be true of, well, the opposite. Besides, the longer the subject line you use, the more likely that it will automatically get cut off by any number of email clients.

SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES

Be concise. Keep subject lines to about 30 characters (36, tops). Most email clients will truncate subject lines in excess of about 40 characters. So, if you absolutely have to use a long-winded subject line, put your most important details at the beginning.

SAME SUBJECT LINES

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

Combined with your sending frequency, this makes it glaringly obvious how aggressive your marketing efforts are. It may even make you look desperate. What's more, sending similar content to your subscribers again and again makes you appear boring and predictable. Eventually, they'll start tuning you out and won't even notice your messages anymore.

SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES

Avoid using the same subject line multiple times. Mix it up a little. Get a thesaurus. If this is an indication that you are literally sending the same message out over and over again, this is a sure sign that you should be trying out new content and not just trying out different subject lines.

BORING SUBJECT LINES

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

You want your recipients to open your mailings, right? You're missing out on an opportunity to engage your audience here.

SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES

Make your subject lines compelling and interesting by instilling a sense of urgency with the use of clear calls-to-action, personalizing them (adding recipient first names can lead to a boost in open rates), and by making them relevant by describing the email's content while focusing on its benefits.

IMPROPER USE OF FROM NAME

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

Failing to use a proper From name makes it difficult to identify who you are and if you're trustworthy.

SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES

First of all, don't state the offer in the From line. It's pretty suspicious that in the one place you can identify yourself you hide behind an offer. Choose a From name that is easily recognizable to the recipient to indicate that your message is from a credible and trusted source. Leverage your brand.

A WORD ABOUT COMPANY NAMES

According to *Jupiter Research*, "including the company name in the subject line can increase open rates by up to 32 percent over a subject line without branding." Something to consider.

SPAMMY SUBJECT LINES

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

First and foremost, your email may get caught in an ESP's spam filter, destroying your chance of reaching inboxes. Secondly, if your message manages to get into an inbox, your recipient may dismiss it as spam or, worst yet, *mark it as spam*, hurting your Sender Score and your deliverability in the future.

SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES

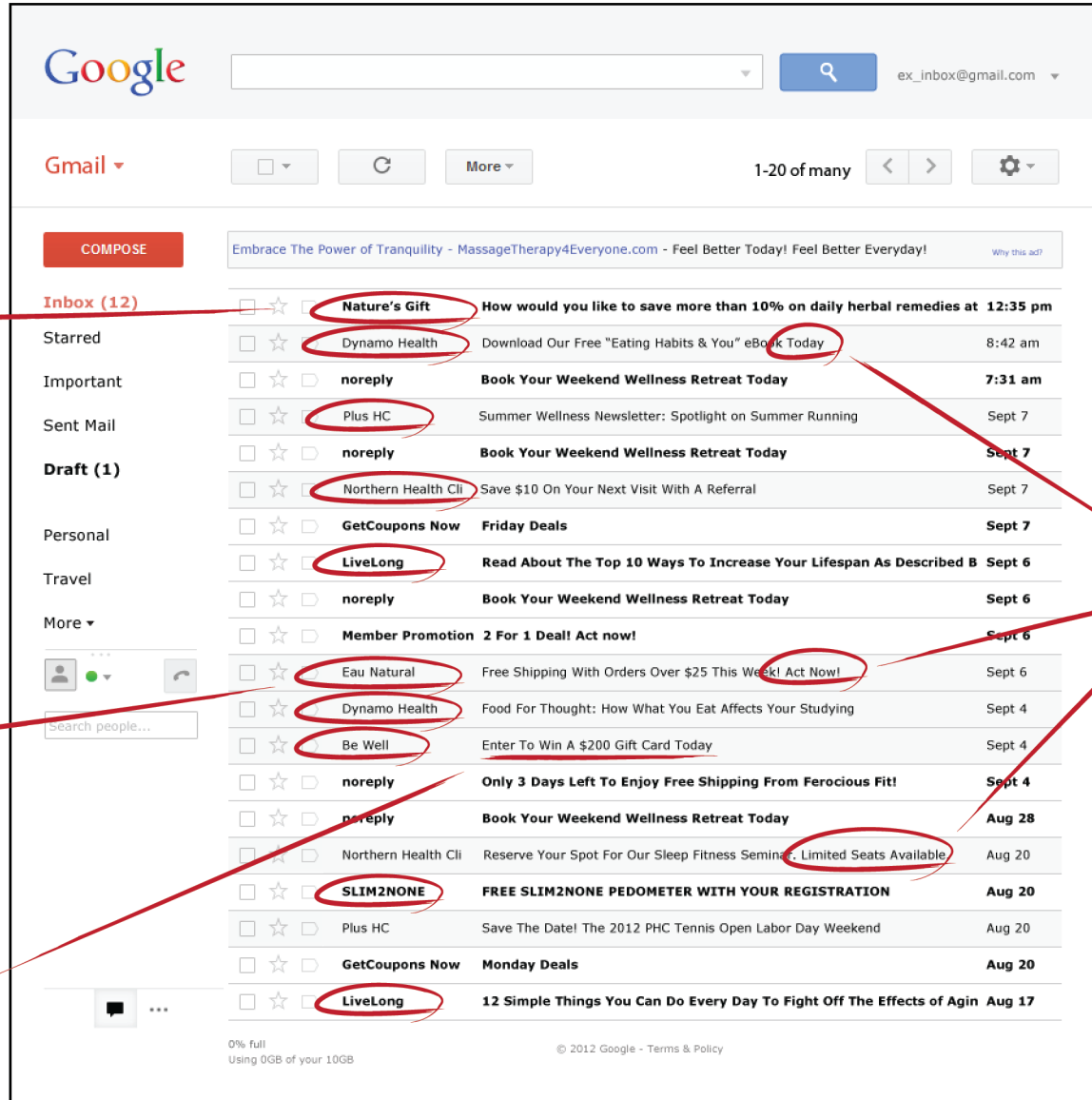
Don't look like spam. Stay away from suspicious words that spam filters look for. Steer clear of multiple exclamation marks, multiple dollar signs, and all-caps. Also, don't use LQQK and L@@K like they do on auction sites. Nobody likes them.

A WORD ABOUT SPAMMY SUBJECT LINES

Spam filters are not foolproof and sometimes grab perfectly legitimate messages, which is why it's advised to play it safe and to simply avoid using spammy words in your subject lines if you can. However, you can get away with using of some of them so long as your content *in conjunction with* your subject line aren't so spammy. When it comes to automated spam determination, it's not always about the subject line used; it's often about the content, as well.

Your Subject Line is Terrible

And Why The View From The Inbox is so Important



an easily recognizable From name indicates that you are a credible and trusted source

short and sweet and, more importantly, less than 35 characters long

focus on the benefits described in the content

instill a sense of urgency

About Net Atlantic

www.netatlantic.com
sales@netatlantic.com
(877) 263 8285

Net Atlantic is an industry leader in email marketing. Since 1995, Net Atlantic, Inc. has been assisting organizations of all sizes communicate effectively online. As an Email Service Provider (ESP) Net Atlantic offers clients the most feature-rich email marketing solutions at a cost-effective price. With unparalleled email marketing capabilities, expert deliverability management and responsive technical support, Net Atlantic's solutions provide you the ability to create, send, track and manage your email marketing campaigns successfully.



-  [net-atlantic-inc.](http://net-atlantic-inc.com)
-  [@netatlantic](https://twitter.com/netatlantic)
-  [NetAtlanticInc](https://www.facebook.com/NetAtlanticInc)
-  [+Netatlantic](https://plus.google.com/+Netatlantic)
-  blog.netatlantic.com