

Writing an Effective Email:

There's nothing worse than putting hard effort into carefully designing a campaign only to have nobody read it. In order to run a successful online campaign, it is important that we carefully craft our email blasts in a way that encourages our supporters to be part of a larger, collective action.

INTRODUCTION

Anatomy of an effective email:

1. Salutation (personalized)
2. Context
3. Ask
4. Reader Focused Theory of Change
5. Your Story (Ask)
6. Narrative Development [optional]
7. Signature
8. P.S (if necessary, with an alternate ask)

Salutation:

Almost every mail client will let you do a custom mail merge field that includes the individual's name (or Friend) in the first line of the email greeting. By including personalization, you increase the deliverability of your blast, and the likelihood that the person reading it will feel a stronger sense of affinity with your message.

Context:

Bulk email writing is difficult because you must simultaneously appeal to the lowest and highest information members on your list. The intro should include context that is brief, to the point, and (for bonus points) contain **new information** about a tension or crisis the reader will care about.

This can be as simple as:

*“Something happening in the real world right now that could develop into a **bad outcome** or is a potential moment to achieve a **good outcome**.”*

Ask:

The ask is the part of the email where you are straight forward and up-front about what you need the e-mail reader to do. This is usually an action-related sentence, and is

almost always the first hyperlink to your action. The basic ask is then repeated 2 more times in the email blast. We do this because the individual might read just the first two paragraphs, half the email, or the entire thing, and you want to be able to offer them an opportunity to take action regardless of when they decide to stop reading the blast.

Here is a couple of things you should keep in mind when developing your ask:

Set goals: Either for internal development, *“Recruit 2 friends to the campaign!”* or external effect, *“Help us make #YourCampaign trend in Canada”*. Anything that increases overall engagement.

Deadline: Immediacy is best, the key to increasing actions is explaining why now is better than later.

The ask is the trigger for the rest of the Reader Focused Theory of Change that ends with resolution of the tension in the context.

Reader Focused Theory of Change

This is a cause and effect sequence of events. It is triggered by the “ask”, which is typically something that the reader can reasonably do. This action then results in tangible, positive impact on the opportunity or crisis related to the context.

The Reader Focused Theory of Change is what makes grassroots movements and online campaigns authentic, and viral. If your email campaign is based on a common sense action that clearly and demonstrably would have an effect on the crisis, then it will be much more likely to grow organically because there is a real credible feeling that taking your action will result in the kind of change we want.

Your Story

By sharing your story with your community, you transform a list of emails into a group that identifies with your cause, and your movement. You can do this in email format by giving an overview of:

What's Happening : Value based message about what's happening, or what is at stake.

Who we are [Blank]: A story about who we are as a community in this context.

Where we're headed: A look back at history or a look ahead at where society is headed. This is where you set your long term goals for victory, always laying out how to

get there through a reader focused theory of change.

Narrative Development:

Every good story has heroes and villains, think about your action and your campaign and try to find someone on the opposing side who is particularly vulnerable to criticism to target, or someone who is supporting and championing your cause to support. By generously lifting up your champions, and fiercely opposing detractors you also send a message to the outside world that there is benefit to supporting your community.

Develop Heroes: *The Chair of the Agricultural Land Commission deserves our thanks for defending B.C.'s farmland and food security from oil and gas interests.*

Develop Villains: *Dear Premier, don't sell off our public hydro provider without consulting the people who elected you.*

Signature:

This is your sign off, try to come up with a simple, professional sign off and stick to it. Usually it can be as simple as thanking the reader for being part of the campaign, celebrating the reader for all the work they've put into the campaign, or anything that conveys a sense of respect and gratitude for reading the words you crafted.

Post Script:

After your sign off, you have the option of adding a PS, or a little message after the bulk of your email.

Studies show that the PS is one of the most often read parts of an email, even by those who skim the top and flip straight down for the action link. The postscript is way to split the ask by adding in a secondary action that you want people to do *without undermining the main action.*

Example

Salutation	Hi (First Name or Friend),
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<p>Context</p>	<p>Every day hard-working Canadian families are being asked to make do with less and less as the top strata of society coasts through life with more and more. Since 1960, income inequality has skyrocketed and our governments and financial institutions have been silently complicit, hoping that the vast majority of Canadians will remain too busy scraping together a living to notice what has been going on.</p>
<p>Ask</p>	<p><u>Across to country many unions and large swathes of civil society have stepped up to issue the call: “No Justice, no Peace”. Will you stand in solidarity with your fellow Canadians this May 1st ?</u></p>
<p>Reader Focused Theory of Change</p>	<p>Imagine what Canada would look like if the vast majority of us didn't just clock long work days and then go home to watch YouTube? It could be game changing. Together the majority of Canadian working people represent a bigger share of the economy than the Banks or the Government, and that's because the economy only works if we do. That's why we're asking folks to band together on May 1st and support a Canada-wide general strike against the policies of austerity.</p>
<p>Your Story (Ask)</p>	<p>General strikes and labour unrest has been the primary method by which past generations of Canadians have forced the hand of increasingly repressive</p>

	<p>governments to do social good. We know that the weekend, the 40-hour work week, paid vacation and sick time weren't just gifted to us by ideologically conservative governments: they were won in the streets and on the picket lines. In 2014, with the global economy sputtering from 20 years of disastrous neo-liberal policies, <u>now is the time to strike while the iron is hot, and join the ranks of millions worldwide who are fighting these failed policies globally.</u></p>
<p>Narrative Development</p>	<p>Stephen Harper and his consortium of cruel capitalists would like nothing more than to break our last great hope at change by undermining solidarity between working people and unions. Let's not give him the pleasure of dismantling the last tool that we have at our disposal to smash his tyrannical grip on power. <u>We can push back, and really bring out the truly angry "Steamin' " Harper for all society to see.</u></p>
<p>Signature</p>	<p>To absolute victory through unlimited general strike, no compromise, no surrender!</p> <p>All the best, Signature</p>
<p>P.S.</p>	<p>P.S. Have you heard about Dogecoin? It's a disruptive cryptocurrency that the government is fighting hard to keep down. If you have an account with one of</p>

the major banks, consider switching over to a hybrid credit union-crypto model. **It's easy and will hit global capitalism where it hurts: their wallet.**