

Design

- Photoshop **PSDs are the recommend design file type**, as they are the gold standard for email development. Saving in other formats such as .AI (Illustrator), .PDF or .IDML (InDesign) will increase the time it takes to slice images as well as match colors, sizes, and spacing.
- The recommended size for desktop emails is **600px wide**, with the maximum being 640px.
- The smallest mobile screen size is currently 320px. With this in mind, your design will become mobile responsive as soon as the screen size drops below the desktop size, and will be reduced to the size of the mobile screen.
- Be sure to include a margin around your design showing the background color that will extend outside the design area within the email window.
- When including a mobile layout version of your design, it's best to use the smallest possible screen size (320px). Be sure to save images as smart objects at 2x the size they appear **OR** design the mobile version at 640px (2 * 320px).

Layout

- Emails are coded in a “spreadsheet” style table method. First they are broken into rows, then those rows are broken into columns. Your layout should mimic this style by having images and physical text elements squared off from each other as if placing them into the cells of a spreadsheet.
- Try to keep all designs “**pixel perfect**” by utilizing guidelines and rulers within Photoshop. Text, images, and spacing around objects should match as close as possible to the original intended layout.
- Leave a generous amount of padding around physical copy away from images. Email clients will render the spacing between letters and words different, which could result in orphans.
- Do not force line breaks unless absolutely necessary. Copy should be allowed to flow freely from desktop to mobile allowing text re-ragging as necessary.

Design Resources

<http://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources>

<http://www.mailchimp.com/resources>

<http://www.litmus.com/blog>

<http://www.emailonacid.com/blog>



Text & Fonts

- There are a limited number of email clients that support custom fonts, therefore the most basic email friendly fonts are recommended for all designs:
 - Common email safe **Sans-Serif** font stacks:
Arial, Helvetica
Verdana, Geneva
Trebuchet MS, Arial, Helvetica
Tahoma, Verdana, Geneva
Lucida Sans Unicode, Lucida Grande
 - Common email safe **Serif** font stacks:
Times New Roman, Times
Georgia, Times New Roman, Times
Palatino Linotype, Book Antiqua, Palatino
- The only supported font styles for email safe fonts are regular, bold and italic.
- Font sizes of 12px to 16px are recommended for paragraphs for easy reading on desktop and mobile devices.
- To prevent automatic resizing of fonts in some mobile email clients, font sizes should generally stay above 8px.
- Font sizes and line heights should be in **whole numbers only**.
- Character tracking (letter spacing) should be used in increments of 100 only. This represents a 1px increase/decrease in the code.
- Line heights should always be a minimum 2px greater than the font size for sans-serif fonts, and 4px greater for serif fonts.
- Never place physical text over an image, gradient or shadow. **Physical text should always sit on a solid color background.**
- Setting the anti-aliasing on the copy to “none” (instead of crisp/sharp/smooth/etc.) will show the potential for copy to orphan.

Images

- Images should be saved as smart objects at 2x their design size. This will allow them to be saved at a larger size for retina devices.
- Any text that sits over an image, a shadow/drop-shadow, or gradient will be saved within an image. For wider images, this may result in the copy being harder to read when resized for mobile. Best practice is to keep all copy possible as physical text.
- Text should always be squared off from images, with generous padding surrounding the image.
- Background images are not fully supported in email.
- CSS3 is not fully supported across email clients, including rounded corners, gradients and text shadows. Design for either full support or graceful degradation of elements.
- Video has very limited support. Animated .gif files are recommended instead, however certain email clients (Outlook) will only show the first frame of the animation.