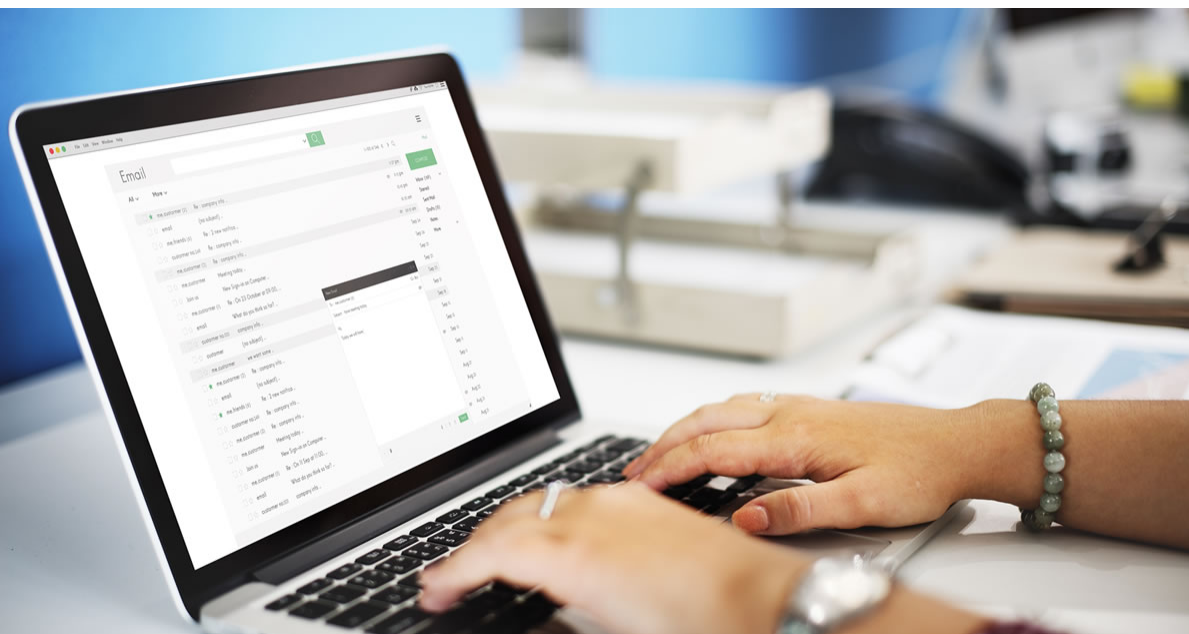


Here's How to Write the Perfect Email Subject Line

By Sandy Franks



- Too many emails, too many seed names
- Getting readers to open your emails
- Can you pick the winning headline?
- Don't listen to the critics
- Struggling to find paying clients? Try this instead

I'm probably no different than you ... or rather, no different in the number of emails you receive every day in your inbox.

I have several email accounts too. One is for work, the others are "seed" accounts. If you're not sure what that is, I'm borrowing from my old direct mail days.

A seed account is when you sign up to a competitor's list so you can see how they talk to their readers and the types of sales copy they produce.

I use Gmail for those seed email accounts. Because there are so many, the seed name I use for each one is my first name followed by the competitor's product as my last name.

Within seconds, I know exactly which company sent the email. Then it's just a matter of opening it up and reading the content.

Or is really that simple?

Obviously there's more to whether you open an email than how it's organized in your inbox. Subject lines matter.

They are like headlines. A well-written subject line works the same way ... it grabs your reader's attention. For email promotions, the more readers you get opening that email, the more people who read your message, and hopefully the more of them who will click through to read the full promo or the order form.

For instance, a recent seed email I received had this subject line: Call me.

Although I knew it was a seed email, my initial reaction was that person really needed to talk to me about something. So I opened the email to find out what was going on.

The "call me" was about a new program they were launching. And if you've read this far, you now know why I used that in the subject line of this email.

And now that I have your attention, let's talk a little more about writing the perfect subject line.

I'm not actually going to do much of the talking. Instead I'm going to share a few pointers on how to write the perfect subject line from Ben Settle, founder of Email Players.

If you're not familiar with Ben, he's an expert marketer and email copywriter. Ben's managed to niche out a very healthy six-figure income teaching people how to write eye-catching emails.

So what's Ben method for writing subject lines that get those emails opened and read? Ben demonstrates how to do that with these three headlines.

Which one do you think performed the best?

1. "How To Get Rich Slowly"
2. "Can India Stop China"
3. "5687 Ira Road, Bath, Ohio 44210"

Don't worry if you haven't guessed it by now. Ben reveals the answer: All three.

He goes on to explain, the advertising critics would say:

"These all suck! There's no benefit! Who wants to get rich slowly?

Who cares if India stops China!

A mailing address as a headline?

*Are you *\$%#&^! kidding me, Ben???"*

And (as usual) the advertising critics would be wrong.

Here's why:

The first headline was written by Gary Bencivenga. (Universally acknowledged by many as the world's greatest living copywriter.)

And, he had to fight tooth and nail to get the client to run it. But, guess what? When it ran, I hear it pulled an incredibly high numbers of sales — far more than anyone would have thought, and ran for a long time.

Ditto for the second headline.

It was for a control written by Doug D'Anna. (One of the top direct-mail copywriters on the planet.)

And the third one?

Just a mailing address?

It may not technically qualify as a headline, but it was one of the "most mailed" sales letters in human history, written by the late marketing genius, Gary Halbert.

Those headlines were written by copywriting masters who knew the audiences they were targeting, and how to grab prospects' attention.

Today, an email subject line is a headline of your message. It's got to stop your prospect in his tracks — and get him to keep reading.

Now, one thing I should point out is that Ben's attitude about getting attention is bold. And his style of writing is audacious. Which, as you can imagine, means he has his share of critics.

In fact, Ben tells the story of a guy who sent him an email saying the headline selling his Email Players newsletter "sucks balls." (That person's description, not mine, not Ben's.)

But that guy didn't bother to gather the facts on whether the type of emails Ben writes work. So, do they work?

Yes. Ben says his business has been "chugging along just fine for almost six years now."

For you, Dear Copywriter, the lesson to be had from all of this is that email subject lines are like the new headlines and your job is to learn to write ones that grab attention and get opened. Every time.

Your takeaway: Study the subject lines of emails you receive to see how they are written, their length, and which kinds you open regularly. Copy the effective ones into a Swipe File, so you have a library of samples to use for inspiration. This will help you become a master at writing subject lines.

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