



Dear *[member\_name\_first]*,

## Writing Effective Email Subject Lines: Part 2



**This is the second part of our interview with Karen Zapp on email subject lines. If you would like us to send you Part 1, email us [here](#).**

I interviewed **Karen Zapp**, who writes for [nonprofits \(charities and associations\)](#), and [B2B companies](#). Apply these answers to your own marketing and you may see a spike in your email response rates.

**Question: Karen, do you recommend using formulas to write subject lines? If so, please share those you like best.**

Here are the top five guidelines I recommend:

**1 – SHORT:** 2 or 3 words. If it's longer, make the first two words the most impactful. Most email software allows 50-60 characters (not much) to display in a subject line. But if your subscribers are using a mobile device, it may be as few as 10 characters. Get to the point fast!

**2 – URGENCY:** Cite a deadline, a date, or a phrase that clearly expresses how their help or action is needed now. It might even be a "reminder" of a pending deadline.

**3 – USE A NUMBER:** People respond to numbers whether it's in a headline, subject line, or wherever.

**4 – CURIOSITY & BENEFIT:** Combine them, or use one or the other. Arouse their curiosity by hinting at, or citing a benefit they'll receive by reading the email. This works for nonprofits or for-profit organizations.

**5 – EMOTION:** Appeal to an emotion and stir it up. It might be loyalty, anger, patriotism, sympathy, and on it goes. It all depends on what you're promoting. For example: I write many emails for nonprofits serving veterans and I often appeal to their sense of patriotism, their pride in serving America in our Armed Forces.

*Four examples follow:*

*Birds disappearing* (An environmental charity. It's short, and also implies an urgency supporters of the cause would respond to. Curiosity is sparked because they want to know WHY the birds are disappearing, where, and how many?)

*Book Sale July Only* (Might be used by an association that offers professional development books to members – urgency and the benefit of saving money.)

*73 and alone – Martha looks for hope* (A charity serving seniors. Although longer, the punch is at the beginning. Combines a number, stirs emotion, and implies that the reader is Martha's hope and as such, has the benefit of helping someone in need.)

*4 Answers Spike Email Response* (Used a number and combined curiosity with a benefit. Curious as to what answers to what questions? And the benefit is higher response rates.)

### **Question: How do you test subject lines?**

This can get complex. But let's take the *basic example* of an A/B split test.

Randomly choose names from your file/list. Send two identical email messages with different subject lines to the group. 50% receive subject line "A" and 50% receive "B." Evaluate response with both open rates and click-through rates.

Send the subject line with the best overall response to the remainder of your list.

Peter, all that being said there are few – if any – absolutes in marketing. Your readers should **use what I've shared as starting points and then test to discover what works best for their organization.**

One last tip: *Make time* to write strong subject lines. They have a tremendous impact on the success of any email.

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### **FACT OF THE MONTH**

A group of cats is called a clowder.

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Manifold Productions Website

## LEVINSONBLOCK NEWS

We just launched a new website for [Manfold productions](#). Our objective was to create a modern look for this 30 year documentary film company. The website features extensive use of rich media such as video clips linked to YouTube, with very clear navigation.

### About LevinsonBlock

*WHO WE ARE: LevinsonBlock is in the business of differentiating our clients. We do this through brand strategy, websites, corporate communications, direct mail, and social media integration, among other services. We've worked with healthcare organizations, such as Hospital for Special Surgery; growing businesses, such as s Opportunity Growth Fund; and organizations such as the Public Library of Science. Visit us [here](#).*

*WHAT WE DO: brand strategy and branding; persuasive content; print (such as annual reports, event promotion, periodicals); and usability-focused websites. If you have marketing questions or a topic you would like us to address in a future issue, [email us here!](#)*

*Thanks for reading!*

*Peter*

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