



Dear [member_name_first],

Writing Effective Email Subject Lines: Part 1



Last month there was a lot of interest in email subject lines. So I asked a colleague – a veteran copywriter – to share her insights. Karen Zapp 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.

We are posting the first half of the interview this month, and the 2nd half in April.

**Question: What should be considered when writing an email subject line?
How can people make it more effective?**

First off, the goal of the subject line is to get recipients to start reading the first paragraph. A catchy subject line often helps. With regard to newsletters, for example, do NOT use the same subject line for every issue. For any type of email don't get so clever that it becomes obscure. Clarity trumps cleverness every time.

Question: What process do you use to write subject lines, Karen?

Step 1

Before I write anything I **determine the purpose of the email**. Generically speaking the purpose of an email is to get people to click through to a landing page. It's on the

landing page where you persuade people to donate, to join, to download an article, to electronically sign a petition to Congress, or to buy a product. Therefore I need to know what the conversion is on the landing page so I can get the subject line and email aimed in that direction.

Step 2

Knowing the purpose and roughly what I'll say in the body of the email, I **write possible subject lines**. Sometimes I'll nail it right out of the gate. Other times I'll fire off anywhere from 2 – 6 and choose later. And if it makes sense for the campaign, I'll recommend split testing subject lines so I'll need two strong ones before I'm done.

Step 3

Write the email. Revise the subject line as necessary.

Stay tuned for the rest of the interview in the April Marketing Minute.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The most popular male dog names are Max and Jake. The most popular female dog names are Maggie and Molly.

LEVINSONBLOCK NEWS

I just taught *Upgrading Your Website's Design and Messaging*, a workshop at Baruch College (CUNY) for non profit leaders. We had over 40 participants, working together on a *competitive audit*, an effective way to evaluate websites. Thanks to the School of Public Affairs for hosting the workshop.

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!

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