

# THIRD PARTY EMAIL SPECIFICATIONS

## VALID FOR DEPLOYMENT ON NATURE AND BIOMED CENTRAL LISTS

Please ensure you read our Technical Specifications before submitting your creative. If your code does not meet our specifications we may not be able to upload it to our email server provider (ESP).

### 1. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

#### Deadline

All materials should be submitted a minimum of **3 business days before the schedule send date**. If materials are received after this deadline, we cannot guarantee the email will deploy on the scheduled day.

#### Prerequisites

The HTML code should be tested and approved on all relevant email platforms before submission.

Please ensure you specify a subject line and a suppression list (if applicable) when submitting the creative.

#### HTML specifications

##### Our email service provider (ESP) is SAP Hybris.

- Our ESP only accepts HTML5 coding. Creative files that are not in HTML5 will have coding automatically adapted by the ESP, but this can result in visible changes to your design. The following tags are not supported in HTML5 and, as a result, by our ESP.

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| ▪ <acronym>  | ▪ <frameset> |
| ▪ <applet>   | ▪ <isindex>  |
| ▪ <basefont> | ▪ <map>      |
| ▪ <big>      | ▪ <noframes> |
| ▪ <center>   | ▪ <s>        |
| ▪ <dir>      | ▪ <strike>   |
| ▪ <font>     | ▪ <tt>       |
| ▪ <frame>    | ▪ <u>        |

- The HTML source text must correspond to the HTML and CSS standard according to W3C. DO include CSS in the HTML source code. DO NOT specify a <link ...> to subsequently load resources (such as CSS or JavaScript) e.g. <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="styles.css">, as this will result in code rejection by the ESP.
- Images need to be fully hosted and hyperlinked into the HTML code.
- Files must be saved with UTF-8 encoding to avoid special characters or accents causing display or upload errors. DO encode the file in UTF-8, set the meta tag in the header of the HTML source code, i.e. <meta charset="UTF-8" http-equiv="Content-Type">. For details go to w3.org. Our ESP will reject code which is not UTF-8 encoded.
- Ensure that the HTML source code does not contain JavaScript or viruses. Our ESP will reject code which contains script tags.
- Our ESP DOES NOT support rich media, please ensure that no rich media code is included in the HTML
- Ensure the editor used is appropriate for the HTML you want to create, avoid editors which do not fully support the HTML language. DO use editors like Dreamweaver, Sublime Text Editor v3 or Notepad ++. DO NOT use Microsoft Word.
- DO NOT include the following words anywhere in the HTML tags as they do not conform to current deliverability standards and will result in the creative being rejected by our ESP.

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| ▪ Alert      | ▪ Function |
| ▪ Behavior   | ▪ Import   |
| ▪ Binding    | ▪ Java     |
| ▪ Document   | ▪ Script   |
| ▪ Eval       | ▪ URL      |
| ▪ Expression | ▪ Window   |

For more information on advertising opportunities, contact your Account Manager or our Sales Operations Team.

To keep up-to-date on marketing solutions like these, sign up for our alerts at [partnerships.nature.com](https://partnerships.nature.com)

✉ [salesoperations@nature.com](mailto:salesoperations@nature.com)

☎ (US): +1 (212) 726 9682

☎ (EU): +44 (0) 20 7843 4960

**SPRINGER NATURE**

### HTML coding best-practice

- Use nested tables and advanced formatting such as *colspan* and *rowspan* for consistent email layout. Avoid floats (<div>) or paragraphs (<p>). Email clients like Outlook do not support emails which are not laid out in a table.
- Center align the main email body table
- Ensure the container table width is 100% and define widths at a cell, not a table level
- Remove redundant empty spaces between and within tags
- Use web-safe fonts as much as possible as this is the surest way to ensure font consistency across email clients
- In HTML5 font styles need to be defined inline in the nearest <td>, <a> or <span> tag and included in every tag containing text to avoid defaulting to browser settings. Font size needs to be defined in pixels, e.g. <td style="font-family: arial; font-size: 14px">
- Only use GIF, JPEG and PNG files as other image formats are not supported by email clients.
  - Minimum resolution for images is 72dpi.
- Code for high DPI displays
- Ensure code is responsive so that both mobile and desktop users can view the email.
  - Outlook for Desktop 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 can be particularly challenging
- Use the attribute target="\_blank" with every hyperlink tag, otherwise requested page will appear within webmail interface.
- Avoid sending emails longer than max. 1750px as these will be cropped by email clients and not fully visible.

HTML5 is a relatively new iteration of the coding language.

Below is an example of a correct HTML5 layout which complies with our ESP standards.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html" charset="UTF-8" />
    <style type="text/css">
      .class {
        font-size: 12px;
      }
    </style>
  </head>
  <body>
    <table border="0" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" width="100%">
      <tr>
        <td>CONTENT</td>
      </tr>
    </table>
  </body>
</html>
```

## 2. TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EMAIL\*

Attention spans are getting shorter so ensure your email is **clear, clean and concise**.

Below are tips to the 3 crucial components of an email, which need to be crafted as carefully as possible, for maximum impact.

### Relevant subject line

- Use concise language & start with action-oriented verbs, while avoiding common spam triggers such as 'Act now' or 'Free'
- Avoid using both a question and an exclamation in the same subject line
- Do not use upper case
- Tell readers what they can expect from the email to entice them to read further

### Calls to Action (CTA)

- Amplify the value of proceeding - answer the question 'What is in it for the reader?'
- Unless your CTA is a text link as opposed to a button, restrict it to 3 words
- Use HTML and CSS to design buttons, not images as these can get blocked
- Use whitespace to make the CTA button stand out, especially for mobile devices

### Email design

- Try to keep the email as short and concise as possible but if needed use background colours to separate email sections
- Use background colours in addition to images in your design. Images can be blocked by email clients and any image-only design will be lost
- Structure your email into a single column, it will help make it look good on mobile as well as desktop clients

Finally, **test your email** on as many email clients as possible. There are no two identical clients and the only way to ensure your email looks good across the board is to test it.

\*Litmus.com

### 3. FIVE COMMON EMAIL MARKETING MISTAKES\*

Email recipients use their inbox for a variety of purposes: work correspondence, keeping in touch with friends and family, personal finance, social networking, newsletters. These messages help people stay connected with the news and information that is most relevant to them; which is why an extraneous marketing message is likely to be ignored or deleted. To make sure your message is on-point, avoid these 5 common pitfalls that contribute to lack luster email campaigns.

#### #1: The reader isn't sure what is expected of them

Establish a clear objective and call to action. Think about what you want the reader to do: Fill out a lead-qualification form? Buy a product? Register for an event? The reader is more likely to respond if they immediately understand what you want them to do. Competing calls to action create 'opportunity paralysis' and detract from your objective.

#### #2: The message is out-of-touch with the audience

Visualize where researchers are reading emails- at their desk, in the lab, at home- and imagine all the distractions that may be competing with your message. Put yourself in their shoes and consider "**What's in it for the reader?**". Give them a reason to open your email, read it, and follow through to the desired action.

#### #3: The copy is focused on features rather than benefits

Rather than focusing on the technical features of your product or service, try talking about the benefits to the reader such as fewer mistakes or saving time. By focusing on benefits to the reader, your product becomes more attractive to the individual and more likely to generate the desired response.

#### #4: The marketer makes assumptions about how images are displayed

Some services, like Gmail, do not display images by default. Additionally, many people have opted to disable images in their email account. Keep in mind that important content, links, or calls-to-action that are locked in an image may not be visible to many recipients. Always include alt-text for those with images disabled.

#### #5: The designer assumes that readers will view the email in its entirety

Emails are viewed in many different ways: in Outlook preview panes, in Gmail accounts, on mobile devices. Don't design your email to be viewed on a full screen. If your call-to-action is not visible on what's immediately displayed, readers are less likely to open it or take action.

\*Nielsen Research