Creating Effective HTML Email Campaigns

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About Listrak

In the Email Marketing World Content is Still King

- Low-cost method for growing brand presence
- For many consumers it is the primary source of information from a brand
- Copy can be dynamic and extremely relevant when tied to database of profile information
- It is personal communication
- HTML creative can be compelling & interactive

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Challenges with Email Content

- Deliverability
  - Where are your messages going?
- Relevancy
  - Are you telling your recipients what they want to know?
- Rendering
  - What do your messages look like when they arrive?

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Content Effects Deliverability

- Messages can be blocked or sent to 'junk' folder based on content
  - Avoid over using certain words and phrases that are perceived as 'spammy'
  - Be cognizant of text-too-image ratio
  - Use standard colors and fonts
  - Avoid excessive use of all-caps and exclamation points
  - Provide a working unsubscribe mechanism to avoid complaints
  - Use a seed list or third-party to test deliverability

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Relevancy

- Maintain relevance or risk losing the subscriber
  - Turn off the recipient and they will unsubscribe or worse yet, hit the ‘this is spam’ button
  - Complaints are a direct result of content that is not relevant and can have a detrimental impact on deliverability
- What you can do to keep content relevant
  - Utilize your existing database(s) to segment and profile your customers
  - Personalize your content

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Rendering Issues

- HTML support varies across platforms and email clients
- Image blocking is now the default on over 60% of email clients
- Placement and design of call-to-action is crucial
- What works on a web page may not work in email

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HTML Content Design Tips and Tricks

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Avoid CSS

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CSS Layout In Web Browser

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New CAN-SPAM Rules for 2008

The Federal Trade Commission has recently approved revisions to the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. These new rules take effect 45 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register, which will take place within the next several weeks. However, direct marketers should implement the changes in their email marketing procedures as soon as possible in order to ensure they remain compliant. If messages do not comply with these rules, the sender's company may be fined or charged with a criminal and civil offense.

The CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 called for unsolicited email campaigns to have several items in place in order for the message not to be labeled as spam. Even though the rules are in place for senders of unsolicited emails, permission-based email marketers that only send to recipients who have requested to receive their emails should also follow these rules. Legitimate marketers must do everything they can to distinguish and differentiate their emails from spam, and these rules help set them apart. Also, many subscribers are using the "Report Spam" button as the means of unsubscribing from a list.

2008 Email Marketing Days

September 7-9
Philadelphia, PA

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Free Webinar

Creating Effective HTML Email Campaigns

May 28, 2008
1:00-2:00 EST

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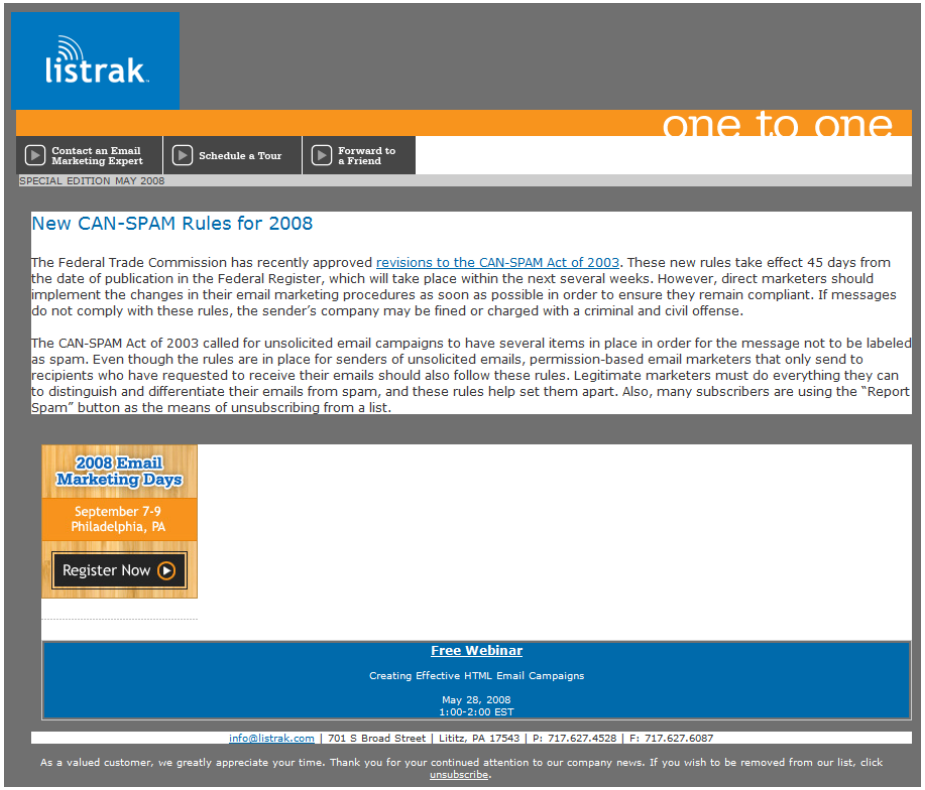
CSS Layout In Outlook 07



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CSS Layout In Gmail

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Fighting the Good Fight

The Email Standards Project

www.email-standards.org

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Targeting the Lowest Common Denominator

Stick to Basic HTML

Use Tables for Position & Structure

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Use Tables for Position & Structure

- Avoid rowspans or colspans
- Design for the preview pane: Use 600px width
- Be careful with nested tables
- Outlook 07 does not support background images in table cells
  - Use a Background color that works if image isn't seen

```
<td background="http://www.listrak.com/listrak.gif" bgcolor="#3366CC">
```


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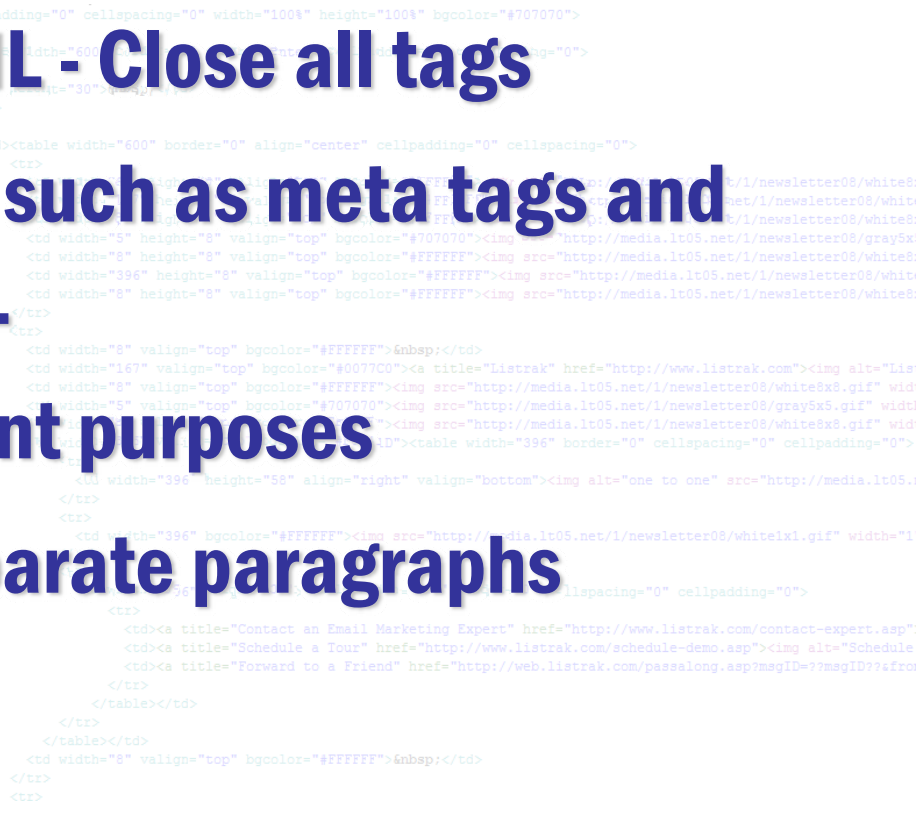
HTML Tips

- Use proper and valid HTML - Close all tags
- Remove extraneous code such as meta tags and comments from the HTML
- Use <P> tags for alignment purposes
- Use

 tags to separate paragraphs



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Do Not Use

- Form Elements
- Flash
- Embedded Media
- JavaScript, DHTML, ActiveX, ASP, PHP, etc.
- Frames
- Image Maps

Video In Email

- Hitachi 500GB SATA Hard Drive
- OCZ 800Mhz PC6400 DDR2 Memory
- Sony 20x DVD Burner
- Mid Tower Ultra Aluminus case
- Ultra 1000Watt PSU

You can click here and add all these items to your cart in one-click – and with a total price of $999.99 After rebate, you could be saving up to $1000 off an already pre-configured system! You can pretty much get a top of the line system for half the price!

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Body Tag

- The <body> tag may be stripped or ignored
- If you wish to fill the background with a color, add a table with a 100% width around your creative and repeat the bgcolor in the table cell

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Images

- All images should be optimized .gif or .jpg formats preformatted in the correct size
- Make sure all images are posted online and contain the full URL, not just the local reference
- Apply height and width parameters to all images
- Apply alt tags to images

```
<img src="http://www.listrak.com/listrak.gif" alt="Email Marketing with Listrak"
 width="106" height="49">
```


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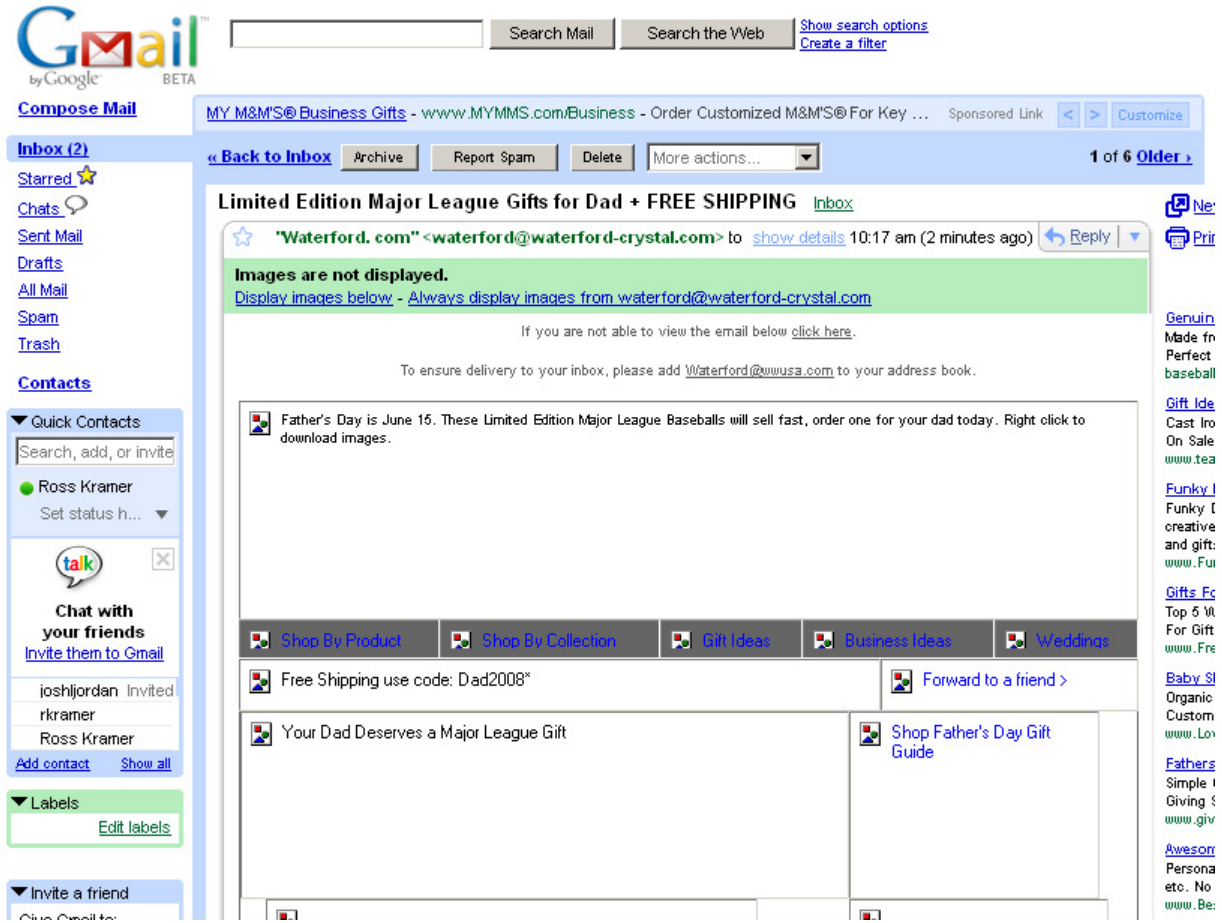
Images Turned Off Using alt Tags



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Images

- Remember, by default, many email clients will turn images off
- Plan for this with a good balance of images and HTML text

Links

- Make sure all links contain the full URL, not just the local reference
- Listrak Users - Use title tags on your links. Listrak reports use this title instead of the URL

  <a href="http://www.listrak.com" title="Listrak Site">
- Click to check all links in your test sends
- Pay attention to URL query strings

Fonts

- Use basic HTML font tags

```
<font face="Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif" size="2">My text</font>
```

- If you use CSS font formatting, use inline styles for best compatibility
- Make sure you do not use the same color text as the background essentially making the text invisible

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Content Tags

- Check and verify personalization tags
- Check and verify dynamic content tags

Pre-Header

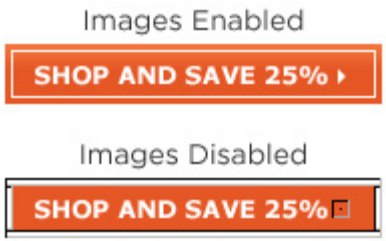
- Initial Text – Main offer, call to action, marketing message
- Browser link
- Address book addition request
- Avoid instruction overkill

Pre-Header

Introducing: The New Williams-Sonoma.com
Add Williams-Sonoma@enews.williams-sonoma.com to your address book.
View this email with images.
WILLIAMS-SONOMA
SHOP NEW SALE
L.L.Bean - Shop our Bayside Twills for all the comfort without all of the wrinkles. Starting at $29.95.
To ensure you continue receiving our newsletter, please add "LLBean@e.llbean.com" to your Address Book.
L.L.Bean GUARANTEED. You Have Our Word.®
Send this email to a friend Gift Cards
Men's Women's Kids' Footwear Outdoor Gear Luggage Home Sale

Content

- Establish a clear call to action above the fold… Within the top 300px.
- Buttons work! Don't be afraid to use them.
- Bulletproof button:



Content

- Make sure your branding settings are set up correctly so that the tracking URLs are your own branded domain and not the default shared domain
- Link to documents rather than attach them

Footer

- Physical address
- Unsubscribe link
- Pass-along link

Dreamweaver Specific Tips

- Start by adding a basic font tag to the code rather than using the properties area to format
- To color links without CSS, make sure the font tag is inside the link tag:

  My Link

- Be sure to wrap bulleted lists with font tag

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Omaha Steaks
FREE Shipping and 54% Savings - Perfect for Dad!

Having trouble viewing this email? Click Here.

To ensure receipt of our online mailings, please add OmahaSteaks@offer.omahasteaks.com to your Address Book.

SHOP | OVERSTOCKS | GIFTS

Share your secret! Do you know someone who fancies fine food? Send them a copy of this email so they can enjoy gourmet Omaha Steaks at great savings, too.

To be removed from this list, you may use one of the following options:
1) Click here, to be removed electronically
2) Call Customer Service at 1.800.329.6500
3) Mail a request via the postal service to:
OmahaSteaks.com
10909 John Galt Blvd
P.O. Box 3300, Omaha, NE 68103

www.listrak.com 717.627.4528

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Having trouble viewing this email? Click Here.

SHOP | OVERSTOCKS | GIFTS

FREE Shipping and up to 54% Savings from Omaha Steaks®!

Thanks Dad! Father's Day is Sunday, June 15th.

For 3 Days Only! SAVE up to 54% on a variety of great grilling assortments PLUS you'll get FREE Shipping!

START SHOPPING

Offer expires 5/29/08 or while supplies last

Prefer to order by phone? Call 1.800.960.8400 & mention coupon code RW7550

Share your secret! **Do you know someone who fancies fine food?** Send them a copy of this email so they can enjoy gourmet Omaha Steaks at great savings, too.

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3) Mail a request via the postal service to:
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10909 John Galt Blvd
P.O. Box 3300, Omaha, NE 68103

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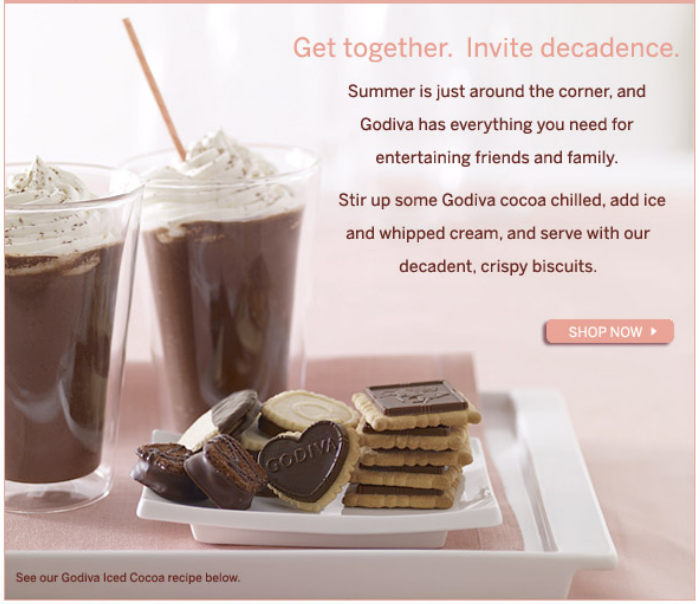

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Heat 8 oz. of milk in a saucepan or microwave-safe mug until hot, not boiling. Add entire contents of two Godiva Hot Cocoa packets, or six tablespoons from a Godiva Hot Cocoa canister (use more or less to taste), and stir. Add ice cubes and top with whipped cream, if desired. Serve chilled and enjoy.

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Final Review

- HTML – Keep It Simple
- Design – Clear Call To Action
- Balance Images and HTML text
- Follow CAN Spam regulations
- Test, Test, Test!

Testing Content for Rendering

- Know your audience
- B-to-B
  - Email clients such as Outlook, Entourage, Lotus Notes
  - Content filtering technologies (Brightmail, Postini, MX Logic, etc.)
- B-to-C
  - Personal email clients (Outlook Express, Thunderbird)
  - Web-based mailbox providers (AOL, Yahoo, Gmail, etc)

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Testing Content Cont'd

- Test every link and image
- If you make the slightest edit – retest
- Utilize the built-in features provided by your ESP
  - Listrak has Spam Score feature available to all account levels
  - Enterprise level account includes integration with Return Path's Sender Score Suite

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Using Seed Lists for Testing

- Build your own
  - Pro: Inexpensive
  - Con: Time-intensive manual process
- Use a third-party provider such as Return Path or Pivotal Veracity
  - Pro: One-step process with access to many email clients and content filtering technologies.
  - Con: Cost

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Example of Return Path's Campaign Preview Tool

With Images Turned On

Generate Rendering Report (PDF)

Earthlink

Spam Blocker Off

Gmail

Lotus Notes 6.5.4

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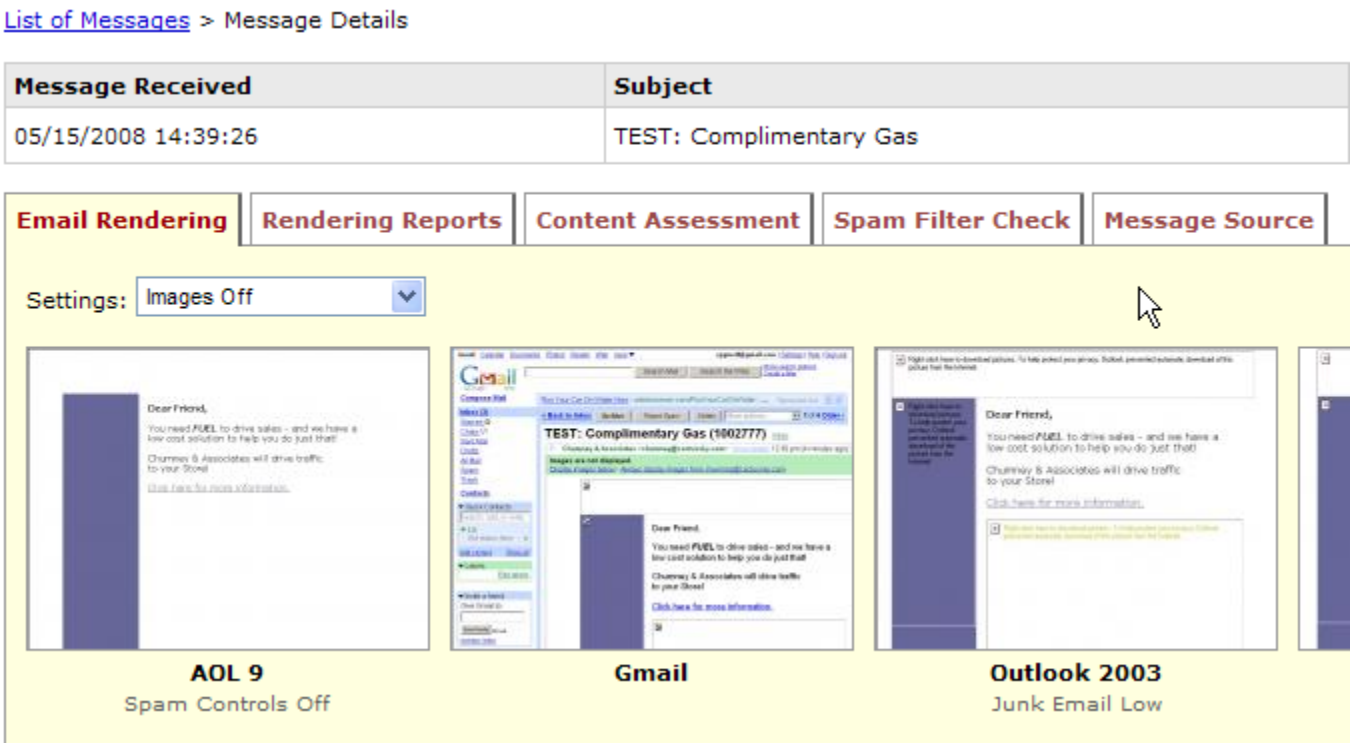
Campaign Preview with Images Off

With Images Turned Off



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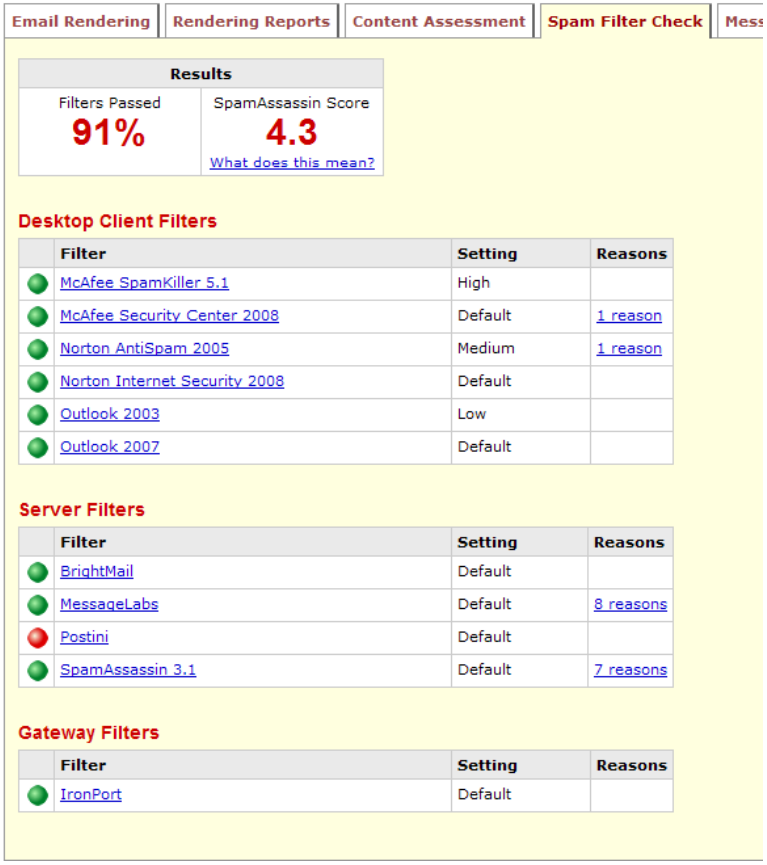
Campaign Preview Spam Filter Check



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Testing Effectiveness

- A/B (split) Tests
- Multi-Variant Tests
- Subject Line Tests
  - Key words
  - Length
- Content Design Tests
  - Offers
  - Call to action design and placement

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Determining Effectiveness

- Open and read rates are no longer the standard for success
- Click rates and conversion rates tell the better story
- Need to tie all channels together to email to properly attribute email marketing reach
- Evaluate results and modify strategy as needed

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Conclusion

- Pay heed to your content
- Use best practices
- Know your audience
- Test, test and re-test
- Understand your performance metrics and know how to act on them

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Upcoming Webinar

List Management Strategies for Email Marketers

June 24, 2008 1:00-2:00 EST

http://www.listrak.com/webinar/List-Management.asp

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2008 Email Marketing Days

- Keynote – David Daniels, JupiterResearch
- 3 session tracks
- 2 networking events
- Personalized one-to-one sessions with industry experts
- Guest Speaker – Chad White, eec
  - Email Design & Rendering Strategies
  - All attendees will receive a free copy of Chad's book

    Retail Email Rendering Benchmark Report

    $200 value

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