



THE SCHOLL GROUP

Advertising and Communications

## Informative Report on Email Breakthroughs

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is distilled from a much longer document sponsored by StrongMail and containing information from Email Data Source. The overall conclusion is one we have heard frequently: digital communications are increasingly valuable in customer and stakeholder relationships and email is the primary medium. Yet marketers have barely scratched the surface of email's potential.

The StrongMail report is based on analyzing the email campaigns of numerous companies and then winnowing down to the "Best in Class." The campaigns honored have the following characteristics in common:

- **Simple, clean design.** An uncluttered design/layout enables emphasis on "carefully selected and limited number of" calls to action. Conciseness and effective and attractive use of white space and imagery contribute to email appeal.
- **Strong call to action.** "The offer is only part of the equation. Strong link language, eye-catching design and proper placement are essential to getting the consumer to follow through with a desired action."
- **Effective social media integration.** Successful emails often contain links to Facebook, Twitter and other social media.
- **Personalized, dynamic content.** Marketers are "embracing the value that personalized, dynamic content offers in terms of relevancy and engagement." This content is at the heart of true one-to-one communication and its use is expected to increase.
- **Email preference management.** "Allowing customers to customize the type and frequency of email" can increase relevance and diminish issues that could result in higher unsubscribe rates. Give customers opportunities to update their email preferences.

## II. “BEST IN CLASS” HIGHLIGHTS

**Winner** Groupon  
**Goal** Drive revenue  
**Subject line** Up to 42% Off NY Waterway Tours

The company “features a daily deal on the best stuff to do, see, eat, and buy” in cities across the U.S. Groupon is able to negotiate great deals for customers and benefits from getting members to get friends and family to sign up as well. Keys to success:

- The clean design enables recipients to “assess the offer in a matter of seconds.”
- The “See Today’s Deal” call to action “is one of only a few links” and “is called out very nicely in the preview pane.” And the offer is king. “The subject line, headline and image all showcase the offer—including breaking it down to the discount percentage and dollar savings.”
- “Groupon members are highly motivated to share offers” so the company “makes Twitter and Facebook sharing links easily accessible” in email headers.
- To get recipient into body of email as quickly as possible, “Groupon uses a very efficient pre-header that maximizes the amount” of viewable template “in the preview pane while still including the requisite view-in-browser and add-to-address links.”

**Winner** Kodak Gallery  
**Goal** Generate website traffic  
**Subject line** Kodak Moment: February’s Winners

Kodak Gallery is a leader in online digital photo development. Kodak understands the emotional attachment people have with their photos and the desire to share with others. Kodak Moment of the Month campaigns give people that opportunity to share, and gain recognition. The main goal is to drive recipients back to the website. Keys to effectiveness:

- Showcasing user-generated content—recipients are motivated to try to win the contest by submitting photos. They also provide background information.
- In addition to Facebook, Twitter and share links, the email links to its YouTube site, “an interactive experience that blends helpful photography videos with extensive branding and relevant promotions.” Also, instead of asking recipients to become Facebook fans, “a well-designed banner asks them to post an inspirational message to its Facebook feed.” Bringing them to the Facebook page in this way “creates a sense of community that is reflected by the vast majority of posts on their page.”
- Kodak ties into special events and occasions such as Valentine’s Day.

- There is a call to action in the preview header and it accommodates those who use an email client's "Auto Preview" feature instead of a preview pane. Kodak maximizes "the value of the pre-header" and makes it easy for "recipients who have Auto Preview turned on" to "click through on an offer."

**Winner**        Crocs  
**Goal**            Drive product sales  
**Subject line**   Spring Fever! Introducing New Women's Styles

Everybody knows Crocs footwear. The winning email informs customers about new styles and promotions. Keys to effectiveness:

- Simple and straightforward design makes it easy for recipient to respond to one of the calls to action.
- Main promotional area features just three new styles. Other areas promote free shipping, new Crocband collection and ability to customize email preferences; this isn't buried, it's pretty prominent and it provides examples of categories for customization. Email is easy to scan.
- While simple, the email "replicates its website navigation," making it easy to explore further.
- The footer doesn't just provide unsubscribe and copyright information. It adds value by providing "links to valuable account information like order status and a store finder, as well as integrated social media sharing links."

**Winner**        Orbitz  
**Goal**            Drive revenue  
**Subject line**   Los Angeles flights to great destinations from \$126 r/t

This global leader in online travel uses innovative technology to make it easy "to research, plan and book a broad range of travel." Their Local Deals campaign is based on "the recipient's originating airport." Why it works:

- From the subject line "to good offer placement and an integrated fare finder," Orbitz maximizes opens and clicks.
- The dynamic subject line maximizes open rate and uses a starting fare based on the offers in the email. The body follows suit with deals from originating airport based on recipient address.
- The featured deals won't appeal to everyone. The "Deal Finder" enables the recipient to look for other destinations/offers, starting "a fare search from the email that automatically carries over to the website," instead of just using a generic link.
- The prominence of the Orbitz logo reinforces brand recognition. And the email provides only the most important calls to action.

- “The compact pre-header and placement of the central” call to action are “optimized for the preview pane.” Recipients can view main offer and access Deal Finder in seconds. “The pre-header also begins with a promotional link.”

**Winner** TD AMERITRADE  
**Goal** Optimize customer experience  
**Subject line** Welcome to TD AMERITRADE

TD AMERITRADE provides investment products and services including “a leading active trader program and long-term investor solutions, including a national branch system, as well as relationships with one of the largest networks of independent registered investment advisors.” The campaign goal is to get a new customer to start “using the services and provide the support required to help ensure a profitable, long-term relationship.” Keys to success:

- Email provides links to information customer can access to maximize the value of their account. “The simple yet effective layout makes it a valuable resource that can be archived for future reference.”
- The information is presented “in a simple three-tiered format” that makes it easy to access with minimal scrolling. The main call to action “is set solidly in the preview pane with three simple links and a button to learn more. Language is used strategically to get customer to take the next step.
- By including the customer name and the last four digits of the account number, the recipient can verify legitimacy quickly.
- Showing customer how to access customer support or nearest branch maximizes customer service integration. “Rather than burying their phone number” to minimize cost, “TD AMERITRADE makes it clearly visible” to enhance customer satisfaction.

### III. TAKEAWAYS

Winning campaigns:

- Maximized conversion with clean design and compelling calls to action—often customized to recipient or targeted segment.
- Provided easy access to sharing tools and customer service resources.
- Stimulated user-generated content and/or interest in online community participation.
- Connected with customers in “sometimes unconventional ways that draw attention by defying expectation.