EMAIL BOOSTER FOR NON-PROFITS

Little things which make all the difference

For the multi-hatter director

By Joy D'Angelo

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Dear Reader,

I wrote this with you in mind. Whether you're new to nonprofits or just need a boost to your email communication, I hope these bits give you the little extra something.

If you would like help figuring out your "why"; your reason for using any particular channel or with developing your marketing strategy, feel free to reach out.

Best regards,

Joy

EMAIL BOOSTER *FOR* NON-PROFITS

o **Say hello**

Greetings or introductions of what the reader may be in for can both go a long way.

o **Use the person's name where possible**

Make it personal. Your donor communication is about relationship building, after all! *Most email services will have an option for you to automatically insert first names from your contact list.*

o **Use capital letters where appropriate**

Spelling and grammar do make a difference. Boomerang data[1] show that **lack of the first-letter capitalization** in your subject line can **lower your response rate by as much as 15%.** Try running text through your spellcheck or Grammarly if you're unsure, or maybe just blissfully unaware. ;-)

o **Say thank you!**

A Recent Boomerang study[2] demonstrated that "thankful closings outperformed all others by a significant margin". This can be in any form.

o **Give an opportunity to respond**

This can be an unsubscribe button, social media links, a "give" button, or an appeal with **every** letter. These don't have to be main the features, but including them ensures the reader can come back and engage anytime.

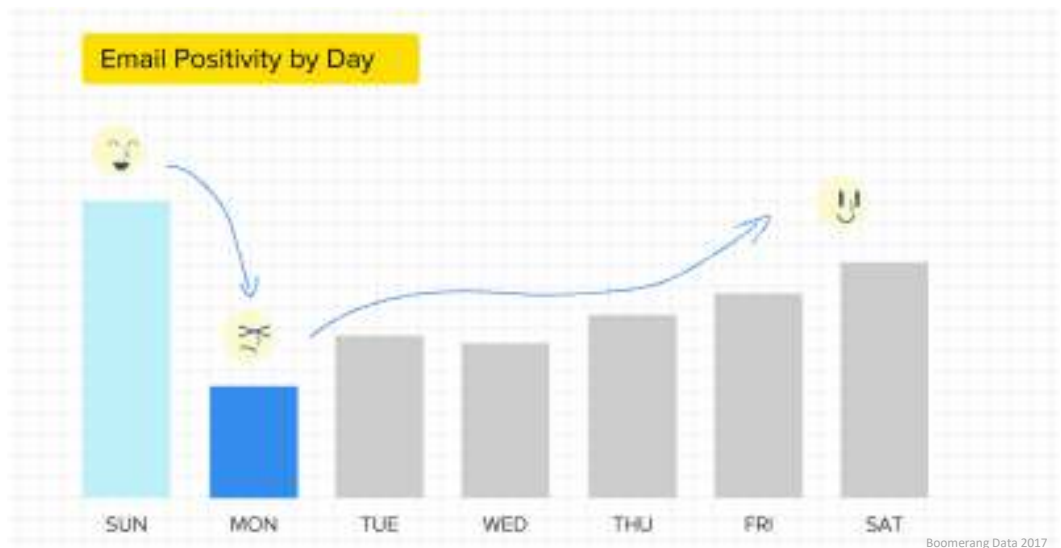o **Make sure you have a physical address and unsubscribe link**

You do not want to get marked as spam! Depending on your geographical area, you may have additional legal requirements to fulfill like including a registration number or charitable solicitations permit, but the universal minimum to avoid ending up in a spam folder is a physical address and an unsubscribe link.

o **Use a Welcome Email**

This can be a simple, pre-written one you set to be sent automatically every time someone new signs up. Use the opportunity to let them know you are glad they're on board and what to expect. Instantly acknowledging their response to your call helps build a sense of connection, and confirms you have the right email address for them.

THE NITTY-GRITTY

→ **Positive, vision-casting email** is important for getting people on board with your vision, excited about what's happening and involved in what you're doing. Again, according to Boomerang, slightly positive and slightly negative (so emotional at some level!) email are shown to have better response rates than ones with neutral, objective tones. Give a snapshot into what is possible when you partner together.

→ **Images and an opportunity to respond** in every email. The opportunity to see and respond helps foster a sense of connection with you and your cause which can lead to better engagement over time. Most platforms make it easy to insert images, allow response to you via email, and links your social media pages and donation mechanisms.

→ **The best subject lines** are pertinent, to the point and explain what they're in for in the least amount of words possible. Magic? Data suggest that the **optimal number of words to elicit a response is 3-5.**[3] For example, "Last Chance to Give!".[4] For an appeal, this may be a good proxy. To elicit opens of your annual report, however, is a different story. The point here is to engage readers with a cause you care about and to build relationships. In this case, letting the reader know what they're in for may be more important than worrying about subject length. For example, "Last Chance to Give!" Vs. *(ORG name)*: "Year in Review – A Look at the Lives Changed in 2016"

→ **Send times** Have a thought about what may be the optimal frequency and send time for your constituents and your type of email, and schedule accordingly. See https://moosend.com/blog/email-marketing-best-practices/ for more from the private sector.

Email Positivity by Day

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

Boomerang Data 2017

…AND AROUND THE CORNER

→ **Make sure your website is mobile-enabled,** as more Americans move toward "mobile-first" behaviors. This means that we are becoming more likely to quickly check out something on our smartphone, and to want to follow through instantly and from a single device. Having the option to donate from a mobile device directly after opening your email and while they're still out and about may increase the follow-through rate (also called "conversion rate", in our case, conversion from appeal to donations).

→ **Remember engagement is multi-channel** now and can include texting and other social media messaging services. These can be automated for an original message with first name inserted like in email, but they open a channel for individual engagement from the constituent in conversational form. This is especially important for the emerging generation of donors. Always ask a question if you do this. Here's an example from Flourish Change and their work on the Katy Trail:

→ **Enabling micro-donations** may be key to building a deeper brand affinity (i.e. enthusiasm to support and promote your organization) in the coming era. Micro-donations may lead to lasting support by a broadening your support base to a wider range of people. Just think of those subscriptions you don't mind keeping on because they're relatively small amounts each month and provide such great value.

Cover Image credit: Daria Chekman via Shutterstock

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[1] http://blog.boomerangapp.com/2016/12/be-careful-sending-emails-on-mondays/
[2] http://blog.boomerangapp.com/2017/01/how-to-end-an-email-email-sign-offs/
[3] http://blog.boomerangapp.com/2016/02/7-tips-for-getting-more-responses-to-your-emails-with-data/