

## **Commercial Email Messages at Temple University**

If you use email as a means of digital marketing, follow these guidelines and best practices to ensure that your messages adhere to current laws, reach your recipients' inboxes and resonate with your targeted audience.

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## What Is a Commercial Email Message (CEM)?

A CEM is any electronic mail message (email) that is sent with the primary purpose of advertising or promoting a product or service or distributing organization content like news and announcements. An email is classified as a CEM when the primary purpose of the message is not based on an already agreed-upon transaction or current relationship. CEMs at Temple University must abide by the requirements set forth by the CAN-SPAM Act (U.S. national standards for sending commercial email) and CASL (Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation).

In addition to working within the law it is important to abide by the requirements of this legislation and to employ best practices in your CEMs to ensure that Temple maintains a strong email deliverability reputation.

At Temple, what constitutes a CEM?\*

- Promotion or advertisement targeting current students (e.g., bookstore, housing, events)
- Promotion regarding educational services to prospective students (e.g., Admissions)
- Events, promotions or a combination of the two (newsletters) targeting alumni
- Informative newsletters to a list of opted-in recipients (e.g., university groups)
- Event information/promotion/invitation targeting external audiences, like local public leaders and businesses
- Rankings emails targeting university representatives or guidance counselors

\*This list is not complete and only contains popular examples--if you are unsure of whether your email is a CEM, please [contact Strategic Marketing and Communications](#).

## **CAN-SPAM, CASL and Temple University Commercial Email Messages**

### *CAN-SPAM Requirements*

If you send CEMs at Temple, you must abide by CAN-SPAM requirements.

- No CEM may be sent without a visible and functioning link for a recipient to unsubscribe from future emails.
  - The link must be valid for 30 days following the send.
  - An unsubscribe request must be honored within 10 days.
  - The link may say “manage your preferences” if your email has more than one category to unsubscribe from; however, the link must allow for the recipient to unsubscribe from all email within one click of the unsubscribe landing page.
  - The unsubscribe instructions should be clear, transparent and representative of the sending Temple organization (e.g., the school or college or unit at the university).
- No CEM may be sent without a valid street address that represents where the emailing organization is located.
- The From Email Address and Reply-to Email Address used for all CEMs must be a valid @temple.edu email address.
- The From Email Address and Reply-to Email Address used for any CEM must be monitored or set up to automatically inform a sender to that email address that the email address is unmonitored and provide an alternate email address.
- The From Name, From Email Address and Reply-to Email Address used for any CEM must be representative of Temple University or the person that initiated the email (who must be a member of a Temple University organization) to identify that the email came from Temple and cannot be false or misleading in any way.
- Subject lines must be relevant to the content of the email and cannot be deceptive (e.g., the subject line “Free Tuition Today” cannot be used if we are not offering free tuition).

[Learn more about the CAN-SPAM Act.](#)

### *CASL Requirements*

If you are targeting contacts in Canada, you must abide by the Canadian rules and requirements, which are similar to the CAN-SPAM Act, but are stricter.

- All email sent to Canadian recipients must comply with the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), passed July 1, 2014.

- All Canadian recipients must provide implied or express consent to receive CEMs from Temple University.
  - “Implied consent” means that the recipient provided our organization with his or her email address willingly, but not necessarily with the intention of receiving CEMs from Temple.
  - “Express consent” means that a recipient expressly opted in to receive CEMs from Temple.
  - If a Canadian recipient has only given implied consent, you have two years to receive express consent from that person, or you must stop sending CEMs to him or her.
- All email sent to Canadian recipients must include a valid opt-out link, a physical address that represents the sending organization’s location and one of the following: a valid phone number, a valid email address or a valid web address.
  - These regulations follow the same protocol as CAN-SPAM.

[Learn more about CASL.](#)

## Best Practices for Email Marketing at Temple University

### Header Information

#### *Subject Line*

The subject line is the first or second element a recipient views when he or she receives an email (along with the From Name). It is critical to keep the subject line relevant, exciting (when appropriate) and succinct.

- Keep the subject line between 25 and 55 characters, and do not exceed 60 characters.
- Ensure that the subject line is an accurate representation of what the recipient will find in the email once he or she opens it; otherwise, you could lose credibility and may be in violation of the CAN-SPAM Act.
- Your message can be relevant and still be creative enough to entice recipients to open, just as long as it remains truthful and on topic.
- Avoid redundant subject lines (e.g., if you send a monthly newsletter, do not make the subject line “April 2012 Newsletter”); create a subject line that relates to the interesting, valuable content that can be found in the email.
- Do not use all caps in a subject line or use spam-trigger words and phrases such as “Free,” “Act Now!” or “Urgent” ([see a full list of spam-trigger words here](#)).
- Limit your use of special characters, such as exclamation points, colons, and question marks, in subject lines.
- Do not use emoticons (“emojis”) in subject lines, as they may trigger spam filters.

#### *From Name*

The name of the person who is sending the email. The From Name is extremely important because it is the first or second element a recipient sees, along with the subject line. If it is misleading, the email may not make it into the recipient’s inbox; creating misleading From Names can damage Temple’s deliverability reputation.

- Ensure that the From Name is representative of the sender and that it includes a Temple University designation (e.g., “Temple University College of Education”).
- When appropriate, to increase open rates, you may send email directly from the name of a Temple representative.
  - That person must be a relevant individual within the department you’re sending from (e.g., the dean of your school/college).
  - You must get consent from that person before sending from their name.
  - Include that person’s title after their name to indicate the email is coming from Temple (e.g., “Jane Doe, Director of Admissions, Temple University”).

#### *From Email Address*

The email address of the person who is sending the email.

- The From Email Address appears next to the From Name in most email applications.
- Use an @temple.edu domain.
- Visibility is low, since it appears after the From Name and does not appear in the preview pane.

- Despite low visibility, the From Email Address is still important because if it is misleading or has a domain other than “@temple.edu,” it could be picked up on spam filters.

### *Reply-to Email Address*

The email address that populates as the “to email address” when a recipient replies directly to your CEM.

- It is only visible when a recipient tries to reply to your message.
- If you do not wish to receive auto-replies or bounce-back messages directly to your inbox, do not use your personal or departmental email address as the Reply-to email address.

## **Content Development**

### *Copy Development*

- Keep email copy brief and to the point, with the intention of encouraging click-throughs.
- Use content patterns that include a headline and short teaser copy.
  - Headline copy should pique interest.
  - Teaser copy should engage recipients and intrigue them to learn more and should include a link to more information.
- Convey value in your copy; here are some value-driven questions to pose when developing content for email:
  - What is the objective of the email—does the email convey that objective?
  - Who is the email targeting—will it make sense to every recipient it reaches?
  - Is there a clearly stated and valuable action you want the recipient to take? If not, why send the email?
- Edit your copy before placing it in layout.
  - Edit for spelling and grammar: spell-check in Word and make sure your sentences are grammatically correct (tip: try reading your copy from end to start).
  - Fact-check: ensure that dates, times, days of the week, addresses/locations, people’s names, etc. are correct.

### *Copy Specs*

- Use web-safe standard fonts such as Arial or specify sans-serif as your font.
  - Many email clients and devices will render text in a different font than the one you used.
- Keep headline font sizes around 20 pixels.
- Keep body copy font sizes around 16 pixels.

### *Call to Action (CTA)*

- A CTA, which is usually a link, is the action you want the recipient to take.
- Clearly explain what action recipients are going to take when they click on the CTA.
- Do not use “Click here” or “Go to our website” as your CTA; instead, try “Learn more” or “Register by June 5,” which explains exactly what action is being taken.

### *Graphics*

- Many email applications do not display graphics, so all pertinent email copy must be included in the email as HTML text and not embedded within a graphic.
- Graphics in an email message should be integral to the content.
- Banner graphics should be between 100 and 200 pixels high (and no higher than 250 pixels).
  - A banner graphic is an image that spans the width of your email message, and is typically found at the top of an email.
  - Keeping the banner graphic 200 pixels or less ensures that the recipient will get to the actual content in the email more quickly.
- Supporting graphics should be about 250 pixels wide x 175 pixels high (for a horizontal graphic) or 175 pixels wide x 250 pixels high (for a vertical graphic), give or take the number of pixels required to keep the graphic proportionate.
- All graphics in an image should be tagged with alternative text (in the “Alt” tag). The alternative text represents what is displayed in the graphic.
- As a rule of thumb, emails should be 75 percent text and 25 percent graphics.

### *Multimedia*

- Do not attempt to embed video in a CEM. Instead, use a still image of the video you’re promoting, with a Play button overlay to depict that the user will be clicking through to a video.
- Avoid using GIFs in CEMs--if you choose to use them, use them sparingly and test their functionality thoroughly across all different types of email applications.

## **Email Layout**

### *General*

- Keep the width of an email between 550 and 650 pixels, with 600 pixels as the optimal width.
- Use responsive HTML design for your CEM so that your email conforms to the width of each recipient’s email application (whether it is a mobile device, desktop platform or web-based provider).
  - In 2013, over 40 percent of email opens [happened on a mobile device](#), so it’s imperative to optimize your email for those viewers.
- For one-off email design or email template design guidance, [contact Strategic Marketing and Communications](#).

### *Logo Placement*

- Use the primary version of the Temple University logo in email marketing messages.
- You may use the logo in two areas in your emails—top left or centered at the bottom.
  - Top left guidelines: do not use your unit lockup logo; instead, place the primary logo left-aligned in the header of your email and insert a break tag below the logo. Write your unit name in HTML text at a 14 pixel font weight, 25 pixel line height in sans-serif in black. For example:



- Centered at the bottom guidelines: do not use your unit lockup logo; instead, place the primary logo center-aligned below the body of your email and insert two break tags below the logo, where you will include your unit name in HTML text at 14 pixel font weight, 22 pixel line height in sans-serif in black.
  - If your unit name appears at the bottom of the email, include the address below the unit name. For example:



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#### **Email Testing**

*This section refers to testing emails before they are deployed (not to be confused with strategic testing such as A/B subject line tests).*

- Before deploying, test the appearance of your email on every type of email application.
  - Mobile (e.g., iOS devices, Android devices)
  - Desktop (e.g., Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes)
  - Web-based (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo)
- If you do not have a way to test (i.e., if your Email Service Provider does not provide this functionality), [please contact us](#) to help with testing on all devices.
- When you receive an email test in your inbox, be sure to double-check spelling, grammar and every link.

#### **Email Reporting**

*What is the open rate, how is it calculated and what affects it?*

The open rate is the rate at which a specific email (or a group of emails) is opened based on how many recipients were sent the email. The calculation is as follows: Number of Unique Opens divided by Number of Emails Delivered. The From Name, Subject Line and Pre-Header are the three factors that affect the open rate, since they



are the three pieces that a recipient views before opening an email. The open rate is a strong indicator of the impact of the information in your header.

*What is the click-through rate (CTR), how is it calculated and what affects it?*

CTR is the rate at which openers of a specific email (or a group of emails) click on any link in an email. The calculation is as follows: Number of Unique Clicks divided by Number of Unique Opens. The content of the email is the key driver of click-throughs; however, header information such as subject line and From Name can also drive click-throughs. The CTR is the best way to analyze the relevancy of your content for recipients.

Other metrics can help you analyze the performance of your emails:

- Unsubscribe rate: the rate at which recipients of your email opted out.
- Kickback rate: the rate at which the number of email addresses you sent actually got delivered.

### **Advanced Considerations**

- A/B testing on header information or email content
- Email personalization via dynamic (role-based) content
- Email personalization via mail merges, leveraging your data
- Email automation
- Nurture and drip campaigns
- Behavior-based audience segmentation

To discuss advanced considerations and/or email marketing strategy for your unit or department, please [contact Strategic Marketing and Communications](#).