



ANATOMY OF A RESPONSIVE EMAIL

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Introduction

With average mobile open rates reaching more than 50%, it's obvious that email campaigns must follow this new consumer trend. Email design must consider mobile users, or it may not reach the expected results.

In this guide, you will learn the basics about responsive design and see how to use it effectively in your emails.

45% of consumers have unsubscribed from promotional emails and 34% of consumers have marked promotional emails as spam because the emails or website didn't work well on their smartphone – Source : Litmus and Fluent “2016 Mobile-Friendly Email & Landing Page Trends” (2016)

WHAT IS RESPONSIVE DESIGN?





The term “responsive design” refers to content that is designed to fit on various devices. With the diversity of devices used to browse the web today, and new ones introduced on the market all the time, it is unthinkable to create a different content for each device. To ensure that content automatically scales to fit the platform where it is viewed, we use a programming method based on media queries and a fluid layout, that together act as dynamic rules.

First used for website programming, this technique now also applies to emails in order to improve the entire customer experience. After all, who wants to read emails on a mobile device when the display is not right?

71,6 % of consumers will delete an email if it does not look good on mobile – Source :
Adestra “Consumer Adoption & Usage Study” (2016)

THE PROS AND CONS



With today's observed statistics on mobile email open rates, there is no need for proof. Responsive design IS a major asset for your campaigns' success. Not only does it display your emails properly on several platforms, but it also provides a lot of latitude when it comes to adjusting content to different screen sizes. Using responsive design prevents possible frustration from your readers and facilitates their engagement by making your content available anywhere, anytime.

This seems to be the perfect solution, right? We could easily believe that, but there are some other points you need to consider...

Programming a responsive email is much more complex than it is for a standard HTML, unfortunately. It could actually take up twice the time, depending on what the template looks like.

Moreover, responsive is not supported on all email platforms. To help you figure out where it is supported, we maintain a list of [responsive-friendly platforms](#).

Dialog Insight offers ready-to-use responsive email templates. All you have to do is choose your favorite template, add your content and colors, and that's it!

PLANNING YOUR CONTENT



Making your emails responsive is not done without efforts. You need to think about the whys, hows and whats . What do you want your mobile users to see in your email? How will you arrange each content element? Here are 4 steps to help you plan your content for mobile.

1. Prioritize content elements

Take each section of your email message and evaluate the importance of element. For example, the image, name, and link of your product are essential, but do you need to add a description?

To help you set your display priorities, give each content element a rating note from 1 to 3. Elements identified with a 1 or 2 rating will be preserved in your mobile version – the 1s are those that are mandatory and must be placed up front, and the 2s are less important and can be placed at a lower level. The 3s provide no value and will therefore be removed from the mobile version.



2. Validate your images

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words... but to do so, it must be readable! Reduce the size of your images to 320 px. If the text on the image is unreadable, you have two choices: either create a new image for your mobile version or change your main image by using a larger font. If you use banners with distinct areas (such as text on the left and image on the right), you might find it appropriate to remove the left image and use only the right section with text.

Don't forget, you can use different images for mobile or simply adapt your design.

The first link in a responsive email on a mobile has a 30% higher click rate than in a non-responsive email. – Source : *Litmus and MailChimp “The Science of Email Clicks: The Impact of Responsive Design & Inbox Testing” (December 2014)*

3. Consider using a new design

Once you have prioritized your content and identified the preferred method for processing your images, you now need to develop a design that fits each platform. Using a separate column for each priority level is a good approach. For example, your level 2 content (blue), arranged in a column on the right, can be found at the end of your mobile message. This solution frees up the entire width of your mobile version for your level 1 content (red and white).

Also, consider developing a distinct display mode for your menu if it's too broad, or doesn't fit your mobile version. Finally, remember that your readers will click with their fingers. Think about adding links on your images and make sure that your calls to action are big and spread enough to avoid false clicks.





4. Test

The last step, crucial for all email communications, is testing. Make sure all links are clickable. Test buttons, images, everything! View the message in all possible directions, test each version and validate it on different platforms and devices.



Source : [The How to guide to responsive email design](#) – Litmus



Quick wins

Here are some great ideas to help you get the best results with your new design.

- ✓ One column format
- ✓ Simple navigation
- ✓ Clear calls to action
- ✓ Responsive landing page
- ✓ Minimum font size of 14
- ✓ Enough spacing for finger clicking
- ✓ Most important content first
- ✓ High resolution images for mobile display
- ✓ Clickable phone number

**Captivate your audience
with our 5 tips to create efficient content**

[Download the whitepaper](#)

WRITING FOR MOBILE

Many writers create their content on a standard size screen. But what happens with all these words when the screen is smaller? Do they become a series of lines that don't make sense?

Reduce your browser window to the size of a mobile in order to test your content display. You will be surprised on how certain ideas can easily be cut off from the original content when your text is 3 feet long on a smaller screen.

Make smaller paragraphs and remove all useless words. Go straight to the point. Use the same approach to reduce your headlines. But be careful to keep your titles as clear as possible.

Pay a special attention to elements like tables and charts that could display wrong on smaller screens. Seek advice from a designer if you need to.



RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING





Up to now, we covered what responsive design is, why you need it and how to plan and write your content for your mobile version. The next step is programming your email.

However, describing in details all the ins and outs of responsive programming would be quite long and complex. But if you are in charge of email programming, here is a diagram that could be useful for you to understand how responsive works and how it is implemented.

We are there for you !

You have difficulties or questions concerning the implementation of your responsive email ?

[Contact our team](#). We will be happy to give you a hand !

How to implement email responsive design?

The query

In the context of email, media types define which CSS styles to use based on screen size.

This media type states "If the email is viewed on a screen size of 480px or less, use the following CSS."

The styles

Combined with the media query, the style rules act like conditional 'if-then' statements, triggered when the specified screen size is detected. There can be many styles, or just a few.

1 Change Navigation

This style moves navigation items to their own row that spans the entire width (100%) of the table.

2 Enlarge Fonts

Here, font sizes inside table cells named 'body-header' are increased to 18px.

3 Change Colors

Any fonts contained in a table cell named 'body-copy' will display as the color #dddddd.

4 Add Padding

This simple style adds 15px of padding to table cells with a class of 'body'.

5 Change or Hide Content

This display property can be used to hide table cells

The HTML

Each style in CSS rule block specifies the type of container or element (for instance, the entire table or just a table cell) the style should effect. These rules must be assigned and referenced in the HTML in order to be applied.

```
td[class="body-header"] {  
  font-size: 18px !important;  
}
```

For example, the element (td) and the class ("body-header") used in the CSS must match those used in the HTML.

```
<html>  
<head>  
<title>Your Amazing Email</title>  
<style type="text/css">  
  
  @media screen and (max-width:480px) {  
  
    table[class="wrapper"] {  
      width:100% !important;  
    }  
  
    table[class="nav"] {  
      width:100% !important;  
      padding:10px 0 20px 20px !important;  
    }  
  
    td[class="body-header"] {  
      font-size: 18px !important;  
    }  
  
    td[class="body-copy"] {  
      color:#dddddd;  
    }  
  
    td[class="body"] {  
      padding: 15px !important;  
    }  
  
    td[class="mobile-hide"] {  
      display:none;  
    }  
  
  }  
  
</style>  
</head>  
<body>  
  
  <table cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0" width="100%">  
    <tr>  
      <td align="left" >  
          
      </td>  
    </tr>  
  </table>  
  
  <table cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0" width="100%">  
    <tr>  
  
      <td align="left" class="body-header">  
  
        This is the email headline text.  
      </td>  
    </tr>  
  </table>  
  
</body>  
</html>
```

*HTML has been truncated for illustration purposes.

Another technique can be combined with medias queries to maximize responsive display on a higher variety of mobile platforms. It's called Spongy programming. We can easily see the difference on the image below.





The main difference between the two methods is in content alignment. As opposed to media queries that align content all at once, by placing them one after the other on a fixed screen size, the Spongy method gradually aligns content as the display reduces.

As an example, let's say we want to display 100% of the content on a small screen but with a maximum of 600px on a larger screen. To do this, you can use a 100% width table and set the max-width to 600px.

Since the max-width setting is not supported in Outlook, we need to add a second conditional table to the main one. This will provide the possibility of displaying a fixed email using a 600px width in Outlook applications.





The code will then be presented like this:

```
<!--[if (gte mso 9) | (IE)]>

<table width="600" align="center">
  <tr>
    <td>

<![endif]-->

<table width="100%" style="max-width:600px;
margin:0 auto;">
  <tr>
    <td>
      Contenu
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>

<!--[if (gte mso 9) | (IE)]>

  </td>
</tr>
</table>

<![endif]-->
```



About Dialog Insight

One of the most effective ways to achieve your growth goals is to take control of your customer data to maximize your marketing efforts.

At Dialog Insight, we believe that each of our customers is unique and that their needs are specific. Therefore , we have developed a platform that adapts to your changing context. On the one hand, we provide you with a unified platform that centralized customer database, campaign orchestration tools, and detailed analysis of your performance. On the other, we offer strategic support services aligned to your needs.

Whether you're looking to increase sales or engage your customers, leverage customer insights you've gathered over time. You will communicate in a more relevant, coherent and personalized way than ever before. Make every point of contact an opportunity to offer your customers a brand experience beyond their expectations.

With Dialog Insight at your side, you are more than ever the master of your success.

