



Visual appearance and effective communication in commercial digital newsletters

Constructing digital commercial newsletters in a visually appealing format as a part of an effective company marketing strategy

Thomas Djupsjö

1 SUMMARY IN SWEDISH

Som jag i introduktionen beskrev, är e-postmarknadsföring och kommersiella nyhetsbrev aktuellt i vårt dagliga samhälle. Många företag använder sig av denna sorts marknadsföring i sin marknadsföringsstrategi för att nå sina användare och potentiella kunder.

När man läser och forskar i ämnet märker man att det finns flera aspekter att ta hänsyn till och förstå, och dessa faktorer har alla en direkt inverkan på effektiviteten av marknadsföringskampanjer. När marknadsföraren har en bra kunskap och förståelse i olika lösningar kan dessa utnyttjas i nyhetsbrev för att förbättra kampanjernas resultat.

Hypoteserna i introduktionen var delvis rätta då det gällde strukturen av nyhetsbrev och det att många av meddelandena har liknande innehållsstruktur och likheter i den visuella framställningen. Trots detta har de analyserade nyhetsbreven specifika egenskaper på grund av varumärket i sig och tjänsten som marknadsförs.

När man läser frågeställningarna för arbetet i introduktionen märker man att det inte går att hitta ett enkelt svar på frågorna. Svaren är indelade i flera kapitel av mitt arbete som tillsammans skapar förslag och potentiella lösningar. Detta arbete tillsammans med andra källor (t.ex. tjänsteleverantörer på webben) kan i e-postmarknadsföringskampanjer användas som riktlinjer av potentiellt intresse för marknadsförare som funderat på ändringar i sina nyhetsbrev.

Genom att kombinera vissa färger kan formgivare skapa en unik känsla och en vacker design som förbättrar engagemanget och attraherar interaktion hos mottagarna. Utgående från vissa teorier fungerar en del färger bättre med varandra och kan användas då man väljer de rätta för sitt specifika ändamål.

Vid val av typsnitt för nyhetsbrev finns det vissa tekniska begränsningar som måste tas i beaktande, men det finns bra lösningar tillgängliga, vilket gör det möjligt med variationer i typsnitten.

När ett företag samlar kunddata finns det några sätt att göra detta mer effektivt och utgående från standarder inom branschen. Det är viktigt att be om lov för att skicka ut nyhetsbrev samtidigt som sändarens e-postadress skall vara bekant för mottagaren. Genom att

ändra på rubriken med en ändamålsenlig förklaring av meddelandet kan marknadsföraren se till att mottagaren känner att meddelandet är relevant till dess behov och önskemål.

Då en kund registrerar sig för ett nyhetsbrev är det bra att skicka det första nyhetsbrevet strax efter registreringen. På detta sätt undviker man att kunden glömmer att den gett sin information och registrerat sig. Om kunden glömt registreringen har detta en negativ effekt på s.k. *open rate* och den generella känslan av kampanjen.

Vid planeringen av sändningsfrekvens av ett nyhetsbrev bör sändaren överväga relevansen av erbjudandet och anpassa frekvensen till kundernas beteende. Om marknadsföraren har en bra kunskap om sina kunder är det ganska enkelt att byta tajmningen och antalet visningar utgående från deras beteende för att förbättra effekten av meddelandet.

En viktig del av nyhetsbrev är innehållet som består av text, bilder, länkar, knappar med mera. När man strukturerar innehållet är det skäl att minnas att det finns tekniska begränsningar som bör tas i beaktande för att göra meddelandet så effektivt och kompatibelt som möjligt.

Genom att placera viktigt innehåll på övre delen av ett nyhetsbrev ser marknadsföraren till att detta är det första som syns. Med hjälp av alternativ text till bilderna försäkras man sig att även kunder med textbaserade e-postklienter får en bra upplevelse även om bilderna inte är synliga.

Genom att dela upp innehållet i kolumner och olika positioner kan man framhäva vissa delar av meddelandet och visa upp innehållet effektivt.

Länkar i ett nyhetsbrev bör vara placerade separat och visualiserade så att användaren förstår att det är en länk. S.k. *call-to-actions* som en länk eller knapp bör vara korta och förklara vad användaren skall göra. Genom att placera flera *call-to-actions* i ett kommersiellt meddelande kan man förbättra engagemanget och *CTR* (*click-through-rate*), men det är viktigt att minnas att alltför många *call-to-actions* i samma meddelande kan ha motsatt inverkan.

Ett problem i e-postmarknadsföring är skräppostfilter som kan hindra att en del av meddelandena blir levererade till kunderna. Genom att använda sig av god praxis och teknik presenterade i mitt arbete kan man försäkra sig om att undvika grundläggande misstag och att förstå hur skräppostfilter fungerar.

När man sammanställer och designar ett kommersiellt nyhetsbrev är det bra att skicka ut provmeddelanden i olika e-postklienter för att testa funktionalitet och för att förhindra att meddelandena blir markerade som skräppost. Med små ändringar i rubriken och i innehållet kan resultatet vara helt annorlunda i positiv bemärkelse.

Att följa resultat och rapporter är en viktig del i att upprätthålla framgångsrika marknadsföringskampanjer och erbjuda kunderna relevant information. Genom att placera kunderna i olika segment är det möjligt att rikta meddelanden och erbjudanden till vissa kunder vilket ökar engagemanget och förbättrar *CTR*.

Genom att analysera rapporter lär sig marknadsföraren om kundernas beteende och kan utnyttja denna information skickligt i olika marknadsföringssyften.

I min studie valde jag att analysera nyhetsbrev sända av fem olika företag (med verksamhet i Finland) som använder nyhetsbrev i sin marknadsföringsstrategi. Nyhetsbreven samlades in under nio månaders tid för att få information om sändningsfrekvens och ändringar i meddelandet under tidsperioden. Alla meddelanden analyserades i samma e-postklient vilket gör meddelandena jämförbara sinsemellan.

Genom att använda teorierna i mitt arbete kunde jag se på meddelandena med en kritisk syn och infallsvinkel vilket gav goda insikter i hur etablerade företag kan ha svagheter då det gäller kommersiell e-postmarknadsföring.

Analysen fungerar som exempel på hur man kan utnyttja teorierna och lösningarna på vilket nyhetsbrev som helst och hur det lönar sig att göra ändringar och förbättringar utgående från detta.

EXAMENSARBETE	
Arcada	
Utbildningsprogram:	Film och Television
Identifikationsnummer:	12948
Författare:	Thomas Djupsjö
Arbetets namn:	Visual appearance and effective communication in commercial digital newsletters
Handledare (Arcada):	Owen Kelly
Uppdragsgivare:	
<p>I dagens samhälle använder företag och organisationer internet och e-post för att nå potentiella kunder och samarbetspartner. E-post och internet är något många har tillgång till och använder direkt eller indirekt. Därför har kommersiella nyhetsbrev blivit ett effektivt sätt att nå ett stort antal mottagare på några sekunder för en relativt liten investering och ansträngning.</p> <p>I mitt arbete försöker jag komma fram till om den visuella framställningen i kommersiella nyhetsbrev är viktig och vilka tekniska metoder som ofta används vid visuella framställningen av nyhetsbrev.</p> <p>För att få svar på en del av frågorna har jag prenumererat på ett antal nyhetsbrev per e-post av finska företag, för att studera meddelandenas visuella framställning och struktur. Jag har också analyserat innehållstrukturen och rubriker i meddelanden för att få en förståelse över hur dessa är verkställda av sändaren samt vilka utseendemässiga variationer det finns mellan företagen som distribuerar meddelandena.</p> <p>Enligt min studie finns det bra lösningar och riktlinjer att följa för en bättre spridning och engagemang hos mottagarna. Genom att följa med rapportering för enskilda marknadsföringskampanjer är det möjligt att förbättra vissa egenskaper i nyhetsbrev för att nå vissa förbättringar och för att öka trovärdighet och interaktiviteten hos mottagarna.</p> <p>Genom att använda teorierna i min studie kan man med ett kritiskt öga och infallsblick analysera meddelanden, vilket ger goda insikter i hur etablerade kommersiella företag kan ha svagheter inom e-postmarknadsföring.</p>	
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DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
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Identification number:	12948
Author:	Thomas Djupsjö
Title:	Visual appearance and effective communication in commercial digital newsletters
Supervisor (Arcada):	Owen Kelly
Commissioned by:	
<p>In today's society companies and organizations use internet and e-mail to reach potential customers, clients and business partners. E-mail and internet is something most has available and are using either directly or indirectly. This is why commercial newsletters have become an effective way to reach lots of receivers in a few seconds for a relatively small amount of money and effort.</p> <p>In my thesis I'm trying to figure out if the visual appearance in commercial digital newsletters is important and which techniques commonly are used in the visual construction of newsletters.</p> <p>To answer some of the questions I've subscribed to an amount of newsletters through e-mail sent by Finnish companies and studied their visual appearance and structure. I've also analyzed structure of content and subject lines in messages to obtain understanding in how this is executed by the senders and how the newsletters' appearance differ depending on the company that distributes them.</p> <p>According to my study there are good solutions and guidelines to follow in order to achieve a better reach and engagement by the receivers. By following reports for each marketing campaign, it's possible to enhance features in newsletters to reach certain improvements when it comes to commitment and interactivity by the subscribers.</p> <p>By using theories written in my thesis one is able to look at the messages with a critical mindset and approach which enables good insights in how established commercial companies may have weaknesses when it comes to e-mail marketing.</p>	
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OPINNÄYTE	
Arcada	
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Työn ohjaaja (Arcada):	Owen Kelly
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<p>Nykypäivän yhteiskunnassa yritykset ja organisaatiot käyttävät internetiä ja sähköpostia mahdollisille asiakkaille sekä yhteistyökumppaneille. Sähköposti ja internet ovat monien käytössä joko suoraan tai välillisesti. Sen takia kaupalliset uutiskirjeet ovat tehokas tapa tavoittaa ison määrän vastaanottajia sekunneissa suhteellisen pienellä investoinnilla ja panostuksella.</p> <p>Työssäni yritän saada selville onko visuaalisen ulkonäön merkitys kaupallisissa uutiskirjeissä tärkeää sekä millaisia tekniikkoja usein käytetään toteutuksessa visuaalisissa uutiskirjeissä.</p> <p>Saadakseni vastauksia joihinkin kysymyksiin olen tilannut määrän uutiskirjeitä suomalaisilta yrityksiltä, tutkiakseni visuaalista ulkonäköä ja rakennetta viesteissä. Olen myös analysoinut sisällön rakennetta ja otsikoita viesteissä saadakseni ymmärrystä toteutuksesta sekä millaisia variaatioita viestien ulkonäössä on lähetettävien yritysten välillä.</p> <p>Tutkimukseni mukaan on olemassa hyviä ratkaisuja ja suuntaviivoja joita voi hyödyntää saadakseen paremman jakelun ja sitoutumista vastaanottajilta. Seuraamalla raportteja markkinointikampanjoiden perusteella on mahdollista parantaa joitakin ominaisuuksia uutiskirjeissä saadakseen parannuksia jotka lisäävät uskottavuutta sekä interaktiivisuutta vastaanottajilta.</p> <p>Käyttämällä tutkimukseni teorioita on mahdollista analysoida viestejä kriittisellä silmällä ja katselutavalla, mikä antaa käsityksen siitä miten menestyvien kaupallisten yritysten sähköpostimarkkinoinnissa saattaa löytyä heikkouksia.</p>	
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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Relevance of the subject

In today's society companies and organizations send out millions of commercial e-mails to customers, partners and other receivers. E-mail that almost everyone uses, either directly or indirectly, has therefore become an important way of sending out large amounts of messages that reach its recipients in just seconds. Analyzing the structure and visual appearance in newsletters is therefore an important aspect when creating commercial messages and is also one of the reasons to write this thesis.

2.2 Main reasons of writing on this subject

As I described in my introduction, the topic is present and important in our society. This is the main reason why I'm writing about it. E-mail marketing is also involved in many company marketing strategies and I'm hoping to gather information that might be of interest to designers and marketers working in the industry.

2.3 Personal reasons of writing on this subject

Reasons for writing a thesis about visual appearance in e-mail marketing is because I hope that my thesis could have an impact or at least evoke new thoughts among companies and start a conversation about this kind of marketing.

I'd also like find good solutions to some of the questions concerning e-mail marketing when studying deeper into the structure of commercial messages. At the same time I hope to learn more about how e-mail marketing works and how it could be improved in a way that supports the theories and study results.

2.4 Hypothesis and questions

My assumptions when starting to write my thesis are a few. I've already seen many newsletters that look pretty alike so I'm assuming the structure in the messages should have a relatively similar visual appearance. It's also commonly known that the subject line of a commercial message, as well as the frequency and delivery has an impact on the effectiveness of the newsletter. The main questions to my thesis are presented below.

- How are commercial messages structured?
- Are there any particular sections that occur regularly?
- How does one effectively improve the visual appearance of a newsletter?
- What's a good subject line?
- What is an appropriate frequency and delivery time of commercial messages?

2.5 Restricting the subject

When approaching the matter I will study and analyze commercial newsletters.

Read more about this in chapter 2.

To restrict and limit the thesis I've chosen to strictly rely on the results of my study, which gives more appropriate answers on a live and practical level, which meets today's standards and questions.

When planning my thesis work I first thought about interviewing companies concerning digital marketing and commercial messages. However, I took the decision to leave this part out because I think it wouldn't have given any extra value, but just answer some general questions that could be more accurate in another study. By restricting my work I think I can present more general guidelines and solutions that may be of interest to many companies instead of focusing on a single company's marketing strategy and insights on e-mail marketing.

2.6 The theory

As in all academic and theoretical texts I'm relying on resources written elsewhere in my study. When reading other studies written around the same theme I've realized that there are many good sources to consider when retrieving new information or theories. Most of the resources used in this particular thesis are found on the internet, which made the writing process somewhat easier and faster.

Some of the Email Service Providers (*EMP's*) are excellent resources which provide good statistics and reports as well as good explanations of effective content in e-mail marketing. By combining many of the sources one can find out solutions and guidelines when it comes to e-mail marketing and its efficiency.

2.7 Background information

To grasp and better understand the topic itself it is required that the reader has a basic understanding of computers, internet and e-mail correspondence. The focus in my thesis is on e-mail marketing messages and their visual appearance and it could be described as the following:

Many commercial companies rely on making profit of its services, which means it's necessary to promote and market their services to stand up against competitors.

Sending out commercial e-mails has lowered the price and time consumed by the company which gives e-mail marketing a high return on investment (*ROI*). According to studies there are many techniques to improve the effect of e-mail marketing which is going to be explained in some of the chapters in this thesis. (*Lynda.com*. 2014b)

2.8 Methods

In my thesis I'm going to use one main method of research to obtain information and conclusions about the subject. This is mainly because I think it will give more accurate results by focusing on a single way at analyzing media products.

I will use analysis tools and theories to look at newsletters that are sent to customers through email. I have therefore subscribed for a specific amount of digital newsletters that are sent from certain companies. All of the companies use this type of marketing strategy in Northern Europe and sends newsletters on a regular basis.

By using a big amount of newsletters sent by a small pool of companies I'm hoping it will give the research a more realistic look at the company marketing strategy and a view of how the messages differ from each other.

2.9 Wordlist and definitions

Table 1. Wordlist and definitions.

Call to action (CTA)	Words that tries to urge a customer to take an immediate action
CMYK	Subtractive color mix used in printed media
Content	Refers to the contents of a newsletter or commercial message
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets, a way of styling messages in HTML
CTR	Click-Through-Rate, the percentage of clicks on advertisements
EMP	E-mail Service Provider
Frequency	Amount of an advertisement exposed to a viewer. In e-mail marketing usually referred to how often e-mails are sent.
HTML	A markup language used in newsletters and pages on the web
ISP	Internet Service Provider
MUA	Mail User Agent, mail client. Mail reading software
Newsletter	A commercial e-mail that provides customers information or offers
Open rate	The percentage of people opening a certain e-mail
Prospect	A potential customer in marketing terms
Reach	Total number of people exposed to an advertisement
RGB	Additive color mix used for digital screens
ROI	Return On Investment
URL	Uniform Resource Locator, web address

3 COLOR THEORY

Color theory explores colors and the combination of them in different occurrences. Color theory is a field that is present in humanities, nature science and art studies. (Nilson, Karl Gustaf. 2004)

The philosopher Aristoteles (born 384 B.C.) wrote about colors when he in Ancient Greece presented his thoughts about the rhetorical tradition. In his writings about pathos Aristoteles explains a connection between colors and emotions of the receiver. The colors evoke emotions and sympathies but the associations are individually bound depending on the receivers' experiences and background. (Oele, Marjolein. 2007, s.100-110)

The first writings on color theory were documented in Leone Battista's paper about the art of painting, *Della Pittura* ~1435. Battista explains the first description on perspectives in art and about the graphic perspective. (Kemp, Martin. 2004).

3.1 Primary colors

A primary color is one of the colors used in additive and subtractive color mix.

In an additive color blend the primary colors; red, green and blue are mixed to match and work on digital screens (also called *RGB*). In a subtractive blend of colors for printed media the colors cyan, magenta, yellow and black are used (also called *CMYK*). (Åbonde, Jens-Jesper. 2013)

3.2 Secondary colors

A secondary color is a mix of two primary colors which together create a unique color nuance of these colors. For example cyan, yellow and magenta are all secondary colors. (Åbonde, Jens-Jesper. 2013)

3.3 Additive colors

The additive color mix is a blend of colors that together creates another color nuance. Usually black (no light source) is used together with one or many primary colors to create

a unique output. When using more colors the lightness increases and creates a nuance which is between 100 % black and 100 % white. Additive color mixes are used in for example content on digital screens. (Åbonde, Jens-Jesper. 2013)

3.4 Subtractive colors

In a subtractive color mix a reflective media (for example a paper) is used to filter a color mix together with the primary colors which creates a color nuance. Usually a mix of the primary colors cyan, magenta and yellow is used. When printing there's also a so called key color (usually black) that is used to give images a higher contrast. (Åbonde, Jens-Jesper. 2013)

4 USAGE OF COLORS

The human reacts to colors on both a physiological and emotional level when both the eyes and the brain create an association to the color. Cultural norms and opinions together with symbolism can show that colors evoke quite different emotions between cultures. (Åbonde, Jens-Jesper. 2013)

4.1 Color harmony

Color harmony is something that is pleasing to the eye in visual experiences. A good color harmony engages, places a sense of order and balance in its entirety. When the design is chaotic and unorganized the human brain might reject the information. (Colormatters.com. 2014)

In the following chapters I will write about how to combine colors that are harmonious together and how to effectively use them in design.

4.2 Complementary colors

Complementary colors are colors that in right proportions together create either white or black. Complementary colors have the biggest contrast between each other and are therefore consciously used in art and design. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.3 Split-Complementary

In a split-complementary color scheme the complementary colors are used in a variation together with a primary color. It uses two colors close to each other and mixes this with one of the primary colors to give a strong visual contrast but with less tension.

The split-complementary color mix is good for beginners as it's easy to use and hard to mess up in the design. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.4 Double complementary

In a double complementary (rectangular) color blend four colors are used as two complementary pairs. This mix offers lots of possibilities when it comes to variation and works best if the designer wants to use many colors without making any of the colors dominant. It might be good to look at the balance between the warm and the cool colors in a double complementary mix. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.5 Square colors

A square color scheme is similar to the rectangular color mix and uses four colors evenly arranged into to the color wheel. In a square color scheme it's good to have a dominant color and to remember to have a good balance between warm and cool colors. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.6 Analogous colors

In an analogous color mix colors that are close to each other are used to create peaceful and comfortable design. The analogous colors are usually harmonious and pleasing to the eye since they are also often found in nature. When using an analogous color mix one should pay attention to see that there is enough contrast and choose one of the colors as the dominant one. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.7 Triadic colors

In a triadic color mix three colors placed evenly around the color wheel are combined. When using this technique in design it usually tends to be energetic even if one is using light or unsaturated color hues. It's recommended to use one of the colors as a dominant part in the design and the other two colors for accent to obtain the best balance between the colors. (Tigercolor.com. 2014)

4.8 Figures of color mixes



Figure 1. Complementary colors,
Tigercolor.com. 2012

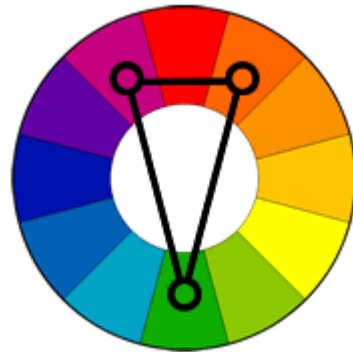


Figure 2. Split-complementary colors,
Tigercolor.com. 2012



Figure 3. Double complementary colors,
Tigercolor.com. 2012



Figure 4. A square color mix,
Tigercolor.com. 2012



Figure 5. Analogous colors,
Tigercolor.com. 2012



Figure 6. Triadic colors,
Tigercolor.com. 2012

5 TYPOGRAPHY

Serif font faces have small lines attached to letters or symbols at the end of a stroke. Serif fonts are commonly used in body text as they are considered easier to read. However, some studies say that there is no significant difference in readability between serif and sans-serif font faces. (Wikipedia. 2014a)

Sans-serif font faces are fonts that do not have *serifs* at the end of strokes. Sans-serif fonts are used in headlines and frequently used on computer screens. (Wikipedia. 2014b)

The difference between serif and sans-serif font faces can easily be visualized in the following figure.



Figure 7. Serif and sans-serif fonts, Wikipedia. 2014a

5.1 Typography in Digital Media

Font faces and typography plays an important part in a newsletter and sets the mood and tune felt by the subscriber. (Campaign Master. 2014a)

Typography is used in design and marketing to enhance readability (promote reading) and understanding the message. One can easily accomplish this by adjusting the font and its size, which makes the text legible and meaningful. By changing the line height and length it guides the eyes of a reader. This is good as people read the shapes of the letters, not the letters themselves.

When it comes to what makes fonts legible there are a few solutions that one may apply. When changing the vertical spacing in text one can create important pieces of information that are separated from each other. By adding spacing around each letter and making sure there's enough stroke (thickness in each letter) the human eye has easier to comprehend content. We also know that font faces evoke different feelings, which means that the designer can easily manipulate the touch and feel in newsletters by changing the font. (Lynda.com. 2014a)

It's also important to think about what fonts and attributes are used on different types of content, since the content itself usually is the most important part. (Art Thompson, Jr.. 2014)

Reading is a complex process and the human eye doesn't read single words but reacts on the shapes when scanning through text. By avoiding all capital letters (caps) in longer pieces of text, using bold for a certain emphasis and the correct font size it automatically increases both the readability and the chance that readers continue reading. If the paragraph is too wide the human eye might have trouble finding the next row which also makes the readability poor.

A good rule is to set the line height to about 150% of the font size in longer text and using a bit less when it comes to shorter subject lines or topics.

When combining several fonts one should pay attention to their similarity and how they match. When choosing colors it's good to find a balance between the background and the font itself. A too large contrast might distract the reader and make it harder to read. So remember; people read what interest them, but if the text has poor legibility they might not read the text at all. (Lynda.com. 2014a)

5.2 E-mail Safe Fonts in Newsletters

Different type faces (fonts) are used in newsletters to set a certain mood or feeling in the campaign to affect the readers. Technically it's possible to use almost any font in newsletters, but it's not always certain that they work properly. Since 1998 there has been a set of fonts that are classed as "e-mail safe fonts". This means that they will work on nearly all devices and are safe to use. If, however, the marketer wishes to use separate

fonts that aren't on this list, it's possible use the so called *@font-face-technique* which allows using special fonts for certain devices. I'm not going more deeply in on this technique in my thesis. The 18 standard "e-mail safe" fonts are listed in the table below. (Campaign Master. 2014b)

Table 2. E-mail safe font faces for PC and Mac (Campaign Master, 2014b)

PC	MAC
Arial	Arial, Helvetica
Arial Black	Arial Black, Gadget
Comic Sans MS	Comic Sans MS
Courier New	Courier New
Georgia	Georgia
Impact	Impact, Charcoal
Lucida Console	Monaco
Lucida Sans Unicode	Lucida Grande
Palatino Linotype, Book Antiqua	Palatino
Tahoma	Geneva
Times New Roman	Times New Roman, Times
Trebuchet MS	Trebuchet MS
Verdana	Verdana, Geneva
Συμβολ (Symbol)	Συμβολ (Symbol)
Webdings	Webdings
Wingdings	Zapf Dingbats
MS Sans Serif	Geneva
MS Serif	New York

6 EFFECTIVE E-MAIL MARKETING

As many know e-mail marketing has been a standard in modern marketing for quite a while. E-mail marketing has a high return on investment (**ROI**) which means it can generate big amount of sales in a short period of time with small efforts and resources by the company. (Wikipedia. 2014c)

The purpose of e-mail marketing is to attract prospects (potential customers) and convince them to become customers and loyal customers. However, as we will learn, it is not effective to send out masses of commercial messages to randomly selected people when building a relationship between the customer and a company (sender).

A good way to do successful e-mail marketing is to use an E-mail Service Provider (hereafter **EMP**) that sends out commercial messages to receivers. The EMP's systems have a set of advanced tools that makes tracking and reports available on all of the messages sent. The EMP's also provides fully designed templates that are easy to use as well as e-mail servers and databases in which all the recipients are stored.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

6.1 Collecting data

When collecting customer data for your e-mail marketing it's good to comprehend some of the norms and ethics attached to this. It's good to offer a simple opt-out (unsubscribe) (Wikipedia, 2014n) in the newsletters, as well as providing direct contact information to the company. This gives the sender more reliability to the customer. One should always ask permission and preferences of the customer to manage the frequency and relevance of subjects when sending out newsletters.

There are a few effective ways to get people to subscribe for a company newsletter which is explained in the following list:

1. Place a newsletter sign-up form on every page on a company website. Chances are higher that users subscribe no matter which page they visit.
2. Use a paper sign-up form that you easily can distribute and fill out.
3. Share a link on Social Media that attract people to subscribe.
4. Ask permission and contact information in person.
5. Use a QR-code in an advert targeted to smartphone users that directly links to a newsletter sign-up form.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

When structuring and planning a sign-up form for a newsletter there are a few things to pay attention to. As one is asking for personal customer information one should always think about the relevancy and what information the customers potentially don't want to give. It's also good to narrow the required information down to just a few fields, and ask for more information when they've already signed up.

Below two examples of how companies try to acquire subscribers.

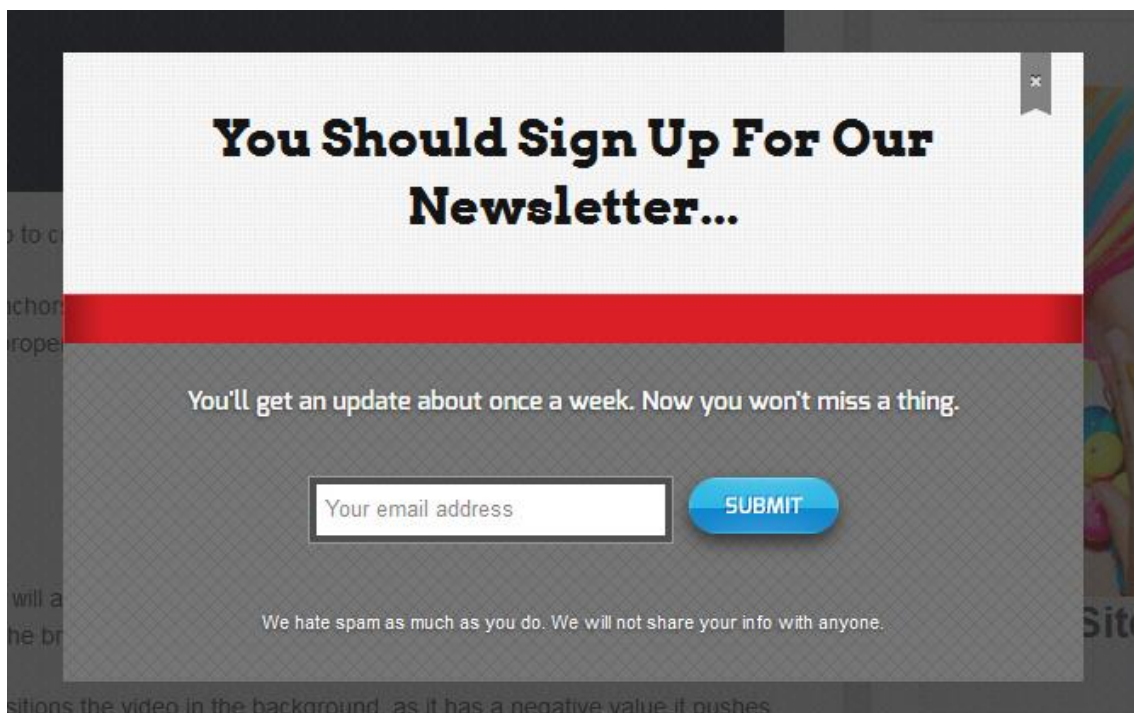


Figure 8. "You Should Sign Up For Our Newsletter", Syntaxx.com. 2014

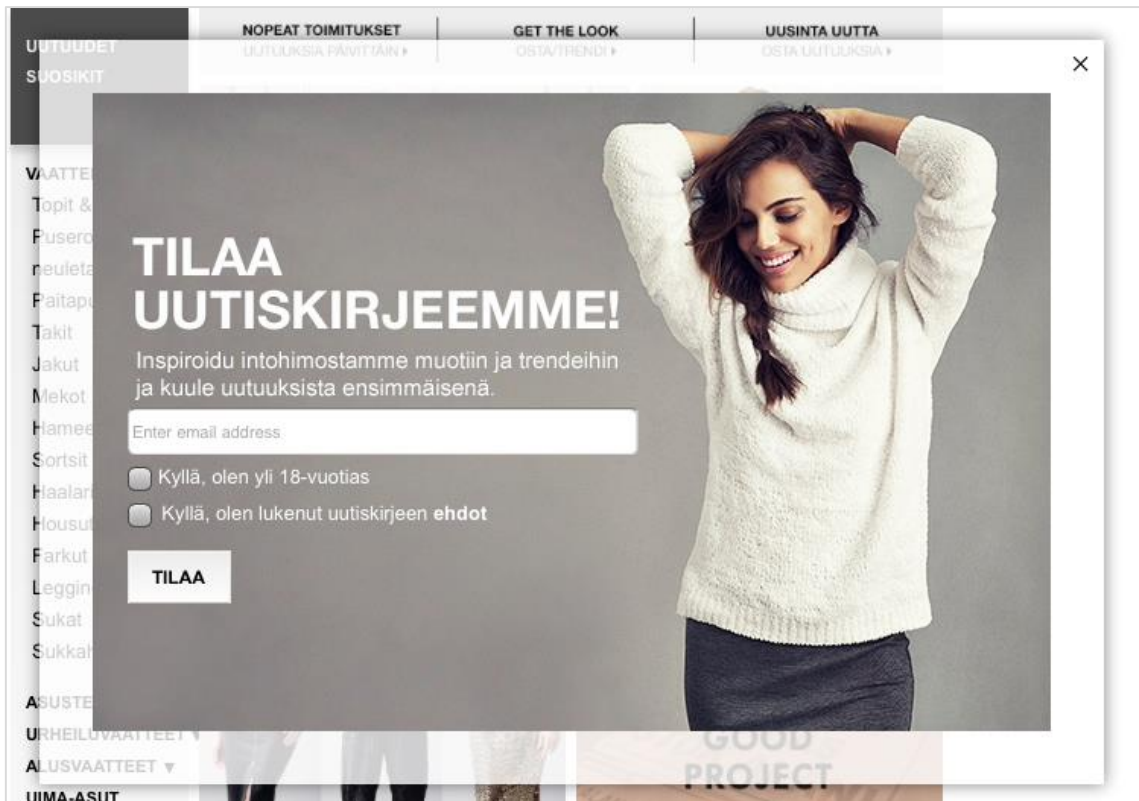


Figure 9. "Tilaa uutiskirjeemme!", Ginatricot.com. 2014

To maximize the amount of subscribers it's good to have offers specially intended for people that sign up to the newsletter. The company can use one of the following techniques to attract registrations:

1. Offer something for free, e.g.: *"Free consultant services when subscribing"*
2. Give the newsletter value with something linked to the company's core business.
For example: *"Exclusive offer on T-Shirts for all subscribers"*
3. Promise exclusive offers in the future, e.g.: *"Don't miss our future offers"*

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

6.2 Double opt-in

It's recommended that there are two steps to subscribe to a newsletter so that users don't get assigned to a newsletter without permission, by an error or a malicious way. The *Double opt-in* method includes sending a link to the subscriber that has to accept the subscription before receiving any newsletters.

Double opt-in has started to take over the single opt-in method since it has been proven to work better. The advantages of the double opt-in method could be described as the following:

- You assure that the subscribers has a higher engagement which means more opens, clicks and fewer bounces and unsubscribes.
- The users can't sign up with false or non-existing information. It is also harder to sign up someone else to the newsletter.
- You are safe from scammers that try to report the newsletters as spam.

(MailChimp. 2014e)

7 NEWSLETTER DESIGN

When designing newsletters it's good to create and test a few different versions of the newsletters which awake a different tone and feeling by the receiver. This can e.g. be accomplished when changing pictures or colors, and by arranging content in the e-mail. By grouping content in the message it is both easier to read and it also gives a more structured look and feel to the reader.

Depending on which type of content and message the sender wants to deliver it is usually good to use separate newsletter designs for different occasions. Often, however, companies combine the newsletters so that they can get many messages into the e-mail. (Lynda.com. 2014b)

It is possible to divide newsletters into the following categories:

1. Info-driven newsletters

The company informs the receiver about a feature, service or other matter (the message should include a maximum of 20 % promotional material).



Figure 10. An info-driven newsletter, K-Supermarket. 2014

2. Promotional newsletter

The message promotes services or products sold by the company.

LG 42" 100 Hz LED-TV ★★★★★ 349,90 LG 42LB550V on hyvä Full HD -resoluutioinen perustelevisio. 42" televisiossa on IPS...	Sony 50" 3D Smart LED-TV ★★★★★ 889,90 Sony KDL-50W828 on Sonyn parhaalla XR800 Motionflow -liiketoistolla varustettu...	LG 55" Smart 4K 3D LED-TV ★★★★★ 1299,90 LG 55UB850V on mahtavan tarkalla 4K-kuvalla ja helppokäyttöisellä webOS...
Osta	Osta	Osta

Figure 11. A promotional newsletter, Verkkokauppa.com. 2014

3. Event-driven newsletters

The message informs about an upcoming event which is arranged or sponsored by the company.

Perheautojen suosikit nyt huikkeilla eduilla ! Tervetuloa hyville kauppoille !

**Tervetuloa Toyotan viikonloppunäyttelyyn
Toyota Espooseen ja Toyota Kaivokselaan !**

**lauantaina 11.10. klo 10-15
sunnuntaina 12.10. klo 11-15**

Aloitamme syksyn perheautojen suosikkien huikkeilla eduilla:
Juhlapaketti Avensikseen, Aurisiin ja Verssoon **vain 50 €** sisältäen

Figure 12. An event-driven newsletter, Toyota Finland. 2014

4. Announcements

The announcement message has an informative task but rather than selling products or services it tries to build a relationship between the sender and receiver.

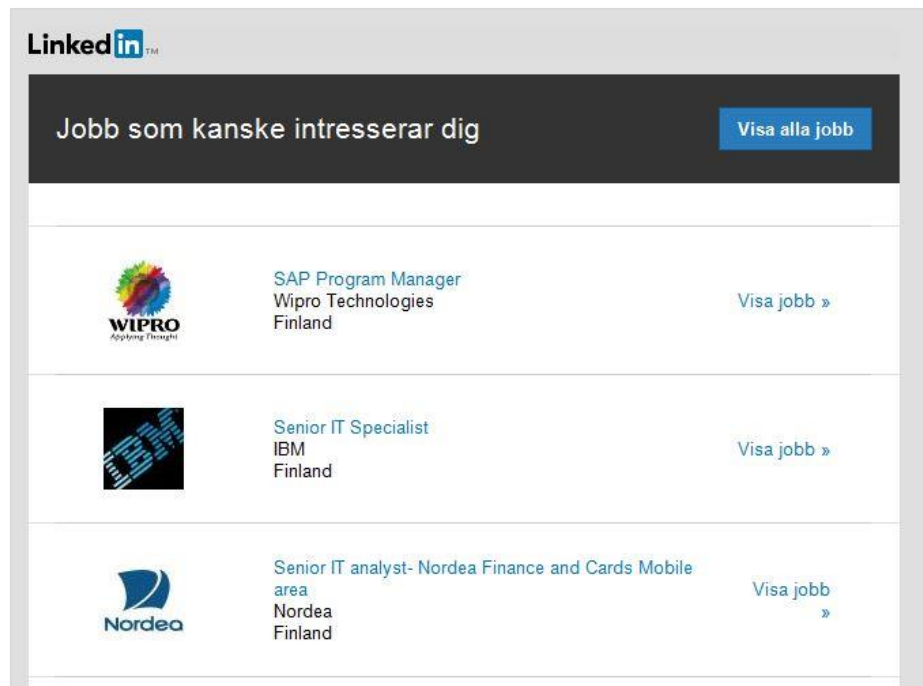


Figure 13. An announcement newsletter, LinkedIn. 2014

When companies use newsletters in their marketing strategy it's good to use a similar design as in the company's other marketing material such as their web page, print media and other advertisements.

There are a few guidelines that are helpful when planning a newsletter campaign.

1. Always include the corporate logo in newsletters
2. Use similar image types and scenery/theme
3. Use consistent colors
4. Remember to keep similarity between newsletters

If the company is using an EMP to send newsletters it's quite easy to change the design as the EMP's usually provides its users with premade design templates. If the advertiser wants to make changes themselves it's commonly done with programming in HTML and CSS. (Lynda.com. 2014b)

8 IMAGES IN E-MAIL MARKETING

Images are commonly used in e-mail marketing as a way to engage the receivers and subscribers. There are two separate standard ways of embedding images to newsletters.

The first and safer way is to attach the image as an e-mail attachment which ensures that the reader has the image available and has a chance to view it. The negative side of attaching images (or files) is that the mail might get tracked as spam, which may cause that the mail does not get delivered as thought. It's also good to remember to check that the image file size is small enough since that has also an impact on getting classed as spam. Read more about spam in chapter 10.

The second way of embedding images to e-mail newsletters is to program them (*HTML*) into the message and referring to the image on the server where it's located. By using this technique it's also possible to change the picture by replacing the file on the server after the e-mail is sent. This is the same way images are embedded on web pages.

According to studies 40–60 % have images turned off in their *MUA* (mail user agent) (Wikipedia, 2014m) which means that the delivered mail won't show images at first. The *MUA* usually shows empty boxes and asks the user to download the images instead.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

The number of users on mobile devices is growing and statistics say that around 20 % of the e-mails are read on text-only e-mail reading software. This means that all of these users won't see the images on their device, which makes it really important to optimize the other content in the newsletter.

It's recommended to have images take up only about 25 % of the content area, leaving 75 % for readable text and other elements. By using so called *alt-text* (alternative text) and titles on images the *MUA* will show the text when the images aren't loaded in the mail. It's crucial that there is a backup text or explanation for every image. It's therefore recommended to avoid using images with text only.

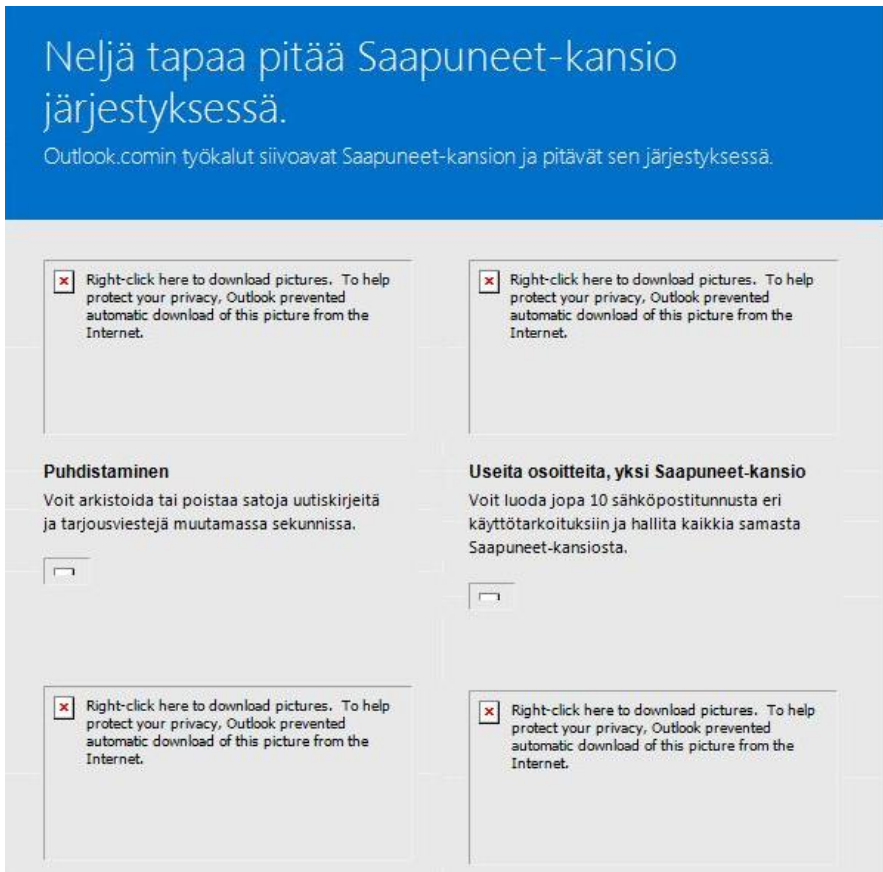


Figure 14. Images turned off in a MUA, Microsoft. 2014

As marketers have proven, images or visual material in advertisement engages and awakes interest in the service or product that is promoted. It might therefore be unfamiliar to cut down on images when it comes to e-mail marketing advertisement.

It's good to explain that e-mails work differently than other marketing material to the designers and managers who might have a tendency trying to implement the same solutions as in brochures or printed media. The main reason for simplifying e-mails is the reason that the mails should be delivered to as many as possible in the correct format. In case there are many images and other "heavy" elements it is going to have an impact on open rate, click-through-rates and other statistics. It's therefore important to follow statistics and reports regularly when sending out newsletter campaigns to subscribers.

(Comm100.com. 2014a, 2014b)

8.1 Best practices with images in newsletters

There are a few good techniques that can be used when planning and sending out newsletters that include images. First it might be good to limit the images or visual elements that are placed at the top section of the newsletter since that is the first part that is seen by the receiver. If the images are incorrectly loaded into the newsletter it might raise the number of people deleting or closing the mail.

However, if a well-planned image is loaded correctly into the newsletter it might engage the receiver to continue reading. It's good although to think about not placing too many images at the top part of the message.

E-mails that only include images are to be avoided as many users don't see images. (Figure 14.) It's therefore recommended to include text into the mail. It's suggested that the marketers don't hide any content and try to use fallbacks for that.

As I wrote earlier it's good to use so called *alt-text* that replaces the image if the image is improperly loaded. The alt-text should not describe what is on the hidden image, but instead show a call to action which engages the reader to make an action.

(Newsletters Social Source Commons Blog. 2014)

Read more about call to actions in chapter 9.4.

8.2 Images and technical specifications

Today people use all kind of devices when reading e-mail. As I wrote in one of the previous chapters up to 20 % use a text-only *MUA* which places restrictions on the content in a newsletter. It's good to think about loading time and internet connection speed when it comes to images in e-mail marketing.

By using an image editing software it's possible to optimize the file-size and dimensions on images which makes quite a difference when reading e-mails on devices with a slow internet connection.

There's a few guidelines listed below that are good to think about when planning a newsletter:

- Resize the image to the desired size before embedding
- The images should be ~100kb in file size for an optimum loading time
- Suggested image-formats are the following: .jpg , .png, .gif (non-animated)
- The image should be under 600px width because of lack of space and *MUA* view settings

When embedding images in newsletters it's suggested to host files oneself which makes it more secure and flexible. The embed works just like on a web page (*HTML*) and the marketer has the possibility to change the *alt-text* and file location.

(Mad Mimi. 2014)

9 CONTENT IN NEWSLETTERS

When arranging content in the newsletters it's usually good to have so called *visual anchors* placed on important places to draw attention. The visual anchors can be links to external pages, contact information or other important data. Keep in mind that most people scan and read messages from the top left corner of the e-mail when placing elements on different places in your newsletter.

One should, however, be careful of placing too many visual anchors in one single message because it may distract or confuse the reader.

By using columns to divide content in newsletters it's easier for the human eye to read. If one has a lot of material or content to fit into a newsletter one should consider dividing the content into separate e-mails for more effective communication.

There are two suggestions on how to use columns in the following examples:

- **50–50**, Divide the content into two columns of same width
- **70–30/30–70**, One of the columns should take up 70 % of the width to give more space for content.

(Lynda.com, 2014b)



Figure 15. Columns divided into a 50-50 ratio. 2014 70-30/30-70

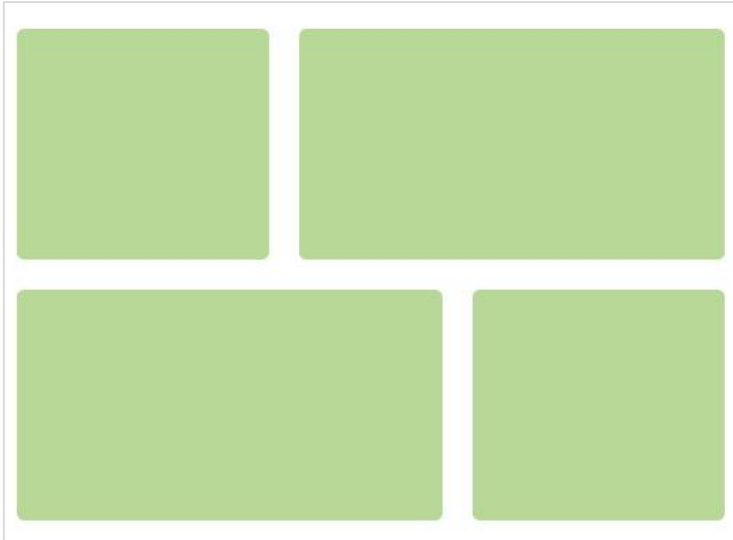


Figure 16. Columns divided into a 30-70 and 70-30 ratio. 2014

9.1 Effective content in Newsletters

When using links in newsletters it's usually good to explain where the link takes the user. An explanation on obvious links such as on logos or product images is not necessary.

There are two types of links that can be used in newsletter:

1. Internal links are commonly used as anchor links inside an e-mail. These usually are placed in the top section of the message which includes links to the different sections of the newsletter.
2. External links are used in most newsletters and point the user to a different location than the e-mail. An external link can go to a web page or a file that is relevant to the newsletter content.

A common rule is that e-mail attachments such as files or videos should be avoided if possible. This is because some of the e-mail client software automatically blocks attachments as a safety cause. Therefore it is recommended to link to the external content that are placed on a web page or a server.

By analyzing reports and statistics of sent newsletters customers can be divided into different segments. This makes it possible to target certain newsletters to certain customers.

For example people that are interested in sports get other newsletters than people who have shown interest in politics. (Wikipedia. 2014l)

There are a few valuable offers that can be used in this type of marketing strategy:

1. Individualized coupons or special offers for customers that have proven interest in a certain item. Sending out e-mails with the customers' first name makes the message more individual.
2. Exchange services or products with customers for customer or behavior information. Notice that there may be legal issues with giveaways in some countries.
3. Loss Leader Offers. Companies commonly try to sell products through newsletters for a bargain to gain customers. This might be a good solution if the customer has subscribed to the newsletter but has not made a purchase of service or product yet. (Wikipedia. 2014k)

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.2 Designing links

One of the reasons why companies send out newsletters is because they want some kind of interaction or engagement by their customers. This drives traffic to the company's web site or social network and tries to evoke purchases or actions.

All elements in e-mail marketing have a direct impact on the *CTR* (click-through-rate) and it's therefore important to grasp certain techniques when structuring newsletters.

When formatting and styling links in newsletters it's good to make them stand out from the other content in the message. It also has to appear in a familiar way to the customer, so that the user understands that it's a link.

A standard link usually is blue and underlined, which is a good technique to stand out from the other content. If it's possible it's also good to have links appear in bold to make an emphasis on it. Technical specifications (compatibility) and formatting links in newsletters are restricted which means that the simple ways might go a long way. Read more about compatibility and technical specifications in chapter 9.9.

When adding links to newsletters it's recommended to avoid using images as links, since the images might not get downloaded by users *MUA* by default. Read more about this in chapter 8.2.

It's most effective if the links contain a call-to-action in the message. This should be just a few words long and descriptive. Read more about call-to-actions in chapter 9.4.

As I already wrote, the links should stand out from the other content, but it's good to remember that the links should relate to the message. There isn't any rule when it comes to the placement of links, but it's recommended that one of the links is placed at the top. This will make the link visible at a first glance over the message, even in the *MUA*'s preview panel of the e-mail.

The amount of links varies between newsletters. A guideline would be to try to use a few links placed on different places on the screen which might increase the engagement from the customers. Note however, that using too many links may cause the *MUA* to block the message because of spam. Read more about spam in chapter 10.

Permanent and static links are commonly used in newsletters which take the user to important pages on the web such as social networks or a customer service page. These links are there to build a relationship with the reader/customer, but it's good to remember that these shouldn't be as "aggressive" or outstanding as the call-to-action links in the newsletter.

(Comm100.com. 2014c)

9.3 Content is King

As early as in 1996 the founder of *Microsoft* Bill Gates wrote an essay about how content will be making money on the internet. (*Content is King, 1996*) He explains how the content on the web can be published by almost anyone at a small cost, or even for free. This leads to his conclusion, which is that the real good content, produced by professionals, is going to be sold for the users in form of a small fee.

(Craig Bailey. 2014)

Bill Gates was right in a sense, when many of the media companies today are charging money for exclusive content on their platforms. (Wikipedia. 2014d)

The content of commercial messages are getting more and more well thought through, at the same time as the messages are written in ways to convince the customers or receivers to make an action, often in the form of a purchase. (Lynda.com. 2014b)

In the following chapters I'll write about the structure of commercial messages and also about *call to action*, the message to convince the customer making an action related to the message.

9.4 Writing a good Call to Action

A “call to action” is words that try to urge or make the viewer to take an immediate action via an advertisement or other marketing material. (BusinessDictionary.com. 2014)

A good practice is to start the call to action with a word that describes what the user is “supposed” to do (a verb). When using multiple calls to actions in e-mail marketing it enhances more customer activity and may increase the click-through-rate. Read more about the click-through-rate in chapter 9.8.

It's also possible to use a call to action in the subject line of a newsletter to wake interest to the newsletter and to increase the open rate (chap. 11). One should however remember that the subject line is limited to 40–50 characters which limit the message that can be sent. It's a good practice to use only a few words in the subject line that uses the newsletters main values (proposition) (Investopedia, 2014b).

Here are a couple of examples on good call to actions:

- “Visit our Downtown store for hands-on testing“
- “Call us for more offers”
- “Download the exclusive PDF for more information”

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.5 The From-line

The From-line shows the sender and its e-mail address in a newsletter. This may be one of the first things that the receiver sees which makes it important in e-mail marketing.

The From-line (sender e-mail address) should be recognized by the customer and should also make relevance to its content and its relationship with the customer. If the person that sends the message is familiar with the customer it's good practice to use the real name of the sender in the sender address. If there are many with the same name in the company it may also be wise to write the department of the sender.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.6 Writing a good subject line

The first thing a recipient sees in their *MUA* when reading a newsletter is the topic of the message. This is why it's an important aspect in the planning of commercial digital newsletters. With a good topic appended to your message the receiver more likely opens the e-mail, which increases the chance that the e-mail is going to be read. Read more about *E-mail Open Rates* in chapter 11.

According to a study made by the EMP *MailChimp* there are several crucial things to understand and think of when writing the subject to your e-mail. In the study *MailChimp* analyzed topics in over 200 million different e-mails.

The topic itself should be short, preferably under 50 characters, informative and at the same time give a good reason or explanation to the recipients why they should continue reading further in the e-mail. This is some of the reasons why writing good and user-friendly subjects can be hard, or at least more time-consuming than one would imagine.

Another interesting result in *MailChimps'* study is that subject shouldn't be too unique or odd since many of the messages remain unread if the topic doesn't have enough relevance to the message that it's written to.

Using the recipients' name in the topic doesn't improve the open rate according to the study, but when using localization in the message such as a city name the messages open rate has a slight improvement. Using special characters such as a dollar sign or percentage-sign in the topic lowers the open rate.

MailChimp writes the following in a blog-post on their web-site:
– *"When it comes to subject lines, don't sell what's inside. Tell what's inside."*

That actually is a good conclusion on how you should think when you write. It seems that keeping the subject simple and explaining what the message is about is the way to go at least according to the study.

(MailChimp. 2014f)

9.7 Social Media and Mobile Devices

When structuring newsletters it's recommended that the company adds links to its social media sites which makes interaction with the customers easier. To get a bigger reach and audience it's also good to publish the newsletter on social media as a part of the marketing campaign.

As more people read their e-mail on mobile devices there are a few techniques that can be used to make the campaigns successful. When adding a phone number to a newsletter it's recommended that it's linked so users can call straight away. If the company writes its address it might want it to be linked so that it shows an exact location that is pointed out on a map.

When using external links in newsletters it's also important that the services or files work properly on all devices. Therefore testing and using mobile safe platforms is recommended.

Below some valuable tips that are useful when planning newsletters for all devices:

1. Don't forget any device. It is important that all customers get a good user experience no matter on which device they read the newsletter.
2. Use optimized content and offers for certain users on certain devices.

3. Place newsletter content so that it's easily understandable by all users on all devices.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.8 Reports and analytics

It has been proven essential that companies follow reports to see relevant statistics on sent e-mail campaigns. When the newsletter is blocked or filtered it's going to be stored in the EMPs' data. By using an EMP many of the blocked or filtered messages will be sent, however there are some methods that one can do to prevent blocked messages. Read more about this in chapter 10.

There's some interesting statistics that should be followed in the back-end of the EMP; for example the open rate (chap. 11) and the so called click-through-rate (*CTR*). The click-through-rate shows the percentage of individuals that views a certain part of an advertisement and makes a click. The click-through-rate thereby measures how successful the advertisement has been to generate interest. (Investopedia, 2014a) According to *MailChimp* an average *CTR* in e-mail marketing is at 3.43 %. (MailChimp, 2014b)

By studying these statistics companies can adapt their campaigns correlating to the reports, which mean that the company can make changes to its newsletters to increase interactivity and engagement. It might also be good to compare the statistics to other similar reporting (e.g. web site visitors) that is available.

To track other user behaviors (than clicks) in e-mail marketing one can add special offers that are only visible in the newsletter. This can also be accomplished by having separate e-mail addresses or other contact information that makes it easy to track all the contacts that have come through these.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.9 Automation

As a part of a good user experience and complete marketing strategy it's recommended that some kind of automation is implemented when sending out newsletters. Usually the

EMP or other e-mail system send so called *auto-reply*-messages when a subscription, reservation, purchase or other service is accepted. It's also common to use so called *sequences* that automatically send out newsletters regularly and in some kind of system that is used to keep the customer engaged and interested in the services the company offers.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

9.10 Code like it's 1999

Today developers get more pressure and expectations from designers and managers who want more complex functionalities and special features in their newsletters.

There is still no e-mail standard when it comes to constructing newsletters and there have always been compatibility issues in many *MUA*'s which makes the programming harder. This means that the developer has to use obsolete techniques from the 20th century which is supported by most of the *MUA*'s.

Some features are disapproved in e-mail marketing and for example animations in Flash or .GIF are not allowed. It's also good to remember that the support for JavaScript, HTML Web Forms and background-images is limited.

Thankfully there are some valuable guidelines that are good to follow when programming a template for a newsletter. Read the guidelines in the list below:

- Use strict HTML4/XHTML syntax when writing markup
- Use inline styles for every element (tag) and limit the use of CSS when styling content in the newsletter
- Use HTML tables instead of DIV's because of compatibility issues
- Stay under 800px in width because of the narrow view space the *MUA*'s supports
- Use standardized "e-mail safe" fonts (read more in chap. 5.2)
- Use absolute URL's to ensure that links and images are found correctly
- Make sure the images are optimized for newsletters (read more in chap. 8.2)

(Art Thompson, Jr., 2014)

10 SPAM

Spam is unwanted e-mails that are sent to a list of people. As a marketer it's therefore important to make sure that sent newsletters are not classed as spam as they may get filtered by the users *ISP* (internet service provider) or *MUA* (mail user agent).

The United States federal *CAN-SPAM Act* became law on January 1, 2004 which means that "spammers" can get fined for \$11,000 for each offense.

Underneath some points that are included in the *CAN-SPAM Act* that are crucial to know about if you're sending commercial e-mail:

- Never use misleading headers, send/reply-addresses or subject lines.
- Always include an unsubscribe link in the newsletter.
- The recipients should be removed from the e-mail list within 10 days when unsubscribing.
- The unsubscribe link must work a minimum of 30 days after e-mail delivery.
- The newsletters must have a physical mailing address or other contact information to the sender.

(MailChimp. 2014a)

10.1 Spam filtering

Spam filters on e-mail servers and in e-mail software have a set of criteria that try to find out whether e-mails are spam or not. Different types of subject lines and words or phrases might give an alert which blocks or filters the e-mail that is sent.

There are quite a few ways to avoid getting classed as spam that is listed below:

- Avoid using typical phrases such as "Click here" or "The best diet for you!"
- Avoid using lots of special characters such as exclamation points
- Avoid using all capitalized letters
- Avoid coloring fonts in red or green
- Avoid programing HTML with errors

- Avoid using one big image with little text. Spam filters cannot read images and might think that the sender is trying to confuse it.
- Avoid using the word “test” in the subject line

(MailChimp. 2014a)

10.2 Abuse reports

When users get an e-mail that they suspect is spam or junk they have the possibility to click a button in their *MUA* which sends an alert to their *ISP*. When the *ISP* has received enough reports they send a warning message to the sender which informs that they’ve received complaints about the e-mail that has been sent out.

The mail might look something like this:

“Hi. Our customers are complaining about your emails. You need to address this issue ASAP, or we’ll start blocking all email from your servers.”

Sometimes legitimate e-mail marketers might get incorrectly accused of sending spam which might be caused by some drastic changes in the company’s strategy. Below examples of common reasons why marketers get accused of spam:

- The receiver does not remember subscribing for the newsletter and reports it as spam.
- The marketer starts sending big amounts of newsletters to its customers that have not shown interest or subscribed to them.
- The users haven’t given permission to get e-mails from the company and reports mails as spam.
- The newsletter looks like spam. It’s good to hire a designer or use newsletter templates if one is uncertain of how something should look.
- The opt-out (unsubscribe) link is hidden or does not exist.

(MailChimp. 2014a)

11 E-MAIL OPEN RATES

When opening and viewing a commercial e-mail message many companies track so called *open rates* related to the messages.

The open rate is a way of counting or getting specific information from the receiver when one opens or views a message. Open rates are therefore classified as a type of measurement, mostly in percentages, that gives useful information to the corporation or organization that sends out its message. (Campaign Monitor. 2014)

When counting open rates a small image of 1×1 pixels usually is embedded into the message, and when the image is loaded to the message from a web server, it's counted as a full "download" or a view of a message. A click on an embedded image can also sometimes count as a trigger for viewing the e-mail. (Wikipedia. 2014e)

The controversy in counting open rates has to do with the images that are sometimes blocked by default in the e-mail reading software that leads to false results. This is why there are sometimes non-reliable statistics of open rates. However, some marketers believe that this way of counting can still be a good comparison when sending out different type of messages to the same receivers and use the statistics gained relatively to each other. According to a study by EMP *MailChimp* normal percentages for open rates in e-mail messages vary depending on the company that sends it out, and of which industry the company or organization represents. For example newsletters sent by companies within the Vitamin supplements and Recruitment and Staffing-section have a small open rate of ~25 % when the open rate for messages in the Government and Insurance-section has a bigger percentage of ~45 % when counting views of messages. (MailChimp. 2014b)

Counting open rates in e-mail usually is done using the following formula:

$$\text{Open rate} = \frac{\text{emails opened}}{\text{emails sent} - \text{bounces}}$$

Figure 17. Formula for counting e-mail open rates, Campaign Monitor. 2014

11.1 Improving e-mail open rates

If the messages one sends out has the open rate of around 20–40 % that would be around the average comparing to all other messages. If one perhaps wants to improve the open rate there are a few ways to improve the open rate percentage in commercial messages according to *Campaign Monitor*. (Campaign Monitor. 2014)

One obvious way to improve the open rate is trying to rewrite the heading of the message, for example with the suggestions given in chapter 9.6. This may impact the open rate if one is dissatisfied with the results of the campaign.

Another useful tip is trying to send out the message at another time of the day and week. More about frequency in e-mail marketing in chapter 13.1.

(Lynda.com. 2014b)

12 HARD AND SOFT BOUNCES

A *bounce* in e-mail marketing means that the e-mail is rejected by a subscriber's email server or ISP. By following reports and paying attention to statistics one can ensure that newsletters are reaching as many customers as possible. (MailChimp. 2014g) A *bounce rate* shows the percentage of e-mails that did not get delivered and was returned by the user's mail server. (Webopedia.com. 2014)

In this chapter I will write more about two types of bounces; *hard bounces* and *soft bounces*.

12.1 Hard Bounces

A *hard bounce* means that there is a permanent reason why the e-mails cannot get delivered. Usually hard bounces are caused by invalid e-mail addresses or by an error during sending the campaign. If the *hard bounce rate* in a campaign seems relatively high there might be something wrong when entering or importing the e-mail addresses. A normal *hard bounce rate* according to *MailChimp* is at **0.73 %**

12.2 Soft Bounces

The *soft bounce* indicates that there is a temporary delivery issue to a certain e-mail address. Usually the e-mail server tries to send the message multiple times over an amount of days trying to ensure that the delivery of e-mail succeeds.

The most common reasons why a soft bounce occurs are the following.

1. The recipients mailbox is over capacity (full)
2. The recipients e-mail server is offline or temporarily unavailable
3. E-mail message or newsletter is too large (file size)

According to *MailChimps'* study a *normal soft bounce rate* is at **0.80 %**.

(MailChimp. 2014g)

13 FREQUENCY AND REACH IN E-MAIL MARKETING

When using newsletters in a company's marketing strategy there are a few terms that should be understood and analyzed when obtaining statistics from campaigns.

The **reach** of a marketing campaign refers to the total number of people that have seen the advertisement (in this case newsletter). When advertisers talk about **frequency** in marketing environments it's usually showing the number of times an individual is exposed to the advertisement. However, one may also read about frequency when talking about how often e-mails are sent to customers. (Avenue Right. 2014)

In the next chapter I will briefly explain some facts on this highly debated topic.

Table 3. Comparison of reach in advertising 1998 and 2007 (Avenue Right)

Advertising year 1998

Reach	Frequency
TV	TV
Print	Print
Radio	Radio
Internet	Internet

Advertising year 2007

Reach	Frequency
TV	Internet
Internet	TV
Radio	Radio
Print	Print

13.1 Effective Frequency in E-mail Marketing

There is no golden rule to follow when it comes to how often or at which particular time of the day the newsletters should be sent to customers. This is because the studies vary from each other and that it's closely connected to the target audience and line of business. (MailChimp. 2014d)

By following statistics from campaigns it's possible to arrange customers into different segments (market segmentation) which make it easier to customize and improve the effect of the campaigns. By placing people into different segments it's easier to target an offer or service directly towards them. It's e.g. possible to arrange customers by geography, demography, behavior or psychographics ("lifestyle") and send special offers that are relevant. (Wikipedia. 2014l)

The two following quotes describe how to think about market segmentation and frequency in digital marketing.

" Look at where your audiences ... determine what you want to say to them, through which channel, and when. "

(TURN. 2013)

" Frequency isn't just about sending more or less emails to everyone; it's about sending the right amount of emails, to the right people. "

(Tim Roe. 2014)

If the company is unsatisfied with the results in a campaign one may want to test other subject lines and changing the frequency on the newsletters sent.

It's quite easy to follow the *ROI* (return on investment), *CTR* (click-through-rate) and Open Rate for each campaign to see how the changes made have a direct impact has on the campaign statistics. It has been proven in many studies that the frequency on sent e-mails has a direct negative relationship to the engagement of the customers.

(MailChimp. 2014d)

This can easily be visualized in the following graphs:

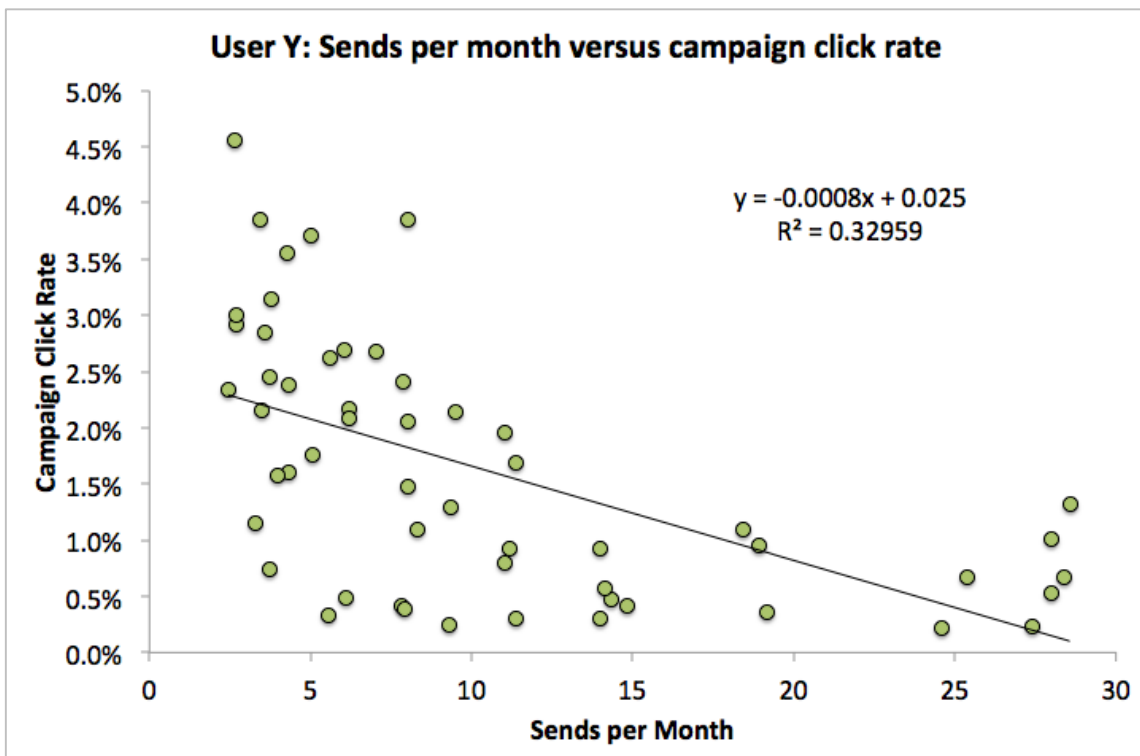
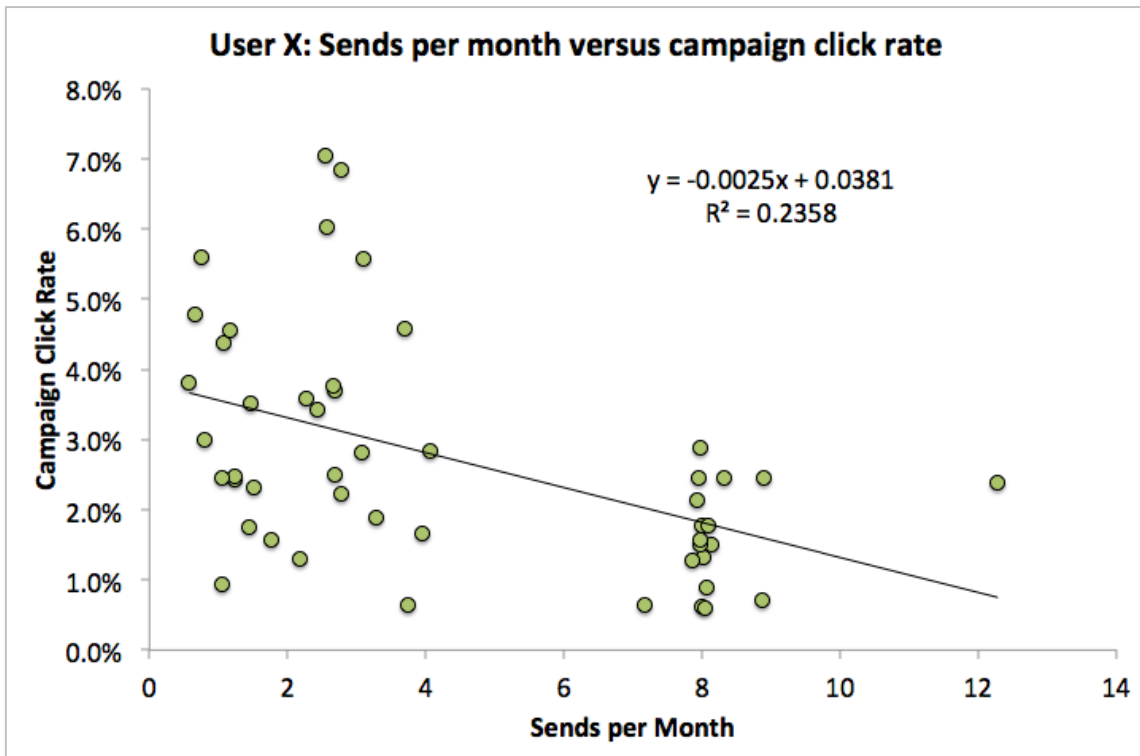


Figure 18. Frequency vs. Click-Through-Rate in two e-mail campaigns, (MailChimp, 2014d)

14 ANALYZING NEWSLETTERS

In this chapter I will use theories and solutions presented in the previous chapters to analyze newsletters. I've subscribed to an amount of newsletters exclusively for this study since the end of January 2014. All of the newsletters are viewed and tested through *Gmail.com* (as *MUA*) on the web.

The selected newsletters are sent by the following companies:

- **Verkkokauppa.com**, the largest online retailer of electronics in Finland.
(~ 400 employees, 2013) (Wikipedia. 2014f)
- **Clas Ohlson**, one of the biggest hardware store chains in Scandinavia.
(~ 2500 employees, 2013) (Wikipedia. 2014g)
- **Tallink (Silja Line)**, shipping company operating in Finland, Sweden and Estonia. (~ 7 000 employees, 2012) (Wikipedia. 2014h)
- **SAS**, the largest airline in Scandinavia with a fleet size of 141.
(~ 15 000 employees, 2012) (Wikipedia. 2014i)
- **Finnair**, the largest airline in Finland founded in 1923.
(~ 5800 employees, 2013) (Wikipedia. 2014j)

The criteria of selecting these newsletters are that all of the companies have a significant market role in their business and uses e-mail marketing as a part of their marketing strategy. These companies also send out newsletters on a regular basis which makes the analysis more accurate. All of the newsletters are promotionally driven, which means that they're trying to sell products or services offered by the company. The following parts and sections are analyzed in the newsletters:

- Delivery time, (read more in [chapter 12.1](#))
- Frequency, (read more in [chapter 12](#) and [12.1](#))
- The From-line and Subject line, (read more in [chapters 9.5](#) and [9.6](#))
- Content, (read more in [chapters 8](#) and [9](#))
- Call to actions, (read more in [chapter 9.4](#))
- Typography and colors, (read more in [chapters 3](#), [4](#) and [5](#))

14.1 Newsletter Analysis: Verkkokauppa.com

Since the start of my study *Verkkokauppa.com* has sent 30 newsletters to its subscribers. *Verkkokauppa.com* sends out weekly newsletters which mean that the frequency of the messages is one e-mail per week. There are, however, a few exceptions where special offers have been sent more than once a week.

The newsletters are sent during office-hours and most of them are sent around noon (12.00) on Wednesdays. There doesn't seem to be an automation included in the strategy when it comes to timing of the delivery.

The From-line (sender) is consistent in all of the newsletters as the sender is *no-reply@verkkokauppa.com*. This e-mail address indicates that subscribers shouldn't reply to it and the address is recognized by the recipient.

The subject line in the weekly newsletters is always the same ("*Todennäköisesti aina halvempi!*"), which also is the slogan of the company. The special offers (11 pcs.) have a separate topic that explains the content of the e-mail.

The content in the newsletters of *Verkkokauppa.com* contain many visual elements and images that presents offers and products in columns. Every image is a link to a certain page and every product takes the user to the chosen product on the company web page.

The calls to actions are clearly visualized under every product with the text "Osta" (buy) that clearly stands out from the other content.

Social networks are not present in the newsletters, neither direct contact information to the company. In many of the newsletters there is an address to all of the locations and links to the company's web page with more convenient information.

The newsletter strictly uses a sans-serif font, which makes the text easily readable. As there are no longer pieces of text this solution works as intended.

As the company color is red, many of the elements are in red. This with a combination with blue creates a high contrast (complementary colors). Read more about this is chapter 4.2.

Read theories for the analysis in the following chapters: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [12](#).

Strengths:

- Planned delivery frequency
- Systematic use of colors and fonts
- Clear Call To Actions

Weaknesses:

- Subject line
- Direct contact information missing

Table 4. Specifications of newsletter: Verkkokauppa.com

Company	Verkkokauppa.com
Type	Promotional Newsletter
Language	Finnish
Amount of newsletters	30
Frequency (monthly)	4
Delivery: Time of day	Noon
Delivery: Day of week	Wednesday
From-line	no-reply@verkkokauppa.com
Call To Actions	Yes
Fonts	Sans-serif
Colors	Red, Blue
Link to Social Networks	No
View in web browser link	Yes
Unsubscribe link	Yes
Direct Contact Information	No
Address	Yes/No

Verkkokauppa.com
 TODENNÄKÖISESTI AINA HALVEMPI
 Ark. 9–21 | la 9–18 | su 12–18 | web/kioski 24 h

Myymälät
 24h Kioski 24 h
 Haku

Yritystiedot
 Osta lahjakortti
 Katalogi

[Kotisivulle](#) | [Oma tili](#) | [Lähetä kaverille](#) | [Anna palautetta](#)



Oho, mikä hinta! Normaalisti 129,90 €! Myynti alkaa torstaina 16.10. klo 9.00.
 1 kpl per asiakas. 150 kpl Helsinki ja web, 100 kpl Oulu ja Pirkkala.
 Lisää Oho!-tarjouksia DIGI-messuilla!

**PlayStation 4
 500 Gt + NHL 15**



Paketti sisältää pelikonsolin lisäksi odotetun EA SPORTS NHL 15 -lätkäpelin. Tarjous voimassa 15. - 19.10.

[Osta](#)

**DriveClub
 PS4-peli**



DriveClub tarjoaa oikeita superautoja sekä mahtavia lokaatioita joilla toteuttaa...
 Tarjous voimassa 15. - 19.10.

[Osta](#)

**Xbox One + FIFA 15
 tai NHL 15**



Xbox One Basic Edition ilman Kinect-liiketunnistinta + FIFA 15 -peli tai NHL 15 -peli. Tarjous voimassa 15. - 19.10.

[Osta](#)

DIGI-messut
 Jätkäsaari - Helsinki 18.-19.10.2014

HUIKEITA
 TARJOUKSIA

Figure 19. Example of a newsletter design, Verkkokauppa.com. 2014

14.2 Newsletter Analysis: Clas Ohlson

Clas Ohlson has sent 19 newsletters during the time of the study and has a frequency that is casual and varies between zero to three e-mails per month. The newsletters are sent at different times of the day which indicates that there is no automation strategy included in the sending process. The newsletters are sent on Thursdays or Fridays, with a few exceptions.

The From-line (sender) is the same in all e-mails: asiakaspalvelu@clasohlson.com (customer service) which is an address that can be replied to.

The subject lines are different between all the messages and they describe the offer (main proposition) (Investopedia, 2014b) of the newsletter. In 12 of the 19 newsletters there's a percentage or price written in the subject, which may cause a spam alert, or on the other hand, attract readers and give a higher open rate.

The content in the newsletter contains many images with prices that are linked to the product on a separate web page. As some of the newsletters almost completely rely on images there might be a problem with blocked images. Read more about images in newsletters in chapter 8.

The buttons used are clear and has good call to actions attached which supports the CTR (*click-through-rate*) of the e-mail. Direct contact information (e-mail and phone number) is placed at the bottom as well as a link to the company's Facebook-site. This promotes engagement and the relationship between the customers and the company.

Clas Ohlson is using a sans-serif font (Arial) in different colors, sizes and weights. This means that they are certain that the font works on all different platforms and devices.

The colors used in the e-mail are light blue and orange which match together and create a good contrast in the content.

Read theories for the analysis in the following chapters: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [12](#).

Strengths:

- Subject line
- Clear Call to Actions
- Social Media present (Facebook)
- Direct contact information

Weaknesses:

- Delivery strategy and frequency
- Usage of images

Table 5. Specifications of newsletter: Clas Ohlson

Company	Clas Ohlson
Type	Promotional Newsletter
Language	Finnish
Amount of newsletters	19
Frequency (monthly)	2
Delivery: Time of day	Office-hours
Delivery: Day of week	Thursday, Friday
From-line	asiakaspalvelu@clasohlson.com
Call To Actions	Yes
Fonts	Sans-serif
Colors	Blue, Orange
Link to Social Networks	Yes
View in web browser link	Yes
Unsubscribe link	Yes
Direct Contact Information	Yes
Address	No

Nyt kaikki LED-lamput -20 %

Ajankohtaisia tarjouksia
09.10.2014

clas ohlson

Sähköposti
thdeeplake@gmail.com



Pimeä syksy?
Meillä on ratkaisu.

LED-lamput
-20%
Voimassa
9.-12.10.

Lue lisää



Lampunritilä

Lue lisää

18⁹⁹

Etsitkö sopivaa
lamppua?
Meillä on ratkaisu.

Tutustu kätevään
lamppuoppaaseemme.

Lue lisää



Jopa 90 päivän palautusoikeus. Kampanjahinnat ovat voimassa niin kauan kuin tavaraa riittää tai ilmoitettuun päivämäärään asti.



asiakaspalvelu@clasohlson.fi | 020 111 2222

© 2014 Clas Ohlson

Tervetuloa osoitteeseen www.clasohlson.fi



[Tykkää meistä Facebookissa!](#)

Jos haluat lopettaa uutiskirjeen tilauksen, paina [tästä](#).

Figure 20. Example of a newsletter design, Clas Ohlson. 2014

14.3 Newsletter Analysis: Tallink, Silja Line

During the study I have received 49 newsletters from *Tallink* and *Silja Line*. These are usually sent on Thursdays and Fridays with a few exceptions. The delivery is mostly done on afternoons and the company seems to have some kind of strategy when it comes to sending out newsletters to its customers and subscribers.

The From-line (sender), *tallink@tallinksilja.messages4.com*, might seem somewhat confusing but it still informs what company has sent the message. It could be good to change this to a more relevant and self-explanatory address.

Every subject line has an exclamation mark after it which may give the feeling that the company is screaming the subject to the reader. The subject lines are a bit long which may have a negative effect on the open rate of the message.

The content in the newsletter is structured in the same format in all messages and divides different type of content from each other. The links are separated in a blue color and are underlined which makes them easy to find. Calls to actions are therefore quite easy to spot even though the visual appearance on them could be improved.

Social Networks are distinctly presented and it's possible both to visit the Facebook-page of the company and to share a certain part of the newsletter on Twitter or Facebook.

Contact information is located at the bottom of every newsletter with a phone number to the sales department of different customer segments.

Tallink and *Silja Line* use a sans-serif font (Arial) and have a variation of colors, underline, font-weight and size. This enhances the readability and focus in the newsletter. However, the font size in the body text could be a couple sizes bigger (with higher line-height) to enhance legibility.

The colors in the newsletter are blue and light blue which go together with the company's branding quite well. However, these could be used more actively as they now might seem a bit dull and static.

Read theories for the analysis in the following chapters: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [12](#).

Strengths:

- Delivery strategy and frequency
- Social Media present (Facebook and Twitter)
- Direct contact information

Weaknesses:

- Subject line
- Static visual appearance

Table 6. Specifications of newsletter: Tallink / Silja Line

Company	Tallink / Silja Line
Type	Promotional Newsletter
Language	Finnish
Amount of newsletters	49
Frequency (monthly)	5
Delivery: Time of day	Afternoons
Delivery: Day of week	Thursday, Friday
From-line	tallink@tallinksilja.messages4.com
Call To Actions	Yes
Fonts	Sans-serif
Colors	Blue, White
Link to Social Networks	Yes
View in web browser link	Yes
Unsubscribe link	Yes
Direct Contact Information	Yes
Address	No

» Jos viesti ei näy oikein, lue uutiskirje tästä » Tallink Siljan nettisivuilta varaat helposti matkat, majoitukset ja muut tarvitsemasi palvelut.



ETSI MATKA AIKATAULUT KOHTEET VIHDE

SYYSLOMAN PARHAAT HINNAT ▶



Hei Asiakkaamme,

Varaa nyt syksyn pimeyttä piristävä miniloma ja lähde läheisten kanssa risteilylle tai hotellimatkalle Tallinnaan. Tutustu syyslomavinkeihimme Tallinnassa, mm. Lentosatamassa ja Energia Oivalluskeskuksessa riittää nähtävää kaikenikäisille. Paluumatkalla teet laivalla merihintaiset jouluostokset kätevästi ja hyvissä ajoin.

» [Tutustu tarjouksiin ja varaa](#)

» [Lue lisää syyslomavinkeistä Tallinnassa perheille](#)



Retrotorstaissa Basic Element

Lähde Baltic Queenin Retrotorstai-risteilylle 23.10. viihtymään Basic Elementin ysärihittien pariin! Kerää kaveriporukka kokoon ja varaa tanssintäyteinen Retroristeily, jota isännöi DJ Matti Airaksinen.

Lue lisää Baltic Queenin Retrotorstai-risteilyistä »
Katsa Retrotorstai-video YouTubessa »



Reittimatkatarjous alk. 15 €/hlö

Hyödynnä nyt superedullinen reittimatkatarjous alk. 15 €/hlö/suunta Helsingistä Tallinnaan. Tarjous on voimassa klo 10.30 lähdöllä Helsingistä ma 27.10., ti 28.10. ja ke 29.10.

Varaa reittimatka Tallinnaan »



Hotellimatka Original Sokos Hotel Viruun esim. 88 €/hlö

Nyt kannattaa hyödyntää hotellimatkatarjous legendaariseen Sokos Hotel Viruun ja lähteä Tallinnaan! Nauti rakkaasi kanssa oopperasta, ystävän kanssa hemmottelusta ja shoppailusta tai vie koko perhe syyslomamatkalle tutustumaan mielenkiintoiseen Lentosatamaan.

Tutustu Viruun hotellimatkatarjoukseen »
Tutustu muihin hotellimatkatarjouksiin »
Lue Tallinnassa yön yli -vinkit »
Lue syyslomavinkit perheille »



Figure 21. Example of a newsletter design, Tallink / Silja Line. 2014

14.4 Newsletter Analysis: SAS

SAS has sent 29 newsletters during the time of the study. The newsletters are sent about once a week and most of them are sent on a Tuesday. The timing on the delivery is mainly early mornings at around 7–8 am, but there is no clear automated structure or strategy when it comes to sending the newsletters to subscribers.

info-sas@flysas.com, which is the From-line (sender), is used throughout all of the newsletters and tells the customer which company is the sender. However, subscribers might not know if it's possible to answer the e-mail, which may cause some confusion.

The subject lines of the newsletters are descriptive and work as call to action to open the mails. One of the newsletters also uses the name of the subscriber in the topic which evokes interest and might improve the open rate.

The content in the newsletter uses the same layout which is good for brand consistency. Images are chosen to fit into the entirety and work together with the text in columns. The images, however, are quite dominant, which may cause problems for users that are using a text-only *MUA* (mail user agent). Links in the content are clearly separated by adding margins and using a blue and underlined font.

The calls to actions in the e-mail are quite small and could be made more visually appealing to enhance and improve the *CTR* (click-through-rate).

Social Networks (Facebook, Youtube and Twitter) are linked at the bottom of every newsletter which engages and creates interactivity and relationship with the customers. There is no direct contact information added to the newsletter, and the “Ota yhteyttä” (Contact) link is not working, which is an important error that should be fixed.

SAS strictly uses a sans-serif font face (*Arial*) in the newsletter which is easy to read. Different font weights and styles are used to enhance the visuals of the fonts. It's also working on all devices. Read more about e-mail safe fonts in chapter 5.2.

The colors in the newsletter are grey and blue which is a part of the company colors. This however, gives a slightly dull and static feeling in the e-mails.

Read theories for the analysis in the following chapters: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [12](#).

Strengths:

- Social Media present (Facebook, Youtube and Twitter)
- Subject line
- Length of newsletter

Weaknesses:

- Direct contact information missing, link not working
- Static visual appearance
- Visual appealing on calls to actions

Table 7. Specifications of newsletter: SAS

Company	SAS
Type	Promotional Newsletter
Language	Finnish
Amount of newsletters	29
Frequency (monthly)	3
Delivery: Time of day	Morning
Delivery: Day of week	Tuesdays
From-line	info-sas@flysas.com
Call To Actions	Yes
Fonts	Sans-serif
Colors	Blue, Grey
Link to Social Networks	Yes
View in web browser link	Yes
Unsubscribe link	Yes
Direct Contact Information	No
Address	No



Liity EuroBonus-jäseneksi ja hyödy eduista...



Varaa

Ota yhteyttä

My SAS Idea

Edulliset hinnat

LONDON CALLING

Juuri nyt hyviä hintoja moniin Iso-Britannian kaupunkeihin



Varaa viimeistään 15.9. ja matkusta 1.10. – 31.3.2015.

Varaa nyt

Uusi terminaalimme Heathrow'lla

SAS muuttaa 10.9. uuteen, raikkaaseen terminaali 2:een, "The Queen's Termiaaliin" Heathrow'lla. Tämä tuo sinulle koko joukon uusia etuja: nopeampi lähtöselvitys, turvatarkastus ja koneeseen siirtyminen, useita loungeja, maksuton WiFi, parempi ravintola- ja myymälätarjonta ja lyhyemmät vaihtoajat Star Alliance -yhtiöiden välillä. Tervetuloa!

[Varaa lennot Lontooseen](#)



Uutta! Päivän lehdet SAS sovelluksessa

Nyt voit ladata puhelimeesi tai tabletillesi päivän lehdet ennen matkaasi. 22 tuntia ennen lähtöä voit valita lehtesi SAS-sovelluksesta. Joustavaa, eikö totta? Oma Scanorama-lehemme on aina saatavillasi – vaikka et olisikaan lähdössä matkalle.

[Lataa SAS-sovellus](#)



Varaa hotelli – saat jopa 40 % alennusta

Olitpa sitten lähdössä viikonloppumatkalle tai shoppailemaan, hotellikumppanillamme on lukuisia hyviä vaihtoehtoja kaikissa hintaluokissa kaikkialla maailmassa. Ja varaukset teet joustavasti netissä.

[Täältä löydät hotellihuoneesi](#)

Twiittaatko? Me ainakin. Liity joukkoomme ja pidä itsesi ajantasalla.

Scandinavian Airlines ©2014

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Olemme lähettäneet tämän sähköpostiviestin osoitteella thdeeplaye@gmail.com. Mikäli et jatkossa halua SAS uutiskirjetä, voit [peruuttaa uutiskirjeen tilauksen](#).

Tämän sähköpostiviestin on lähettänyt Scandinavian Airlines System Denmark-Norway-Sweden SE 195 87 Stockholm-Arlanda, Sweden.

Figure 22. Example of a newsletter design, SAS. 2014

14.5 Newsletter Analysis: Finnair

Finnair has sent 41 newsletters during the time of the study. The messages are sent once a week with a few exceptions and mostly on Tuesdays. The delivery time of the messages is usually on afternoons.

There are two different From-lines (senders) that send newsletters when subscribing to Finnair's newsletter. These are: *finnair@email.newsletters.finnair.com* and *offers@email.finnair.com* which both tells the reader which company has sent the e-mail. There is no particular difference between the newsletters sent from the two differing addresses and one might wonder why they need two sending addresses for this purpose.

Some of the subject lines in the newsletters are quite long, even though they clearly state the offer and explain the content of the message which is good.

The content is divided into clear sections which make it easy to read. The images play an important role and support the content as it should.

A call to action is separately placed under every column but it could be bigger in size to improve engagement and the *CTR* (click-through-rate) by subscribers. At the top there's a link to choose the language of the message which is a good extra feature.

As there is no direct contact information in the newsletter it's good that *Finnair* has implemented social networks to the newsletters. This way the customers have an opportunity to contact the company through other sources.

The content in the newsletter has a clear structure and is divided into different sections with different content. As I analyze quite many of the e-mails I notice that many of them use the same images, which might feel a bit uncreative. *Finnair* uses alternative text for the images which is good in case the subscribers *MUA* (mail user agent) block the images from display.

The font face chosen is a safe sans-serif (Arial) that works on all devices. The font size of the text could be a few sizes bigger as well as the line-height, as it now might have a negative effect on the legibility.

Read theories for the analysis in the following chapters: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [12](#).

Strengths:

- Social Media present (Facebook)
- Subject line
- Length of newsletter

Weaknesses:

- Direct contact information missing
- Small font size (legibility issues)

Table 8. Specifications of newsletter: Finnair

Company	Finnair
Type	Promotional Newsletter
Language	Swedish
Amount of newsletters	41
Frequency (monthly)	4,5
Delivery: Time of day	Afternoon
Delivery: Day of week	Tuesdays
From-line	finnair@email.newsletters.finnair.com, offers@email.finnair.com
Call To Actions	Yes
Fonts	Sans-serif
Colors	Blue, White
Link to Social Networks	Yes
View in web browser link	Yes
Unsubscribe link	Yes
Direct Contact Information	No
Address	No

FINNAIR

FINNAIRS SENASTE ERBJUDANDEN



Ännu fler nya resmål för sommaren 2015

Nu släpper vi ännu fler nya resmål för sommaren 2015. Då flyger vi bl.a. till **Aten**, **Dublin**, **Malta** och **Split**. Se alla resmål och boka din biljett nu.

[Se alla nyheter](#)

Regler och avtal i slutet av nyhetsbrevet.

Flygerbudanden för Nordamerika



Tillsammans med våra samarbetspartner flyger vi till totalt resmål runt om i Nordamerika. Se alla alternativ och boka din resa redan i dag.

[Se alla resmål](#)

Regler och avtal i slutet av nyhetsbrevet.

BOKA GALET BILLIGA FLYGBILJETTER UNDER STOCKMANNS GALNA DAGAR!

[Till erbjudandena >](#)

Regler och avtal i slutet av nyhetsbrevet.



AVTAL OCH VILLKOR

Ännu fler nya resmål för sommaren 2015

Säljperiod tills vidare. Reseperiod: Aten 5.4–21.10.2015, Dublin 30.3–24.10.2015, Malta 2.4–22.10.2015; Split 5.5–3.10.2015. Kom ihåg att antalet platser är begränsat.

Flygerbudanden för Nordamerika

Säljperiod tills vidare. Kom ihåg att antalet platser är begränsat.

Boka galet billiga flygbiljetter under Stockmanns Galna Dagar

De billiga biljetterna kan du köpa 8–12.10.2014 på Stockmanns varuhus i huvudstadsregionen, Åbo, Tammerfors och Uleåborg. Kom ihåg att antalet platser är begränsat.

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© 2014 Finnair. Alla rättigheter reserverade. Du har valt att prenumerera på Finnairs nyhetsbrev med information om våra senaste erbjudanden. Om du inte vill ha de här meddelandena längre kan du [avbryta prenumerationen här](#).

Figure 23. Example of a newsletter design, Finnair. 2014

15 CONCLUSIONS

As I wrote in the introduction, e-mail marketing and commercial newsletters are present in our everyday society. Many companies use this type of marketing in their marketing strategy to reach their customers and prospects (potential customers).

When reading and researching on the subject one realizes that there are many aspects to understand and comprehend which factors have a direct impact on the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. When a marketer has a good knowledge and understanding in different solutions one can utilize these in newsletters to improve the outcomes of campaigns.

The hypotheses in the introduction were quite correct when it came to the structure of newsletters and that many of the messages have similar content structure and similarities in visual appearance. However, the analyzed newsletters have unique characteristics because of the brand itself and the offer or service marketed.

When reading the questions of the thesis in the introduction one can't find a single answer to all of them. The answers are divided into many chapters of my work which together create suggestion and potential solutions. This thesis together with other resources (e.g. EMP's on the internet) can be used as guidelines for e-mail marketing campaigns which may be of interest to marketers considering changes to their newsletters.

By combining certain colors in newsletters designers can create a unique feeling and beautiful design which enhances engagement and attracts interaction by the receiver. According to theories some colors match better with each other which can be used when choosing the right ones for its purpose. When selecting font faces (typography) for newsletters there are technical restrictions that have to be taken in consideration but there are good solutions available which make variations in fonts possible.

When a company is collecting customer data there are a few ways to do this more effectively and according to industry standards. It's important to ask for permission before

sending out newsletters as well as sending the messages from an e-mail address that is recognized by the receiver. By adjusting the subject line with an appropriate explanation of the message, the marketer makes sure that receivers feel that the message is relevant to its needs and desires.

As a customer signs up for a newsletter it's good to send the first newsletter soon after the subscription. This is because the person might not remember signing up for the e-mails if the mails get delivered much later. If the customer doesn't remember signing up for a certain newsletter it might have a negative effect on the open rate and general feeling of the campaign.

When planning a delivery frequency of a newsletter the sender should consider the relevancy of the offers and adjust the frequency according to the customers' behavior. If the marketer has a good knowledge about its customers it's quite easy to change timing and occurrences according to their behavior to improve the effect of the message.

A crucial part of the newsletters is the content, which may consist of text, images, links, buttons and more. When structuring the content one should remember that there are technical restrictions which need to be taken in consideration to make the message as effective and compatible as possible.

By placing important content at the top part of the newsletter the marketer makes sure that this is the first thing that gets seen. When using alternative text for images one can assure that readers using a text-only *MUA* get a good experience although images aren't shown. By dividing content into different columns and positions one can point out and emphasize a certain section of the message, as well as promote the content efficiently.

Links in a newsletter should be separately positioned and visualized in a way so that the readers understand that it's a link. The call to action in a link or on a button should be short and explain what the user is supposed to do.

When placing a few calls to actions in a commercial message it improves the engagement and the *CTR* (click-through-rate), but it's good to remember that placing too many *CTA*'s in a single message might do the opposite.

One of the problems in e-mail marketing is SPAM-filters that might prevent some of the messages from getting delivered to customers. By using good practices and some techniques presented in my thesis one can make sure not to make common mistakes and to understand how the SPAM-filters work.

When assembling and designing a commercial newsletter it's good to send out test messages viewed in different *MUA*'s to test functionality and to prevent the messages from getting tracked as SPAM. With small efforts in the subject line or in the content, the outcome might be quite different in a positive way.

Following analytics and reports is a crucial part in sustaining a successful marketing campaign and serving the customers with relevant information. By placing the customers into different segments it's possible to target certain messages and offers which promotes the engagement and enhances the *CTR*. When analyzing reports the marketer learns about the behavior of its customers and gets an opportunity to wisely use this information in different marketing purposes.

In my study I chose to analyze commercial messages sent by a few companies (operating in Finland) that use newsletters in their marketing strategy. The newsletters were collected under nine months to get information about the delivery frequency and changes made during that time. All of the messages were viewed in the same *MUA* which makes all of the messages equal and comparable with each other.

By using theories written in my thesis I was able to look at the messages with a critical mindset and approach which enabled good insights in how established companies may have weaknesses when it comes to commercial e-mail marketing. The analysis works as an example on how to use theories and solutions on any commercial messages and how to make changes and improvements according to this.

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