How to write email subject lines worth clicking

Email subject lines are the first things your customers see when they receive your message. Like headlines, these move readers to either open or ignore your email. And if customers don't go beyond it, then the message hasn't served its purpose.

What causes customers to ignore your email even if they subscribed to it? Several factors come into play for this. But one of the primary catalysts is the words on your subject line.

Customers now sense if an email is trying to sell them something simply from the first words they see. They are wary of incoming messages, even if they signed up to receive updates from you, because either they have forgotten that they subscribed, or they've developed the tendency to brush off messages from unfamiliar senders or what seems "salesy".

Before you write your next subscriber email, consider the tips below. These may prove helpful in writing subject lines your customers will want to click as soon as they receive it.

Be brief

A study recently conducted by Retention Science, the data of which was "derived from an analysis of more than 260 million delivered emails and 540 campaigns" showed that "subject lines with six to 10 words perform[ed] best, generating a 21 percent open rate, well above industry standard. Those with subject lines containing five or fewer words ranked second with a 16 percent open rate, and those with 11–15 words returned a minimal 14 percent open rate. Despite this, the majority of emails sent (52 percent) had subject lines in the 11-15 word range." http://www.retentionscience.com/new-research-reveals-which-email-subject-lines-perform-best-for-marketers/

If you're still among the 52%, then it's wise to change strategies and limit your subject line to 10 words or less. This makes it easy for readers to immediately decide whether your email is worth their time or not.

Be specific and straightforward

Last July, Mailchimp updated their comparison study which looked into the open rates of more than 200 million emails and they came up with the same conclusion as their first analysis: Selling on the subject line doesn't sell. http://kb.mailchimp.com/article/best-practices-in-writing-email-subject-lines

That said just describe what's inside your message. Think along the lines of interesting, yet truthful. So instead of using splashy words and symbols, grab your customer's attention by clearly citing the benefits your email brings.

Personalize

Dale Carnegie said in his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, "A person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language." And this applies to email marketing

too. But balance it with personalization based on location or interest then you'll have a variety of appealing subject lines.

You can also replace the customer's name with the word "You" to still make it personable. Tina Brown, Editor-in-chief of the Daily Beast and Newsweek Magazine, said in an interview published on The Wall Street Journal, "I always find the content line YOU makes people open up fast." And this applies "especially [to] busy…recipients." http://blogs.wsj.com/atwork/2014/03/24/the-new-science-of-email-subject-lines/

While these tips are not set in stone and testing what works for you is still a good idea, you now know the current inclinations of most customers which will help you write subject lines that get opened instead of disregarded.