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Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

## Mark Twain on E-mail

LORI TURNER

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*Editor's Note: This is the second in a three-part series.*



Lori Turner

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If Mark Twain were around to speculate about the future of e-mail marketing, he might exclaim, "The reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated."

E-mail ad spending is expected to jump nearly 40 percent in 2011 compared to 2008, according to [emarketer.com](#).

MarketingSherpa reports that consumers rank e-mail marketing as their communication channel of choice, when compared to direct mail, telemarketing and other online marketing methods (such as social media).

In this review of e-mail marketing best practices, we'll examine how content and design strategies ensure subscribers open, read and engage with your campaigns.

**Be personal:** The real power of e-mail marketing is in forging a more personal relationship. Use a friendly, conversational tone and address subscribers by first name. Customize content for a subscriber's interests.

**Master the subject line:** The subject line has less than a second to capture your subscriber's attention. Make it snappy and engaging. Promote a specific benefit recipients can expect from opening your e-mail.

**Deliver value:** The primary reason consumers opt out of e-mail is the content isn't pertinent. So build in real value with strong offers, discounts, product trials or free educational content.

**Drive engagement:** The goal of any e-mail campaign is to generate action – getting your readers to call, share your content, click through to your website, request additional information or place an order. If there is no strong call to action, rethink your message.

**Ensure strong deliverability:** To prevent e-mail being labeled as spam, avoid promotional words like free, discount or cash. Too many images will also flag spam filters. Use a spam checker to flag issues before you send an e-mail.

**Prioritize your message:** Optimize your e-mails for common viewing scenarios – such as subscribers using a preview panel. This user is much less likely to see content that requires scrolling, so prioritize critical content in the top real estate of your layout.

**Design with mobile in mind:** Many Americans review and respond to e-mail by mobile device rather than computer. Appropriately size the images for mobile viewing. Users will lose interest if the download is slow. Pay attention to the width of your e-mail. A format that's too wide requires the user to scroll left to right for content. To test e-mails on a variety of mobile devices, use a Web-based "device simulator program."

**Design for image blocking:** Content must be able to stand on its own without the supporting graphics. A MarketingSherpa survey reported that only 33 percent of e-mail users have images turned on by default. The other 67 percent of e-mail users must be enticed to take the extra step of

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| FORECLOSURE NOTICES | 0   | 0    | 10,295 |
| BUILDING PERMITS    | 0   | 0    | 40,826 |
| BANKRUPTCIES        | 60  | 60   | 18,966 |
| BUSINESS LICENSES   | 15  | 15   | 5,348  |
| UTILITY CONNECTIONS | 103 | 103  | 26,767 |
| MARRIAGE LICENSES   | 28  | 28   | 5,477  |

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While e-mail marketing continues to offer the potential for great returns, it is evolving, as all technology does, requiring more thoughtful content and design strategies.

*[Lori Turner](#) is managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, [www.redrovercompany.com](http://www.redrovercompany.com). You can follow her on Facebook and Twitter.*

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