



## Tips on writing arresting SUBJECT lines.

To get your emails read, you need to start with an arresting and alluring SUBJECT line.

E-mail SUBJECT lines act like a headline of an ad. They perform the same critical functions of 1) attracting attention and 2) getting the rest of your message read. Understanding this, you can see how the same principles of effective headline writing apply to writing great SUBJECT lines.

So, a great place to start is by following these time-honored headline writing principles. Run it through this checklist every time you're writing a SUBJECT line:

- Is the promised message useful to the reader?
- Does the reader know exactly what's being promised?
- Is the promised message compelling and unique?
- Will the reader feel the need to read it now?

Beyond these headline basics, there are a few subtleties to keep in mind with e-mail SUBJECT lines:

■ *Make your identity known right away:* Remember with opt-in e-mail, the most compelling thing about your messages is they are coming from you, a trusted source. The first thing your recipient needs to see at a glance is that it's a message from a trusted source. Exclaim your identity in either the "From" field or at the beginning of all of your SUBJECT lines.

■ *Use urgency selectively:* If every message from you is urgent, then none is. Use urgency only when there's a real deadline or compelling reason to act now.

■ *Rely on spam checking software:* It's well known that certain words trigger spam filters, but there's a lot of confusion about which words are the problem today. Many people are mistaken in their belief that the word "free" in a subject line is a certain trigger. It may not be. All e-mail services provide spam checking software as part of the service or as an add-on. Draft your messages with the most compelling language, let the software do its job, and make adjustments when they're suggested.

■ *Shorter is better:* Subject line space is valuable, so the more compact your subject line, the better. Try to condense your words into the most powerful promise.

Finally, test alternatives to determine what works best. There's no substitute for letting your readers be the judge of which SUBJECT lines are effective. Whenever you're planning a campaign, split your e-list into segments and test different versions of the SUBJECT line. You'll be amazed at the degree of differences changes to SUBJECT lines can make on open and click-through rates!

Better yet, look to Pratt Direct for affordable and effective help in crafting winning e-mail communications. See our contact information below