

Successful Email Signatures

Simple techniques for creating a high impact email signature

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) . Pay Per Click (PPC)
Social Media Marketing . International SEO . Web Design
Ecommerce . Web Analytics . **Email Marketing**

Hallam Internet Ltd is an industry leader in SEO, PPC, Social Media, Web Analytics and Email Marketing. We provide bespoke consultancy and training for companies of any size and pride ourselves on producing proven result for our clients. Contact us to discuss your online business

info@hallaminternet.com

Freephone – 0800 622 6100

Telephone – 0115 948 0123

www.hallaminternet.com

Website: www.hallam.biz

Contents

1.	Introduction	7.	Branding
2.	Email Signature Basics	8.	Rendering
3.	Email Signature Etiquette	9.	Email Signature Tool: WiseStamp
4.	Disclaimers and Confidentiality Notices	10.	Successful Signatures
5.	Methods for Creating Signatures	11.	Next Steps
6.	Social Networking Links	12.	Resources



© Hallam Internet Ltd

Free Phone: 0800 622 6100 or 0115 948 0123

Website: www.hallaminternet.com

Susan Hallam
Managing Director

hallam

susan.hallam@hallaminternet.com

<http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Office: 0800 622 6100

Mobile: 07980 212750

My profiles:    

Introduction

This paper discusses what may be the single most important piece of digital business stationery your prospective customers, your existing customers and your suppliers will see on an almost daily basis.

Email signatures are one of those deceptively simple but high impact marketing techniques that might slip under your business radar.

Certainly, it is worth spending time and effort in getting your signature right.

What is an email signature?

An email signature is simply the block of text or information that is automatically added to the bottom of sent emails. It will often contain information about the sender, including name and contact information.

There is much to consider with your signature: what it should contain, the tools you need to create a signature, and this white paper will give you a practical check list and some simple tools for creating the perfect email signature.



© Hallam Internet Ltd

Free Phone: 0800 622 6100

Website: <http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Email Signature Basics

A good starting point for your email signature is the basic information you would find on a traditional business card:

- Your name
- Position
- Company name
- Office address
- Company website
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Fax (if applicable)

Limited companies have a legal requirement to also include the following information, since the introduction of the *Companies House Act 2000*.

- Your company's registered name
- Your Registered address
- Your place of registration
- Your company number
- VAT registration number, if appropriate.



Email Signature Etiquette

To say that we are drowning in email might be an understatement for some business owners, and your signature is an important signal to the recipient that you are not sending spam

Here are some of the basic rules you might want to follow for email signature etiquette:

1. Your signature should be easy to scan
2. It should quickly identify you and your business
3. Your company branding should be readily identifiable
4. It should be quick to load
5. Your **company logo should not be attached as an image to your email**. Instead, your logo should be stored on a server on the Internet, for example your web server, and your signature should just display the image from that location
6. You do not need to include your signature when you reply to an existing email, however you may wish to include your signature when you forward a message
7. Many email signatures now include Green messages along the lines of “**Please consider the environment before printing this email**”.



Email disclaimers & confidentiality notices

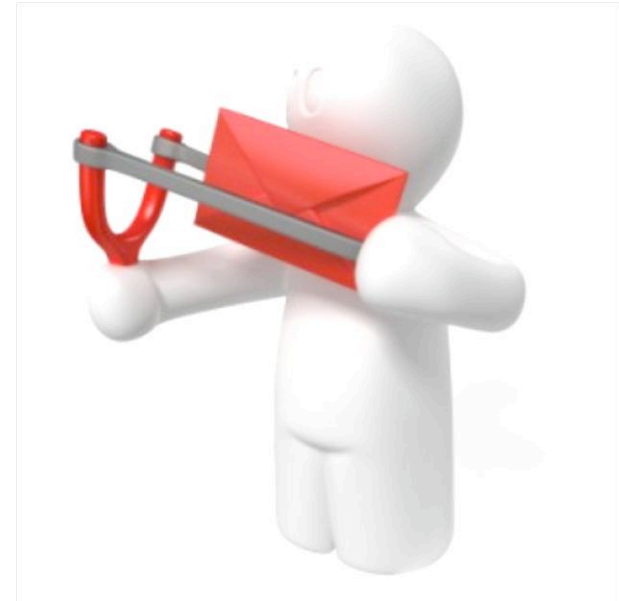
Should you have a disclaimer on your email signature? Are detailed disclaimers legally binding? It's a much disputed topic, and we are not solicitors, and this article is not offering legal advice. That, of course, is our disclaimer!

BusinessLink provide this standard disclaimer template for small businesses to use:

This email and any attachments to it may be confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. Any views or opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of [business name].

If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must neither take any action based upon its contents, nor copy or show it to anyone.

Please contact the sender if you believe you have received this email in error.



Methods for creating email signatures

Depending on what email client software you use (Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, Hotmail, Eudora, etc) you will have a number of options for creating your email signature.

One common factor, though, is that a graphical and attractive signature will be created using **HTML**, the same language that is used to create web pages.

You can create an HTML signature file using a simple application like Microsoft Word, and then insert the file as your default signature. You can find a simple set of instructions here if you use Outlook as your email client: <http://bit.ly/EmailSig1>

Or, if you are using MSN Hotmail, then instructions for creating a signature can be found here: <http://bit.ly/EmailSig3>

A number of new email signature applications have been developed to facilitate signature creation, and we would particularly recommend **WiseStamp**, which is discussed later in this paper.



Social Networking Links

If your company has a social presence, you may look to link out to your various social profiles within your signature. Different companies will want to tailor their social outlets depending on how appropriate they are.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn are the current big three —

Be sure to create and link to your *Facebook business page* and **not** your personal account!

For a more in depth read please read [Facebook Pages for Business](#).

[Twitter](#) is also being widely used in the business community, both for Business to Consumer and Business to Business purposes. Whether you are using Twitter for the provision of customer service, interacting with customers, market research, or keeping in touch with the trade press, be sure to include a link in your signature.

[LinkedIn](#) is a great network primarily geared towards business professionals and will allow people to read about your working background and history. If you're offering a professional service, or are indeed a business owner or director, the chances are this will be very relevant to you.

And if you're hot on the latest offerings from Google, there's now [Google+](#), which looks to contend with Facebook. *You may want to observe how this new product matures before adding it to your signature or look out for future news about it from Hallam.*



© Hallam Internet Ltd

Free Phone: 0800 622 6100

Website: <http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Branding & Marketing Messages

It is a good idea to carry your company logo, and colours into the design of your signature. People will instantly recognise where your email has come from before even starting to read anything due to the associations they are forming. If you've already had prior email contact with someone it will reassure them and show them that your message has come from somewhere, or someone trusted. This means other people are more likely to read your message and don't mistakenly bin it!

And your email signature provides the ideal opportunity to reinforce your brand messages, promote an upcoming event, or announce a new product.

Consider including Calls to Action such as:

- Subscribe to our newsletter
- Attend our forthcoming events
- Read our latest press releases
- Watch our videos
- Read our case studies
- Learn more about our most recent award
- Apply for our jobs

Susan Hallam
Managing Director

hallam

susan.hallam@hallaminternet.com

<http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Office: 0800 622 6100

Mobile: 07980 212750

My profiles:    



© Hallam Internet Ltd

Free Phone: 0800 622 6100

Website: <http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Rendering

You can create a beautiful looking signature, however keep in mind some email clients/software or corporate email systems will strip out all of the graphics, which includes your company logo and social icons. Some require you to click a link to say “display graphics” before they will appear.

The variation in how images display in an email is called “rendering” and you may well be surprised at the wide differences between email clients.

Here’s an example of what a reply might look like from somebody whose email settings are set to *not display images or graphics*. Including **ALT descriptions** will display a descriptive slide underneath the picture and reassure people the contents of your well intentioned graphic aren’t something more sinister.

So, be sure to test your signature with the images turned off, and ensure your key marketing messages are still being conveyed.



A signature creation tool: WiseStamp

WiseStamp (<http://www.wisestamp.com>) is an easy to use tool which allows you to format your email signature using formatting options that will be very familiar to most people.

One of the difficulties you may experience in developing your email signature is the need to learn HTML. Wisestamp gets round this issue by offering you a simple and effective toolkit for creating high impact signature files.

This tool integrates with both your browser and your chosen webmail client. In this example we will demonstrate using Gmail. WiseStamp has been built to also work with Hotmail, Yahoo and AOL—however I will not be covering these other mail clients here.

At this stage, WiseStamp does not integrate with Microsoft Outlook, however you can make use of the “export html template” functionality in the paid version, which will allow you to either copy and paste the code for your new signature into your preferred email client such as Outlook, Mail for the Mac or import a ready created file. It is a very good and powerful little editor and my recommended place to start when building your own signature.



Getting Started with Wise Stamp

Head on over to the WiseStamp (<http://www.wisestamp.com>) website and install the free browser plugin by clicking on the big orange button from the home page.

WiseStamp provides you with some [useful signature examples](#) that you may wish to follow or get ideas and inspiration from, while also taking into account what you've learned here.

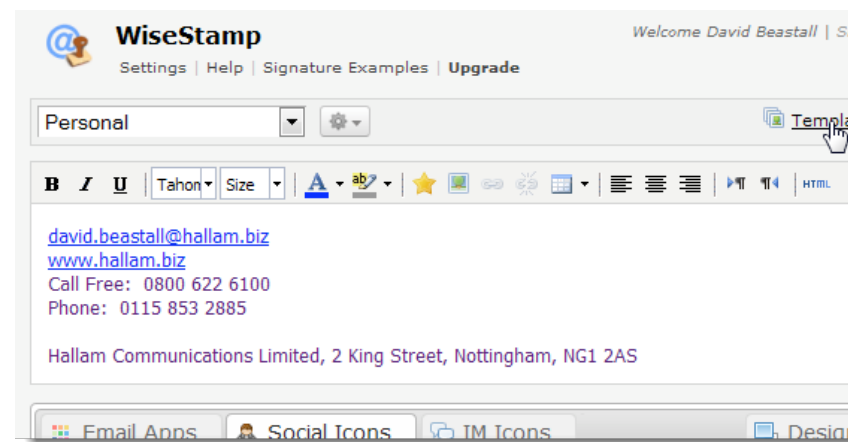
You will then be prompted/asked whether or not you wish to install WiseStamp? *You're looking to say yes to these, each browser will ask you in its own unique and annoying way—okay, it's actually quite useful when/if they ask you first!*

I've installed WiseStamp, what next?

Once you have installed WiseStamp, just go to your Google inbox, the plug-in will kick in and you'll see an icon in the top right corner of your browser window. This links through to the signature creator/editor.

Use one of the pre-formatted templates or create your own. If you're just looking to add social buttons and you're happy with your current signature, try copying & pasting the information into the editing box and work from there.

WiseStamp allows you to initially create two signatures per user, which are "Personal" and "Business."



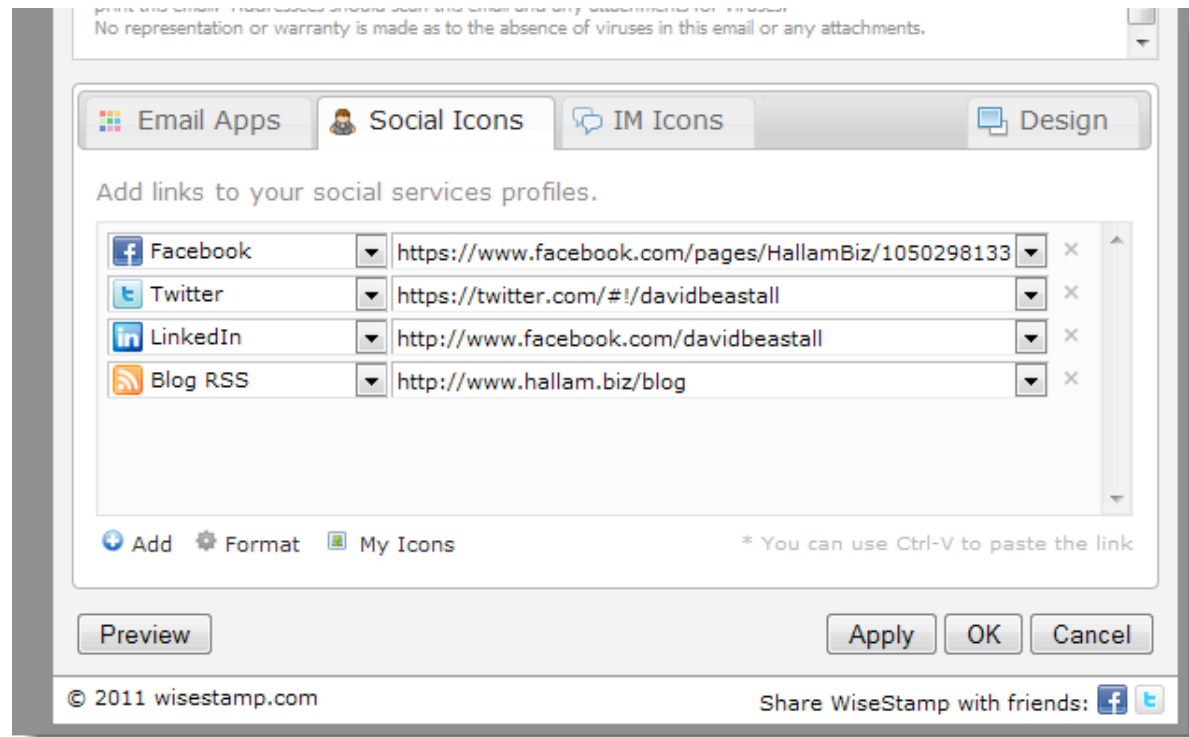
Adding Social Icons

Select the Social Icons tab to start adding on your social profiles.

We decided to include the Hallam Facebook page, individual Twitter and LinkedIn accounts for all members of staff and then our blog.

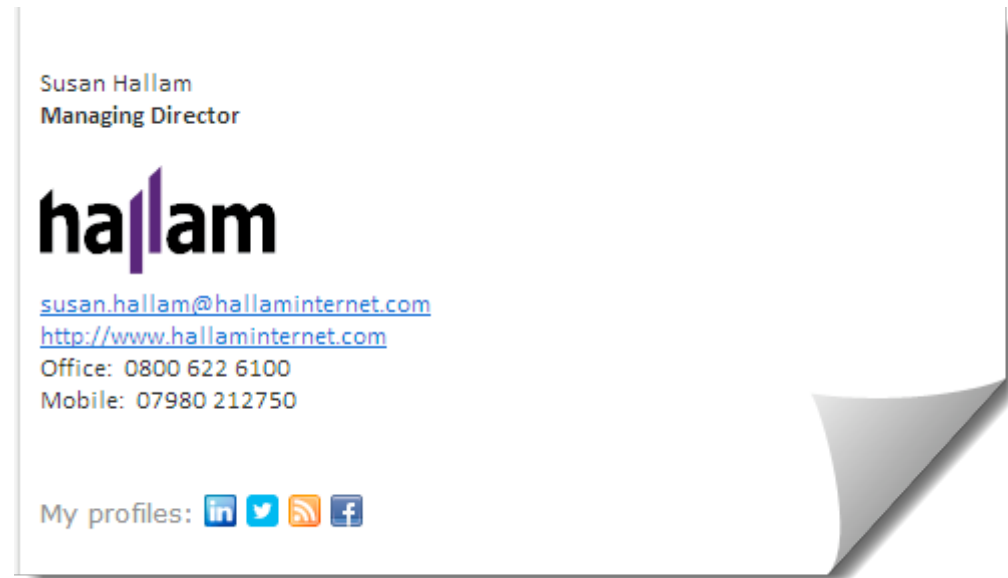
You will need to copy and paste the browser address for each profile or page that you own.

Once you're happy with the design of your signature and have included all the right profiles, click "Apply" and then "Preview" to see a rendered version—*this is how it will look to others*. Feel free to go back and re-tweak your design as necessary.



I've made it, how do I start using it?

Once you're satisfied, click "OK" to save your signature file and make it available to use when composing messages. When composing your message in Gmail there will be a new icon that allows you to select which signature to use.



Successful signatures

- Be concise. It's meant to be a small signature that takes up the trailing end of your message. Use it as a platform to take people to further information, be it your website or a social profile. It's not a book and shouldn't occupy an entire sheet of A4 if it were to be printed.
- Don't overload your email signature with every conceivable social profile under the sun. Not only will your messages take longer to send, and likewise for others to receive, but it will look untidy and confusing.
- Don't be tempted to insert a whacking huge company logo. It just won't look good. *Bosses, managers, business owners and directors all over are guilty of this one.* A smaller logo will look more refined and convey a certain confidence—*Google have just made theirs smaller!*
- Do link your logo back to your home page, it's intuitive and user-friendly.
- Generally people have become accustomed enough to recognise an email address from a website. There's no need to label these with "email:" and "web:" —this just adds an extra layer of clutter. *The exception however might be if your business works with an older audience.*

If you have multiple telephone numbers, **DO** label them accordingly.

- At Hallam we have both a local number, which helps to cement our position and create trust with our local clients based here in Nottingham. We also have a free-phone number - the benefit being obvious, however it conveys less information. A free number doesn't reveal your demographic location which is important in demonstrating traceability and accountability, again a tool used in creating trust and confidence in your business, organisation or service. *Also, the chances are a free-phone number won't be free when dialled from a mobile phone.*



What Hallam is doing

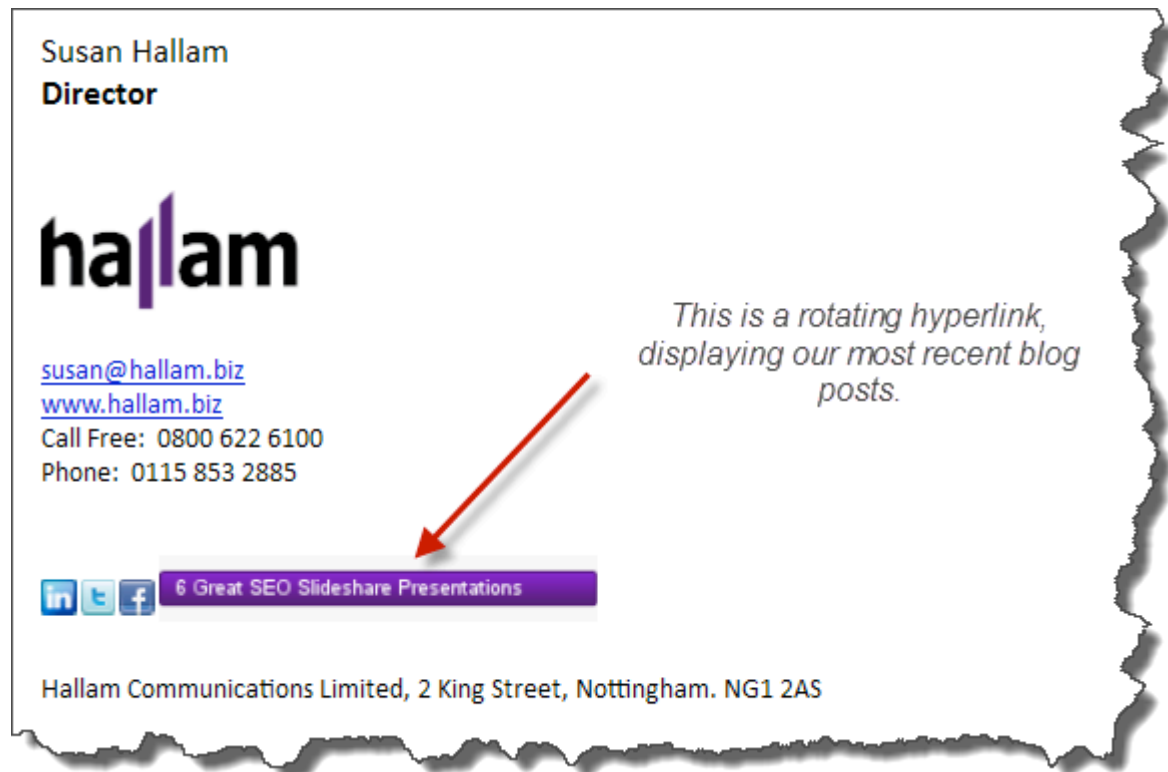
We decided to integrate the links in our signature file with our web statistics package (Google Analytics) in order to observe and record how many people are visiting our website or reading our posts directly from the links within our email signatures. This is achieved by using Google's free URL tracking code generator.

Using the [Feed Burner tool](#) we are able to display a dynamically updating headline display of all our recent posts, the look of which can be customised. *Our new posts are displayed in the purple bar.*

WiseStamp also offers a number of similar features such as the ability to display your Twitter feed directly within an email.

My advice at this stage is not to get too carried away, as its possible to completely fill your signature with seemingly cool 'stuff', diluting its effectiveness. Ask yourself, what do you believe to be most important to the people who you communicate with?

We're still evaluating how well our new signature is performing for us, however early comments from our clients have been very positive and hopefully the data we collect will support this.



Next Steps

Hallam is an industry leader in SEO, PPC, Social Media, Web Analytics and Email Marketing. We provide bespoke consultancy and training for companies of any size and pride ourselves on producing proven result for our clients. This is an example of just a handful of the results we achieved for our clients in the past few months...

Key Fact

900%

Increase in clickthrough rate in the 4 months Hallam managed the account, compared with previous 4 months.

Key Fact

225%

Increase in the number of visitors who click on their adverts after seeing them on Google (25 Sep-30 Nov vs. 20 Jul-24 Sep)

Key Fact

400%

Increase in the number of enquiries from Google AdWords.

Key Fact

160%

160% Increase in highly qualified traffic from the search engines for their most important keywords.

If you would like further advice or information from Hallam about how we can help you grow your business online, accelerate your sales and conquer your competition, **get in touch now** –

info@hallaminternet.com

Freephone – 0800 622 6100

Telephone – 0115 948 0123

www.hallaminternet.com



© Hallam Internet Ltd

Free Phone: 0800 622 6100

Website: <http://www.hallaminternet.com>

Resources

Business Link Simple email disclaimer template

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1076142180&type=RESOURCES>

Facebook Pages for Business

<http://www.hallam.biz/blog/2011/03/facebook-pages-for-business.html>

Learn why you want to use a page and not a profile.

Free social icons

<http://www.komodimedia.com/download/#social-media-mini-iconpack>

These are useful if you're going to make your own signature without using WiseStamp.

WiseStamp Browser Plugin

<http://www.wisestamp.com/>

A friendly tool for building your own signatures

Email on Acid

<http://www.emailonacid.com/>

This tool allows you to test how your signature looks in different email software such as Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo and Outlook etc.

Email signatures legal requirements

<http://www.hallam.biz/blog/2007/01/company-website-statutory-requirements.html>

