Rockin' Subject Lines That Resonate With Physicians

Introduction

Physicians, like the rest of us, are bombarded with email every day. "You've Got Mail", once viewed as a novelty, has been the norm for quite some time now. Physicians are not only overwhelmed with overflowing email inboxes, they are also under the added pressure to be plugged in around the clock. After a quick scan of their email from a mobile device at the crack of dawn, a physician rapidly needs to decide which emails warrant further review. As a marketer trying to reach physicians, you only have a few moments to capture a physician's attention with an email, and you must therefore use the subject line to effectively do so.

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Keep it short.

Research, confirmed by our own experience, indicates that subjects with 10 words or less work best. In a recent Inc.com article, Madhu Gulati, president of ShowMeLeads, researched and analyzed 260 million emails from 540 campaigns to determine the perfect subject line length for a marketing email. As shown below, this research verifies that shorter subject lines have higher open rates – a good practice to keep in mind when you are creating subject lines targeting physicians.

Subject Length (Words)	Open Rate
5 or fewer	16%
6 to 10	21%
11 to 15	14%

BEST PRACTICE

Shorter subject lines have higher open rates – keep this practice in mind when you are creating subject lines targeting physicians.

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Be unique and personal.
Focus on powerful keywords.

Make your subject line unique, personal and to the point. If you have the ability to personalize the subject line with the physician's name, try doing so. At the very least, run a few A/B tests to determine whether this will boost results for your given marketing environment. In past experience, this has been known to boost open rates among physicians—as long as your data is accurate enough that you're confident you have the correct name spelling.

From our own experience mailing physicians on behalf of clients, we've found that the majority of physicians use mobile devices to open and read their email, so it is critical to get your point across by placing important concepts and phrases at the start of the subject line. As a rule of thumb, we suggest keeping your subject line to 45 characters or less to reduce the likelihood of important words being cut off.

BEST PRACTICE

Majority of physicians use mobile devices to open and read their email. Keep your subject line to 45 characters with the important concepts at the beginning.

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Entice with powerful content.

1. Asking a Question

Use a question approach in an email subject line to get the physician to think about how the subject matter applies to him or her. The best questions resonate with the physician's current or past experience and arouse their curiosity in learning more about the subject.

Example from a MedData Group campaign

Subject line: What Should a Doctor Wear?

Result: 24.5% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

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2. Providing a "How-to"

There's an old saying in copywriting circles that you can't write a bad headline if it starts with the words "how-to". Our experience has shown that a "how-to" subject line formula is effective because it forces you to describe the content of the email to the physician in very clear, succinct language. The key to success with this subject line formula is focusing on the benefit, not the methodology or technology.

Examples from MedData Group campaigns

Subject line: How to squeeze in a workout at night
Result: 26.94% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

Subject line: EHR – How to get it right the second time around
Result: 23.82% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

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Entice with powerful content.

3. Utilizing Numbers

Using numbers in your email subject lines is a great way to set the physician's expectations and provide a simple structure for the content of your email.

Examples from MedData Group campaigns

Subject line: 10 Things Doctors Can't Do
Result: 24.84% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

Subject line: 5 EHR Myths… Busted
Result: 27.29% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

Subject line: 3 Key Pieces of Data Your Practice Needs
Result: 25.11% unique open rate in our 1st campaign drop

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Accentuate a key benefit.

Focus on a key benefit and be sure to clearly state how reading your email is going to enhance a physician's life. No matter what the topic of the email is, the best way to capture their attention is by figuring out how to immediately drive the point home. If you save them time, make them money or make them laugh you just may have them at "hello".

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We are here to help you.

What specific challenges are you facing with your email campaigns to physicians? MedData Group specializes in helping healthcare marketers reach the right audiences and create and implement performance-based cost per click and cost per lead campaigns designed to yield the best results. Let's connect.

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More about us.

MedData Group provides data and demand generation solutions to providers of healthcare technology, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, medical education, and others looking to engage with hard-to-reach physicians and other healthcare professionals by using a fundamentally unique approach.

MedData Group publishes Medical Product Guide, the industry's go-to resource that provides clinicians and healthcare professionals with meaningful vendor, product and industry information. By distributing meaningful content to healthcare professionals, we are able to collect more data, glean deeper insights, and reach larger audiences than any other demand generation service. Using behavioral analytics and big-data techniques, our proprietary content and lead management system produces unrivaled insights that we apply to best-in-class marketing practices to achieve unmatched results towards helping our clients reach their business goals.

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