

# Bespoke Mailers - Sending HTML files to TheYachtMarket for Broadcast

October 2011

# Introduction

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This document has been put together in order to help you with preparing your HTML email for broadcast by TheYachtMarket.

Although we will test the supplied HTML in the more popular mail clients prior to broadcasting, ultimately it is up to you to ensure that the content displays correctly to ensure the best possible results.

If after reading this document you are still unsure of our requirements, please feel free to contact:

Vikki@theyachtmarket.com

Please note that all mailers sent to TheYachtMarket.com's database are broadcasted on a Wednesday and will have a 'Sent in association with TheYachtMarket' and our logo placed at the very top of the mailer. This is purely to remind our users that the mailer is being sent from TheYachtMarket and is not spam.

# Our Pricing Structure

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As a guide, the general cost of sending out a bespoke mailer to TheYachtMarket's database can be calculated as follows;

**CPT + £100 (list handling fee\*) + £15 per additional country**

where CPT is set as £50 per thousand.

Our database can currently be segmented on an individual country basis so you can ensure that your campaign reaches your ideal target demographic. We will advise if we think that your campaign would be better suited to specific countries rather than the entire database.

## Pricing examples

If you wanted to send to the entire database, then you would be charged:

**CPT + £100 (list handling fee)**

If you wanted to send to the UK only then you would be charged:

**CPT + £100 (list handling fee)**

If you wanted to send to UK, France and Spain, then you would be charged:

**CPT + £100 (list handling fee) + £30**

The £30 charge is for the two additional countries which would need to be set up as additional campaigns.

# List Handling Fee

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You will have noticed that on the previous page that our pricing structure includes a **List Handling Fee of £100**. You will only be charged this fee once per campaign - regardless of whether you are sending to multiple countries. This charge has been introduced to cover the time our broadcasting team take to ensure that your mailer is suitable for sending.

The following checks are undertaken:

- Validity of HTML (this can cause display issues if non-valid HTML has been supplied)
- Creation of plain text version if you have not supplied it yourself
- Creation of online version of your mailer if not provided - this will allow those who are unable to view your mailer in their inbox view it online instead
- Hosting of images if applicable
- Testing mailer display in our list's most popular mail clients (approx 8 different email clients). If there are any discrepancies we will either amend (if the issues if a quick fix) or alert you to the problem and discuss how you wish to proceed
- Testing the subject line you have provided in approx 10 different spam filters - online and desktop based. If we encounter any issues, we will ask you to provide an alternative subject line and retest as many times as required until successful
- Collation of mailer statistics after sending

# Need Help?

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If you are interested in sending a bespoke mailer to our database, but do not have the 'technical know-how' to produce the files as per our requirements listed below, then there are a couple of options for you.

## Construction of HTML files

If you have an idea of a design - maybe a print based advert that you'd like to send as a mailer - then send it over to us and we will provide you a quote on how long it will take to convert to HTML.

Generally speaking, the build of a mailer file will take a minimum of an hour, which will be charged at our standard studio rate of **£75 per hour**.

During the quote phase, we will advise of any compromises we may need to make to the design in order to ensure that your mailer adheres to the industry standard.

## Design of mailer and HTML construction

If you would like TheYachtMarket to design and build your mailer file for you, then please get in touch! Ideally we'd need a brief, a copy of your logo and any images and text you would like to include in the mailer.

The design of a mailer will take approximately 2 hours, again charged at our hourly studio rate of £75. This cost includes one round of amends. Of course this cost is dependent upon your requirements - more complex designs may take longer to produce.

As above, the build will take approximately 1 hour.



# Mailer Requirements

# Mailer Requirements

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TheYachtMarket will be responsible for broadcasting your mailer to our distribution list, however you are responsible for creating the HTML (.html) and plain text (.txt) files.

**Please ensure that you proof read your mailer PRIOR to sending over to TheYachtMarket as once the mailer has been broadcasted to the list, errors cannot be rectified.**

All of the below points are Industry Standard and therefore should be followed. Rules stated are applicable to all major email clients: Outlook 2003/Express, Outlook 2007, Outlook 2010, Windows Live/Hotmail, Google Mail, Apple Mail etc.

- Keep emails a fixed width of 550 to 650 pixels maximum
  - Email clients are not designed to render wide web page-like emails. Users' screen resolutions will have an effect on how mailers are displayed, and also how their email client layout is set up (e.g. left hand navigation pane). This means that emails wider than 650 pixels will require the reader to scroll left and right. This is very bad in terms of usability if the user is having to scroll vertically plus horizontally.
- Use tables for layout
  - Due to changes in the way some popular mail clients render HTML emails it means that all mailers need to be produced using tables only. This is one of the ways of ensuring cross email client compatibility.
- Avoid nested tables/putting all mailer information in one table
  - Mailers that have been designed using nested tables/contain all information in one massive table normally won't display any of the information until every single bit of content has been downloaded from the server. This means that potentially, depending on the connection speed, a user will be made to wait a few seconds before they actually see anything on their screen.
- Use inline styling ONLY
  - Due to the variety of ways email clients render HTML (often ripping out any styling in style and body tags and introducing their own default styles) - the best way of achieving a consistent look across multiple email clients is to use inline styling - literally putting the styling markup on the element itself - for example  
<p style="font-color: #000000; font-size: 12px; font-family: arial;">. Also avoid using CSS for positioning of elements. If it cannot be done using the table layout, then do not do it at all.
- Use cellspacing and cellpadding or spacer images to fix spacing issues instead of the CSS margin and padding attributes
  - Avoid using margin and padding on tables as this produces inconsistent results. If using spacer gifs, remember to include an empty alt attribute - alt="".

# Mailer Requirements

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- Avoid placing styling directly on the body
  - Other than a colour, trying to put a background image directly on the body tag provides inconsistent results. If a background image is required, it's best to put it on a 100% width <div> that starts/finish just after/before the body tags, and on the body tag provide a background colour as a backup.
- Avoid embedding forms, such as surveys, in emails. Instead, link to a web form
  - Some email clients will block/strip out form tags in mailers so it's best to avoid them.
- Make sure the email is coded well and W3C compliant
  - Some of the most common display/rendering issues come from poorly constructed HTML. Make sure that all HTML validates - if not the email could end up classed as spam. To check your code use the W3C HTML validator - <http://validator.w3.org/>
- Use image alt tags
  - These show one or two words describing an image or an action when the image doesn't display because of slow loading time or default image blocking.
- Make sure ALL images are absolutely linked to
  - If you wish to use images in your mailer, please ensure that they are hosted on YOUR server and that you link to them absolutely - for example ``
- Animated gifs
  - Used sparingly is considered acceptable, however some versions of Outlook do not support them and will instead display the first frame of the animation. There is no way of detecting which email client a recipient is using so with this in mind it may be worth avoiding animated gifs altogether.
- Do not use JavaScript
  - Script vulnerabilities pose security risks. Messages with scripts might either get blocked by the email service or have the script stripped out by the email client.
- Use widths on all elements
  - Always remember to include widths for table, td and image tags.
- 3 pixel gap in Hotmail/AOL Mail
  - Adding the style attribute "display: block" on the images and tables will remove this display issue.
- Include a text only version
  - Create a text version for multipart HTML/text MIME messages, not doing so can cause some filters to treat the email as spam.
- Provide an online version of the mailer
  - Provide an online version of the mailer so that users can click the link to it if they are experiencing difficulty viewing the mailer in their inbox. It may also be an idea to include a request to be added to the recipient's address book to ensure images will be displayed by default.

# Mailer Requirements

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- Opening links in a new window
  - Always use the 'target="\_blank"' attribute in your links so they open in a new window rather than in the email client.
- Emails need to be image and text based
  - Ensure that all emails sent have a mixture of images and text. If the mailer is just image based, it is likely that it will be blocked by spam filters.
- Keep message file size under 100 KB
  - Although most desktop and web-based email clients no longer struggle at downloading large files, recipients still using dial-up connections might not have the patience to let a big file load, especially one 100KB or larger. Try to keep emails less than 50 KB if possible. But larger emails up to 100 KB generally won't cause filtering or loading problems.

# Testing

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We recommend that prior to sending your files over to TheYachtMarket, you test your mailer in the following mail clients:

- Gmail
- Windows Live/Hotmail
- AOL Mail
- Yahoo
- Outlook
  - CSS support in Outlook will vary depending on which version of Outlook you are using, so it is best to test in as many versions as possible.
- Apple Mail
- Thunderbird

Please note that we will test your mailer before broadcasting to our database and will alert you to any problems we encounter. You will then be given the opportunity to fix the errors and resend the files, or we will fix them on your behalf.

Please note that if we are required to amend your HTML, this will be chargeable at our standard studio rate - currently £75 per hour.

# Supplying Files to TheYachtMarket

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**You need to supply us with 2 files, one .html file and one .txt file.**

**Please ensure that you proof read your mailer PRIOR to sending over to TheYachtMarket as once the mailer has been broadcasted to the list, errors cannot be rectified.**

Once you have built and tested your mailer and are happy with the contents, please zip up the .html AND .txt files (a plain text equivalent of the mailer is required for those recipients who have chosen this format) and send over to TheYachtMarket.

We do not need to be sent any images as these, unless otherwise agreed, should be hosted on your own server.

# Timescales & Deadlines

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We have discovered that campaigns sent to our mailing list perform best when sent at lunchtime on a Wednesday, therefore this is the ONLY date we will broadcast to our list.

We use a feature called, 'Time Warp' to send our mailers. This is a campaign scheduling feature that ensures that our campaign's are delivered to recipients at that time, in their time zone. Instead of sending campaigns all at once, Time Warp delivers incrementally to each time zone making it easier for us to reach inboxes at more optimal times, therefore increasing open and click-through rate.

**As this feature requires to be scheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance, this now means that for ALL mailer content we need to receive FINAL copy by the previous Thursday morning (preferably before) and approval by Monday PM at the latest in order for us to schedule the send.**

**We unfortunately cannot deviate from this deadline, so if you cannot meet these requirements you need to advise us ASAP.**

# Useful Links

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- Guide to CSS support in email clients
  - <http://www.campaignmonitor.com/css/>
- Email Standards website
  - <http://www.email-standards.org/>
- How to Code HTML emails
  - [http://www.mailchimp.com/articles/how\\_to\\_code\\_html\\_emails/](http://www.mailchimp.com/articles/how_to_code_html_emails/)