

# Introduction

## Email's impressive results have stayed consistently reliable. So, what makes the popularity of email newsletters stand the test of time?

After working with media and publishing's fastest-growing brands to test email newsletter performance and recommendations for more than a decade, we've found this channel to be the most effective way to keep subscribers in the loop without being overly "salesy." And they do so in a way that gives your audience the opportunity to engage with your brand on their terms.

To build a winning email newsletter experience for your media brand, you need fresh, relevant, and original content for every send — otherwise, your subscribers will be closer than ever to clicking that

dreaded "Unsubscribe" button. And that's a huge negative for any company considering this channel is cited by consumers as the most important marketing channel according to [our 2022 Retail Personalization Index retailer and consumer survey research report](#).

In this guide, we'll explore the anatomy of a winning email newsletter — as well as two eye-catching email newsletter examples that also contain some of media's top-performing tactics and proven tricks of the trade.

So, is your brand ready to make a splash in the media industry's crowded email marketing waters?



Fashion killa



MORNING BREW

May 12, 2022 | View Online | Sign Up

# sidekick

live better

TOGETHER WITH **fuzzy\***

**Good afternoon, Sidekickers.** Job seekers are swiping right on companies, only to [ghost them](#) before their start date. Try it at your own risk: Just like in online dating, word gets around when you stand up your employer. Just look at [West Elm Caleb](#).

In today's edition:

- Meditation training
- Shelby Ivey Christie balances her 9–5 and 5–9
- Your boss in your business?

—[Maliah West](#), [Sabrina Sanchez](#)

## optimize

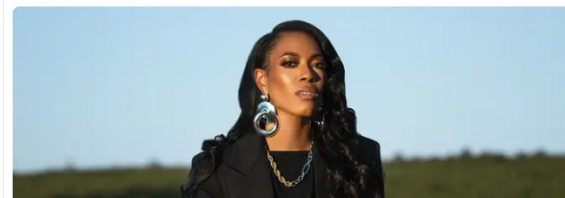
*Time-saving tools and products we're really into m.*

🧘 Get your mind right after a long day's work with this [meditation trainer](#), because it takes a lot of zen vibes to keep thoughts of quitting at bay.

🧠 Shift brainstorming sessions from chaos to cohesion using [MindNode](#). There's a better way to jot down ideas than chicken scratch on sticky notes.

🗑 [Reestablish boundaries](#) with your weird, noisy, fish-microwaving coworkers to save your sanity.

## routine



# 3 Things Every Email Newsletter Needs

Email newsletters are a fluid channel by nature — and that makes nailing down winning best practices a tricky proposition for most media brands. Your subscribers are unique, and your content shouldn't stagnate.

When it comes to making changes, every marketing team handles them differently. But remember, media's best email newsletter experiences all have three things in common:



## Curiosity

Readers consume your content to learn new things. Intriguing subject lines, highly personalized content, and unexpected aha moments are an engaging combination that captures audience attention and keeps them coming back.



## Empathy

The most effective email newsletters are the ones that address problems from your reader's point of view. So, offer unique subscription models and personalized content options to make sure your marketing speaks the same language as your audience.



## Individuality

No subscriber wants to feel like a number on your email list. Segmenting subscribers by interests, past habits, and putting reader personalization elements into your email newsletters is an easy way to make individual readers feel respected and heard.

# The Essentials

While every media brand is unique, there are a number of email newsletter best practices that can make a more positive, meaningful impact — regardless of your audience demographics.

By including each of the following elements in your email newsletter experience, you can build a winning email newsletter experience that gets your messages opened by delivering the content that you know subscribers will love!

## Subject Line

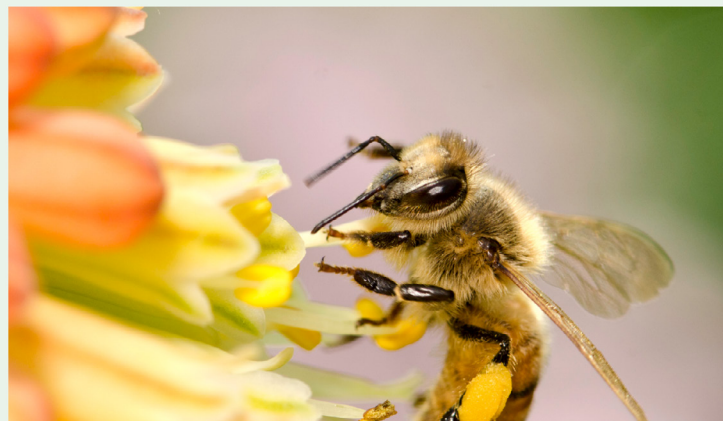
Most email apps cut your subject line off after 40 characters. While that's not a lot of space to work with, A/B testing tools can help you determine which subject lines are the most catchy, whether adding emojis can increase engagement, and which winning email newsletter formula gives you the best chance to create stronger reader engagement.

The incredible importance of the humble sting-less bee 🐝

**EVOKE**

TOP STORY

**These stingless bees make medicinal honey.  
Some call it a 'miracle liquid.'**



600-640 pixels

## Content Width

The ideal content width of 600 pixels by 640 pixels creates the potential for a winning experience that not only gives you and your readers breathing room between content pieces — but the best chance for your brand to render messages across any combination of email platforms.



### Consistency, Relevancy, and Personalization

Did you know that **56% of readers unsubscribe from media email lists** because the content they receive isn't relevant? By segmenting your audience and tailoring newsletter content to individual subscribers, you can create highly personalized experiences that are 760% more likely to convert.

### Inverted Pyramid Layout

Encourage readers to act on your email newsletter experience by using an inverted pyramid layout whenever possible. In doing so, you naturally funnel the attention of your readers down to one direct CTA.

#### TOP STORY

**These stingless bees make medicinal honey. Some call it a 'miracle liquid.'**



In the Peruvian Amazon, native stingless bees are helping beekeepers and their communities by producing honey and pollinating local plants.

**Read the story**

### Branding

Winning email newsletter experiences are highly personalized — but if a subscriber can't connect your message to your brand, then what's the point? Any time you're building email newsletters, make sure your logos, colors, and fonts are on-brand before you click "Send."

### Quality Images

Any images you use should be high-quality and rigorously tested to ensure proper display across all devices and email platforms. Pixelated, blurry, or improperly sized images should never make it into one of your email newsletter sends.

#### Latest Stories Curated for You



#### TRAVEL

**These are the Top 10 most popular national parks**

**Explore the List**

**AXIOS** LOCAL



We're expanding our local coverage to Arizona's capital with reporters Jessica Boehm & Jeremy Duda, who will be authoring the new **Axios Phoenix** newsletter.

[Sign up for free with one click here](#)

**Starting next Monday, 6/6**, Axios Phoenix will be give you the rundown of the most important and worthy stories shaping the area — featuring original reporting and curating the best of local news.

## Calls to Action

An ideal call to action (CTA) does two things to create an effective conversion point for the reader:

### 1. Get Specific

We like as little ambiguity in our daily lives as possible, so it's a good idea to write your CTA copy in a way that explains exactly what will happen when the reader clicks on it.

### 2. Focus on the Benefits

People's time is precious, and you need to promise them a benefit to get them to click-through from your email and take your offer. Instead of using generic CTA copy like "Read more," boost your audience clicks, conversions, and engagement rate by reinforcing the benefits of reading your email newsletter.

### Mobile Responsiveness

Today, **over half of all emails** are opened on a mobile device. If your newsletter doesn't look right on a smartphone screen, more than 70% of your audience will delete it in three seconds or less. Designing emails with a mobile-first approach to responsiveness is a must-have for any media brand using these messages to get ahead.

### Accessibility and Readability

Does your email newsletter feature at least 16pt. font? Have you used alt text for any recipient using a screen reader? A winning experience is one that makes messages accessible and easily readable for any audience member — no matter how they choose to consume them. With more diverse audiences to serve and more ways to engage with content than ever, it's important to remember that not every newsletter fan reads your messages.

gato

WHAT TO COOK THIS WEEK

#### Broiled Salmon with sauteed spring vegetables



Watch the tutorial

#### Other Top Stories & Tricks



The absolute best way to cook shrimp, after so many tests

Show me the ways >



Our most-popular vegetarian pasta dishes of all time

Bon appetit >



Slow cooker recipes to set and forget

Good things take time >



A Sunday sauce made with love - and lots of panchetta

Sunday kinda love >

### File Size

We recommend keeping your email newsletters under 300kb. If you're using GIFs, videos, or another interactive form of media in your message, anything under 1MB should ensure on-time delivery.

### Meaningful Animation

GIFs and videos are a fun addition to any email newsletter — but not if it distracts from the point you're trying to make. Ensure any animations you use are meaningful and don't compete for attention with your key message.

### Clear and Concise Messaging

Clear, concise, and conversational messaging can go a long way toward connecting your brand with engaged audiences. So, whenever crafting email copy remember to write for one person — not 100. Being able to feature localized news coverage or community groups that align with individual reader interests, for example, add instant trust and credibility to your newsletter.

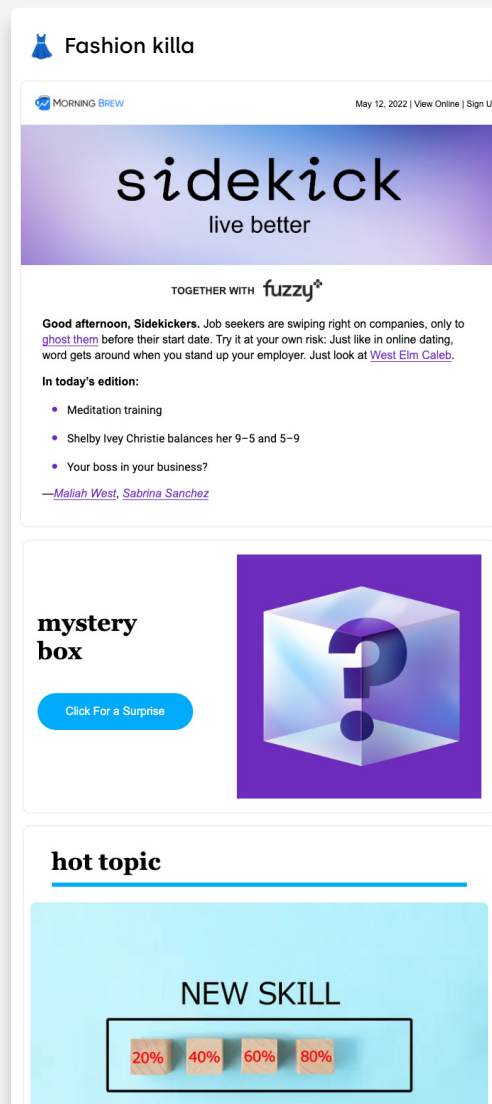
# 2 Email Newsletters We Love

Morning Brew and Axios have built themselves into household media industry names. These brands have displayed impressive audience growth, engagement and personalization — and now they're using email newsletters to engage online audiences every day.



## Sidekick from Morning Brew

Email newsletters are a part of Morning Brew's DNA. Three times a week, Sidekick greets subscribers by giving them a highly personalized selection of content combined with mystery offers to keep longtime readers engaged. On top of that, this media brand greets more than four million loyal subscribers daily through its other newsletters. And after generating approximately \$50 million in revenue in 2021, Morning Brew is leading the way where today's email newsletter boom is concerned.



## Why we love Morning Brew's SideKick email newsletter:

- | **Subject line emojis** that create inbox excitement
- | **Use of GIFs** to visually engage email newsletter readers
- | **Mystery Box and content summaries** help the brand intrigue audiences and bring traffic to its website

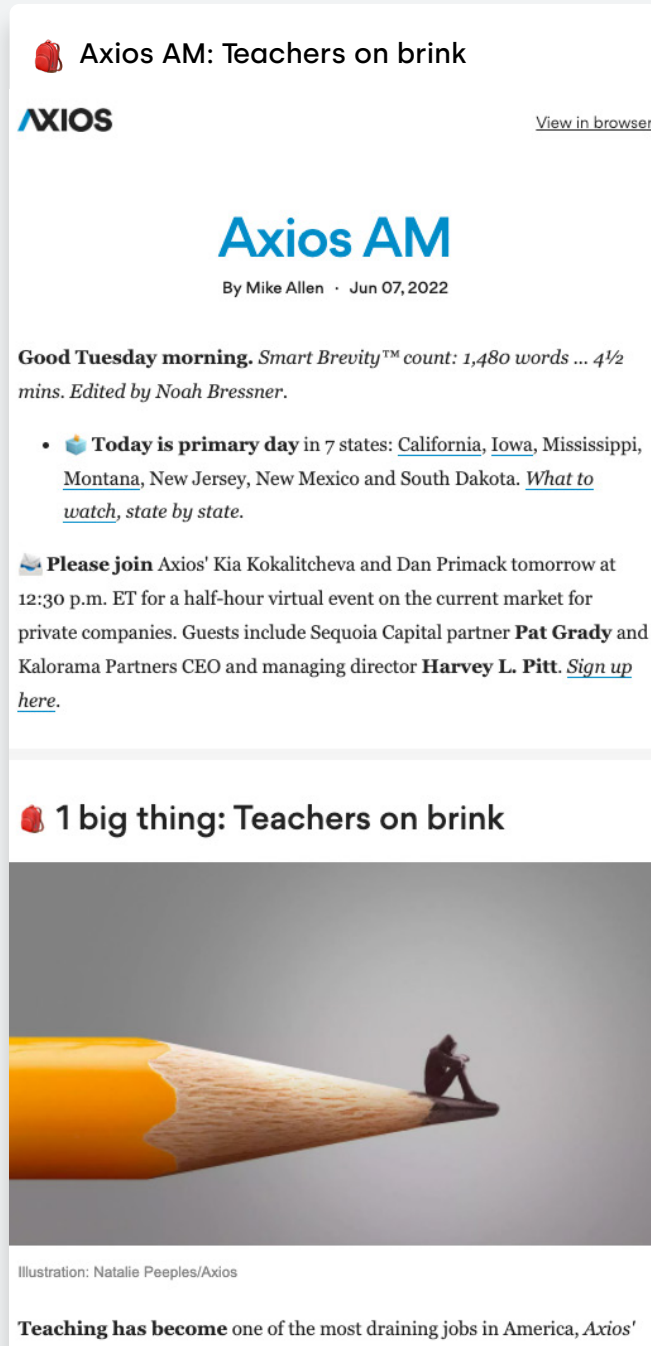


## 2 Email Newsletters We Love



### Axios

Axios' mission is to connect readers with faster, smarter coverage of the fast-changing topics changing the world. And with [Smart Brevity](#), the media company's signature style for efficient, effective communication, the brand is taking email newsletter experiences to the next level.



### Why we love Axios' email newsletters:

- | **Estimated reading time** is displayed at the top of each email newsletter to give readers the option of browsing when it's most convenient for them
- | **Topic-specific and local-focused content** ensures every newsletter send is highly relevant and engaging
- | **Short-form writing and bullet points** make it easy for readers to navigate emails, consume content, and convert as a direct result of the brand's newsletter sends.

# About Sailthru

Sailthru, a CM Group brand, helps modern marketers drive higher revenue, improve customer lifetime value, and reduce churn by using its powerful suite of connected capabilities. Sailthru's high-performance email, website personalization, mobile marketing automation, and unique integrations power new customer acquisition by leveraging machine learning and first-party data to easily deliver relevant, personalized engagement across all channels. The world's most innovative publishers, including Business Insider, Refinery29, and Food52, and the world's fastest-growing ecommerce companies, including Everlane, Thrive Market, and MZ Wallace, trust Sailthru to help them succeed.

For more information, please visit [www.sailthru.com](http://www.sailthru.com).

The fastest-growing internet retailers and media enterprises trust Sailthru

CONDÉ NAST

HEARST

Raise

Frank And Oak

MZ WALLACE  
NEW YORK

BEAUTYCOUNTER

FOOD52

INSIDER

coindesk

THRIVE  
- MARKET -

MORNING BREW

Chairish

REFINERY29

MailOnline

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EVERLANE

AP

THIRDLOVE