

OPTIMIZE YOUR EMAIL PRODUCTION WORKFLOW



Every brand's email production process is unique, with different planning, development, and approval processes. Luckily, we can all learn from one another. What's your **production process** like? How can you **improve it**? We've taken a look at the production processes of more than 900 marketers and distilled the **best tips and tools** to help you **optimize your workflow**.



THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

A standardized production process is crucial for email success. It not only ensures quality and consistency across sends, but it saves your team valuable time. That's especially critical due to the number of campaigns marketers are working on—and the fast turnaround times.

According to data from Litmus' 2016 State of Email Production report:



While each brand's process is different, each workflow should encompass the following elements:



Strategy & Goal Setting

Defining your email marketing campaign strategy and goals helps guide the direction of your campaign, and makes it easier to measure the success of your efforts.

BEFORE YOU WRITE A SINGLE WORD OR WRITE A LINE OF CODE, ASK YOURSELF:

- What **action(s)** do you want your subscribers to take?
- Why should your subscribers **care**?
- **Who** are you sending the campaign to?
- How will you **measure** success?

1.

ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assign tasks for each step of your production process
- Choose a **project manager** to ensure everything is executed properly

2.

SET DEADLINES:

- Set **deadlines** for each step of your production process to ensure everything is completed on time
- The **project manager** will ensure deadlines are met

Content Creation

When writing your campaign copy, keep your audience in mind and tailor your message appropriately. Use **relatable, positive language**, and ensure that your **call-to-action** is clear.

DRAFT CONTENT → EDITS → FINALIZE COPY

TOP 3 CONTENT PLANNING TOOLS:



Email Design

According to findings from the 2016 State of Email Production report, out of all production tasks, the majority of senders spend the most time in the email design phase.

EMAIL DESIGN → EDITS → FINALIZE EMAIL DESIGN

TEMPLATES

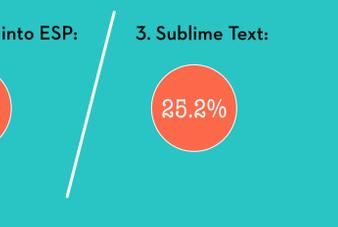
The majority of senders use an email template in one way or another. Only 14.1% of companies code all or most of their emails from scratch.

If you're interested in using templates, you can build them yourself, or use a third-party's template. Your email service provider (ESP) may have templates available, or you can choose from over 25 free responsive, hybrid, and mobile-aware templates in Litmus Community Templates.

DESIGN PROGRAMS

To create any images or to design the layout of your campaign, you'll need to use a design program.

TOP 3 MOST POPULAR DESIGN PROGRAMS:



Email Development

After email design, email coding and development is the production task that senders spend the most time with. Over 44% of respondents reported that they spent over three hours in the coding and development phase.

BUILD HTML EMAIL → EDITS → FINALIZE HTML EMAIL DESIGN

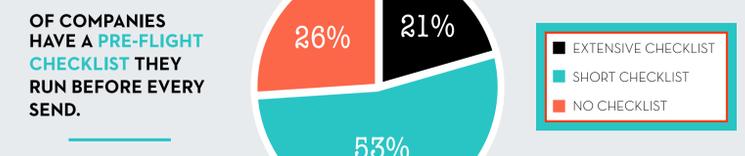
Whether you're building an email from scratch or updating a template, you'll need an HTML email editor. There are lots of options available, including **Movable Ink's Email Builder tool** and **Litmus Builder**.

TOP 3 MOST POPULAR EMAIL EDITORS:



Other Development Tools to Consider

When it comes to the email design and coding phase of the workflow, other tools to consider to streamline your process include:



Since not all email clients support CSS, inliners transfer your CSS code from the head of your email to all the tags through your email so you can get desired rendering.

An HTML Email Framework contains pattern-based elements such as tables, images, buttons, and links that help you quickly create emails.

A static site generator is a build system for flat files that allow you to template and break down elements, making them easier to edit and control.

Task runners automate repetitive tasks such as inlining CSS and sending test emails.

A preprocessor converts code written in a preprocessing language into standards-compliant HTML or CSS that can be rendered by a browser.

A postprocessor sanitizes your CSS and converts it into standards-compliant CSS to ensure compatibility across email clients.



Quality Assurance & Testing

You've spent time carefully planning your goals, content, and design. Now it's time to ensure everything works as you intended. Regardless of whether you have a pre-tested template or it's an email built from scratch, every email should be thoroughly tested before every send.

THOROUGHLY TEST YOUR EMAIL → MAKE ANY NECESSARY CHANGES → TEST IT AGAIN!

74%

OF COMPANIES HAVE A **PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST** THEY RUN BEFORE EVERY SEND.

You should test dozens of elements before sending, including your subject line, image load time, links, images, and rendering.



■ EXTENSIVE CHECKLIST
■ SHORT CHECKLIST
■ NO CHECKLIST

Preview Your Email Before Sending

Due to the seemingly countless email apps available—each with their own rendering quirks—it's crucial to preview your emails across numerous email clients before sending. Ensure that your email is easy to interact with and legible across all environments. This is a vital step in the quality assurance process.

54.5% OF COMPANIES USE **EMAIL PREVIEW SOFTWARE** TO TEST THE RENDERING AND **FUNCTIONALITY** OF THEIR EMAILS ACROSS EMAIL CLIENTS AND DEVICES **BEFORE SENDING**.

While it's possible to manually preview your emails, it can be time-consuming and costly to purchase all of the different apps and devices.

Luckily, there are some solutions. **HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVORITES:**



Within Movable Ink's **Email Builder tool** you can preview your email in 50+ email clients in seconds. Previews are powered by Litmus.

Preview your emails in 50+ emails clients in seconds, plus get a **guided check** of the most critical elements that affect campaign performance.

Many ESPs, like **MailChimp** and **Campaign Monitor**, include preview tools in their solutions. You can run a **test** directly within their platform.

The Send!

It's time for the big event! With a proper quality assurance process in place, the actual send should be a breeze. After pressing send (or scheduling it to go live), it's time to sit back and relax. You did it!



Post-Send Reporting

In the first step of your workflow, you determined the goals of your campaigns. Now, it's time to see if you met those goals. If your goal was content downloads, then see how many of your subscribers downloaded your report. If your goal was upsells, then see how many of your customers upgraded their accounts. Those are the main goals of the campaign, and therefore the metrics that are most important.

→ OTHER METRICS TO LOOK AT FOR EACH CAMPAIGN INCLUDE:

- Open rates
- Unsubscribe rates
- Click rates
- Bounces
- Conversion rates
- Spam complaints

*All data is taken from Litmus' 2016 State of Email Production report. More than 900 professionals involved in email marketing took our Email Production Survey between Aug 27 and Nov. 24, 2015. They represented a diverse range of industries and company sizes.

ABOUT LITMUS
Litmus is a web-based email creation, testing and analytics platform that empowers over 250,000 marketers, designers and agencies to confidently deliver a superior subscriber experience. For more information, visit <https://litmus.com/>.

ABOUT MOVABLE INK
Founded in 2010, Movable Ink pioneered the application of contextual experiences to email and has powered over 100 billion live content impressions. More than 350 innovative companies use Movable Ink to Market in the Moment and optimize their email campaigns to drive ROI. For more information, visit www.movableink.com.

