

# Mid-Month Email Menagerie

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## Intro

I open over 4,000 emails each month. I also click in each one of them. *Open...Scan...Click...Repeat...*

This carpel-tunnel inducing activity results in the data I use for various reports including my monthly [Email Marketing Trend reports](#). While I can never get enough data, I realized I view and interact with a lot of friggin' emails every month, so perhaps I should write something about them. In the slurry of "*Free Shipping*," "*20% Off*," "*Last Day*," and "*Hours Left!!!*" it takes a lot to earn my double-take and get labeled for this report.

The purpose of this menagerie, a collection of clever, curious or catastrophic emails from the past 30 days, is to serve as a reference of the best emails in the industry and those that could use be improved. Read about new tactics that you should test in your own programs and others that you should avoid.

**Behold the Fold:** Eye-catching use of the above the fold area of an email

**Promotions, Processes, and Peeves:** Interesting promotions, various subscriber experiences, and personal annoyances

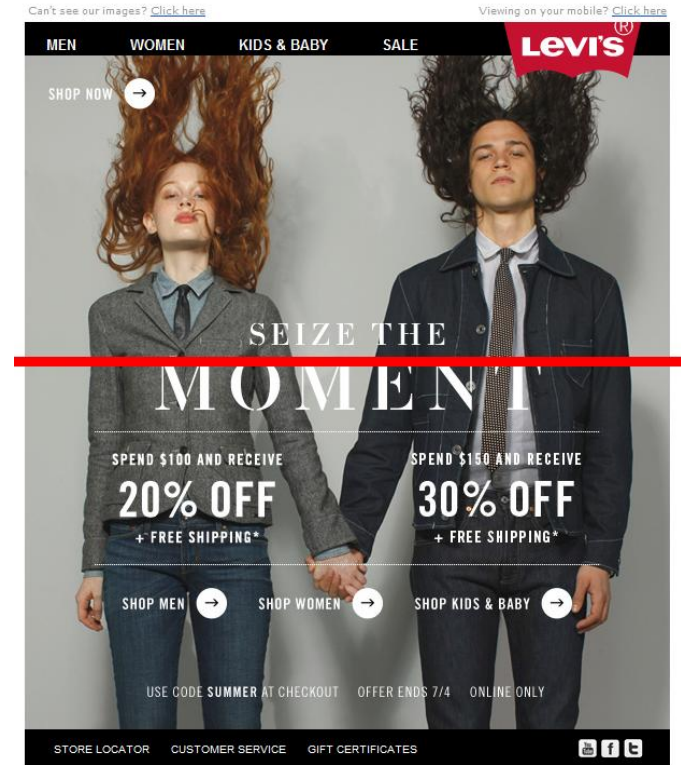
**Composition Exhibition:** Designs that stand out not always for the right reasons

**Animation Station:** Various uses of animated gifs in emails

Compliments and critiques represent my opinion only.

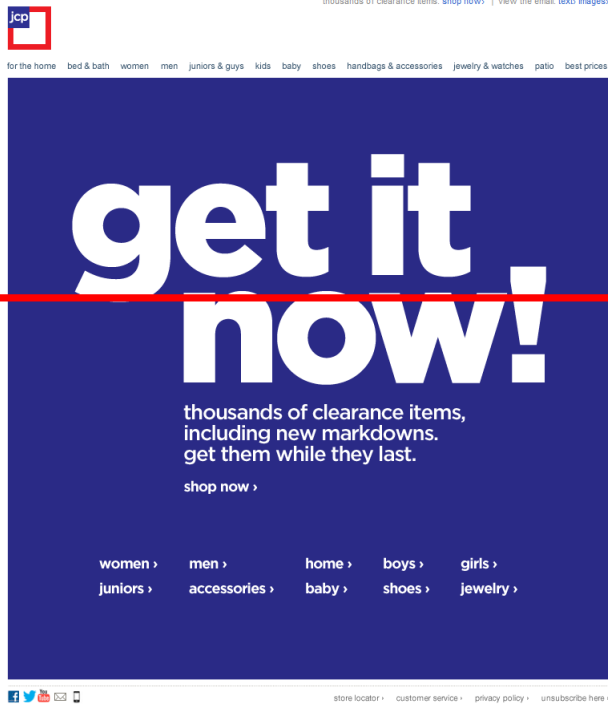
## Behold the Fold

Models, background, and copy rarely combine strategic forces to optimize the above-the-fold area. Well, break out the tiara and sashes because Levi's wins Couple of the Month with these two emails. The email on the left shows a couple holding hands while pulling away from each other under the line "Last Chance." As you scroll, the offer is revealed in a narrowing space between the models. The email on the right shows the same couple mid-hair flip. This one definitely caught my attention though the "Seize the Moment" copy was a bit low to the fold to make a solid one-two punch.



A model free-falling toward the fold is definitely one way to bring the viewer into the email. This one made me scroll to see what the guy was falling into. Thankfully it was not a sidewalk or crowded beach. While the thrill seeker caught my attention, the rest of the above-the-fold area effectively communicates the offer.

JCPenney wins for the largest font treatment with only “get it” appearing above-the-fold. With only two words showing without scrolling, I was curious to check out what exactly I was going to get! If you typically send image- or copy-heavy emails, this tactic could help break the pattern and drive subscriber engagement.



ShopNBC

JEWELRY | WATCHES | APPAREL & ACCESSORIES | BEAUTY | HOME & COLLECTIBLES | COMPUTER & ELECTRONICS | HEALTH & FITNESS | CLEARANCE

Like us

Share This FORWARD TO A FRIEND

Today's Top Value

*Your Secret*  
FOR SANDAL SEASON

RECHARGEABLE HANDHELD CALLUS REMOVER WITH BONUS DREAM CREAM BY DEEP COVER MOISTURIZER\*\*

BUY IT TODAY ▶

ANSR: 8011

SHOP OUR PROGRAM GUIDE ▶

TEXT VALUE to 73596

to receive daily **Today's Top Value** text alerts to your phone.\* It's your personal connection to our best deal – every day!

Text **VALUE STOP** to 73596 to cancel, text **VALUE HELP** to 73596 for info.  
Standard messaging & data rates may apply. Mobile terms.

TODAY'S TOP VALUE | PROGRAM GUIDE | SHOPNBC CREDIT CARD | MY ACCOUNT | CUSTOMER SERVICE

CONNECT WITH SHOPNBC

Feet! There's no way around that being your first impression of this ShopNBC email. Perhaps this was done for shock value, but the large foot in my face when I opened this email did not make me want to explore the rest of the message. Guess this is one way to promote a callus remover! While a shocking graphic can drive engagement, going too extreme could result in a negative reaction. Testing images that may turn off part of your audience will help you determine how far you can safely go.

With the question appearing in full above-the-fold, only the tip of the "A" for the answer is revealed. The center panel was animated to show the front and back of four different dresses. Guiding the subscriber's eye through the email can be difficult but this email definitely steered me along the path.

Having trouble viewing the email below? [click here.](#)

ANTHROPOLOGIE

Q:

*Is an everyday SHIRTDRESS ever not snoozy?*

A:

Absolutely, especially when it's this zippy little ikat mini from Maeve. Now in four colorful patterns, this wear-now, wear-later mainstay is bound to get hearts racing (no morning coffee run required).

[find your everyday, everywhere dress](#)

# Promotions, Processes, and Peeves

American Apparel®

Made in the USA  
Sweatshop Free



**PRINT-SHOP  
DESIGN CONTEST**

American Apparel is looking for new graphic designs!



**Submit Now→**

**Send to a Friend→**

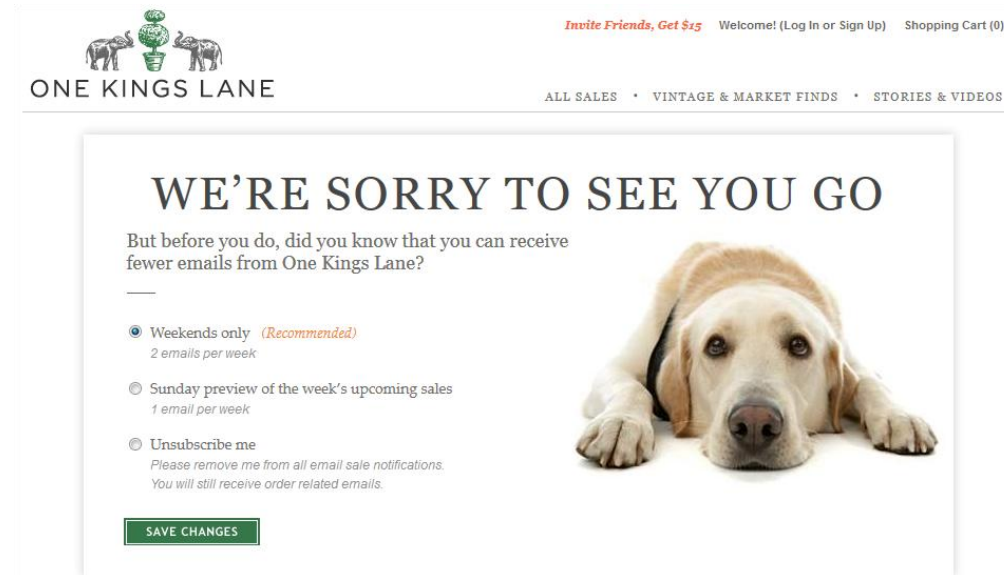
Do you have a unique print idea that would look great in our stores? We want to see it—and pay you for it, too!


**PRINT-SHOP**

Create your own design on one of our classic styles.

**Design Now→**

Yes, emails drive sales but not every email needs to promote products and offers. Subscriber engagement not only helps fight list attrition but can also have a positive impact on email deliverability. This example from American Apparel asked subscribers to submit a design that, if selected, would be printed on their products. The subscriber would even get paid for a winning design. This type of contest has the potential to increase brand awareness by having the contest participants spread the word about their submission. Check out “[8 Key Ways to Keep Subscribers Engaged](#),” by Kristen Gregory, Bronto’s Director of Marketing Services.



 **ONE KINGS LANE**

[Invite Friends, Get \\$15](#) [Welcome! \(Log In or Sign Up\)](#) [Shopping Cart \(0\)](#)


[ALL SALES](#) • [VINTAGE & MARKET FINDS](#) • [STORIES & VIDEOS](#)

## WE’RE SORRY TO SEE YOU GO

But before you do, did you know that you can receive fewer emails from One Kings Lane?

- Weekends only *(Recommended)*  
2 emails per week
- Sunday preview of the week’s upcoming sales  
1 email per week
- Unsubscribe me  
Please remove me from all email sale notifications.  
You will still receive order related emails.

**SAVE CHANGES**



An opt-down option has become a common sight after clicking an unsubscribe link. While most offer monthly, weekly, or daily options, I liked the weekend and Sunday preview options presented by One Kings Lane. I don’t, however, understand why the sad puppy shows up. Perhaps testing showed that the emotional pull of the image helped decrease unsubscribing. Learn a few more tactics for optimizing the unsubscribe process in this [Bronto Blog post](#).



LAST DAY Insider Sale [View on a mobile device or web browser](#) Like us on Facebook

# HORCHOW

ROOMS & IDEAS FURNITURE BED & BATH DÉCOR LIGHTING TABLETOP RUGS & CURTAINS OUTDOOR DESK & TRAVEL **SALE**

24 HOURS LEFT

**INSIDER SALE**

HOURS: 23 MINUTES: 57 SECONDS: 57

SAVE 40% OR MORE\* ON SPECIAL FINDS BROUGHT IN ONLY FOR THIS EVENT

SAVE 40% OR MORE ON TABLETOP BASICS

SAVE 40% OR MORE ON GLOBAL ACCENTS

SAVE 40% OR MORE ON PARIS METRO STYLE

INSIDER SALE

SAVE 40% OR MORE ON URBAN CHIC

SAVE UP TO 50% ON DESIGNER LUGGAGE

SAVE 50% OR MORE ON ARTERIORS

EXCLUSIVELY FOR EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS! [SHOP NOW](#)

SHOP OUR ROOMS SEARCH OUR SITE DESIGNERS

Many brands are including some form of an animated countdown image within an email. I'm categorizing this more as a promotional element rather than an animation tactic because the countdown works to drive urgency for the limited time offer in more than a visual way. Although these two countdowns look similar, there are notable differences. The Bath & Body Works countdown is dynamically updated to reflect the amount of time left to take advantage of the offer each time the email is opened. The Horchow email, however, uses a static image that counts down a specific amount of time before looping back to the beginning. The second approach could be a good way to test how your subscribers will react to the countdown element.

Signature Collection Body Care [View on Mobile Device | Web Browser](#)  
BUY 3, GET 3 FREE! [Don't miss out! Add Bath & Body Works to your address book to receive our emails.](#)

Bath & Body Works [FIND A STORE](#) [LIKE US ON FACEBOOK](#)

Body & Bath Home & Candles Anti-Bacterial Spa & Skin Gifts Online Exclusives Fragrances New Sale

THE BIG SEMI-ANNUAL SALE ENDS SOON! UP TO **75% OFF** IN STORES & ONLINE NOW [Shop](#)

03 DAY 14 HR 03 MIN 25 SEC **White Supplies Last.**

## FINAL DAYS!

THEY'RE BACK! YOUR MOST REQUESTED FRAGRANCES

**\$3** Select Body Care [SHOP](#)

Save up to **\$8**

2-Pick Raffia Wallflowers **\$5** [SHOP](#) Save up to **\$7.50**

All Anti-Bac Hand Soap **\$3** [SHOP](#) Save up to **\$2.50**

Signature Collection Body Care **BUY 3, GET 3 FREE** [SHOP](#) Save up to **\$103.50**

**While Supplies Last!** **\$8** Select 3-Wick Candles [SHOP](#) Save up to **\$11.50**

THEY'RE BACK! YOUR MOST REQUESTED FRAGRANCES [UP TO 60% OFF](#) [SHOP](#)

[Find a Store](#) [Gift Cards](#) [We Ship to Canada](#) [Join Us on Facebook](#) [Get Mobile Alerts](#)



Connect with Us Today! View this email on: [Mobile Device](#) | [Web Browser](#)  
 All [thingsremembered@thingsremembered.com](mailto:thingsremembered@thingsremembered.com) to your address book.

THINGS REMEMBERED  
*Delight Your Present*

Home | Her | Wedding | Business | Sale

## Join The Conversation: Today Is Social Media Day

Every day, we hear amazing stories in each of our stores. Creative customers find ways to personalize a gift that not even we have thought of. Or we help someone find the words for a heartwarming gift. Hear and share your story through our social media homes. Become part of our community!

### WHY LIKE US ON FACEBOOK?

You'll be the first to talk about new gifts, unique ways to use personalization and see fun engravings!

[Like](#)

### WHY FOLLOW US ON PINTEREST?

Get inspired with great gifts, cool ideas and ways to personalize gifts in creative ways! Pin our photos to your boards & share with friends!

[Pin it](#)

### WHY FOLLOW US ON TWITTER?

Joy, our personalization expert, will give you one-on-one gift recommendations and engraving ideas!

[Follow us on Twitter](#)

**IN-STORE EXCLUSIVE OFFER:**

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK, and earn double rewards today.**  
 get a \$10 reward check for every \$100 you spend.  
**\$50**

**TO FBOOK (32665) NOW!** Visit [facebook.com/thingsremembered](http://facebook.com/thingsremembered)  
**OR TEXT like thingsremembered**

Not a Rewards Club member? Enroll today.

VISIT YOUR NEAREST THINGS REMEMBERED:  
[Find Your Nearest Store](#)

SHOP: 800.600.4968 | CLICK: [THINGSREMEMBERED.COM](http://THINGSREMEMBERED.COM) | CALL: 800.274.2367 | TEXT: 300N TO THING | FOLLOW US: @THINGSREMEMBERED | STAY CONNECTED: [ON.FACEBOOK.COM](http://ON.FACEBOOK.COM)

Most emails contain some form of social CTA. It could be liking a product, the email, or the brand. Perhaps it's sharing the content or becoming a fan or follower. A pet peeve of mine is how many of these calls-to-action are bland logos that set no expectation of what will happen after the link is clicked. Needless to say, when a brand sets those expectations or takes it up a notch and dedicates an entire email to social networks, it really catches my attention. On "Social Media Day," Things Remembered communicated the value of joining their Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter communities. An email dedicated to joining social networks can also be effective as part of a welcome series for new subscribers. Check out a few "[Top Tips for an Email Welcome Series.](#)"

New York & Company made their Facebook like button unavoidable in this email. While this definitely draws attention it also clarifies whether clicking on like results in liking the brand or liking the email content. Try this approach if you need to grow your Facebook audience.

ONLINE: 2 days only enjoy 30% off your entire purchase [Promo 2835]. And if that wasn't enough, you can combine this sale with our Buy One Get One 50% off sales going on now. Want more? Enjoy FREE SHIPPING on orders of \$100 or more! [Go now](#)

If you are unable to see the images in this email, [click here](#)

**NEW YORK & COMPANY**

LATEST TRENDS | NEW ARRIVALS | APPAREL | TOPS | PANTS | PETITE | [LIKE US](#) [Like](#) | ACCESSORIES | SALE

**TODAY & TOMORROW ONLY  
 EXCLUSIVE  
 ONLINE SALE**

**30% OFF\***  
 Your entire purchase.

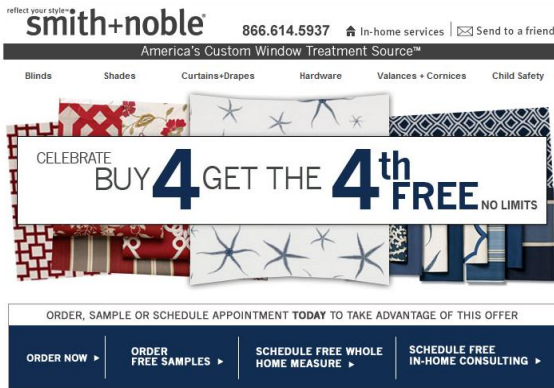
**CAN BE COMBINED WITH OUR  
 BUY ONE GET ONE 50% OFF SALES!**

\*Excludes Sale, NYC Great Finds, Clearance and Gift Cards.  
**PROMO 2835**

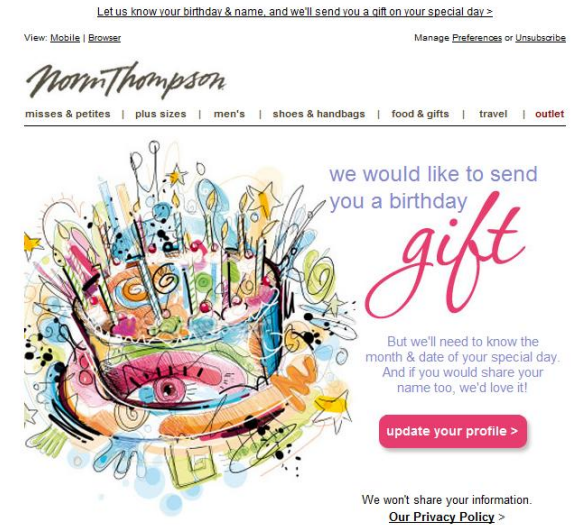
**SHOP 30**

SHOWN  
 Our NEW Crosby Street Suit  
 Slim, sophisticated design  
 and a modern, tailored fit.

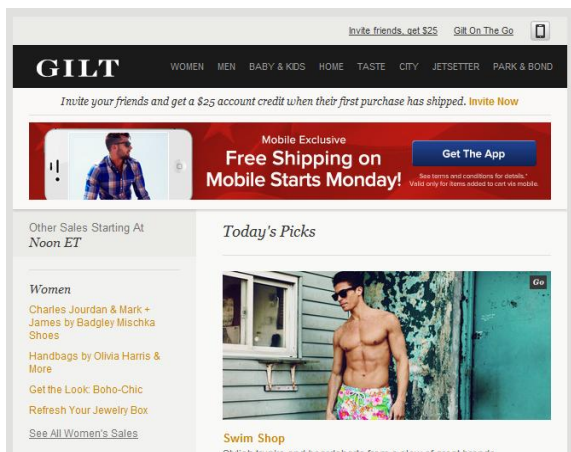
Plus, enjoy **FREE SHIPPING** on orders of \$100 or more!



A confusing promotion can result in low sales and frustrated customers. This email from smith+noble gave subscribers the opportunity to “buy 4” and then “get the 4<sup>th</sup> free.” But if I buy 4, then haven’t I paid for 4? While this may be an attempt to cleverly make a “buy 3 get 1 free” offer relate to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, it’s important to make sure promotions can be easily comprehended in a short amount of time.



Norm Thompson sent a dedicated email to subscribers asking for one of the most powerful data points: Birthday! If don’t have an email wishing your subscribers a happy birthday, then you are leaving money on the table. While I love the intent and design of this email, it’s worth noting that I had already provided my birthday to Norm Thompson. Considering this data value will never change, segment your list so that only those subscribers with no birthday value in your database are mailed.



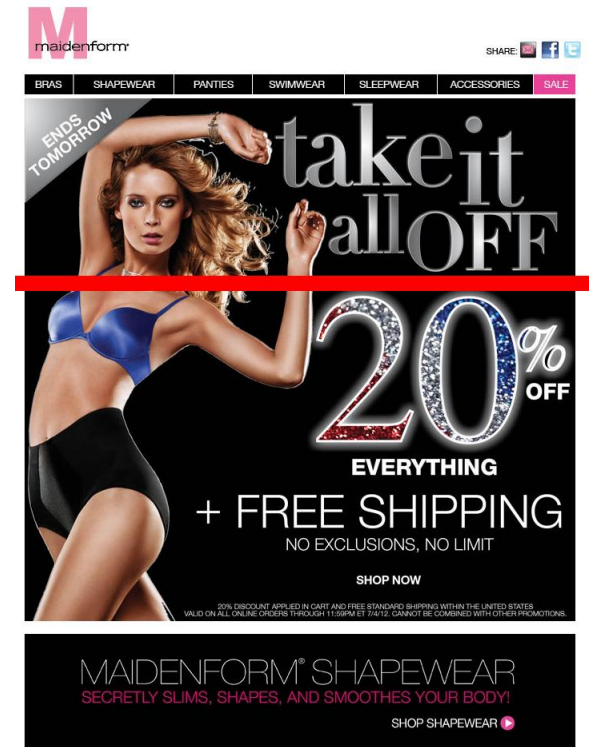
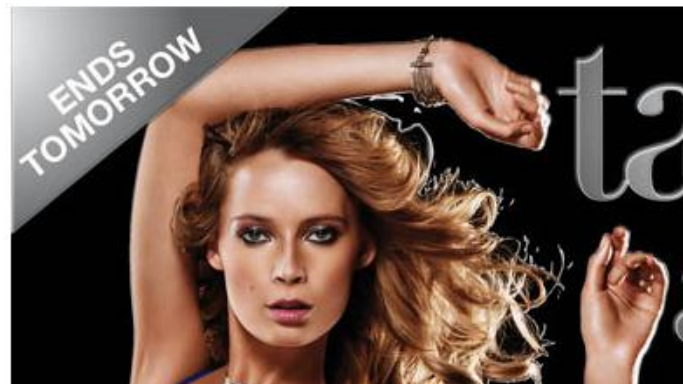
Another standout this month was Gilt’s “Free Shipping on Mobile” offer. According to Adobe System’s Digital Marketing Insights report, tablet customers spend 50% more than smartphone users and 20% more than customers on a traditional computer. If you have an app that optimizes the shopping experience for these customers, then offering exclusive promotions like this could help encourage greater app usage and sales. That being said, I do like the approach of “if you can do it on the web, then you don’t need to do it in an app.”

## Composition Exhibition



This email from... well, you can't really tell who sent this one, can you? I will say that this brand usually does include clear branding in their emails but for some reason this email lacked any branding reference. While a mega-clearance event and limited quantities may entice subscribers to click, make sure you provide a consistent customer experience in your communications. This doesn't mean elements can't vary but extreme shifts could lead to subscriber confusion and unsubscriptions and potentially spam complaints.

This Maidenform email almost made it into the Behold the Fold section of this report but upon closer investigation a design quirk landed it in the Composition Exhibition. I highlighted the fold to emphasize the dramatic content featured when opened. The positioning of the model's arms framing the proactive tag line "Take it all OFF" really directs the eye. It also directed my attention to some kind of oddly lit fly away hair or photoshop relic that gives the model an outlined pompadour hair style.





When I received the email on the left, I thought I had a fantastic example of horrible photoshopping. The arm from one photo aligned to the shoulder of another. Then I scrolled... The arm on the bottom-left pops out of the pant leg above. This had to be intentional. At least that was the consensus after showing the email to a few folks. Then I received another email with the same concept. The design stood out for what could have been seen as a mistake and some recipients may have been turned off by the odd cropping. Coordinating the name of a promotion to a visual concept could make the email easier to comprehend... though I probably would not have sent the email around asking for opinions.



Please [click here](#) if you are unable to view the images.

# The Mini-V!

Introducing our new V-necks for Kids and Youth! Available in a variety of colors in our super soft Fine Jersey and our popular Tri-Blend.



Like  
Like this style? Let us know on the American Apparel Kids Facebook page!

Shop these styles and all T-Shirts for Kids & Youth here→

<p><b>FREE BUDGET SHIPPING ON ALL ORDERS OVER \$50</b></p>	<p><b>ACCOUNT</b> Create an account Sign In Track your order Wishlist</p>	<p><b>ABOUT US</b> Company Profile What We Do Careers Investor Relations Wholesale</p>	<p><b>SHOP</b> Women Men Kids and Babies Accessories Vintage Multibrand Sale Gift Certificates</p>	<p><b>FOLLOW US</b>  If you received this from a friend, <a href="#">subscribe</a> to our e-mail list for future updates. Please add <a href="mailto:updates@americanapparel.net">updates@americanapparel.net</a> to your address book to ensure our e-mails reach your inbox.</p>
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American Apparel, Inc.  
747 Warehouse St. Los Angeles, CA 90021

[Unsubscribe](#) from this e-mail list.

<p><b>FREE BUDGET SHIPPING ON ALL ORDERS OVER \$50</b></p>	<p><b>ACCOUNT</b> Create an account Sign In Track your order Wishlist</p>	<p><b>ABOUT US</b> Company Profile What We Do Careers Investor Relations Wholesale</p>	<p><b>SHOP</b> Women Men Kids and Babies Accessories Vintage Multibrand Sale Gift Certificates</p>	<p><b>FOLLOW US</b>  If you received this from a friend, <a href="#">subscribe</a> to our e-mail list for future updates. Please add <a href="mailto:updates@americanapparel.net">updates@americanapparel.net</a> to your address book to ensure our e-mails reach your inbox.</p>
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Mistakes happen. “Oops” email are sent. There’s a list of the usual suspects: a typo, a slow site, a promo code doesn’t work, a product sells out, etc... Then there are the mistakes that should easily be caught during testing. American Apparel fell victim to one of those mistakes when an American Apparel Kids email went out with double headers and footers. So, as a friendly reminder, always test before sending!

# Animation Station

I'm a fan of animated images in an email if they are visually compelling and enhance the experience of interacting with an email. They can be overused, misused, and abused. Occasionally the novelty of the animation alone can be compelling enough to have the opener take pause and engage with the email.

*Tip: Click any screenshot to view the animation.*



Let's start with a doozy. UncommonGoods lets the confetti shake (at a very rapid speed) to create a party environment for a 30-70% off sale. The overall size of the animation is enough to cause someone to take notice but the speed and repetition of the animation made it difficult for me to really understand the offer. If you watch the animation long enough, I swear the confetti starts to swirl in a circular motion.

Considering the heat wave that many sweated through this summer, Barnes&Noble's sweet treat of animation was, well, cool! As the animation progressed, the mystery percent off promotion was revealed. The effective use of seasonality and fun definitely had me watching to the end.





ALLOY

Like LIKE US ON FACEBOOK FORWARD TO A FRIEND

Clothing Jeans Tops Dresses Swim Shoes Clearance

4 days only!

**FREE SHIPPING**  
NO MINIMUM PURCHASE

Ends Thursday, 7/5/12 Use code **FLAG**

[▶ SHOP NOW](#)

July 4th brought out the animated fireworks and stars... lots of stars... dizzying dancing stars that, in many cases, did little to enhance the overall email design. These examples from Alloy and Sally Beauty are definitely patriotic but also a bit frantic. Always be careful to not allow the animation to overpower the rest of the email design.

SALLY BEAUTY EVERY DAY **FREE SHIPPING** NO CODES. NO HASSLE. \*On all orders \$50 or more! Excludes equipment. Details >

Starz:

Hair | Make-up | Spa & Body | Skin Care | Manicure & Pedicure | Gifts | Accessories

offer extended! >

liberty & beauty for all!

**save 20%\***  
on ANY online purchase \$50 or more  
use promo code 555140

Hurry, offer expires Thursday,  
7/5/12 at 11:59 p.m. EST

[shop now >](#)

**every day free shipping** + **easy returns!**  
on ANY purchase \$50 or more! return in stores or by mail  
learn more >

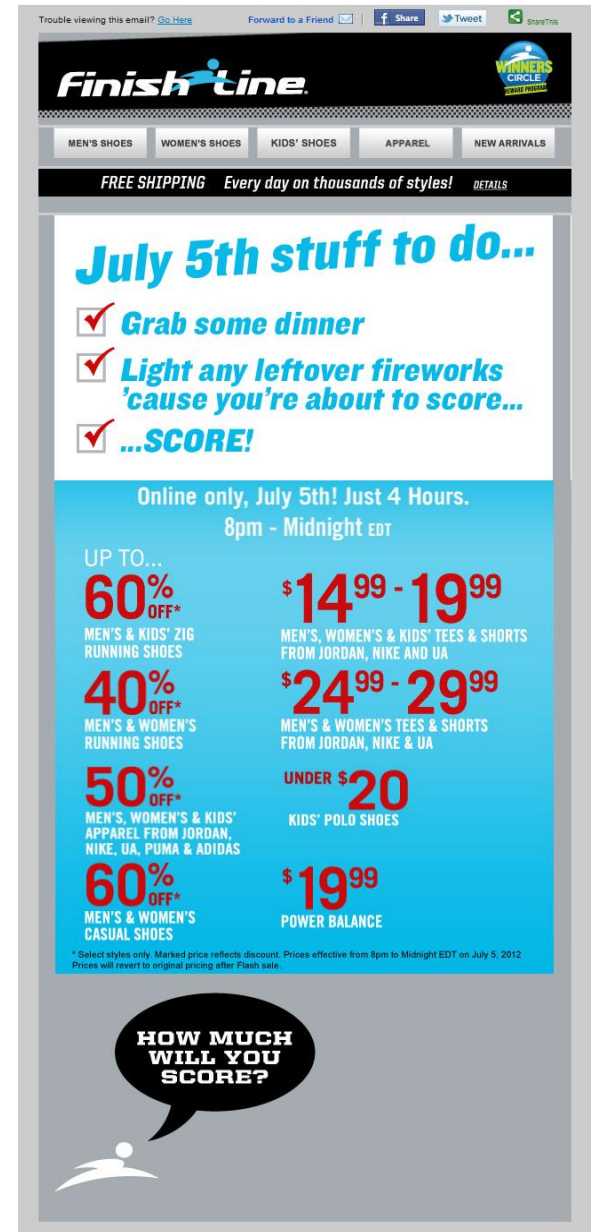
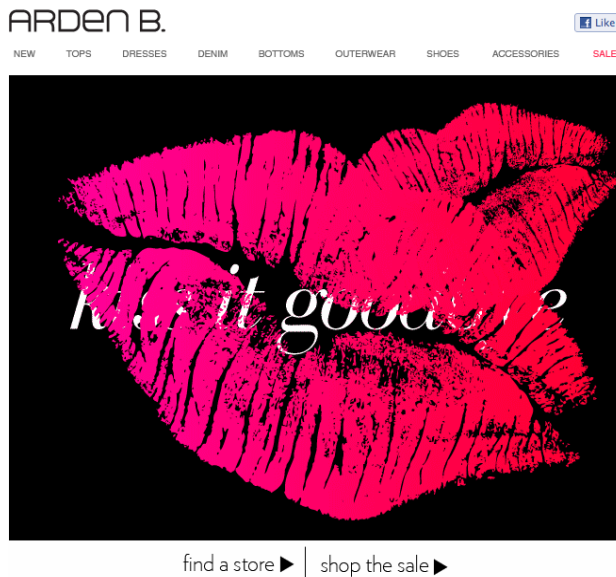
pedicure > hair care > hair color > makeup >

Update your Email Preferences | Contact Us | View Monthly Specials | Find a Store

Like us > Follow us > Read our blog > Go mobile >

Finish Line and Arden B. both cleverly animated the primary above the fold section of these emails. Finish Line broke the “4th of July Sale – Extended” theme seen in abundance after the holiday passed by providing a July 5th check list that, after checking off the tasks, reveals a flash sale. This engaging animation tells a fun story and then provides value by revealing the promotion.

Arden B.’s “Kiss it goodbye” animation covers the entire screen with kissing lips and then reveals the 75% off promotion. Coordinating the theme of the promotion and the animation helps an opener better understand the animation and the offer.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK **DELIA'S** Forward to a Friend

JUST IN SWIM SHORTS TOPS DRESSES JEANS BOTTOMS SHOES ACCESSORIES CLEARANCE

**FREE SHIPPING on orders over \$25! Use code: DDGW25**

**BACK IN STOCK!**

**THE OFFICIAL 1D TEES!**

SHOP NOW ▶

**ALL GRAPHIC TEES BUY 1, GET 1 50% OFF**

REQUEST A CATALOG | SHOP THE ONLINE CATALOG | STORE LOCATOR | SHOP NOW | FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

Including every member of the boy band One Direction in the product animation probably thwarted what could have been an onslaught of a fans angered by not seeing their personal favorite featured in the email. They do, however, start the animation with the member most sites rank as the most popular. (thanks google!) If you use multiple animated images, synch the timing so that they are coordinated after looping. OMG! You, like, so *totally* don't want the front of a Zayn shirt and the back of a Liam version showing at the same time!

Want to learn how to spell "Sale" using flag semaphore? Lands' End is here to help! The sailor atop the "A" in sale spells out the entire word over the course of four animated frames. This is a great example of how animation can be used as a secondary piece of content that is novel and enhances the primary message.

Plus, free shipping with orders of \$50 or more. [SHOP NOW](#) Can't view this e-mail? [Click here](#).  
View this e-mail on a mobile device. Please add [landsend@email.landsend.com](mailto:landsend@email.landsend.com) to your address book.

**LANDS' END**

Women Men Girls Boys Swim Outerwear Shoes School For The Home Sale **LANDS' END CANVAS**

**FREE SHIPPING on \$50 orders.** DETAILS BELOW.

**YOU HAVE A 3-DAY HEAD START ON CATALOG SHOPPERS!**

**SALE**  
**UP TO 65% OFF**  
**BIG SAVINGS. LIMITED QUANTITIES.**

[SHOP ALL SALE](#)

<b>women</b>	<b>men</b>	<b>girls</b>	<b>boys</b>	<b>for the home</b>
<a href="#">Swim</a>	<a href="#">Shorts &amp; Swim</a>	<a href="#">Swim</a>	<a href="#">Swim</a>	<a href="#">Bedding</a>
<a href="#">Knit Tops &amp; Polos</a>	<a href="#">Polo &amp; Tees</a>	<a href="#">Dresses &amp; Skirts</a>	<a href="#">Tops</a>	<a href="#">Bath</a>
<a href="#">Shirts &amp; Blouses</a>	<a href="#">Dress Shirts &amp; Ties</a>	<a href="#">Tops</a>	<a href="#">Pants &amp; Shorts</a>	<a href="#">Beach Towels</a>
<a href="#">Sweaters</a>	<a href="#">Sport Shirts</a>	<a href="#">Pants &amp; Shorts</a>	<a href="#">Activewear</a>	<a href="#">Outdoor Living</a>
<a href="#">Pants &amp; Shorts</a>	<a href="#">Pants</a>	<a href="#">Shoes</a>	<a href="#">Shoes</a>	<a href="#">Decorative Pillows</a>
<a href="#">Dresses &amp; Skirts</a>	<a href="#">Sweaters</a>	<a href="#">Outerwear</a>	<a href="#">Outerwear</a>	<a href="#">Kids' Home</a>
<a href="#">Shoes</a>	<a href="#">Shoes</a>	<a href="#">Luggage</a>	<a href="#">Luggage</a>	<a href="#">Totes &amp; Bags</a>

GUARANTEED PERIOD 6 | CUSTOMER SERVICE | STORE LOCATOR | GIFT CARDS | SHOP YOUR WAY REWARDS™ | FAN US