

knak.

GURU 2025





Brendan
Farnand

Co-founder &
Chief Evangelist,
Knak





Agenda

Part 1

The New Rules of the Game

Part 2

Strategy #1 – Shooting Some B-Ball Outside of the School

**Strategy #2 – My Mom Got Scared and Said,
‘You’re Moving with Your Auntie and Uncle in Bel-Air’**

Strategy #3 – The Prince of Bel-Air

Part 3

Your Actionable Playbook



Certified Carleton
Moment

PART ONE

West Philadelphia Born and Raised

The rules of email
have changed



The New High-Stakes Reality of Email Marketing

The Inbox has never been a tougher place

- Inbox providers are enforcing engagement standards
- AI is now gatekeeping what lands where
- Every send counts

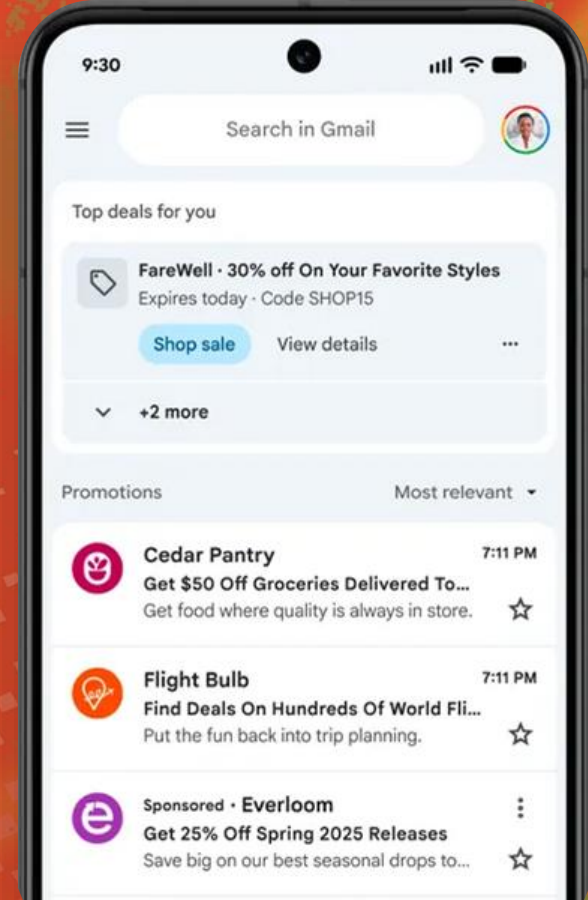


The new Inbox Reality

- Engagement Just Became Non-Negotiable
- Gmail, Yahoo, Microsoft, Apple now score senders based on engagement
- AI models prioritize "most relevant" and "most wanted" emails



Deliverability =
Engagement+Reputation



PART TWO

Strategy #1

Playing some B-Ball outside of the school



How Emails Get Flipped-Turned Upside Down

- No-no's
 - a. Mixing promotional / transactional
 - b. Hacking the tab system
 - c. Sending too often
 - d. Difficult unsubscribes



These tricks no longer work!
Will *lower* your chances of being
seen in the inbox



Strategy #2

My Mom Got Scared and Said, You're Moving with Your Auntie and Uncle in Bel-Air



Play by the Rules, Stay Prince of the Inbox

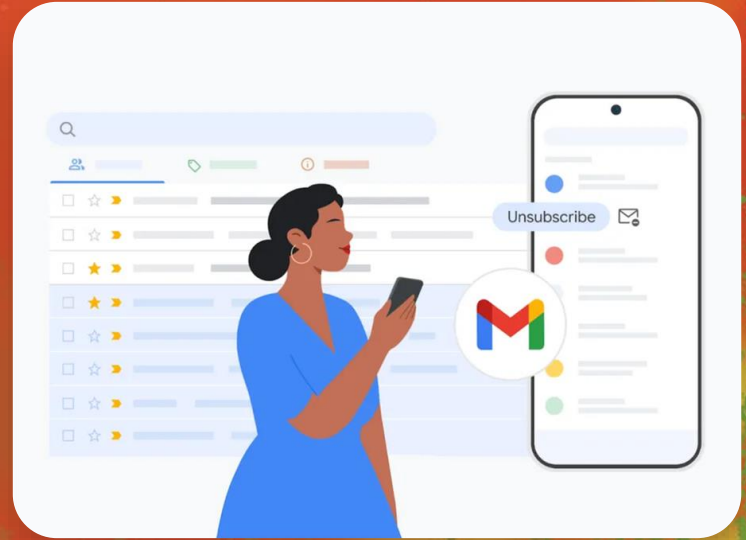
Mom introduced a bunch of new rules/mechanisms:

- Making it easy for people to manage subscriptions/unsubscribe
- Categorising mail into tabs
- Rewarding transactional and update content by utility
- Displaying promotional content by relevance instead of chronological order

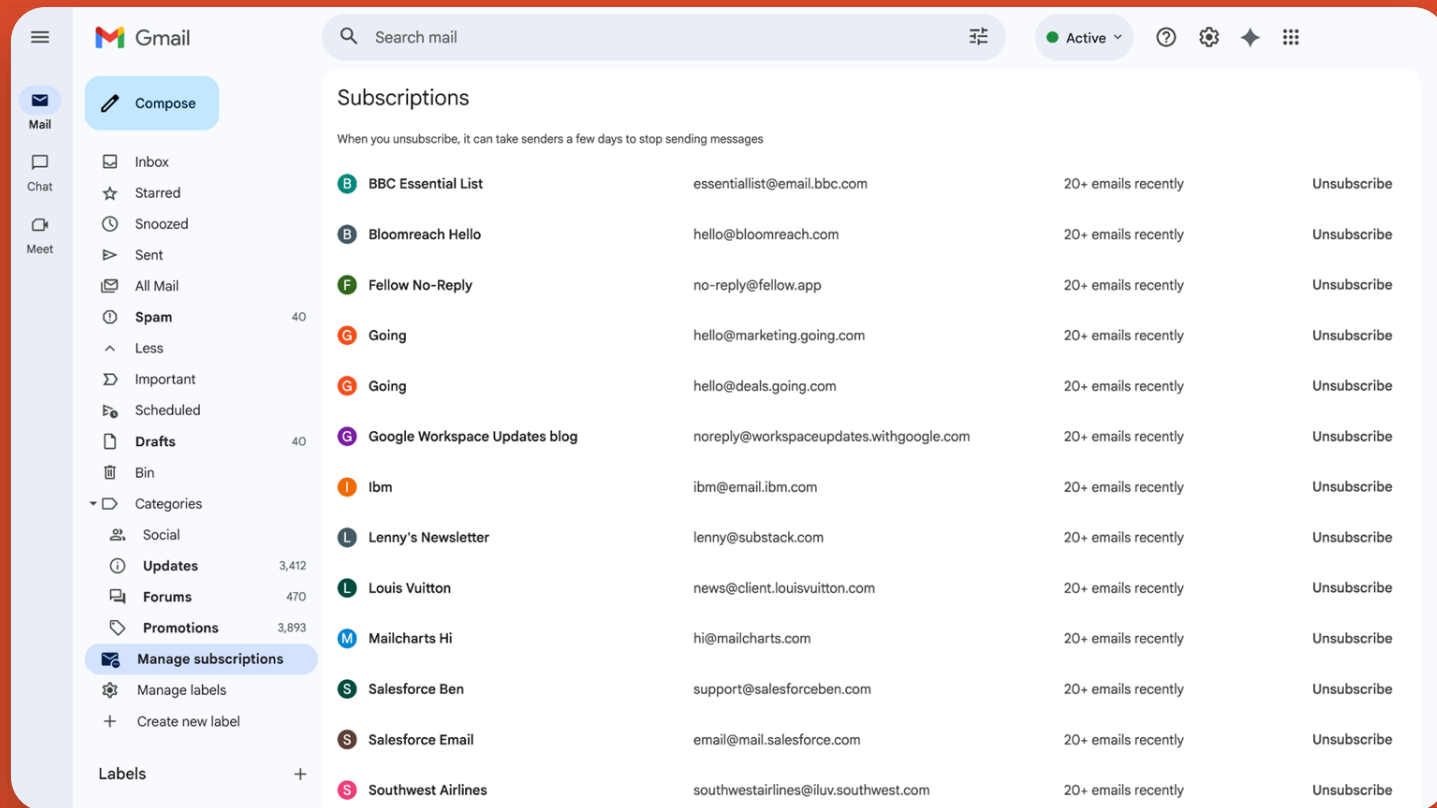


Managing Subscriptions

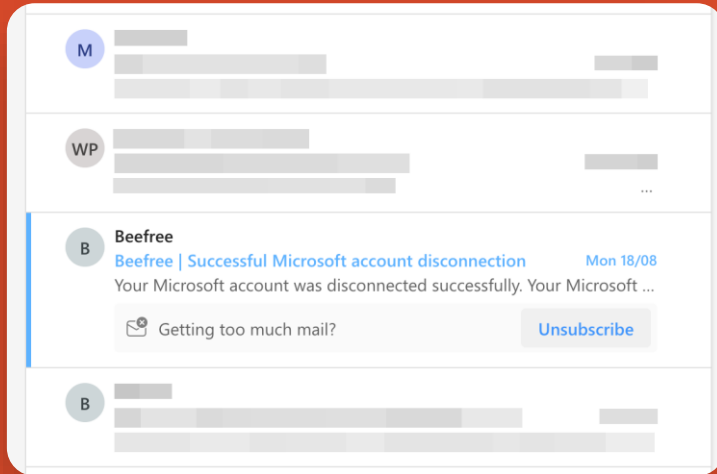
- Subscription management centers
- Easy unsubscribe = engagement hygiene, not risk
- Proactive subscription controls and OPTIONS reduce spam complaints



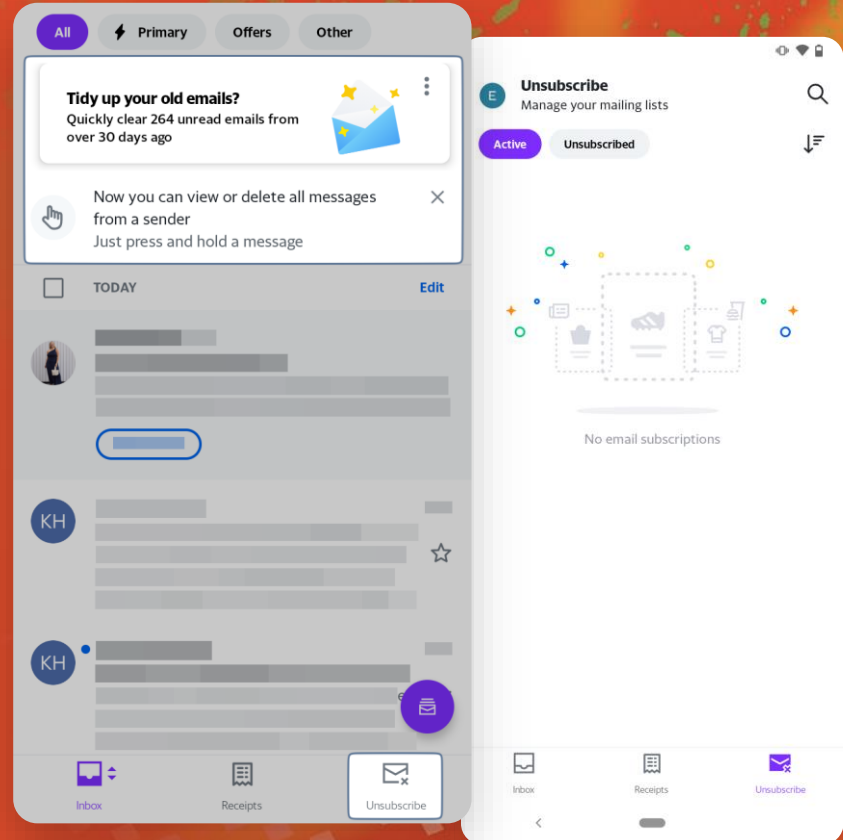
Part 2 – Strategy #2: My Mom Got Scared and Said, You're Moving with Your Auntie and Uncle in Bel-Air



Part 2 – Strategy #2: My Mom Got Scared and Said, You're Moving with Your Auntie and Uncle in Bel-Air



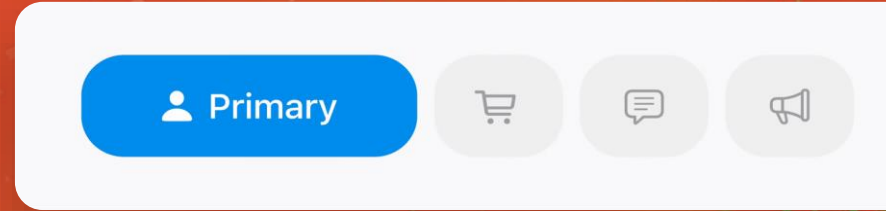
Outlook



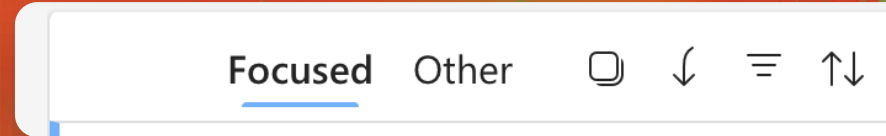
Yahoo

Categorising mail: Everyone has tabs now

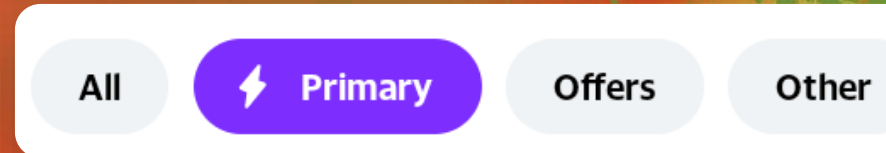
- Your emails should have a clear purpose so they go to the right tab
- Don't try to game the tabs system



Apple (from [here](#))



Outlook



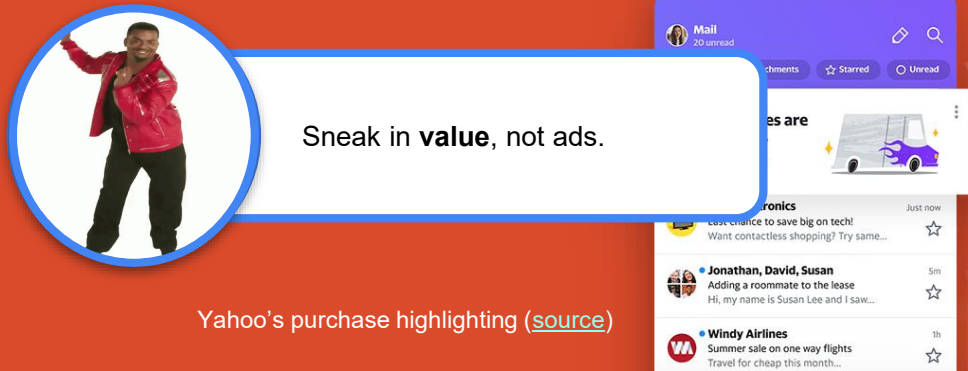
Yahoo



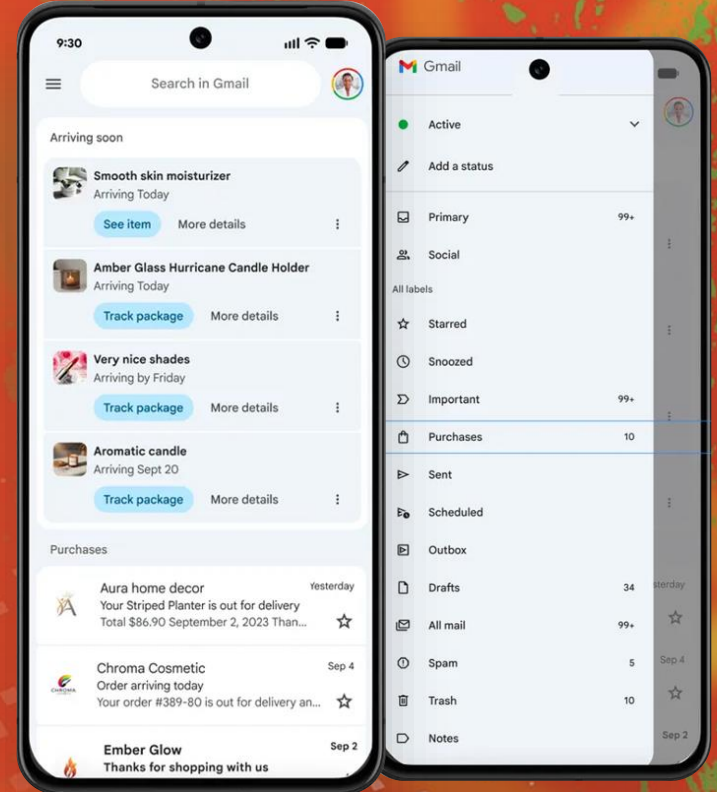
Gmail

Promoting useful transactional emails

- Emails that are recognisable as transaction will be highlighted and their details extracted and displayed
- Clarity of brand, content + purpose is king



Yahoo's purchase highlighting ([source](#))

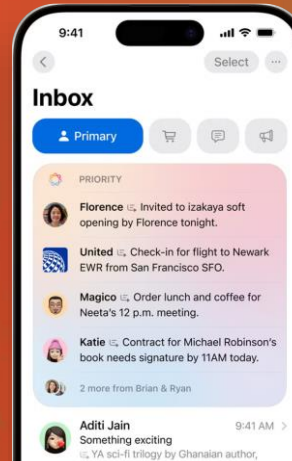


Gmail's new Purchase Tracking ([source](#))

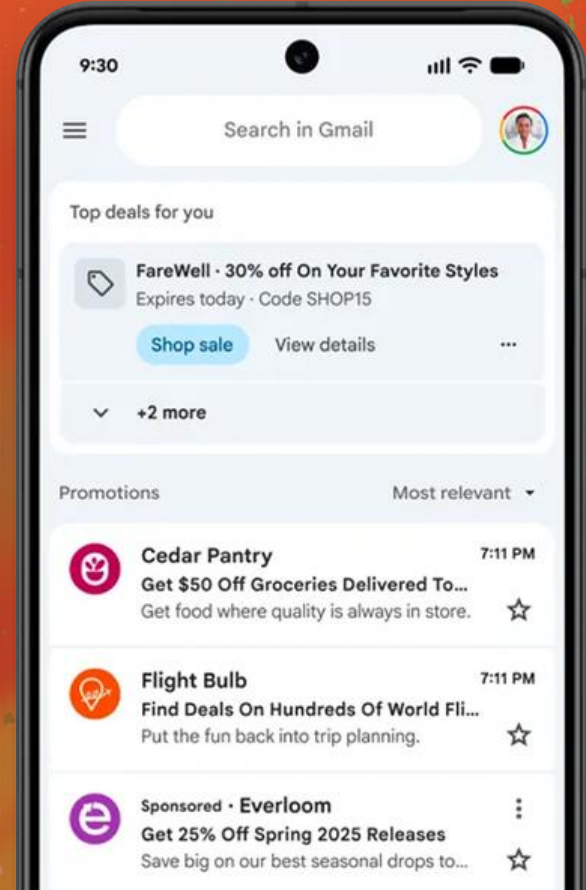
Promoting engaging promotional emails

- Engagement is king
- Your engagement across your entire list is under the spotlight, on every send

Apple's Priority Inbox



Gmail promotions tab by relevance ([source](#))



Strategy #3 Prince of Bel-Air



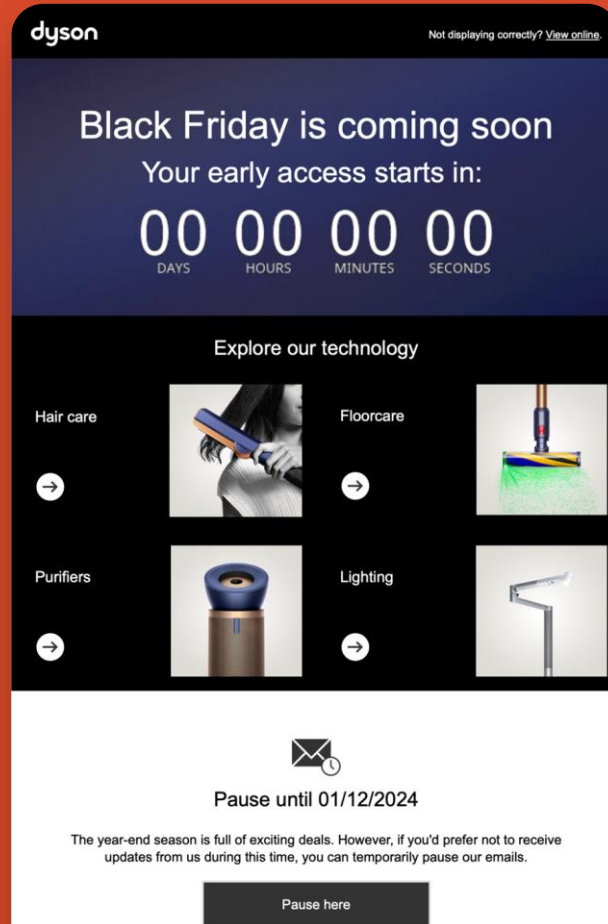
Visualizing Recipient Power

Put the Customer in the Driver's Seat

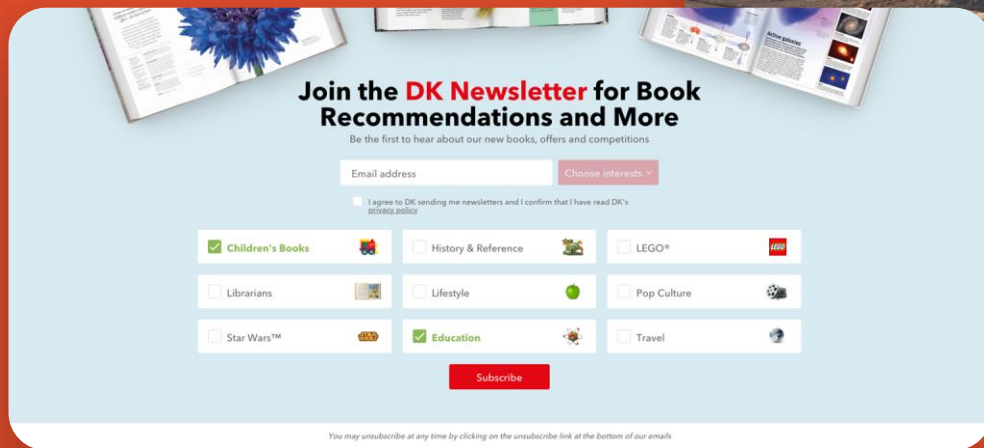
- Let recipients manage how they hear from you
- Every click, open, and preference signal is valuable data
- Use it to power personalization loops



Good examples: Preferences



Good examples: Visual preference centres



Join the **DK Newsletter** for Book Recommendations and More

Be the first to hear about our new books, offers and competitions

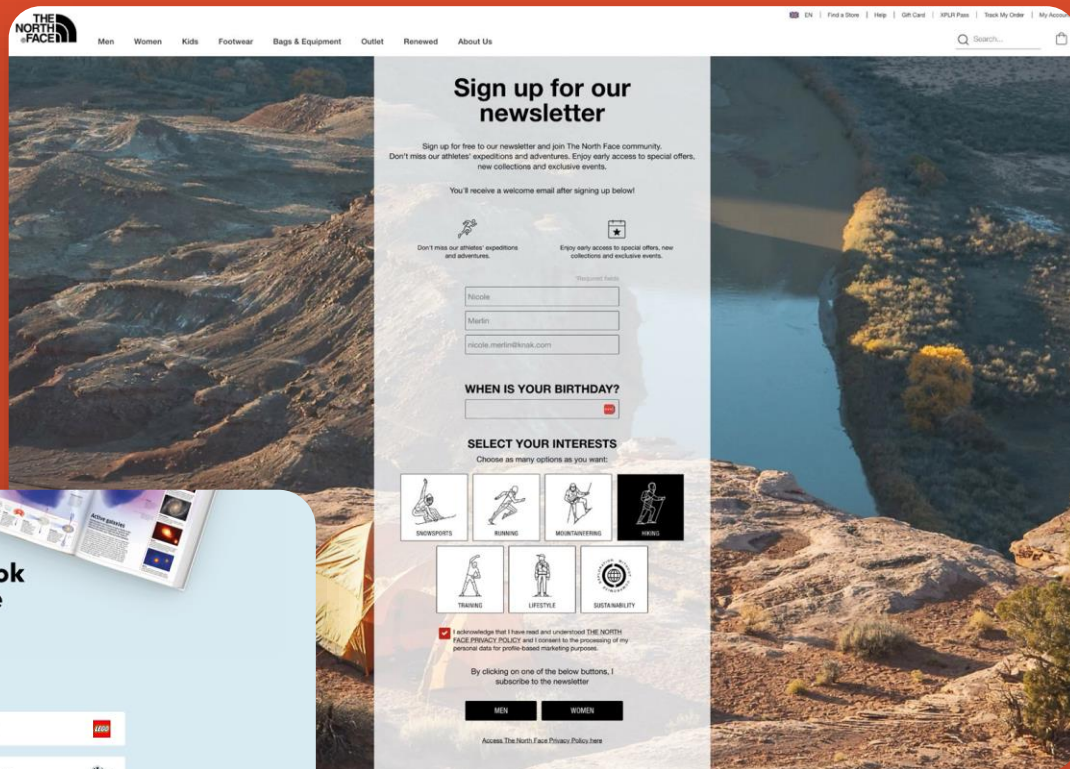
Email address [Choose interests](#)

☐ I agree to DK sending me newsletters and I confirm that I have read DK's [Privacy Policy](#)

☒ Children's Books		☐ History & Reference		☐ LEGO®	
☐ Librarians		☐ Lifestyle		☐ Pop Culture	
☐ Star Wars™		☒ Education		☐ Travel	

[Subscribe](#)

You may unsubscribe at any time by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of our emails



THE NORTH FACE

Men Women Kids Footwear Bags & Equipment Outlet Renewed About Us

Sign up for our newsletter

Sign up for free to our newsletter and join The North Face community. Don't miss our athletes' expeditions and adventures. Enjoy early access to special offers, new collections and exclusive events.

You'll receive a welcome email after signing up below!

☐ Don't miss our athletes' expeditions and adventures.

☐ Enjoy early access to special offers, new collections and exclusive events.

You will find:

Nicole
Martin
nicole.martin@nbfak.com

WHEN IS YOUR BIRTHDAY?

SELECT YOUR INTERESTS

Choose as many options as you want.

☒ SNOOWSPORTS ☐ RUNNING ☐ MOUNTAINCLIMBING ☒ HIKING

☐ TRAINING ☐ LIFESTYLE ☐ SUSTAINABILITY

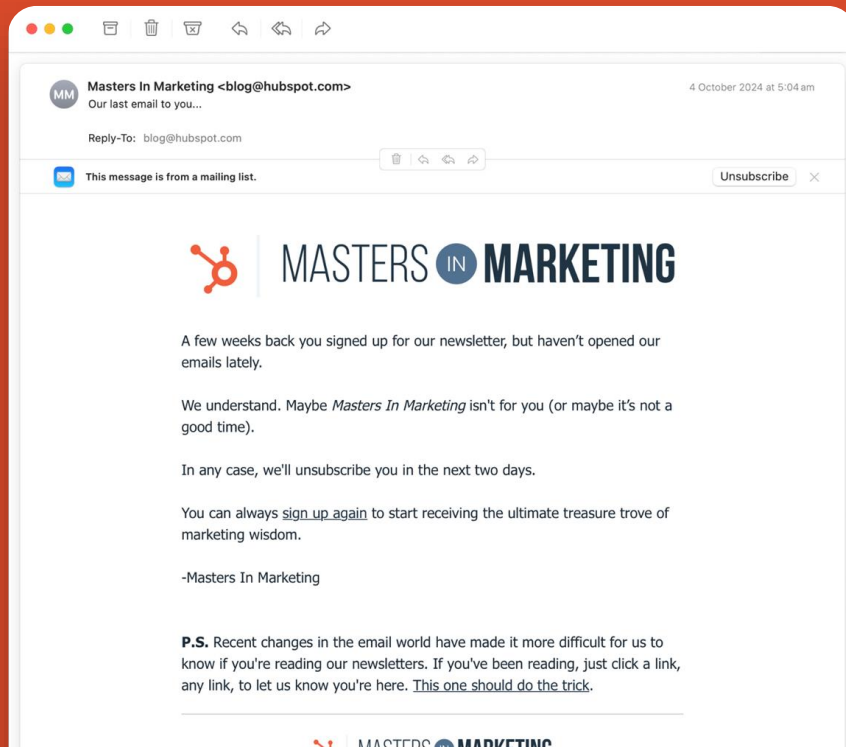
☒ I acknowledge that I have read and understood THE NORTH FACE PRIVACY POLICY and I consent to the processing of my personal data for profile-based marketing purposes.

By clicking on one of the below buttons, I subscribe to the newsletter

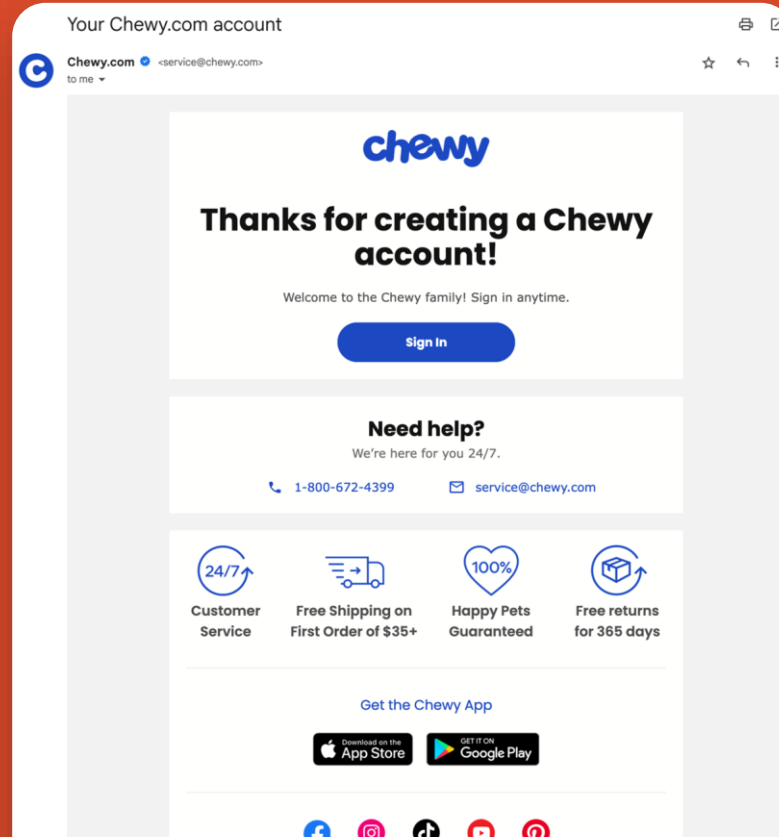
[MEN](#) [WOMEN](#)

[Access The North Face Privacy Policy here](#)

Good examples: Keep your list fresh



Good transactional example



Good transactional example



Elske

Reservation confirmed

A message from Elske

We are thrilled that you will be joining us. If you would like to make any special arrangements or have questions about your reservation, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Saturday, April 20, 2019, 6:00 PM

Party of 2 for Smiles Davis

Confirmation #: SMLSDVS650

Reservation x 2

[Manage your reservation](#)

Elske

1350 W Randolph

Chicago, IL 60607

+13127331314

[Get directions](#)



Reservation x 2 (Deposit)

\$50.00

Your deposit secures your booking and will be applied to your final bill.

Subtotal

\$50.00

Total

\$50.00

Paid with Visa **** 6555 (4/12/19)

On your statement, this charge will appear as "Tock at Elske"

Cancellation policy

Your reservation can be canceled for a full refund 24 hours prior to the reservation time. You can always transfer your

PART THREE

Your Actionable Playbook



Focus on Fundamentals...Not Hype



Do

- Inbox AI, predictive tools, and automation are great — but not magic.
- Hype doesn't replace consistency.
- "Cool" tech means nothing if your audience isn't engaged.



Don't

- Chase emerging tech unless your basics are strong
- Over-automation kills authenticity
- Sustainable engagement > fleeting trends

Actionable takeaways: Transactional Emails

- Send super-clear purchase, order & transactional emails
- Be precise, obvious, and clear
- Do NOT include other messages in the email
- Stay consistent



Actionable takeaways: Promotional Emails

- Focus less on send time than clarity, relevance and value
- Explain what's in it for the recipient if they open
- Be clear and direct: AI and machine learning filters reward clarity and consistency
- Play the long game: repeated engagement will pay off



The Fresh Prince of Email

Time to Rule Your Inbox Kingdom

- You know the rules. You've got the playbook
- Deliverability = trust, engagement, and respect
- "Now this is a story all about how... email got flipped, turned upside down."

knak.



GURU 2025

The
FRESH
PRINCE
of Email