



Email Solutions

ACS Technologies.

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Email Solutions

Emailing in a World Full of Spam

Emailing is a very convenient way of communicating with staff and parishioners. It's much faster and cheaper than regular mail and less time consuming than phone calls. For some, email is the single most important form of communication.

However, email does have some concerns. Some people are overwhelmed by the volume of email they receive. The majority of emails are unsolicited and unwelcome advertisements know as SPAM. As of April of 2010, an estimated 294 billion pieces of spam were emailed each day. This makes it harder to actually reach people who want the contact.

To counteract this, the government has enacted a law to fight Spam. The CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 addresses some of the main problem with this type of mail. This law, in summary, says that if the email's primary purpose is to advertise or promote a commercial product or service, it must:

- Contain an unsubscribe mechanism allowing the recipient to opt-out of receiving more emails
- That opt-out must be honored within 10 days
- Contain accurate FROM lines
- Contain relevant SUBJECT lines
- Contain a legitimate physical address of the publisher.

These restrictions do not apply to religious or political messages, neither do they apply to emails to anyone with a "prior relationship". Most emails you send are not legally bound by these requirements, but adhering to them is a very good idea. You would like your recipients to open the email and not doing some of these things may keep them from opening it.

Common Email Mistakes

Spam filters may reject an email for a number of reasons. If you don't include a valid return email address or a subject line, many spam filters will reject your email. If you use certain terms, some spam filters may reject the email. Some obvious words and phrases will also cause your email to be rejected. If you ever send an email with the word Viagra anywhere in the subject, don't expect anyone to receive it.

However, some less obvious terms are trapped, too. We tried to send an email that read: 'How to run the demo program by typing xxx\PDSChurch Sample'. The intended recipient never received this email, even though we sent it a couple of times. We found out that his spam filter classified it as 'Adult Content' because of the xxx and placed it in a special folder.

Email attachments are sometimes a problem. Because of much publicized viruses, many people do not open emails with attachments. If you include an attachment, identify the attachment in the subject line so the person knows what they are getting. If they know what it is, they are much more willing to open it. For example, if you email the July schedule for ministers, say that in the subject. You can avoid most of these problems by keeping in mind what the recipient is going to see when they get your email.

Another common mistake that keeps emails from being received is not understanding your IP (Internet Provider)'s email rules. Many IPs set limits on how many emails you can send at a time and over a given period.

Exceeding these limits is easier than you might imagine. For example, the very popular Gmail accounts only allow sending 100 emails a day, and if you exceed that limit, your account can be locked down for a day with a '550'-error message. Many providers have a limit with a delay, such as 50 emails at a time and time limits of 30 seconds between each set of 50. Sometimes these restrictions are to stop computers that have a virus from sending hundreds of emails. Sometimes the provider has different pricing levels. So, for example, if you purchase the basic package

you can send 50 emails at a time, but if you purchase the deluxe package you can send an unlimited number of emails. Know these limits before you start. You can usually find them on your provider's web site.

Emailing from PDS

We have built the ability to email letters and statements into the PDS programs. We have tried to make this work seamlessly within the generation of letters and statements. You can run a letter once and have the program automatically email those that prefer email and print it for those who do not. The family and member screens include a field for email address and checkbox to indicate if an email is preferred.

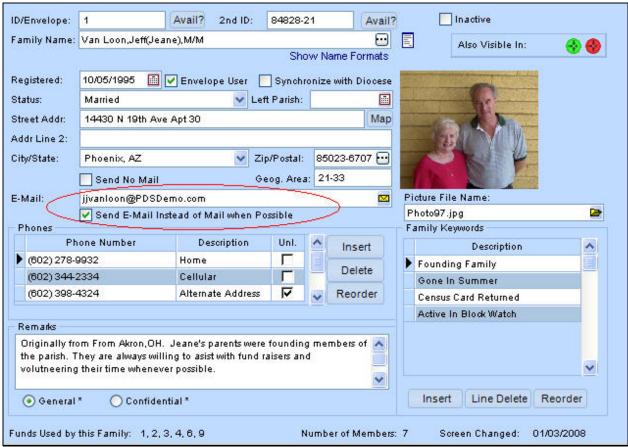


Fig. 1

You can click the small envelope next to the email address to have the program bring up your default email program with that email address in it. This lets you send this one family (or individual) an email.

The real power of the system comes in combination with reports. On the selection screen of letters and statements, there is a **Sortation** box. This lets you email the letter or statements.

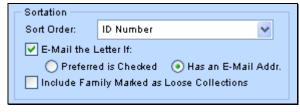


Fig. 2

If the **Email the Letter If** checkbox is NOT checked, nothing is emailed. Every letter is printed regardless of the setting.

If the checkbox is selected, then an email is sent instead of a printed letter if there is any email address at all or if there is an email address and the **Send Email Instead of Mail when Possible** checkbox is selected on the data screen.

These options are set for the entire report. You cannot have one family wanting it one way and another wanting it a different way (unless you use selections and run the letter more than once). When you run the report, the program first determines how many letters print and how many will be emailed. If you email the families that can be emailed, it is unusual for there to be no families set for email. So, if based on the current selection, no one will receive an email, the program displays a message to confirm that.



Fig.3

Likewise, it is unusual for everyone to have an email address, so, if no letters will print, the program displays a message to confirm that.



Fig. 4

These messages let you know about an unusual situation, but they do not stop you from continuing. The next step generates the printed letters (if any). The printed letters generate first so you can check them. We found that if we emailed first and then printed, end users found problems when looking at the printed ones after the emailed ones had already been sent.

After PDS prints the letters, the program displays the email dialog.

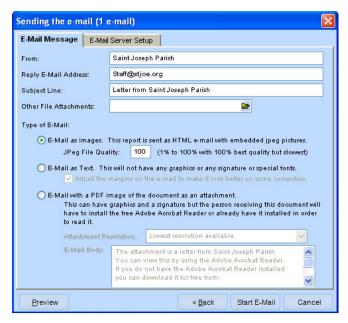


Fig. 5

This lets you set up the return address information and the subject line. It also lets you attach any external files (you can attach more than one file by using a commas (,) between filenames). Remember that when you attach files, those files attach to every email. So, if you email 150 families and you have a 2-megabyte attachment, then you send at least 300 megabytes of information up to the email server. This email may take a while to send.

This dialog also has a tab for the Email Server Setup. This is where you tell the program how to connect to your IP provider. First, enter the Name or IP Address of the SMTP server and what port to use (usually 25). The network administrator can usually provide that information. On some systems, we are able to look up this information in Windows. Clicking **Lookup the Default E-mail Server Information** tries to look it up.

Sending the e-mail (1 e-mail)		
E-Mail Message E-Ma	nil Server Setup	
E-Mail Server (SMTP):	smtp.myserver.com	
E-Mail Server Port:	25 Lookup the Default E-Mail Server Information	
✓ Server Requires Authentication.		
Account Name:	Account Name: myaccount	
Password:	****	
Use TLS (ĠMail) ☑ Server Limits E-Mails.		
Maximum E-Mails i	in a Batch: 50	
Time Delay Betwee	en Batches: 30 Seconds	
✓ If an Error Comes Up, Delay 30 Seconds and Retry Once. □ Disconnect and Reconnect After Every E-Mail.		
<u>P</u> review	< <u>B</u> ack Start E-Mail Cancel	

Fig. 6

Next, enter any login and password information that must be sent to the email server. Again, the network administrator usually has this information. With Gmail accounts, a special command must be included for proper authentication. So, if you use Gmail, select the **Use TLS** box.

Next, set any limitations the provider has. For example, you may need to send only 50 emails at a time and delay 30 seconds between each request. Then, set what to do if you receive an error from the server when sending an email. In some very rare cases, an email server may require that the system disconnect and reconnect after every email, so an option allows for that.

Choosing the Type of Emailing to Send

Finally, determine what type of email you want to send. An email can take many forms, and the type of email determines how the original letter displays in the email. You can select from three options: image, text, and PDF.

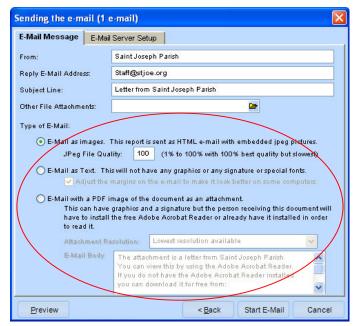


Fig. 7
Each type has good and bad points.

Let's take a simple letter and see how each performs. We'll start with the standard welcome letter, but we added a link to the www.parishdata.com web site to this letter. This is what the printed form of the letter looks like.

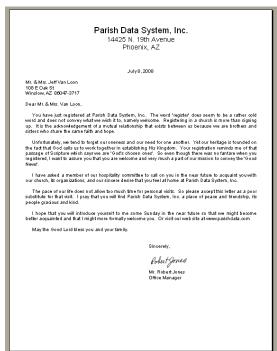


Fig. 8

Email as Images

The first type of email is an image. Sending the letter as an image creates a jpeg image of each page of the letter. Then, the program creates a very simple html document with these pictures embedded and sends that as an html email. Jpeg image clarify can vary. This is expressed as a percentage with 1% being bad and 100% being perfect-the higher the percentage, the larger the file's size. For this letter, we started with a jpeg quality of 100%, so each email was about 200k.

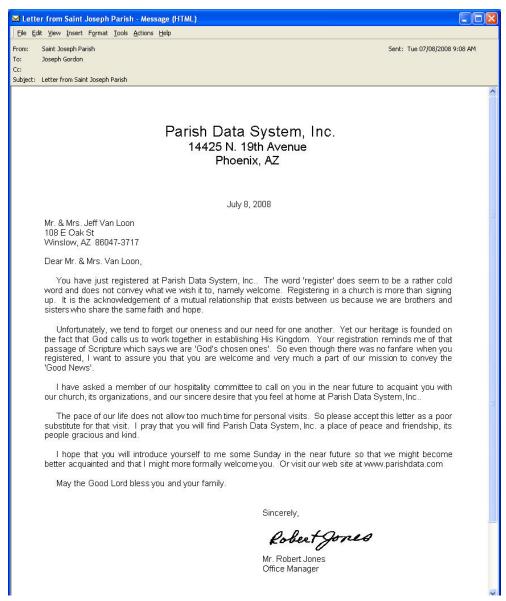


Fig. 9

If we used 80%, each email was about 112K (approximately half the original size) and still very legible. 50% was 81K was grainy. 25% was 59K and very grainy but readable. If you plan on using images, send yourself some sample emails to see which level you feel comfortable with.

On the bad side, sending an email as an image tends to create a larger email that takes longer to send. The email reader displays the email as having attachments (which are the embedded jpeg images). Also, you cannot click on any links in the image. On the good side, an image is a fairly accurate representation of the original letter and hard for the recipient to modify (they would have to use a paint program).

Email as Text

The second type of email is as text. Sending a letter as text requires converting the letter into simple text and sending that text. The email is as small as possible, but all images and fonts are lost. Sometimes the email may contain some positioning problems with text not lining up. Here is that same letter sent as text.

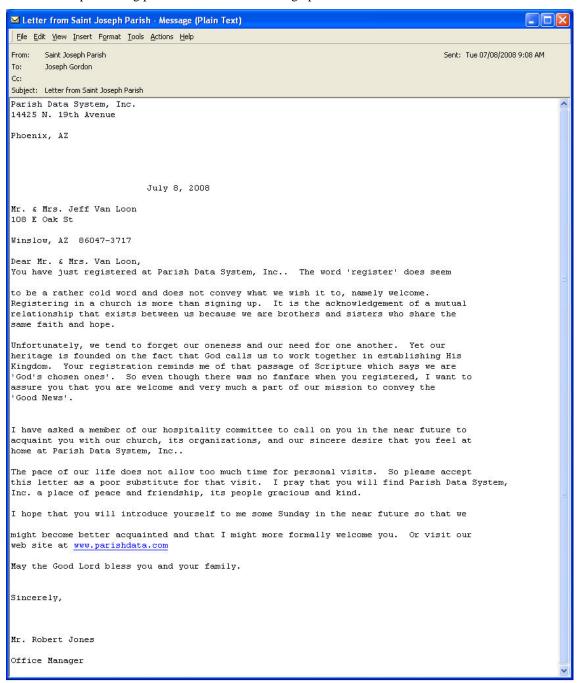


Fig. 10

Sending as text has some good points. The email is very small, about 8k in this case- which is about 1/6 the smallest image email. Text keeps links intact, so you can click www.parishdata.com to go to there. Text does not have an attachment, so people are not afraid to open it. However, text also has some bad points. You can see some small spacing differences (the blank line in the first paragraph). Bitmaps are not included (in this case, the signature is

missing), and fonts are ignored. The letter does not look as nice as the original one, and the recipient can easily change the text.

Email as PDF File

The third type of email is as a PDF File. This is also known as an Acrobat file. This format has become very popular on the web for a number of reasons. One reason is that the file is small. In the case of this email, it is 29k. The main problem with this format is that you need a special reader to view it, but this viewer is available from Adobe and is free. The program emails a plain text message to the recipient, giving them the path to the free reader and placing the letter in as an attachment. When the recipient opens the email, he sees:



Fig. 11

When the recipient opens the pdf file using the Acrobat reader, he sees:

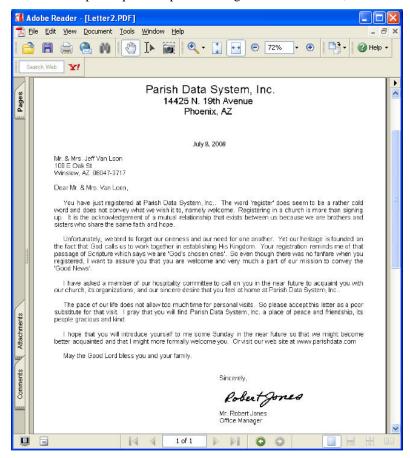


Fig. 12

Another problem with this type of email is that the image is grainy at the lowest resolution. You can choose higher resolutions, but this creates larger emails. If you choose 100dpi, the email is 30k, at 200dpi, the email is 77k, and at 300dpi, the email is 137k. Like an image email, you can't click links in the letter.

Processing the Email

Once you have selected your email's type, you can preview or send the email. When you send the email, PDS generates an email for each family (or member) and sends it to the mail server individually, which can take some time. If it takes 10 seconds to send an email, the program sends 6 a minute, or 360 in an hour. During this time, you must leave the computer on, and it may be slow. That is why an email's size matters. The program also logs what happened during the email process. If the program had to retry or got an error on anyone, this displays in this list.

Logging the Email

As with any letter or statement, when the letter finishes, you can log that it was sent to the families. This places a reference to this email on the family's Letter, Visits, Call's history screen. You can mark this with a different keyword if an email was sent rather than a letter.



Fig. 13

Not Printing Labels or Envelopes

Once the letters or statements print, you have to print labels for the printed letters. The labels and envelopes have an option like the letter and statements do, except, this option lets you skip printing labels if you sent an email.



Fig. 14

Setting up Emails in Version 6

In Version 6, we added Email Setup to the list of setup options. This means you can set emails up without having to send them. We also added a Quick Communications report. This report text messages those with cell phones, emails those with email address, and lists anyone else's phone number.

Emailing with Constant Contact

In addition to emailing inside the program, PDS has partnered with an online email service called Constant Contact. You can learn more about this at http://acstechnologies.constantcontact.com. Using Constant Contact, you upload a list of recipients with email addresses and custom information, create an email using their extensive templates and html editor, and then schedule the email for sending. Constant Contact generates the individual emails, the email server, and the bounced messages.

Constant Contact's prices depend on the number of contacts in your contact list: 0-500 contacts is \$15 per month, 501-2500 contacts is \$30 per month, and 2501-5000 contacts is \$50 per month. Non-profit organizations get a discount if they prepay (20% for 6 months prepaid, 30% for 12 months prepaid). Contact Contact also charges based on the number of unique email address in your lists. You can keep more than one list online at a time if you want, so you don't have to generate a new list every time you want to email.

If you would like to try it, Constant Contact offers a 60-day free trial (you must have fewer than 100 emails, or your free trial ends). They also offer a survey service that can send surveys to your email list and compile the answers.

Generating a List for Constant Contact

You can generate a list for Constant Contact under Information > Family > Processes > Create Constant Contact Email List. This process creates lists of email addresses from your PDS database and sends them to Constant Contact. Inside Constant Contact, you can compose and design your email, select the email list, and send the email to the selected email addresses. You can have more than one list of email addresses. You can also refresh the lists that you sent to Constant Contact.



In general, sending an email involves three steps. The first step is selecting a group of emails from the PDS data for transferring. Next, select which Constant Contact account to use (you can have more than one). Finally, name the list and upload it to Constant Contact.

The first step in this process is selecting a group of the PDS data for transferring. First, choose to send emails to Families or Members.

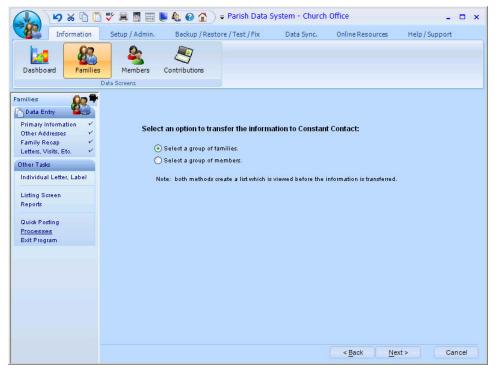


Fig. 16

After this, a selection screen displays. This works like the selections in reports and some quick postings. These selected options are saved for later use.

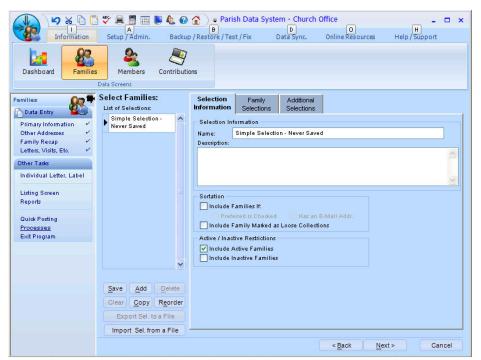


Fig. 17After selecting, a list of selected items displays. You can use all of them or select the ones to include.

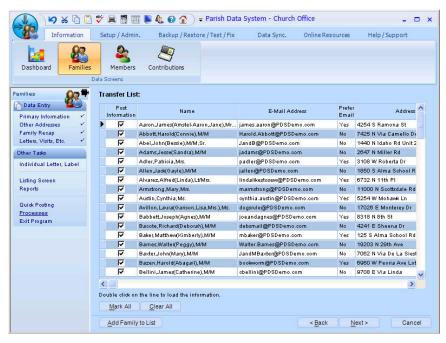


Fig. 18

Now, the **Next** button displays the list of Accounts. This connects between Office programs and Constant Contact. Enter your Constant Contact User Name and Password. You may have several accounts depends on your needs, but you must have at least one account to send a list of email addresses to Constant Contact.

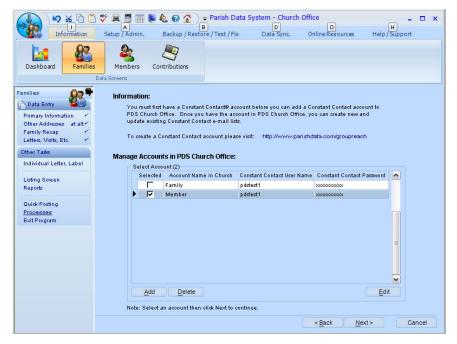


Fig. 19

You can click **Edit** to change the value and also to define which fields you want to send to Constant Contact (see Fig. 20). The list of fields to send defaults to Email address, First Name, Last Name, Work Phone, Home Phone, Address Line 1, Address Line 2, and City. If you click **Edit**, a dialogue box displays how the PDS fields are mapped to the fields in Constant Contact.

On the left are custom fields from Constant Contact. On the right are the PDS fields you would like to match and transfer.





Fig. 20 Fig. 16

To match a custom field with a field in Office database, click on a PDS field to add it to the selection list. (Note: If all PDS fields are blank, the program transfers the default contact information as mentioned above. If one field is matched, the program transfers that one field.)

When finished, click Next. The program connects to Constant Contact and retrieves the Contact lists.

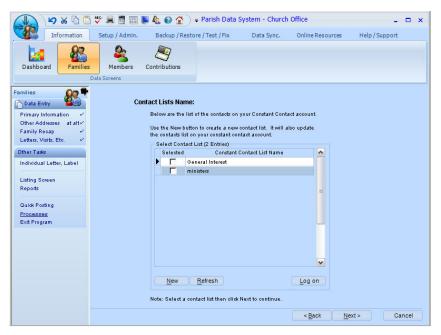


Fig. 21

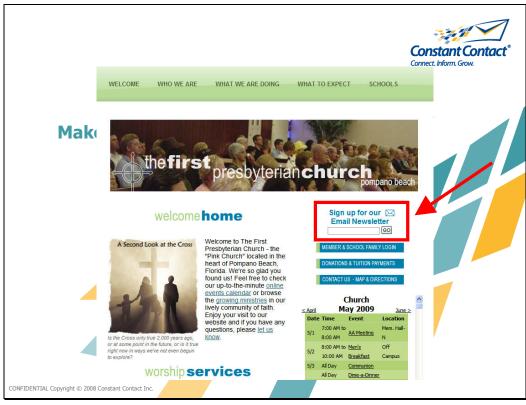
To manage the Contact list, you have to log on your Constant Contact account. Click **Log on** to open a web browser and log into your Constant Contact account. Click **New** to create a new contact list.

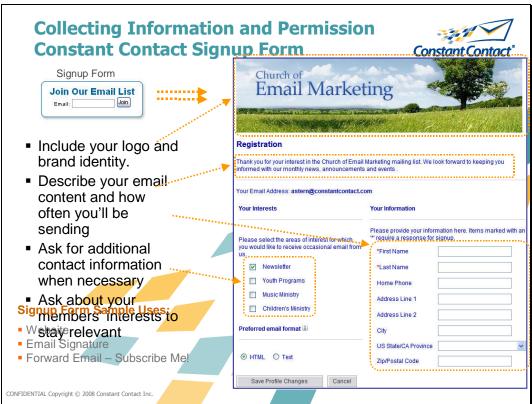
If you change your contact list in PDS, click **Refresh** to send the latest contact list to Constant Contact.

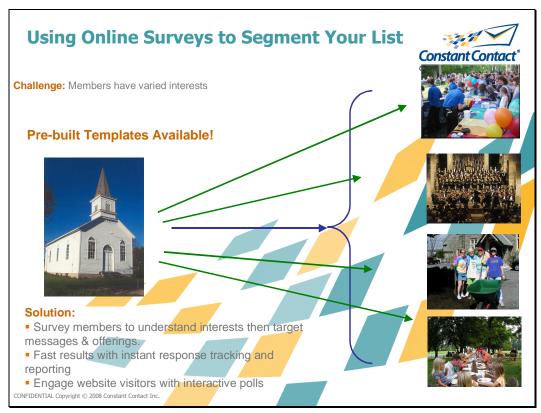
Select a contact list, then click **Next** to continue. Click **Transfer** to complete the process.

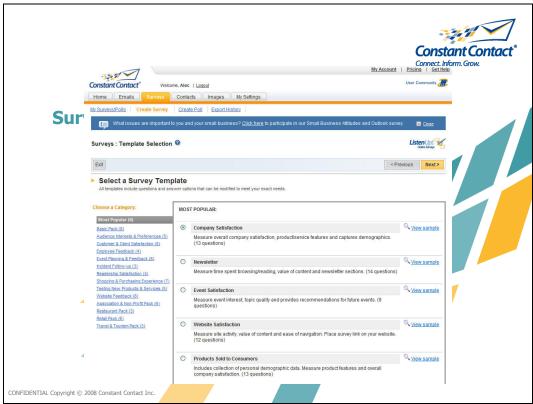
After the data transfers, you can preview, print, or log into your Constant Contact account to see the transferred data and send the email.

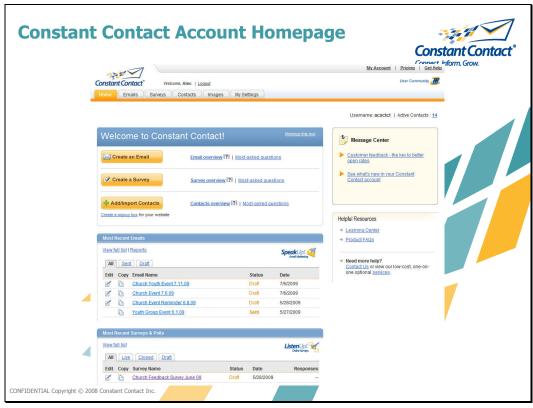
Working in Constant Contact

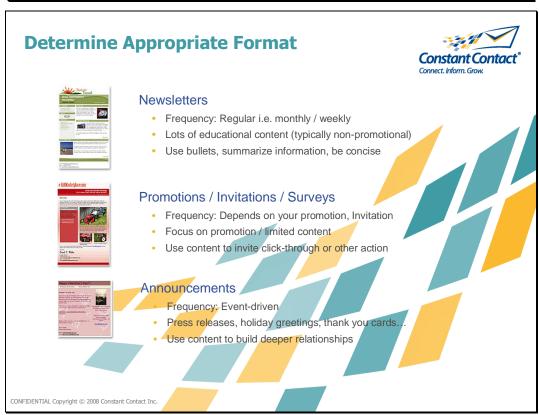


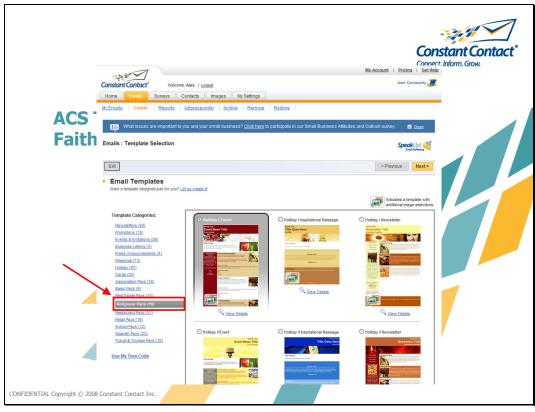


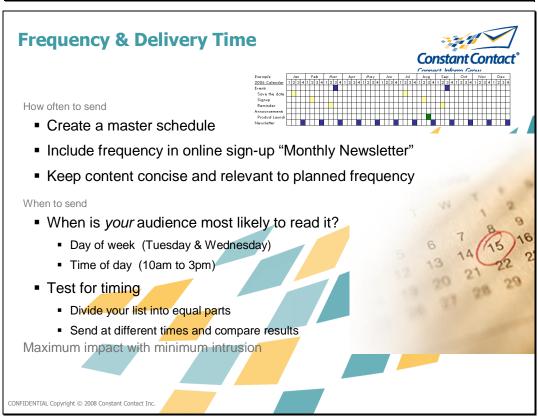




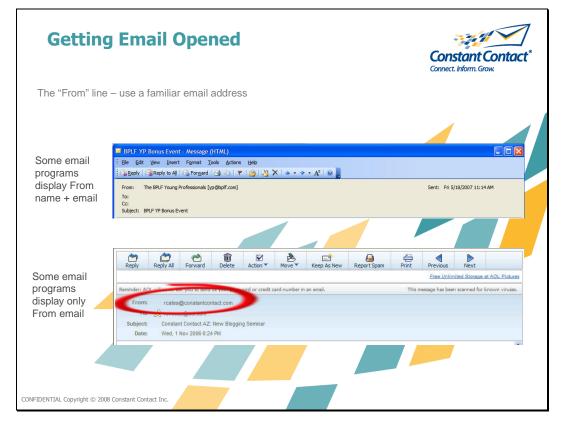


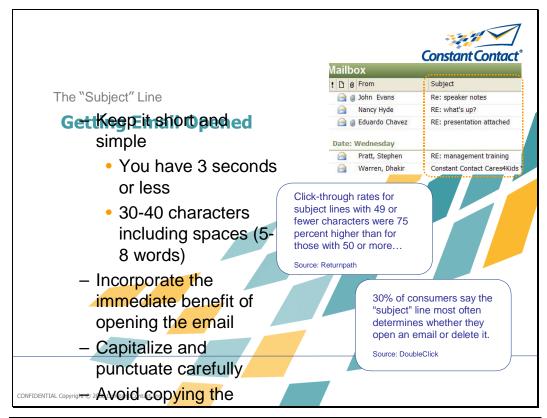


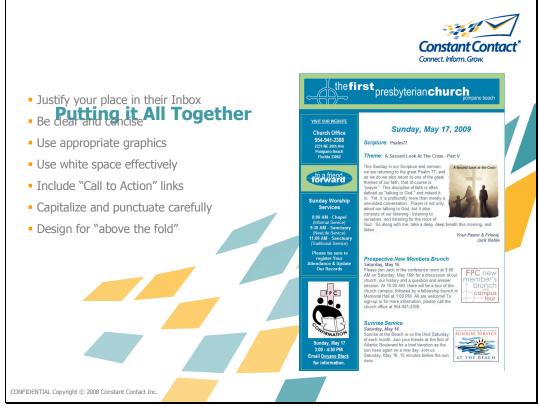






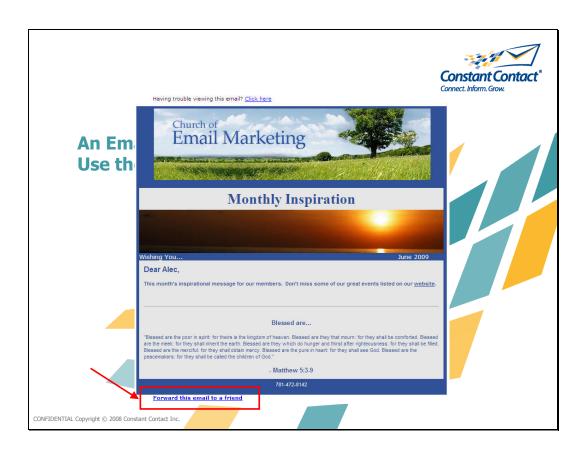




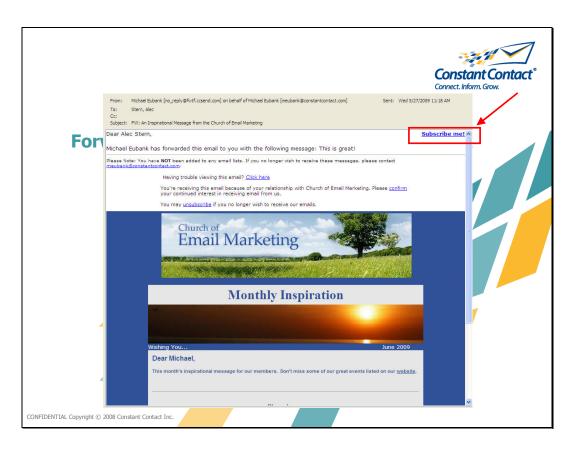




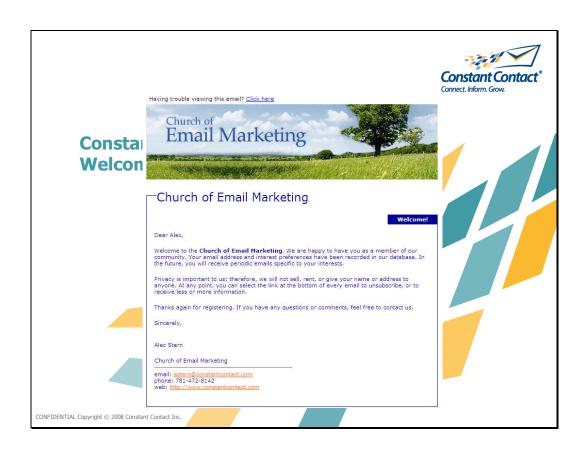












Constant Contact® - At A Glance



- The leading Email Marketing™ service for SMBs
 - Constant Contact's leading email marketing and survey products—supported by its expert personal coaching and service—help all types of small businesses and organizations create professional-looking in least leading in least lea

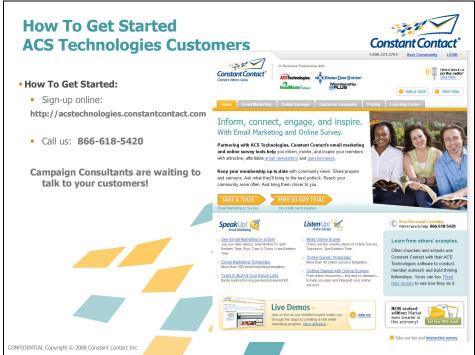


- Award Winning!
- Outstanding Customer Satis ion
- Fast Growing
- Market Leadership
 - Publicly Traded Company CTCT
 - More than 250,000 customers worldwide trust
 Constant Contact to help them connect with their audience.
 - Sending over 1.6 billion messages a month on our customers behalf
- Partnering with Industry Leaders!









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