

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The communications request form on the PSNZ website can be used to request bulk emails be sent to members. This could be:

- To promote PSNZ events, club events and special benefits for members offered by our major sponsors.
- To target information to members, clubs, regions or specific member sectors.

Bulk emails are sent from a PSNZ email address and are perceived as being from PSNZ. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines:

- To ensure bulk emails are opened, read and are relevant to the people they are sent to.
- To ensure bulk emails are written and presented in a consistent style with easily read and understood messages, so that they have maximum impact.

THE QUICK GUIDE

HOW MANY CAN I SEND?

- If your event is run by or on behalf of PSNZ – as many as needed.
- For other events – a maximum of three bulk emails per event, salon or competition that is endorsed or supported in any other way by PSNZ. (refer to the PSNZ Bulk Email Policy for further details)

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Make sure you only send your email to people it is relevant to; on the communications request form you can select the target audience (all members, northern members, all clubs, etc.).

SUBJECT HEADER

- This is what makes people want to open your email and lets them know what to expect.
- Use a short, clear subject header and make sure it is relevant to the message(s) in the email.
- Avoid spam triggers in the subject header — words that could cause your email to go straight to spam folder. Examples of spam triggers include: acceptance, avoid, problem, success, Dear, Hello, member, Important information regarding, Congratulations, Don't miss, Act now!

SENDER DETAILS

- Include contact details at the end of your email, e.g. Jane Smith, Coordinator, Creative Focus Salon

KEY POINTS FOR WRITING YOUR EMAIL

- **Write from your audience perspective:** the email should address their needs, not yours. Personalise by using words like 'you' and 'yours'. Tell them about what's in it for them.
- **The email is sent from a PSNZ email address:** write your message in the third person. Write "The XYZ Club invites you..." rather than "we invite you...".
- **Ensure timeliness:** don't send your email out too far ahead of the event.
- **Be brief:** keep your message relevant and on point. The first paragraph should tell the reader why they're being emailed. Aim for the whole message to be no longer than 250 words.
- **Break it up:** use simple headings to separate important parts of the message.
- **Use action language:** "Don't miss the cut-off date of 31 August" will get more attention than "Closing date 31 August" in the body of a message. Specific facts, such as important dates, often work better as key points in bulleted lists.
- **Clear call to action:** people scan emails so make sure your important points are easily seen.
- **Attach it as a word document:** to show us how to format your email, use the attach buttons on the communications request form to send it to us as an attachment. We won't send it on as an attachment; we will turn it into a formatted email.

Guide to writing bulk emails

By Paul Witham

PSNZ maintains a bulk email list of both members and clubs that is available for use to promote photographic events and salons. Council has written a policy around the use of this email list and we encourage everyone who wishes to make use of them to become familiar with the requirements.

This guide is based on over 18 months experience in managing the lists. By following these simple guidelines your email will be more effective and you will have less rewrites before it gets sent out.

1. The email comes from a PSNZ email address - not from you or your club

When you request a bulk email via the PSNZ contact form, you are requesting us to send an email that is perceived to be from PSNZ, and not from you.

One of the best ways to make your message clear is to write in third person, rather than if you are sending it out yourself.

For example: "We invite you to enter our salon" is not correct - it is not a PSNZ salon. This should be phrased: "The XYZ Club invites you to enter their salon"

2. Be careful which list you request

When you request an email, you can select whether it is to go to members or clubs. We can also segment these lists further into regions and, in some cases, cities.

Therefore, if your event is likely to only appeal to a very small number of people, ask to send it to a targeted group rather than emailing every member.

3. Make sure text make sense for your target audience

While it is possible to request a mail out to both members and clubs at the same time, it is actually better to request two different emails.

Emails to clubs ask the recipient to pass along the request to their members, rather than being direct information to individuals. If you have also requested an email to all members with the same information, then the one to clubs should ask that it be sent only to those that are not PSNZ members.

Remember, if you have asked for the mail only to go to a targeted group, then don't include text that is relevant to other groups.

4. Include a contact address

While the Communications Form requires a contact name and address, this is merely used for us to contact you with any questions before the mail is sent. You also need to provide contact details in the email for readers who have questions.

As noted above, some people don't realise where this mail comes from. If they have a query, they hit the reply button. This goes to us instead of you. So please make it clear who the reader should contact if they have a query.

5. Make links obvious

If your email is to elicit some form of action, then make the links very obvious in the message. Don't simply hide a hyperlink inside of a work. Make it prominent.

The computer literacy of our members varies significantly. If you make it too difficult for people to respond to your email then they will not respond. If you confuse a club secretary, then the chances that your message will be passed on reduce dramatically.

6. Include all of your message in the email body

The MailChimp account that we use does not allow for attachments. Given all the issues of malware and viruses, attachments are not a good idea anyway. What we can do, however, is to store a file as a downloadable link in the email.

So rather than writing: "Please refer to the attached information",

you should write: "Please click on the following link to download the information"

But, before you put something in an attachment, think first about whether it could be incorporated into the body of the email. Not all attachments get read.

7. Make sure follow-up emails don't scare your audience

If your email is essentially a reminder for something that has already been open for a while (such as salon entries or conference registration), then include a passage aimed at those that have already registered.

"Thank you to those of you who have already registered for XYZ.

For those who haven't registered yet, this is a reminder"

The majority of entries to events are now done digitally, and not everyone has complete faith in online processes. When they get emails reminding them to do something that they have already done, they could worry.

8. Be reasonable with your timing

Finally, be reasonable about when you expect the emails to go out, and plan ahead. PSNZ Councillors are all volunteers who have families and jobs to deal with that will take priority. Or, your email may be best fitted in to a combined bulk email. Don't expect that a request for immediate action will always be adhered to.

We also don't want to bombard our members with multiple emails in the same day, or even week, so it is much better if we can plan when they are released.

For help in creating a marketing plan for your event, contact the Councillor for Marketing and Communications, communications@photography.org.nz. We have templates and other resources available for our members and Clubs to use.