

INTERACTIVE EMAILS: UNDERSTANDING THE HOTTEST TREND IN EMAIL MARKETING

Exciting new functionality can now be added to emails to make them more engaging and effective. But there are challenges.

Creating interactive email experiences is the top email design trend of 2018, according to a [Litmus poll](#). This is the second year that interactive email has been the hottest email marketing trend.

A number of large brands have already embraced interactive emails, including Neiman Marcus, Nest, Lego, Quartz, and Under Armour. Many more will do so by the end of this year.

Plus, most inbox providers are jumping on the interactive email bandwagon. Most notably, Gmail announced support for [AMP in Email](#). Momentum is clearly building behind the idea that emails can be more than just a static gateway to a landing page.

What Is an Interactive Email?

Email interactivity is an action taken in an email that triggers an event within the same email.

That's according to Rebel's Mark Robbins, who is considered the godfather of interactive email.

Although there are consultants and companies that can help you create interactive emails, there's nothing proprietary about it.

With the proper code, anyone can add interactive elements to their emails, just like anyone can add an animated GIF to an email.

What Are the Benefits of Interactive Email Functionality?

Email interactivity is a fantastic option for brands that want to educate subscribers about a product or service, collect additional information from a subscriber, or allow a subscriber to quickly and easily make a choice within an email.

In addition to boosting subscriber engagement and reducing email fatigue, interactive emails...

- **Shorten the path to conversion** by creating search bars, review and rating submissions, and even add-to-cart functionality (see Fig. 1).
- **Make messages more engaging, fun, and delightful** through the use of hot spots, hover effects, offer reveals, and in-email interactive quizzes (see Fig. 2).
- **Bring common web and mobile app elements to email**, such as carousels and hamburger menus, that let brands use the limited screen real estate in their emails more efficiently.

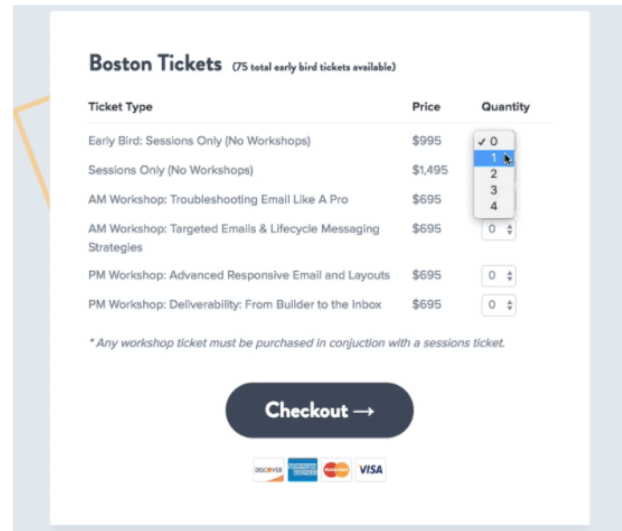


Fig. 1: Litmus created an interactive email with add-to-cart functionality to help process hundreds of ticket purchases for our 2017 conferences.

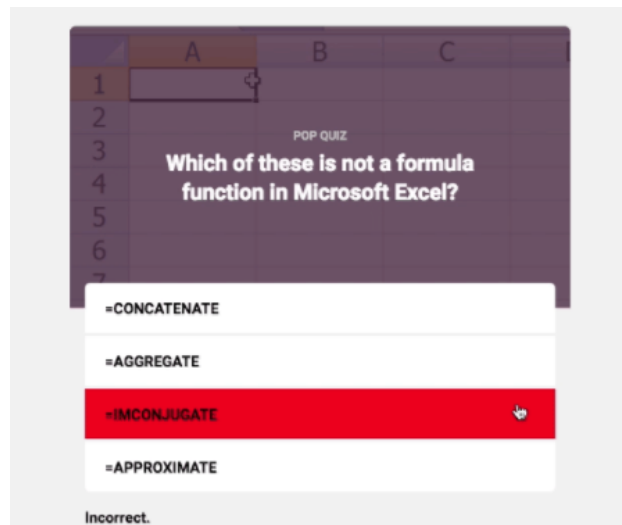


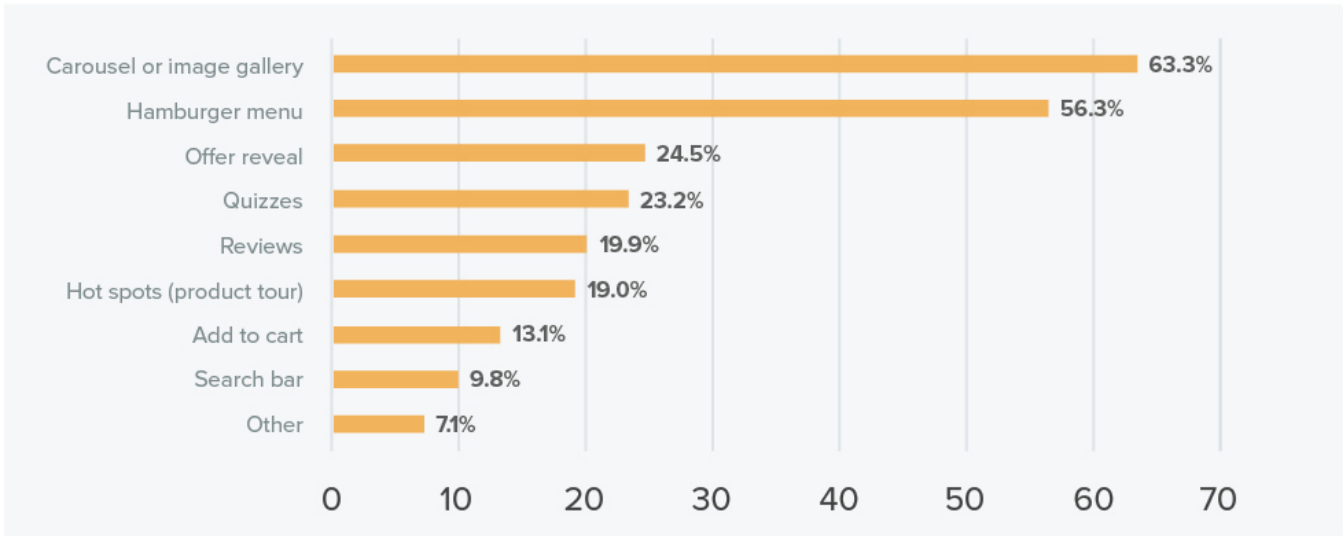
Fig. 2: Media company Quartz used a hover effect in this email to create an interactive quiz to engage subscribers right in the inbox.

Interactive Email Elements Used

Which interactive elements has your company used in its marketing emails?

324 respondents who have used interactivity

B2B brands were much more likely to use hamburger menus, hot spots, and search bars, while B2C brands were much more likely to use carousels and quizzes.



What Are the Challenges?

Interactive emails...

- **Aren't supported by all email inboxes.** The majority of emails are opened in email clients that support interactivity, but support can vary depending on the email clients used by your subscribers.
- **Take more time to code.** Not only do you need to code for the interactivity, but you have to code fallbacks for subscribers whose email clients don't support the functionality.
- **Can affect your email, web, and mobile app metrics.** Adding more functionality

to emails can reduce email clicks and the quantity of traffic to your landing pages. However, that traffic should be of higher quality, since the subscriber has moved down the funnel by engaging with the interactive content.

At its core, interactive emails are part of the trend toward quality over quantity, where a more impactful email experience leads to more engaged subscribers and more intentful traffic that converts better. Interactivity also makes it easier for subscribers to interact with your brand, shortening the path to conversion.

Resources on Interactive Emails to Share with Your Email Team

- [Interactive Email's Opportunities and Challenges](#)
- [Interactive Email for Beginners](#)
- [How to Build an Interactive Quiz in an Email](#)
- [Gmail Announces Native Support for Dynamic and Interactive Email Powered by AMP](#)
- [2017 State of Email Creative report](#)

For those resources and more, visit Litmus' industry-leading blog at litmus.com/blog.

How the Litmus Email Creative Platform Can Help with Interactive Emails

- [Litmus Builder](#), our email code editor, lets your team interact and test out the interactive elements in your emails as they build them.
- [Litmus Email Analytics](#) allows you to see which email clients your subscribers are using to open your emails, giving you valuable insights into the support level for interactive email elements across your audience. It also lets to measure how long your subscribers are spending reading your emails, a metric that will be higher with interactivity.

For more information, contact your account executive. Don't have one yet? Please visit litmus.com/enterprise to talk with an expert.



About the Author

Chad S. White is the Research Director at Litmus and the author of *Email Marketing Rules* and more than 3,000 posts and articles about email marketing.