The red hot
VIRGIN TRAINS
EMAIL BOOK

Virgin trains

What's inside...

Chapter One - Introduction

As a *Virgin Company,* customers expect us to send them engaging, relevant and all-round glorious emails. No pressure…

This book is a basic style guide for all emails we send to our customers. Before you dive in, please read our Brand and Writing books to get a much more comprehensive overview of our brand style Brand tone of voice.

👁 One quick note: Always remember that these are guidelines – not strict rules. They should never get in the way of creating gloriously effective emails.

Our email goalposts

Whether it's a big campaign or a down-and-dirty offer, each and every email we create should tick the following five.
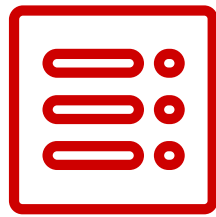
Clear

Always prioritise messaging to make sure the most important is at the top, and the least at the bottom. Keep accessibility in mind.
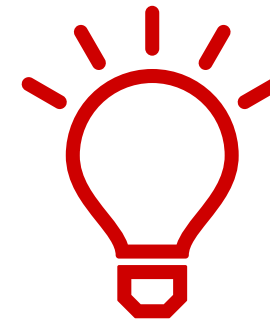
Direct

Our customers want their information quickly, so make sure emails have just the right amount of information. No more. No less.
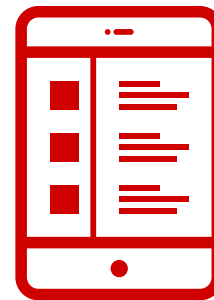
Consistent

Use consistent design and writing styles to help customers recognise us as soon as we land in their inbox.

Creative

Always add awesome. Every email we send should say or do something that no other train company could.

Adaptable

Our audience is on the go, so think mobile first to make sure we're right there with them.

Getting started

We like to make things easy, so we have a standard layout guide and a few starting pointers to help get you going...

Mobile first

60% of our customers receive emails on their phones, so always think and design mobile first.
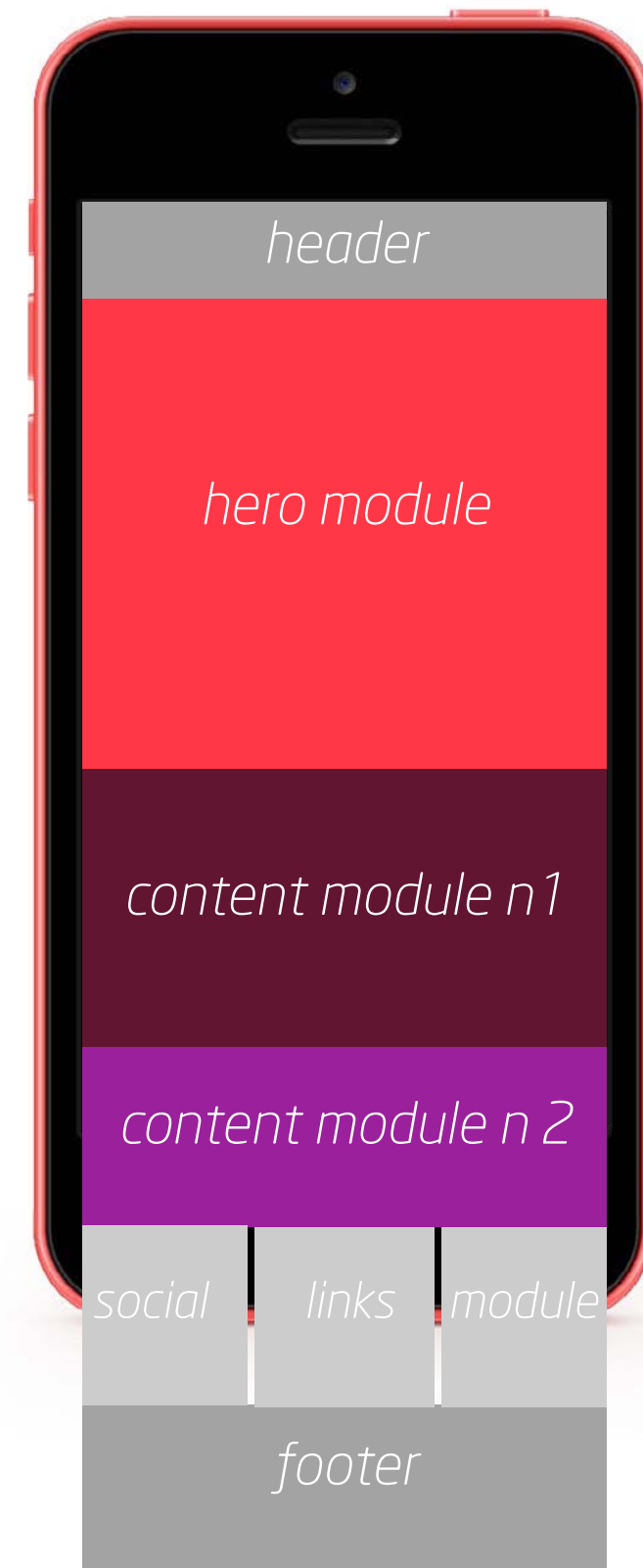
Width

Mobile: 640px (320px @2x)
Desktop: 600px

Sections

We break our emails down into 5 sections: header, hero, content modules, social module, and footer. More on these guys in the next chapter.

header

hero module

content module n1

content module n 2

social   links   module

footer

Chapter Two - Modules

Consistency is king.
Simplicity is the saviour.

When we land in people's inboxes, we want them to instantly recognise us – so we have a slick and simple email structure to make sure of it. The next few pages will show you the way.

2.1 Mobile

Our header panel uses the full bleed of the email with a white rectangular background – no diagonals or other fancy edges please!

Note that the header is marked with 'East Coast' / 'West Coast' next to the 2D logo. Nice and simple.

East Coast

West Coast

2.1 Desktop

In desktop, you can vary the height of the header to fit in a bit of extra copy if needs be. Nothing too wordy though!

Note that the header is marked with 'East Coast' / 'West Coast' next to the 2D logo. Nice and simple.

East Coast

West Coast

2.2. Hero

As its name suggests, our hero module is the big one. This is where we can really add that Virgin flair to the email, and here's how it tends to work:

Image

To make it a true hero, this image is always larger than the rest (specific dimensions in chapter 3).

Headline

This sits below the images on a white background. We often add copy to the hero image too, to get that glorious Virgin tone up in lights.

Copy

We keep this short, concise and bite-sized for easy reading. If there's more to be said, break it up and pull out the keys bits.

M 640x960px
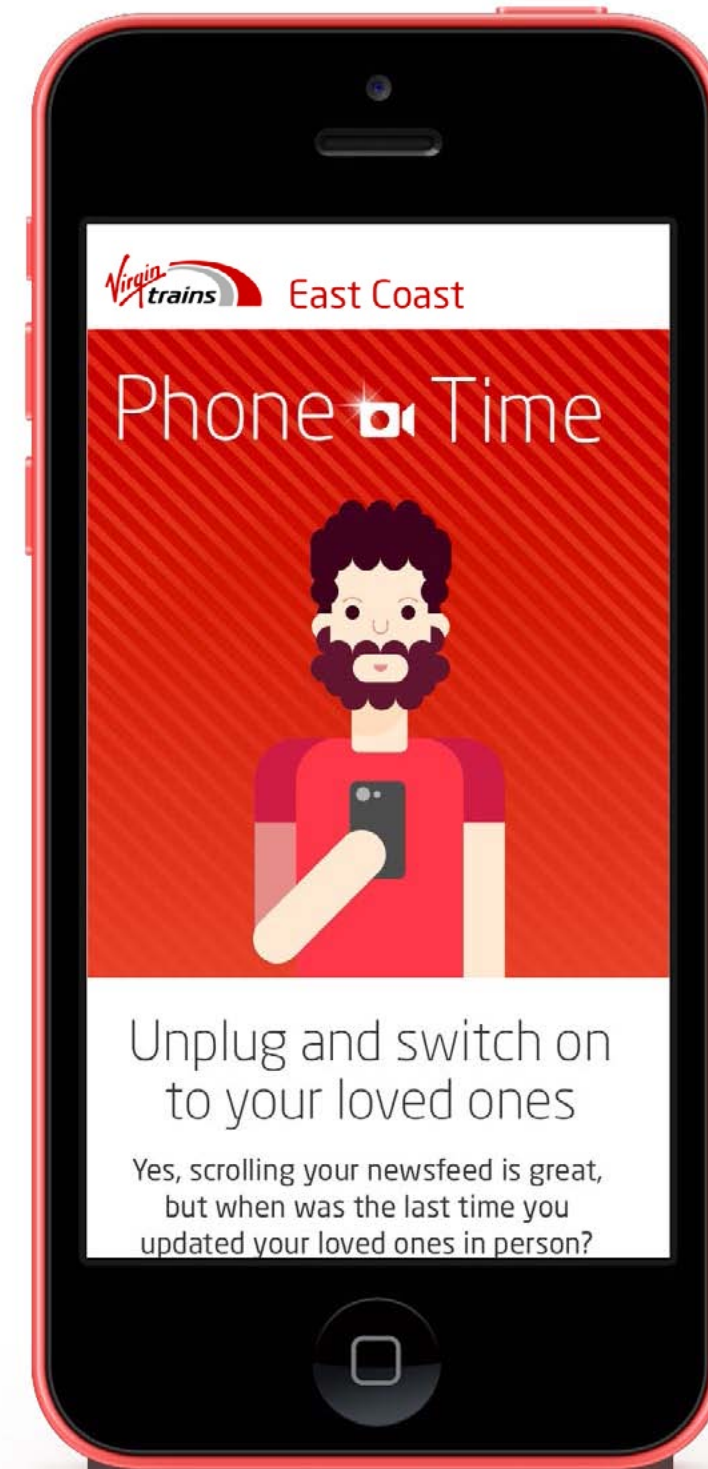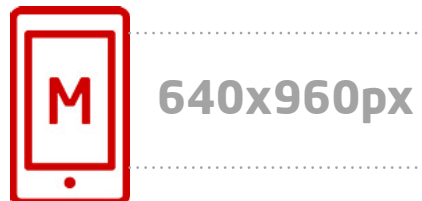
2.2. Hero

What makes a hero? The truth is – all sorts.
Here are a few steps to help lead you to greatness.

Create big and bold headers that make people keep reading...

To do so, you can add cheeky headlines and textured backgrounds.
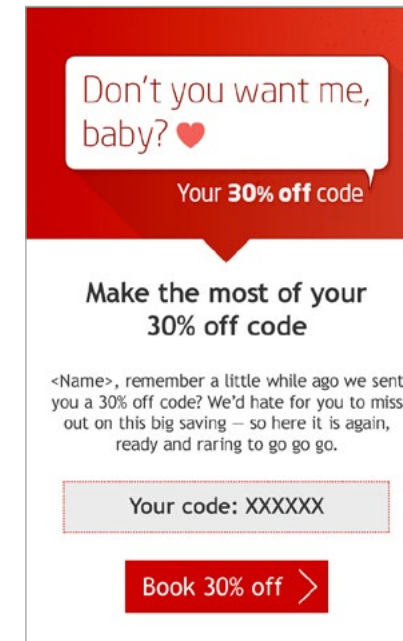
Bring it to life with illustration and/or animations (we love a GIF).

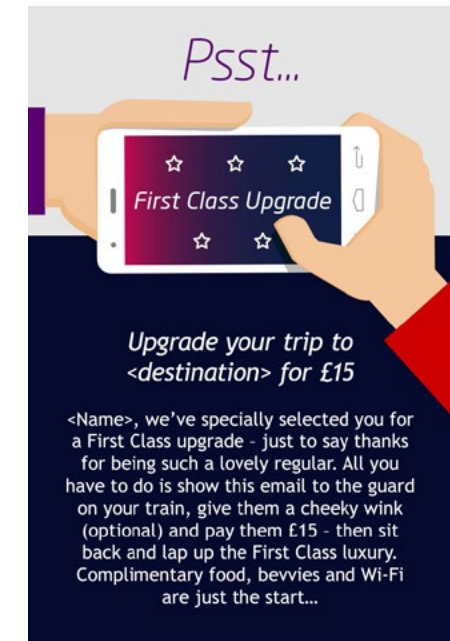You can also add typographic compositions – just keep it 80% Neo Sans.

Some campaigns with have a specific look and feel, so replicate it in the hero and keep the rest of the email consistent with it.

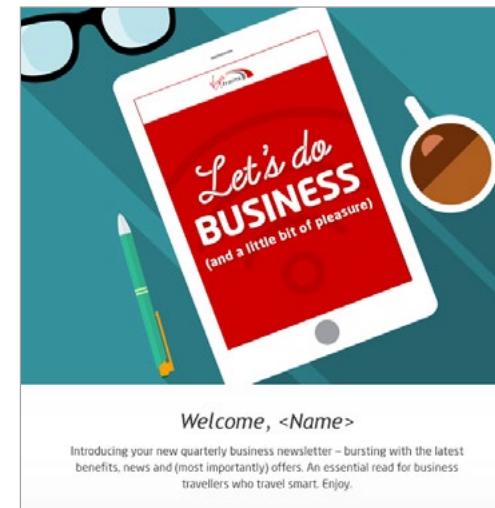**Building the hero image**
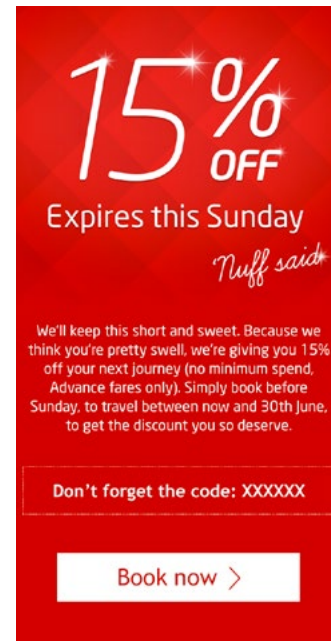
Create eye-catching headers that make you keep reading.

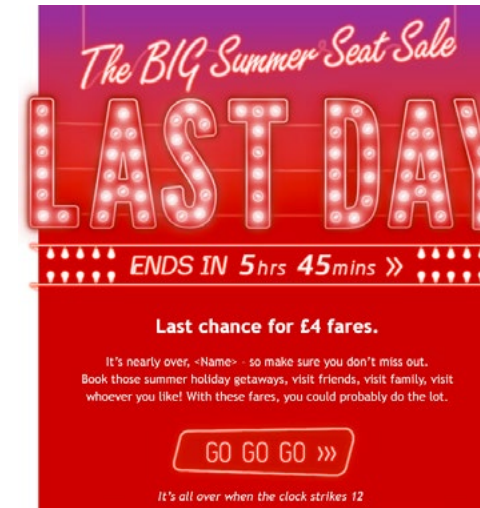To do so, you can use hyperbolised headlines and texturised backgrounds.

You can also add illustration and/or animations.

You can also add typographic compositions. Just keep 80% in Neo Sans.
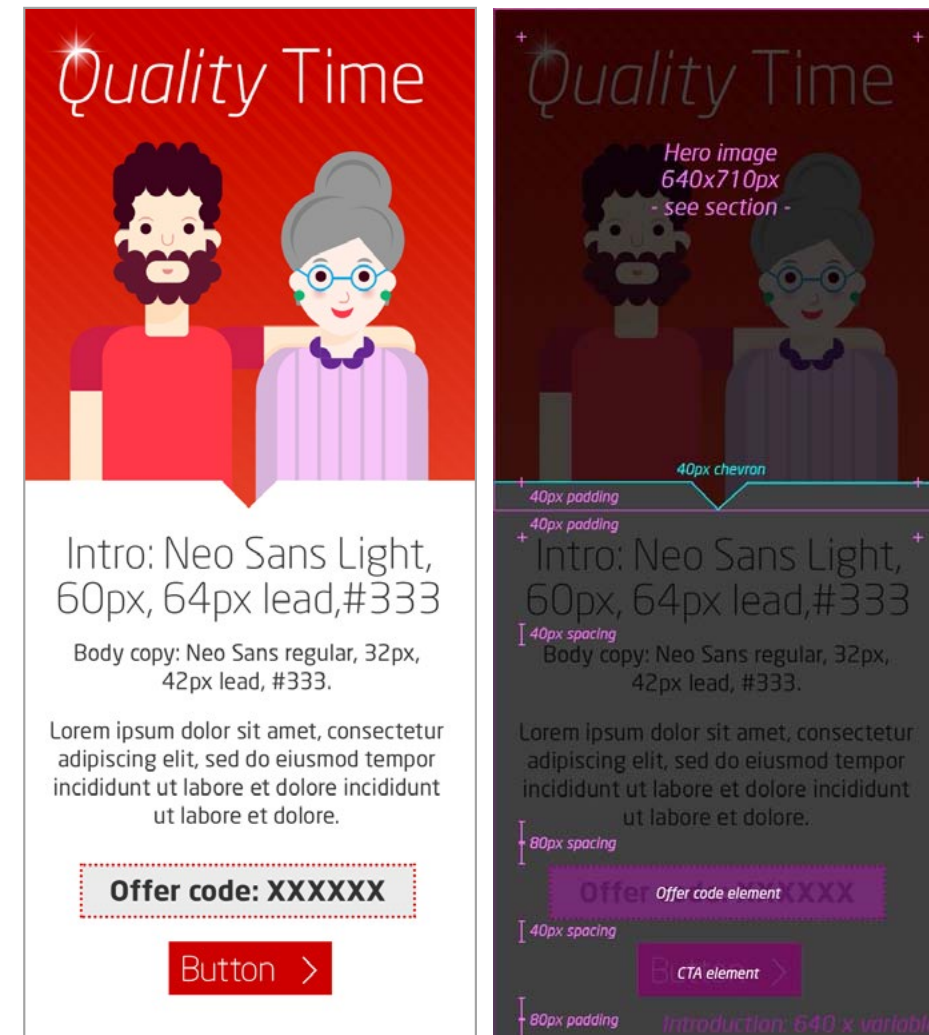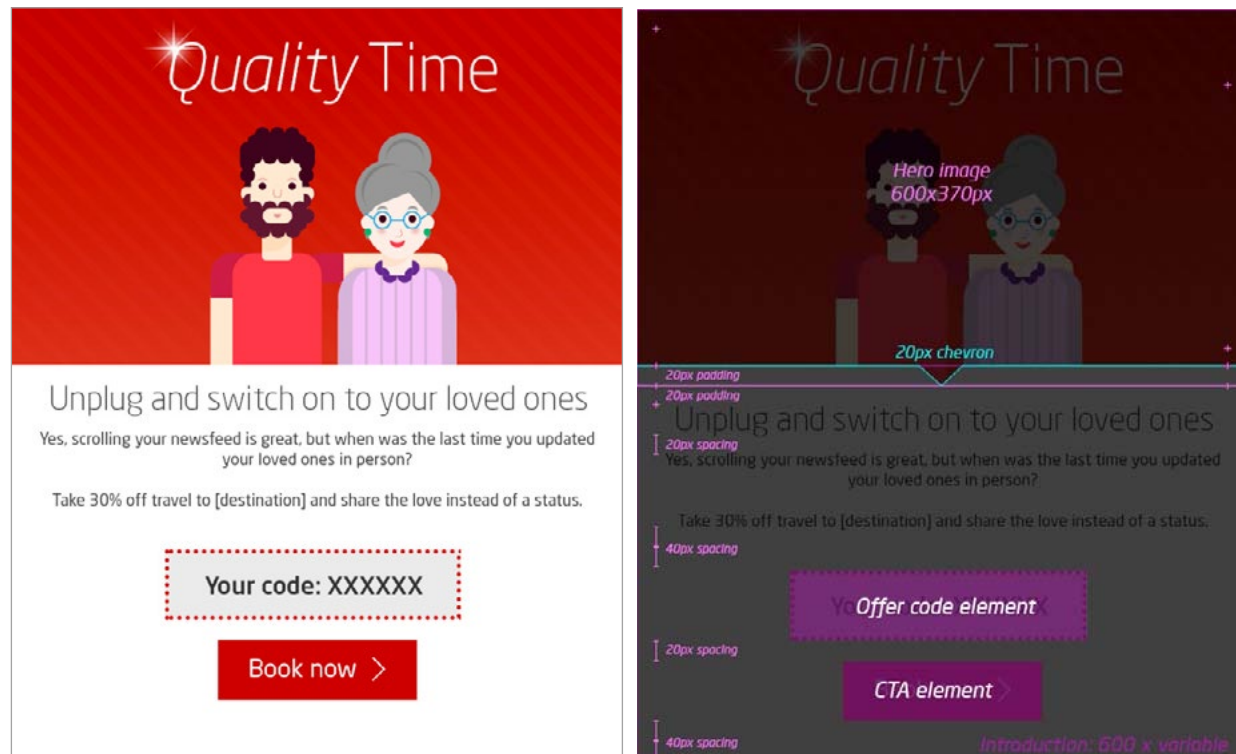

Some campaigns will have a specific look and feel.

2.2. Hero message & copy

Straight down the middle

Include a downwards pointing chevron in the bottom centre of the hero image to guide the eye down:

We always centre-align the main intro copy in our emails as well as calls to action and promo codes. This is to ensure better readability on mobile and tablets.

2.3. Content modules

Beneath the hero, we break everything up into bite-sized chunks. Each little content story has its own space, and modules should vary in style depending what's in them.

Layout

It can be image and copy, or just plain text – this will depend on the type of content.

Hierarchy

The most important module always sits at the top under the hero with less key modules sitting at the bottom above the footer.
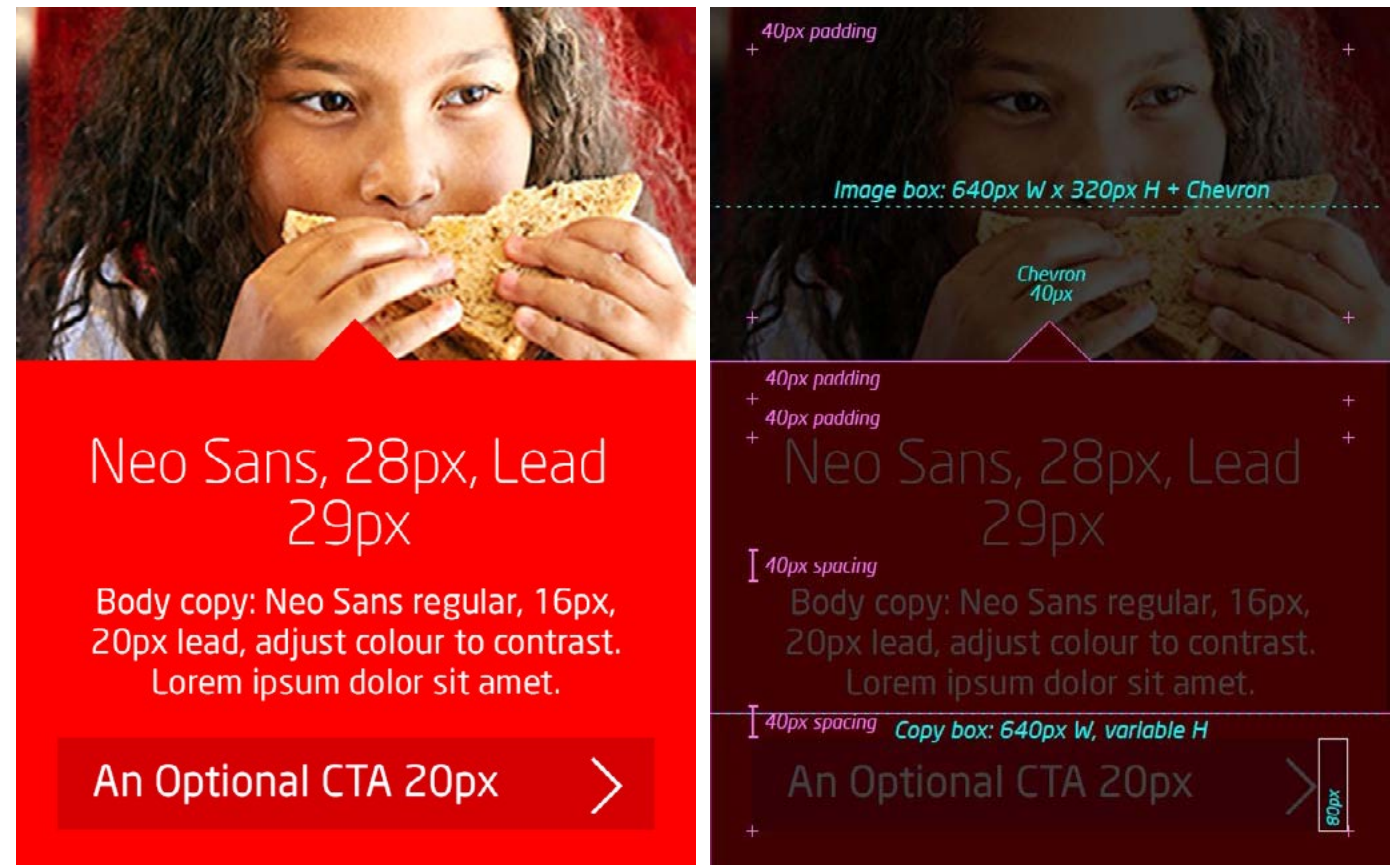
Spacing

Each module needs room to breathe so they sit 10 pixels apart vertically.

Copy alignment

Desktop: left align text
Mobile: centre align text

Basic module

Neo Sans, 28px, Lead 29px

Body copy: Neo Sans regular, 16px, 20px lead, adjust colour to contrast. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

An Optional CTA 20px

40px padding

Image box: 640px W x 320px H + Chevron

Chevron 40px

40px padding
40px padding

Neo Sans, 28px, Lead 29px

40px spacing

Body copy: Neo Sans regular, 16px, 20px lead, adjust colour to contrast. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

40px spacing Copy box: 640px W, variable H

An Optional CTA 20px

2.3. Content modules

Short and snappy

We like short and snappy stories – a paragraph is more than enough. In fact, sometimes just a great image and strong headline is enough.

Ratio

Choose your module ratio according to the amount of copy and quality of image.

Size matters

Mobile versions of our emails can get very long if there's a lot of content. If some content can be left out then do so – it will save a bit of scrolling.
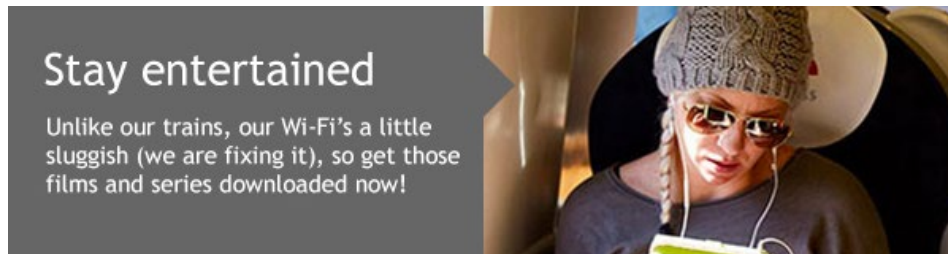
Basic module

2.3. Content modules

Mix it up

As long as you keep the proportions of the basic module, you can help organise information and keep things interesting by using a combination of different layouts...
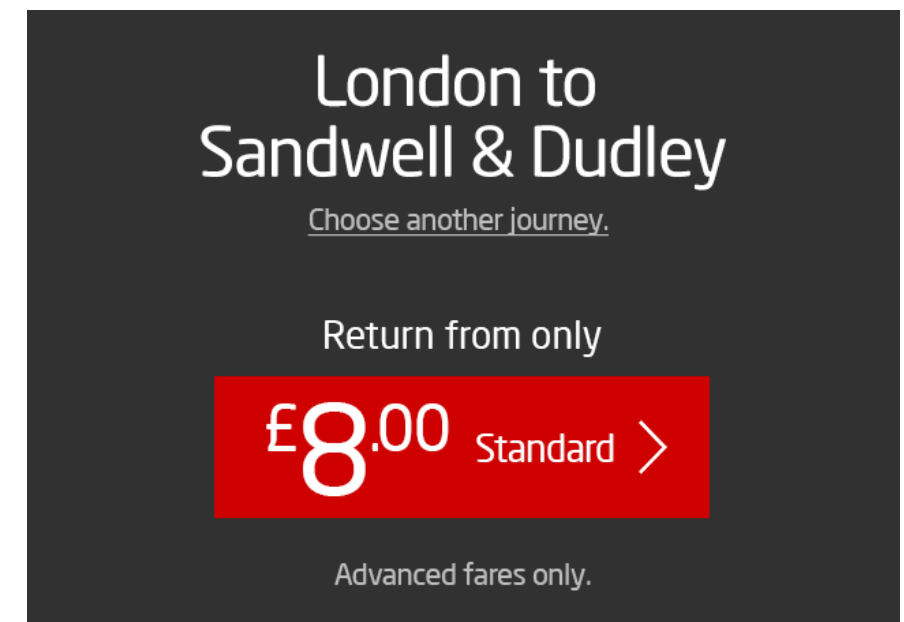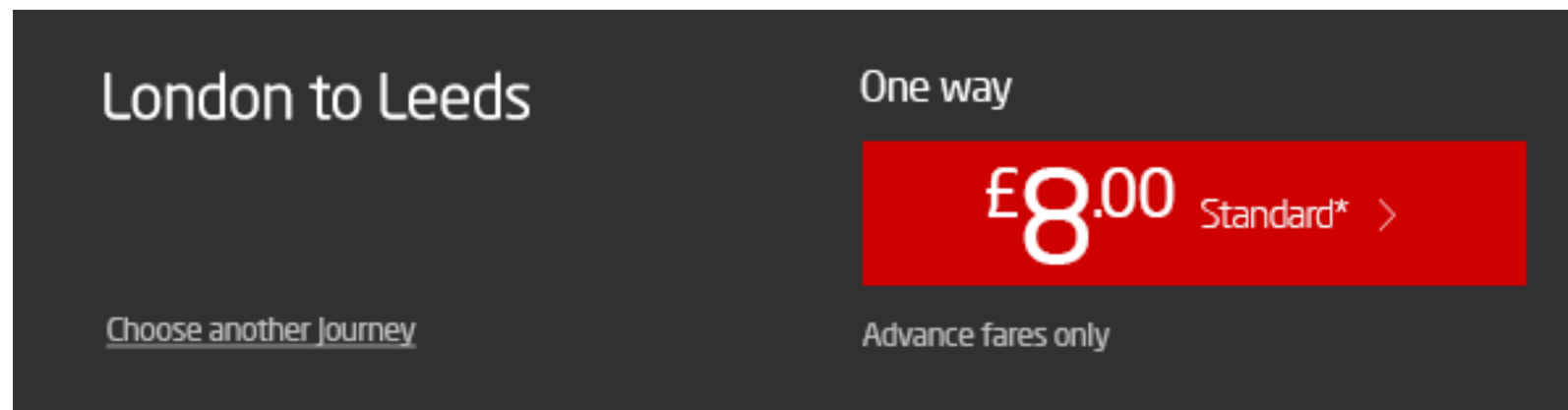
2.4. Price points

They may look basic, but these guys get way more clicks than you'd think, so it's important to get them right.

Always include the hero route along with a text link to 'Choose another journey' (this link also gets a fair bit of action).

Make sure the price is clear within a bold red call to action (CTA) button aligned to the right of the module.

For First Class price points change the CTA button to blue (#02173a).

London to Leeds

One way

£8.00 Standard* >

Choose another Journey

Advance fares only

D

London to
Sandwell & Dudley

Choose another journey.

Return from only

£8.00 Standard >

Advanced fares only.

M

⚠ This module's a big hitter, so please don't modify it.
Just drag it into your design and change the copy accordingly.

2.5. Icon modules

Our icon modules allow us to quickly deliver information, and drive customers straight to the relevant page on our website for more detail. They're usually positioned between the content and social media modules.

The length of the accompanying copy will dictate icon module layout. Here are a few examples.
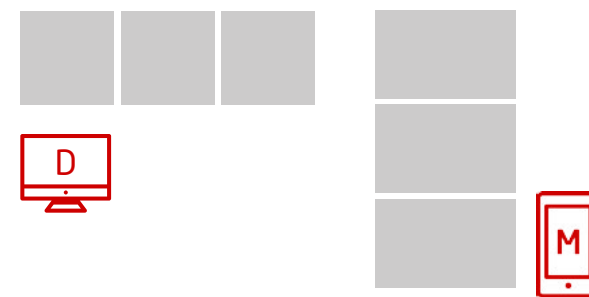

Lorem ipsum

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.
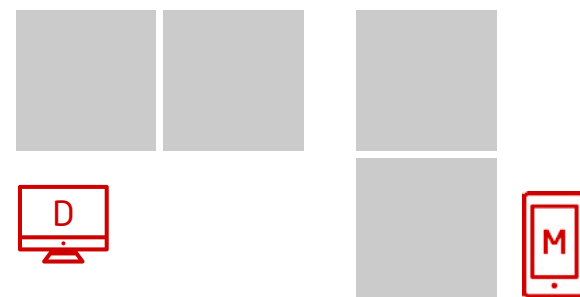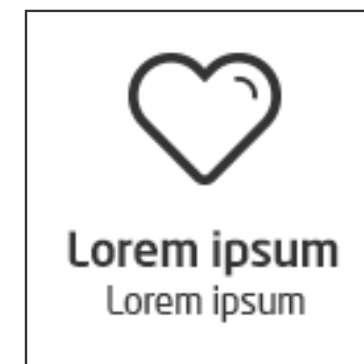
Lorem ipsum
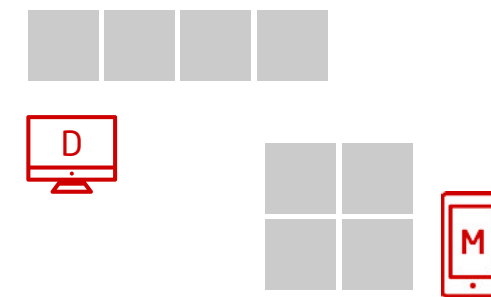Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit

Lorem ipsum
Lorem ipsum

Lorem ipsum
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit

2 side by side or stacked

3 side by side or stacked

4 side by side or 2 x 2 stacked
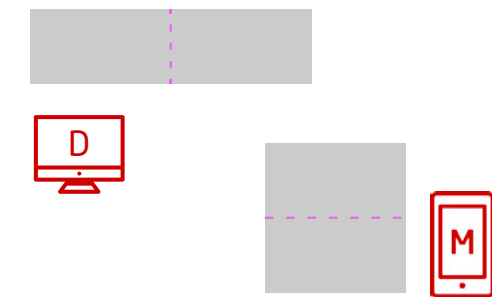
Updates: 2 side by side or stacked

16

2.6. Social module

We love having friends and followers, so we make our social links easy to find and even easier to tap with linked icon, copy and chevron.
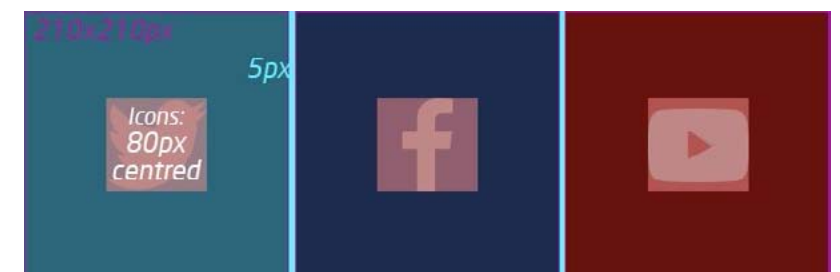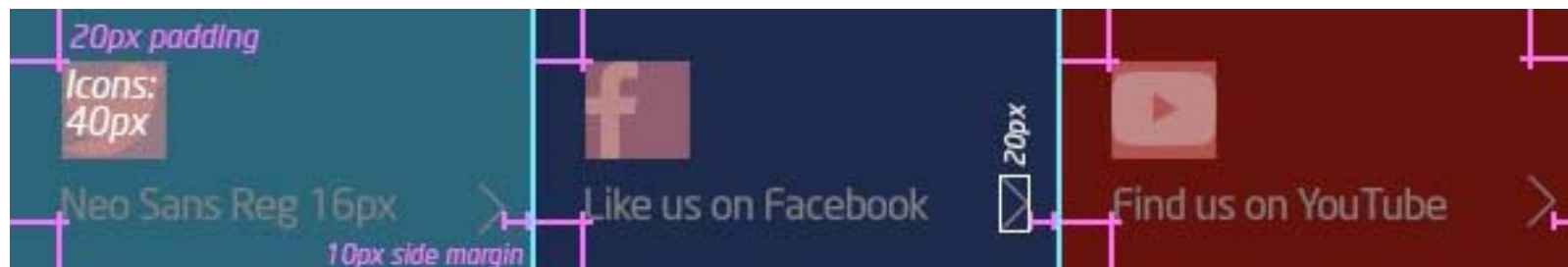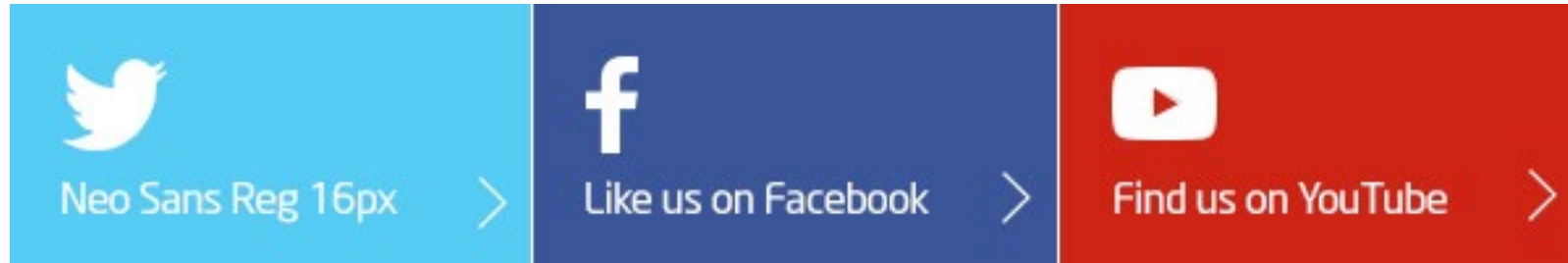
Size and spacing

Links to our three social media pages always sit together as three columns in a full width module separated by 2px spacing.

Position

We include them in most of our opt-in marketing emails, just above the footer.

Colour

Twitter: #5eccf1
Facebook: #3d5998
YouTube: #cc2721

2.7. The footer

Right at the bottom of our emails sits the small print – the stuff that needs to be said (by law!).
It sits on the email background outside of any modules, but within the width of the email body.

T&Cs

We list terms and conditions in numbered format.
If they can be found elsewhere (such as online) list
the most important and link off to the rest.

Non-negotiables

We always include our sender info at the very bottom
of the email. All opt-in emails must contain links to
unsubscribe, our Privacy policy and contact details.

Ordering

Keep the order of footer contents consistent
as follows:
1. Privacy policy
2. Contact us
3. Unsubscribe
4. Terms and Conditions
5. Sender info

Privacy policy | Contact us | Unsubscribe

Terms and conditions: 1. Tickets are available for booking online through virgintrains.co.uk. Please ensure the booking window is open and valid for the date you intend to book or travel. 2. Promotion is open to UK residents aged 18 years or over except employees and their families of Virgin Trains, affiliated companies, suppliers, agents and anyone professionally associated with the promotion. 3. The 15% discounts apply when using a valid PIN (Personal Identification Number) when you buy a Virgin Trains Advance fare only. Promotion cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions, rail cards, discounts or vouchers. 4. The offer is limited to one set of PIN per person, each PIN is valid for up to two people travelling in line with point 3. Both passengers must be travelling on the same Virgin Trains West Coast service to receive the 15% discount. 5. Each PIN is valid for use once only and must be used within a 10 week period. Customers travelling on a return journey must book the outward and return at the same time. 6. The discounts can only be applied when using the link supplied in the email containing the PIN. The discount is not available through any other sales channels. 7. Seat reservations are mandatory and free of charge for both outward and return journeys and are only valid when travelling on Virgin Trains. Customers must travel on the trains they reserve and sit in the seats they reserve. If customers wish to travel on different dates or trains, they will have to pay the full walk up fare. 8. The money off PIN has no cash value. 9. Travel is subject to availability and requested journeys cannot be guaranteed. 10. Tickets are non-refundable. Change of travel date and/or time is available up to the scheduled departure with a payment of £10 admin fee plus any difference of the new applicable fare. 11. Tickets can be collected the by the e-ticket option and at FastTicket machines at the relevant station. 12. If you have specific needs or require journey assistance when travelling by train, please contact JourneyCare at least 24 hours before you intend to travel. 13. All travel is subject to The National Conditions of Carriage, copies of which may be obtained from ticket offices. 14. Travel is only available on services on West Coast mainline operated by Virgin Trains. In cases of severe disruption The National Conditions of Carriage apply. If you are in any doubt as to whether a certain train is run by Virgin Trains West Coast, you should check with the staff before boarding. 15. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the promoter reserves the right to cancel the promotion without prior notice. 16. By entering the promotion all participants will be deemed to have accepted and be bound by the terms and conditions and by any other requirements set out in the promotional material. 17. The website is provided by Virgin Trains West Coast. The site is controlled from the UK and therefore does not represent the content which will be appropriate in all jurisdictions. If you choose to access the site from outside the UK you must ensure compliance with local laws. Your entrance to the site is subject to you accepting the terms and conditions. 18. Virgin Trains reserves the right to revise the terms and conditions, information materials and notices on this site from time to time or to temporarily or permanently discontinue the site or any part of it from time to time without prior notice should circumstances make this unavoidable. You should review the terms and conditions each time you visit this site. 19. Virgin Trains West Coast endeavours to ensure that the information on the site is accurate but makes no representations or warranties as to accuracy and accepts no liability for the same. 20. Virgin Trains West Coast does not control all sites linked to the site and shall have no liability for the same. 21. Personal information provided by you to the site will be used in accordance with the laws enforced under the Data Protection Act. 22. Full Advance ticket terms and conditions are available at www.virgintrains.com or by calling 08457 222 333

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Privacy policy | Contact us | Unsubscribe

Terms and conditions: 1. Tickets are available for booking online through virgintrains.co.uk until 3 July 2016, for travel until 6 September 2016 inclusive. Please ensure the booking window is open and valid for the date you intend to book or travel. 2. Promotion is open to UK residents aged 18 years or over except employees and their families of Virgin Trains, affiliated companies, suppliers, agents and anyone professionally associated with the promotion. 3. The 20% discounts apply when using a valid PIN (Personal Identification Number) when you buy a Virgin Trains Advance fare only. Promotion cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions, rail cards, discounts or vouchers. 4. The offer is limited to one set of PIN per person, each PIN is valid for up to two people travelling in line with point 3. Both passengers must be travelling on the same Virgin Trains West Coast service to receive the 20% discount. 5. Each PIN is valid for use once only. Customers travelling on a return journey must book the outward and return at the same time. 6. The discounts can only be applied when using the link supplied in the email containing the PIN. The discount is not available through any other sales channels. 7. Seat reservations are mandatory and free of charge for both outward and return journeys and are only valid when travelling on Virgin Trains. Customers must travel on the trains they reserve and sit in the seats they reserve. If

M

2.8. Opt-out emails

Most of our emails go out to customers who have fully opted in to receiving our glorious marketing comms. However, sometimes we have important info that we need to send to **everyone** – including those who haven't opted in. In these cases, we have to dial things back a bit.

What they get

Opted-out customers get our service emails and Automatic Delay Repay emails (if they book online with us). We'll also send them the occasional NAS email, which asks them to rate us after a journey.

What they don't

We're careful not to market anything to our opted-out customers – keeping the visual imagery down to a minimum and the tone dialed back a notch. We to stick to the following modules:
1. header
2. simple hero image
3. body copy
4. footer with sender info
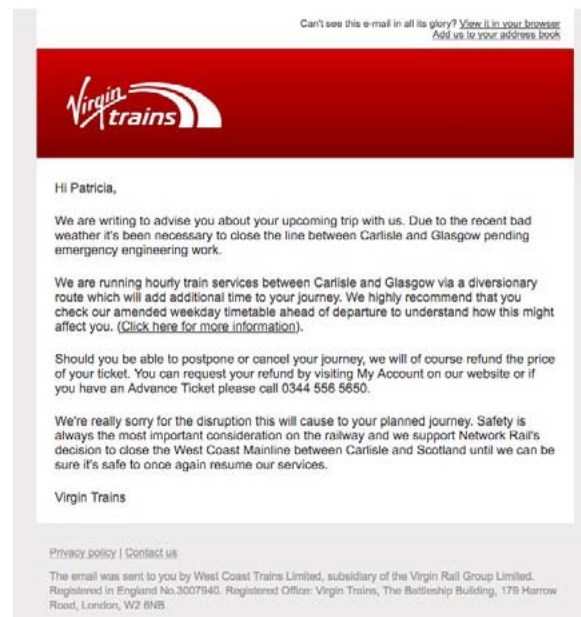
Standard service email template

Service email with bespoke header image
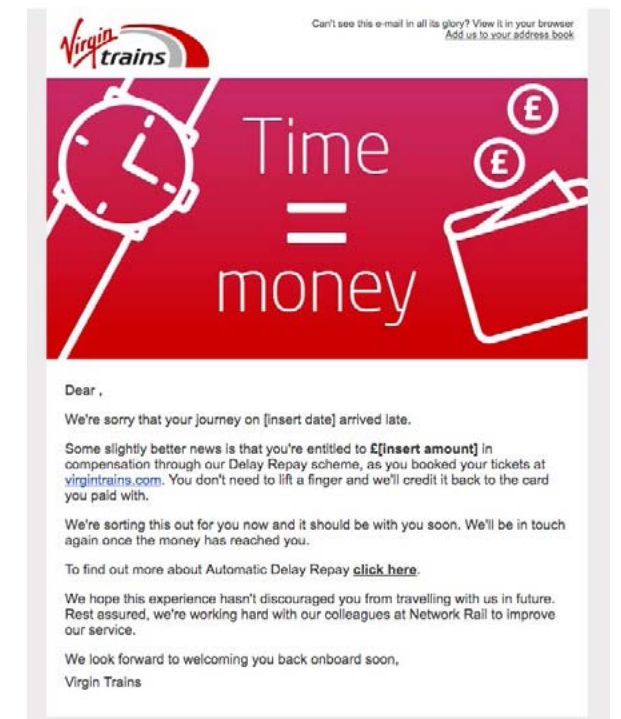
Automatic Delay Repay

Chapter Three - Design & tone of voice

Wow them and make them want to read on. It's easy when you know how.

A stunning image plus a dash of wit are key ingredients to inbox success. Whether you choose a great photograph, a slick illustration, or some artful typography for that all-important header image – here's how to make sure it's unmistakably Virgin...

Introducing our core html fonts - NeoSans & Arial

Always remember that as much of your email copy as possible needs to be set as html, otherwise there's no guarantee it will be readable when it reaches inboxes. And what a waste of words that'd be.

3.1. Html typography

Our core font for all our branding is Neo Sans. From its subtle and refined lightest weight to its impactful bold, this awesome all rounder keeps everything we do distinctly us.

The rules

Use Neo Sans as the master font in all html applications, headline and body copy (although only light or regular in body copy please).

Italic and light italic can also be used, but always consider the location and appropriateness first.

When going small

Use Arial for your header and footer module copy for greater legibility. Arial comes in a load of different shapes and sizes, but we stick to regular, bold, italic or bold italic.

Backups

As we're always moving forward and thinking mobile first, we recommend using Neo Sans in all our email design. On the rare occasions this lovely web font isn't supported, we have back-ups in place - Helvetica, Arial and Sans-Serif. This is known as graceful degredation.

Light

Light italic

Regular

Italic

3.1. Typography as image

Styling typography

When using type as an image be playful with headlines in order to have a high visual impact.

To ensure brand presence, keep 80% of the copy in Neo Sans. There are plenty of resources you can use to bring Neo Sans to life. And, feel free to use the full range of font weights available.

We tend to use combinations like 3D with exaggerated side shadows or bevel the lettering with a modern retro style. See the examples on the right.

3.1. Typography as image – Script fonts

Sometimes we need to add a little extra flair to our words – and script fonts have a great dynamism and warmth that help deliver a more personal touch.

New supporting typography - Handleson

We use Handleson as it's a fun and diverse font family. There are many fonts out there to choose from. So, if you want to choose a different supporting font please check it's ok with the brand team first.

Hello gorgeous

Diversity of the font family

Hello *Hello*

Hello HELLO
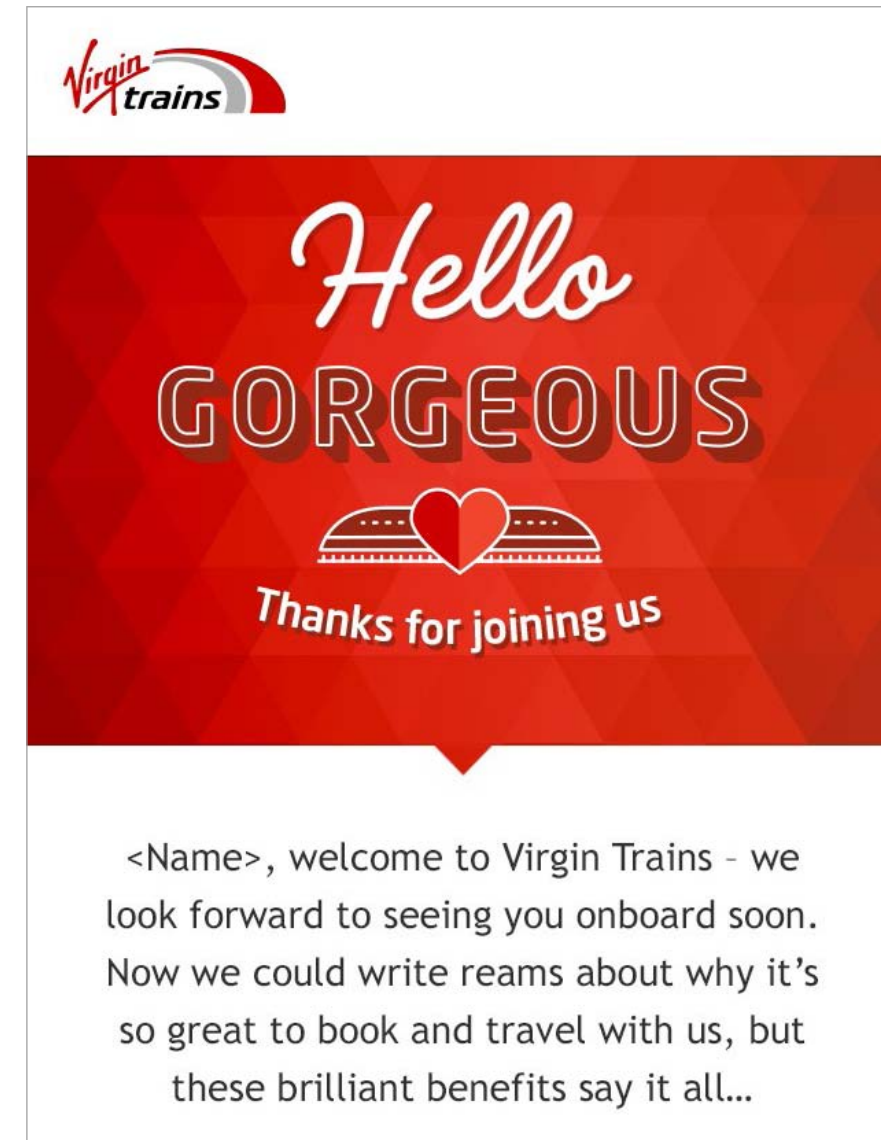
HELLO

3.1. Typography

Here are some examples of styled type as image in our hero images.

3. 2. Colour

Add a splash of colour to break things up a bit.

We're Virgin Trains, which means we're red. We want to be instantly recognisable, but without overpowering, so we dial this up or down depending on the email. Other colours are drawn from our website colour palette with a few other beauties thrown in. Here goes...

3.2. Colour

Naturally our brand red is always a feature in our emails. Treat it with the love and respect it deserves, and use the monochromes to break it up – we never want to be *too* red.

Standard email palette

#B30400

#CC0000

#990400

#FFF

#939393

#000

HTML Backgrounds

#EDEDED

#FFF + grey stripe

3.2. Colour - specific palettes

Business newsletter palette

| | | #08225d | #5d0307 | #CC0000 | #FFF | #313131 |

HTML Backgrounds

| # 08225d | #3b2929 |
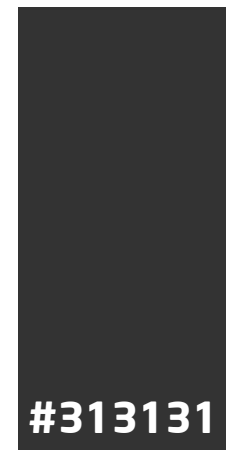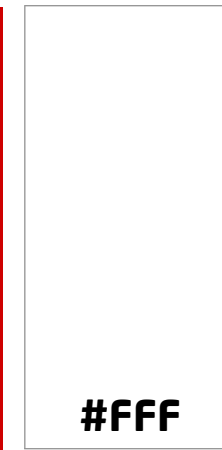
First Class newsletter palette

| | | #08225d | #831186 | #313131 | #FFF | #CC0000 |

HTML Background

| #0d1424 |
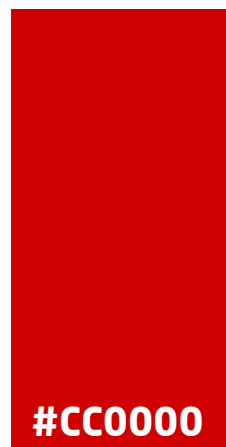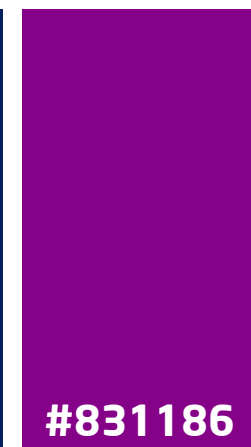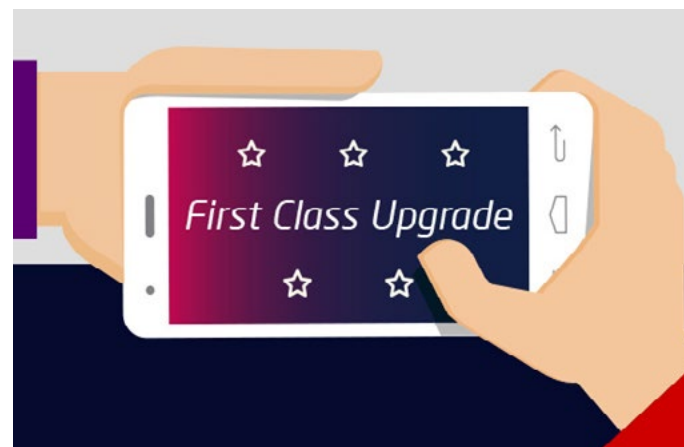
3.2. Colour - complimentary palette

We have specific rules for certain modules (header, footer, Nectar, etc.) – but for the rest you can use this great array from our web palette. As a general rule, choose a colour that both complements and stands out from the module image. Vary the colours to break up the modular content, and don't place similar or identical colours too close together. Easy.

Red

Red dark
#ac2224

Brand red
#cc0000

Red bright
#ff0000

Pinks

Pink dark
#a92a60

Pink
#c62d64

Pink light
#dd2c6c

Purples

Purple dark
#831186

Purple
#7a419d

Purple light
#b122a4

Blues

Blue dark
#0d1424

First Class blue
#08225d

Blue light
#00307d

Greys

Graphite
#313131

Grey darker
#666666

Grey dark
#939393

Other grey tones can also be used, but make sure that any copy used over these backgrounds is high contrast.

Specific colours

Yellow warning
#ffe401

Orange alert
#f49b1d

Green travel
#299937

Blue weather
#2d94cf

3.2. Colour - html copy

We stick to a simple palette when choosing font colours, making sure that the copy is highly legible on whatever background colour it sits on. Here's a guide.

Headers, sub-headers and CTAs

Brand red
#cc0000

Red dark
#ac2224

Graphite
#313131

First Class blue
#08225d

Intro, body copy and footer

Graphite
#313131

White
#ffffff

Bold blackheader ---- **Don't miss another Red Reward**

Charcoal body copy ---- Hi Alexander. We just wanted to remind you that the new **Virgin Red** app is ready and raring to be downloaded. It gives you immediate access to a big bundle of exclusive offers, events, and experiences from across the Virgin Group – really not to be missed.

Bold red sub-header ---- **What do you get?**

Main story module copy

Charcoal header and body copy — Pitch to Branson
VOOM is back for 2016! It's your chance to pitch your million dollar idea to the big man himself for a share of a £1m investment. Better dry-clean your suit.

White button copy — Register now

White header and body copy — Business booking
Booking lots for business? Our SME booking portal - Virgin Trains Business - could make your life easier. With one account, it makes managing bookings a doddle.

Story module copy

3.2. Colour

Main palettes should be used as a base to create the main structure of the email: hero image, copy and CTA, main background colour and html background.

You can use complementary colours for content modules. If you are varying the module colours, make sure that adjacent module background colours are different.

Sometimes you'll need to highlight a promotion or a destination offer, there you can use the complementary colours to make that module stand out.

*Standard
email palette*

*Standard
email palette*

*Standard
email palette*

*Complementary
colour*

*Complementary
colour*

3.3. Photography

Use photos that are sure to get the likes. And the clicks.

Nothing adds that warmth and human-ness like a good photograph. And whether we're showing people, destinations or our handsome trains, we have a few rules to make our photos as engaging as possible.

3.3. Photography

When it comes to images, you can choose from our bank of brand photography or use a carefully selected stock shot.
You may also be supplied an image to use from a partner brand (more on these guys later).

Know what's right

Our images are natural, relaxed, dynamic, fresh, and contemporary. Use focus and cropping to make them more interesting, and if finding the right image is proving difficult, consider using another visual resource, like illustrations or icons.

A splash of red

We love a bit of red, so try to use photos with a splash of it. If this isn't possible you can always incorporate it another way: a red copy line or panel overlay is enough to reinforce our Virgin-ness. Alternatively, dial up the red in other parts of the email such as background colour.

Be crafty with the copy

It's not always easy to integrate a copy line with a photograph. If there's no space, overlay a panel somewhere on or around the image to hold your line. Use your design ingenuity!

3.3. Photography

Finding the right image is not always easy.

Sometimes we'll get images from partners or other providers.
More often than not, those images will not cover our needs.
In those cases it's very important to support the images with
catchy copy that can be overlaid on top of the image.

In the absence of a good photo we sometimes use stock images.
Select your stock image carefully and refer to our Brand Book or
speak to the brand team for guidance.

If photos just aren't up to scratch try using an illustration or
type as image.

Crop it right

Cropping the images is as important as selecting the right one.
Focus on the image in the main concept to communicate
your message.

Try to fix small imperfections like very grey skies, but don't
over-do it!
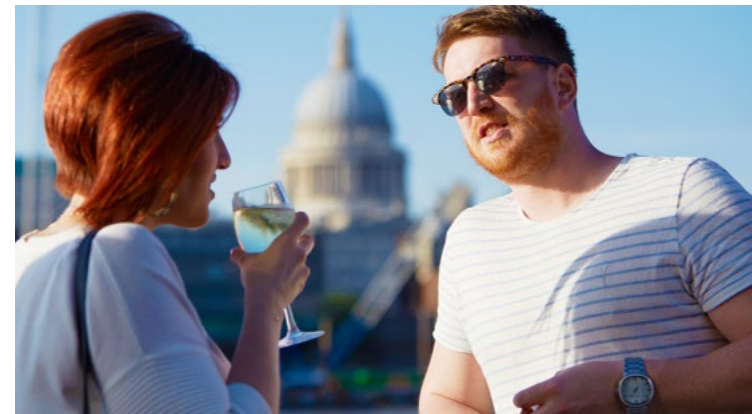
3.3. Photography - in use

Here are a few examples of different shots we've used previously.
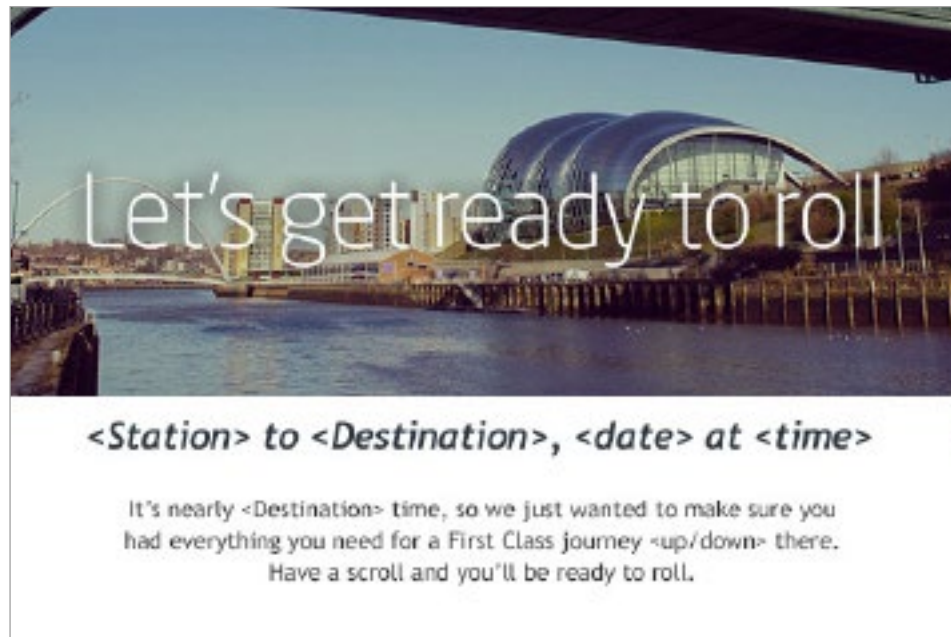
Destination images used in content modules.

Image with colour overlay used in module to fit content.

Image with angled text overly used in content module.

If you can't find it – draw it. Or get someone else to.

We love to use illustrations as header images – they're ideal for creating clever concepts and perfect for incorporating our wit.

On the next few pages are three illustration styles that you can draw on as a guide to creating your masterpiece.

3.4. Illustration - style route 1

On quicker email jobs, we adapt stock images to save a bit of time and add a dash of wit."

Original stock images adapted for 'Chiltern retention' email hero along with added elements.

Stock city skyline

Stock image characters
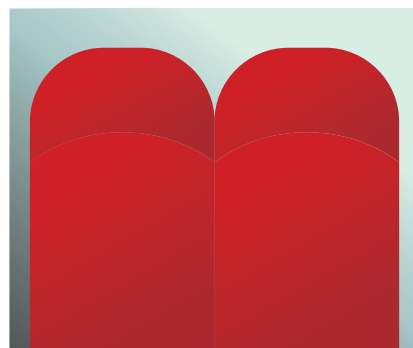
Hand drawn seats

Hand drawn sign
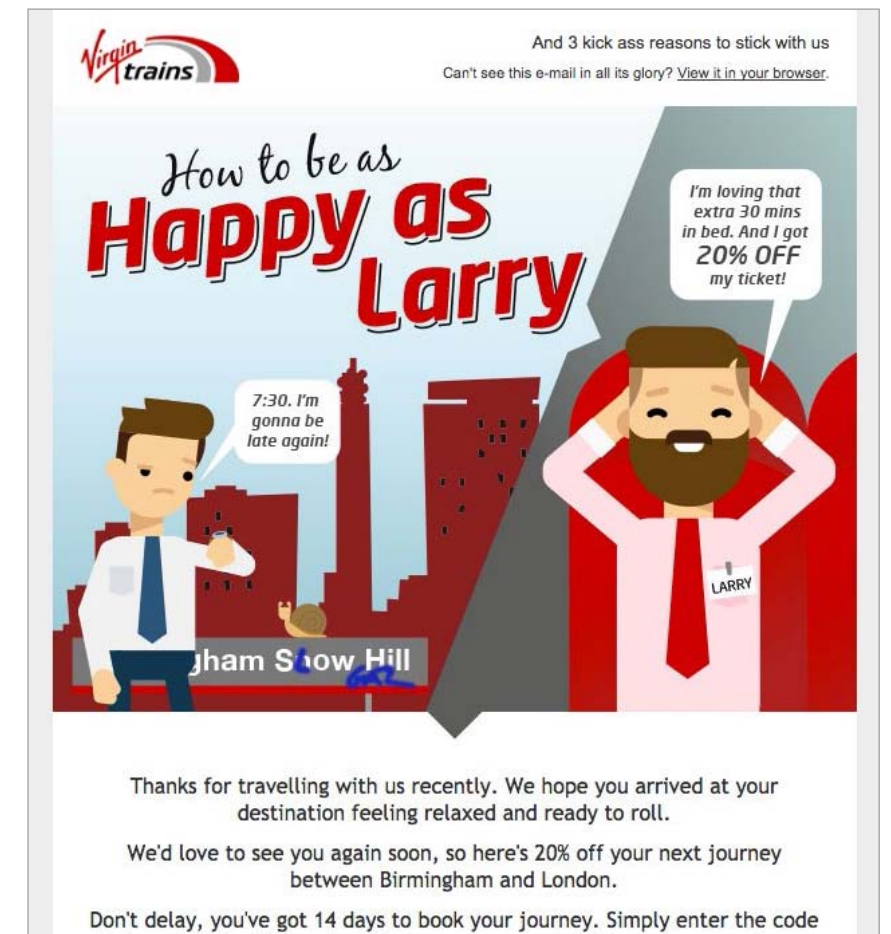
Finished hero image

3.4. Illustration – style route 2

Using simple geometric shapes and a grid build your illustration from scratch and add a textured background (backgrounds on p43).

How it's done
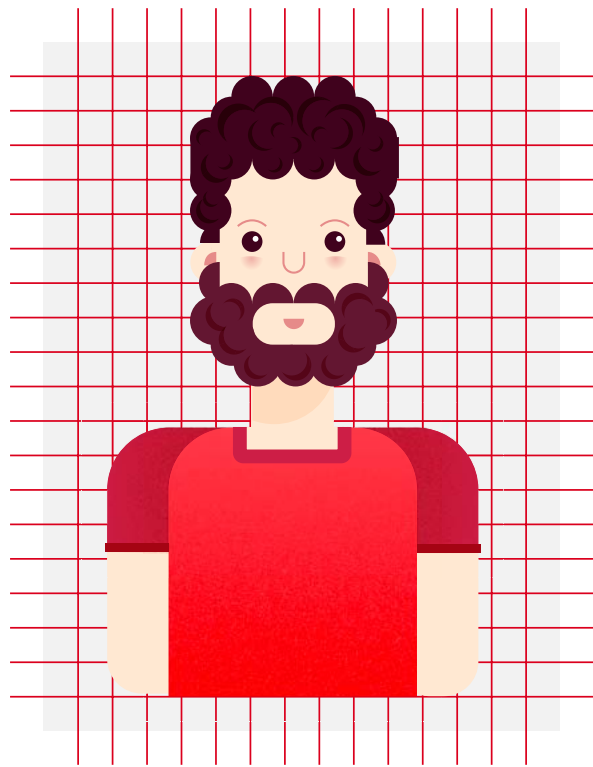
Digital-friendly grid: divisible by 20 / 10 / 5

☐ 20x20px

Glorious diversity

In situ

This is what it all looks like in one of our emails. As you can see, the flat style works perfectly to create a simple and bold header. An absolute inbox winner.
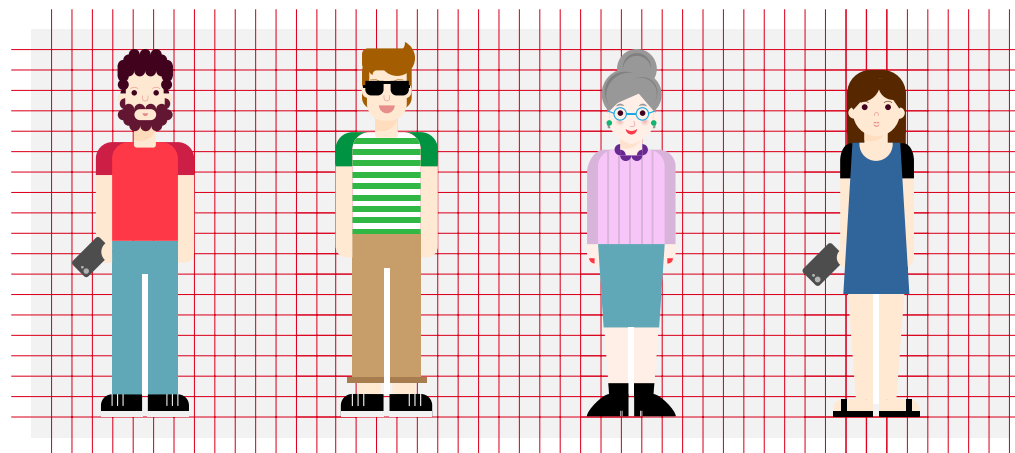
All illustrations are created using these 3 basic shapes:

You can:

ADD   SUBSTRACT   INTERSECT   EXCLUDE
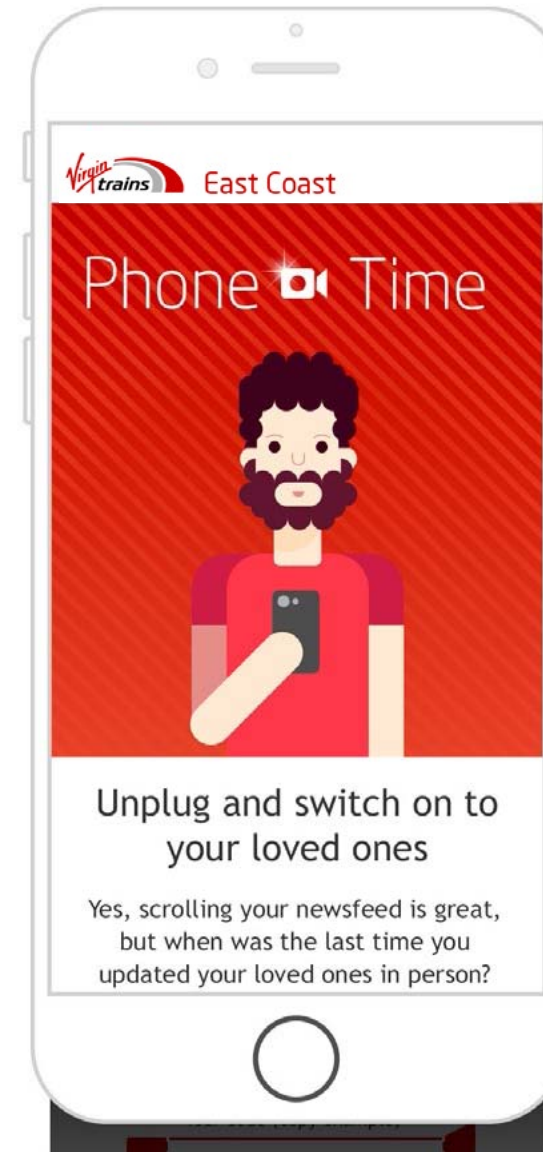
3.4. Illustration – style route 3

When we have the time and budget we commision bespoke illustration.
Make sure they keep a flat and fun style with just the right amount of cheekiness.
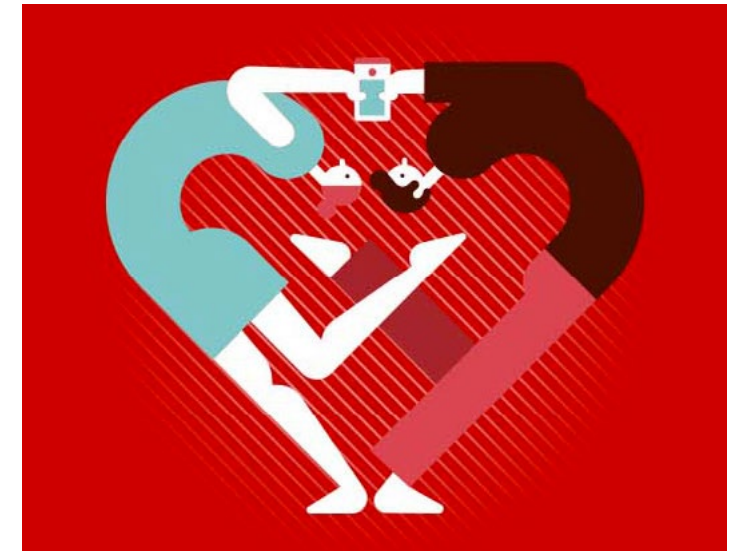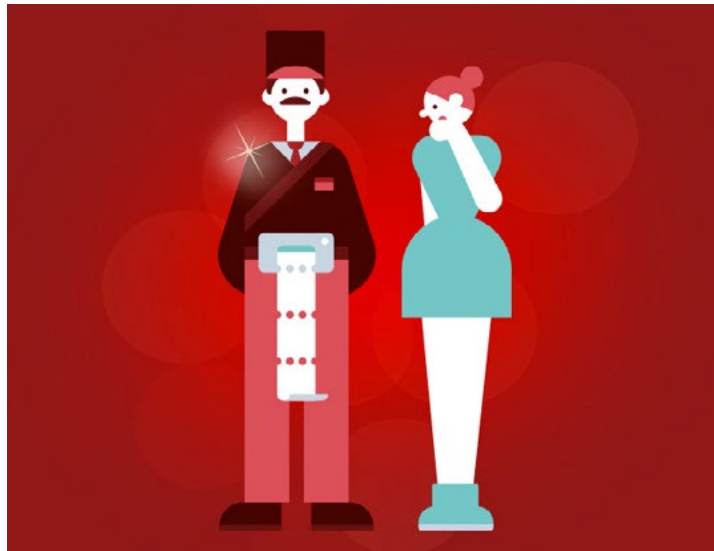
'Kama Sutra' illustrations created by Yehteh

Keep it slick, subtle, and a little bit sexy.

We're going to keep this section simple, like our backgrounds. There's a couple of pointers over the page - the rest is up to you and your design genius.

3.5. Hero image backgrounds

When creating our hero image and/or designing images for module contents, we like to bring a bit of pizazz with slick, textured backgrounds.

They allow for plenty of creative flair as there are so many options – you can adapt colours and blending modes too if necessary. These examples are a good guide.
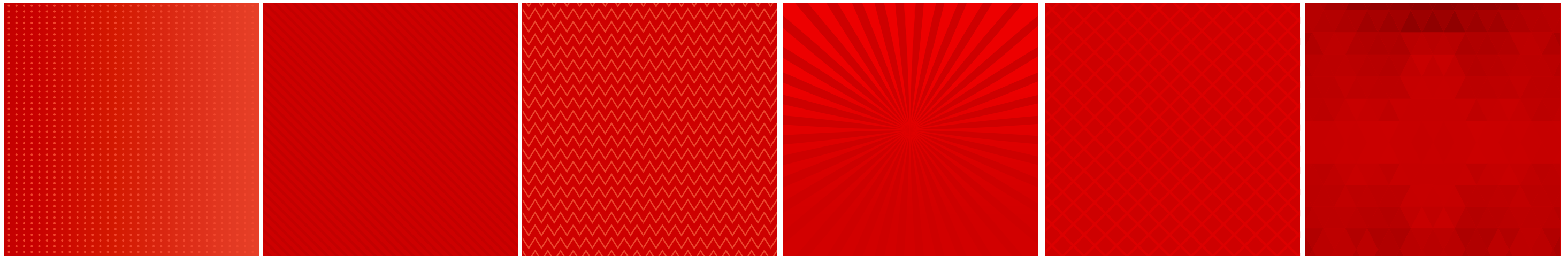
👁 You'll find all these backgrounds as vectors in the deliverables folder.

Like any good relationship, it's all about compromise.

Sometimes we like to buddy up with a partner to offer more enticing deals and tap into new markets. This means we need to position both brands carefully together without diluting our personality. Treat each partnership on a case by case basis and speak to the brand team for advice.

3.6. Partnerships

Hero images

Partnership hero images are often brought to life with a bit of clever copy
- add a dash of wit if you can to inject some Virgin Trains personality.

Where's the red?

Nothing shouts Virgin more than a liberal dose of red in the hero image -
push it as far as you can.

Logo test

If you were to cover up our logo, would the email still scream Virgin Trains?
It's a tricky thing to get right, so be sure to run designs past the design
team to make absolutely sure.

Nectar

Nectar's one of our main partners, so we often use their logo in our emails.

As a general rule, always try and get away from the Nectar brand purple,
as purple is now one of our secondary colours. Instead, insert the logo
within our branding.
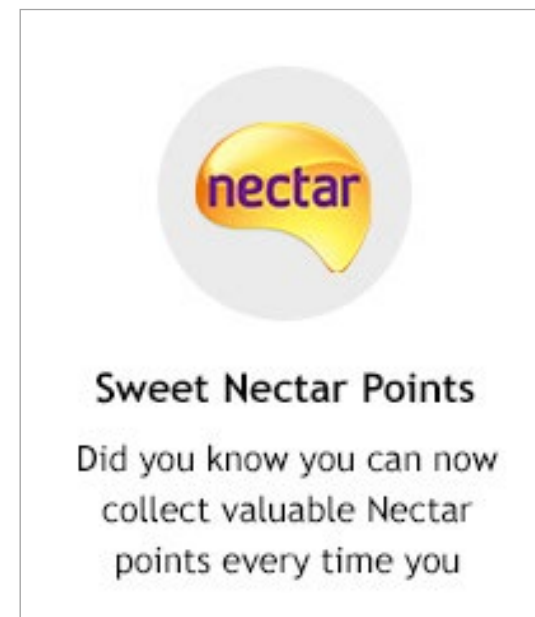
Nectar logo in icon module
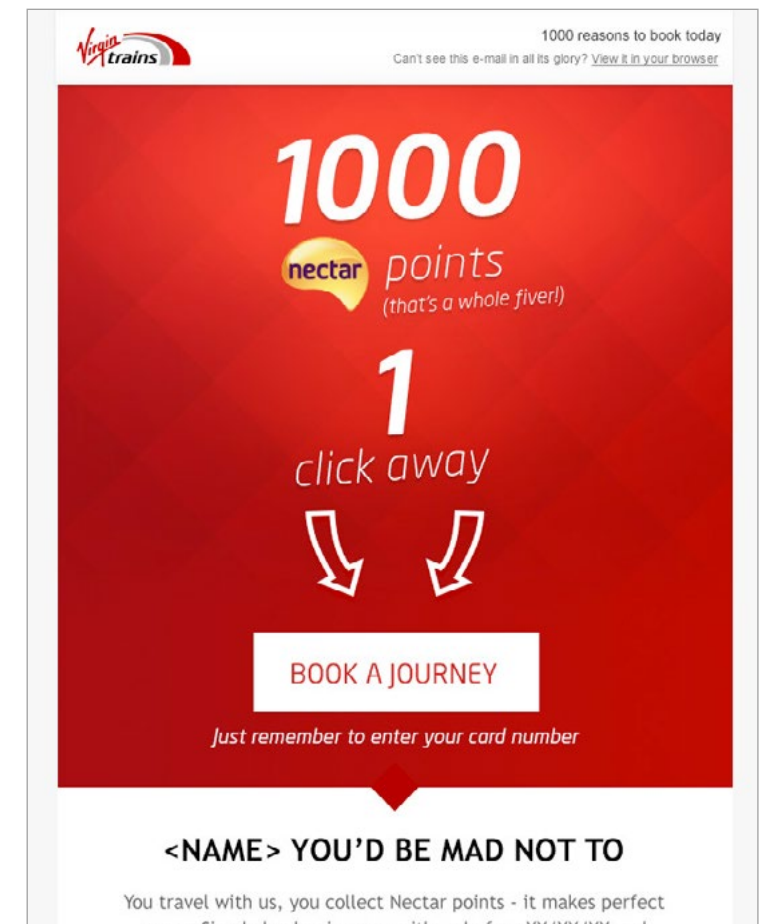
Nectar logo as part of hero image

If it's fun to write, it'll be fun to read.

Our Brand Book has a fantastic section on tone of voice, so make sure you read it first. Naturally, the same tone applies here, but in CRM we can afford to be a little bit cheekier, and a whole lot bolder. Great news for you wordsmiths.

3.6. Tone of voice

Use these check points to get that oh-so important tone spot on and to get those direct responses in the form of clicks, laughs and shares. Remember, we're a Virgin company, so we're expected to talk and sound a little different from your usual business or train operator.

Human-ness

You're a human, right?! So write like one. No buzz words or railway jargon, please. Just nice, straightforward, honest language.

Be personal

The beauty of CRM is that we know who we're talking to, where they travel, and what they like (ish). So make the most of it!

Be straight

This is direct marketing after all. A single witty bracket or closing remark can be more than enough to give direct copy a Virgin feel. Fact.

Wink

Use your gloriously intelligent wit. Whip it out when you think it's right. Our sense of humour is always clever and confident - just don't overdo it.

Playful

We're a breath of fresh air in a notoriously stuffy industry. Familiar human quirks or words that raise a smile of recognition, always speak volumes.

Bold and positive

We're self-assured and bold. But not arrogant. Be humble, down-to-earth and keep things friendly. There's no need to brag or lie, just find a positive spin and celebrate the goodness.

3.6. Writing style

Subject lines - SHORT, SHARP & ENTICING

We aim for 5 words max. So be bold, have fun, and if there's a great offer inside don't hide it.

Snippet - SAY WHAT'S INSIDE

We use this to give more detail of what's in the email – it helps keep our subject lines snappy. You've probably got 10 words to play with here.

Header lines - IMMEDIATELY ENGAGING

Our header creative is where we give our emails some serious pizzazz. Any copy here has to nail the tone.

Sub-head - SPELL IT OUT

This is where we go straight – telling the recipient exactly what the email's all about. Naturally, we can still add a bit of tone to this.

Body copy - COOL & CONCISE

We write how we'd speak and never say more than we have to. So keep it nice and short. Less is so much more.

CTA - DIRECT

We're all about clickthroughs. So keep these short and clear – tell people where their click will take them.

Chapter Four - The nitty gritty

The devil is in the **detail.**

Great things come in small packages, and the smaller elements of our emails are as important as any other. So keep them consistent, and get them right.

Our logo, ladies and gentlemen...

It's our mark. It's our heart. Treat it with respect. There are specific rules to protect and look after it, so get to know it better in our Brand Book.

Buttons, links and all that jazz.

Most of our emails are clickable – our CTA buttons are the big hitter. We want people to tap, click, and go forth to book a ticket. Here's how we make them irresistible...

4.2. CTA buttons

For your primary CTA button, go big and go bold. For most emails it'll be in our brand red. For others, such as First Class or Business newsletters dip into our primary and web colour palettes. If your button's the same colour as the background, add a 1px border in the same colour as your button text and arrow. Pure click-bait.

Width

Keep your button width under 300px and your copy on one line. That way your button will also look great on mobile screens.

Arrows

This is the only part of the button that can be an image. Set the arrow at 30px high in the style shown with 5px top and bottom and 10px to the right. Make your total button height

Font style

Use Neo Sans Regular in sentence case. Set this as html text for readability at 20 - 28px size.
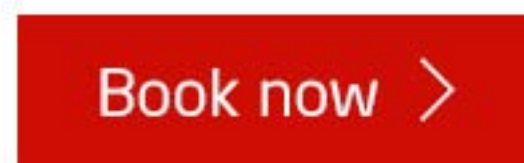
Adding an iconic touch to your emails is easy.

We use a lot of icons in our emails as they're a clear, simple way of signposting and illustrating a topic. We have a whole bunch designed especially for us (you can find these in our Brand Book) so any new icons should follow the same style.

4.3. Icons

Usage

Our icons must always be accompanied by a caption or block of copy to clarify their meaning.
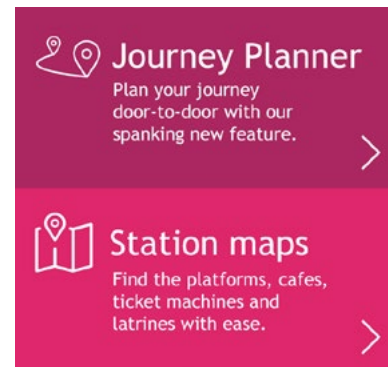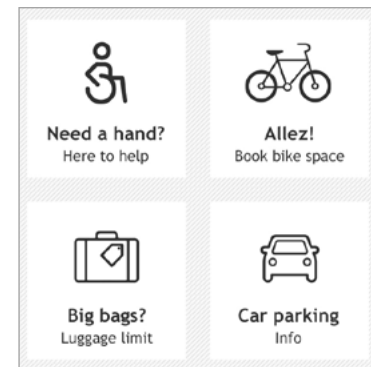
Colours

Icons can be displayed in a variety of our brand colours, and for some specific emails can be stylised. But don't go crazy – keep 'em simple.

Resources

You should be able to find every icon you need in the master icon file. If not, give the brand team a shout and they'll advise on creating a new one.
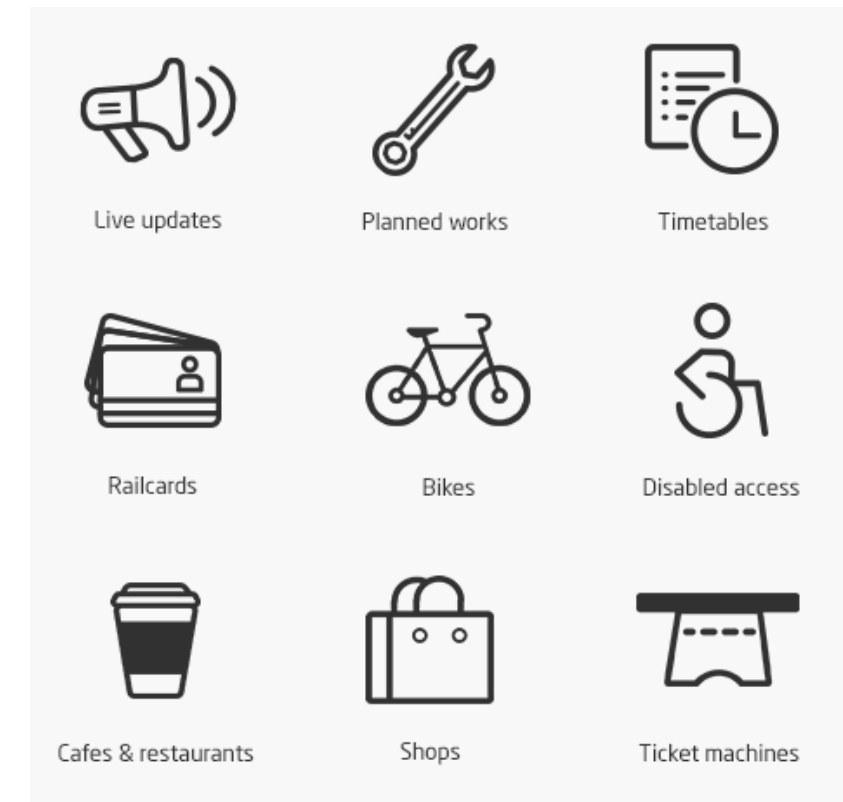
West Coast already has an icon master file with many supplied assets. See deliverables to find out more.

Everybody loves a good offer... code.

These guys simply have to stand out. We make them easy for our customers to spot, read and redeem. That's it.

4.4. Offer codes

Our unique PIN codes are usually placed directly below intro copy along with instructions on how to redeem them.
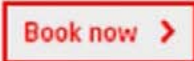
The code must be clearly outlined as shown with a clear call to action below.

Colours can vary, but are usually a mixture of our brand red, white and grey. The mobile version is almost the same, but with a reduced font size of 15px.

Max width - 346px

30th June, and get the discount you so deserve. Easy.

Don't forget the code:
49R4U9F336

Font size - 18px

PIN cell border 2px dotted line.

Book now >

CTA should be in a contrasting colour to background and PIN cell.

35px left padding

Cells and text are all centre aligned

35px right padding

Your 25% code: XXXXXX

13px to padding

D

Book 25% off >
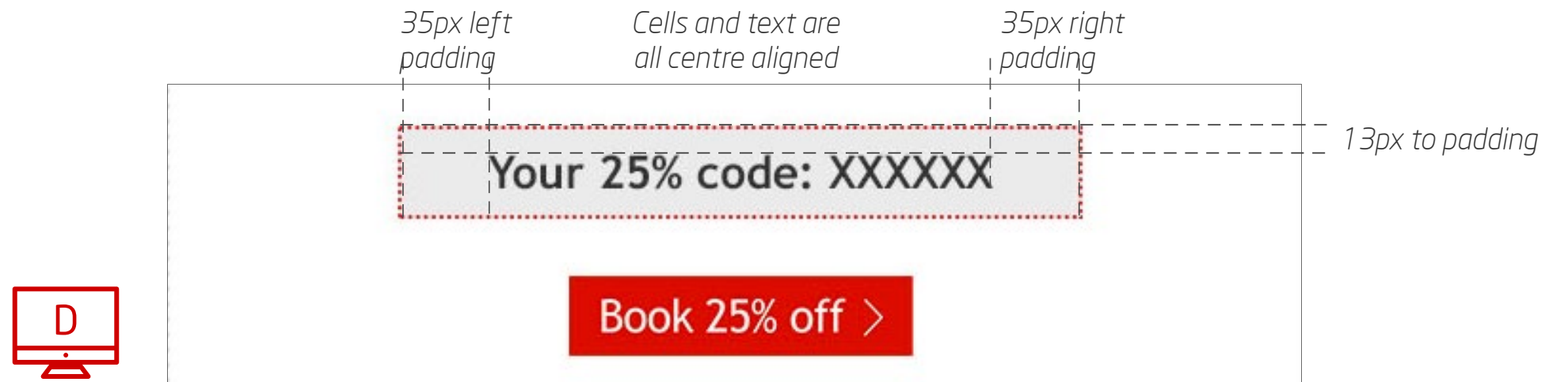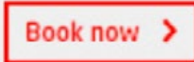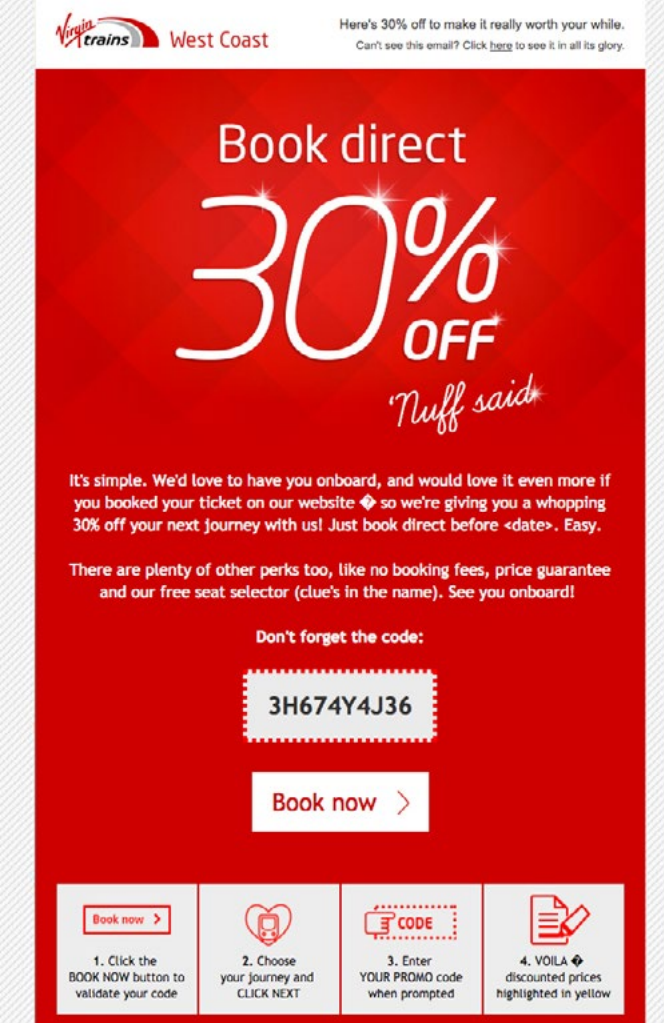
4.4. Offer codes

Always include our step by step guide for offer codes when sending an email with a PIN.
Include this immediately below the call to action button that follows your PIN code.

Chapter Five - Tech wizardry

5.1. Animation

A [moving] image tells a thousand words.

We love a GIF. Who doesn't? They add interest and grab attention as soon as the email is opened. We've put a few pointers on the next couple of pages.

5.1. Animation

Whether it's to bring a hero to life or make an offer even flashier, a simple bit of animation can work wonders. There are just a few things to bear in mind when creating them:

- Keep your file under 400K
- Remove any unnecessary background effects like gradients or patterns
- Remove unnecessary frames
- For smoother animations you can use bespoke animation software like After Effects or similar, but Photoshop does compress better final files.

Roll over to play and see this baby in all its moving glory.

⚠ Just watch-out: not all email servers will play an animated GIF, so make sure you provide an alternative static image with all the important messaging.

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5.1. Animation

A couple of other moving gems.

We're hot, fast and....
GO AT IT 54 TIMES A DAY
Phew!

▶ Go to fullscreen to play animation

Phone ◼◀ Time

▶ Go to fullscreen to play animation

Create emails for all to see.

When you've created the most awesome email around, you want everyone to see it. So there are always a few things to consider to make sure it doesn't get missed, blocked or bounced back.

5.2. Accessibility

Make sure you don't leave anyone out by following our accessibility rules...
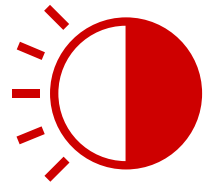
Make sure there's high contrast between the background and the font. For instance, use white copy when using red or blue background.

Always define an alternative text description for images ('alt'). And provide fallback images when using GIFs.
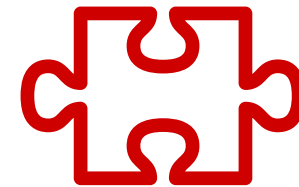
Design your email by modules. Define a consistent hierarchy of content assigning constant values for headings (h1, h2, h3, h4, h5) as well as for body copy and other elements.

In your CTA, always use text fields. Describe semantically what to expect after the click (aka, no more 'CLICK HERE!').

Chapter Six - Examples

In all their **glory**

Even with all the great guidelines you've just read and memorised, there's nothing quite like seeing examples of emails past and present to get a feel for things. So without much further ado...

6. Examples - East Coast

Standard, Business and First Class emails

6. Examples - West Coast

Standard, Business and First Class emails.
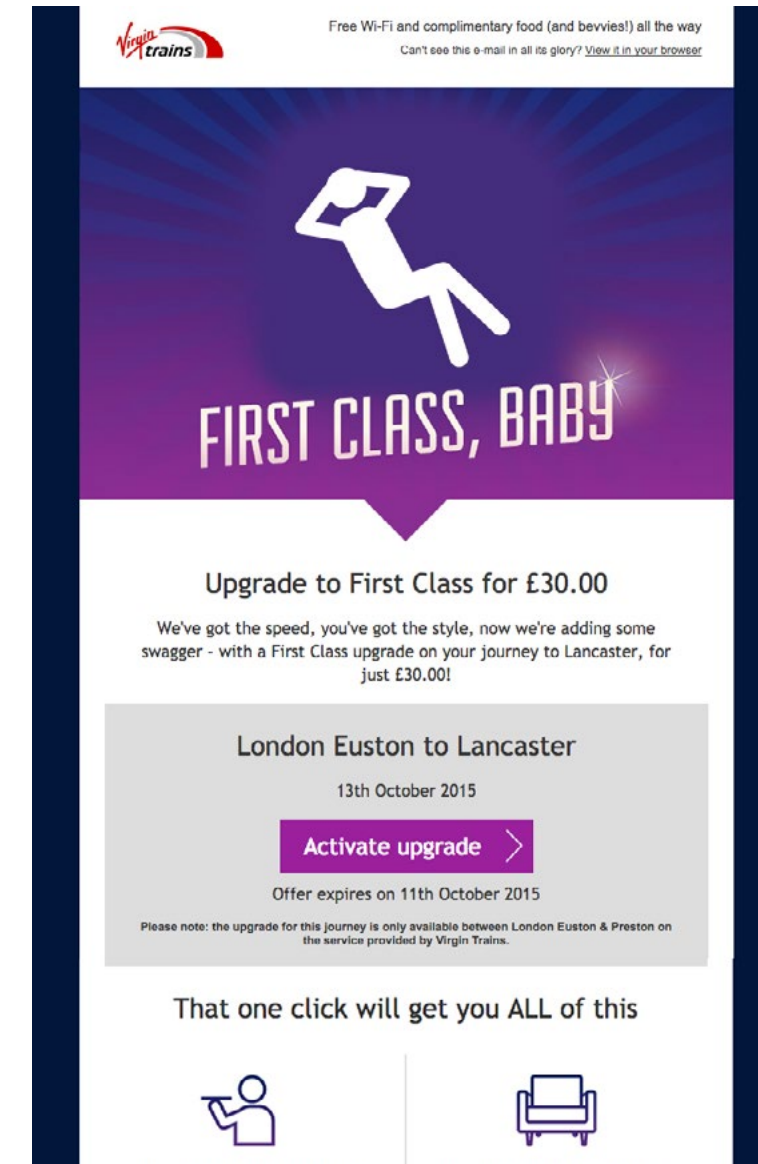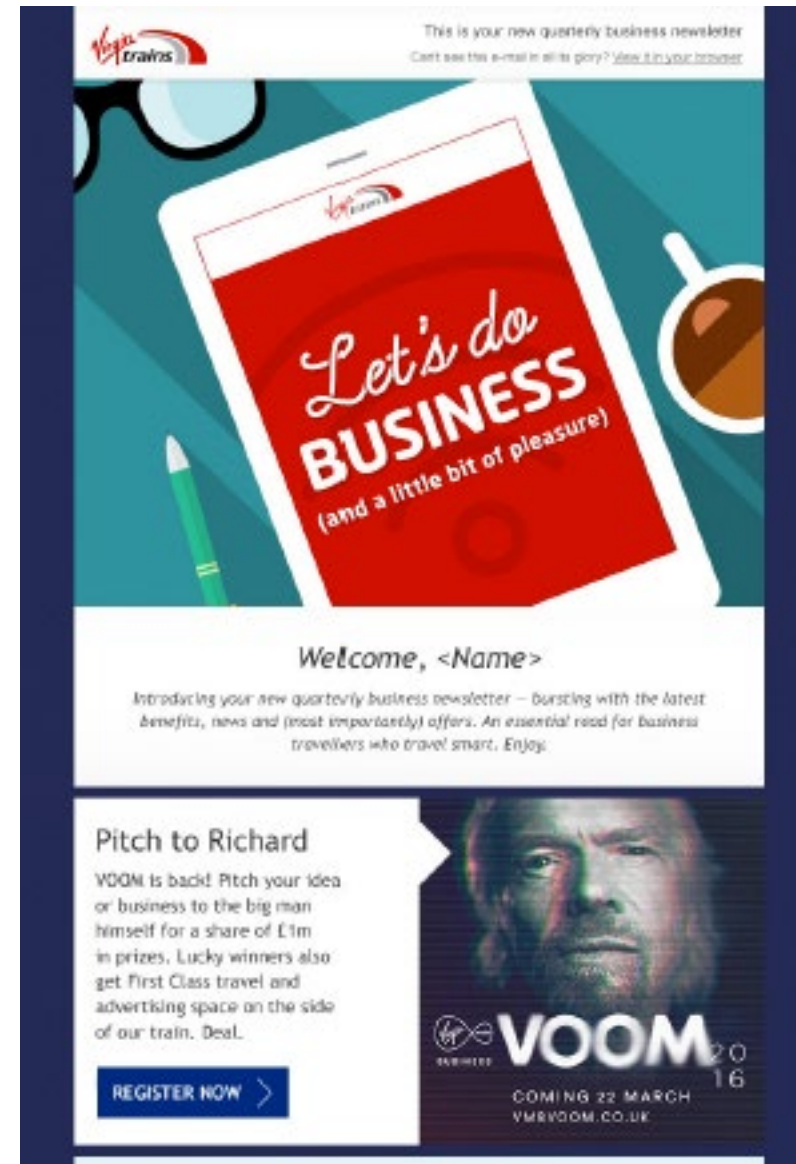
6.1 A bit different

Sometimes we do things a little differently for a specific campaign or topic. Follow our guidelines as far as possible, and make sure you run your creation past the brand team.

Here's couple of examples that don't follow these guidelines to a T.

Seat sale campaign

Car versus train

Chapter Seven - The last stop

That's all folks!

We've now come to the end of our journey and you can
go forth and create some stunning emails. Any questions,
please don't hestitate to contact us at...

7.1 Contact us

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