Links in Cold Email: How to Add & Track Them Safely (Updated)

Do you have links in your cold emails? I bet you do. We often feel the need to add a link or two – either in the body of our email or in the signature. Moreover, we usually want to know if someone clicked the link or not. Ideally, we would like to know how many people clicked the link and who it was exactly.

There are many tools that allow us to track clicks on links in emails, but all of them use the same mechanism to do that. Unfortunately, the mechanism is not perfect, and it may cause spam alerts if we set up our links wrong. That's why it's important to put in the links properly into our message not to get into spam folder. Here's how to do that.

Ground rules about links in cold email

Before we pass to technical tips, there are some crucial rules about putting links into email messages. And those do not derive from technical limitations. They derive from logical and structural cold email assumptions and from our respect to the addressee.

Rule #1 Don't put in too many links in one email

If you add a link in every sentence, the recipient of your email will not be able to decide what you want from them. Which link do you want them to click on? And why should they even click on anything? If you decide to put in a link, make sure it leads to a place from where they can take a next step – contact you back, find more useful information on your company, etc.

Rule #2 Don't expect a link to sell for you

It's not enough anymore to write a great pitch and put in a link to your website to get a new customer just like that. I've written this about a dozen times on this blog so far, but I'm going to write it again just to make sure we all keep it in our minds:

cold email is not about selling, it's about starting a valuable business relation (which may, but doesn't have to, result in a sale).

So if you give your prospects a link to your site and expect they will go there and simply buy what you're selling, you may be sorely disappointed with the results of your cold email campaign.

For more on that topic, see this post:

What Shouldn't We Expect from Our Cold Email Addressees? >>

Rule #3 Make sure the link works before you send the email

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How does the click tracking mechanism work?

To check if someone clicked on your link, a link-tracking software needs to redirect your recipient to a custom URL, where the tracking takes place, and from there redirect them to the destination page.

For example:

Say, you want to see in Woodpecker how many people clicked on the link in your first email.

1. Your destination link is: WeRCuttingWebsites.com (that's a fake address, I used it only for demonstration purposes).

2. Woodpecker will create a custom tracking link with https://, like this one: click.52c.es/click?openIdUrl=4N6&url=WeRCuttingWebsites.com

3. Thus, by clicking the link to your site in your email, your prospect will go to click.52c.es/click?openIdUrl=4N6&url=WeRCuttingWebsites.com for a second — and that's how we'll be able to register the fact that she clicked the link, and next she will be immediately redirected to your website.

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URL: http://YouCompanyAlternativeDomain.com

LINK TEXT: MyCompanyWebsite.co

☑ Track clicks (not recommended)

domain Y

ADD

Why the anti-spam filters get alarmed by that? Long story short: because spammers used to give people nicely looking links that led to dangerous websites.

But there's a way to add tracking links safely

If you're using link tracking to check if someone clicked on the link in your email, make sure you add the link to a piece of text that is *not* an address itself.

So instead of tracking the clicks on WeRCuttingWebsites.com, track clicks on " Check our website".

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If you're new to all this click tracking, here's a little exercise for you. Go to your inbox now, and find a message from a newsletter. Open the message and hover with the mouse cursor over a chosen link given in the copy of the message. Check the address that will appear on the left at the bottom of the message window. Now click the link. Are the URL from the email and the destination URL the same? ☺

How to track links in Woodpecker?

If you want to send your cold emails and follow-ups automatically, you can use Woodpecker to do so. Now in your emails and follow-ups, you can also track links.

Here's a quick tutorial on how to do that right.

1) When creating/editing copy of your cold email campaign, highlight a piece of text you want to add your tracking link to.

At WeRCuttingWebsites we do the cutting, so that talented designers like yourself can focus entirely on graphics.

We'd love to cooperate. Would you be interested?

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Your email...   I WANT IT

URL: wercuttingwebsites.com

LINK TEXT: WeRCuttingWebsites

☑ Track clicks (not recommended)

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Stay safe with Woodpecker

Update June 2019

We added SSL to our link tracking mechanism in Woodpecker. Thanks to that you have a greater chance of staying safe while sending your email campaigns. Plus, a chance of getting your email delivered has increased too. Why is that? Some email accounts block messages that contain links to a domain without SSL. Since we have SSL, you're safe from getting blocked by those accounts.

To make sure your messages get delivered and you're protected, our tracking pixel isn't based on http:// but on https://. From now on, every piece that's tracked in Woodpecker, such as unsubscribe, email open or click is tracked with SSL.

To sum up

Remember the 4 rules when adding links to your cold emails:

- don't add too many links,

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Cathy is the Woodpecker

blog's creator & chief...

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