

**ACTIVATE**

**LIVE**

# Driving Record Customer Growth to Being Blocklisted in the Same Week



Jade Kolber | @ItsmeJade

Senior Marketing Manager - Email

**99designs**





# G'day, I'm Jade!

- Based in Melbourne, Australia
- Specialized in email marketing for over a decade
- Worked for global creative communities, non-for-profits and social enterprise sector
- Mum, avid cook and sneaker collector



**99designs** is the **global creative platform**  
that makes it easy for designers and  
clients to work together to create designs  
they love



# Over 90 design categories



99designs

Categories How it works Find a designer Agencies

1 800 513 1678 Log in



## Take your business online today

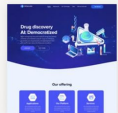
Businesses everywhere are moving more quickly than ever before. Our creative platform allows your brand to evolve fast and tap into new digital strategies.

Get started

See creativity at work

by Mad pepper

Trending:



Web page design



Logo & brand id...



Product packagi...



Product label



Illustration or gr...



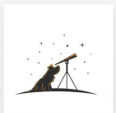
Book cover



App design



T-shirt



Show more

Everything from logos & websites, to wine labels & tattoos!


Two ways to work:

1. Start a design contest
- OR
2. Hire a designer to collaborate one-on-one

# Email marketing @ 99designs




99designs Design by Vladanland  
View in browser



**Mouthwatering catering logos**

The Tour de France is in full swing. The bikers are tired, sweaty and hungry. What better way to feed *les cyclists* than with *les sandwiches*. But who's providing the grub? The caterers, of course! Check out the finest in catering logo inspiration and get ready to create the ultimate logo for your own tasty business.


[Catering logo inspiration](#)



## Tour de France Themed Newsletter

Creative by Vladanland

99designs View in browser  
By BEARHAND Design



**Monster savings await**

Don't look now ...but there's a huge deal ahead. Get US\$50 off a new custom design, plus a FREE Power Pack upgrade (US\$99 value).

Get the perfect logo, website, book cover or terrifyingly good monster design (seriously). But don't wait, this gigantic deal ends in 48 hours.


[Save me now!](#)

99designs © 2018  
2201 Broadway, Suite 815  
Oakland CA 94612 [Unsubscribe](#)

## Cyber Monday 2018 Sales Campaign

Creative by BEARHAND Design


99designs View in browser  
designs by Lera Balashova



**Your favorite logos go Bauhaus**

This year marks 100 years of Bauhaus, a design movement that significantly influenced the trajectory of art and graphic design. In honor of all things Bauhaus, we tasked our designers with redesigning some of the world's most notable logos in the remarkable style. You've never seen Google, Netflix and Apple quite like this!

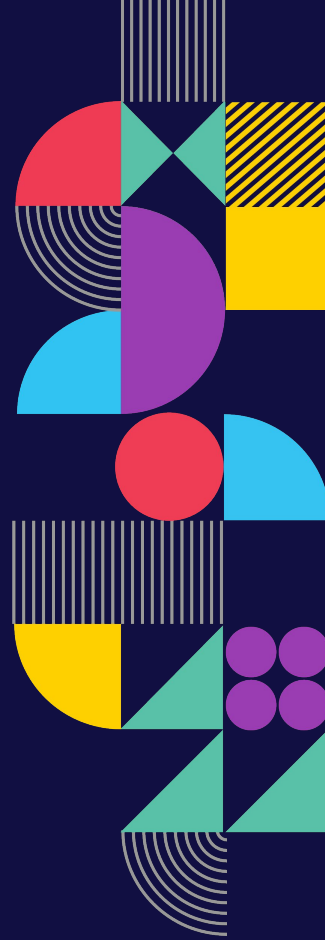
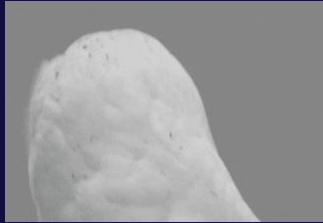
[Big logos, Bauhaus-ed](#)



## 100 Years of Bauhaus Solus

Creative by Lera Balashova

**This is a  
cautionary tale...**



# Background

Our Cyber Monday 2019 promotion was projected to be our largest customer growth campaign ever!

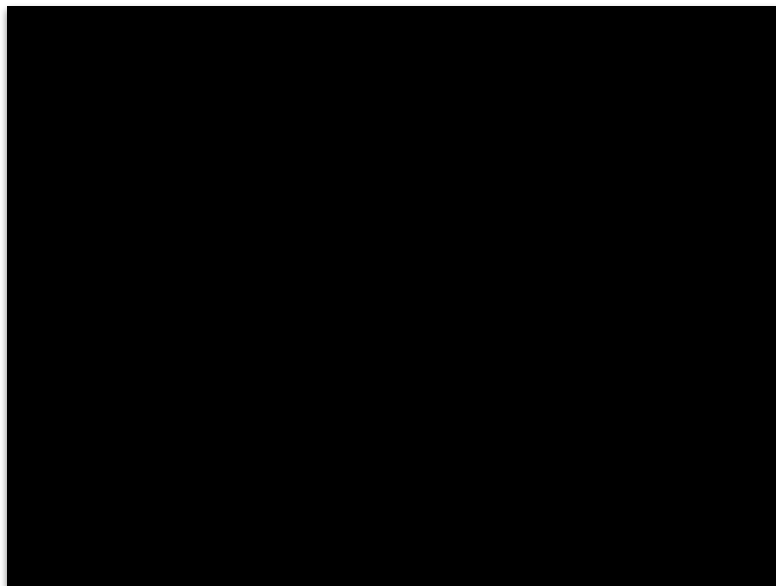
- ✓ Segmentation & Personalization
- ✓ Multi-channel
- ✓ Internationalization

# Background

October Pre Sales Season Promotion



- Get your marketing blitz ready for Black Friday
- Segmented on industry, job title & business type Eg: eCommerce, “Marketing Manager”, SMB etc
- \$25USD off business, advertising & web design contests
- Sent to 50K engaged En prospects






# Background

All 2.5M subscribers would receive at least 1 email  
6M+ marketing emails projected to be sent throughout “Cyber Week”



## Launch

99designs View email online  
Creative designed by -Z-



**Don't let this deal float away**

For the next 48 hours, **get** `[[promo.discount_amount]]` off a new design contest plus a free Power Pack—helping your contest stand out and boost the number of designs you receive (`[[promo.upgrades_amount]]` value).

Whatever you're looking for—a logo, website or just a really rad illustration—this is your chance to save some cash in our biggest sale of the year.


What are you waiting for?

[Save BIG now](#)

99designs © `[[now format='yyyy']]`  
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Oakland, CA 94612 [Unsubscribe](#)

## Reminder

99designs View in browser  
Design by -Z-



**5 hours left to save \$209**

Hurry, hurry! That design you've always dreamed of is just a click away.

**Get** `[[promo.discount_amount]]` off a new design contest plus a free Power Pack (`[[promo.upgrades_amount]]` value), which will help your contest stand out and boost the number of designs you receive.

This deal is disappearing at 6:00pm, so don't wait.

[Let's take off & save](#)

99designs © `[[now format='yyyy']]`  
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Oakland, CA 94612 [Unsubscribe](#)

## Extension (Optional)

99designs View email online

Hi there,

Due to popular demand we've extended our Cyber Monday sale through to Friday December 6th, 5:00pm! That means you've still got **time to save BIG** on the design you've always dreamed of.

We don't want you to miss out on the biggest sale of the year. So, whatever you're looking for—a logo, t-shirt, website or just a really rad illustration—this is your last chance to save some cash.

**Let's get creative!**  
— The 99designs team

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Oakland, CA 94612 [Unsubscribe](#)

# Background



- Onsite sign-up

99designs

## Sign up

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I need something designed

I'm a designer

I have read and agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

[Register](#)

Already have an account? [Log In](#)

- Newsletter Opt-In



by Tamara Milakovic

## Want design tips & business trends (and the occasional promotion) in your inbox?

---

Subscribers to our newsletter have been scientifically proven to be smarter, better looking and at least 50% more awesome than average.

[Sign me up!](#)

- I'm a freelance designer [?](#)

By completing this form, you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

- Gated Download

## Want to learn how to create the perfect logo for your brand? Get the free logo ebook!

Enter your email to get the ebook, along with creative tips, trends, resources and the occasional promo (which you can opt-out of anytime).

[Get the ebook!](#)

[View our privacy policy](#)

# Background

Segmentation & Personalization



6 customer lifecycle phases

▼ phase 1: acquired

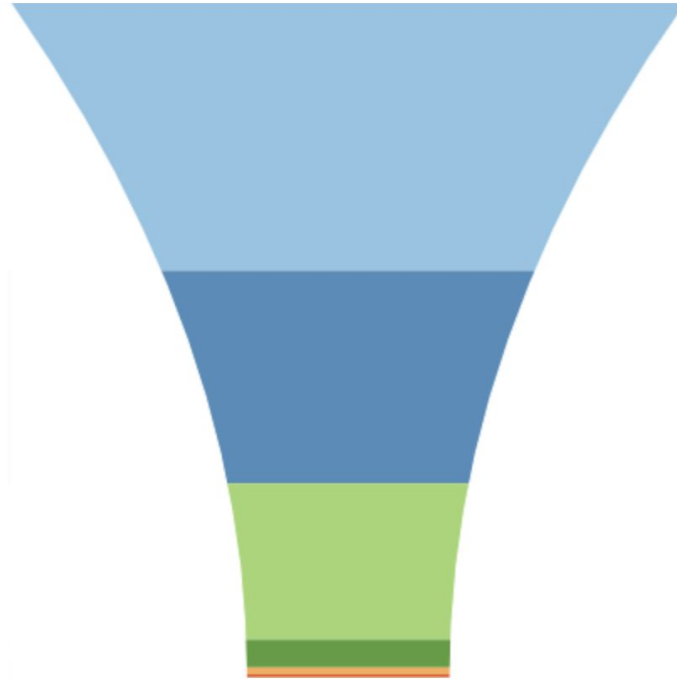
▼ phase 2: engaged

▼ phase 3: high intent

▼ phase 4: purchaser

▼ phase 5: repeater

▼ phase 6: 3peater




# Background

## Segmentation & Personalization



### Phase 4 / Purchaser

99designs View email online  
Creative designed by -Z-



**Don't let this deal float away!**

You've already created a beautiful design with us, so here's your chance for another (and you'll save some cash too).

**Get A\$74 off a new contest** plus a free Power Pack upgrade (A\$135 value), so you'll get even more options to choose from.


What are you waiting for? This offer ends in two days!

[Save \\$149 now](#)

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### Phase 5 / Repeater

99designs View email online  
Creative designed by -Z-



**Don't let this deal float away!**

You know what it's like to get great designs from our talented design community. Let's do it again!

**Get A\$74 off a new contest** plus a free Power Pack upgrade (A\$135 value), so you'll get even more options to choose from. Don't delay, this offer ends in two days!


[Save \\$149 now](#)

Ps: Thank you for choosing us for your custom designs needs, it's awesome to have you in our community.

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### Phase 6 / 3peater (HVC)

99designs View email online  
Creative designed by -Z-



**Don't let this deal float away!**

We're proud that you've chosen 99designs as your partner for so many of your creative projects.

To say thank you here's **A\$74 off a new contest** plus a free Power Pack upgrade (A\$135 value) so you'll get even more options to choose from. Available for 48 hours only.

[Save \\$149 now](#)

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# Background

## Internationalization

German 🥨

French 🥖

Dutch 🥞


Italian 🍕

Spanish 🍖

Portuguese 🍷



99designs Im Browser ansehen  
Designs von -Z-



### Das stärkste Angebot des Jahres!

Kommen Sie mit auf die Reise zu Ihrem Wunschdesign!

Erhalten Sie `[[promo.discount_amount]]` Rabatt auf einen neuen Design-Wettbewerb sowie ein kostenfreies Power Pack (im Wert von `[[promo.upgrades_amount]]`), um aus noch mehr Design-Konzepten auswählen zu können.

Dieses Angebot gilt nur für zwei Tage, lassen Sie es sich nicht entgehen!

[Sparen Sie jetzt 145 €](#)

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Oakland CA 94612



### Sparen Sie 145 € und werden Sie kreativ

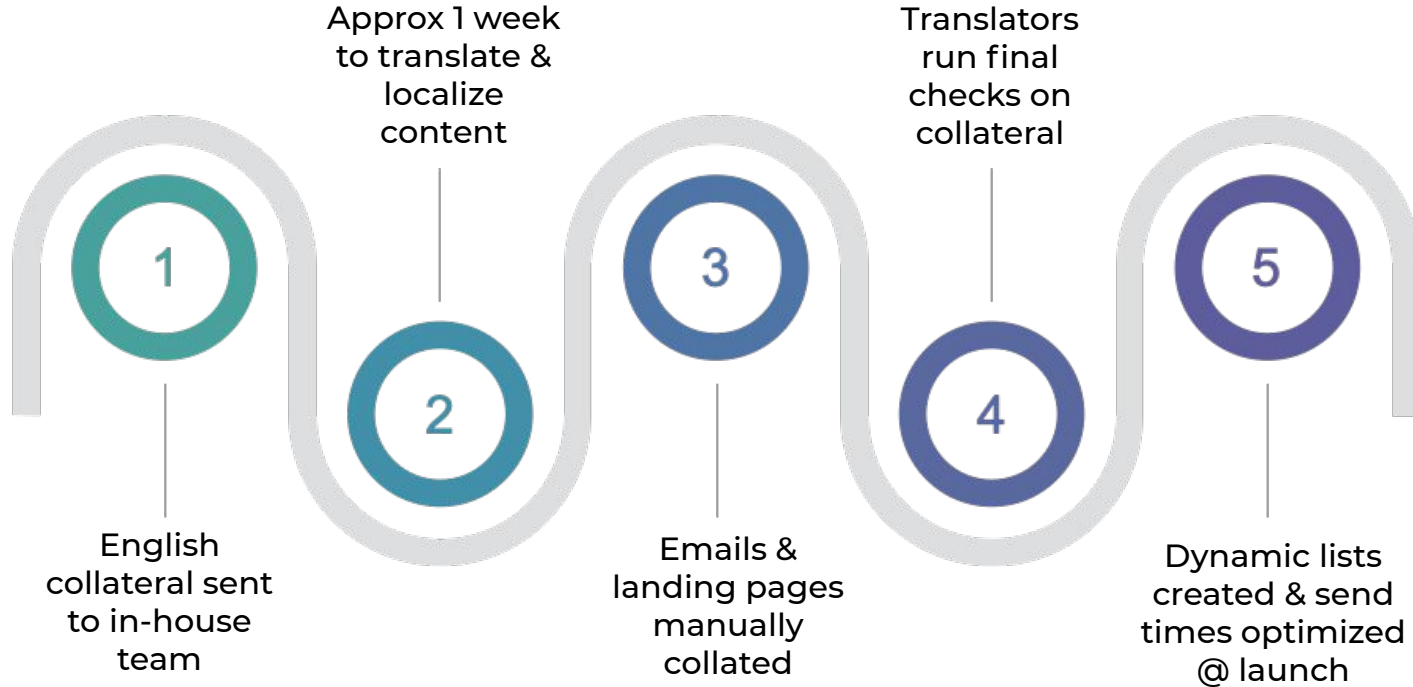
Zum Cyber Monday haben wir ein Angebot für Sie, mit dem Sie abheben und dem Design Ihrer Träume näher kommen.

- ✓ 50 € Rabatt auf einen neuen Design-Wettbewerb
- ✓ Kostenfreies Power Pack (im Wert von 95 €) für noch mehr Design-Konzepte
- ✓ Kreative Experten in mehr als 90 Design-Kategorien

[Sparen Sie jetzt 145 €](#)

# Background

Internationalization



# Background

## Internationalization

### Dynamic lists on locale & launch time optimization

#### Dynamic list details

German speaking customers & prospects

Find users that meet **any** of the following criteria

Find users that meet **all** of the following criteria

**MUST HAVE**

**Contact Property**

where **role** **Equals** **customer**

and **locale** **Matches Regex** **de-\***

and **+ Add Contact Property field**

**26,422**

Users

**REFRESH RESULTS**

**SAVE LIST...**

**EXPORT AS...**

**Campaign ID** 1177232  
**Created** Tue, Apr 28, 2020 6:22 PM  
**Launch time** Thu, Apr 30, 2020 7:55 AM in the recipient's time zone.  
Starting time zone: **Europe/Berlin**  
Fallback time zone is: **Europe/London**  
**End time** Thu, Apr 30, 2020 10:55 AM PDT

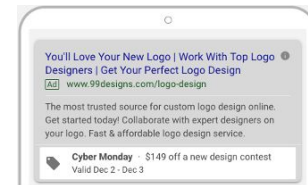
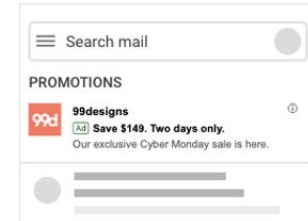
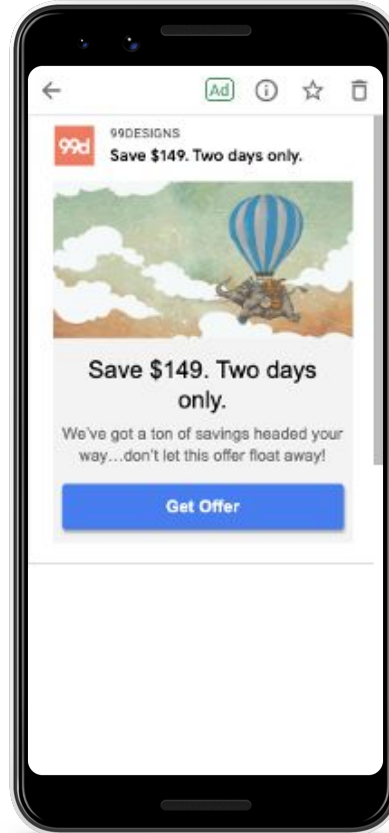


locale: "de-de"

# Background

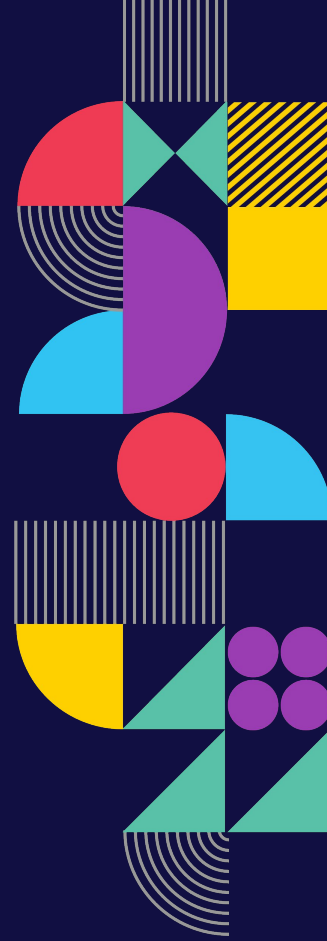
## Multichannel

- 4 paid promo pushes:
  - SEM promotion extensions
  - G-Mail ads
  - Facebook / Instagram campaign
  - Affiliate promotion
- Onsite promotional & notice bar





**It was all systems  
go...**



# Something was NQR

With about 2M emails sent, we realised something was up

**Our marketing emails were no longer arriving in subscriber inboxes!**



# What happened next

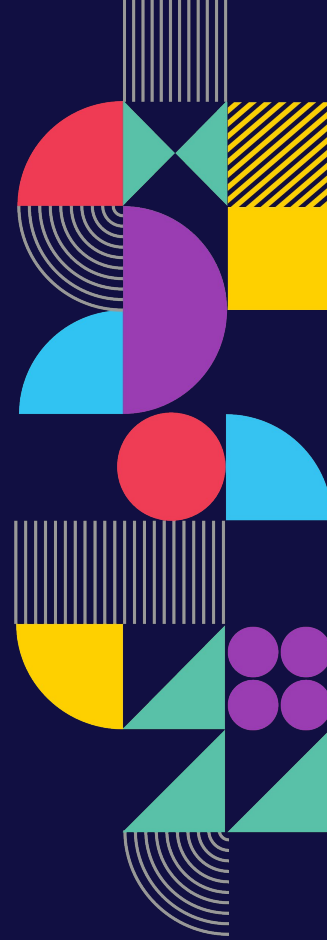
Contacted by our delivery provider & Spamhaus.

A Cyber Monday marketing email was delivered to a spam trap and we'd been blacklisted.

Our delivery provider disabled our account and our IP was blocked!



# Email marketing purgatory...



## How...

Did a spam trap email land on our list - when (to our knowledge) they'd been organically grown?

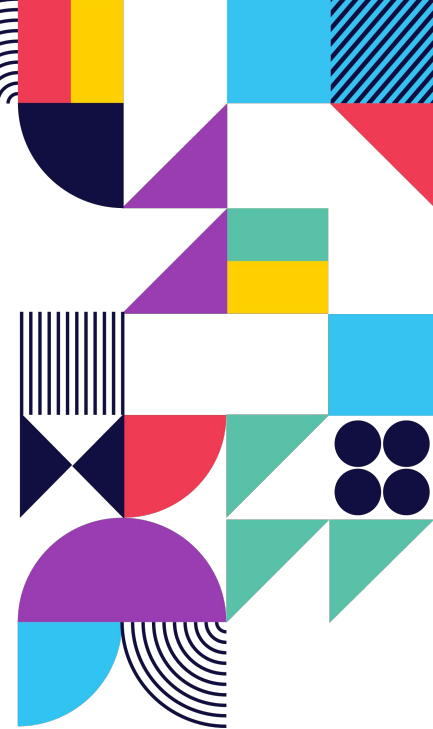
Could we fix this 30% the way through our most commercially critical promotion of the year?

Would we achieve the promised record results?



# How does a spam trap get on a list?

- Purchased lists - it's never a good idea!
- Intentional contamination - not everyone want you to thrive :(
- Old / invalid email addresses - they can hurt your reputation beyond low engagement!

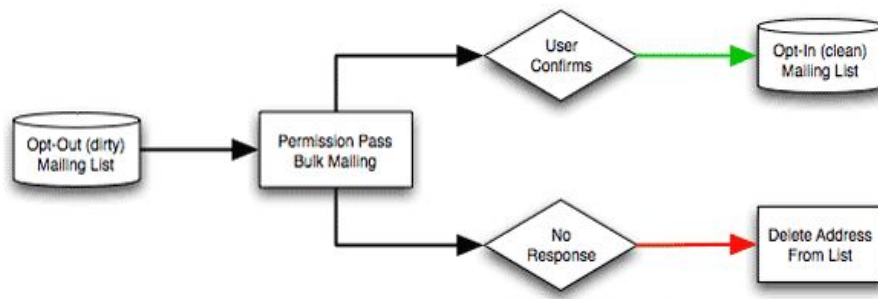




# Finding a resolution



- ✓ Leaned on our providers
- ✓ Sought guidance from Spamhaus
- ✓ Sent permission pass to problematic segment
- ✓ Remove subscribers who didn't confirm opt in (COI)
- ✓ Accepted list size would significantly decrease



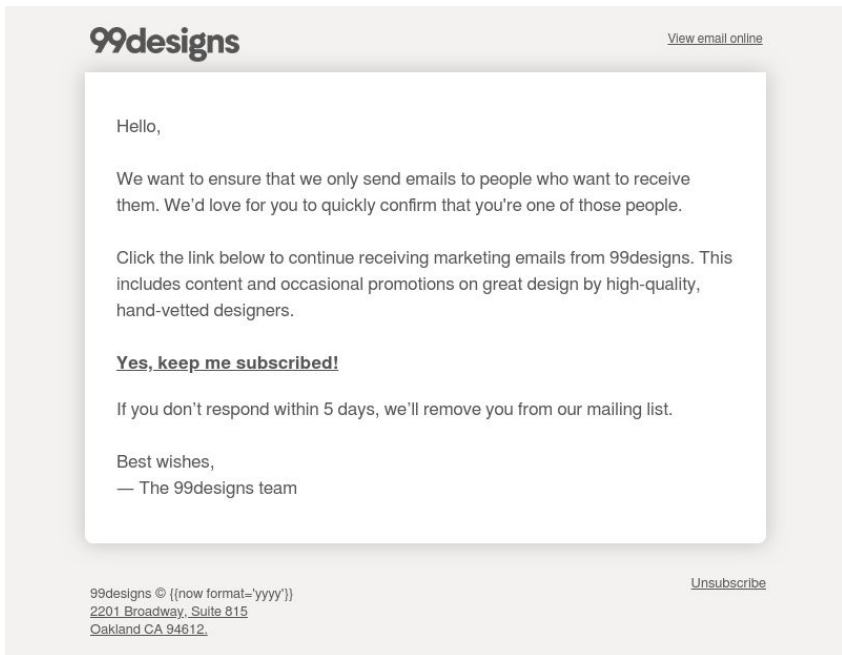
Source: spamhaus.org



# Finding a resolution

## Permission pass performance

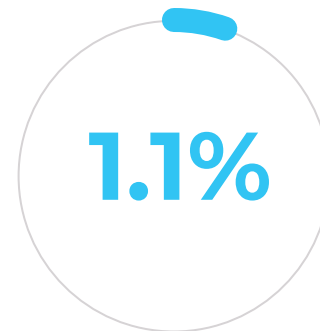
**Subject** Do you still want to receive marketing emails from 99designs?  
**Preheader Text** Your action is required if you want to keep getting great design



Unique Open Rate  
(89,816)



Click/Open



Click Rate



Unsubscribe Rate  
(7,284)

# Finding a resolution

But what happened to Cyber Monday?



- 30% of the emails had been delivered
- Email engagement & conversions were strong
- All triggered emails & automated workflows had come to a halt
- Ten days post blacklisting, it was resolved
- Triggered /workflows commenced sending
- Rested the channel from blasts after being whitelisted to take stock on next steps
- First customer newsletter sent early Jan to a small / engaged segment & Q1 planning begun

# Finding a resolution

And there was a silver lining!!



 **Kirk Williams**  
@PPCKirk

Everybody else trying to keep their lists full of disinterested people, and @99designs out here disrupting the concept of unsubscribe for the good of humanity. 🍌🍌🍌

**99designs** [View email online](#)

Hello,

We want to ensure that we only send emails to people who want to receive them. We'd love for you to quickly confirm that you're one of those people.

Click the link below to continue receiving marketing emails from 99designs. This includes content and occasional promotions on great design by high-quality, hand-vetted designers.


**[Yes, keep me subscribed!](#)**

If you don't respond within 5 days, we'll remove you from our mailing list.

Best wishes,  
— The 99designs team

9:36 AM · Dec 18, 2019 · [TweetDeck](#)

29 Likes

 **Alan "Bootsie" Jones**  
@bigyahu

Nearly died of shock when I received this! Thank you @99designs. I'm going to stay subscribed \*because\* of this email.

**99designs** [View email online](#)

To: Alan Jones

9:26 AM

...

**99designs** [View email online](#)

Hello,

We want to ensure that we only send emails to people who want to receive them. We'd love for you to quickly confirm that you're one of those people.

Click the link below to continue receiving marketing emails from 99designs. This includes content and occasional promotions on great design by high-quality, hand-vetted designers.

**[Yes, keep me subscribed!](#)**

If you don't respond within 5 days, we'll remove you from our mailing list.

Best wishes,  
— The 99designs team

# Finding a resolution

More awesome community accolades :)



**Josh Durham** @JoshJDurham · Dec 18, 2019  
I like it because it comes from an abundance mindset:  
🔑 "Please stay with us if we're providing value!"  
1 reply

---

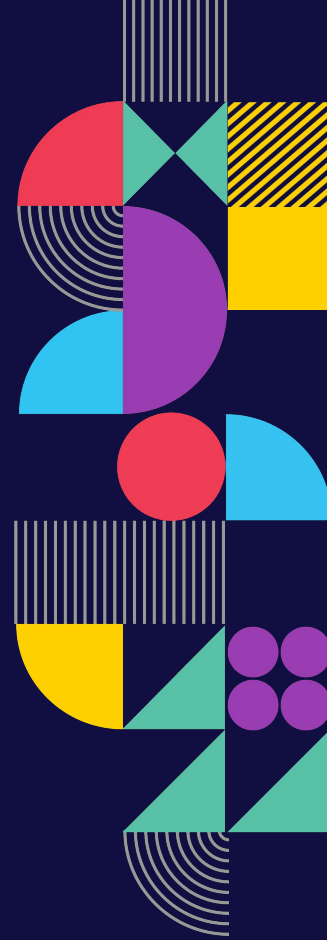
**Josh Durham** @JoshJDurham · Dec 18, 2019  
I've seen other email cleaning flows that are like:  
"🚫 We're deleting your account. 🚫"  
To get people to purchase or to get them into the engaged list.  
Much better experience from @99designs 🙌  
1 like

**montuoro** @montuoro · Dec 18, 2019  
Replying to @bigyahu and @99designs  
Wow, this should be the gold standard!

---

**Betty Andrews** @UniverseOfBetty · Dec 19, 2019  
Replying to @bigyahu and @99designs  
It's a great move!!!  
1 like

# Six things we learnt..



# Six things we learnt



1. Don't defer your list hygiene

# Six things we learnt



## 1. Don't defer your list hygiene

- Action bi-yearly list hygiene and delete disengaged subscribers
- Remove soft bouncing email addresses
- Analysis of low performing signup sources
- Consider double opt-in

# Six things we learnt




1. Don't defer your list hygiene
2. Audit subscribe forms & add reCAPTCHA

Select ▾

How often do you (or your business) have new design needs?

Select ▾

By completing this form, you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

I'm not a robot  reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Request a consultation

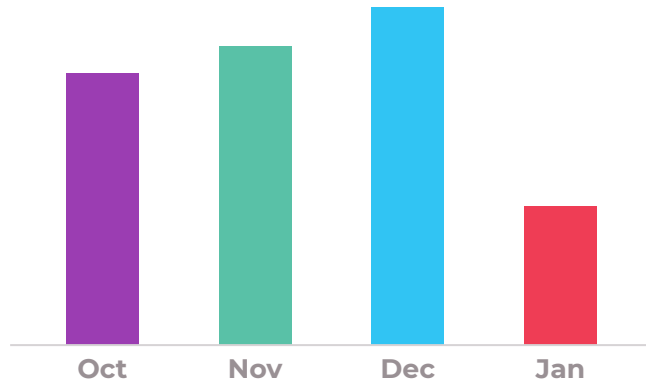




# Six things we learnt



1. Don't defer your list hygiene
2. Audit subscribe forms & add reCAPTCHA
3. Champion list quality over quantity



# Six things we learnt



1. Don't defer your list hygiene
2. Audit subscribe forms & add reCAPTCHA
3. Champion list quality over quantity
4. Don't take it personally!



# Six things we learnt



1. Don't defer your list hygiene
2. Audit subscribe forms & add reCAPTCHA
3. Champion list quality over quantity
4. Don't take it personally!
5. Form a good relationship with your providers



# Six things we learnt

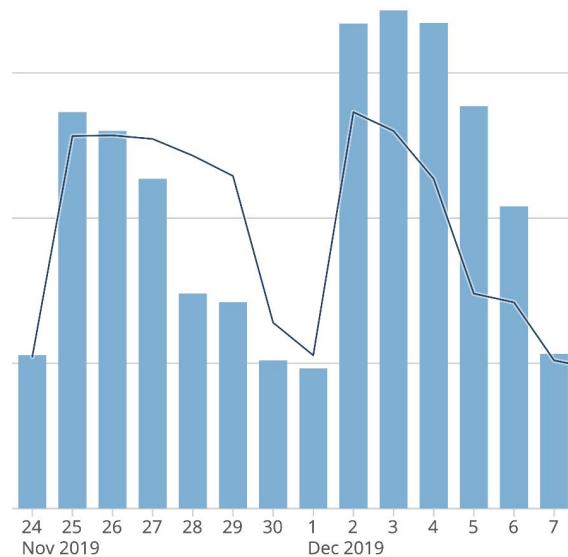
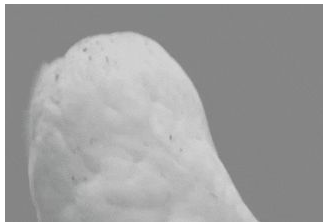


1. Don't defer your list hygiene
2. Audit subscribe forms & add reCAPTCHA
3. Champion list quality over quantity
4. Don't take it personally!
5. Form a good relationship with your providers
6. Trust in your subscriber community (and make them your priority)





# We still hit record customer growth despite the turmoil!



**ACTIVATE**

**LIVE**

**Thank You!**



@ItsmeJade | jade.kolber@99designs.com

**99designs**



**ACTI** **LIVE**  
**VATE**