

# Going Agile: The New Email Workflow

And the micro-efficiencies to help you send better emails, faster





**Speed to market is more important than ever in this constantly evolving environment. And yet, the email process can feel overwhelming and painfully slow. You want to make it more efficient, but you just don't have the time to add yet *another* thing to your plate to think about.**

That's why the agile methodology has become increasingly popular beyond its roots in software development. Agile marketing is all the rage, and email marketing plays a part. In this ebook, we'll cover:

- What agile marketing is
- How agile marketing applies to email
- Why you might see resistance

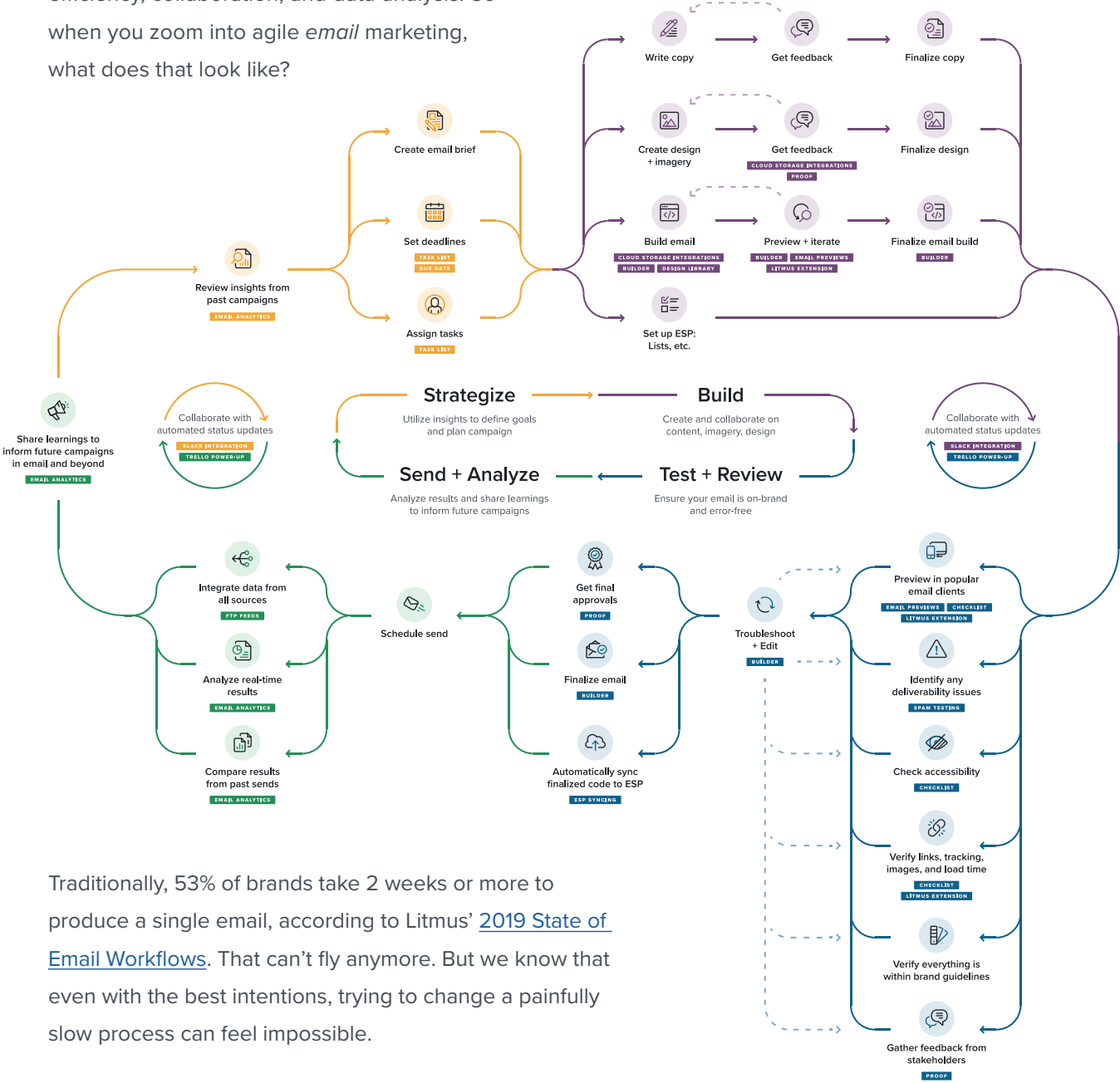
...and the small steps you can take to create an agile email workflow that are too easy for even your most stubborn stakeholders to resist.

**Let's go** →

# So, what's agile email marketing?

Essentially, agile marketing is about progress, not perfection. It's about running a lot of small, customer-focused campaigns frequently so you can quickly learn, adapt, and grow. You get speed without sacrificing quality. **The key? Keep it simple.**

With all of this comes the need for increased efficiency, collaboration, and data analysis. So when you zoom into agile *email* marketing, what does that look like?



Traditionally, 53% of brands take 2 weeks or more to produce a single email, according to Litmus' [2019 State of Email Workflows](#). That can't fly anymore. But we know that even with the best intentions, trying to change a painfully slow process can feel impossible.



# We know change is hard, but...

Our resistance to change is human nature. According to [Psychology Today](#), the status quo is rooted in our biological need to survive. So while we no longer face the same dangers our ancestors did at the beginning of time, even trying to change a seemingly harmless work habit can still have people putting their defenses up. But it's not impossible to overcome this survival instinct—especially when it comes to fine-tuning your email marketing process.



## **Want to conquer change for the better? Start small.**

The problem is that most people tend to think in sweeping changes, but when you break things down into microsteps, it no longer feels intimidating. So how can you get emails out the door faster without it feeling like a huge endeavor? The answer: micro-efficiencies.

# Adopt these micro-efficiencies to be more agile in your email process

Micro-efficiencies stem from the idea that [small steps lead to big changes](#). After all, breaking things down into bite-sized tasks feels more achievable, like dipping your toes into the water instead of diving right in.

We're turning the traditionally linear email marketing process on its head. Here are the micro-efficiencies that'll help you achieve an agile email workflow.

## 1. Develop your content and design strategy

First, you need to outline your email campaign strategy and share it with everyone involved. A solid strategy is critical to ensure that copy, design, and development are aligned. Otherwise, there can be miscommunication, resulting in even more work. Putting together your strategy doesn't have to be complicated, though. Remember, small steps! As long as you have the basics below, you're golden:

- Define your email's purpose, goal, and audience.
- Define your content strategy for getting opens and clicks.
- Define how your email's copy and images should be laid out.

For a more guided approach, check out our [email brief & planning template](#).

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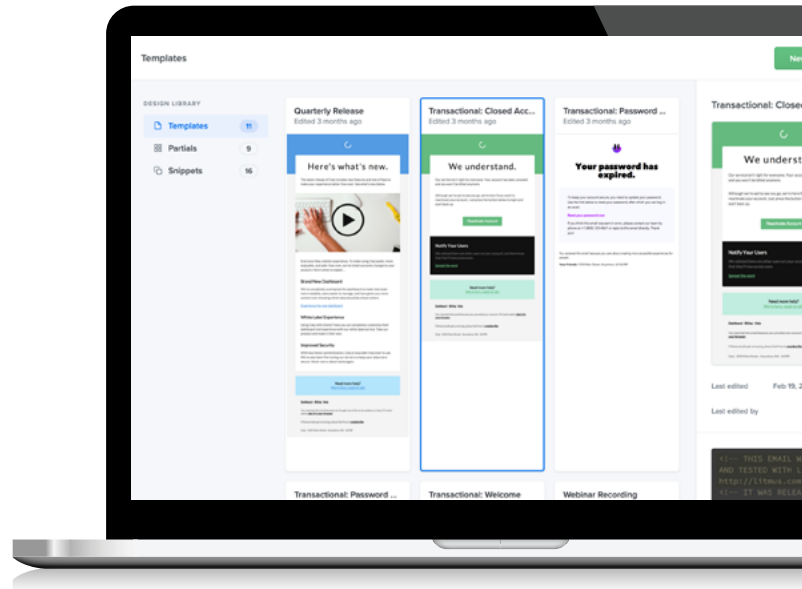
### Extra credit

Want to increase your email's chance of success? [Learn from the past](#) to inform your strategy. Look at email performance from your email service provider or marketing automation platform, and go beyond opens and clicks with [Litmus Email Analytics](#). You'll be able to extract the right insights to identify design innovation opportunities or improve segmentation, targeting, and personalization.

## 2. Standardize email development

To further simplify how you visually organize your email content and cut down on email development time and resources, create templated emails. Easier said than done, right?

Start small with [partials](#) and [snippets](#) a.k.a. reusable blocks of code. Think of email headers and footers or bulletproof buttons. Save time from coding the same things over and over again—and come out with consistently on-brand, error-free emails.



If you want greater control while empowering others to easily create their own emails, use email templates. Don't have one? Check out our [free email templates](#) or learn how to make your own with the [Ultimate Guide to Email Templates](#).

Be sure to store all of these reusable, shared assets—partials, snippets, and templates—in one easy-to-access spot. With [Design Library](#) in Litmus, you can centralize these key components of email campaigns to more easily collaborate, ensure brand integrity, and scale email production across your team.

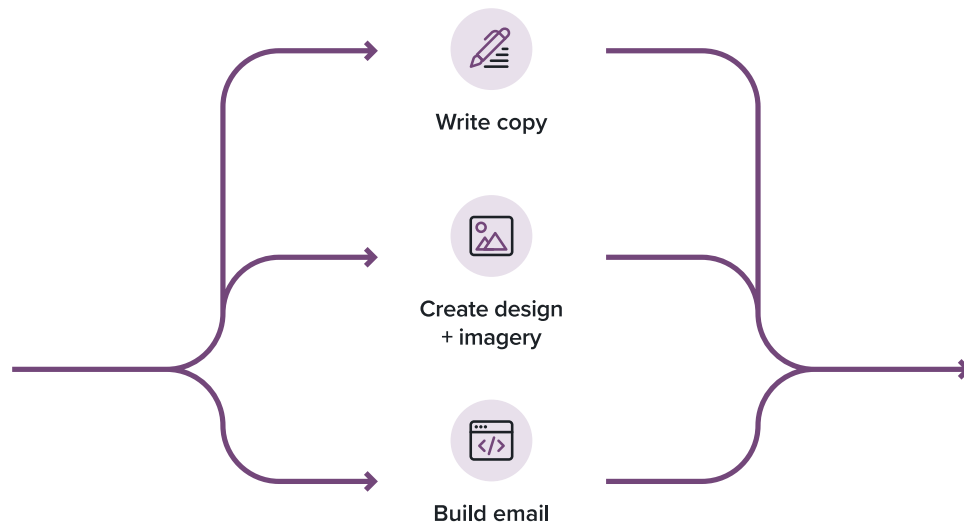


### Extra credit

Roll up your partials, snippets, and templates into a full [email design system](#). Think of it as a brand guide combined with a pattern library, creating detailed standards on the what, how, when, and why of your email designs.

### 3. Write, design, and build—at the same time

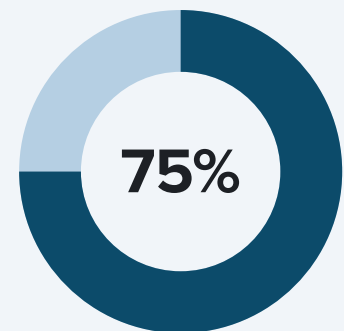
Traditionally, design wouldn't be created until the copy was done. And only after all of that, could development finally be underway. But with your strategy nailed down and email layout decided, everyone can take this information and start working on their part at the same time while collaborating on the way.



Here are a couple of quick tips how:

- Provide at least a rough headline and call-to-action for each piece of content that requires an image so design can be done at the same time that the rest of the copy is written.
- Based on the aligned strategy, development can begin with placeholder text. Once copy and images are drafted, you can quickly place them directly into your email template with [Visual Editor in Litmus Builder](#), see if everything fits the way it should, and make edits as needed. Plus, you'll be able to [preview how your email will look](#) across the email clients and devices that matter most to you.

And all of this can cut email creation time by up to 75%! No more waiting around.



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## 4. Collect feedback and collaborate in one place

One of the not-so-fun things about the review process? Feedback can come from different people across different channels. So if one piece of feedback contradicts another, who do you listen to? And, uh, hopefully you didn't miss someone's comment among the various tools you're juggling. Oops.

So this small time-saver is too easy not to do: Consolidate everyone's feedback, collaborate more effectively, and get approvals all in one place. Stop sending screenshots or individual test emails. Share one email test with stakeholders in a single location so everyone's collaborating together.

The ultimate way to simplify collaboration? The all-in-one [Litmus Proof](#). We admit we may be a bit biased here, but you can get desktop, mobile, and plain text views on a single page—with the ability to leave comments directly on the email and record approvals. Super convenient. And reviewing multi-email campaigns or dynamic content versions is easy with folder sharing. We've even got integrations with [Trello](#) and [Slack](#) to help you stay on top of things so you can take action faster. After you get feedback, you can just click over to [Litmus Builder](#) to easily make changes. No hopping between tools!





## 5. Automate testing

Ahh, the final preparations for your email send. But wait, are you forgetting something? Don't let anything fall through the cracks. Free up your brain space, and save yourself the time of sending a bunch of test emails.

Automate your final checks and testing in just a few quick clicks with [Litmus Checklist](#). In one place, you'll be guided through an automated check of:

- **Email previews:** Make sure your email displays perfectly across popular email clients.
- **First impressions:** Ensure your subject line, preview text, from name, and reply-to will get opens.
- **Accessibility:** Instantly see (and hear) whether your email is accessible for all your subscribers and get actionable advice on how you can make your emails more inclusive.
- **Links:** See that they're working and going to the right place.
- **Tracking:** Verify that click-throughs are tracked by Litmus, your ESP, and/or Google Analytics.
- **Image blocking:** Preview your email with images turned off to ensure your email is legible and actionable in all circumstances.
- **Loading speed:** Identify images that are broken, taking too long to load, or have excessive file sizes which could impact performance.
- **Spam checks:** Identify issues that could impact deliverability *before* you send.

And remember, you can easily make changes to fix any issues you might find by clicking back over to [Litmus Builder](#). **Wasn't that quick and painless?**

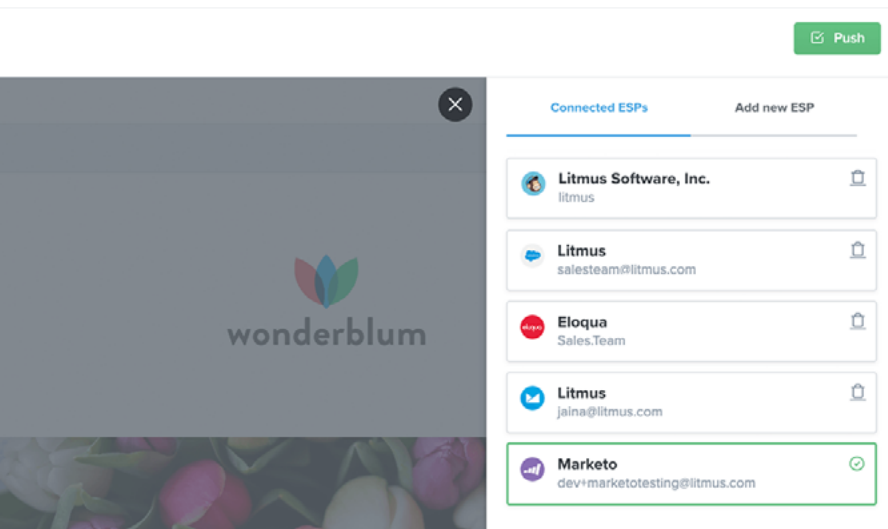


### Extra credit

Do you have your own unique set of checks to watch out for in every email? Maybe you want to make sure copy is reviewed for typos or suppression lists have been made. You can customize Litmus' [Task Template](#) for your needs. And if you have the [Trello integration](#), tasks automatically sync so you don't have to switch between tools.

## 6. Send final email code straight to your ESP

Let's face it, there's probably some—or a lot—of copying and pasting going on to get final email code into your sending platform. All of that back and forth between tools is bound to lead to mistakes. Even more so if there are last minute fixes or requests (shakes fist at multiple “final” files). There's an easier way so you never have to second guess the final code of your email again. And it's literally one click away.



You can find several tools to help you do this... Did you know we have one, too? With [ESP Syncing](#) in Litmus Builder, you can automatically sync your email—and any changes you make in Builder—to your email service provider. No more of that manual copy and paste nonsense. This way, you know you always have the latest version and can hit send with confidence. If you're already using or considering Litmus, this is a no-brainer.



### Extra credit

Did you know Litmus works where you do? Streamline your email marketing process even further with [Litmus integrations](#)—and get the power of Litmus with your favorite ESPs and desktop editors as well as cloud storage solutions, Slack, and Trello.

## 7. Analyze and share insights

It's easy to forget about reporting once your email's sent. On to the next thing, right? And all that data... whew! If you haven't been keeping up, it can be overwhelming. Instead of trying to conquer it all at once, remember our recurring theme here: small steps.

**First, figure out which metrics you need to measure.**

The basics—opens, clicks, bounces, and unsubscribes—are a great place to start. These surface-level metrics help you stay on top of email activity, which is critical for email deliverability and inbox placement.

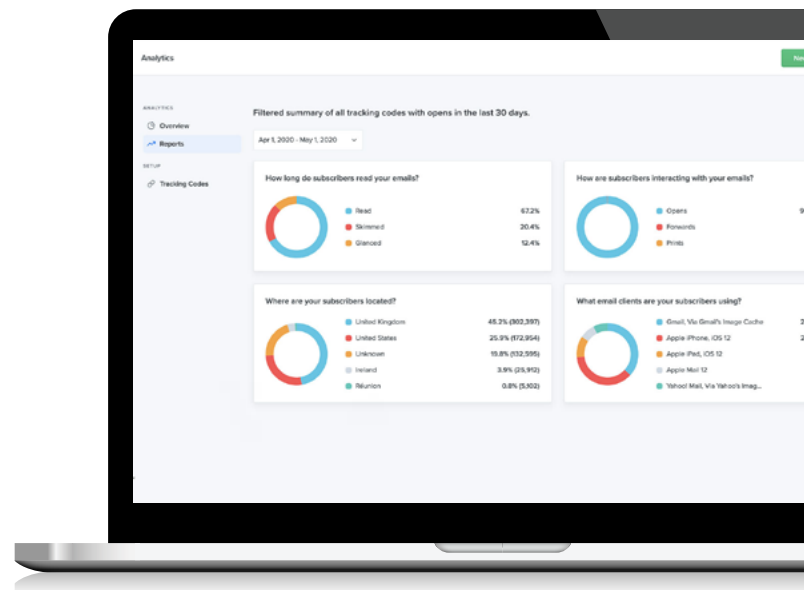
For a more complete picture, though, measure engagement-level metrics. These will differ from brand to brand. For some ideas and to see how others are measuring up, check out our [State of Email Analytics](#).

One way to go beyond the basics? [Litmus Email Analytics](#). You can measure things like how much time was spent on your email, how often it was forwarded, which email clients and devices your subscribers use most, and more. Brands that use Litmus Email Analytics see a [16% higher ROI](#) than those that rely on data from their ESP alone.

So now you know what you want to measure, but wow, it would take forever to get all of that data for your email marketing program. **Start with one email.** How about the one you just sent? Then continue to collect data for each future email (and you can slowly backtrack and catch up as needed).

Even with one email, you can begin to [turn your metrics into action](#)—like optimizing your next email, social post, and more.

And in this new, agile email workflow, you can analyze real-time results, compare with previous sends or similar types of campaigns, and share learnings all at the same time, all within one tool: Litmus. Litmus Email Analytics simplifies getting the insights you need with tags for filtering, [aggregated reports](#) for a bird's eye view, and custom reports to hone in on the data that matters most. Here are some tips on how you can use email insights to [power email segmentation](#) and [make informed decisions across your entire marketing mix](#).



# Remember, take small steps to achieve big wins

Now we're at the end. Except it's not the end. You've come full circle and can now be more strategic about your next email in a continuous cycle of optimization with all the micro-efficiencies we've shared here. After all, the agile email workflow aims to help you make better emails, faster.

Sure, you could stick with the [linear email marketing process](#)—and there's nothing wrong with that—but you wouldn't be able to pivot as quickly in today's constantly evolving environment. To rise above your competition and meet the ever-changing needs of your audience, you need speed. That's where agile email marketing comes in.

Email marketers are always challenged to do more with less—and do it quickly. Instead of doing things one step at a time, there are tools like Litmus that allow many parts of the email process to be done automatically or at the same time. **Our own email team now sends out emails in half the time it used to take without sacrificing quality.** Who doesn't want that?

Hopefully these micro-efficiencies make you feel like agile email marketing is possible. It doesn't matter where or how you start. Just start, and start small. One thing at a time. One email at a time.

To get a taste of these micro-efficiencies in action, [check out this webinar recording](#).

**Ready for the easiest way to make your email process agile? See for yourself how Litmus can help you be more efficient every step of the way.**