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Foundations of Email Design

LESSON 4

# Calls-to-Action

Layouts

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Calls-to-Action

At Litmus, we live and breathe email design. Get a strong, foundational understanding of email design principles, straight from our own email team.

We'll walk you through examples, important considerations, and our recommendations—equipping you with the tools you need to design with confidence.

Use this as a compass to help you navigate what lies ahead of your email design journey.

In this lesson, we'll cover calls-to-action (CTAs). Let's begin.



Calls-to-action (CTAs) help guide your subscriber to the primary action you want them to take.

Generally speaking, each email you send should have a primary goal. But what about when you have more than one CTA?

In this lesson, we'll walk you through primary CTAs, secondary CTAs, and using bulletproof buttons to make your CTAs more accessible.

#### **4.1 Primary CTAs**

#### **4.2 Secondary CTAs**

#### **4.3 Bulletproof buttons**

## 4.1 Primary CTAs

Your primary CTA is the main action you want your subscriber to take. It should always be the most prominent in your email and styled in a way to help it stand out.

Some ways to achieve this are by:

- Styling your primary CTA as a button
- Making your button a different color than the other design elements
- Using typography, such as larger or bold text
- Applying whitespace



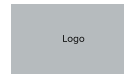
At Litmus, we often give buttons between 30px and 50px of whitespace to allow for enough breathing room from other elements.

### Primary CTA

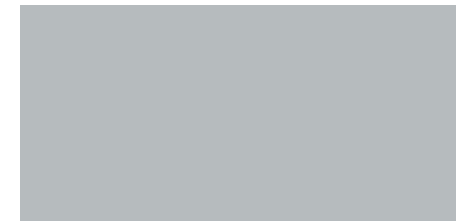
One of the key ways to ensure your CTA stands out is by applying whitespace—that is, space that is uninterrupted by other elements.

## Main headline frames email message (h1)

A sub-headline provides additional context and helps the subscriber to take action



Call to action



## Headline for secondary content (h2)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin id elit ac metus interdum dicitum. Praesent malesuada enim in egestas gravida. Etiam et molestie leo. Donec quis leo sit amet sapien pharetra mattis sed at nulla. Etiam nunc eros, imperdiet a gravida ut, ullamcorper eget augue.



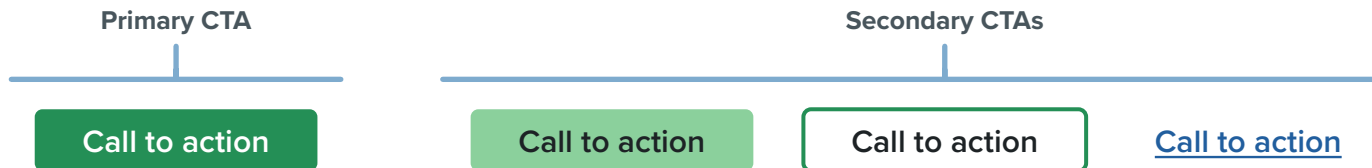
Donec efficitur libero vitae consequat vehicula. Nullam fermentum leo quam, sed tincidunt est laculis a.

## 4.2 Secondary CTAs

After primary CTAs, any further actions you want your subscriber to take are secondary CTAs. These should be styled in a less dominant way.

You can still offer a button, but use a muted style—such as a color that isn't as bold, or a white button with a color border. Or, you can simply offer a styled text link.

For a styled text link to be effective, it should **1)** be a different color from the copy and **2)** underlined. This helps the reader recognize it as a clickable element.

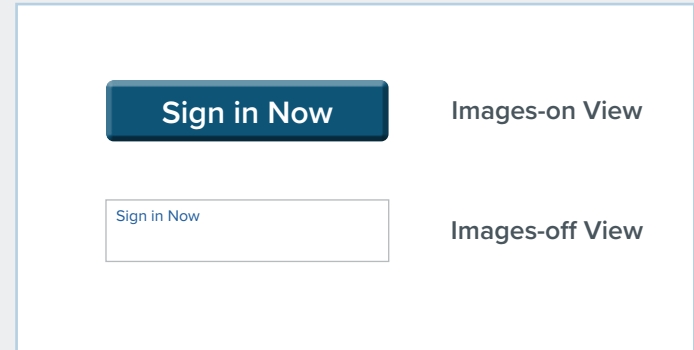


Styling your primary and secondary CTAs differently prevents them from competing with each other and clearly guides your subscriber to the CTA that takes them where they need to go.

## 4.3 Bulletproof buttons

Bulletproof buttons are CTA buttons built with code instead of images. By only using code, the button will display in all email clients even with images off, which is what makes them “bulletproof.”

Image based buttons get lost when images are turned off due to image-blocking. By using bulletproof buttons, even if your subscribers have their images turned off, they’ll still be able to take action on your email.



### Recommended reading

Dive deeper on how to style and code bulletproof buttons [on our blog](#).



## Lesson recap

- At Litmus, we ensure there's around **30 to 50px of padding** between buttons and other elements.
- Style **secondary CTAs** in a less prominent way, such as with muted colors or simply a styled text link.
- Use **bulletproof buttons** to make your emails actionable, even with images off.

**Need a recap?** Revisit the previous lessons on [Layouts, Imagery, and Fonts and typography](#) here.