

# COLLECTING VIA EMAIL:

# 4

## MUST-MAKE MOVES IN YOUR SUBJECT LINE



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For most businesses, collections emails have replaced collections call, at least when accounts first go past due. After all they're faster and cheaper ... and a whole lot easier to ignore.

That's unless you hit *just* the right opening note.

The best way to do that is for you and your A/R staff to think like marketers. That's the advice from the experts at Anytime Collect.

And it largely comes down to the subject line.

### Gotta catch 'em early

Lindsey O'Brien, of Anytime Collect suggests you highlight these strategies with your A/R team to help them craft a subject line that gets customers to respond (and pony up).



1

**Get specific.** Studies have proven that subject lines with customer account numbers or invoice numbers helps get those emails opened. So try a subject line like: Payment Needed for Invoice Number 1234 or Account Number 1234 Payment Needed.

2

**Personalize it.** No one wants to feel like a part of a mass collections email. So get the first name of your A/P contact right in the subject line. The proof it's worth it: The open rate for emails with personalized messages was 17.6%, vs. 11.4% without personalization.

3

**Stay out of the spam filter.** You and your team know not to use words like "money" or "price," but even things like "check" or "act now" can land you in the junk file.

4

**Experiment a little.** What do marketers do? They test multiple approaches to see which ones get the best response. Encourage your A/R staffers to do the same until they hit upon the winning formula that loosens those purse strings.



## Bonus:

### And if you have to follow up with a phone call...

Of course, should you not get the desired effect from that email, your team will need to pick up the phone and get calling.

Nothing stops a collections call dead in its tracks faster than a customer getting defensive. At that point you can all-but kiss that call's productivity goodbye.

But there's a single word many A/R staffers use that could be doing just that without them even realizing it.

The word? Why:



**Why** haven't you paid our latest invoice?



**Why** didn't you speak up about the quantity discrepancy?

The good news is a single word swap can turn things to your company's advantage.

### Opens up instead of shutting down

Accounts Receivable company IC System recommends staffers use the word "what" when they pick up the phone instead of the dreaded why:



**What** caused you to fall behind with your account?



**What** happened that's keeping you from paying this invoice now?

That way, instead of callers putting up a wall because they feel personally attacked, you open the door to answers that give your company roads in to get paid.

It's also a way to convey empathy – based on their response, you can find a way relate to their situation, which paves the way for smoother collections.

Armed with the best approaches for both email and phone collections, watch those agings improve.

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