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THE MARKETER'S EMAIL CREATION MATURITY MODEL: 2021

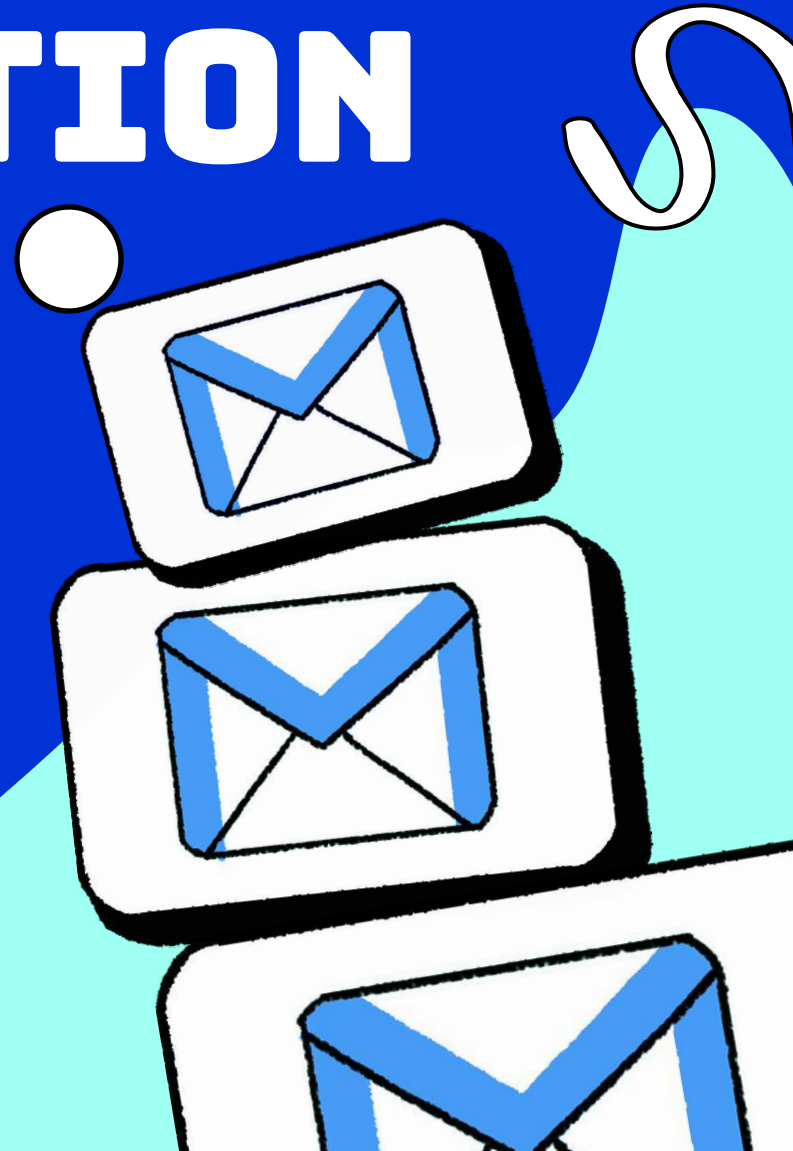
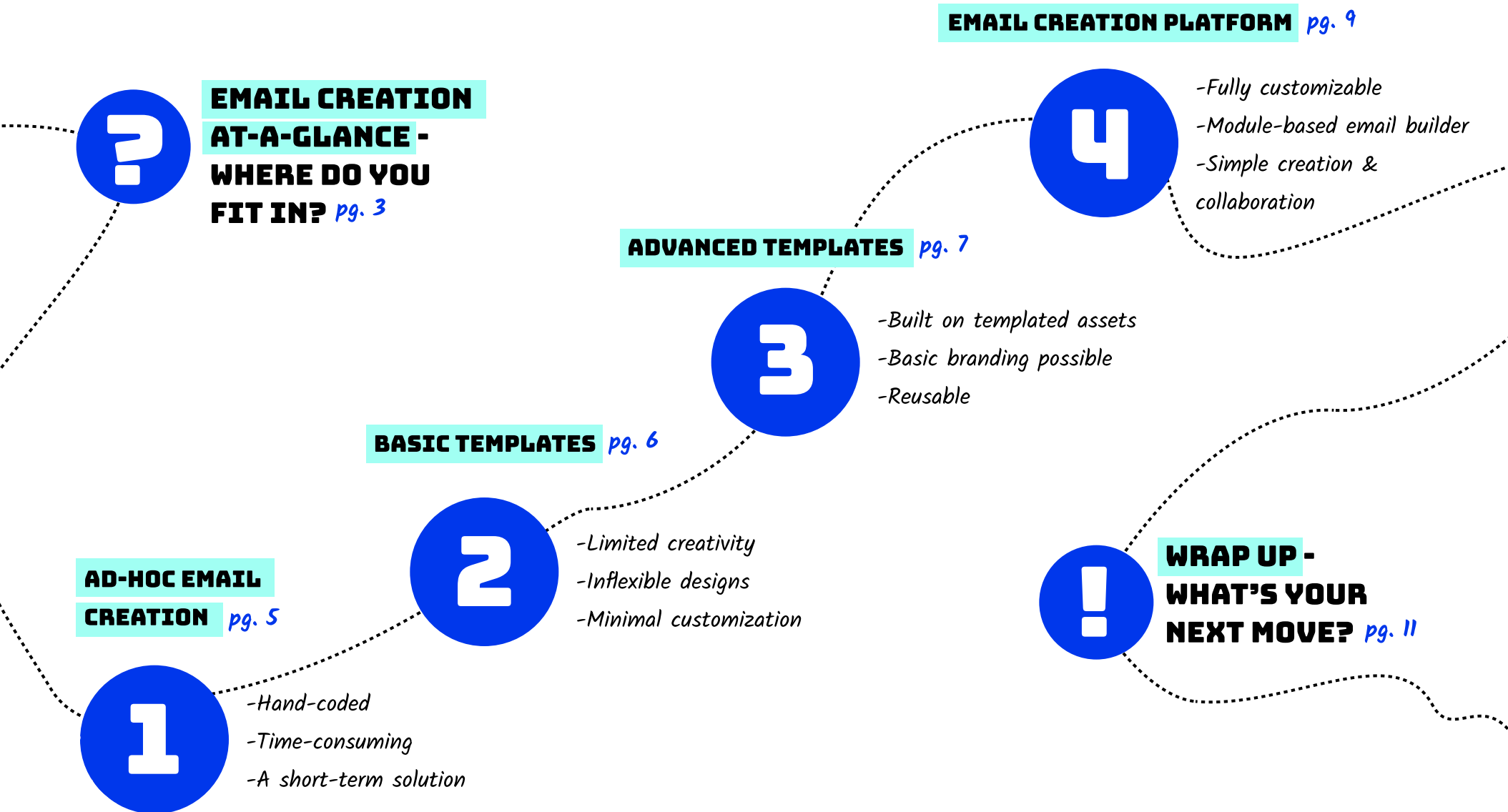
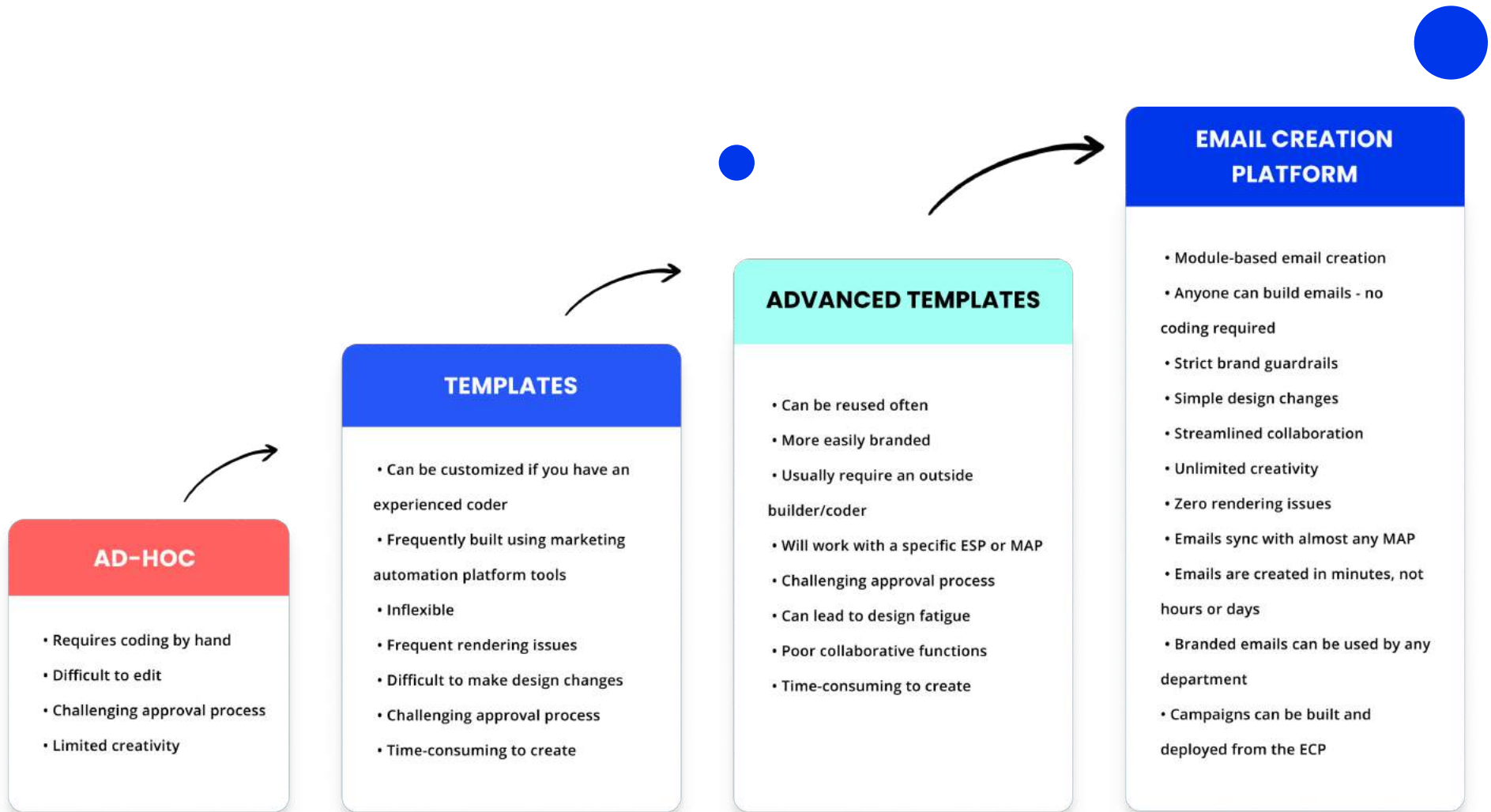


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EMAIL CREATION AT-A-GLANCE

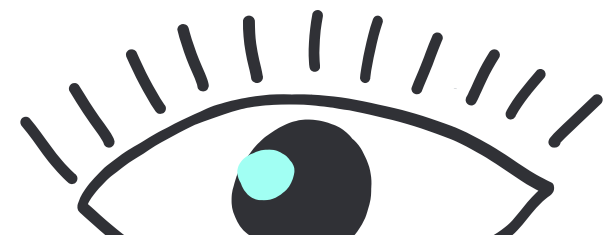
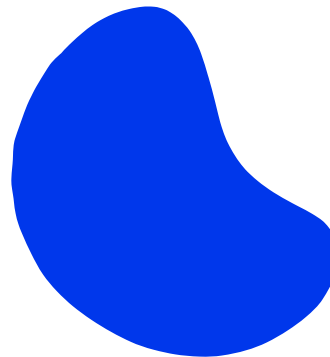
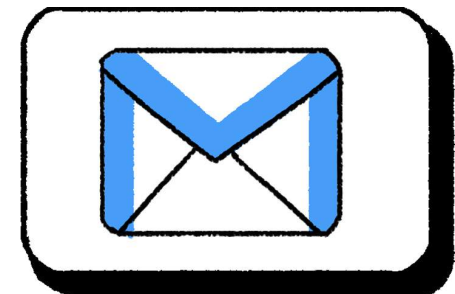
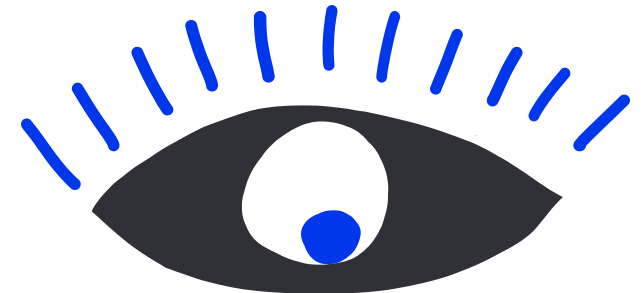
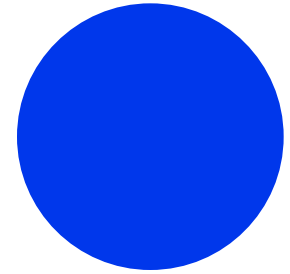


AN INTRO TO THE EMAIL CREATION PROCESS - WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

The email creation process has evolved in recent years. Like just about everything in the tech world, what was once cutting edge is now obsolete, and while change continues to be the only constant, the changes to the email creation process have actually made life far easier for Marketers.

Email is still one of the most effective communication channels out there, and while email creation methods have changed, the importance of creating incredible, on-brand emails and getting them to market quickly has not.

Let's take a look at the typical evolution of the email creation process, from coding to templates to modules, and break down some of the hallmarks of each step.



LEVEL ONE: AD-HOC EMAIL CREATION

- Emails are coded by hand
- Design changes often
- Modifications to copy or design are time and labour intensive

Pros:

-A short-term fix for an immediate problem

Cons:

*-Requires coding by hand
-Time-intensive
-Difficult to alter
-Frequent rendering issues
-Challenging approval process
-Expensive
-Creativity is limited*

Agency involvement: Agency provides strategic direction for branding, coding, campaign structure, and execution.

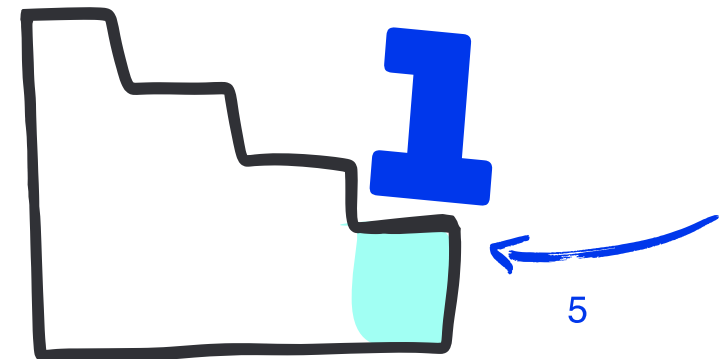
The Starting Point

Whether you're an SMB or an enterprise, your email creation process started somewhere. If you started off coding by hand, you likely realized the limitations of that method before too long.

Coding by hand is time consuming and requires an on-site developer, something start-ups don't always have.

Plus, once the email is created, any **requested text or design changes require updates to the code**, which means it needs to go back to the developer. Emails take days or even weeks to get out the door, and the process starts over again for each new campaign.

According to our [2019 Email Benchmark Study](#), only 5% of companies are still creating emails like this, and if you're in that 5%, it's time for an upgrade.



LEVEL TWO: BASIC TEMPLATES

- A set of rigid templates are used to build all emails
- Users rely on the built-in editor in their marketing automation platform to build emails
- Slightly more efficient than an ad-hoc approach

Pros:

*-Branding is set
(unfortunately, that's because it's not possible to make changes once the template is built)
-Customization is possible if you have an experienced coder on the team*

Cons:

*-Inflexible
-Can break easily
-Frequent rendering issues
-Challenging approval process
-Design changes require coding changes
-New designs require new templates
-Creativity is limited*

Agency involvement: Your agency is likely custom-coding email templates for your specific MAP, which can take days and have varying results.

Next Step

The next step is usually to build emails from basic templates. These are often designed and coded by an outside provider and used directly in your marketing automation platform (MAP).

It's more efficient than coding from scratch, but any design changes require updates to the code, and the necessary back-and-forth adds time to your campaigns. Plus, templates are rigid and must be manipulated/updated on an ongoing basis to resolve rendering and other issues. **These updates take time, meaning that the creativity of your team - one of their most important assets - is limited.**

Templates are a first step in the right direction, but they're a prime example of a technology that was once cutting edge and is now out of date.



LEVEL THREE: ADVANCED TEMPLATES

- Through internally developed Word documents, users are enabled to build emails based on templated assets
- One team populates Word docs or Excel sheets and another team builds the content into the actual email
- Changes to design still require coding changes
- Approval requires lots of back and forth and typically happens within emails and attachments that are easily lost in inboxes

Pros:

- Can be reused often once developed
- Can use branded elements
- Will usually work with a specific ESP or MAP to the extent that their built-in editors are capable of handling.

Cons:

- Still rigid and inflexible
- Poor collaborative functions
- Usually require an outside builder
- Have to rely on spreadsheets for review and approvals
- Frequent rendering issues
- Design fatigue is common
- Creativity is limited

Agency Involvement: Templates can be reused, but if you want to change the design or create a special campaign, your agency will likely need to build something new or spend resources updating an existing template.

Getting Better

With advanced templates, you gain a little more flexibility. You may still be relying on an agency to build them for you, but if someone on your team has mastered the template builder in your MAP, you can do it in house, though it will still be time-intensive for your builder to maintain.

In this case, content is usually entered into Excel sheets or Word documents by one team, and then a second team builds the email.



LEVEL FOUR : EMAIL CREATION PLATFORM

- Users build email assets through the email creation platform using modules, no coding required
- Collaboration, approvals, and workflow are integrated into the platform, providing a real-time overview of where the project stands
- Brand guardrails are firmly in place to ensure compliance
- Assets are portable and can be moved seamlessly from one marketing automation platform to another
- Can create emails for the rest of your sending tech stack, including chat bots, gmail, internal systems, etc
- Bonus points if you can build AND deploy email campaigns from within your ECP

Pros:

- Module-based email creation
- Drag & drop builder so anyone can build emails
- Strict brand guardrails
- Simple design changes
- Unlimited creativity
- No rendering issues
- Better collaborative functions
- Emails sync with multiple MAPs
- Branded emails can be used by any department
- Emails are created or updated in minutes, not hours or days

Cons:

- Peers will be jealous
- Too much extra time on your hands

Agency Involvement: Since you don't need your agency to build templates, you can save significant costs by using them as a strategic partner. They can help you create more dynamic campaigns, and it will free up valuable internal resources for higher-value projects.

LEVEL FOUR : EMAIL CREATION CONT'D

Process Maturity

The last step on this journey so far is the use of an email creation platform.

In an email creation platform, design frameworks are built using modules. **Modules can be dragged and dropped into place** and then edited as needed. Brand guardrails remain intact, and **emails can be built in minutes instead of hours or days.**

With an email creation platform, **anyone can build emails easily**, and your branding is no longer limited to the marketing department. Any email coming from your company - whether it's from HR, Sales, etc - looks great and keeps [your brand at the center](#).

Most importantly, the platform has **built-in collaborative features**. Approvals and workflow are integrated, so an email campaign can be:

- **Designed**
- **Built**
- **Reviewed**
- **Edited**
- **Approved**

...all in one place.

It's simple and intuitive, and **it puts the creativity back in the hands of your team**. No more waiting for an agency to build templates, no more using the same designs over and over. Plus, **no one has to learn how to code**.

In the Benchmark Study, 22% of users reported using an email creation platform or an agency to help build emails. This is up from just 6% in 2018, an increase that shows organizations are looking for platforms that simplify email creation and get campaigns to market faster.

WRAP UP - WHAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE?

Frequently, using an email creation platform comes down to efficiency. Sure, you can continue coding emails by hand or using templates. But the **time and resources** you're investing in those methods **can be used to create new, innovative campaigns instead.**

This is why the 6% of people who relied on email creation platforms in 2018 **jumped up to 22%** in 2019.

Businesses are increasingly asked to do more with fewer resources, and a platform like Knak that can alleviate that struggle and make email creation easier is an intuitive next step.

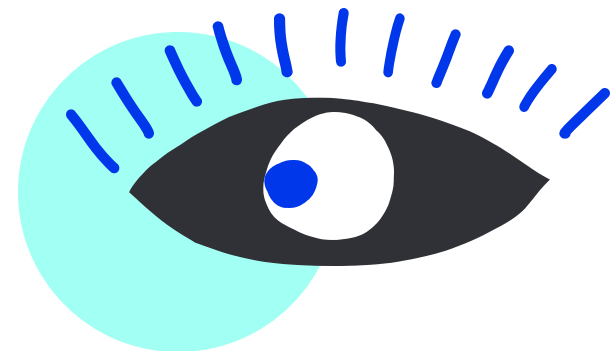
If it's time to uncover the benefits of an email creation platform, we'd love to chat! Check out our [product pages](#) or [reach out here](#) to schedule a demo.



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At Knak we believe **emails should take minutes to create,**
not hours or days

Marketers should build emails, not developers

Email creation, collaboration, approvals, and deployment
should be seamless