

The Science of Email Signatures

Eye-tracking analysis and best practices
around email signature marketing



An ebook by  eyequant & *Sigstr*

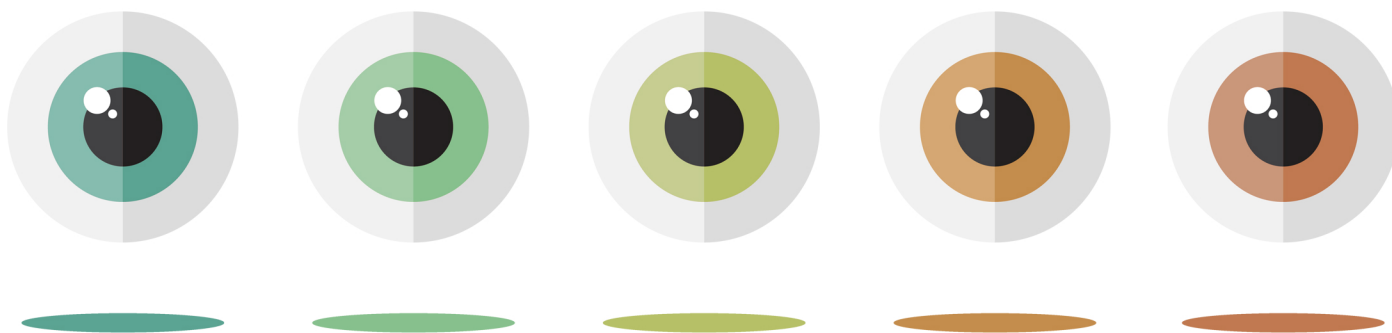
Introduction

The number of emails sent and received per day total over 269 billion, according to The Radicati Group Email Statistics Report¹. And on average, each of your employees will send or receive 122 emails per day. These are both eye-opening statistics, and make a case that no other marketing channels are as effective and efficient as employee email.

Whether it be prospective customers, current customers, job candidates, partners, vendors, or industry influencers, your employees are interacting with your most important contacts everyday. Like it or not, each email sent by your employees becomes an extension of your brand.

Now, with eye-movement technology and analysis, there is evidence that shows the most impactful part of these communications is the email signature. It's the focal point of your brand within these messages, and it can leave a positive or not so positive brand impression with your contacts (flower clipart and inspirational quotes are not ideal). It also means that the most valuable real estate in every message your employees send is being overlooked by all too many marketers. Are you maximizing the value of each of your employee's email signatures? Sure, you may send on an "all@" email with steps and best practices, but do you know if they took it to heart?

Exactly how does the employee email signature make an impact during these interactions? Do your contacts even pay attention it? And, if they do, is there a way to actually have it work in your favor?



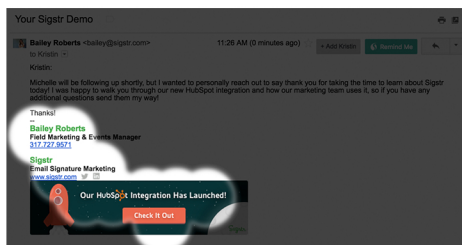
1. Sara Radicati, PhD, "Email Statistics Report 2017-2021", The Radicati Group, 2017, page 2

How do we interact with everyday email?

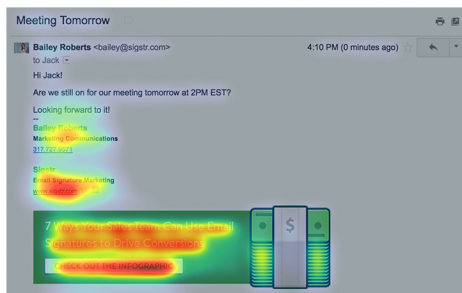
Is there a way to see how people interact with everyday email sent out of Gmail or Outlook? To answer this question, Sigstr teamed up with EyeQuant, an artificial intelligence platform that helps UX, CRO, and marketing teams make faster and better design decisions.

EyeQuant's design analysis technology instantly predicts how users are going to perceive any design. The predictions achieve between 85% (attention prediction) and 90% (clarity and excitingness scores) accuracy when compared to large-scale human studies. The analysis includes a perception map, attention map, and hot spots.

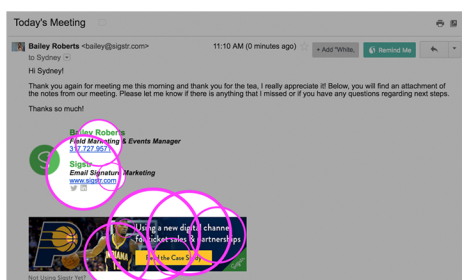
Sigstr and EyeQuant focused on each of these three tests when analyzing these emails. Here's a quick rundown on each one:



Perception Map: Intended to show what the email recipient will see and miss in the first three seconds with dark and highlighted areas. It's important to make sure the most important aspects of your message or offer are included in the highlighted areas.



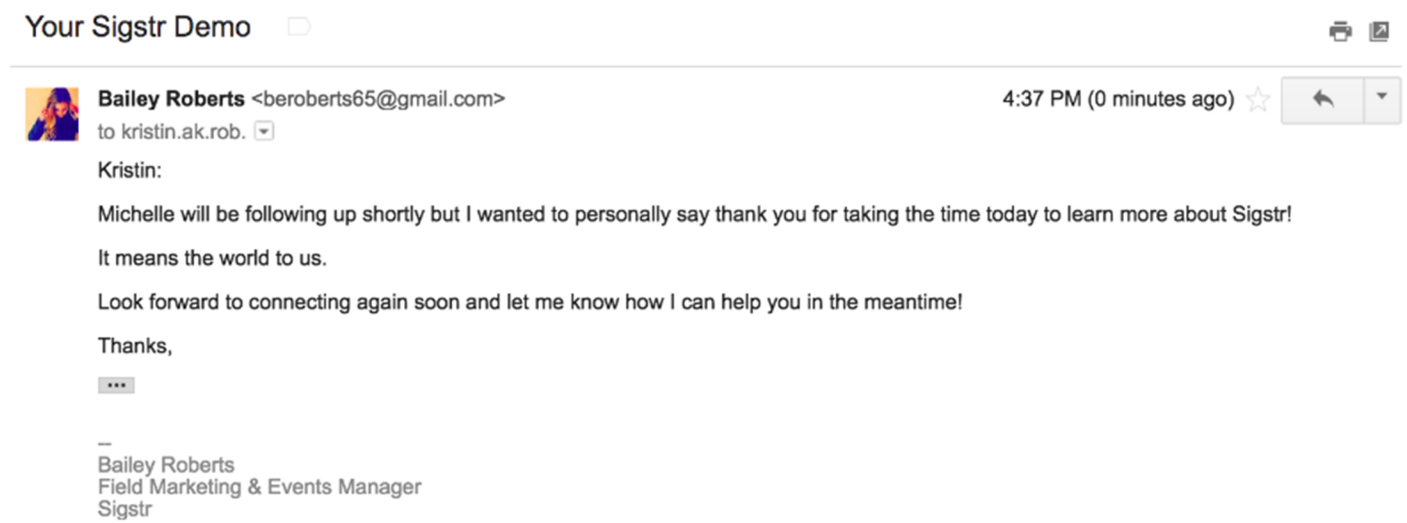
Attention Map: Intended to show which elements capture the most attention. Warm areas are more visible to the email recipient.



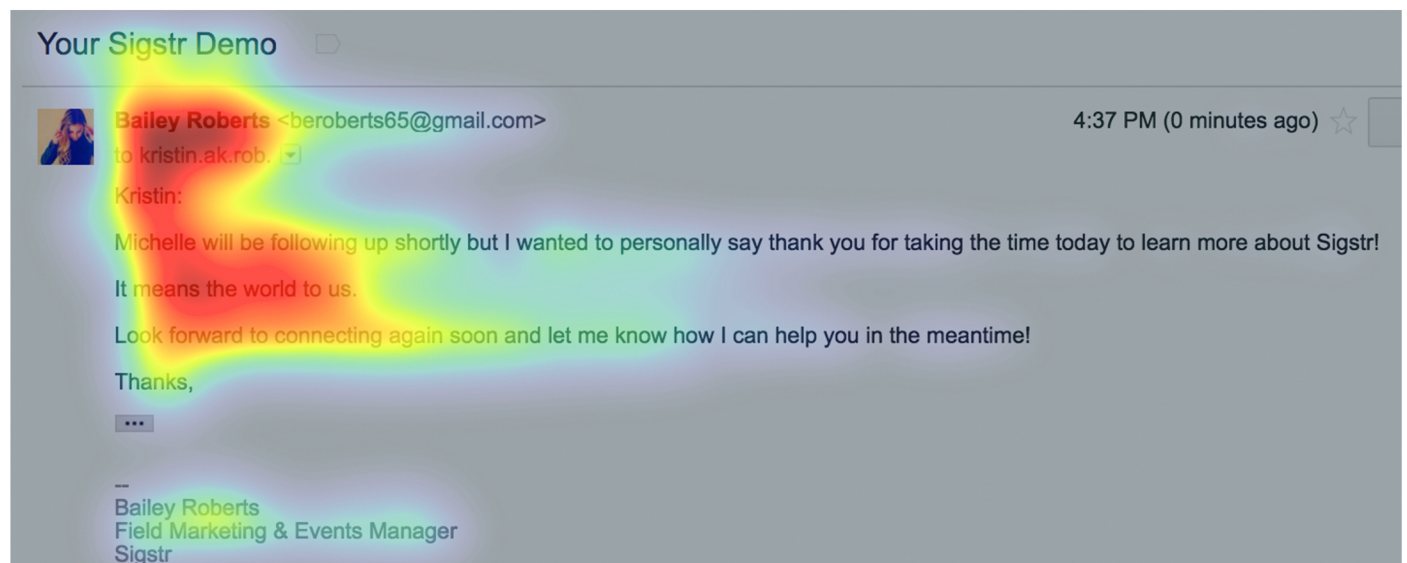
Hot Spots: Intended to show the ten most attention-grabbing spots of your email or design. Large circles indicate great visibility and smaller ones will still be easy to find.

Example: Email with a non-branded email signature

First, let's start with an email that includes a non-branded email signature. Standard in length, and with the typical information you would find in a traditional email signature.

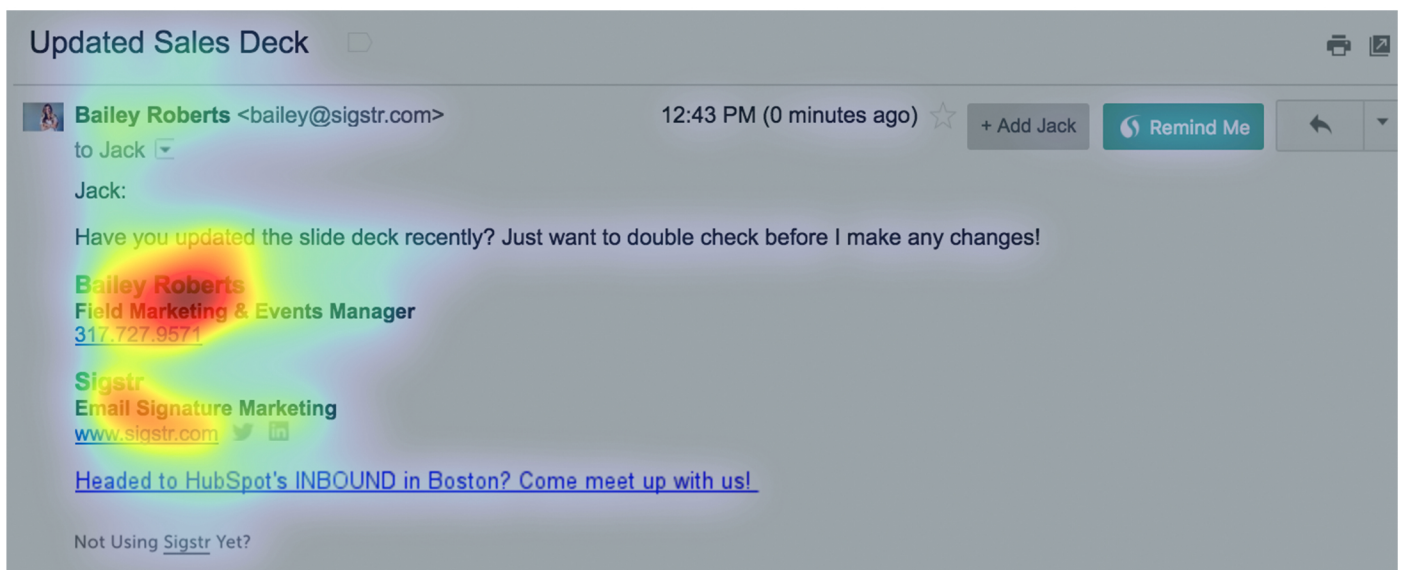


The recipient is naturally attracted to the sender of the email and body text. There is some acknowledgement of the email signature, but other than that, it's pretty much ignored.



Example: Email with a branded email signature and text call-to-action

So what happens when a few simple elements are added? Just by bolding the font and adding some color, the recipient not only notices the email signature, they also engage and spend the majority of their time in that area. However, the text call-to-action link is hardly acknowledged.

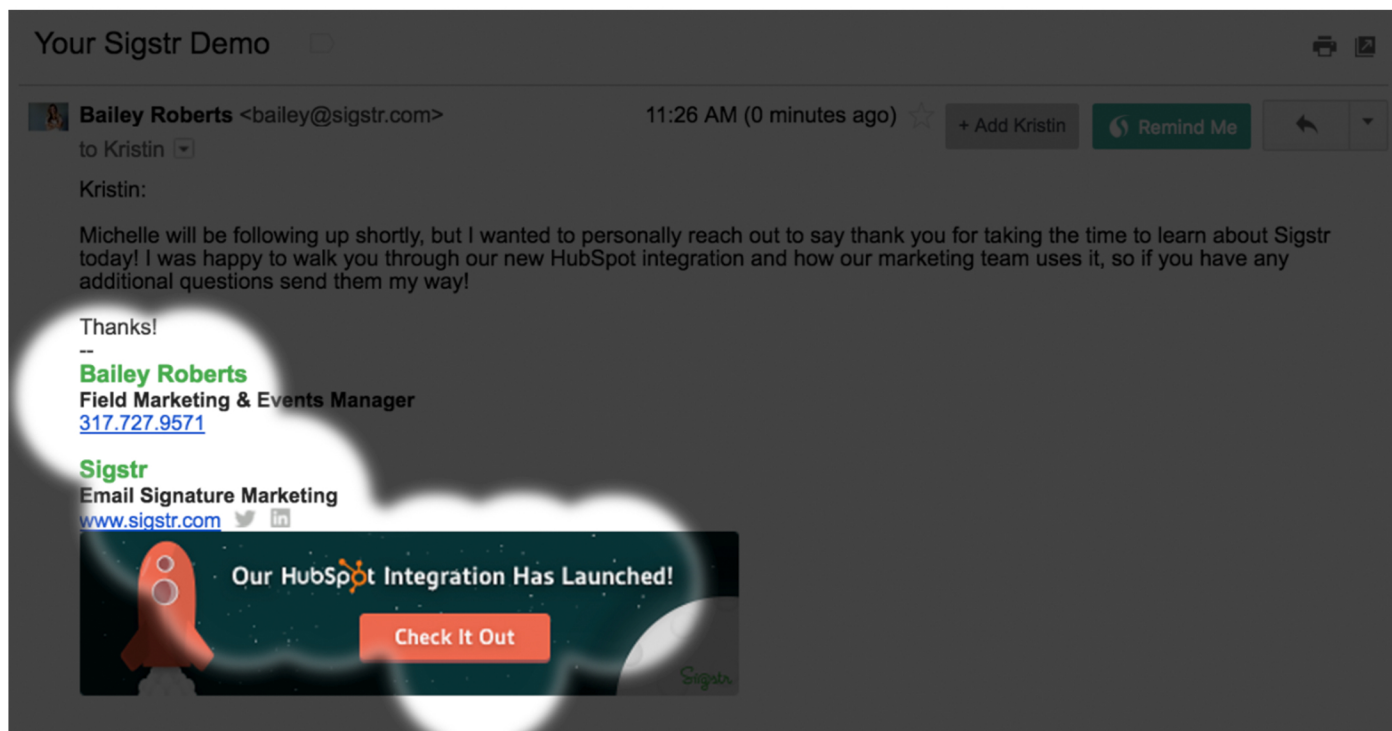


Example: Email with a branded email signature and banner call-to-action

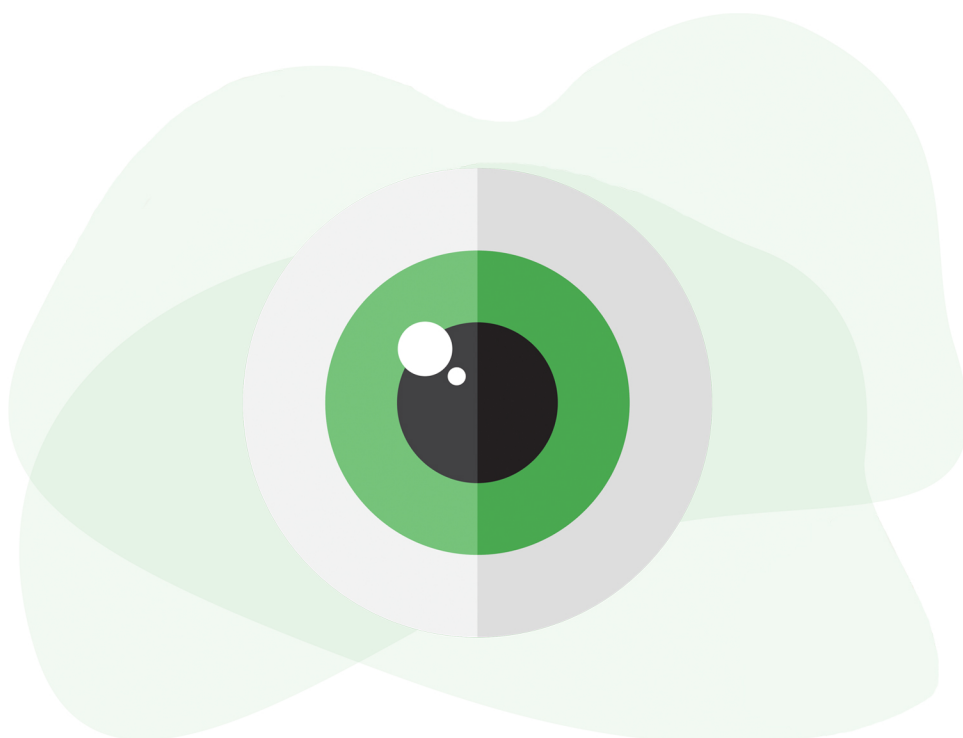
Promoting an upcoming event, new case study, or relevant blog post is a great way to engage your contacts in everyday email. However, a text CTA might not be enough. Something more eye-catching that visually tells the story of what it is you're trying to promote makes a big difference. Below is an email signature banner that promotes an upcoming webinar.



Not only did the recipient engage with the signature area, the attention map shows that they also focused heavily on the headline of the promoted webinar and “Register here” call-to-action. The next page shows one more test with the same concept, this time using the perception map.



The perception map shows what the recipient will see and miss in the first three seconds. Just like the the webinar example, the recipient focused first on the signature area and banner promoting a new product integration.

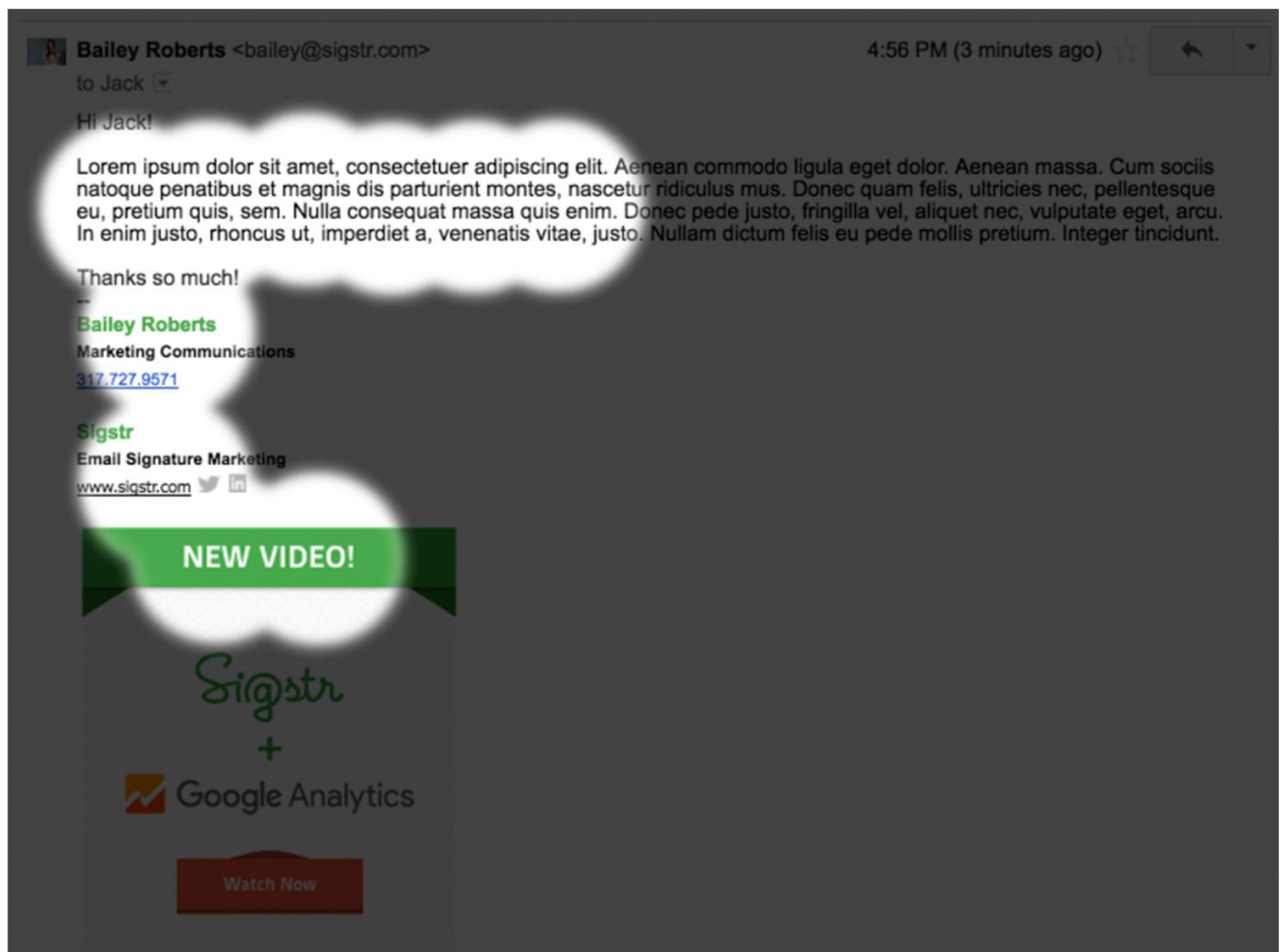


Best practices with email signature banners

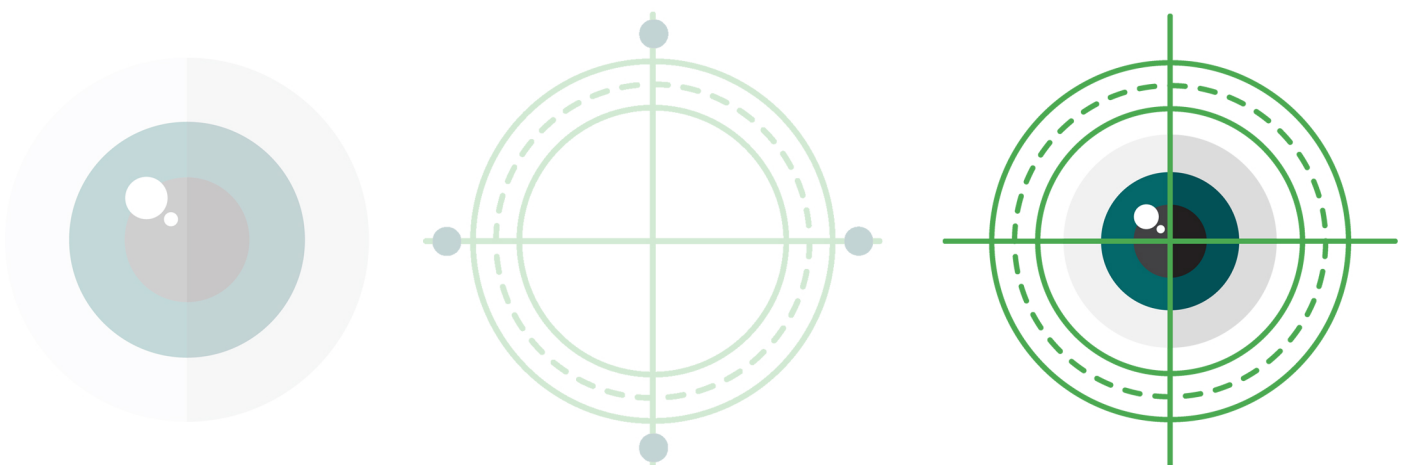
A beautifully branded email signature accompanied by a clickable call-to-banner transforms every sent email into a marketing opportunity. Including an email signature campaign proves to make a difference, but what works best within this banner area? Dimensions and sizing is a great place to start. Are recipients more likely to engage with shorter, wider banners (such as the webinar or product integration examples), or do taller, slimmer banners work better?

1. Size and dimensions: tall vs. wide

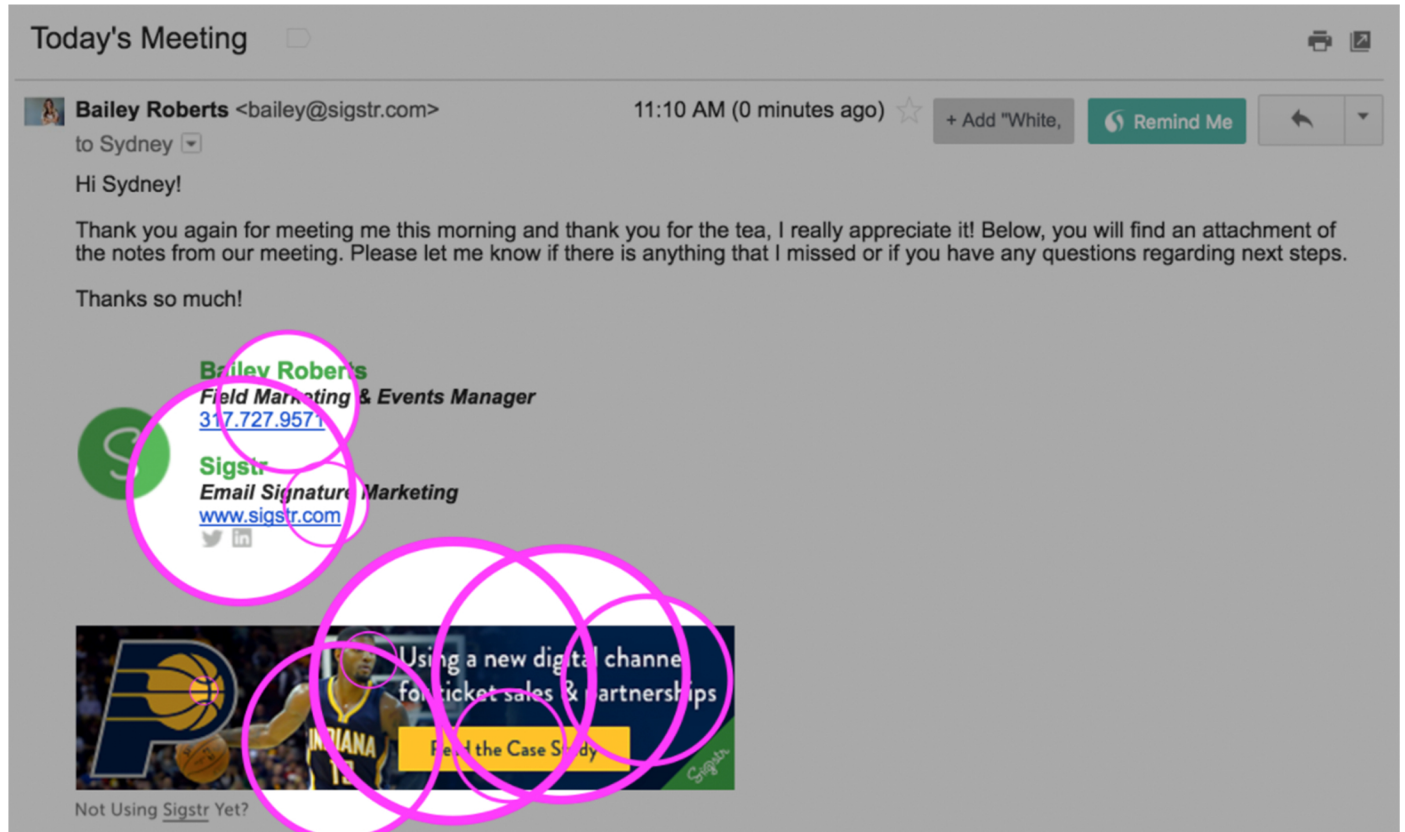
Let's start with a tall banner. The perception map below shows engagement with the body of the email, signature area, and top of half of the banner. However, the recipient did not focus heavily on the peach colored call-to-action button within the banner. They saw what it is being promoted, which is great, but missed what to do next.



The same story can be told in this next example with the attention map. Great engagement with the body, signature, and top half of the banner. But below that, the “Register Now” call-to-action shows little action.



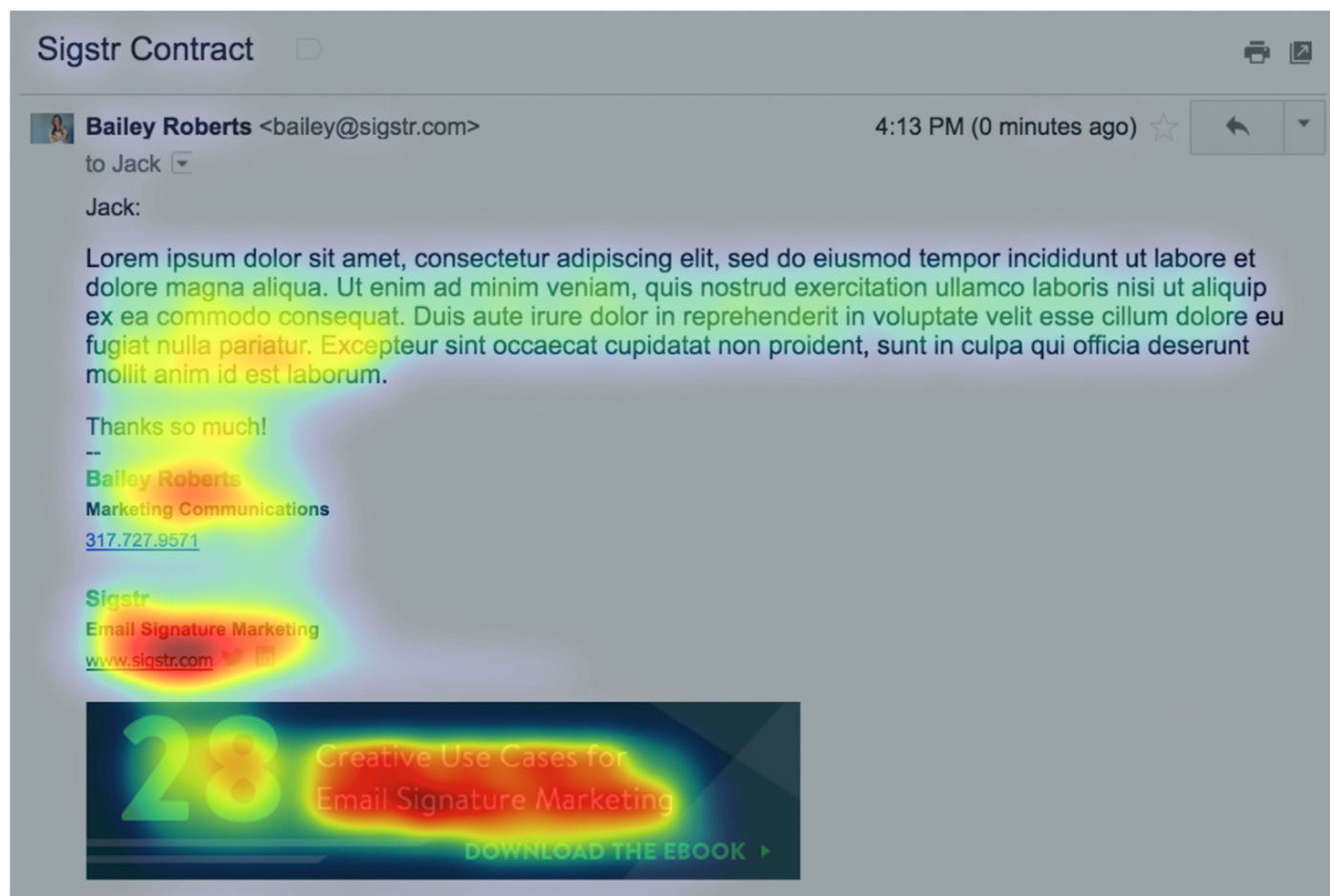
Does it make a difference to flip the dimensions with a wider, shorter banner? The hot spots (top ten most attention-grabbing areas) in the example below show high engagement with the headline and call-to-action within the banner. With taller, slimmer banners, the email recipients have to continuously scroll down with their eyes to see the call-to-action. With this Pacers case study banner, the recipient could see what was being promoted and what to do next, all in close proximity to one another.



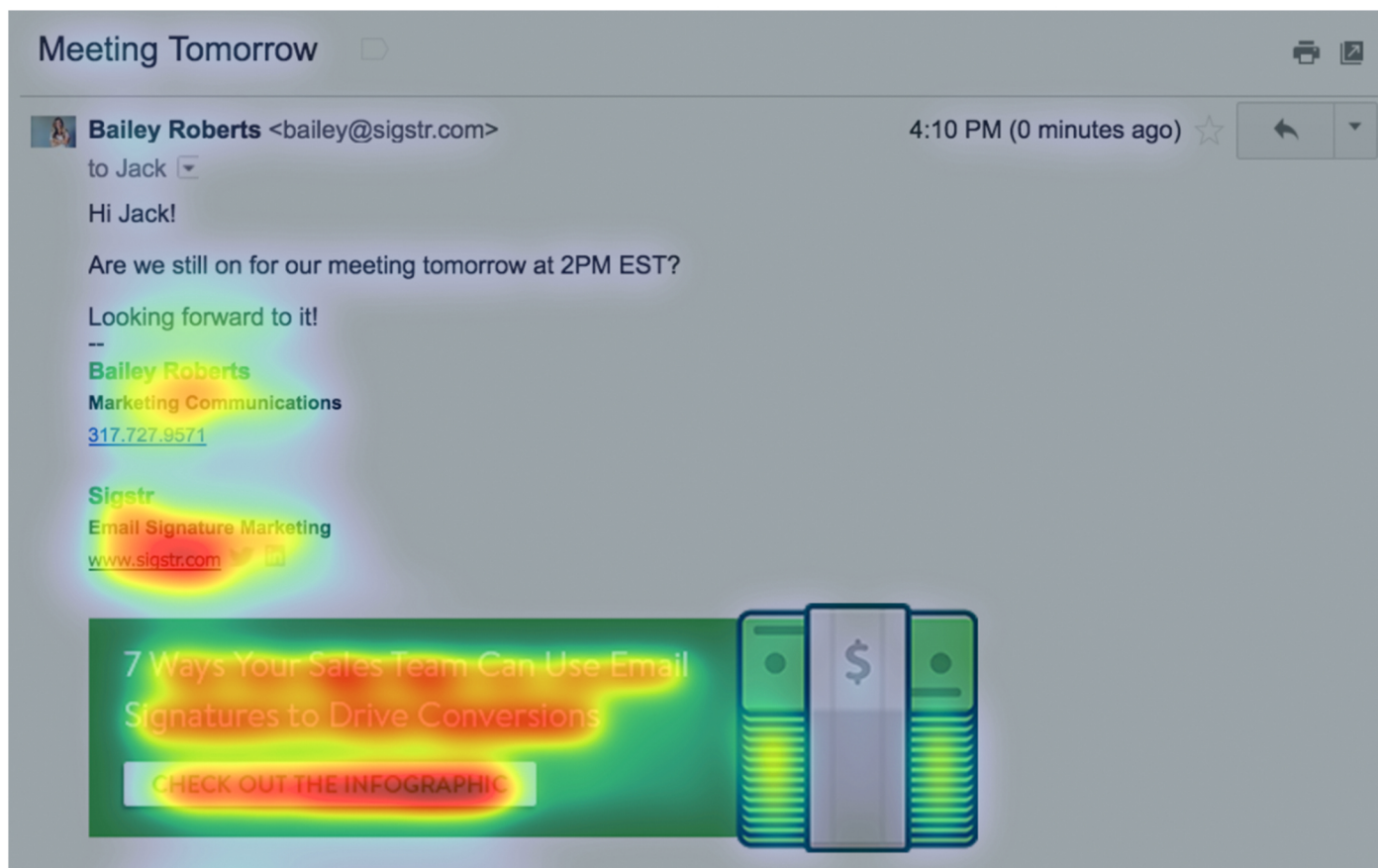
With the shorter and wider format, a width between 300 and 450 pixels and height range of 60 to 120 pixels works best. Using images in the .png file type, uploaded at 72 dpi (this determines the clarity and crispness of a graphic), is also recommended.

2. Clearly defined CTA button

As previously stated, not only is an email signature banner important, the call-to-action within the banner also deserves some thought. Including text that describes the resource and what to do next are both recommended. But what works best with the call-to-action text? Including it is one thing, but how can you ensure it gets noticed?



The ebook banner effectively describes the resource, as you can see in the attention map. However, the “Download the ebook” text did not see much attention. What happens when the CTA text is surrounded by a box so it resembles a button?

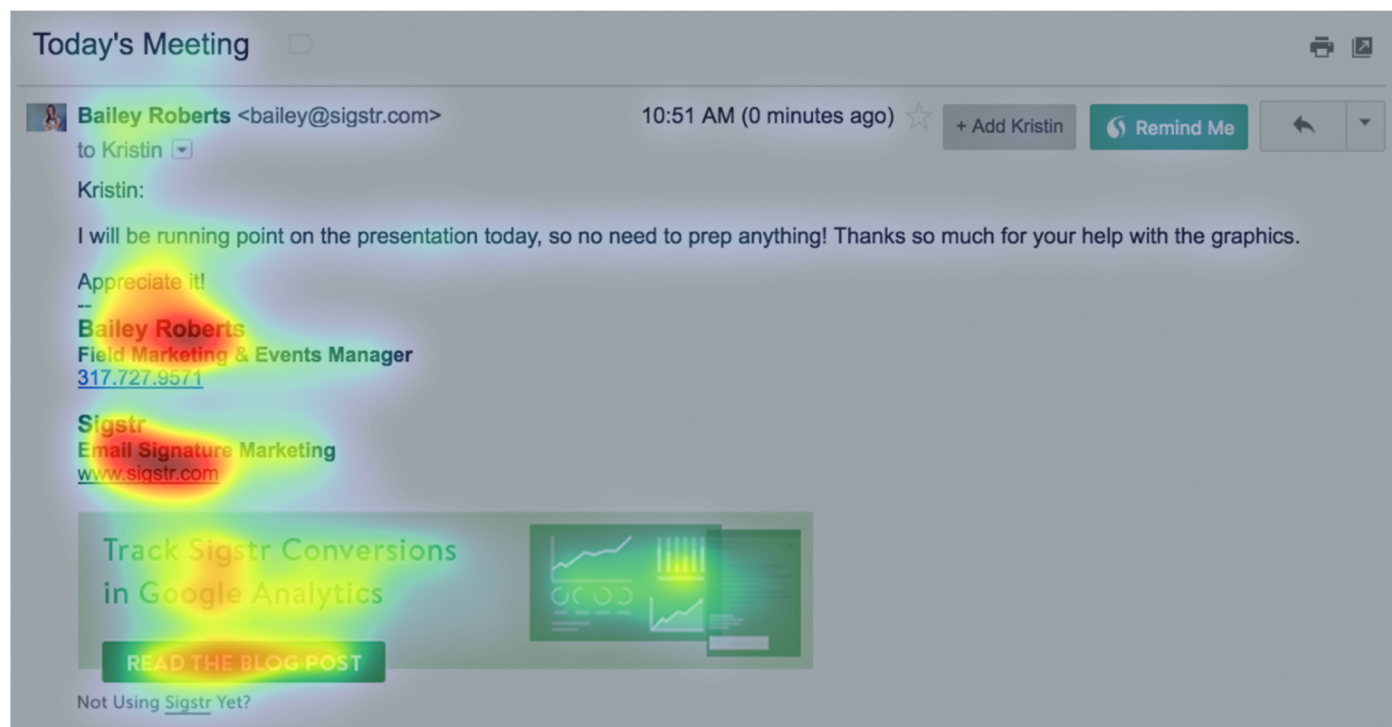


This email signature banner example, which is promoting a new infographic, saw much more engagement with the call-to-action text. By clearly defining what the next action is and structuring it in a way that stands out, email recipients will focus not only on the resource description or headline, but also on the CTA text.



3. Contrasting colors

Using contrasting colors can also help get the right elements of your banner noticed. In the next example, an email signature campaign promoting a new blog post uses two closely related shades of green as the primary colors.



The blog post example reflects a healthy dose of engagement with both the headline and CTA. However, the next example shows how different colors can influence the reader's attention.



This webinar campaign includes white text and a white CTA box, which sharply contrasts with the peach background color. This allowed both elements to stand out more, which impacted the overall engagement. An attention map showing red hot areas on the right elements is a huge win for any marketer or designer!



4. Other best practices

In addition to the size, dimensions, call-to-action, and colors of a banner, here are a few other best practices.

- Use eye-catching imagery showing people or social interactions
- Be concise with wording and bold with graphics
- Keep it fresh and rotate in new content every other week
- Think beyond the box - feel free to use subtractive space to make design elements stand out
- Create dimension with layers: images, abstract shapes, color overlays, patterns, etc.
- Use a design application such as Sketch or Photoshop

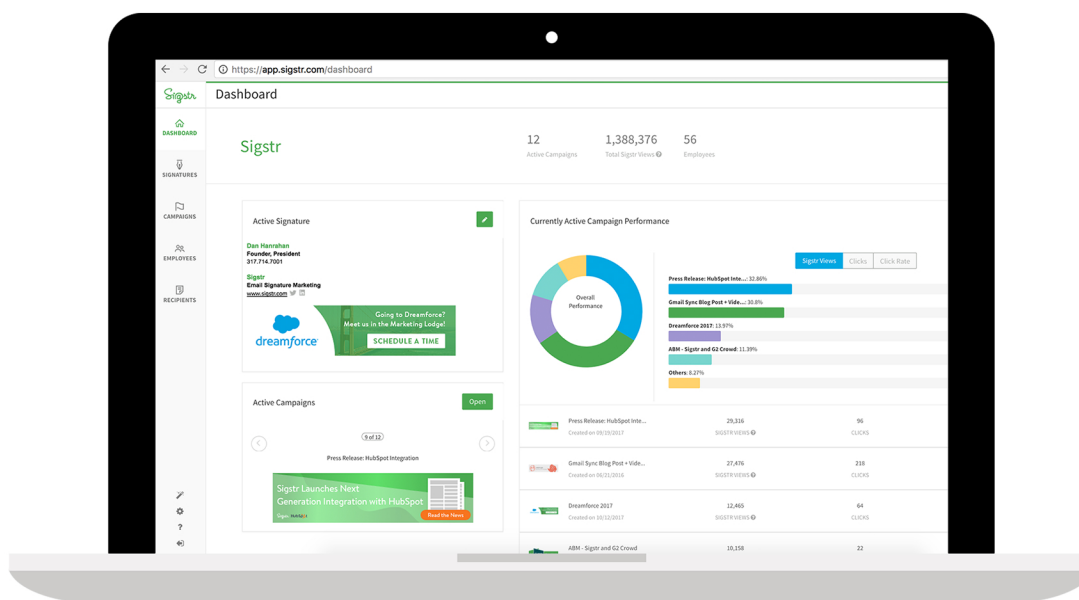
Make it easy with an email signature marketing platform

Email signature marketing transforms employee email into a new owned marketing channel. Take advantage of every email your employees send, test what works best, and frequently rotate in/out new email signature banners.

Of course all of this can be difficult to do manually, so use an email signature marketing platform to make things easy. Standardize the company email signature across your entire organization. Control it at a single point, and adapt to every department or team's needs.

Track overall impressions, clicks, and which of your contacts engaged. You can even add value to your account-based marketing strategy with contact or account targeting. Imagine pairing a specific email signature banner with a list of accounts or contacts and controlling which banner will be served when your employees email those list members.

Email is still the workhorse of digital marketing. Your most important contacts are engaging with employees every single day and paying attention to their email signature. This piece of digital real estate is an extension of your brand - so use it to your advantage to drive conversions and distribute relevant content.



About Sigstr

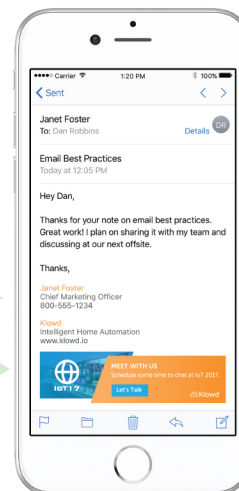
How Sigstr Works

CENTRALLY MANAGED EMAIL SIGNATURES

Make life easier for everyone in your company and maintain brand consistency. Sigstr Signatures automatically adapt to every department's needs while being managed at a single point.

HIGH-IMPACT CAMPAIGNS

Whether you want to tell the whole world about an upcoming event, or you want to instantly turn every employee in your company into an account-based marketer, Sigstr allows you to deliver relevant call-to-action banners in every email your employees send.



Sigstr For...

ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING

- Dynamically target any account with campaigns
- Dynamically target individuals within an account
- Intelligently deliver relevant content during the buyer's journey

EVENT MARKETING

- Drive event awareness and registrations from every email
- Geographic targeting for local events
- Target people that missed your webinar

BRAND MARKETING

- Drive thousands of brand impressions every month
- Ensure brand consistency across every employee email
- Target personas with unique brand messages

DEMAND GEN

- Drive engagement with your most qualified audience
- Add another channel to your advertising mix
- Organically grow your remarketing list

The world's best marketers are using Sigstr



CALIFORNIA CLOSETS™



Employee email is your biggest untapped marketing channel. Unlock it with Sigstr.

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