



If they're not reading it,
your message isn't working.

Smart Brevity for newsletters and emails

Most employees decide quickly if they'll keep reading your message. Long or unclear updates lose them right away. Smart Brevity helps you write messages people don't skip.

That starts with how you write newsletters.

Newsletters

Newsletters work when they deliver essential information fast. Smart Brevity often cuts word count significantly while keeping what matters, making updates easier to read and easier to finish.

Smart Brevity uses a simple structure: a bolded lead that gives the main point, followed by a sentence with essential context and a clear action. That structure helps employees get what they need quickly. Here's what improves when you use Smart Brevity in newsletters:

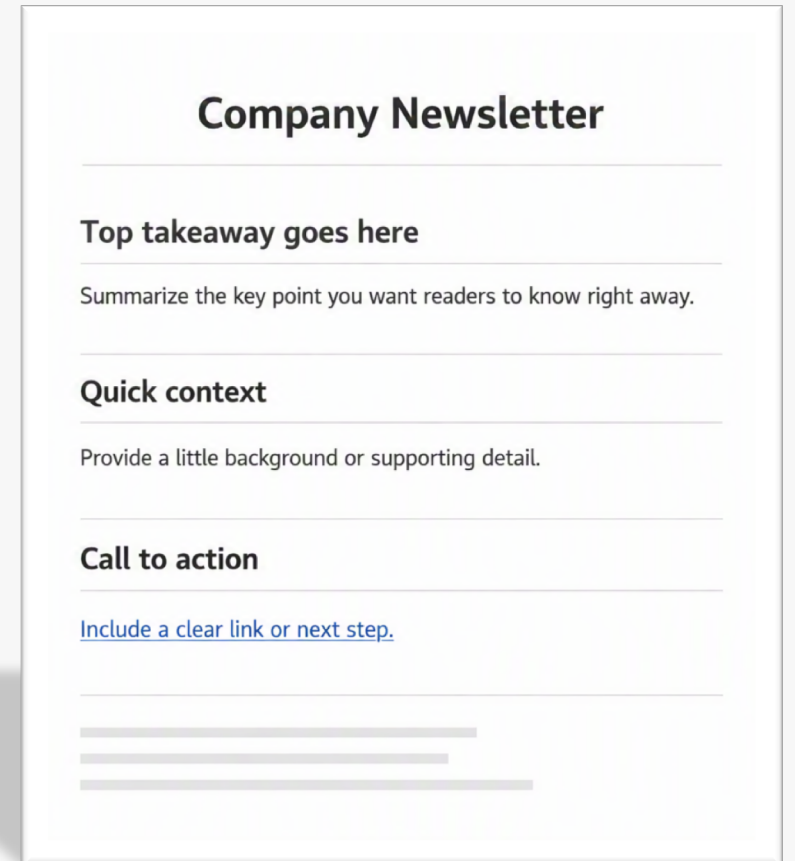
- Lower cognitive load: Short sentences, bolded leads and tight structure make information easier to absorb
- Support for skimmers: The bolded lead gives skimmers the main point
- Clear hierarchy: The most important information sits at the top, followed by one clean layer of context and a simple action

An example

Predictable read time and consistent formatting reinforce trust that employees can get what they need quickly.

- [Review the format](#)

The same principles apply to email.



Emails

Emails follow the same skimmable structure as newsletters, but they need a few extra cues because inboxes move fast. Smart Brevity helps you get to the point so employees don't miss what matters.

Here's what to focus on in emails:

- **Sharp subject lines:** Make the subject line clear and focused on the action.
- **The ask or news:** Put the decision, deadline or update in the first sentence.
- **Why it matters:** Add brief context so readers understand the stakes.
- **One layer more:** Keep the body short. Add only what the reader needs to act.
- **Clear next steps:** Close with a simple action, date or link.

Example: [See a before and after Smart Brevity email in action.](#)

No need to be rigid



Smart Brevity is a communication style built to deliver essential information fast by cutting down what doesn't matter and calling out what does. The authors share their advice as **guardrails, not hard rules.**

Best practices

Here's how to respect your readers:

- Grab attention with a short, concrete headline.
- State what's new and why it matters in single sentences.
- Use simple subject-verb-object sentences. Write like a human.
- Make it scannable: short paragraphs, bullets.
- Stop when you've said enough.



This article is part of a series inspired by the principles in [***Smart Brevity: The Power of Saying More with Less***](#), by Jim VandeHei, Mike Allen and Roy Schwartz.

- Lost? [Read The Case for Smart Brevity](#)
- [Read the series](#)