Visuals that help a newsletter, not slow it down

An image earns its place when it explains, shows or proves something faster than words. Here is how to use visuals without the usual problems.

Use images for what text cannot do

A chart, a screenshot, a product photo or a before-and-after says something words would take a paragraph to say. Decorative images that say nothing make the issue heavier and slower.

Never put the message inside the image

Many readers see your issue with images off at first. Headlines, prices, dates and calls to action belong in text, where they always show.

Write alt text for every image

Describe what the image shows or why it is there, briefly: “Bar chart comparing open rates for March and April”. Alt text shows when images are blocked and is read aloud by screen readers.

Size them for sharp screens

Export images at twice the width they will be shown, then set the display width in the code. They stay sharp on high-resolution phones without being oversized.

Keep files small

Compress every image before upload. Photos as JPG, flat graphics and screenshots as PNG. Heavy images make the issue slow to open on mobile data.

Be careful with animated GIFs

Some versions of Outlook show only the first frame, so make sure the first frame works on its own. Large GIFs also add a lot of weight.

Plan for dark mode

Logos with dark lines on transparent backgrounds can disappear in dark mode. Give them a light outline or a solid background that suits both themes.

Check the result

Send a test, open it with images off, then on a phone in dark mode. Every image should either help or disappear without loss.