

creating

HTML EMAILS

with

CHAT GPT

One of the most frequently asked questions on the community forum is, "Can Sparkle be used to create HTML emails?" The short answer is "No." This is because the HTML code used for websites is quite different from that used in emails.

Key Considerations

Embedding Images: HTML emails often include images, but these cannot be effectively embedded directly into the document. While you can add images to email messages, they are typically included as attachments, giving you limited control over their size and placement.

Responsiveness: HTML emails need to be responsive to the width of the recipient's email window. As the window is resized, the text should reflow, and graphical elements should reposition themselves to best fit the available space.

Deliverability: The complexity and content of HTML emails can affect their deliverability. This is largely due to spam filters, which not only analyze the content of your message but also evaluate the number of links it contains.

Despite these considerations, creating HTML emails is relatively straightforward once you understand the process.

With this in mind, we're going to see how you can use the modern tools of the Internet to help you create HTML emails with ease - in particular, ChatGPT. Read on to see how it's done.

Image Policy

The first thing to remember is that any images or graphics you want to include in your emails **must** be hosted on a server. This can lead to various implications depending on your server's security policies and how individual recipients have configured their email clients.

Some servers do not allow external hot-linking to image files, which can result in a broken image icon (such as a blue question mark) appearing in your emails instead of the intended images. Additionally, recipients may be prompted to confirm they wish to download images when they receive your message. However, in most cases, images will be delivered as part of the message, provided your server doesn't have restrictions and the recipient hasn't enabled image blocking in their email client.

Where to Keep Your Images

Create a folder on your domain, naming it something like "**email_assets**". Use this folder to store all the images you plan to include in your current or future emails. Make sure to use JPG or PNG file formats for your images.

Designing Your Email

You can use Sparkle as your design tool to lay out how you want your emails to look. This will make it easier when

specifying to ChatGPT what you want to create. Pay particular attention to the following:

Hex Color Codes: Note the specific color codes used in your design.

Font Sizes: Record the sizes of the fonts you've chosen. (*do not specify specific fonts*)

Box Widths: Especially for boxes that are positioned side by side, note their widths. These widths are usually expressed as a percentage of the total email width, but you can also specify pixel widths. This allows the email window to adjust the design accordingly - placing boxes one below the other in narrower windows, while keeping them side by side in wider windows.

Full-Width elements: There's no need to note the width for full-width elements, but if the height is important, be sure to record it.

Now. You're ready to go into ChatGPT.

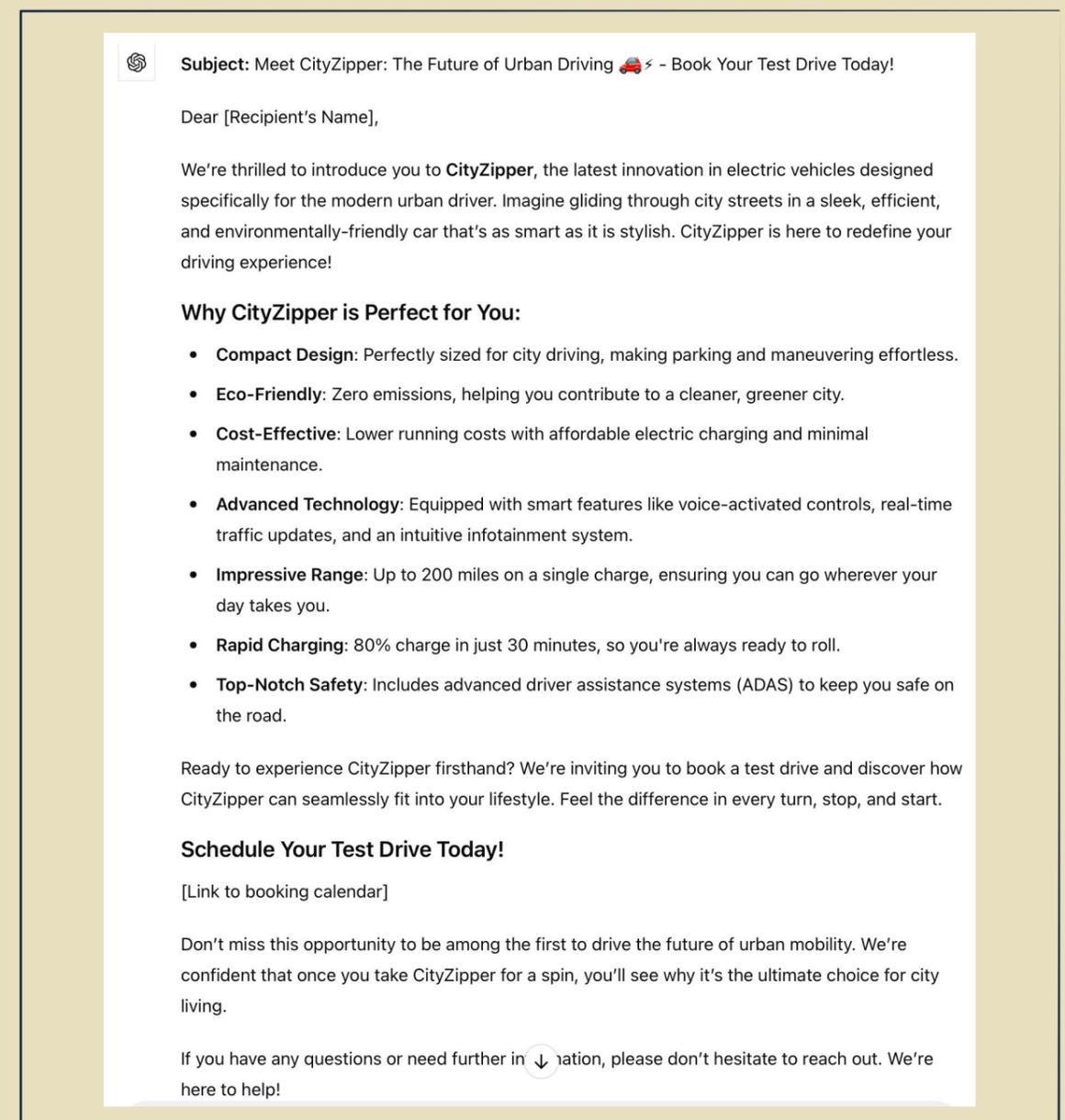
Specifying your email content

In ChatGPT you will create a prompt that will allow the system to generate the code for your email. On the opposite page, we've set out a typical prompt that may be used - you should refine it to better reflect what you want.

First Prompt for ChatGPT

Create an HTML email for [name of brand or entity] with the following message: [*Add details of the message you want to send to your recipients - it doesn't have to be word perfect because ChatGPT will write something for you - in many cases, the text will only require minor editing*].

Your prompt will generate the actual text copy for your email, and will often add some headings and subheadings. In the example below, we asked Chat GPT to create a sales email promoting the benefits of a new brand of electric vehicle named 'CityZipper' and to invite users to book a test drive. Here is the initial response:



The screenshot shows an email generated by ChatGPT. It features a subject line, a personalized greeting, an introductory paragraph, a section titled 'Why CityZipper is Perfect for You:' with a bulleted list of features, a call to action to book a test drive, and a closing statement. The email is styled with a clean, modern layout and includes a placeholder for a booking calendar link.

Subject: Meet CityZipper: The Future of Urban Driving 🚗 - Book Your Test Drive Today!

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We're thrilled to introduce you to **CityZipper**, the latest innovation in electric vehicles designed specifically for the modern urban driver. Imagine gliding through city streets in a sleek, efficient, and environmentally-friendly car that's as smart as it is stylish. CityZipper is here to redefine your driving experience!

Why CityZipper is Perfect for You:

- **Compact Design:** Perfectly sized for city driving, making parking and maneuvering effortless.
- **Eco-Friendly:** Zero emissions, helping you contribute to a cleaner, greener city.
- **Cost-Effective:** Lower running costs with affordable electric charging and minimal maintenance.
- **Advanced Technology:** Equipped with smart features like voice-activated controls, real-time traffic updates, and an intuitive infotainment system.
- **Impressive Range:** Up to 200 miles on a single charge, ensuring you can go wherever your day takes you.
- **Rapid Charging:** 80% charge in just 30 minutes, so you're always ready to roll.
- **Top-Notch Safety:** Includes advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) to keep you safe on the road.

Ready to experience CityZipper firsthand? We're inviting you to book a test drive and discover how CityZipper can seamlessly fit into your lifestyle. Feel the difference in every turn, stop, and start.

Schedule Your Test Drive Today!

[Link to booking calendar]

Don't miss this opportunity to be among the first to drive the future of urban mobility. We're confident that once you take CityZipper for a spin, you'll see why it's the ultimate choice for city living.

If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help!

Now you've got your content organized, move on to the next prompt in the same chat.

Second Prompt for ChatGPT

Organize the above content into a nicely designed HTML email with the following features: Top centre should be the brand logo which can be obtained from the URL https://mysite.com/email_assets/logo.png. 20 pixels under the logo should be a full width box for the vehicle image which can be got from <https://mysite.com/vehicle.jpg>. 20px below that image should be a heading banner. The box should use the color Hex 162740 with heading reversed out in Hex D0BE7E. Under the heading The body text should be organized as a single column in the hex color 162740 and a background color of D0BE7E. The features and benefits should be the same style in the same box, but organized as two columns. This section should be followed by full column text for the remainder of the body text including the Test drive invitation. This text can be black on white but with a border in the hex color 162740. Under the final box should be two buttons - one to book the test drive, the other to reply to the email. Finally, there should be an unsubscribe link.

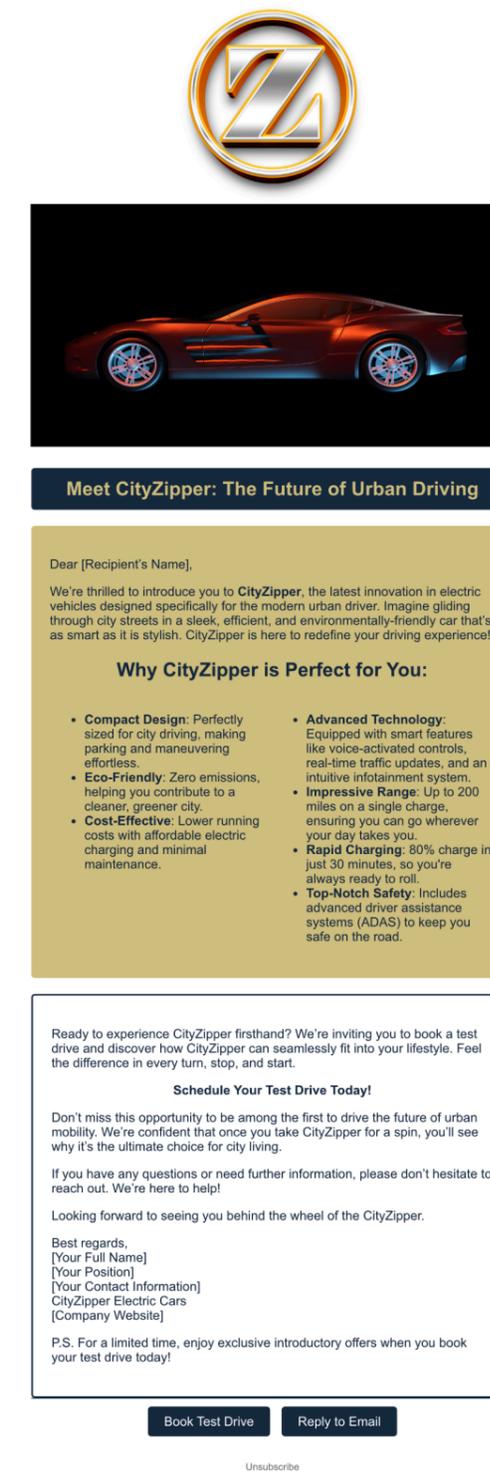
What that prompt does is get ChatGPT to design the email using your colors and your images. It will generate the code inside a code box. You use the **Copy code** link to place the code on your clipboard. Here is what the response looks like:

Certainly! Below is the HTML code for the designed email. This code assumes that the brand logo, vehicle image, and links provided are accessible.

```
html Copy code
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
  <title>CityZipper Electric Car</title>
</head>
<body style="margin: 0; padding: 0; font-family: Arial, sans-serif;">
  <!-- Email Container -->
  <table align="center" border="0" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0">
    <tr>
      <td align="center" colspan="2">
        <!-- Logo -->
        <img alt="CityZipper Logo" data-bbox="722 193 781 278" style="width: 100px; height: auto; margin-bottom: 20px;"/>
        <img alt="CityZipper Electric Car" data-bbox="670 286 833 401" style="width: 100%; height: auto; margin-bottom: 20px;"/>
        <h2 style="text-align: center; color: #D0BE7E; margin: 0; background-color: #162740; padding: 5px 0 5px 10px; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">Meet CityZipper: The Future of Urban DrivingDear [Recipient's Name],
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">We're thrilled to introduce you to CityZipper, the latest innovation in electric vehicles designed specifically for the modern urban driver. Imagine gliding through city streets in a sleek, efficient, and environmentally-friendly car that's as smart as it is stylish. CityZipper is here to redefine your driving experience!
        <h3 style="text-align: center; color: #162740; margin: 10px 0 0 0; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 5px 0 5px 10px;">Why CityZipper is Perfect for You:
          <tr>
            <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px 0 5px 10px;">
              <ul style="list-style-type: none; padding: 0; margin: 0; font-size: 0.8em; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Compact Design: Perfectly sized for city driving, making parking and maneuvering effortless.
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Eco-Friendly: Zero emissions, helping you contribute to a cleaner, greener city.
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Cost-Effective: Lower running costs with affordable electric charging and minimal maintenance.
              </ul>
            <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px 0 5px 10px;">
              <ul style="list-style-type: none; padding: 0; margin: 0; font-size: 0.8em; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Advanced Technology: Equipped with smart features like voice-activated controls, real-time traffic updates, and an intuitive infotainment system.
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Impressive Range: Up to 200 miles on a single charge, ensuring you can go wherever your day takes you.
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Rapid Charging: 80% charge in just 30 minutes, so you're always ready to roll.
                <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;">• Top-Notch Safety: Includes advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) to keep you safe on the road.
              </ul>
            </tr>
          </table>
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 10px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">Ready to experience CityZipper firsthand? We're inviting you to book a test drive and discover how CityZipper can seamlessly fit into your lifestyle. Feel the difference in every turn, stop, and start.
        <h4 style="text-align: center; color: #162740; margin: 10px 0 0 0; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 5px 0 5px 10px;">Schedule Your Test Drive Today!Don't miss this opportunity to be among the first to drive the future of urban mobility. We're confident that once you take CityZipper for a spin, you'll see why it's the ultimate choice for city living.
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help!
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">Looking forward to seeing you behind the wheel of the CityZipper.
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">Best regards,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Your Position]  
[Your Contact Information]  
CityZipper Electric Cars  
[Company Website]
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">P.S. For a limited time, enjoy exclusive introductory offers when you book your test drive today!
        <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px;">
          <button style="border: none; padding: 5px 15px; text-decoration: none; color: white; font-weight: bold; margin-right: 10px;">Book Test Drive
          <button style="border: none; padding: 5px 15px; text-decoration: none; color: white; font-weight: bold;">Reply to Email
        </div>
        <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 10px 0 0 0; color: #162740; background-color: #D0BE7E; padding: 10px 0 10px 10px; text-align: center;"><a href="#" style="color: #162740; text-decoration: none; font-size: 0.8em;">Unsubscribe>
      </td>
    </tr>
  </table>

```

Paste the code into a plain text or HTML editor and save the file with an HTML extension. You can now open the file in your browser to see the result. Here is what our example looks like.



CAVEAT WHEN COPYING/PASTING HTML EMAILS FROM A BROWSER

When using the “copy from browser” method of adding HTML email content to an email, you may find that the images get converted to raw **Base64 Encoding**. This essentially embeds the images directly into the email, instead of fetching them from your server. This could make the emails larger than necessary, and may even cause spam filters to reject your emails.

To overcome this potential issue, we recommend using **Mozilla Thunderbird** as your email client. This app is free, and allows you to insert HTML code directly. Just open Thunderbird and start a new message. From the **insert menu**, select HTML. This will open a code editing window.

Open your HTML email in a plain text editor and copy the code, or simply copy the code directly from the ChatGPT code window. Paste this directly into Thunderbird's code window and then close it. You should now see your perfectly composed email. Send as normal.

Refining the design

If the design isn't exactly how you want it, simply continue your chat with ChatGPT. You can request adjustments like increasing or decreasing the spacing between elements or changing colors in different sections. You may also want to specify maximum dimensions for elements like the logo or main image. Keep refining with ChatGPT until your design looks just the way you want it.

Why no font specification

When people visit a website, fonts are typically loaded into the browser from your server. However, this isn't the case with emails. It's best to use system fonts to ensure consistent appearance across all devices. ChatGPT is aware of this and will select appropriate fonts. While you can specify general font styles like serif or sans-serif, avoid specifying exact font names.

Changing text content

Don't worry too much about the text content generated by ChatGPT. When you're ready to send your email, you can easily edit the text within your email client. Think of your designed email as a template that you can save as a draft and reuse for various messages.

Sending HTML emails

Once your design is ready, the next step is to send it out. This process is simpler than you might expect:

1. Open your email design in Google Chrome.
2. Go to the Chrome menu, select "Edit," then choose "Select All" to highlight everything in the browser window.
3. Right-click on the highlighted content and select "Copy."
4. Switch to your email client, start a new message, right-click in the message window, and select "Paste." Your formatted email should now appear in the message window.

At this point, you can save the message as a draft, ready to be reused whenever needed.

Important Notes about Email Protocol

One of the biggest problems in today's communications world is SPAM. Many servers now deploy efficient spam filters to detect and eliminate spam emails from their user's accounts. These filters can prevent email delivery altogether, or send email to a user's junk folder. To help prevent this from happening, there are a few rules to follow.

Balance Text and Images: Ensure a good ratio of text to images. Too many images with little text can trigger spam filters.

Avoid Spammy Words and Phrases: Avoid excessive use of words like "Free," "Discount," "Buy now," etc. Also, avoid using all caps, multiple exclamation marks, or excessive punctuation.

Use Alt Text for Images: Always include alt text for images. This not only helps with accessibility but also reduces the likelihood of being marked as spam.

Limit the Use of URL Shorteners: Spammers often use URL shorteners to hide links. Use full URLs where possible.

Send From a Recognizable Email Address: Use a consistent and recognizable "From" name and email address. Avoid using free webmail addresses (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo).

Personalization: Use the recipient's name and other personalized details where possible. This can make your email seem more legitimate.

By following these best practices, you can significantly reduce the chances of your HTML emails being marked as spam. Remember, the key is to ensure that your emails are wanted, trusted, and technically sound.