How **GRUBHUB** Saved Its Creative Team From Code

Executive summary

Grubhub was looking to drastically shorten its email creation process. The team was spending too much time in HTML, which diverted efforts away from higher-value projects and stifled the volume of email campaigns they could send.

With stensul as a key part of the solution, Grubhub has been able to scale its B2B email marketing program.

About Grubhub

The Chicago-based company connects people with the food they love from their favorite local restaurants. It is the nation's leading online and mobile takeout food-ordering marketplace.

Grubhub partners with 75,000 restaurants to serve more than 1,200 U.S. cities and London. The Grubhub portfolio of brands includes Grubhub, Seamless, Eat24, AllMenus and MenuPages.

The Team

Grubhub's B2B marketing team focuses on Driver, Restaurant and Corporate partners. Two of the people on this team include Aaron Myers and Winnie Lee.

Aaron is an associate art director on the creative team. He's the mastermind behind many of the team's designs. B2B Marketing Manager Winnie uses Grubhub's email service provider (ESP) to talk to its 75,000 restaurant partners. Email comprises the bulk of her marketing and operational communication.

Aaron Myers   *Winnie Lee*

Grubhub's Goals

Decrease production time

Find a better solution for ESP templates

Get designers out of HTML

To create emails, Grubhub had been using a combination of freelance developers and agency-designed ESP templates.
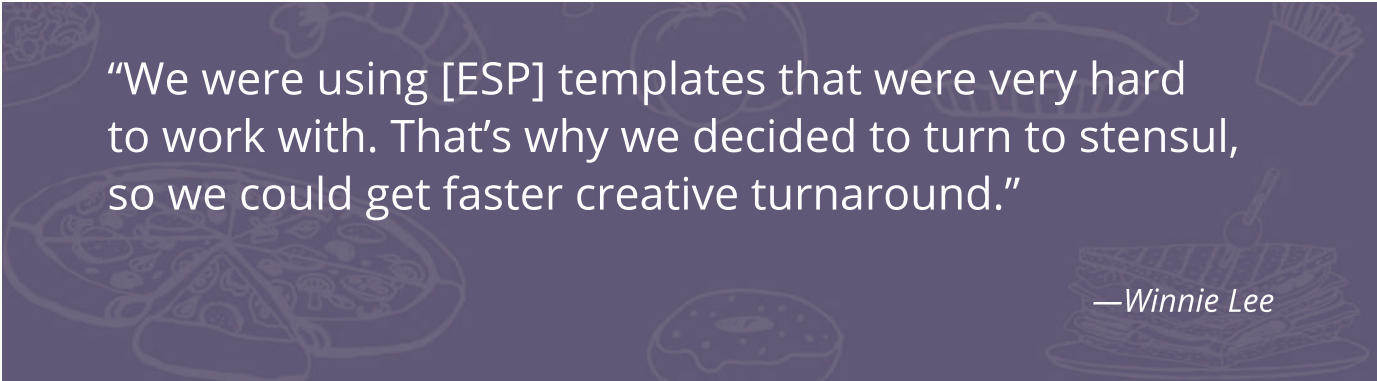
Frequent challenges included:

1) Lengthy creation process
It took much longer than Grubhub wanted to produce an email from start to finish.

This was time-intensive for Aaron, since he was the one receiving the copy, designing the email, getting approval from Winnie, and passing it to developers to code and test.

2) Non-negotiable development time
Several freelance developers were always on standby. They required 2-3 days for each email, but also worked on additional outside projects, making turnaround time unpredictable.

> "We were using [ESP] templates that were very hard to work with. That's why we decided to turn to stensul, so we could get faster creative turnaround."
>
> *—Winnie Lee*

3) Human error in hand coding
The problem with manual work is that mistakes happen. And when they do, "you have to look through all that code and have to find it yourself—that's the problem," Aaron says.

4) ESP templates were difficult and time-consuming
Grubhub paid an agency to create new email templates, but these still came with frustrations.

If a new email fit into the mold of an existing template, Winnie would add the copy and an image into the template herself. "But it took us forever—sometimes hours—to fight with the template," she says. "It was too time-consuming and wasn't worth it."

5) And restricted creativity
The combination of rigid templates and non-negotiable coding time meant email designs couldn't be overly complicated if the team wanted to hit deadlines. Even when Aaron went above and beyond with his designs, the finished emails wouldn't always reflect his vision.

"It was pretty disappointing," he says.

Aaron and Winnie agree: recouping time has been the single biggest benefit of using stensul. Now, the team can create a full email campaign in less than a day—without touching HTML.

"Giving us time back to focus on bigger things? That's definitely made things a lot better for us and for our restaurant partners. We can communicate even more strategically," Winnie says.
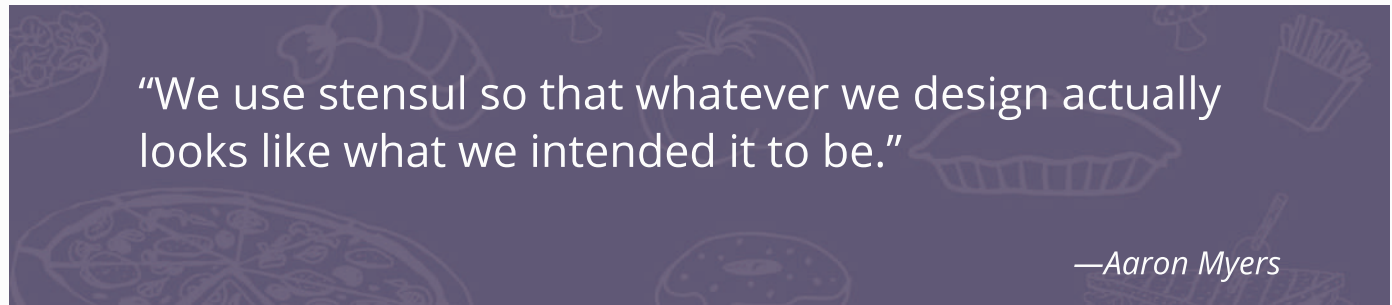
Some other amazing changes:

1) Shorter creation time + an empowered creative team
Winnie says it's been great not having to wait for someone to help them code. "The creative team will design something and immediately they can put that template into [the ESP for deployment],"
she says.

2) Eliminated coding time (and cut down costs).
Grubhub hasn't tapped its standby developers since implementing stensul. "As long as you have a designer and they understand stensul, that's all you really need," Aaron says. "I'm the designer and developer without having to rip my hair out over code."

> "We use stensul so that whatever we design actually looks like what we intended it to be."
>
> —*Aaron Myers*

3) A better ESP builder and HTML experience
Aaron says he doesn't have to think about whether or not the HTML might break anymore—plus, all emails are automatically responsive.

"I'd have no answers when something went wrong with the code," he says. "That doesn't happen anymore."

He also says that getting emails into Grubhub's ESP is much easier now. "We've been having fewer problems with [our ESP builder] since we've been using stensul, for sure."

4) Faster last-minute changes
Whether it's a design update or swapping one image for another, eliminating the developer bottleneck lets Grubhub address edits and finish emails quicker.

5) More time to build the Grubhub business
"Instead of spending hours going through HTML, I can actually focus on creating more emails and doing other projects," Winnie says.

Winnie and Aaron now have more time to work on multi-touch marketing, review metrics, strategize for upcoming projects, and create more design-oriented emails.

"If a last minute request were to pop up, I could have it done in an hour."

—Aaron Myers

Results Per Email

97%

Decrease in total
creation time

86%

Less production
time

25%

Less people
involved

100%

Saved hours
of QA

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most admired companies in the world
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