

Everything we know about email marketing today

By [Blake Snow](#)

August 2016—What happens when you monitor 40,000 email marketing campaigns and millions of global transmissions over the last two years and then ask in-the-trenches practitioners to make sense of the results? This summer Adobe did just that. Here's what we learned.

Introduction

If you're reading this, chances are you deal with email marketing, already believe in it, and/or want to get better at it. Maybe you want to hear the latest thinking, learn a new trick, or see how it's evolved recently. While we don't have all the answers, we're excited to share new insights while reaffirming older ones.

For example, 91 percent of marketers believe email is the single most effective channel for driving revenue, according to a recent study by the Adobe Relevancy Group. Indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that *everyone* monitors their email at all times of the day. This goes for social-medial loving Millennials as much as Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and even up-and-coming Generation Z users.

In spite of the latest and greatest apps, 30 year old email remains our collective life box.

And yet, we seem to have a love/hate relationship with it. We spend six hours a day with it because it allows us to connect one-on-one with strangers as well as friends, according to a recent Adobe study. In fact, nearly 80 percent of people check email first thing in the morning, according to [Adweek](#). On the other hand, we despise it because [half of it](#) is unsolicited spam, 58 percent say they receive too much of it, and two thirds of those who send it for marketing purposes are unsatisfied with the results, according to the same Adobe study.

What's a marketer to do?

Examine the data

John Thies has made email his life's work. As CEO [Email On Acid](#), he's on a mission to enhance email marketing with nifty tools and better education. With respect to the latter, over the last

two years he and his Denver-based team have tracked over 40,000 email marketing campaigns and several million “sent messages” across both time and space. They recently shared their findings with Adobe. As you might expect, the results are both surprising and lend further credibility to the truths we’ve already observed.

They also demonstrate how this already established marketing tool is getting smarter. “At 30 years old, we’re just scratching the surface of what email can do,” Thies says. Because it’s proven to be so powerfully inexpensive, especially when compared to trendier social media campaigns, email marketing “is exploding once more,” he adds. “When done right, it returns \$40 for every \$1 spent, according to Forrester Research.”

So what does the recent data say? Noting that the U.S. sends more email than any other country (so the numbers will be naturally skewed), here are some key observational benchmarks from Email On Acid’s research:

- Total average open rates = 23.74%; unique opens = 14.19%
- Total average click-through rates = 2.29%; unique clicks = 1.94%
- Email sent during the weekend, especially on Sunday, enjoy the highest click-throughs at 3 percent, followed by Tuesdays and Fridays at 2.5 percent. As you would expect, readers click more often as less email is received. The same is true of peak open rates by day of the week at 23-28%.
- Thursdays experience the lowest open rates.
- While most email campaigns are sent at the start of the day (when total number of subscribers is highest at 9AM), both unique and total click-throughs peak at 3-4% at the end of the workday (5PM) and before audiences go to sleep (10PM).
- The same is true of both open and read rates, which peak around 6PM at 60%-70%. Although click-throughs decline after normal working hours, total read rates remain high between 6PM–1AM.
- Delete rates peak at 7PM, 9PM, and 11PM.
- People will spend the same amount of time reading (12.30 seconds) an email once they have opened it at all hours of the day.
- In terms of annual spikes, readers open nearly double the amount of email (82%) in the weeks leading up to Labor Day (specifically weeks 27-33). New Year’s week enjoys the second highest open rates at 42%, followed by the week of President’s Day at 27-30% total opens.
- All other weeks average open rates in the high teens and low 20s.

In other words, readers are more likely to open, read, and click your campaigns on Sundays, end of the working day, during nights, and increasingly from July to mid-August as they collectively prepare for a new school year.

One size doesn’t fit all

Of course, different industries enjoy different open, click, and read rates, according to Email On Acid data.

For instance, click-throughs for employee recruiting, government, and health science correspondence is the highest at 3-5%, even though their subscriber numbers are some of the lowest. “This indicates that these industries are sending very targeted email campaigns,” says Adobe Campaign product expert Alex Dal Canto.

On the other hand, industries with large subscriber audiences including marketing, advertising, retail, and education typically experience lower click-through rates at 1.5–2%. “This is an indicator of a batch and blast or un-personalized email campaign,” Dal Canto says.

When it comes to the finance, insurance, software, and technology emails, if you can get a reader to open an email once, chances are they’ll come back to it again. But casual or less interested reader appears a lot less inclined to open it. In fact, said industries see total open rates 210+% higher than their unique open rates, with nonprofit and government total opens close behind at 190% higher than their unique opens. Certainly something to consider.

How do browsers, email clients, and operating systems affect campaign performance? As you might expect, Firefox, IE, Chrome, and Google Image Proxy dominate the browsers being used to open email. Firefox and Google Image Proxy show the highest read rates peaking at over 90%, while IE and Chrome both hover around 60% read rates with skim and delete rates around 20%.

Obviously, not all email users are early adopters and use the latest browser version. With that said, the ratio of opens, reads, skims, and deletes remains relatively constant across browser version. But since different browsers and different versions render content differently, it’s important to consider “preview before sending” software to make sure your message displays properly.

“You’d be surprised by the number of marketers who fail to understand this reality,” Thies says while referencing his most popular email preview tool. “Every email client renders content differently, so it’s important to verify your content before sending.” (DISCLOSURE: Adobe is considering adding Email On Acid’s preview feature into Adobe Campaign.)

As for popular email clients, the vast majority are using the default iOS mail client. Outlook is a distant second, Gmail an ever more distant third, according to the data. That said, “There is a very large group of people who are using other third-party email clients and show some of the highest read rates across the board,” Dal Canto says, suggesting that picky email client users are serious about their email.

As per browser versions, the ratio of opens, reads, skims, and deletes remains relatively constant across all email clients. That said, iOS client users update to the latest version the fastest, whereas the vast majority of Android owners are still using older versions. “This could

explain why the 'Other' category is so large when we look at the data as people may be downloading newer third party clients for their Android devices," explains Dal Canto.

That said, iOS users dominate total mobile opens. Nearly 92% of all mobile email is opened on an Apple device, with 81% taking place on an iPhone. In fact, Apple devices not only see higher total opens over Android but higher read rates and lower delete rates as well, according to the data.

Unsurprisingly, Windows still dominates desktop email. But that's increasingly less of a priority, Thies notes. "If you're not focused on mobile, you're missing 50-60% of the market," he says. "Be sure your audience can convert as easily on mobile as they can on spacious laptop or desktop screens."

Modern misconceptions

Hopefully some of the above has inspired you to rethink your approach. But old habits can be hard to break. Which is why despite the new or reaffirming information, each and every expert we spoke to was quick to call out outdated or otherwise unproven email marketing strategies.

For instance, "Opens versus converted clicks is the biggest misconception," Thies believes. Because many email clients block images by default (which is still the only way to track email opens), this makes open rates less reliable than click-throughs, if not misleading he says. "If no one's converting, what's the point?"

Michael Sciano, a seasoned account manager for Adobe Campaign, is baffled by the continued failure to adapt and optimize campaigns. "The days of batch and blast have been over for years, yet too many marketers are still sending large, unsegmented, impersonal, and poorly timed blasts without even using a recipient's first name," he says.

Not only have the standards increased, but consumers expectations have as well. "Subscribers will disengage and unsubscribe much faster than in the past, and then share their negative experience on social media," Sciano adds.

When their not resting on their laurels, many email marketers are babysitting or wrangling other departments for the assets, technology, and approvals they need to send campaigns, says Kristin Naragon, director of email solutions at Adobe. This is a problem because instead of focusing on delightful communication experience (which you'll see in the below examples), "email marketers spend quite a bit of time relying on other departments to prepare the content," she says, such as readying creative, landing pages, and persona data.

To overcome this, Naragon recommends a more modern approach to your process as well as your technology. "Streamlining the back-end of email campaigns will free marketers to think

more strategically about the entire lifecycle of their customers, allowing the former to insert more surprising, useful, and ultimately effective emailed messages.”

Overreliance on simply checking off or hitting benchmarks is another concern. “They should be a reference point—not the reason for which you make a decision,” Naragon says. “Just because a retailer’s typical open rate is X percent doesn’t mean your open rate should be at least that. Sometimes it really pays to be different from average.”

And even though “context” has become a bit of a buzzword in recent years, many email marketers overlook the importance of it or fail to understand how who, when, and where affects a recipient’s attention to your what, how, and why. “You can tell a wonderful story or create a visual masterpiece of an email, but if you send that email at the wrong time, to the wrong person, all of your work becomes meaningless,” notes Bridgette Darling, product manager and [email marketing blogger](#) at Adobe. “Answering ‘why now?’ is a large part of telling the right story.”

Lastly, every insider we spoke to independently challenged the hype of trendier social media campaigns when compared to already substantiated email marketing. “Yes, social media was the cool kid on the block for a while, but I think brands quickly realized that it just doesn’t have the same impact and ROI as email,” says Darling.

Thies goes a step further. “Social media has very little meat compared to email,” he says, noting the former’s lack of big images and personalized one-to-one communication. “Even social media knows that email works better, which is why Facebook sends more email than anyone when you’re not using it.”

This isn’t to say social media marketing is all style and no substance, Sciano says. “Only that people don’t want to be sold to on social, whereas they expect to be over email, which explains the latter’s better conversions.” In fact, a good social campaign must incorporate email if brands want to win our future attention, observes Sciano in a below use case.

Winning examples

Not everyone can be a great email marketer. But great email marketing can come from anywhere. Let’s examine how forward-thinking email marketers are running successful campaigns today.

Consider Naragon’s local dentist, for example. After missing her six month check-up, she received a courtesy email entitled, “Kristin, it’s time for your next dental visit.” Inside the dentistry encouraged her to “keep her smile bright” with button links to “reschedule now” or “not at this time.”

Like other busy executives, Naragon did nothing, which prompted a second follow-up email six months later. “We hope everything is alright, Kristin (from your dentist),” read the subject line. This time, the dentistry again encouraged her not to let her “smile fade” and offered the same two button links. But they rightfully and intelligently added a third button link to keep their email list squeaky clean and up-to-date: “My dental needs are being taken care of elsewhere.”

As you might expect, the thoughtful, personal, and appropriately-timed experience impressed Naragon enough to reengage the dentistry. “They understood the options that might have prevented me from rescheduling and made it easy for me to provide feedback,” she says. “These are not overly glamorous or flashy emails. But they are super practical and very useful for me. That’s email done right, in my opinion.”

Scott Solomon, the global research CTO for UBS, tells another. “Three out of four billionaires have money with UBS,” he explains. “To help them understand real-time market conditions, we send them 250,000 emails a day; about 60 million a year.” By most standards, this is a massive amount. But instead of working in the trenches, Solomon and his team spends the majority of their time building programmatic campaigns, leaving Adobe Campaign to do the rest. “That way, we only spend 25 percent of the time working on specific emails with particular language and can even automate dynamic content such as ‘People like you also read this.’”

Kara Douglas, senior manager of marketing communications for JustAnswer, uses Adobe Campaign in a slightly different way, albeit with similar volume. “About 70 millions emails a year,” she says, mostly comprised of transactional, lifecycle, and other marketing messages. “We’re using the Adobe Campaign to analyze daily behavioral data to find people who fall into the right category for the right message at the right time,” Douglas explains. “Doing so we’ve been able to increase our open rates by 32 percent and our click throughs by 19 percent.”

Having seen the efficiency Campaign brings to email marketing, research company William Reed is looking to expand its use to other channels, including text messaging, mobile app notifications, and even segmented print campaigns. “Campaign allows us to bring together data from multiple sources under one analytic umbrella,” says the company’s digital marketing manager Vincent Renaud. By bringing together data from all channels, this allows Renaud’s team to deliver cross-channel engagement.

Sciano elaborates, “For example, I might get an SMS message or a push notification from my bank about an overdraft or low balance. This type of urgent message is more effective as a text or push message, requiring and encouraging immediate action. However, the bank also knows that sharing insights into my past spending is much more effective via email than a text message.”

Whether centralizing your campaign analytics, enacting cross channel reach, or freeing time to work on special need segments, a more robust platform does wonders towards extending an effective experience like the dentistry example mentioned above. Not only that, but automated campaigns allow marketers to increase the number of segments that target, in some cases from

eight to 35, plus a 100 more variants for each segment. Simply put, this level of segmentation would be impossible without the efficiencies gained by automation.

That matters because the more you segment, the more opens and clicks you enjoy. “Overall, we’ve seen open rates on our campaigns jump by as much as 25%,” says Ilias Chelidonis, e-commerce manager of Meritus Hotels & Resorts. “Those impacts, coupled with the efficiencies we’re seeing in creating and executing campaigns, are translating into a return on Campaign in the range of 1,500%.”

Obviously, Adobe Campaign isn't right for everyone. We know you have options. But whatever you choose, most agree that larger organizations should reach for something that frees their time (instead of getting stuck in the manual trenches) and something that informs across a variety of channels and analytic inputs.

Gauging your maturity

We’ve covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time. Now it’s time to start asking yourself some uncomfortable questions. For instance, “How would I rate my current email marketing efforts?” or “Am I a classic, contextual, and/or dynamic email marketer?” or “How should I improve?”

To help answer those questions and assess your email practices, Adobe recently created a [five minute self-assessment tool](#). Upon completion, you will be able to view your anonymous results and receive a comprehensive follow-up report.

Of course, you could also start by observing the world around you. “I can distinguish a classical from contextual or dynamic marketer in seconds,” explains Sciano. “I got an emailed offer over the weekend from my cellphone carrier who I’ve been loyal to for almost ten years. But frustratingly, I’ve already paid for the offer (twice!) and the brand didn’t even address me by name.”

Now they have two problems, Sciano continues. “First, they turned me off by not respecting my relationship with them. Secondly, they missed the opportunity to seize my attention on something that might actually interest me. In other words, today’s subscribers will see right through your stale, classic emails and you’ll pay the price.”

What’s the best way to avoid that carrier’s oversight? In addition to the aforementioned techniques, Naragon is quick to add strategic technology, personalized data, organizational structure that facilitates smart delivery, and of course delightful content. “When you excel in these four areas, you can achieve contextual email marketing,” she says.

Subject line optimization and an understanding of “time to open” behavior is another good indicator of an advanced or modern email marketer. For example, as time passes, so too does

the probability of a recipient opening and engaging your message. “Based on our Conversation Index, we know that those who open their messages more quickly are more conversant with the brand,” explains Moumita Sinha, a data scientist at Adobe Research. “With this information, an email marketer can further segment his/her consumers into different groups and approach them with more fitting or on more suitable channels.”

And of course, an appreciation of the optimal times of the day, week, and year helps marketers avoid email fatigue. That’s no more than 1–4 emails per month on average, [according to Mailjet](#). And up to seven emails during the course of a single purchase journey, according to [our research](#).

Whatever your maturity, “Email is the workhorse of digital marketing,” Sciano emphasis. “It brings together all of the other digital channels, driving engagement, revenue, conversion and loyalty. Wherever and however we consume online activity – through a website, through a mobile app, through text messages, through social media – email marketing is the bedrock foundation.”

The future of email marketing

So far we’ve explored present conditions. What might big-thinking email marketers be able to accomplish in the not so distant future?

Thies predicts impromptu offers that are scary good in their approach. “As creepy as it sounds, Google already knows where you live within 200 yards based on your phone use,” he says. “This will lead to an increase in location-based, highly personalized, and spontaneous offers like, ‘You’re about to pass our store again; stop in for 50% off.’”

He’s also excited to study how we engage email differently during off hours and holidays when compared to giving it our full attention in the office, and the percentage of emails that receive more than two reopens. “That’s powerful information that most still don’t have access to.”

Naragon longs to see even more dynamic content that updates based on the time of open, current location, current weather, or current inventory. While this technology has been around for a few years, the barriers are finally coming down, she says. Gmail’s current bundling and summary displays are a good example of this, which mine your messages for information, search the web for updates, then present those updates directly in your inbox. When paired with Google Calendar, the client even lets you accept, reject, or defer meeting without ever leaving your inbox.

Sciano for his part is chomping at the bit for email integration within hashtag campaigns that tend to fade as quickly as they rise. “Consider a \$4.5 million Super Bowl ad that ends with a hashtag,” he says. “The game continues, the conversation moves online, and marketers high-five

each other because people are talking about their products during the game. Then, everyone goes to sleep. The cross-channel opportunity of the year has passed.”

In the future, Sciano predicts companies will incorporate email into an increasing number of their campaigns to keep the conversation from dying, to engage their most passionate fans, and to keep the fire burning. “That’s where brands need to live going forward.”

Conclusion

Congratulations! You made it! Now what?

For starters, we hope you’ll reevaluate your relationship and commitment to email marketing. Whether that’s with our [assessment tool](#) or with the above insights, the ball is in your court now. But not without a few parting shots.

Here are 10 things we want you to know:

1. Email is a big part, if not the digital glue of everyone’s life. Understand how, when, where, and why they use it.
2. You live and die by your subject line. Up to 70% in fact. Spend an appropriate amount of time optimizing them.
3. Identify your maturity and understand what it takes to move from classical to dynamic and contextual email marketing.
4. Consider automating your workload to focus on programmatic campaigns and special case segments.
5. Send the right message, to the right person, at the right time. All three should be different for every segment. Context is more than a buzzword. It matters.
6. Know that a lack of centralized or even basic metrics prevent classic marketers from progressing past batch and blast ways of the past.
7. Manage personas, not the list. Focus on dynamic and preference based content.
8. Invite lapsed customer to re-engage. In email, they expect you to.
9. “Less is more,” as the above dentistry example and optimal send frequencies indicate.
10. Identify a clear email strategy with mobile as your new priority.

Wherever you fall on the email marketing spectrum, the already powerful discipline is even more powerful today. “This should compel marketers to re-invest in email and ensure that the information they send can exceed consumers expectations,” Naragon says.

Isn’t that something? “Fifteen years ago people thought that email was at max capacity—that consumers would soon adopt a new form of communication to trump it,” she concludes. “Yet here we are today and email is as powerful as before, if not more so.”

About Adobe Campaign. 98 percent of billion dollar companies use [Adobe Campaign](#). Over the past decade, the robust software has helped marketers you know and respect reach more people, in some cases quadrupling business. To access the latest thinking, best practices, and research reports on email marketing, we hope you'll join the thousands who already subscribe to our [Context Newsletter](#).

THE ART OF THE CLICK

An email excellency report

2016



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

The status quo.

4

Email volume has been turned up to 11.

6

The unopened majority.

7

Timing is (almost) everything.

11

The device conundrum.

13

All clicks are not created equal.

15

Experience enhanced email.

16

It's all about the customer.

17

The future of email marketing.

The **STATUS QUO.**

When it comes to marketing, email is almost every brand's bread and butter. It's been around the block and back again over the past 40 years, and it's only gotten wiser. Its widespread use in marketing can be attributed to the fact that 91 percent of marketers believe email is the single most effective channel for driving revenue.¹ Indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that everyone monitors their email at all times of the day.

We're all glued to our email. The average person spends almost six and a half hours a day checking it and responding to it.² But despite this captive audience and the fact that email has proven itself as a revenue-driving workhorse of any marketing strategy, two-thirds of marketers are still less than satisfied with their email marketing efforts.³

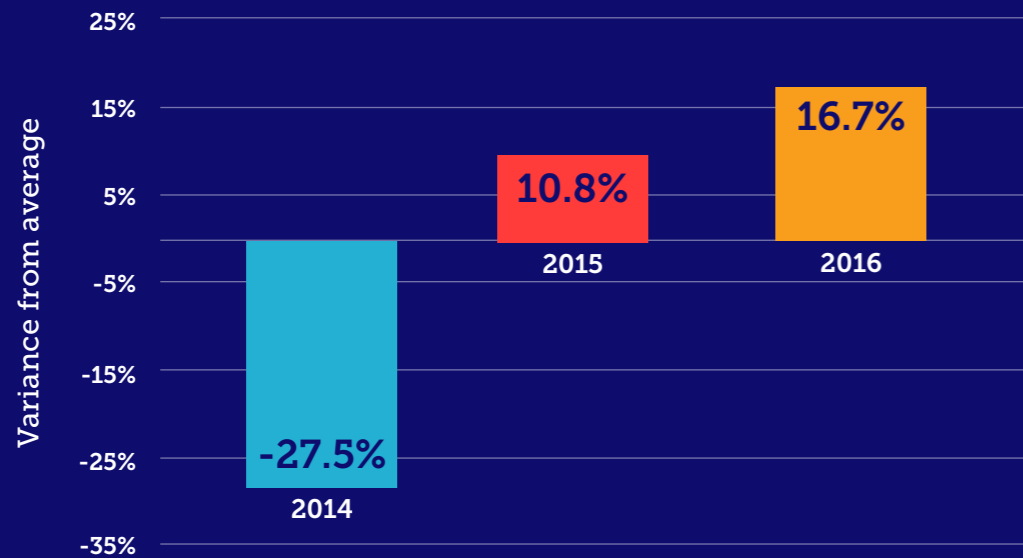
In order to create more satisfying email campaigns, start by understanding how, when, where, and why everyone uses it.

After monitoring more than 40,000 email marketing campaigns and millions of global transmissions over the last two years, Email on Acid shared their data with Adobe.⁴ Here's what we learned.

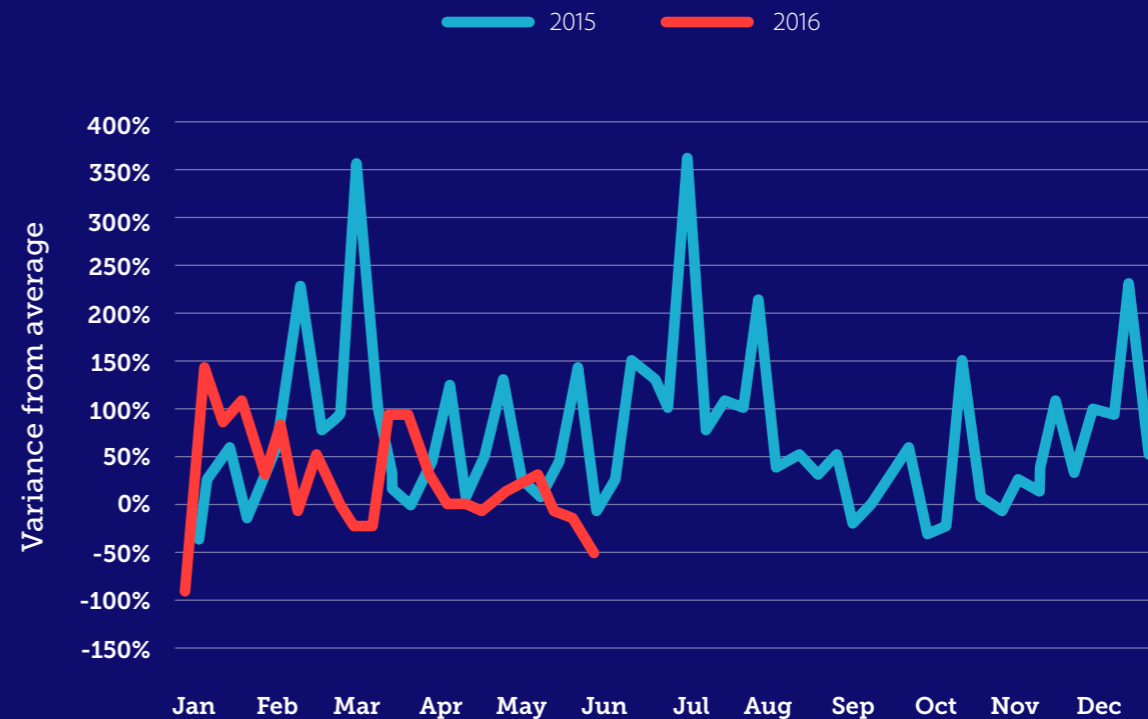
Email **VOLUME** has been turned up to 11.

There's more noise in our inbox than ever before. On average, consumers receive 61 percent more email today than they did in 2014. In particular, 2015 showed a tremendous (52.8 percent) increase year over year in email volume. While this growth has generally slowed in 2016, email volume is still climbing at a rate greater than 5 percent year over year.

Email List Send Size Comparison vs. Average
(Note: Unbalanced Sample)



Percentage of Growth in List Size Send Over Previous Year

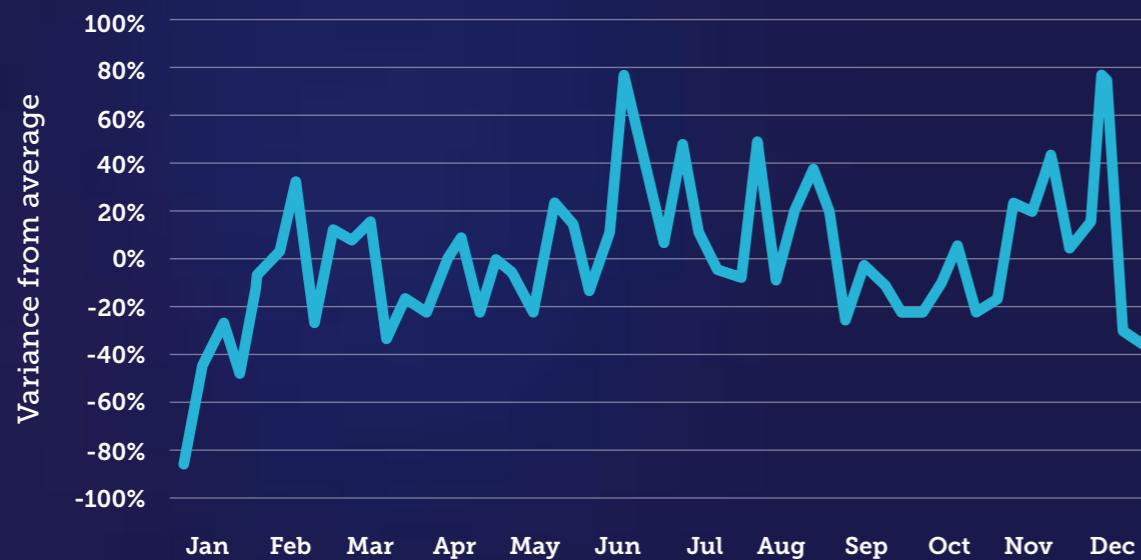


Holiday list send size increased by **32.4%**

This trend is highlighted in particular by the 2015 holiday season (November and December), when email volume increased by 32.4 percent over the previous year.⁵

As a result, it's more difficult than ever for marketers to cut through the noise in the inbox and for our customers to find the value they're looking for.

Indexed List Send Size 2015



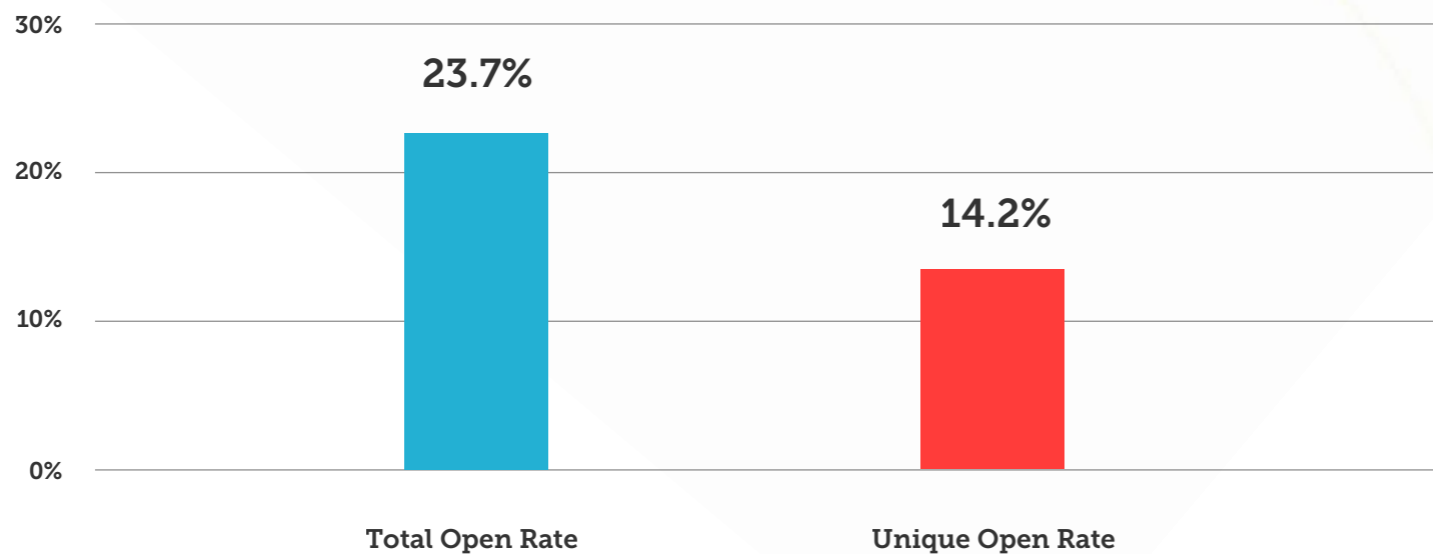
It's important to remember that mindlessly increasing email volume is not the answer, and more often than not, it only helps your messages fade into the background. What you should aim to send smarter emails and create a personalized moment that will catch your audience's attention.

Identify the traits and preferences of your best customers and learn how they've reacted to various email campaigns over time. Based on these insights, you'll be able to deliver the value they need—at the moment they need it—in order to make a strong impression, build brand loyalty, and ultimately increase customer lifetime value.

The unopened **MAJORITY.**

The potential effects of creating personalized impressions for your email marketing program can be huge. While average aggregate open rates show that only 14.2 percent of emails result in a unique open, almost half of these opened emails are read more than once. Coupled with the fact that nine in ten people check their personal email while at work, this suggests that if an email catches a consumer's eye, they may come back and open it later in the day.⁶

Overall Total vs. Unique Click Rate Comparison



Timing is (almost) **EVERYTHING.**

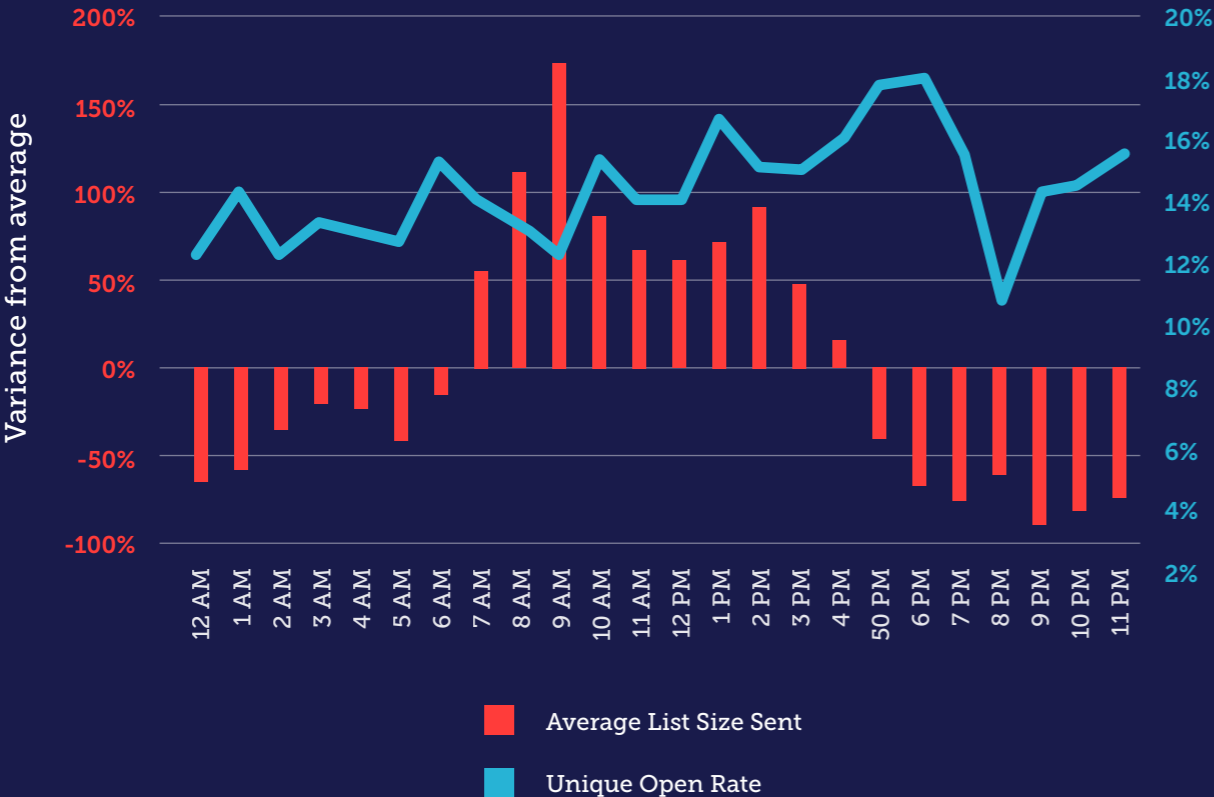
Email marketers tend to send emails in the morning. The vast majority of email volume is being sent at 9 a.m., prior to the start of the workday. However, customers at 9 a.m. open and read fewer emails than at almost any other point in the day. It's no wonder—these morning emails are not only competing with each other, but with consumers' start-of-day routines and activities. They likely only have time to skim through and delete the mass volume of email they've received and flag the most relevant or important messages for follow-up later in the day.

Subsequent opens suggest that timing and content relevance are key to competing in the crowded inbox. In order for your emails to be useful to consumers, they need to be sent at the right time with content that's relevant, engaging, and helpful.

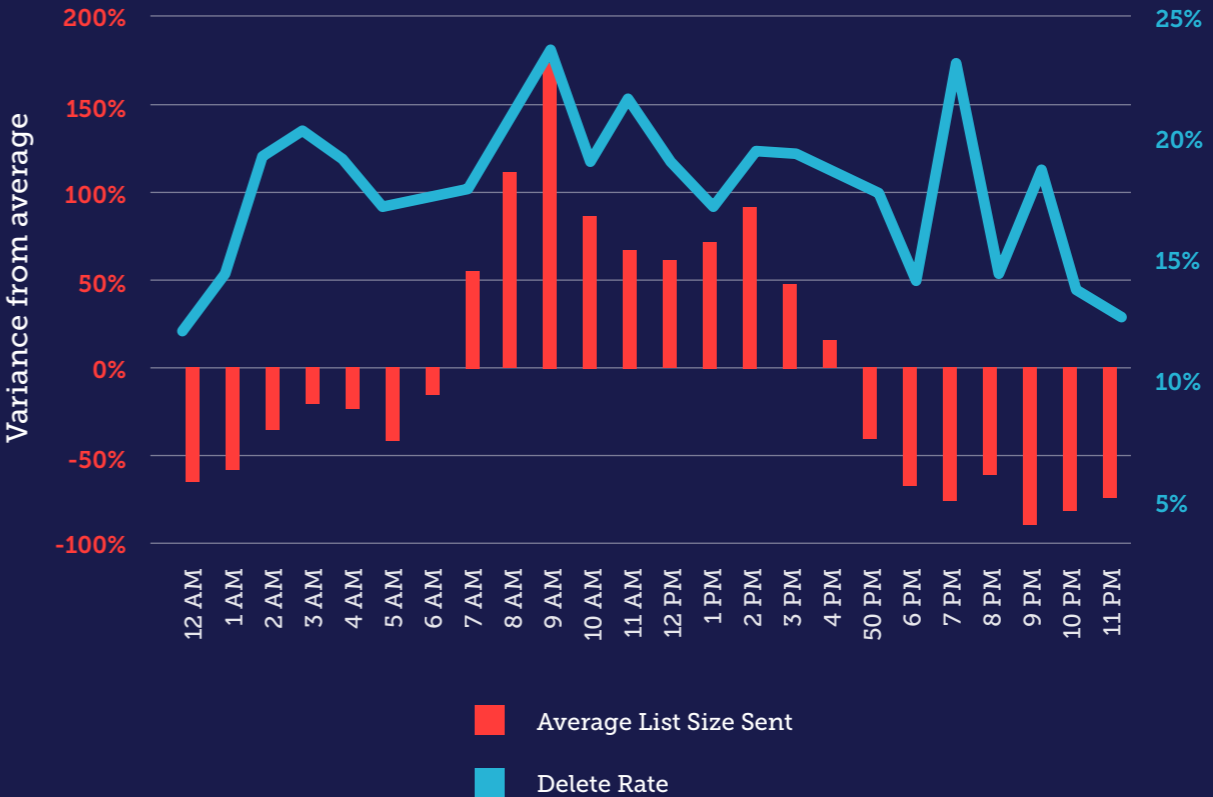


The more people on your list, the less likely the message will resonate or be read and the more likely it will be deleted.

Average List Size Sent vs. Unique Open Rate

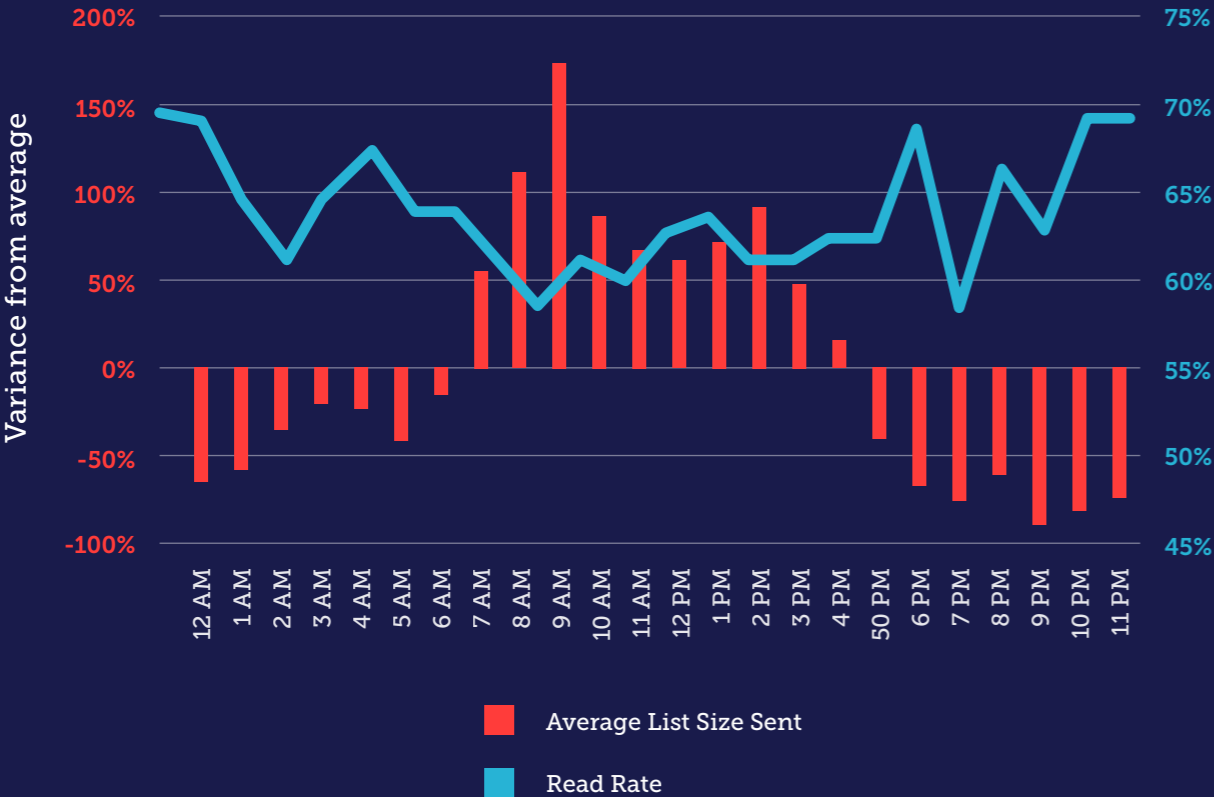


Average List Size Sent vs. Delete Rate

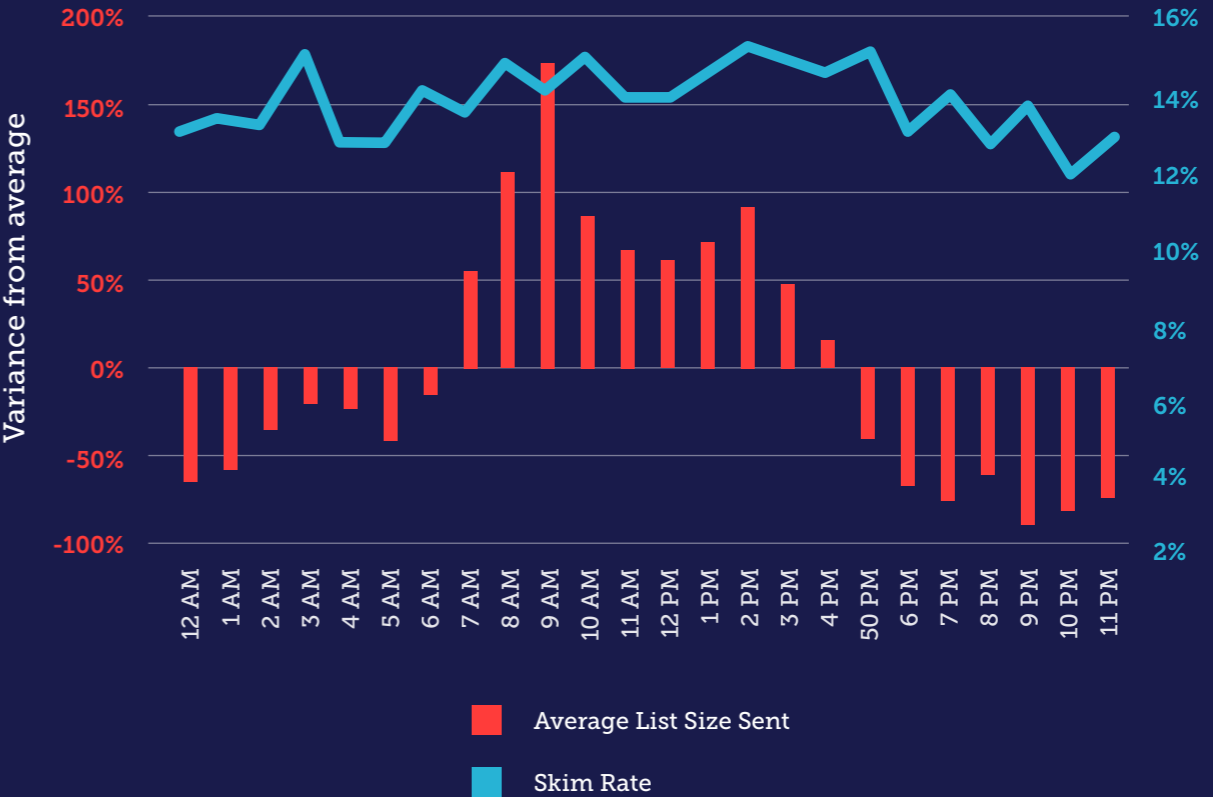


The more people on your list, the less likely the message will resonate or be read and the more likely it will be deleted.

Average List Size Sent vs. Read Rate



Average List Size Sent vs. Skim Rate

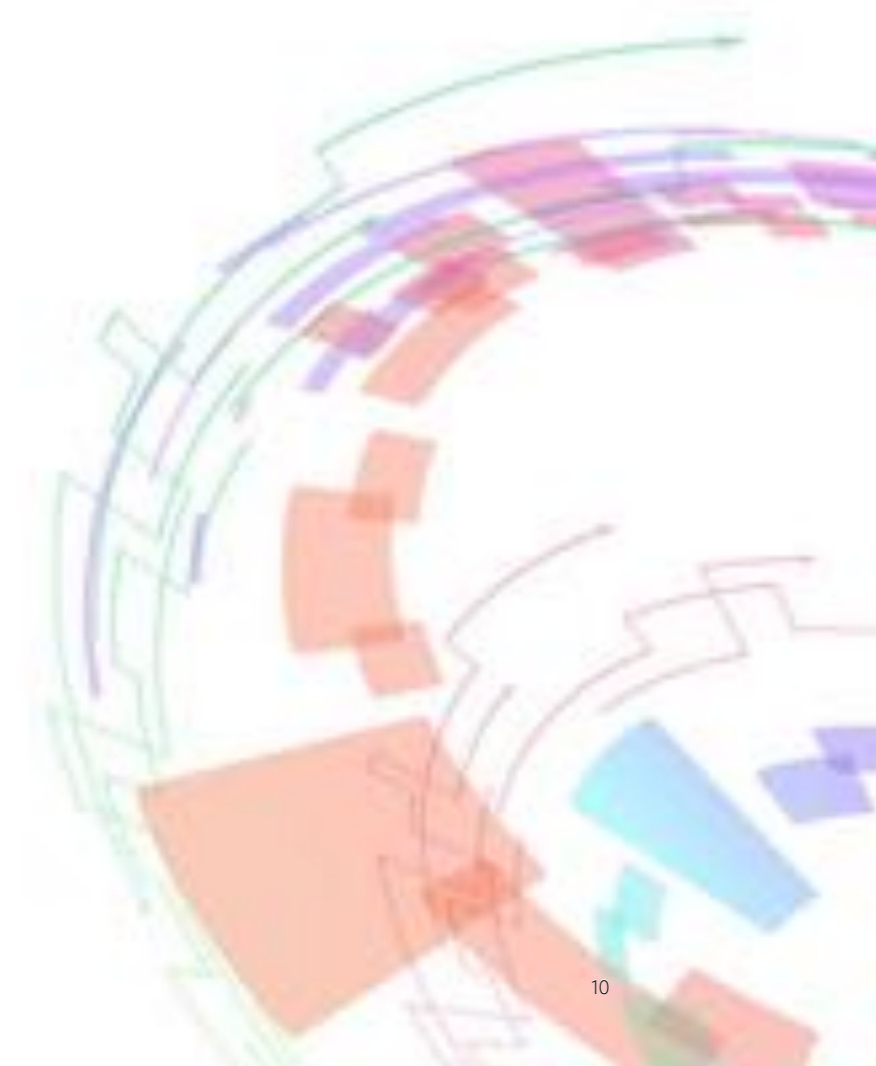
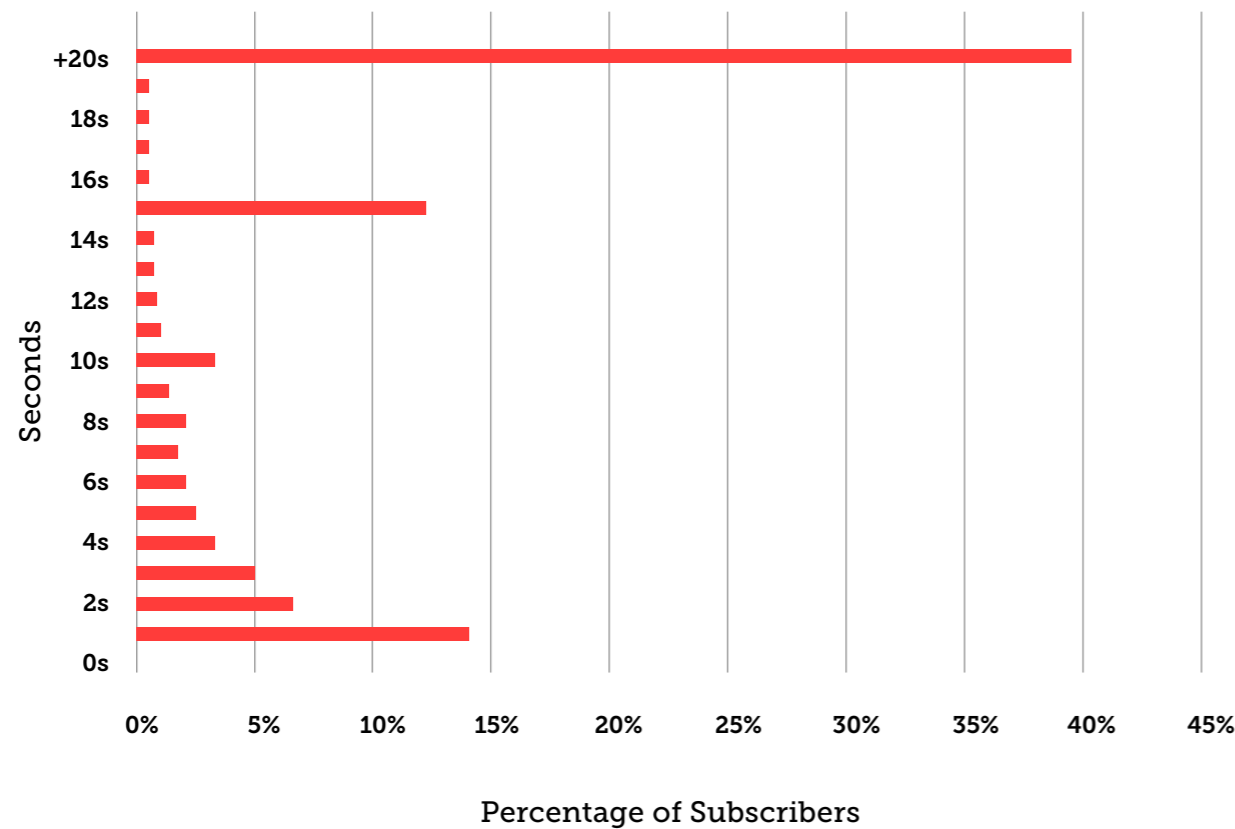


Although most email is sent in the morning, our data shows that email open rates are almost as high in the evening after 8 p.m. as they are in the afternoon hours. At the same time, delete rates are on average lower in the evening.

Simply put, in order for your emails to be useful to consumers, they need to be sent at the right time. Leveraging A/B testing can help determine the best time of send for your email campaigns, along with the right content—including best subject line, images, and offers. One time does not fit all.

We live in a fast-paced, 140-character-or-less world, so the value of your message to a consumer must be clear and concise. Once an email has been opened, the time consumers spend engaged with it is relatively constant throughout the day, no matter the time of send. Although nearly 40 percent of consumers spend 20 seconds or more reading a single email, the average read time is only 12.3 seconds. The vast majority only spend between one and 12 seconds on any opened email.

Percentage of Subscribers and View Duration

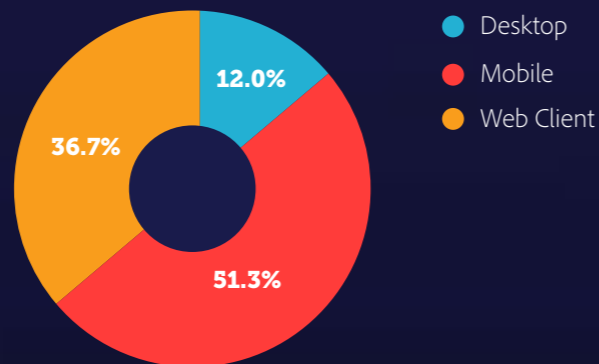


The device CONUNDRUM.

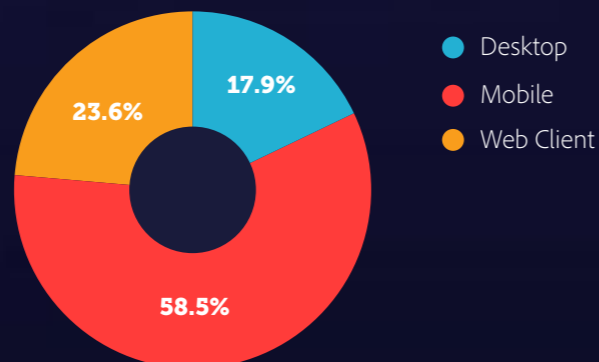
It should come as no surprise that mobile is a power player when it comes to email: Just over half of all emails are opened on mobile devices. Inherently, mobile also sees higher delete rates than desktop or web clients. In comparison, web clients show the best performance, with the percentage of opens outweighing the percentage of deletes. As many opened emails are reopened multiple times, they can also be opened on multiple devices throughout the day. Customers who used their mobile device to open email in the research phase of their customer journey may ultimately reopen the same email on their web client when they're ready to convert.

As a result, mobile has the highest proportion of read emails, but also the highest number of skims. Marketers should be aware of this and determine how to accurately retarget email content of interest. Web clients get the next highest number of reads, and skims are much lower.

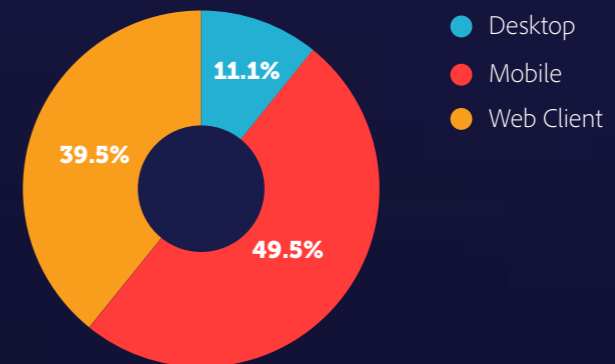
Percentage of Opens



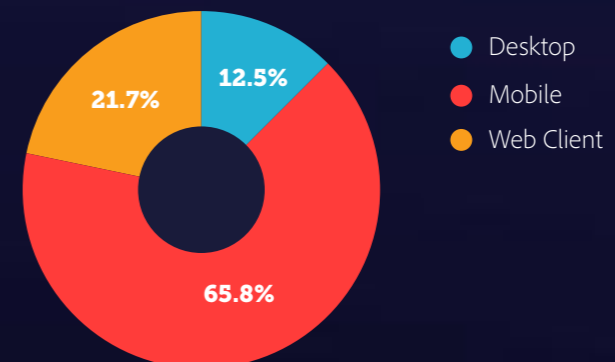
Percentage of Total Deletes



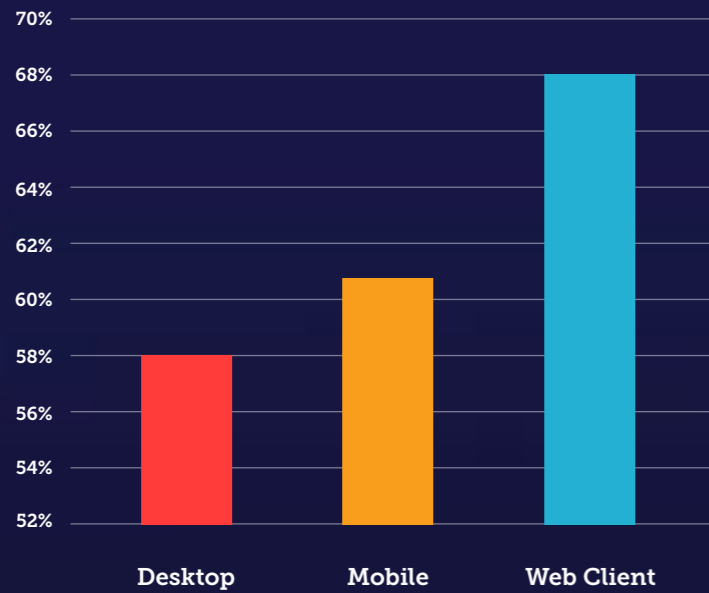
Percentage of Total Reads



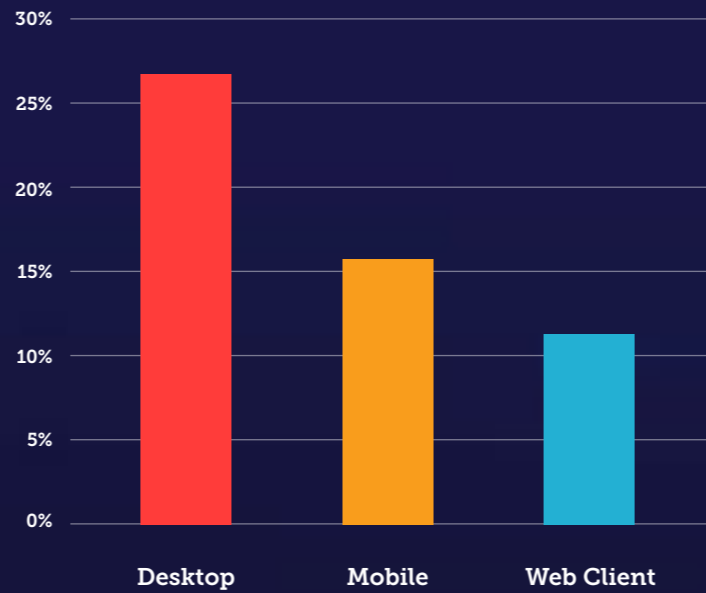
Percentage of Total Skims



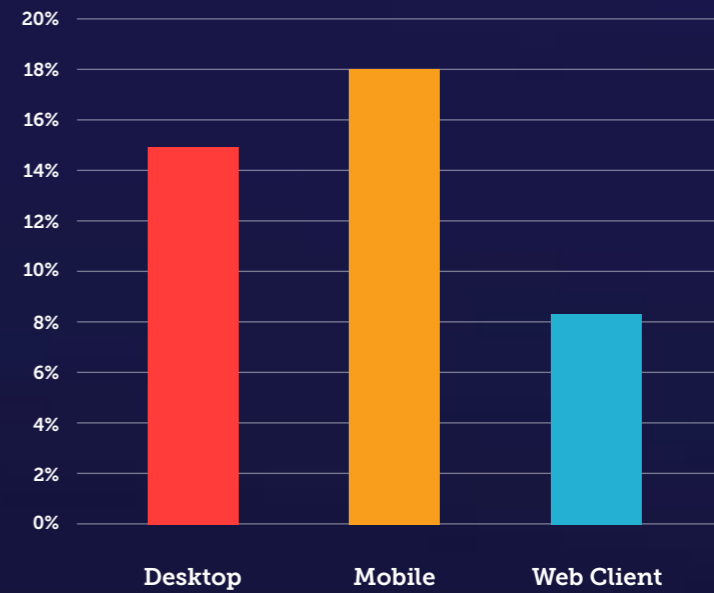
Average Read Rate



Average Delete Rate



Average Skim Rate



Proportionately, email opened on web clients receives the highest read rates. Finally, email opened on desktop email clients receives the highest delete rates. Therefore, responsive templates are only one factor marketers need to take into consideration when designing an email campaign.

If your customers mostly open email on their mobile device, the overall content and structure of your email campaigns should be molded around a mobile-first strategy to ensure your message is getting through. Take your customers' overall device habits into consideration when creating email campaigns to ensure that you're delivering your message in the most effective way possible for your target customers.

**Mobile communication is where your customers live.
Be sure to meet them there.**

All **CLICKS** are not created equal.

Habits differ by country, so when creating an email campaign that spans borders, it's important to keep these differences in mind.

For example, consumers in the UK may not respond as well to an email campaign as consumers in Argentina. That's because UK consumers open and read fewer emails than average and tend to skim through their inbox, while deleting more emails than consumers in any other country except Italy. The challenge for email marketers in Argentina is different, on the other hand, since Argentina has higher open rates on average than most other countries—surpassed only by Singapore—and has the highest read versus skim rates as a country. Like the Argentinians, Singaporean consumers also delete far fewer emails than average, but mostly skim through email rather than taking the time to read it. Finally, Russia has the lowest average open rate of any country evaluated, but also the highest read rates. These stats suggest that while Russian consumers are selective, they're more likely to take the time to read an email once they have opened it.

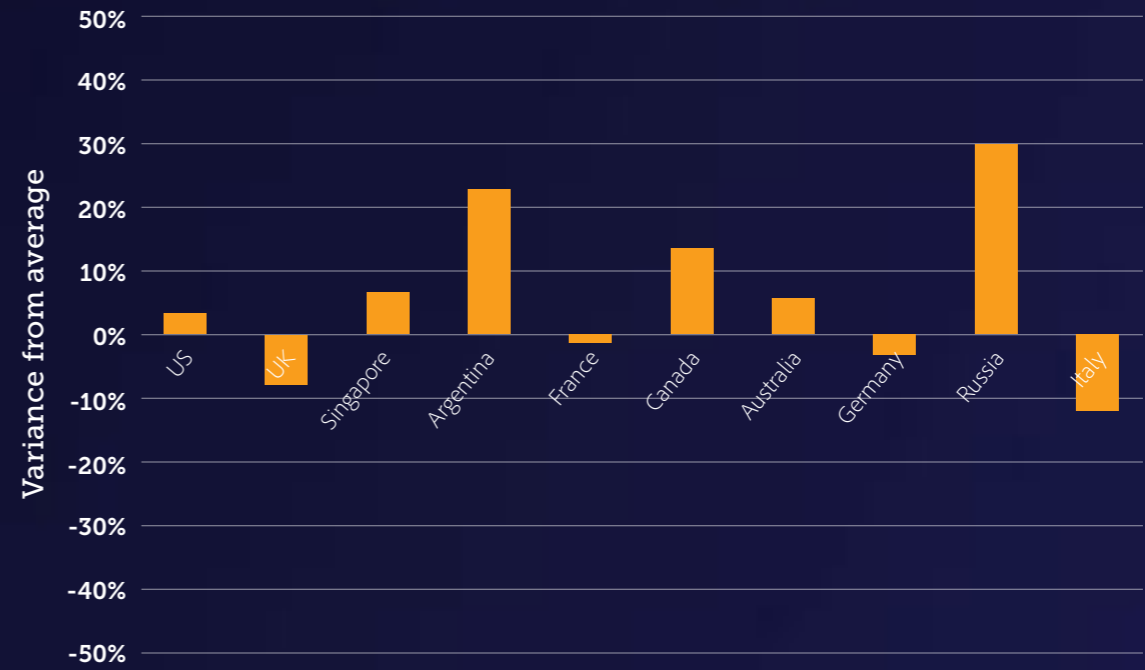
The best time of day to send and the most compelling content, subject lines, images, and offers can all change from country to country. Therefore, the A/B testing and learning that has made you successful with a certain customer segment at home won't necessarily help you with a similar segment abroad. Treat each country as an individual by evaluating, A/B testing, and segmenting for every new market you enter.



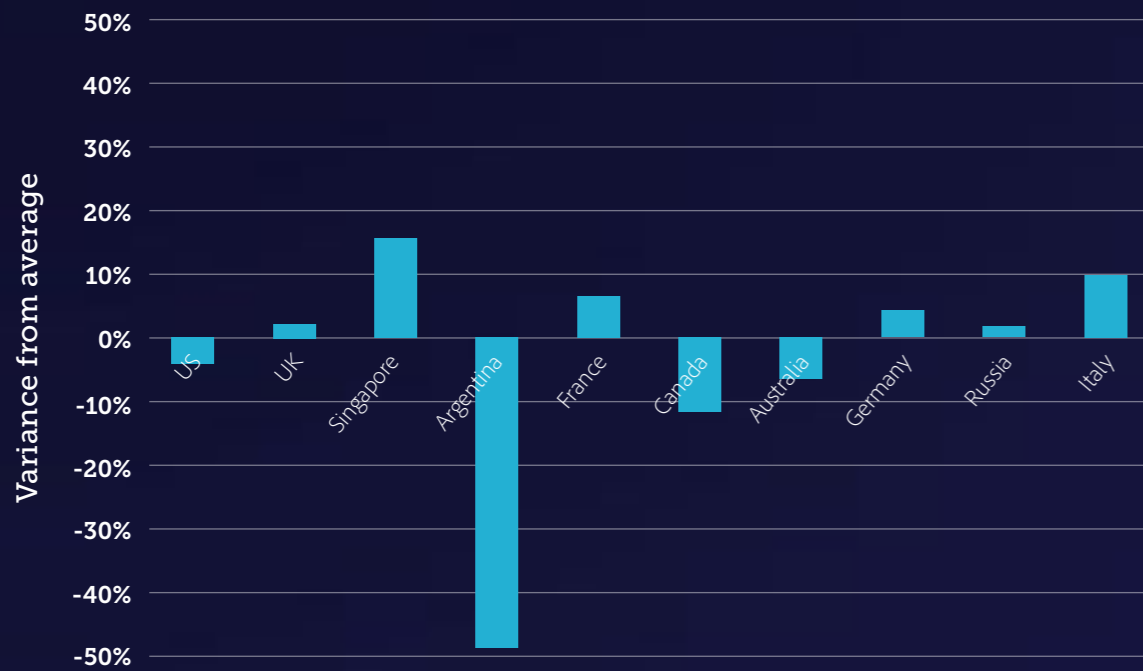
Open Rate by Country



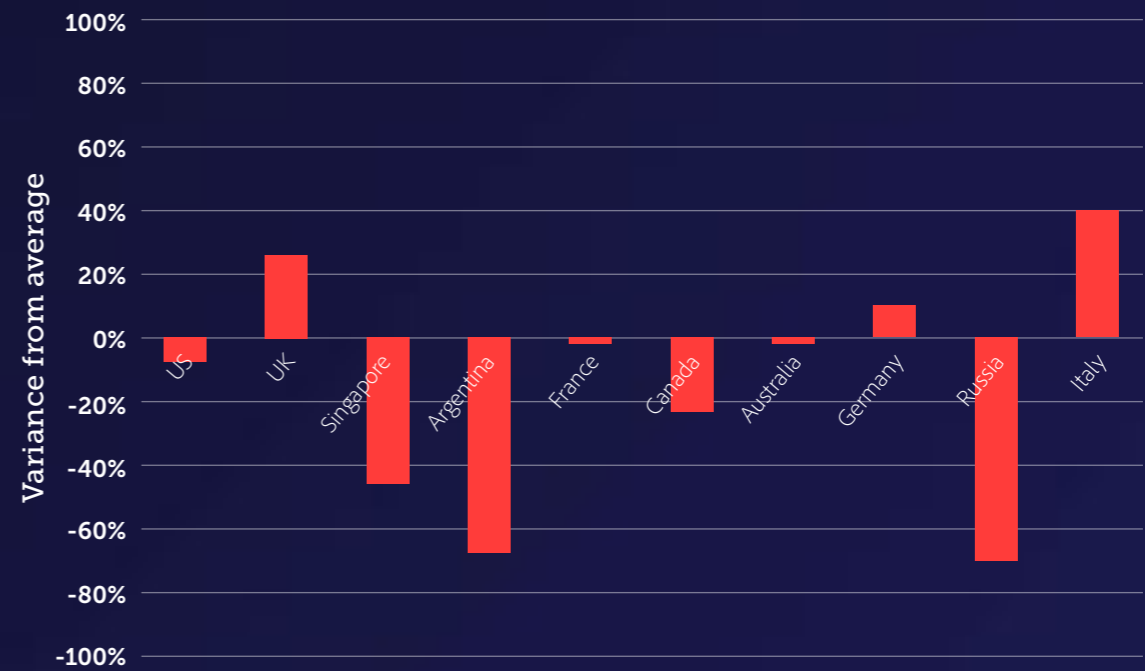
Read Rate by Country



Skim Rate by Country



Delete Rate by Country

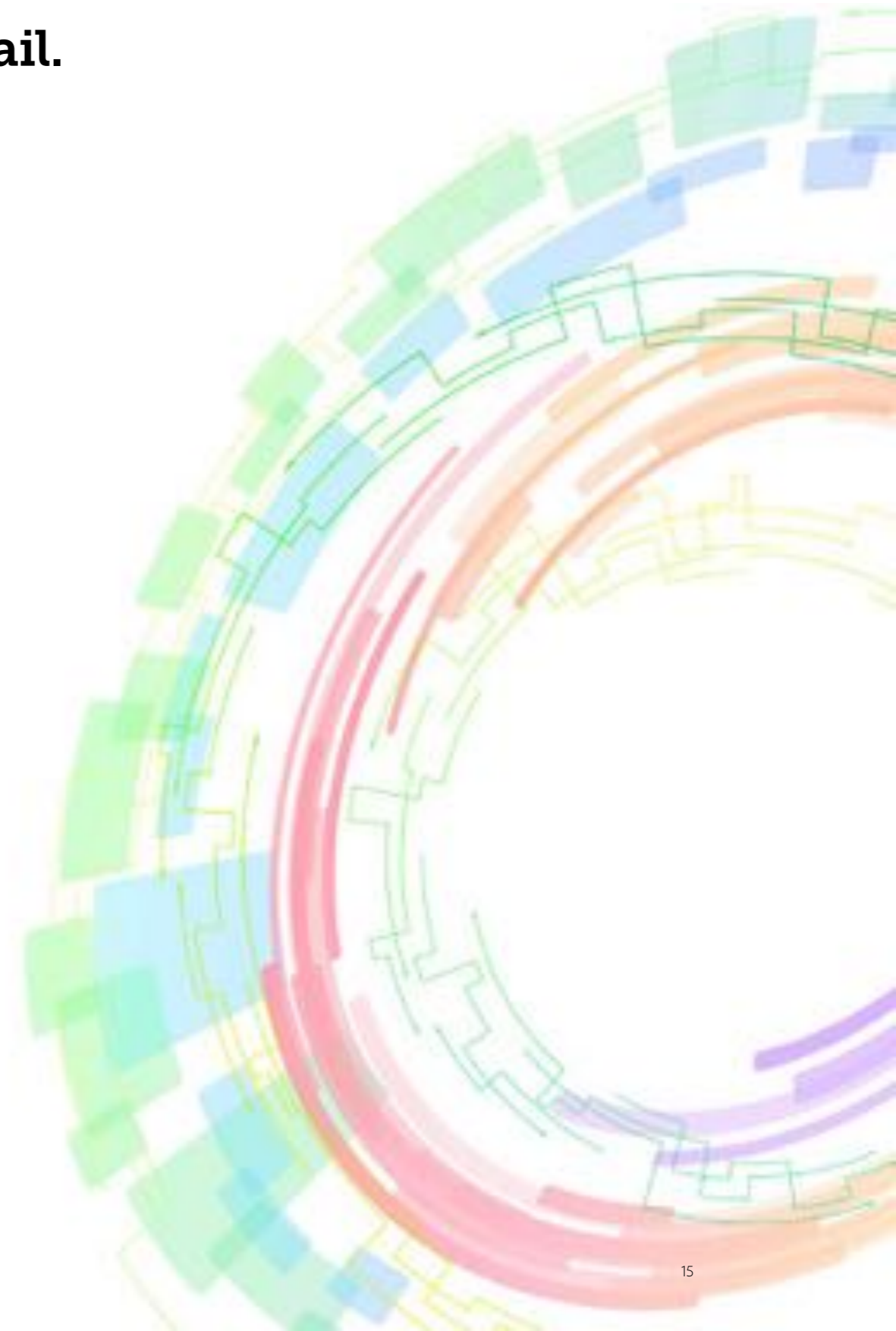


EXPERIENCE enhanced email.

Today, an email marketer's world revolves around creating a unique experience and building trust, as customer expectations soar higher than ever. Building these experiences and trust helps to define and strengthen your brand in your customers' eyes. But how can you create these experiences through an email marketing program?

All great experiences share four critical qualities:

- **Compelling**—Capture your customers' attention and draw them in. Emails need to look beautiful, be dynamic, and display seamlessly across devices. Leverage progressive enhancement to ensure that content and offers are displayed in the best possible way for the device they're opened on.
- **Personal**—Show your customers that you understand who they are and what they like. Of the pieces of customer information you already have, determine which can be best leveraged in the email strategy, what additional information could improve the customer experience, and how quickly you can leverage such information based on individual profiles.
- **Useful**—Help your customers accomplish something quickly, wherever they are, so they can move on to the next thing. Maybe a 40 percent off offer is useful, but perhaps a well-considered product or service recommendation based on an abandoned web activity or prior purchase would be more useful.
- **Contextual**—Ensure that each email communication is sent only after considering what touchpoint came before and what will come after that email message is sent, received, and read. Ensure that email is the appropriate channel for the message, given customer preference, content of message, and consideration of prior and subsequent communication.



It's all about the **CUSTOMER.**

Most marketers today aren't able to determine how a customer engages with email differently during off-hours and holidays compared to when they're sitting at their desk. They also have difficulty understanding the percentage of emails that receive two or more reopens.

Many marketers use a reactive strategy, sending email campaigns throughout the day and waiting for a customer to download their app. Or they use a beacon to determine if a customer is in the vicinity of their store to trigger an email.

Yet we as customers voluntarily share more and more data about ourselves, our preferences, and our habits every day. This means you as a marketer have the unique opportunity to transform your email marketing programs into a foundation on which you can build incredible experiences throughout a customer's journey.

For example, by enabling location services in applications on our mobile devices, we are sharing more information about our daily routines with brands than ever before. With this data, brands can easily determine things like which area we live in, where we like to shop, and at what time of the year or hour of the day we're out making purchases.

These location- and time-based insights can be paired with data derived from the email marketing campaigns a brand already has in place. This helps build robust individual customer profiles that can help you define how, when, and what to communicate to your target audiences at an individual level.

Email marketers in the retail industry are learning how to entice customers to come to their stores in real time, regardless of their location. It's now possible to determine when a customer would typically step out to go shopping on any specific day and send them an email

at that moment with the most contextually relevant offer possible. Then when a customer responds by visiting the store, you can use an email triggered by a beacon to welcome them and guide them toward a purchase.

The **FUTURE** of email marketing.

Making your email program the cornerstone of a delightful customer experience isn't easy. But it all boils down to one word: data. And data is only as useful as it is actionable. Gone are the days when an email program could live only in its own technology, and email marketers didn't have to look beyond opens and clicks to determine the next best message. Gone are the days when an email marketer would ask the database administrator or the web analytics team for a segment and receive it a week later.

To advance your email marketing programs, your organization will likely need to make some programmatic changes and consolidate some of its technology systems. But there are tactical things you could do today to move the needle. Think about dynamic content, which will play an ever more important role in an email marketer's world. Email marketing must remain relevant no matter the time of day, location, or weather or what inventory is currently available at the time the customer reads it. While the ability to include dynamic content in email

has been around for a few years, the barriers are finally coming down, allowing email marketers to deliver the right message or offer to the right person.

Using the full potential of dynamic content is only the first step. Consider a US\$5 million Super Bowl ad that ends with a hashtag. The game continues, the conversation moves online, and marketers high-five each other because people are talking about their products during the game. Then everyone goes to sleep. The cross-channel opportunity of the year has passed as the conversation wasn't kept alive through a consistent email experience that serves as the backbone of any cross-channel campaign.

Ultimately, the key is using the full power of a brand's own customer data to drive meaningful experiences and deliver a holistic, contextual email marketing program, not just a one-off email tactic or message. Brands should incorporate email into more of their campaigns, using multiple channels to keep the conversation from dying.

This helps engage their most passionate fans—to keep the fire burning and the experience unique, no matter where the next touchpoint occurs.

If you're interested in understanding more about what makes a truly engaging email marketing program, take five minutes to go through our [self-assessment tool >](#) You'll be able to see how your program stacks up against a benchmark of your peers. More importantly, you'll be able to use the questions, responses, and suggestions to drive a discussion in your organization about how to elevate your email marketing game within the context of the broader experience your customers have with your brand.

Methodology

This report was produced by Adobe and based on data gathered by Email on Acid from January 2014 to June 2016. The report presents the findings from 40,000 email campaigns for all non-industry data and about 31,000 campaigns for industry data. Note that the majority of the subscribers are primarily based in the United States.

About Adobe

Adobe Marketing Cloud is the most comprehensive and integrated marketing solution available, helping marketers measure, personalize, and optimize marketing campaigns and digital experiences for optimal marketing performance. With its complete set of solutions—including Adobe Analytics, Adobe Target, Adobe Social, Adobe Experience Manager, Adobe Media Optimizer, Adobe Primetime, Adobe Audience Manager, and Adobe Campaign as well as real-time dashboards and a collaborative interface—marketers are able to combine data, insights, and digital content to deliver the optimal brand experience to their customers. And it gives you everything you need to get deep insight into your customers, build personalized and unified customer experiences, and manage your content and assets. www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud

About Email on Acid

Every email client displays email differently. Email on Acid provides an email-testing platform that will show you how your email looks in each client and mobile device. Not only do they have email previews, they also offer the most advanced email analytic platform on the market. Founded in 2009, Email on Acid has helped more than 100,000 companies worldwide to test and track their emails. For more information, visit www.emailonacid.com.

1. Nick Einstein and David Daniels, "Assessing the Return on Email Marketing Strategy," Relevancy Group, September 2015.
2. Kristin Naragon, "Subject: Email, We Just Can't Get Enough," Adobe Blog, August 25, 2015, <http://blogs.adobe.com/conversations/2015/08/email.html>
3. DMA and Adobe Study of 263 email marketers in North America, 2015, <https://www.adobe.com/content/dam/acom/en/marketing-cloud/campaign-management/pdfs/adobe-campaign-email-marketing-book-v2-1.pdf>.
4. Email on Acid data from January 2014 to June 2016 based on 40,000 email campaigns for all non-industry data and about 31,000 campaigns for industry data.
5. Ibid.
6. Kristin Naragon, "Subject: Email, We Just Can't Get Enough."



Adobe and the Adobe logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

© 2016 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. 10/16