

Global Benchmark Report 2025

Email, SMS, & marketing
automation benchmark data.



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Executive summary

We're always talking about the importance of customer data and letting it inform your strategy - so here's some of ours. Anonymized and aggregated, naturally. We now bring you the latest Dotdigital Global Benchmark Report. Packed with cold hard data sourced from billions of real-world campaigns across a comprehensive span of industries, regions, and brands.

If you're familiar with our past reports, it's likely you'll have read a thing or two about responsible marketing. Responsible marketing is all about taking a customer-first approach to marketing. Do right by your customer and they'll do right by you, your business, and everyone's happy - right? Sort of. All too often I speak to fellow marketers and seasoned industry experts to find that despite doing everything 'right', the desired results don't follow. Working smarter can lead to reduced touchpoints with your audiences. And to stay top of mind, being there is kind of important.

So whilst quality over quantity sounds good, we believe there is a world in which you can have both, and this report is a case in point: Overall sends are up 23.9% YoY. At no compromise to engagement may I add. Click-through rates (CTR) have doubled and Click-to-open rates (CTOR) are also up by 50%. Companies aren't burning through good subscribers either, with a global average unsubscribe rate of just 0.13% which is well below the broadly considered acceptable rate of 2%. So, could more be more?

Email continues to be where digital marketers spend their time, but we are seeing marketing teams diversify their channel mix, and with notable success. Globally, SMS sees a CTR over 6x higher than email. That's not to say we should all replace our beautifully designed campaigns with text-based messages (although developments in RCS and WhatsApp makes a compelling case). Each channel has a place in the mix.

The marketing tightrope requires us to achieve share of mind without being intrusive or annoying. Achieving this at scale requires two things: a solid understanding of marketing channels and the role they each play in the wider mix, and actionable data. Customer data continues to be the biggest opportunity for marketers who wish to unlock personalization opportunities and deliver contextually relevant content to each recipient. Master these two things and you can achieve both share of mind and share of wallet.

25 years in the industry has taught us that every business is different. You should benchmark against yourself in the first instance, and against the competition in the second. So here we uncover benchmark data for more than 40 industries to give you a head start. Happy benchmarking!



Juliette Aiken
Chief Marketing Officer
Dotdigital

Welcome to Dotdigital's Global Benchmark Report 2025



A quick introduction

As a marketer, it can be hard to know how your results compare to the competition. To know if something's gone awry with your strategy, or if the wider industry is seeing ripples. To know if you're delivering exceptional results, or if it's a result of tech updates rendering the metric irrelevant.

In this report, you'll discover the benchmarks for engagement metrics across marketing channels. Diving deep into the click rates, list growth, subscriber churn, and more for email, SMS, marketing automation, and more, get an exclusive peek under the hood of cross-channel marketing in 2025.

In case you're new around here, we're Dotdigital, the world's first customer experience and data platform (CXDP). We've been empowering marketers around the globe to execute outstanding cross-channel marketing for over 25 years. Through our platform we send millions of marketing messages in the form of emails, SMS, MMS, push notifications, and more every single day. This means we have a strong understanding of what works and what doesn't.

Discover informed and reliable insights to measure yourself against, get inspired by, and to better understand the landscape. Make these numbers work for you, and use these benchmarks as the leverage you need to justify investment in your department, or even yourself. We all know numbers talk, so this report is a concrete way you can reinforce the value of your work to others in the business.

However you utilize the findings in this report, we hope it empowers you to succeed with your marketing strategy.



Cross-channel marketing in 2025

Since the last benchmark report, a lot has changed. Most notable is the huge explosion of AI. AI started out as a novel tool; a way for people to ask a ‘robot’ questions or create art for fun. Today, AI is an integral part of our day-to-day work life. Here at Dotdigital, WinstonAI’s generative AI features are called on over fifteen thousand times every month by our customers.

We’ve also seen a continuation of the shift towards an emphasis on consumer privacy. Largely in the form of customer data protection laws and big changes from the tech giants, most notably Apple. Mail Privacy Protection and Link Tracking Protection have made it harder to understand customer behaviors on Apple devices. All of these changes directly impact marketers’ ability to effectively measure their marketing results.

With this in mind, you may be wondering if engagement benchmarks are still useful. The short answer to that is an emphatic ‘yes’. We’ll be getting to the longer answer later in the report.

This report covers your essential metrics for the key channels, both established and emerging.

Learn what’s what, what’s missing, and what you need to do to get the most from your cross-channel marketing in 2025 and beyond.

1

Email Benchmarks

Let's kick off proceedings with the powerhouse that is email. Email is the channel that started it all, the medium that inspired marketers to recognize the value of a digital approach to marketing. It has retained its status as a key revenue and engagement driver for over 40 years.

Email provides a canvas for you to convey messages that are short-form, long-form, and anything in between. It is easily the most accommodating and flexible channel we marketers have at our disposal. So, how's it faring in the engagement stakes?



Email send volumes

Email isn't going anywhere

Email send volumes are only increasing year-on-year. This is a clear indicator that email maintains its status as a key channel for brands. As well as strong engagement, email is a reliable revenue driver. The **Dotdigital CMO tracker** found that 30% of CMOs cited email as their businesses' top channel for ROI.

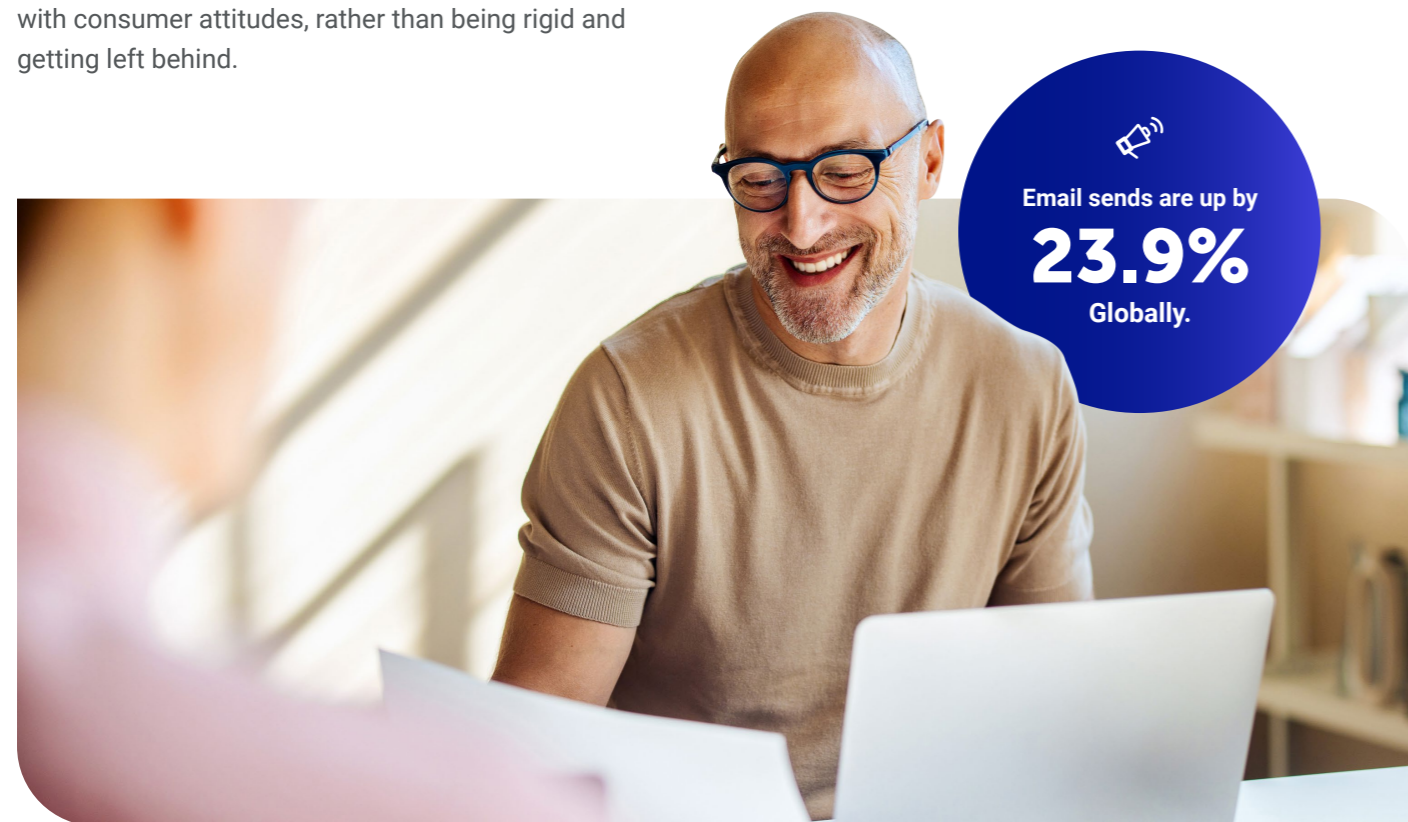
When the shift towards consumer privacy began there was some fear that it was the beginning of the end for email. However, the email industry; both marketers and tech platforms, has embraced the changes.

The industry has actively chosen to work with, rather than against, the tech giants to align on this new approach. Where measures such as MPP could have disrupted email engagement reporting, marketers and platforms have pivoted to rely on other metrics to track engagement. This includes relying less on opens, instead utilizing clicks to measure a campaign's success.

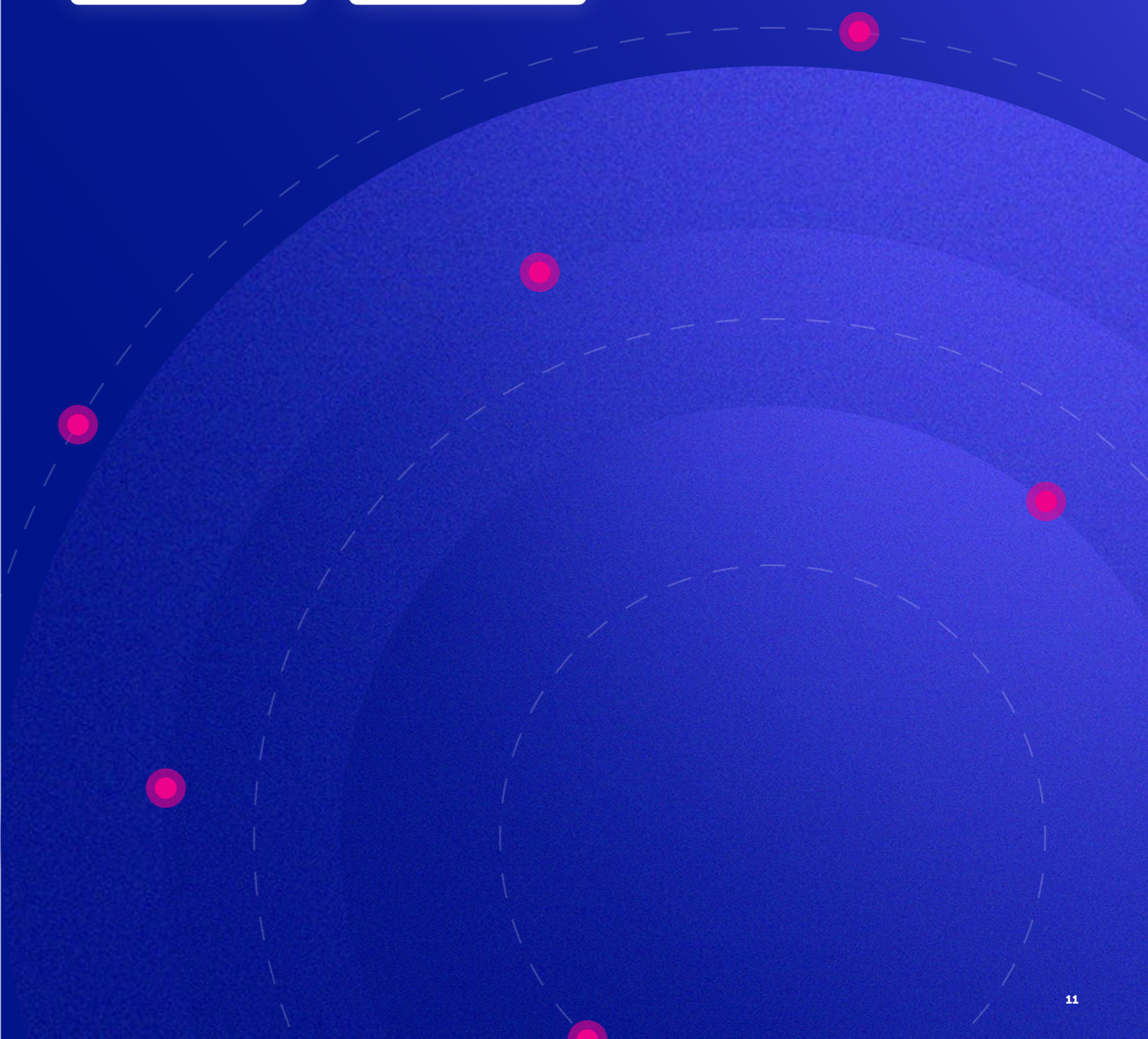
Accepting, understanding, and adapting to these changes has ensured that email marketing is evolving with consumer attitudes, rather than being rigid and getting left behind.

Email's success is no doubt down to the fact it is loved by marketers and consumers alike. **92% of consumers** state email as their preferred marketing contact method. The shift towards consumer privacy has actually helped email maintain this popularity. Consumers now have more confidence in the channel. This is thanks to clear data policies and increased adoption of preference centers which give consumers a true understanding of why you're asking for their data, and faith that it will be used to enhance their experience.

What was once a batch and blast channel, is now the most direct, tailored, and genuine connection marketers have to their audience.



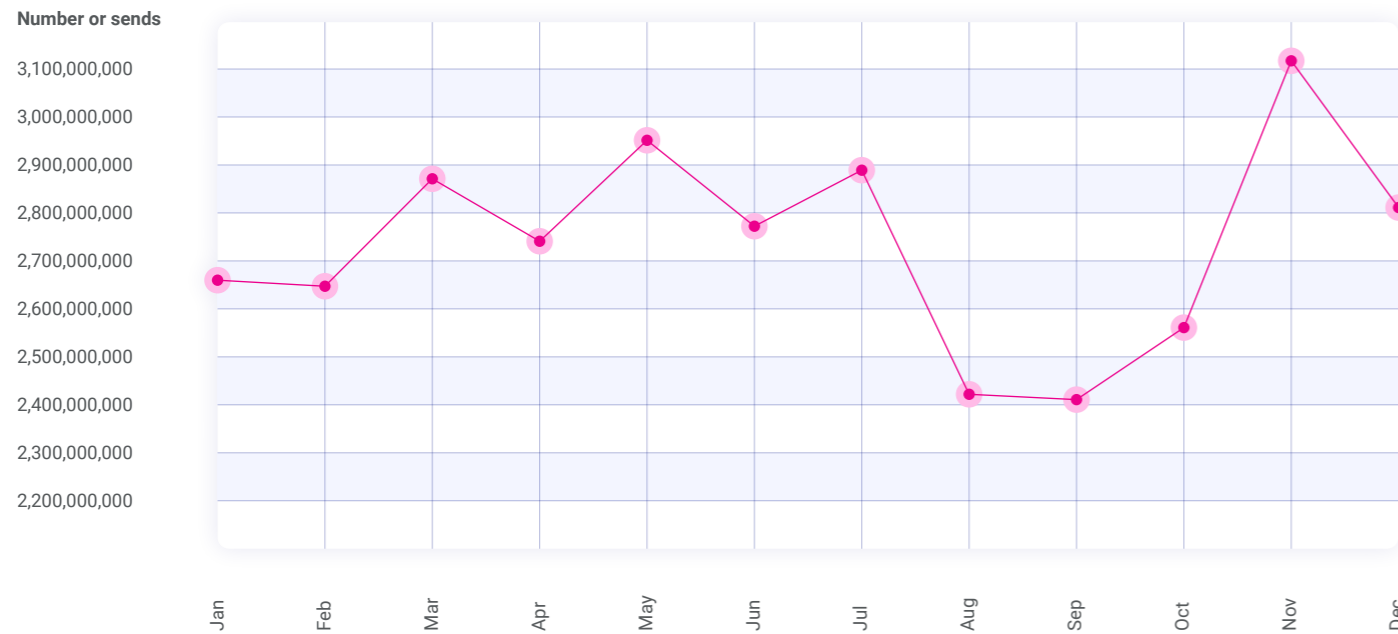
Email sends around the globe



Holidays are a time for connection

The holiday season is kicking off earlier and earlier, and despite all the chatter around 'busy inboxes', these holiday events are huge-revenue driving occasions for email marketers.

November is the busiest month for email sends, up 22% compared to October. The holiday season is big business and what were once region-specific holidays such as China's Singles' Day and America's Black Friday, are now celebrated around the globe.



How to maintain the impact of email

- Invest in your strategy:** As send volumes increase, it's important to be running with a high-quality email strategy. When everyone is sending more, you need to do more to grab attention. It's always 'quality over quantity' - but who says you can't have both?
- Utilize segmentation:** Divide your email list into smaller, targeted groups based on demographics, buyer personas, or behavioral patterns to create tailored content and improve relevance. **Segmentation** allows you to maintain high send volumes without spamming your recipients with irrelevant content.
- Enable personalization and dynamic content:** Ensure your email campaigns appeal to every single recipient directly. Utilize personalization and dynamic content to ensure every send piques interest and drives action. Use the recipient's name, location, or browsing history to tailor emails, making them more appealing and fostering a connection with your subscribers.
- Spend time on your subject lines:** All too often subject lines are left until last, meaning they don't get the consideration they deserve. Remember that subject lines are the only part of your email visible in the inbox itself. Allocate adequate time to craft catchy, concise, and curiosity-driven subject lines that grab attention, compelling your subscribers to open the email.
- Hold comprehensive data:** The backbone of any good email marketing strategy is customer data. Without customer data, you have to rely on guesswork and a one-size-fits-all approach, which we know doesn't work. Customer data allows you to create relevant and engaging marketing consistently.

CASE STUDY

Beer Cartel sees a 36% increase in total revenue using Dotdigital's segmentation tools

Dotdigital has allowed us to segment our customers and approach them with tailored campaigns, showcasing our relevant product ranges and catering to their interests.

We have seen higher engagement rates across our email campaigns, resulting in revenue growth.

READ NOW

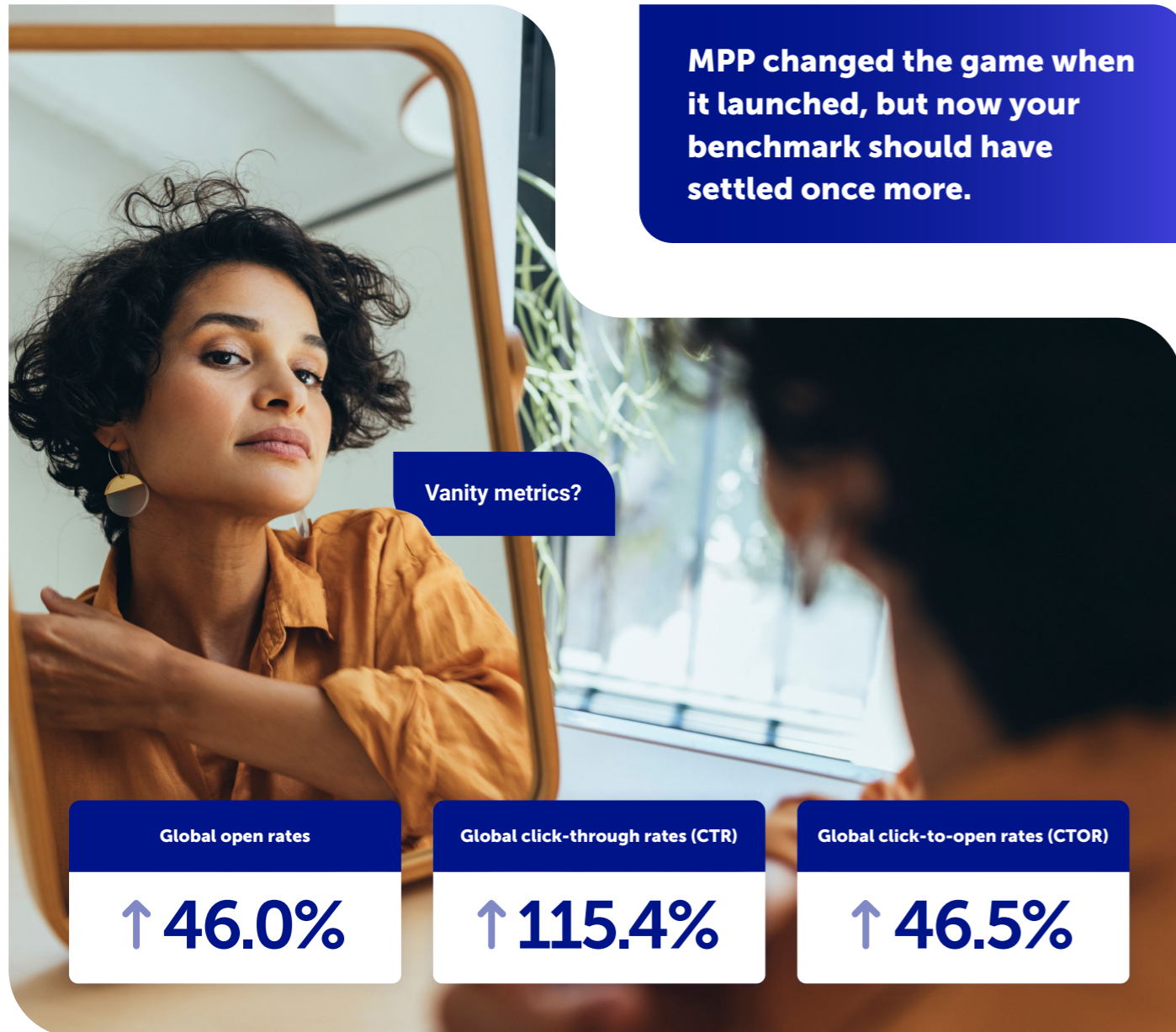
Richard Kelsey
Co-founder and Director at Beer Cartel

Email engagement rates

Email engagement around the globe

Email engagement metrics have gone up and there's no doubt this is largely due to Apple's various iOS updates, in particular Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) and Link Tracking Protection. Whilst open rate has long been considered a 'vanity' metric, it is still useful. Whilst we know there have been changes to the reliability of open rates and more recently clicks due to iOS updates, you can still find value in them.

Track your opens and clicks over time, as long as there isn't a huge change in external factors (e.g. another big iOS update), these metrics will all be impacted in the same way month to month and send to send. This means you can still see if your emails are seeing more or less engagement over time and from campaign to campaign.



MPP changed the game when it launched, but now your benchmark should have settled once more.

Vanity metrics?

Global open rates
↑ 46.0%

Global click-through rates (CTR)
↑ 115.4%

Global click-to-open rates (CTOR)
↑ 46.5%

Opens and clicks around the globe

Global	
Email open rate	45.7%
Unique open rate	32.8%
Email CTR	3.1%
Unique CTR	1.3%
CTOR	6.7%
Unique CTOR	4%

APAC	
Email open rate	39.3%
Unique open rate	29.6%
Email CTR	1.9%
Unique CTR	1%
CTOR	4.7%
Unique CTOR	3.5%

EMEA	
Email open rate	46.5%
Unique open rate	32.8%
Email CTR	3.5%
Unique CTR	1.4%
CTOR	7.6%
Unique CTOR	4.3%

Americas	
Email open rate	46.4%
Unique open rate	34.1%
Email CTR	2.3%
Unique CTR	1%
CTOR	4.9%
Unique CTOR	3%

Email engagement by industry

Opens and clicks by industry

Industry	Email open rate	Email CTR (click-through rate)	Unique CTR	CTOR	Unique CTOR
Apparel & fashion	41.4%	1.8%	1%	4.2%	3.3%
Arts & music	33.4%	2.3%	1.3%	6.8%	5.4%
Automobiles & parts	45.1%	5%	1.8%	11.1%	5.8%
Charity & non-profit	60.6%	5.4%	2.4%	9%	6.3%
Commercial services & supplies	40.9%	6.8%	1.7%	16.5%	6.3%
Construction & materials	48.5%	6%	2.2%	12.3%	6.7%
Consulting	52.6%	13.9%	2.9%	26.5%	10.3%
Consumer goods & services	43.7%	2.5%	1.4%	5.6%	4.3%
Creative services & agency	38.5%	1.3%	0.8%	3.5%	2.7%
Ecommerce	43.7%	2.3%	1.2%	5.2%	3.8%
Education & training	56.3%	6.9%	2.4%	12.2%	7.2%
Energy & utility producers	67.1%	5.8%	2.5%	8.6%	6.4%
Events & entertainment	50.3%	3.8%	1.5%	7.5%	4.2%
Finance	53%	7.8%	2.4%	14.6%	7.4%
Food & drug retailers	35.2%	1.5%	0.7%	4.1%	2.5%
Food producers & processors	57.7%	4.3%	2.2%	7.4%	5.8%
Gambling	26.7%	3.5%	2.1%	12.9%	11.3%
General industrials	53.7%	6.4%	2.1%	11.9%	6%
General retailers	47.2%	2%	1%	4.1%	2.8%
Government	62.3%	8.5%	3.4%	13.6%	8.9%
Health & fitness	46.1%	5.2%	1.8%	11.2%	5.6%
Healthcare equipment & services	51.8%	5.5%	1.9%	10.6%	5.5%
Hotels, restaurants & venues	47.1%	3%	1.1%	6.3%	3.4%
Industrial engineering	32.8%	18%	2.5%	54.8%	12.9%
Industrial transportation	46.1%	3.2%	1.5%	6.9%	4.7%
Insurance	51.1%	4.2%	1.4%	8.1%	4.3%
Legal	92.8%	17%	5%	18.4%	10.9%
Leisure goods	51.1%	4.6%	2.6%	9%	7.4%
Manufacturing, mining & machinery	45.5%	4.7%	1.6%	10.4%	5.1%
Marketing & advertising	40.1%	3.9%	1.5%	9.6%	5.3%
Media	36.3%	4.7%	1.6%	13.1%	6.4%

Opens and clicks by industry, continued...

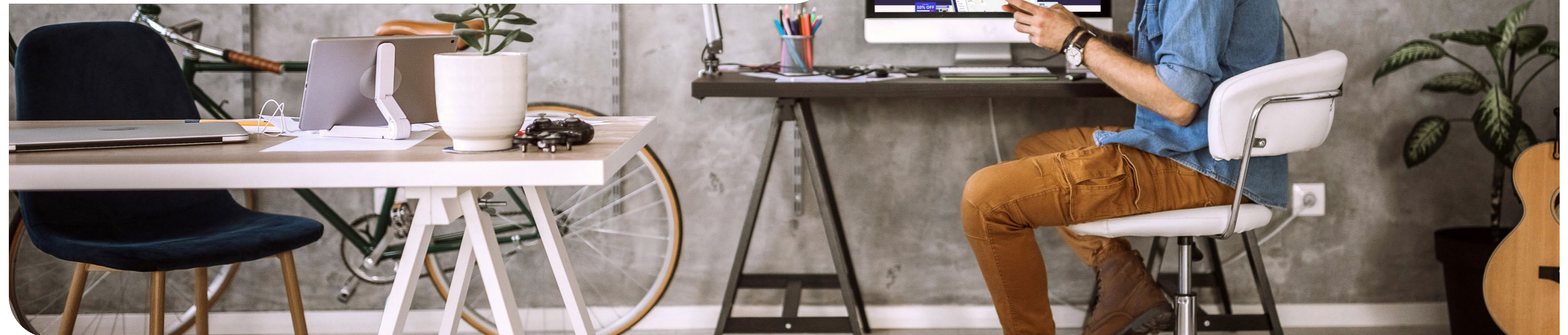
Industry	Email open rate	Email CTR (click-through rate)	Unique CTR	CTOR	Unique CTOR
Personal goods	34.7%	2.4%	0.7%	7%	2.7%
Pharmaceuticals & biotechnology	67.6%	12.1%	3%	17.9%	8.1%
Professional services	53.4%	14.4%	3.5%	27%	11.5%
Real estate	62.6%	6.2%	2.3%	9.9%	5.8%
Recruitment & staffing	54.7%	5.4%	1.7%	9.8%	4.8%
Software & computer services	56.1%	4.2%	1.8%	7.6%	4.9%
Sports & leisure	56.2%	4%	1.8%	7.1%	4.7%
Technology hardware & equipment	38.6%	2.1%	0.6%	5.5%	2.2%
Telecommunications	48.3%	9.6%	3.3%	20%	10.9%
Travel & leisure	44%	2.3%	1.1%	5.2%	3.4%




How to nurture email engagement

Customer data is the key to better engagement. Once you know exactly who you're talking to, you can make your campaigns much more engaging.

- Responsible marketing:** Consumers are protective of their personal data, so you need to let them know why you want it as well as reassure them that it's in safe hands. Be clear, open, and honest about your data collection, link to your data processing policies, and communicate the value exchange such as tailored messaging. Dotdigital's **Hitting the Mark report** found that only 16% of brands are communicating the benefits of data sharing.
- Zero-party data:** Zero-party data is data that customers willingly hand over to you. Be sure to collect it at the point of sign-up. Once you've captured an email address and/or mobile number, you can layer in a follow-up popover that asks for commonly used data like first name, gender, and location.
- Preference centers:** The backbone of any good personalization strategy is a preference center. Preference centers allow users to specify their preferences on a whole host of areas such as favorite channel, desired messaging frequency, and their interests. Our recent **Hitting the Mark** report found that only 40% of brands have a preference center. This is a huge missed opportunity.
- Regularly collect data:** Send out annual or bi-annual data collection automations to ensure data is up to date. Encourage users to keep their preference center up to date, and run surveys when you want to collect your audience's opinion on something new. You can also use automation programs to keep on top of data hygiene and turn raw data into actionable insights and segments. For example, if a customer recently purchased running shoes, you can automatically add them to a "Running Enthusiast" segment.



CASE STUDY


Discover how Visit KC use preference centers

Visit KC developed a preference center form that allowed contacts to easily manage their marketing preferences and subscriptions.

READ MORE

That not only provided a more transparent way for [customers] to know what type of content they would receive, but it also gave us the chance to cross-promote our secondary email newsletters.

Lee Prutsman
Marketing Manager at Visit KC

Email deliverability

I'm proud that Dotdigital empowers our customers to achieve great deliverability. Our platform provides sophisticated tools so marketers can get the most relevant message in front of the right recipient at the most impactful moment. Our team of Deliverability Consultants supports our customers with expert guidance to help them reach the inbox.



Tam Bond
Operations Director
Dotdigital

Email deliverability around the globe

Global	
Soft bounce rate	0.66%
Hard bounce rate	0.07%
Average bounce rate	0.73%
Delivery rate	99.28%

APAC	
Soft bounce rate	0.65%
Hard bounce rate	0.06%
Average bounce rate	0.71%
Delivery rate	99.29%

EMEA	
Soft bounce rate	0.72%
Hard bounce rate	0.07%
Average bounce rate	0.79%
Delivery rate	99.21%

Americas	
Soft bounce rate	0.47%
Hard bounce rate	0.06%
Average bounce rate	0.53%
Delivery rate	99.47%

Lower your bounce rate with Dotdigital

A bounce rate of around 2% is generally considered to be acceptable in the marketing industry. With a CXDP that values strong data hygiene practices, you'll see those figures drop significantly. The last thing you want after spending so long crafting your campaign is for it to not land in the inbox. By reducing your bounce rate you'll see higher engagement and ROI.

Having responsible data practices and practicing good list hygiene is crucial for email deliverability. It's always your responsibility to ensure that consent has been given and that the data you're sending to isn't

problematic. The **Dotdigital Data Watchdog** is also in place to protect sender reputation by assessing, flagging, and blocking problematic data.

The Data Watchdog helps to protect Dotdigital customers from complaints and potential blocks by internet service providers, as well as guarding those all-important delivery rates. This holistic, platform-wide approach also protects customers from being affected by other platform users sending to potentially problematic data sets.

How to boost email deliverability

As well as good data hygiene, the content of your emails matters here too. When your audience regularly engages with your email campaigns your sender reputation gets boosted.

- **Implement BIMi:** BIMi stands for Brand Indicators for Message Identification. It allows brands to display their logo alongside the sender name in the inbox which improves brand recognition and boosts trust. Hitting the Mark revealed only 6% of brands were **utilizing BIMi**.
- **Employ segmentation:** Segment your campaigns to ensure that your audience only gets campaigns that will appeal to them individually. As well as boosting engagement and deliverability, this will also reduce customer churn thanks to an engaging and relevant customer experience.
- **Speak to an expert:** Dotdigital has a dedicated team for all things deliverability and messaging operations. The team is on hand to look at your unique requirements and advise ways in which you can navigate inbox placement for optimal impact and engagement.
- **Test what works:** Run tests on your campaigns to figure out what type of content engages your audience most. This could be send times, subject line style, or campaign content - whatever you test will help you paint a stronger picture of what your audience likes. This in turn boosts engagement which helps with deliverability.

Email deliverability by industry

Industry	Soft bounce rate	Hard bounce rate	Delivery rate
Apparel & fashion	0.47%	0.05%	99.5%
Arts & music	1.06%	0.07%	98.9%
Automobiles & parts	1.48%	0.13%	98.4%
Charity & non-profit	0.73%	0.11%	99.2%
Commercial services & supplies	0.91%	0.17%	98.9%
Construction & materials	1.07%	0.11%	98.8%
Consulting	2.45%	0.57%	97%
Consumer goods & services	0.59%	0.03%	99.4%
Creative services or agency	0.29%	0.01%	99.7%
Ecommerce	0.49%	0.04%	99.5%
Education & training	0.84%	0.15%	99%
Energy & utility producers	1.14%	0.15%	98.7%
Events & entertainment	0.76%	0.07%	99.2%
Finance	1.05%	0.21%	98.7%
Food & drug retailers	0.29%	0.02%	99.7%
Food producers & processors	0.67%	0.11%	99.2%
Gambling	1.16%	0.08%	98.8%
General industrials	1.27%	0.48%	98.3%
General retailers	0.38%	0.04%	99.6%
Government	0.61%	0.07%	99.3%
Health & fitness	1.02%	0.12%	98.9%
Healthcare equipment & services	0.80%	0.09%	99.1%
Hotels, restaurants & venues	0.88%	0.11%	99%
Industrial engineering	2.3%	0.49%	97.2%
Industrial transportation	0.76%	0.06%	99.2%
Insurance	1.25%	0.11%	98.7%
Legal	0.87%	0.22%	98.9%
Leisure goods	0.49%	0.04%	99.5%
Manufacturing, mining & machinery	0.86%	0.16%	99%
Marketing & advertising	1.3%	0.17%	98.5%
Media	0.76%	0.1%	99.1%
Personal goods	0.35%	0.02%	99.6%
Pharmaceuticals & biotechnology	1.34%	0.13%	98.5%
Professional services	1.69%	0.38%	97.9%

Email deliverability by industry, continued

Industry	Soft bounce rate	Hard bounce rate	Delivery rate
Real estate	0.88%	0.15%	99%
Recruitment & staffing	1.05%	0.21%	98.7%
Software & computer services	0.8%	0.07%	99.1%
Sports & leisure	0.61%	0.06%	99.3%
Technology hardware & equipment	0.5%	0.06%	99.4%
Telecommunications	1.03%	0.23%	98.7%
Travel & leisure	0.27%	0.02%	99.7%



2

SMS Benchmarks

SMS offers short creation time and strong engagement, so it's definitely a channel marketers need to utilize. The average person spends four hours a day on their smartphone, so mobile-first marketing channels are very much in the mix.

The popularity of smartphones and the accessibility of SMS without an internet connection make it an inclusive channel for reaching diverse and potentially untapped audiences.



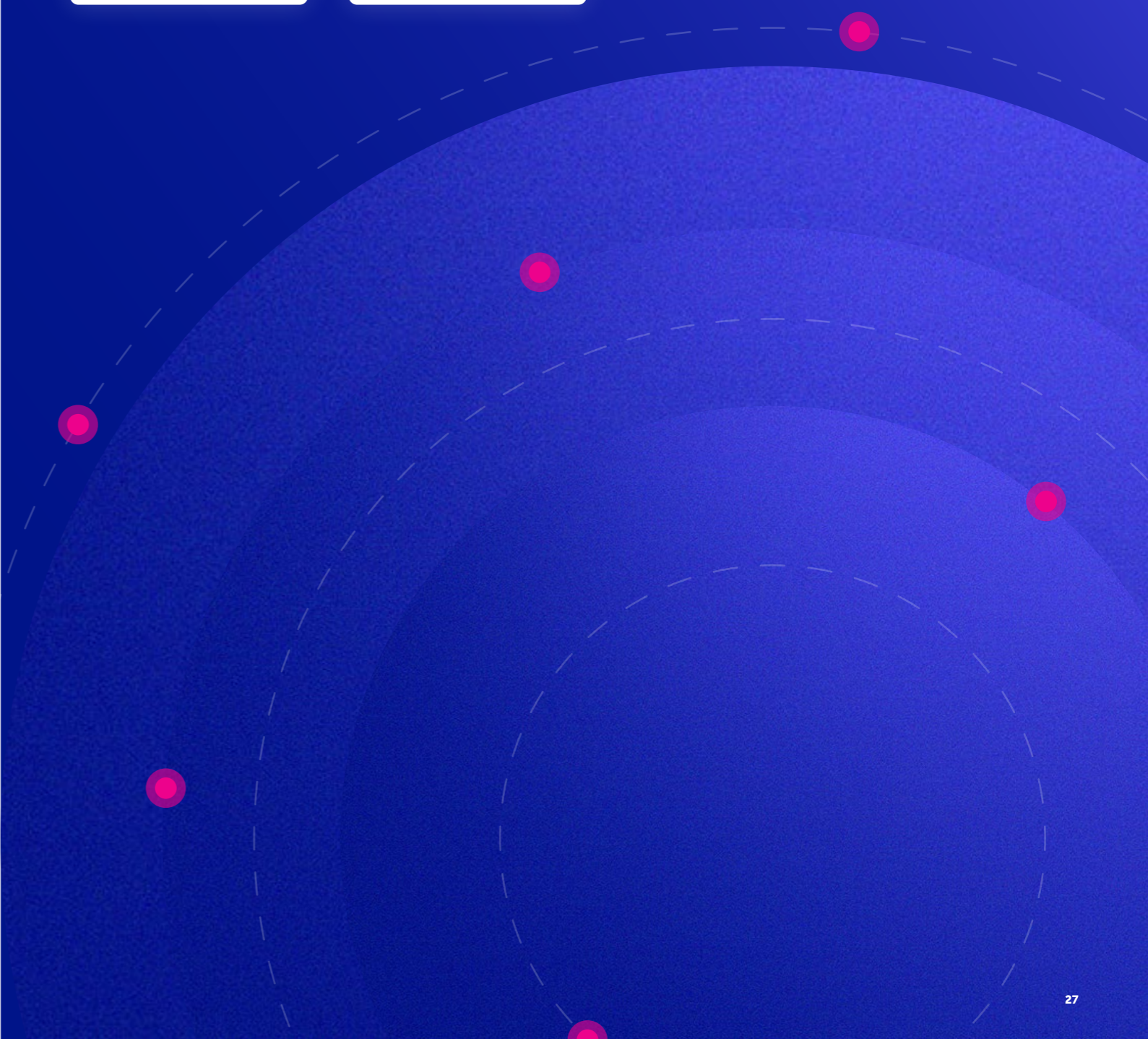
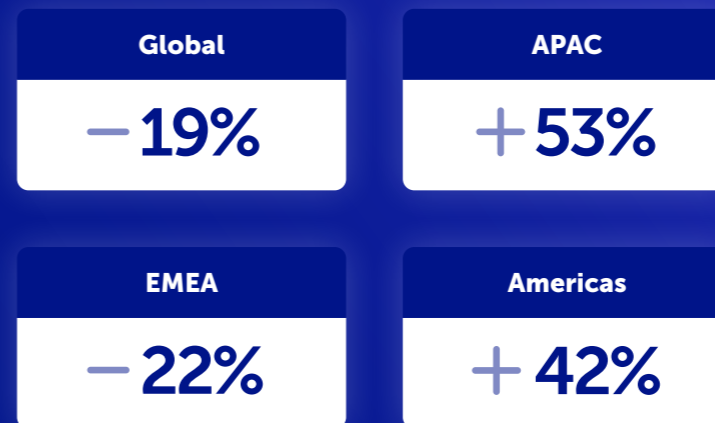
SMS send volumes

Due to its immediacy and accessibility, SMS is a channel that fluctuates to meet marketers' needs. During the pandemic, we witnessed high send rates as SMS was used to communicate time-critical messages.

SMS is not a channel that is going to fade away, it's simply changing. SMS has proven to be great for service-based messages, but there's now an opportunity for all marketers to utilize it more for purely marketing messages. **Consumers rank** SMS as the second-best channel to reach them on, second only to email, so marketers need to embrace the channel.



SMS sends around the globe



Europe is leaving SMS on read

We observed huge SMS growth in the APAC and Americas regions. Brands in these regions have recognized the power of SMS and are running with it. This was backed up by our research for **Hitting the Mark** where APAC brands outpaced EMEA brands by 16% in collecting phone numbers for SMS communication. APAC brands are making SMS signup a priority, often appearing alongside newsletter signups.

So why are EMEA marketers cautious to jump on this channel? We know that SMS is a more invasive channel than others, it's louder and more direct, so perhaps EMEA marketers feel it doesn't align with consumer attitudes in the region.

There's also the fact that messaging app, WhatsApp is more popular in the region, often replacing SMS messaging amongst individuals to speak to family and friends. WhatsApp is also updating its positioning and offers more options to marketers, such as broadcast channels and automated replies for customer support. We predict more marketers will adopt messaging channels alongside SMS and MMS to reach their audience for this short-form, direct, communication style.

Plus, with increasing European email regulations to contend with, a reluctance to adopt another channel makes sense. Perhaps marketers are waiting for it to be proven before they jump in. EMEA marketers, that time is now.

How to get SMS to work for you

- **Create a channel matrix:** Have a clear understanding of which channels are best suited to different message types. This ensures that you're getting the most from each channel, creates a cross-channel approach, and saves you time on planning. If you're unsure where to start, check out our [Channel playbook](#).
- **Don't overuse it:** SMS is a great channel for engagement thanks to its direct nature, but that's also why you can't overuse it as you'll turn your recipients off quickly. Opt for SMS when you're sharing notable deals, time-sensitive promotions, order confirmations, appointment reminders, and event notifications.
- **Capture SMS numbers:** Handing over your phone number is a bigger deal than your email address. If you're able to offer an incentive such as a discount code for email signup, make your SMS incentive even better. Also, ensure you clearly communicate how their number will be used and explain that users can unsubscribe for free at any time.
- **Don't stop at SMS:** There is clear growth of SMS and similar channels, such as MMS, WhatsApp, and Rich Communication Services (RCS), highlighting the increasing significance of messaging in modern marketing strategies. These channels get the message across quicker, in a more concise manner, and will land right on your recipient's home or lock screen.

SMS in seconds

Creating an SMS campaign doesn't take long as there's no design component, meaning you only need words - and a few at that. For global companies, SMS's low-character requirement ensures cost-effectiveness when translating messages into multiple languages.

Dotdigital's **WinstonAI** enables you to easily convert email campaigns into SMS messages with just one click. WinstonAI will do all of the hard work for you and suggest an SMS campaign with 160 characters or fewer, made up of copy that is perfectly aligned with your email campaign.



CASE STUDY



Research agency Ipsos sees conversion rate of 69% with SMS

[READ MORE](#)

Ipsos needed a communication channel to supplement an online and telephone survey with a high engagement rate in order to reach as many respondents as possible. Each message needed to be personalized with a unique link that would drive each individual to a personal pre-populated landing page. SMS was the perfect solution.

SMS engagement

SMS engagement around the globe

SMS sees strong engagement, especially when you compare it to email. If you have a specific action you want your audience to take, SMS is the channel to opt for.

Globally SMS sees a CTR over 6 times higher than email (3%).

Global	
SMS CTR	19%
SMS unique CTR	17%
SMS unsubscribe rate	0.12%

APAC	
SMS CTR	20%
SMS unique CTR	17%
SMS unsubscribe rate	0.2%

EMEA	
SMS CTR	21%
SMS unique CTR	18%
SMS unsubscribe rate	0.03%

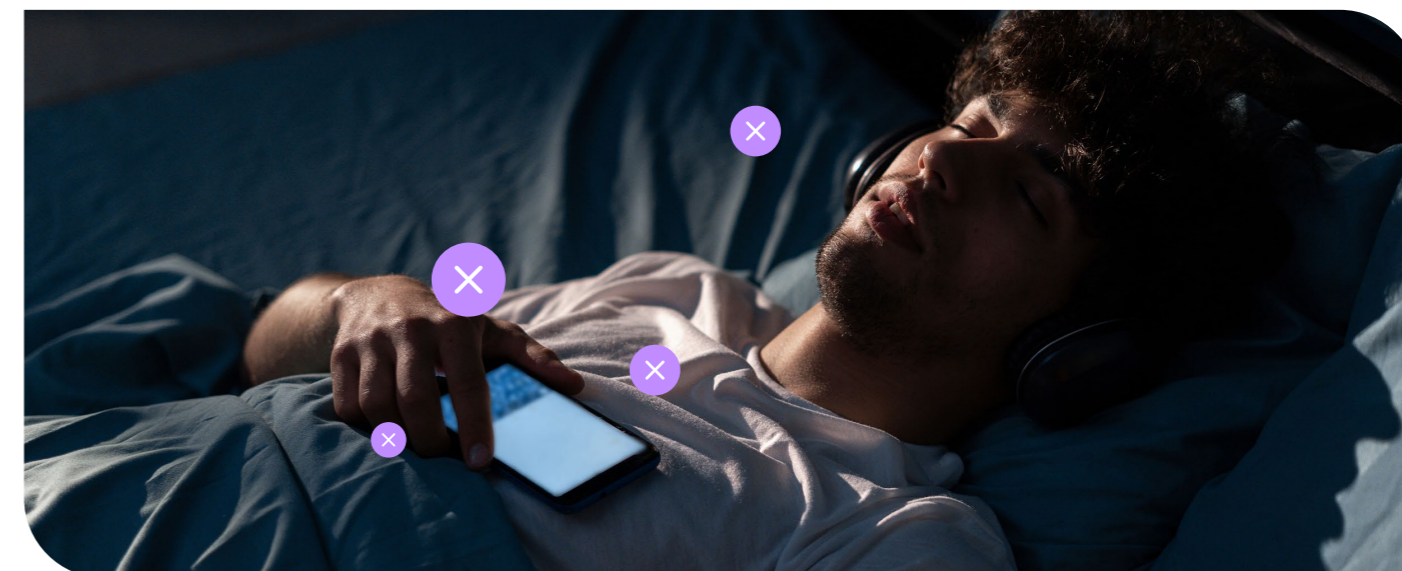
Americas	
SMS CTR	12%
SMS unique CTR	10%
SMS unsubscribe rate	0.43%

SMS send time considerations

As SMS is more intrusive you need to be mindful of send times. Some countries enforce 'quiet hours' for SMS marketing.

Note that the rules around SMS marketing are always changing, so it's important to work with a provider who can advise on these changes and implement guards to protect your sender reputation around the globe.

In the USA, UK, and parts of mainland Europe 8pm - 8am are no-go times for sending. In France, Sundays and Public Holidays are also banned. Ensure you're adhering to these as well as respecting people's time by not sending SMS messages during unsociable hours and being mindful of sending frequency.



CASE STUDY

FeelGood contacts

See how Feel Good Contacts utilized SMS to drive app downloads

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

SMS is a great channel when you have a time-sensitive message or a clear action you want customers to complete. Feel Good Contacts utilized SMS to drive app downloads. Sending an SMS campaign complete with personalization and discount codes drove a 20% increase in app downloads in just one day.

SMS engagement by industry

SMS provides a reliable channel for engagement across all industries, especially during the holiday season.

Industry	SMS CTR	SMS unique CTR	SMS unsubscribe rate
Apparel & fashion	16%	13%	0.09%
Automobiles & parts	12%	10%	0.21%
Charity & non-profit	21%	18%	0.04%
Commercial services & supplies	19%	17%	0.37%
Construction & materials	15%	13%	0.23%
Consulting	12%	9%	0.03%
Consumer goods & services	36%	27%	0.2%
Creative services or agency	20%	17%	0.36%
Ecommerce	13%	11%	0.16%
Education & training	27%	21%	0.03%
Energy & utility producers	16%	12%	0%
Events & entertainment	22%	18%	0.02%
Finance	18%	15%	1.78%
Food & drug retailers	15%	13%	0.07%
Food producers & processors	9%	9%	0%
Gambling	56%	46%	0%
General retailers	18%	16%	0.14%
Government	64%	40%	0%
Health & fitness	10%	9%	0.51%
Healthcare equipment & services	17%	14%	0.04%
Hotels, restaurants & venues	33%	28%	0%
Industrial transportation	33%	26%	0.03%
Insurance	12%	9%	0.01%
Legal	19%	16%	0.36%
Manufacturing, mining & machinery	18%	16%	0%
Marketing & advertising	23%	18%	0.01%
Media	4%	3%	0%
Personal goods	12%	11%	0.01%
Pharmaceuticals & biotechnology	17%	13%	0.05%
Professional services	22%	19%	0%
Real estate	17%	15%	0.07%

SMS engagement by industry, continued

Industry	SMS CTR	SMS unique CTR	SMS unsubscribe rate
Recruitment & staffing	15%	11%	0%
Software & computer Services	21%	18%	0.36%
Sports & leisure	20%	17%	0.05%
Telecommunications	52%	39%	0%
Travel & leisure	32%	27%	0%



CASE STUDY

See how SMS drives reliable engagement

READ NOW

The **co-operative** bank

Ethical then, now and **always**

SMS is a great channel for important, time-sensitive messages that drive an action.

Discover why marketing agency DCX chose Dotdigital to run time-sensitive SMS campaigns for Co-operative Bank.

3

Customer growth and churn

List growth and churn are crucial metrics for marketers. Whilst engagement metrics give you insight into the effectiveness of your campaigns, growth and churn data gives you an idea of the channel's overall health.

Growth speaks for itself: the more customers you can reach, the more conversions you can generate. Churn is costly, so taking steps to minimize unsubscribes by keeping your audience engaged and happy is essential.



Email subscriber growth & churn

Email subscriber growth and churn around the globe

Region	Unsubscribe rate	List growth
Global	0.13%	+7.88%
APAC	0.13%	+8.48%
EMEA	0.13%	+8.09%
Americas	0.13%	+6.61%

Halve your unsubscribe rate

Unsubscribe rates should always be sitting below 0.5% and a healthy unsubscribe rate is generally expected to be around **0.26%**. Dotdigital customers are seeing unsubscribe rates that are half that, at 0.13%.

The Dotdigital platform boasts comprehensive data hygiene tools and fully customizable preference centers to ensure your unsubscribe rates stay low.

By utilizing tools such as double opt-in and preference centers, marketers can ensure that new subscribers are engaged. Couple this with a consistent use of segmentation and personalization and you get a strategy that ensures subscribers are actively engaged and served up relevant and engaging content - why would they unsubscribe?



Subscriber churn by industry

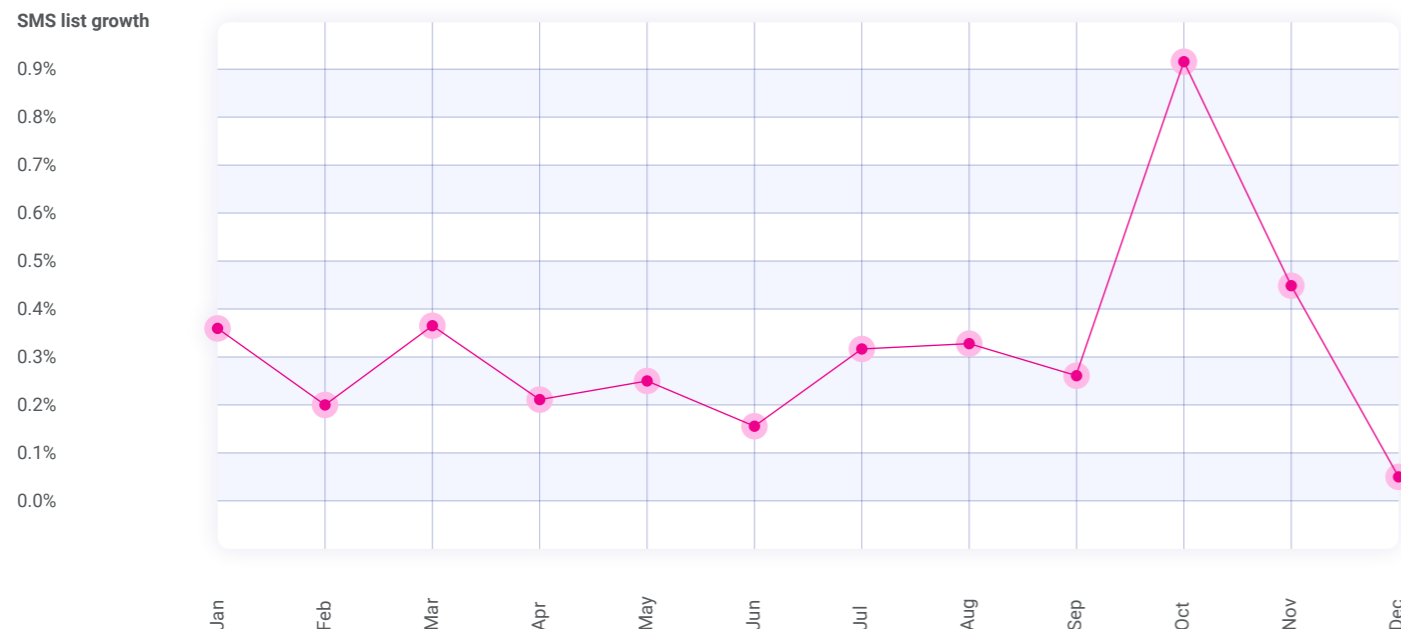
Industry	Unsubscribe rate	List growth
Apparel & fashion	0.11%	+5.73%
Arts & music	0.17%	+5.80%
Automobiles & parts	0.3%	+4.75%
Charity & non-profit	0.17%	+8.02%
Commercial services & supplies	0.15%	+6.73%
Construction & materials	0.2%	+6.31%
Consulting	0.39%	+8.01%
Consumer goods & services	0.15%	+10.1%
Creative services or agency	0.12%	+2.41%
Ecommerce	0.12%	+8.51%
Education & training	0.12%	+7.42%
Energy & utility producers	0.13%	+8.14%
Events & entertainment	0.15%	+9.74%
Finance	0.14%	+5.79%
Food & drug retailers	0.09%	+4.43%
Food producers & processors	0.21%	+7.58%
Gambling	0.09%	+11%
General industrials	0.29%	+4.85%
General retailers	0.11%	+5.97%
Government	0.16%	+8.73%
Health & fitness	0.17%	+10.4%
Healthcare equipment & services	0.18%	+5.65%
Hotels, restaurants & venues	0.23%	+5.66%
Industrial engineering	0.19%	+0.18%
Industrial transportation	0.12%	+2.46%
Insurance	0.21%	+6.64%
Legal	0.11%	+6.40%
Leisure goods	0.12%	+10%
Manufacturing, mining & machinery	0.23%	+3.02%
Marketing & advertising	0.18%	+13.58%
Media	0.09%	+3.95%
Personal goods	0.08%	-0.01%
Pharmaceuticals & biotechnology	0.18%	+6.86%

Subscriber churn by industry, continued

Industry	Unsubscribe rate	List growth
Professional services	0.14%	+7.75%
Real estate	0.19%	+11.7%
Recruitment & staffing	0.26%	+7.61%
Software & computer services	0.16%	+7.57%
Sports & leisure	0.15%	+9.43%
Technology hardware & equipment	0.09%	+8.09%
Telecommunications	0.19%	+6.42%
Travel & leisure	0.13%	+6.39%

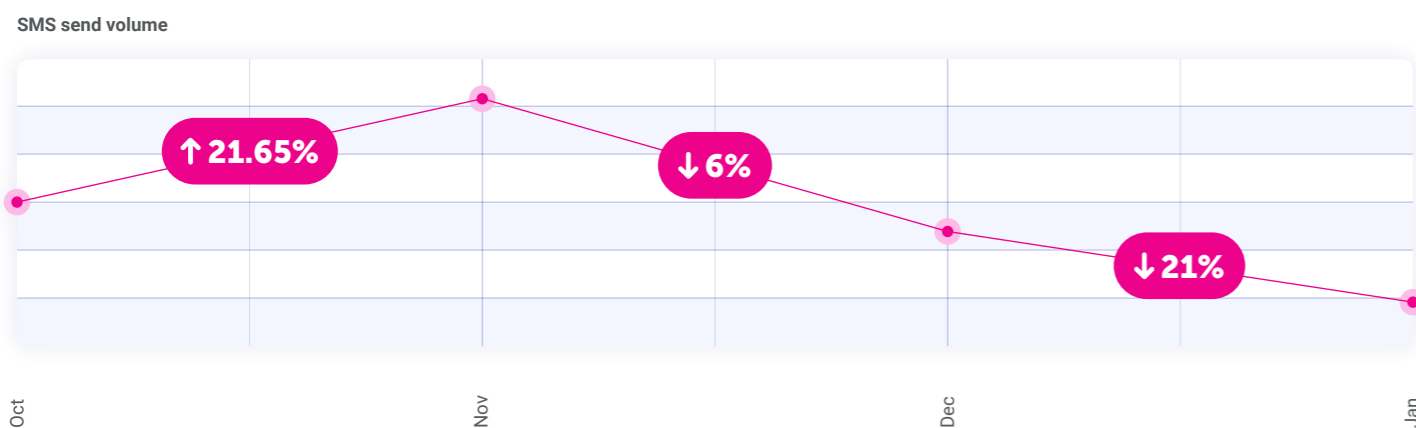


SMS list growth



In terms of SMS list growth, October had the highest list growth at 0.68%, conversely, December had the lowest growth at 0.07%.

This reinforces the narrative that both marketers and customers alike were gearing up for Singles' Day, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday sales. These sales typically offer high discounts for short periods so SMS is the perfect channel.



With the significant list growth in October, it's no surprise to see send volumes increasing in November as brands market to their newly acquired customers. There was a 22% uplift in SMS sends throughout the November sales season. December then saw a drop of 6% compared to November and January dropped even further by 21%, proving that **holiday season is SMS season**.

Boost list growth

List growth is consistently higher than unsubscribe rates which is great for marketers as it proves that these channels are only growing. So, how can you capitalize on this and make your marketing lists even bigger and full of engaged customers?

How to drive list growth

- **Utilize popovers:** Create branded, SEO-friendly **onsite popovers** that capture email and phone contact data. Use smartly timed popovers that will appear on high-traffic and high-intent pages to encourage new leads to hand over their details so that you can nurture them down your funnel.
- **Provide value:** To capture someone's personal details you need to make clear how it will benefit them. An offer of some kind, such as a discount code is a classic tactic. Be sure to also briefly explain the content they can gain access to by subscribing such as exclusive offers, news of new product releases, etc.
- **Referral programs:** Implement referral programs that reward existing subscribers for inviting friends and family to sign up for your email list, download your app, or subscribe to your SMS updates.
- **Cross-channel promotion:** Promote your email, SMS, and app subscription options across multiple channels; for example, mention your app in email newsletters or provide easy app installation links in SMS messages.

CASE STUDY



See how triggered popovers increased audience growth

The abandoned basket popover has done especially well. Of the people who see it, one-third sign-up. So we've acquired those customers who might have gone on to shop elsewhere.

Louisa Brooks
Email Marketing Manager, Feel Good Contacts

Feel Good Contacts wanted to increase audience growth. The brand utilized triggered popovers to push newsletter capture or app downloads to customers based on their data. By utilizing Dotdigital's Fresh Relevance tools to do this, the brand saw huge results.

The introduction of targeted popovers generated more than 10,000 additional registrations in the first month alone, representing a 333% increase in sign-ups month-over-month.

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4

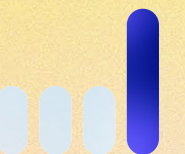
Marketing automation benchmarks

Marketing automation can save you time, streamline your processes, and maximize every lead.

There is an appetite for marketing automation, Dotdigital's CMO tracker revealed that 43% of marketers are looking to invest in marketing automation software.

Set-up time can be a blocker for busy marketers, but the benefits of automated marketing flows certainly outweigh the initial time outlay.

For this report we're looking at one of the most powerful automation programs there is, abandoned cart.



Abandoned cart benchmarks

Abandoned cart rates have been steadily increasing over the last decade, with 2024 seeing a cart abandonment rate of **70%**. As consumers gain more and more choice, you need to put time and effort into rescuing abandoned carts to ensure you don't lose a sale at the final hurdle.

Abandoned carts around the globe

Abandoned carts are not lost revenue, that much is clear. For the period we analyzed in this report, over 1.8 million 'abandoned' carts were recovered which resulted in \$455 million of revenue generated.

Abandoned carts don't have to mean the end of a potential conversion, with the right marketing tactics you can reignite the sale.

It's also important to recognize that customers are very engaged with abandoned cart emails. The global click-to-open rate (CTOR) for abandoned cart campaigns is 14%. For context, let's remember that for regular emails that sits at 7%. That's quite the jump.



Abandoned cart opens and clicks

Global	
Open rate	73%
Unique OR	30%
CTR	11%
CTOR	14%

APAC	
Open rate	73%
Unique OR	30%
CTR	11%
CTOR	15%

EMEA	
Open rate	68%
Unique OR	26%
CTR	11%
CTOR	16%

Americas	
Open rate	80%
Unique OR	35%
CTR	10%
CTOR	13%

How to cash in from abandoned cart campaigns

- **Timing is everything:** Send reminders soon after cart abandonment to capitalize on existing interest, typically within 1-3 hours. Add in a series of well-timed follow-up messages, test what works for your audience, and consider cart value too. Higher value carts tend to take longer to convert so you'll need to test out what works for your product or service offering.
- **Target and personalize:** Customize emails or messages with customer names, abandoned items, and tailored product recommendations to increase engagement and relevance. This allows you to reignite interest, remove barriers with a clear CTA to the items already explored, and also boost AOV with clever cross and upsell tactics.
- **Make it enticing:** Offer discounts, free shipping, or other perks to nudge customers towards completing their purchases and enhancing the campaign's effectiveness. Also, include social proof to tap into the psychology of buying and add another layer of encouragement and trust.
- **Take a cross-channel approach:** Cross-channel programs are under utilized, but as we've seen each channel brings its own benefit. In this case, SMS and push notifications are the perfect channels to be direct, reignite the sale, and see it through to completion.



CASE STUDY

Lee × Wrangler

Abandoned cart in action

READ NOW

Discover how apparel brand Lee and Wrangler utilized Dotdigital's out-of-the-box abandoned cart template to kick-start its abandoned cart strategy. The brand saw an ROI increase of 6x YoY from this simple approach, proving that not having the time to set up automations is no longer a valid excuse.

How to start with marketing automation

- **Identify drop-offs:** Look at your customer journey and find your drop-off points, is it on sign-up, at checkout, or three months into being a customer? Find your areas for attention, prioritize the biggest drop-off area, and start there.
- **Utilize templates:** At Dotdigital we know you're busy, but we also know how valuable these automation programs are so we've made it as easy as possible to get started. The Dotdigital platform provides templates for key automation programs so you don't need to spend time on the set-up.
- **Break it down:** Pick one or two key automations to begin with. Check out our [marketing automation masterclass series](#) for clear how-to guides for key automation programs covering birthday, welcome, abandoned cart, re-engage, and events.
- **Outsource it:** If that still sounds like too much time that you simply don't have, lean on the Dotdigital Professional Services Team to create automation programs for you. These experts will whip up automation programs for you in no time and you'll soon see results.

CASE STUDY

Learn how Neal's Yard Remedies saw a 419% increase in revenue with Dotdigital

Neal's Yard Remedies wanted to maximize the impact of abandoned cart campaigns. The company was using a rudimentary module from Shopify to send emails to customers who placed products in their cart without making a purchase. However, it lacked the functionality, control, and measurement to fully automate and optimize the process.

We handed over all the technical implementation to Dotdigital's Professional Services team and our customer success managers, who carried out a customer journey mapping exercise before building the entire automation for us. All that we had to do was provide creative and copy for the emails.

Jessica Fox
CRM Manager
Neal's Yard Remedies

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Conclusion

Hopefully, this report has proven that benchmarks are still relevant. Whilst this report provides great context, remember that the key metrics you need to compare against are your own. Optimization is how you can ensure your brand is continually evolving and excelling.

Speaking of evolving, marketers are demonstrating their ability to adapt and flourish in the face of ever-changing restrictions and consumer attitudes. Where open rates once reigned supreme, other metrics are now used to paint a fuller picture of engagement, and AI has established itself to be a part of everyday life for marketing teams around the globe.

While there have been some key changes to the way we work, some things remain comfortably steady. Email holds its position as a key engagement and revenue driver for brands and remains the consumer's communication channel of choice. At Dotdigital, we've added even more revenue attribution metrics so that you can easily demonstrate the value your campaigns are having. These include advanced revenue attribution for a metric that perfectly aligns with your business' unique buying cycle, and an average revenue per recipient metric to allow you to easily see the impact each campaign has on your customers.

The tools and channels available to cross-channel marketers are growing, and this is only increasing your reach. Each channel has its own pros and cons, and it's not an either/or, it's all about having your channels work together - it's called the marketing mix for a reason. The crucial takeaway here is the value to be found in having a marketing platform that allows you to work across different channels with ease.

This report has revealed that cross-channel marketing is just as important as ever. Marketers have more and more ways to engage their audience and have adapted to regulatory changes to stay one step ahead.

Looking forward, it's clear that automation is worth the investment, and it's an area CMOs are keen to focus on moving forward. We can also confidently say that SMS and messaging apps are on the rise. As consumers spend more and more time on their smartphones, marketers need to follow suit and maximize these channels to drive engagement and revenue.

As AI continues to evolve, laws continue to be passed, and consumers continue to protect their personal data, one thing is clear: cross-channel marketers are more than ready to succeed.



Glossary

Average bounce rate

The total of soft and hard bounce rates combined.

Click-through rate (CTR)

The percentage of recipients who clicked on one or more links in an email campaign, calculated by dividing the total number of clicks by the total number of delivered emails.

Click-to-open rate (CTOR)

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a link after opening an email, calculated by dividing the total number of clicks by the total number of opened emails.

Delivery rate

The percentage of sent emails that successfully reach recipients' inboxes. Calculated by dividing the number of delivered emails by the total number of sent emails, excluding bounces.

Growth rate

The percentage increase in the size of an email list or the number of subscribers over a given period, accounting for new sign-ups, unsubscribes, and bounces.

Hard bounce rate

The percentage of email messages that are permanently undeliverable due to issues like invalid or non-existent email addresses. Unlike soft bounces, which involve temporary issues, hard bounces require the removal of such addresses from the email list to maintain list quality and deliverability.

Marketing automation

The use of automated workflows, triggers, and personalized content to send relevant, timely, and targeted emails to subscribers.

Open rate

The percentage of recipients who opened a delivered email campaign, calculated by dividing the total number of opened emails by the total number of delivered emails.

Soft bounce rate

The percentage of temporarily undeliverable emails due to issues on the recipient's side, such as a full mailbox, server downtime, or a large email size.

Unique click-through rate

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a link at least once, considering each recipient only once, regardless of how many times they clicked.

Unique click-to-open rate

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a link uniquely after opening an email at least once, measured as unique clicks divided by unique opens.

Unique open rate

The percentage of recipients who opened the email at least once, counting each recipient only once, regardless of how many times they opened the email.

Unsubscribe rate

The percentage of recipients who opted out of an email list after receiving an email campaign, calculated by dividing the total number of unsubscribes by the total number of delivered emails.

Methodology

For this report, we analyzed data from Dotdigital customer accounts for twelve months. The data set runs from 1 Aug 2023 - 31 July 2024. All comparisons made are against data from Dotdigital's last Global benchmark report released in 2023, using data from 2021 - 2022.

Spanning email, SMS, and marketing automation usage, this report provides a real-life, reliable insight into how marketers are working, and the results they are seeing.

We analyzed tens of billions of emails and over half a billion SMS campaigns to uncover these insights. The report examines marketing activity across over 40 industries and multiple countries around the globe, splitting the findings into global, EMEA, APAC, and the Americas.

All data is aggregated and anonymized, no Dotdigital accounts are identifiable through this report.

Note that the SMS click-through rates were calculated using only SMS messages that contained a link. Any SMS campaigns without a link were not included in order to maintain the relevancy of the metric.

Further reading

Check out the Dotdigital [resource library](#) for more reports and helpful how-to content.

Follow us on our social media channels to be the first to hear about our latest resources and [subscribe to our monthly LinkedIn newsletter](#) for inspiration, marketing chatter, and a space to spark new ideas.



Discover more at dotdigital.com

Boost your benchmarks with Dotdigital

Dotdigital is an all-in-one customer experience and data platform (CXDP). Personalize the entire customer journey from website, to automated email campaigns, retargeting, and more. Our sophisticated data capture and data modeling tools make it easy for you to know your customers' behaviors, intent, and preferences. You can then use this insight to deliver relevant and engaging marketing campaigns from the Dotdigital platform.

No more guesswork

Attribute every click, conversion, and checkout to its true source with Dotdigital's advanced marketing attribution. Go beyond simple engagement metrics with AI-powered behavioral modeling to deliver personalized experiences every time.

Let's grow together

We're ready wherever your business goes and however your team grows. Our CXDP supports messaging to 200+ countries and dozens of currencies. Cross-account analytics, single sign-on (SSO) functionality, and multi-language support are just some of the reasons businesses choose us.

Appeal to every individual

Combine the power of marketing automation with the benefits of a customer data platform (CDP) to create a seamless customer experience. From website to WhatsApp, make sure every moment and message is as unique as your customers.

It's a team effort

Dotdigital integrates with leading ecommerce and CRM platforms to eliminate data silos and uncover actionable insights. Access hundreds of verified integrations with your favorite marketing tech using our integration hub and an API library that enables thousands more.

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