



2014 SILVERPOP EMAIL MARKETING METRICS BENCHMARK STUDY



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TWEET THIS!

Reading Silverpop’s “2014 Email Marketing Metrics Benchmark Study”

2014 SILVERPOP EMAIL MARKETING METRICS BENCHMARK STUDY

If numbers are your specialty, this year's benchmark study offers up a tasty new treat: how transactional and automated emails perform on metrics such as click and open rates.

Without giving too much away, suffice to say that transactional emails live up to their billing as the messages your recipients like to receive and act on.

Silverpop's annual study of emails also revealed some other surprises. Among them:

1) Hard bounce rates declined noticeably from 2012 to 2013, even among the bottom 25 percent of email senders. Marketers' efforts to clean up their databases and manage them responsibly seem to be paying off, among other likely factors.

Note: Silverpop doesn't usually examine year-over-year results because they aren't always comparable enough to be statistically relevant. But, in this case, these results were eye-popping enough to justify a mention.

2) The performance gap between the top and bottom senders in the study is getting wider, especially on key metrics such as opens and clicks, which measure the all-important quality of engagement.

3) Transactional messages sent by top-performing companies get opened almost four times each. This means any additional copy and cross-sell/upsell offers you add to your transactional message can benefit from the message's longer shelf life.

Silverpop's 2014 survey examines messages sent by nearly 3,000 brands in 2013 using a wide variety of measurements to establish benchmarks

on customer engagement (via multiple open and click metrics) and list churn (hard bounces, unsubscribes and complaints).

The Data: How to Interpret and Apply It

This study reports overall, mean (average) and median benchmarks. Our analysis focuses primarily on the median, which is where half of respondents are above the middle, and half are below it. It's usually a more significant measurement than the mean.

Most studies only include "average" benchmarks, and usually just the mean. However, in today's hypercompetitive marketplace, "average" has become the new bottom. So, we encourage you to set your sights higher.

If you want to be a world-class marketing organization, compare yourself to those who are doing the best on the benchmarks that are most important to you. To help you make that comparison, we also report results from the top and bottom quartiles on each measurement.

Process vs. Output Metrics

This report examines "process" metrics, which measure activity on email messages. Understanding where your email program stands on process metrics is one half of the benchmarking equation.

"Output" metrics, such as revenue, leads generated, cost savings, order size or number of downloads, measure how well your email campaign delivered against your individual company's business goals. You need both to understand your email program's actual performance.

Transactional and Automated Email Data

For the first time, the Silverpop benchmark study compares data on transactional emails with nontransactional messages and automated versus manual messages.

Transactional messages are generally triggered automatically by behaviors such as purchases, subscriptions or account activity. Nontransactional messages include all other sends, such as broadcast or segment campaigns, birthday emails and the like.

Likewise, manual messages are those that require a human to press the "send" button, such as broadcast or segmented campaigns. Automated messages are any emails triggered automatically by business rules, such as website behavior, matching demographic data, a series of related email messages, etc.

Benchmarking: Just the Beginning

As a baseline scorecard, the benchmarks established in this new study can help you determine where your email program outperforms your peers and competitors and where you need to improve.

Remember that gauging your marketing success requires going beyond industry benchmarks to see whether your email program met, exceeded or fell short of your own goals while adding value to the customer/prospect relationship and maximizing conversions and revenue.

Additional Resources

At the end of this report you'll find a glossary explaining terms used in the study along with a list of resources on the Silverpop website that can help you understand more about key issues affecting email marketing and email program performance.

Open Rates Overview

The open rate works best as an in-house benchmark to track over time, because it can signal progress or problems with engagement. It's relatively unreliable because it doesn't capture all opens accurately due to image blocking and other factors. In other words, track your

open rate, but don't use it as a sole measure of campaign success.

Observations

Unique open rate: While median open rates are fairly close among country groupings, top-quartile performers achieved open rates more than double the median and five to 22 times higher than bottom-quartile performers.

Disparities on the gross open rate are even greater, with top performers achieving rates eight to 42 times higher than low performers.

Industry vertical results show that some industries are clearly outperforming others. Healthcare companies (23.4 percent), Nonprofits (23.1 percent) and Education (22.7 percent) scored the highest unique open rates.

UNIQUE OPEN RATE (by Country/Region)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	20.2%	17.1%	39.4%	6.5%
U.S.	20.1%	16.8%	38.5%	7.4%
EMEA	20.4%	17.9%	39.4%	5.8%
Canada	20.9%	17.7%	46.2%	3.0%
APAC	19.5%	14.3%	45.4%	2.3%

UNIQUE OPEN RATE (by Industry)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	25.3%	23.1%	44.9%	9.1%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	23.1%	19.7%	41.7%	10.1%
Computer Software	22.1%	19.4%	40.7%	8.4%
Consumer Products	21.4%	17.7%	42.2%	7.2%
Consumer Services	25.5%	20.9%	49.8%	9.1%
Education	25.7%	22.7%	50.4% ▲	6.2%
Financial Services/Banks/Insurance	22.4%	19.5%	42.8%	7.0%
Healthcare	26.2%	23.4%	46.8%	10.5%
Travel & Leisure	15.0%	11.1%	33.7%	3.3% ▼
Media & Publishing	16.6%	14.0%	31.3%	6.2%
Real Estate & Construction	23.1%	21.4%	37.3%	12.1%
Retail	20.9%	17.9%	37.6%	9.6%
Corporate Services	20.7%	17.9%	41.2%	4.9%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	22.2%	19.7%	38.1%	11.0%

GROSS OPEN RATE (by Country/Region)

Open Rate (Gross)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	39.1%	25.5%	94.4%	8.6%
U.S.	39.2%	25.3%	93.8%	9.8%
EMEA	37.6%	26.1%	88.7%	7.6%
Canada	41.8%	26.9%	109.3%	4.0%
APAC	44.7%	41.4%	127.4%	3.0%

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

(by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	20.2%	17.1%	39.4%	6.5%
Manual Sends	19.7%	16.8%	38.3%	6.2%
Automated Sends	23.6%	19.3%	45.6%	8.6%

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

(by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	20.2%	17.1%	39.4%	6.5%
Nontransactional	20.0%	17.0%	38.9%	6.5%
Transactional	37.7%	38.5%	65.7%	9.5%

GROSS OPEN RATE

(by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Open Rate (Gross)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	39.1%	25.5%	94.4%	8.6%
Manual Sends	38.3%	24.9%	93.0%	8.2%
Automated Sends	44.4%	29.3%	102.7%	12.0%

GROSS OPEN RATE

(by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Open Rate (Gross)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	39.1%	25.5%	94.4%	8.6%
Nontransactional	38.6%	25.3%	92.8%	8.6%
Transactional	91.4%	73.8%	201.4%	15.2%

▲ Strongest performer ▼ Weakest performer

Opens per opener: Top-quartile performers achieved a median 2.72 opens per openers, 88 percent higher than the median and more than double the bottom-quartile rate. The difference is even wider on transactional messages, where top performers' messages are opened a median 3.9 times, nearly 3 times the bottom-quartile rate of 1.32 opens.

None of the 14 industry verticals achieved an overall median of two or more opens per opener, but all but one of the top-quartile verticals had 2-plus opens per opener.

Marketing opportunity: This longer shelf life for transactional messages should encourage marketers to create well-designed, informative emails that add relevant copy, such as cross- or upsell suggestions, shipping dates, package tracking codes, etc., to transactional information, within the confines of email regulations such as CAN-SPAM in the United States and Canada's Anti-Spam Law (CASL).

GROSS OPEN RATE (by Industry)

Open Rate (Gross)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	49.1%	35.60%	109.3%	12.3%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	56.1%	37%	129.9%	16.2%
Computer Software	52.9%	36.2%	122.7%	13.7%
Consumer Products	38.6%	24.5%	93.6%	9.4%
Consumer Services	49.0%	32.6%	114.7%	12.5%
Education	58.8%	37.6%	147.7% ▲	8.8%
Financial Services/Banks/Insurance	53.8%	33.6%	134.8%	9.9%
Healthcare	58.3%	41.7%	129.6%	16.1%
Travel & Leisure	24.2%	14.3%	62.3%	4.1% ▼
Media & Publishing	28.4%	20%	64.1%	7.9%
Real Estate & Construction	40.7%	30.8%	84%	16.5%
Retail	34.5%	24.6%	74.7%	12.6%
Corporate Services	40.9%	27.6%	99.1%	6.8%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	53.8%	37.8%	119.4%	17.4%

OPENS PER OPENER (by Country/Region)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.71	1.45	2.72	1.18
U.S.	1.73	1.46	2.77	1.19
EMEA	1.62	1.42	2.47	1.16
Canada	1.77	1.47	2.99	1.13
APAC	1.8	1.49	3	1.18

OPENS PER OPENER

(by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.71	1.45	2.72	1.18
Manual Sends	1.70	1.44	2.75	1.18
Automated Sends	1.70	1.53	2.46	1.20

OPENS PER OPENER

(by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.71	1.45	2.72	1.18
Nontransactional	1.70	1.45	2.70	1.18
Transactional	2.26	1.87	3.87	1.32

OPENS PER OPENER (by Industry)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	1.75	1.50	2.74	1.22
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	2.23	1.78	3.88	1.40
Computer Software	2.25	1.76	4.07 ▲	1.35
Consumer Products	1.57	1.38	2.29	1.18
Consumer Services	1.72	1.53	2.56	1.24
Education	1.99	1.58	3.51	1.25
Financial Services/Banks/Insurance	2.08	1.63	3.81	1.20
Healthcare	2.05	1.73	3.33	1.36
Travel & Leisure	1.40	1.30	1.91	1.06
Media & Publishing	1.53	1.38	2.16	1.18
Real Estate & Construction	1.62	1.41	2.38	1.24
Retail	1.52	1.38	2.11	1.21
Corporate Services	1.76	1.48	2.90	1.14 ▼
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	2.25	1.80	3.96	1.38

Click-Through Rates Overview

Click rates are process metrics that measure activity on an email message. They're a more reliable metric than open rates but are still not a substitute for output goals such as conversions, revenue or order value.

The click-to-open rate (CTOR), also known as the effective rate, does shed more light on engagement

than a simple click rate because it measures click-through rates as a percentage of messages opened instead of messages delivered.

Clicks per clicker captures actions by recipients who either click a specific link multiple times or click more than one link in the email message. Unlike other process metrics, clicks per clicker measures recipient behavior, not marketer-defined metrics.

Email messages with higher clicks per clicker usually reflect content that gives consumers several options to generate multiple unique clicks in a single message, or useful content the recipient wants to retain and consult more than once.

Observations

Across the three click-based metrics, some key findings:

- **Click-Through Rate:** Top-quartile performers had click-through rates that were more than six times higher than the median CTR of 1.5 percent. In contrast, bottom-quartile performers mustered CTRs of no more than 0.2 percent.

CLICK-THROUGH RATE (by Country Region)

Click-Through Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	3.3%	1.5%	9.5%	0.2%
U.S.	3.2%	1.4%	9.4%	0.2%
EMEA	3.5%	1.9%	9.7%	0.2%
Canada	2.9%	0.7%	9.6%	0.0%
APAC	3.3%	1.3%	10.3%	0.1%

CLICK-THROUGH RATE (by Industry)

Click-Through Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	4.2%	2.3%	11.5%	0.4%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	3.6%	1.6%	10.6%	0.2%
Computer Software	2.9%	1.1%	8.8%	0.2%
Consumer Products	2.7%	0.9%	8.6%	0.2%
Consumer Services	4.7%	2.3%	13.2% ▲	0.4%
Education	4.5%	1.9%	13.2%	0.3%
Financial Services	3.3%	1.3%	10.0%	0.1%
Healthcare	4.8%	2.6%	13.0%	0.5%
Travel & Leisure	2.2%	0.8%	6.8%	0.1% ▼
Media & Publishing	2.6%	1.1%	7.8%	0.2%
Real Estate & Construction	3.9%	2.8%	8.8%	0.9%
Retail	3.4%	2.1%	9.1%	0.3%
Corporate Services	3.4%	1.4%	10.3%	0.1%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	3.2%	1.8%	8.7%	0.3%

CLICK-THROUGH RATE

(by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Click-Through Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	3.3%	1.5%	9.5%	0.2%
Manual Sends	3.3%	1.4%	8.8%	0.2%
Automated Sends	5.0%	2.5%	14.0%	0.3%

CLICK-THROUGH RATE

(by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Click-Through Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	3.3%	1.5%	9.5%	0.2%
Nontransactional	3.2%	1.5%	9.3%	0.2%
Transactional	9.2%	4.2%	26.4%	0.3%

▲ Strongest performer ▼ Weakest performer

- Industry comparison:** Real Estate & Construction (2.8 percent), Healthcare (2.6 percent), Consumer Services (2.3 percent) and Nonprofit (2.3 percent) verticals had the highest median CTRs of the 14 industry verticals. This might reflect their content, which usually relies more on news and information than on promotions. Especially regarding healthcare, the information might also be more likely to be personalized or relevant to recipients.
- Click-to-Open Rate:** Again, top-quartile performers far surpassed their counterparts, notching click-to-open rates that more than tripled the overall median rate. Top-quartile industry vertical performers were about 15 times higher than the bottom performers.

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE
(by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Click-to-Open Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	13.5%	10.0%	31.3%	1.7%
Manual Sends	12.8%	9.5%	29.6%	1.6%
Automated Sends	18.2%	14.1%	41.2%	2.3%

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE
(by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Click-to-Open Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	13.5%	10.0%	31.3%	1.7%
Nontransactional	13.4%	9.9%	31.1%	1.7%
Transactional	21.1%	15.1%	50.8%	1.4%

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (by Country/Region)

Click-to-Open Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	13.5%	10.0%	31.3%	1.7%
U.S.	13.1%	9.4%	30.8%	1.8%
EMEA	15.1%	12.2%	32.7%	2.3%
Canada	8.9%	4.8%	25.1%	0.0%
APAC	15.9%	11.4%	36.6%	2.3%

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (by Industry)

Click-to-Open Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	14.4%	10.8%	32.3%	2.6%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	12.5%	8.8%	29.4%	1.6%
Computer Software	10.6%	7.2%	25.9%	1.4%
Consumer Products	9.9%	6.2%	24.7%	1.4%
Consumer Services	15.1%	12.5%	32.0%	2.7%
Education	14.5%	10.7%	32.5%	2.7%
Financial Services	13.0%	8.7%	32.6%	0.6% ▼
Healthcare	16.7%	12.9%	37.7% ▲	2.6%
Travel & Leisure	12.2%	8.7%	28.8%	1.4%
Media & Publishing	12.9%	9.0%	30.8%	1.6%
Real Estate & Construction	15.7%	14.3%	28.7%	5.2%
Retail	14.6%	12.5%	30.2%	2.4%
Corporate Services	13.9%	9.6%	33.3%	1.6%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	12.7%	9.5%	28.7%	2.2%



- **Clicks per Clicker:** This metric is a clear indicator of recipient activity on your email. Here, the difference between top and bottom performers is less pronounced than in other categories, but the top quartile still tallied clicks-per-clicker rates about 85 percent higher than the median rate.

Strong performers in industry verticals include Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics, Financial Services, Healthcare, and Media & Publishing, with top-quartile performers each posting 2.7 clicks per clicker or higher.

CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Country/Region)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.45	1.31	2.44	0.73
U.S.	1.5	1.31	2.6	0.8
EMEA	1.37	1.3	2.1	0.7
Canada	1.01	1.23	2	0
APAC	1.54	1.4	2.4	1

CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Industry)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	1.48	1.30	2.35	0.94
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	1.77	1.41	3.38 ▲	0.82
Computer Software	1.50	1.33	2.65	0.64
Consumer Products	1.18	1.15	1.77	0.65
Consumer Services	1.39	1.33	2.10	0.81
Education	1.56	1.38	2.54	0.93
Financial Services	1.46	1.29	2.77	0.46
Healthcare	1.62	1.44	2.72	0.87
Travel & Leisure	1.33	1.29	2.17	0.59 ▼
Media & Publishing	1.53	1.30	2.71	0.78
Real Estate & Construction	1.37	1.25	2.00	0.97
Retail	1.28	1.30	1.86	0.66
Corporate Services	1.41	1.31	2.27	0.71
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	1.54	1.37	2.44	0.93

- **Transactional emails:** As you might expect, transactional messages outperformed nontransactionals, and automated messages did better than manual messages, but it's striking to see the difference, especially among top performers.

Compared with the median CTR of 1.5 percent and CTOR of 10 percent on all messages, transactional messages scored a median 4.2 percent and 15.1 percent. And the click rates further spotlight the distinct differences between top and bottom performers: 26.4 percent CTR and 50.8 percent CTOR for the top 25 percent of email senders analyzed, compared to 0.3 percent median CTR and 1.4 percent CTOR for the bottom 25 percent.

CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Message Type — Manual vs. Automated)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.40	1.31	2.44	0.73
Manual Sends	1.46	1.30	2.48	0.72
Automated Sends	1.40	1.33	2.14	0.79

CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.40	1.30	2.44	0.73
Nontransactional	1.45	1.31	2.44	0.73
Transactional	1.53	1.40	2.68	0.62

▲ Strongest performer ▼ Weakest performer

List Churn Metrics Overview

These metrics can reveal reader disengagement and discontent along with bad list-management practices. Rising unsubscribe rates might tell you your email program doesn't match what subscribers expected when they signed up or that they find it easier to unsubscribe or let their addresses lapse into inactivity than to update their data. Hard bounces can indicate you're not eliminating bad email addresses vigorously enough at opt-in and practicing good, ongoing list hygiene.

Hard Bounce Rates Observations

The overall median hard-bounce rate was just under 0.04 percent. That's an eye-popping 95 percent decline from the previous year, when the median was 0.8 percent.

(Note: The Silverpop benchmark study doesn't regularly compare one year's statistics with the previous year because the companies involved, practices deployed and email messages themselves change, so the data isn't "apples to apples." But this year's hard-bounce stats are different enough from last year's study that they warrant comment.)

While some email experts might disagree, we believe the decrease in hard bounce rates signals that email marketers are taking list hygiene seriously. We're now seeing the fruits of their efforts to remove hard bounces more often and faster from their active databases, to keep bad addresses from getting into their databases and to keep a closer eye on factors that affect sender reputation.

This improvement might snowball in coming years as more marketers either see their own efforts paying off or witness the success their competitors are having.

HARD BOUNCE RATES (by Country/Region)

Hard Bounce Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.7644%	0.0377%	0.0000%	2.9329%
U.S.	0.6973%	0.0373%	0.0000%	2.6656%
EMEA	0.9552%	0.0486%	0.0000%	3.6747%
Canada	0.6098%	0.0000%	0.0000%	2.4000%
APAC	0.8752%	0.0271%	0.0000%	3.3800%

HARD BOUNCE RATES (by Industry)

Hard Bounce Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	0.6355%	0.0642%	0.0000%	2.3714%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	0.9209%	0.1511%	0.0000%	3.2532%
Computer Software	1.2630%	0.1694%	0.0002%	4.5897%
Consumer Products	1.1396%	0.1984%	0.0000%	4.1086%
Consumer Services	0.7783%	0.0468%	0.0000%	2.9688%
Education	0.9806%	0.1106%	0.0000%	3.6053%
Financial Services	0.8989%	0.0608%	0.0000%	3.3679%
Healthcare	1.0311%	0.0972%	0.0000%	3.8363%
Travel & Leisure	0.8351%	0.0265%	0.0000%	3.2512%
Media & Publishing	0.3706%	0.0162%	0.0000%	1.4378%
Real Estate & Construction	0.5057%	0.0935%	0.0000%	1.7859%
Retail	0.3706%	0.0348%	0.0015%	1.3894%
Corporate Services	1.3891%	0.0718%	0.0002%	5.3253%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	1.1815%	0.0830%	0.0000%	4.4542%





TWEET THIS!

Reading Silverpop's "2014 Email Marketing Metrics Benchmark Study"



UNSUBSCRIBE RATES (by Country/Region)

Unsubscribe Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.1438%	0.0279%	0.0000%	0.4893%
U.S.	0.1501%	0.0276%	0.0000%	0.5136%
EMEA	0.1376%	0.0329%	0.0000%	0.4565%
Canada	0.0842%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.3110%
APAC	0.1398%	0.0433%	0.0000%	0.4553%

UNSUBSCRIBE RATES (by Industry)

Unsubscribe Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	0.1579%	0.0600%	0.0000%	0.4968%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	0.1264%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.4776%
Computer Software	0.1901%	0.0389%	0.0000%	0.6381%
Consumer Products	0.1627%	0.0521%	0.0000%	0.5358%
Consumer Services	0.1260%	0.0119%	0.0000%	0.4481%
Education	0.1966%	0.0733%	0.0000%	0.6019%
Financial Services	0.1574%	0.0131%	0.0000%	0.5529%
Healthcare	0.1015%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.3765%
Travel & Leisure	0.1680%	0.0521%	0.0000%	0.5498%
Media & Publishing	0.0839%	0.0113%	0.0000%	0.3028%
Real Estate & Construction	0.2040%	0.0122%	0.0000%	0.7452%
Retail	0.1411%	0.0842%	0.0057%	0.3866%
Corporate Services	0.2052%	0.0554%	0.0000%	0.6672%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	0.1751%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.6273%

Unsubscribe Rates Observations

As with the open rate, the unsubscribe rate is most useful as a trend indicator. Even the lowest-performing marketers generate unsubscribe rates of well less than 1 percent. But is that rate going up or down? If your unsubscribe rate rises over time or remains constant while spam complaints increase, you likely have subscriber rebellion on your hands.

The median unsubscribe rate for all senders was 0.028 percent. The bottom-quartile performers are seeing unsubscribe rates of around 0.5 percent, nearly 20 times that of the median. Top-quartile performers are achieving near-zero percent unsubscribe rates, which also spotlights the significant difference between the top and bottom quartiles.

COMPLAINT RATES (by Country/Region)

Complaint Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.0359%	0.0018%	0.0000%	0.1273%
U.S.	0.0386%	0.0058%	0.0000%	0.1351%
EMEA	0.0308%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1108%
Canada	0.0247%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.0960%
APAC	0.0352%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1248%

COMPLAINT RATES (by Industry)

Complaint Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Nonprofits	0.0318%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1089%
Computer Hardware, Telecom & Electronics	0.0106%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.0425%
Computer Software	0.0204%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.0811%
Consumer Products	0.0793%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.2718%
Consumer Services	0.0379%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1380%
Education	0.0358%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1307%
Financial Services	0.0368%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1445%
Healthcare	0.0297%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1164%
Travel & Leisure	0.0441%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1609%
Media & Publishing	0.0289%	0.0075%	0.0000%	0.0979%
Real Estate & Construction	0.0481%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1847%
Retail	0.0352%	0.0201%	0.0000%	0.1014%
Corporate Services	0.0459%	0.0026%	0.0000%	0.1628%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	0.0266%	0.0000%	0.0000%	0.1060%

Complaint Rate Observations

The complaint rate is another metric that illustrates the growing gap between top and bottom email senders. The median rate was 0.0018 percent, meaning half of all senders generated roughly 2 spam complaints per 100,000 emails sent.

However, senders in the bottom quartile generated median complaints of just more than 120 per 100,000. This number has actually declined since the previous study, when the rate was closer to 200 per 100,000.



SILVERPOP
An IBM® Company

Loren McDonald
Vice President,
Industry Relations

Tips for Using an Email Marketing Benchmark Study

Methodology, Glossary and Additional Resources

Research Methodology

This study examined messages sent by Silverpop's client base. Researchers combined data from all messages sent by nearly 3,000 brands from 40 countries.

A broad set of message types was included in the study — from promotional emails and content-based newsletters to notifications and transactional messages — sent by companies in a variety of industries.

For this study, researchers analyzed various metrics for both the overall category (all 40 sender countries, including the United States, Canada, EMEA – Europe, the Middle East and Africa – and Asian Pacific [APAC] countries) and for just the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC. Because the overall numbers include countries beyond the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC, in some instances the overall median might actually be higher (or lower) than the combined median of the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC.

Reporting the Findings: Each performance chart features statistics that include the mean, median, and top and bottom quartiles. The standard statistical definition of quartiles was used for this study. The “top quartile” is calculated by taking the median of all data *above* the overall median, and “bottom quartile” is the median of all data *below* the overall data median.

Definitions for Terms Used in This Paper

Open: “Open” refers to an HTML email message whose viewing is recorded by a clear 1 X 1 pixel

image. When a message is opened and images are enabled, the image calls the server and the message is then counted as an open. The number of opens counted for this research include both this direct reporting and an “implied open” on text messages that recorded a click on any link in the message or an HTML message whose viewer did not enable images but clicked on a link.

Open Rate (Unique): The unique open rate measures one open per recipient and is expressed as a percentage of the total number of delivered email messages. To calculate the rate, divide the number of unique opens by the total number of delivered emails, and then multiply by 100 to display the percentage.

Gross Open Rate: Sometimes called the total open rate and also expressed as a percentage of total delivered email messages. It measures how many times the email message is opened, either by the original recipients or by those to whom the original recipient forwards the message by using the “forward” button in the email client instead of a “forward to a friend” link. To calculate, divide the total number of opens by the total number of delivered messages and multiply by 100.

Median Opens Per Opener: Expresses the median number of times a recipient opens the message; exactly half are above that number and half below.

Click-Through Rate (CTR): Measures the percentage of email messages that drew at least one click. For this study, it is expressed as unique click-through rate, counting only one click per

recipient. To calculate the click-through rate, divide the number of unique clicks by the number of delivered messages and multiply by 100.

Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR): Measures the percentage of opened messages that recorded clicks. To calculate, divide the number of unique clicks by the number of opened messages and multiply by 100.

Median Clicks per Clicker: The median number of times a recipient clicks any link in an email message.

Hard Bounce: A permanent delivery failure because the address doesn't exist or the account was closed.

Hard Bounce Rate: The percentage of sent messages that failed (bounced) because the address doesn't exist or the account was closed. To calculate, divide the total number of bounced messages by the total number of emails sent. Multiply by 100.

Spam Complaint: A complaint registered by a recipient who indicates the email message is unwanted, whether it fits the classic definition of “spam” as an unsolicited email or simply any message the recipient no longer wants to receive. The majority of spam complaints are received via a direct message via a “feedback” loop with an ISP.

Spam Complaint Rate: The percentage of delivered email messages that generate spam complaints. To calculate, divide the total number of spam complaints by delivered emails and multiply by 100.

Unsubscribe Rate: The percentage of delivered email messages that generates unsubscribe requests. To calculate, divide the number of unsubscribe requests received by delivered emails and multiply by 100.

Additional Resources

White Papers and Tip Sheets

- 1) "[15 Post-Purchase Emails That Build Loyalty and Drive Revenue](#)"
- 2) "[5 Tips for 'White Space' Emails That Educate, Entertain and Engage](#)"
- 3) "[15 Holiday Email Tips to Make Your Customers' Shopping Experience Easier, Faster and More Fun](#)"
- 4) "[7 Tips for Nurture Marketing](#)"
- 3) "[Print Money Today: 7 Emails Marketers Should Automate to Drive Massive ROI](#)"

Blogs

- 1) "[7 Tactics to Generate Content for Automated Emails](#)"
- 2) "[10 Steps to Keep Bad Email Addresses Out of Your Database](#)"
- 3) "[7 Tips to Promote Gift Cards in Email](#)"
- 4) "[Happy Birthday Email 2.0: Now with Dynamic Awesomeness!](#)"
- 5) "[10 Questions to Ask to Help You Enhance Your Email Program](#)"

Videos

- 1) "[Using Post-Purchase Segmentation to Reward Best Customers](#)"
- 2) "[Browse Abandonment Remarketing](#)"
- 3) "[The New Preference Center](#)"
- 4) "[Growing Your Database Through Social and Mobile Channels](#)"
- 5) "[Cart Abandonment Remarketing](#)"

About IBM Marketing Cloud:

IBM Marketing Cloud, part of the IBM Marketing Solutions portfolio, powers the delivery of exceptional experiences for customers across the buyer journey by leveraging customer data and behaviors, providing analytical insights and automating relevant cross-channel interactions. The cloud-based digital marketing platform provides email marketing, lead management and mobile engagement functionality to inform and drive personalized interactions in real time.

To find out more, please contact us at 1-866-745-8767 or +44 20 7202 5930 and visit ibmmarketingcloud.com/contact.