



# **7** Tips to increase your **Email Open Rate**

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You’ve worked hard on the email content, design, and campaign scheduling. Now your campaign’s success depends on how the customers and prospects react to your communication. Is it getting the maximum exposure, maximum opens, or is it just getting ignored?

Let’s say, you have invested money and time in creating an email campaign for your 2000-member strong customer base, and you find that only 10% have opened your mail. It is certainly disappointing, but who can you blame for such a low performance— the content marketing team, the design team or your data analysis team?

This paper presents 7 great tips that can boost your email campaign by increasing the email open rate, helping you enhance your communication with your customers for improved ROI.

It is always important to measure what happens to your email message after shooting it. Email open rates enable you to measure the effectiveness of your email campaign, subject line, the delivery time, and overall interaction of your target audience with your email communication.

## Tip 1: Craft Interesting Subject Lines

The subject of your email can prompt your customers to either click on your mail or ignore it.

### How do you write a compelling subject line?

You can experiment with your subject line in multiple ways to make it more effective and attention-grabbing:

- Keep the expectations of your audience in mind when drafting the subject line.
- Prioritize customer benefits by advertising a “discount,” “offer,” or “special offer.” There is always a greater probability of the e-mail being opened if you start with words like “grab” or “get.”
- Announce the rewards of taking action to your customers. In B2B communication, subject lines that contained “money,” “revenue,” and “profit” performed the best. (Adestra July 2012 Report)
- Make your subject line short and simple; subject lines with fewer than 10 characters had an open rate of 58%. (Adestra July 2012 Report)
- Personalize the subject line by adding emotions. Personalized subject lines are 22.2% more likely to be opened. (Adestra July 2012 Report)
- Introduce an element of suspense that is relevant to the interests of the customer segment in order to encourage them to open the email.



**That they open an email because of the subject line. (Chadwick Martin Bailey).**

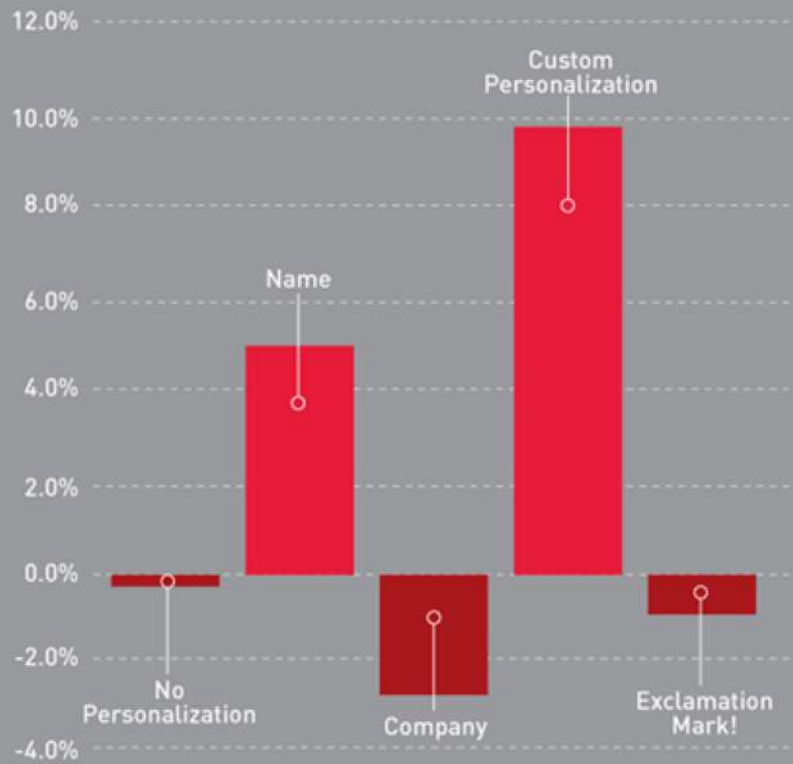
## A/B Testing

The more you test your subject line, the more you will learn about its effectiveness. “A/B testing” is a great way to distinguish between subject lines that work on your target prospects and customers and those that don’t. It allows you to send the same information with different subject lines and analyze the emails have the highest open rates. This way, you will know how to create an effective subject line the next time you shoot an email.



## Personalized Email Subjects and Open Rate

■ Based on a sample of 200M+ emails



Source: Eloqua Benchmark Data, January 2011

## Personalized Subject Lines Key to Email Open Rates

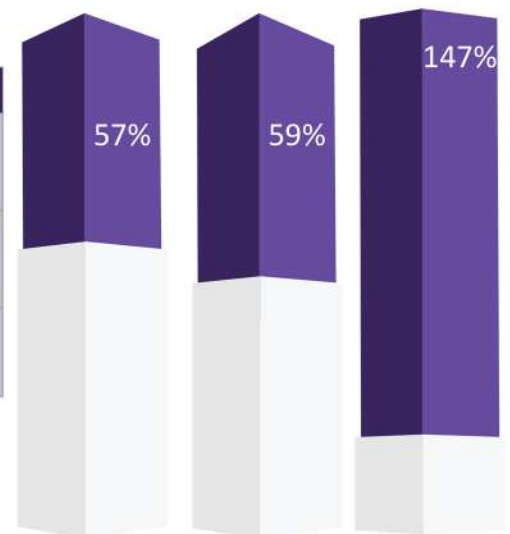
The best-performing emails include subject lines personalized with the recipient's name and an additional data point, like location

### Tip 2: Focus on Behavioral Targeting

Customer behavior is an indicator of customer interests and preferences. Behavioral data can be used to design promotional campaigns and increase the rate of email opens, actions, and engagement.

When David Daniels, founder of the Relevancy Group, was an analyst at Jupiter Research (acquired by Forrester Research in 2008), he reported that targeting emails based on Web click-stream data increased open rates by more than 50% and increased conversion rates by more than 350%.

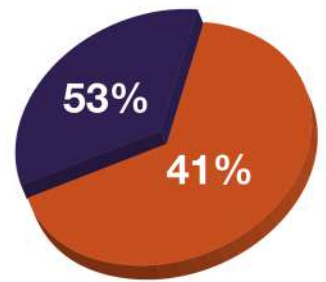
| Target Type                  | Open Rate | Click-through Rate | Conversion Rate |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Untargeted broadcast emails  | 20%       | 9.5%               | 1.1%            |
| Triggered from user actions  | 27%       | 9.3%               | 2.3%            |
| Targeted with web click data | 33%       | 14%                | 3.9%            |



A leading marketing automation company, Marketo, found that their lead nurturing campaigns using behavioral targeting have 57% higher open rates, 59% better click-to-open rates, and a whopping 147% higher overall click rate.

Research by Gareth Herschel at Gartner showed that event-triggered campaigns (e.g., those based on behaviors) performed five times better than traditional batch campaigns.

Forrester Research recently found that only 17% of companies have assessed themselves as mature practitioners of behavioral marketing — but those mature practitioners increased their revenue faster than they had planned (53% versus 41%).



**Mature practitioners of behavioral marketing**

### How to drive behavioral targeting

- Determine the type of emails that generally have high open rate
- Know the types of emails that frustrate customer
- Compare emails that customers generally open with those that they ignore
- Analyze emails that generate a high level of customer response
- Determine responsive and unresponsive customer segments

The marketing automation tool, Marketo, is the industry's leading behavioral marketing platform. Marketo allows you to hone your expertise in behavioral marketing, lead nurturing, email campaigning, and content marketing. Marketo covers all aspects that enable you to deliver targeted email campaigns and helps you derive more value for your invested dollars.

### Tip 3: Relevant Messaging

Every customer likes relevancy and is more interested in how your offer meets his/her needs. It is high time that marketers connect with their audience using information that is mostly like to evoke a response.

Forrester's report on "The New Messaging Mandate" shares its vision of email marketing for interactive marketers: Integrate the email into a multi-channel conversation that includes a number of non-email communication vehicles. Why? Because direct messaging options have proliferated to include a myriad of digital channels such as email, social media, SMS, and mobile app push notifications. To meet user expectations across all of these channels and create business value, marketers must shift to what Forrester calls "customer-focused integrated messaging."

### How to make your message relevant?

- Don't make the mistake of sending the same campaign message to everyone
- Build your approach around the information that your customers want the most
- Build a message that is rewarding, realistic, responsive, and unique
- Make sure that the tone of your email is appropriate, and your message is clean
- Schedule your delivery at the right moment and through the right channel
- Avoid spam clues such as all caps letters and exclamation marks!!
- Test your list, offer, body copy, and call-to-action

Marketers should adopt strategic planning methods to gather data that are relevant to their goals. With the help of marketing tools such as Marketo and Eloqua, they can better review their objectives by modifying information and deciding on attributes that will help them succeed.

These tools enable marketers to create a comprehensive prospect profile that can be used to send targeted offers easily and economically.

## Tip 4: Delivery Time

Delivery time plays an important role in the success of an email campaign. There are no hard and fast rules for email delivery times, but you should be aware of when your message is ignored by everyone. Send your email at a time when the recipients can receive them during their working hours. Don't schedule your campaign in the morning because everyone has a full inbox and your message may be lost in the shuffle. Although there is no perfect timing for shooting promotional emails, it is recommended that you avoid sending emails when your customers are least likely to check them.

If you challenge your assumptions around the best times – there can be significant improvements and as much as a 22% swing in open rates depending on whether or not you're emailing at the right times (source).

### How to decide the delivery time

- To discover the best delivery time, always experiment with your delivery day and time.
- Try different timings on a particular day such as sending several emails in the morning, afternoon, or evening.
- Avoid delivery timings that may cause customers to perceive your message as distracting.
- Depending on the content of your message, try varying the number of messages you send each week.
- Astonish the recipients with new elements and you might experience a better open rate.

**Note: It is generally advised that you should send business-to-business messages midweek. Mondays are not considered to be good for e-mail campaigns as it is the first day after a weekend.**

## Tip 5: Update contact information on databases

How old are the contacts in your database? Three years, five years, or more? Even with the most responsive lists, some old email addresses tend to not respond. So stay active and update your email contacts at regular intervals for better open rates and increased opportunity.

Your email marketing list decays by about 25% every year. You have to keep filling the funnel with fresh relationships.



### How to keep contacts updated

- Don't miss an opportunity to add more information, whether through subscription forms or marketing campaign.
- Add more fields to your forms and learn about your subscriber.
- Clean up your lists according to your data on a regular basis and you'll experience better open rate.
- Create customer segmentation as per their interest and behavior for target based campaign.

## Tip 6: Timeliness

The best strategy for creating a successful email campaign is to keep a close eye on an ongoing events, breaking news, or deadlines. Many organizations time their email campaigns around major events and breaking news, or deadlines.

### Debt Deadline Arrives at Midnight

While building your next email campaign, focus on the subject line in order to drive the email into your customer's inbox and ensure higher email open rates. Your subject line should make a difference if it has to be read by the targeted audience.

## Tip 7: Consider Mobile Devices

Smartphones have revolutionized the marketing industry, and a large number of customers will receive your email newsletter on their mobile devices.

A February 2013 survey from the enterprise email service provider BlueHornet showed that 71.8% of US email users ages 24 to 40 said they typically read their personal email throughout the day.

So, mobile devices should be seriously considered while designing any email campaign as they enable users to check email at any time.

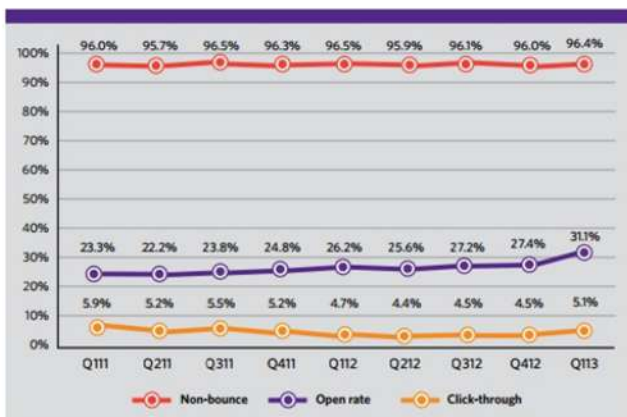
Consider the appearance of the email on a mobile device and optimize it for different platforms and devices. Test it before sending it out to your entire customer base. Cross check for display quality, links, and more.

### Statistics

Epsilon has compiled and analyzed email data to provide marketers with insights on how the average company in each industry performed in Q1 2013.

- Non-bounce rates remained strong at 96.4%
- Open rates increased quarter over quarter (+13.5%) and year over year (+18.6%), resulting in an overall open rate of 31.1%
- Click rates increased both quarter over quarter and year over year, reaching 5.1%. This finding suggests that more marketers have adapted their emails for mobile devices
- Both email open and click rates increased quarter over quarter and year over year in Q1 2013. These findings suggest that more marketers have optimized their email communication for mobile devices
- Mobile optimization will continue to be a key factor affecting email marketing performance metrics, as numerous studies have shown consumers use their mobile devices to check their email throughout the day, regardless of where they are or what they are doing





Open rates continue to increase as consumers have the ability to engage with email at any time and from any location via mobile devices

The Consumer Publishing vertical had the highest amount of engaged subscribers in Q113, with 23.8% categorized as Superstars. After the holidays, Retail Apparel did the best job of onboarding new subscribers through Q113, with 9.5% categorized as Rising Starts.

#### Industry performance

| Industry                               | Superstar | Napper | Dormant | Rising Star | Question Mark |
|--|-----------|--------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Consumer Publishing / Media General    | 23.8%     | 25.7%  | 42.9%   | 3.7%        | 3.8%          |
| Financial Services CC/Banks            | 23.1%     | 35.0%  | 32.1%   | 4.8%        | 4.9%          |
| Travel / Hospitality                   | 21.3%     | 40.6%  | 27.0%   | 5.1%        | 6.1%          |
| Retail Apparel                         | 20.3%     | 30.5%  | 29.7%   | 9.5%        | 9.9%          |
| Retail Specialty                       | 19.3%     | 24.5%  | 45.6%   | 4.2%        | 6.3%          |
| Retail General                         | 18.5%     | 46.1%  | 26.5%   | 4.8%        | 4.0%          |
| Business Publishing / Media General    | 18.5%     | 36.7%  | 40.5%   | 1.3%        | 3.0%          |
| Consumer Services General              | 16.1%     | 19.2%  | 55.7%   | 3.4%        | 5.6%          |
| Consumer Services Telecom              | 15.6%     | 29.4%  | 50.1%   | 2.0%        | 3.0%          |
| Financial Services General             | 14.8%     | 24.6%  | 49.2%   | 3.0%        | 8.4%          |
| Consumer Products                      | 12.9%     | 41.1%  | 40.4%   | 2.8%        | 2.9%          |
| Business Products and Services General | 11.0%     | 31.6%  | 46.0%   | 2.9%        | 8.5%          |
| Consumer Products Pharmaceutical       | 7.6%      | 20.4%  | 60.5%   | 3.3%        | 8.2%          |
| Overall                                | 15.6%     | 31.0%  | 44.3%   | 3.5%        | 5.6%          |

## Conclusion

These 7 tips can help you measure and optimize your email marketing strategy. They can help you derive better results from your email campaign and also enable you to assess campaign performances over time.

Marrina Decisions has a proven track record of helping clients execute multi-channel campaign execution utilizing our expertise and detailed processes, and we'd like to help you do the same. Contact us today to find out how we can bring winning results to your next marketing campaign.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT MARRINA DECISIONS

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