

As the Holiday Season Approaches, Small Businesses Report Putting Small Data to Good Use

Small businesses more optimistic about year-end revenue than holiday revenue

WALTHAM, Mass.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--While most small businesses are not swimming in a sea of Big Data, a commanding majority (79 percent) are using reporting and analytics to inform their business decisions. According to [new survey data](#) from [Constant Contact®, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: CTCT), 73 percent of small businesses surveyed believe data can help them grow their business by finding new customers. Big Data is a different story, with 60 percent saying they do not use Big Data tools. Uncertainty remains a factor in the Big Data equation, with a full 25 percent of respondents reporting they are not sure if they use Big Data tools. When it comes to the most popular uses of reporting and analytics during the all-important holiday season, small businesses are using it to identify which products and services to market (66 percent), as well as where (52 percent) and when (51 percent) to market.

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Small Data for Small Business

Three quarters of respondents believe reporting and analytics will give them a business advantage. They also believe this data can help them retain existing customers (67 percent) and improve their customer experience (65 percent).

Small businesses are more likely to look at easily accessible, activity-oriented data:

- 83 percent use email marketing reports
- 64 percent use website analytics
- 52 percent use social media analytics
- 48 percent use sales trends (timing, location, etc.)
- 44 percent use current customer data
- 43 percent use sales receipts

Getting a Better Grip on Data

Small businesses do report a desire to gain a better understanding of data, with 64 percent expressing interest in learning more about how to use data to drive business. Of the 19 percent that do not use any data, it is not a matter of access (cited by only 21 percent) or expense (cited by only 4 percent).

The top two roadblocks to data usage:

- Not knowing where to begin (49 percent)
- Not having the time (40 percent)

Forty-four percent express a need to set up systems to track sales and customer data, with only 11 percent reporting that they pay for analytics tools.

"The fact that so many small businesses use reporting and analytics is promising, as the better they know their customers the better they can target their marketing and vie with bigger competitors," said Christopher M. Litster, senior vice president of sales and marketing, Constant Contact. "Big Data insights can also be quite helpful but because small businesses lack the necessary volume to generate those insights, the responsibility lies with big companies serving them to make that kind of data available and easy to use. At Constant Contact we look in aggregate at data we compile from the 60 billion emails we send in a year on behalf of our 600,000-plus customers and share actionable insights on their online marketing campaigns. We can tell them things like the best time of day to send an email campaign and the optimal number of images and text lines to include in an email. These types of insights can help our small business customers market like their much bigger competitors."

Holiday Revenue Expectations

Small business B2Cs are less optimistic about the holidays this year. Forty-five percent of B2Cs expect their 2014 holiday revenues to exceed their 2013 revenues, down from 65 percent a year ago. This slide in optimism could be related to economic concerns; only 49 percent think the economy will be stronger this holiday season than the 2013 holiday season. Overall, a quarter of small businesses surveyed think the economy will be the biggest obstacle to achieving a successful holiday season.

On a positive note, small businesses are more optimistic about their year-over-year revenue expectations, with 63 percent of small businesses expecting their annual revenues to exceed those of 2013.

Resources

- **Infographic:** <https://constantcontact.newshq.businesswire.com/research/infographic/small-data-and-small-business-infographic>
- **eBook:** <https://constantcontact.newshq.businesswire.com/research/small-data-and-small-business-2014-holiday-survey>

About the Survey

This Constant Contact-sponsored survey was administered in October of 2014 to 1200 small business participants in the Constant Contact Small Biz Council – a research panel of US small businesses recruited from the Constant Contact customer base. This survey is part of an ongoing series about the state of small businesses and the ways they connect with, and grow, their audiences. Results include responses from respondents across a range of business-to-business and business-to-consumer industries.

About Constant Contact®, Inc.

Constant Contact helps small businesses do more business. We have been revolutionizing the success formula for small businesses, nonprofits, and associations since 1998, and today work with more than 600,000 customers worldwide. The company offers the only all-in-one online marketing platform that helps small businesses drive repeat business and find new customers. It features multi-channel marketing campaigns (newsletters/announcements, offers/promotions, online listings, events/registration, and feedback) combined with shared content, contacts, and reporting; free award-winning coaching and product support; and integrations with critical business tools – all from a single login. The company's extensive network of educators, consultants/resellers, technology providers, franchises, and national associations offer further support to help small organizations succeed and grow. Through its Innovation Loft, Constant Contact is fueling the next generation of small business technology.

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