Subscriber Email Domain and Industry are Major Factors in Email Open Rates, According to New Constant Contact Study

Evidence points to segmented, personalized subscriber lists enjoying higher open rate success, and mobile devices now make up more than half of all opens

WALTHAM, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Until today, open rates, traditionally the benchmark metric for email campaign performance, have been a bit of a mystery. A study by Constant Contact®, Inc. (NASDAQ: CTCT)—released today and compiled from analysis of the more than 100 billion customer emails sent from Constant Contact in 2014 and 2015—reveals that sending more personalized email campaigns can result in open rates being lifted by nearly 150 percent.

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Campaign size and domain marked factors in open rates

Segmenting email lists to create customized email campaigns is a commonly accepted best practice and today's study supports that theory. Campaigns sent to 35 subscribers or less, suggesting more personalized content, saw the best average open rates of 55 percent, dwarfing the average open rate of 22 percent. Meanwhile, campaigns sent to more than 7,500 subscribers, suggesting low personalization, averaged about a 14 percent open rate.

"This study provides conclusive proof that personalizing the emails you send, so that you're speaking directly to specific interests and wants of a subscriber, not only strengthens the relationship with subscribers, it results in better campaign performance," said Jesse Harriott, chief analytics officer at Constant Contact. "Small businesses tend to be great at developing authentic customer relationships and this data underscores the marketing value of those relationships."

Subscriber domain can also influence open rates. Campaigns sent to Comcast Cable®, Verizon Wireless®, and Cox Communications® email addresses had the highest open rates out of any domain name, with AOL®, Hotmail®, and Yahoo!® bringing up the rear.

Industry Deviations

Previous Constant Contact research revealed that nonprofits enjoy generally higher click-through rates than their business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) counterparts. This same trend is true among open rates:

- Nonprofit average open rates: 29 percent
- B2C average open rates: 23 percent
- B2B average open rates: 20 percent

Among the top 15 industries based on overall volume of emails sent, religious organizations have the highest open rates, at a 38 percent average, followed by medical services and nonprofit associations at 32 and 28 percent, respectively. The best performing B2C industry was sports and recreation at a 26 percent average open rate, and the best performing B2B was professional services, also at 26 percent.

"Whether it's a religious organization or school, nonprofits generally have a passionate and engaged subscriber base that enjoys seeing regular updates and communications," Harriott said. "However, the data also shows that—with the right type of execution—it is possible for businesses to replicate that kind of engagement. For example, if a fitness center keeps tabs on which exercise classes their members have taken in the past, sending relevant upcoming class schedules to the right members will inevitably result in higher open rates and well attended classes."

Mobile devices now make up more than half of all opens

The study also confirmed that mobile devices now make up a majority of opens. Almost 51 percent of all emails are now

opened on either a smartphone or tablet, according to the study, with 38.8 percent being opened on a smartphone and 11.9 percent being opened on a tablet.

“Constant Contact has found that three-quarters of subscribers say they will delete an email if they can’t read it on their mobile device,” said Harriott. “When combined with these recent mobile open findings, the conclusion is clear: Small businesses must have a mobile-first mindset when it comes to their email marketing.”

For more information, including additional graphs of the data, visit Constant Contact’s Newsroomhere.

About Constant Contact

Constant Contact introduced the first email marketing tool for small businesses, nonprofits, and associations in 1998. Today, the company helps more than 650,000 customers worldwide find marketing success through the only all-in-one online marketing platform for small organizations. Anchored by our world-class email marketing tool, Constant Contact 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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