



# Email Marketing Metrics Analysis



## Introduction

Numbers have a magic of their own. Random guesses become formal estimates. Estimates become assumptions. Assumptions become facts. But facts are often hard to come by in the world of Marketing, except when it comes to email marketing.

For example, we now know that our favourite medium returns more than twice that of search and other online channels. Some analysts say you could triple it yet again if you factor in online sales resulting from email campaigns!

So, fortunately for all of us, email marketing is not only cost effective, it is highly measurable and can be analysed for a variety of success factors, e.g. subject lines, messaging, design/layout, spam, links and interactive content, etc. For the purposes of this report, we used several popular approaches to measuring and comparing email campaigns with the goal of highlighting trends and techniques to help you, our customers, continuously improve your results.

The statistics were gathered over a period of six months by our email experts and will be updated and re-released on a regular basis. We'll be sure to let you know when the next report is coming! GetResponse Team.

## Why Metrics Matter

Analysing and comparing the major aspects of email marketing campaigns is the only reliable way to ensure mistakes aren't repeated and successes are. Because email marketing is so measurable and easy to manipulate, there are a multitude of opportunities to test, assess, and modify each message before it goes out – without spending an extra dime. Analysing the results provides yet another opportunity to evaluate the content, timing and techniques, and ensure each campaign is better than the last. Remember, the goal is to generate sales, but ROI determines your profit margins.

While we recommend the use of Email Analytics to optimize your campaigns, it is extremely useful to assess and compare email marketing outcomes for larger volumes of emails over longer periods of time. These statistics can reveal both common errors and new best practices and help our valued SOHO and SMB customers improve productivity, increase profits, and reduce costs.

## Definitions

### Open Rate

Open rate: the total number of emails opened which were tracked as viewed, divided by the total number of HTML messages sent.

#### How are open rates tracked?

To track open rates, HTML emails contain a piece of code requesting the display of a tiny, transparent (i.e. invisible to the viewer) image. When a recipient enables images to display upon when reading a message, the sending server receives notification of when and by whom the image was displayed, hence tracking” the “open”. The entire process takes place in the background in a matter of milliseconds.

Unfortunately, open rates are becoming less accurate as more recipients use mobile devices or disable image display for more efficient browsing. Many email clients also refuse by default to display images. The result? When images are blocked, the “open” cannot be tracked even though the message is read.

As we develop new formulas to assess the impact of these “blocking” devices, open rates will remain a critical factor in helping marketers determine the success of subject lines, personalization techniques, and overall brand recognition and customer relationships. See how to use email open rates below.

## Click-Through Rate

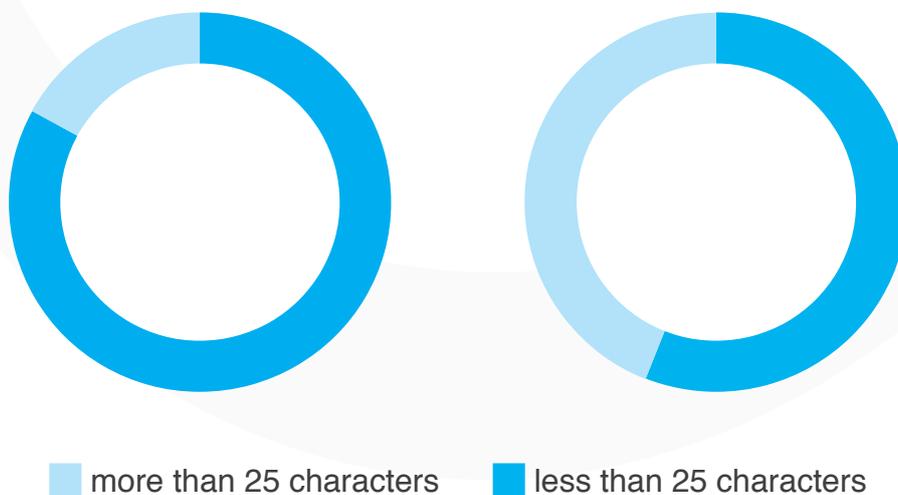
Click-Through Rate (CTR): The percentage of recipients who click on a link divided by the total number who receive the link. For example, to calculate the click-through rate of an email campaign, divide the number of click-throughs by the number of emails delivered (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage). Include clicks from both text and HTML versions of a message.

## Short or Long? Subject Line Length

### Open rates by subject line length

The subject line is probably the single most important element that drives open rates. Bad subject lines, poor open rates. Good subject lines, good open rates. But what role does character length play? While there's much discussion at both the "short" and "longer" ends of the length spectrum, we found a middle ground that proved successful for our sample group.

In contrast to the "shorter is better" argument, the emails with subject lines of more than 25 characters generated more open rates in our study sample. So it seems that email marketers still prefer "longer" subject lines to short ones, but not too long! The optimum range we recommend is 25-50 characters.



## Tips

When creating your subject line, try to be concise and, above all, relevant. Be aware that if they are either too long or too short, your open rates will suffer. Again, the optimum length we recommend is 25-50 characters.

To write a successful subject line, make sure it accurately summarizes your message. You want to tell the recipient what's inside the email, not try to sell the content in one line of text. However, it should be compelling and use language that is appropriate for your target audience. For example, you wouldn't use "Biz" instead of "Business" in a report you send to business executives, but it might be perfect for your SOHO prospects.

## Subscription Age Tracking

### Open rates by subscription age

Our results show that for the first 12 months after sign up, the newer the subscriber, the higher the open rate. Recipients who signed up for your newsletter a month ago or less tend to open messages more frequently than those who signed up 3 to 6 months ago. However, subscribers who have been on a list for more than a year are more responsive, perhaps indicating that it takes time to build customer loyalty and sustain interest. This provides yet another reason to communicate with customers on a regular basis, or risk losing them in that all-important first 12 months.

### Click rates by subscription age

Consistent with our open rates, recipients who signed up less than one week prior tend to show more interest in, and act more often on, email messages. Again, this tells us subscribers are more enthusiastic at the beginning of the subscription and that their engagement diminishes with time, with the worst results occurring between 3-6 months into the subscription. Fortunately, the click-through rate increases again over time, according to our study, but why wait?

Use the Tips below to reduce your risk!

## Opens and Clicks by subscription age



### Tips

The drastic drop in open and click-through rates between 3-6 months after sign up shows that mail marketers need to work harder at keeping new customers interested and engaged. While it's expected that you'll lose money on most new customers due to the cost of acquisition and the lower average value of first purchases, don't stop "selling" after they become subscribers. In fact, that's when you need your "second wind" campaign. Why? Existing customers are almost always

easier to persuade and more prone to purchase. So if you want to increase the lifetime value of every subscriber you win, it's essential to view them as valuable assets that need to be nurtured to continue delivering value, i.e. income!

## Timing Is Everything!

### Open and click rates by day of the week

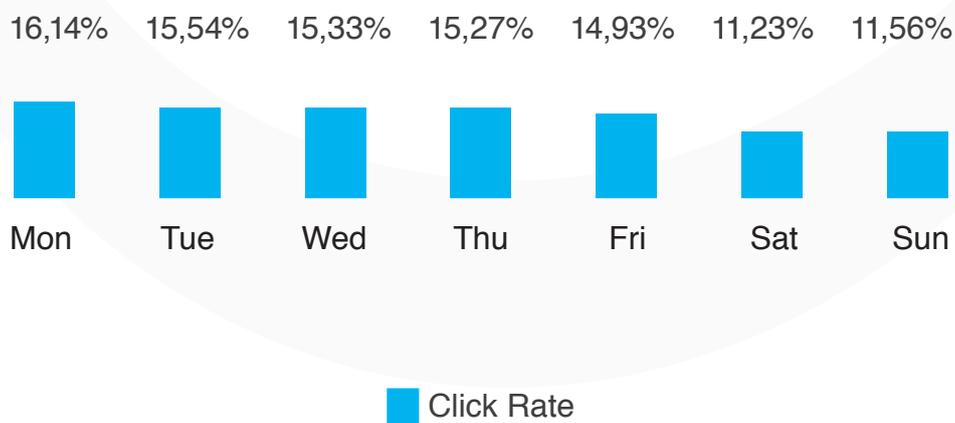
Open rates will vary significantly for the same email sent on different days, so timing is critical! This is another aspect of email marketing that is very easy to control in order to optimize your results.

According to our data, Thursday is currently the day when the majority of broadcasts are sent by GetResponse, with Monday a close second:

**Thursday: 17,46%**

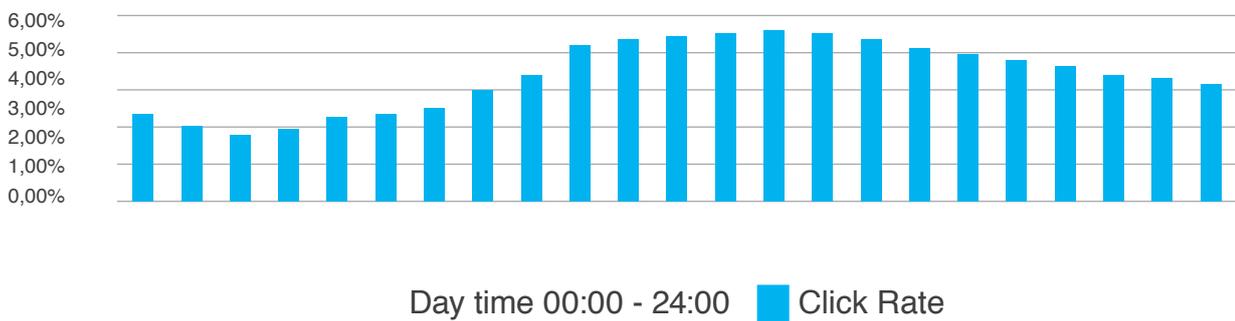
**Monday: 17,04%**

While most messages are being sent out on Thursdays, the majority are read on Mondays. It's possible that savvy marketers choose the 4th workday as Friday leaves little time for last-minute changes...and fewer emails get read as the weekend begins. However, if your email is waiting in recipients' inboxes on Monday morning, they are much more likely to take action and click on your links!



## Click rates by hour of the day

Note: the highest click rates occur around the lunch hour. That's when many of us have plowed through our "to do" lists and take a few minutes to catch up on personal and promotional emails. So we have another good reason to make messages short and enticing – you may be competing with food!



### Tips

To increase your open and click rates, try sending very early in the week or close to the end of the work week. However, just as every audience is different, what works for some industries may fail miserably for others. For example, businesses that make most of their money on the weekends and holidays, like restaurants, retail stores, and entertainment venues, should get better results later in the week, rather than on Mondays. Bottom line? Experiment to find out what works best for your target market. And, as always, we'll be here to help you with the latest metrics, tutorials, and support!

## Closing remarks

### Summary

The statistics in this report were gathered from November 2008 through April 2009 and are based on our customers' email marketing activities. We believe they are typical of most SMB and SOHO marketing results over a 6-month period and can serve as a valuable baseline for follow-on reports. However, email marketing is constantly evolving and we are committed to measuring and updating our statistics on a regular basis to make sure you stay ahead of the curve.

Please let us know if you would like us to include any other topics or categories in our analysis and we will do our best to comply! About GetResponse GetResponse is the easiest, most feature-rich email marketing service available on the Internet! Since 1998, GetResponse has championed the needs of SOHO and SMB marketers, providing user-friendly, online tools to build profit-generating lists, deliver high-impact HTML and video email campaigns, and increase customer loyalty and sales with automated follow-up messages.

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