

# The Ultimate Guide to Email Marketing

The Top 10 Mind-Changing Email Marketing Stats, Email  
Marketing Trends, and Email Marketing Platforms

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American computer engineer Ray Tomlinson sent the first email message (to himself) in 1971. By the early 1990s, we already had a spam problem. In the following three decades email would rise and fall in popularity, as consumers faced increasingly aggressive online advertising campaigns and juggled more and more communication methods. With the advent of social media, some marketing prognosticators even warned of an impending end to the original electronic message.

They were wrong: email isn't dead. In fact, 99% of us check it everyday — and most of us consider email to be “the most personal channel to receive communications from brands.”

## The Top 10 Mind-Changing Email Marketing Stats

Not only is email *not* dead:

1. The email marketing market is expected to more than double by 2027
2. Four out of five marketers say they'd rather give up social media than email marketing
3. Email marketing generates a 4,200% ROI
4. Email marketing is 400% more effective than social media at reaching your target audience(s)

5. Email marketing click-through rates are 600% higher than average social media engagement
6. Email marketing produces 300% more conversions than social media marketing
7. There are 400-million more email than social media users
8. Email subscribers are nearly 400% more likely to share your content on social media
9. Nearly eight in 10 consumers believe email is the best channel for company contact, preferring it almost twice as much as any other
10. More than half of consumers say email directly influences their purchasing decisions

Hundreds of billions of emails are sent every year, and as much as that means email's here to stay, it also means **there's a lot of email marketing competition.**

To outperform your industry, do what works.

## The Top 10 Email Marketing Trends Today

Want to know how to do email marketing? In the last two decades I've developed, iterated and optimized the email marketing strategy of numerous companies, nonprofits and agencies, large and small. I've also implemented and overseen dozens of email marketing campaigns — and each one has enhanced my understanding of what works and what doesn't.

Take this advice, discuss it with your team, and test out the strategies and tactics against what you've been doing.

### 1. Data Privacy, Data Decay and the Customer Data Platform

Privacy laws are changing, all the time, and we can no longer rely on third parties for collecting our customer data. Also, since COVID, more people have moved around and reconsidered their priorities than ever before, leaving our data out of date. Many marketers are moving to double opt-ins to protect data quality, risking UX. Others are urging email marketers to **redefine success by focusing more on data collection and aggregation techniques than 'vanity' metrics like open rates.**



The solution: the customer data platform, or CDP, a marketing, sales and customer experience technology designed to unify your data across online and offline sources; it allows you to:

- Use your data for modeling, segmentation, targeting, testing and more
- Expedite progress from idea to execution, from execution to measurement, from measurement to iteration and optimization, and from one successful email marketing campaign to even more successful future campaigns

[Here](#) are nine steps to replacing your third-party tracking cookies with the zero- and first-party data your customers want you to have. And [here](#) is your guide to making the most of your customer data — from lead generation to sales and customer support.

## 2. Dynamic Segmentation and Hyper-Personalization

Between March and August 2020, seven in 10 consumers tried new digital shopping channels; the retail sector experienced a decade's worth of growth in digital penetration in mere months. Yet, for most retailers, the surge in data didn't help them better market to their prospects, sell to their leads, or support their customers. Why? Because their DMP or CRM or MMH's outdated data modeling prevented them from effectively capturing critical shifts in consumer behavior. In turn, this prevented them from better understanding their customers. And

today's customers expect to be understood and appreciated by the brands they shop.

Even when brands create comprehensive user personas and communicate correctly to the right consumers, they experience unsubscribes, abandoned carts and customer churn if they don't translate each conversion event into personalized interactions through dynamic segmentation. Meanwhile, **though marketers who send segmented email marketing campaigns can experience a 760% increase in revenue, when they don't know who to target — or when, where or how to target them — they instead waste a lot of money sending marketing emails that alienate their audiences.**

Fortunately, with the data collection, unification, profiling and segmentation capabilities of a CDP, you can easily implement, iterate, optimize and glean invaluable insights from your email marketing campaigns, enabling continual improvements to your audience segmentation and email personalization.

## 3. AI and Automation

One way to deliver a personalized, even predictive experience to your email marketing recipients is to [leverage artificial intelligence](#), or AI. Of course, it must be done with care; if you misuse or overuse AI, you can create the opposite effect, alienating your customers.



AI can help you with:

- **Lead nurturing**, including A/B tests, targeted drip campaigns and triggered and scheduled emails. Automated emails have a 70.5% higher open rate and a 152% higher click-through rate than generic email newsletters.
- **Upselling**, like sending automated post-purchase emails to customers recommending additional products based on purchase history, interests and/or how they've used your website.
- **Productivity**, by enabling campaign autopilot, which allows employees to measure, iterate and optimize in real time.
- **Campaign measurability**, by providing deeper insights on what inspires different user personas to take various actions.
- **Sales**, including lead scoring, pipeline customization, trigger emails and scheduling.

By reducing human intervention and streamlining repetitive processes and tasks, automation provides the following benefits to businesses:

- **Time savings and improved productivity.** When you use email marketing automation, you free yourself to focus on strategic tasks and boost productivity. With the right automation solution, you can put your strategy to work and let it run, collecting data to improve future campaigns while you focus on other initiatives.
- **Cost savings and higher ROI.** Automation can enable staffing cuts, which can lower business expenses. More importantly, though, automation reduces human error and the costs associated with correcting mistakes by limiting human intervention in repetitive, mundane technical tasks, while allowing employees to focus on delivering the human connection customers have come to expect from their favorite brands.
- **Better internal relationships.** 97% of employees and executives believe that a lack of alignment impacts the outcome of a task or project. By simplifying processes and integrations, automation improves the working relationships among marketing, sales and customer service employees. Instead of staying in silos, these three historically disparate departments can brainstorm cross-departmental strategies, share customer information and integrate funnels, as well as coordinate with IT to implement the right 360-degree automation solution.

If you're new to AI and automation in email marketing and want to reap the benefits without the risk, start by using it for predictive analytics, split-testing subject lines, cleaning up your mailing lists, and optimizing send times.

#### 4. Omnichannel Marketing

Google has found that 98% of Americans switch between platforms and devices in the same day. This is why marketers who simply use three or more channels in any one campaign deliver a 287% higher purchase rate. Of course, if you optimize *how* you use these channels, you can experience even better results.

While multichannel marketing allows you to cast your net as widely as possible to reach more consumers and build brand awareness, **marketers who commit to omnichannel marketing provide a consistent customer experience across channels — and retain nearly nine of 10 customers (versus 33% for those who don't!).** So what does omnichannel marketing mean?

Omnichannel marketing represents [a rethinking of the customer lifecycle](#), with a focus on providing a seamless and personalized user experience across all channels relevant to the buyer journey. With omnichannel marketing, you don't send email blasts or even targeted automated messages without first incorporating your email marketing strategy into an overarching 360-degree marketing strategy that integrates all essential channels.

And the best way to achieve this is by [investing in a digital experience platform](#), or DXP; while CDPs allow marketing, sales and CX pros to use data for modeling, segmentation, targeting, testing and more, the DXP leverages the CDP's "solid bedrock of data" for "the delivery of personalized experiences that consumers have come to expect and demand from brands."

Typically a single collaborative platform powered by AI to create frictionless omnichannel digital journeys, the DXP could be your solution for streamlining and optimizing your customer journey mapping, personalization and context awareness, as well as your content presentation, delivery and orchestration.

#### 5. Interactivity

"The first and most significant email *design* trend is interactive content," reports designmodo. "Like a touch of magic, it takes a simple piece of information and transforms it into a participatory experience that instantly draws attention, ignites interest, and resonates deeply with an audience." Indeed, **interactivity improves customer engagement by 200% over static content emails — and nearly nine in 10 marketers also attribute lead conversion and competitive differentiation improvements to the introduction of interactive content.**

Fortunately, HTML5 and other web technologies have enabled the inclusion in emails of interactive elements including animated GIFs, image carousels and



gamification elements (which can increase customer interactions by 40% on their own!).

Of course, “interactive content comes with its challenges and obstacles,” so “start by embracing basics” and “take one step at a time,” ensuring you always provide non-interactive and non-visual alternatives for accessibility across email clients, browsers and consumer populations.

## 6. AMP for Email

Since its release in 2019, Google’s AMP for email has shown it can increase engagement and conversions by 500% — by enabling in-mail interactivity, eliminating the need for clickthroughs.

With AMP for email, clickable interfaces allow users to explore your content, take a survey, respond to an invitation, reply to a

comment or zoom in on products, without ever leaving the email for a landing page. But AMP’s real strength is that it can pull live data into an email, ensuring that each and every recipient sees the most up-to-date information no matter when or how they open your AMP email.

That’s why, according to email marketing platform provider Dyspatch, **“AMP is the biggest innovation to come to email technology since its inception, decades ago.”**

## 7. Accessibility and Inclusivity

Even with all the tech advancements each and every year, some things never change; one of the easiest ways to cause customer *disengagement* (and damage your reputation with at least one-billion people worldwide) is to ignore [the need for accessibility](#) in your email marketing.

By implementing accessibility best practices across all your digital communications, you can ensure your message reaches *all* your customers (including those with vision impairment) — and everyone is included. You can also stand out among your competitors, since only about half of all companies maintain these practices consistently.

### **Here are a few ways to start improving your accessibility today:**

- Add header tags (like H1, H2, and H3) to guide readers through the email
- Add alt-text to any image so a screen reader can read the description

- Include captions with all video
- Use only GIFs with an animation flashing rate that is not between 2 Hz to 55 Hz, as this can aggravate photosensitive epilepsy
- Use proper color contrast to make it easier for people with colorblindness

## 8. Mobile Optimization

Predictably, more than half of all email campaigns are now viewed on mobile devices — and **mobile-optimized emails are 65% more likely to generate clickthroughs to your website.**

So, make sure your email marketing provider either automatically optimizes for mobile or allows you to do so. And be sure that your mobile-optimized emails are designed for optimal UX across devices, since emails read on mobile and then again on desktop are 65% more likely to produce a clickthrough.

## 9. Dark Mode Optimization

Designing for dark mode has been “one of the hottest digital design trends in recent years” and **more than a third of all emails are now opened in dark mode**, according to Litmus research. Why? The reversed color scheme uses light-colored typography, UI elements and icons on dark backgrounds because it minimizes eye strain, saves battery life and can improve content legibility/viewability. Of course, more than a third of emails are opened in dark mode also because the TikTok generation simply decided it’s the cooler way to set

your mobile device. This is why all the most popular operating systems and apps allow users to switch to dark mode, and why many email marketing platforms and email designers and coders are utilizing color schemes and design elements that dynamically adapt to the user’s device settings.

## 10. Influencers, User-Generated Content and Social Proof

**Few techniques are more proven than letting others do the talking for you — and marketers have learned leveraging influencers and customers is effective not only on social media and in video ads but also in email marketing.**

The stats supporting the use of user-generated and influencer marketing content is overwhelming:

1. 92% of consumers consider peer reviews and user feedback to be the most credible source of potential purchase information
2. 7 in 10 consumers read customer reviews before making a purchasing decision
3. Consumers are 240% more likely to view user-generated content than brand content
4. 50% of millennials trust product recommendations from influencers
5. 33% of Gen-Zers have made a purchase based on an influencer’s recommendation
6. 40% of teens trust influencers more than their friends

To get started, scour your social media



channels and the world wide web for videos, images, reviews and testimonials featuring your products. Don't forget TikTok. Don't forget YouTube. Incorporate the best of the best into your emails. And do not, under any circumstances, fabricate your user-generated content; sophisticated consumers will catch you, destroying the valuable trust you've built for your brand.

## The Top 10 Email Marketing Platforms and CRMs

Long gone are the days of dropping hundreds of email addresses into the Bcc section of a text email and mass-blasting your contacts from a browser-based email provider. Everyone knows you need an email marketing tool. The question is: Is the free version of Mailchimp enough, or should I invest in a high-powered CRM?

The truth is: for individuals and small businesses, Mailchimp is definitely enough — and since its pricing is based on number of contacts, it can scale with you. Enterprise-level organizations, on the other hand, need more.

A CRM, or customer relationship management tool, tracks and reacts to direct lead and customer interactions like new purchases, email link clicks and customer service communications. Coupled with a CDP (and DXP), this marketing, sales and CX tool empowers you to optimize all of your communications.

**Here are the best CRMs and email marketing platforms (in alphabetical order; demo them all):**

1. [ActiveCampaign](#)
2. [Campaigner](#)
3. [EmailOctopus](#)
4. [EngageBay](#)
5. [GetResponse](#)
6. [Keap](#)
7. [MailerLite](#)
8. [Omnisend](#)
9. [Sendinblue](#)
10. [SMTP](#)

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