



THE 2023

# association email benchmark report



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## Email is an ever-shifting communication channel and data is a valuable tool for understanding and navigating its changing landscape.



Email benchmarks have become a kind of pulse check for determining how your marketing strategies and member engagement efforts are performing compared to your peers trying to achieve the same goals.

We all want to get to our audience's inbox and convince our recipients to take an action – whether that's registering for an event, signing up for a course, or renewing their membership. In tandem with monitoring our performance data, email benchmarks give us a glimpse into the factors that can influence people to open emails, click links, and ultimately engage with our organizations.

**Higher Logic's 2023 Association Email Benchmark Report offers insights specifically for marketers in the association industry.** It will help you understand current trends, validate the impact and value of personalization, and provide strategies to improve your membership marketing.

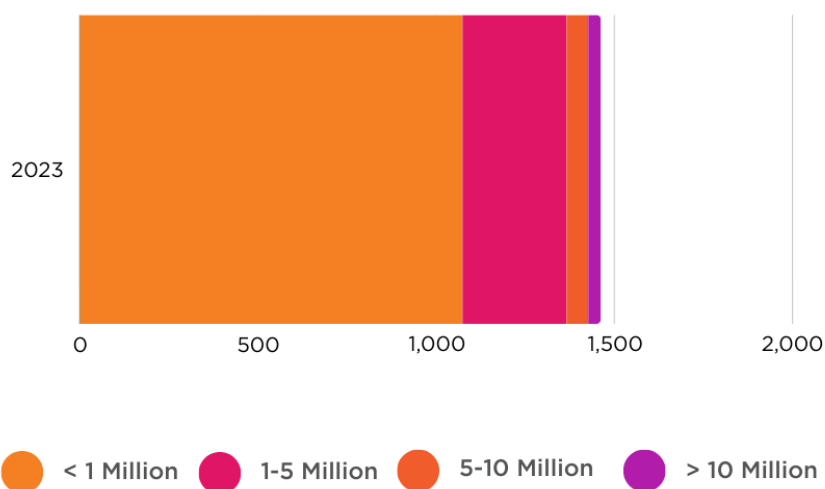
## OUR DATA SET

This report summarizes email marketing metrics from approximately **1,500 organizations** and nearly **2 billion emails** sent in 2022 and 2023, **specifically by associations** located in the United States, Australia, and Canada.

We collected an anonymized data sample from our association customer base who use Higher Logic Marketing Professional, Informz, or Higher Logic Thrive Marketing or Platform (collectively referred to after this point as Higher Logic Thrive Marketing).

### Customer Distribution List Size

The majority of our customers have distribution lists under 5 million.



## DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Throughout this report, we explore metrics related to the following:

- **Deliverability rate** is the percentage of emails, out of the total sent, that were not reported back to Higher Logic as bounced or blocked.
- **Open rate** is the percentage of delivered emails that were reported back to Higher Logic as having been opened. Open rates are tracked in HTML emails using a tiny, invisible tracking pixel—when an email recipient opens your email, that pixel is downloaded from our web servers and the email is tracked as opened. (This process was disrupted by [Apple's privacy updates](#) in 2021 but open rates [leveled out somewhat in 2022](#)).
  - Open rate only includes unique subscribers. Multiple opens by one subscriber only count once.
  - If the text version of an email is read, it is not counted.
  - If an HTML email is read with the images turned off, it is not counted. However, if an email is opened with images off, but a link is clicked, the email is counted as being opened.
- **Click rate, or click-to-open rate**, is the percentage of opened emails clicked by the recipient. “Click rate” is used synonymously with “click-to-open rate” in this report.
  - Because Higher Logic Thrive Marketing calculates click rates as a percentage of open rates, higher open rates without a corresponding increase in clicks will show click rates decline.
  - Click rate only includes unique subscribers. Multiple clicks by one subscriber only count once.
  - Clicking a link in a text email is not counted as a click.
- **Unsubscribe rate** is the percentage of recipients, out of the total sent to, who unsubscribed via that mailing.

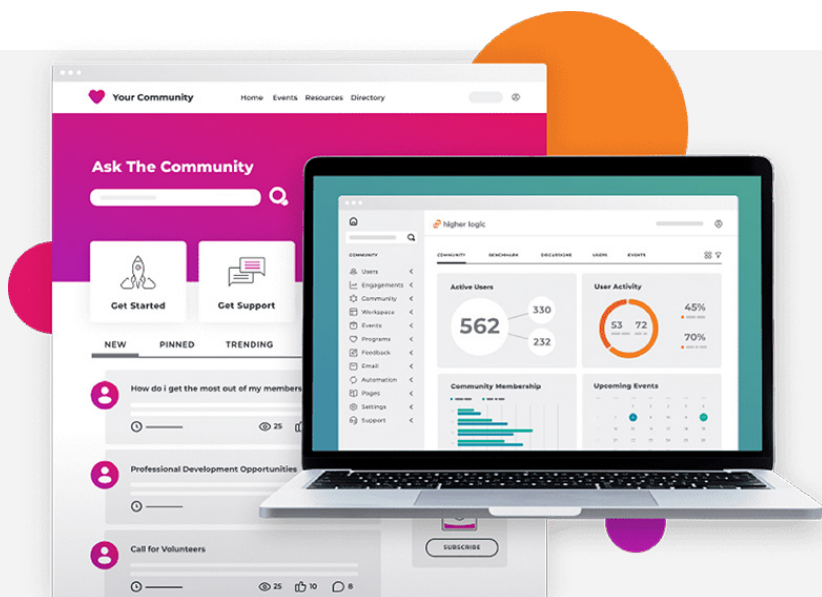
## Types of email clients referenced in this report:

Email clients are software applications that enable users to send, receive, and organize emails.

- **Mobile Email Clients** are email apps that allow users to manage their email accounts on their mobile device (e.g. native apps like the Mail app on iOS devices and Gmail, or third-party apps like BlueMail).
- **Desktop Email Clients** are applications installed on a user's computer. (e.g. Microsoft Outlook and Apple Mail).
- **Web Email Clients** are a type of email client accessed through a web browser. These allow users to send, receive, and manage their emails using a web-based interface (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook.com).
- **Web Browser** refers to emails viewed via a web browser (e.g. Chrome). If someone views an email in Gmail, via Chrome, that would count as both an Email Client view and a Web Browser view.

## Higher Logic marketing products:

Higher Logic Marketing Professional, Informz, and Higher Logic Thrive Marketing or Platform are referred to collectively as Higher Logic Thrive Marketing throughout this report, except in cases where examples/ instructions are product-specific.



## TLDR: KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Higher Logic continues to lead the industry with an average deliverability rate in 2023 of 98.6%**—much higher than the overall average deliverability rate of 85.7%.



**Average open rates increased** from 34.63% in 2022 to 38.18% in 2023. This is likely due to residual effects of [Apple Mail Privacy Protection](#) features, as more and more Apple Mail users “turn on” the privacy feature.

**Average click rates increased** from 2.32% in 2022 to 2.71% in 2023.



**Average unsubscribe rates increased** from 0.05% in 2022 to 0.07% in 2023.

There was no outstanding winner when comparing open rate to the day of the week an email was sent, but **Saturdays and Sundays had the lowest open rates** in 2023.

In 2023, the day of the week with the **highest average click rate was Wednesday**.

Messages sent as part of **automated marketing campaigns had higher open and click rates** than individual email sends.



Messages sent with **dynamic content (i.e. content targeted to the recipient's interest)** had higher open and click rates.

Messages sent to **segmented lists had lower unsubscribe rates**.



## TRENDING NOW

### Google & Yahoo Mail: Email Authentication for Bulk Senders

In 2023, [Google \(Gmail\)](#) and [Yahoo \(Yahoo Mail\)](#) announced new requirements for bulk email senders on their platforms, effective in 2024. While these requirements have long been best practices, both companies are now making the following mandatory:

- Bulk senders must authenticate their emails.
- Bulk senders must ensure an easy one-click unsubscribe process and honor unsubscribes within two days.
- For Google, bulk senders must stay under a specific spam rate threshold (Google indicates senders should maintain a rate below 0.1% and avoid a rate above 0.3%).

**If you don't meet these standards, your messages won't be delivered to Gmail and Yahoo inboxes** (if an email message fails authentication or DMARC alignment, Yahoo and Google will "bounce" the message with an error code; mail that exceeds the spam threshold or is missing the required unsubscribe mechanisms will likely end up in the spam or junk folder).

Since these were already best practices, hopefully you've got it covered. But if you're wondering what this means or you're reviewing your marketing platform setup to make sure, here's a to-do list:

- **Authenticate all email** with [SPF and DKIM](#) and [publish a DMARC record](#) (Higher Logic customers can refer to our [support article](#) for instructions for doing this on their platform or contact support for assistance).
- **Include a one-click unsubscribe method**, ideally in your header. Higher Logic Thrive Marketing includes a list-unsubscribe header by default for customers—and it automatically excludes those who unsubscribe from future sends. You can also implement [message categories and email preferences](#) to give members greater control over their email subscription.
- **Monitor your spam rate** (using [Google's guidelines and Postmaster Tools](#)) and make sure you're not approaching the threshold. Having a clear unsubscribe process helps ensure members use your email preference center rather than marking your messages as spam. You should also [practice good email hygiene](#) and make sure you're sending members only the messages that are relevant to them.

[In their FAQ](#), Google shared that "enforcement for bulk senders that don't meet our [Email sender guidelines](#) will be gradual and progressive," starting in February 2024 and getting more strict through April. The easy unsubscribe requirement enforcement date isn't until June.



One of the reasons Higher Logic Thrive is an industry leader when it comes to deliverability is because of the support we provide to customers to help you meet email best practices and the default tools included in our marketing products that make achieving those best practices simple.



**SCHEDULE A DEMO WITH US TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE! →**

## DATA PRIVACY REGULATIONS

The [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#), implemented in 2018 by the European Union, marked a significant milestone in the realm of data privacy. However, it is widely acknowledged that GDPR was only the beginning of a global shift towards more comprehensive and stringent data protection regulations—many of which may impact email marketing. In the wake of GDPR's success, a growing number of states in the US have introduced new regulations that may influence how email marketers collect, process, and manage customer data.

**[CHECK OUT THIS LIST OF STATE PRIVACY LAWS](#)**

### **Aligning Your Email Practices with This Trend**

Most of these regulations protect consumers' right to be informed about and access any personal data an organization has collected. They can also ask organizations to delete this data and opt out of the sale or use of this data for targeted advertising.

Some of the regulations include requirements for affirmative

opt-in and consent to collect and use a recipient's data (which includes the information you collect to send emails).

Data minimization is a trend throughout many comprehensive privacy laws, so it is best practice to only collect the data that is absolutely necessary and the data that you do keep needs to be securely protected.

Whether or not your organization is located in any of the states with privacy laws, you likely have recipients who are – and other states are likely to pass similar regulations in the future. So, it's good practice to discuss these regulations with your legal counsel and consider the following:

**1 Consent and Permission:** Affirmative opt-in is just a good idea at this point. Not only does it align with regulations that are or might be on the way, it also means you're only emailing people who want to be emailed. Obtain explicit and informed consent from individuals before collecting and using their personal data for email marketing purposes and ensure you have clear statements about how data will be used, giving individuals the option to opt in or opt out.

**2 Data Handling:** Regulations require marketers to implement robust data handling practices, including secure storage, limited data retention periods, and measures to prevent unauthorized access. Marketers need to be transparent about their data processing activities and provide mechanisms for individuals to access, correct, or delete their data.

**3 Targeting and Personalization:** Personalization is great, as we'll talk about throughout this report, but marketers must be careful about what personal information they include in recipient emails. Using overly personal information without explicit consent can violate privacy regulations, so it's essential to strike

a balance between personalization and respecting individuals' privacy rights.

**4 Data Breach Notification:** Regulations often mandate prompt notification to authorities and affected individuals in the event of a data breach. Email marketers need to have contingency plans in place to respond quickly and effectively to such incidents, minimizing the impact on both individuals and their organizations.

**5 Global Compliance:** As data privacy regulations continue to evolve globally, email marketers operating in different regions must stay informed and compliant with various legal frameworks. This requires adapting strategies and practices to meet the specific requirements of each jurisdiction.

**6 Third-Party Partners:** Email marketers often collaborate with third-party service providers. Regulations necessitate that marketers ensure these partners adhere to the same data protection standards, emphasizing the importance of due diligence in vendor selection and management.

*Understanding data privacy trends is more than just about adhering to the law (though that's necessary). Aligning with best practices helps build trust with your members, who are increasingly aware of and concerned about the privacy and security of their personal information.*

## AI

AI is almost guaranteed to continue trending this year, and it's going to continue to impact email marketing.

From content creation to member engagement, AI creates opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness.

- By leveraging advanced algorithms, AI can analyze vast datasets to segment audiences intelligently, enabling marketers to send highly targeted and personalized emails.
- Automation features streamline routine tasks, such as A/B testing and optimizing campaigns for better performance over time.
- AI-driven predictive analytics can enable marketers to anticipate customer behavior, ensuring timely and relevant communications.

In the hands of innovative, capable human marketers (and that's key! because AI-generated content still needs a lot of fact-checking and editing), AI can save time and resources and elevate the precision and impact of email marketing, fostering stronger connections between associations and their audiences.

### Marketing AI Enhancements Coming to Higher Logic Thrive in 2024

Higher Logic is incorporating new AI-powered tools to help association marketers save time and drive member engagement. We have almost two decades of experience working with associations, and our customers and staff have a wealth of knowledge and data about what strategies work for association marketing. We're putting that data to use to help you!

- Our forthcoming **AI Assistant for Higher Logic Thrive Professional Message Designer** will power up your content creation by generating suggested, effective messaging based on your input prompts.
- We also have Community AI Enhancements on the way, including AI Library Entry Generation, AI-Suggested Tagging, and more!

## BENCHMARK DATA



### EMAIL CLIENT

Based on what we can track, in 2023 most association email recipients open and click on their emails via the web, **with 33.99% of email opens and clicks occurring via a web browser** (e.g. Google Chrome), and 24.42% on a web client (e.g. Gmail). (Note: In our measurements, those metrics are not mutually exclusive—if someone accesses Gmail using Chrome, it counts toward both.)

Only 7.49% of the open and click volume in 2023 occurred on mobile clients, and even less (3.79%) on desktop.

### Where are recipients reading emails?



Considering the way your email designs will render on different email clients is helpful for making sure all your members can read, understand, and interact with your messages. And it's a good idea to ensure that your designs are compatible with a mobile experience too! When you draft and test your emails, Higher Logic Thrive Marketing gives you the option to do a "Virtual Inbox Test"/Deliverability Test for different email clients.

## Overall Delivery, Open, Click, and Unsubscribe Rates

Higher Logic continues to lead the industry with an average deliverability rate of 98.6%. By comparison, EmailToolTester's 2023 Email Deliverability Test\* (which compared results from 15 different email platforms) lists the overall average deliverability rate in 2023 as 85.7%.

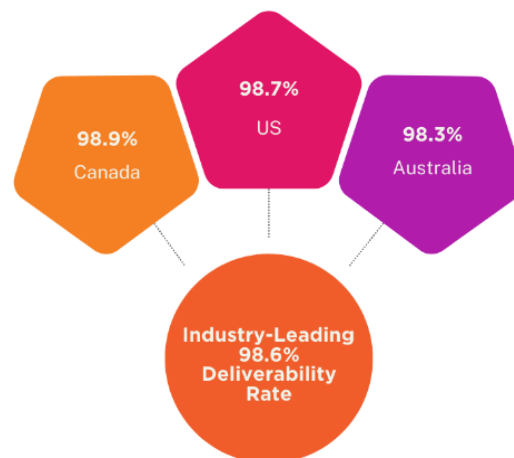
*\*Reports that compare benchmarks from multiple email marketing services are uncommon - likely due to a lack of data sharing between email service providers because of data privacy considerations and the proprietary nature of their data.*

Between 2022 and 2023, **overall average open rates and click rates increased**, while mobile opens decreased.

The increased open rates are likely partially influenced by [Apple Mail Privacy Protection features](#) (which we talked about in last year's report). Though these features became available in 2021, the privacy settings are not automatically activated on a users account—so there was continued adoption throughout 2023 as more and more Apple Mail users turned on the privacy features.

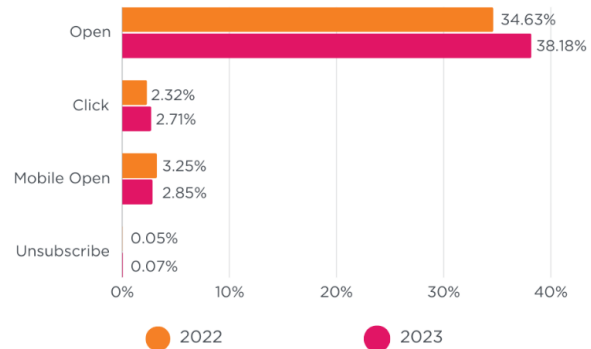
The mobile open rate decline may also be a residual [impact of Apple Mail Privacy Protection](#), but it's still helpful to review your email design on mobile to make sure that when recipients open their messages on mobile, they have a positive experience.

### Deliverability Rate by Country



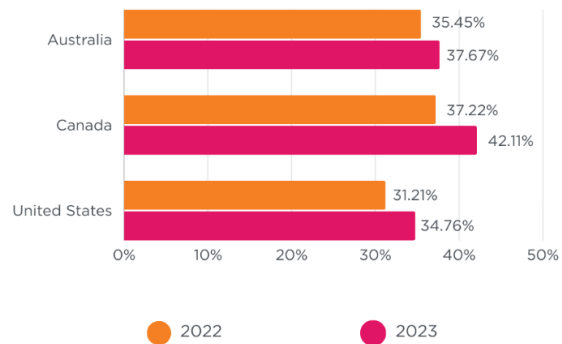
The average unsubscribe rate also **increased slightly**, underscoring the importance of segmentation and personalization (which we discuss later in this report on page 19).

### Average Open, Click, and Unsubscribe Rates

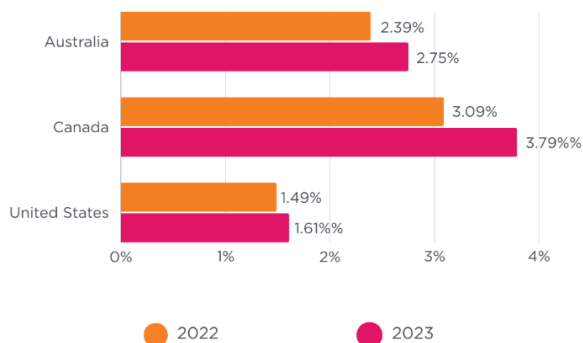


Comparing open, click, and mobile open rates by country and year, we see the same trends.

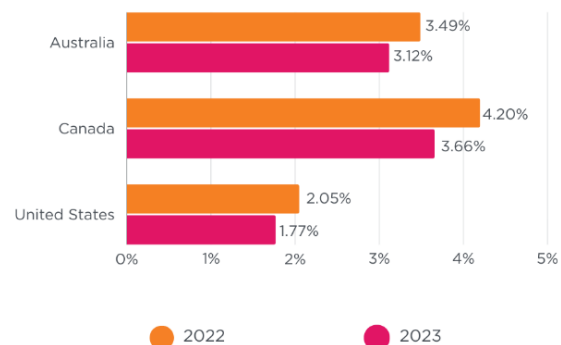
### Average Open Rate by Country



### Average Click Rate by Country



### Average Mobile Open Rate by Country

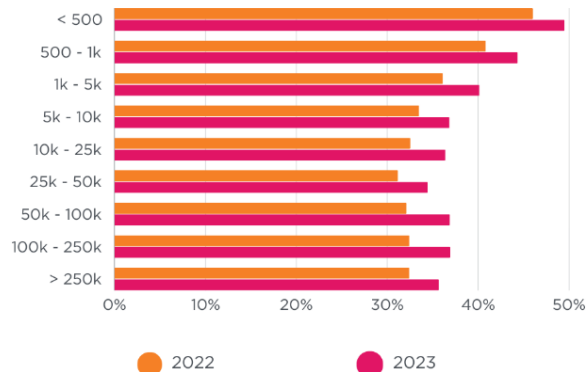


## Open Rate by Send Volume

Open rates tend to be higher for emails sent to smaller lists, with the **highest average open rates on emails sent to less than 500 people**. This is likely because smaller list sizes usually indicate a more personalized, targeted message that specifically addresses the needs of a particular audience segment.

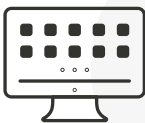
**Members want personalization** - they specifically told us this in [the 2023 Association Member Experience Report](#)! When you take the time (or leverage smart automation tools, like those available in Higher Logic Thrive) to segment your email sends, you ensure that your members get the personalized experience they're looking for and receive messages about topics and services they're genuinely interested in. This leads to better engagement, more meaningful connections, and higher levels of trust and loyalty.

### Open Rate by Send Volume



### Open Rate by Send Volume

Send Volume	2022	2023
< 500	46.02%	49.51%
500 - 1k	40.84%	44.33%
1k - 5k	36.11%	40.14%
5k - 10k	33.49%	36.84%
10k - 25k	32.54%	36.41%
25k - 50k	31.19%	34.46%
50k - 100k	32.11%	36.90%
100k-250k	32.45%	36.93%
> 250k	32.44%	35.67%



**Higher Logic Thrive's Compound Target Goup feature** (which helps you segment your send lists) and Story-Level Targeting tool (which helps you target particular audience segments with specific messaging without having to send multiple messages) can help you give your members the personalized experience they're looking for. See page 18 to learn more about the positive impact on opens, clicks, and unsubscribes these tools have had on our existing customers.

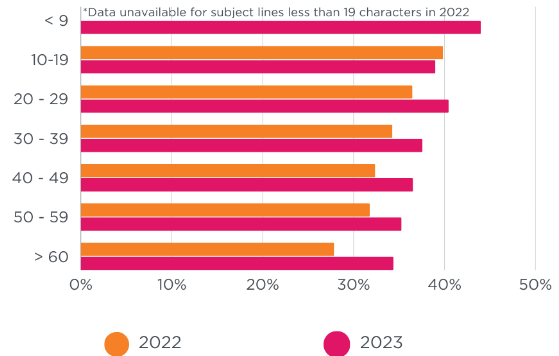


## Open Rate by Subject Line Length

In general, shorter subject lines lead to higher open rates. The sweet spot for subject line length in 2023 was **under 9 characters** and in general subject lines under 29 characters performed above the 2023 average open rate.

Your members are being inundated by information on every communication channel. In a crowded inbox, users quickly scan through their emails to decide what's worth opening. A short subject line is more likely to capture attention immediately—not to mention, shorter subject lines are usually clearer and easier to see on mobile. So, where possible, keep your email subject lines short and sweet! You can always leverage your preheader text to include additional context and details. (See page 21 for ideas!)

### Open Rate by Subject Line Length (Characters)

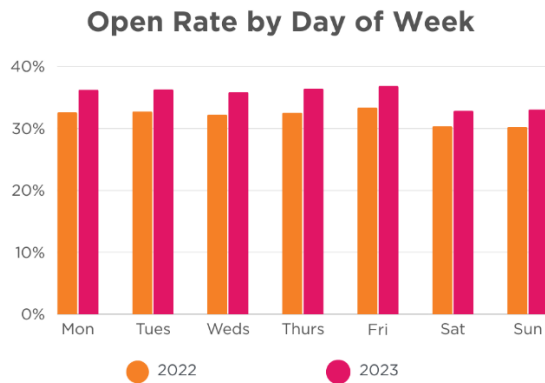


### Open Rate by Subject Line Length

Characters	2022	2023
< 9	N/A	43.99%
10-19	39.84%	39.00%
20-29	36.48%	40.45%
30-39	34.27%	37.57%
40-49	32.38%	36.54%
50-59	31.78%	35.28%
> 60	27.86%	34.38%

## Open and Click Rate by Day of the Week

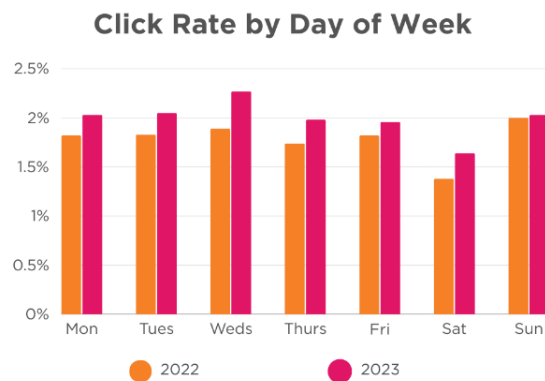
Like in [2022](#), for open rates, there's no clear winner in terms of send day in 2023. However, **Saturday and Sunday have the lowest open rates**. Association members are less and less likely to engage with their professional inboxes during their personal time.



**Open Rate by Day of the Week**

Day	2022	2023
Monday	32.64%	36.29%
Tuesday	32.77%	36.34%
Wednesday	32.25%	35.89%
Thursday	32.59%	36.45%
Friday	33.41%	36.92%
Saturday	30.38%	32.89%
Sunday	30.27%	33.10%

For click rates, **Wednesday stands out as having the highest average click rate in 2023**.



**Click Rate by Day of the Week**

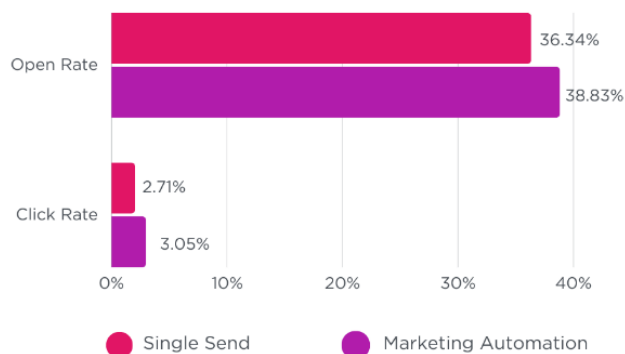
Day	2022	2023
Monday	1.82%	2.03%
Tuesday	1.83%	2.05%
Wednesday	1.89%	2.27%
Thursday	1.74%	1.98%
Friday	1.82%	1.96%
Saturday	1.38%	1.64%
Sunday	2.00%	2.03%

## THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF AUTOMATION, SEGMENTATION, AND PERSONALIZATION

Email marketing best practices often talk about automation, segmentation, and personalization. But you might be wondering if these strategies are really worth the effort. Our data showed that they are!

**Messages sent out of Higher Logic Thrive Marketing as part of automated marketing campaigns had higher open and click rates than individual email sends.**

**Messages Sent with Marketing Automation Perform Better Than Single Sends**



Does that mean marketing automation is magic? Probably not—it's more likely that crafting a cohesive campaign and using automation to set up specific demographic or behavioral triggers for the email sends in your campaigns leads to a better member experience and more relevant messaging.

For example, if you're putting together an event marketing campaign, deciding on the story you want to tell in advance sets you up to avoid disjointed, random email blasts. Having the campaign automatically filter out members who've already registered also ensures that you're not annoying members by sending them messages that are no longer relevant to them. (Why not automatically funnel registrants into an event attendee campaign?)

**Not sure where to start when it comes to setting up automated marketing campaigns?** Higher Logic is here to help! Higher Logic Thrive comes with [Advanced Starter Kits](#) to help you jump-start your marketing automation with pre-built, high-impact campaigns. You can also check out our [Campaign Cookbook](#) for step-by-step recipes to help your association fire up our favorite automated email campaigns.



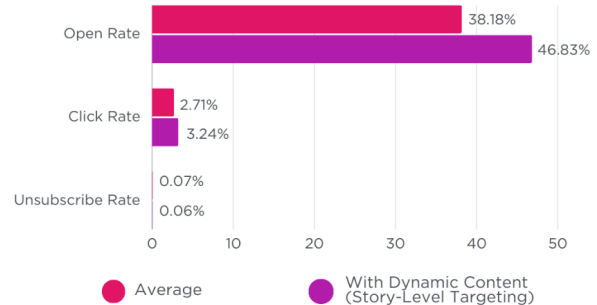
**Messages sent with dynamic content (using Higher Logic’s Story-Level Targeting tools) also had higher open and click rates.**

Higher Logic’s [Story-Level Targeting](#) feature (also known as dynamic content or dynamic segmentation) allows users to send a single mailing with blocks of content targeted to different groups. This is beneficial to your organization because you can create one mailing while still targeting different groups dynamically.

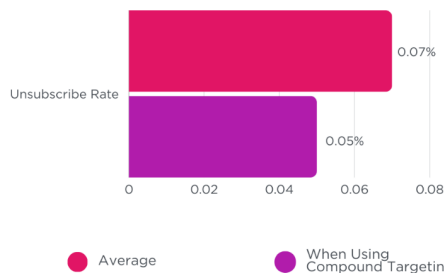
For example, you might target a section of your newsletter to explain the benefits of attending the annual conference to any recipients in a non-registrant list, while anyone on the registrant list is shown a different targeted section of recommendations for attendees.

Dynamic content helps you personalize your members’ experience and make them feel like you know them. You’re able to ensure that the content they see is relevant, without additional manual work from your staff.

#### Messages Personalized with Dynamic Content Perform Better



#### Using Segmentation Reduces Unsubscribes



**Messages sent to segmented lists (using Higher Logic’s Compound Target Group tool) had lower unsubscribe rates.**

By now you’re probably noticing a theme—association members like to get emails that are relevant to them and personalized to their interests. Higher Logic Thrive Marketing’s [Compound Target Group](#) tool helps you segment your email send lists so you can plan and deliver messages specific to different member groups. Providing hyper-personalization and relevance in

your communication reduces the likelihood of recipients feeling inundated with irrelevant information.

When people receive content that aligns with their needs, they are less likely to perceive the emails as spammy or intrusive, ultimately leading to a higher level of satisfaction and a lower rate of unsubscribes. And, although a decrease in the (hopefully) tiny percentages we see when it comes to unsubscribe rates might not feel like a lot, each percentage point could be multiple members who aren’t checking out.

# tips for reviewing your data & improving performance





# Improving Your Open Rate

To \_\_\_\_\_

## Create compelling, short subject lines:

Craft clear, concise subject lines that pique the recipient's curiosity or offer a tangible benefit. Cut out extraneous words and put the value up front. Short subject lines are more likely to make it past spam filters and look good on mobile devices. Avoid using misleading or clickbait-style subject lines to build trust with your audience.

### EXAMPLES:

- New jobs!
- [YOUR INDUSTRY] News
- 2 days | 45 credits
- 3 Ideas to Improve
- (Subject Line) Unlock Opportunities  
(Preheader) Your Weekly Update

### NOTE:

You can also include the recipient's first name in your subject line to personalize, but be careful to do this only when it really makes sense so you don't reduce the effectiveness with overuse.

## USE ENGAGING PREHEADER/

### PREVIEW TEXT:

Add compelling preview text that complements your subject line. The preview text provides an additional opportunity to capture attention and provide a sneak peek into the email's content.

### Examples:

- (Subject) Your Voice Matters (Preheader) Join the Discussion Today
- (Subject) Empowering You (Preheader) Latest Resources for Members
- (Subject) Member Perk Alert (Preheader) Exclusive Early Bird Discount
- (Subject) Don't Miss Out (Preheader) Upcoming Member Network Event
- (Subject) Your Feedback Needed (Preheader) Association Survey



**OPTIMIZE SEND TIMES:** Experiment with different days and times to identify when your audience is most active and likely to open emails. Consider the time zone of your target audience to ensure that your emails are delivered at a convenient time. Higher Logic Thrive Marketing offers a feature where you can choose an "Optimized" schedule for your email sends based on when contacts have historically opened messages.



**CLEAN UP YOUR EMAIL LIST:** Regularly removing inactive subscribers from your email list will improve your open rate and can prevent you from damaging your sender score (sometimes inactive emails are spam traps).



**TEST EMAILS FOR GMAIL'S PROMOTION TAB:** Many email clients now sort messages into different categories in a recipient's inbox. [Testing which email tab](#) your emails will likely end up in can help you figure out if you need to adjust something to try to get into the main inbox.



**SEGMENT YOUR SUBSCRIBERS:** Segment your email lists based on relevant criteria such as demographics, behaviors, or engagement history. Sending targeted and personalized content to specific segments increases the likelihood that recipients will find the email relevant and open it. Segmenting your send lists will also help you reduce unsubscribes.

# Improving Your Click Rate



## Make your Calls to Action (CTAs) clear and obvious

Create clear and compelling calls to action that encourage recipients to click. Make CTA links buttons—with color contrast that makes them easy to read—so they stand out from the rest of your message. Use action-oriented language and make sure the CTA button stands out visually. And don't include too many calls to action in one message (unless you have a reason to—like a Newsletter or calendar highlight), because it will divide audience attention.

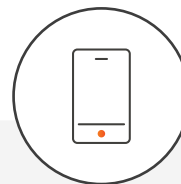
### EXAMPLES:

- Discover Resources
- Find Your Next Role
- Join the Conversation
- Unlock Premium Content
- Upgrade Your Skills



### SEGMENT AND PERSONALIZE YOUR MESSAGES:

Sending emails to specific segments with the information that's most relevant to them is going to improve your performance. Someone is much more likely to click on something that coincides with their interests than they would something that doesn't fit their needs.



### KEEP YOUR EMAIL DESIGN SIMPLE AND MOBILE-FRIENDLY:

It can be tempting to pull out all the stops when designing your emails, but straightforward, single-column emails often perform better because they render better across email clients and they're easy to follow. Format your emails for easy readability. Use short paragraphs, bullet points, and compelling visuals to make it easy for recipients to scan the content and click through. Straightforward designs



### INCORPORATE SOCIAL PROOF:

Things like customer testimonials or user-generated content can help build trust and credibility. Seeing that others have benefited from your products or services can encourage clicks.



# Ideas for A/B Testing

It's important to remember that the effectiveness of any strategy is dependent on various factors, including the audience, industry, and the specific content of the email you're sending. That's why tracking your own metrics and testing different strategies with your audience can help you determine the most effective approach for your email marketing campaigns.

## Try testing the performance of:

### To DIFFERENT FROM NAMES/SENDERS

#### Subject: SUBJECT LINE

- Length
- Content
- Tone
- Statement vs. Question
- Inclusion of numbers (price, number of days until a deadline, etc.)



#### MESSAGE

- Length
- Layout/Format
- Tone
- Plain text vs. HTML
- Number or type of images

CLICK



#### CTA

- Wording
- Format (button vs. text; colors; etc.)
- Placement
- Number of CTAs



#### PERSONALIZATION



#### DAY AND TIME OF SEND

\*Remember, you'll get the clearest results when you only test one factor at a time—changing more than one piece of the message you're A/B testing will make it less clear which factor drove higher performance.

# Reviewing Your Data

Tracking your own data is not just an important measure of your success—it can help you gain a better understanding of your members and their preferences so that you're more likely to reach them. Not only that, doing regular tracking can give you a heads up if something is changing (or needs to change).



## **KEEP AN OVERALL AVERAGE OF YOUR METRICS (OPENS, CLICKS, UNSUBSCRIBES) AS A BASELINE**

Then you can compare each month's performance to that baseline, and if you see a metric changing significantly, you're able to quickly look for the cause and pivot.



## **PULL YOUR METRICS AT LEAST QUARTERLY AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR TRENDS**

Then ask yourself where it might be helpful to review your metrics more often (possibly even monthly) or where you might want to compare specific messages (for example, in a multi-message campaign, you could compare which messages had the highest opens, clicks, or seemed to spur the highest conversions—then consider why it performed better).

### **Higher Logic Thrive Marketing (Marketing Professional) makes it easy to review your email performance with Message Summary and Trends Over Time Reports.**

Having these built-in reports gives you a birds-eye view of all your mailings—and you can apply filters to refine which data you want the reports to contain. If you organize messages by folder, or use email templates, you can even use these to compare subsets of your own messaging! With tools like this from Higher Logic, a little forward planning can save you a lot of time and effort down the line.

## Key email metrics you should be tracking:

- **Delivery rate** (number of messages delivered / number of messages sent)
- **Open rate** (number of messages opened / number of messages sent) and unique opens
- **Click through/click to open rate** (number of messages clicked / number of messages opened) or click rate (number of messages clicked / number of messages delivered)
- **Bounce rate** (number of messages hard bounced / number of messages sent)
- **Unsubscribe rate** (number of unsubscribes / number of messages delivered)
- **Conversion rate** (number of recipients who took the action you wanted them to take / number of messages delivered)
- **List growth rate** (number of new subscribers - the number of unsubscribes / total number of email addresses on your list)
- **Mobile open and click rates**
- **Mobile vs. Not Mobile Opens**

## Additional metrics that can help you gain a deeper understanding of your members:

### ○ Mailing Result Comparisons

- Correlation between open rate, click rate, and number of recipients
- Correlation between open rate, click rate, and length of subject line
- Correlation between open rate, click rate, and day of the week sent
- Correlation between open rate, click rate, and time of day sent
- Correlation between open rate, click rate, and email body size

### ○ Correlation between email sends and web traffic

### ○ Email volume

### ○ Email clients used by recipients/ domain click rate

### ○ Overall ROI, revenue per email, and/or revenue per subscriber

### ○ For emails sent in a campaign:

- Which message inspired the best results? (clicks, event registrations, survey responses etc.)
- At what point in the campaign did the most recipients drop off/ disengage?

## Industry-specific email trends and performance metrics offer associations both a snapshot of the current digital communication landscape and a tool to compare against.

Benchmarks can help you contextualize your own data and gauge the effectiveness of your marketing strategies.

As you delve into the details of open rates, click rates, and more, think about where your organization sits within the broader spectrum of association email performance. Do you have opportunities for growth? And where can you celebrate above-average success?

The benchmarks and suggestions for best practices we've shared are just a jumping off point. Use this report as a source of inspiration, sparking new ideas to captivate members. Whether it's optimizing subject lines, refining content strategies, or fully embracing marketing automation, take the data in this report as an invitation to embark on a journey of continuous improvement—strategically enhancing your email marketing to foster stronger connections, deliver more value, and, ultimately, elevate the overall member experience.



**Higher Logic** is the leading marketing software and online community solutions provider for associations. Make your members feel like you're directly communicating to their needs with software that helps you understand their interests and personalize your emails without the extra work. Simplicity is built into Higher Logic Thrive Marketing—save time with pre-built email templates and automated campaigns based on nearly two decades of association experience. Plus, gain insight from engagement scoring, reporting, and web tracking so you can refine your offerings and prove ROI.

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