imrg | The UK eCommerce Association
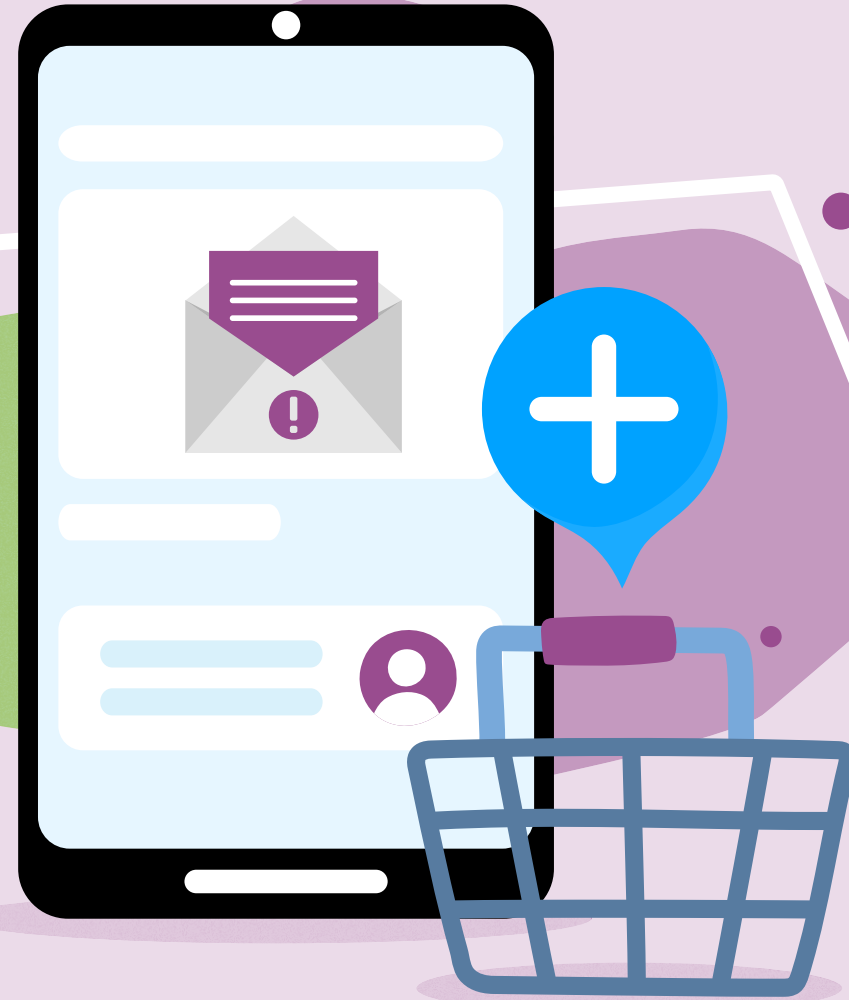
The state of retail email marketing:

Uncover key consumer preferences and performance data

GetResponse MAX

Contents

Contents – *continued*

Contents – *continued*

Meet the experts

imrg | The UK eCommerce Association

"We are excited to share the results of our email study in collaboration with GetResponse. By combining insights from retailer and consumer surveys, this report offers a comprehensive view of email marketing trends. It provides valuable benchmarks to help you assess your performance and uncover actionable opportunities for optimisation and growth."

About

We help our members understand and improve their online retail performance through a busy programme of performance benchmarking, data analysis, insight, best practice-sharing, and events. We have been tracking online sales since 2000 – and now measure over 120 individual metrics in a series of indexes, providing in-depth intelligence on online and mobile sales, delivery trends, marketing ROI and channel performance.

Editorial

Ellie-Rose Davies, Content Executive at **IMRG**

Matthew Walsh, Data & Retail Director at **IMRG**

Milita Bani, Assistant Analyst at **IMRG**

GetResponse MAX

About

GetResponse MAX is an email and marketing automation platform built to boost conversions, drive sales, and maximise ROI.

Here's what it offers:

- **Comprehensive tools:** Email, SMS, web and mobile push notifications, webinars, lead generation tools, and advanced automation – all in one place.
- **Ecommerce features:** Designed to increase retention and drive sales. AI product recommendations, abandoned cart recovery, promo codes, and more.
- **Targeted campaigns:** Precision marketing to connect with the right people at the right time.

Editorial

Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse **MAX**

Joanna Wójcik, Senior Business Development Executive at GetRespons **MAX**

Wojciech Błażałek, Head of Email Deliverability at GetResponse **MAX**

Karolina Przybysz-Smęda, Senior Content Marketing Specialist at GetResponse **MAX**

Maciej Ossowski, Director at GetResponse **MAX**

The state of retail email marketing: Uncover key consumer preferences and performance data

If there was one word to describe 2024 for most online retailers, it would be "steadying". Last few years have been a rollercoaster ride for many, as we went from skyrocketing growth during the pandemic to 2023 dip as consumers returned to offline shopping.

Still, the critical challenge remains: how to acquire new customers while keeping a healthy ROAS and margins? Many retailers report increasing costs of performance marketing and decreasing efficiency of paid channels. This is why the importance of building relationships, driving repeat purchases and competing on value / brand is even more impactful.

One of the most effective ways to boost consumer loyalty is email marketing. Whether it's a product newsletter or automated workflow emails, our report proves that consumers still choose this channel over almost any other form.

To stay on top of their competition, online retailers should follow customers preferences when it comes to sending frequency, personalisation, and engagement tactics. With the rising acquisition costs, each marketing contact in our database becomes more precious. And the cost of opt-out or a spam complaint becomes even more stinging.

I am extremely proud of the insights our teams have come up with in this report. I strongly believe the findings will be crucial to each retailer's strategy and will eventually result in more marketing contacts that can be turned to repeat customers.

- Maciej Ossowski, Director at GetResponse MAX

Methodology

Our research comprised two detailed surveys conducted in 2024: a retailer survey generating responses from 42 retailers, and a consumer survey involving 1,000 UK consumers aged 18 to 54+.

The consumer survey consistently generated 1,000 responses. However, the response rates varied across the retailer research questions. In this report we show all the data we received for each question.
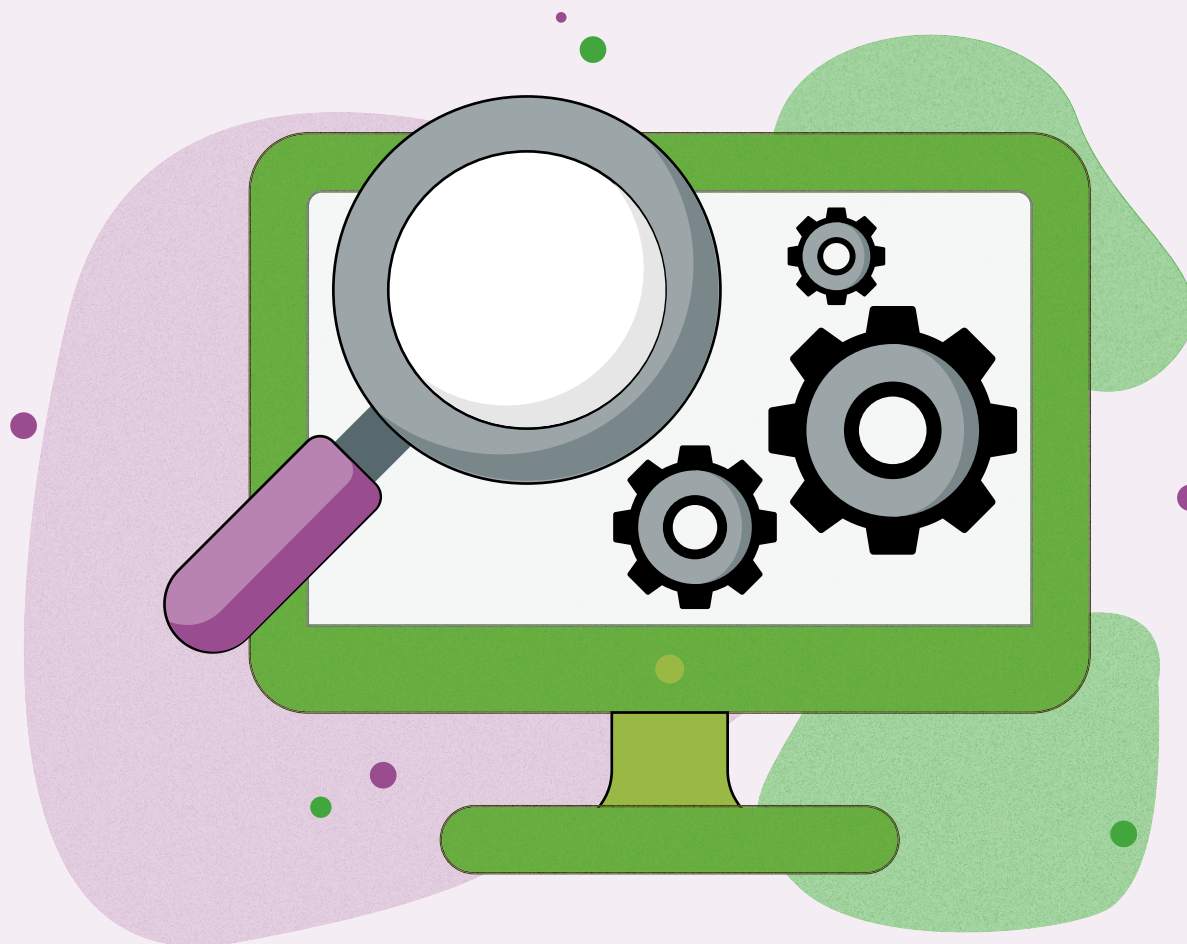
Email spam rate trends

Average spam rate for campaign versus flow emails

The charts display responses to the question: 'What is your average spam rate for all campaign and flow emails in 2023?' Retailers reported an impressively low average spam rate across all emails, at just 0.3%. When comparing campaign and flow emails, the difference is minimal: **campaign emails average a spam rate of 0.30%, while flow emails average 0.36%**.

You can see to the far right that a few retailers had a significantly higher spam rate than other retailers. If we were to remove these, the averages would be much lower.

Campaign emails spam rate
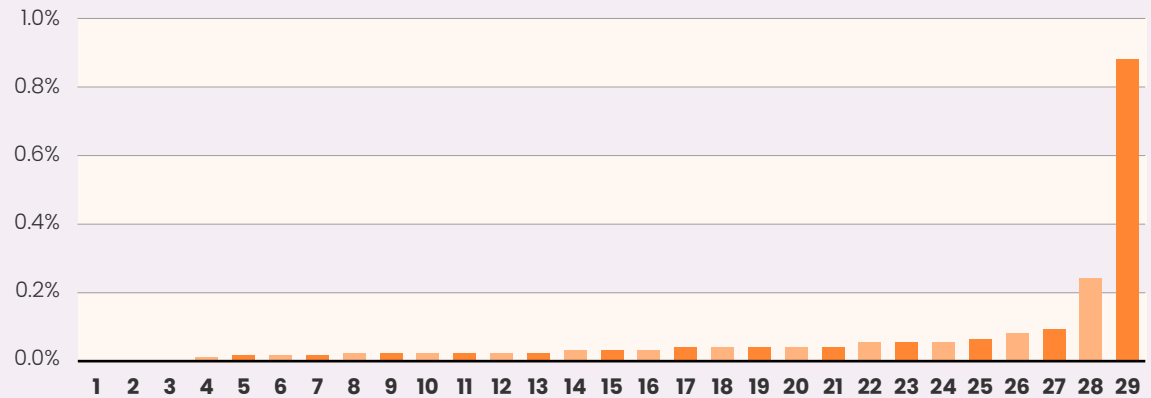
Flow emails spam rate
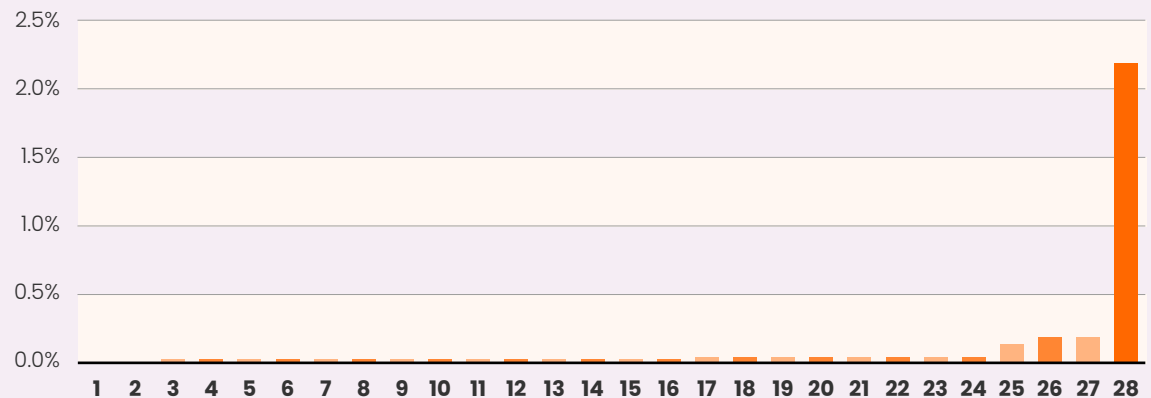
getresponse.com/max

How can you keep your spam rate low?

Email authentication is one of the key factors in reducing spam rates and ensuring high deliverability.

Protocols like SPF, DKIM, and DMARC play a vital role in preventing email spoofing and phishing attacks.

Think of these protocols as security badges that confirm your emails are legitimate and ensure they land in inboxes – not spam folders. It's like showing your ID to get into an exclusive club – no badge, no entry.

Combined with the best practices outlined in this report, these steps will help you keep your spam rate low and your emails effective.

Lastly, provide relevant content at the right frequency. Check the statistics below to see how often consumers mark emails as spam when the content doesn't align with their interests.

- Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX
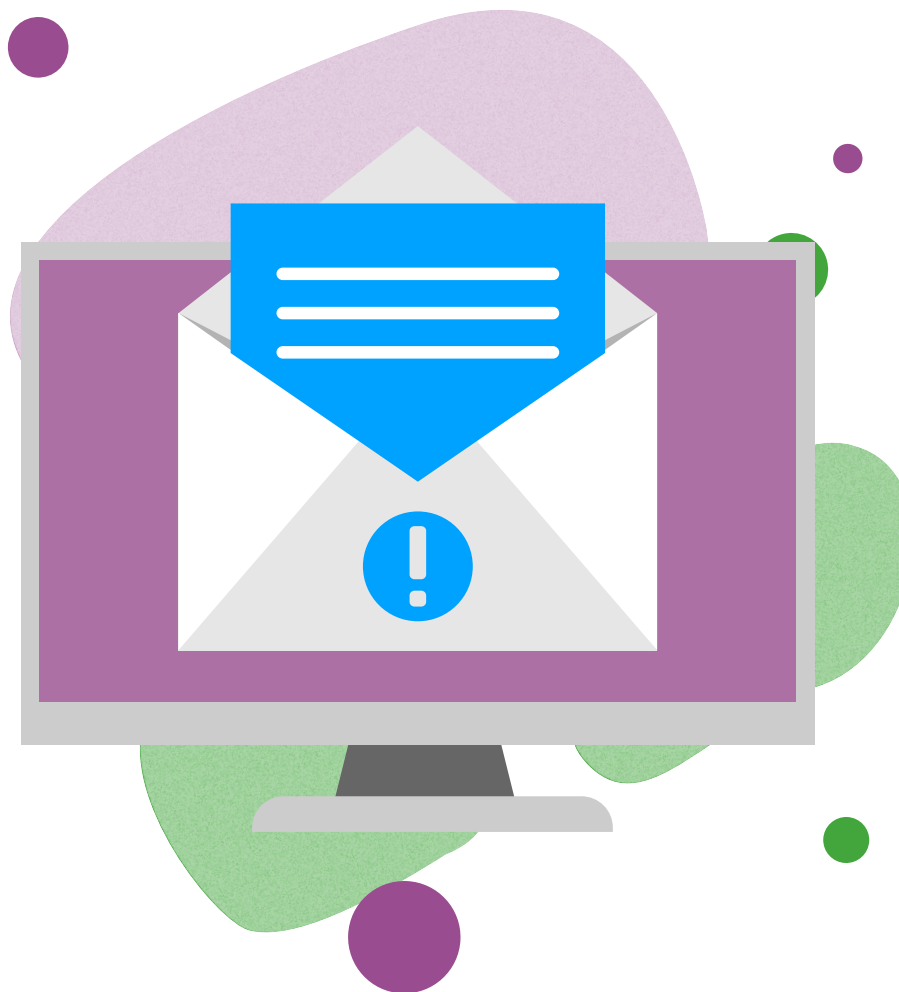
Why consumers mark emails as spam

We asked 1,000 consumers to tell us the most likely reasons why they would mark emails from a retailer as spam and, as may be expected, the top answer was 'emails are sent too frequently' (47%).

Though, in almost equal measure, customers revealed that they would mark an email as spam because they don't trust them (46.10%), or because the content doesn't interest them (44.40%), or that they received emails despite never having signed up for them (41.2%).

What are/would be the most likely reasons that you would mark emails from a retailer as spam? (Please select up to 3 answers)

Reason	Percentage
Emails are sent too frequently	47.0%
I don't trust the emails - it appears fake or fraudulent	46.1%
The content does not interest me	44.4%
I never signed up for these emails	41.2%
No clear sender information	14.7%
Emails contain aggressive sales tactics	14.0%
The subject line was misleading to the emails content	13.5%
The unsubscribe process is too complicated	11.8%
I would not mark any retailer's emails as spam	4.9%
Other	0.5%

getresponse.com/max

Back To Contents

Tips to reduce spam complaints

The survey results provide insights into why subscribers mark retailer emails as spam, with email frequency identified as the top reason.

Alarmingly, many subscribers choose to mark emails as spam rather than unsubscribing, reflecting frustration with excessive messaging, a lack of confidence in the unsubscribe process, or dissatisfaction with the content strategy.

*Other significant reasons include **distrust in emails, irrelevant content, and receiving unsolicited emails.** These findings highlight the urgent need for retailers to enhance the subscriber experience by addressing trust, relevance, and frequency management.*

Recommendations:

Optimise email frequency

- *A/B test frequency: Experiment with different sending cadences to find the ideal balance between engagement and avoiding fatigue.*
- *Ask subscribers directly: Use surveys to let subscribers choose how often they want to hear from you.*
- *Monitor engagement: Regularly review metrics like open rates and unsubscribes to adjust your strategy as needed.*

Simplify the unsubscribe process

- *Make it easy to opt out, reducing frustration that can lead to spam complaints.*
- *Offer alternatives, such as reduced email frequency or a temporary pause, to retain subscribers without overwhelming them.*

Focus on trust and relevance

- *Personalise and segment emails to match subscriber interests and behaviours.*
- *Avoid misleading subject lines or overly aggressive sales tactics that erode trust.*

Reinforce transparency

- *Ensure clear sender information so subscribers immediately recognise your brand.*

Build confidence in opt-in processes

- *Use double opt-in to confirm subscribers want to receive your emails, minimising the risk of unsolicited messages.*

By addressing these key issues, retailers can reduce spam complaints, enhance deliverability and engagement.

- Joanna Wójcik, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Email unsubscribe rate insights

Understanding that customers are unlikely to mark emails as spam, our consumer survey explored what they are most likely to do when they no longer wish to receive emails from a retailer. **The top response, chosen by 84.2% of respondents, was to 'hit the unsubscribe button.' The second most common action, selected by 19.8%, was to 'ignore all emails.'**

19.8% would 'mark the emails as spam'

5.5% would 'contact customer service'

1.7% said 'I am not sure'

0.7% selected 'other'

getresponse.com/max
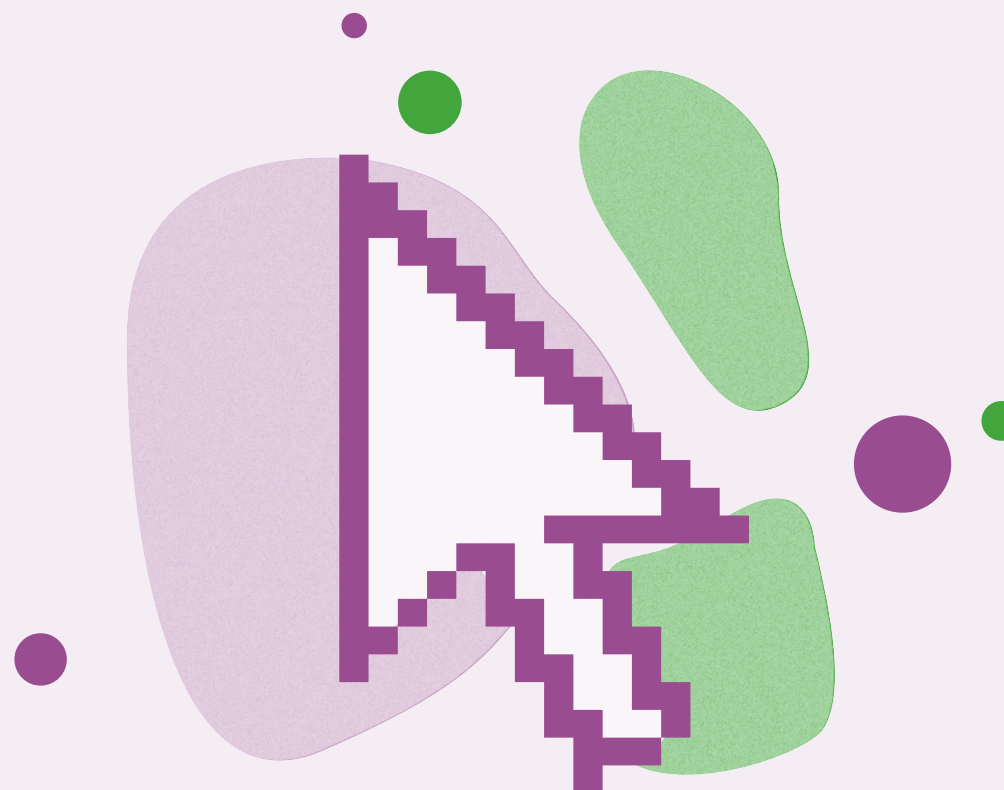
The top reasons leading customers to unsubscribe

Similar to their reasons for marking emails as spam, customers are most likely to unsubscribe if a retailer sends too many emails (63.2%) or if the emails do not interest them (60.9%). **This highlights the importance of sending fewer, more targeted emails to retain subscribers.**

Interestingly, 16.6% of respondents indicated they unsubscribe because they unintentionally signed up for the retailer's emails. For instance, they may have quickly ticked all boxes at checkout without realising they were opting in.

What are/would be the main reasons that you would unsubscribe from a retailer's emails? (Please select up to three answers)
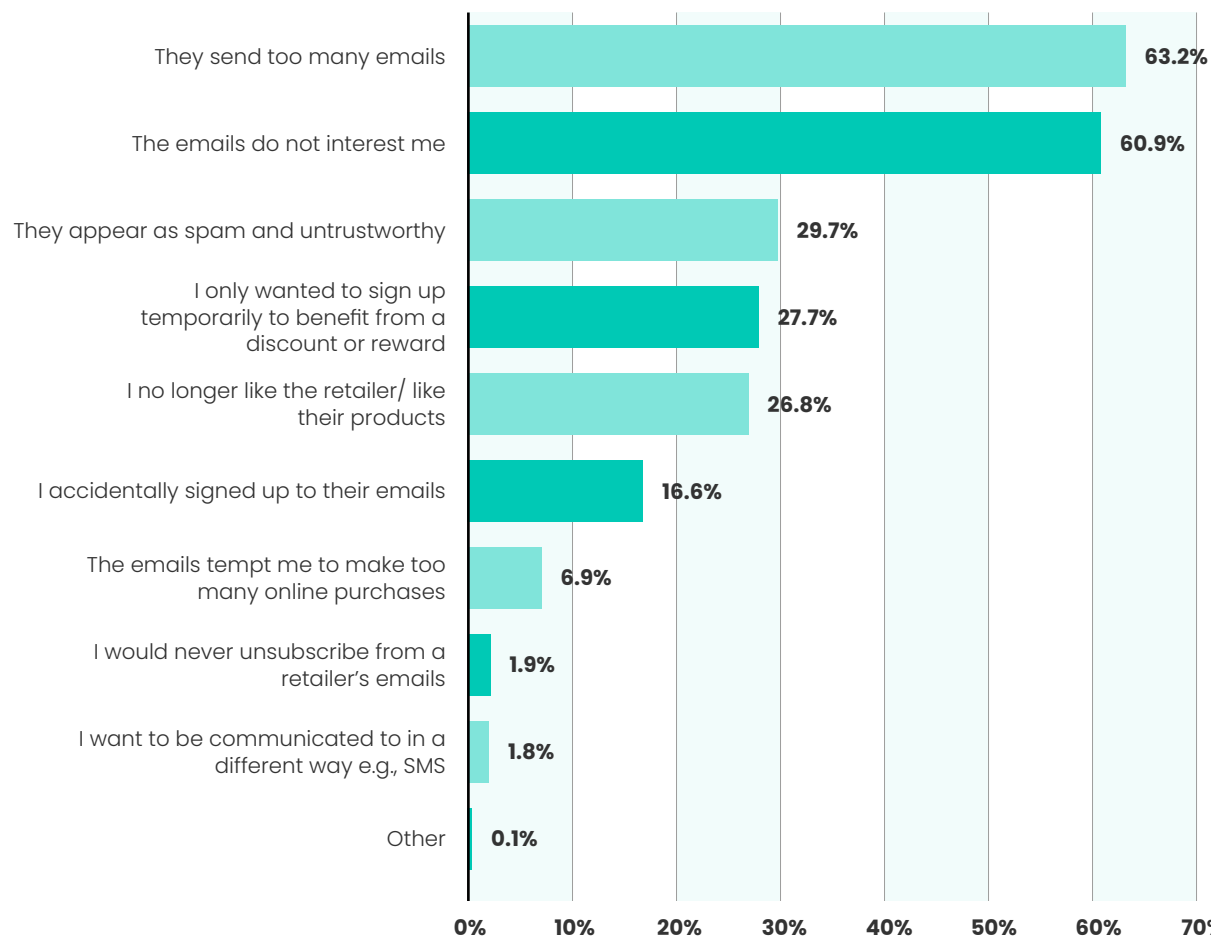
Reason	%
They send too many emails	63.2%
The emails do not interest me	60.9%
They appear as spam and untrustworthy	29.7%
I only wanted to sign up temporarily to benefit from a discount or reward	27.7%
I no longer like the retailer/ like their products	26.8%
I accidentally signed up to their emails	16.6%
The emails tempt me to make too many online purchases	6.9%
I would never unsubscribe from a retailer's emails	1.9%
I want to be communicated to in a different way e.g., SMS	1.8%
Other	0.1%

How can you lower your unsubscribe rate and keep your customers engaged and loyal in the long run?

People stay engaged when your emails feel worth their time.

Focus on clear, value-packed content – like exclusive deals, helpful tips, or personalised offers.

The secret to success? Personalisation paired with smart segmentation. *Tailor your messages to what customers care about and how they interact with your brand.*

Customers come in many forms: occasional shoppers, regular buyers, discount hunters, brand fans, and more. Personalise your communication to match their needs, engagement level, and stage in the buying journey.

While basic segmentation by age, gender, or location is a good start, advanced tools provide deeper insights – like behaviour, purchase history, and more.

Here are some examples of segmentation you can use:

- ***Deal hunters:*** *Notify them about promotions on their favourite brands.*
- ***Loyal customers:*** *Offer exclusive discounts or invite them to loyalty programmes.*
- ***Undecided shoppers:*** *Send product reviews or abandoned cart reminders.*
- ***New customers:*** *Welcome them with emails featuring valuable tips or tailored product recommendations.*

Smart segmentation drives better engagement—and fewer unsubscribes.

– Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Discounts and rewards prompt customers to stay

38.99% of retailers said, 'Yes – Discounts/rewards would make the emails worth keeping'

MOST respondents (53.07%) said 'Maybe – It depends on how good the discounts are'

Only 6.5% said 'No – I only want the one-time discount/I don't want ongoing emails'

1.44% said 'I am unsure'

Many customers sign up for emails to take advantage of exclusive discounts and rewards. Among the 27.7% who signed up temporarily for this reason, we asked if they would remain subscribed if ongoing discounts and rewards were offered.

An impressive 92.06% of this group indicated they would be open to staying subscribed (combining those who answered 'yes' or 'maybe'). Providing exclusive promo codes and ongoing benefits throughout the year is an effective strategy to build loyalty and maintain customer interest.

Do customers encounter difficulties when unsubscribing?

Only 25% of customers report never encountering difficulties when unsubscribing from retailers' emails, leaving **75% who have experienced issues.**

The most common problem, reported by 44.5%, is continuing to receive emails after unsubscribing. Retailers must ensure their unsubscribe process functions correctly to reduce customer frustration and maintain a positive reputation.

Additionally, 30.5% of customers noted that the unsubscribe button did not work, often due to broken links or forms leading to 'no results' pages. A further 27.3% stated they could not locate the unsubscribe button. While retailers may not wish to encourage unsubscriptions, the button should still be easily identifiable—placed at the end of each email and formatted in bold or underlined.

Have you ever encountered difficulty when unsubscribing to retailers' emails? If so, what happened? (Please select all that apply)

Category	%
I unsubscribed but still received emails	44.5%
The unsubscribe button did not work	30.5%
I could not locate the unsubscribe button	27.3%
I haven't ever encountered difficulties	25.0%
Multiple steps required to unsubscribe	24.6%
Need to log into account to unsubscribe	23.2%
The unsubscribe link was incorrect	12.4%
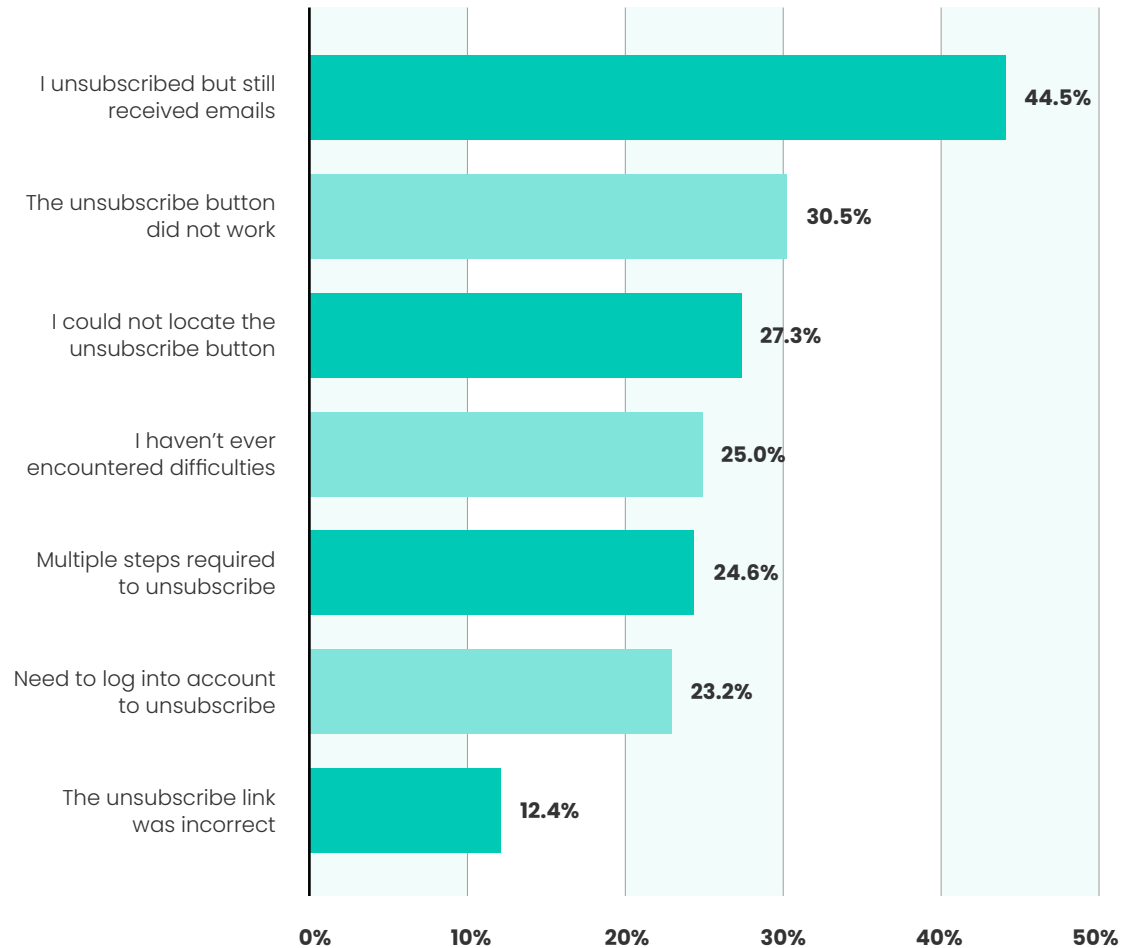
Unsubscribe rate trends split by campaign and flow emails

While customers often state they would unsubscribe if they no longer wish to receive retailer emails, this intention does not always align with their actions. In practice, **the market unsubscribe rate for both campaign and flow emails are very low, at just 0.63%**. Specifically, campaign emails average 0.59%, while flow emails average 0.66%.

Campaign emails unsubscribe rate
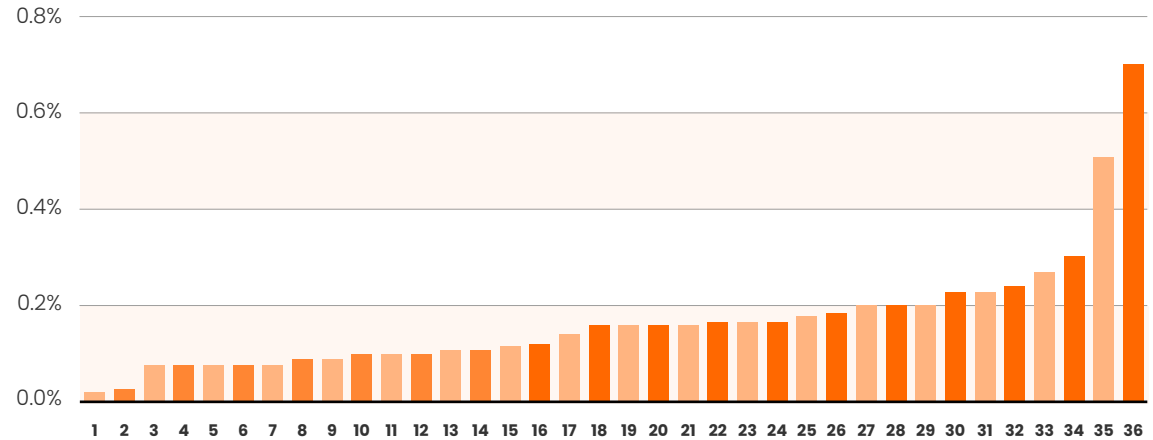
Flow email unsubscribe rate

getresponse.com/max
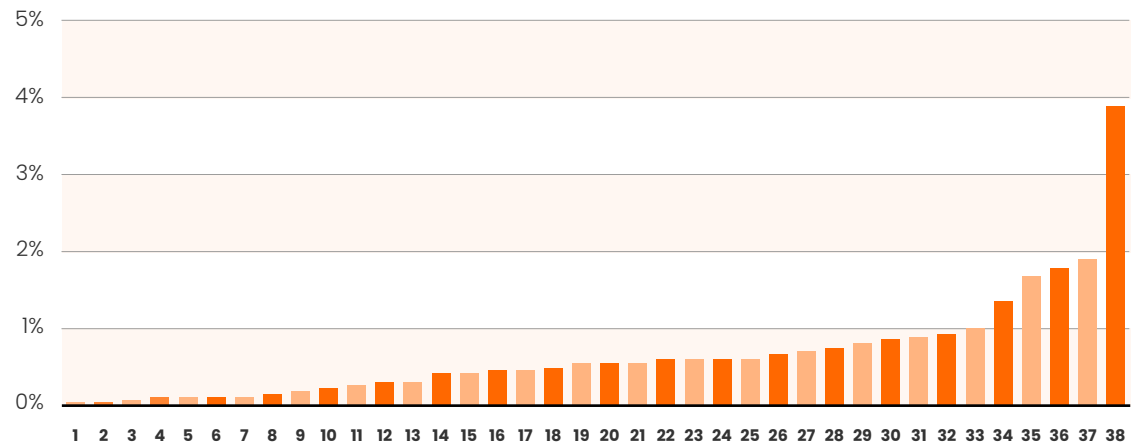
Growing email opt-in rates

Customers (**62.9%**) have indicated that email is their preferred channel for communication with retailers, demonstrating a strong openness to opting in.

While SMS communications are gaining popularity, email remains the top choice for customer engagement, making it the channel retailers should prioritise optimising. More so than Text/SMS, chosen by 3.7%, customers would prefer communication via website on their customer/loyalty profile (11.3%) or via app (4.3%).

Less popular is via physical post (3.6%), social media direct message (2.2%), and messaging apps e.g., WhatsApp (1.3%).

Retailers reveal their opt-in rates

The market average email opt-in rate is 47%, meaning just under half of their customer database are contactable. On the chart you can see the variation in rates, ranging from 11% to over 90%.

What Percentage of your customer base are actually contactable – contactable defined as 'opted IN' to receive emails
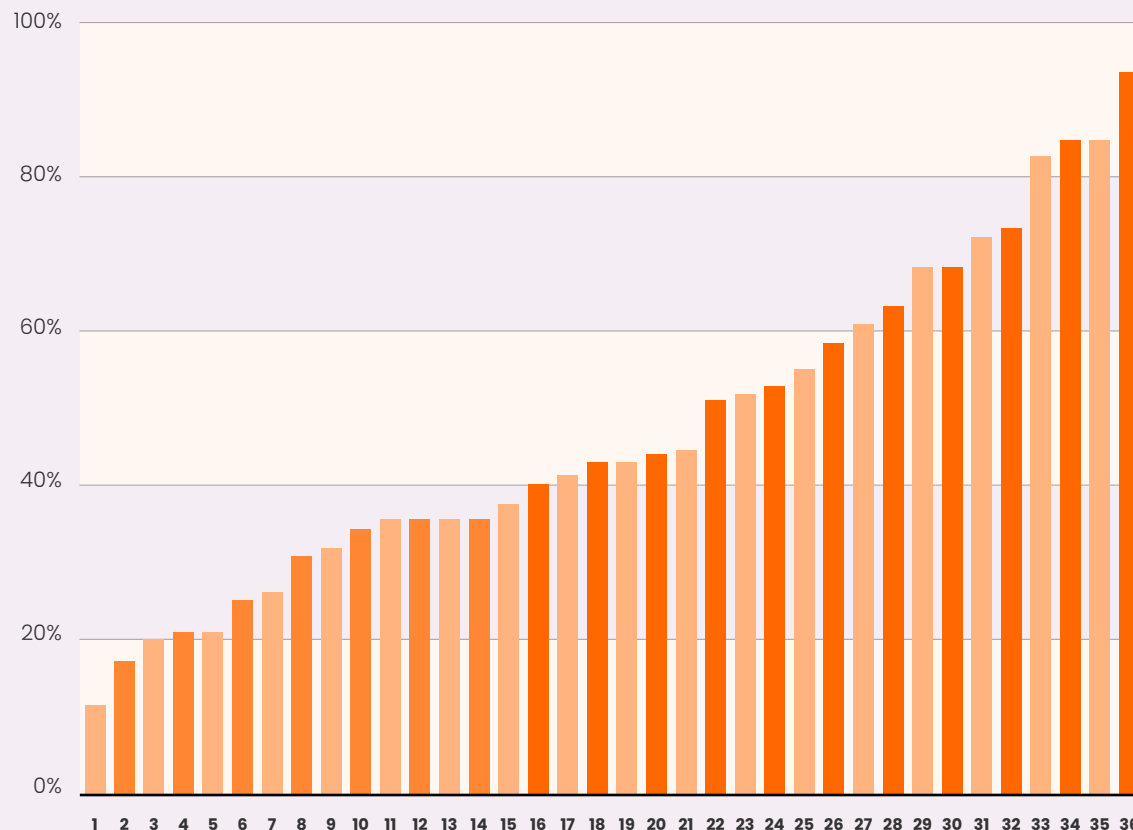
What would inspire customers to opt-in to emails?

Exclusivity is key!

More than half (52%) of respondents in our consumer survey identified 'a discount or other added benefit upon signing up' as the top reason they would opt-in to emails.

The second most popular reason, chosen by 14%, was 'early access to new product ranges or sales.' This underscores the importance of offering exclusivity to grow a contactable database. Customers want to feel that receiving emails adds value to their shopping experience.

The remaining answers were:

- I am unsure (**10.3%**)
- Nothing would attract me to opt in to receiving a retailers' emails (**8.8%**)
- Personalised experiences – e.g., receiving product recommendations (**7%**)
- Insider tips and expert advice related to the product category (**3.7%**)
- Feeling part of a community (**3.7%**)
- And 'Other' (**0.5%**)

Are retailers transparent with emails?

It would be beneficial for retailers to clearly highlight the advantages of receiving emails, as many customers feel that retailers are only 'somewhat' transparent about the content they will receive before opting in. While some information is provided, it often lacks detail.

Notably, **30.1% of respondents believe that retailers are vague or unclear about the types of emails they send**, indicating room for improvement in communication.
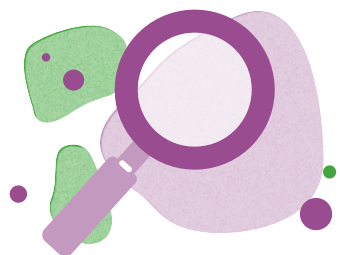
Do you believe retailers are transparent about the types of emails customers will receive before they opt-in?

Response	Percentage
Yes - Most retailers clearly outline the types of emails customers can expect	13.0%
Somewhat - Retailers provide some information, but it could be more detailed	47.9%
No - Retailers are often vague or unclear about the types of emails they send	30.1%
Unsure - I haven't noticed or paid attention to the level of transparency	9.0%
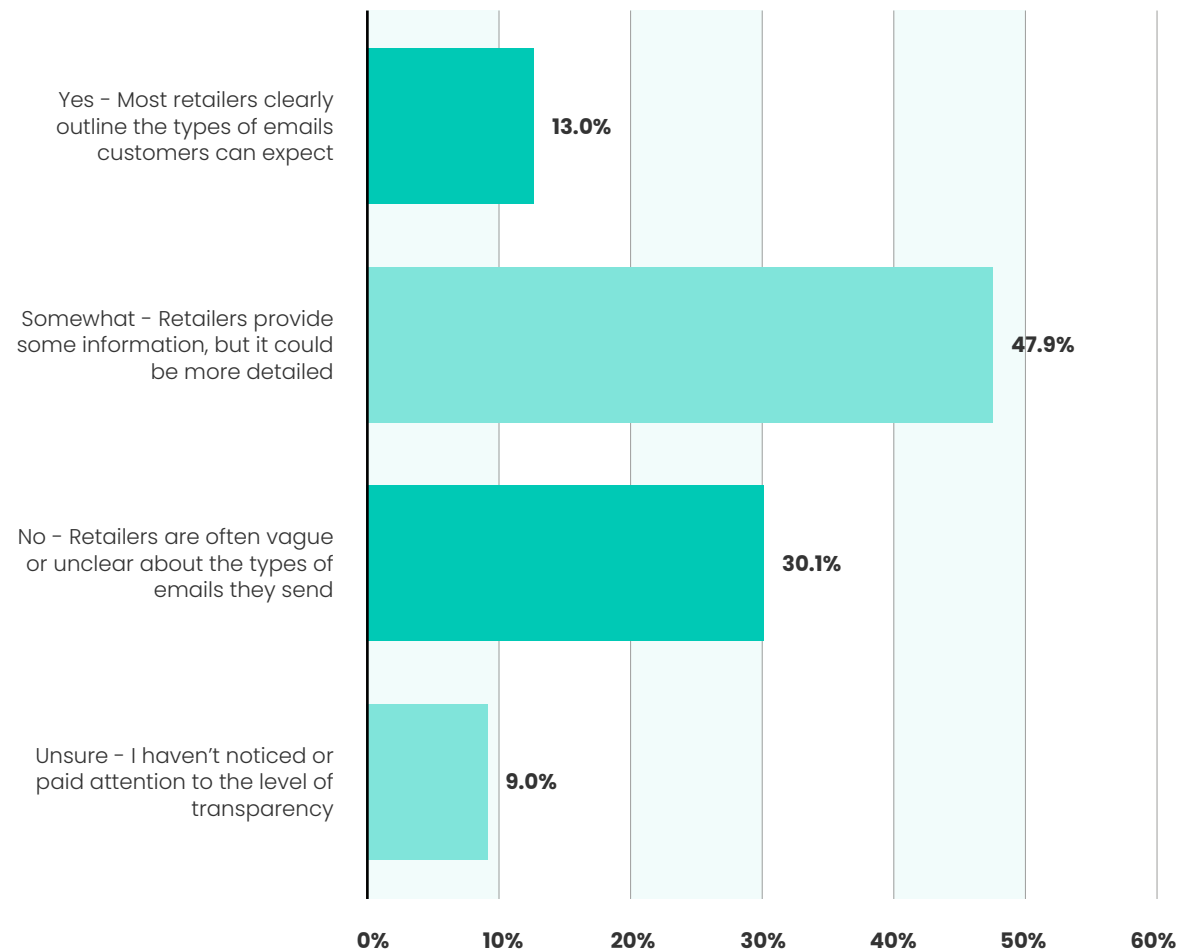
How email has grown in the last year

The average growth rate of email databases

The average retailer reported their email database grew by 9% in 2023, and of the 30 retailers who provided us with this data, only 7 saw flat performance or declines.

Tips for growing a healthy email list

*Growing your mailing list is important, but the real focus should always be on **attracting high-quality, engaged subscribers.***

Retailers should avoid shortcuts like buying email lists, skipping list hygiene, or bypassing double opt-in. These practices can damage email deliverability and hurt long-term success.

Instead, invest in value-driven strategies like offering personalised incentives and keeping your list clean.

These efforts build sustainable growth and keep your audience engaged.

- Joanna Wójcik, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

What was the growth rate of your email database in 2023? i.e. the volume of contacts you have who are subscribed to email marketing in 2023 vs 2022
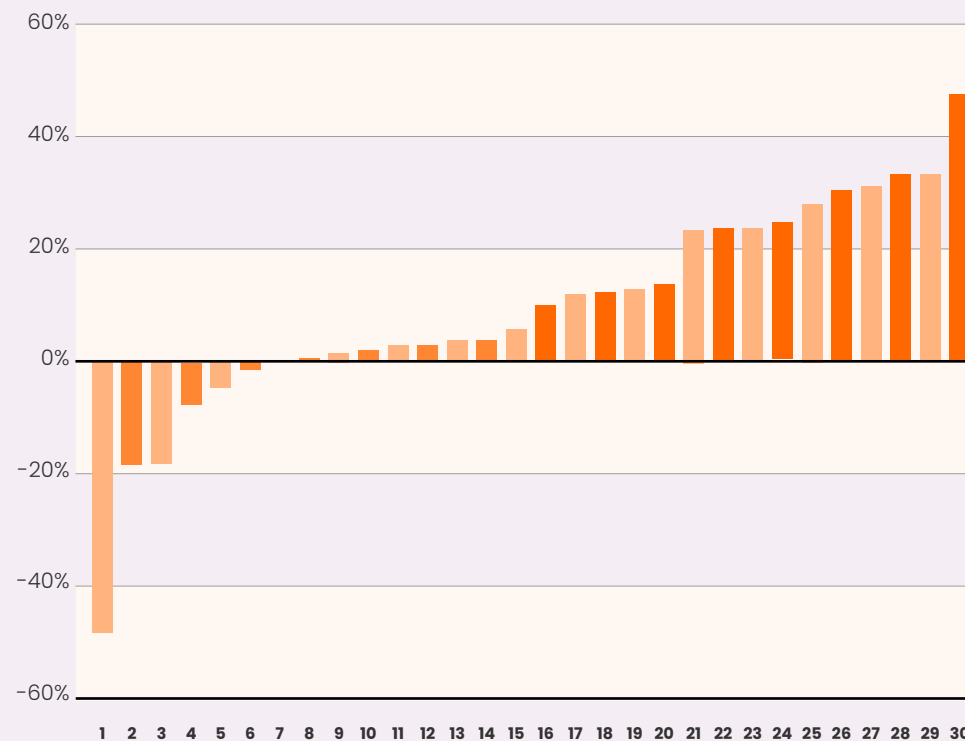
Customers reveal the number of emails they subscribe to

Our consumer survey results show that most customers (32.5%) subscribed to 1-5 retailers' emails in the last year (Dec 2023 – Dec 2024). A notable 22.8% subscribed to 5-10 retailers, which implies a strong willingness to engage with retailers via this channel.

- **9.4%** subscribed to 10-15 retailers' emails

- **5%** subscribed to 15-20 retailers' emails

- **1.4%** subscribed to 20-25 retailers' emails

- **2.8%** subscribed to 25+ retailers' emails

- A significant **18.7%** of consumers were unsure

- Only **7.4%** of consumers didn't subscribe to any retailers' emails

SUBSCRIBE

The impact of personalisation in emails

Retailers reveal the direct impact of personalisation in their emails

Personalisation proves to be valuable in email communications to consumers. Our retailer research showed that personalisation increased retailers' open rates (58%) and click through rate (46%). 27% of retailers noticed that their personalised emails increased their purchase rate.

Does using personalisation in emails work?

Response	Percentage
It increased our Open Rates	58%
It increased our Click Through Rate	46%
It increased our Purchase Rate	27%
We haven't been able to track the results	23%
None of the above	4%

getresponse.com/max
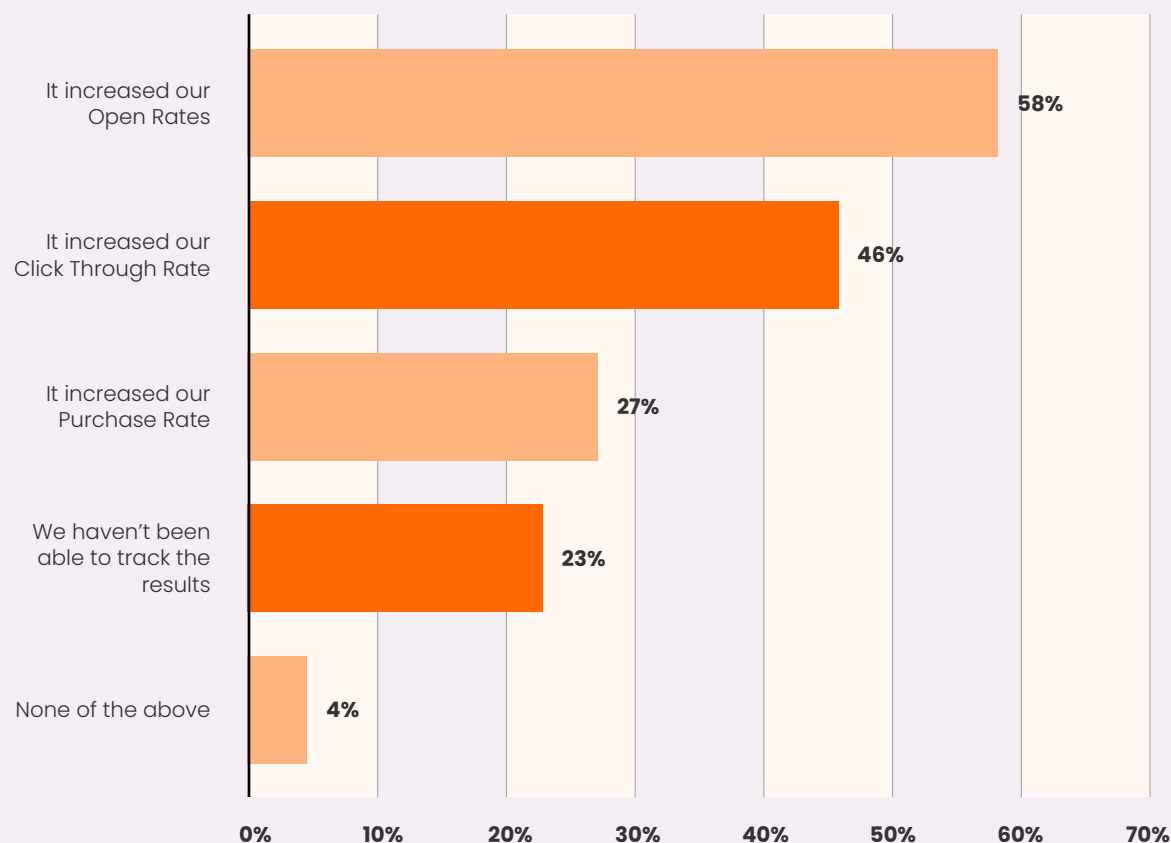
Customers reveal their personalisation preferences

Our consumer research reveals that **48% of consumers are more likely to engage with emails that are personalised to them**, with an additional 28% being 'somewhat' more likely to engage. 8% said they are unsure and 16% said no, they are not more likely to engage with personalised emails.

This highlights the significant value of prioritising personalisation in email strategies to enhance customer engagement and drive better results.

Nearly half of respondents (48.7%) indicated that their preferred type of personalisation in emails is 'personalised offers and rewards.' The second most popular choice, selected by 31.5% of respondents, was 'recommended products based on my previous behaviour.'

What personalisation in emails do you like/would you like best? (Please select up to three answers)

Answer	Percentage
Personalised offers and rewards	48.7%
Recommended products based on my previous behaviour	31.5%
Addressing you on first name basis e.g., 'Hi Matthew'	22%
I do not want to receive personalised emails	20.5%
Personal reminders (e.g., abandoned cart reminder/ back in stock notifications)	17.5%
Personalised content that reflects my life stage (e.g., student, new parent, professional)	12.1%
Location-Based Personalisation (e.g., products that reflect the season/ your culture)	9.6%
I am not sure	6.8%
Other	0.2%

Personalisation – best practices

Personalisation works because it makes customers feel understood. Instead of generic messages, they get emails that align with their interests.

- *Use advanced segmentation for better personalisation.*
- *Recommend products based on what they viewed, added to their cart, or purchased.*
- *Small touches, like using their first name in subject lines, personalised subject lines (more information below), or celebrating birthdays, can make a big impact.*
- *Respect privacy—be transparent about how you use their data and stick to your word.*
- *Keep your tone helpful, not intrusive.*
- *Test everything. What resonates with one group might not work for another.*

The key is balance: show you care, respect boundaries, and give people a reason to open your emails. The results will speak for themselves.

– Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Retailers' use of personalisation in subject lines

Personalisation in subject lines is an effective strategy for increasing email open rates. Currently, 68% of retailers use personalised subject lines in their campaign emails, while 50% apply this tactic to their flow emails.

The personalisation in subject lines that created the best open rates for retailers were as the examples to the bottom right.

We analysed anonymised subject lines using an AI engine to generate alternatives that matched their tone, style, format, wording, and approach. The results were insightful:

"Last Chance! Clearance Event Ends Soon – Grab Your Favorites Now!" 🛍️

"Celebrate Spring with 20% Off New Arrivals! 🌷 **Don't Miss Out!"**

Both subject lines emphasised promotional details, created a sense of urgency, and addressed the reader directly. Interestingly, both also included emojis. While emojis can boost open rates, using them sparingly is advisable to avoid the email being flagged as spam.

Personalisation
SUBJECT LINE

From	Subject
MEGA RETAIL	Matthew - You're going to love our new Summer gifts! 😃

68%
Campaign Emails

50%
Flow Emails

Informal and Conversational tone:
"Don't worry..."
"Get your hands on..."

Urgency and scarcity:
"Last few days - don't worry there's still time"

Direct & Enticing:
"Your exclusive early access"

Promotion- 1/3 included a reference to discount activity:
"20% off Everything"

Popular words:
New, Free, Off

Highlighted benefits:
"Luxury for less"

Emojis: 🤍 👋 😍 😃

Subject lines that entice customers the most

We also asked customers which type of subject line would make them most likely to open an email. After 'discounts or promotions' (51.5%), the second most popular choice was 'personalised subject lines' (9.3%), highlighting their importance in engaging customers.
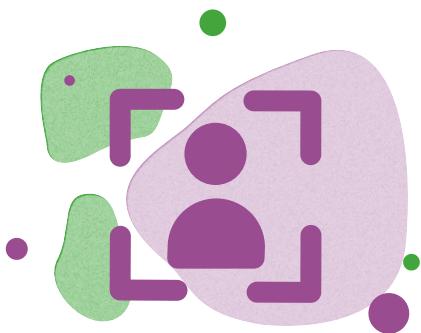
What type of emails subject line would make you most likely to open an email? (Please select all that apply)
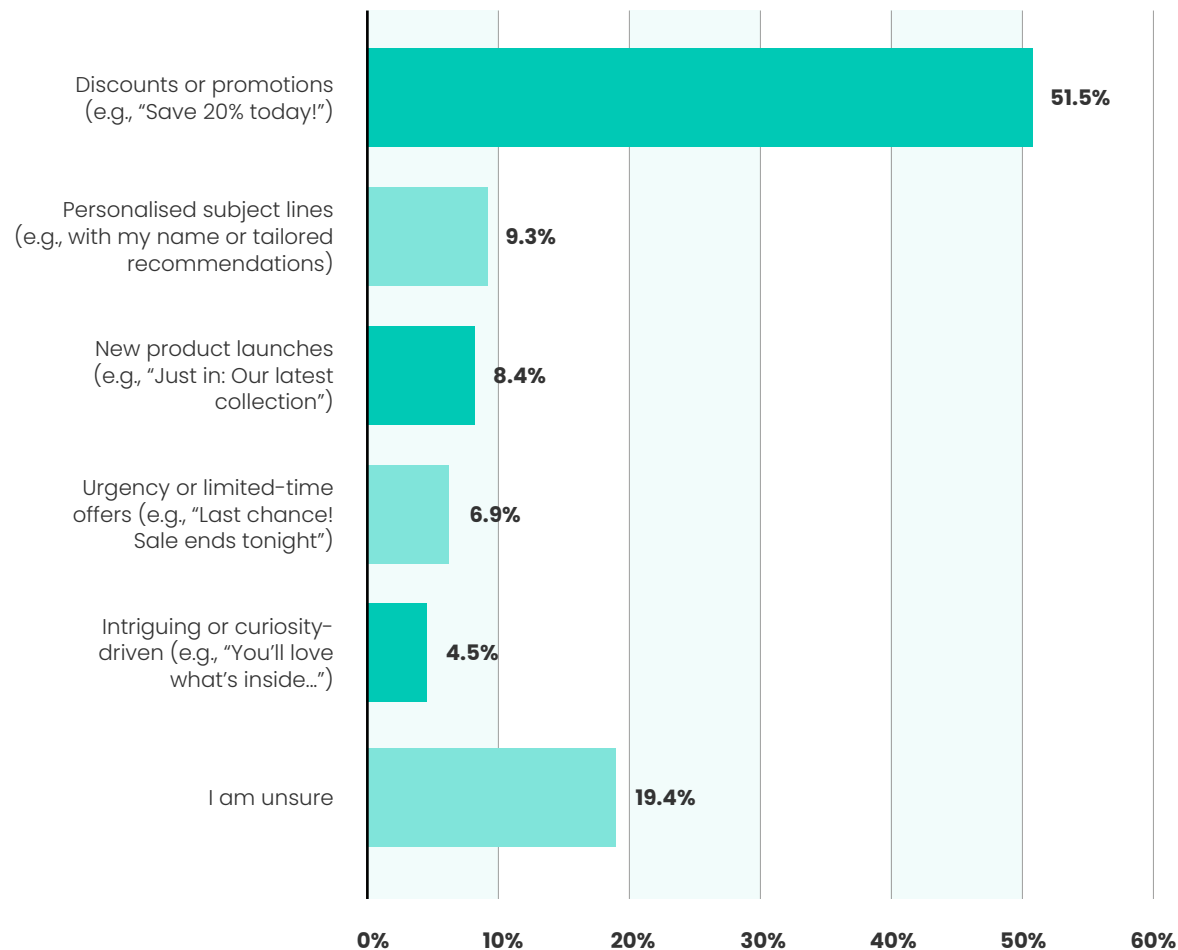
Subject line type	Percentage
Discounts or promotions (e.g., "Save 20% today!")	51.5%
Personalised subject lines (e.g., with my name or tailored recommendations)	9.3%
New product launches (e.g., "Just in: Our latest collection")	8.4%
Urgency or limited-time offers (e.g., "Last chance! Sale ends tonight")	6.9%
Intriguing or curiosity-driven (e.g., "You'll love what's inside…")	4.5%
I am unsure	19.4%

Product recommandations via campaign versus flow emails

Personalisation can also be effectively used to promote products within emails, such as including phrases like 'this jumper is picked just for you.' **Currently, 65% of retailers incorporate this type of personalisation in their campaign emails, while 49% use it in their flow emails**.

Considering that personalised product recommendations is the second to top personalisation customers would most like (see page 23), it would be smart for more retailers to adopt this into their email strategy.

Tips for using product recommendations

Tailoring product recommendations to your customers' preferences offers big benefits: higher sales, increased loyalty, more cross-selling opportunities, and fewer abandoned carts.

To make your recommendations impactful, segment your audience based on purchase behaviour and preferences.

Go beyond just suggesting products – explain why they're a great fit, highlight reviews or testimonials, and show how the items complement previous purchases. This personal touch not only drives engagement but builds trust and loyalty.

– Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Personalisation PRODUCTS

MEGA RETAIL
Picked just for you

Get Holiday Ready

The Latest Looks

Warm Tootsies!

65%
Campaign Emails

49%
Flow Emails

Customers' issues with personalised emails

Over half (56.1%) of respondents reported experiencing issues when encountering personalisation in retailers' emails. The primary reason is that 'the product recommendations do not align with my preferences' (34.5%), with the second most common issue being that 'the information in the emails appears incorrect or out-of-date' (26.1%).

A key problem with product recommendations is that they are typically based on the customer's previous behaviours during browsing or purchasing. Many retailers will be unaware when a purchase was made as a one-off gift, consequently providing ill-fitting recommendations thereafter. Retailers could address this by posing follow-up questions to better understand their customers, specifically making a point of enquiring about the intended recipient of their shopping.

32.6% said they have had no issues with personalised emails, and 18.5% said N/A, they don't receive personalised emails.

Email communication preferences

Getting email frequency right

The average number of campaign emails that retailers sent out per month in 2023 was 23, which works out to be roughly one email for every working day. This means that **retailers tend to send 5 emails per week** – however, this is likely to be segmented – not all customers in a retailers' database will receive 5 emails.

Retailers tend to send the most campaign emails during November, which is as expected around the time of Black Friday and fierce competition.

Average count of campaign emails sent out across 2023
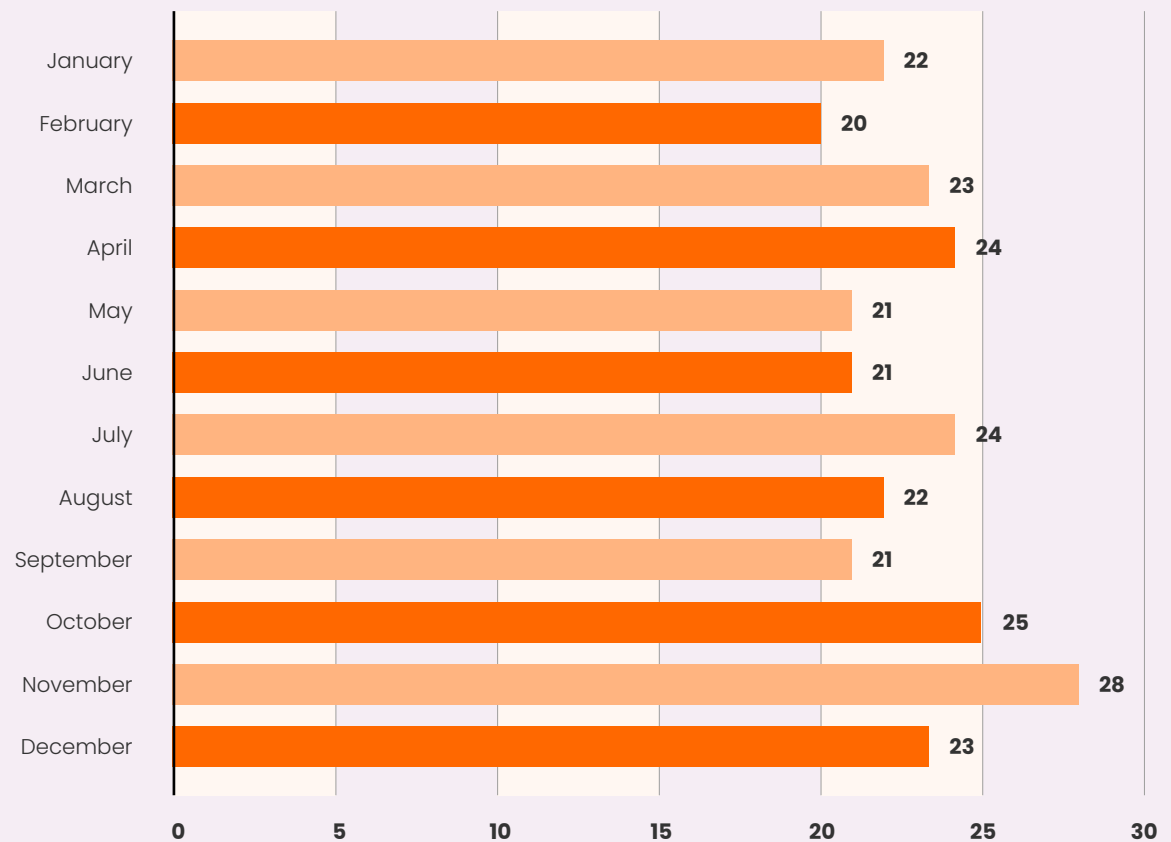
Month	Count
January	22
February	20
March	23
April	24
May	21
June	21
July	24
August	22
September	21
October	25
November	28
December	23

The state of retail email marketing: Uncover key consumer preferences and performance data

Our consumer research shows that around busy sale periods such as Black Friday, Christmas and January sales, most customers expect to hear from retailers up to a maximum of 3 times within one week. Knowing that customers unsubscribe from emails most commonly because they receive too many emails, it is important to try to stick to these expectations.

In one week, how many times (roughly) do you expect to hear from a retailer during busy sale periods? E.g., Black Friday, Christmas, January sales

Response	Percentage
1 time	16.7%
2 times	21.9%
3 times	18.0%
4 times	7.2%
5 times	8.8%
6 times	2.6%
7 times	4.8%
8 times	1.3%
9 times	0.3%
10 times	2.2%
10+ times	5.6%
I am unsure	10.6%
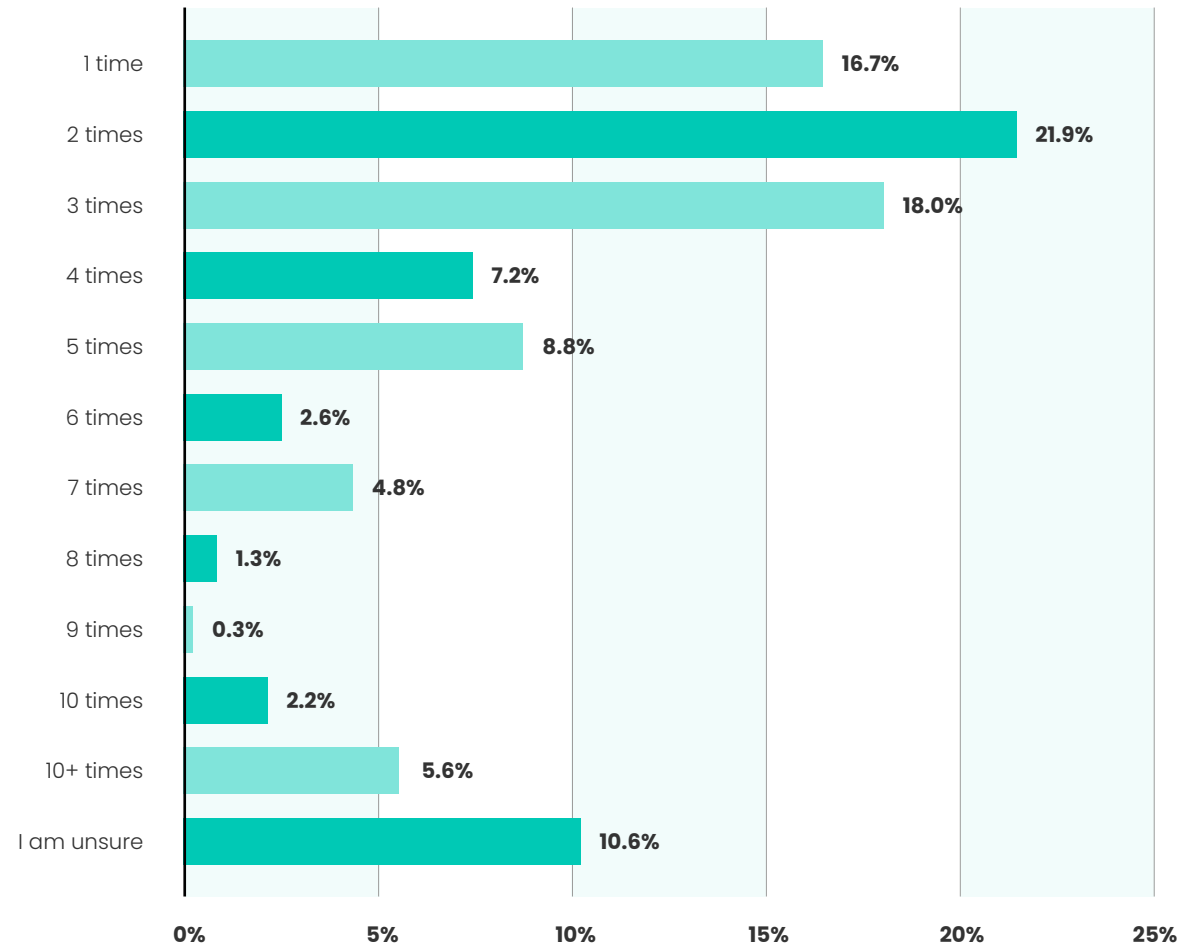
The best time of day to send emails

We asked retailers to tell us what time of day their email with the best open rate was sent. It appears that the exact hour of the day isn't universally successful for open rates. Instead, retailers reported a full spread across the day. However, none of these emails were sent before 6am or after 10pm.

Though there was no correlation between the time of day and the best email open rate, generally, **customers are most likely to open an email in the evening (32.1%) or in the morning (28.4%)**. 17.2% said they'd be most likely to open an email in the afternoon, and only 5.3% exclaimed that they would most likely open an email from a retailer at night.

The time of day of the email with the best open rate

getresponse.com/max
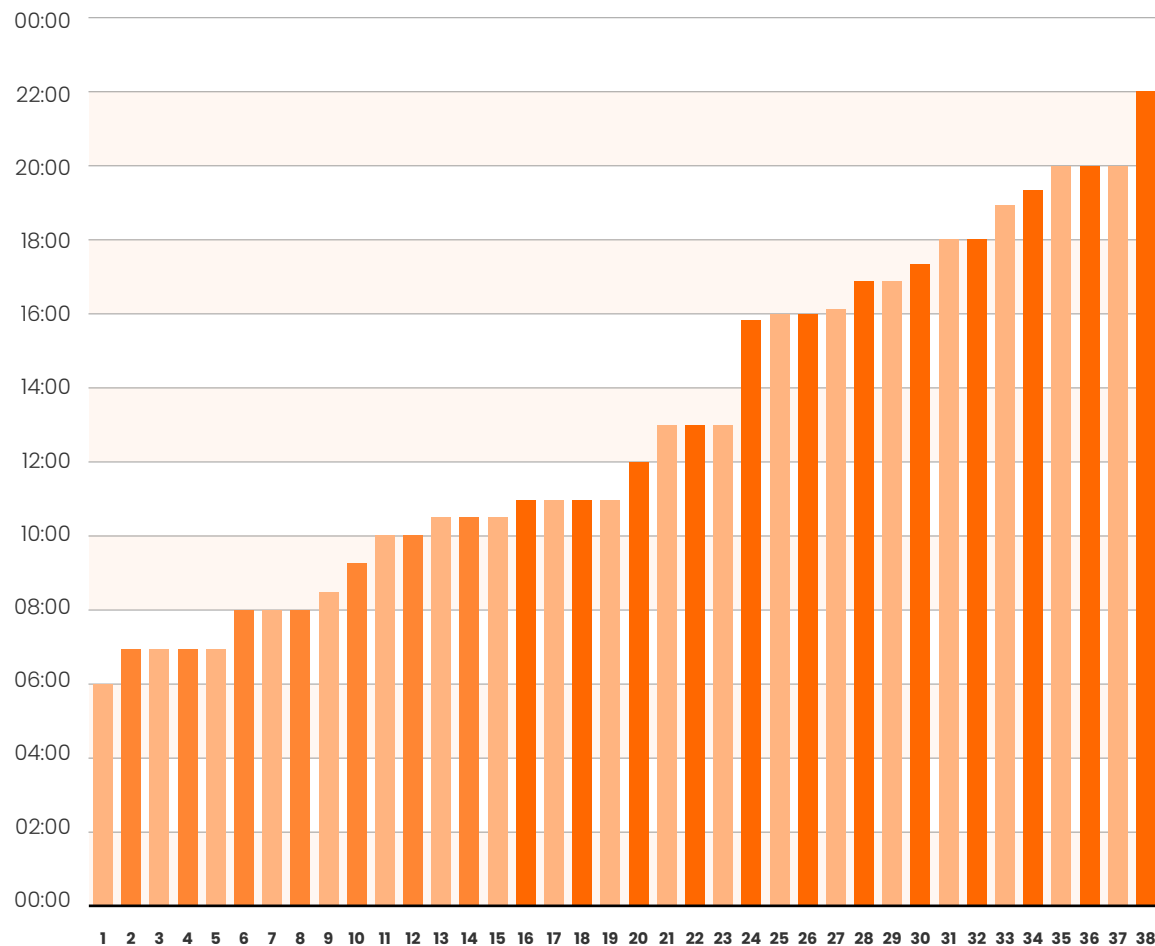
The best day of the week to send an email

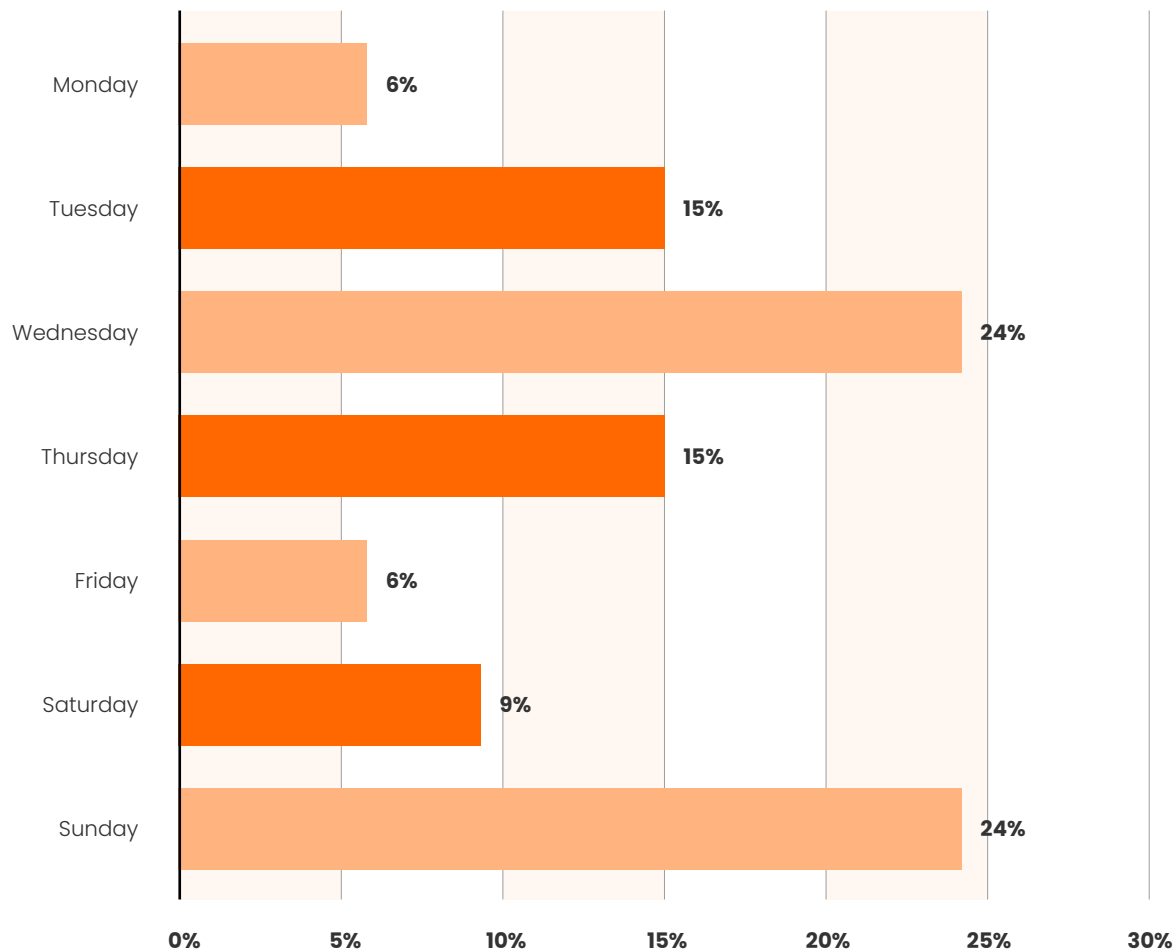Our retailer research has shown that the days with the best email open rates are Wednesday and Sunday.

What day of the week was the best open rate email sent?

Day	Percentage
Monday	6%
Tuesday	15%
Wednesday	24%
Thursday	15%
Friday	6%
Saturday	9%
Sunday	24%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30%

Where are customers checking retailers' emails?

The vast majority of respondents (72%) revealed that they are most likely to check their personal emails at home. The second most popular location is at work (13%).

Best practices for email timing

When it comes to email timing, there's no one-size-fits-all. While data suggests Wednesday and Sunday work well, your audience may have its own preferences. That's where testing comes in. A/B test send times to discover when your subscribers are most engaged—AI-driven tools can help identify patterns you might miss.

For content, urgency is key. Phrases like "24 hours only" or "last chance" encourage action. Pair them with strong CTAs like "Shop Now" to drive conversions. But be careful not to overdo it—if every email is urgent, none will feel special.

Test, adjust, and leverage urgency. You'll find the right timing and approach to keep your audience engaged and clicking.

- Victor Tintar, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Typically, where are you most likely to check your personal emails? (please select all that apply)

- 3%
- 9%
- 1%
- 2%
- 13%
- 72%
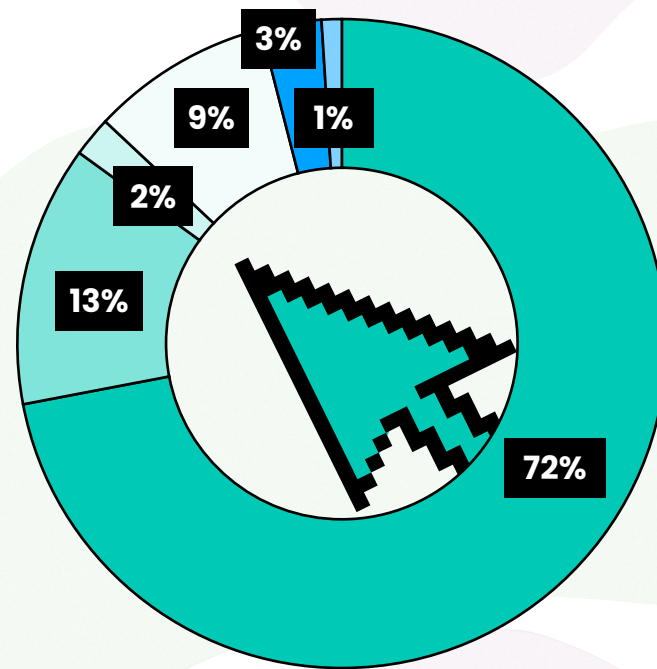
Legend:
- At home
- At work
- At school/ University
- During commutes/ travel
- I am not sure
- Other

Open and Click Through Rate (CTR) trends

Market average trends split by month

Generally, flow emails have a higher Open Rate than campaign emails. Nonetheless, campaign emails experience a greater uplift around the final months of the year, likely owing to increased promotional activity.

Despite an increase in flow email Open Rates towards the end of the year, at the same time these emails receive a reduction in Click Through Rates, starting at over 6.5% and declining to under 5% by year end. Even if emails are opened, customers may be less inclined to engage due to content fatigue or oversaturation.

A drop in CTR during November and December is often caused by subscriber fatigue from overcrowded inboxes filled with Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and holiday campaigns. Overwhelmed by repetitive, similar messaging, subscribers engage selectively and lose interest.

What was your average Open Rate for campaign emails and Flow emails across each month of 2023


Legend: ■ Flow ■ Campaign
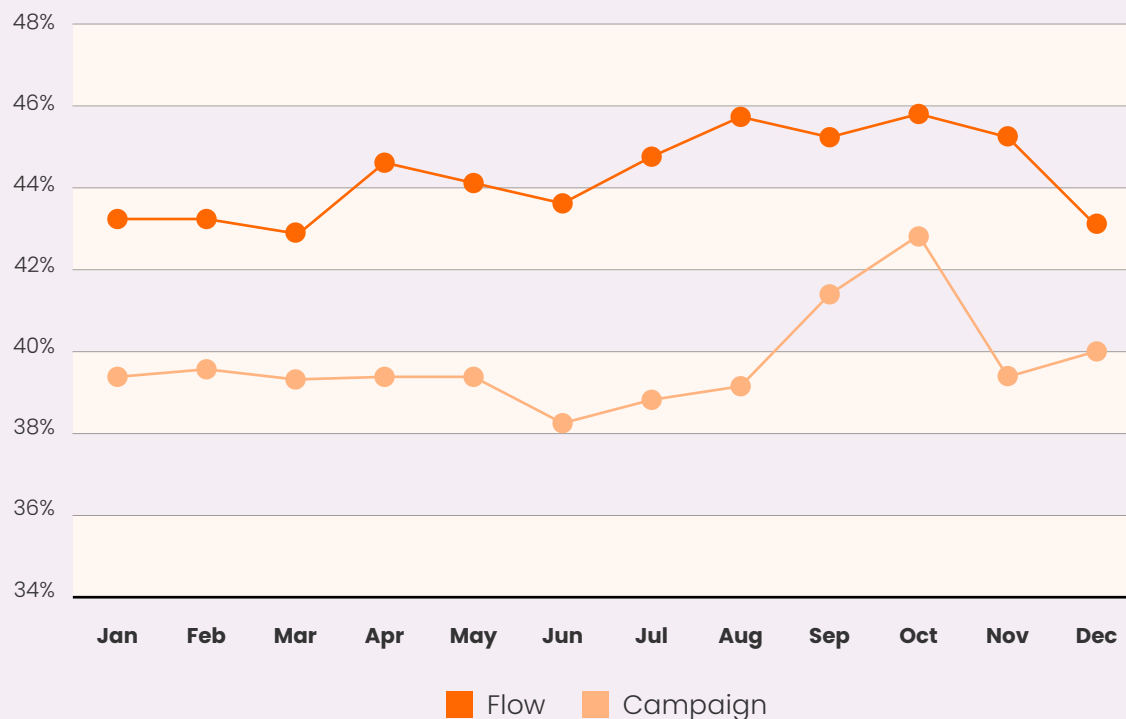
Tips to mitigate fatigue:

- **Segment for relevance:** *Send highly targeted content, like exclusive early access for VIPs.*

- **Optimise frequency:** *Prioritise fewer, high-quality emails over increasing volume.*

- **Be creative:** *Stand out with unique subject lines and personalised offers. Avoid generic lines like "Biggest Sale Ever!" and try something more engaging, like "Your holiday wish list awaits – with a surprise!"*

- **Strategic timing:** *Test off-peak hours for better visibility in crowded inboxes.*

- **Focus on value:** *Share gift guides, tips, or personalised recommendations alongside discounts.*

- **Post-holiday re-engagement:** *Launch campaigns to reconnect with disengaged subscribers after the holidays.*

This approach helps balance engagement and reduce fatigue, ensuring stronger CTRs during peak seasons.

- Joanna Wójcik, Senior Business Development Executive at GetResponse MAX

Q9: What was your average Click Through Rate for campaign emails and Flow emails across each month of 2023

Flow   Campaign
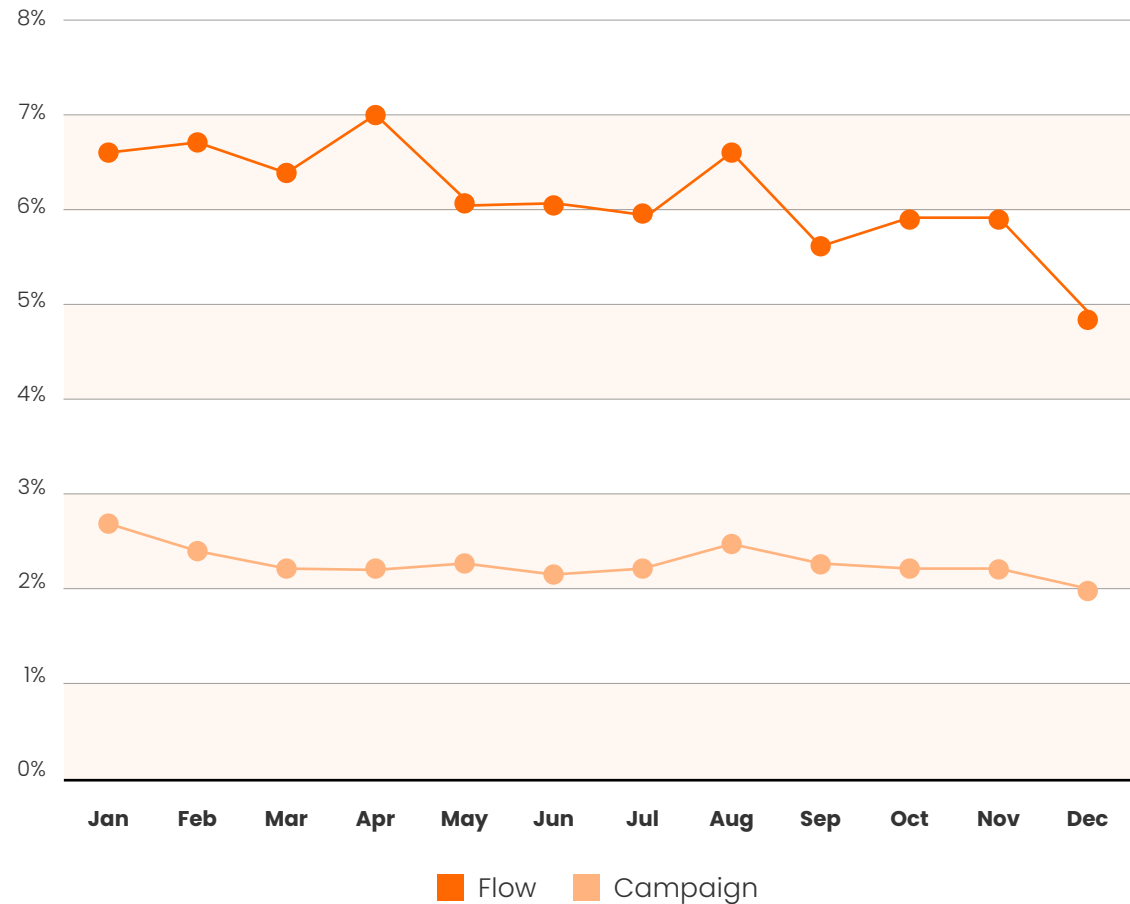
The best open rate and click through rate of 2023

The best performing campaign emails of 2023 saw an average Open Rate of 60% which is quite impressive. **Note that the average open rate across ALL emails is 39%**.

In comparison, the best-performing campaign emails achieved an average Click-Through Rate (CTR) of 11.9% across our survey sample, significantly surpassing the average CTR of all emails throughout the year, which was 4.2%.

Retailers also shared the call-to-action (CTA) text used in their highest-performing emails. Trends reveal that 75% of retailers incorporated the word "shop" in their CTA, with the phrase "Shop Now" being the most popular, appearing in one-third of all emails.

The very best Open Rates - Campaign

Each circle represents one retailer

getresponse.com/max

Additional tip: Remember to monitor your email deliverability

Open rates and click-through rates are essential metrics to monitor, but there's one more critical factor marketers can't afford to overlook: deliverability. Deliverability is the foundation of any successful email marketing strategy. Without reaching the inbox, even the best content won't drive results.

To keep email deliverability high, focus on proper email authentication, regularly clean your list, and adjust your sending frequency to match engagement levels. Make unsubscribing easy, reengage inactive contacts, and offer preference surveys to tailor communication.

Partnering with a trusted email provider is essential to ensure your emails consistently land where they belong – in your customers' inboxes.

- Wojciech Błażałek, Head of Email Deliverability at GetResponse

The very best Click Through Rates - Campaign
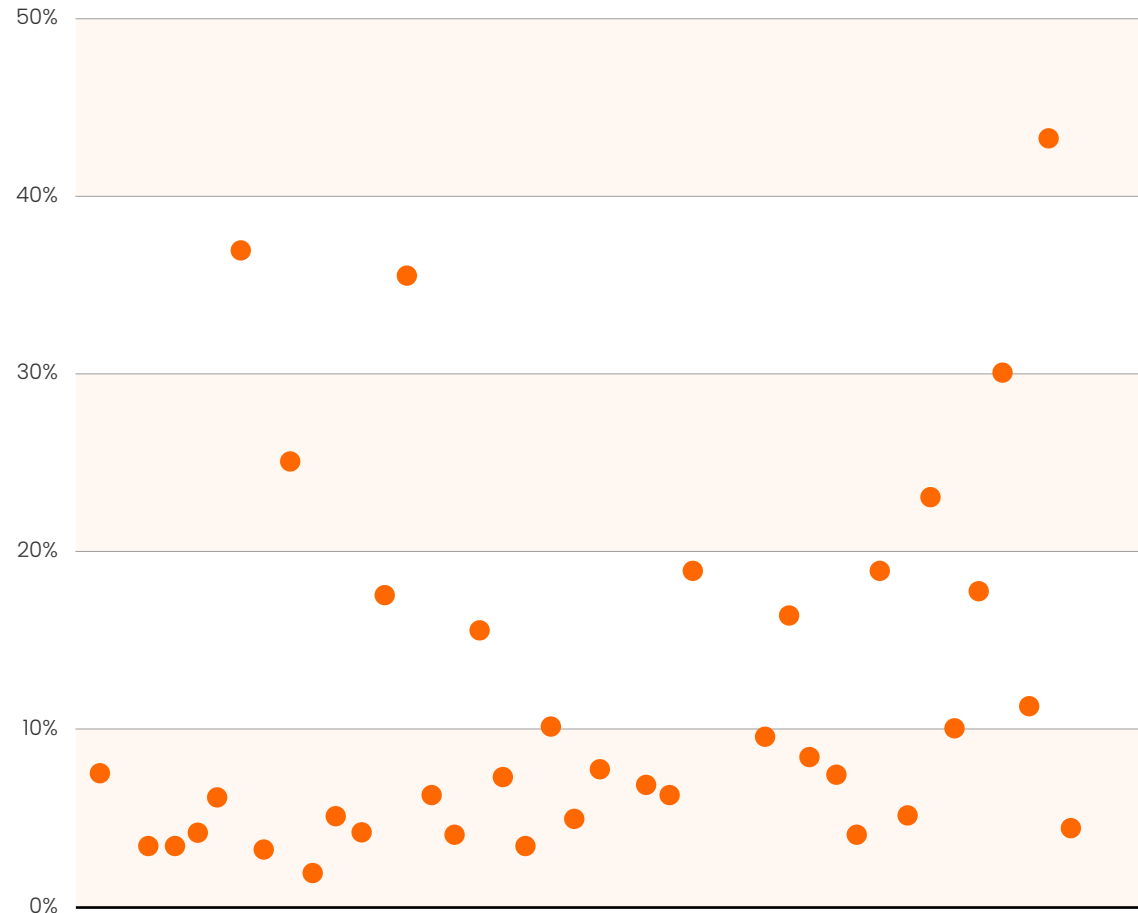
Each circle represents one retailer

What may cause lower click through rates?

We asked customers about their comfort levels when clicking on links within retailer emails. The top responses were 'mostly comfortable' (32.4%) and 'somewhat comfortable' (31.2%). However, only 11.8% of respondents reported feeling 'completely comfortable.' This indicates a need for retailers to build greater consumer trust to improve engagement and boost Click-Through Rates.

Do you feel comfortable clicking on links within emails from a retailer?

Response	Percentage
Completely comfortable - I trust the retailers I've purchased from before	11.8%
Mostly comfortable - But I'm cautious and verify first	32.4%
Sometimes comfortable - Depends on the retailer and how familiar I am with them	31.2%
Rarely comfortable - I'm very skeptical of links in emails	13.2%
Never comfortable - I avoid clicking links in emails at all costs	11.4%
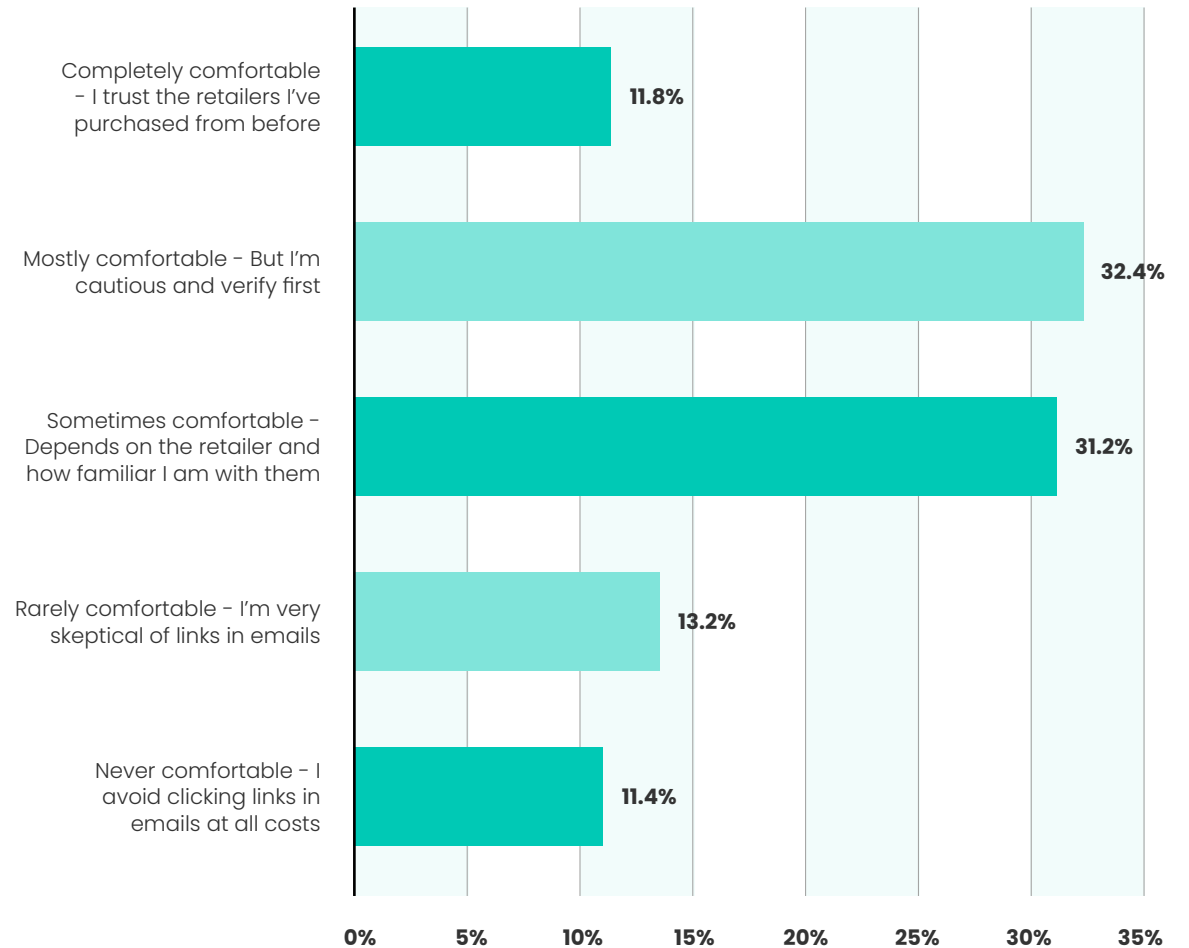
Open rate, click through rate and order rate quartile benchmarks

Email Performance – Quartile Benchmarks

	25th	50th	75th
CAMPAIGN – Open Rate	32%	40%	48%
FLOW – Open Rate	33%	45%	54%
CAMPAIGN – Click Through Rate	1%	1.6%	3%
FLOW – Click Through Rate	3.1%	4.7%	7.8%
CAMPAIGN – Order Rate	0.02%	0.05%	0.1%
FLOW – Order Rate	0.3%	0.7%	1.4%
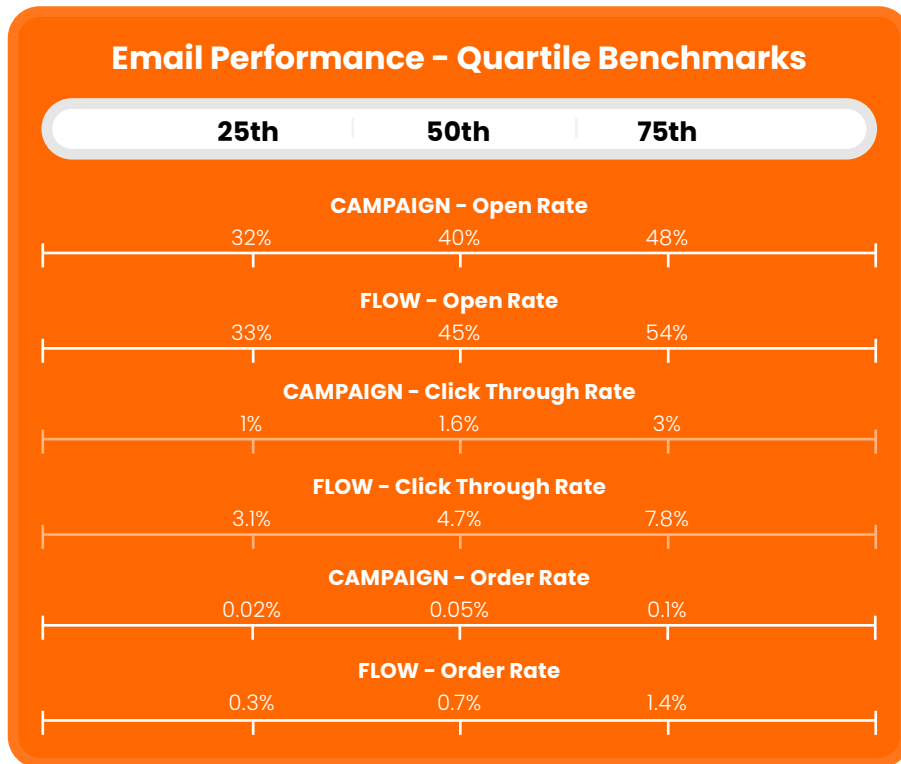
Flow emails consistently outperform campaign emails across all metrics, highlighting their effectiveness in engaging recipients and driving actions. Businesses should leverage flows for personalised, action-triggered communications while optimising campaigns to improve engagement and conversion rates.

1. **Open Rates:**

   Campaign Emails: Open rates range from 32% (25th quartile) to 48% (75th quartile), with a median of 40%. This suggests that while some campaigns struggle to engage recipients, the top-performing campaigns achieve nearly half of recipients opening their emails.

   Flow Emails: Open rates are slightly higher, ranging from 33% (25th quartile) to 54% (75th quartile), with a median of 45%. This indicates that flows tend to perform better in capturing attention.

2. **Click Through Rates (CTR):**

   Campaign Emails: CTRs are relatively low, ranging from 1% (25th quartile) to 3% (75th quartile), with a median of 1.6%. This suggests limited engagement with content beyond the email.

   Flow Emails: CTRs are significantly higher, ranging from 3.1% (25th quartile) to 7.8% (75th quartile), with a median of 4.7%. This shows that flows not only get opened more but also lead to more customer interaction.

3. **Order Rates:**

   Campaign Emails: Order rates are very low, ranging from 0.02% (25th quartile) to 0.1% (75th quartile), with a median of 0.05%. This indicates that campaigns are less effective in directly driving purchases.

   Flow Emails: Order rates are considerably higher, ranging from 0.3% (25th quartile) to 1.4% (75th quartile), with a median of 0.7%. Flows appear more successful in converting engagement into sales.
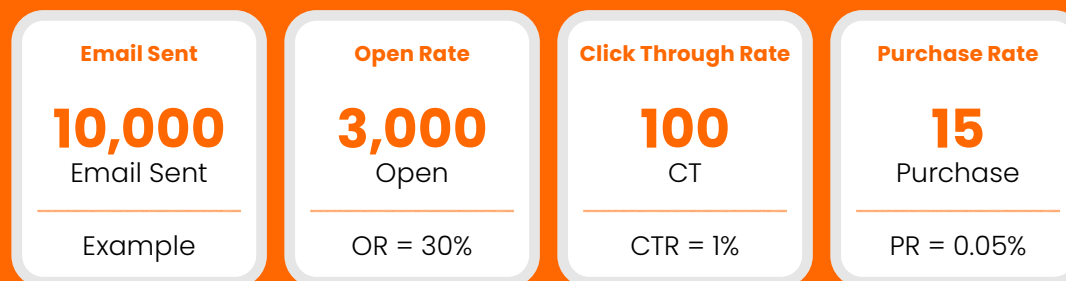
The email journey – From email sent to purchase

Typically, 30% of all emails sent are opened by customers, which is followed by a 1% click through rate and a 0.05% purchase rate.

Flow emails again beat campaign emails in the number of customers who then go on to make a purchase; 0.1% for campaign versus 1.1% for flow emails.

The path of an Email

Email Sent	Open Rate	Click Through Rate	Purchase Rate
10,000	**3,000**	**100**	**15**
Email Sent	Open	CT	Purchase
Example	OR = 30%	CTR = 1%	PR = 0.05%

Industry average

	Open Rate	Click Through Rate	Purchase Rate
Campaign	**40%**	**2.3%**	**0.1%**
Flow	**44%**	**6.1%**	**1.1%**

How emails influence customers' purchasing decisions

The chart shows that most respondents find retailer emails 'somewhat ineffective,' with 36.8% saying emails rarely convince them to purchase. However, 31.9% view emails as 'moderately effective,' occasionally prompting them to buy, indicating potential for improved targeting. **Only 4.8% find emails 'highly effective,' frequently leading to purchases**, highlighting a small but valuable segment of highly engaged customers. This suggests room for improvement in crafting more impactful and personalised email campaigns.

How effective are retailer's emails at inspiring you to make a purchase?
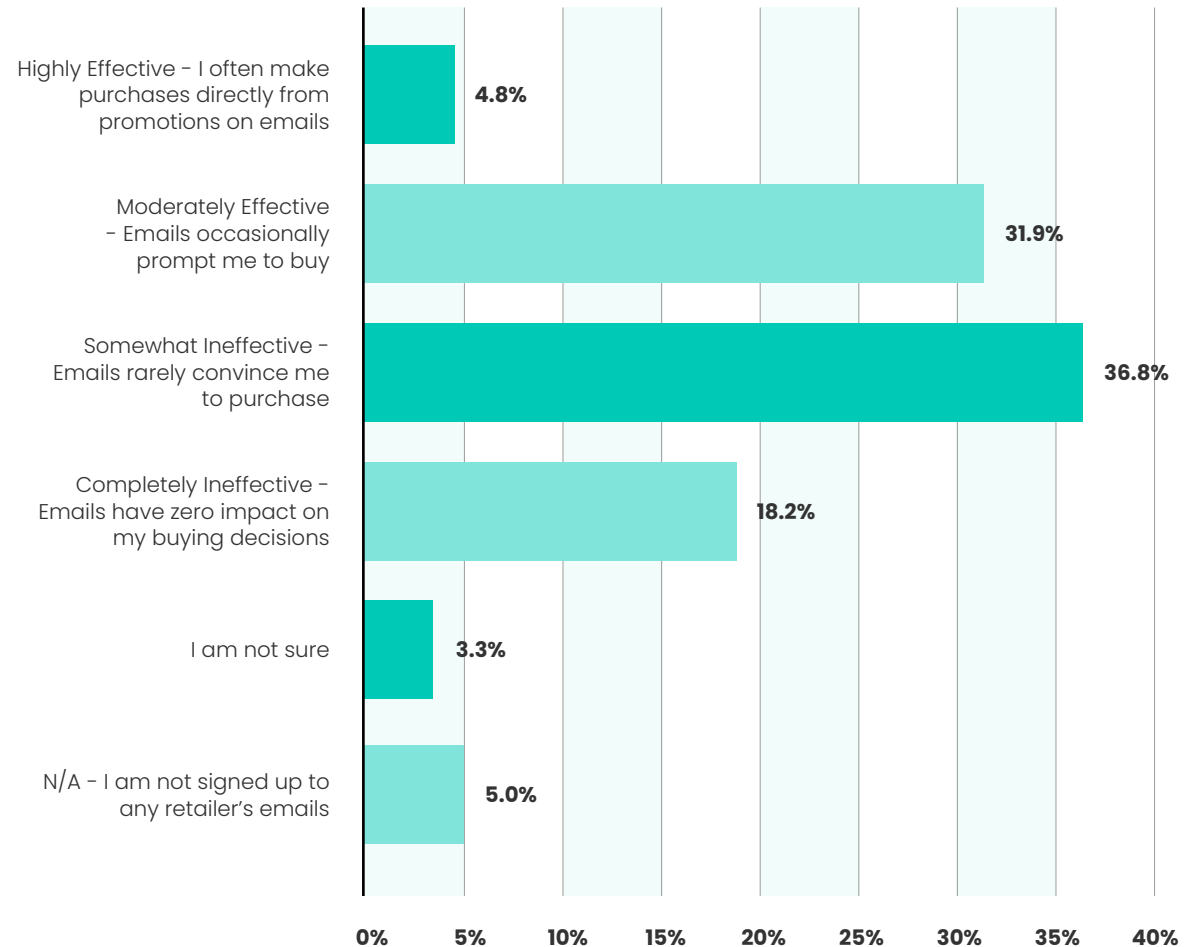
Highly Effective - I often make purchases directly from promotions on emails — **4.8%**

Moderately Effective - Emails occasionally prompt me to buy — **31.9%**

Somewhat Ineffective - Emails rarely convince me to purchase — **36.8%**

Completely Ineffective - Emails have zero impact on my buying decisions — **18.2%**

I am not sure — **3.3%**

N/A - I am not signed up to any retailer's emails — **5.0%**

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

The best purchase rate for campaign emails

The very best purchase rate across the retailer survey sample for campaign emails was 1.09% on average. In comparison, the average Purchase Rate across all emails is 0.62%.

The content that best drives purchase rates

The most popular content type across the best performing purchase rate emails was discount/promotion for an astonishing 91% of retailers.
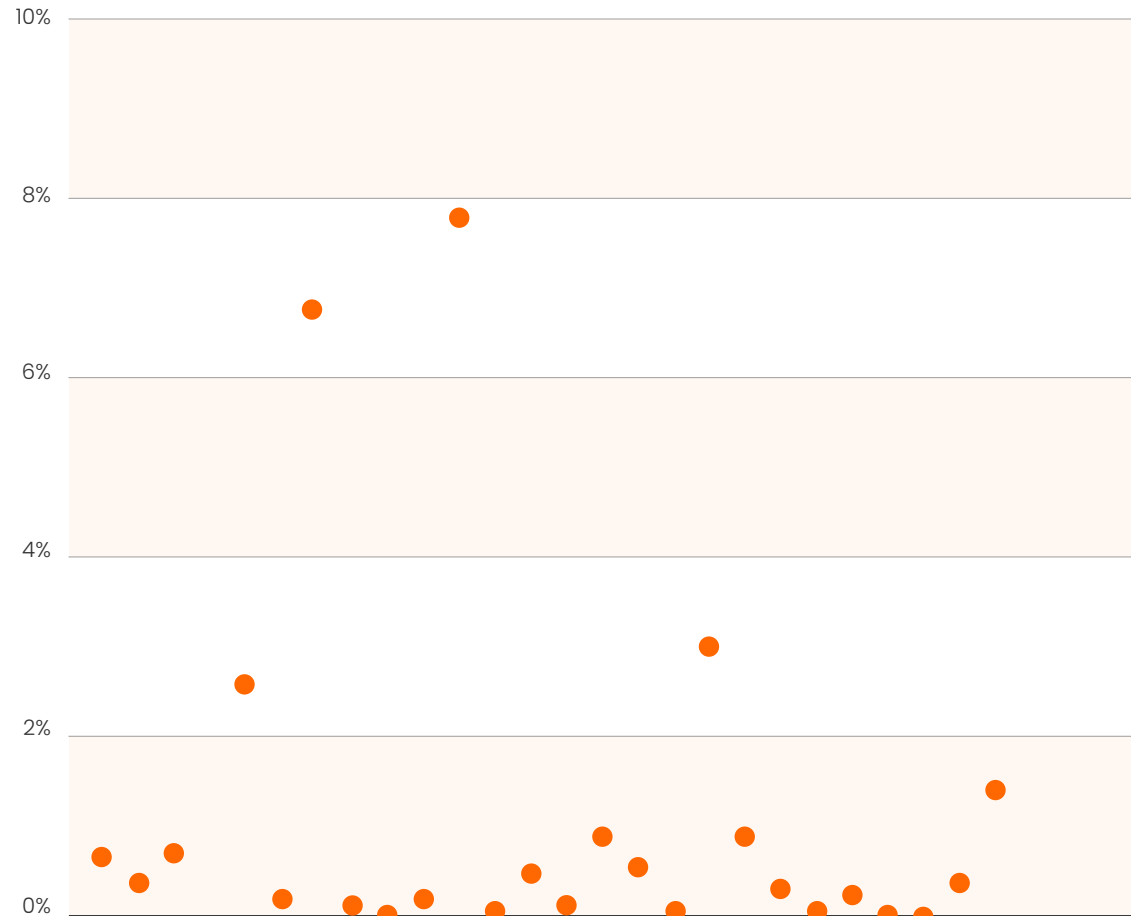
Other answers included:

New products (3%)

Product awareness (3%)

Competition (0%)

Upsell (0%)

Other (3%)

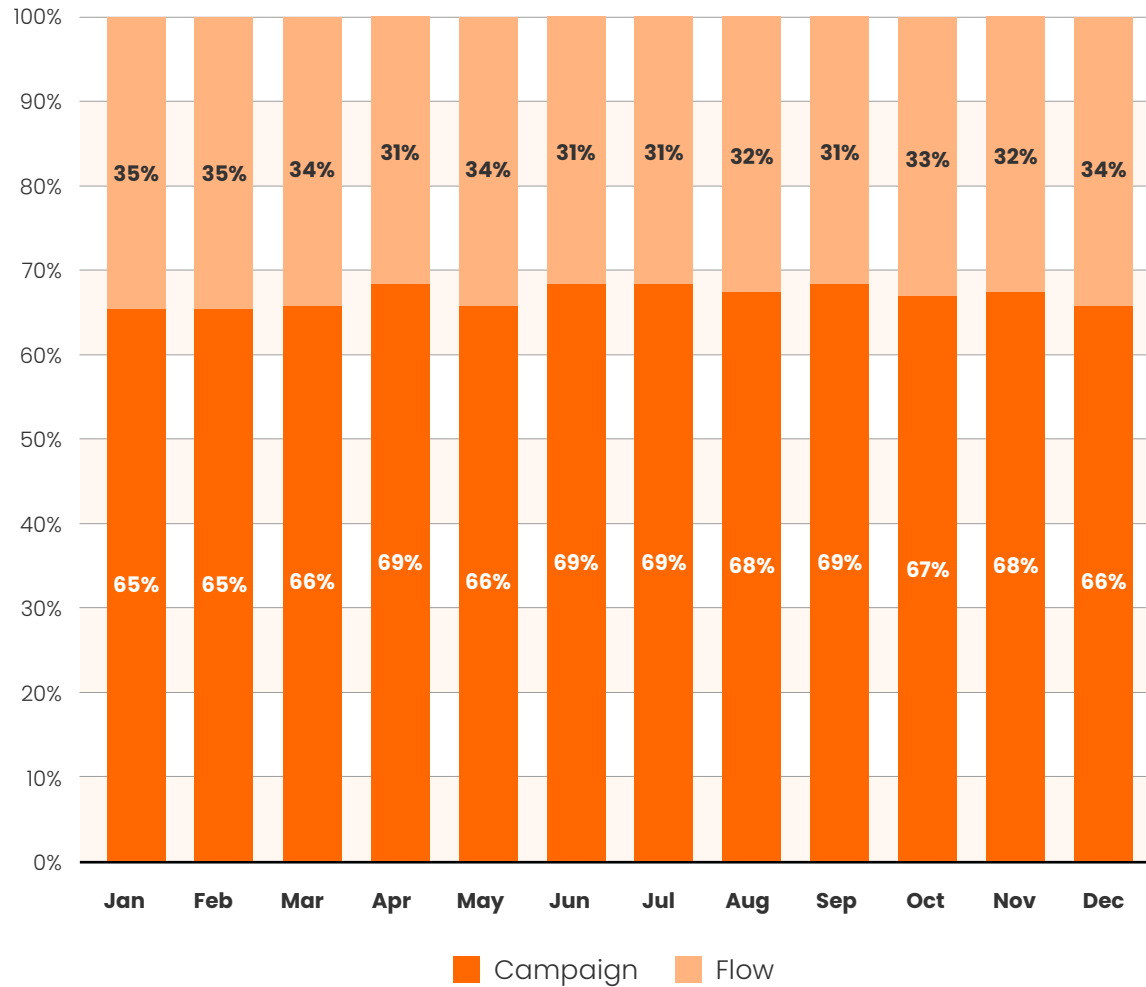**The very best Purchase Rates - Campaign**

Each circle represents one retailer

Revenue share for campaign versus flow emails

Campaign emails dominate the revenue share due to their broader reach, frequent promotions, and regular sending frequency, while flow emails generate consistent but smaller revenue due to their focussed, action-driven nature. Both play complementary roles in driving overall revenue.

Average Revenue share between Campaign and Flow emails in 2023 - Last Click

Month	Campaign	Flow
Jan	65%	35%
Feb	65%	35%
Mar	66%	34%
Apr	69%	31%
May	66%	34%
Jun	69%	31%
Jul	69%	31%
Aug	68%	32%
Sep	69%	31%
Oct	67%	33%
Nov	68%	32%
Dec	66%	34%

■ Campaign ■ Flow

getresponse.com/max

Conclusion

Nearly all customers prefer email as their primary communication channel, making it a critical focus for retailers. Given its prominence, optimising email strategies—from personalisation to timing and content relevance—is essential for fostering engagement, building trust, and driving measurable results.

getresponse.com/max

5 key takeaways from IMRG:

1

Flow emails outperform campaign emails in engagement and conversions: Flow emails consistently achieve higher open rates, click-through rates, and order rates compared to campaign emails, showing the importance of personalised, action-triggered communication. Flows lead to a 1.1% purchase rate compared to 0.1% for campaigns.

2

Exclusivity drives email opt-ins: Over half (52%) of consumers are most attracted to signing up for emails by discounts or added benefits. Early access to products or sales is another key motivator, emphasising the need for exclusive offers to grow a contactable database.

3

Spam and unsubscribe rates are low but can be reduced: The average spam rate across all emails is just 0.3%, and unsubscribe rates are similarly low at 0.63%. However, customers are most likely to unsubscribe if emails are too frequent (63.2%) or irrelevant (60.9%), highlighting the need for retailers to prioritise quality over quantity.

4

Personalisation boosts engagement: Personalised emails significantly improve performance, with 48% of consumers more likely to engage when content is tailored. Retailers reported increases in open rates (58%) and click-through rates (46%) from personalised emails, making it a vital strategy for success.

5

Campaign emails dominate revenue, but flows are crucial: Campaign emails contribute a larger share of revenue (65–69% monthly average) due to their broader reach and promotional focus, while flow emails provide consistent revenue from a smaller, more targeted audience. Together, they form a complementary strategy for driving sales.

5 key takeaways from GetResponse MAX:

1 Customers are eager to receive emails from retailers and are far more likely to engage and make a purchase when the content aligns with their interests and includes rewards or discounts. This is a valuable opportunity for retailers to strengthen relationships and drive sales.

2 Email remains one of the most preferred communication channels for customers to receive updates from retailers. To maximise its potential, it's essential to monitor key deliverability factors. Beyond creating valuable content, stay up to date with authentication standards, keep your list clean, re-engage inactive contacts, use double opt-in to confirm subscriber consent, make opting out easy, and adjust your email frequency. These steps will help maintain a healthy sender reputation and improve your overall campaign success.

3 Precise customer segmentation is crucial for success. While basic segmentation by gender, age, or location is important, using advanced methods—such as behaviours, purchase frequency, history, or specific problems customers aim to solve—can significantly enhance impact. This approach enables more personalised communication and increases the effectiveness of email campaigns in driving sales.

4 Discounts are a powerful driver of customer purchases, making them an essential part of any customer retention strategy. Offer promotions on products your clients are likely to be interested in (segmentation is key here), celebrate milestones with special offers, and invite them to join loyalty programmes.

5 Respecting your customers' needs and time is fundamental to success. Building strong relationships opens the door to upselling and cross-selling opportunities, boosts CLV, and fosters loyalty, creating a resilient brand. The golden rule? Ensure every message delivers genuine value. It's that simple.

Contact

IMRG

Tel: **0203 696 0980**
Email: **membership@imrg.org**
www.imrg.org

GetResponse MAX

Email: **sales@getresponse.com**
getresponse.com/max