

GLOBAL BENCHMARK REPORT 2021:

The changing face of cross-channel marketing



Contents

Report overview and purpose	1
Email open rates	2
Email engagement	4
Email vs. SMS usage	7
SMS engagement	9
Contact lists	11
Personalization and segmentation	13
Automation adoption	15
Closing remarks	17
Appendix	18

Report overview and purpose

The marketing landscape has changed a lot in the last three years. Compare your cross-channel marketing efforts with regional and industry standards analyzed from billions of messages and emails.

Today's marketing professionals face unprecedented challenges. Audiences are more digital than ever, especially in the wake of a pandemic that changed both consumer consumption behavior and the way businesses communicate. With these new challenges come new opportunities, and in a world where consumers have more choice than ever, we see marketers working hard to deliver valuable, personalized content that honors their audience's time and privacy.

In the Dotdigital Global Benchmark Report, we dive deep into how marketing campaigns have evolved and adapted during this period, using data gathered over almost three years to track notable patterns in marketing behavior. Analyzing activities across 40M+ SMS messages and 40B+ emails from over 32 industries across EMEA, APAC, and North and Latin America shows us how adoption of different marketing channels and tools changed over time.

Through this data, we take a close look at email and SMS adoption and success rates, meaning you can see how your engagement metrics compare with industry averages. Our data uncovers new tactics and opportunities to help inform cross-channel communications strategies, from list-building to content development and delivery. This report will also shed new light on audience segmentation metrics and techniques, while showing how automation can supercharge your campaigns.

We're seeing rapid growth in some areas, while others are remaining consistent. Taken together, these are simply signs of a changing marketing landscape; one that is leading towards more mature and sophisticated practices with an increasing focus on customer-centricity across the board. But enough preamble. It's time to crunch some numbers.

Summary of key takeaways



Email marketers are relying on different success metrics

New policies and updates introduced by digital giants like Apple challenge our visibility into email open rates, so we are seeing some previously underappreciated metrics emerge instead.



Email engagement remains consistent

While email isn't seeing the same level of growth as SMS, consistent engagement rates across CTR and CTOR show that it is still a reliable channel for reaching audiences directly.



We're not seeing much consumer fatigue

Companies are sending more communications across both email and SMS, so consistently strong engagement rates suggest we're not seeing much consumer fatigue.



SMS is catching up to, and complementing, email

Messaging is a powerful communication channel for audiences that are consistently tied to their phones and as SMS usage grows, more and more businesses are delivering the cross-channel strategies their customers need.



Marketers are increasingly embracing segmentation

Per-account segmentation is on the rise, indicating that marketing teams realize the power of targeting specific audience groups.



The rate of subscribers lost is outpacing gains

This is despite an increase in contact segmentation adoption, suggesting that segmentation as a standalone tactic is not enough. This trend may point to a proactive effort on the part of brands to clean their lists of inactive contacts that may be skewing performance data.



Brands are missing out on automation opportunities

Marketers recognize that automation can be a powerful way to save time in the long run while enabling precise, triggered campaigns that allow busy teams to proactively communicate with customers. However, adoption is not growing at the same rate as demand, suggesting that marketers may be experiencing challenges in actually implementing automation strategies.

1 Email open rates

Numbers: Open rate

- The global email open rate averaged **18.36%** between January 2019 and June 2021.
- While 2020 saw a slight increase over 2019's email open rate, March and April of 2020 were the months seeing the most significant lift throughout the study period, at **20.4%**, marking an **11%** increase over the average global open rate.
- Moving into the first half of 2021, email open rates have returned to normal at **18.13%**.
- Regionally, **EMEA** saw the strongest open rate, above the global average at **19.53%**. Meanwhile, **APAC** and **the Americas** saw a below global average open rate at **15.42%** and **14.18%**, respectively.
- The **electronics and electronic equipment industry** saw the strongest open rate at **31.27%**, followed by **government** (**32.15%**) and **energy and utility producers** (**30.39%**).

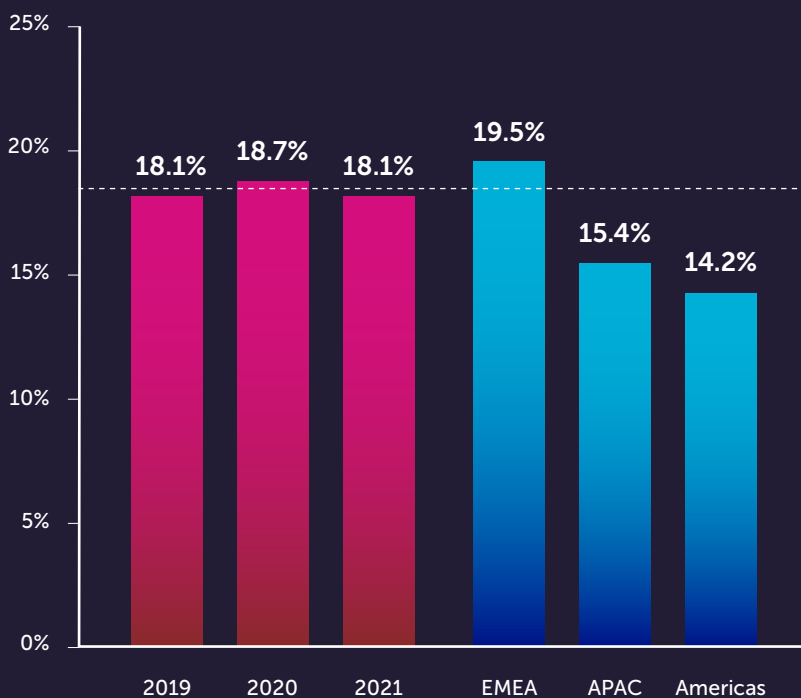


The **electronics and electronics equipment** industry saw the strongest open rate at

31.3%



Over three years, March and April 2020 saw the most significant lift in open rates — an **11%** increase over the global average.



18.4%

average global email open rate

Refer to [appendix 1](#) for the full list of open rate data across all industries.

What this means for open rates

While it is still important to measure email open rates, marketing teams should be relying less and less on this one statistic to chart the success of email campaigns.

In part, that's because open rates do not map perfectly to engagements. Simply opening an email doesn't mean the recipient reads the content, as consumers can choose to disable the tracking mechanisms used to determine open rates. What's more, email scanners can sometimes open messages automatically to view the content. All these can skew results.

While these complicating factors may affect absolute numbers, we can still look for notable trends, like the spring 2020 bump, which coincided with the pandemic. We link this to home-bound audiences using their screens more and watching their email for news.

The iOS 15 effect

Globally, roughly 15% of smartphones in use are iPhones, placing them in the top three most popular smartphones worldwide. With that kind of market share, new releases like iOS 15 represent a significant shift for email marketers and could signal changing trends in customer privacy.

With iOS 15, the company introduced two important features that will affect the measurement of email open rates in this version of its mobile operating system.

1. Mail Privacy Protection

This new feature in the default Mail app in iOS 15 automatically opens emails, meaning marketers will see inflated, and therefore irrelevant, open rates.

2. Hide My Email

Hide My Email enables iOS and Mac users to create unique random Apple email addresses. When a user signs up for an online service or newsletter, Apple enables them to substitute these addresses for their real ones. Apple then acts as a proxy, forwarding any emails from the online services to the user's real address.

Apple is not just influential among customers, but other tech companies as well, and this is a trend that other organizations such as privacy browser

Looking beyond open rates

As we mention in our [iOS 15 analysis](#), Apple's new services make it harder for email analytic systems to determine a recipient's location. They also make open rates an even less accurate measure of success and prevent companies from tracking email open times. Overall, this makes it more difficult for senders to link user email behavior to other activities.

While these new announcements may make current metrics less relevant, they are not necessarily a bad thing. They will simply accelerate an evolution to a new email measurement approach that emphasizes other consumer signals to deliver insights. These include prioritizing engagement metrics such as CTR, and bottom-of-funnel metrics tied to sales and other conversion activities.

Even though marketers will see fewer email open signals, they should still take measures to make sure email is still performing well, creating campaigns subscribers want to open. These include:

- Improving subject lines to make them relevant and appealing.
- Making content relevant to the audience by collecting zero-party data, which is data that the recipient chooses to provide.
- Encouraging people to provide that information by being open, honest, and transparent about how you'll use it.
- Using other channels such as SMS to drive traffic to emails.
- Making your brand more visible in the recipient's inbox.



2 Email engagement

Numbers: Email CTOR and CTR

Click-through rate (CTR)

- The average click-through rate (CTR) across the study period was **1.99%**.
- Much like open rates, CTR has remained relatively consistent since 2019, where it sat at **1.98%**, and in the first half of 2021 when it reached **1.96%**.
- CTR saw a similar although less pronounced rise in 2020, growing to **2.02%**. The increase was once again driven by an uptick in email engagement during the early days of the pandemic.
- April 2020 also saw the highest CTR thus far between 2019 and 2021 at **2.28%**, which was a **14.6%** increase above the global average.
- Regionally, **EMEA** displayed a notable performance in CTR across the study period at **2.15%**, compared to **APAC's 1.69%** and **the Americas' 1.38%**.
- On a per-sector basis, **electronics** and **electronics equipment** topped the rankings with a CTR of **5.81%**, while **government** came second at **4.54%**.

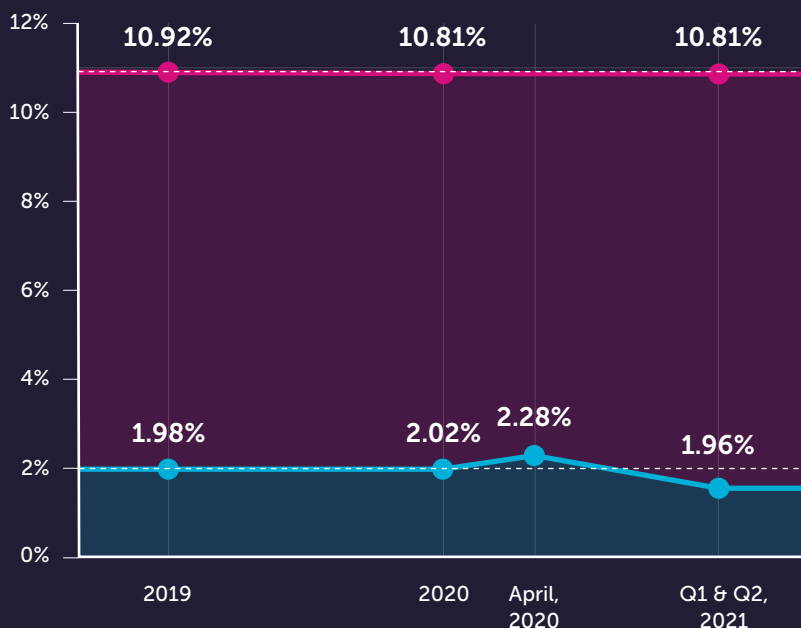


CTR and CTOR differed significantly by region, with **EMEA** leading in email engagement with a CTR of

2.15% and a CTOR of **11%**

Click-to-open rate (CTOR)

- The click-to-open rate (CTOR), which measures the number of unique clicks to unique opens, averaged **10.86%** across the study period.
- Unlike CTR, CTOR dipped slightly from **10.92%** in 2019 to **10.81%** in 2020, where it remained into the first half of 2021.
- **Electronics** and **electronics equipment** also topped the industries with the highest CTOR average at **18.57%**. This was closely followed by **construction**, at **17.73%**.
- Once again, **EMEA** outperformed other regions with a CTOR of **11.01%** compared with **10.98%** in **APAC** and **9.74%** in **the Americas**.



10.89%

average global CTOR

1.99%

average global CTR

Refer to [appendix 1 & 2](#) for the full list of by-industry email & SMS CTR data.

Understanding CTR and CTOR

While CTR and CTORs may sound similar, the differences between them are significant. CTR measures clicks across all emails sent, whereas the CTOR only measures click-through rates against emails that were opened, meaning the CTOR increases as the open rate decreases. In other words, 10 clicks from 1,000 emails sent creates a CTR of 1%. Ten clicks from 100 emails opened gives you a CTOR of 10%.

You can also learn a lot by looking at the relationship between these two numbers. A high CTOR-CTR ratio suggests that fewer people are opening your emails, but those that do engage heavily. That could indicate well-crafted emails are reaching the wrong recipients.

Tips for growing your email engagement rates

Here are 10 tactics you can use to boost email engagements across both metrics.

1. Review your email acquisition techniques

How are you getting your contacts? Are you buying huge lists with little relevance, or working with a core group of fans?

2. Check your list stewardship

How well are you honoring unsubscribe requests and resolving complaints? When it comes to engagement, trust is key.

3. Know your audience

Tailor your content, including subject lines, to each segment.

4. Collect zero-party data

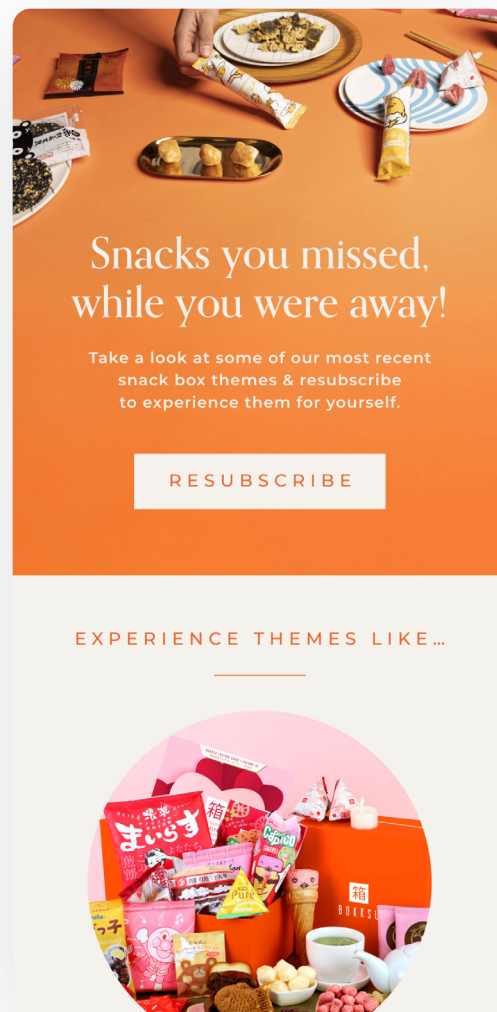
Improve this segmentation by collecting data that the subscriber explicitly gives you. Quizzes and questionnaires can be a simple way to try this out.

5. Experiment with visual email design

Be creative with elements including GIFs and call-to-action placement. It can be tempting to stick to the tried-and-true, but how can you play with design to ensure you keep getting noticed?

Food for thought

The regional differences in CTR and CTOR are worth noting. Could EMEA's successes be due to the stricter General Data Protection Regulations that protect privacy in the EU? Audiences may trust email communications there more because regulations dictate responsible marketing behavior. We will be watching the performance of state-level data protection regulations in places like California and Virginia in the coming years to see if these change the landscape.



Sometimes a little FOMO is all it takes to re-engage your customers. Check out this clever campaign idea by Bokksu, inviting targeted customers with the opportunity to resubscribe.

6. Use split testing

Great email is both an art and a science. Maximize open rates and engagement success by trialing different variations of subject lines and content.

7. Innovate with campaign content

Try competitions, games, and countdown clocks to spark audience interest.

8. Encourage teaser text

Don't offer all of your best content in the email. Create a reason to click through by promising more value.

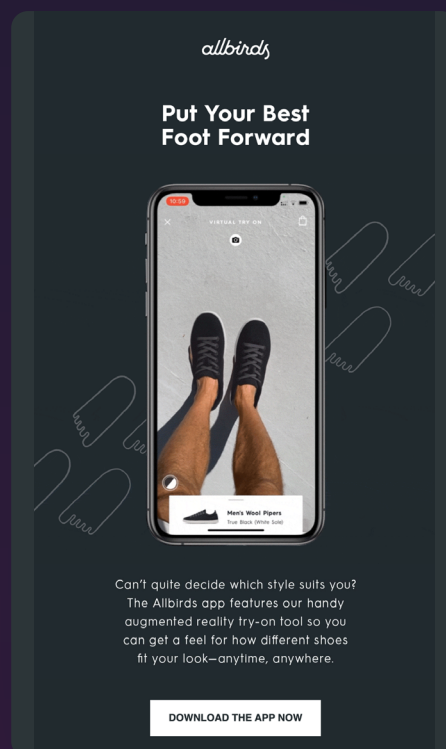
9. Encourage trust

Inspire confidence among your subscriber list by showing integrity. Be transparent with your data usage and link only to reputable sources in your content.

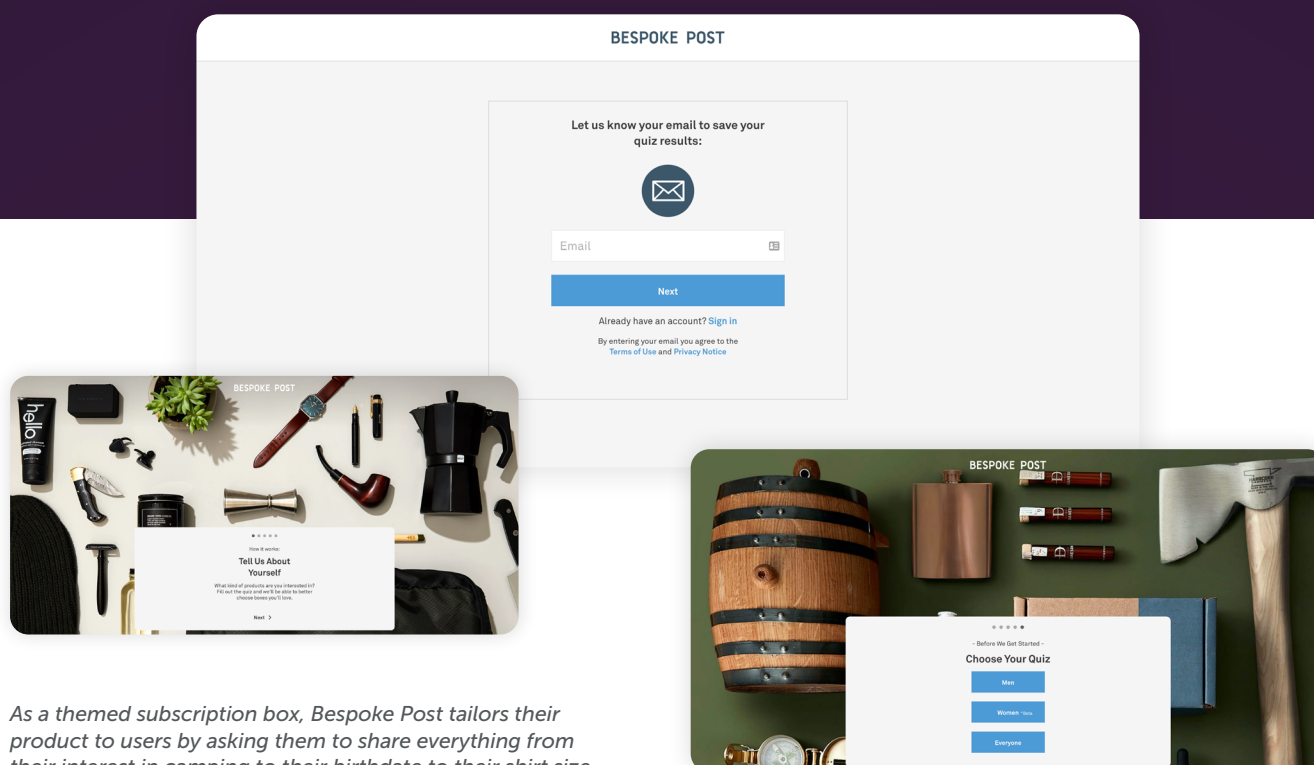
10. Re-engage with customers

Target segmented lists of lapsed customers to rekindle interest. Use discounts, triggered reminders, and personalized recommendations as tools here.

Above all, the most critical part is maximizing value to the audience. People are busy and discerning; respecting their time and attention will help raise your profile with them and ensure that more people open and engage with your emails.



Shoe company allbirds makes creative use of gifs and visuals to show how their latest AR tool works, allowing customers to test shoes virtually. This fun, valuable offering encourages users to download the app, so they're also increasing engagement on other channels — and creating more reasons for users to click through.



As a themed subscription box, Bespoke Post tailors their product to users by asking them to share everything from their interest in camping to their birthdate to their shirt size.

3 Email vs. SMS usage

Numbers: Changes in email vs. SMS send volume

- The average number of SMS messages sent per month in 2020 grew by **125%** over 2019. This number grew again by **160%** in the first half of 2021 compared to the monthly average in 2020.
- Emails sent also grew over the study period, with the monthly average increasing **26.6%** between 2019 and 2020, and by another **11.9%** in the first half of 2021. This meant that the monthly average for emails sent increased by **41.6%** in the first half of 2021 compared to 2019.
- Regionally, SMS usage within **EMEA** was highest, followed by **APAC**, with **the Americas** seeing relatively low adoption. Overall, **EMEA** accounted for over **50%** of all SMS messages sent during the study period, while **the Americas** only accounted for just over **5%** of SMS messages sent.
- **General retailers** topped the number of SMS messages sent during the study period at 14.9M, beating the next most frequent user (**marketing and advertising**, with 3.9M) by far.

Refer to [appendix 1 & 2](#) for the full list of by-region SMS and email send rate data.



160%

increase in average monthly SMS send volume since 2019, compared to

41.6%

for email over the same period.



56.6%

of all SMS messages sent regionally came from **EMEA**.

Complementing email with SMS

What's interesting here is that both SMS and email usage are up. SMS has seen particularly strong adoption, possibly due to more companies experimenting with this channel. Numbers also suggest a correlation between SMS messaging and the pandemic. The sustained step change in SMS numbers began in the early stages of the pandemic and hasn't reverted.

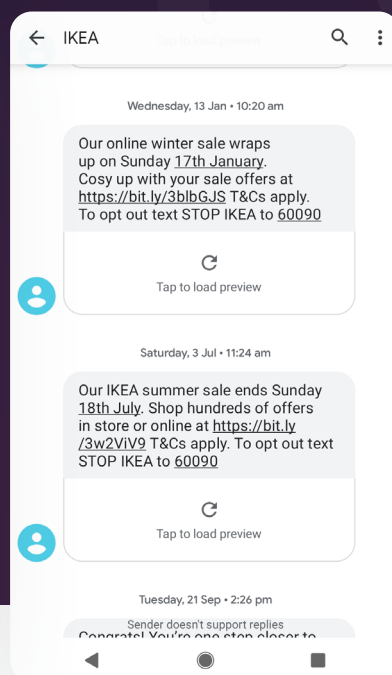
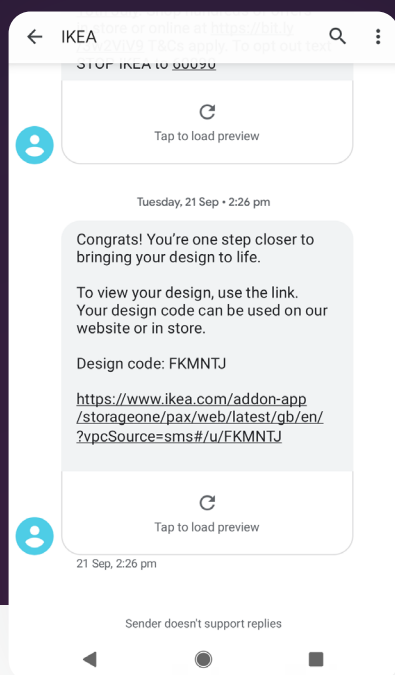
There is also strong evidence to suggest ties between SMS traffic and seasonal campaigns. The spike in SMS messages sent in November and December 2019 happened again in the 2020 holiday season but at more than double the rate. Email campaigns tied to the holidays could explain why retailers are by far the biggest SMS users.

The success of SMS is exciting — we'll talk more about that in the next section — but it doesn't mean that marketers should forego their email campaigns in favour of new opportunities. Email remains one of the most engaging and highest ROI tactics marketers can use for reaching and connecting with audiences. Creative use of both channels is a good way to increase the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Companies can use them to reinforce each other, like by bolstering email engagement by using SMS to flag campaigns.

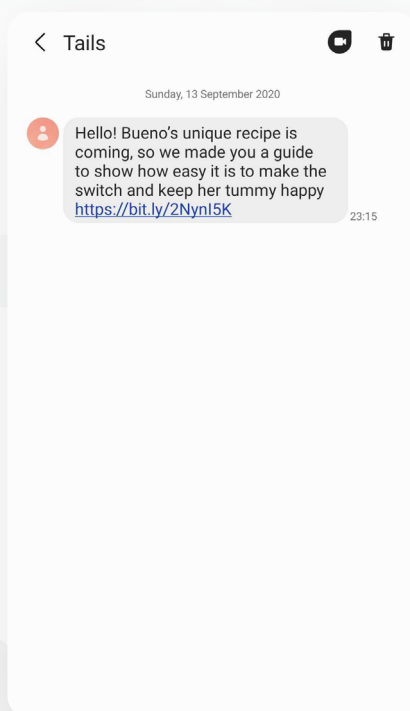
Inspiration for boosting your SMS engagement

Not all SMS campaigns are created equal. Great customer communication not only informs, it delights and delivers value. Check out these examples to see what we mean, and try experimenting with your own creative copy.

Add real value. IKEA uses SMS as a creative way to re-engage customers, without seeming pushy like abandoned-cart messages can. Customers can come back to their saved designs at any time — a valuable feature that also increases conversions.



Connect to customers' needs. Tie your messages with promotions your audience will actually be interested in, like seasonal sales and personalized offers.



Keep it custom. In post-purchase aftercare messages, Tails addresses their customer's pet by name, adding a level of personalization and familiarity to their outreach.



4 SMS engagement

Numbers: SMS CTR

- The **average CTR** for SMS messages reached **4.37%** over the study period.
- It also showed sustained growth, up 191% from 1.64% in the second half of 2019 to 4.77% in 2020.
- It grew again by another 41% in the first half of 2021, reaching 6.72%.
- Overall, the CTR for this channel has increased over 300% since 2019.
- Regionally, CTR was highest within **EMEA**, at 6.76%, whereas APAC and the Americas saw a much lower, but comparable CTR of 2.85% and 2.84%, respectively.
- The **hospitality industry** (hotels, restaurants, and venues) saw the **strongest CTR**, at 51.25%, followed by healthcare equipment and services at 27.14%, and ecommerce at 22.82%.



Since 2019, SMS CTR increased by

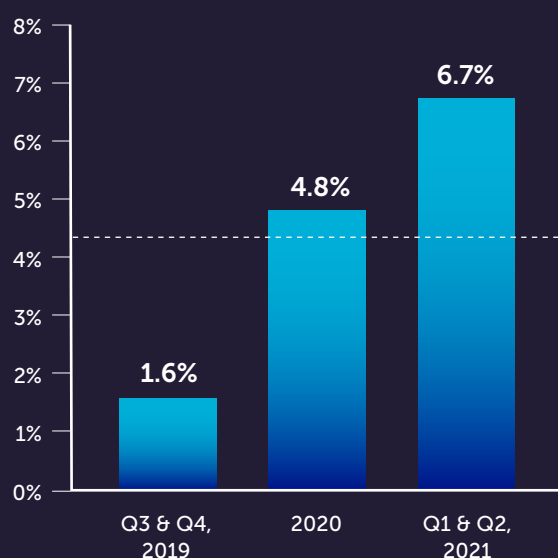
+300%

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

EMEA	6.8%
APAC	2.9%
Americas	2.8%

TOP 3 INDUSTRIES

Hospitality	51.3%
Health Services	27.1%
ecommerce	22.8%



4.4%

average global SMS CTR

Refer to [appendix 2](#) for the full list of by-industry SMS data.

Jumping on the SMS opportunity

SMS subscribers were far more engaged than email subscribers, and much more likely to interact with links. Results are often impressive for well-executed SMS campaigns. Our research shows that brands using SMS attribute at least **10% of their earnings** to this channel.

Several factors could be helping to drive higher audience attention to SMS communications. One is that mobile devices are in your pocket and with you all the time, with our data suggesting that people check their phones 150 times each day on average for personal communications and social media alerts. Another is that SMS messaging tends to be direct and to-the-point, delivering only the

information the audience needs, when they need it. Finally, people tend to use SMS and messaging apps to communicate with friends and family, meaning they are already highly aware of incoming messages via these channels. We estimate that **95% of SMS messages** are both opened and read within five minutes of receipt.

Because the adoption of SMS is in an early high-growth phase, it presents an opportunity for brands to establish a competitive advantage among subscribers, especially for companies outside the retail sector. SMS is unique, which is likely to make users more attentive overall.

Tips for capitalizing on and enhancing SMS

Looking to implement an SMS strategy? Try these best practices to capitalize on and enhance your campaigns.

Use opt-in subscriptions

Ensure that your list contains only opt-in subscribers to generate trust among your audience.

Use split testing

Split testing works for SMS messages just as it does with email.

Respect the screen

Be extra respectful of this medium, using texts sparingly. People are protective of that small six inches of screen space, which they associate with social interactions among trusted friends.

Economize on space

Shorten links and skip unicodes. Unicode is a standard for encoding SMS messages that takes up more space than the traditional GSM-7 alphabet, resulting in less character real estate for marketers to deliver their message.

Use short codes

Encourage responses by inviting SMS recipients to send texts to short codes.

Schedule staff support

SMS campaigns are immediate and invite fast responses. Ensure you have enough agents standing by to cope with them.

Work with a competent supplier

Your marketing automation service provider should be able to handle application-to-person messaging properly, avoiding gray routes.

5 Contact lists

Numbers: Contact list change

- While the average monthly volume of contacts created per account grew by **1.82%** between 2019 and 2020, the average monthly volume of unsubscriptions or manual deletions per account also increased by **22.78%**.
- 2021 saw an **8.17%** year-on-year drop in average monthly contact creations and a **7.56%** increase in contact removals.

1.8% average monthly increase in contacts created per account between 2019 and 2020.



22.8% average monthly increase in unsubscriptions or manual deletions per account.



During the first half of 2021, the **average contact removal** increased by

+7.6%

In that same period, the **average contact creation** decreased by

-8.2%

Engaging and retaining subscribers

While at first glance, these percentage changes might seem scary, things aren't actually dire. In absolute numbers, per-account additions outpace removals by far, meaning that subscriber lists are growing in volume. Still, email marketers can take steps to staunch subscriber attrition on email lists.

As usual, the main tactic here is to concentrate on keeping content relevant and valuable, but this means gaining a better understanding of the audience. Marketers must acknowledge the differences among their subscribers and account for their individual preferences.

That's why segmentation is so important but, alone, is not enough. We see that demonstrated by increasing unsubscriptions even as per-account segmentation usage grows. Savvy marketers are finding ways to use segmentation to tailor content perfectly to subscriber preferences, including modifying their delivery times and frequency.

Sometimes, that level of data can be hard to gather, so marketers must revise their zero-party data gathering practices, ideally via a preference management center.

Tips for building your preference management centre

Preference management centers put the power in the hands of the audience, meaning they feel engaged and informed every step of the way. Here are a few tips to make yours great.

Provide an explicit option to manage preferences

Ensure subscribers have a clear and accessible pathway to access their preference management center within every message sent. Unsubscribing completely should not be a default option.

Give consumers granular control

Enable people to manage their own subscription preferences, including email delivery frequency and channels.

Make complete unsubscription the last option

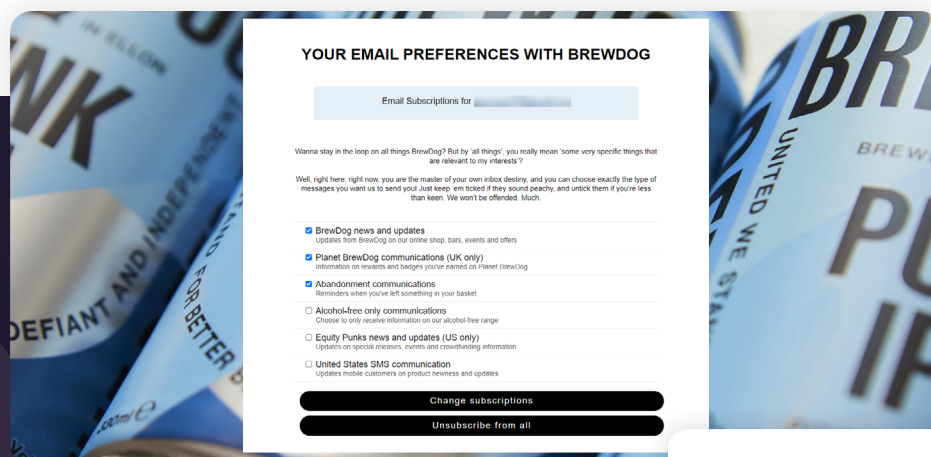
Give people plenty of alternatives to maintain the relationship without having to fully opt out of all emails.

Enable multiple list management

If you operate multiple subscription lists, enable subscribers to manage them in one place.

Use zero-party data

Collect information that will improve your personalization. This includes subscriber interests, key dates such as birthdays or anniversaries, and ZIP code.



Personalize data capture. BrewDog uses their preference management centre to help customers feel in control, selecting only the content that feels relevant to them.

Ongoing data capture can help improve segmentation and list hygiene, ensuring customers only see the information they're interested in. Spotify uses performance management centres to keep notifications relevant so customers are more likely to engage with the content they receive.

Notification settings

Spotify Updates

	EMAIL	PUSH
Product News Getting started, new features and the latest product updates on Spotify	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spotify News and Offers News, promos and events for you	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Your Music

	EMAIL	PUSH
Recommended Music Music we find that we think you'll like	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Music Fresh tracks from artists you follow or might like	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Playlist Updates A playlist you follow is updated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Concert Notifications Updates about virtual and live shows by artists you like, online or in places near you	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Artist Updates Hear about artists you listen to and artists we think you'll like	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

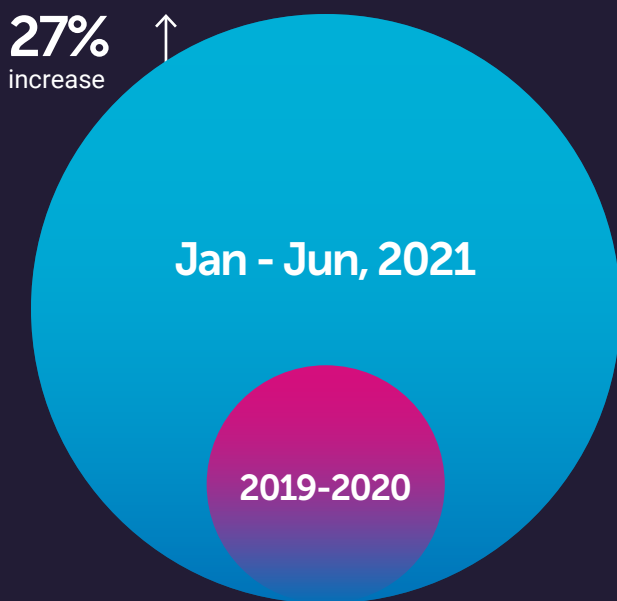
CANCEL

SAVE

6 Personalization and segmentation

Numbers: Segments created per account

AVERAGE INCREASE IN SEGMENTS CREATED PER ACCOUNT IN 2019-2020 VS. THE FIRST HALF OF 2021.



- The average monthly number of segments created per account grew **27%** between 2019 and the first half of 2021, with the biggest growth happening this year.
- Segments per account jumped **7.6%** from 2019 to 2020 and another **18.3%** from 2020 to the first half of 2021.



From 2019 to 2020, segments created per account increased by

7.6%

Using segmentation creatively

The figures show brands increasing their use of segmentation to tailor their communications. This offers substantial revenue potential as marketers use different segments to personalize content and make their communications more relevant to specific groups.

Our segmentation [ebook](#) found that effective use of this technique can boost email marketing revenues up to 760%.

Segmentation supports many different use cases, including:

- Onboarding people that sign up to your list at events.
- Boosting sales by issuing back-in-stock alerts for people that explored products on your site.
- Encouraging new customers with coupon codes.
- Promoting related products to customers that have made a purchase.
- Maintaining subscriptions.
- Asking loyal customers for product reviews.
- Targeting those whose engagement stops at opening emails.

Building your segmentation strategy

Not all segmentation strategies are created equal. Try these best practices to ensure yours stands out.

Use personas

Data and research can help develop personas to segment customers based on key traits.

Integrate with data sources

Integrating with appropriate sales data sources such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems can feed your segmentation campaign.

Find the data that matters

Identify the data points that help you segment your contacts appropriately. These include:

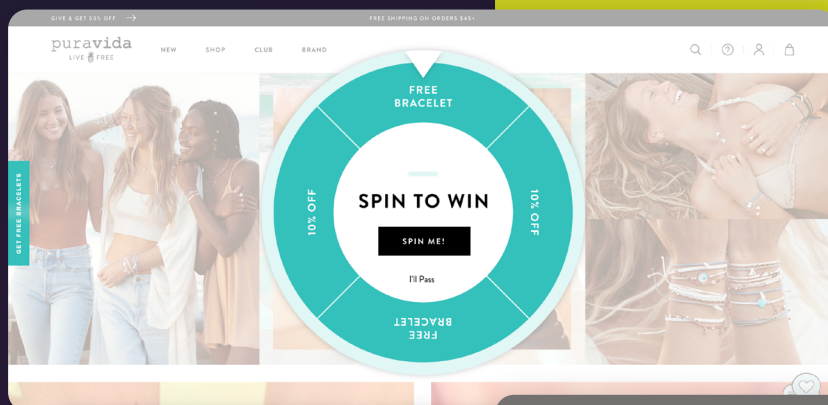
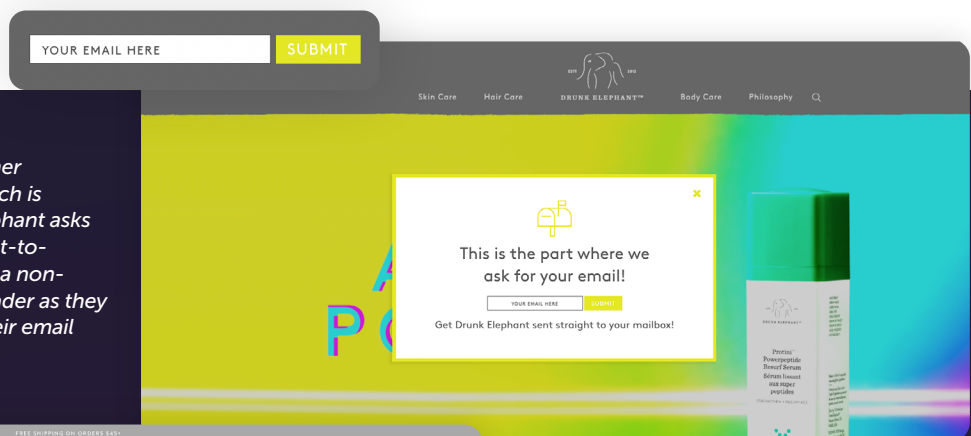
- Zero-party customer demographic data such as age, gender, and location.
- Implicit data points such as purchasing history, order dates, and activities on your website.

These can help you to segment your customers based on recency, frequency, and monetary value (RFM).

Walk, then run

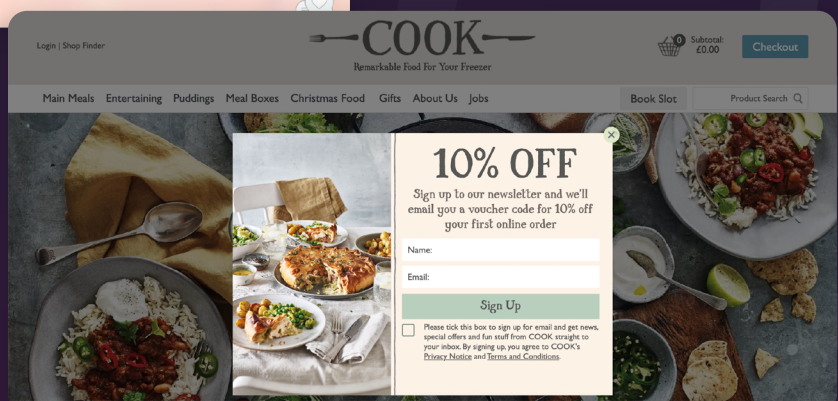
Segmentation is a skill. Start simply with broad audience groups, then hone in on niche segments as you become more comfortable.

When it comes to asking for customer information, the most direct approach is sometimes the best one. Drunk Elephant asks customers to sign up using a straight-to-the-point pop up. If they close that, a non-distracting reminder stays in the header as they explore, meaning they can share their email whenever they're ready.



Another approach to get customers sharing their data is through fun activations, like this creative idea from puravida. Customers can spin to win prizes, inviting them to engage with the brand and incentivizing them to sign up with their email.

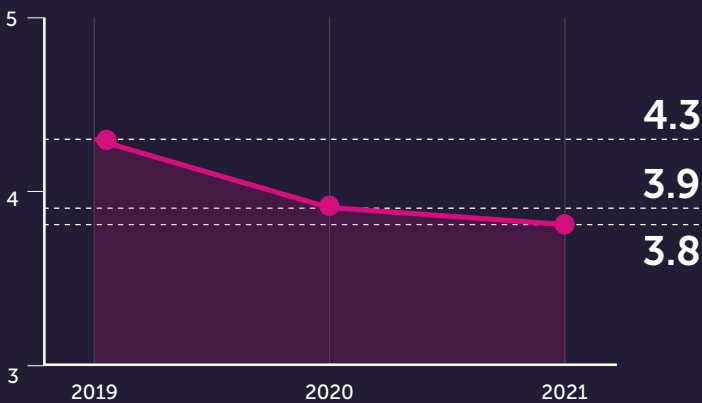
For a tried-and-true way to win customer data, take a look at COOK. They offer new customers a 10% voucher for their first online order when they sign up for their newsletter. This gives COOK a way to re-engage customers long-term, and can help increase conversions for online orders.



7 Automation adoption

Numbers: Average automation programs created per account

- The average monthly number of automation programs created per account fell consistently over the study period, leveling off slightly towards the end.
- This metric fell from **4.3** programs per account in 2019 to **3.9** in 2020, and then dropped slightly to **3.8** in the first half of 2021.



The most significant decline in average automation programs created per account occurred between 2019 and 2020, at

-9.3%



An automation program refers to the creation of a workflow designed to automatically deliver messages or perform other marketing actions based on a predetermined set of instructions. For example, triggering an email upon a visitor abandoning cart.

Understanding the potential of automation

Marketing automation involves setting up scheduled communications actions triggered by certain times or events, such as a new customer registration or product purchase. These scheduled actions are called automation programs, which refer to the workflows designed to be delivered automatically.

Three quarters of all companies already use automation to boost their marketing activities, according to [Social Media Today](#), and the 25% of companies that don't are missing out on major opportunities.

Effective automation brings many benefits, like taking work off marketers' plates. Reducing workloads using pre-scripted templated campaigns enables them to do more with less and frees up time to work on other high-value tasks, making email marketing teams **20% more productive**.

Automation enables brands to target would-be and existing customers with precision campaigns where the consumer's own actions trigger a chain of communications that move them through the funnel. Furthermore, automation can be used to re-engage lapsed customers using behavioral signals such as when they last engaged with a brand's content or channels.

Despite all these benefits, the drop in per-account usage rates shows that people aren't adopting automation enough. This could be due to a lack of expertise and internal resources. Automated campaigns take time and skill to create, and busy marketing teams might focus on manual campaigns with a promise to tackle automation at some point in the future. Unless they devote time, they remain trapped in inefficient manual work cycles that limit their success.

Building your segmentation strategy

Automation doesn't need to be a daunting project. Following these key principles will help you to get up and running quickly, reaping powerful rewards.

Think ahead

Devote time and people to an automation setup project with a focus on long-term ROI.

Integrate with existing data sources

Connecting your automation platform with existing data sources like CRM can help deliver the data you need to automate campaigns. How about a customer birthday promotion, for example?

Start with quick wins

Targeting the most appropriate audience segments such as new or inactive customers will help you test your assumptions and learn from your successes. You can then build a business case for more complex automation in the future.

Identify goals early

Decide on quantifiable goals up front such as more conversions or better customer retention. Set key performance indicators to measure your success.

Test your automation.

Verify that your automation campaign works by running it against groups of test recipients.

There's lots more to learn about automation, but you don't need to be an expert to get started. [Start with the fundamentals](#) and go from there.

Closing remarks

Marketers are masters at navigating change, and rarely has that been more apparent than in the last few years. At the start of the pandemic, some businesses did a complete pivot, others shifted to online offerings, and across the board, COVID-19 made many organizations rethink their purpose, vision, and objectives. Through all of it, marketing teams evolved and adapted at high speeds, building new skills and approaches faster than ever.

This report shows how some of those changes impacted the ways we reach customers and the opportunities we have in this new landscape. Even for marketing teams that have spent these few years laying strong, customer-oriented foundations, discovering the nuances in segmentation, SMS marketing, and automation can supercharge results even more.

Through the data, we see that 1:1 communications works best in a cross-channel environment where each channel complements and enhances the other. Marketers can deliver strong results by using email and SMS in concert, reinforcing their communications with potential and existing customers.

To succeed in marketing via these channels, companies must prioritize respect for the audience. Today's consumers and businesses alike are inundated with brand messages. A measured, thoughtful approach to communications will help smart brands make themselves stand out from their competitors. This means understanding that your audience has an attention budget and using it wisely. It also means respecting their privacy concerns.

This careful approach to communications requires a solid understanding of audience data through smart data integrations, honest and transparent data collection, and responsible usage. Use this data to segment subscribers, enabling you to deliver the right messages at the right time.

Dotdigital's cross-channel marketing automation, personalization, and measurement tools offer marketing teams the chance to master these capabilities through a combination of easy onboarding, navigable interfaces, and valuable educational material. [Talk to us](#) about how we can help your team take marketing automation to the next level.

About Dotdigital

Dotdigital is a leader in marketing automation technology. Trusted by 4,000+ businesses, Dotdigital is the customer engagement platform of choice for marketers seeking to connect with customers through cross-channel marketing. The platform's future-proof features empower brands across 150 countries to acquire, convert, and retain customers using email, SMS, social, and more. From creating a unified customer view, to surfacing powerful insights and implementing intelligent automations, Dotdigital's highly acclaimed, easy-to-use platform is everything the modern marketer needs.

1. Email data by industry

Appendix

Industry	Unique Open Rate	Unique CTOR	Unique CTR
Government	32.15%	14.11%	4.54%
Electronic & electrical equipment	31.27%	18.57%	5.81%
Energy/utility producers	30.39%	13.99%	4.25%
Real estate	30.15%	11.20%	3.38%
Charity/non profit	30.12%	12.52%	3.77%
Healthcare equipment & services	26.66%	10.17%	2.71%
Financial services & insurance	26.55%	10.30%	2.73%
Food producers & processors	26.03%	13.45%	3.50%
Education & training	25.58%	11.83%	3.03%
Pharmaceuticals & biotechnology	23.01%	14.92%	3.43%
Construction	22.92%	17.73%	4.06%
Technology (hardware & software)	22.68%	8.86%	2.01%
Sports & leisure	22.41%	11.35%	2.54%
Travel & leisure	22.32%	9.25%	2.07%
Transportation & automotive	20.64%	9.57%	1.97%
Professional services	19.67%	12.70%	2.50%
Health & fitness	19.55%	8.31%	1.62%
Hotels, restaurants, & venues	19.28%	16.58%	3.20%
Industrial & engineering	18.96%	11.16%	2.12%
Media & entertainment	18.57%	12.02%	2.23%
Other	17.94%	11.53%	2.07%
Commercial services & supplies	17.67%	13.53%	2.39%
General retailers	17.54%	9.96%	1.75%
Marketing, advertising, & agencies	16.98%	9.26%	1.57%
Consumer goods & services	15.81%	10.62%	1.68%
Food & drug retailers	15.64%	9.19%	1.44%
Telecommunications	15.11%	12.26%	1.85%
Manufacturing, mining, & machinery	14.72%	13.73%	2.02%
Apparel & fashion	14.60%	12.26%	1.79%
Ecommerce	13.70%	11.56%	1.58%
Architecture & construction	9.70%	11.98%	1.16%
Gambling	6.43%	12.42%	0.80%

2. SMS data by industry

Appendix

Industry	CTR
Hotels, restaurants, venues	51.25%
Healthcare equipment & services	27.14%
Ecommerce	22.82%
Industrial engineering	14.19%
Charity/non profit	13.80%
Education & training	10.81%
Government	8.96%
Media & entertainment	7.92%
Food & drug retailers	7.51%
Telecommunications	6.14%
Food producers & processors	5.37%
Professional services	5.27%
Travel & leisure	5.09%
Commercial services & supplies	5.04%
Other	4.83%
Consumer goods & services	3.90%
Construction & materials	3.75%
Real estate	3.61%
Apparel & fashion	3.54%
General retailers	3.00%
Sports & leisure	2.32%
Transportation & automotive	1.44%
Technology (hardware & software)	1.15%
Pharmaceuticals & biotech	0.42%
Financial services & insurance	0.34%
Marketing & advertising	0.22%
Energy/utility producers	0.06%

3. Regional data

Region	Unique Open Rate	Unique CTOR	Unique CTR	Unique SMS CTR
EMEA	19.53%	11.01%	2.15%	6.76%
Americas	14.18%	9.74%	1.38%	2.84%
APAC	15.42%	10.98%	1.69%	2.85%

