2015 EMAIL MARKETING METRICS BENCHMARK STUDY



SILVERPOP
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IBM Marketing Cloud

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2015 Email Marketing Metrics Benchmark Study

Silverpop's annual report of email marketing benchmarks is back, offering marketers 15-plus open, click-through and list churn metrics to pore over and delivering more visuals and observations than ever. This year's study turned up a few surprise findings among the statistics generated by nearly 750 companies worldwide:

1 Companies representing Computer Hardware and Telecommunications, Corporate Services, Insurance, Hospitals/ Health Care and Consumer Products performed consistently better than others this year.

One factor that distinguishes Silverpop's annual benchmark survey is that it goes beyond simply reporting statistics to look at how industry verticals compare on their performances. This year, we noted these verticals outperformed others most frequently on most metrics.

Although each one might not have "led the league" on each metric each time, across all measurements they were regularly among the top three. Emails in these categories generally are more likely to be personalized to the subscribers or to contain highly relevant information, which leads to higher opens and clicks as well as more opens per opener and clicks per clicker.

Content marketing is likely one of the factors that helped propel the Computer Hardware and Corporate Services verticals to the top. These B2B companies typically send value-added email newsletters that give subscribers reasons to open, click and retain for further reading with content such as industry news, best practices, case studies and tips.

2 Countries in the APAC region outperformed others on most benchmarks.

Much of the difference between Asia-Pacific countries and those in the United States, Europe-Middle East-Africa, United Kingdom and Canada might be due to newer, younger databases where subscribers are generally more engaged than in Western countries, where email has become an established marketing channel.

Also, recipients in these countries likely receive fewer emails; either they subscribe to fewer email programs, or brands in those countries send email at a lower rate.

3 Transactional messages continue to generate much higher customer engagement than broadcast email.

Transactional emails performed markedly better than nontransactionals, particularly those sent by the top quartile of companies. These generated a 72 percent open rate and a 30 percent click rate. The statistics underscore their importance as part of an effective email program.

These are some of the most relevant emails you can send because they speak to actions your customers have taken and represent another avenue to broaden engagement.



The Data: How to Interpret and Apply It

Silverpop's 2015 survey examines messages sent by nearly 750 companies and 3,000 brands in 2014, using a wide variety of measurements to establish benchmarks on customer engagement (via multiple open and click metrics) and list churn (hard bounces, unsubscribes and complaints).

Aim Higher
Most studies focus only on "average" benchmarks. However, in today's hypercompetitive marketplace, "average" has become the new bottom. So, we encourage you to set your sights higher. To that end, you'll find reporting results from the top and bottom quartiles for each measurement.

If you want to create a world-class email-marketing program, compare yourself to the best performers on the benchmarks that are most important to you instead of the average players.

Process vs. Output Metrics
This report examines "process" metrics, which measure activity on email messages. Understanding where your email program stands on process metrics is one half of the benchmarking equation.

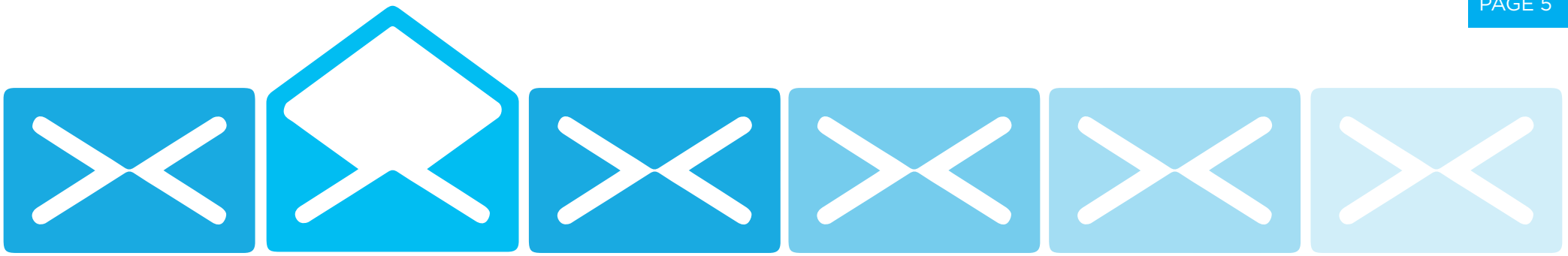
"Output" metrics, such as revenue, leads generated, cost savings, order size or number of downloads, measure how well your email campaign delivered against your individual company's business goals. You need both to fully understand your email program's performance.

Beyond Benchmarks
The benchmarks established in this study set a baseline you can use to determine where your email program outperforms your peers and competitors and where you need to improve.

Accurately gauging your marketing success, however, requires also going beyond industry benchmarks to see whether your email program met, exceeded or fell short of your own goals while adding value to the customer/prospect relationship and maximizing conversions and revenue.

Additional Resources
At the end of this report you'll find a glossary explaining terms used in the study along with a list of resources that can help you understand more about key issues affecting email marketing and program performance. There's also a list of industry category definitions you can use to determine which vertical group you fall into for the purposes of this study.





Open Rates

Overview

The open rate works best as an in-house benchmark to track over time, because it can signal progress or problems with engagement. It's also not a completely accurate metric because it doesn't capture all opens due to image blocking and other factors.

In other words, track your open rate for comparison to your other messages, but don't use it as a sole measure of campaign success.

UNIQUE OPEN RATE (by Country/Region)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	21.0%	17.4%	41.3%	7.0%
U.S.	20.7%	16.7%	40.9%	7.5%
EMEA	20.4%	17.9%	40.3%	5.3%
United Kingdom	22.2%	19.4%	39.9%	9.3%
Canada	19.8%	11.4%	48.5%	**3.4%**
APAC	26.1%	21.5%	**49.5%**	9.9%

Strongest performer Weakest performer



OBSERVATIONS

APAC and U.K. countries outperformed all other regions on this benchmark, although not consistently across the board. While APAC countries had the highest unique open rate on all four measurements, top performers in the United Kingdom actually registered the lowest open rate of all five global regions.

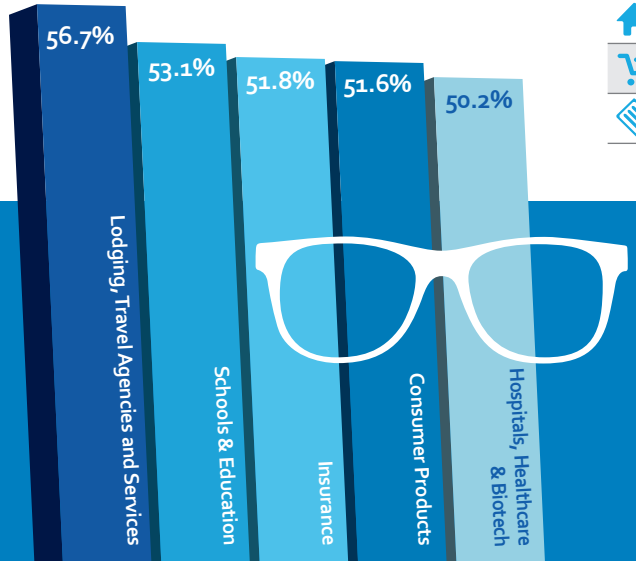
Canada posted markedly lower mean and median open rates as well as the lowest in the bottom quartile by a wide margin. However, Canadian brands in the top quartile performed better than three of the other four regions, behind only APAC.

UNIQUE OPEN RATE (by Industry)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	24.0%	19.5%	44.9%	10.3%
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	25.7%	23.3%	45.2%	10.3%
Computer Software & Online Services	21.5%	19.2%	39.1%	8.0%
Consumer Products	27.3%	23.3%	51.6%	10.3%
Corporate Services	23.7%	20.6%	41.9%	10.7%
Financial Services	22.1%	18.9%	41.8%	7.8%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	20.9%	16.9%	43.6%	**5.5%**
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	26.6%	23.4%	50.2%	9.0%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	25.2%	21.5%	46.6%	9.8%
Insurance	28.7%	24.9%	51.8%	12.6%
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	29.6%	23.0%	**56.7%**	12.3%
Marketing Agencies & Services	25.1%	21.3%	48.0%	8.0%
Media & Publishing	16.1%	13.1%	31.3%	6.1%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	27.5%	24.7%	48.1%	11.4%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	26.0%	22.1%	44.3%	14.4%
Retail & Ecommerce	18.3%	16.1%	33.8%	6.6%
Schools & Education	27.2%	23.0%	53.1%	7.7%

Strongest performer Weakest performer

Industries in Which Top Performers Posted Open Rates Greater Than 50%



OBSERVATIONS

For mean unique open rates, five verticals stood above the others: Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services; Insurance; Consumer Products; Nonprofits, Associations & Government; and Schools & Education. Looking at the top quartile, five industries saw open rates greater than 50 percent.

Not surprisingly, the Retail & Ecommerce and Media & Publishing verticals have the lowest mean unique open rates. This is most likely a direct result of frequency, because many brands in these verticals send broadcast emails almost daily.

TWEET THIS!
Top-performing companies see **nearly three out of every four** customers open their transactional emails.



UNIQUE OPEN RATE (by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	21.0%	17.4%	41.3%	7.0%
Nontransactional	20.8%	17.3%	40.8%	7.0%
Transactional	44.9%	45.9%	72.2%	16.6%



OBSERVATIONS

One of the greatest selling points for sending transactional messages is that recipients value them, opening them in greater numbers than any other message type. These statistics bear out that assertion, with transactional messages even generating double-digit open rates among brands in the bottom quartile.

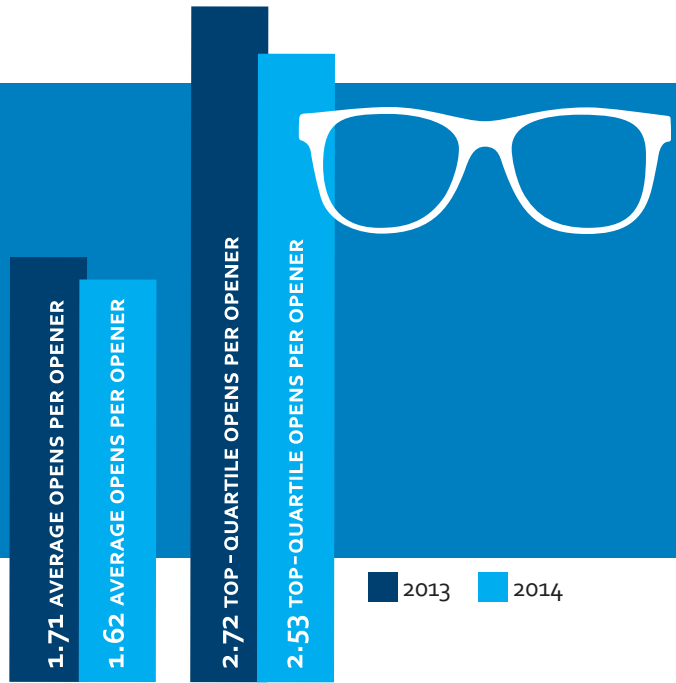
With transactional messages producing mean open rates of about 45 percent and the top quartile more than 72 percent, these emails can serve as excellent vehicles to include cross-sell/upsell content. An email receipt for a camera purchase, for example, might include a promotion for a camera bag and zoom lens based on like-minded purchases.

OPENS PER OPENER (by Country/Region)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.62	1.38	2.53	1.17
U.S.	1.66	1.39	2.63	1.17
EMEA	1.49	1.32	2.12	1.16
United Kingdom	1.60	1.38	2.41	1.20
Canada	1.47	1.31	2.19	**1.05**
APAC	1.87	1.50	**3.14**	1.29

Strongest performer Weakest performer

Opens per Opener, 2013 vs. 2014



OBSERVATIONS

APAC once again leads all other global regions in the number of times recipients opened emails, even among brands in the bottom quartile. Even though the other four regions clustered lower, the standard still points to emails that get opened more than once. This indicates that shelf life is still important even among bottom-quartile performers in this category and among industry verticals (see next chart).

This metric is trending lower when compared to previous years, perhaps because mobile consumers are quicker to delete emails that don't resonate immediately. This speaks, however, to the importance of moving not just to a responsive or mobile-friendly approach to emails but also to reducing the calls to action to one or two per email.

Industries Averaging 2+ Opens per Opener



OPENS PER OPENER (by Industry)

Opens per Opener	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	1.86	1.54	3.05	1.24
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	2.07	1.70	3.51	1.34
Computer Software & Online Services	1.74	1.42	2.87	1.20
Consumer Products	1.66	1.49	2.41	1.22
Corporate Services	2.47	1.84	4.82	1.31
Financial Services	1.71	1.40	2.82	1.18
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	1.48	1.33	2.06	1.16
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	2.00	1.64	3.39	1.27
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	1.96	1.63	3.24	1.29
Insurance	2.70	2.00	**5.23**	1.43
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	1.74	1.49	2.67	1.27
Marketing Agencies & Services	1.64	1.43	2.47	1.22
Media & Publishing	1.42	1.31	1.91	**1.13**
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	1.83	1.53	2.96	1.24
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	1.72	1.50	2.61	1.23
Retail & Ecommerce	1.39	1.28	1.80	1.17
Schools & Education	1.83	1.46	3.15	1.21

Strongest performer Weakest performer



OBSERVATIONS

Insurance and Corporate Services were significantly higher than the other industries for both mean and top quartile. While the personal, individual nature of insurance emails is easy to see, the strong performance by Corporate Services likely reflects the inclusion of high-value B2B information such as case studies, best practices and industry news that readers want to retain for reference.

If you'd like to deliver more high-value content, but don't think you have the resources, look to repurpose existing materials. Scour your website, peruse your print materials and search your blogs, social media channels and videos for useful content. You might be surprised at how much material you already have to turn into engaging emails.



Click-Through Rates

Overview

The click-through rate is a process metric that measures recipient action on an email message. It's a more reliable metric than the open rate but still doesn't substitute for output goals such as conversions, revenue or order value.

The click-to-open rate (CTOR), also known as the "effective rate," sheds more light on engagement than a simple click rate because it measures click-through rates as a percentage of messages opened instead of simply messages delivered.

Clicks per clicker captures actions by recipients who click more than one link in the email message. Email messages with higher clicks per clicker usually reflect content that gives recipients several options to generate multiple unique clicks in a single message, or useful content they want to retain and review more than once.



TWEET THIS!

Email click-through rate among top companies is **3X greater than the average** per @Silverpop study.

CLICK-THROUGH RATE (by Country/Region)

Click-Through Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	3.2%	1.4%	9.4%	0.2%
U.S.	3.0%	1.3%	9.0%	0.2%
EMEA	3.8%	1.9%	10.7%	0.3%
United Kingdom	3.5%	2.0%	9.2%	0.3%
Canada	2.6%	0.6%	8.7%	**0.0%**
APAC	4.6%	2.0%	**13.2%**	0.4%

Strongest performer Weakest performer



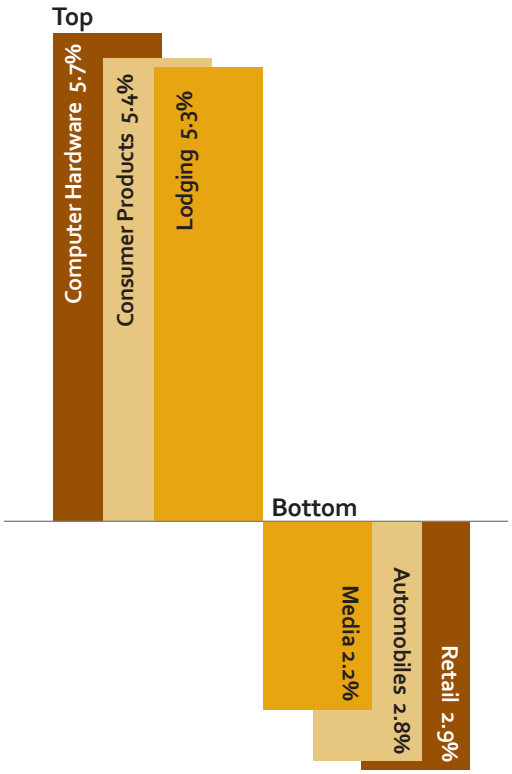
OBSERVATIONS

Top-quartile performers had click-through rates that were more than six times higher than the median CTR of 1.4 percent. In contrast, bottom-quartile performers mustered CTRs of 0.2 percent.

APAC brands once again led the pack on the mean CTR, which you'd expect because they also posted the highest open rates. On the median, APAC, the United Kingdom and EMEA regions ranked within a scant tenth of a point of each other. While APAC brands also ruled the top quartile, bottom performers were comparable with their global peers.



Best- and Worst-Performing Industries



CLICK-THROUGH RATE (by Industry)

Click-Through Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	2.8%	1.0%	8.8%	**0.0%**
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	5.7%	2.7%	**16.3%**	0.4%
Computer Software & Online Services	3.2%	1.7%	8.9%	0.3%
Consumer Products	5.4%	3.1%	14.6%	0.6%
Corporate Services	3.4%	1.5%	10.1%	0.1%
Financial Services	3.3%	1.6%	9.4%	0.2%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	3.7%	1.5%	11.4%	0.3%
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	4.3%	2.0%	12.5%	0.3%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	3.4%	1.6%	9.7%	0.3%
Insurance	4.2%	1.5%	12.8%	**0.0%**
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	5.3%	2.5%	15.2%	0.5%
Marketing Agencies & Services	4.0%	1.6%	11.8%	0.2%
Media & Publishing	2.2%	1.0%	6.2%	0.2%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	4.0%	2.0%	11.4%	0.3%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	3.4%	1.5%	9.9%	0.2%
Retail & Ecommerce	2.9%	1.8%	7.5%	0.3%
Schools & Education	4.6%	1.5%	14.5%	0.2%

Strongest performer Weakest performers



OBSERVATIONS

Emails from brands representing Computer Hardware & Telecommunications, Consumer Products, and Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services rule this comparison of verticals. This combination is likely a testament again to strong content marketing for computer hardware and high brand affinity for consumer products.

The strong performance of lodging/travel-related emails likely benefits from the typical aspirational, often visual (think beaches) and offer-heavy approach.



Top-quartile performers have transactional email click-through rates of nearly 3X the mean and 6X the median.

CLICK-THROUGH RATE (by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Click-Through Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	3.2%	1.4%	9.4%	0.2%
Nontransactional	3.2%	1.4%	9.2%	0.2%
Transactional	10.4%	4.9%	30.2%	0.2%



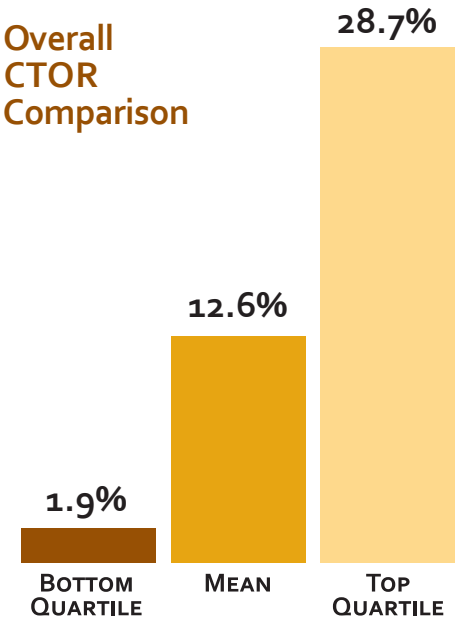
OBSERVATIONS

Transactional emails easily beat their nontransactional counterparts on every metric except, interestingly, bottom-quartile performance. Given that these messages are based on data or activity, it's not a surprise to see these emails drive stronger engagement.

What's interesting is that top-quartile performers have click-through rates of nearly three times the mean and six times the median. This suggests that smart marketers are finding ways to add value through transactional messages and driving further engagement and action, such as purchasing a related product or service.

To take your emails up a notch, consider offering an incentive for a related purchase; inviting buyers to review their purchases or join your loyalty club or user community; or linking to user information, how-to videos and other information on your site.

Overall CTOR Comparison



CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (by Country/Region)

Click-to-Open Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	12.6%	9.4%	28.7%	1.9%
U.S.	11.8%	8.5%	27.2%	1.9%
EMEA	15.9%	13.1%	**33.6%**	3.1%
United Kingdom	13.6%	11.2%	29.5%	2.1%
Canada	9.9%	6.7%	26.0%	**0.0%**
APAC	14.2%	10.4%	32.3%	2.6%

Strongest performer Weakest performer



OBSERVATIONS

This time, brands in EMEA countries took top honors on all measurements for this metric. Top-quartile performers were especially productive, notching rates across the board that were three to four times higher than the median rates.

If your CTOR is subpar or merely average, try analyzing your actual clicks per link in several messages. Establish any patterns and trends for which types of links (e.g., CTA buttons, product photos or text links), location, design, etc. drive higher click-through rates than others. Then use the link analysis combined with the overall CTOR to make assumptions about content, layout and offers that drive the highest engagement consistently.

TWEET THIS!

Want to better measure email effectiveness?

Look beyond basic open and click metrics.

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (by Industry)

Click-to-Open Rate (Unique)	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	8.4%	5.3%	21.9%	0.3%
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	17.0%	12.8%	**39.2%**	2.5%
Computer Software & Online Services	12.8%	10.0%	28.5%	2.1%
Consumer Products	16.8%	14.5%	33.8%	4.2%
Corporate Services	11.8%	7.5%	29.7%	1.0%
Financial Services	12.5%	9.2%	28.7%	1.8%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	14.0%	10.0%	32.5%	2.6%
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	14.8%	10.1%	35.2%	2.1%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	11.5%	8.5%	25.7%	2.4%
Insurance	12.6%	7.3%	33.6%	**0.2%**
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	14.9%	12.0%	31.6%	2.9%
Marketing Agencies & Services	13.1%	8.9%	31.2%	2.0%
Media & Publishing	11.2%	8.3%	25.4%	1.7%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	12.2%	8.9%	27.8%	1.9%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	11.1%	7.4%	27.8%	1.1%
Retail & Ecommerce	14.3%	12.3%	28.4%	3.5%
Schools & Education	12.5%	7.9%	31.6%	1.7%

Strongest performer Weakest performer

OBSERVATIONS

While Consumer Products and Computer Hardware tallied the highest mean click-to-open rates, note the stronger performance for Retail and Ecommerce emails on this combination metric compared to opens and clicks alone.

Also, while Retail's performance is middle-of-the-pack among top verticals, its bottom-quartile brands performed better than all but one other vertical: Consumer Products. This highlights the need to look beyond simple opens and clicks to measure engagement and effectiveness.



VIDEO: Post-Purchase Support Email Tips >>

CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE (by Message Type — Transactional vs. Nontransactional)

Click-Through Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	12.6%	9.4%	28.7%	1.9%
Nontransactional	12.5%	9.4%	28.5%	1.9%
Transactional	20.1%	13.0%	51.2%	0.8%

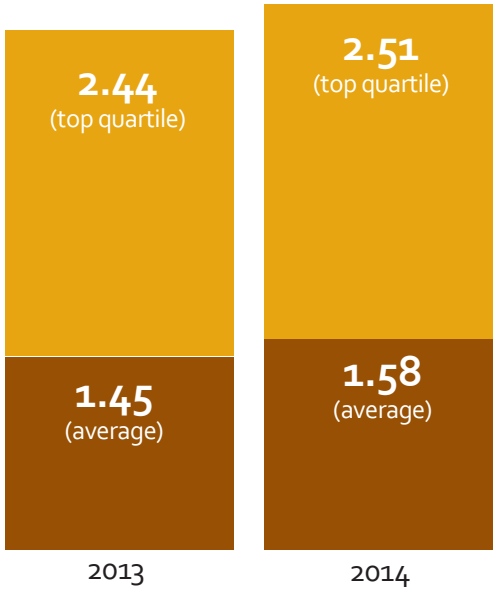


OBSERVATIONS

Top-quartile performers see more than one-half of transactional messages opened with a click. The click-to-open rate for transactional messages emphasizes the need to look for opportunities to create an even deeper level of engagement.

If you aren't in the top quartile of brands on your transactional messages, add a call to action to your messages, thus doing more than just letting customers know their orders have shipped by giving them a chance to interact while they're highly engaged. This might include product usage guides, customized recommendations or an invitation to join your email program.

Clicks per Clicker, 2013 vs. 2014



CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Country/Region)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	1.58	1.36	2.51	1.08
U.S.	1.64	1.37	2.69	1.09
EMEA	1.45	1.33	2.06	1.07
United Kingdom	1.46	1.33	2.08	1.08
Canada	1.4	1.27	2.06	1
APAC	1.8	1.45	3.11	1.13

Strongest performer Weakest performer



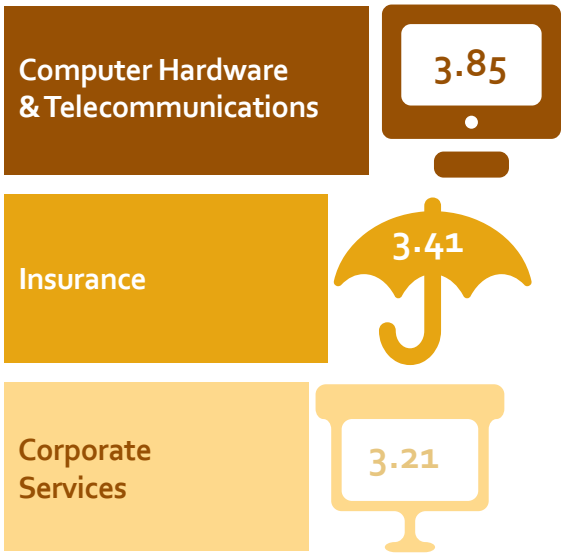
OBSERVATIONS

Brands in APAC countries once again claimed the lead on all measurements of this metric, which measures the number of links clicked or times a link is clicked per individual and indicates reader interest.

We had expected to see clicks fall as readers transition from desktop to mobile email reading, a move which could introduce more friction because the smaller screens make old-style email formats difficult to read and act on.

Instead, we're seeing the opposite. Perhaps the simplicity of offering only two or three calls to action in a streamlined or responsive design takes the friction out of reading and clicking and is leading to more clicks on average.

Industries Averaging 3+ Clicks per Clicker*



(*top-quartile performers)

CLICKS PER CLICKER (by Industry)

Clicks per Clicker	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	1.46	1.27	2.31	**1.00**
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	2.02	1.52	**3.85**	1.12
Computer Software & Online Services	1.50	1.30	2.31	1.04
Consumer Products	1.54	1.44	2.12	1.14
Corporate Services	1.83	1.50	3.21	1.06
Financial Services	1.51	1.33	2.30	1.04
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	1.49	1.33	2.22	1.05
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	1.63	1.44	2.53	**1.00**
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	1.56	1.38	2.35	1.09
Insurance	1.86	1.45	3.41	1.07
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	1.51	1.38	2.10	1.14
Marketing Agencies & Services	1.50	1.31	2.29	1.08
Media & Publishing	1.65	1.38	2.72	1.08
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	1.62	1.35	2.69	1.08
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	1.52	1.27	2.46	1.05
Retail & Ecommerce	1.46	1.35	1.99	1.14
Schools & Education	1.72	1.40	2.95	1.07

Strongest performer Weakest performers



OBSERVATIONS

B2B verticals performed well in this comparison, especially Computer Hardware and Corporate Services, where the top performers essentially doubled the medians in each vertical.

Again, as with the open and click findings, we expect richer content is driving deeper engagement, with material such as best practices, user tips and industry news supplementing or even replacing sales-focused copy. These verticals also illustrate that giving readers more than a single reason to click helps improve engagement.



List Churn Metrics

Overview

These metrics reveal reader disengagement and discontent, as well as providing insights into your list-management practices. Rising unsubscribe rates might tell you your email program doesn't match what subscribers expected when they signed up or that they find it easier to unsubscribe or go inactive than to update their data. Hard bounces can indicate you're not eliminating bad email addresses vigorously enough at opt-in and practicing good, ongoing list hygiene.

As with the open rate, the unsubscribe rate is most useful as a trend indicator. Even the lowest-performing marketers generate unsubscribe rates well below 1 percent. But is that rate going up or down? If your unsubscribe rate rises over time or remains constant while spam complaints increase, you're dealing with subscriber rebellion.

HARD BOUNCE RATE (by Country/Region)

Hard Bounce Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.547%	0.021%	0.00000%	2.114%
U.S.	0.568%	0.0260%	0.00000%	2.185%
EMEA	0.563%	0.008%	0.00000%	2.200%
United Kingdom	0.481%	0.016%	0.00000%	1.865%
Canada	0.272%	0.000%	0.00000%	1.085%
APAC	0.804%	0.080%	0.00234%	2.979%

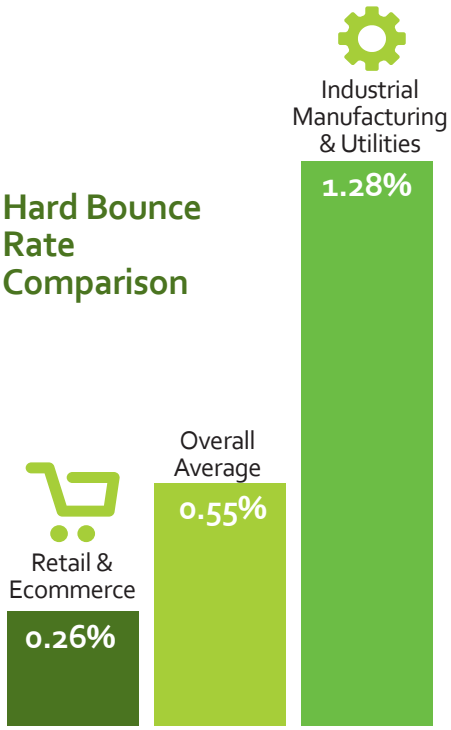


OBSERVATIONS

U.S., U.K., and EMEA-based companies have similar mean hard bounce rates, while Canada is well below them, and APAC companies are way above.

With the enactment of CASL (Canada's Anti-Spam Law) in 2014, many Canadian companies took the step to re-opt-in their email subscribers. This practice and other related hygiene steps clearly drove down a hard-bounce rate that is about half of the three other regions.

Hard Bounce Rate Comparison



HARD BOUNCE RATE (by Industry)

Hard Bounce Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	0.815%	0.051%	0.00000%	3.051%
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	0.975%	0.232%	0.01249%	3.346%
Computer Software & Online Services	0.592%	0.047%	0.00000%	2.218%
Consumer Products	0.541%	0.026%	0.00000%	2.072%
Corporate Services	0.756%	0.109%	0.00000%	2.725%
Financial Services	0.615%	0.007%	0.00000%	2.373%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	0.678%	0.034%	0.00000%	2.600%
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	0.926%	0.111%	0.00006%	3.375%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	1.285%	0.120%	0.00000%	4.811%
Insurance	0.885%	0.121%	0.00000%	3.200%
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	0.522%	0.043%	0.00037%	1.953%
Marketing Agencies & Services	1.086%	0.041%	0.00000%	4.201%
Media & Publishing	0.265%	0.010%	0.00000%	1.031%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	0.503%	0.043%	0.00000%	1.892%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	0.723%	0.041%	0.00000%	2.720%
Retail & Ecommerce	0.256%	0.013%	0.00001%	1.004%
Schools & Education	0.820%	0.069%	0.00000%	3.086%



OBSERVATIONS

Mean hard bounce rates vary widely by industry, from a low of 0.26 percent for Retail & Ecommerce companies to a high of 1.28 percent for Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities organizations. These differences are likely a simple result of frequency and math.

It's not uncommon for retail companies to send core broadcast emails three to five times a week, while manufacturing might not even send that many emails per month. When emails are sent more frequently, hard bounces are processed more. This reduces the per-send rate but not the overall amount.

TWEET THIS!
Unsubscribe rates in Canada are **less than ½ the worldwide average** per @Silverpop's Email Benchmark Study

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE (by Country/Region)

Unsubscribe Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.130%	0.021%	0.00000%	0.452%
U.S.	0.131%	0.021%	0.00000%	0.454%
EMEA	0.159%	0.030%	0.00000%	0.546%
United Kingdom	0.124%	0.028%	0.00000%	0.414%
Canada	0.060%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.234%
APAC	0.113%	0.014%	0.00000%	0.416%



OBSERVATIONS

Mean unsubscribe rates are fairly close across the regions except for the outlier Canada. As with the lower hard bounce rate, many Canadian companies deployed re-opt-in campaigns that required recipients to click a link to re-confirm their subscription. This would dramatically reduce database size but also reduce subscriber-driven opt-outs.

With even bottom-quartile performers averaging an unsubscribe rate less than 0.5 percent, you might be tempted to downplay this metric, but make sure you understand how unsubscribes impact your database growth. Improving your unsubscribe rate just 0.1 percent would save 1,000 subscribers every time you send to a database of 1 million people. That's more than 100,000 contacts retained over the course of a year if you're sending four emails per week.



VIDEO: Tips for Building Out An Unsubscribe Preference Center >>

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE (by Industry)

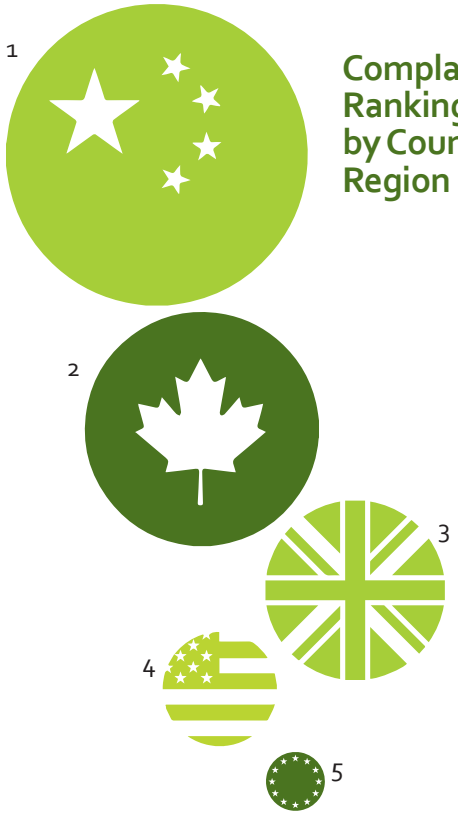
Unsubscribe Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	0.074%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.264%
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	0.105%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.393%
Computer Software & Online Services	0.131%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.477%
Consumer Products	0.178%	0.056%	0.00000%	0.567%
Corporate Services	0.175%	0.049%	0.00000%	0.561%
Financial Services	0.204%	0.049%	0.00000%	0.681%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	0.170%	0.064%	0.00000%	0.535%
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	0.109%	0.007%	0.00000%	0.391%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	0.187%	0.055%	0.00000%	0.600%
Insurance	0.141%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.512%
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	0.145%	0.043%	0.00000%	0.473%
Marketing Agencies & Services	0.216%	0.058%	0.00000%	0.703%
Media & Publishing	0.061%	0.007%	0.00000%	0.222%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	0.133%	0.029%	0.00000%	0.443%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	0.331%	0.128%	0.00047%	1.030%
Retail & Ecommerce	0.095%	0.038%	0.00197%	0.288%
Schools & Education	0.225%	0.083%	0.00000%	0.690%



OBSERVATIONS

As with hard bounces, mean unsubscribe rates vary widely by industry, from a low of 0.06 percent for Media & Publishing companies to a high of 0.33 percent for Real Estate, Construction & Building Products organizations.

Similar to hard bounce rates, these industry differences are most likely driven not by marketing practices or subscriber demographics but rather email frequency. Much like retailers, many publishers send email daily or multiple times per week, while real estate and related companies likely send only a few times per month. Again, this can lead to a large difference in unsubscribe rate per send.



Complaint Ranking by Country/ Region

COMPLAINT RATE (by Country/Region)

Complaint Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Overall	0.027%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.095%
U.S.	0.028%	0.003%	0.00000%	0.097%
EMEA	0.030%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.112%
United Kingdom	0.023%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.079%
Canada	0.021%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.085%
APAC	0.018%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.066%



OBSERVATIONS

The mean spam complaint ("abuse") rate is fairly similar across the geographic regions, although APAC companies see the lowest rate. This lower APAC rate probably results from a combination of factors including culture, differences among ISPs and a lower send frequency, which tends to produce fewer complaints from subscribers.

The complaint rate also highlights the difference between bottom- and top-quartile performers. While the best companies generated too few complaints to record, bottom-quartile senders saw upwards of 95 complaints per 100,000 emails sent.

TWEET THIS!
Top-performing industries in @Silverpop's email marketing study generated **virtually zero complaints per send.**

COMPLAINT RATE (by Industry)

Complaint Rate	Mean	Median	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile
Automobiles & Transportation	0.040%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.153%
Computer Hardware & Telecommunications	0.009%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.036%
Computer Software & Online Services	0.024%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.095%
Consumer Products	0.038%	0.020%	0.00000%	0.111%
Corporate Services	0.016%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.063%
Financial Services	0.037%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.146%
Food Service, Sports & Entertainment	0.039%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.141%
Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech	0.024%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.091%
Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities	0.026%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.101%
Insurance	0.020%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.079%
Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services	0.025%	0.006%	0.00000%	0.083%
Marketing Agencies & Services	0.041%	0.004%	0.00000%	0.144%
Media & Publishing	0.019%	0.004%	0.00000%	0.065%
Nonprofits, Associations & Government	0.025%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.093%
Real Estate, Construction & Building Products	0.047%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.169%
Retail & Ecommerce	0.025%	0.015%	0.00000%	0.072%
Schools & Education	0.028%	0.000%	0.00000%	0.101%

OBSERVATIONS

Computer Hardware and Telecommunications companies had the lowest mean abuse rate at 0.009 percent, while Real Estate, Construction & Building Products companies had the highest mean rate at 0.047 percent. Real Estate, Construction & Building Products companies also had the worst of the lowest-performing quartile at 0.17 percent.

If your complaint rate is higher than average, consider adding an extra unsubscribe link at the top of your email. Subscribers sometimes hit the spam complaint button when they don't know how to opt out or just want your email to stop. Making the unsubscribe link more prominent might stave off some of these complaints.

Methodology, Glossary and Additional Resources

This study examined messages sent by those Silverpop clients who had agreed to have their data anonymously included in the report. Researchers combined data from all messages sent by nearly 750 companies representing 3,000 brands in 40 countries.

A broad set of message types was included in the study — from promotional emails and content-based newsletters to automated emails and transactional messages — sent by companies in a variety of industries.

For this study, researchers analyzed various metrics for both the overall category (all 40 sender countries, including the United States, Canada, EMEA – Europe, the Middle East and Africa – and Asia Pacific [APAC] countries) and for just the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC.

Because the overall numbers include countries beyond the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC, in some instances the overall mean might actually be higher (or lower) than the combined median of the United States, Canada, EMEA and APAC.

Reporting the Findings: Each performance chart features statistics that include the mean, median, and top and bottom quartiles. The standard statistical definition of quartiles was used for this study. The "top quartile" is calculated by taking the median of all data above the overall median, and "bottom quartile" is the median of all data below the overall data median.

Glossary

Click-Through Rate (CTR): Measures the percentage of email messages that drew at least one click. For this study, it is expressed as unique click-through rate, counting only one click per recipient. To calculate the click-through rate, divide the number of unique clicks by the number of delivered messages and multiply by 100.

Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR): Measures the percentage of opened messages that recorded clicks. To calculate, divide the number of unique clicks by the number of opened messages and multiply by 100.

Hard Bounce: A message that generates a permanent delivery failure because the recipient's address doesn't exist or the account was closed.

Hard Bounce Rate: The percentage of sent messages that failed (bounced) because the address doesn't exist or the account was closed. To calculate, divide the total number of bounced messages by the total number of emails sent. Multiply by 100.

Median Clicks per Clicker: The median number of times a recipient clicks any link in an email message.

Median Opens Per Opener: Expresses the median number of times a recipient opens the message; exactly half are above that number and half below.

Open: "Open" refers to an HTML email message whose viewing is recorded by a clear 1 X 1 pixel image. When a message is opened and images are enabled, the image calls the server and the message is then counted as an open. The number of opens counted for this research include both this direct reporting and an "implied open" on text messages that recorded a click on any link in the message or an HTML message whose viewer did not enable images but clicked on a link.

Open Rate (Unique): The unique open rate measures one open per recipient and is expressed as a percentage of the total number of delivered email messages. To calculate the rate, divide the number of unique opens by the total number of delivered emails, and then multiply by 100 to display the percentage.

Spam Complaint: A complaint registered by a recipient who indicates the email message is unwanted, whether it fits the classic definition of "spam" as an unsolicited email or simply any message the recipient no longer wants to receive. The majority of spam complaints are received via a direct message via a "feedback" loop with an ISP.

Spam Complaint Rate: The percentage of delivered email messages that generate spam complaints. To calculate, divide the total number of spam complaints by delivered emails and multiply by 100.



Transactional Message: An email, such as an order/subscription confirmation or shipping update, which is triggered by a customer/prospect transaction.

Unsubscribe Rate: The percentage of delivered email messages that generates unsubscribe requests. To calculate, divide the number of unsubscribe requests received by delivered emails and multiply by 100.

Industry Category Definitions

By segmenting the benchmark data into various industry segments, we hope that this report provides greater value in enabling comparisons to like-kind companies. The categories range from fairly narrow to broader segments that combine related but different company types.

For each segment, a minimum number of companies was required to create a segment to ensure reliable averages and to minimize the chance that a few outlying companies would skew the averages higher or lower.

Tip: Consider comparing your organization to more than one segment in an attempt to benchmark against similar senders as much as the industry your organization falls under.

Finally, as always, we believe that while these benchmarks can provide a good starting point, always benchmark against your own program – previous years, types of emails, sister brands, and more – so that you're performing true apples-to-apples comparisons.

- **Automobiles & Transportation:** Auto manufacturers and dealers; airlines.
- **Computer Hardware & Telecommunications:** Computer hardware and telecommunications manufacturing and telecommunications providers.
- **Computer Software & Online Services:** Business and consumer software; online services and gaming.
- **Consumer Products:** Manufacturers of consumer products, including those that also sell direct to consumer, but primarily their own products.
- **Corporate Services:** Accounting, legal and consulting firms; miscellaneous business services.
- **Financial Services:** Banks, financial/asset management, stock brokerages.
- **Food Service, Sports & Entertainment:** Restaurant chains, sports teams and entertainment venues.
- **Hospitals, Healthcare & Biotech:** Hospitals, health management services and biotech companies.
- **Industrial Manufacturing & Utilities:** Industrial, chemical and forest products; energy companies and utilities.
- **Insurance:** Providers of all types of insurance products.
- **Lodging, Travel Agencies & Services:** Hotels, travel agencies and cruise lines.
- **Marketing Agencies & Services:** Advertising and marketing agencies. Note: This category includes emails sent by agencies on the behalf of their clients and to market their own business.
- **Media & Publishing:** Magazine, newspaper and online media and publishers.
- **Nonprofits, Associations & Government:** Nonprofit organizations, charities and trusts, associations and government entities.
- **Real Estate, Construction & Building Products:** Commercial, residential and multi-family real estate and property management companies; construction; and organizations that manufacture building products.
- **Retail & Ecommerce:** Traditional retailers and online retailers and ecommerce companies, whether B2C or B2B.
- **Schools & Education:** Private and public schools, universities and technical training organizations.

Additional Resources

White Papers and Tip Sheets

1) "Unsubscribe Best Practices: How to Decrease Database Churn and Strengthen Your Marketing Program"
2) "10 Tips for Using Email to Drive Mobile Engagement – and Vice Versa"
3) "Ultimate Guide to Assessing Your Digital Marketing Program"
4) "21 Tips for Building a Strong Modern-Day Preference Center"
5) "7 Tips for Generating Content for Automated Emails"

Blogs

1) "5 Ideas for Closing the Customer Experience Gap"
2) "Create Content That Engages Without Selling"
3) "3 Quick Ideas for Holiday Marketing Success"
4) "Empower Your Customers with Decision-Making Data"
5) "Mapping the Customer Journey: A New Vision for Digital Marketing"

Videos

1) "The New Inbox Challenge: Content, Friction, Timing"
2) "Tips for Solving the Email Address Change Unsubscribe Problem"
3) "Tips for Incorporating Dynamic Content Blocks into Your Automated Emails"
4) "IT Is *Not* the Enemy"
5) "How Broadcast and Automated Emails Work Together"

Silverpop, an IBM Company, is a cloud-based digital marketing provider that offers email marketing, lead-to-revenue management and mobile engagement solutions. Silverpop Engage — the foundation of the IBM Marketing Cloud — uses customer data and individual behaviors, collected from a variety of sources, to inform and drive personalized interactions in real time. IBM Marketing Cloud powers the delivery of exceptional experiences for customers across the buyer journey by leveraging key data, providing analytical insights and automating relevant cross-channel interactions. As part of IBM Marketing Solutions, Silverpop helps make it easier to design meaningful customer experiences across applications, devices and time, accelerating today's results and tomorrow's ambitions. Silverpop is trusted by more than 5,000 brands around the globe. For more information, view our demo and visit silverpop.com.