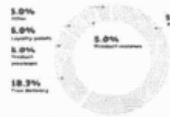


Email marketing data

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A survey by the **Direct Marketing Association**, presented exclusively in new media age, reveals consumers' views on marketing emails and gives pointers to where brands can improve their messages' relevance



Consumers love emails with money-off offers and six out of ten will share humorous or informative messages. But having an existing relationship with a brand makes a huge difference to whether an email from it receives a positive response.

These are some of the conclusions from the first DMA Digital Tracker survey, the results of which are published here exclusively. Certain retail brands, such as Argos, Marks & Spencer and Tesco come out well. But it seems many marketers are still missing a trick when it comes to creating messages that resonate with their audience.

While 60% of consumers like receiving money-off offers (**graph 1**), shocking or surprising emails are among the least likely to be shared (**graph 2**). "People like, read and pass on content which is relevant, interesting, timely or humorous," says David Cole, MD of Fast MAP, which conducted the survey in March for the DMA. "Even though every direct marketer knows this, most recipients find only one out of ten emails interesting or relevant."



When recipients deem an email interesting or relevant, 56% of them will visit the brand's website, but nearly as many will save the email to view at a later date (**graph 3**). So is there a huge problem with targeting? Not necessarily, argues Chris Combemale, executive director of the DMA. "Marketers could do more to increase relevance," he says. "But you could look at it another way: that 82% of people think some of the emails they received are relevant. It's not a lost cause."

Combemale claims there's a sea-change as new tools become available. "The trend this year within the email marketing community is to focus heavily on segmentation and better targeting," he says. "Certainly this data reveals an opportunity to move away from one-size-fits-all newsletters to much more relevant content."

While a tenth of those taking part in the survey said none of the brands suggested to them did email well, some retailers were seen as doing a good job (**graph 4**). For Combemale, this suggests companies are talking to their existing customers and giving them a convincing reason to continue hearing from them. "People felt they were getting some value from the emails they received and preferred those that offered discounts," he says. "It suggests to me that companies are engaging reasonably well with their existing customers, but could do better at communicating with non-customers."



The industries that offer the best emails are travel and tourism, followed by retail, food and entertainment (**graph 5**). "In certain sectors the consumer is really engaged with digital channels," says Combemale.

Digital media is, of course, central to social networking. But here the survey paints a mixed picture. Facebook dominates as the favoured site, used by 58% of respondents, with a third spending more than three hours a week on the site. But the vast majority of the time spent on sites like this is for socialising. For example, only 3% of recipients of an email from a brand would then go to its social page or blog, and 40% have never shared company or product-related information on social networks.

"Most of the social media sites are peer to peer or person to person, communicated in a social context," says Combemale. "Companies need to be wary about jumping into the middle of that dialogue. I don't think a user would think of social media as a place where you discuss product choices with your friends. It's more about keeping each other up to date with your personal news."

For the time being, companies need to be careful about how they promote their products in social media. "There's a greater focus on reputation management, more in a PR sense than in terms of pushing offers," he says. "It's more of a branding than a direct response medium. The most important thing for companies to do is monitor what people are saying about them so they can react when needed." That said, the DMA is looking closely at how social media affects direct marketers and will be following this up with another survey in six months' time. P

How the data was compiled