

Communications Capacity-Building Program

Get the Most Out of Your Email Marketing

Led by John Morgan, Senior Analytics Consultant & Marketing
Automation Manager

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Upcoming Webinar

Make Them Feel It: **Storytelling That
Moves People to Act**

Wednesday, May 20 • 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**John Morgan,
Senior Analytics
Consultant &
Marketing
Automation
Manager**



A little about **John**

- **2009**: Started as an intern at UAMS
- **2010**: SEO and web development
- **2014**: Joined MHP/The Social Innovation
- **2022**: Director, Digital Marketing at Living Water International
- **Now**: Current role as Senior Analytics Consultant & Marketing Automation Manager

Before We Begin

A Few Housekeeping Notes

What to Expect Today

- This session is being recorded, and a link will be shared after the webinar
- Use the chat to ask questions throughout; we'll address them in the live Q&A at the end

The Platform Disclaimer

Whether you use Mailchimp, HubSpot, Salesforce, Constant Contact, or manually email individual recipients, today is about strategy. We are focusing on tactics that work regardless of what software you log into every morning. No platform left behind!

Your Four Key Takeaways Today

This webinar is built around four strategic pillars.

01

Structure & Copy

Write for the scan, not the read.

03

Strategic Follow-Up

Ethically and effectively resend to boost reach without burning out your subscribers.

02

The Call to Action

Give every email one job.

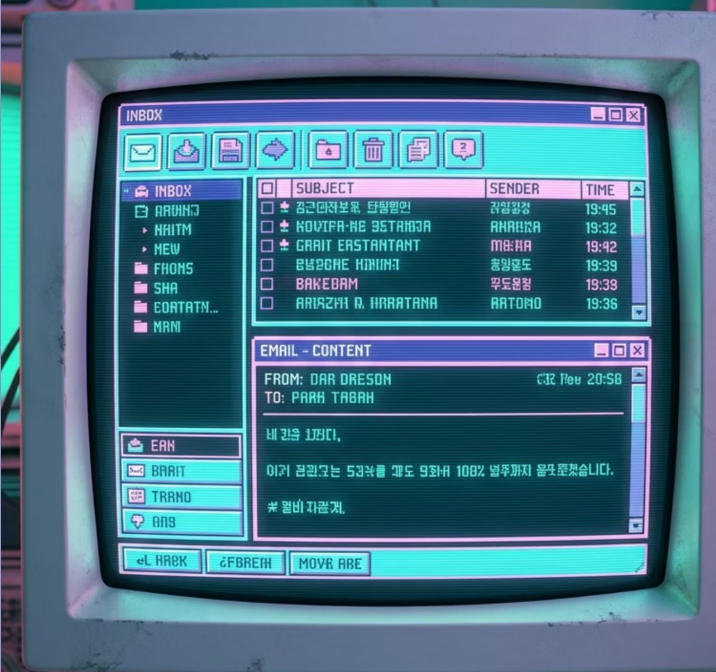
04

Simple Automations

Build a welcome series that engages new subscribers at the moment they care most.

Structure & Copy: Writing for the "Scan"

Most readers spend fewer than 10 seconds¹ deciding whether to engage with your email. In this section, we'll cover how to format and write emails so that even the fastest scanner gets the message *and* gets engaged.



Win the Inbox **Before They Even Open**

Your email's first impression happens **before** anyone opens it. Two fields determine whether your message gets clicked or deleted: the subject line and the preview text.

Subject Line

Keep it under 50 characters so it doesn't get cut off on mobile.

Lead with curiosity, urgency, or a specific benefit.

Preview Text (Your Secret Weapon)

Many leave this blank or let it default to "View this email in your browser." **Don't.** Treat your preview text as a *secondary subject line*.

People... Don't Read Emails?

Eye-tracking research consistently shows that readers move through digital content in an **F-pattern**: they read the first line fully, then scan down the left edge looking for hooks. Design your emails accordingly!

I

Short Paragraphs

1–3 sentences max. A wall of text signals effort, and effort signals "skip." Imagery, space, punchy headings are your friend.

II

Strategic Bolding

Bold the single most important phrase in each section. This creates "landing spots" for skimmers so they absorb the key idea even if they read nothing else.

III

Bullet Points

Break up dense information into scannable lists. Bullets reduce cognitive load and help readers extract value quickly.

The "You" vs. "We" Test

One of the fastest ways to improve your email copy is to audit who the hero of your story is. Read your last email and count the words.

✗ "We" Language: Organization as Hero

- "We distributed 500 meals last weekend."
- "We launched a new after-school program."
- "We couldn't have done it without your help."

This framing centers *your organization*, which can be less motivating for a donor.

✓ "You" Language: Reader as Hero

- "Because of you, 500 families had a warm meal this weekend."
- "You made it possible to open doors for 40 kids this fall."
- "You are the reason this works."

Shift the hero to your **reader**. They'll feel the difference, their impact, and connect to the org at a deeper level.

The Call to Action: Getting the Click

Every email you send should have a single purpose. In this section, we'll cover how to design, write, and place your calls to action for maximum impact.



The "One Job" Rule

If you give your reader five things to do, they will do zero.

Every email should have **one primary goal**. One action must be clearly dominant, visually and strategically. Before you hit send, ask yourself:

"What is the single most important thing I want this person to do right now?"

Common Primary Goals

- Give: Make a donation
- Go: Register for an event
- Connect: Read a report or story
- Act: Sign a petition
- Advocate: Share with a friend

What "One Job" Doesn't Mean

Don't delete all your email links! One Job = One Intention. You *can* repeat your primary CTA button twice (above the fold and at the bottom) without violating the one-job rule. What to avoid: splitting attention equally between a donate ask, an event RSVP, a social follow, and a survey all in one email.

Buttons, Links & Action-Oriented Language



Buttons Win

Buttons get clicked more than plain text links.

- Use a high-contrast color that's distinct from the rest of your email.
- If your platform doesn't support buttons, make a text link bold, uppercase, and set it on its own line. Then get a new platform.



Ditch Passive Language

Replace vague, passive CTAs with **specific, value-driven language** that tells the reader exactly what happens when they click (and why it matters to them).

✗ "Click Here" → ✓ "Feed a Family Today"

✗ "Learn More" → ✓ "Read Maria's Full Story"

✗ "Donate" → ✓ "Give a Child Safe Water"



Placement Strategy

Put your primary CTA "**above the fold**" visible before the reader scrolls. Then repeat it at the bottom.

- Use in-platform testing tools to see where your content falls
- Test sends and check on your phone
- Don't obsess over cramming content in above the fold

Buttons, Links & Action-Oriented Language



Buttons Win

A case study from ContentVerve: 90% increase in click-through rate by using first-person phrasing: "Start *my* free 30 day trial" vs. "Start *your* free 30 day trial."

90%



Ditch Passive Language

A case study from Copyblogger: Making CTA look like a physical button rather than a text link created a 45% boost in clicks

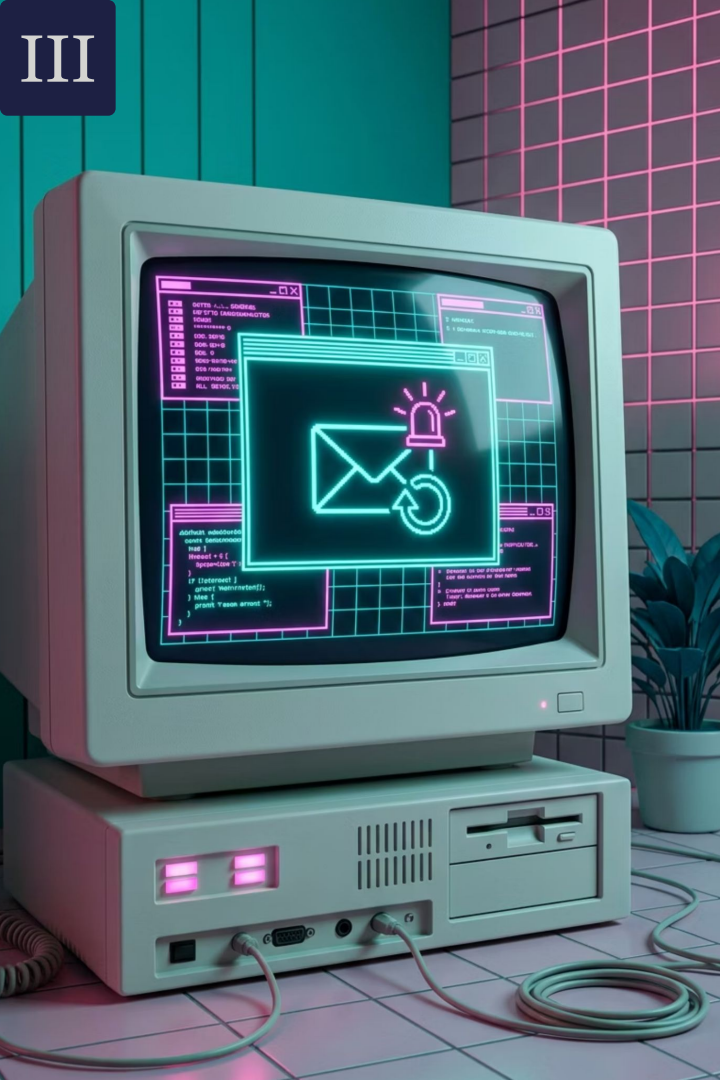
45%



Mobile-First

Data from Litmus: 50+% of all emails are now opened on mobile devices.

50%



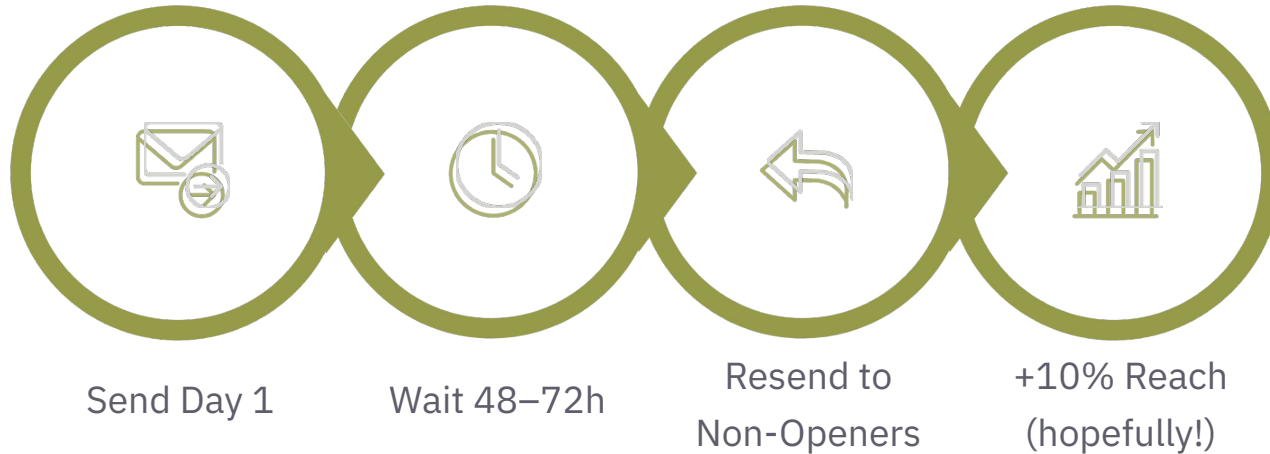
The Strategic Follow-Up: Boost Results Without Burning Your List

Sending once and hoping for the best leaves real engagement on the table. This section is about ethical, strategic follow-up.

Strategy no. 1

The "Unopened" Resend Strategy

This is one of the highest-ROI tactics in email marketing, and it takes less than 15 minutes to execute.



The Tactic

Wait **48–72 hours** after your first send. Change *only* the subject line. Send the same email exclusively to people who didn't open the first one. That's it.

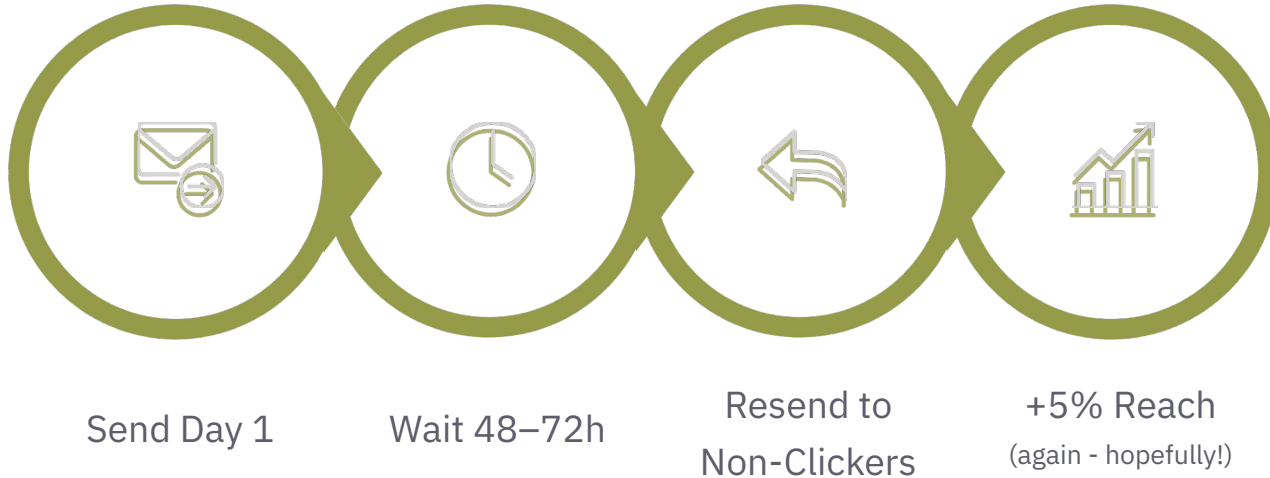
The Reality Check

Some platforms (like Mailchimp) do this in one click. Others require you to export your non-opener list and re-import it as a new segment. **The effort is worth it!** A 10–15% bump in reach on every campaign compounds significantly over time.

Strategy no. 1.5

The "Unopened" Resend Strategy

A modern twist on one of the highest-ROI tactics in email marketing, and it also takes less than 15 minutes to execute.



<https://mailchimp.com/help/resend-an-unopened-campaign/>

<https://community.hubspot.com/t5/Email-Marketing-Tool/Resend-marketing-email-to-delivered-but-unopened-contacts/m-p/1123862>

Strategy no. 2

The "Last Chance" Reminder: Making Mass Feel Personal

For high-stakes campaigns a well-timed final reminder can dramatically move the needle. The key is tone.

Keep It Plain Text

Strip away the header image, the logo, the branded footer. A plain-text email looks like it came from a person, not a marketing department.

That contrast can be powerful when your list has been receiving designed emails all season.

Lead With Urgency, End With Warmth

Open with the deadline front and center:
"Tonight at midnight, our matching gift window closes."

End with a genuine, human sign-off. No P.S. tricks, no fake personalization, just honest urgency and real appreciation.

Target the Right Segment

Make sure your "Last Chance" reminder only goes out to people who **haven't yet acted** on the campaign.

Protect the experience of those who already acted.

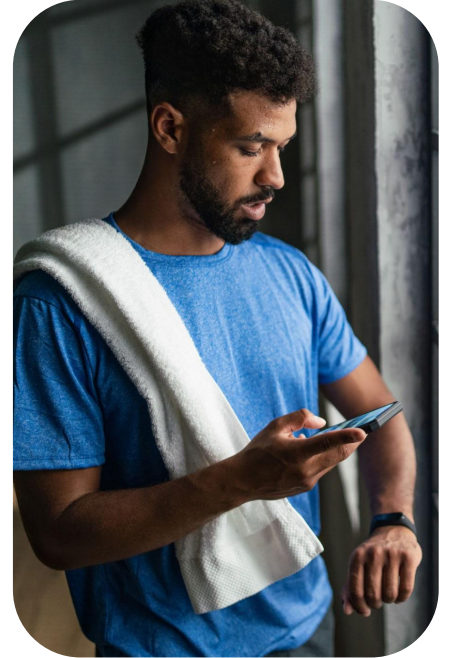
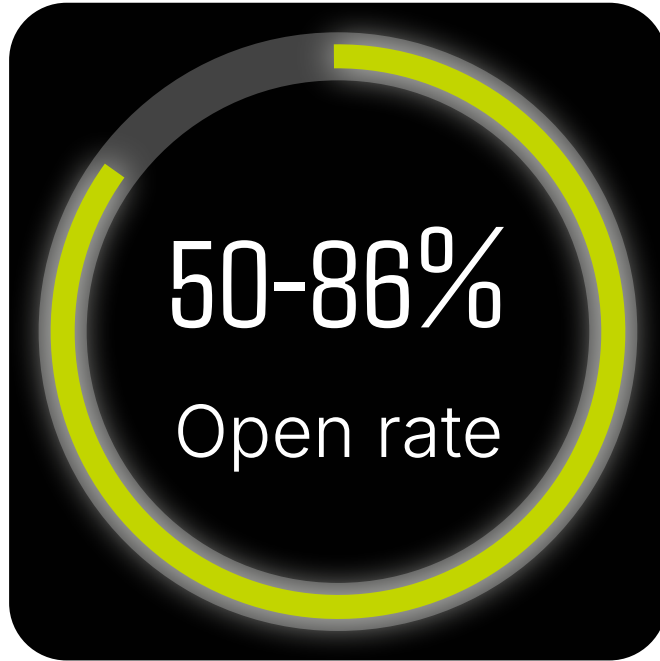


Simple Automations: The Welcome Series

Automation might seem intimidating. Thankfully the most important automated sequence is also the simplest. The welcome series is your one opportunity to engage a new subscriber at the precise moment their interest is highest. Don't waste it.

Some Welcome Series Data

Users who receive a
welcome email series
show 33% more
long-term engagement



The 3-Part Welcome Series Logic Flow

When someone joins your list, their **intent is at its peak**. Strike while the iron is hot with three targeted emails spaced over one week. This logic works on virtually any platform because the providers/platforms know how important it is.



Day 1: Deliver & Welcome

Send whatever they signed up for (a guide, a report, a newsletter).

Set clear expectations for what comes next.



Day 3: Tell Your Story


Introduce your mission, your founder, or a single powerful beneficiary story. Help them understand *why* your work matters. Tell them what they are a part of and build connection.



Day 7: The Soft Ask

Invite them into a low-barrier action: follow on social, perhaps?

Meet them where they are and don't lead with a major ask.

 **No automation tools? No problem.** Set a recurring Friday calendar reminder to manually send your welcome template to that week's new subscribers as a batch. The logic is the same! The delivery is just a little more hands-on.



Wrap-Up: The "Do This Tomorrow" Plan

Learning is only part of the equation. Here's how to turn today's session into immediate, measurable improvement in your email program. Start with the next email you send!

Core Takeaway: It's Not About the Software

Better emails come from clear copy, a single CTA, and strategic follow-ups, not fancy software.

Clear Copy

Short paragraphs, strategic emphases, "you" language, and a subject line + preview text that work together to earn the open.

Single CTA

One primary job per email. Action-oriented button language. Placed above the fold and repeated at the bottom.

Strategic Follow-Up

Resend to non-openers with a new subject line. Use "Last Chance" reminders for campaigns. Welcome new subscribers with a three-part sequence.

Your Homework: Apply One Tactic Tomorrow

Pull up the last email you sent. Run it through this quick three-question audit, then apply at least one fix* to your very next email.

1

The One Job Test

Did your email have a single, clearly dominant call to action? Or were you asking your reader to do five things at once? Identify the one thing that matters most, and make every other element support it.

2

The CTA Language Swap

Find your call-to-action button or link. Is it "Learn More," "Click Here," or "Donate"? Rewrite it with an active verb and a specific outcome. **You can make an impactful change today!**

3

The You/We Count

Read your last email and count "we" versus "you." If your organization is the hero of every sentence, rewrite and center the reader as the agent of change.

*Speaking of Tests

A/B testing compares two versions of an email to see which one performs better with your audience. It helps you make decisions based on real behavior instead of guesswork, so your emails can drive higher opens, clicks, and conversions over time.

Used well, A/B testing gives you a clear way to improve email marketing with small, measurable changes. The key is to test deliberately, read the results carefully, and apply what you learn to future sends.

What to Test

- Subject lines
- Preheader text
- Call-to-action copy
- Button color or placement
- Send time or day
- Email layout or length

How to Do It Right

- Test one variable at a time
- Use a sufficient sample size
- Define success before you send
- Run the test long enough to get reliable results
- Apply the winner to your next campaign (many platforms have tools to test a small percentage, then distribute the winner)

Bonus: Open Rates Are Broken

Here's the uncomfortable truth: **open rates are no longer a reliable metric.** Apple's Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) pre-loads email content for iPhone users.

📌 Our new north star metric is **Clicks**.

Why? It proves a real human made a real decision to engage with your content. Everything we cover today is designed to drive clicks.



Mail Privacy Protection: How it Works

...an opportunity to look beyond the open rate when measuring engagement

Apple Mail Privacy Protection (rolled out in 2021) pre-loads tracking pixels on Apple's proxy servers, regardless of whether the user actually opened the email. Because Apple Mail accounts for over 50% of all email opens globally, this artificially inflated open rates across the board

Important & Relevant Metrics

- Open Rate
- Click to Open Rate
- Click Rate
- A/B Test Goals: Open Rate or Click Rate?
- IP Address-based Location Data

Even MORE Information

Apple Mail accounts for 45% of all email opens globally.¹

Some platforms offer an email client usage report that gives visibility into the number of recipients with MPP enabled.

Industry data consistently shows that well over 90% of Apple users choose to turn it on when prompted upon iOS upgrade.²

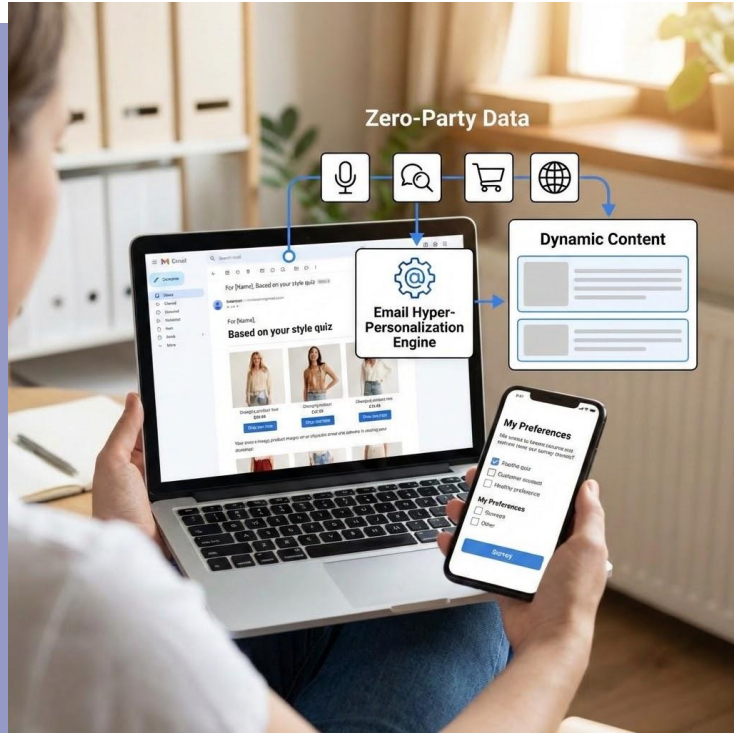
Advanced Track: Data and the FUTURE of Email - Personalization 2.0

Econsultancy asked marketers: "What do you think the single biggest to change to email marketing will be when looking ahead 5 years?"

[According to the survey](#), the top 3 responses of those who strongly agreed or somewhat agreed included:

- 84% – Email will be fully integrated with other marketing channels
- 76% – All email communication will be completely personalized
- 74% – Email will still be one of the highest channels for delivering ROI





Personalization 2.0

Modern personalization is centered on *context* not *identity*.

- Personalization engines use zero-party data - data your contacts share with you by filling out a form, completing a poll, taking a quiz, etc.
- Dynamic content blocks can be used to personalize messaging - hero images, articles, the content of the email - and the recipient gets a custom tailored version of the newsletter.

Bonus: AI Do's and Don'ts

Using AI to be more efficient is an easy win... right?

× Remove AI phrasing

- "It's not X... it's Y."
- "It's not just a gift, it's a lifeline."

× Remove—the—em—dashes

- "You'll see it everywhere now—if you don't already."
- "It sends a message—but not the kind you want to send."

× Remove the buzzwords

- If it's not natural language, if it's a bit too buzzword-y, take it out
- ***delve, elevate, tapestry, foster, beacon***

✓ Take advantage of custom prompting

Use any available settings to adjust tone and voice to your brand and remove the "don'ts"

Find creative that has worked well, and feed it to the AI. Get it to use that voice to create a first draft.

Live Q&A: Mic is Open

We have 10–15 minutes to dig into your questions. Nothing is too basic, and every question can help someone else in the room!



Thank You!

The tactics we covered today aren't magic. Keep testing, keep iterating, keep learning.

Overwhelmed?

Start small. *Ship the next email better than the last one. That's the name of the game.*

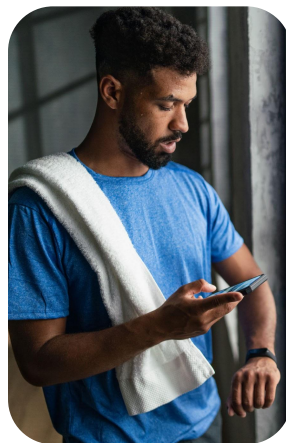
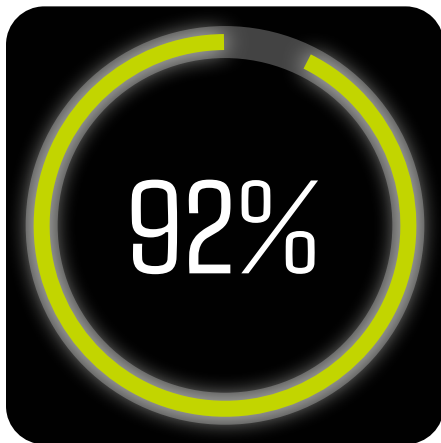
Underwhelmed?

Lets talk! *I'd love to consult with you on more advanced topics: zero-party data, DMARC, BIMl, Confirmation Campaigns*

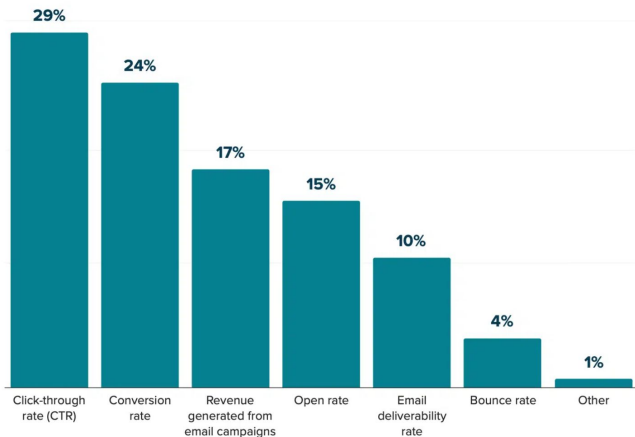
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3. <https://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2023/48537/how-much-time-do-people-typically-spend-looking-at-an-email>
4. <https://www.psypost.org/people-consistently-devalue-creative-writing-generated-by-artificial-intelligence/>
- 5.

Email Stats and Facts



Which of the following best describes your company's top key performance indicator (KPI) for marketing emails?



Source: Litmus - The State of Email 2025

