When should I send?

Email send-time optimization guide
Send-time optimization

Finding the best time to email

As a marketer, you have access to an immense amount of customer behavior, preference and historical benchmark data that can help you optimize email send-time beyond batch-and-blast.

The reality is that there is no one-size-fits-all “best time to mail.” Even if there was, it would quickly become obsolete as every brand rushed to deliver their emails at the exact same time-of-day or day-of-week. Instead, you need to find ways to optimize send-time for your unique audience.

Over the next few pages, you’ll discover three different ways to optimize send-times:

- Using historical benchmarks
- Triggering messages based on customer behavior or other contextual data
- Examining inbox activity data at the individual level

More email trends and benchmarks

The findings presented in this eBook were pulled from our quarterly Email Benchmark series. For more email trends, benchmarks and recommendations, download the full report!

Q4 2015 Email Benchmark Report
Historical benchmarks

Highlighting potential new send-times with past performance data

The historical performance of email campaigns by time-of-day or day-of-week can highlight opportunities for times and days to test mailing more frequently. For example, by looking at the day-of-week data below, we see that weekends in Q4 2015 appear to have been underutilized*, and may provide opportunity for increased volume.

QUICK TIP
Look for days or times where [percent of transactions] > [percent of volume]

Day-of-week: Email volume vs. transactions (Q4 2015)

Time-of-day: Email volume vs. transactions (Q4 2015)

Source: Experian Marketing Services
Beyond batch-and-blast

Triggering messages based on customer behavior

While benchmarks can give you ideas for optimizing send-times for your entire audience, the reality is that your customers operate differently from one another. There’s no one time that will work for all of them.

That’s why moving beyond the classic “batch-and-blast” method can be so powerful. Instead of pushing your message at a time you think may be effective for your whole audience, you can respond to their behavior and needs at an individual level.

For example, a travel company might trigger an email to a customer after she browses their website without booking a trip. Rather than sending a mass email at a time that they think will make sense for all of their customers, the marketers can automate the send to respond to the behavior of each individual.
Send-time optimization

For regular promotional mailings, setting up behavioral triggers may seem daunting or unnecessary. In these cases, it’s still wise to consider each customer’s motivations and behaviors and send to them at the time they are individually more likely to open the message.

Email Insights
Analyzing your own customer data is a crucial step in optimizing send-time for each subscriber. But this process is even more effective when you belong to an email cooperative, like Experian Marketing Services’ Email Insights. In this type of program, you can examine your individual customer’s behaviors across all of the brands within the cooperative – not just determining when they are most likely to open your messages, but when they interact with the rest of their inbox.

Learn more about Email Insights ➤
Send-time optimization: Case example

A high-end retailer optimizes time of day using Email Insights

Strategic goal

Optimize email send-time for each subscriber by analyzing the Email Insights consortium’s best time-of-day data

Tactics

• Leveraged actionable time-stamp information that was connected to each email address. The brand processed over 10 billion actions from the past 13 months.

• Used activity data to implement a morning, afternoon and evening campaign. The test was run over 1 month using test and control.

RESULTS

23-41% Lift in open rates compared to control

27-51% Lift in click rates compared to control
Build a contact strategy around your customers’ needs

Ultimately, customers want to interact with brands that consider their unique needs and preferences. Message timing is a large part of context, and the data exists to optimize send-times beyond batch-and-blast. There’s no universal best time to mail – instead, pay attention to benchmarks, testing results, context and behavior to reach your subscribers at the perfect time.

Deliver thoughtful messages at the perfect time

To learn how the Experian Marketing Suite can help you design a personalized, relevant and valuable cross-channel marketing strategy, email us, visit us online or give us a call:

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experian.com/marketingsuite

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Like what you read?

The insights in this eBook were featured in our quarterly Email benchmark report, which is chock-full of trends, benchmarks and best practices from our Experian experts.

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About Experian Marketing Services

Experian Marketing Services is a leader in data-driven marketing and is the only company in the world to offer a comprehensive Marketing Suite that unites customer insights, analytics, data quality and cross-channel marketing technology into a single platform. Backed by the industry’s highest-rated client services team, we own and maintain the world’s largest consumer database and provide marketing services and cloud-based technology to more than 10,000 brands in more than 30 countries. With significant presence in the world’s largest economies and a portfolio including many of today’s most well-known and respected global brands, we provide enterprises with unique competitive advantages through marketing services and technology. Our extended legacy in data security, management and consumer privacy has earned the trust of organizations and consumers from around the world for more than three decades.

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