



The 2017

# User Engagement Top 100 Report

## Subscription Retailers



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## Introduction

The subscription retail industry has grown exponentially in the U.S., fueled by the success of early innovators like Birchbox, which landed on the scene in 2010. With more than **10,000 subscriptions** on the market today, even leading e-commerce companies, such as Walmart and Sephora, are recognizing the value of this popular business model.

Here are just a few revealing stats from the **2016 Hitwise report** about the impact of the subscription commerce industry.

- ▶ Traffic to subscription box websites has grown nearly **3,000 percent** in the past three years, with more than 21.4 million visits in January 2016.
- ▶ In the U.S., subscription sites are now mobile-first, with over half (**53 percent**) of visits coming from smartphones and tablets.
- ▶ Social media remains a powerful driver of subscription site traffic, with a difference of up to **792 percent** in referred visits compared to retail sites.

How do these businesses keep their subscribers coming back for more month after month? In this report, we analyzed the email and mobile messaging strategies adopted by the top 100 subscription retailers in the United States to study how they communicate with their customers.

We note what companies are doing across the board and what they can do to stand out from the crowd, using case studies to make recommendations about how to optimize the omni-channel marketing of your own organization.



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## Key Takeaways

During the course of our three-week study, we examined the email and mobile messages sent by the top 100 subscription box businesses. Here are our key takeaways from analyzing aggregate trends and how industry and user activity affected messaging content and timing.



### Failed first impressions.

As the starting point for user engagement, a disappointing 68 percent sent one or more welcome emails to new subscribers, and only 19 percent committed to a welcome series.



### Can you hear me now?

26 percent of the top 100 subscription businesses had mobile apps, but only **nine** sent push or text messaging to new users once the apps had been downloaded.



### It's not them, it's you.

Cancellation confirmations are universal, but only **13** businesses went beyond the basics and sent dedicated re-engagement emails to win back customers who churned.

This report is for marketers and go-to-market leaders interested in implementing high-performing, omni-channel marketing campaigns that can achieve these objectives.

Increase customer  
lifetime value.

Strengthen  
brand loyalty.

Improve  
win-back rates.

In it, we present valuable insights about the subscription commerce industry and include real-world messaging examples from the country's most popular subscription retailers.

If this report piques your interest and you'd like to learn how to advance your own campaigns, please **reach out** to us for some one-to-one advice and best practices.

Iterable empowers growth marketers at B2C companies to create world-class user engagement campaigns throughout the full lifecycle, and across all channels, including direct mail, email, SMS, push and in-app notifications.

Segment users, build workflows, automate touchpoints and test strategies at scale without engineering support.

Request a demo: [iterable.com/demo](https://iterable.com/demo) or [contact us](#).

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## Methodology

Based on lists of the most popular and best-selling subscription retailers, we selected the top 100 businesses<sup>1</sup>. For the purpose of this study, 25 companies were chosen for each of the following four industries.



### Food and Drink

Weekly meal planning services and snack boxes  
*Blue Apron, Green Chef, NatureBox, Graze*



### Beauty and Grooming

Sample and full-size makeup and beauty products  
*Birchbox, Ipsy, Dollar Shave Club, PLAY! By Sephora*



### Fashion

Wardrobe rentals and accessory boxes  
*Stitch Fix, Trunk Club, Rocksbox, Fabletics*



### Lifestyle

Boxes for various lifestyles, including pets and parenting  
*BarkBox, Loot Crate, KiwiCo, Book of the Month*

After creating an account for each of the companies<sup>2</sup>, we tracked email and mobile marketing strategies over the course of three weeks during May and June 2017:

- Week 1** Signed up for email communication with the companies that did not require a subscription.
- Week 2** Purchased a subscription from all 100 companies and downloaded the mobile apps of those that offered them.
- Week 3** Canceled all subscriptions<sup>3</sup>, whether by email, live chat or phone call with a customer support representative.

This research report was designed to analyze select messaging tactics in a brief timespan for the purpose of creating a snapshot of the leading subscription retailers.

Readers should note that Iterable's recommendations for omni-channel marketing are based on the limited experience of this study, which is not meant to be scientific in its analysis and does not reflect the official position of any company listed.

<sup>1</sup> This Top 100 list was based on best-selling and most popular lists from publications, such as Forbes and Buzzfeed, as well as subscription-based websites, such as Cratejoy and My Subscription Addiction.

<sup>2</sup> Two email clients, Gmail and Outlook, were used in this study in order to analyze the effectiveness of their spam filters.

<sup>3</sup> This particular user action experienced the most variance. Oftentimes the subscription was canceled before the package arrived or could not be canceled until the shipment was delivered.



During our analysis, we studied how each company communicated with new users at each stage of the customer lifecycle, and across email and mobile channels.



## Welcome Campaigns

Welcome emails are often designated by their targeted purpose of introducing a user to an e-commerce website, mobile app, social media platform or other business property.

Did the company send out a welcome email after a new user signed up to receive communications or purchased a subscription? If so, how many welcome emails did each company send?

## Blast Campaigns

Marketing blasts are typically high-volume, general-purpose communications that e-retailers use to inform customers of sales and other promotions.

How many blast emails were sent in total by each company? Which industries tended to send more blasts?



## Re-Engagement Campaigns

Studies show that a 5 percent increase in retention can **result** in a 25-95 percent increase in profit. At the point a customer cancels their subscription, a re-engagement campaign can be deployed to win them back.

Did the company send out a re-engagement email after a subscription was canceled? Which industries were more likely to prioritize subscription reactivation?

## Mobile Messaging

Mobile text and push messaging can include marketing promotions, as well as transactional shipping and delivery confirmations.

Of the companies with mobile applications, which sent SMS messages and/or push notifications? Which industries tended to message more on mobile?



# User Engagement Strategies of the Top 100 Subscription Retailers

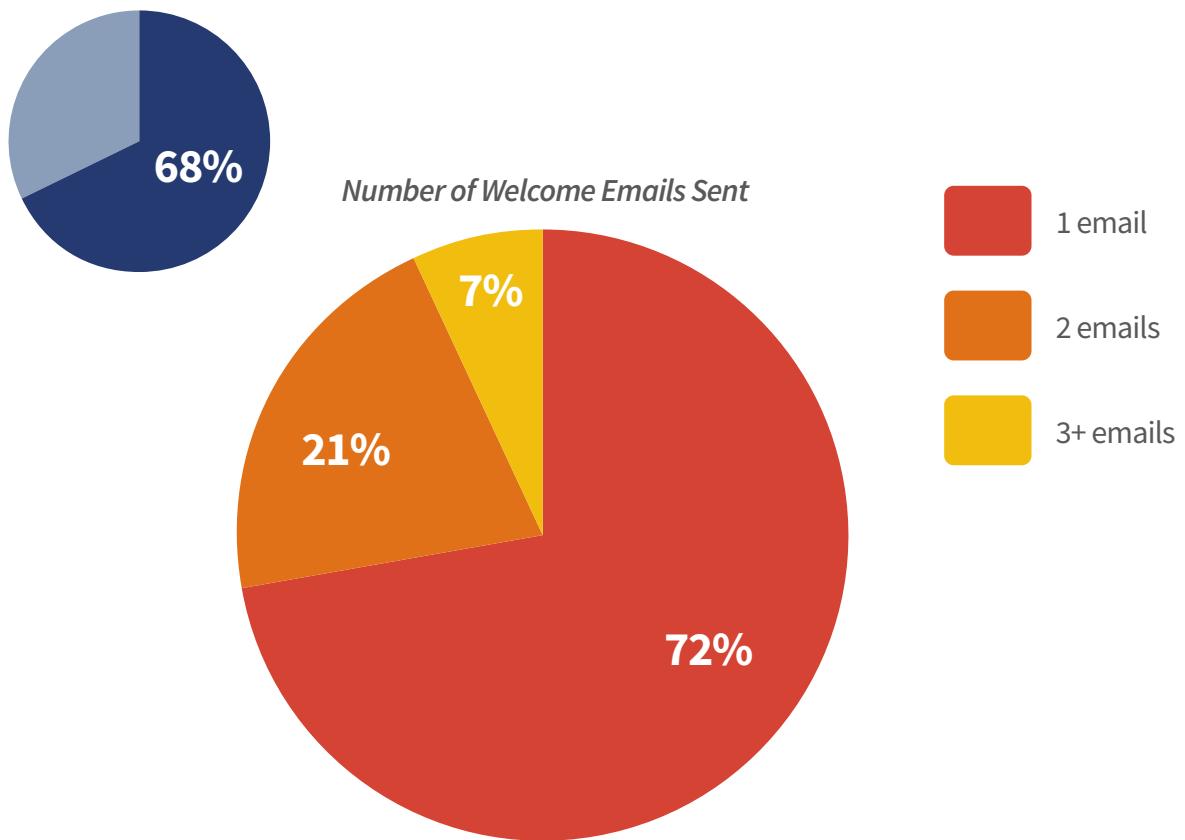
## Welcome Campaigns

### Data Analysis

Welcome, or onboarding, campaigns are commonly used by leading subscription retailers. 68 percent sent at least one email to welcome new customers; staggeringly, only 19 percent committed to a series of welcome emails. Suffice it to say that even industry leaders are struggling to go beyond growth marketing basics.

Of the companies that leverage welcome campaigns, 72 percent sent only one email, 21 percent sent out a second follow-up email. A small portion (7 percent) delivered a welcome series of three or more emails to engage with new subscribers.

Top 100 Subscription Retailers  
With Welcome Campaigns

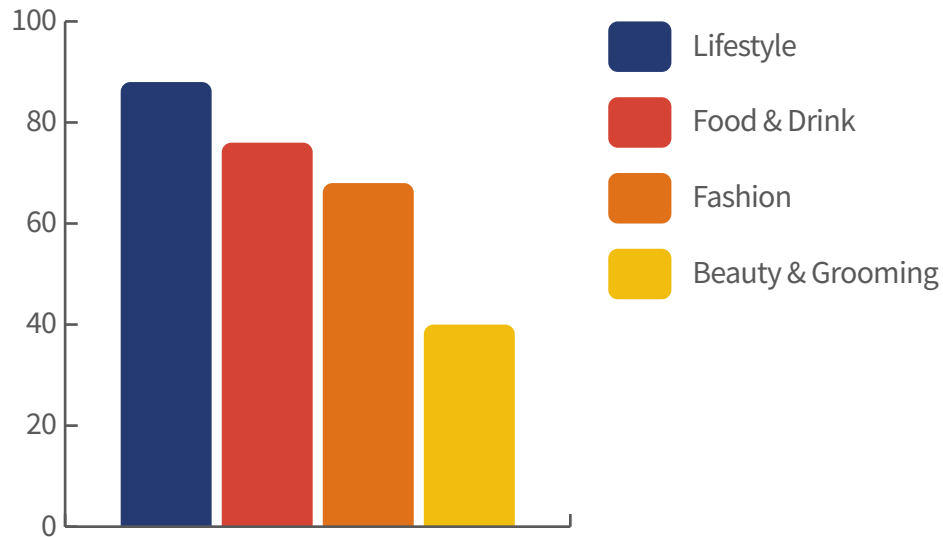


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There were wide discrepancies of adoption among subscription categories: 88 percent of Lifestyle businesses sent welcome emails, followed by 76 percent of Food & Drink companies and 68 percent of Fashion brands. However, only 40 percent of Beauty & Grooming subscription retailers prioritized onboarding new customers.

*Welcome Campaign Adoption By Industry*



### Welcoming the Waitlisted

Talk about a good problem to have: your subscription business is so popular that you have to waitlist consumers to keep up with growing demand. Of the top 100 companies, we were waitlisted by two Beauty brands: **Ipsy and Boxycharm**.

Each company took a different approach when welcoming new subscribers. While Boxycharm reassured in its order confirmation that its team is “working hard to get you off the list as soon as possible,” Ipsy sent customers a message allowing them to skip the waitlist if they shared their support on social media.

Subscription retailers should already engage users regularly, but constant contact is especially important with your waitlist. Make sure they immediately feel like members of the community, and reduce any frustrations with frequent status updates.



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## Interesting Findings

An important point to note is that there are multiple opportunities in which e-commerce companies can welcome new members. Aside from making a purchase, users can also be onboarded when they sign up for an email newsletter, download a mobile app or follow the brand on social media.

Leading fashion subscription retailer Le Tote demonstrated how to effectively welcome consumers who have yet to convert. Once we signed up for email communications, we received three onboarding messages over the next four days (Fig. 1).

With this messaging flow, Le Tote successfully explained how its service works, highlighted the top reasons to join and shared the company's origin story. By building rapport with a welcome series, subscription businesses can encourage users to become paid subscribers.

Figure 1:  
Le Tote converts with class with its robust welcome series.

**LE TOTE**

Hi! It's nice to meet you.

We're introducing a new way to shop—rent your clothes and accessories!

You should get designer brands, looks you love and sizes that fit you just right without spending a fortune. That's why we created Le Tote, to help you do just that.

**Here's How It Works:**

- 1 Customize Your Tote**  
Pick your size, color palette and we'll make a unique tote of clothing and accessories just for you. We'll send a totebox to your door to try on. You can take a small case of your favorites every time you change. When you're done, return your tote and we'll deliver it to you soon.
- 2 Wear, Return or Keep**  
Wear your tote for as long as you like as many times as you want and you're ready to swap your tote back. When you're done, drop your totebox for up to 40% off the retail price. Put the rest in your closet and swap it in tomorrow.
- 3 Receive Your Next Tote**  
Return your tote and we'll make and send your next tote immediately. Receive as many totes as you'd like each month. Oh, and don't forget to take our exclusive look at our new releases every week and style, every day.

With Le Tote you get all the good the good part, free shipping, no commitments and no shipping.

So go ahead, join our community of savvy shoppers and start renting your clothes today.

[GET STARTED](#)

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**LE TOTE**

Join the Shopping Revolution

Curious about Le Tote? Here's why you should rent your Monday through Sunday style.

**Top 5 Reasons To Join Le Tote:**

**The Shopping Revolution**  
Le Tote is the new way to shop. No pushy sales talk, long lines or browsing overload. For as low as \$39 a month you get up to \$700 worth of brand name fashion delivered right to your door. Wear what you like for as long as you need, return your items when you're done and repeat.

**Easy on Your Wallet**  
Most women don't wear 80% of their wardrobe. Just think how much you can save if you borrow instead of buy the designer brands and styles you love. Now, you don't have to spend a fortune to look like a million bucks.

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**LE TOTE**

Hi There,

We started **Le Tote** four years ago when we saw the women in our lives struggle with a **closet full of clothes, but nothing to wear**. We watched them swap their clothing and accessories with friends, desperate for variety within budget.

Their creativity sparked the idea for **Le Tote** and we have been working ever since to make fashion accessible and affordable. Our goal was to give the women in our lives, and everywhere access to an unlimited closet.

To build out this closet, **we brought in the experts**. Our merchants come from Macy's, Levi's, and Kate Spade to name a few. Bottom line – these women know their stuff. They have relationships with top brands and work to bring you unparalleled access to amazing style.

We know what you're thinking, beautiful styles are good, but if they don't fit – what's the point?

We are proud to say that **we fit our members better than any other retailer**. How, you ask? We measure each garment in our collection and compare those measurements to your unique silhouette. We don't estimate or guess your size. We use your one-of-a-kind style and size data to deliver products that make you look and feel fantastic. In short, we've changed the way women shop, bringing you **access to the ultimate closet** (the women in our lives love it too). But don't just take our word for it, why not give us a try?

**We hope you join us!**

Brett and Rakesh  
Founders, Le Tote

[TRY LE TOTE](#)

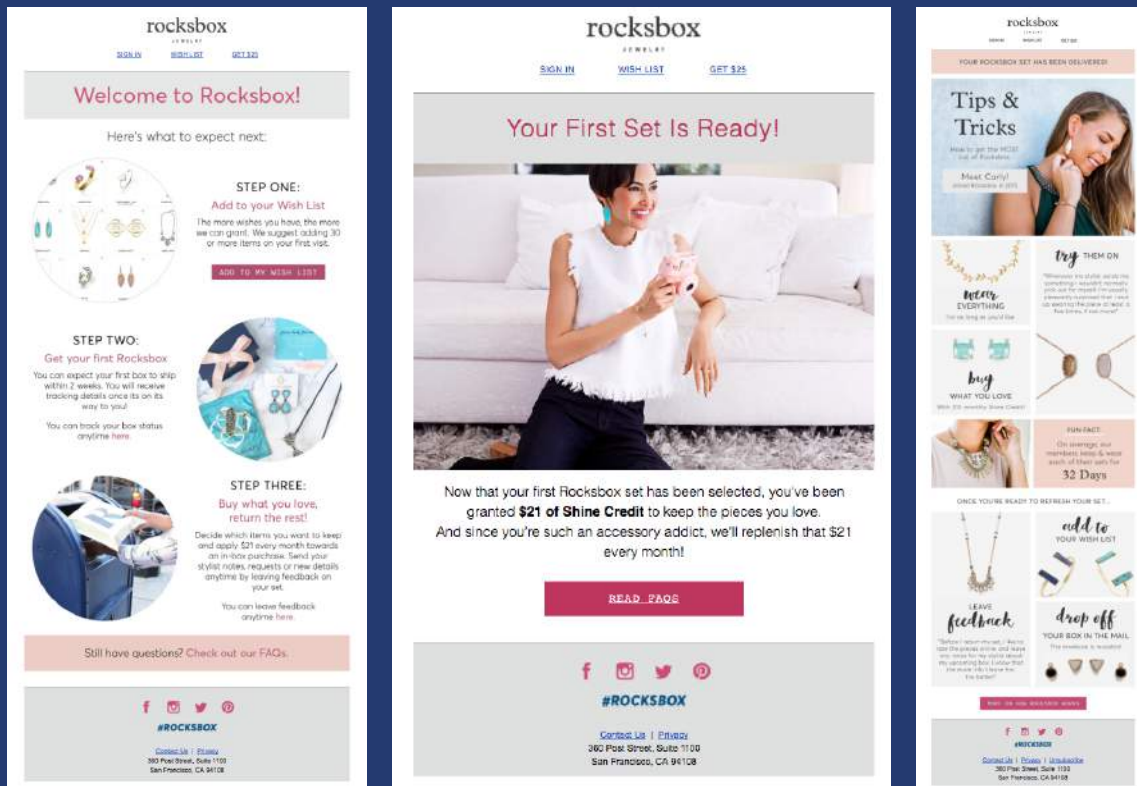
Once an user has been converted into a customer, it's time to roll out the red carpet. Why bore your fans with ho-hum confirmations about the status of their shipment when you can integrate that information into your welcome campaign?

Rocksbox, a leading jewelry shopping service, excelled at delivering targeted messages that align to the customer journey (Fig. 2). After a new user purchases a subscription, Rockbox sent a detailed welcome email explaining what to expect next in three simple steps.

The next day, the company provided answers to FAQs. When the shipment was delivered, a third email educated the customer again about how the service worked and requested product feedback.

Considering that the subscription business model relies on an ongoing customer relationship, a brand's welcome campaign is vital in keeping subscribers informed and interested.

Figure 2:  
Rocksbox keeps new customers informed by aligning messages to box delivery status.



Welcome campaigns may be a no brainer for most growth marketers, but whether you can relate to the 32 percent of companies who have yet to implement one or plan to improve your existing workflow, here are a few tips to make you stand out among the top 100 subscription retailers.

### Recommendations for Warmer Welcomes

- ▶ **Keep the good vibes going.** Customers appreciate more hand-holding as they're becoming familiar with your brand, so don't cut the conversation short. Continue building rapport with new users with a multi-touch welcome series.
- ▶ **Evolve beyond email.** 47 percent of shoppers buy more from retailers that engage with them on multiple channels, so extend the warm welcome to SMS, push messaging and direct mail to make a longer lasting impression.
- ▶ **Prioritize engagement over acquisition.** Although typically triggered post-purchase, a welcome campaign can be launched by many other behavioral events, such as signing up for a newsletter. In other words, make sure to welcome all users into your home, regardless of the door they entered.

### Best Practices Checklist: First Impressions

- ✓ **Create a multi-touch welcome series.**  
Even if you don't get past this tip, you will have made an impact!
- ✓ **Personalize the outreach.**  
And that means going beyond, "Hi [First Name]" Use real-time behavioral data to customize campaigns.
- ✓ **A/B test early and often.**  
Experiment with subject lines, CTAs and creative.
- ✓ **Get sophisticated with segmentation.**  
Target by age, gender, location and more.
- ✓ **Respond to engagement in real-time.**  
Then iterate on your results. Don't waste hours or days waiting for legacy technology to update.



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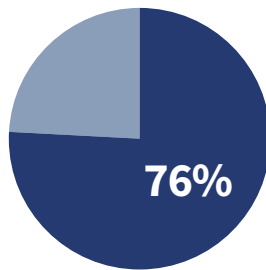
## Blast Campaigns

### Data Analysis

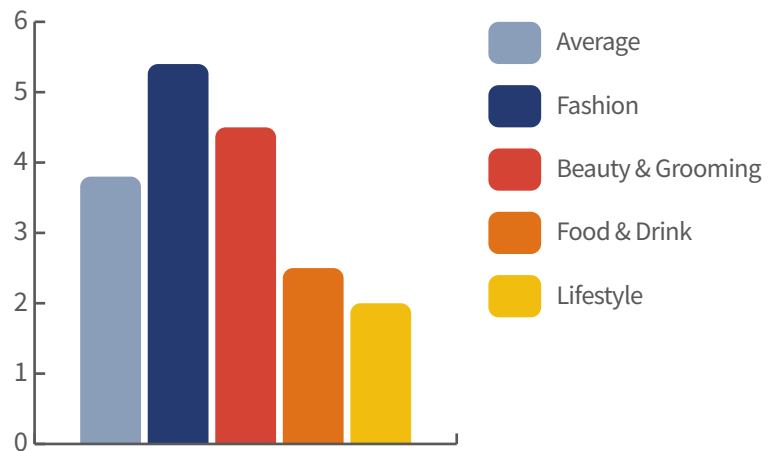
Blast campaigns are a popular, albeit untargeted, way to share promotions and offer upsell or cross-sell opportunities: 76 percent of the leading subscription retailers sent a blast marketing email during our three-week study.

The average number of blast emails sent to active subscribers was 3.8 in one week. Fashion brands sent the most with 5.4 on average, followed by Beauty & Grooming with 4.5 emails and Food & Drink with 2.5 emails. The Lifestyle industry sent the least number of blasts at a weekly average of 2 emails.

Top 100 Subscription Retailers  
With Blast Campaigns



Weekly Average By Industry



### Spam: The Outlook Is Bleak

There are few things that incite as much fear for email marketers as poor email deliverability. A message that ends up in spam instead of the inbox might as well not have been delivered at all.

Sadly, **19 percent** of the top 100 subscription retailers had at least one email sent to the spam folder. Of those businesses, **89 percent** suffered deliverability issues with Microsoft Outlook.

In addition to troubleshooting with each email client, marketers can improve their inbox placement by optimizing send time, offering relevant content and only messaging recipients who are actually interested in their services.



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### Interesting Findings

Unlike a welcome series or re-engagement messages, blast emails are more loosely defined in purpose and range more significantly in formatting and design. So what distinguishes a good blast from a bad one?

Subscription retailers get an “A” if they make an effort to engage their users with relevant content, unique visuals, and a clear call to action above the fold. Companies that frequently re-use templates, or worse, send the same email repeatedly will lose points with customers.

Adding interactive elements that align with an email’s subject matter is a great way to make a blast campaign more dynamic. Fans of Netflix’s original series, “Stranger Things,” would appreciate Loot Crate’s promotion of its limited edition crate, thanks to the email’s use of animated title (Fig. 3). Its clever mirrored design to reflect the show’s alternative reality known as “the Upside Down” is another unique touch to wow subscribers.

In contrast, Geek Fuel missed a valuable opportunity to take its Space Invaders exclusive blast to the next level (Fig. 4). Although video game enthusiasts likely appreciated the nostalgic typography and themed call-to-action button, they would be blown away if the aliens were animated to match the gaming experience.

Figure 3:  
Loot Crate flips boring blasts upside down with this animated blast.



Figure 4:  
A Space Invaders animation could have brought GeekFuel’s blast to life.



Geek lifestyle boxes may have a creative advantage when it comes to partnering with popular fandoms, but other industries can also act like entertainment studios. As a magazine publisher, Allure effectively engages its subscription box customers by sending a daily beauty newsletter (Fig. 5). In its June 1, 2017, blast, Allure included a short video of a woman trying a concealer, encouraging subscribers to purchase the product for themselves.

Not all beauty subscription retailers started off as media companies like Allure did, but FabFitFun demonstrated how even subscription-only businesses can go successfully cross-channel (Fig. 6). As part of its summer health and fitness blast campaign, FabFitFun promoted a live meditation session on Facebook and pointed to over 80 videos on its TV streaming channel.

Figure 5:  
Allure brings beauty news to subscribers with its daily blasts.

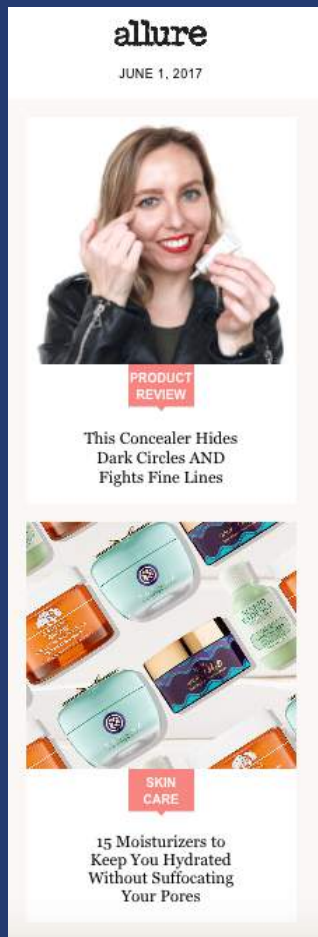


Figure 6:  
FabFitFun engages customers with video content and interactive social media sessions.



Blast campaigns offer widespread opportunities to amaze current and potential customers. Generate more revenue from your blast emails with these best practices.

#### Recommendations for Better Blasts

- ▶ **Boost blasts with dynamic content.** Grab your customers' attention with fun animations, GIFs, scratch-offs and other dynamic elements. Interactivity isn't only about aesthetics—tactics like live polling and geotargeting can collect valuable user data and drive real results.
- ▶ **Personalize the promotion.** To keep your blasts fresh, appeal to each customer's thirst for novelty by offering new, personalized offers based on their past behavior. Relevant, hyper-targeted messaging will yield higher engagement rates.
- ▶ **Think like a media company.** No one understands subscriptions quite like newspapers and magazines. Improve your content marketing by adapting publishing strategies for email with informative newsletters and fun features.

#### Best Practices Checklist: Deliverability

- ✓ **Determine your true inbox placement.**  
After all, an email in spam still counts as accepted.
- ✓ **Improve your sender reputation.**  
That means only communicating with customers who are interested.
- ✓ **Monitor your bounces.**  
If your hard bounce rate gets too high, ISPs may refuse message deliveries altogether.
- ✓ **Understand your unsubscribes.**  
This act of "tough love" improves overall list quality.
- ✓ **Speed up your sends.**  
Lagging latency is a sign of an unhealthy sending infrastructure.



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## Re-Engagement Campaigns

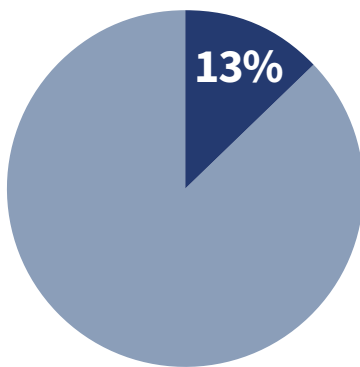
### Data Analysis

The cancellation process varied widely among subscription retailers, ranging from making a simple profile update to having a lengthy phone conversation with a customer representative.

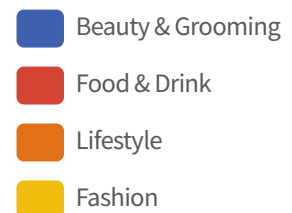
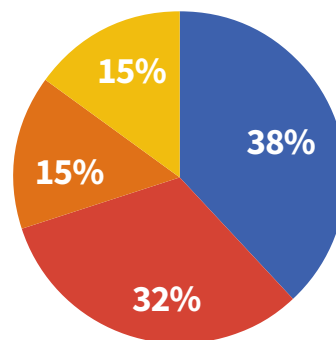
Once a subscription was canceled, a transactional confirmation was typically delivered via email. Only 13 of the top 100 companies sent re-engagement messages specifically designed to regain the customer's business. Of those companies, 38 percent were categorized as Beauty & Grooming, 32 percent as Food & Drink, 15 percent as Lifestyle and 15 percent as Fashion.

Acquiring a new customer **costs** five to 25 times more than retaining an existing one. Because preventing churn is a core objective of subscription retailers, it's astonishing how little the industry as a whole is doing to win back subscribers.

*Top 100 Subscription Retailers  
With Re-Engagement Campaigns*



*Re-Engagement Campaign  
Adoption By Industry*



### Listen. No, Really Listen.

Price might have been the tipping point for a lapsed customer, but how do you know for sure? Implementing an effective re-engagement campaign requires requesting feedback from subscribers who have recently churned.

Only **24 percent** of the top 100 subscription retailers requested feedback from their customers, typically to follow up after an interaction with a support representative or to survey what subscribers thought of a recently delivered box.

Asking customers to rate and review products should be a regular occurrence, but a higher-quality conversation may be needed to re-engage those who fall off the wagon. Developing a targeted, multi-touch campaign across direct mail, email and mobile is key to retaining customers for the long term.



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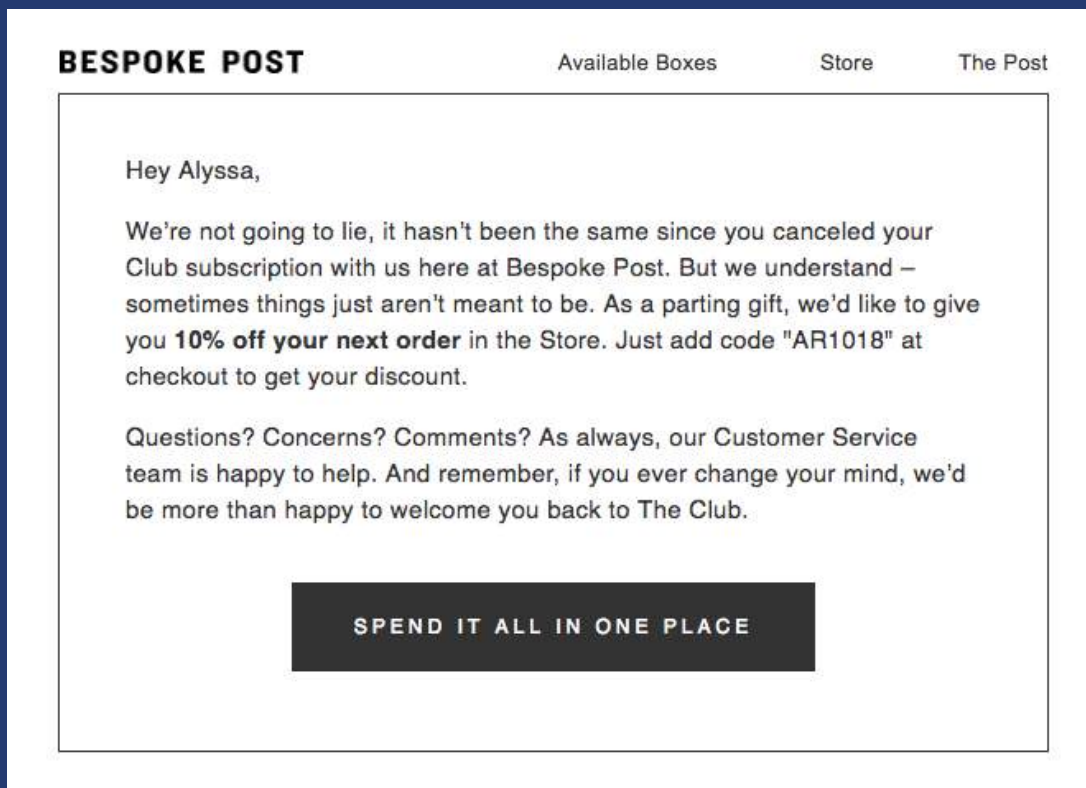


## Interesting Findings

Of all the lifecycle campaigns, re-engagement was clearly the stage that was least utilized. It seemed that once customers churned, most businesses merely resumed sending them mass blasts with no targeted attempt to incentivize them to resubscribe.

A handful of companies, however, stood out from the crowd with excellent examples of re-engagement. A popular tactic to win back lapsed customers was to send a special discount or incentive, as seen with Bespoke Post's offer of "10% off your next order" in its online store (Fig. 7). This strategy can be especially useful for similar businesses that also have a traditional e-commerce site.

Figure 7:  
Bespoke Post points lapsed subscribers to its online store with this re-engagement email.



Although they didn't offer any discounts, Dollar Shave Club (Fig. 8) and BarkBox (Fig. 9) both stressed that inactive users can still buy their products without a recurring subscription. BarkBox's casual, no-pressure tone with messaging like, "Look, we get it, you just aren't looking for anything serious right now," takes any awkwardness out of cancellation and rebuilds the relationship with the customer.

Figure 8:  
Dollar Shave Club says, "No Problem,"  
to canceled subscriptions.

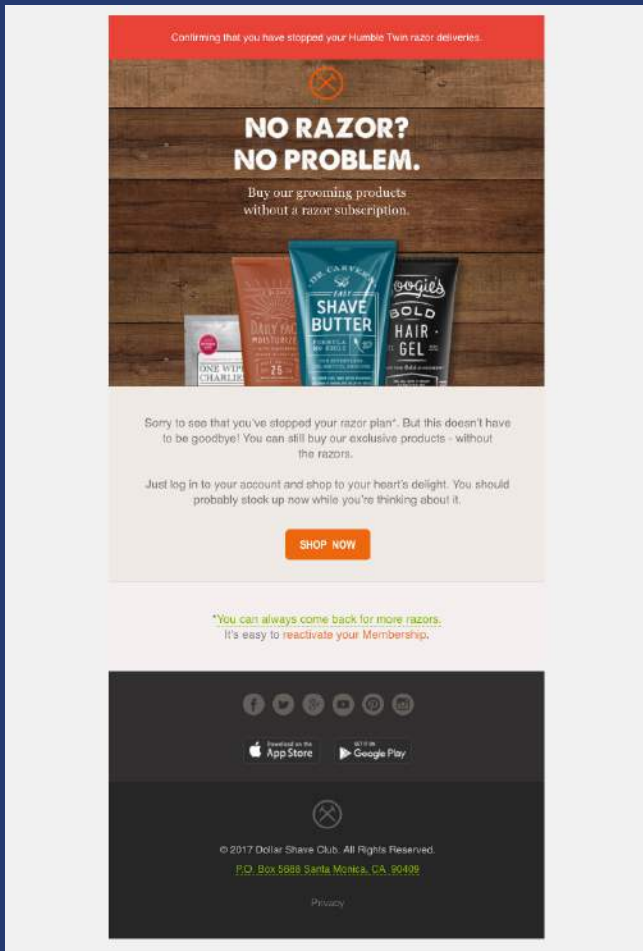
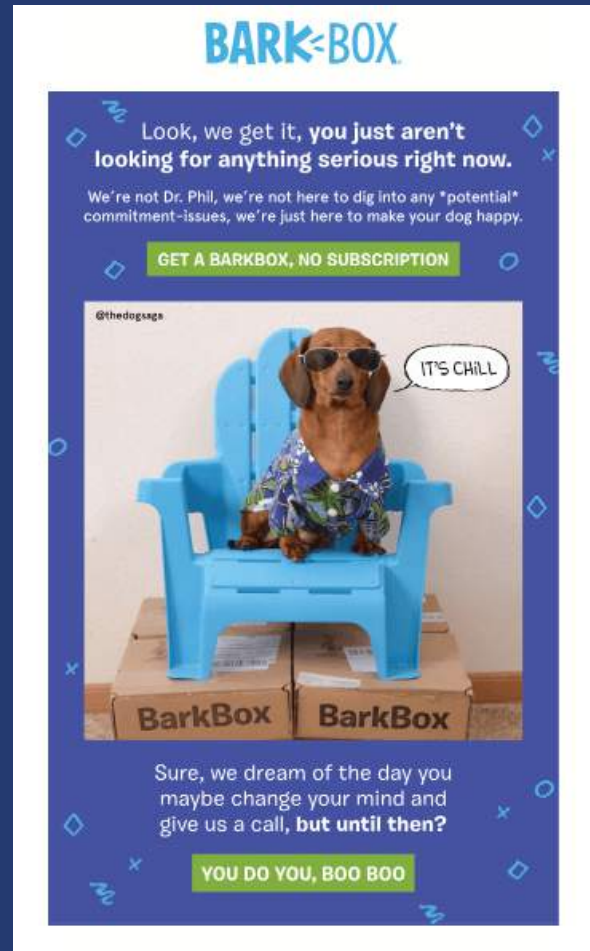


Figure 9:  
BarkBox also takes the chill approach  
to re-engagement.



Meal delivery subscriptions, however, might not have the same advantage as product-based businesses when it comes to offering another way to buy. Instead, companies like Plated highlighted the flexibility they provide with easily updated delivery days (Fig. 10). This type of re-engagement messaging may better retain customers with busy schedules.

Figure 10:  
Plated's reminds churned customers of delivery flexibility.

**Plated.**

**Dinner another time?**  
You can always fit great dinners to your life—change your delivery day from week to week.

**REACTIVATE**

**Remember, dinner with us will always be about you**

**YOUR SCHEDULE**  
Change your delivery day from week to week—and skip weeks as needed.

**YOUR TASTES**  
Mix and match 12 weekly recipes in any combination, in 2, 3, or 4 servings.

**YOUR LIFE**  
The Plated app for iPhone and Android puts better dinners in the palm of your hand.

**REACTIVATE**

STAY CONNECTED

PLAN DINNER ANYTIME, ANYWHERE WITH THE PLATED APP

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Our Customer Experience team is available 7 days a week from 8am-12am EST. Call (at 1-855-252-2399) or visit [plated.com](https://www.plated.com) to chat with us.

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If you prefer not to receive these emails, you can [unsubscribe](#).

Regardless of the type of products offered, every company should be prepared for the moment when the honeymoon period ends and consumers no longer express interest in continuing their subscriptions.

Keep customers coming back for more month after month with these recommendations for re-engagement.

### Recommendations for Winning Them Back

- ▶ **Communicate and compromise.** The conversation doesn't have to end when a customer unsubscribes, but it does need to change direction. Encourage lapsed users to return to your online store or consider updating their shipment frequency.
- ▶ **Offer a sweet deal.** Cost is a top-rated reason why subscribers churn, so make sure to include an incentive they can't refuse, whether it's 15% off, a bonus item of their choice or even a whole month of service for free.
- ▶ **Keep it casual.** If you're doing a good job, then a customer should already be reluctant to cancel. There's no need to add pressure by being pushy afterward, so use messaging that's lighthearted and focus on maintaining a positive relationship.

### Best Practices Checklist: Re-Engagement

- ✓ **Do something before it's too late.**  
Check in with customers regularly to reduce churn.
- ✓ **Align incentives with your brand values.**  
Be as forceful with discounts and free goods as your business allows.
- ✓ **Don't stop tracking.**  
Are lapsed customers continuing to browse your site? Reach out to gauge their interest.
- ✓ **Prepare past the honeymoon period.**  
Anticipate a decline in engagement to stop inactivity before it starts.
- ✓ **Segment smarter.**  
Filter inactive users from campaigns to better determine the metrics of your regulars.



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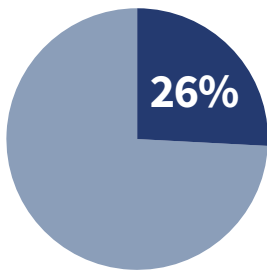
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# Mobile Messaging

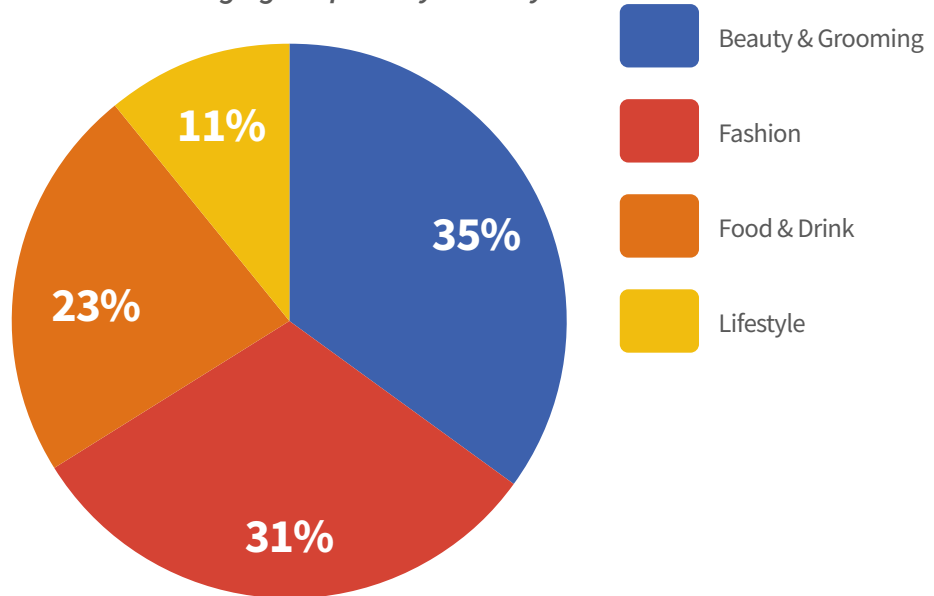
## Data Analysis

Compared to traditional retailers, e-commerce companies with a subscription business model do not prioritize mobile messaging. Only 26 percent of the top 100 subscription retailers have a dedicated mobile app. Of those companies, 35 percent were categorized as Beauty & Grooming, 31 percent as Fashion, 23 percent as Food & Drink and 11 percent as Lifestyle.

*Top 100 Subscription Retailers  
With Mobile Applications*







*Mobile Messaging Adoption By Industry*






Of the 26 companies with mobile apps, only nine sent at least one SMS or push notification to new users. Adore Me, a leading subscription for women's lingerie and other apparel, was the only company in the top 100 to leverage both channels.

### Companies That Sent Mobile Messaging

GENRE	COMPANY	PUSH	SMS
	Adore Me	✓	✓
	Trunk Club	✓	
	Wantable	✓	
	Gywnnie Bee	✓	
	Le Tote		✓
	Nadine West		✓
	Dailylook Elite		✓
	Winc		✓
	Grove		✓



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## Interesting Findings

Mobile messaging is a vastly under-utilized strategy by the leading subscription retailers, despite its wide applicability. Whether it's sharing exclusive incentives or keeping customers informed about delivery status, there are a multitude of ways that subscription businesses can keep users regularly engaged on the smartphone of their choosing.

Adore Me did an excellent job of leveraging both text and push messaging. The apparel company demonstrated its multi-channel marketing prowess with its SMS that encouraged users to download the app to track shipping (Fig. 11) and its “buy two, get one free” promotional push (Fig. 12).

Each alert motivated customers to continue shopping with strong calls to action, with offer codes and links to mobile app stores. While the SMS kept content clear and concise, the push notification added a casual, friendly tone with, “Shop it out, girl!”

Figure 11:  
Adore Me's transactional SMS  
shipping confirmation.

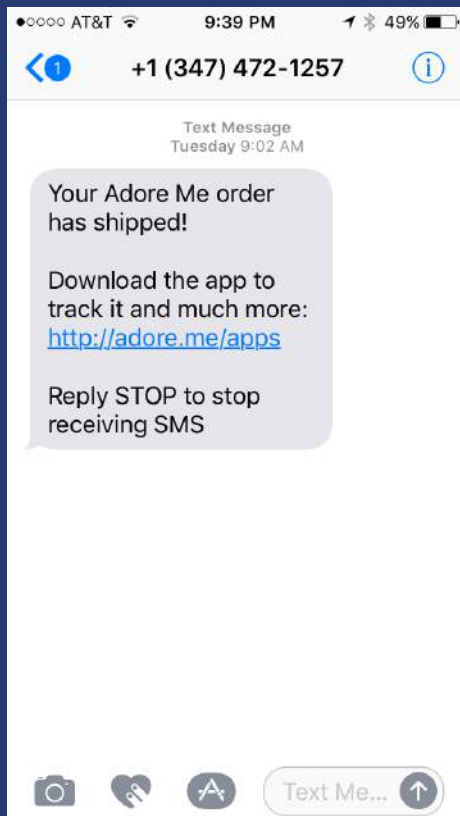
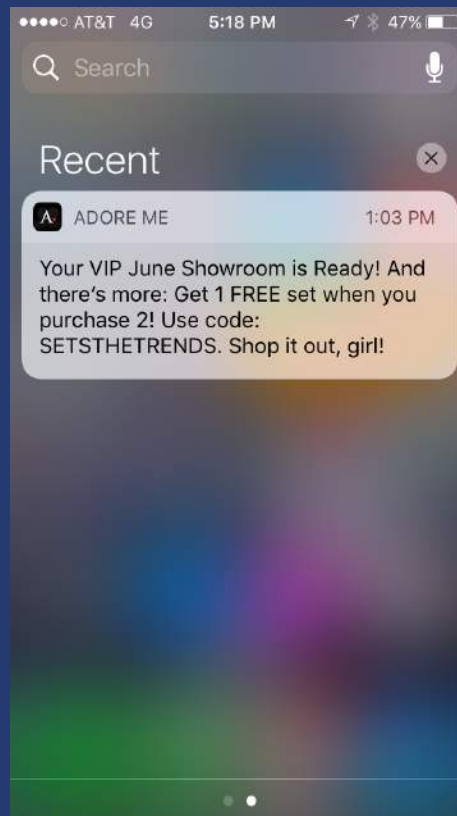


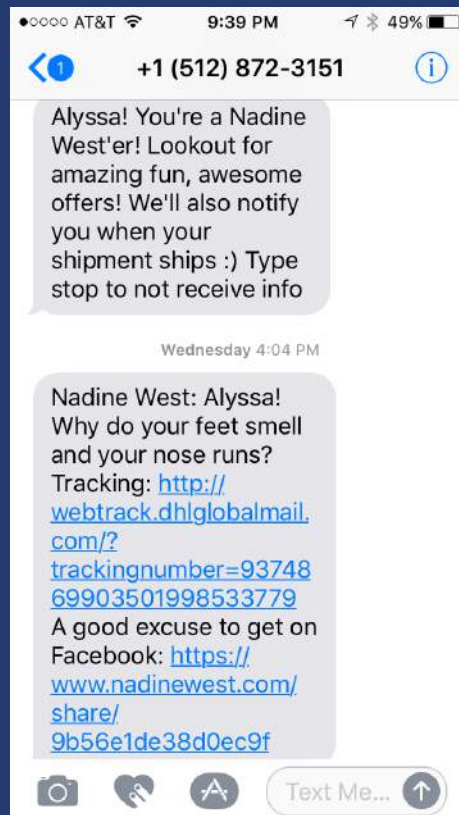
Figure 12:  
Adore Me's promotional push  
notification with offer code.



In contrast, Nadine West communicated solely via SMS on mobile, but with varying results. Its initial text (Fig. 13, top) showed what a warm welcome should look like: personalized to the new user with a positive voice and cheery use of emoticons.

However, the second SMS sent by Nadine West (Fig. 13, bottom) was more of a miss than a homerun. At first glance, a customer might not understand why she's receiving a strange joke about her smelly feet, which is not at all relevant to the tracking link below it. The secondary call to action to share on Facebook also muddled the message and created a confusing experience.

Figure 13:  
Nadine West sent a great welcome SMS, but their following text gets lost in translation.





Mobile messaging is most effective when it mirrors the voice and style of your brand—not to mention gets straight-to-the-point to fit the limited messaging space. Make your alerts more memorable with these best practices.

### Recommendations for Maximizing Mobile

- ▶ **Coordinate all channels.** Consumers are increasingly interested in shopping on their mobile devices, so make sure you offer a dedicated application and capture phone number information to easily communicate via SMS and push notifications.
- ▶ **Avoid any mixups.** A mobile message should be either transactional or promotional in nature, but not both. Keep your calls to action focused, so your customers can easily distinguish between a shipping confirmation and the latest BOGO deal.
- ▶ **Make opt-in (and out) easy.** Keep consumers rapt with attention by requesting push permission immediately after downloading the app to encourage increased signups. As for text messaging, provide an instruction like “STOP” for users who are no longer interested in SMS communications.

### Best Practices Checklist: Gamification

- ✓ **Set a goal.**  
Award users for reaching milestones, like surpassing a certain spend level.
- ✓ **Demonstrate scarcity.**  
Offer limited-time discounts or flash sales to create a sense of urgency.
- ✓ **Appeal to novelty.**  
Recommend new products to customers with previously demonstrated interest.
- ✓ **Showcase social proof.**  
Build credibility by spotlighting positive reviews and video testimonials.
- ✓ **Treat your VIPs.**  
Target the most engaged customers with exclusive promotions and referral rewards.



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## Summary

One might expect a consistent standard regarding the email and mobile marketing of subscription retailers, but this User Engagement Top 100 Report demonstrates that quality and extent of strategy is highly variable even among the leaders in the industry.

Some companies are executing sophisticated campaigns, others just cover the basics and the rest range widely in between. As a collective whole, however, there is much room for more effective customer engagement:

- ▶ 91 percent don't communicate via mobile,
- ▶ 87 percent don't attempt to re-engage lapsed subscribers,
- ▶ And 32 percent still haven't mastered the basics of welcoming new customers.

In our experience, it's not that marketers don't understand how important these tactics can be in increasing sales, it's that their legacy technology is keeping them from gaining a competitive advantage. Implementing the right growth marketing platform is key to setting subscription retailers up for success.

### Capturing a 360° Customer View

The ability to respond to your customer in real-time is directly proportionate to what you know about them. If your data is siloed, it can be challenging to build dynamic user profiles, accurately segment audiences and seamlessly deploy integrated omni-channel campaigns.

Your customers expect a modern and sophisticated experience, and so should you. When evaluating growth marketing platforms, it's vital to select best-of-breed technology that is designed with the marketer in mind.

By enabling a single, unified view of your customers, the right solution can provide the competitive edge you need to dramatically increase engagement and accelerate business growth.



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## About Iterable

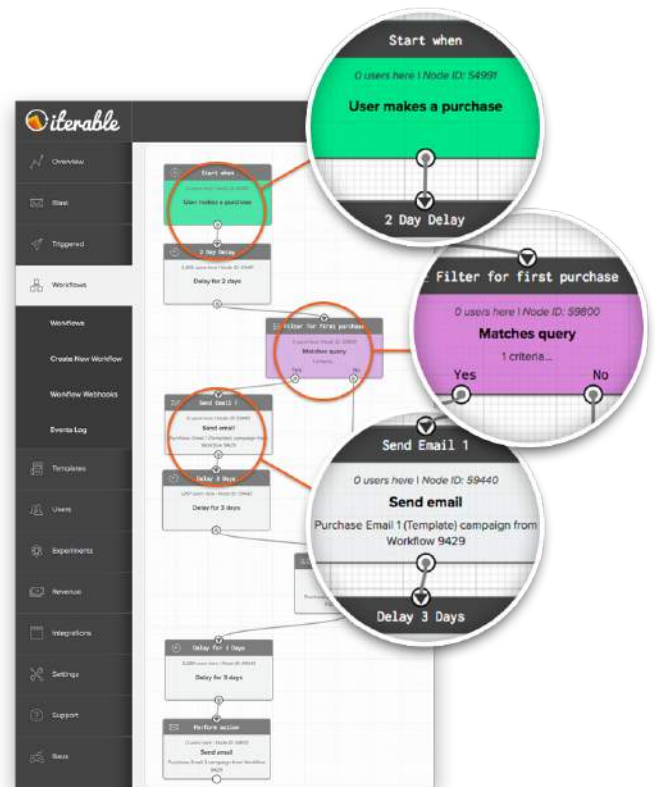
We appreciate you reading this User Engagement Top 100 Report. You can expect more reports like this to be published on a quarterly basis, covering a variety of industries and marketing channels. If you have any questions or feedback, we'd love to hear from you. You can email us anytime at: [hello@iterable.com](mailto:hello@iterable.com).

Using Iterable, growth marketers quickly build and run high-performance omni-channel campaigns to welcome new users, send hyper-targeted content and reactivate lapsed customers.

Iterable provides marketers with a 360° view of their customers via a flexible data model that accepts any data point and can segment users and trigger workflows based on any behavior, event or criteria.

### Why Iterable?

- ✓ **Marketer friendly.**  
Marketers do not require engineering support and can build any type of campaign in minutes with Iterable's intuitive, modern UI.
- ✓ **Seamlessly omni-channel.**  
Supports all channels, including direct mail, email, SMS, push and in-app notifications, within and across all campaigns.
- ✓ **User profile flexibility.**  
Can ingest any user criteria or event, has a flexible data model, gives marketers a full view of the user and integrates with many other platforms, letting you easily get data in and out.
- ✓ **Massively scalable.**  
Handles hundreds of millions of users and billions of messages without sacrificing high performance or security.
- ✓ **Real-time.**  
Marketers don't wait for segmentations to complete, campaigns to run, data to process or reports to compile.
- ✓ **Easy to optimize.**  
Everything can be A/B tested and optimized, enabling non-technical marketers to be data scientists.



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## Appendix

Full list of the top 100 subscriptions analyzed in this report, in alphabetical order:



### FOOD & DRINK

1. Beer of the Month Club
2. Blue Apron
3. Candy Club
4. Chococurb
5. Craft Beer Club
6. The Cravory
7. Freshly
8. Graze
9. Green Chef
10. HelloFresh
11. Home Chef
12. Japan Crate
13. Love With Food
14. Mantry
15. MistoBox
16. MunchPak
17. NatureBox
18. Plated
19. Purple Carrot
20. Shaker and Spoon
21. Sun Basket
22. Taste Trunk
23. Treats
24. Try the World
25. Winc



### BEAUTY & GROOMING

26. Allure Beauty Box
27. Beauty Box 5
28. Beauty Fix
29. BeautyCon Box
30. Birchbox
31. Boxycharm
32. Cocotique
33. Dollar Shave Club
34. FabFitFun
35. GlossyBox
36. Harry's
37. Honest Beauty
38. Ipsy
39. Julep Maven
40. Lip Monthly
41. Love Goodly
42. MishiBox
43. New Beauty Test Tube
44. Petit Vour
45. PLAY! By Sephora
46. POPSUGAR Must Have
47. Scentbird
48. Vegan Cuts
49. Walmart Beauty Box
50. Yuzen



### FASHION

51. Adore Me
52. Bespoke Post
53. Dailylook Elite
54. Dia & Co.
55. Elizabeth & Clarke
56. Fabletics
57. Five Four Club
58. Game Day Box
59. Gwynnie Bee
60. JustFab
61. Le Tote
62. MeUndies
63. Nadine West
64. Peaches & Petals
65. Rachel Zoe Box of Style
66. Rent the Runway Unlimited
67. Rocksbox
68. ShoeDazzle
69. Sock Fancy
70. Sock Panda
71. SprezzaBox
72. Stitch Fix
73. TeeBlox
74. Trunk Club
75. Wantable



### LIFESTYLE

76. Awesome Pack
77. The Bam Box
78. BarkBox
79. BattlBox
80. Bits Box
81. Bluum
82. The Book Drop
83. Book of the Month
84. The Bouqs
85. Bulu Box
86. Calmbox
87. CatLadyBox
88. Cozy Reader Club
89. Escape the Crate
90. Geek Fuel
91. Grove
92. KiwiCo
93. Loot Crate
94. Nerd Block
95. New Hobby Box
96. Nicely Noted
97. Owl Crate
98. Quarterly
99. Sketchbox
100. Toy Box Monthly



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