



The 2018 Cross-Channel Engagement Benchmark Report



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About Iterable

Iterable is the growth marketing platform that enables brands to create, execute and optimize campaigns to power world-class customer engagement across email, push, SMS, in-app and more with unparalleled data flexibility. An integrated, cross-channel solution—built for marketers, trusted by engineers, designed with intelligence.

[REQUEST DEMO](#)

Welcome

With the rise of consumer demands for highly personalized products and services comes the necessity of creating a unified brand experience. Research shows that a cross-channel marketing strategy delivers [3X more effective campaigns](#) and [23X higher rates of customer satisfaction](#).

However, it's safe to say that most marketers are still working toward truly integrated engagement. In Iterable's 2018 Cross-Channel Engagement Benchmark Report, we demonstrate that brands continue to prioritize email above mobile, web and direct mail messaging.

In this report, we present valuable insights about the strategy, cadence and channel usage of pivotal campaigns across the customer lifecycle: welcome & onboarding, promotions, cart & browse abandonment, re-engagement, and loyalty.

We also share expert commentary from **our partners and customers** to enable your business to implement high-performing, cross-channel marketing campaigns that can achieve your objectives.

Jen Capstraw

Director of Strategic Insights and Evangelism at Iterable and co-founder of Women of Email



And from me! I'm a long-time #emailgeek and stoked to add some color to this debut study.



Activate consumer attention



Nurture brand relationships



Drive retention and loyalty



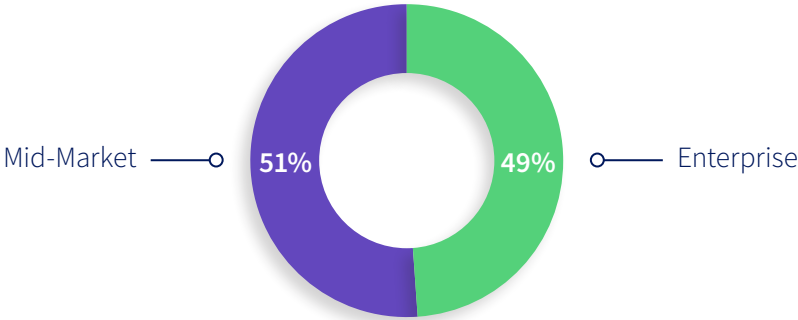
Increase customer lifetime value

If this report piques your interest and you'd like to learn how to dramatically improve your cross-channel engagement, please [reach out to us](#) for personalized recommendations and best practices.

Methodology

The 2018 Cross-Channel Engagement Benchmark Report was developed by Iterable based on the results of a Q3 2018 survey. This survey was sent out to over 1,500 contacts from more than 200 Iterable clients. 49% of these companies were enterprise organizations and 51% were mid-market organizations.

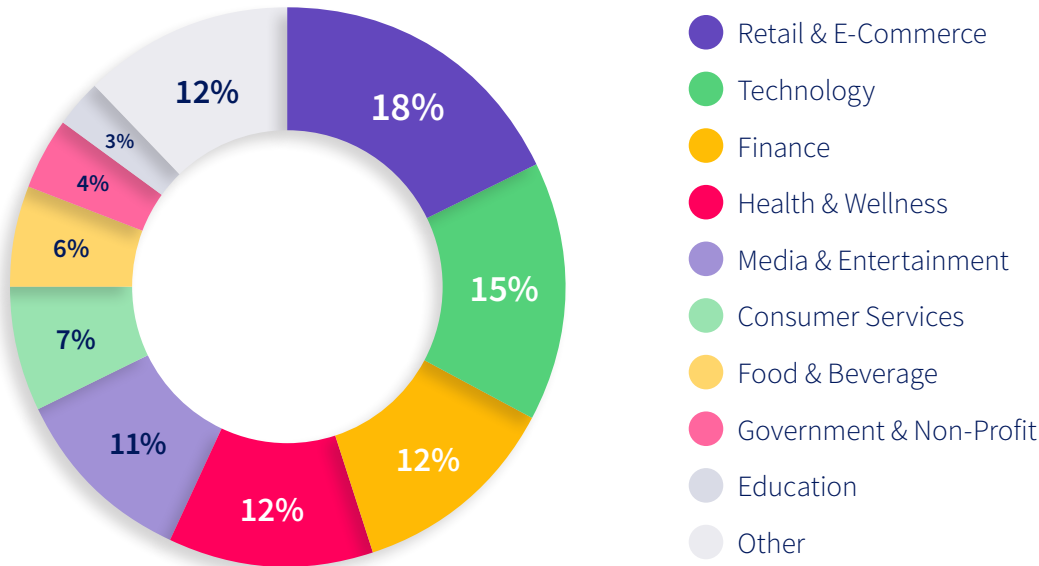
Iterable Customer Base By Market Segment



While we received responses from around the world and across various industries, this report is primarily representative of business to consumer (B2C) engagement in North America.

Retail and E-Commerce is the largest industry represented, at 18% of the Iterable customer base, followed by Technology (15%), Finance (12%) and Health & Wellness (12%). The chart below depicts the full industry breakdown.

Iterable Customer Base By Industry



This inaugural benchmark report contains metrics that will be applied to future reports to consistently compare changes in customer engagement.

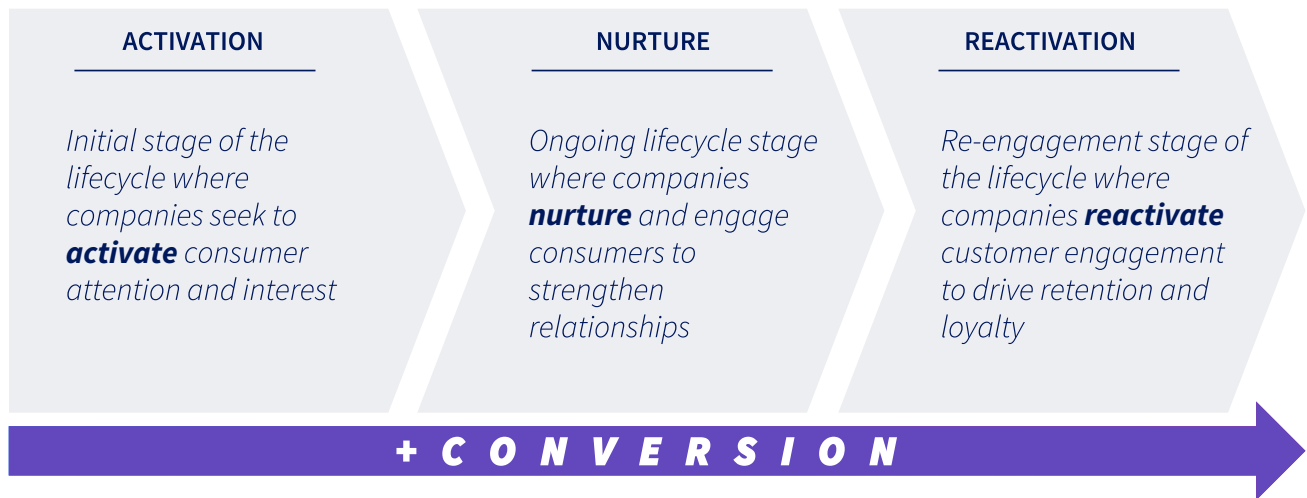
The State of Cross-Channel Engagement

As a leading growth marketing platform that reaches over a billion consumers, Iterable is in the unique position of analyzing and reporting on B2C cross-channel customer engagement.

Since 2016, Iterable has sent hundreds of thousands of marketing campaigns across email, direct mail, mobile push, web push, in-app and SMS.

This benchmark report was designed to dive deeper into these various campaigns, asking marketing professionals how they're using their channels to activate, nurture and reactivate their subscribers.

Stages of the Customer Lifecycle



The following sections have been divided by the key campaigns that encompass the end-to-end customer experience:



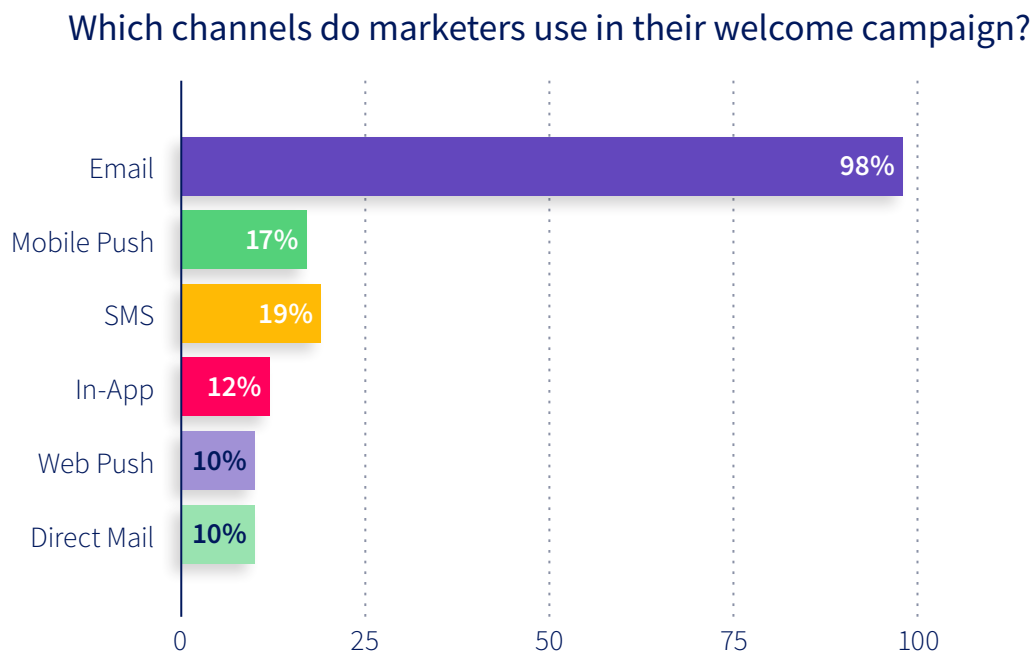
Activation Campaigns: Welcome & Onboarding

Welcome and onboarding campaigns are often designated by their targeted purpose of introducing a new user to an e-commerce website, mobile app, social media platform or other business property. They're critical in activating interest and driving early engagement.

Survey Results

83% of growth marketers surveyed go beyond a new user account confirmation and send a dedicated welcome or onboarding campaign.

While email is the most commonly used channel in this campaign (98% of survey respondents send email to welcome new customers), SMS (19%) and mobile push (17%) are popular channels for businesses interested in making a more impactful first impression.



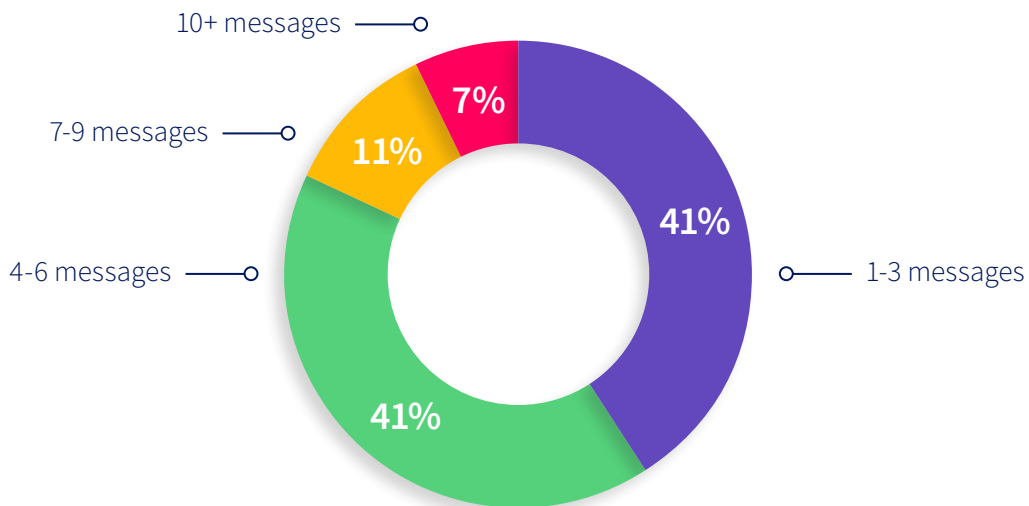


It's really encouraging to see that multi-message welcomes have become the rule and not the exception! The first message in a welcome campaign often garners the most engagement of any message in an email program.

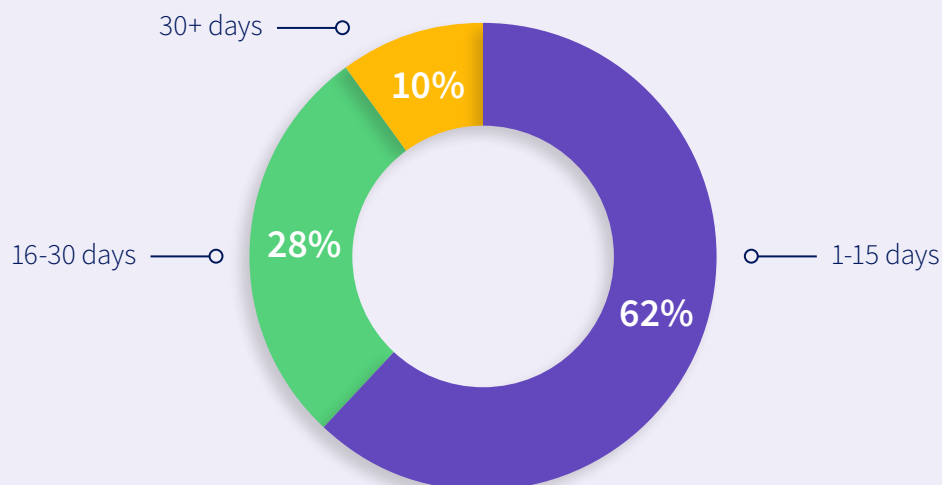
Use that opportunity wisely to start laying a foundation toward loyalty and nudging new subscribers and customers toward the action you want them to take next.

The majority of those with welcome campaigns (82%) send fewer than six messages. These campaigns typically last a month or less: 62% of welcome campaigns complete within 15 days, while 28% complete within 16-30 days.

How many messages are in a brand's welcome campaign?



How long is a brand's welcome campaign?



Recommendations for Warmer Welcomes

- 1** **Map out your customer journey.** Many brands still lack proper onboarding, so identify your specific touchpoints (e.g. email signup, app install, first-time purchase) that could trigger a welcome campaign. Then build your messaging workflow with the right exit criteria to ensure seamless engagement.
- 2** **Integrate the inbox and mailbox.** Online channels make sense for real-time welcomes, but don't forget the benefits of following up with direct mail. Thank your new customers for joining your community with a personalized postcard within the first week of their onboarding.
- 3** **Gather more data for future personalization.** If your welcome campaign consists of only a few messages, consider extending it to collect more information about your customers' unique preferences. Send a survey, ask for feedback, or find other opportunities to learn more about them while they're already highly engaged.



YAAAAAASSSSSS



Anu Verma
Head of Marketing at Care/of

“With Iterable, we're segmenting customers based on the high-level goals they've shared with us and personalizing content around those goals as well as around the products in their personalized vitamin packs.”

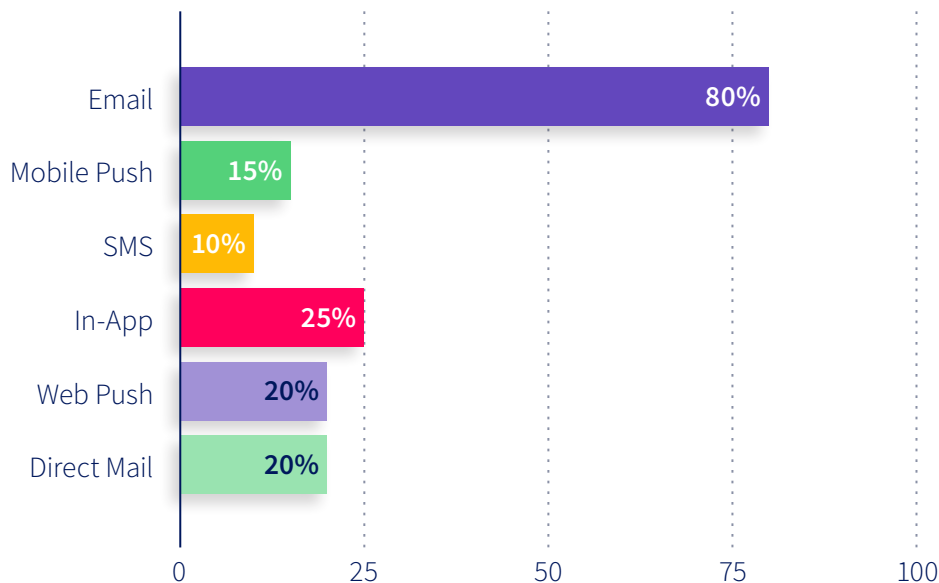
Nurture Campaigns: Promotions

Nurture or drip campaigns make up the bulk of most consumer-facing messaging. After new customers have been onboarded, marketers must continue to stay top of mind with nurture campaigns, often in the form of sales and other promotions.

Survey Results

Unlike welcome campaigns, promotions incorporate a larger number of marketing channels. Email is still the most popular with 80% of survey respondents leveraging the channel in their promotions, but in-app messages play a large role as well at 25% usage. Web push and direct mail are tied at 20%, followed by mobile push (15%) and SMS (10%).

Which channels do marketers use in their promotional campaigns?



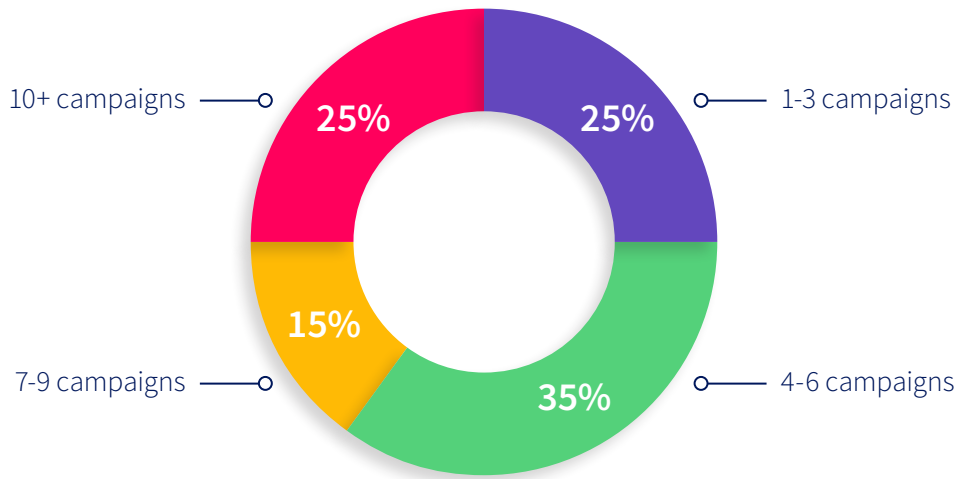
Over one-third of marketers (35%) send 4-6 promotional campaigns per month, while a quarter send fewer than three. However, 25% of survey respondents send more than ten campaigns monthly, so **the right cadence can vary from business to business.**



Marketers often ask me the optimal frequency for promotional campaigns. Unfortunately that's a question that can't be easily answered—it always depends.

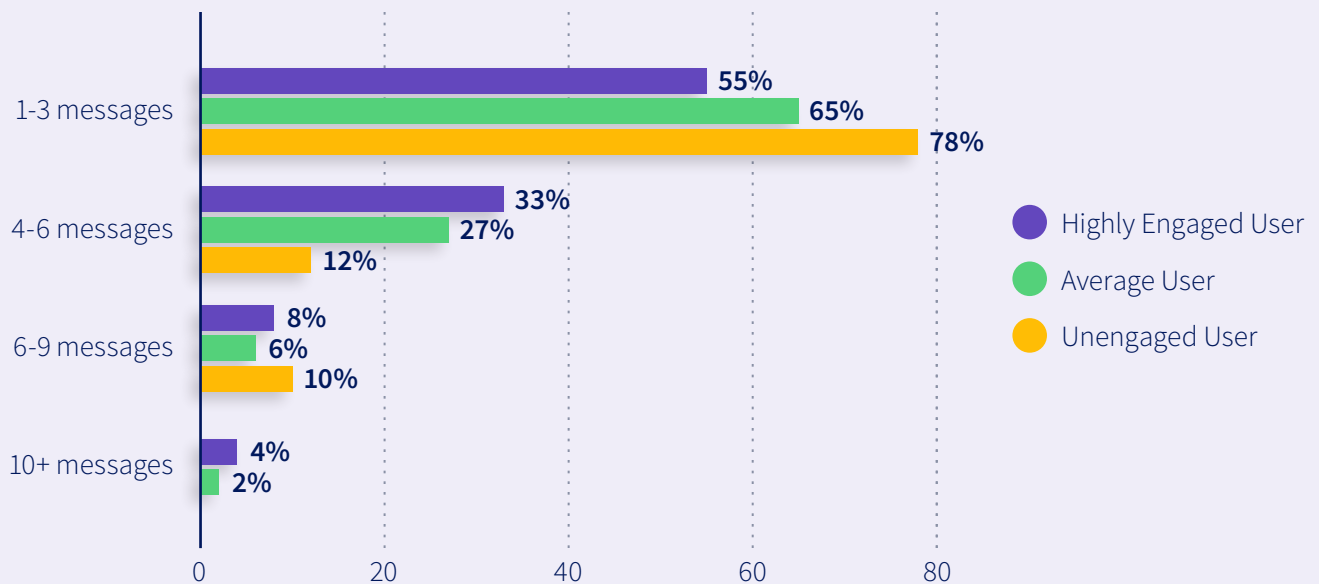
I can tell you, though, that those who most fear subscriber fatigue and unsubscribes tend to be the same marketers who are leaving money on the table by under-mailing their list.

How many promotional campaigns do marketers send each month?



Message frequency also varies by a customer's level of engagement. Only 22% of marketers send more than three messages to unengaged users, but that number rises to 45% when sending to highly engaged users.

How many messages do marketers send in a typical week?



Marketers are spicing up their campaigns with visual design trends: 53% are using GIFs in their messaging, and 20% are including videos. While these forms of animation are certainly not new elements, advancements in technology have made them more accessible than ever.

Another popular topic among brand marketers is interactivity. The most commonly used interactive elements used in email specifically are in-email reviews (25%), followed by in-email forms (22%). **However, one-quarter of respondents have yet to incorporate any of these animated or interactive elements in their campaigns.**

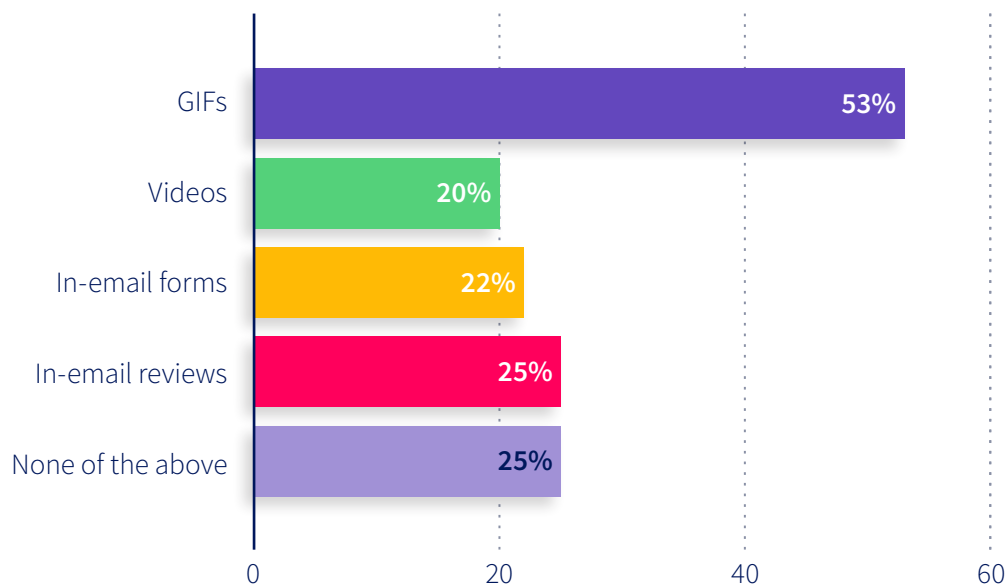


Interactive or kinetic email is a huge trend right now. But the level of effort and budget necessary to implement an interactive campaign can be significant.

If you're ready to jump aboard the interactive bandwagon, think beyond cool-factor alone and consider how you can leverage the trend to really move the needle.

For instance, a reusable template with interactive elements, or an automated trigger, will get far more mileage than a one-off promotional message.

Which animated or interactive design trends have marketers used?

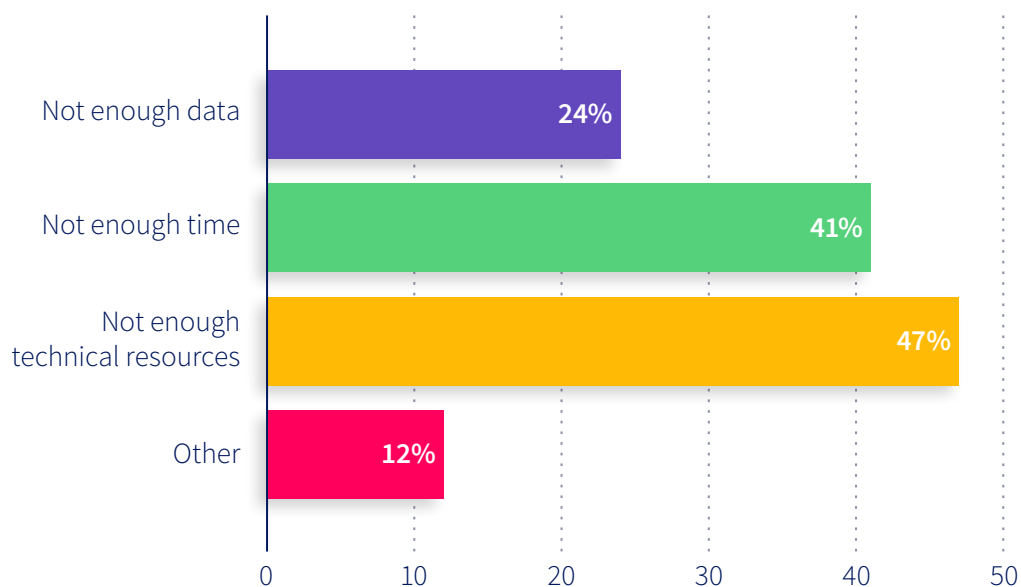


Design trends and shiny new objects aside, what truly turns mass marketing into targeted, relevant communications is what's commonly known as dynamic content. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents (64%) are using dynamic content to personalize their promotions.

For those marketers who have not yet leveraged dynamic content, 47% cite a lack of technical resources as their primary limitation. Not enough time to prioritize personalization is another key factor (41%), followed by a lack of customer data (24%).

Other responses included a lack of subject matter expertise and acknowledgement that their dynamic content is still being built but hasn't yet gone live.

What limits brands from leveraging dynamic content?



Dynamic Content Deconstructed: Stack Overflow's 3 Building Blocks for Success

[Stack Overflow](#) is the world's largest online community of software developers, with over 50 million monthly visitors relying on its resources.

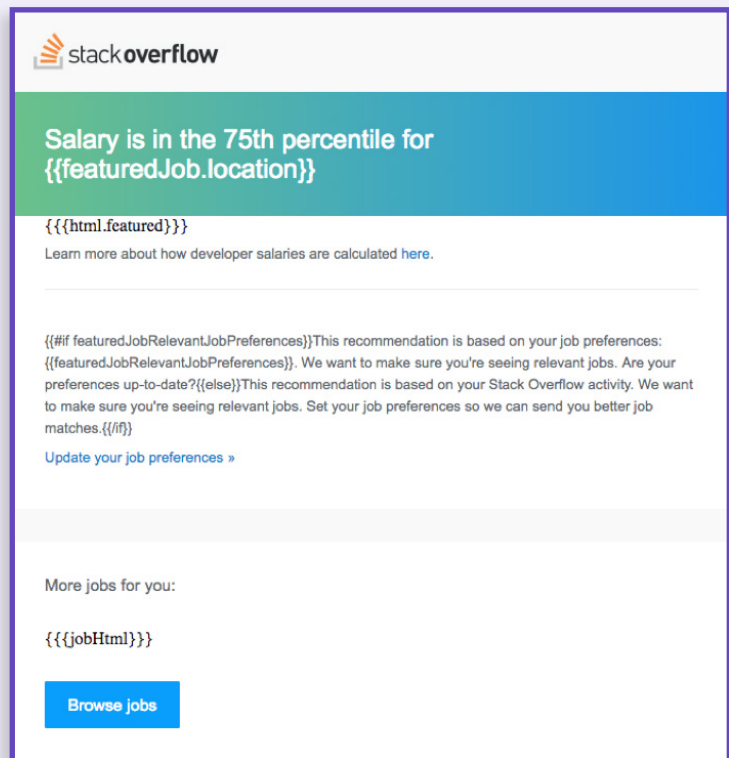
The site generates revenue through its popular job board, which recommends open positions based on their location, salary requirements, technical experience and other variables.

With such an advanced recommendation engine, the marketing team's primary challenge was translating the personalized web experience into their email program to show the right job to the right user at the right time.

Here are the three building blocks they used to create stellar **dynamic content**.

- **Data:** Rather than store every single data point as a user record, Stack Overflow makes API calls to access valuable metadata about each job, such as its salary and benefits.
- **Templates:** Using handlebars logic in Iterable allows the team to display personalized job information, without requiring extensive lines of code.
- **Workflows:** Iterable's Workflow Studio makes it easy to trigger and schedule messages across marketing channels, including email, direct mail, mobile, web and social.

After implementing dynamic content through Iterable, Stack Overflow was able to develop a robust series of email campaigns. The results? Achieving an outstanding 100% increase in job applications.



Stack Overflow uses Iterable's handlebars logic to dynamically populate job information in its email template.

Recommendations for Next-Gen Nurture

- 1 Start small with dynamic content.** An easy way to get started is to leverage user and event data in your message templates. Then you can increase the complexity by adding data feeds for time-sensitive information and accessing metadata stores for content that's relevant to large audiences, like a product inventory.
- 2 Experiment with artificial intelligence.** Advanced AI technology, like Iterable's Intelligence Suite, can analyze each customer's digital "body language" to optimize the best time, channel and frequency to engage them for fully automated, goal-driven marketing.
- 3 Unleash your creative side.** If you're constantly requesting assistance from your technical team, then it might be time to upgrade your growth marketing platform. Modern solutions take the hassle out of campaign setup and testing, so you can get back to great storytelling.



Fabian Seelbach
SVP of Marketing at Curology

“Curology’s efforts to support our patients in their battle against acne directly impact the success of our business. The capability to easily execute dynamic channel and message personalization based on the unique treatment plan of each patient is the reason we switched to Iterable.”

Reactivation Campaigns: Cart & Browse Abandonment

Reactivation campaigns are designed to keep customers coming back for more, whether it's to re-engage those who've lost interest or strengthen the loyalty of your most captive audience.

Survey Results

For most brands, especially those in retail and e-commerce, cart and browse abandonment are common reactivation use cases.

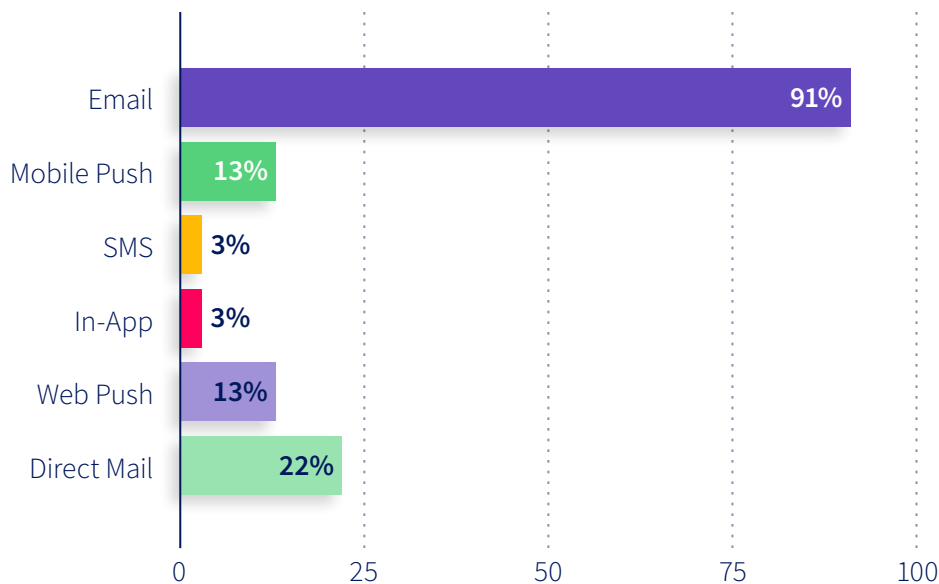
51% of marketers surveyed have an abandonment campaign.

Although email continues to be the most popular channel, used by 91% of marketers with abandonment campaigns, direct mail comes in second with 22%. Mobile push and web push are tied for third at 13%, followed by SMS and in-app, each at 3%.



Ouch. This number is low! Abandoned cart campaigns nearly always generate more ROI than any other campaign in your email program. If you aren't leveraging abandoned cart, just stop reading right here and go do that right now. No, seriously. Just go.

Which channels do marketers use in their abandonment campaign?



Michael McCarthy
CEO at Inkit

“A smart marketer knows how to take an online experience offline, and direct mail has the highest response rate of marketing channels. Likely you would send an email first, but follow up with a postcard if the customer hasn't engaged to keep the brand top of mind.”



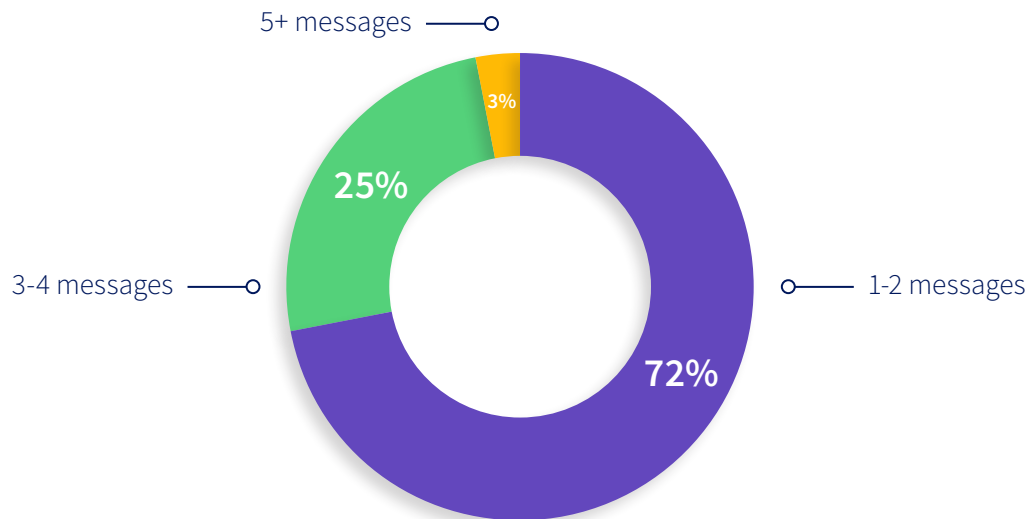
Abandonment campaigns don't have to be complex to deliver value. Marketers can get caught up in the idea that they require loads of personalization—product descriptions, product photos, product prices, cart total, and so on.

While personalization is powerful, it can be tough to implement campaigns with that level of complexity, which perhaps explains why only about half of survey participants are currently sending abandonment campaigns. Step back and take an iterative approach.

Launching a very simple "Hey, you forgot something" trigger—sans further personalization—is better than leaving a gaping hole in your cross-channel program. Phase two of that campaign can include a product image and description. Maybe phase three details price. And so on.

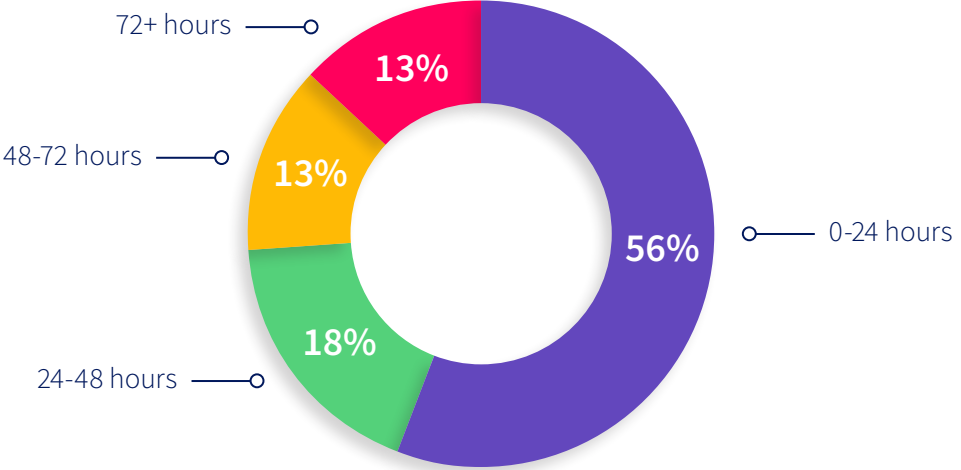
Most abandonment campaigns keep it simple: 72% of survey respondents only send one or two reminders to reclaim customer interest. 25% send 3-4 messages, while the remaining 3% send more than five.

How many reminders are in a brand's abandonment campaign?



Real-time response is critical for cart and browse abandonment, especially for that first reminder. 56% of marketers deploy their campaigns within 24 hours of abandonment; only 13% wait longer than 72 hours.

How soon do marketers deploy their abandonment campaign?



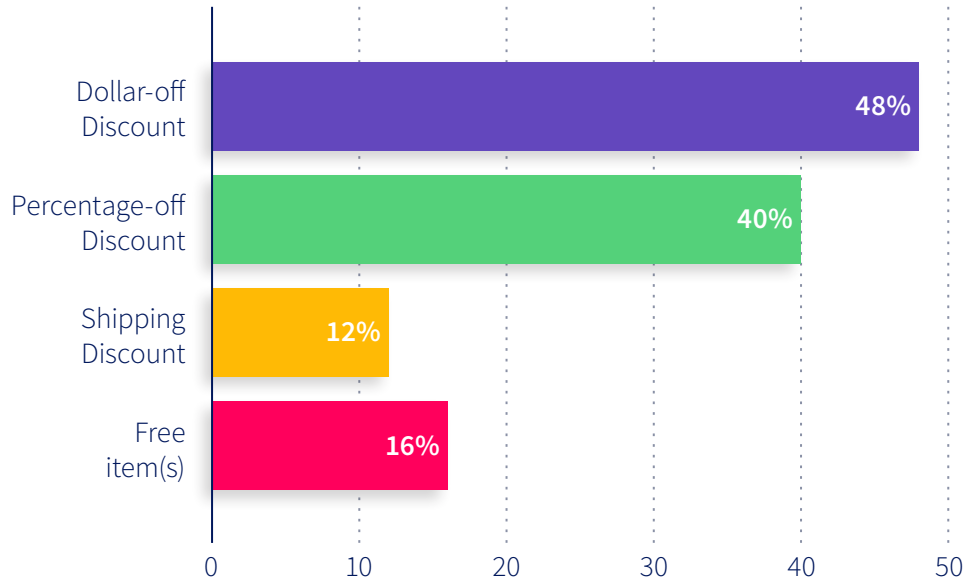
Marketers are almost evenly split on whether to include a discount or incentive to entice customers to complete their purchase or other business-critical call to action: **only 47% have decided to add that extra oomph of motivation.**



Offers can be powerful incentives, but be certain you aren't inadvertently training customers to intentionally abandon carts in anticipation of discounts. Some clever consumers have caught on to this strategy, and a number of blogs instruct consumers to leave items in carts in hopes that a hefty coupon code will be offered up.

For those who include incentives, a dollar-off discount is the most popular choice (48%), followed by a percentage-off discount (40%), a free item (16%) and a shipping discount (12%).

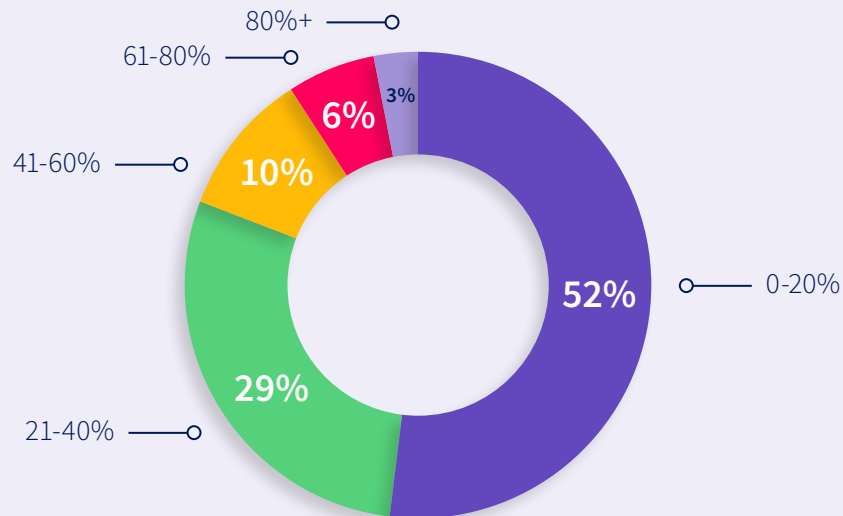
What discounts or incentives do marketers use in their abandonment campaign?



Regardless of discounting strategy, marketers have found abandonment campaigns an excellent way to recover lost revenue and complete more CTAs. **81% of marketers achieve a conversion rate of up to 40 percent.**



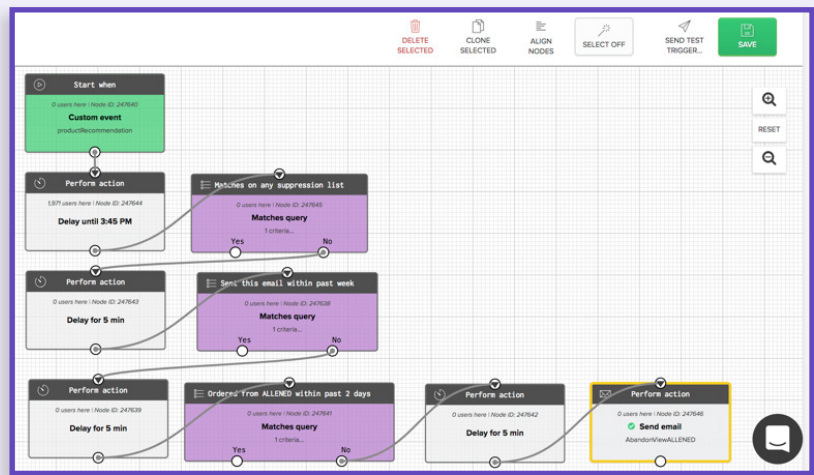
What is the conversion rate of a brand's abandonment campaign?



Customer Case Study: ShopRunner

[ShopRunner](#) is a service that gives members free 2-day shipping and free returns across 100+ stores. Think of it as Amazon Prime for the other half of the internet.

Our View Abandon is a triggered campaign that sends emails to ShopRunner members that view a product on a retailer website but don't make a purchase. Instead of prodding the member to purchase the item that they viewed, we show them a handful of other items that we think they'll like.



ShopRunner triggers its View Abandon campaign with Iterable's Workflow Studio.

Then we use Iterable's easy user interface to create business rules and iron out the details of the campaign.

The result is a scalable email program that can be tested, iterated on, and improved upon within a few keystrokes within Iterable.

We've observed some extremely promising rates on these emails in comparison to our average blast campaigns:

- 11% better open rate
- 63% better click rate
- 88% better click-to-order rate

We're looking forward to more cross-team collaboration to transform our email program into one that follows and guides members throughout their shopping lifecycle.



Marisa Amorasak
Email Product Manager at ShopRunner

Recommendations for Conversion Recovery

Lost revenue goes far beyond unpurchased shopping carts—all companies should identify the many potential abandonment points in the lifecycle and use cross-channel messaging to convert more customers.

Here are our top 4 tips for conversion recovery:

- 1 Don't wait too long to follow-up.** The timing of your abandonment campaign is important and indicates you're paying attention and responsive. Send an email after an hour of abandonment, and consider reminders with other relevant channels.
- 2 Match message cadence to the customer journey.** Shopping for car insurance may be more complicated than ordering takeout, so your conversion recovery strategy should mirror the complexity and length of the buying process. Overcome potential disengagement points before they take hold.
- 3 Lead, guide and educate.** With a longer customer journey, it's important to manage expectations and mitigate confusion by breaking down the conversion process into several micro-conversions and enumerating next steps one by one.
- 4 Create a sense of urgency.** Even if dwindling inventory doesn't apply to your business, you can communicate deadlines for actions by emphasizing the benefits, offering help and using compelling content.



Kelly Inglis
Marketing Manager at 99designs

“We’re able to customize our targeted campaigns based on such factors as previous purchases and not completing a purchase. Our abandonment campaign is now delivering better results because the message content refers to the design category under consideration and speaks directly to what the prospect is looking to buy.”

Reactivation Campaigns: Re-Engagement

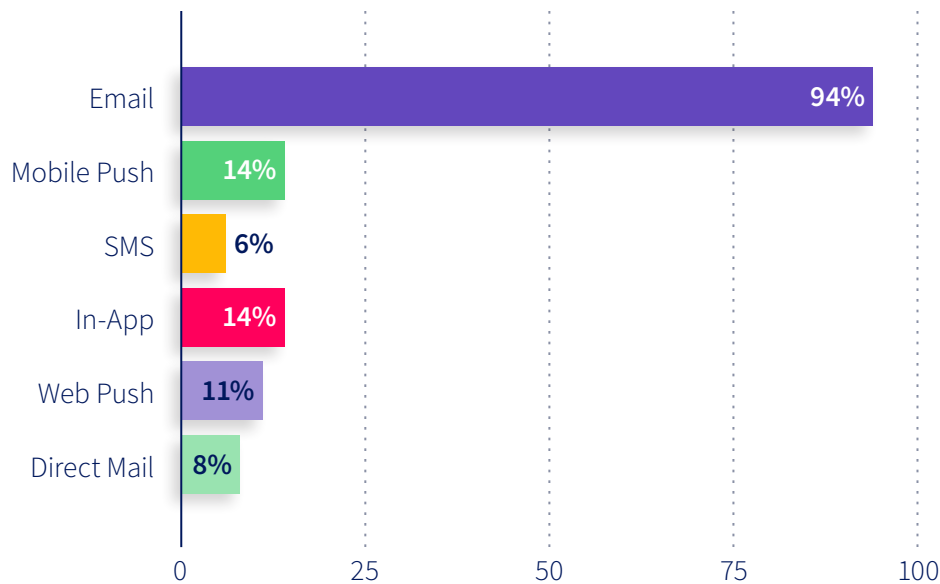
When a customer’s interest wanes, regardless of where they are in their buying journey, it’s the perfect opportunity to reactivate the relationship with a re-engagement campaign.

Survey Results

Nearly two-thirds of marketers (64%) leverage re-engagement campaigns in their messaging strategy.

Mobile messaging can be a great way to win back customer attention: push and in-app are tied as the second most commonly used channels for re-engagement (14%). Web push comes in third with 11% usage, followed by direct mail (8%) and SMS (6%).

Which channels do marketers use in their re-engagement campaign?

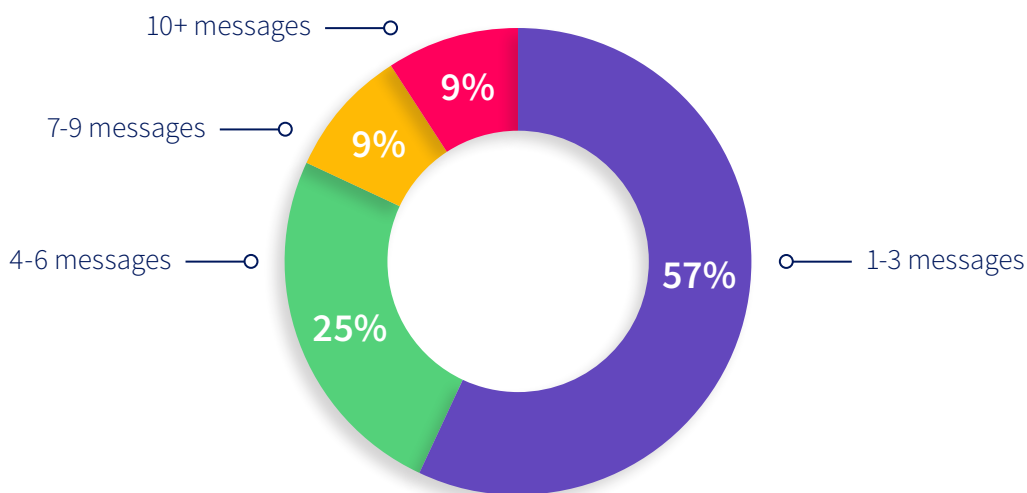


Tracy Sestili
VP, Growth Marketing, at SparkPost

“Re-engagement emails are essential for brands delivering growth by driving customer engagement and fighting churn. Effective re-engagement messages build loyalty by delivering value and extending the customer experience from an app or service right into a user’s inbox.”

57% of marketers who leverage re-engagement campaigns included fewer than three messages. One-quarter send 4-6 messages, and only 9% send more than ten touches.

How many messages are in a brand's re-engagement campaign?



If it's not possible to win back users, then a marketer must decide whether to let them go.

54% of respondents will wait up to three months before sunsetting or removing disengaged subscribers.

20%, however, will attempt re-engagement for nine months or more.

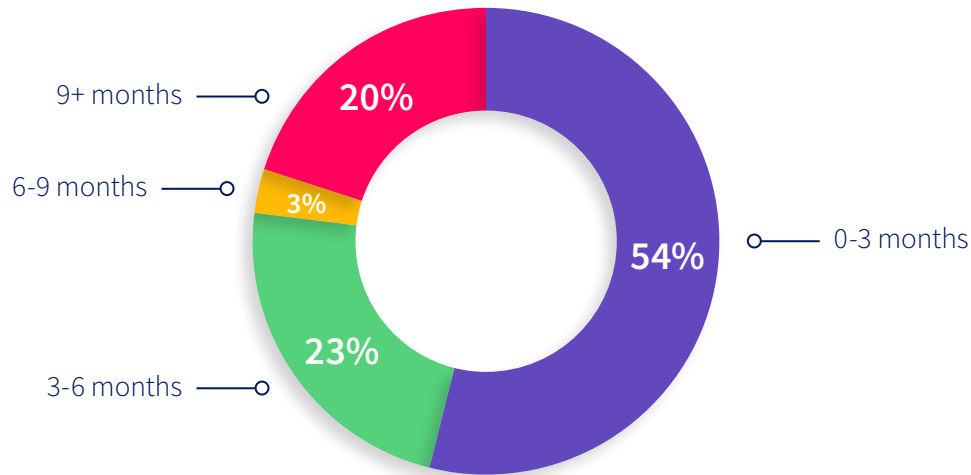


Wow! Dumping the disengaged within three months is an aggressive strategy! We hear a lot of advice from deliverability pros about the importance of letting disengaged email subscribers go—but if you aren't encountering deliverability issues, it usually makes sense to hang on to those subscribers much longer.

You can't quantify inbox impressions among non-openers, but the existence of your brand in the inbox—even with zero engagement—may be influencing behavior in other ways, or simply cementing brand recognition.

So don't arbitrarily clear out the disengaged without a business reason. And don't assume that someone who's not clearly engaging with your messages isn't engaging with your brand in other ways.

How long will a brand's re-engagement campaign run before sunsetting or removing disengaged subscribers?



Recommendations for Robust Re-Engagement

- 1 Focus on education.** Your messaging should resonate with on-the-fence consumers so spend more time educating them about your products and services than pushing a sale. Clarify the next steps you want them to take and develop your calls-to-action accordingly.
- 2 Identify re-engagement opportunities across the lifecycle.** Re-engagement campaigns usually target inactive subscribers, but every time someone does not take that specific action you wanted them to take is a chance to win them back. Broaden your scope to increase your conversions.
- 3 Remember the power of web push.** [94% of users](#) who opt into web push stay subscribed, so these personalized browser messages can be a highly effective way to reach your customers when they're not on your website or app. Just make sure you provide real value and don't over-communicate to avoid being seen as spam.

Customer Case Study: Swish

Generally speaking, it's really difficult to change behavior. People don't want to use your dumb new app. They don't care about the blood and sweat you put into building it. They don't want to change.

But users need a push to make it happen, and Iterable is central to the way that Swish onboards and retains users. It's a key pillar of the overall strategy we take to build bite-sized habits that change people's lives.

We implemented Iterable in under a week, and we haven't looked back. Today we can't imagine using anything else.

When users join [Swish](#), they can opt-in for reminders by push notification, SMS, or email. Iterable's Workflow Studio lets us trigger messages based on users' actual spending behavior and personalize them based on a complex and ever-changing set of rules.

We've already seen an amazing 350% increase in user engagement since we first started using Iterable, and we feel like we've only scratched the surface. Iterable has been an amazing partner, and we can't wait to see how much more they can help us push the envelope and grow our user base in the future.



Iterable enables Swish to re-engage users through email, SMS, and mobile push.



Jeff Whelpley
CTO at Swish

Reactivation Campaigns: Loyalty

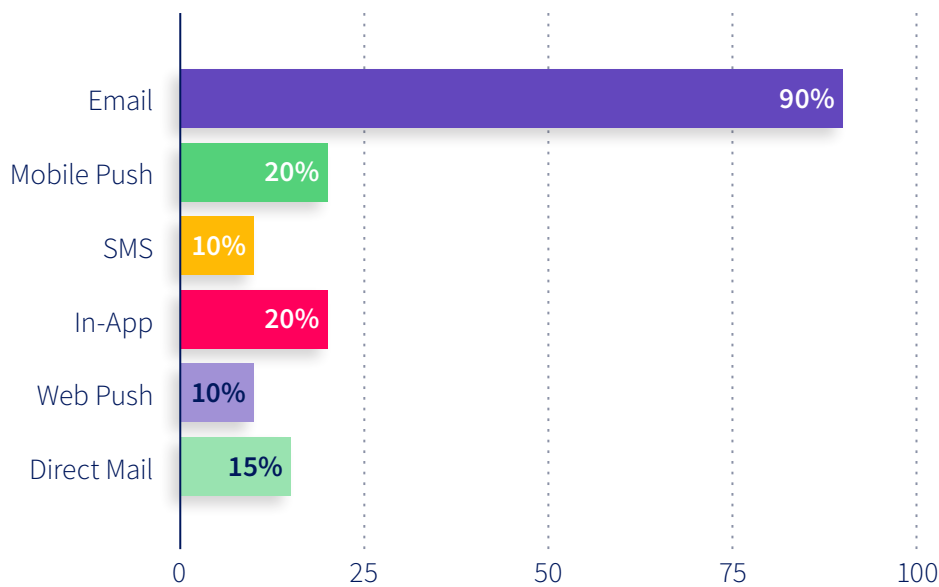
In addition to winning back subscribers, reactivation campaigns also encompass the messaging that marketers send to their most prized customers to drive retention and loyalty.

Survey Results

Despite the importance of increasing customer lifetime value, only 37% of respondents have a dedicated loyalty campaign to convert more customers into VIPs.

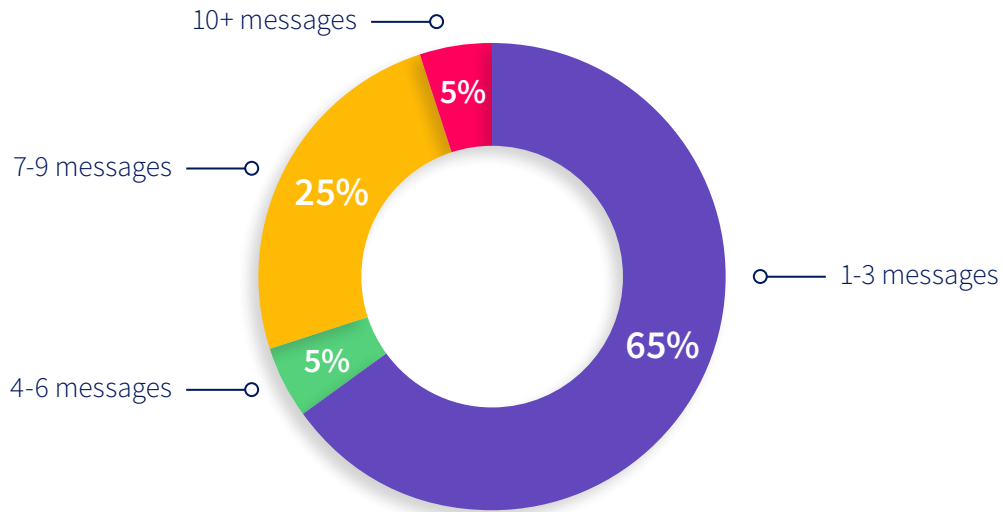
For those marketers who prioritize this particular lifecycle stage, mobile channels play a larger role. 90% use email in their loyalty campaign, followed by mobile push (20%), in-app (20%), direct mail (15%), SMS (10%) and web push (10%).

Which channels do marketers use in their loyalty campaign?



Nearly two-thirds of marketers (65%) send 1-3 messages in their loyalty campaigns, while 30% send more than six messages.

How many messages are in a brand's loyalty campaign?



Recommendations for Long-Term Loyalty

- 1 Identify your best customers.** Create segments based on key behaviors and actions, such as date of last purchase, total number of purchases, average order value, loyalty program points, time spent on site and more. Then build a loyalty campaign that speaks to their preferences and incentivizes them to stay active.
- 2 Amplify their advocacy.** Your biggest fans want your business to succeed, so give them the right advocacy opportunities at the right time. Use social data to trigger referral requests, develop their influencer potential and convert them into brand ambassadors.
- 3 Surprise and delight with personalized experiences.** Perhaps every customer receives a birthday coupon, but how can you really wow your VIPs? Consider inviting them to an exclusive sale, making charity donations in their names or sending them gift cards or swag to make them feel special.



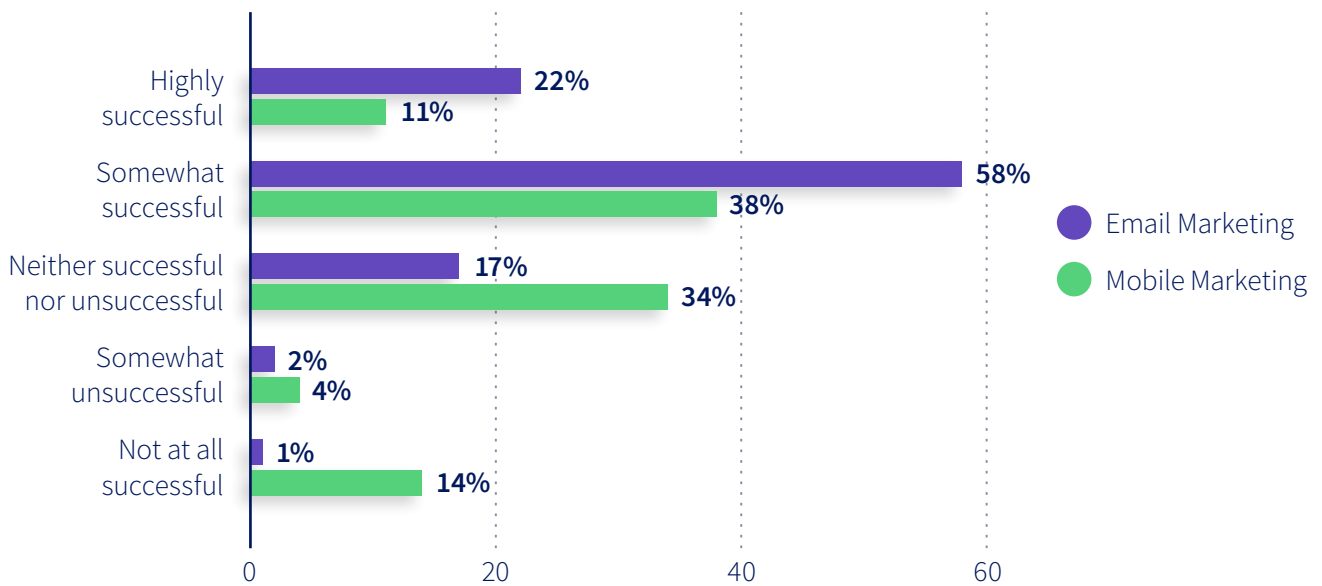
Ben Clark
VP of Customer Retention at SeatGeek

“We didn't want an email application with mobile capabilities bolted on or vice versa. We wanted a platform that was architected to support the channels we use now as well as the ones we plan to use in the future. That requirement ruled out pretty much every solution except Iterable.”

Summary

To conclude Iterable's 2018 Cross-Channel Benchmark Report, when marketers were asked to rank the success of their messaging, it was clear that while they hold their email programs in high regard, they could feel more confident about their mobile efforts.

How successful are brands at email and mobile marketing?



Confidence comes when brands break down organizational silos and consolidate their data, so they can finally see the forest for the trees. An effective cross-channel marketing strategy is not channel-driven—it's customer-driven.

Catering your messaging to each customer across every stage of their lifecycle will give your brand a competitive advantage and set you up for success.

Additional Resources

Going Cross-Channel

- [The Growth Marketer's Playbook](#)
- [8 Actionable Email Strategies to Boost Mobile User Engagement](#)
- [Turn Users Into Customers With In-App Messaging](#)
- [Direct Mail Automation vs. Email: Knowing When to Send Which](#)
- [Ask Yourself These 5 Questions Before Getting Started With Web Push](#)

Welcome & Onboarding

- [On-Demand Webinar: Maximize Your Welcome Campaign in 6 Steps](#)
- [Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Welcome Series](#)
- [User Engagement Teardown: Top Online Travel Agencies](#)

Promotions

- [7 Tips to Boost the Success of Your Promotional Campaigns](#)
- [Dynamic Content Deconstructed: 3 Building Blocks for Success](#)
- [4 Ways to Make Interactive Email Actionable](#)

Cart & Browse Abandonment

- [The Growth Marketer's Guide to Shopping Cart Abandonment](#)
- [Shopping Cart Abandonment Email Strategies \(for the Rest of Us\)](#)
- [Avoid These 5 Mistakes of Cart Abandonment Campaigns](#)

Re-Engagement & Loyalty

- [On-Demand Webinar: Re-Engagement That Rocks](#)
- [On-Demand Webinar: 5 Keys to Driving Loyalty](#)
- [The 3 Re-Engagement Mistakes Most Marketers Make](#)
- [It's Not Me, It's You: Breaking Up With Your Subscribers](#)
- [You Had Them at Hello: How to Retain Your Best Customers](#)

Case Studies

- [Zillow](#)
- [SeatGeek](#)
- [CreativeLive](#)
- [Curology](#)

About Iterable

Iterable is the growth marketing platform that enables brands to create, execute and optimize cross-channel campaigns with unparalleled data flexibility.

Leading brands, like Spotify, Zillow, SeatGeek and Box, choose Iterable to power world-class customer engagement throughout the entire lifecycle.



Data Flexibility at Your Fingertips

Access real-time user, behavioral and event data to trigger personalized messaging at virtually unlimited scale. Support an audience of millions while appealing to each subscriber's unique preferences.



Unified Brand Experience

Orchestrate seamless customer engagement across email, mobile push, SMS, in-app, web push, direct mail and more throughout every lifecycle stage, from activation to re-engagement.



Agile Iteration & Optimization

Launch, measure and fine-tune campaigns with ease to deliver more relevant messaging faster than the competition. Experiment and iterate on-demand to determine the right content, channel and cadence for each user.



Customer Journey Mapping

Visualize the entire customer journey and build sophisticated, cross-channel segments and campaigns with Iterable's intuitive, drag-and-drop Workflow Studio.

If you want to learn more about Iterable, please request a demo:

[REQUEST DEMO](#)

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