



How to Personalize Cross-Channel Campaigns Using Data Feeds

Personalization Maturity: Level 2

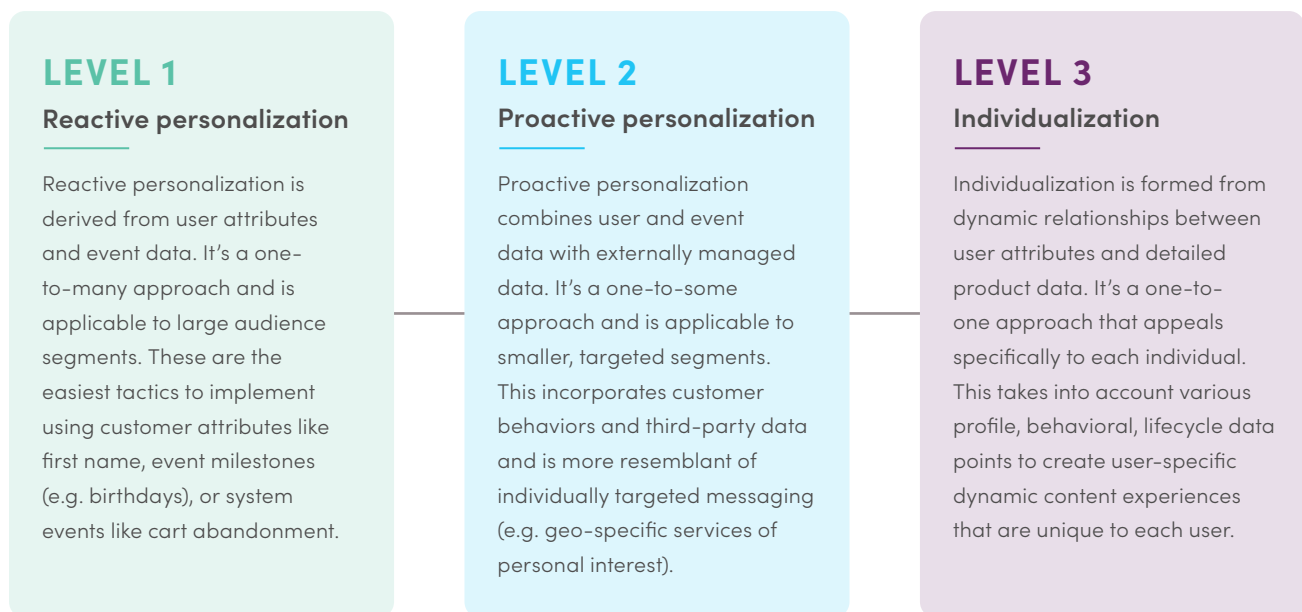


Introduction (Time to Up the Personalization Ante!)

In our first guide, we discussed Level 1 of personalization, also known as reactive personalization. There, we discussed how the power of your customers' user profiles can be harnessed to build bespoke cross-channel marketing campaigns.

For illustration, we also walked you through some B2C brands that have mastered the art of personalization, some of which include Alaska Airlines, Target, and [The Dyrft](#).

But, as you may know already, user and event data is just one aspect of personalization. To take your campaigns to the next level, you need to adopt a proactive approach to personalization using data feeds.



This guide will explore what data feeds are, what they aren't, and why they're essential. We'll follow up with examples of data feed-powered campaigns featuring renowned brands.

Upon completion, you'll learn how to leverage data feeds into your next campaign and deliver extra value to your customers.

Data Feeds 101: An Introduction

What Is a Data Feed?

A data feed is a way of sending structured and up-to-date information from one source to another. It's a form of data exchange that imports external data, which you can incorporate into your messaging templates.

Data feeds supplement your customers' user profile data so that you can create more sophisticated personalization.

So, what are data feeds?

Data feeds are non-user information that is:

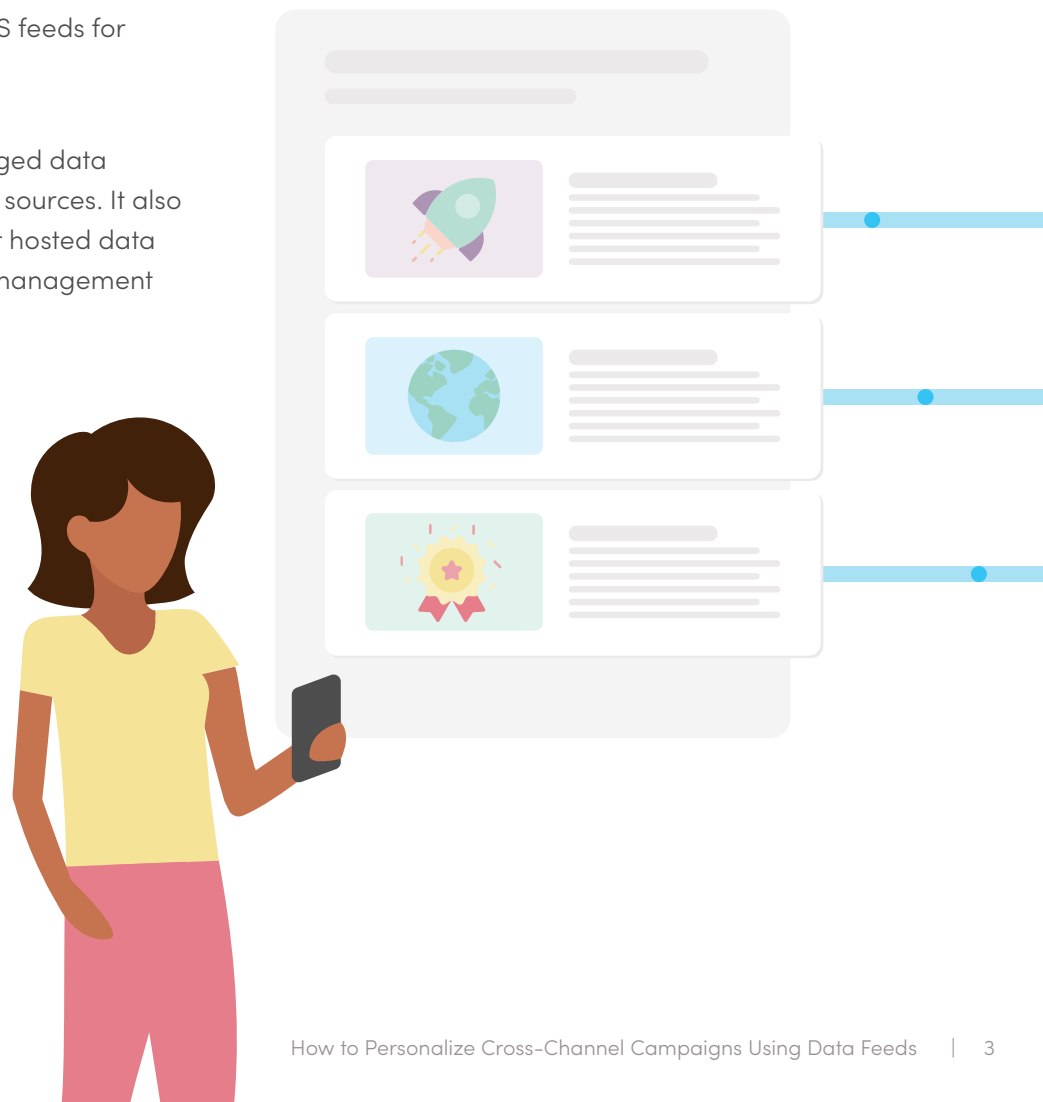
1. Externally managed outside of your email service provider (ESP)
2. Updated frequently (think RSS feeds for blogs and podcasts)

Bear in mind that externally managed data doesn't just come from third-party sources. It also comes from internally managed or hosted data stored in your company's content management system or data warehouse.

Why Are Data Feeds Essential?

As we mentioned earlier, user profile data is just one aspect of personalization. If you don't look beyond user attributes and event data, your messages may grow stale and irrelevant to your customers over time.

However, with data feeds, you have the flexibility (and efficiency) to deliver unique messages at scale. This means you can work smarter, as you have a repeatable framework for creating and executing personalized campaigns that continue to wow your customers.



What Are the Most Common Data Feed Formats?

As email service providers and growth marketing platforms like Iterable send campaigns, data feeds can make per-recipient requests to external sources. Parameters in these requests make it possible to return data that's directly relevant to specific users.

Iterable data feeds can query JSON, XML, RSS and Atom web services in order to customize and personalize the content you send out in your messages.

Websites typically use these formats to publish frequently updated information, such as blog entries, social media posts, news headlines or podcasts.

```
{
  "pastPurchase": "Hot Dog Halloween Outfit for Cats",
  "suggestedProduct": [
    {
      "name": "Deluxe Cat Tree",
      "description": "A jungle for your favorite feline buddy",
      "price": 160,
      "imageUrl": "http://img-cache.cdn.gaiaonline.com/0b4be3af7262e023cce39cffa697d4cd/http:"
    },
    {
      "name": "Catnip Mouse Toy",
      "description": "Cats go absolutely crazy for this realistic mouse toy!",
      "price": 4,
      "imageUrl": "http://www.crystalclearpet.com/shop/treats/images/catnip-large-mouse-11077"
    },
    {
      "name": "Set of 3 Furry Sticks",
      "description": "Dangle this enticing toy in front of your kitty!",
      "price": 5,
      "imageUrl": "http://i01.i.aliimg.com/wsphoto/v1/1944996867/Freeshipping-font-b-Rabbit-b"
    }
  ]
}
```

For example, a JSON web service might return the following product recommendations based on a user's purchase history.

What Are Some Examples of Data Feeds in Action?

While data feeds can be used to personalize your content with dynamically updated information at send time, generally speaking, there are four common use cases in which you can put data feeds into action in your marketing campaigns.

1. Active offers
2. Recommendations
3. Tickers and APIs
4. Blog and news content

The email examples from the following industry-leading brands demonstrate how data feeds can help you achieve proactive personalization.

Let's check out the active offers first.

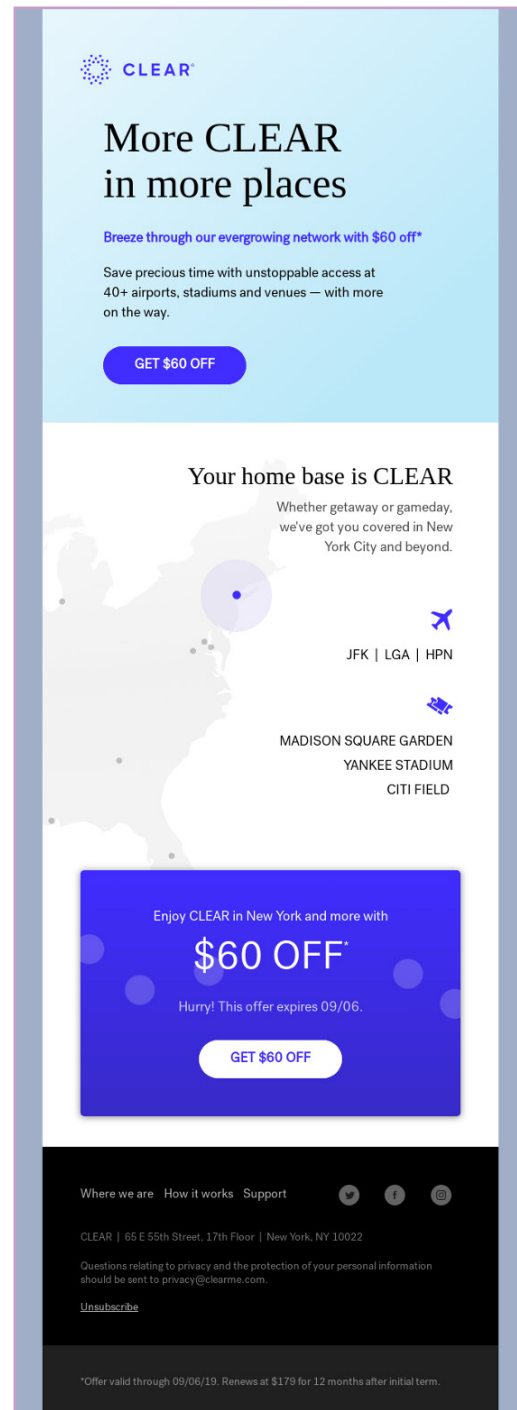
1. Active Offers

Inside Look: CLEAR

CLEAR, a biometric security identity platform that allows members to bypass travel security checkpoints, offers time-saving access to 40+ airports, stadiums and venues in the U.S.

Campaign Appeal: Right away, the reader knows the message pertains to an active offer. The email copy and CTA buttons clearly state what they can expect: \$60 off their first year of membership.

Data Feeds in Action: CLEAR personalizes each offer by location with a data feed that inserts a map and details about local airports and venues. In this example, the user's "home base" is New York City, so the information displayed promotes landmarks, like JFK Airport, Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium.



CLEAR entices their reader with \$60 off their subscription. Source: [Really Good Emails](#)

Inside Look: SeatGeek

SeatGeek is a mobile-focused ticket platform that allows fans to buy and sell tickets for concerts and sporting events. They carry the largest inventory of live event tickets on the web, and they rely on Iterable's robust and agile platform to deliver personalized experiences at scale—which increased their revenue by 3x.

Campaign Appeal: The message is relevant to each customer's location and interests—in this case, a Jaguars fan based in Jacksonville, Florida. Home game tickets are on sale if they apply a \$300 promo code. The full home game schedule and the ticket links make it easy for the user to plan, further incentivizing them to purchase a ticket.

Data Feeds in Action: SeatGeek builds a data feed to pull upcoming home games based on the user's location and adds it to their campaign template, both chronologically in the full schedule and in the featured event section at the top.

The screenshot shows a mobile app notification from SeatGeek. At the top, a small banner reads "The NFL is taking extra precautions to keep fans safe at games this season." Below this is the SeatGeek logo. The main headline is "Jacksonville Jaguars tickets are back on sale". A featured event card highlights "Houston Texans at Jacksonville Jaguars" on "Sun, Nov 8 • TIAA Bank Field" with a "Find tickets" button. Below this, a message says "Let's try this again, shall we? Tickets to Jaguars games are back on sale and available now. Use your \$300 promo code on an upcoming home game." The bottom section is titled "Full home schedule" and lists four games: Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars (Sun, Sep 13), Miami Dolphins at Jacksonville Jaguars (Thu, Sep 24), Detroit Lions at Jacksonville Jaguars (Sun, Oct 18), and Houston Texans at Jacksonville Jaguars (Sun, Nov 8). Each game entry includes the date, location, and a "Find tickets" button.

SeatGeek engages its customers by keeping them informed of local events.

You've seen some cool examples of active offers and how they can entice your customers. Next, let's take a look at some companies that offer hand-picked products and services to their respective customers.

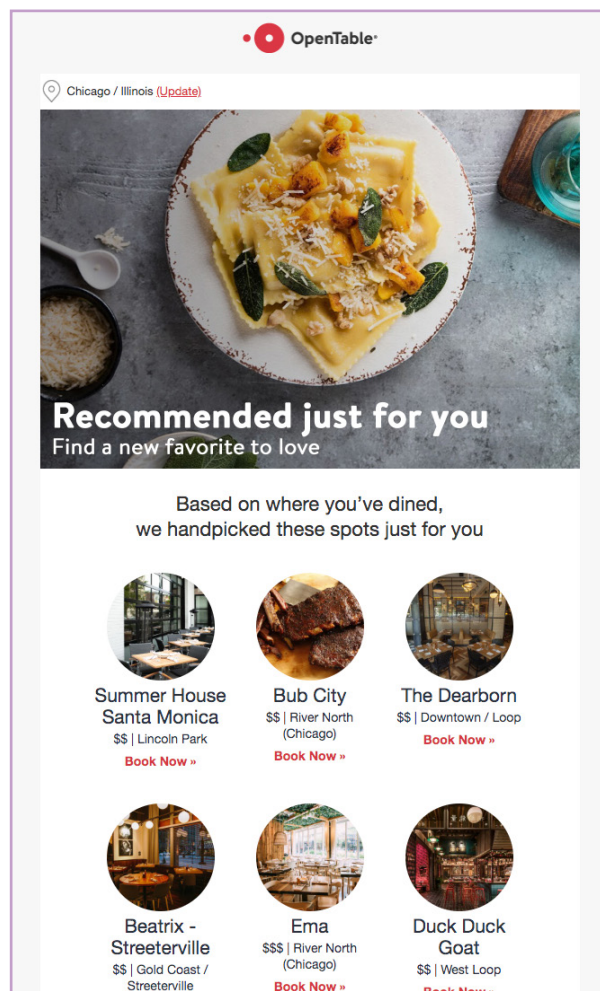
2. Recommendations

Inside Look: OpenTable

OpenTable is an online restaurant reservation platform. Since its inception in 1998, it has helped diners discover new restaurants and accumulate reward points towards travel and dining experiences.

Campaign Appeal: The image of the savory ravioli dish grabs the reader's attention (who doesn't like a good pasta dish?). And the list of the recommended restaurants with critical details (location, rating, and price range) make the suggestions more compelling, as the reader doesn't have to spend too much time researching each one.

Data Feeds in Action: OpenTable uses a data feed to pull a list of local restaurants similar to the ones where the customer has dined before. And if the customer no longer lives in Chicago, they're given the option to update their location in the header.



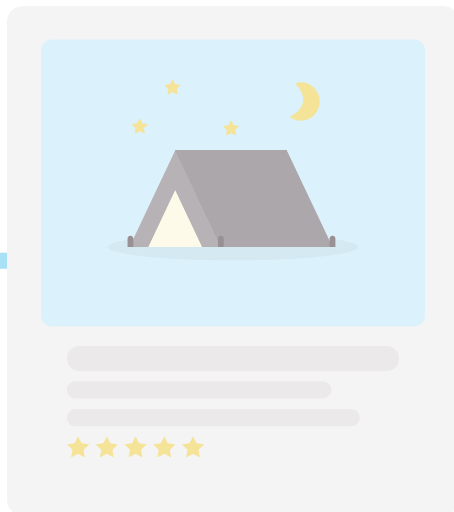
OpenTable knows how to serve great recommendations. Source: [Really Good Emails](#)

Inside Look: Airbnb

Airbnb is an online marketplace that connects hosts and travelers from all over the world. It allows people to rent their properties or spare rooms to out-of-town guests looking for alternatives to pricier hotel rooms.

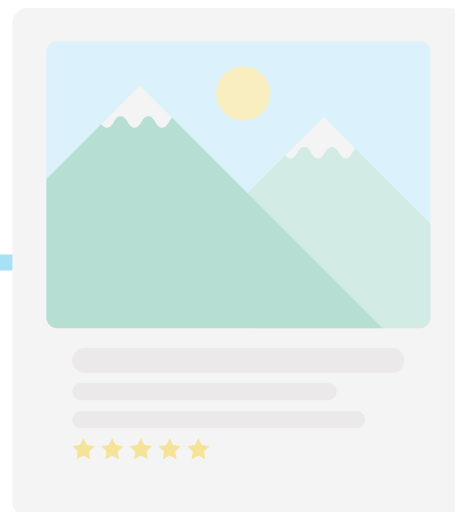
Campaign Appeal: In this example, Airbnb sends a welcome message to a user who has just booked a trip to Berkeley, Calif. A day-by-day itinerary allows the customer to spend less time planning and more time exploring.

Data Feeds in Action: Airbnb uses a data feed to pull a curated list of the most highly rated tourist attractions in the surrounding Bay Area, including important information, like the time of each experience, the distance from the booking location and the number of reviews.



A screenshot of an Airbnb welcome email. At the top is the Airbnb logo, followed by "WELCOME TO" and "BERKELEY" in large, bold letters. Below that is a paragraph: "Not sure how to spend your time in Berkeley? We've created a day-by-day itinerary just for you. So you can spend less time planning and more time exploring." Underneath is a large image of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Below the image, it says "Jun 20" and "Wednesday". The text reads: "Your first full day of exploration! You won't want to miss the landmarks, but you can make those visits even more special with a local as your guide." There are two activity cards. The first is "San Francisco Victorians" from 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM, 10.0 miles away, with 252 reviews and 5 stars. The second is "Chinatown Walking Tour" from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, 9.9 miles away, with 21 reviews and 5 stars. Each card has a small image of the activity.

Airbnb sends a welcome email with a fun-filled agenda. Source: [Really Good Emails](#)



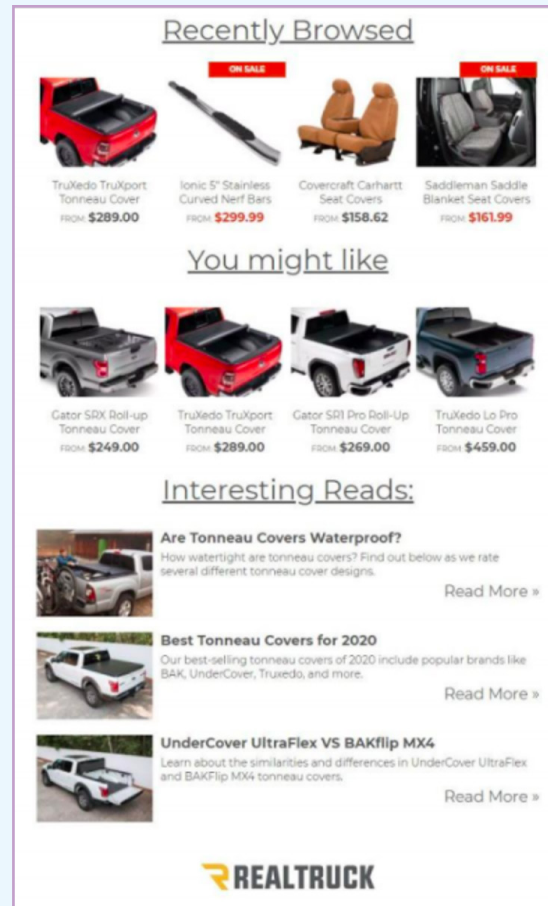
Iterable Case Study: RealTruck

RealTruck is a leading e-commerce retailer of pickup truck accessories. The company provides an immersive and engaging experience for truck enthusiasts through expert advice and comprehensive information on every product it sells.

Campaign Appeal: This pre-purchase email campaign exhibits products and suggested blog posts into three dynamic content modules: Recently Browsed, You might like, and Interesting Reads. The recommendations are relevant to each user's browsing behavior, and the blog articles help address any customer questions or concerns.

Data Feeds in Action: RealTruck uses a data feed to populate each content module with product recommendations and blog posts that resonate with every customer on an individual level.

Results: Using Iterable's growth marketing platform to power their email marketing, the RealTruck team achieved a 4.71% increase in click-through rate and a 0.61% increase in conversion rate compared to the static content in previous batch sends.



RealTruck draws the reader in with recommended products and reads.

There's no doubt that recommended products and services offer tremendous value to your customers. Next, we'll look at how public data feeds, like stock tickers and weather APIs, can add more depth and relevance to your content.

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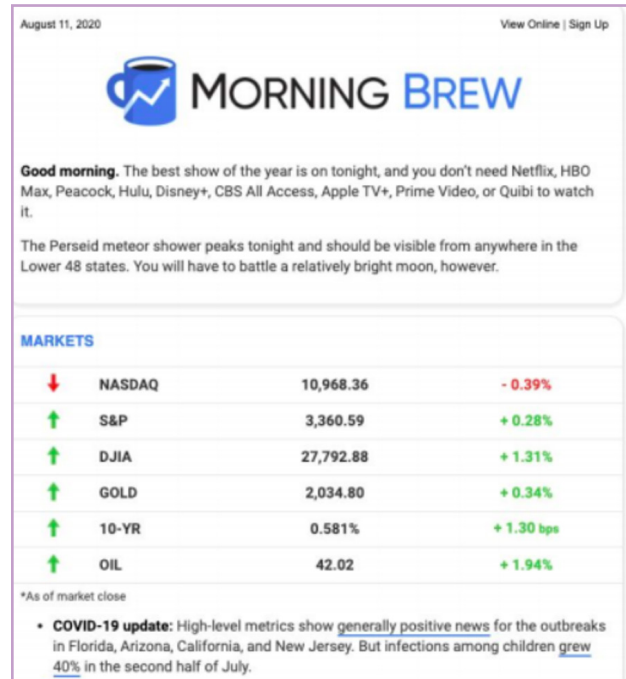
3. Tickers and APIs

Inside Look: Morning Brew


Morning Brew is a free daily email newsletter with over 1 million subscribers and an impressive 45% average open rate. It's designed for young business professionals, covering the latest news in business, finance, technology, politics and more.

Campaign Appeal: Each newsletter starts with the previous day's performance, which offers a high-level overview into various stock market indices and commodities. It's a great barometer to quickly assess the world's financial health and leads readers to the following news highlights.

Data Feeds in Action: The markets are in a constant state of volatility, which requires automation to leverage effectively in email campaigns. Morning Brew uses a public stock ticker to pull closing numbers from the previous day. This eliminates the need to manually recreate this information five times a week during trading hours.



August 11, 2020 View Online | Sign Up

 **MORNING BREW**

Good morning. The best show of the year is on tonight, and you don't need Netflix, HBO Max, Peacock, Hulu, Disney+, CBS All Access, Apple TV+, Prime Video, or Quibi to watch it.

The Perseid meteor shower peaks tonight and should be visible from anywhere in the Lower 48 states. You will have to battle a relatively bright moon, however.

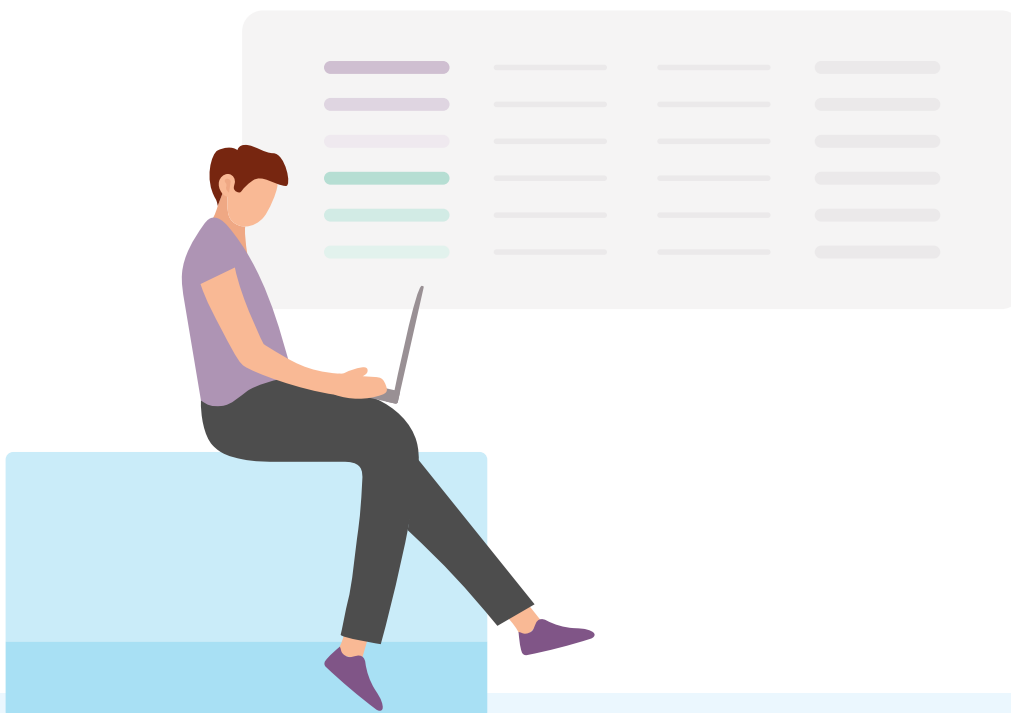
MARKETS

↓	NASDAQ	10,968.36	- 0.39%
↑	S&P	3,360.59	+ 0.28%
↑	DJIA	27,792.88	+ 1.31%
↑	GOLD	2,034.80	+ 0.34%
↑	10-YR	0.581%	+ 1.30 bps
↑	OIL	42.02	+ 1.94%

*As of market close

- **COVID-19 update:** High-level metrics show generally positive news for the outbreaks in Florida, Arizona, California, and New Jersey. But infections among children grew 40% in the second half of July.

Market performance is the focal point of Morning Brew's daily email newsletter.



Inside Look: Uniqlo

Uniqlo is a Japanese clothing company with over 1,000 stores globally. Their name derives from the words ‘unique’ and ‘clothing,’ and they’re known for their affordable, high-quality basics and outerwear.

Campaign Appeal: The local weather forecast, featuring Saint Paul, Minnesota, in this example, gives the reader an idea of what clothes from Uniqlo would best accommodate the fluctuating temperatures during the transition into spring.

Data Feeds in Action: Uniqlo understands that the weather determines their customers’ fashion choices, so the brand has imported a data feed from a public weather API to create a 7-day forecast that will help readers buy seasonally appropriate apparel.

The graphic is a vertical rectangular panel with a dark blue, cloudy sky background. At the top left, it says "Be prepared for what Mother Nature has in store: MEN | WOMEN" and at the top right, "View in a browser". The Uniqlo logo is centered at the top. Below it, the location "Saint Paul, Minnesota" is displayed. The current date and temperature are "03/07 TODAY 50°" with a sun icon. A 7-day forecast follows, showing temperatures and weather icons for each day: SUN 47° (partly cloudy), MON 38° (cloudy), TUES 33° (partly cloudy), WED 36° (sunny), THURS 40° (sunny), FRI 35° (sunny), and SAT 35° (cloudy). The main headline "TRANSITIONAL WEATHER ESSENTIALS" is in large white letters. Below it, a paragraph reads: "Crazy weather got you down? Don't fret because we've got you covered in BLOCKTECH that keeps the rain out and Ultra Light Down that blocks wind." At the bottom, there are two white buttons: "SHOP MEN" and "SHOP WOMEN".

Uniqlo offers transitional weather essentials based on the local 7-day forecast. Source: [Really Good Emails](#)

You’ve seen how tickers and APIs can power your campaigns with an extra dose of personalization. In the next and final section, we’ll talk about amplifying your messaging with a nearly universal resource used by businesses everywhere: blog and news content.

4. Blog and News Content

Media outlets and brands that run company blogs as part of their content marketing strategy face fierce competition. With over [600 million blogs](#) on the internet, businesses have to continuously work to attract and retain their target audience by regularly publishing new content.

As a marketer, you're aware that the content distribution process can be painstaking, if not downright tedious. But with RSS feeds, you can promote your blog or news site more frequently and efficiently, while delivering personalized content to your subscribers.

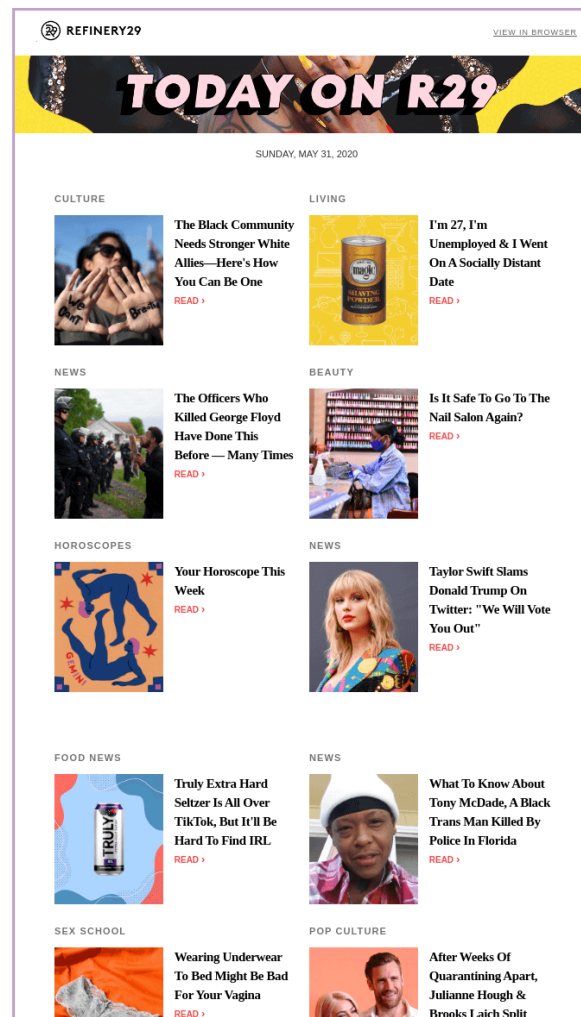
Bearing this in mind, let's take a quick look at media and entertainment sites and resource hubs that bring their A-game when it comes to supplying fresh, relevant content to their readers.

Inside Look: Refinery29

Refinery29 is a media and entertainment company that aims to be the destination for the modern woman seeking a well-rounded life. The website includes a kaleidoscope of content on news, culture, entertainment, fashion, beauty, and more.

Campaign Appeal: R29, as they're otherwise known, offers over a dozen curated newsletters on a variety of topics, but its "Today on R29" delivers a sample of the day's best stories across all of its content categories.

Data Feeds in Action: A daily newsletter's objective is to surface the best-performing content to maximize engagement, so this data feed is likely serving up the most viewed post in each category. A cross-sell opportunity could be to promote the dedicated newsletter of the category that the reader clicks most often.



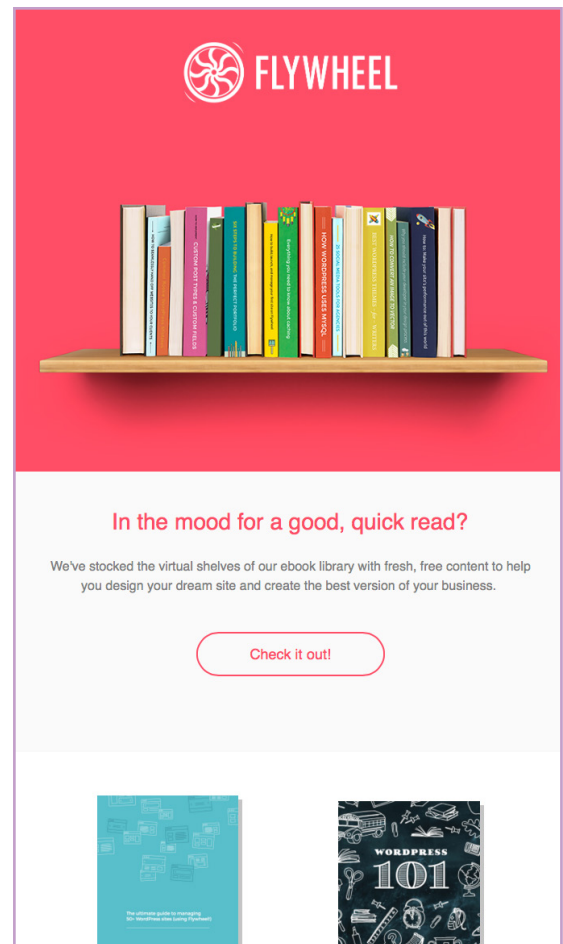
R29 highlights cultural and political affairs in its daily newsletter. Source: [Really Good Emails](#)

Inside Look: Flywheel

Flywheel is a managed WordPress hosting platform for designers, web developers, agencies and other busy creatives. Its resources hub includes a blog and ebook library on topics about plugins and performance.

Campaign Appeal: This email promoting Flywheel's ebook library emphasizing content to help readers create the best version of their businesses. The message also highlights color psychology, as indicated by the vibrant featured image that connotes invigoration and high energy, prompting the reader to check out the suggested posts for a good, quick read.

Data Feeds in Action: A data feed used in an email like this can be used to return evergreen content that is most recent, most viewed or categorized on a specific topic—whichever you believe that readers would find valuable.



Flywheel inspires its readers to check out its ebook library.

Source: [Really Good Emails](#)

Mini-Assignment (Yes, It's Homework Time)

- Brainstorm the content types that would add the most value** to your marketing messages, whether they're your blog's RSS feed or a public weather API.
- Review your live campaigns and identify low-hanging fruit** that you can add, such as prices or customer ratings and reviews.
- Incorporate one new data feed into your email campaign** and compare its performance to the original version.

Closing Thoughts (Feed Your Campaigns)

By now, you should have a firm grasp on how data feeds can supplement your customers' profile data to give your campaign that extra boost it needs.

Nourishing your campaigns with data feeds allows you to deepen your relationship with your customers and create more memorable experiences.

Whether you run a news outlet, an online marketplace or an e-commerce shop, data feeds can help level up your personalization game.

If you want to learn how Iterable can help enhance your campaign with data feeds, [request a demo](#) today.



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 Zillow, SeatGeek, DoorDash, 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](#).

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