

RESEARCH

With 215B emails sent daily, retailers are not maximizing marketing potential: Yesmail

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Graphic provided by Yesmail

By JEN KING

While it may seem like a simple addition to branded communications, two-thirds of retailers do not use consumer data to personalize email offers, according to a new report by Yesmail.

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Yesmail's "The 2016 Yesmail Marketing Channel Report" also found that more than one-third of retailers do not personalize subject lines and the majority do not insert the intended recipient's name in the email body and more so, 64 percent do not personalize any email copy. With so much buzz centered on the omnichannel concept, retailers are missing a mark that can easily be solved through the integration of consumer data mined for existing digital channels.

"Overall, many retailers are missing the easiest opportunities to collect email addresses and other customer information," said Ivy Shtereva, director of marketing at **Yesmail**. "According to the 2016 Yesmail Channel Report, almost half of retailers do not collect email addresses via social media or in-store, and over two-thirds of retailers do not collect consumers' email addresses when they interact with mobile apps.

"When retailers fail to secure email addresses, they miss the chance to establish future relationships with buyers that can be nurtured into long-term brand advocacy," she said. "As for implementation, it's important for retailers and brands to connect with customers on multiple channels.

"That could mean providing social share buttons in emails or encouraging social followers to subscribe to email programs and share email promotions. It all starts with mastering the basics and adopting digital to collect customer information."

For the 2016 **Yesmail Marketing Channel Report**, Yesmail surveyed approximately 200 retailers in attendance at the National Retail Federation's Shop.org Digital Summit in October 2015. The survey was conducted to identify retailer's top priorities for 2016 while recognizing the opportunities in email marketing.

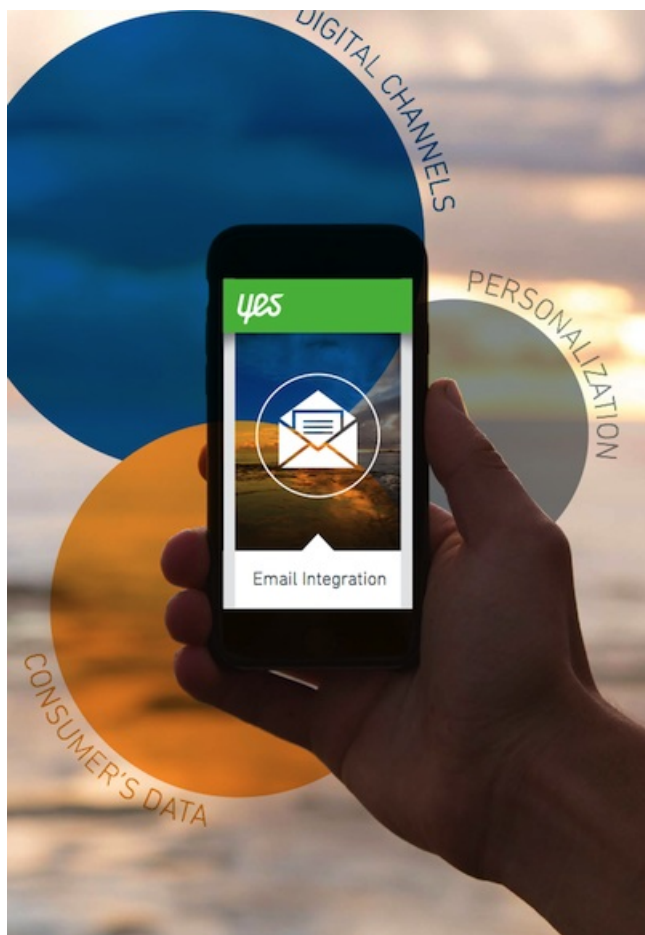
You've got personalized mail

In its research, Yesmail found that a third of retailers said that integrating email with other digital channels is one of their top email marketing goals for 2016. But, despite having their sights set on proper integration, many retailers are

continuing to overlook the importance of incorporating key data points across social, search, point-of-purchase and demographics into their overall digital strategy.

Surprisingly, 60 percent of retailers integrate email with social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, but nearly half do not collect email addresses via social, or even within physical store locations. Also, 17 percent of retailers do not collect the email addresses of consumers visiting their Web site, and two-thirds fail to do so on their mobile applications.

Email presents marketers with an opportunity to streamline truly integrated channel solutions. Yesmail cites the power of email, noting that in 2016 there will be an estimated 2.7 billion global email users, and more than 215 billion emails sent and received daily.



Graphic provided by Yesmail

As it stands, despite having access to consumer data, 40 percent of retailers do not use purchase data to create email marketing campaigns that are more relevant. Additionally, half of surveyed retailers do not use demographic data to improve message relevance.

Customizing emails can help to boost conversion rates since consumers are more likely to interact with a targeted message that is relevant to their wants and needs. Brands and retailers should be thinking of ways to bring a more personal touch to their digital marketing by using data and technology to create better relationships with their customers ([see story](#)).

A number of retailers, 22 percent of those surveyed, do not implement new consumer welcome campaigns. Staging a welcome campaign for new subscribers helps retailers mine data while making the consumer feel embraced and wanted. The ideology is the same for lapsed or inactive subscribers, but only 43 percent of retailers produce reactivation campaigns.

Possibly the most standout finding from Yesmail's report is of the 84 percent of retailers that send coupons and promotion codes over email, over a third do not allow consumers to redeem emailed-based promotions by scanning the code or entering it at the point of sale. As retail becomes increasingly omnichannel, syncing promotions received via email with in-store point of sale will likely boost sales and consumer retention.

Sending solutions

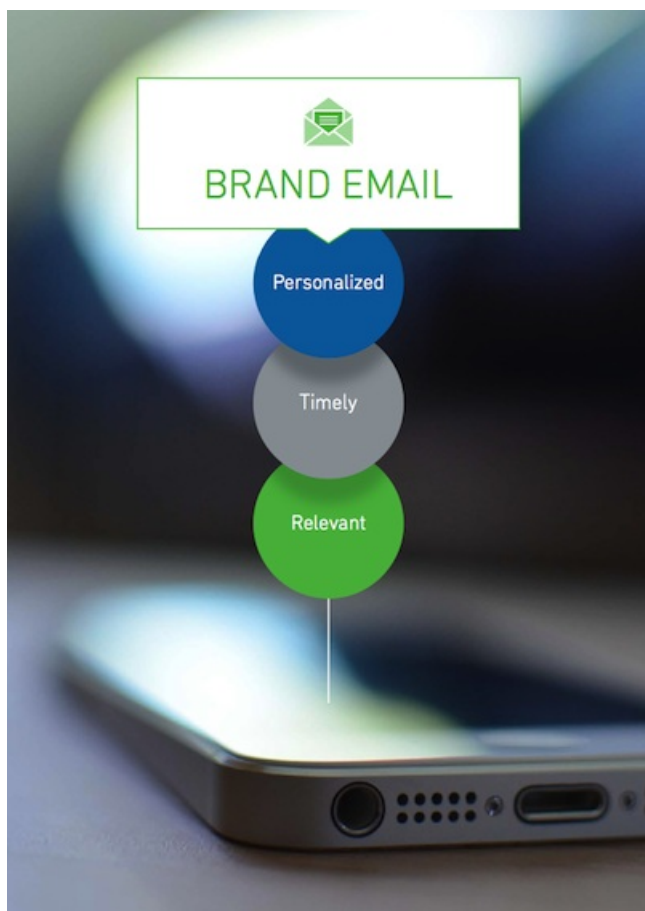
Within its report, Yesmail targeted the troubled areas retailers are currently facing and offered solutions and tips to strengthening the interactions between brand and consumer.

Firstly, for the 17 percent of retailers that have failed to collect emails, Yesmail suggests collecting addresses from all channels within a digital marketing program. For instance, while it may seem obvious, email addresses should be collected from Twitter, mobile apps and physical locations.

With email personalization and actualized relevance only brushing the surface of possibilities, retailers should incorporate the consumer data on hand to craft stronger email messages. Even for brands who are not yet able to do this to the full extent, minor personalization tweaks, even if it is just a subscriber's first name in a subject line, are better than nothing at all.

Yesmail acknowledges that email blast timing is challenging and many miscalculate the best times to send, with 56 percent relying on consumer behavior triggers such as purchase, Web browsing and email activities. For this, Yesmail suggests that retailers "think mobile-actionable as opposed to mobile-friendly," meaning a mobile approach to personalization can be beneficial to integration efforts.

The same strategy can be executed for email promotions, says Yesmail. Although 84 percent of retailers rely on email and 64 percent look to social media to share promotions with consumers, the promotional campaign must be reinforced across digital channels. For example, when a promotional email is sent, retailers should follow up with a reminder message shared as a tweet or via SMS.



Graphic provided by Yesmail

But, this does not mean share the same exact message across available channels. Rather, properly executed integration measures should complement the various layers shared to benefit consumer experience and enhance a retailer's overall digital program.

An important relationship to cultivate is the one between email campaigns and social media strategies. Fifty-four percent of retailers include social share buttons within emails and 48 percent encourage social media followers to sign up for emails. For this, retailers should invest in a tool to measure the effectiveness of cross-channel integration and attribute sales revenue and subscribers accordingly.

As mentioned previously, triggered email campaigns that are implemented upon sign up, reactivation, birthday or anniversary, demographics, purchase confirmation and abandoned cart, among others, are also just barely reaching

potential. To create better executed triggered email campaigns, Yesmail recommends a calendar system tracking deployment dates and requirements.

"Consumers are still extremely active and responsive to brands via email, because they are able to engage across different channels," Ms. Shtereva said. "According to [Yesmail's Q3 2015 Email Marketing Compass](#), mobile email open rates alone have increased to 53 percent and click rates are now at 46 percent.

"What's most important is that brands now have the opportunity to use social media content and connections to improve email marketing," she said. "However, 39 percent of brands do not integrate email with social media and two thirds of those currently use both channels, separately.

"Digital channels have the ability to work with each other. Beyond social media, SMS and mobile applications can combine efforts with social and email to work together in driving the success of a campaign."

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