

RETAIL

92pc of retailers send promotional emails, but many are irrelevant and impersonal

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Retailers can get a lot more out of email than they currently are with correct application

By DANNY PARISI

While some retailers are taking full advantage of email marketing, many are lacking basic tenets such as abandoned cart reminders.

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This data comes from Dotmailer, an email marketing firm, which released a report surveying email marketing tactics from a large number of retailers to determine what methods they were using and misusing. The data found that while many brands had the most basic email setups, far fewer were making full use of what a simple email can do.

"The number of brands who are still not doing the basics (abandoned cart reminders, etc.) is almost criminal," said Skip Fidura, client services director at [dotmailer](#), Croyden, U.K. "The business case is almost always there.

"For example, we work with a luxury fashion brand in the U.K. who is recovering 50 thousand pounds per month in unclaimed abandoned cart revenue alone – better email marketing can make an instant difference."

Email marketing

Email is not the sexiest of marketing channels. While much fuss is made over the latest ways of engaging audiences with native advertising, interactive ads and mobile targeting, there is still something to be said of a simple email.

Besides, email is far from extinct. Even with the rise of business chat apps such as Slack, email still forms a core part of modern digital communication. Brands can take advantage of the deeply engrained email culture by strengthening their email marketing tactics.

The world of email marketing is fairly unevenly divided. The top performers on email are far ahead of the rest.

The top 10

1	ASOS
2	Best Buy
= 3	Asda
= 3	easyJet
= 3	John Lewis
6	J.Crew
7	Holiday Extras
8	New Look
9	Overstock
10	Trainline

The top 10 brands at email marketing according to Dotmailer

This in part comes from the fact that so many retailers are doing the bare minimum when it comes to emailing their customers. Eighty-six percent of all retailers surveyed by Dotmailer send a welcome email to customers when they first sign up, but only 40 percent send an email when customers leave a full shopping cart abandoned when shopping online.

Similarly, 92 percent of brands send emails with offers and promotions in them, but many are irrelevant or are sent without regard to a customer's history or preferences.

The average retailer sends about four emails a week, but Dotmailer found that volume was not the deciding factor of email efficacy, but rather the relevance and level of personalization present in the emails sent.

"Every brand is trying to build relationships with their customer base," Mr. Fidura said. "They have to do that specific to where the customer is in the journey.

"The fundamental challenge is that there is a higher level of expectation with luxury brands. For example, in my own experience, I made a purchase with a very high end watch brand and I was very surprised and disappointed when I got my welcome email 18 mos. after the purchase - that looks very bad for the brand."

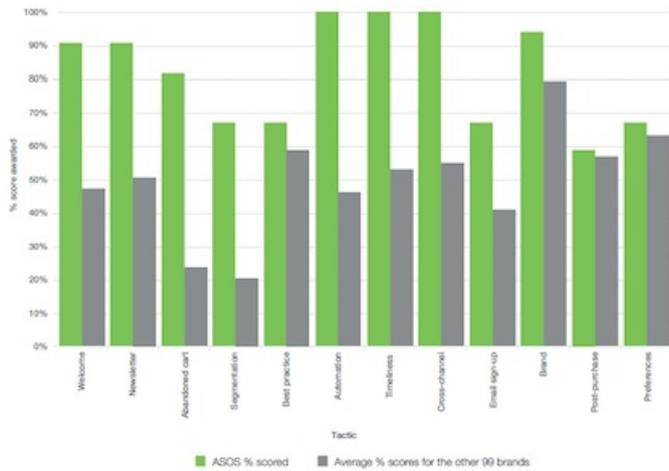
"The second challenge, which is driven by the nature of luxury brands, is that they will attract an aspirational audience. It's just as important to know how to engage with a customer who isn't looking to buy. Brands need to consider what content they are going to deliver now to keep their customers engaged for the future."

Efficiency

In terms of which brands are doing email marketing right, mid-range fashion retailer Asos actually came out on top, with a multi-part email system that addresses consumers by their specific demographics.

The retailer offers a three-part welcome email campaign when customers first sign up or make a purchase, including gender-specific messaging.

This is in contrast to other recent research, which found that some of the top-level fashion brands out there performed less than impressively at email marketing.



ASOS performed better than the average of other brands in every category

Nordstrom and LVMH-owned Sephora were among those of the top brands who are managing email marketing in a positive manner in a recent L2 report. However, Chanel, Este Lauder, Gucci and Michael Kors were among the laggards ([see story](#)).

Another often overlooked part of email marketing is making those emails pop. HTML has come a long way and modern emails can be just as interactive and animated as ads one might see on a mobile device.

These kinetic emails have an 18 percent higher click rate and a 10 percent higher open rate than standard email marketing messages ([see story](#)).

While brands are right to focus their marketing budgets on many modern marketing channels, email should not be overlooked when it is capable of providing an easy and effective connection with future customers.

"There isn't a brand anywhere in the world that has enough marketing resources," Mr. Fidura said. "But the brands that did well in our report are the ones who are able to take what they do have and do it just a little better.

"If you wait until everything is perfect, you'll never get there. You just have to be a bit more clever in your sector to make a huge impact on your bottom line."