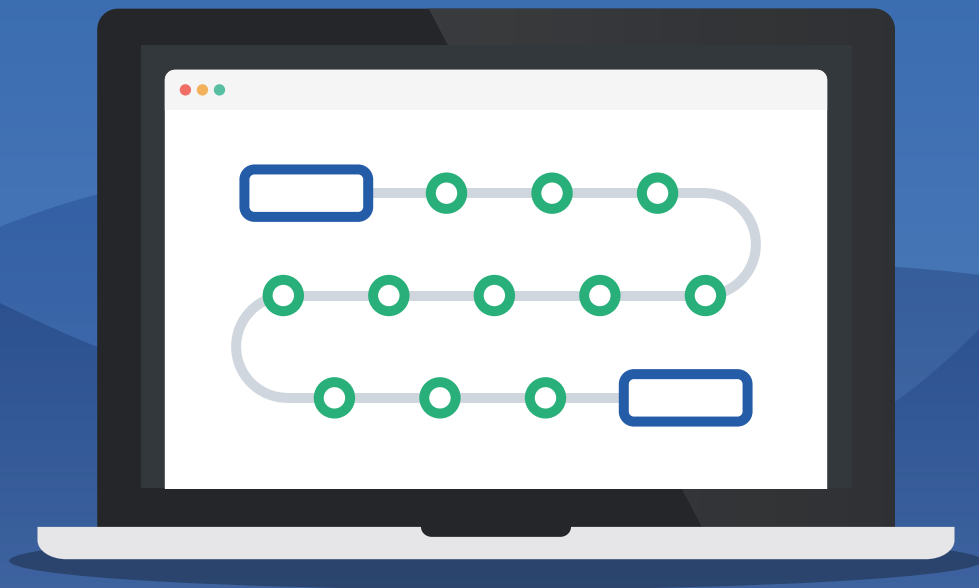# 2019 State of Email Workflows

A comprehensive look at how email marketers get email campaigns out the door, from pre-send planning to cross-channel integration

litmus

Email is your most effective and measurable channel—so long as you set it up for success through every phase of the production process.

Creating a high-performing email takes time and resources—and your workflow can make or break your team's productivity and campaign quality. A watertight email process keeps projects moving quickly, helps keep stakeholders in the loop, and ensures high-quality output. A broken process, on the other hand, can be damaging to your program and your team.

But what does the ideal email workflow look like?

In our fourth annual State of Email Workflows report, we take a detailed look at how marketers plan campaigns, handle crucial pre-send processes—including email design, coding, testing, and approvals—analyze campaigns post-send, and ultimately use the insights gained to strengthen other marketing channels.

Use the results to benchmark your own process and identify opportunities for improvement, as well as leverage this report's findings as evidence to make a compelling argument for more resources or process changes at your company.

All of this is made possible by the 3,000+ marketers who generously took the time to take our 2019 State of Email Survey and share their insights with the industry.

Use the Power of Litmus in Every Step of Your Workflow

Streamline email production, improve campaign effectiveness, and share valuable insights with the new, redesigned Litmus.

See what's new →

Table of Contents

Who Is Litmus?

Litmus is passionate about email marketing research, because our mission is to help brands get access to the knowledge and tools they need to send better email. Through our industry-leading blog, Litmus Live conferences, ebooks, webinars, Delivering Podcast, Community, and more, we discuss best practices and explore trends to help your team stay on the forefront of the industry.

We are also passionate about software that makes creating high-performing email easy. Marketers use the Litmus Platform alongside their existing email service providers to ensure a consistently great brand experience for every subscriber, work more efficiently, accelerate campaign performance, reduce errors, and stay out of the spam folder.

Email marketing is complex. But through hands-on advice and software you can trust, we enable your team to do their best work—creating innovative, on-brand campaigns that engage and delight audiences. With the Litmus Platform, you'll have the tools and insights you need to provide your customers with an incredible email experience—and get the best results in return.
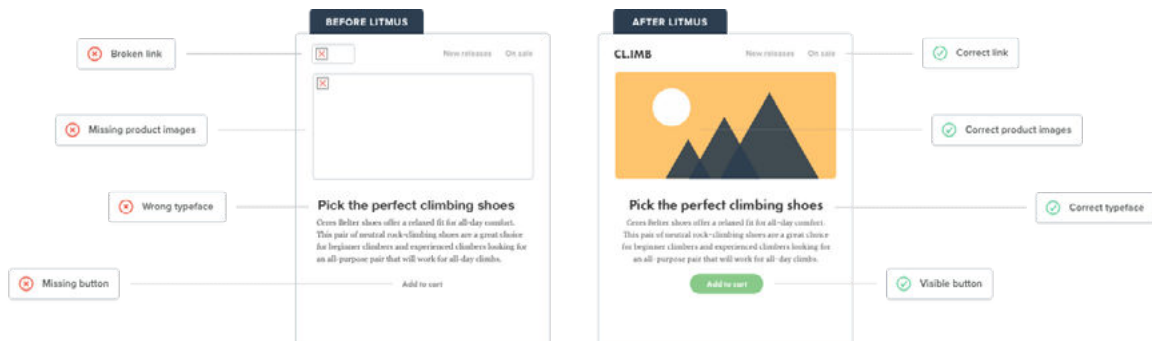
Keep Up with the Latest in Email

Join over 300,000 email marketing pros who rely on Litmus for expert advice and analysis. Sign up for our emails to get the Litmus newsletter, notifications of new reports and executive summaries, announcements of upcoming webinars and events, and more.

Subscribe to Litmus emails →
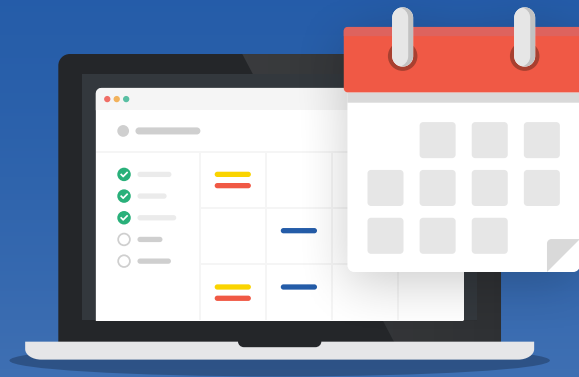
1 Production Cycles and Time Allocation

Nearly every email marketer has been asked if they can "just send out another email." But it's *rarely* that simple.

Every step of the email production process—depending on company size, team size, and many other factors—takes time. 53% of brands take 2 weeks or more to produce an email. If you work on a bigger team, the average production time is even longer.

53% of brands take 2 weeks or more to produce an email.

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And do you know what part of the email workflow is taking the longest? It's not copywriting. Do you think it's design or email coding? You'd be wrong. Read on to learn what step of the process is the biggest time drain.

The Bigger the Team, the More Emails Are in Production at Any Given Time

At any given time, how many emails do you have in production—that is, at any point between conception and being sent?

👥 **2,148 respondents**
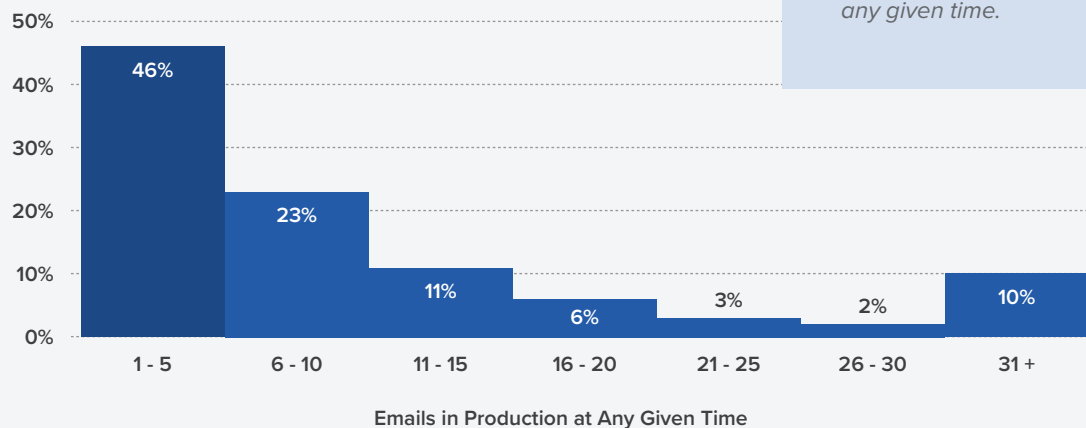
Smaller email teams (1-3 full-time employees) typically have between 1 and 5 emails in production, while larger teams with 11 or more email employees have between 21-25 emails in production at any given time.

Emails in Production at Any Given Time

	46%	23%	11%	6%	3%	2%	10%
	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 30	31 +

53% of Brands Spend Weeks Producing an Email

How long is your company's production cycle for a single email—from the time brainstorming or concepting begins until it is sent?

👥 **2,170 respondents**
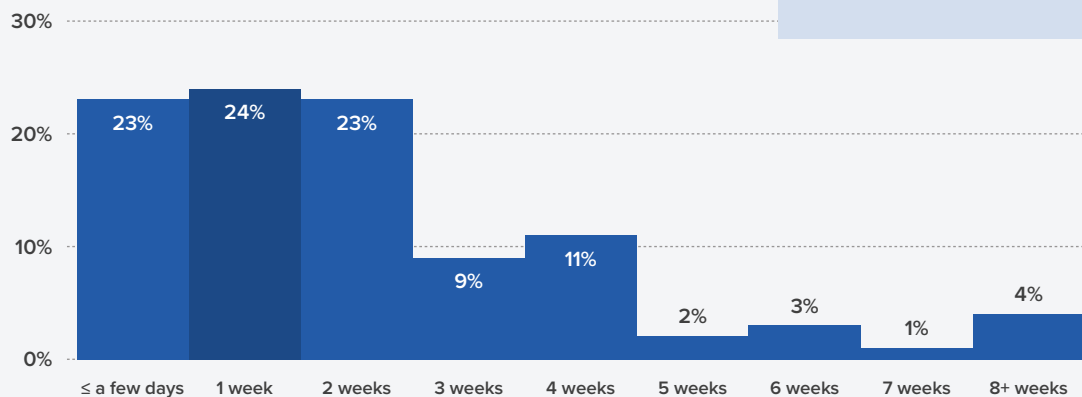
The bigger the team is, the longer the production cycle. 20% of large teams (that's teams of 11 email employees or more) need more than a month to produce a single email.

23%	24%	23%	9%	11%	2%	3%	1%	4%
≤ a few days	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks	7 weeks	8+ weeks

Design, Coding, and Review Demand the Most Time

For each email that your company sends, how long is typically spent on each of the following tasks?

Larger teams spend 2+ more hours on every facet of email production than small or medium-sized teams.

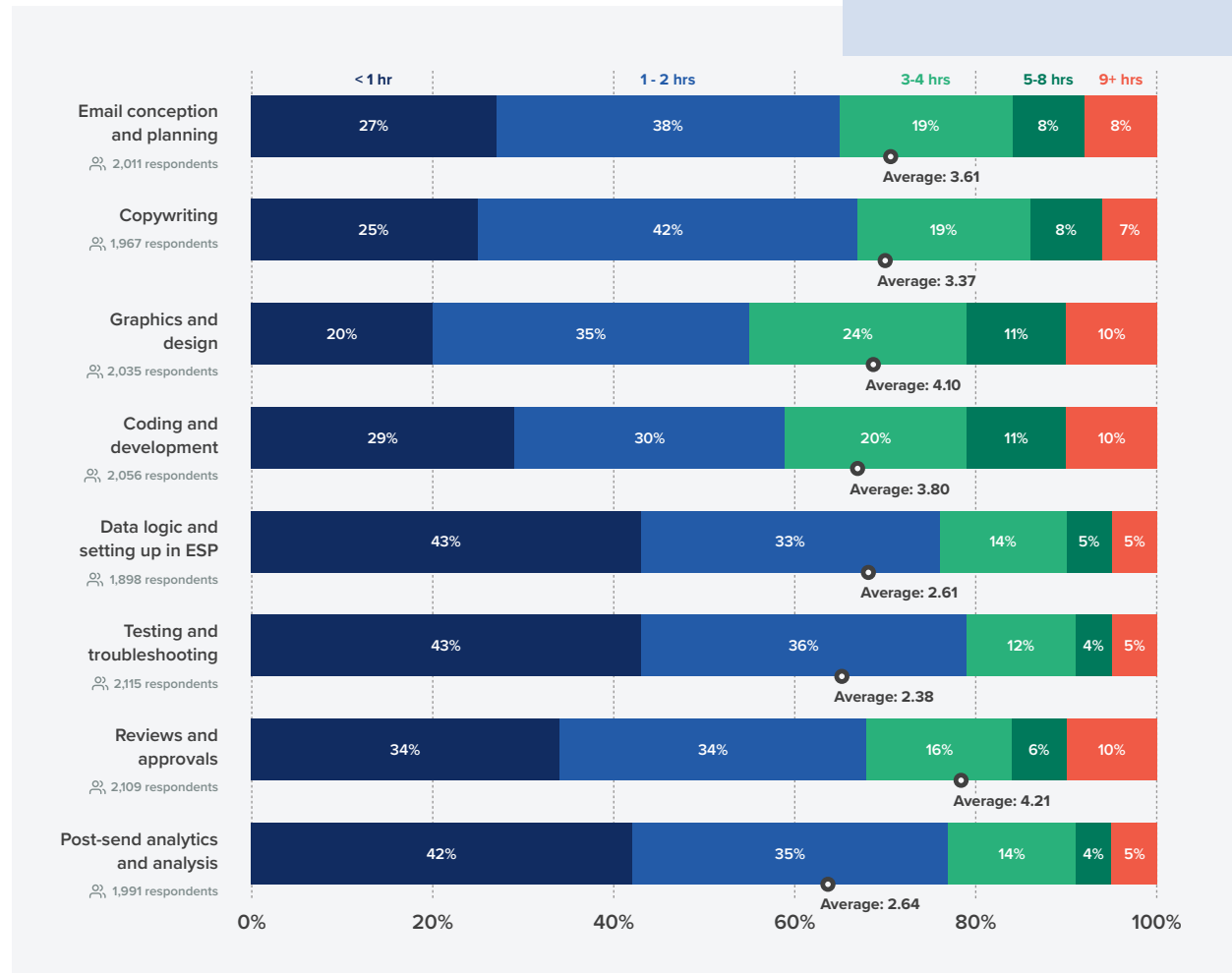|	< 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3-4 hrs	5-8 hrs	9+ hrs
Email conception and planning 2,011 respondents	27%	38%	19%	8%	8%
			Average: 3.61		
Copywriting 1,967 respondents	25%	42%	19%	8%	7%
			Average: 3.37		
Graphics and design 2,035 respondents	20%	35%	24%	11%	10%
			Average: 4.10		
Coding and development 2,056 respondents	29%	30%	20%	11%	10%
			Average: 3.80		
Data logic and setting up in ESP 1,898 respondents	43%	33%	14%	5%	5%
			Average: 2.61		
Testing and troubleshooting 2,115 respondents	43%	36%	12%	4%	5%
			Average: 2.38		
Reviews and approvals 2,109 respondents	34%	34%	16%	6%	10%
			Average: 4.21		
Post-send analytics and analysis 1,991 respondents	42%	35%	14%	4%	5%
			Average: 2.64		

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Put the numbers into action:

How does the time your team spends on each step of the email workflow compare to the global averages? If you're spending significantly more time on any step of the process, there's likely room for improvement. When looking at ways to speed up email production, start with the steps that eat up the most time for your team.
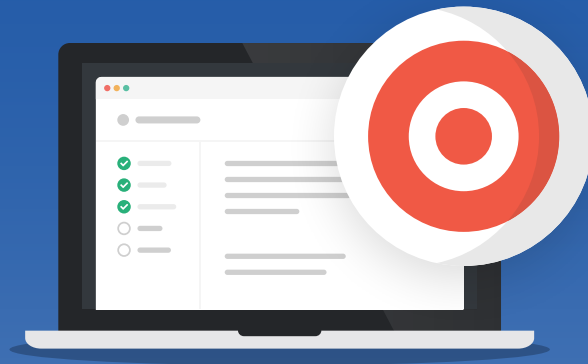
2   Pre-Send Preparation

Every year, it's getting increasingly more difficult for a brand to be heard through the sea of ads and messages. What's going to make you stand out from the hundreds of emails in your subscribers' inboxes? If you want your email campaigns to drive action, you must send campaigns that are targeted and effective. And to do that at scale, you need a bulletproof pre-send process.

From content planning to copywriting, design, coding, approvals, and more, getting an email ready to send involves a multitude of steps, tools, and stakeholders. A watertight pre-send email process keeps projects moving quickly, helps keep stakeholders in the loop, and ensures high-quality output. A broken process, on the other hand, can be damaging to your program—and your team's morale.

It's important to set up a watertight pre-send email process in order to create email campaigns that drive action. Without one, you risk damaging your brand.

Tweet this →

So how do your peers handle the pre-send email workflow and what tools do they use to get it done? Read on to get the answers.

Content Planning

Email content planning continues to become more rigorous. More brands than ever are using a content calendar year-round, which is great because planning begets success. But when it comes to how far ahead brands are planning—and what tools they use to do so—there's a wide spread. Where does your brand fit in?

Majority of Marketers Maintain an Email Content Calendar Year-Round

Does your company use an email marketing content calendar year-round or only for peak seasons?

	2018	2019
No, we plan and send emails ad hoc as needed.	27%	24%
Yes, but only for peak season(s).	17%	18%
Yes, year-round.	56%	58%

2018 — 2,345 respondents

2019 — 2,258 respondents
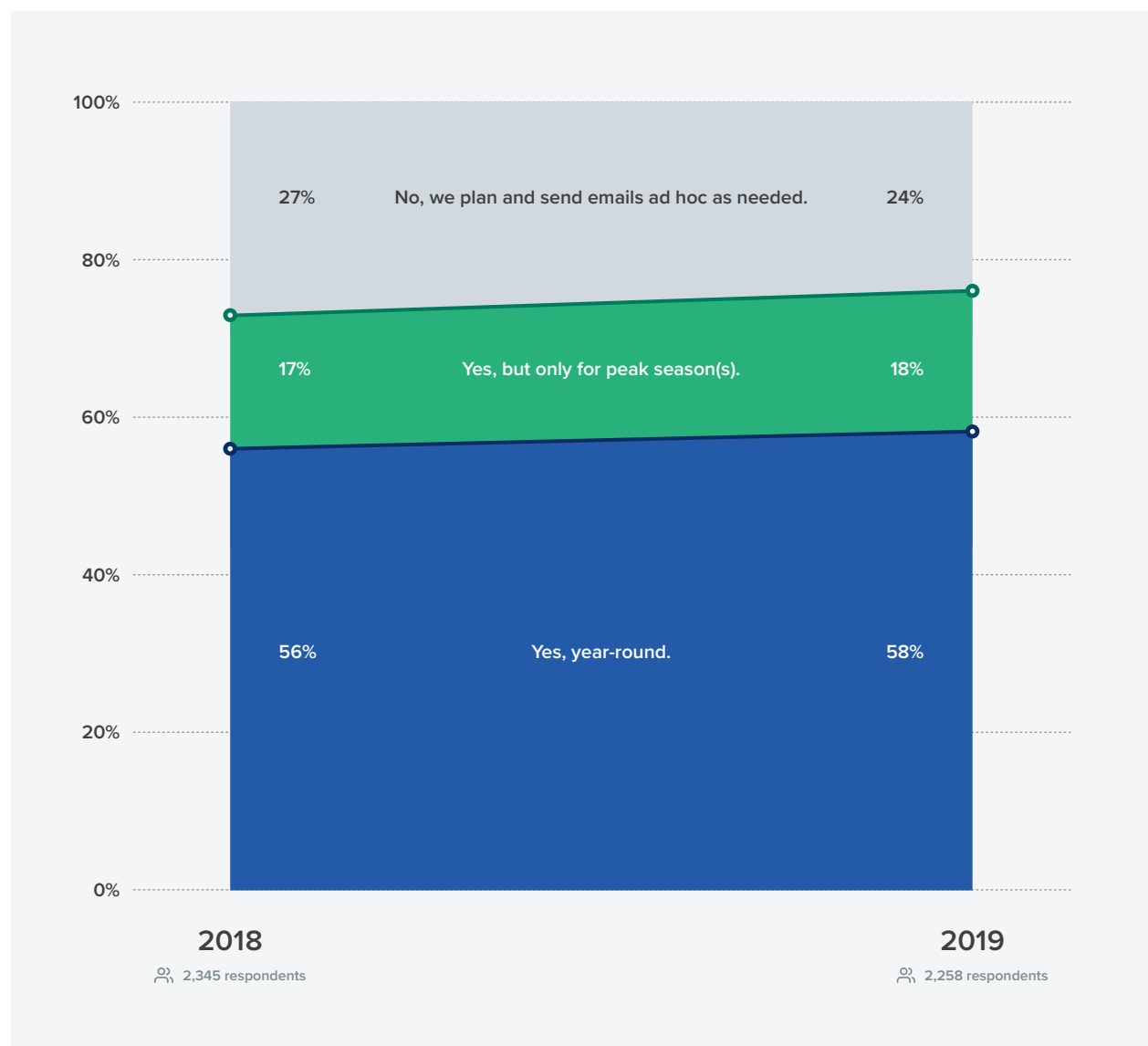
Majority of Marketers Use Google and Microsoft Office Tools for Email Content Planning

What software does your company use for email content planning? (Those used by 2%+ shown.)

👥 **1,668** respondents

Tool	Percentage
Google Docs, Calendar, Drive, etc.	60%
Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, etc.	50%
Slack	22%
Jira	17%
Trello	16%
Asana	13%
Basecamp	9%
Confluence	9%
SharePoint	8%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	6%
Smartsheet	5%
Workfront	5%
Wrike	4%
The one provided by our ESP	3%
Paper-based system	3%
Airtable	3%
Apple iCal, etc.	2%
Teamwork	2%
Other	7%
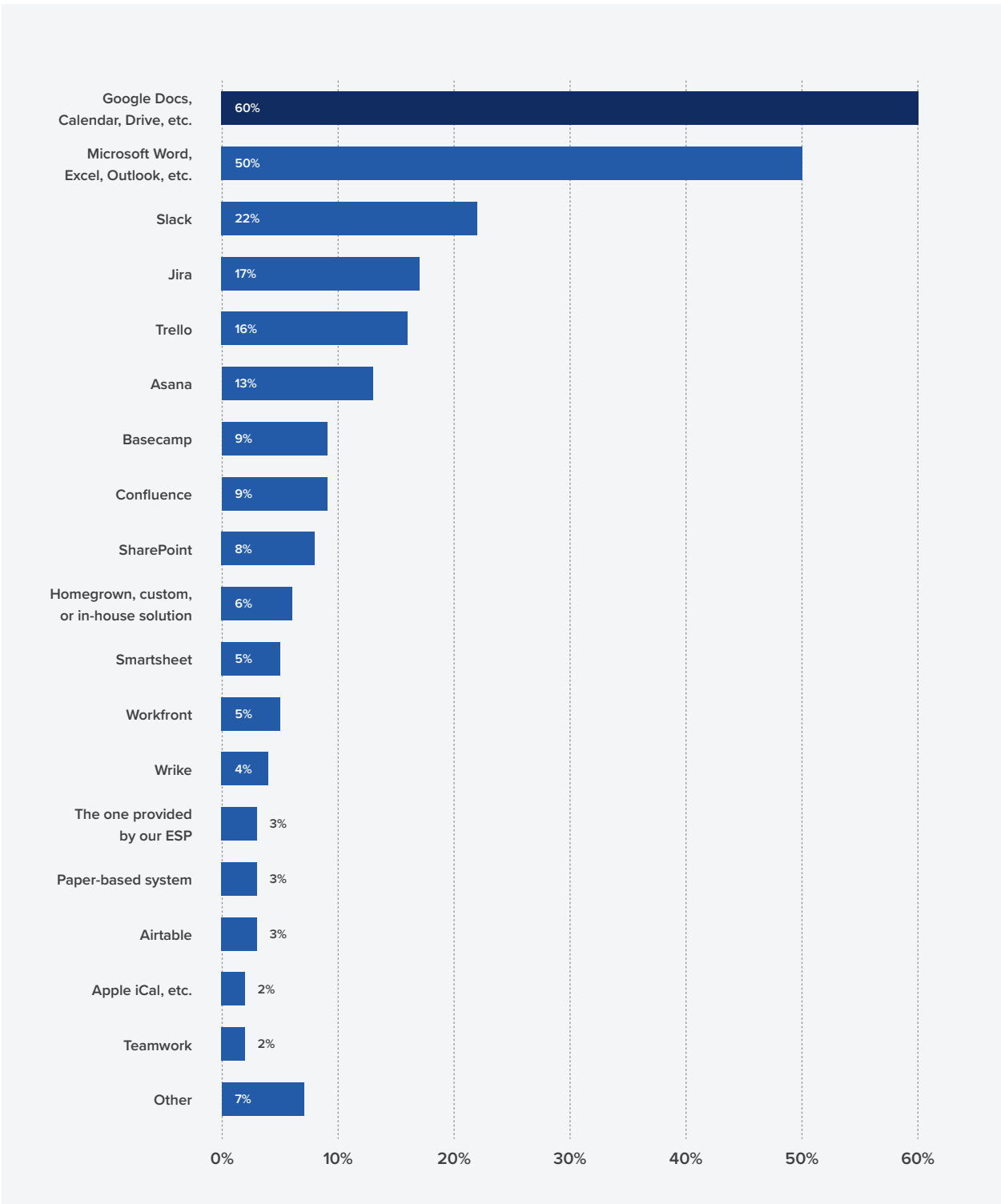
Majority of Marketers Plan Content Less Than 2 Months in Advance

How far in advance does your company typically plan email content for your peak and off-peak season(s)?

Peak season(s)? 1,626 respondents
Off-peak season(s)? 1,504 respondents
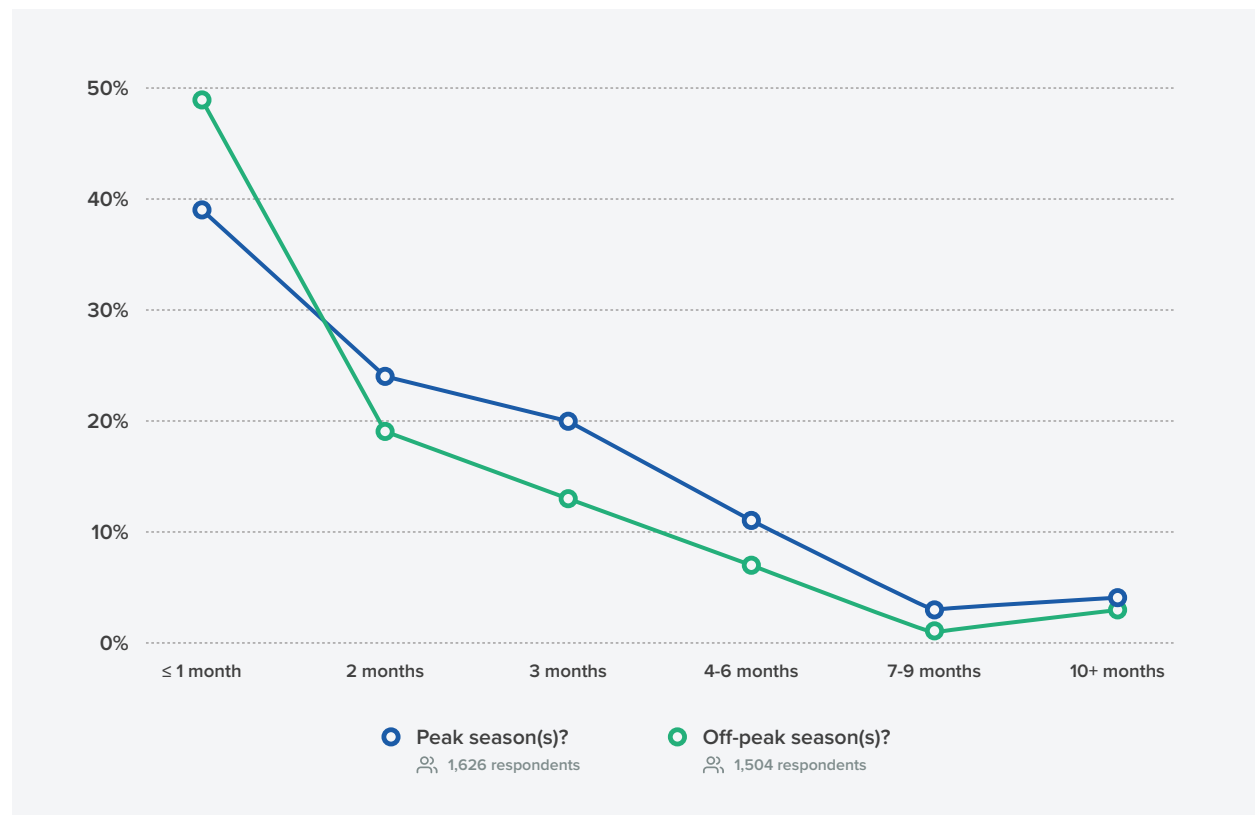
Put the numbers into action:

So, does your team need a content calendar? We think it does. Every team—no matter what size or email program complexity—benefits from a single point of truth that allows all stakeholders to see what campaigns are coming up. Campaign calendars help all team members plan their time more effectively and make it easier to align email campaigns with other marketing channels. How detailed and advanced your content planning has to be heavily depends on your team's unique setup, though. Is your team small and do projects change quickly? A simple spreadsheet that looks at the next 2-4 weeks might be just enough to keep your team in sync. Larger teams that juggle multiple complex campaigns might benefit from more advanced content planning and project management software.

Majority of Marketers Use Email Briefs at Least Sometimes

Does your company create a brief for any of the emails you produce that outlines the email's goals, audience, messaging, key performance indicators, etc.?

	2018	2019
No.	45%	34%
Yes, for some of the emails we produce.	36%	41%
Yes, for every email we produce.	20%	24%

2018
2,422 respondents

2019
2,299 respondents
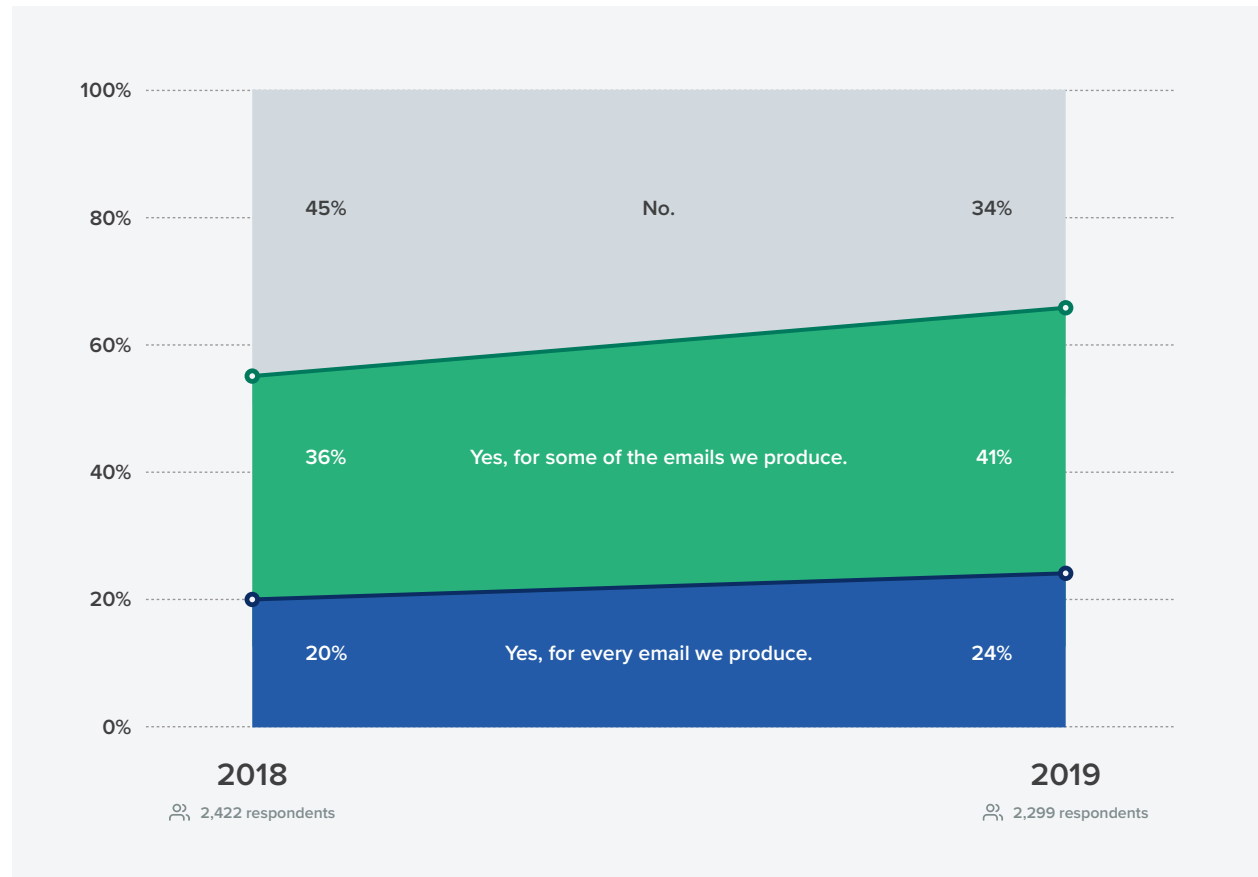
Put the numbers into action:

More marketers than ever utilize email briefs, and there's a good reason for it. Creating email briefs that outline the goal, messaging, timing, key performance indicators, and other important details ensures that all stakeholders agree on the purpose and action plan for the email. That keeps team members on track and helps improve email quality overall. If you're not utilizing email briefs, you should start doing so—at least for your larger campaigns. Here are our tips on what to include in a great email brief.

A/B Testing

A/B testing—that's presenting different versions of the same email to two subscriber groups—is one of the most powerful opportunities for email marketers to iterate on and improve their campaigns. But, according to our research, a surprising amount of brands don't take advantage of the power of A/B testing. 37% say they never test their broadcast and segmented emails—and when looking at triggered and transactional email, that share is even higher.

30% of Brands Add A/B Tests to at Least Half of Their Broadcast and Segmented Emails

What portion of your company's broadcast and segmented emails typically include an A/B test?

	2018	2019
They rarely or never include an A/B test.	38%	37%
25% of them include an A/B test.	31%	33%
50% of them include an A/B test.	15%	16%
75% of them include an A/B test.	10%	9%
Every one of them includes an A/B test.	6%	5%

2018 — 1,916 respondents

2019 — 1,866 respondents
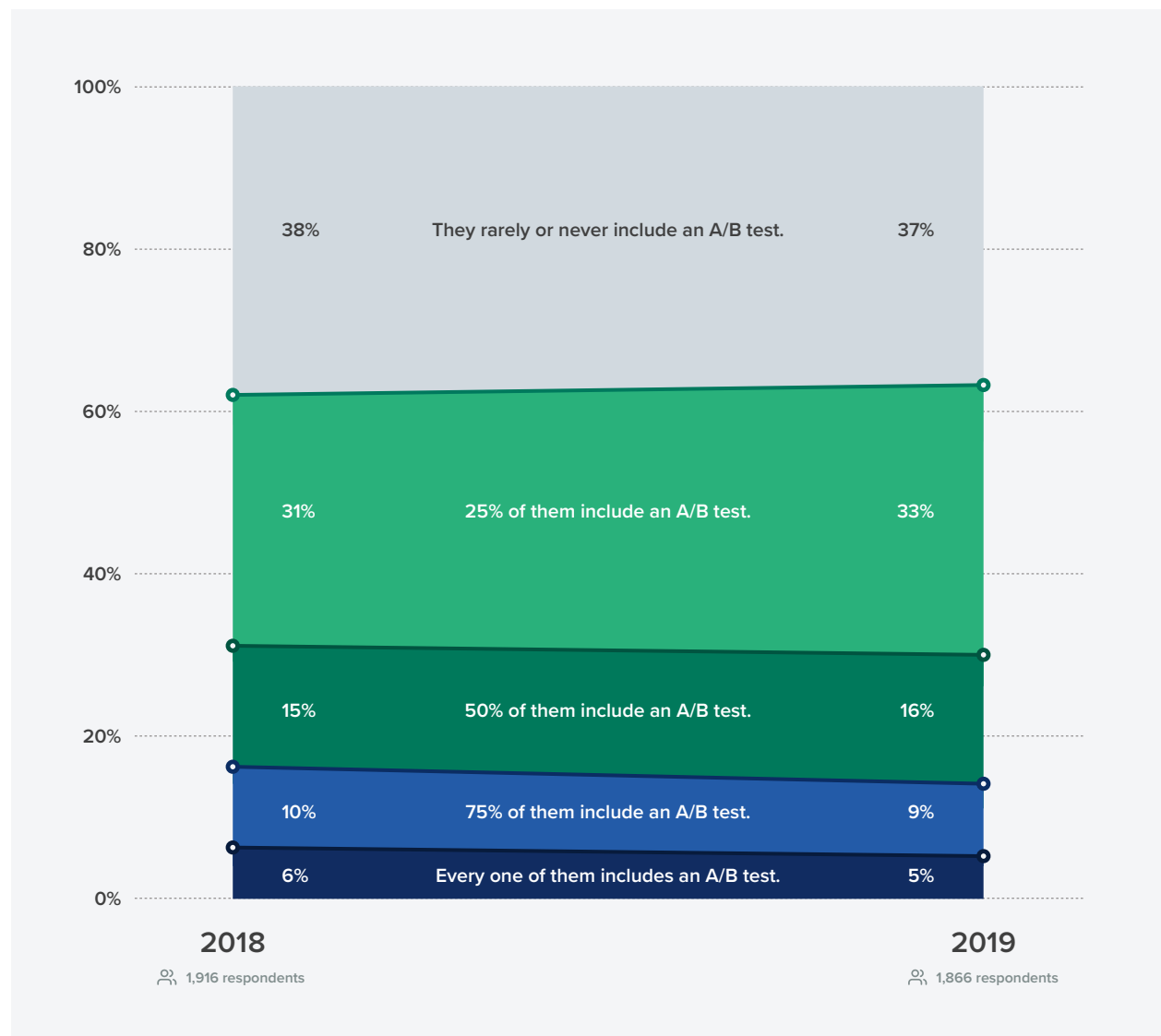
A/B Testing Remains Rare in Triggered and Transactional Emails

How often does your company typically include an A/B test in its transactional emails or triggered or automatic emails?

	Triggered or automatic emails?	Transactional emails?
Once a month or more often	15%	9%
Once every 3 months	12%	8%
Once every 6 months	11%	8%
Once a year	8%	6%
Rarely or never	41%	50%

Triggered or automatic emails? 1,970 respondents
Transactional emails? 1,952 respondents
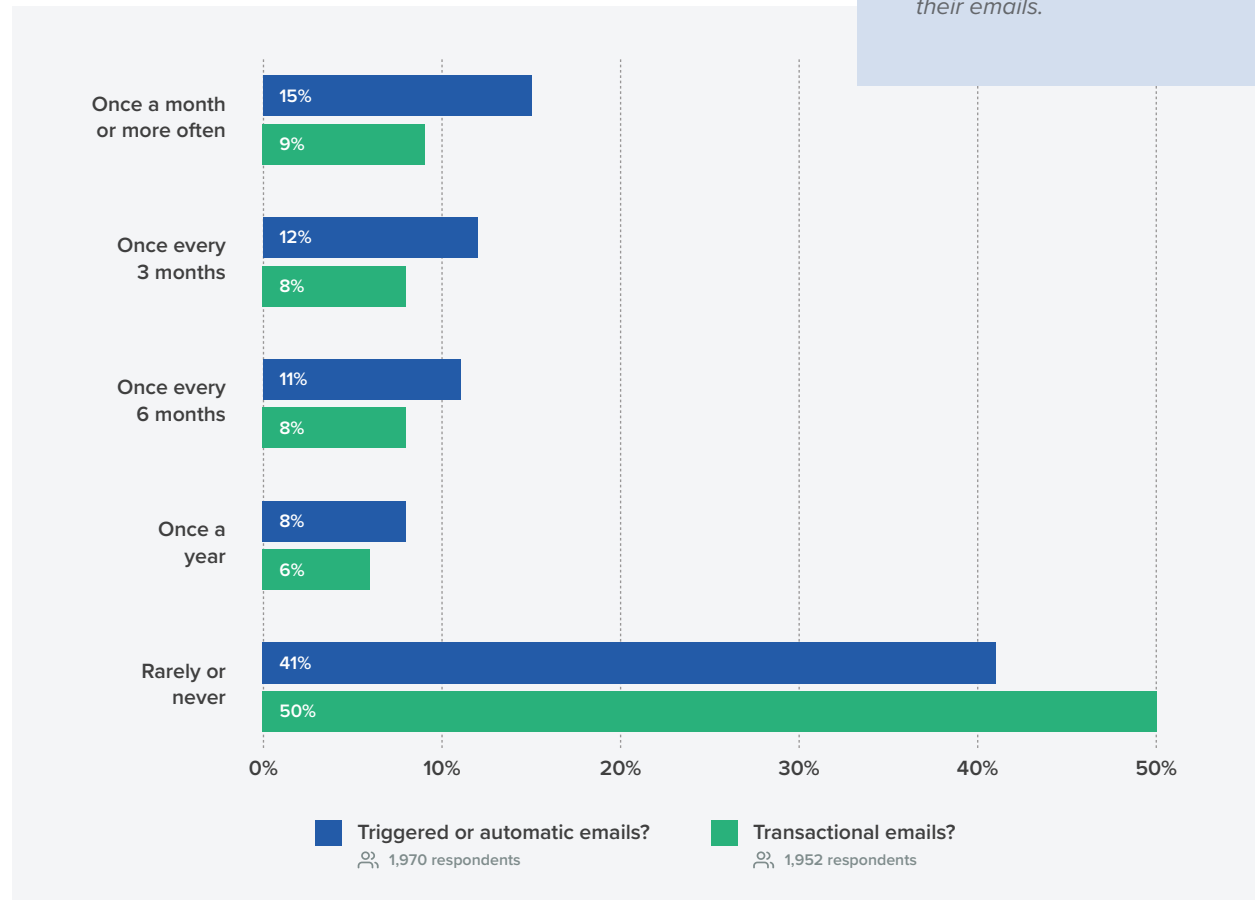
Put the numbers into action:

To build a best-in-class email program, you need to constantly improve—and there's no better way to learn fast than A/B testing and experimentation. Provide your team with the time and resources they need to at least A/B test your most crucial campaigns. Sometimes, small changes can move the needle. If you're new to A/B testing, ensure your experiments are set up to deliver reliable results and avoid making these A/B testing mistakes.

Email Design

Email design is easy, right? When it comes down to it, email is just HTML and CSS, kind of like writing a web page. Well, that's not *really* all there is to it. In reality, HTML and CSS is just the beginning when it comes to email design. So much of email design is about mitigating risk. It's about understanding each of these email clients and related quirks, coding emails defensively, and setting and maintaining design guidelines to ensure a consistent subscriber experience. But email design is *also* about pushing boundaries.

Brand & Design Guideline Use on the Rise

Does your company have brand or design guidelines for your emails?

	2018	2019
No.	38%	34%
Yes.	62%	66%

2018 — 1,981 respondents
2019 — 1,889 respondents

Put the numbers into action:

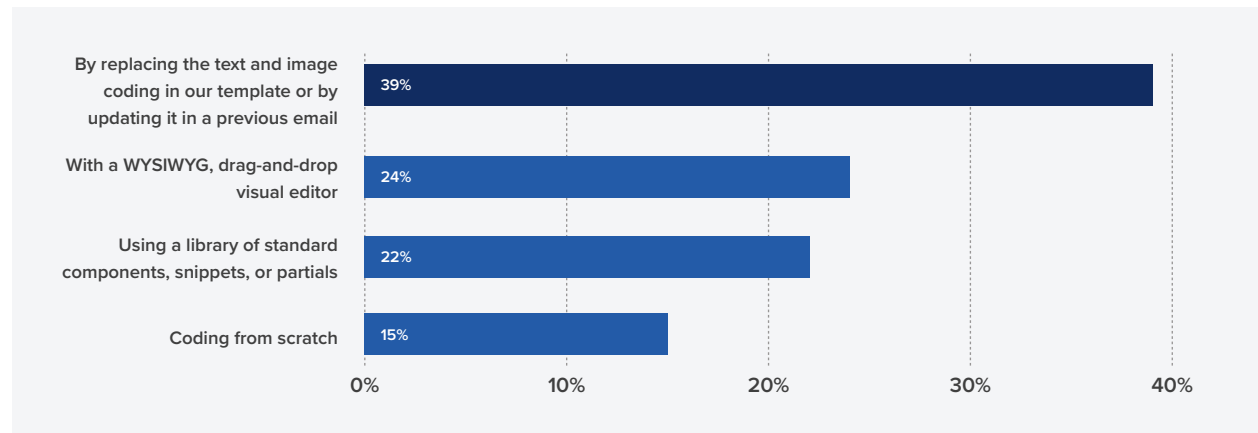The use of brand and design guidelines for email is on the rise. Having email brand guidelines makes creating emails easier and faster, and ensures a more consistent subscriber experience across campaigns. If your brand doesn't have email design guidelines, make this a priority for your team. Our overview on "Why You Need Email Brand Guidelines and What to Put in Them" will help you get started.

Most Marketers Edit Existing Templates or Build Emails in WYSIWYG Editors

How does your company currently build its marketing emails?

👥 **2,160 respondents**

Category	Percentage
By replacing the text and image coding in our template or by updating it in a previous email	39%
With a WYSIWYG, drag-and-drop visual editor	24%
Using a library of standard components, snippets, or partials	22%
Coding from scratch	15%

Adobe Products Continue to Dominate Design Programs Used for Email

Which design program(s) does your company use for email marketing? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 **2,048 respondents**

Program	Percentage
Adobe Photoshop	86%
Adobe Illustrator	47%
Adobe InDesign	28%
Sketch	17%
The one provided by our email service provider	9%
Canva	8%
Design in browser	5%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	5%
Adobe XD	5%
Adobe Fireworks	3%
GIMP	3%
Pixlr	2%
Affinity Photo	1%
Other	3%
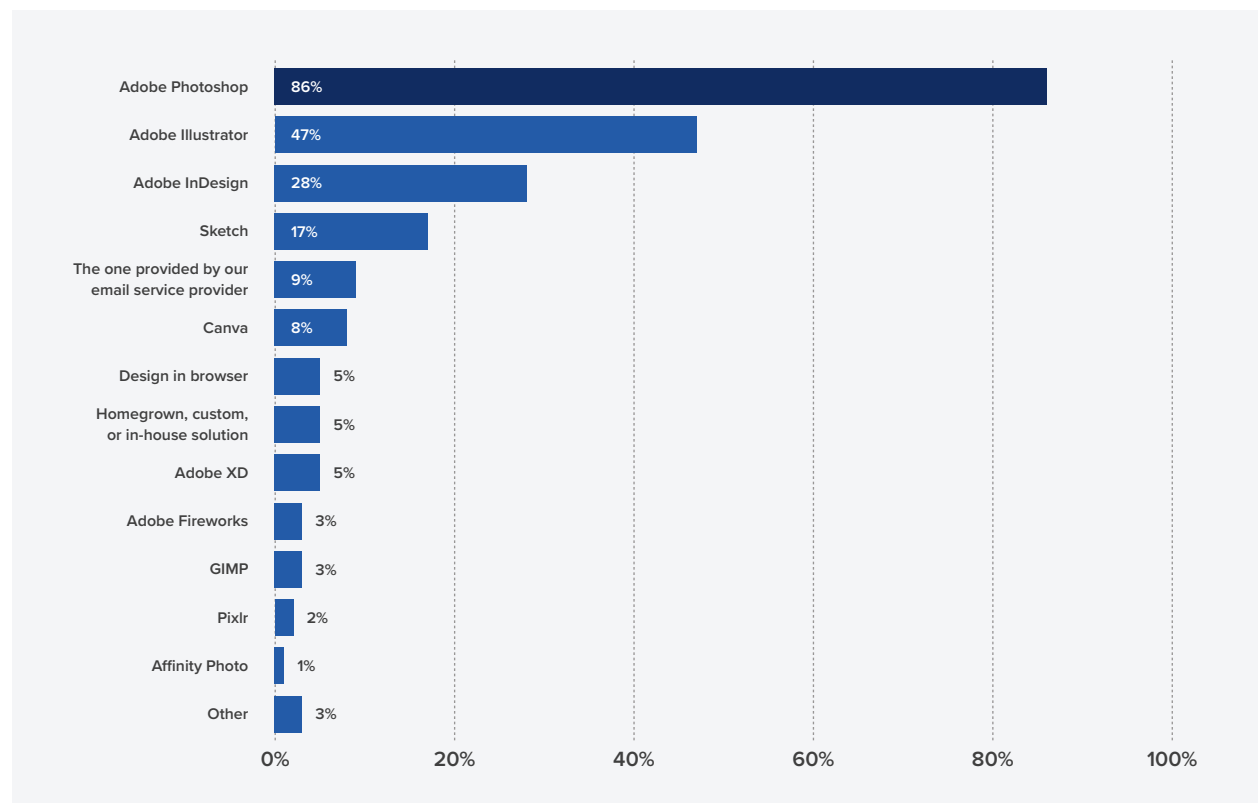
Majority of Marketers Use a Responsive Approach to Email Design

What is your company's approach to email design for segmented, automated, and transactional emails?

9%
23%
68%
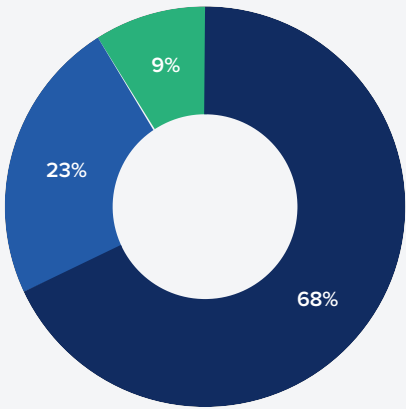
Broadcast and segmented emails?
👥 **1,935 respondents**

● Responsive, adaptive, or hybrid design
● Mobile-aware, mobile-first, or scalable design
● Desktop-centric design

Automated and triggered emails?
👥 **1,806 respondents**

● Responsive, adaptive, or hybrid design
● Mobile-aware, mobile-first, or scalable design
● Desktop-centric design

10%
24%
66%

17%
23%
60%

Transactional emails?
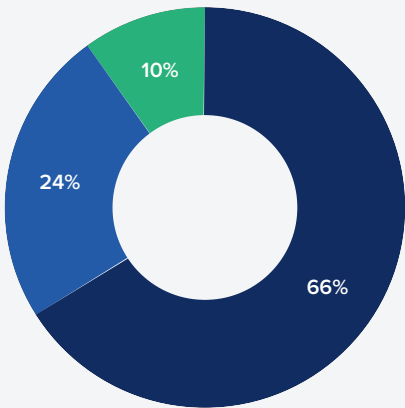👥 **1,653 respondents**

● Responsive, adaptive, or hybrid design
● Mobile-aware, mobile-first, or scalable design
● Desktop-centric design
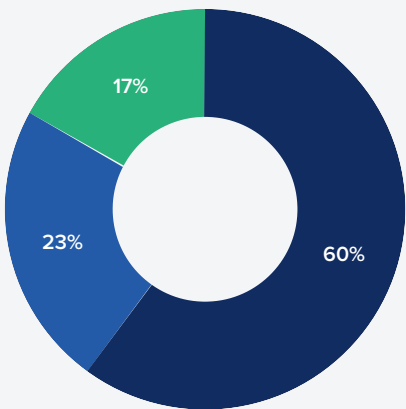
Email Design Reviews and Redesigns

The email world is constantly changing, and your brand, product, and content are too. Regular reviews—and if necessary, redesigns—are crucial to ensure your emails are up-to-date and align with constantly evolving subscriber needs. How often do your emails get a refresh?

Most Marketers Redesign Email Templates At Least Every Two Years

How often does your company do a major email template redesign?

👥 **1,439 respondents**

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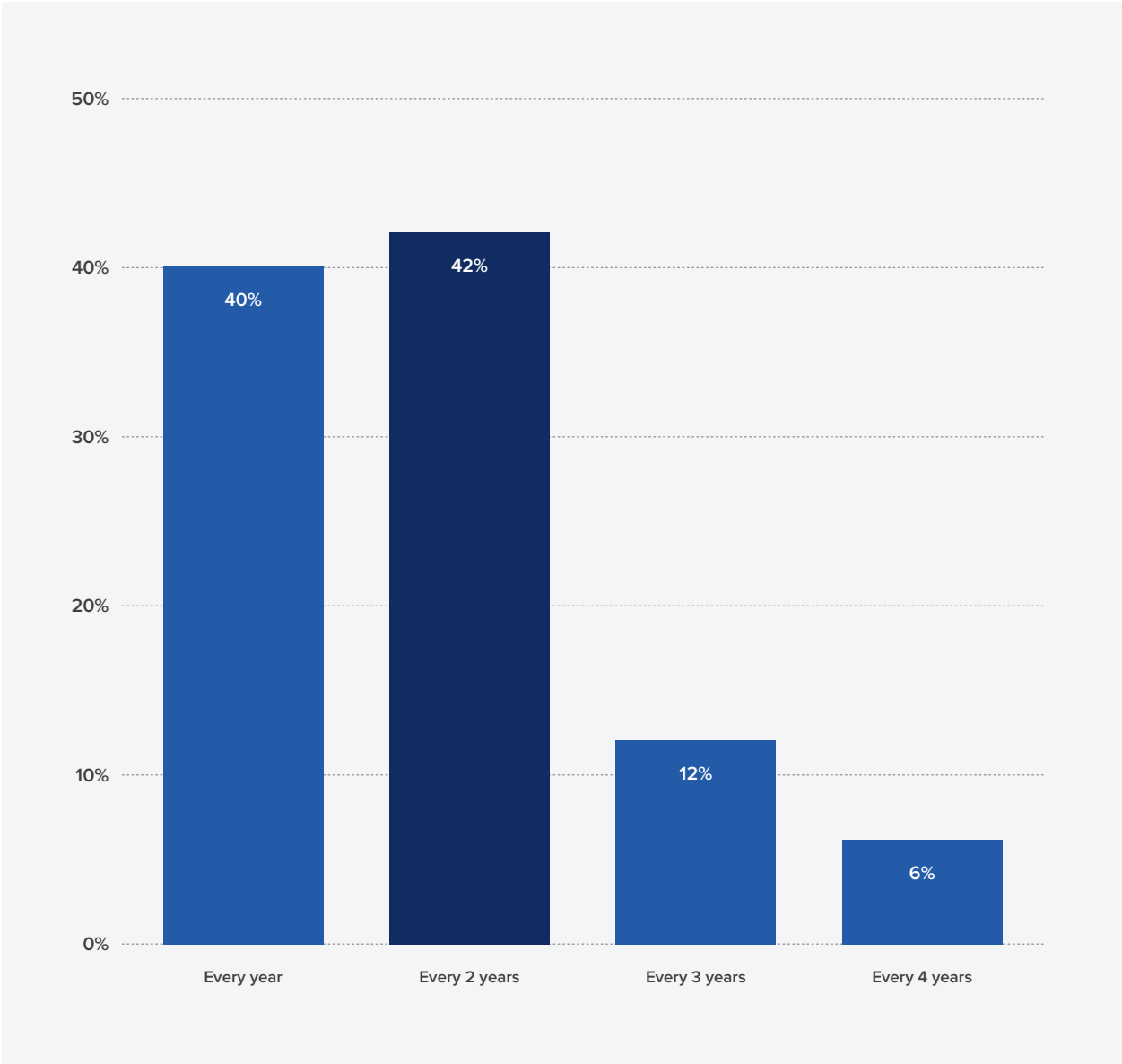
Automated Emails Reviewed At Least Annually by Most Email Marketers

How often do you review the design and messaging of transactional and automated emails?

👥 **1,377 respondents**
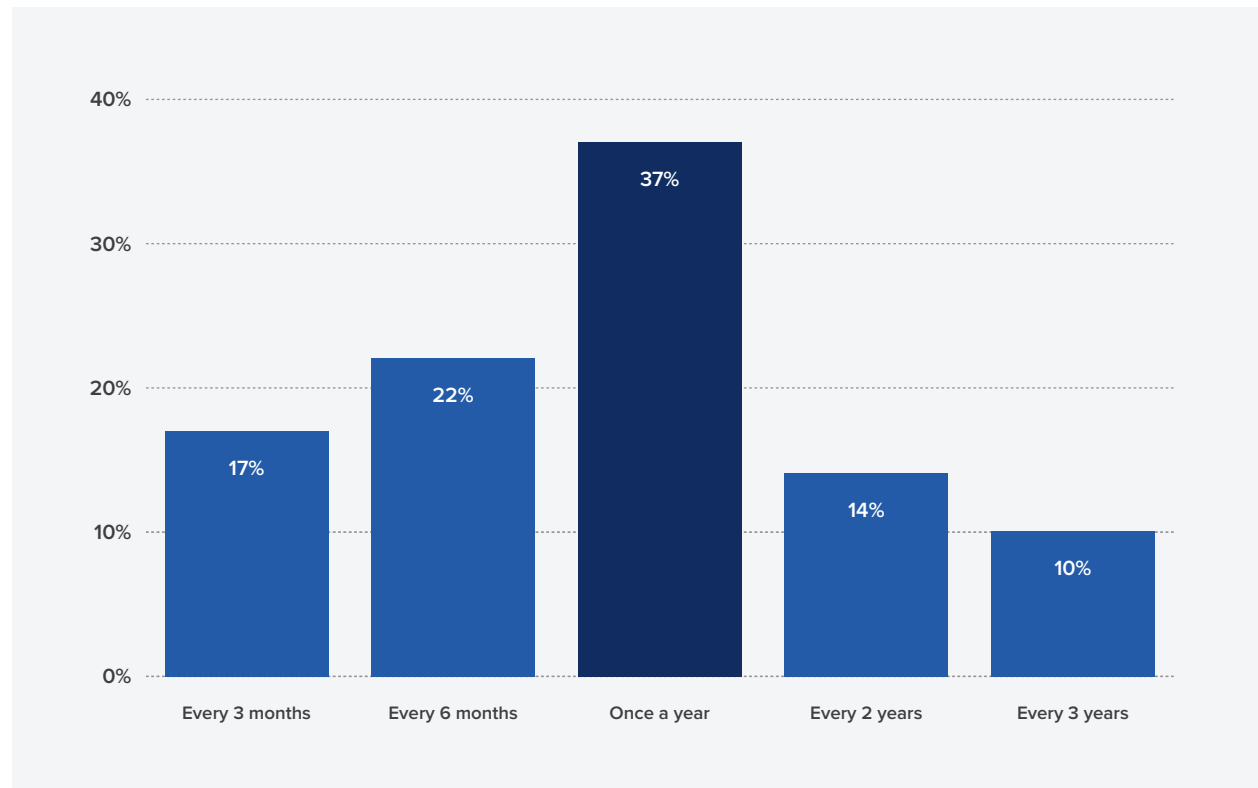
Put the numbers into action:

The majority of email marketers only review their automated emails once a year or even less frequently. That's a dangerous approach. Email clients change support for HTML without notice, so an email that looked great yesterday might be broken today. Spam filters change their algorithms constantly, and an email that always made it to the inbox can suddenly be marked as spam and never get seen. That's why no email should go without a solid review for more than three months. Renewal notices, cart abandonment emails, and other emails that are proven to drive the highest returns should be reviewed even more frequently. The risk of delivering a sub-par experience to your subscribers and negatively impacting business results is simply too high.

Email Coding

Extremes continue to dominate email development. Some tools and techniques see wide usage, while others are rarely used outside of their niche. As in past years, Adobe Dreamweaver continues to be central for editing—but inlining CSS by hand continues to drop as more tools are introduced. Plus, with the growing importance of email accessibility, it's more important than ever to optimize our emails' code so *every* subscriber can enjoy them.

Nearly Half of Email Marketers Use Adobe Dreamweaver for Email Development

Which editor(s) does your company use for email development? (Those used by 2%+ shown.)

👥 **1,882 respondents**

Editor	Percentage
Adobe Dreamweaver (CC or CS)	48%
Litmus Builder	26%
Sublime Text	24%
The one provided by our email service provider	24%
Notepad, Text Wrangler, TextMate, or other text editor	16%
Brackets	10%
Atom	9%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	7%
Microsoft VisualStudio	6%
Email on Acid	5%
Coda	3%
Movable Ink	2%
Other	9%
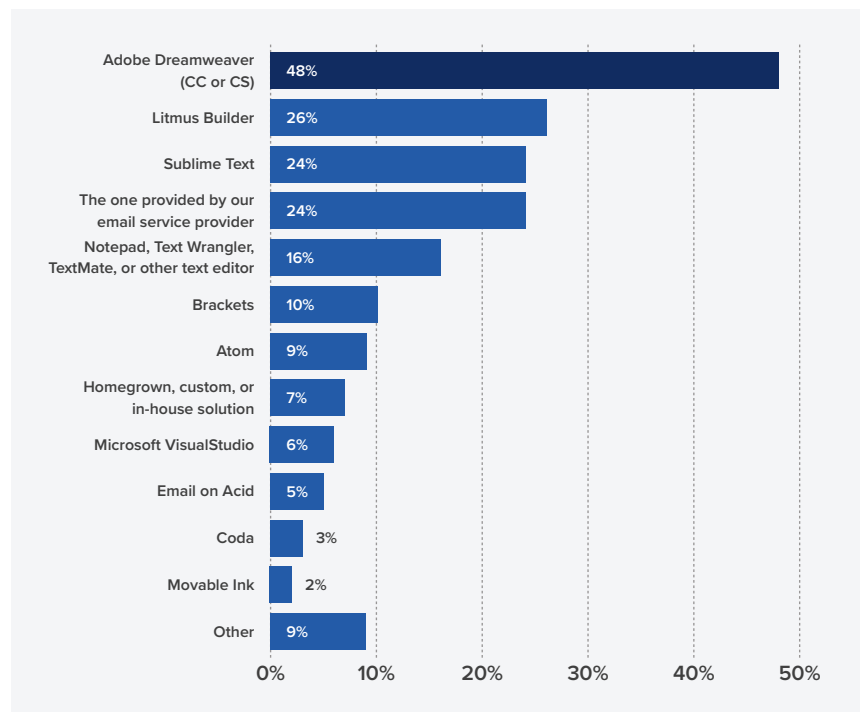
Build Better Emails Faster with Litmus Builder

Built by email professionals for email professionals, Litmus Builder is the leading code editor to help you streamline your email design and development workflow.

Learn more →

Partials Usage Continues to Increase

Does your company use partials for email development?

	2018		2019
	100%		
	80%		
78%		No.	57%
	60%		
	40%		
22%	20%	Yes.	43%
	0%		
	2018		**2019**
	1,377 respondents		1,875 respondents
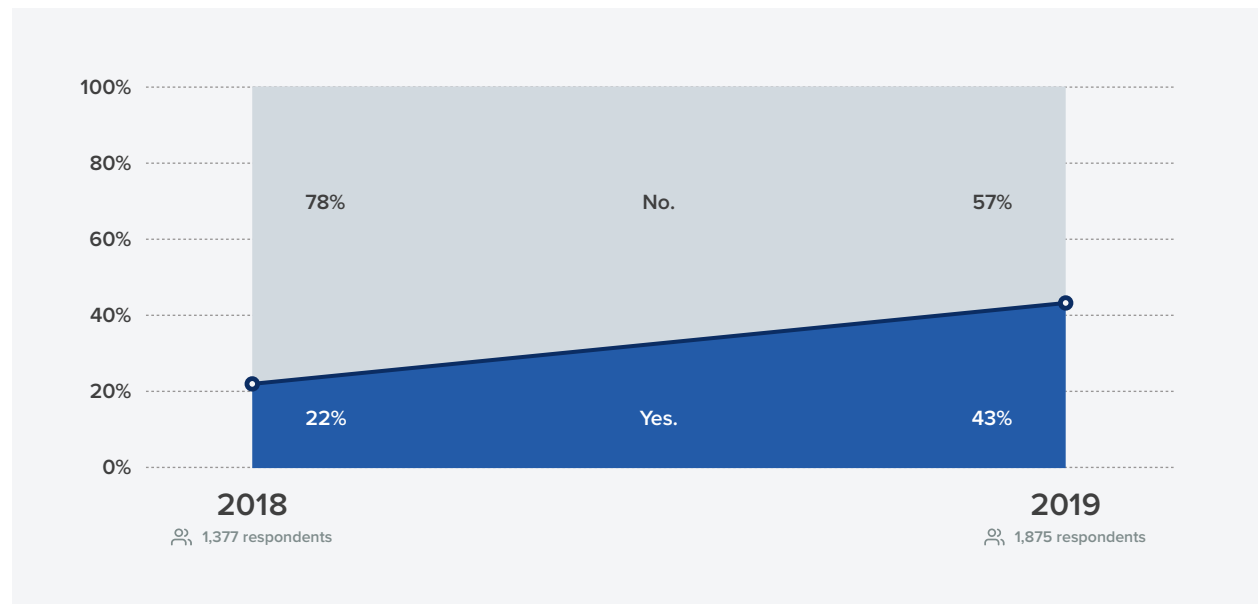
CSS Inlining Remains Strong

Does your company inline CSS styles in their emails?

	2018		2019
	100%		
14%		No.	16%
	80%		
	60%		
86%	40%	Yes.	84%
	20%		
	0%		
	2018		**2019**
	1,951 respondents		1,632 respondents

Inlining CSS by Hand Continues to Drop as More Tools are Introduced

Which CSS inliner tools does your company use? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 **1,217 respondents**

Category	Percentage
We inline CSS manually by hand or via snippets	62%
Litmus Builder	16%
The one provided by our email service provider	14%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	13%
Mailchimp Inliner	8%
Campaign Monitor Inliner	7%
Zurb Foundation	3%
Gulp-inline-css	3%
Litmus PutsMail	2%
Premailer	2%
Juice	1%
Other	3%

70% of marketers said they inlined CSS by hand in 2018, but that number dropped to 62% in 2019.

Put the numbers into action:

Does your team spend a lot of time copy and pasting code snippets or inlining code by hand? Mundane, repetitive tasks slow down your team and introduce room for error. If you and your team are doing a lot of manual work on repetitive tasks, take it as a sign that your email process needs improvement. Brands that do email right find ways to replace manual work wherever possible—and that boosts productivity, leaves less room for errors, and saves time and money. Stop manually inlining your code and start using a CSS inliner like the one in Litmus Builder, use snippets and partials to speed up email coding, and generally look for ways to automate processes wherever you can.

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Majority of Marketers Have Room to Grow with Accessible Emails

Do you optimize your emails for accessibility?

👥 310 respondents

- 8% — Yes, we follow accessibility best practices for all of our emails.
- 63% — Somewhat. We follow some best practices but there's room for improvement.
- 29% — No, we currently don't optimize our emails for accessibility.
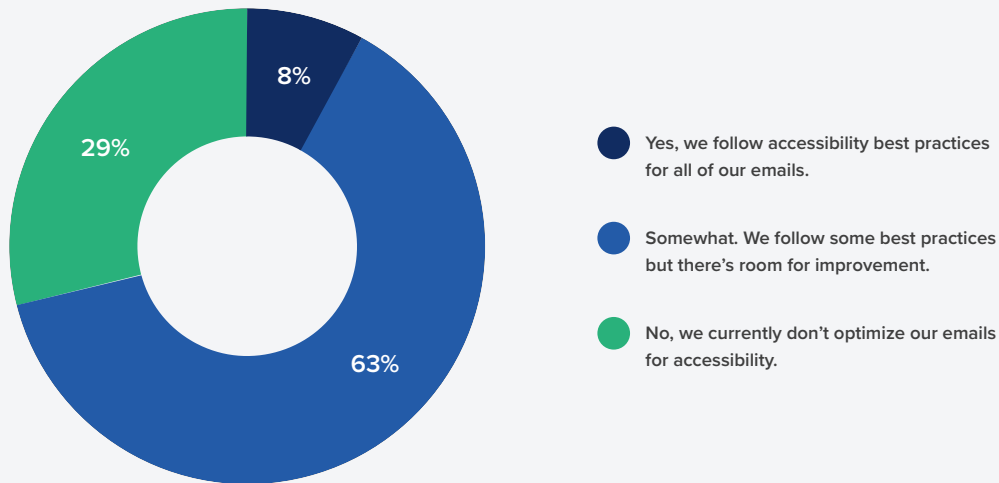
Put the numbers into action:

There are currently around 3 billion email users worldwide. None of those users are the same, with different abilities and disabilities—both permanent and temporary—and access to technology that informs how they experience email. If you create accessible emails, you can reach a wider audience than ever. If you don't, you're leaving money on the table with *every send*.

There's a misconception that optimizing your email code for accessibility is hard, but it's easier than you think. We've got an ebook, a curated video collection from top email experts, and free accessible email templates to help you get started.

Plus, **you can now use Litmus Checklist to optimize the accessibility of your emails.** Instantly see whether your email is accessible for all your subscribers and get actionable advice on how you can make your emails more inclusive.

In-House Email Development Solutions Remain Dominant

Which HTML email framework(s) or template(s) does your company use for email development? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 **1,478 respondents**

Framework/Template	Percentage
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	62%
The one provided by our email service provider	21%
HTML Email Boilerplate	11%
Litmus Community Templates	10%
Mailchimp, Blueprints	9%
Zurb, Foundation for Emails	4%
Mailjet, MJML	3%
Bee Pro	2%
Cerberus	2%
Other	11%
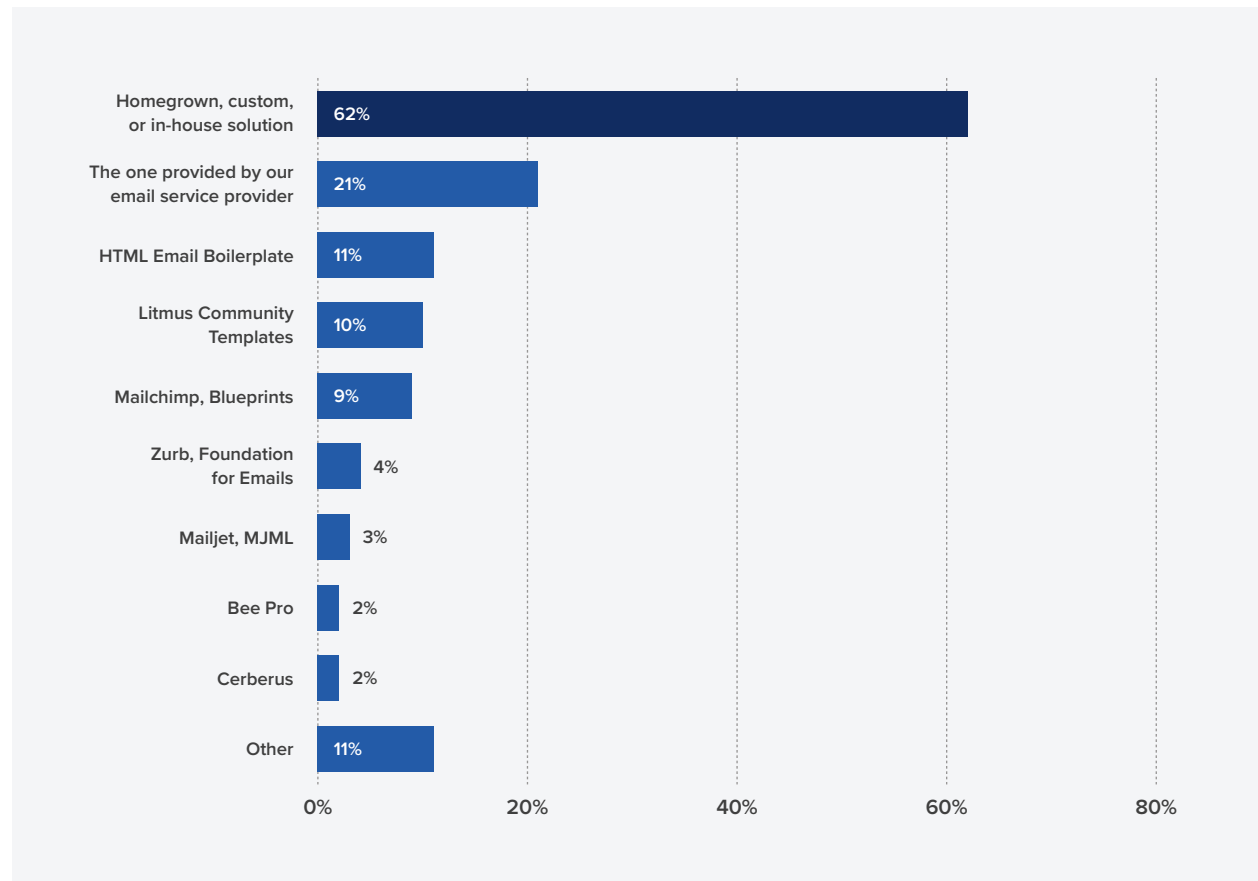
Cut Your Development Time in Half with Litmus Builder

Litmus Builder is designed to streamline the email development tasks that eat up the most time so you can code better emails, faster.

Learn more →

Quality Assurance

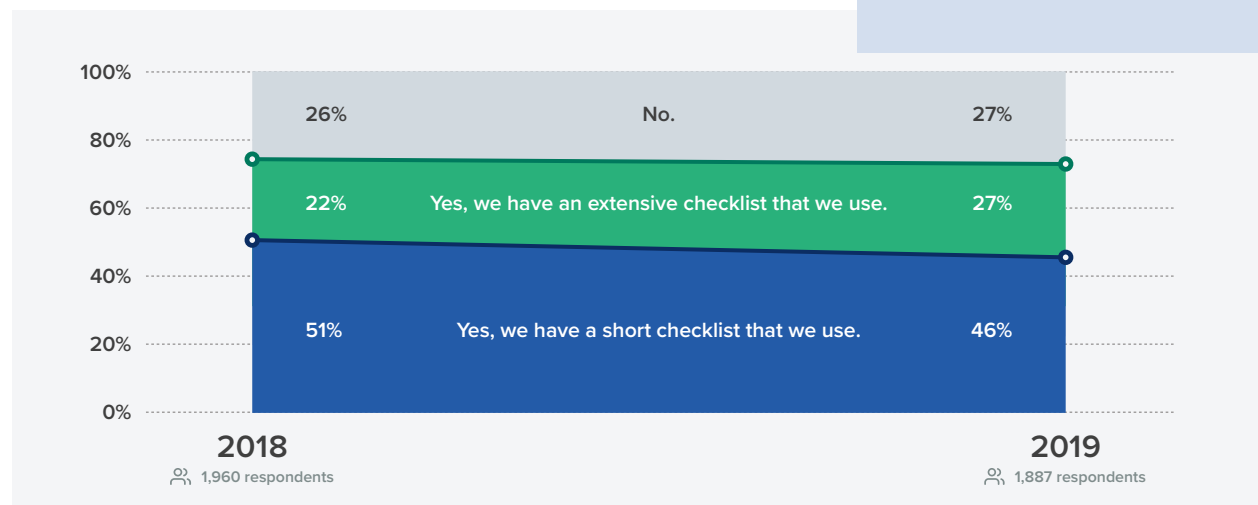Email quality assurance (QA) is just as necessary as strategy, design, and coding. Think of it as the final piece of the email marketing puzzle, and one that can throw a wrench in your plans if ignored. Successful email programs recognize this and set themselves up for success with pre-send checklists and a process in place to test *every* email before they send.

Majority of Marketers Use Some Sort of Pre-Send Checklist

Does your company use a short or extensive pre-send checklist to QA emails before sending them?

Brands that use an extensive pre-send checklist see a substantially higher ROI (48:1) than those who don't use a checklist (38:1).

	2018	2019
No.	26%	27%
Yes, we have an extensive checklist that we use.	22%	27%
Yes, we have a short checklist that we use.	51%	46%
	1,960 respondents	1,887 respondents

QA Your Emails with Litmus Checklist

Litmus Checklist gives you a guided check of the critical elements that impact email performance. Preview your email in 90+ apps and devices, validate that links, images, and tracking work, and create an incredible email experience every time.

Learn more →

Majority of Marketers Test Every Email They Send

How frequently does your company test the rendering and functionality of its emails across email clients and devices before sending them?

2018
2,003 respondents

2019
1,912 respondents

	2018	2019
We don't test our emails or templates.	4%	3%
We only test new and updated templates	18%	19%
We occasionally test the emails we send.	20%	21%
We test every email we send.	58%	57%

Put the numbers into action:

43% of brands don't test every email they send—and that's a risky approach.
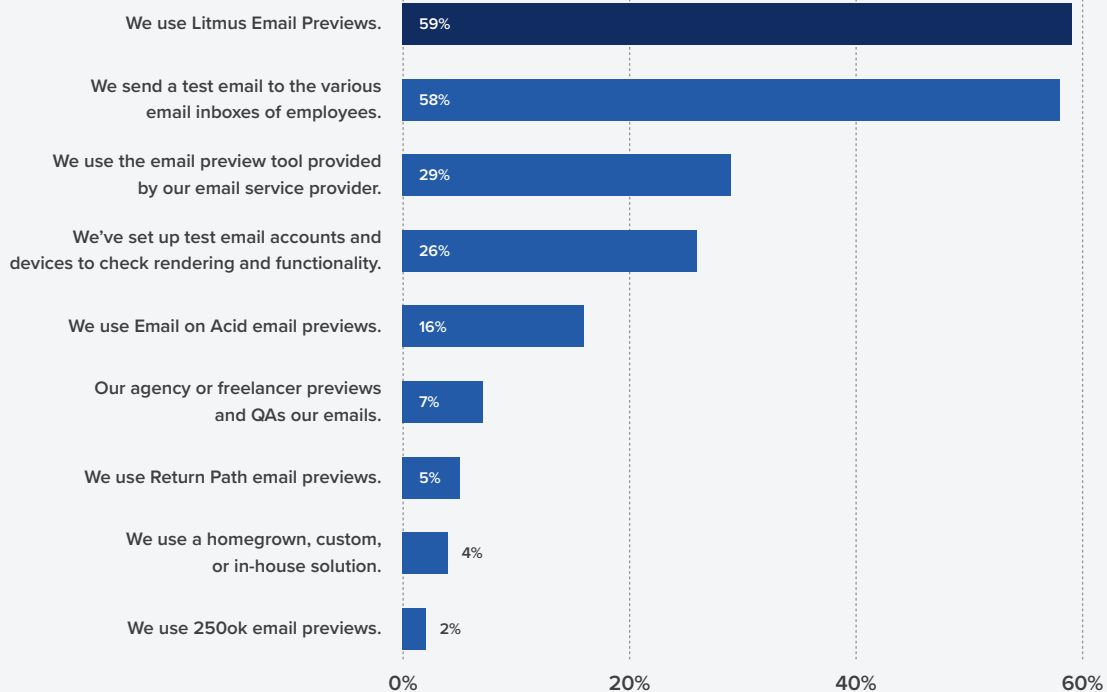
Every single time you send an email without testing, you risk a sub-par subscriber experience. Email clients change frequently so an email that looked great yesterday might be broken today. Not testing means you won't catch issues and you'll send broken campaigns, and that can be damaging to your brand. Make email testing a never-to-be-skipped part of your workflow for every email.

Most Marketers Use Litmus to Check Email Rendering

How does your company test the rendering and functionality of its emails in different email clients and devices before sending them?

👥 **1,800 respondents**

Brands that utilize Litmus Email Previews to test their emails generate an ROI of 44:1. Brands that never or occasionally test their emails generate an ROI of 38:1.

Category	Percentage
We use Litmus Email Previews.	59%
We send a test email to the various email inboxes of employees.	58%
We use the email preview tool provided by our email service provider.	29%
We've set up test email accounts and devices to check rendering and functionality.	26%
We use Email on Acid email previews.	16%
Our agency or freelancer previews and QAs our emails.	7%
We use Return Path email previews.	5%
We use a homegrown, custom, or in-house solution.	4%
We use 250ok email previews.	2%

Email Testing Made Easy with Litmus Email Previews

Test your emails in 90+ email clients and reading environments in just seconds—and catch rendering errors before you send.
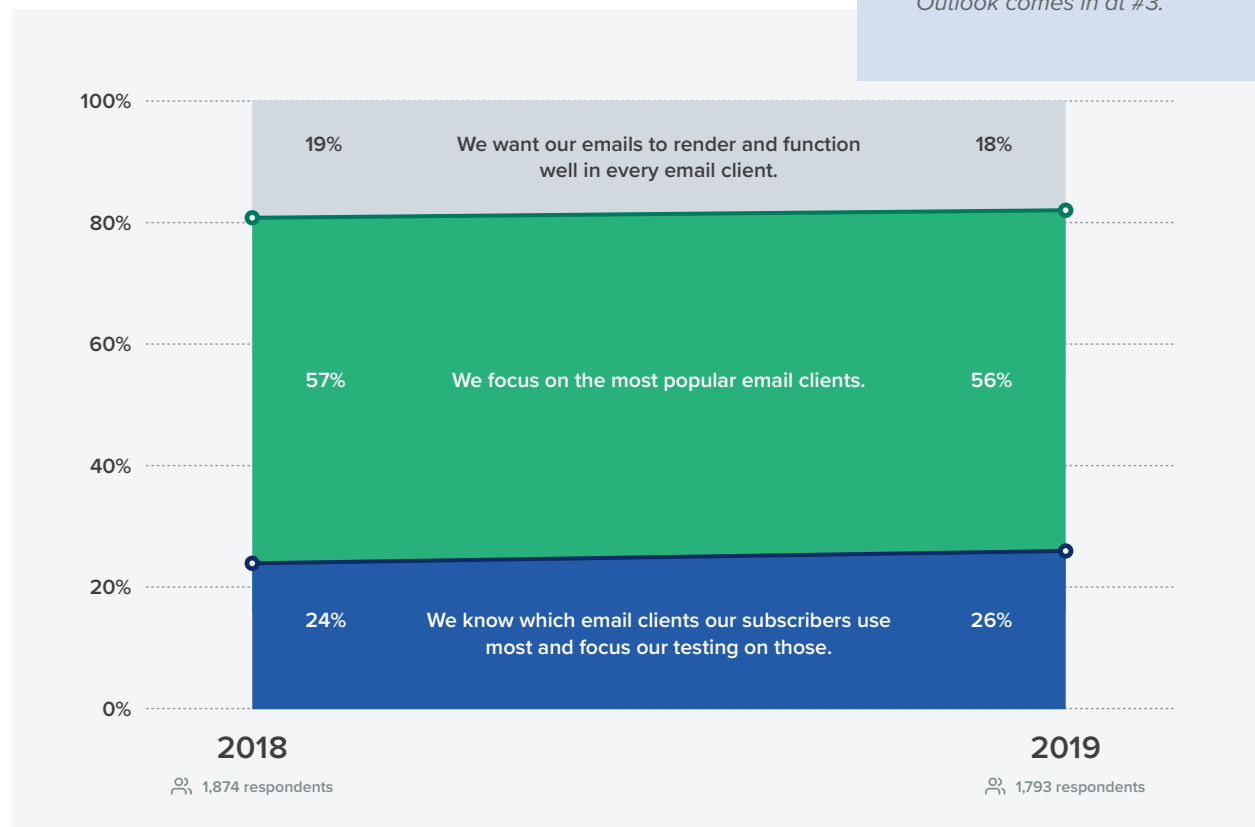
Learn more →

Most Brands Focus Testing on the Most Popular Email Clients

When testing the rendering and functionality of your emails, do you test on every email client, test on the most popular clients, or focus on the clients your subscribers use most?

	2018	2019
We want our emails to render and function well in every email client.	19%	18%
We focus on the most popular email clients.	57%	56%
We know which email clients our subscribers use most and focus our testing on those.	24%	26%

2018 — 1,874 respondents

2019 — 1,793 respondents

Put the numbers into action:

Did you spot an issue with your email in *one* email client? Some tricky rendering bugs can take hours to fix. Use email client market share insights to make data-backed decisions on where to focus your testing and optimization efforts. We all want our emails to look great everywhere, but it's a balancing act. If you see a small rendering issue in an email client that less than 1% of your subscribers use, let it go. Your time is better spent elsewhere.

Nearly Half of Brands Occasionally Use Spam Filters to Check Emails

Before sending an email, does your company run it through spam filter tests to identify potential deliverability problems?

👥 **1,725 respondents**

50%		
40%	44%	
30%		34%
20%	22%	
10%		
0%		
Yes, we run every email we send through a spam filter test.	Yes, we occasionally run our emails through a spam filter test.	No.
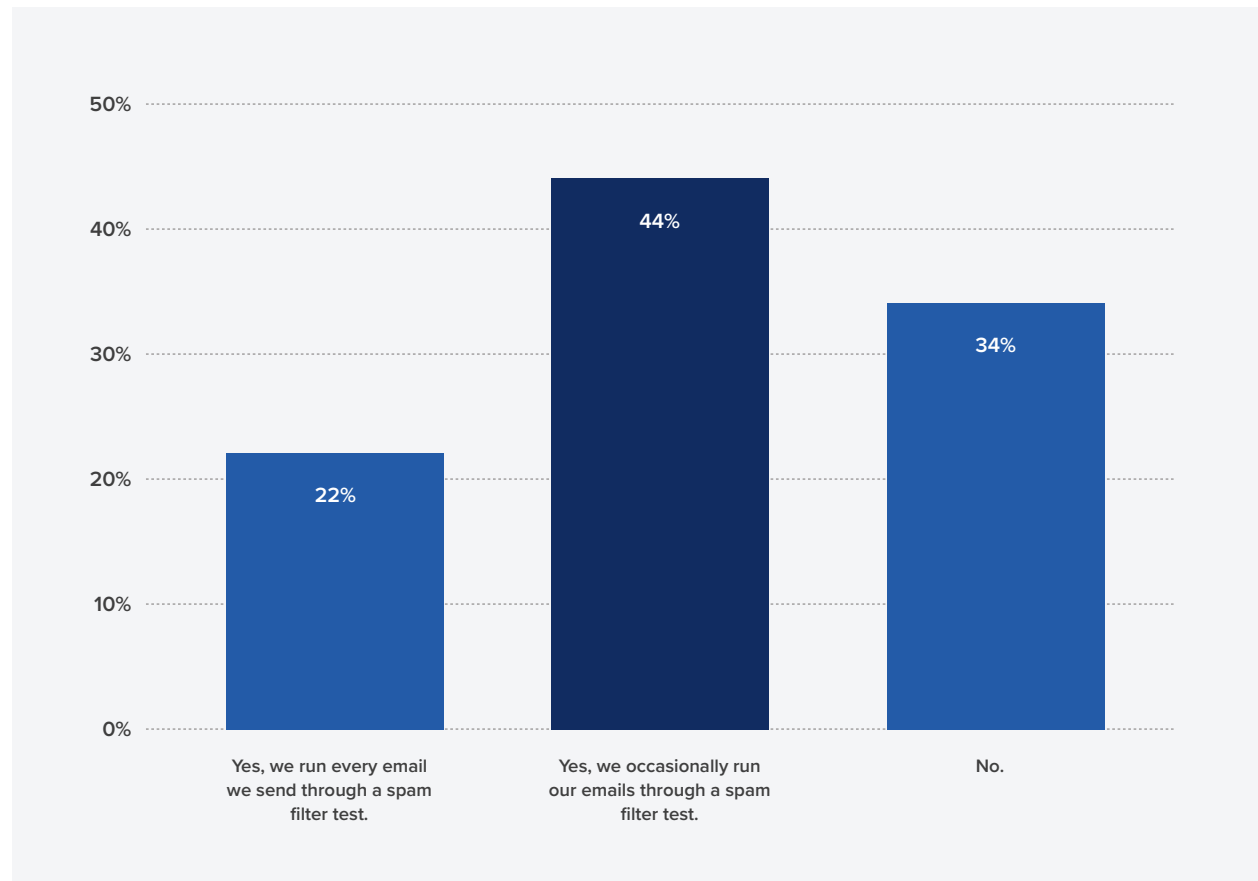
Make It to the Inbox, Not the Spam Folder

Identify issues that may prevent emails from being delivered—discover if you've been blocklisted, validate your email authentication, and get actionable advice on how to fix issues before you send with Litmus Spam Testing.
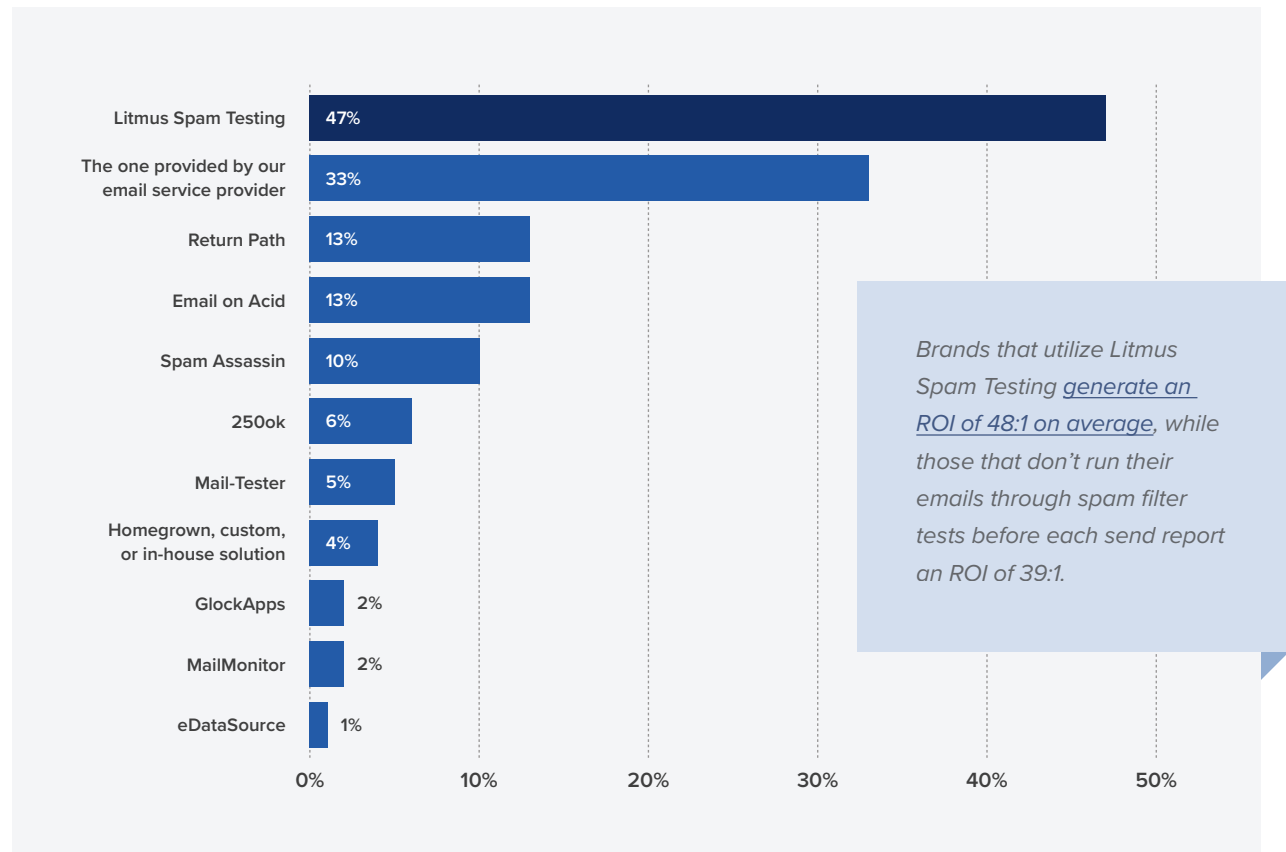
Improve your email's deliverability →

Nearly Half of Brands Rely on Litmus Spam Testing

What service(s) or tool(s) does your company use to check your emails against spam filters before you send them? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

1,025 respondents

Tool	Percentage
Litmus Spam Testing	47%
The one provided by our email service provider	33%
Return Path	13%
Email on Acid	13%
Spam Assassin	10%
250ok	6%
Mail-Tester	5%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	4%
GlockApps	2%
MailMonitor	2%
eDataSource	1%

Brands that utilize Litmus Spam Testing generate an ROI of 48:1 on average, while those that don't run their emails through spam filter tests before each send report an ROI of 39:1.
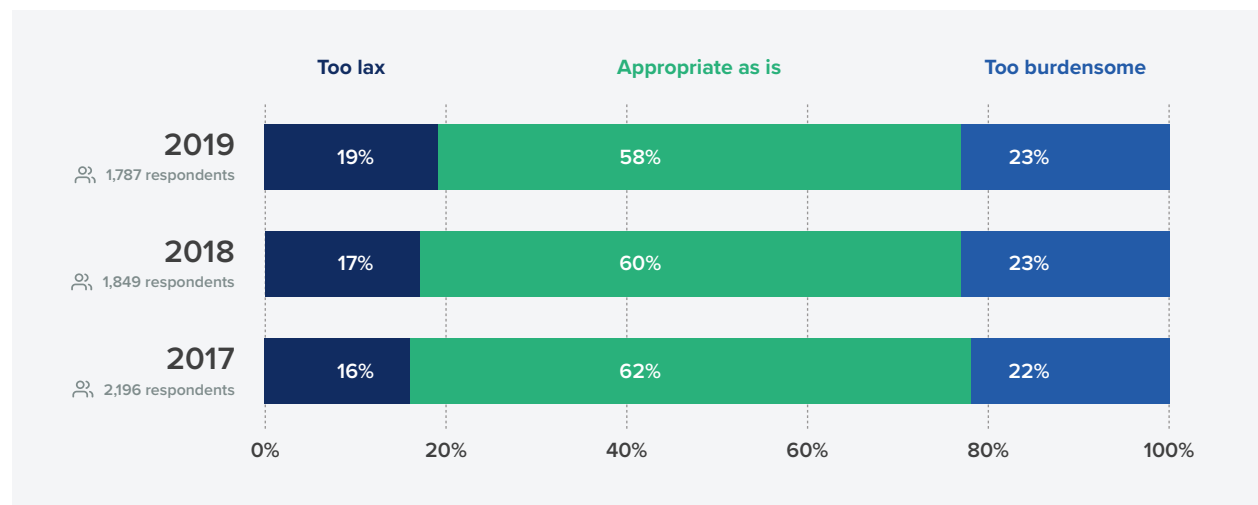
Put the numbers into action:

When you create an email campaign, you work hard to craft the right message and the perfect design. But those hours and hours spent optimizing your copy and troubleshooting tricky rendering issues will be all for nothing if the email ends up in the spam folder instead of the inbox. The best way to get ahead of these issues is to prevent them from happening in the first place. Pre-send spam testing tools like Litmus Spam Testing help you take control and own your email program's deliverability health.

Reviews & Approvals

Reviews and approvals for emails is almost always reported as the longest step in a marketer's workflow and production process. Depending on the number of departments involved, the number of people involved, and when and where feedback is given, these processes can very quickly become drawn out. For the sake of your email program—and your sanity—it's important to create an appropriate, streamlined review process.

Less and Less Marketers View Their Review & Approval Processes as Appropriate As-Is

Do you feel that the email review and approval process at your company is too burdensome, appropriate as-is, or too lax?

	Too lax	Appropriate as is	Too burdensome
2019 — 1,787 respondents	19%	58%	23%
2018 — 1,849 respondents	17%	60%	23%
2017 — 2,196 respondents	16%	62%	22%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Streamline Your Email Review Process with Litmus Proof

With Proof as your centralized tool for collecting feedback, you can improve collaboration, get better visibility, and cut review cycles.
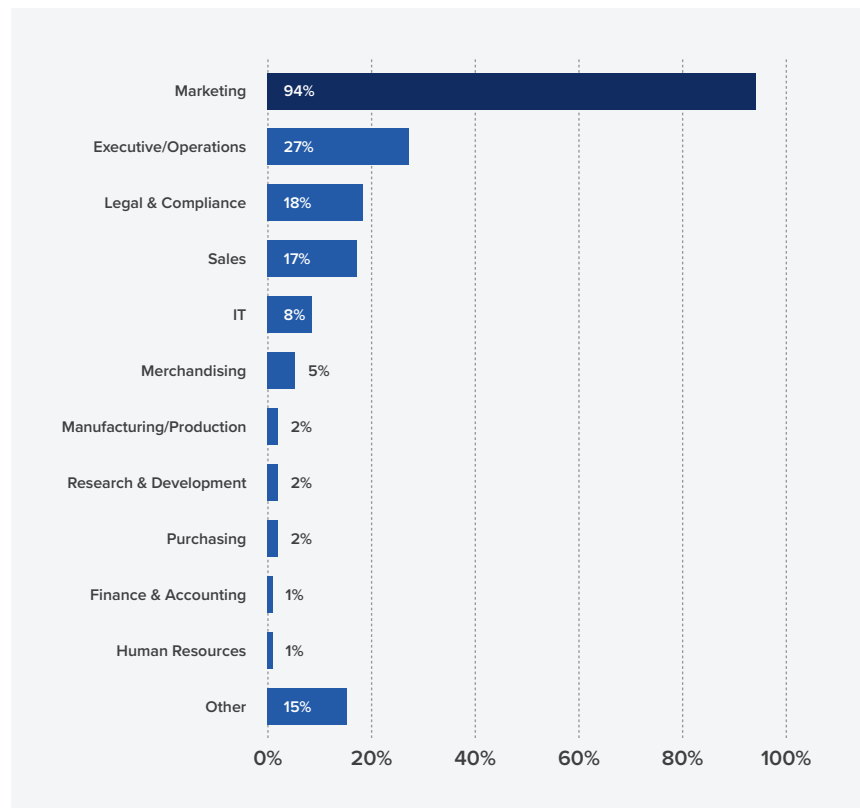
Learn more →

Most Marketers Work with 2 Other Departments to Get Emails Reviewed and Approved

Which of the following departments are generally involved in the review and approval process for your typical marketing email?

👥 1,866 respondents

Department	Percentage
Marketing	94%
Executive/Operations	27%
Legal & Compliance	18%
Sales	17%
IT	8%
Merchandising	5%
Manufacturing/Production	2%
Research & Development	2%
Purchasing	2%
Finance & Accounting	1%
Human Resources	1%
Other	15%

Majority of Brands Involve 3 or More People in An Email's Review and Approval Process

How many people are involved in the review and approval process for your typical marketing email?

👥 1,851 respondents

People	Percentage
1	3%
2	18%
3	28%
4	20%
5	13%
6	7%
7	3%
8	1%
9	1%
10 or more	6%
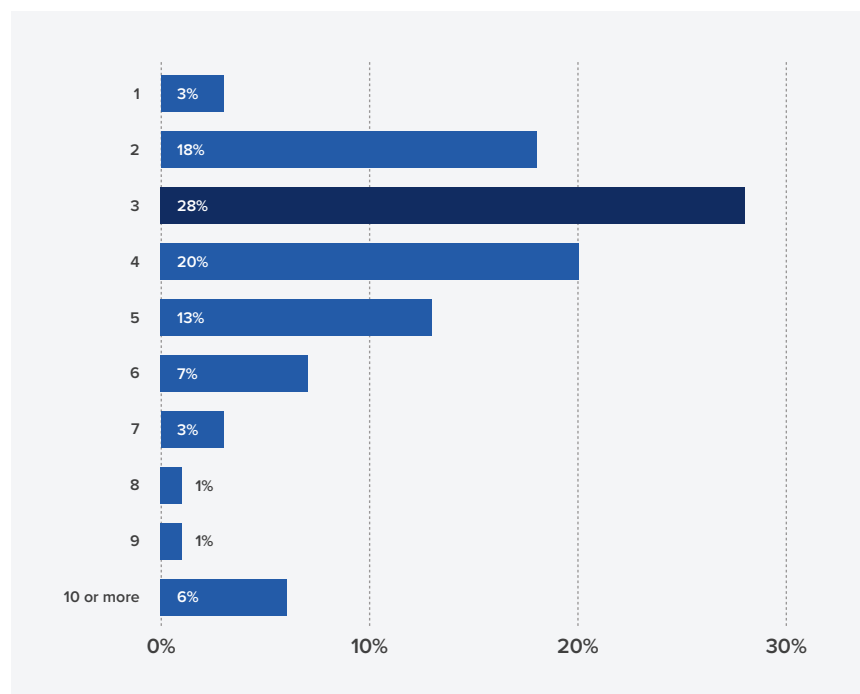
Majority of Brands Have Marketing Managers or Higher Review and Approve Emails Before Sending

What's the highest level person that reviews and approves an email before it's sent?
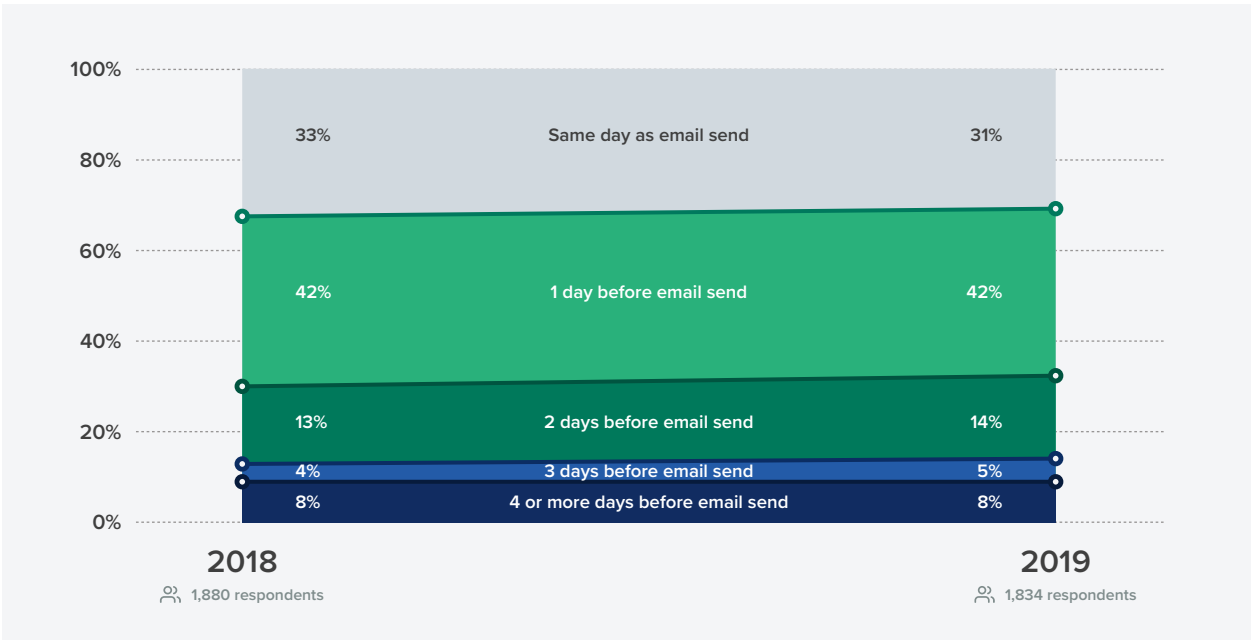
	2018	2019
Account/Client/Project Manager	17%	17%
Email Marketing Manager	15%	18%
Marketing Manager or Director	38%	40%
VP of Marketing or another VP-level officer	16%	13%
Chief Marketing Officer or another C-level officer	14%	12%

2018 1,837 respondents

2019 1,821 respondents

Put the numbers into action:

Who and how many people are involved in email reviews and approvals has a big impact on whether or not your review process is running smoothly. The need for two or three people to sign off on an email appears to be the sweet spot for a balanced, appropriate email approval process. If more people are involved, marketers say the approval process becomes cumbersome. If only one person is involved, it becomes too lax. Plus, the data shows that having high-level executives involved in email approvals generally bogs the process down. If possible, don't include senior leadership in day-to-day email reviews and approvals, but keep them focused instead on overall campaign strategy and goals.
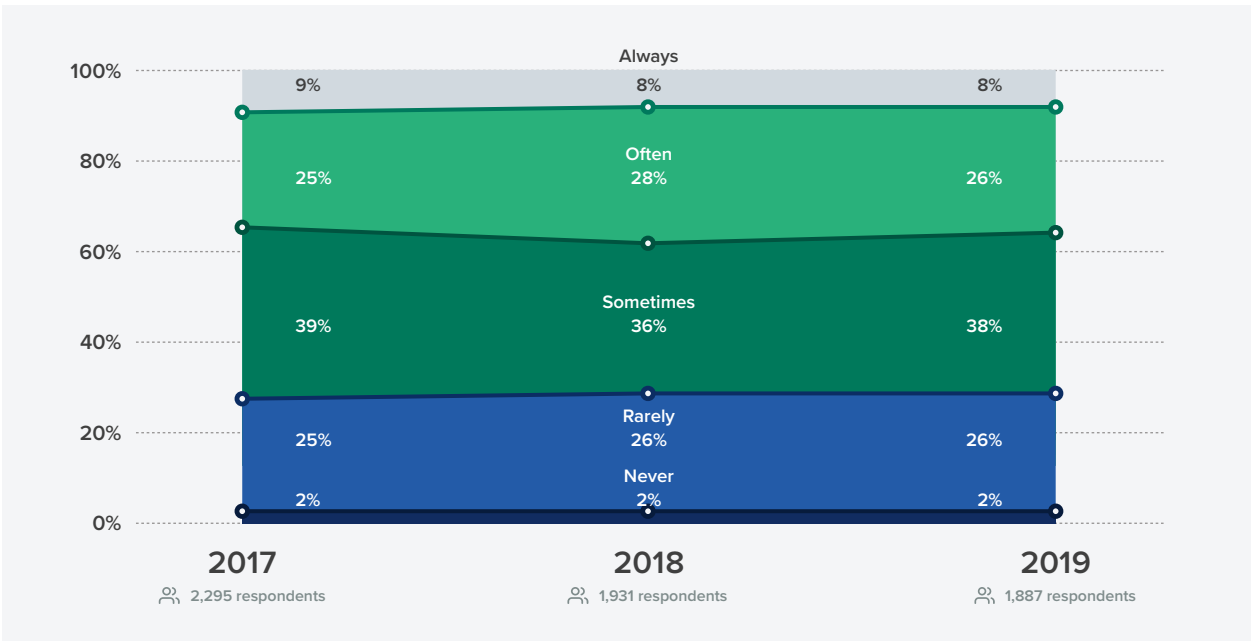
Even Fewer Brands Sending Emails the Same Day They're Approved

How many days before an email is sent do you generally get final approval for that email?

	2018	2019
Same day as email send	33%	31%
1 day before email send	42%	42%
2 days before email send	13%	14%
3 days before email send	4%	5%
4 or more days before email send	8%	8%

2018 — 1,880 respondents
2019 — 1,834 respondents

Last-Minute Changes to Emails Are Common, But Becoming Less Frequent

How often are last-minute changes made to an email after it has been approved by all stakeholders?

	2017	2018	2019
Always	9%	8%	8%
Often	25%	28%	26%
Sometimes	39%	36%	38%
Rarely	25%	26%	26%
Never	2%	2%	2%

2017 — 2,295 respondents
2018 — 1,931 respondents
2019 — 1,887 respondents

Majority of Marketers Still Receive Feedback Verbally or By Email

What tool(s) do you use to manage reviews and approvals for emails at your company? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 **1,929 respondents**

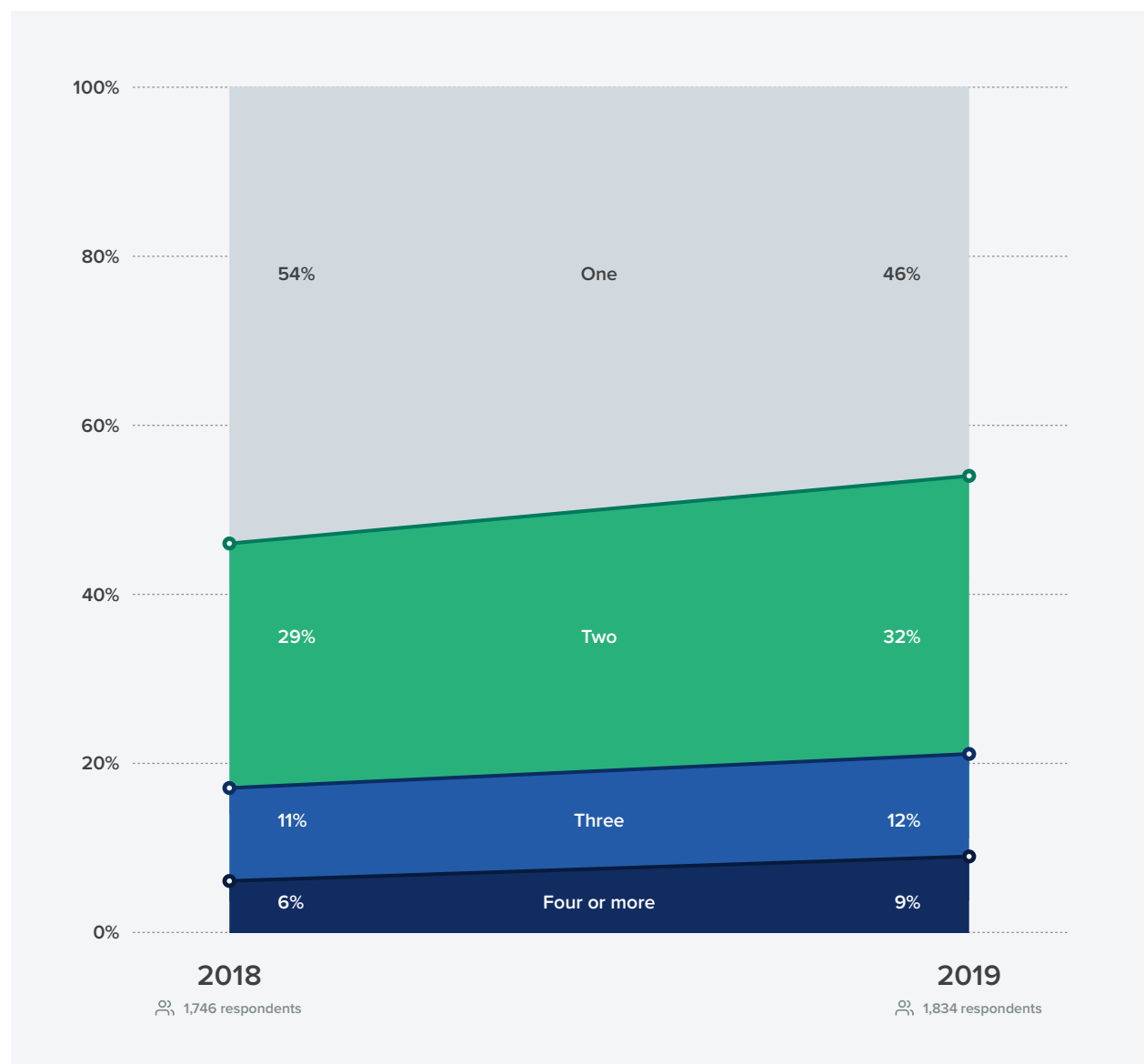| Tool	Percentage
Emailed comments, especially in reply to a test send of the email under review	75%
Verbally	28%
Slack	25%
Google Docs, Google Drive, or other shared documents or spreadsheets	21%
Jira	11%
PDFs of email	11%
Asana	6%
Trello	5%
Workfront (including ProofHQ)	5%
On paper, whiteboard, etc.	5%
Microsoft Teams	4%
Litmus Proof	3%
Dropbox, Box, and other file-sharing services	2%
InVision	2%
Functionality provided by our email service provider	2%
Other	11%

Put the numbers into action:

If you're among those marketers who receive feedback verbally or through a multitude of channels, make it a priority to improve that process. The less organized your process is, the more likely it is that errors will happen and mistakes will slip through. Figure out how to centralize feedback to keep everything in one place, keep projects moving, and avoid errors—all while keeping your and your team's sanity. Tools like Litmus Proof can help.

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ESP Usage

Your email service provider (ESP)—that's the tool you use to send your emails—is the core of every email marketing program. While brands continue to have hundreds of ESPs to choose from, Mailchimp and Salesforce Marketing Cloud continue to be the most popular sending tools.
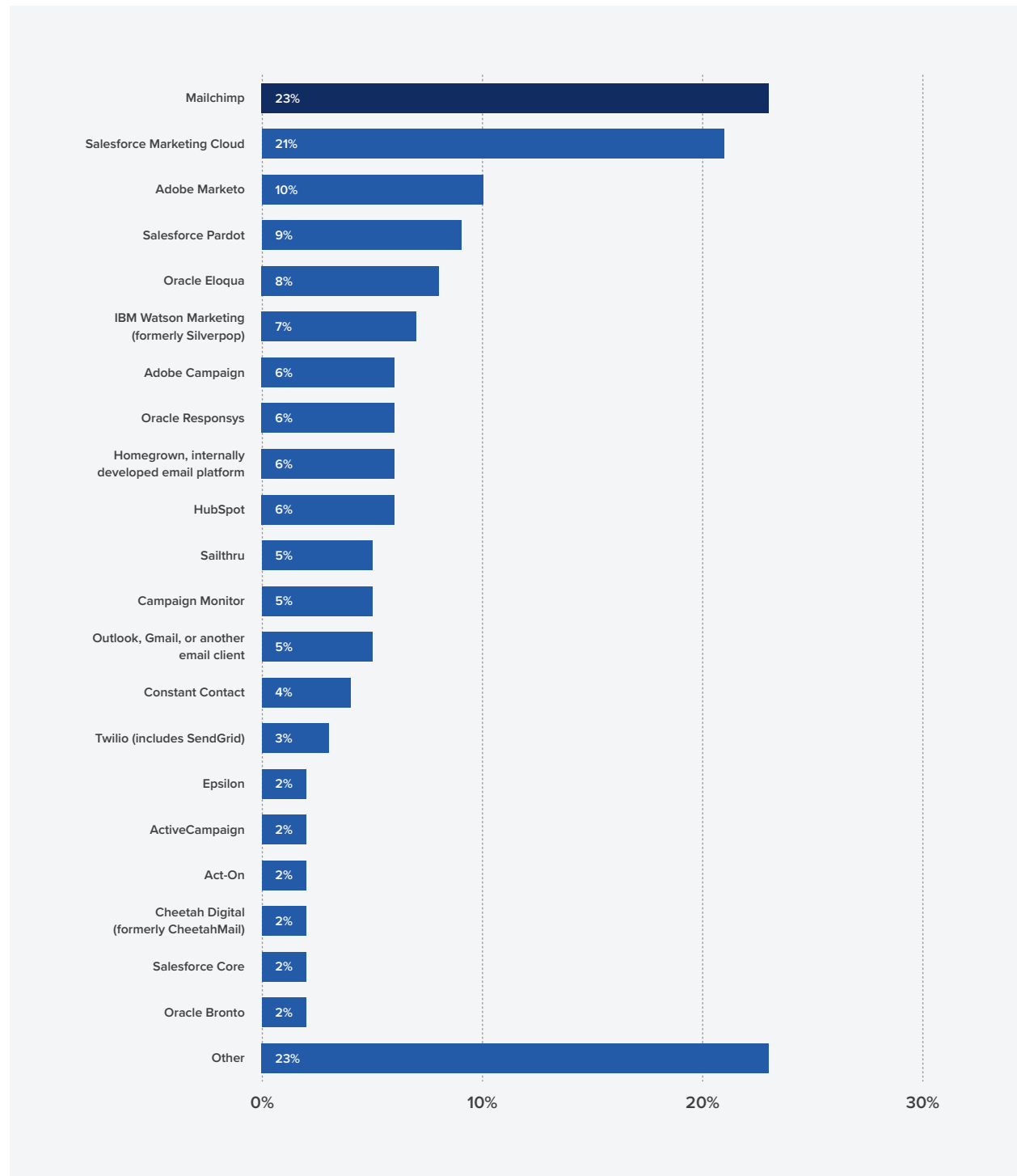
Nearly Half of Marketers Only Use One Email Platform

How many ESPs does your company currently use to send its broadcast, segmented, triggered, and transactional emails?

	2018		2019
100%			
80%	54%	One	46%
60%			
40%	29%	Two	32%
20%	11%	Three	12%
0%	6%	Four or more	9%

2018
1,746 respondents

2019
1,834 respondents

Mailchimp and Salesforce Marketing Cloud Continue to Dominate Market Share

Which ESP(s) or platform(s) does your company currently use to send its marketing emails? (Those used by 2%+ shown.)

👥 **1,840 respondents**

ESP/Platform	Percentage
Mailchimp	23%
Salesforce Marketing Cloud	21%
Adobe Marketo	10%
Salesforce Pardot	9%
Oracle Eloqua	8%
IBM Watson Marketing (formerly Silverpop)	7%
Adobe Campaign	6%
Oracle Responsys	6%
Homegrown, internally developed email platform	6%
HubSpot	6%
Sailthru	5%
Campaign Monitor	5%
Outlook, Gmail, or another email client	5%
Constant Contact	4%
Twilio (includes SendGrid)	3%
Epsilon	2%
ActiveCampaign	2%
Act-On	2%
Cheetah Digital (formerly CheetahMail)	2%
Salesforce Core	2%
Oracle Bronto	2%
Other	23%

3 Post-Send Analysis

Arguably some of the most important work you can do in email marketing is analyzing the results of your campaigns to make your emails *even better*.

You can only craft and target personalized messages to your audience if you understand them—who they are, their behavior, their engagement. Plus, post-send analysis is incredibly valuable not just to improve your messaging, but to see if your original message got to your subscribers in the first place.

> *As an email marketer, your work isn't done once you hit the send button. Post-send analysis is a crucial part of your workflow.*

Tweet this →

Read on to learn how your peers measure the effectiveness of their campaigns.

Email Analytics

Almost all email service providers offer the basics when it comes to email metrics—opens, clicks, and hard or soft bounces—and the overwhelming majority of brands do track these metrics. However, after that, visibility diminishes quickly. That's why a growing majority of brands use at least one third-party analytics tool to supplement their ESP's dashboards.

Majority of Marketers Use Third-Party Tools For Analytics In Addition to Their ESP

Does your company use any third-party email analytics tools, aside from the tracking provided within your email platform?

👥 **1,661 respondents**

37%

63%

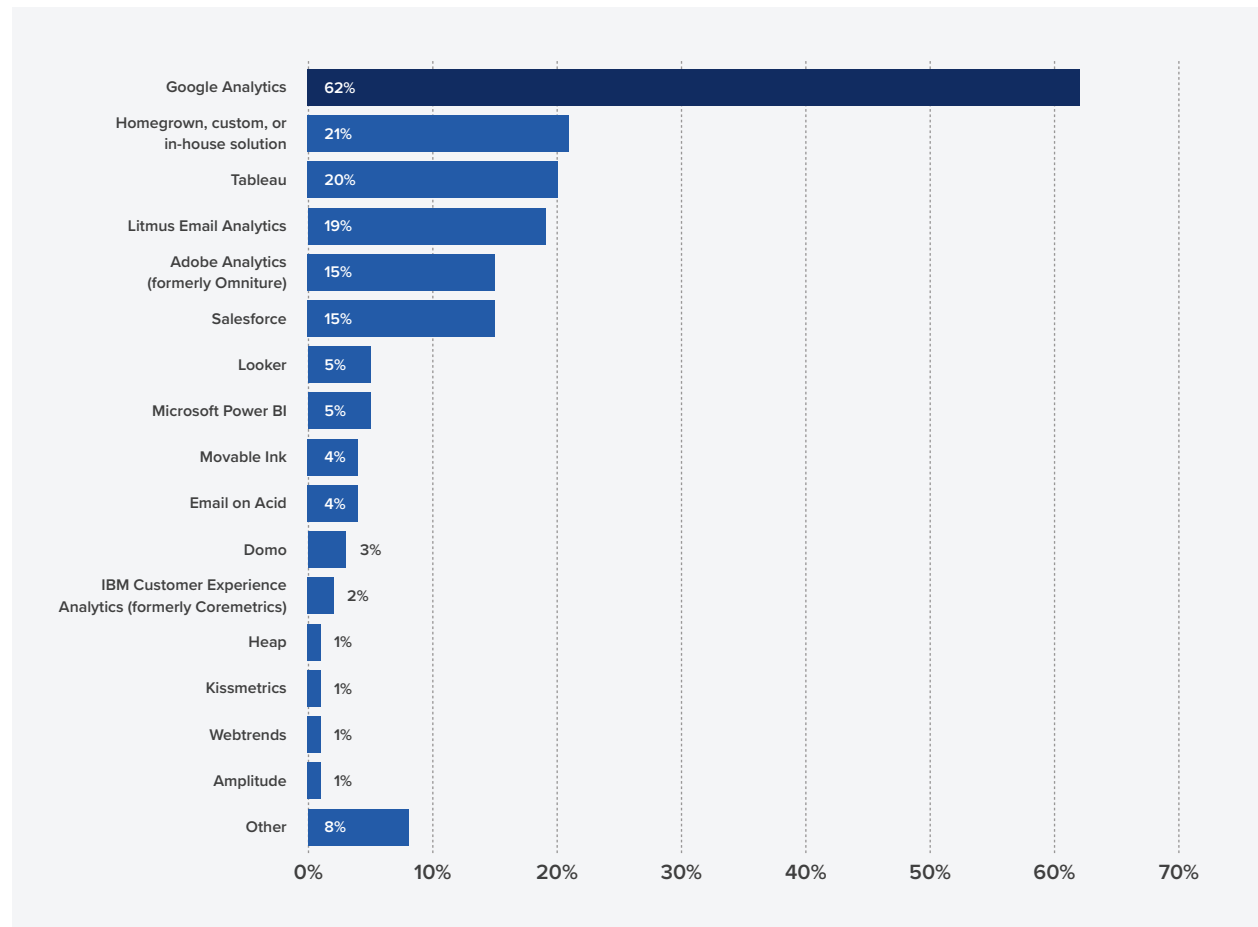● Yes   ● No, we only use the dashboards provided by our ESP.
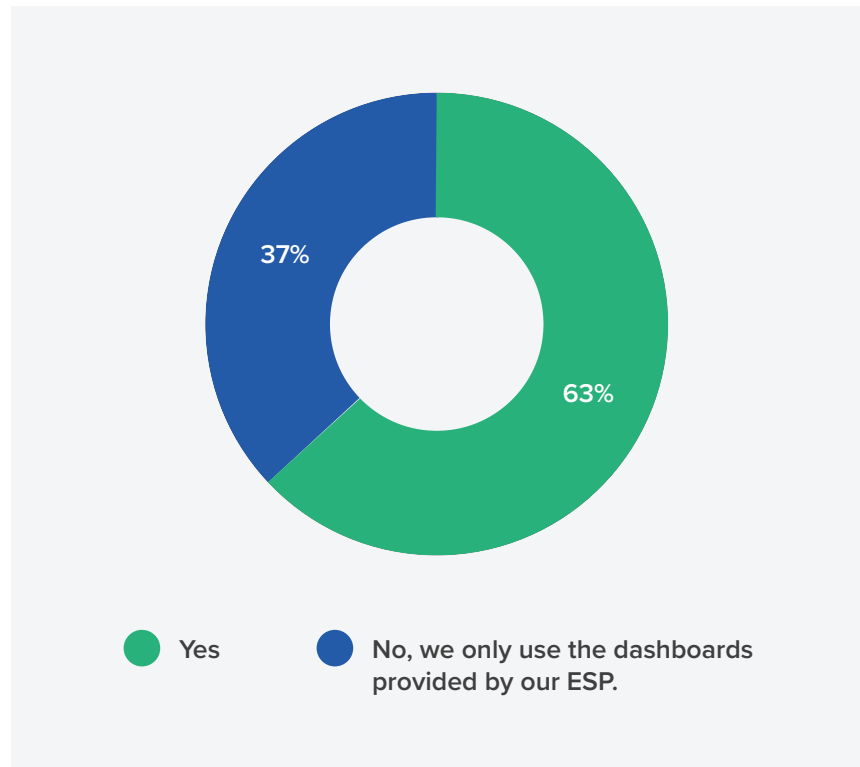
Put the numbers into action:

Brands use analytics to listen to what their subscribers are telling them. Without analytics, brands are deaf to both their cheers of happiness *and* their shouts of frustration. Take a deeper look at more strategic metrics in your next email campaign—like subscriber lifetime value, value per subscriber, and return on investment—and bring your email performance tracking to the next level.

Majority of Marketers Use Google Analytics for Third-Party Email Analytics

What service(s) or tool(s) does your company use for email analytics? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 **1,015 respondents**

Service/Tool	Percentage
Google Analytics	62%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	21%
Tableau	20%
Litmus Email Analytics	19%
Adobe Analytics (formerly Omniture)	15%
Salesforce	15%
Looker	5%
Microsoft Power BI	5%
Movable Ink	4%
Email on Acid	4%
Domo	3%
IBM Customer Experience Analytics (formerly Coremetrics)	2%
Heap	1%
Kissmetrics	1%
Webtrends	1%
Amplitude	1%
Other	8%

Go Beyond Opens and Clicks with Litmus Email Analytics

Accelerate campaign performance with advanced data insights you won't get from your ESP. Fine-tune testing efforts and utilize engagement and geographic data to inform design, segmentation, and copywriting decisions.

Learn more →

Visibility into Email Metrics Falls Off Significantly After Opens, Clicks, and Bounces

Using any of the analytics tools available to you, which email metrics do you currently track?

Currently track   **Don't track**

Metric	Currently track	Don't track
Opens — 1,690 respondents	99%	1%
Clicks — 1,685 respondents	99%	1%
Bounces — 1,623 respondents	93%	7%
Conversions — 1,553 respondents	78%	22%
Deliverability or inbox placement rate — 1,516 respondents	76%	24%
Spam complaints — 1,482 respondents	75%	25%
Email device and client usage — 1,515 respondents	71%	29%
Return on Investment — 1,372 respondents	47%	53%
Revenue/value per subscriber — 1,344 respondents	39%	61%
Forwards — 1,374 respondents	37%	63%
Email read time — 1,357 respondents	33%	67%
Subscriber lifetime value — 1,290 respondents	28%	72%
Prints — 1,275 respondents	14%	86%

Deliverability Monitoring

If you're not watching and paying attention, it's easy for your emails to be blocked or blocklisted without you knowing. Spam filter testing and deliverability monitoring tools are instrumental in getting this critical visibility. Nearly three-quarters of marketers monitor their delivery rates and inbox placements—but over half of those same marketers only use the tools provided by their ESP to do so. What other tools help you monitor post-send deliverability? Read on to find out.

Most Marketers Monitor Their Delivery Rates and Inbox Placements

Do you monitor delivery rates/inbox placement?

👥 **1,645 respondents**

28%

72%

● Yes

● No
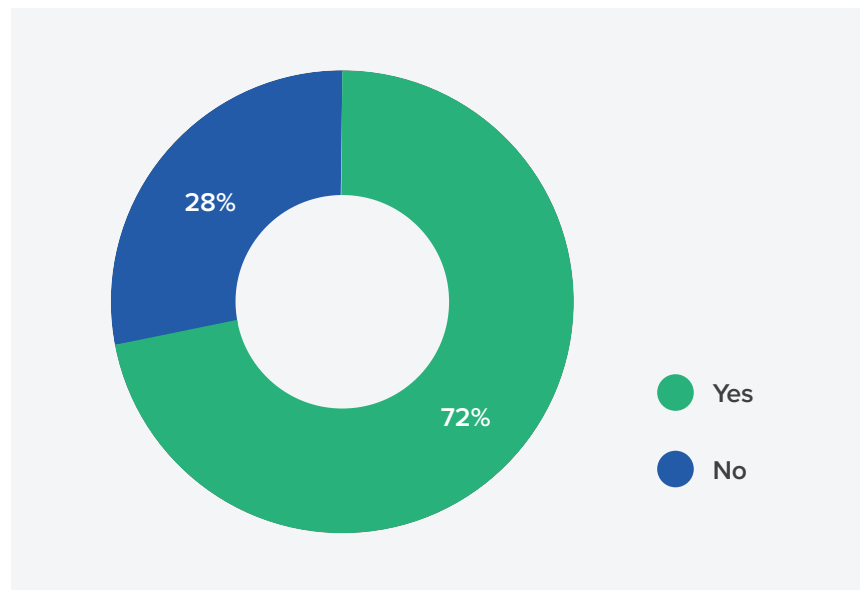
Put the numbers into action:

First thing's first: delivery rate isn't the same as deliverability. Even if your delivery rate looks healthy—you see few bounces and most of your emails are being delivered—it's still possible that your emails never make it to the inbox. Mailbox providers might have received your message but then decide to place your email in the spam folder. Even with a stellar delivery rate you can still have deliverability issues. Post-send deliverability monitoring tools are powerful when it comes to fighting deliverability emergencies when they happen. Great marketers know how to use the power of these tools to act fast and reduce brand damage in case of a deliverability crisis.

Over Half of Marketers Only Use the Deliverability Tool in Their Email Platform

What tool(s) does your company use to monitor email deliverability and inbox placement? (Those used by 1%+ shown.)

👥 986 respondents

Tool	Percentage
The one provided by our email service provider	57%
Return Path	26%
Homegrown, custom, or in-house solution	11%
250ok	9%
eDataSource	3%
MailMonitor	2%
SendForensics	1%
GreenArrow	1%
Other	6%
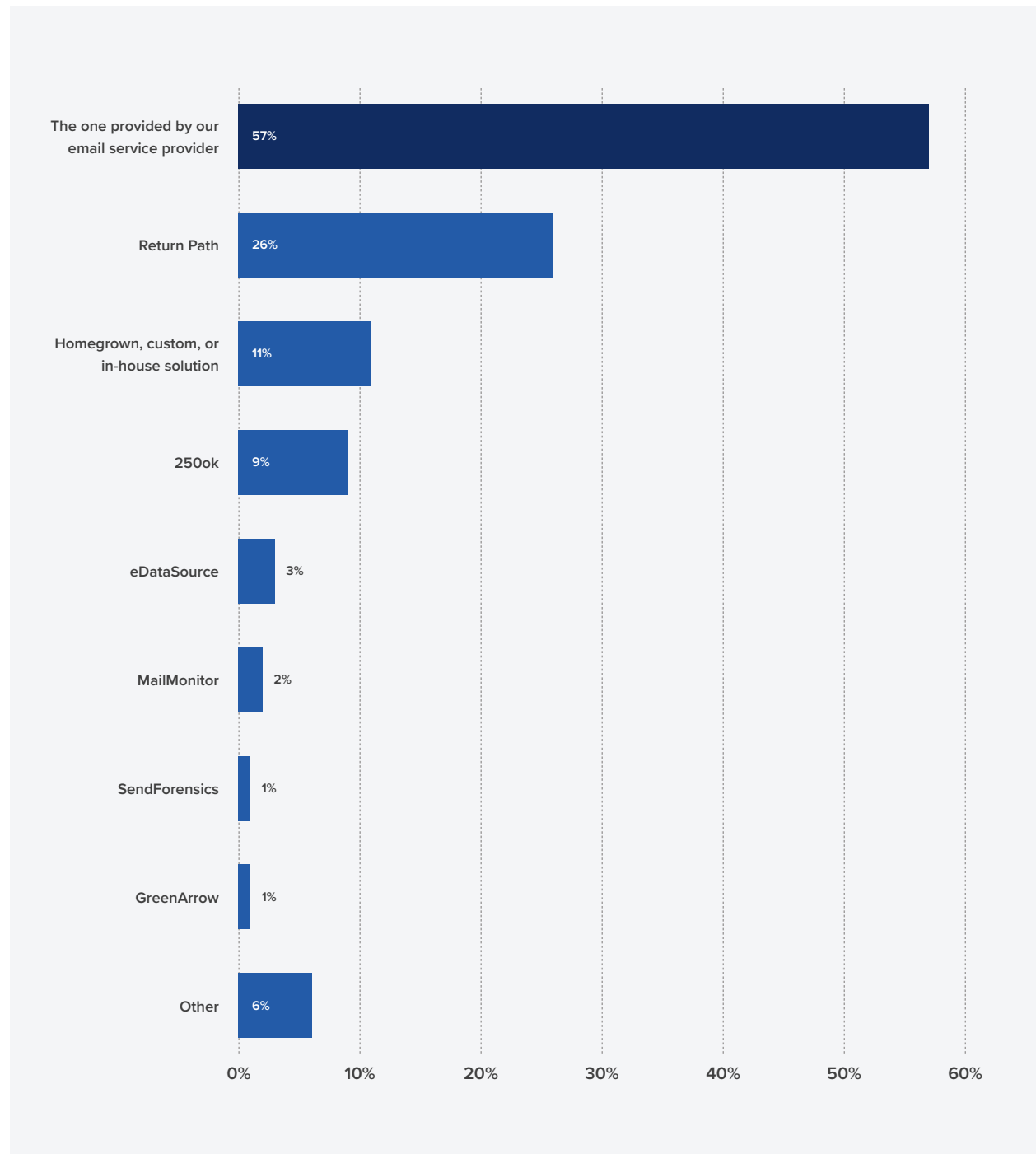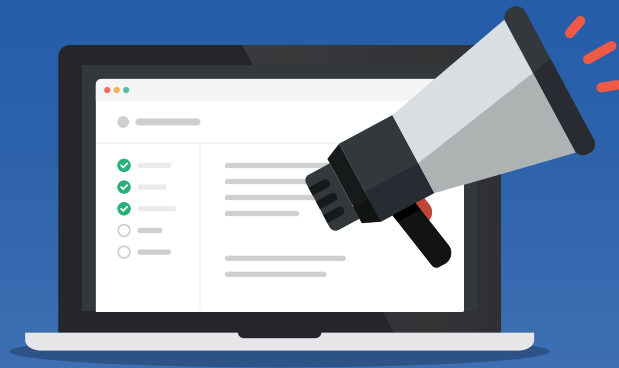
4   Perform Across Your Marketing Channels

Now that you've worked hard on your email campaigns, sent them to your subscribers, and analyzed the results—what's next?

It's time to look beyond the email channel on its own. The best email marketers don't just send great campaigns and evaluate what's working. They also communicate the power of the email channel across the marketing organization and beyond. The best brands know that their email subscribers are the most closely aligned to their prospect audience and best able to show what they most want to hear about.

Email is the most dependable and measurable channel in any marketing program, so why not take those hard-earned insights and apply them to your other marketing channels? Whether it's strategic approach, content type, intended message, or visual design, the engagement insights you learn from email and your subscribers can inform what will best engage your audience—and help you be most effective in *any* channel.

Email is the most dependable and measurable channel in any marketing program. Use your email learnings to inform strategy and drive performance across all channels.
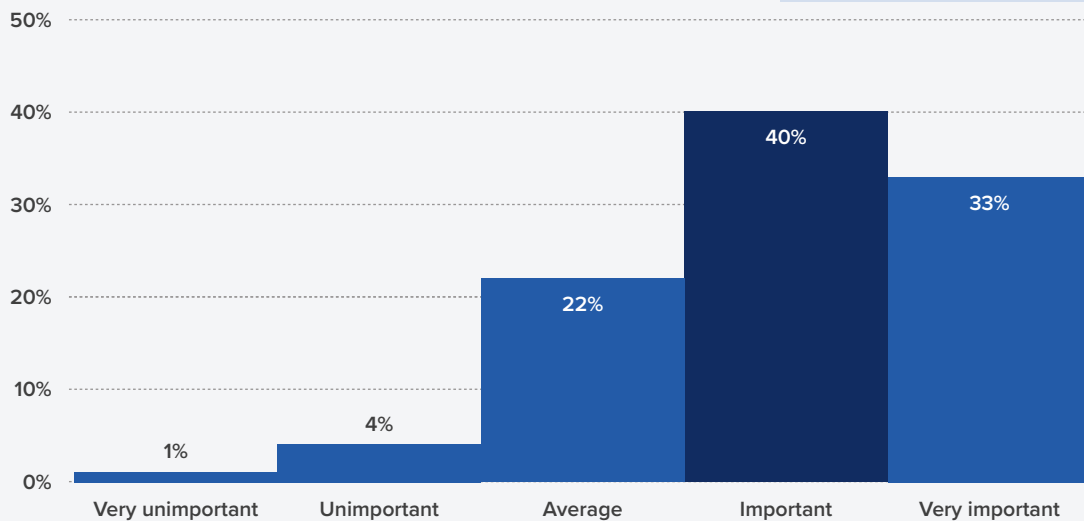
Tweet this →

73% of Marketers Consider Email to be Important to the Company's Success

How important is email to the overall success of your company?

👥 **1,923 respondents**

| Very unimportant	Unimportant	Average	Important	Very important
1%	4%	22%	40%	33%

Put the numbers into action:

Is your wider marketing team—and the rest of your company—aware of email's contribution to overall marketing success? Teams that can constantly prove success are more likely to have leadership support, so make sure you share your success stories and what you learned from them with your team on a regular basis, be it via a monthly round-up email, a slide deck, or a spreadsheet that shows key performance indicators.

We often use campaign insights to improve future emails but forget that the things we learn about our subscribers can be incredibly valuable for other teams, too. Always share your learnings. A subject line triggered more opens than ever? Maybe similar language can drive results on paid. A post in your newsletter got more clicks than any other content piece? Your content team will love those insights to help shape future content.

A Third of Marketers Say Their Email Marketing is Poorly or Very Poorly Integrated With Other Channels

How well is email integrated with other marketing channels at your company?

👥 **1,887 respondents**
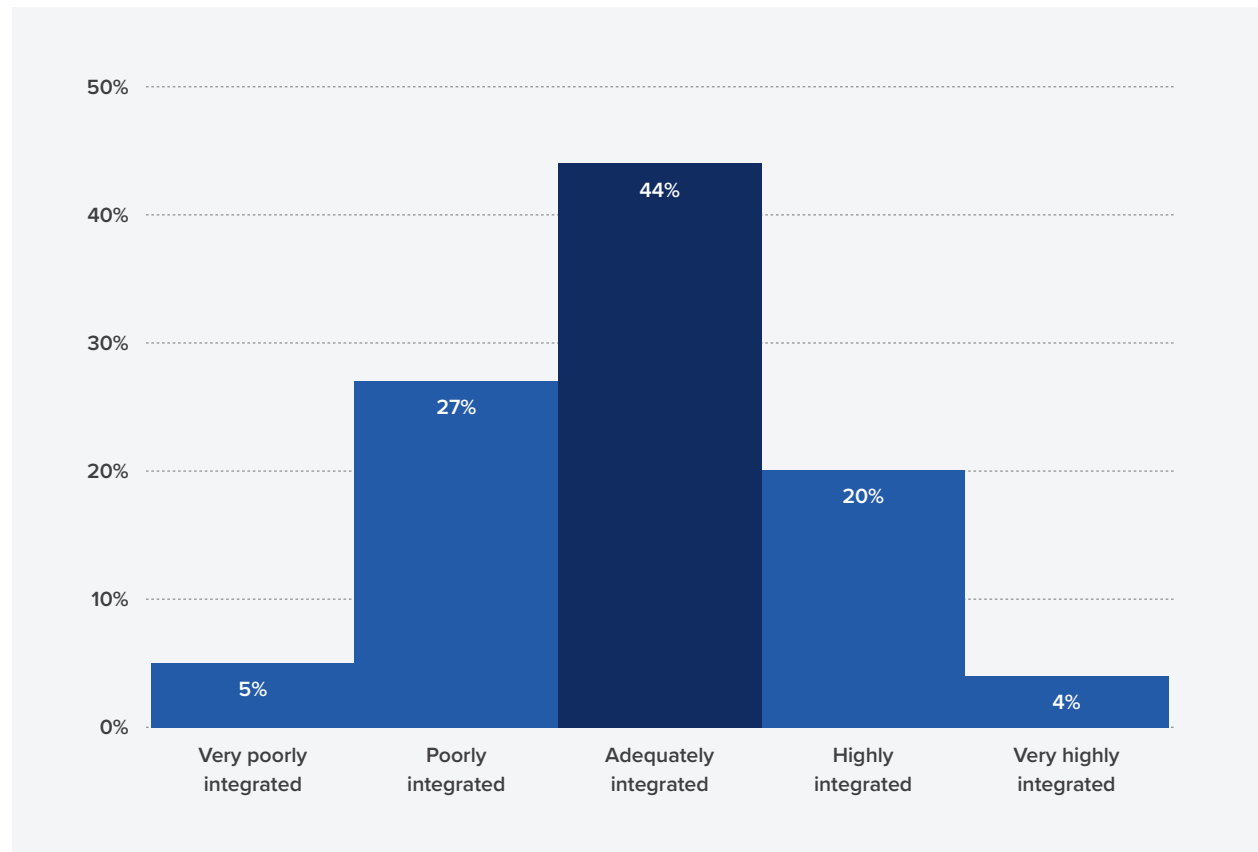
Put the numbers into action:

No matter your team's size, everyone has room to grow when it comes to integrating email with other marketing channels. Too often, teams that handle different channels are in competition with each other rather than focusing on how those channels can work together for the best overall results. Don't fall into that trap. Share your learnings and collaborate across teams. For example, integrating email marketing with social media can benefit both channels and lead to some truly unique cross-channel campaigns.

Streamline every step of your email workflow with Litmus

Litmus makes it easy to build, test, approve, and analyze every email for the best results.
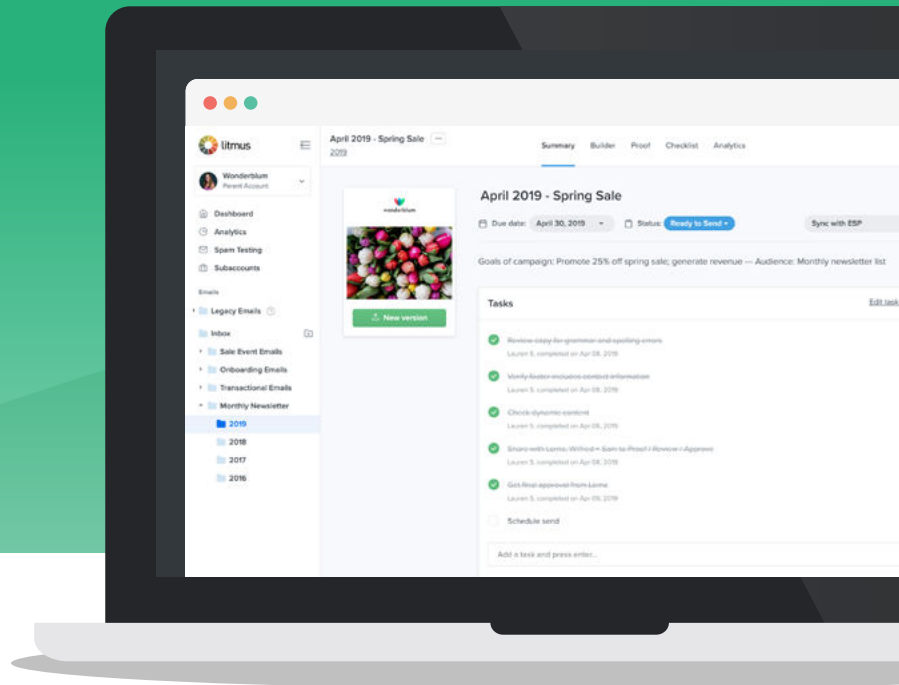
Campaign Development

Simplify organization and processes to accelerate email production, improve quality, and control access. Start new campaigns with a single click and set them up for success in a seamless, unified view; efficiently create, edit, and navigate code in Litmus Builder; and more.

Pre-send Testing

Create the best possible chance to drive results by testing every email with Litmus. Identify and fix critical elements that could hurt performance with Litmus Checklist, reach the inbox with Litmus Spam Testing, and ensure a great subscriber experience with Litmus Email Previews.

Reviews & Collaboration

Reduce confusion and speed up approvals—and production time—by enabling stakeholders to share feedback and approve campaigns in one place. Plus, easily share projects directly from Litmus and get even more visibility with notifications in Slack.

Technology & Integrations

Eliminate manual steps with integrations that let you access Litmus Email Previews directly inside hundreds of popular ESPs. Plus, seamlessly transfer code from Litmus to your ESP with a single click using Litmus ESP Syncing.

Insights & Analytics

Understand subscriber behavior to improve future campaigns in email and across channels. Fine-tune testing efforts and identify your most successful campaigns to inform future segmentation, design, and content decisions.

Try Litmus for free →

About Litmus

Litmus helps more than 250,000 marketers make email better. They use the Litmus Platform alongside their existing email service provider to ensure a consistently great brand experience for every subscriber, work more efficiently, accelerate campaign performance, reduce errors, and stay out of the spam folder. For more information about Litmus and the latest email news and trends, visit www.litmus.com.

About the author

Whitney Rudeseal Peet is the Digital Marketing Specialist at Litmus. Her average day at work involves writing and editing Litmus' content in addition to wrangling social media across multiple platforms. When she's not at her desk, you can find her reading a good book, enjoying a glass of wine, and planning her next trip to London.

About the designer

Chase Carpenter is a Junior Designer at Litmus. With a passion for simple illustration, subtle detail, and concise visual-communication, he strives to make the Litmus brand as approachable and memorable as it can be. When away from his computer, he can be found venturing out into the mountains around Salt Lake City to meditate or taking in a baseball game with a beer.

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