

Email Benchmarking Study

PROJECT: CLIENT EMAILS PRODUCED BY PRIORITY INTEGRATED MARKETING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION, METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

Priority Integrated Marketing participated in an academic study of email campaigns that were created over the past three years. The goal was to study readership patterns and click rates from those 300 Priority-produced emails to create best practices for email marketers, specifically in the financial services and healthcare industries. According to Forrester analysts, consumers will be deluged with more than 9,000 email marketing messages annually by 2014,* which certainly represents a challenge for marketers. Priority and MBA students from the University of St. Thomas studied the behavior patterns of email readers to help Priority's clients anticipate ways to ensure engagement.

METHODOLOGY:

The Priority and graduate student team reviewed four styles of email communications:

1. Publications: educational content
2. E-Alerts: important, time-sensitive news
3. Statements: transaction information (financial services)
4. Offers: promotions, discounts, sale items

OBJECTIVE:

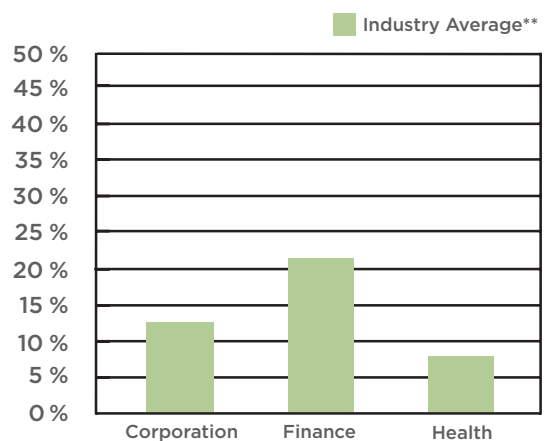
To analyze traditional email analytics such as opens, click-thrus, opt-outs, as well as visual heat maps to illustrate how various email marketing methodology affects consumer behavior.

FINDINGS HELP ANSWER PRIORITY CLIENTS' MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

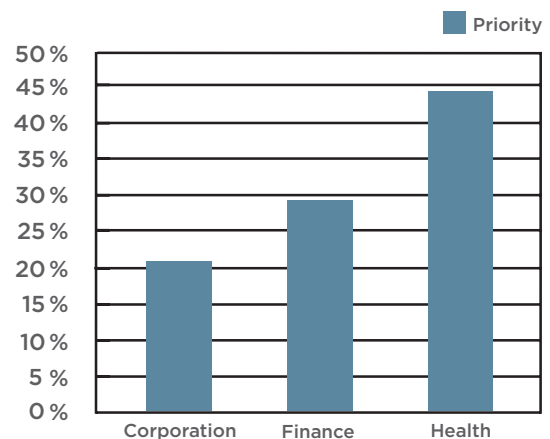
- ◆ The research shows that email messages created and sent by Priority have significantly better open rates, click rates and clicker percentage than the industry average.
- ◆ Chart 1B illustrates that healthcare emails have the highest open rates. Further study showed they also have the highest click rates and clicker percent.

OPEN RATE DEFINITION

The total number of emails opened divided by the total number of emails delivered (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).



▲ CHART 1A: RESULTS FROM A 2009 MAILER EMAIL METRICS REPORT



▲ CHART 1B: OPEN PERCENT OF PRIORITY EMAILS

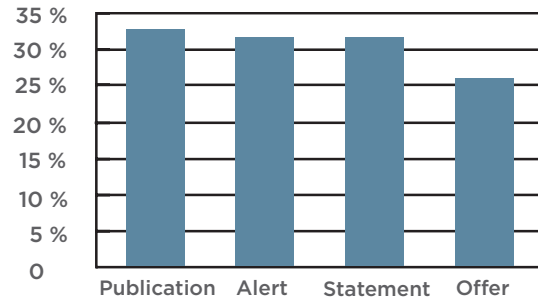
* "US Email Marketing Forecast, 2009 To 2014," Forrester Research, June 2009 By David Daniels

** Results from chart 1A are from the last half of 2008. The unique open rate for all industries was used for the corporation statistic.

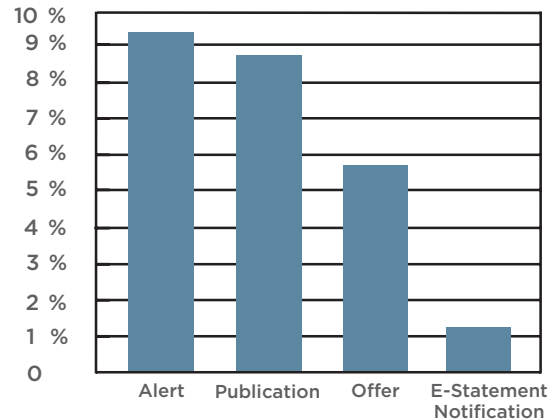
- ◆ Publications garner higher open rates and read rates than the other email types. Publications had higher open rates and higher read rates than offers. (Chart 2) Most interesting though is the bounce percent by email type (Chart 3). Using best practices for email opt-in can have a significant impact on bounce rate.
- ◆ Open rates increased by 5% for emails sent in the afternoon as opposed to the morning; the study further found that the average unique click rate (unique clicks divided by unique opens) for email sent in the AM was 6.4% and 8.57% for those sent in the PM.
- ◆ Mondays and Fridays saw the highest open rates in general; Friday had slightly less opens at 33.86% vs. 35.55% for Mondays, but better unique click rates at 9.83% vs. 8.36% for Mondays.

OTHER KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ Smaller list sizes generate a higher unique click rate than larger list sizes.
- ◆ Respondents' clicks tended to center on the top and middle sections of the emails; however, respondents did click on the bottom section of the emails if an offer or article of special interest was placed there.
- ◆ Open percent has very little to do with subject line length: results were inconclusive.
- ◆ The length of the email had no effect on open rate or click thru rate.
- ◆ If a publication contained promotional content, respondents tended to click there as opposed to the other material in the publication.



▲ CHART 2: OPEN PERCENT BY EMAIL TYPE



▲ CHART 3: BOUNCE RATE BY EMAIL TYPE

In the spirit of adding context to the data, there are dozens of factors that can influence results including:

1. The list and opt-in method. These can affect a variety of results, including open, click and opt-out rates.
2. The type of content in the message. People appreciate content that benefits them.
3. Overall brand strength. The more integrated an email message is to the overall brand and marketing channels, the more focused you can expect your audience to be to your messages.

These are only some of the elements that can influence email campaign results. Priority works closely with clients to identify and implement integrated approaches to improve the results.

SUCCESS MEASUREMENTS IN YOUR EMAIL MARKETING

The email channel by its very nature is dynamic and ever-changing as new technologies are applied to it, so the key findings in this case study are likely to change over time as well. Advancements in technology require marketers to revisit their data to ensure that they are keeping up with the latest in best practices. To receive updates from Priority's research, send an email to info@priorityresults.com or follow our ongoing email research on our blog at priorityresults.com/blog/.



- ▲ **HEALTHEAST SEASONS OF A WOMAN**
An email publication that was included in the study