If You Think Email Is Dead, Think Again





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When it comes to the biggest trends in marketing today, our industry is obsessed with channels such as social, voice and augmented reality as the means for reaching today's modern audience. And while each plays an important role in the customer journey, new research from Adobe finds a more traditional form of marketing—email—is very much holding its own among newer channels and technologies.

In fact, consumers said they spend approximately five hours a day checking work email (three-plus hours a day) and personal email (two-plus hours a day), according to our 2019 "Adobe Email Usage Study," which surveyed 1,002 U.S. adults in July 2019. They're refreshing their inboxes from a variety of times and places too: while watching TV, in bed, during work meetings, during meals, while driving — and even in the bathroom.

"It's incredibly clear that we're all comfortable with email, and we've integrated it into almost every part of our day," said Sarah Kennedy, VP of global marketing, digital experience, at Adobe. "While it's important to note that the time we spend checking email overall has declined since 2016, the frequency remains substantial. The Adobe survey findings solidify how important email still is in the everyday lives of our customers, and this means there is still a big opportunity for marketers to utilize email to engage with people in relevant and useful ways."

"Contextual relevance and usefulness are critically important because you need both to deliver value to your customer and without them, you also risk being ignored," Kennedy emphasized.

Email Offers: Survey Says, 'Room For Improvement'
According to the survey, work emails are opened more frequently than personal emails—80% and

57%, respectively. Respondents also said they most prefer to receive offers via emails (56% for work, 60% for personal), which is significantly more than direct mail, social, and other marketing channels.

Yet only one-quarter of email offers from brands are interesting or compelling enough to open, consumers said. Why don't people open emails? Frequency of brand email communications is the leading annoyance according to respondents, for both work and personal emails. Other issues cited include incorrect marketing data about the recipient, offers to buy an already-purchased product, and poorly written or wordy messages.

Consumers said personalization in email marketing is important to them—especially in personal correspondence. Broken down by generations, almost half of Millennials (46%) said they want personalized email communications from brands, followed by 43% of Gen X and 30% of Baby Boomers. For work emails, 37% of Millennials want them personalized, as do 26% of Gen X and 23% of Boomers.

Consumers said they are most frustrated by email recommendations that don't match up to their interests—33% for work emails and 31% for personal emails.

"It's no secret that customers now expect personalized experiences both online and off," Kennedy said. "Accurate and useful personalization in email marketing isn't optional. It may sound simple, but get their names right. Provide offers for products and promotions they've already expressed interest in. Stop blasting mass emails to your entire subscriber list. Understand the implication of a customer's job, location, historical behaviors, and anything else you know about them and have their consent to utilize."

Work-Life Balance—Or Not

According to the study, respondents across all groups frequently check their work emails outside of the office. Interestingly, they're checking personal email less during work hours; although that's more true for Baby Boomers than for Millennials and Gen Z, 31% and 26%, respectively, who still check personal email multiple times per hour.

Despite most people checking work emails outside of the office, there is a growing trend to resist this urge, driven by Millennials. Almost half (48%) of consumers said they don't check their work emails until they start working. Of the remainder, just 13% check while still in bed, 15% while commuting, and 25% while eating breakfast.

As for personal emails, 25% of consumers said they first check their personal email while still in bed, 42% check while getting ready or eating breakfast, 16% check in route to work, and 17% check when they get into work.

For comparative purposes, social media, which has seemingly taken over our lives, is mostly first checked when on a break at work (30%). Not far behind, 26% said they first check while still in bed, 25% check while getting ready in the morning or eating breakfast, 11% check during their morning commute, and 8% check at the office.

Compared with 2018, the study also found that Baby Boomers are more likely (more than half) to ignore work-related email while on vacation, but personal email is frequently checked. On the other hand, one-quarter of Millennials and Gen X check their work email multiple times a day when on vacation, while one-third do so with their personal email.

"There are generational preferences and habits that come into play, for sure," Kennedy told CMO by Adobe. "And it depends on the person and what their daily routines and preferences are. For

example, someone who commutes via public transportation might choose to check their email while on the train, while someone who is driving to work would wait until they get into the office. Understanding when and where individuals are more likely to open an email communication from a brand is essential to getting open and engagement rates up."

For the full survey findings: https://www.slideshare.net/adobe/2019-adobe-email-usage-study

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