
Practice papers

Beyond open rate: Why it is time for e-mail marketers to think reach, frequency, impact

Received: 14th February, 2013



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Abstract E-mail marketing is still dominated by a direct mail world view, with a focus on recency, frequency and monetary value (RFM) and a resulting fixation on relevance, timing and tighter targeting. As a result, e-mail marketers are trying to get subscribers to open, click and buy more often by sending fewer messages. Current performance metrics are both limiting and misleading. Thinking of e-mail as fundamentally a broadcast advertising channel shifts the focus onto reach, frequency and impact (RFI), unlocking the brand potential of e-mail.

KEYWORDS: e-mail marketing, reach, frequency, brand

INTRODUCTION

E-mail is not digital direct mail

The e-mail marketing landscape has never been healthier. In the last three years, the number of e-mails sent by brands has nearly doubled with no discernible change to open or click rates (Figure 1). Information held by the UK Direct Marketing Association indicates that consumers are increasingly choosing to receive a greater number of e-mails from brands they trust. In the recent US presidential election campaign, Obama's digital fundraising was ten times higher

than Romney's because he sent significantly more e-mail.¹ But despite overwhelming evidence that consumers are willing to receive more e-mail from trusted sources, marketers are still trying to get subscribers to open, click and buy more often, by sending fewer e-mails. E-mail inherited much of its strategy and thought leadership from direct mail, where the biggest and defining challenge is the high cost of sending messages. The high channel costs of traditional direct mail led to the development of the RFM model (recency — frequency — monetary value), which focuses on

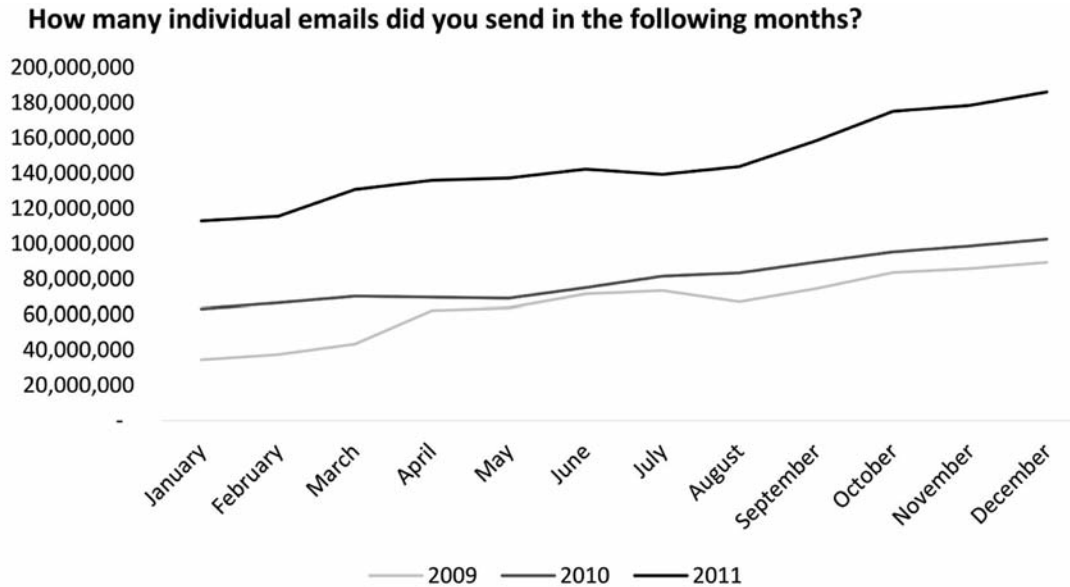


Figure 1: UK DMA National E-mail Benchmarking Report 2011

relevance, timing and targeting to maximise return on investment (ROI). By continuing to adhere to this approach, e-mail marketers are not leveraging the true power of e-mail — its low cost — to test consumer acceptance for frequency and unlock the brand potential of e-mail.

Unlocking the brand potential of e-mail

In every other marketing medium, advertisers try to push the boundaries of frequency to see how much messaging an audience will accept. Imagine if ad time on television was free. Would advertisers reduce, maintain or increase their number of ads? They would take as much space as they were offered because they use the broadcast RFI model (reach — frequency — impact). Importantly, it is this model, not RFM, which brand marketers have adopted because it focuses on telling as many people about a brand as many times as they will tolerate. With the lowest cost per message of all marketing channels, e-mail would appear to be the perfect candidate for the RFI model. However, it

is hugely underexploited by marketers because of the perception that inboxes are already overcrowded.

The (un)crowded inbox

Any discussion about e-mail marketing will inevitably mention over-mailing or spam. Genuine spam is defined as unsolicited e-mail. It is illegal and very little of it makes it into inboxes these days, such is the quality of the filters that internet service providers have in place. Nearly everything else is legitimate, permission-based e-mail from trusted brands, friends and colleagues. It is important to distinguish commercial e-mail from personal e-mail because consumers do this very effectively for themselves. In Merkle's 'View from the digital inbox' report,² when people were asked how they would like to be contacted for personal communication, approximately 35 per cent said e-mail, with phone and text message proving more popular (Figure 3). When asked how they would like to be contacted for commercial communication, e-mail is the

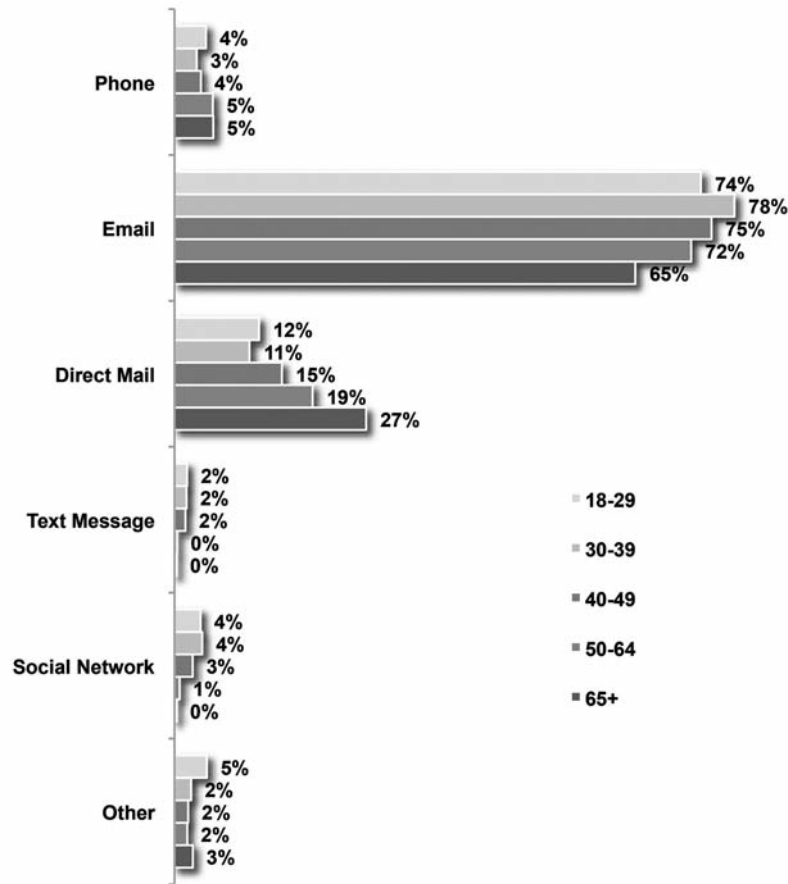


Figure 2: Preferred method of commercial communication by age

Source: Connelly, L. (2011) ‘View from the digital inbox 2011’, available at: <http://www.merkleinc.com/thought-leadership/white-papers/2011/view-digital-inbox-2011> (accessed 18th March, 2013)

overwhelming choice, with roughly 75 per cent of people choosing this as their preferred option (Figure 2). Most people would rather be sold to via e-mail than by phone, text or social media.

In reality, most customers do not excessively love or hate e-mails from brands they trust. They like the brand enough to tolerate the e-mails until such time as they require the service or product being offered by that brand. We call this unemotionally subscribed. Such apparent indifference should not be mistaken for dislike or disengagement. E-mail is a sufficiently mature marketing channel for consumers to understand that they alone

choose what arrives in their inbox. If they have not unsubscribed, it means they want to receive e-mails from that brand, whether they engage with every e-mail or none at all. Interestingly, people’s view on frequency and volume is directly connected to their opinion of the brand. Brand advocates will happily receive two or three e-mails a day, while brand opponents might see two e-mails a week as over-mailing. E-mail is the tail not the dog — annoy people from a brand perspective and they will start shouting ‘spam’.

Finally, the most sophisticated filter for e-mail is the consumer themselves. A typical consumer will choose to receive

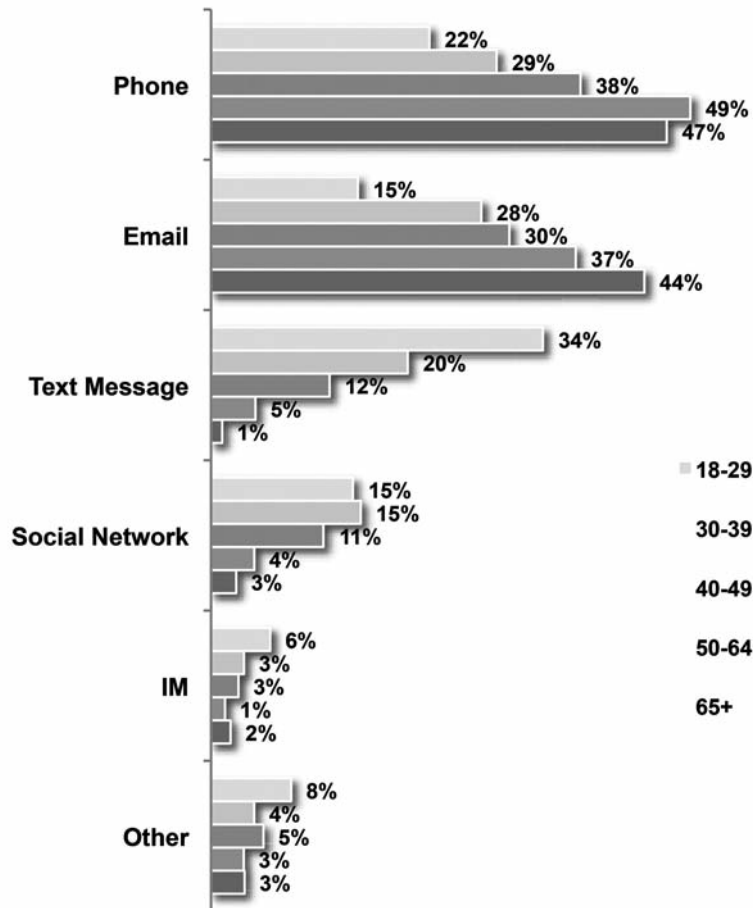


Figure 3: Preferred method of personal communication by age

Source: Connelly, L. (2011) 'View from the digital inbox 2011', available at: <http://www.merkleinc.com/thought-leadership/white-papers/2011/view-digital-inbox-2011> (accessed 18th March, 2013)

e-mails from one or two competing brands only, making the inbox a relatively competition-free zone. Take insurance as an example. Searching on Google would return hundreds of insurance offers, while a search of a consumer's inbox would likely find just one or two — those to which they are subscribed. One or two e-mails from an insurance company a week does not contribute to an overcrowded inbox. According to the Direct Marketing Association's e-mail tracking report for 2012, 57 per cent of UK consumers subscribe to ten brands or fewer. If each of these brands sends three

e-mails a week, a high frequency by conventional e-mail wisdom, that would mean that over half of UK e-mail consumers were receiving a maximum of 30 commercial e-mails a week, most a lot less. Inboxes are only crowded from marketers' perspective.

BEYOND OPENS AND CLICKS

Focus on customers not campaigns

There is a fixation in the e-mail industry with rates and, more particularly, open and click rates. These are widely used as the

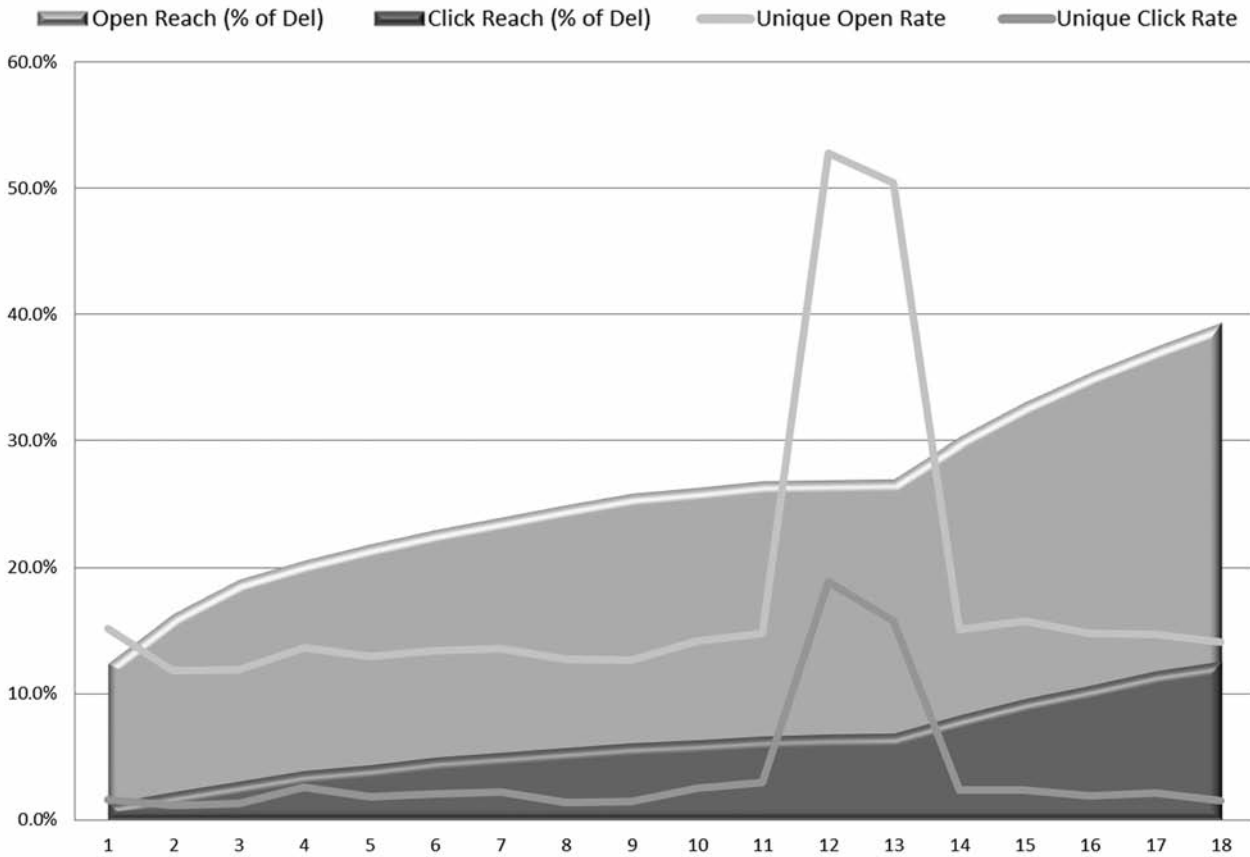


Figure 4: Open and click reach vs open and click rate

definitive performance indicators but can be very misleading. In Figure 4, there is a clear spike of about 50 per cent in open and click rates for weeks 12 and 13. Taken in isolation, this would appear to be a significant success and it would seem logical to replicate the creative, product, offer or targeting. As shown in Figure 5, however, it was a highly targeted, tiny volume send that produced the outlier. Unsurprisingly for such a tiny send volume, revenue was also low. As the key objective for almost every business is revenue, this is what should drive measurement and strategy.

Open and click rates are also responsible for one of the most divisive disconnects in the e-mail industry, namely the use of campaign metrics to measure customer

behaviour or engagement. Behaviour in marketing is defined as the aggregation of specific responses by customers to a stimulus, in this case an e-mail campaign. Campaign metrics measure these specific responses, such as open and click, but do not offer any insight into the relationship between them. For example, if an e-mail newsletter has an average open rate of 21 per cent after five sends, does that mean that only 21 per cent of the database has engaged over that time? It is far more likely that there is a group of subscribers that open every e-mail and a group that never open, with everyone else sitting somewhere in between. This is a valuable piece of information about customer behaviour that cannot be gleaned from conventional metrics because they do not

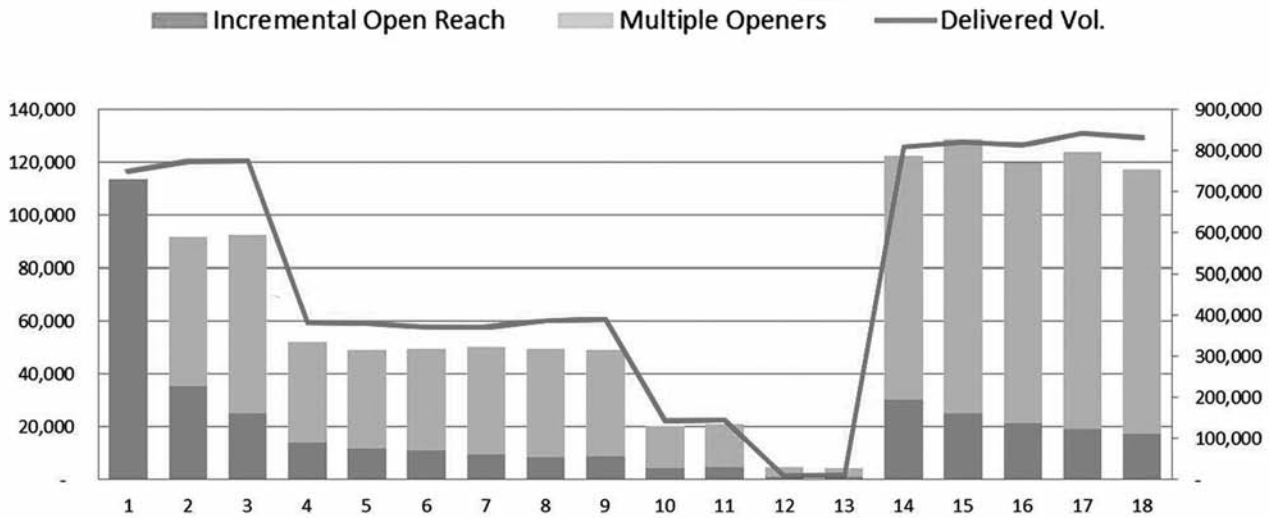


Figure 5: Open reach vs frequency

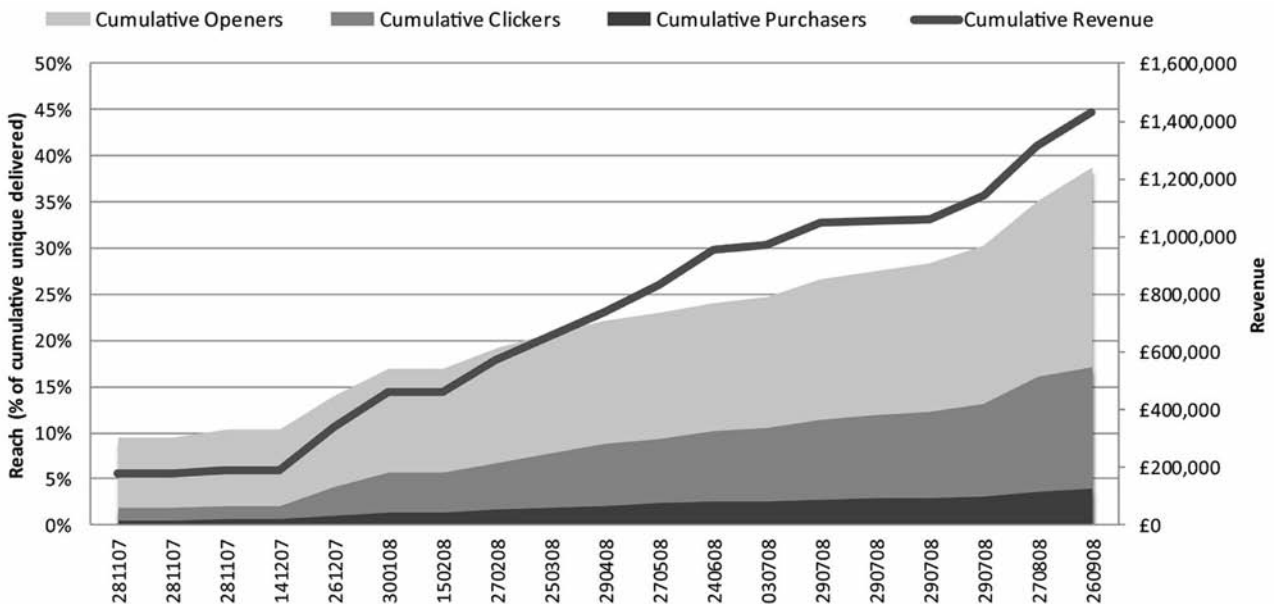


Figure 6: Open, click and purchase reach vs cumulative revenue for UK travel company

examine the relationship between these results over time.

What adds to this campaign measurement fallacy is that most companies do actually require performance to be charted over time and for many brands, excluding fast-moving consumer goods, customer purchase cycles are longer than one month. Thus, there is

a need for a metric that keeps track of customer behaviour over time. This metric is one of the cornerstones of the broadcast RFI model, and it is called reach.

Reach: Measuring customer behaviour

Reach is a customer behaviour metric that measures the proportion of a list that has

Open Frequency	% of 2007 Subscribers	% of 2007 Revenue
0 Messages	54.51	23.22
1 Message	18.67	16.1
2 Messages	8.17	14.56
3 Messages	5.86	13.28
4 Messages	3.93	9.69
5 Messages	2.55	5.91
6 Messages	2.04	5.62
7 Messages	1.74	4.17
8 Messages	1.22	4.59
9 Messages	0.84	2.2
10 Messages	0.39	0.63
11 Messages	0.06	0.02
12 Messages	0.01	
	100%	100%

54% of revenue
75% less revenue
per subscriber

17% of revenue
400% more revenue
per subscriber

Figure 7: Annual revenue generated by open frequency for a UK travel company

engaged at least once over a period of time. In e-mail terms, that interaction could be opens, clicks, conversions or purchase, but for simplicity's sake this paper will consider only opens. Open reach is calculated by counting the number of subscribers on a list that have opened at least once, and dividing that by the number of subscribers that have received at least one e-mail over a given period, thus:

$$\text{open reach} = \frac{\text{de-duped list of all e-mail addresses that opened an e-mail}}{\text{de-duped list of e-mail addresses that received an e-mail}}$$

The time period could be a quarter or a year, depending on send frequency and specific goals, but to achieve significant results the chosen period must contain at least 12 interactions.

First-time opens drive results

For open reach to have any practical application in e-mail marketing, it must correlate to the most important business metrics of conversion and revenue. E-mail agency Alchemy Worx has been measuring open reach across a range of clients and

industries for seven years and time and again it has noted such a correlation. This is perfectly illustrated in Figure 6. The first arrow highlights a period in which total revenue, the grey line, was static and this is mirrored closely by open reach, in light grey. The second arrow highlights an increase in total revenue that correlates to an increase in open reach. The bulk of total revenue is generated when customers who have not opened over a given period, open an e-mail for the first time. Thus, a strategy that focuses on optimising open reach instead of open rate is far more likely to improve revenue.

The reason for the correlation between revenue and open reach is at the heart of the RFI model — a very large group with a low response rate will generate more revenue than a very small group with a high response rate. Figure 7 details the annual revenue generated by open frequency for a UK travel company. It is interesting to note that the largest group for revenue generation is '0 messages', but the power of unopened e-mail will be discussed in the branding section a little later. Moving up the open frequency chain, the percentage of total revenue

generated by the higher responding groups drops in line with the diminishing size of the group. Although it is easy to focus on the groups with the best response rates because the open and clicks look so positive, it is the much larger groups that give the biggest increases in total revenue when they open. In the RFI model, the short-term goal of increasing open and clicks is replaced by a longer-term strategy — converting non-openers into first-time openers, and then those first-time openers into higher-responding multiple openers.

Target engagement

The traditional direct mail model uses tighter targeting to reduce costs and increase ROI through relevance but its application in e-mail can be counterproductive. First, the ability to segment and target effectively is entirely dependent on the quality of data. Even simple data points such as age, gender and name can be difficult to collect accurately for an entire database and it is getting harder, too. According to the UK Direct Marketing Association's most recent national client e-mail report, the number of UK client-side marketers citing data as a barrier to achieving their goals rose by nearly one-quarter from 2011 to 2012. Secondly, it is very hard to predict with accuracy when and why a customer will be ready to do something new with a brand. Imagine a buyer of fine wine orders a few cheap cases from a mail-order company every year for the office party. That transaction leads to a data profile that recommends targeting him with cheap wine offers. In fact, the fine wine buyer's personal tastes are very expensive, but because his purchase history excludes him from fine wine offers, he buys his expensive wine elsewhere. Both are happy because they continue to gain something from the relationship but both are also oblivious to how much more beneficial the relationship could be.

A more effective and measurable area of segmentation is customer engagement with the communications themselves. Tracking open reach makes this data available for every single customer. In terms of an e-mail strategy using the RFI model, this means understanding how first-time openers and multiple openers respond to e-mails in comparison to each other. For example, a free delivery offer is sent to an entire list. Open rates and revenue for that individual campaign are both above average; then a 20 per cent discount offer is sent and both metrics are again above average. Using conventional metrics, both of these campaigns would appear to be successful, so the logical conclusion would be to keep sending these two different types of offer to the entire list.

However, analysis of open reach for these offers shows that free delivery had very little effect on generating first-time opens, whereas the discount offer had significantly more. A free delivery offer has less interest to someone who is not buying regularly but is more likely to appeal to someone who is. Likewise, a big discount is far more likely to engage someone who has been inactive for a while. Analysis of open reach can identify what triggers these different groups to respond so that they can be targeted with an appropriate offer and message. Customers are constantly indicating how they want to engage with brands and open reach allows marketers to listen, learn and lift response.

Reactivate with every e-mail sent

The use of open reach as a key performance metric for e-mail identifies three key groups — non-openers, first-time openers and multiple openers. As discussed, the first and most important step of the strategy is converting previous non-openers into first-time openers. But look at this another way and every non-opener is actually an opted-in prospect in need of reactivation (see the

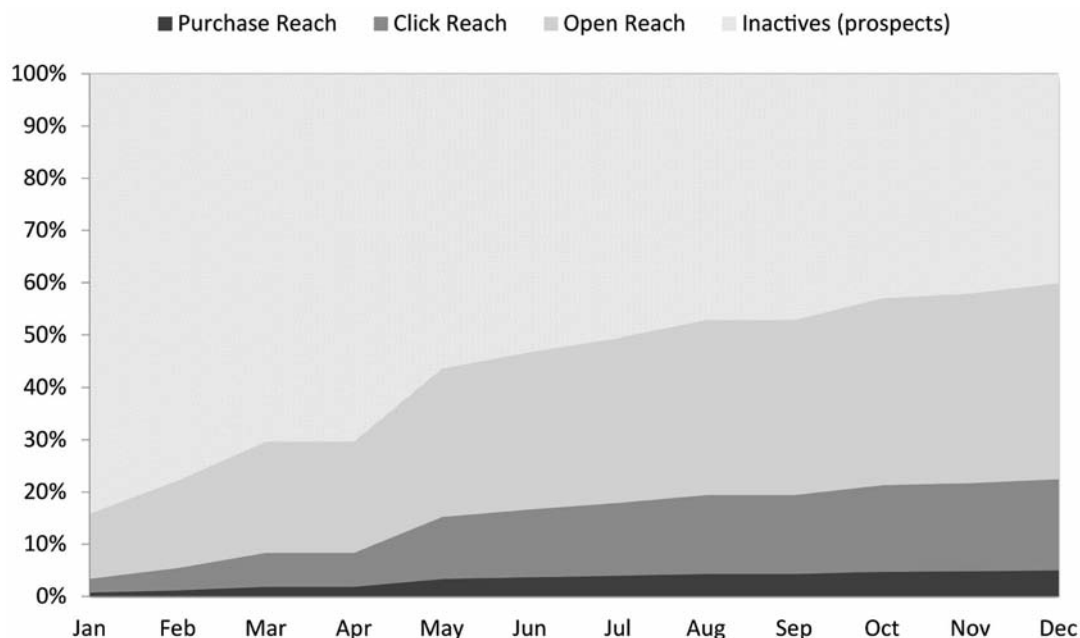


Figure 8: Example reach chart categorising all mailed subscribers

pale grey section in Figure 8). One-off reactivation campaigns are often ineffective because they target a snapshot of a database. A small number of customers will engage but that is often their only interaction until the next time they appear in the snapshot, and so on. Rather than focusing one campaign every six or 12 months on re-engaging inactives with a low-margin offer, every e-mail should be seen as a re-engagement opportunity. Insights gained from analysing what motivates non-openers to become first-time openers will inform this continuous reactivation strategy. There should be no need to send ‘we miss you e-mails’ when open reach analysis suggests that a 20 per cent discount offer has significantly increased first-time openers. This is a measurable trigger for this group and can be used as part of a strategy that reactivates with every single e-mail sent.

The importance of list size

When there is a significant increase in open reach, typically it is for one of two

reasons — new people were added to the list or there was an increase in mailing frequency. Analysis of open reach shows that new subscribers to a list are the most likely to become first-time openers, so one of the best ways to increase revenue is to grow the list. This is why in the RFI model, database size is the single most important factor for increasing revenue. It can be a large investment of time and money, but the impact of new subscribers on open reach, and subsequently revenue, is significant. Very few marketers ascribe enough importance to increasing list size when it comes to e-mail because the focus of the RFM model is reduction.

Frequency increases engagement: Case study

The second most important factor in the RFI model is mailing frequency. Periodically increasing send frequency is the most cost-effective way of optimising open reach and the single most effective way of increasing revenue in any e-mail programme, regardless of strategy or model.

Table 1: Frequency test groups

Group	Mailable records	Mailings
1: Monthly newsletter	19,678	3
2: Monthly + resend	19,641	6
3: Fortnightly e-shot	19,646	6
4: Fortnightly + resends	19,747	12

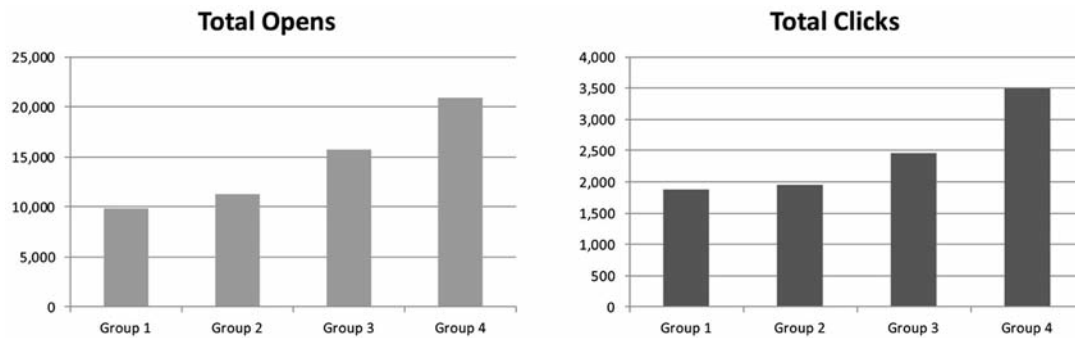


Figure 9: Open and click volume by test group

As such, this part of the RFI e-mail strategy is worthy of more in-depth analysis.

The following is a case study undertaken by Alchemy Worx to test the impact of frequency on engagement. The prevailing wisdom in e-mail marketing is that increasing frequency decreases engagement. This study of a UK travel company’s monthly newsletter shows the opposite to be true. The database was equally split into four groups, with groups 1 and 2 receiving the full newsletter plus a re-send for group 2, and groups 3 and 4 receiving a bi-monthly e-shot that split the content in two plus a re-send for group 4 (Table 1). The test was run over three months to make sure the content of the e-mails did not skew results. For the purpose of this discussion, the two groups with the biggest variation in frequency will be considered, namely, groups 1 and 4. Group 1 received three e-mails per quarter and group 4 received 12 e-mails per quarter, four times the send frequency.

The first thing to note about the results (Table 2) is that the average open rate for

the higher-frequency send is significantly lower than that of the lower-frequency send — a difference of 7 per cent in the case of groups 1 and 4. There is also a similar result for click rate. It is at this point that open and click rate would be used within the RFM model to conclude that customers are reacting negatively when sent more e-mail. This again highlights how misleading open rates can be because the figures show the total number of opens for group 4 to be twice as many as group 1 — 20,944 vs 9,386 (Figure 9). Again, it is a very similar result for total clicks — 1,870 for group 1 vs 3,498 for group 4.

A look at the wider picture confirms the same trend: 39 per cent of group 4 opened at least once in the three-month period compared with 27 per cent in group 1, and 24 per cent of group 4 opened more than once vs 10 per cent of group 1 (Figure 10). The one negative outcome for group 4 was a churn rate 2 per cent higher than group 1. In the RFM model, where increasing database size is

Table 2: Frequency test results

Group	Mailings	Sent volume	Opens	Open rate (%)	Clicks	Click rate (%)	CTO (%)	Unsub rate (%)	Complaint rate (%)
1: Monthly newsletter	3	59,034	9,836	17.01	1,870	3.23	19.01	0.54	0.09
1: Totals	3	59,034	9,836	17.01	1,870	3.23	19.01	0.54	0.09
2: Monthly newsletter	3	57,028	8,294	14.82	1,453	2.60	17.52	0.39	0.12
2: Resend	3	47,951	2,998	6.29	508	1.07	16.94	0.38	0.11
2: Totals	6	104,979	11,292	10.89	1,961	1.89	17.37	0.38	0.12
3: 1st bi-weekly e-shot	3	56,630	7,951	14.27	1,251	2.24	15.73	0.44	0.09
3: 2nd bi-weekly e-shot	3	56,191	7,751	14.03	1,219	2.21	15.73	0.35	0.11
3: Totals	6	112,821	15,702	14.15	2,470	2.23	15.73	0.40	0.10
4: 1st bi-weekly e-shot	3	56,696	7,754	13.89	1,134	2.03	14.62	0.40	0.11
4: Resend	3	48,313	3,311	6.87	900	1.87	27.18	0.36	0.11
4: 2nd bi-weekly e-shot	3	56,109	7,192	13.02	982	1.78	13.65	0.30	0.08
4: Resend	3	48,316	2,687	5.58	482	1.00	17.94	0.28	0.09
4: Totals	12	209,434	20,944	10.10	3,498	1.69	16.70	0.34	0.10

Table 3: Aggregated frequency test results

Group	Mailable records	Mailings	Sent volume	Open reach (%)	Opened >1 (%)	Click reach (%)	Clicked >1 (%)	Purchase reach (%)	Purchased >1 (%)	AOV (£)	Revenue per contact mailed (£)	List churn (%)
1: Monthly newsletter	19,678	3	59,034	26.99	9.67	6.88	0.79	1.39	0.23	179.58	5.57	1.58
2: Monthly + resend	19,641	6	104,979	32.16	16.71	8.57	1.35	2.01	0.31	247.32	6.14	2.02
3: Fortnightly e-shot	19,646	6	112,821	32.25	18.88	9.66	2.31	2.10	0.34	225.78	5.96	2.28
4: Fortnightly + resends	19,747	12	209,434	38.97	24.39	13.36	3.37	2.11	0.34	243.32	6.17	3.52

not a priority, this could be viewed as a reason not to adopt a high-frequency strategy. However, increasing database size is a key component of the RFI model, so the higher percentage of churn will be offset by the increased acquisition of new subscribers.

These results show that it is frequency that drives engagement, not the other way round as is currently adhered to in the RFM model. Customers cannot engage with an e-mail they do not receive. If the word ‘e-mail’ was replaced with ‘opportunities to interact’, then the strategy of ‘an extra e-mail send to 1 million customers’ becomes the strategy of ‘let’s send another 1 million opportunities

to interact’. This simple re-phrasing highlights the biggest obstacle to the RFI model — it is the perception by marketers that sending more e-mail disengages customers and not the fact itself.

Frequency needs to be proportionate to value

It stands to reason that there will always be a limit to the number of e-mails a single brand can send within a given time period. It is not just about how many e-mails you send, it is about the relative value of each e-mail. Frequency needs to be proportionate to value. A daily e-mail is more demanding on the recipient than a weekly e-mail, which in turn is more

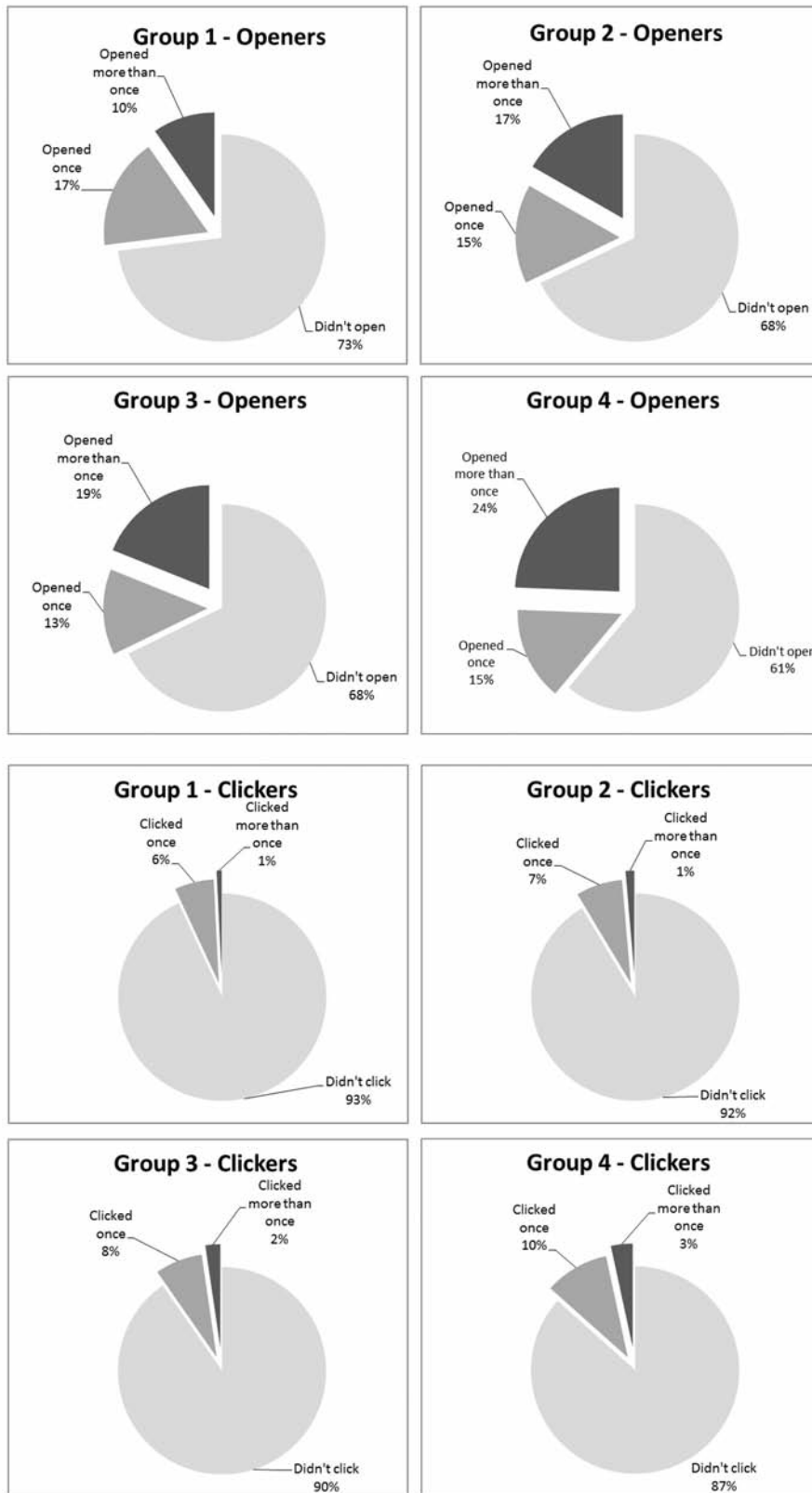


Figure 10: Open and click frequency breakdown by test group

demanding than a monthly e-mail. As frequency is limited by value, finding the acceptance level through testing and phasing needs to go hand in hand with understanding the value of each e-mail to the consumer. Thought of in this way, e-mail becomes about influencing behaviour in a brand way, rather than about reacting to behaviour in a direct mail way. In other channels this approach is simply called brand advertising.

E-MAIL AS BRAND ADVERTISING

The lowest-cost ad channel available

A typical major UK retail brand is likely to have an e-mail list of between 250,000 and 1 million contacts. To put that in perspective, very few national newspapers have a circulation of more than 1 million nowadays, and even those numbers come with significant wastage. This means up to 1 million customers who have expressed an interest in a brand. Access to that kind of relevant audience is not available in any other marketing or advertising channel in the UK, save for prime-time television ad slots that are prohibitively expensive, and the increasingly difficult to monetise social media. Now compare the cost of regularly e-mailing 1 million people who have said they are interested in hearing more about a brand's products and services, with the cost of booking a slot in a leading prime-time soap opera every week.

So the broadcast element of e-mail is very real, and it is arguably the closest thing in numerical terms to the power that broadcast television once wielded before the signal went digital and the market fragmented. With numbers like these, the goal of every major brand should be to build and maintain a list of people who have opted in to receive their e-mails because every send is an opportunity to advertise their products, services and brand values at the lowest cost available.

The nudge effect

The evidence that e-mail can work as brand advertising is perhaps most notable in the power of the unopened e-mail. As discussed, the RFM model would view any unopened e-mails as a failure because the send of that e-mail has not been directly monetised. Looked at from the RFI viewpoint, however, the results are very different. Figure 11 shows a company's sales performance for a fortnight across all channels. The vertical mid-grey area indicates the period over which the e-mail was sent, the light grey horizontal line shows sales from people who did not receive the e-mail and the dark grey line shows people who got the e-mail but, and this is the key, did not open it. Despite not opening the e-mail, they still went on to purchase via another channel. This is called the nudge effect and it is essentially a way of influencing people's behaviour without a direct response — or, in other words, brand advertising.

Just because a user is not opening an e-mail, it does not mean that they are not registering with a brand. The simple presence of e-mail in a user's inbox creates this powerful nudge effect — a subtle stimulus that brings three distinct advantages:

- regularly seeing a brand in their inbox may prompt a subscriber to respond via another channel;
- an engaging subject line reminds the subscriber of any current offers across channels, as well as reinforcing brand values and key benefits; and
- regular e-mails keep a brand in the front of a subscriber's mind, so that even if they do not transact today, they may do so in the future.

What is more, this effect is not just noticeable in isolation. Figure 12 shows the revenue across all channels, both

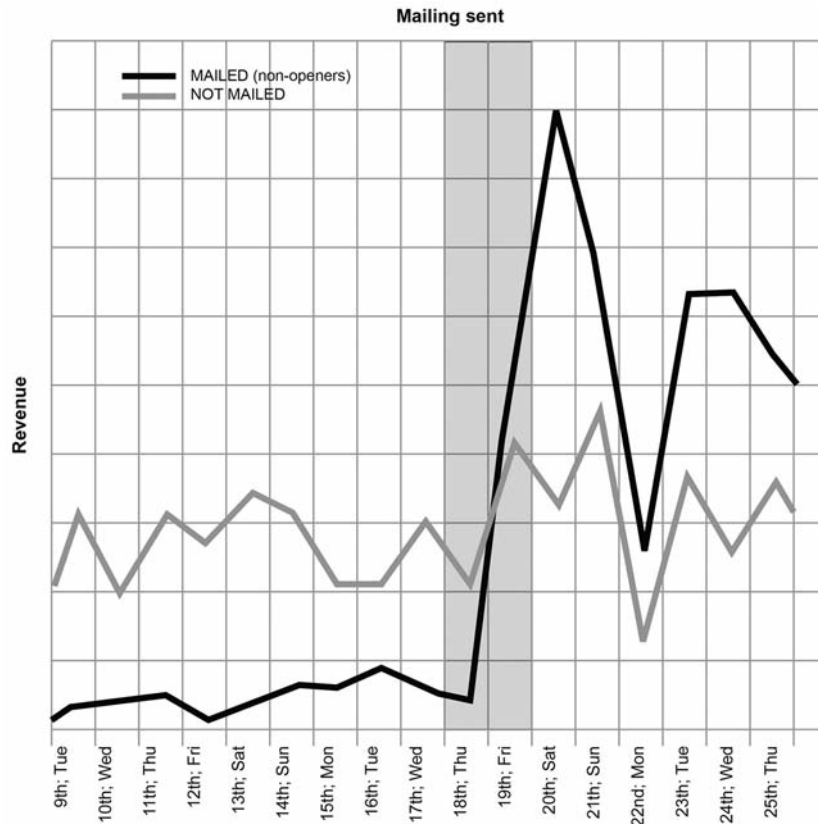


Figure 11: Non-email revenue from customers mailed but that did not open vs not mailed

online and offline for customers who did not open any e-mails. The revenue is highest in absolute terms for the segment that received seven e-mails.

The nudge effect derives its effectiveness from ‘e-mail triage’. This is the act of inbox-sifting that all inbox owners go through to ascertain the importance of each e-mail and the relevant action. Which messages need to be open and read at once? Which messages can be saved for reading later? Which ones need to be kept? Which ones can be deleted? During this process, subscribers must use their highest cognitive function to make these instant decisions. Sending an e-mail featuring a brand name in the ‘from field’ alongside a subject line that communicates content and strong brand benefit can facilitate retention of the message and influence a

purchase decision — even when the recipient fails to open the e-mail. It is a subtle yet powerful opportunity that makes an unopened e-mail a source of potential revenue across all channels.

E-mail drives sales in other channels

It is not just unopened e-mail that has a branding effect; e-mail as whole, opened or unopened, drives sales and activity in other channels. In Figure 13, the revenue from all channels excluding e-mail was measured using Omniture tracking. The light grey bars show the average daily revenue per month on days for which e-mail was sent, whereas the dark grey bars show the average daily revenue for days on which no e-mail was sent. Those days on which e-mail was sent deliver higher revenue through non-e-mail channels. As e-mail revenue has been excluded, it is clear that

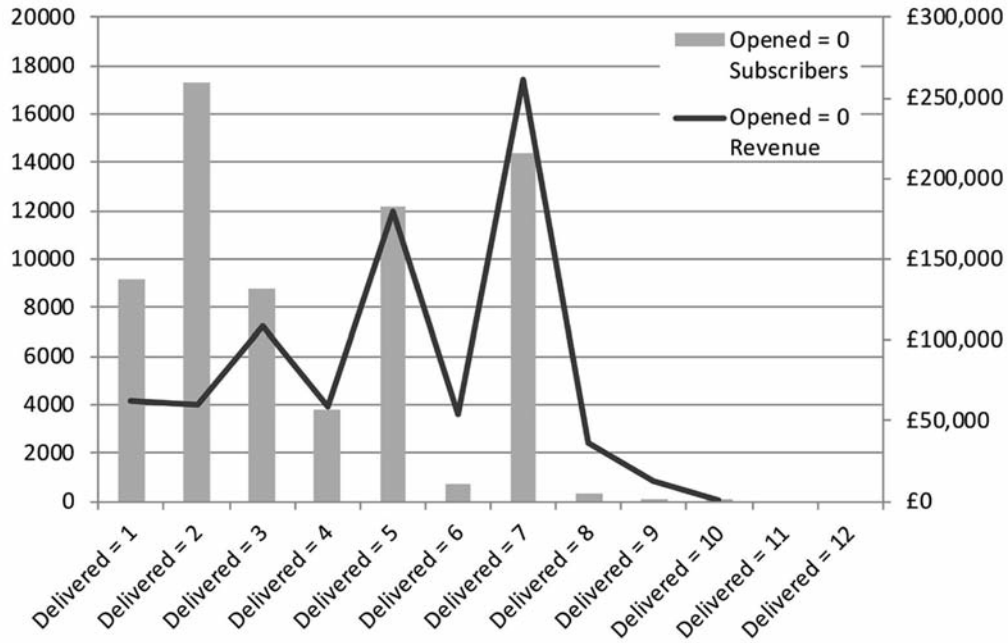


Figure 12: Revenue from all channels from subscribers that did not open, by number of emails received

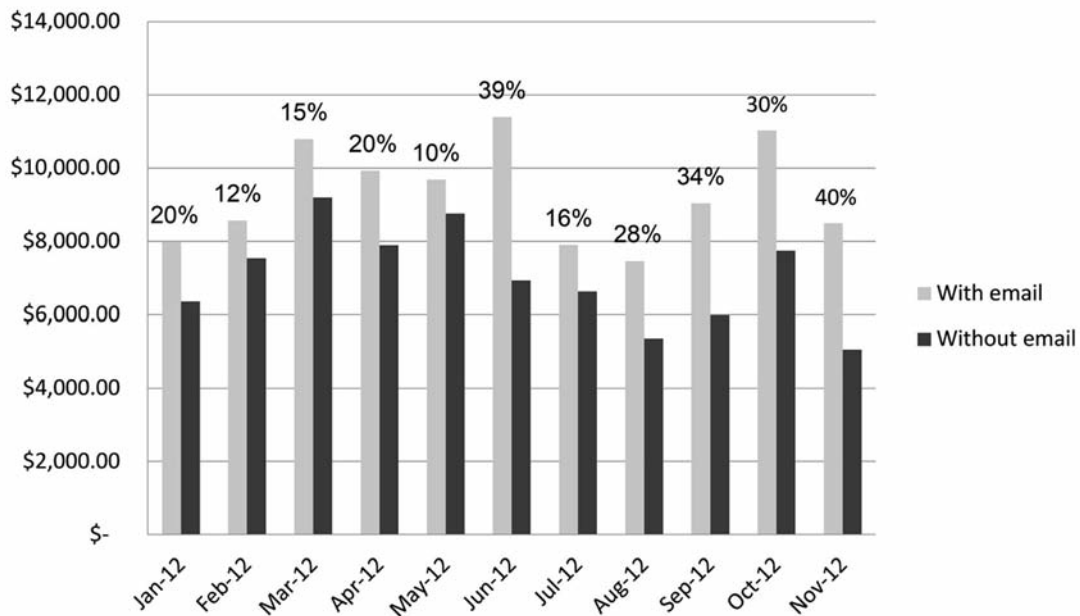


Figure 13: Non-email revenue by month with and without e-mail

revenue not attributed to e-mail is present. Figures 14 and 15 split the same data into different channels. In each case, the darker block represents the revenue for the group that continued to receive e-mail, and in

each case there is an increase across all channels when e-mail was sent. The revenue generated directly by e-mail is direct response in action, while the revenue generated not directly attributed to e-mail

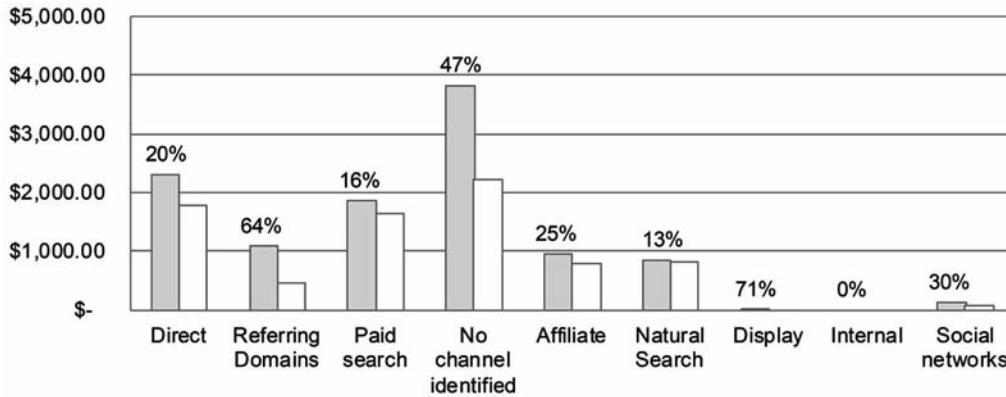


Figure 14: Last touch average daily sales by channel (October 2012)

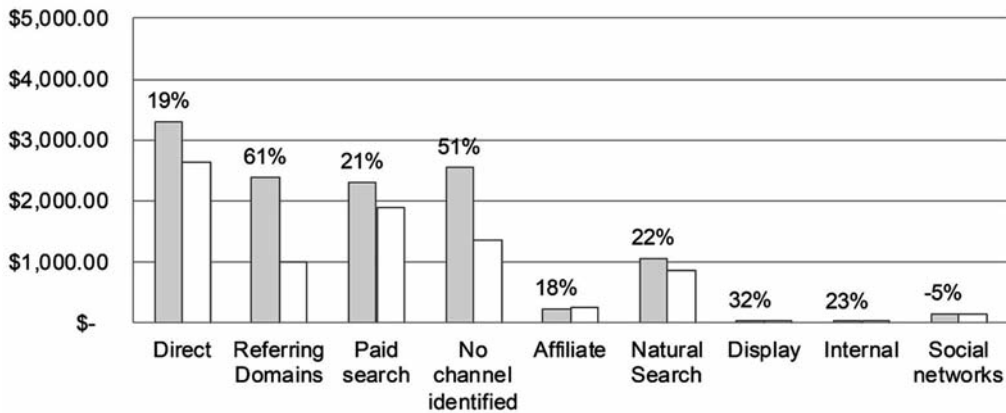


Figure 15: First touch average daily sales by channel (October 2012)

is branding at work. The beauty of e-mail is it can be very effective at both branding and direct mail, and it does so while being the cheapest marketing channel ever devised by marketers.

CONCLUSIONS

WHAT? E-mail marketing's inherited reliance on RFM from direct mail is outdated and hindering its potential impact as a brand marketing channel, as well as a direct response channel. Much of this stems from historical industry prejudice and superstition, and is not borne out when looking at the numbers behind what is actually happening when e-mails are sent to consumers.

HOW? A shift in focus to the broadcast marketing model of RFI unlocks e-mail brand potential by leveraging its low cost to focus on reach, frequency and impact.

WHAT? There needs to be a sea change in how the success and failure of e-mail is measured. Campaign-based metrics such as open and click rates are limiting in their scope and ignore consumer behaviour over time.

HOW? By looking at reach, e-mail marketers can learn what is working with each campaign and use that information to improve revenue and engagement, as well as reactivating the inactive sections of their list with every e-mail they send.

WHAT? E-mail marketers should be testing the acceptance levels of frequency

because the perception that consumers receive too much e-mail is not supported by the numbers.

HOW? Analysis of reach highlights that frequency drives engagement in e-mail. Sending another e-mail is still the most effective way to increase engagement and revenue.

WHAT? E-mail is a powerful brand channel that increases revenue across all other channels regardless of opens, clicks and conversions.

HOW? E-mail marketers should be working closely with their other channels to optimise for this behaviour and put in place a brand strategy for subject lines and content.

FINAL THOUGHT

For those that remain sceptical that the RFI model has any real-world application for e-mail, consider these two e-mail strategies: Campaign R sent an average of 20 million e-mails a day with an average read rate of 8 per cent, while Campaign O

sent an average of 300 million e-mails a day with an average read rate of 15 per cent. These fundraising campaigns were run concurrently and the success of Campaign O dwarfed that of Campaign R, raising a staggering US\$600 million.³ Simply by increasing broadcast reach through frequency at near zero marginal cost, Campaign O, or Campaign Obama to give it its full name, trounced Campaign R (for Romney) and produced the most successful digital fundraising campaign of all time.

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