

What analysing 10 billion emails shows business leaders

By [JD Engelbrecht](#), issued by [Everlytic](#)

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According to the Everlytic 2020 Email Marketing Benchmarks report, email subscribers who have been opening their messages have been more engaged with the content than ever. The Everlytic Email Marketing Benchmarks report is the largest email engagement study in South Africa providing a unique categorised analysis of the billions of emails sent in the country.

Scope of Data Analysed

	2019 Statistics	2020 Statistics
 Total emails analysed	4,598,424,170	4,661,834,919
 Total number of opens	884,056,349	829,809,771
 Total campaigns sent	147,040	141,169
 Average number of recipients	23,177	24,230
 Median number of recipients	3,582	3,921

Even though fewer people have been reading their emails, (likely due to the economic uncertainty created by the pandemic and reduced inclination to spend on non-essential products and services) the report has highlighted the importance of providing subscribers with more value-added content than purely sales-driven information. Subscribers are looking for a richer journey than what traditional marketing campaigns can provide.

Growth ahead

The only industries that showed an increase in open rates last year were education (6% increase) and logistics (20%) which may be attributed to increased homeschooling and home deliveries via online shopping platforms.

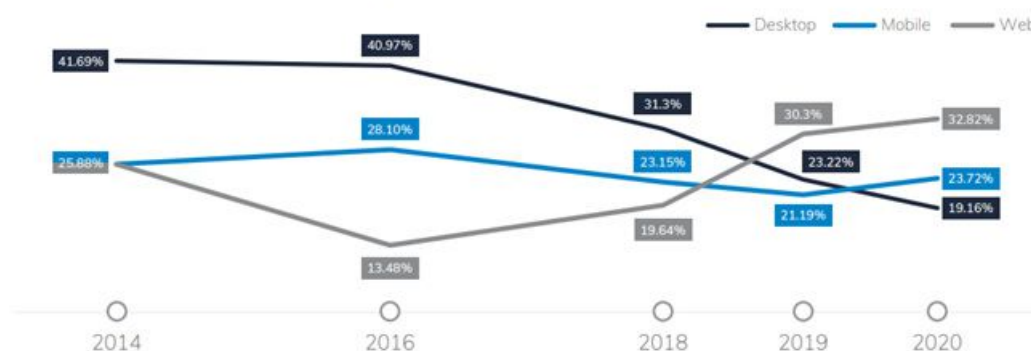
By Industry	Mean		
	2019	2020	% Change
Overall	26.18	24.97	-5% ▼
Agriculture & Environmental	26.33	25.02	-5% ▼
Automotive	27.26	25.41	-7% ▼
Business & Consulting Services	25.55	23.40	-8% ▼
E-commerce	17.89	17.58	-2% ▼
Education & Training	29.22	30.97	6% ▲
Financial Institutions	30.82	29.14	-5% ▼
Hospitality, Travel & Tourism	25.36	23.75	-6% ▼
Industry, Trade & Manufacture	22.18	20.33	-8% ▼
Lifestyle, Arts & Entertainment	32.56	31.29	-4% ▼
Logistic Services	23.09	27.80	20% ▲
Medical & Healthcare	28.99	28.71	-1% ▼
NGOs	26.36	25.76	-2% ▼
Property & Real Estate	25.14	24.19	-4% ▼
Publishing & Media	21.28	20.23	-5% ▼
Retail & Wholesale	22.94	22.57	-2% ▼
Technology & Science	26.71	20.62	-23% ▼

**The above table notes the Mean Open Percentages by Industry*

Surprisingly, even though hospitality, travel, and tourism were impacted substantially by the pandemic, their email engagement increased by 21%. This is likely due to how the lockdown left people unable to travel, but may have boosted their aspiration to do so. Additionally, the recipients may have kept engaging with those emails in the hopes that there were updates to travel regulations or on trips they had booked prior to the lockdown.

The report further highlighted that the pandemic impacted which devices people use to view their emails. Desktop use dropped substantially, with mobile and web picking up in response. With many offices closing during lockdown and introducing a more flexible working environment, this was to be expected. In fact, every industry's mobile views went up, while desktop views decreased.

Email Open Rate from 2014 - 2020



**The graph above shows a comparison of email open rates on desktop applications, mobile devices, and web-based platforms such as Gmail, Yahoo, etc.*

All about engagement

Marketers know that the success of email campaigns comes down to the total number of engaged contacts. The ultimate return any organisation can hope for is to multiply the volume of its email distribution list by the engagement rate. But to build engagement, the recipient must first open the message. It is therefore important to improve subject lines and start building brand affinity. In doing so, companies can improve open rates to improve the return on investment they are getting from their email. Once opened, the relevance and compellingness of the call-to-action will lead to further engagement.

A smaller, engaged list could yield the same volume of engagement as a large, unengaged one. The findings of the report have shown the importance of practising email list hygiene.

Amid changes in the digital marketing landscape, email will evolve in functionality and should remain the go-to platform as it provides the most cost-effective way of engaging with customers on their terms.

Based on this comprehensive study, it is clear that delivering quality content to email subscribers will be the cornerstone of any successful campaign. Subscribers have moved away from expecting a pure sales pitch to emails that deliver meaning to their lives. Generating this relevant content will significantly help to improve engagement rates.

To find out more about the statistics from your industry, [click here](#) to read the Everlytic Email Marketing 2020 Benchmarks report.

ABOUT JD ENGELBRECHT

JanDirk (JD) Engelbrecht is a commercial technologist who is passionate about finding creative solutions to problems. His experience in digital product development and commercialisation has allowed him to work with various South African market leaders in media, ecommerce, advertising, data science, and agriculture.

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