



2024 Email Metrics Report

Note From the Author

The report you’re about to read, the culmination of over a year of meticulous planning, continual data tracking and cleaning, and detailed analysis, all began with a question: “What makes a message successful?”

At face value it was a simple question, easily answerable with the right metrics and data. One that would produce meaningful insights into how corporations, trade associations, and membership organizations could better tell their story to the stakeholders and leaders who make their advocacy possible.

However, as we soon realized, data alone can never provide the answer.

As paradoxical as that may sound, especially coming from someone who spends their working life collecting, formatting, and analyzing data, it’s simply a reflection of reality. Success is defined as much by context as it is by data.

Open rates, clickthrough rates, and any other selection from the buffet of vanity metrics available mean nothing if you haven’t persuaded people to change the way they view your advocacy and moved them to participate.

Don’t get me wrong, metrics matter. After all, what good does it do to send a message no one reads? But metrics alone are not the measure of success.

This report is not intended to be the final authority on the success of your program’s digital communications effort. Instead, I hope these metrics will serve as a waypoint on a continual journey to reach your audience with the most compelling, true story your organization has to offer. So that when the compass invariably shifts, or the fog of uncertainty rolls in and obscures your sight of the destination, you can reorient your efforts and continue to move forward.



Blake Toman Market Research Analyst Sagac Public Affairs

Blake Toman is a communications data analyst and public affairs researcher with more than a decade of combined experience helping Fortune 500 corporations and national trade and membership associations effectively reach key audiences by leveraging the power of individually tailored communications strategies and tactical messaging designed to drive action and deliver meaningful results. His unrivaled passion for simplifying complex datasets into succinct and actionable insights has fueled his continued development as a thought leader in advocacy-focused digital marketing campaigns.

Table of Contents

- 2 Note From the Author
- 3 Executive Summary
- 5 Email by the Numbers: 2024
- 9 Email by the Numbers: Corporate Communications
- 13 Email by the Numbers: Individual Membership Associations
- 17 Email by the Numbers: Trade Associations

Executive Summary

The Sagac Public Affairs 2024 Email Metrics Report presents data from more than 3.5 million individual emails from January 1 to December 31, 2024, representing 27 corporations, trade associations, and individual membership organizations across 11 unique economic sectors.

The report includes data and trends across common key performance indicators, including email open rate, clickthrough rate, unsubscribe rate, deliverability rate, and mobile viewing rate, along with an overview of how images, unique senders, and external links are leveraged in digital advocacy communications. Each section includes a more detailed analysis of message performance, segmented by organization type, with key performance indicators measured against the type of message sent, the month, day, and time of deployment, and, in some cases, by economic sector of the organization.

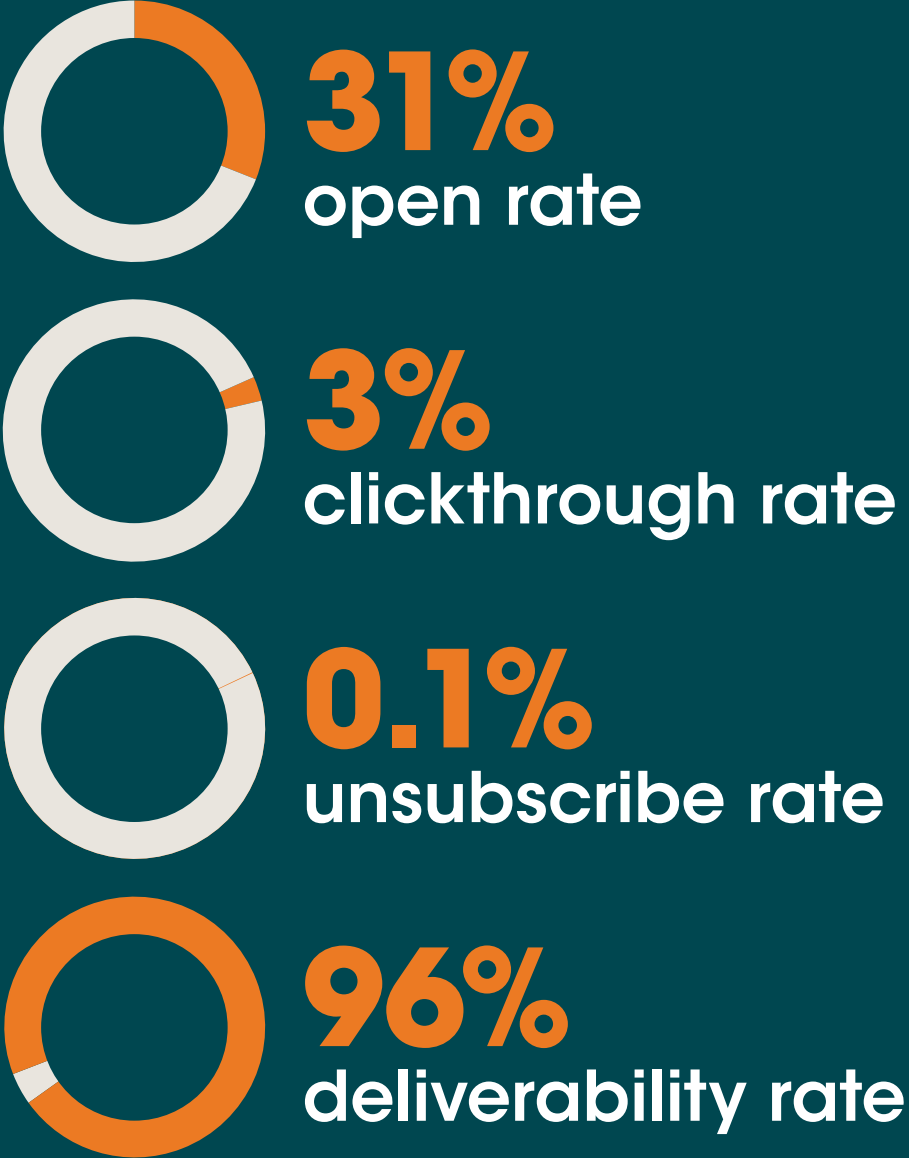
Among the many trends in digital advocacy communications highlighted by this year’s data, the three most important insights were:

- Open rates varied significantly between organizations, message types, deployment times, and economic sectors, indicating the need for each organization to tailor digital communications to best meet the needs of their specific audience, rather than specific statistical benchmarks.

- Email proved to be an invaluable tool for trade associations to efficiently and effectively get prior approval from member companies, with above average clickthrough rates and open rates. As online prior approval collection platforms and forms continue to improve, email will become an increasingly important part of successful campaigns.
 - Opportunities exist for organizations to cut through a crowded digital communications landscape by leveraging engaging subject lines and microtargeted, business-unit leadership to improve open rates, clickthrough rates, and ultimately, participation and receipts.
- Sagac Public Affairs would like to thank each organization that provided data for this report. Your program’s commitment to excellence through continual measurement and evaluation of communications outcomes helped make this analysis possible.

DATA FROM
MORE THAN
3.5
MILLION
INDIVIDUAL
EMAILS

EMAIL BY THE NUMBERS: 2024



Email by the Numbers: 2024

Overall Benchmarks for Email Performance

While the average open rate for advocacy emails was just above 30% in 2024, open rates varied significantly based on the type of organization, message, sender, and deployment time, ranging from a peak of 47% in agricultural corporations, to a low of 11% in financial services membership organizations.

Clickthrough rate also varied significantly from the 2024 average of just under 3.5%, reaching a peak of nearly 11% for trade associations requesting prior approval, to below 1% for individual membership organization newsletters. The type of organization, message, sender, and deployment time all had an impact on clickthrough rate, highlighting the importance of detailed planning and segmentation in driving action among email recipients.

Unlike clickthrough and open rates, unsubscribe and deliverability rates did not vary more than one percentage point above or below the overall benchmark rate highlighted above. To improve low deliverability rates, consider optimizing email address collection with built-in data validation or cleaning existing records to help your organization meet or exceed the deliverability benchmark.

What the Typical Email Looked Like in 2024

Instead of organization-wide 6-12 message campaigns, 2024 featured flurries of activity focused on creating action among a tailored audience, with an average campaign consisting of three messages sent to fewer than 5,000 people. Microtargeted communications, tailored to an audience with a shared demographic or psychographic trait, played a larger role in overall advocacy communications and were responsible, in part, for the growth of this trend.

The most commonly used image in email messaging was a branded banner featuring the PAC or organization's name and logo. A branded banner can be an easy way to create immediate brand recognition and trust with your audience, especially when located at the top of an email, and signals readers to expect a specific type of content or message. Consider leveraging unique banners for solicitation campaigns, requests for prior approval, or special events to quickly move readers through the message and bring them to your call to action.

Solicitations with Individual Senders Reigned Supreme in 2024

Solicitations were the most frequent message sent by corporations, trade associations, and individual membership organizations, accounting for almost one-third of the emails sent in 2024 and showcasing the power email can have as an effective advocacy fundraising tool. Emails to introduce new members to the organization's advocacy and newsletters highlighting key events and achievements accounted for another quarter of the emails deployed, with the remaining 40% spread between donor recognition, member benefits, invitations to special events and webinars, and member education. GOTV emails played a smaller-than-expected role in advocacy communications, comprising only 2% of all messages sent in 2024, despite it being a Presidential election year.

Individuals were the sender of choice for advocacy emails and were responsible for 62% of the emails sent in 2024. The PAC Director or Administrator was the most common individual sender, sending over half of all advocacy emails, while an additional third came from the organization's President, CEO, or Head of Government Affairs. However, less than 1% of emails sent in 2024 came from a department or business unit leader, providing organizations an

opportunity to pair microtargeted messages, focused on specific issues of legislative or regulatory issues facing individual divisions of the organization, with their corresponding department leaders to improve awareness, email open rates, and clickthrough rates.

Mobile Viewership is Trending Upward in Advocacy

Mobile viewership rates continued to rise across all organization types and sectors, with 13% of all emails opened on a mobile device. While advocacy trails other types of communications in mobile viewership, audiences more frequently engage with and respond positively to messages that are designed with mobile readers in mind.

To maximize the potential of email with a continually growing mobile audience, ensure subject lines are concise, use mobile-friendly layouts that keep text and images easy to read, and place the most important information or calls to action near the start of the message.

Successful Email Campaigns had Purpose Driven Deployment Times

Spring and fall are considered ideal windows for large-scale solicitation campaigns, and email performance metrics show that February and August messages consistently overperform relative to overall advocacy benchmarks, with an open rate of over 40% and a clickthrough rate above 4%. Consequently, starting solicitation campaigns earlier in each window, where audiences are more attentive after winter and summer vacations, can be used to augment a shorter,

microtargeted campaign to produce stronger awareness and participation outcomes.

While May and June had two of the lowest open rates, at 22% and 23%, emails in May generated above-average engagement, with a clickthrough rate over 5%. Leveraging existing organization-wide events or current events of interest to your audience can help capture their attention, improving email open rates and maximizing the potential for engagement.

Saturday and Sunday were the worst performing days for email, which aligns with the increasing priority of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and prioritizing mental health and well-being. Monday and Friday, on the other hand, were two of the best days for awareness-oriented messaging, boasting open rates of 36% and 34%, at least four percentage points above the average open rate while within one percentage point of the average email clickthrough rate.

The time of day had a much larger effect

on the clickthrough rate than the day of the week, with emails sent between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. (ET) having clickthrough rates above 6% and 4%. However, emails sent between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. also had the second lowest open rate of all time slots at just under 23%. Leverage an engaging, succinct subject line and preheader text, and have the email come from an attention-grabbing sender, someone your audience respects and wants to hear from, to tap into the potential the 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. timeslot offers for moving readers to act.

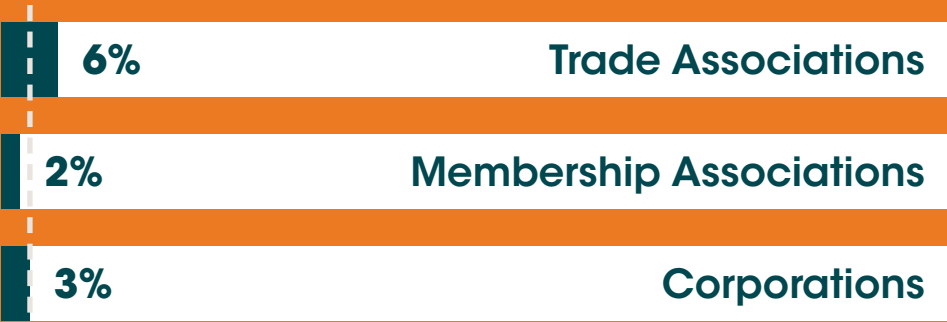
13%
OF ALL EMAILS
WERE VIEWED
ON MOBILE

AVERAGE OPEN RATE



31% BENCHMARK

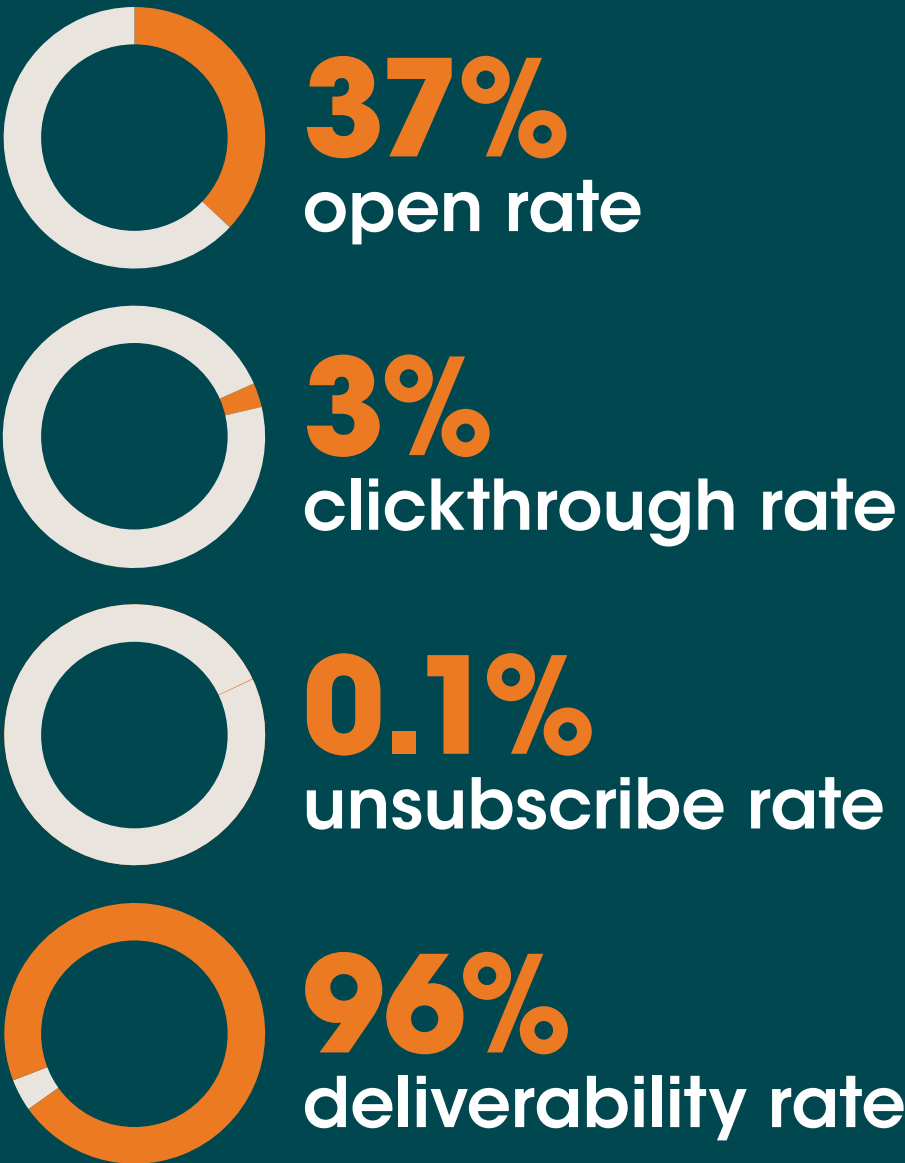
AVERAGE CLICKTHROUGH RATE



3% BENCHMARK



EMAIL BY THE NUMBERS: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS



Email by the Numbers: Corporate Communications

Corporate Email Benchmarking and Performance Metrics

Corporate emails enjoyed a notably higher open rate than their trade association and individual membership organization peers, exceeding the overall average by nearly six percentage points in 2024 at 37%. The more prominent role of email in corporate communications could be a driver of this trend, with employees more attentive to and likely to engage with communications sent via this channel. However, the effect did not carry over to the clickthrough rate, deliverability rate, and unsubscribe rate, which all remained within half a percentage point from the overall benchmark for 2024.

Corporate political action committees and grassroots advocacy efforts can leverage employees’ increased attentiveness to internal emails by using recognizable senders, such as the Chief Executive Officer, and ensuring emails are allowlisted to enhance the perceived trustworthiness of the message and avoid being confused as a phishing attempt or spam.

The Typical Corporate Email in 2024

Unsurprisingly, corporate emails followed the same general structure and layout as other advocacy communications, using a similar number of links and images in each message and a more targeted audience in shorter campaigns.

Corporate emails diverged in strategy and subject matter, with onboarding emails to newly hired or promoted employees playing a large role in messaging, comprising 30% of all emails sent in 2024. In fact, almost two-thirds of all emails sent by corporations were either onboarding messages, solicitations, or newsletters.

Corporations were also more likely to send GOTV emails, along with invitations to webinars and copies of an annual or cycle

report, making up 15% of all corporate emails compared to just 1% of membership organizations’ emails and 3% of trade association emails. Consequently, each organization, regardless of type or economic sector, should carefully consider the unique needs and preferences of its stakeholders to craft a digital communications strategy that’s timely, persuasive, and ultimately, effective.

How Corporations Leveraged Senders for Email

The PAC played a much larger role in corporate communications, where it was the sender for just over 40% of all advocacy messages in 2024, five percentage points higher than the overall average. The most frequent individual sender was the PAC Administrator or Director, which sent nearly three times as many emails as the company’s CEO, President, or Head of Government Affairs.

Given the prominence of high-level executives within corporations, corporate grassroots or political action committee emails are missing an opportunity to improve engagement and participation by forgoing the use of the organization’s top leaders, such as the CEO or key members of departmental leadership, as senders.

Mobile Viewership Trends in Corporate Audiences

Employees were more mobile-oriented than their membership organization and trade association peers, with a 16% mobile viewership rate that was three percentage points higher than the overall average. Although remote work may start to decline in 2025, the increasingly strong expectation that employees be accessible, even outside of traditional working hours, along with the ever-expanding suite of mobile productivity and communications apps, will likely continue to push mobile viewership rates higher in the years to come.

As a result, corporations should keep mobile readers in mind when designing both messages and platforms employees use to act. Whether it's sending interested employees to an internal SharePoint or intranet site to learn more about the company's advocacy and policy priorities or encouraging employees to sign up online via payroll deduction or credit card, without a mobile-friendly approach, corporations risk losing potential donors to a frustrating and convoluted user experience. The fewer steps a reader must take, and the less resistance they encounter when taking those steps, the more likely they'll be to act.

**The Corporate Clock:
The Most Successful Months, Days,
and Times for Email**

Following overall benchmarks, corporate emails performed best in February, with an open rate almost exceeding 75% and a clickthrough rate of just under 20%. March and May also were effective for engagement, with a clickthrough rate above 9%, but had open rates substantially lower than the corporate and overall average. These peaks in performance could be due, at least in part, to the timing of corporate bonuses. After all, goodwill is never higher than after a well-earned bonus, raise, or promotion, which makes each of these windows an optimal time for new donor acquisition and upgrade campaigns.

Corporate emails sent on Monday and Wednesday had higher than average open rates at 46% and 42%, while Tuesday produced above-average engagement

with a clickthrough rate just below 6%. Consequently, emails with a clickable call-to-action, such as a solicitation, are best sent on Tuesdays, whereas emails designed to build awareness and reinforce primary messages about the effectiveness of PAC and grassroots advocacy efforts are ideal for Mondays and Wednesdays.

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS ARE BEST FOR BUILDING AWARENESS, WHILE TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS ARE BEST FOR ENGAGEMENT.

The ideal time of day for sending corporate emails varied significantly based on the goal of the message. If action was the primary goal, then the 8 - 9 a.m. Eastern Time slot produced the best results, with a clickthrough rate above 9%. Alternatively, if the goal was awareness or education, the 4 - 5 p.m. window was the most effective, with an open rate exceeding 50%, nearly 20 percentage points higher than the overall

average. In cases where an email needed both awareness and action, the 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. timeslot provided a compromise, with an above-average open rate of over 40% and a clickthrough rate of nearly 5%.

Best Practices for Corporate Solicitations, Newsletters, and Onboarding Emails

Just as each message has a unique objective, each objective is best measured with a unique set of key performance indicators tailored to that objective. For solicitation emails designed to generate action, contributions are the most appropriate metric, supported by the email's clickthrough rate, which indicates whether the message is effectively moving people from the message to the contribution page. Since solicitations make a relatively high ask of employees to contribute part of their salary to support the organization's

advocacy, they tended to have a lower-than-average clickthrough and open rate and should be benchmarked accordingly.

On the other hand, corporate newsletters, which provided information on transparency and effectiveness to employees already contributing to the organization's PAC, had a much higher open rate than average, exceeding 40%. Since the purpose of the newsletter was to communicate succinct and specific updates on topics of high importance, the clickthrough rate was below 2%, as the email was designed to relay the most important information to readers without referring them to another online resource.

Onboarding messages posed a unique challenge for corporations. Although these emails performed at or above the corporate benchmark levels for open rate and clickthrough rate in 2024, they had a nearly 25 percentage-point lower deliverability rate than all other corporate emails. As a best practice, the individuals responsible for overseeing the organization's advocacy database, whether the PAC Director or Head of Government Affairs, need to be in lockstep with the Human Resources and Information Technology team to ensure newly onboarded individuals are uploaded to the database in a timely manner so that a larger percentage of new hires start building awareness of the company's government affairs team and efforts. While there will always be challenges in ensuring high deliverability rates, clear and frequent communication, along with diligent data management, is key to maximizing the value of onboarding emails.

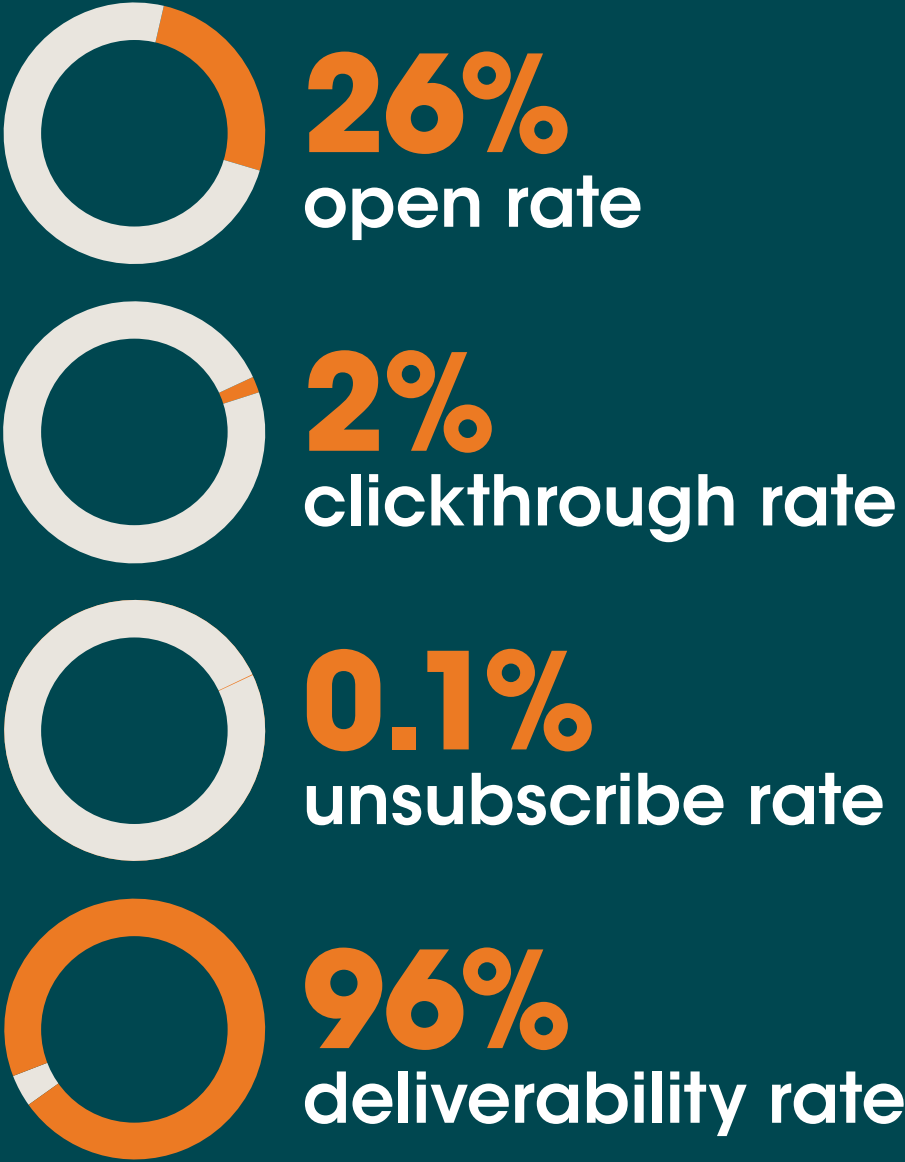
Economic Sector Changes the Playing Field for Successful Emails

Every corporation faces unique internal and industry-specific challenges that impact the benchmarks used to evaluate the effectiveness of emails. For corporations in financial services and agriculture, employees tend to pay much higher attention to advocacy emails and are more interested in legislative and regulatory issues, with an average email open rate above 40% and an average clickthrough rate above 4%. However, employees in agriculture also have a much lower tolerance for unwanted communication, with an average unsubscribe rate that's more than double the corporate average.

Corporations in pharmaceuticals and retail face a different challenge: getting their audience to read and act on emails in an already oversaturated communications landscape, with both industries having an average open and clickthrough rate well below the corporate benchmark. In retail, PAC-eligible employees performing specific job functions may have less time to read emails, which can make other channels more fruitful for promoting awareness and action. In pharmaceuticals, companies have found success by using patient or consumer-focused messaging to cut through the noise and engage employees with a persuasive shared mission and purpose.



EMAIL BY THE NUMBERS: INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATIONS



Email by the Numbers: Individual Membership Associations

Individual Membership Association Benchmarking and Email Performance Metrics

Like corporations in the retail and pharmaceutical sectors, individual membership associations struggled to grab their members’ attention through email, with an average open rate nearly five percentage points lower than the overall average and a clickthrough rate below 2%.

While some individual membership associations have struggled with the quality of records in their membership file, leading to lower-than-average open and clickthrough rates, in 2024, they had an email deliverability rate on par with corporations at nearly 96%, indicating the problem they face today isn’t a lack of high-quality data, but a strong, eye-catching, and persuasive message that cuts through the dozens of marketing and spam emails their members receive every day.

The Typical Association Email in 2024

In an attempt to stand out in their readers’ inboxes, individual membership associations leveraged shorter, more infrequent bursts of messaging across a broader audience, using two message campaigns with an average audience of over 10,000 members.

To get the most out of opened emails, individual membership associations, on average, included at least two links in each message, offering readers both online educational resources to learn more about advocacy and ways to directly get involved by contributing or participating in grassroots activities. However, the split approach could contribute to low clickthrough rates, as competing resources add another step in the conversion funnel, deciding which action they should take, rather than a more streamlined decision to simply act or not act.

As with corporations, individual membership associations primarily sent solicitation emails, comprising nearly 50% of their 2024 messaging. Donor benefits, such as Inside Elections, and invitations to fundraising dinners and events also played a prominent role in communications, making up an additional 20% of individual membership association emails.

Research played a unique role in individual membership associations’ communications strategy. In fact, invitations for members to take an association-sponsored survey or participate in a focus group made up nearly 10% of association emails. This demographic and psychographic data may allow individual membership associations to provide members with more tailored messages focused on specific legislative and regulatory issues of interest in 2025, empowering them to cut through a hectic communications landscape with persuasive messaging that can improve email open and clickthrough rates and increase receipts and participation in the association’s advocacy.

How Associations Used Senders to Improve Email Performance

For individual membership associations, the PAC played a prominent role in email communication, sending 43% of all emails in 2024 and leveraging a clearly recognizable brand name, which in most cases included the name of the association, to quickly build trust and credibility with an audience that’s increasingly skeptical of marketing emails and phishing schemes.

Of the emails sent from individuals, almost 64% used the name of a specific PAC Board Member, most commonly the PAC Board Chair, or a member representing a targeted membership group or region, such as students. The PAC Administrator or Director was one of the least used senders, sending just 5% of

emails in 2024 compared to 13% sent by the association’s President or CEO and 16% sent by the Head of Government Affairs.

Mobile Viewership is on the Rise in Individual Membership Associations

While it would seem likely that individual membership associations would have higher mobile viewership rates than their trade association and corporate peers, 2024’s data showed a different trend. In fact, just 10% of emails sent by individual membership associations were opened on a mobile device, below the 13% average across all advocacy emails.

However, this data may paint a broader picture of how individual members engage with the association at large. For most, if not all members, the association is not their primary concern. They may participate actively in meetings and activities, which includes reading emails from the association and its PAC, but they do so on their own time. This often means they’re sitting at their computer, either after the end of their working day or while taking their lunch break, when interacting with the association’s digital content. Consequently, individual membership associations can improve their open rates and clickthrough rates and better reach their audience in 2025 by keeping their messages short, using clear and engaging subject lines, and sticking to a singular call to action to quickly move readers through the email and minimize the opportunity for distractions that might interrupt their audience’s intent to act.

The Minutes Matter: Deployment Timings for Association Emails

A new year is a new opportunity! As we sit down and set our resolutions and goals for the year ahead, the data shows that the members of individual associations do exactly the same. In fact, the start of the year provides individual membership associations a unique opportunity to capitalize on their members’ New Year’s resolutions, with emails sent in January and February having open rates of 55% and 43%, nearly 20 percentage points higher than the overall average. May and November also were effective months at driving action, with clickthrough rates almost twice the overall average at 5%.

Since members tend to engage with the association in their spare time, it’s not surprising that Friday and Monday were the best days for email. Friday had the highest overall open rate, at just over 30%, along with

the second-highest clickthrough rate at 2%. Monday was the best day for prompting action, with a clickthrough rate above 3%, making it an ideal time to remind members of easy ways they can get involved in the association’s advocacy as they look to check things off their to-do list at the start of the week.

Moreover, the late lunch and early evening windows, when members were likely away from work, showed strong email performance metrics, boasting the two

highest open rates at just over 30%. In fact, messages sent during the late lunch hour were the most likely to drive action, with a clickthrough rate exceeding 5%, the highest of any individual timeframe. Emails sent between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. produced a similar effect as Monday messages, with a slightly below-average open rate of 28% and a clickthrough rate of over 3%, making it an ideal window to

drive action as members work through their daily agendas.

Best Practices for Individual Membership Association Solicitations, Special Event Invitations, and Newsletters

Although solicitations comprised almost half of all messages sent by individual membership associations, they performed on par with the average advocacy message, having an open rate of just above 25% and a clickthrough rate of just below 2%. Audience segmentation and changes in message timing to meet members’ needs could help this number increase in 2025, potentially even beyond the 2024 overall benchmark.

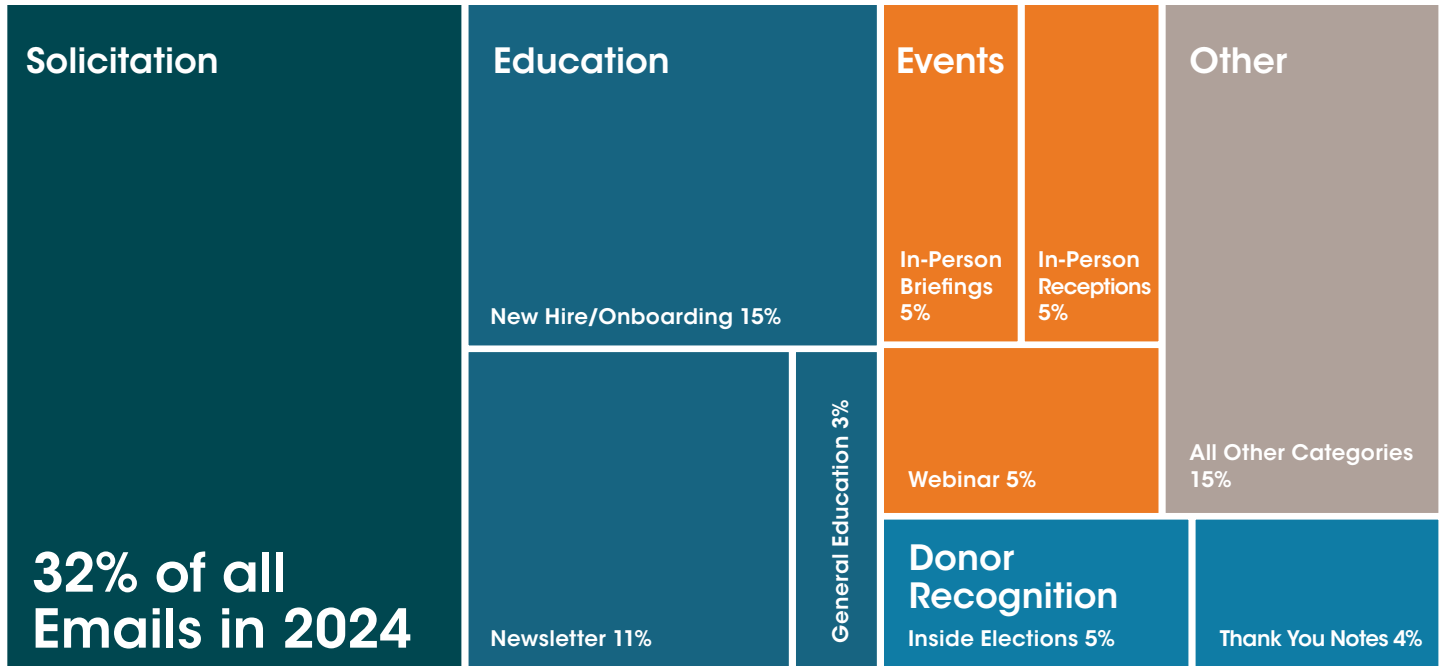
Emails promoting in-person events and dinners performed worse than the other types of messages sent by individual membership associations, despite containing arguably more engaging content than solicitations. In fact, event-related emails had an email open rate below 20%, although those who opened the email acted in similar proportions, with a clickthrough rate of approximately 2%. The

lack of engagement could be due, at least in part, to the subject lines used in these emails, as they might mimic those used in “junk mail” that we’re collectively all too familiar with. For example, starting a subject line with “You’re Invited!”, without any additional context, can sound like an email advertising a timeshare investment pitch or a retail sale, which can lead members to either delete it or ignore it entirely. To combat these issues, individual membership associations should leverage differentiated subject lines that, while still engaging, do more to communicate clearly that the email is an invitation to an association-sponsored advocacy event, helping it stand out in readers’ inboxes and improving open rates.

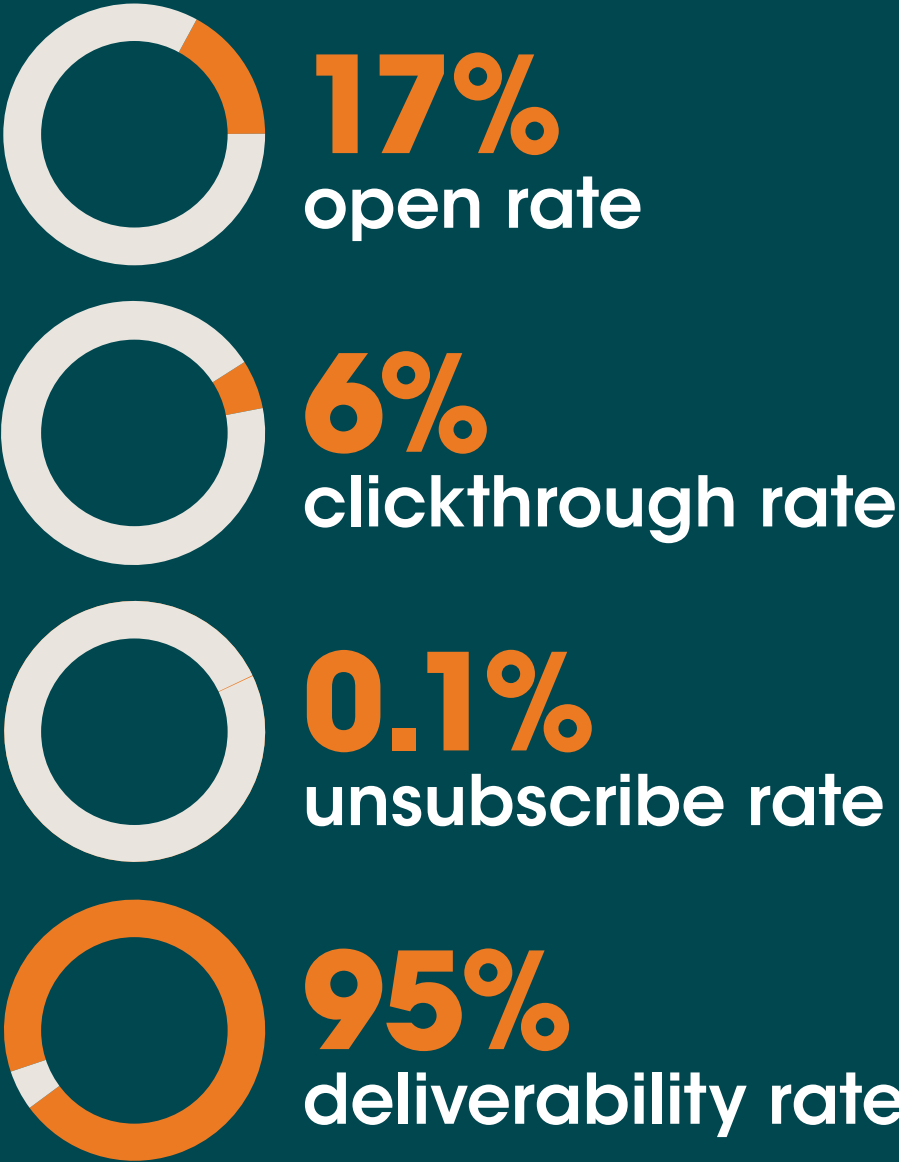
Email newsletters from individual membership associations had an open rate that was on par with the association benchmark, but a clickthrough rate much lower than average at barely half a percent. As a result, associations should keep these updates succinct, focusing on the most important points and minimizing the key details hosted on click-away pages to ensure members have what they need to be informed and invested participants in the association’s advocacy.

FRIDAY HAD THE HIGHEST OPEN RATE, AT JUST OVER 30%

OVERALL PURPOSE OF EMAILS IN 2024



EMAIL BY THE NUMBERS: TRADE ASSOCIATIONS



Email by the Numbers: Trade Associations

Trade Association Benchmarking and Email Performance Metrics

Trade associations encountered the most barriers when trying to reach their audience via email, facing an open rate of just 17% in 2024. What trade association emails lacked in attention, however, they made up for in action, boasting a clickthrough rate almost double that of any other type of organization at close to 6%.

Consequently, the challenge for trade associations is not compelling content, which has consistently moved recipients to act, or the quality of records in their database, with an average email delivery rate above 95%, but crafting engaging subject lines and utilizing recognizable senders to cut through a noisy communications landscape and improve email open rates.

The Typical Trade Association Email in 2024

Unlike individual membership associations and corporations, trade associations leveraged slightly longer campaigns, consisting of four messages on average and with an average audience of less than 2,000 members. Company campaigns, in which the association partners with a prior approved member company to develop, design, and deploy co-branded messages, played a larger role in trade associations' email strategy, utilizing, on average, two links and a single, co-branded campaign banner.

Solicitations dominated trade association communications, comprising nearly 40% of all emails sent in 2024, with donor recognition emails, invitations to special events, and requests for prior authorization making up an additional 40%.

Invitations to events and holiday-centric engagement emails were more frequently sent by trade associations, deploying

nearly two times as many emails in those categories than their corporate or individual membership peers. Newsletters, on the other hand, took on a less prominent role, representing less than 3% of all messages deployed by trade associations in 2024, compared to 16% of corporate and 8% of individual membership association emails.

Trade Associations Leveraged Individual Senders to Maximize Email's Value

Individuals were the sender of choice for trade associations, sponsoring more than three-fourths of all emails sent in 2024, compared to just under 20% sent with the name of the trade association's political action committee.

Individual senders were still more likely to be within Government Affairs, with the Head of Government Affairs sending 24% of emails, and the PAC Administrator sending an additional 44%. However, the association's CEO or President was used more frequently than in corporations or individual membership associations, with nearly a quarter of all emails coming from those titles.

Mobile Viewership Trends in Trade Associations

While trade association readers were slightly more likely to open emails on a mobile device, their overall mobile viewership habits didn't vary substantially from their peers, staying within one percentage point of the 13% average mobile viewership rate.

Email timing, along with the use of a work or personal email address, had a potentially significant impact on mobile viewership, with emails sent during traditional work hours to a recipient's work address having a higher desktop viewing rate than emails sent to a personal email address outside of working hours. Consequently, trade associations should plan the timing and design of

communications around the types of contact information they have to maximize the effectiveness of their emails, regardless of message or desired response.

Making the Most of Members' Attention: Email Deployment Timings for Trade Associations

Properly timing deployments can have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of trade association emails, with open and clickthrough rates fluctuating by nearly 20% month-to-month. February and May were the two best months for building awareness among members, with open rates of 46% and 52%, well above both the overall and trade association average. August, April, and December, on the other hand, were the best months for prompting action, with clickthrough rates of 20%, 12%, and 11%. February and March also produced favorable email engagement metrics, with a clickthrough rate of around 7%, still four percentage points higher than the overall average.

The day of the week mattered significantly less for awareness-oriented emails, with only nine percentage points separating the best and worst performing days by open rate. When generating action, however, the day of the week had a significant impact, with Thursday being the clear leader with a clickthrough rate six percentage points higher than average at 9%.

Like individual membership associations, trade association emails shined when sent near the end of the day, around the lunch hour, or in the mid-morning. Awareness-oriented messages have an ideal deployment time between 9 and 10 a.m., 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.,

and 4 to 6 p.m., with open rates of 49% and 35%. These same windows were also effective for generating action, with the 4 to 5 p.m. window far outperforming all other timeslots with a clickthrough rate of almost 28%. The 9 to 10 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. timeslots also produced above-average engagement, each with a clickthrough rate above 9%.

Best Practices for Trade Association Email Solicitations, Event Invitations, and Prior Approval

Email solicitations from trade associations performed on par with the overall averages for advocacy messages, with an open rate just below 18% and a clickthrough rate slightly better than the trade association average at nearly 7%.

Invitations and reminders for in-person events and briefings were especially well received in trade associations, with an open rate of 33%, nearly double the trade association average. However, these reminders were much less effective at driving action, with a clickthrough rate just above 2%.

While prior approval has posed a constant challenge for trade associations, email

proved an invaluable resource for securing authorization in 2024, with an open rate above 45% and a clickthrough rate more than double the trade association average at nearly 11%. Consequently, email should continue to cement itself as a critical channel for successful prior approval campaigns in 2025, with a proven record of increasing awareness among member company contacts and driving them to grant authorization. Further optimizations, such as online collection portals with a quick and seamless user experience, will help raise prior approval completion rates and provide trade associations with ample opportunity to inform and solicit member companies' eligible classes.

PRIOR APPROVAL EMAILS HAD AN OPEN RATE ABOVE 45%

BEST OVERALL TIMING FOR EMAILS

BEST MONTH FOR ATTENTION

- FEBRUARY (60% OPEN RATE)
- AUGUST (44% OPEN RATE)

BEST MONTH FOR ACTION

- FEBRUARY (11% CTR)
- MAY (5% CTR)
- MARCH & AUGUST (4% CTR)

BEST DAY FOR ATTENTION

- MONDAY (36% OPEN RATE)
- FRIDAY (34% OPEN RATE)

BEST DAY FOR ACTION

- TUESDAY & THURSDAY (4% CTR)

BEST HOURS FOR ATTENTION

- 11 A.M. - 12 P.M. (37% OPEN RATE)
- 4 - 5 P.M. (35% OPEN RATE)

BEST HOURS FOR ACTION

- 8 - 9 A.M. (6% CTR)
- 11 A.M. - 12 P.M. (4% CTR)





Trey Richardson

Managing Partner

Jeri Richardson

Partner & Chief Creative Officer

Dan Ekstein

Partner & Chief Business

SAGAC
PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Sagac Public Affairs



sagacpublicaffairs



@sagaonline



Sagac Public Affairs

www.sagac.com | Phone: 866-521-0900 | Email: info@sagac.com