

# 2019 State of Email Report

The data, trends, and innovations  
that shape successful email  
programs in 2019



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# Introduction

The 2019 edition of the Litmus State of Email Report analyzes the significant email developments in email client news, market share insights, and key industry updates from 2018, along with updates that might have flown under your radar.

We dive into what those changes mean for your email team and provide hands-on advice and links to resources that will help you stay in the forefront of email innovation.

## Here's a sample of what you'll find in this year's report:

- In 2018, behind-the-scenes improvements came together to transform the entire email experience, bringing interactivity not just to the email message but also to the inbox itself—and turning both into conversion channels.
- Apple once again launched new phones and updated its mobile operating system. Also in 2018, Microsoft overhauled its Outlook.com email client. All of those updates will affect your email design and functionality.
- Litmus' partnership with Microsoft has resulted in several major wins for email marketers and developers. See what they are, and find out how you can participate to help make email better for everyone.

## Simplify and Accelerate Your Email Workflow

Join more than 600,000 marketing professionals who use Litmus alongside their existing email tools to efficiently create high-performing email campaigns.

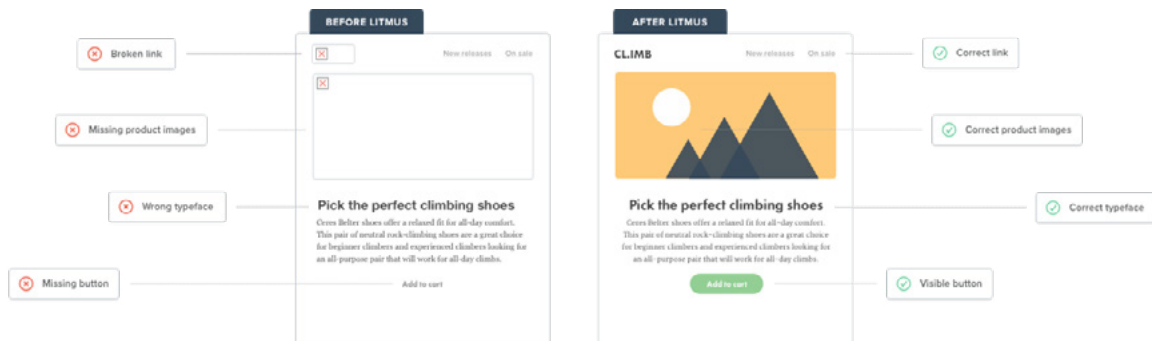


## Who Is Litmus?

Litmus is passionate about email marketing research, because our mission is to help brands get access to the knowledge and tools they need to send better email. Through our industry-leading [blog](#), [Litmus Live](#) conferences, [ebooks](#), and [webinars](#), we discuss best practices and explore trends to help your team stay on the forefront of the industry.

We are also passionate about software that makes creating high-performing email easy. Marketers use the Litmus Email Creative Platform alongside their existing email service provider to ensure a consistently great brand experience for every subscriber, work more efficiently, accelerate campaign performance, reduce errors, and stay out of the spam folder.

Email marketing is complex. But through hands-on advice and software you can trust, we enable your team to do their best work—creating innovative, on-brand campaigns that engage and delight audiences. With the Litmus Email Creative Platform, you'll have the tools and insights you need to provide your customers with an incredible email experience—and get the best results in return.



### Keep Up with the Latest in Email

Join the hundreds of thousands of email marketing pros who rely on Litmus for expert advice and analysis. Sign up for our emails to get the Litmus newsletter, notifications of new reports and executive summaries, announcements of upcoming webinars and events, and more.



## Key Takeaways

The email landscape shifts a little every day. New clients and operating systems appear. Legacy platforms change or disappear. New laws, changing customer expectations, and evolving industry standards mean your work as an email marketer shouldn't be the same today as it was a year ago—or even a few months ago.

These takeaways from the 2019 State of Email Report will help you understand what's happening and stay ahead of developments in our ever-changing email world.



**1. When email clients change support without warning, your brand reputation and customer experience are at risk.**

The email client ecosystem continues to be fragmented and dynamic. Email clients drop and add support for critical email elements without warning. All of these affect how your email looks to your subscribers and performs for your brand. A thorough quality assurance and testing process will help you prevent costly errors, protect your brand reputation, and ensure a consistently great brand experience for every subscriber. Read more on [page 10](#).



**2. Inbox providers are working hard to improve the email environment and meet customers' ever-changing expectations. Your email messages must keep up with the changes.**

Many of these changes are intended to make email more pleasurable and less painful for users, but your visibility and engagement in the inbox can take a hit as algorithms decide which emails to spotlight. Read more about what's happening in the inbox and how to respond on [page 20](#).



**3. Data protection and security is every marketer's concern now.**

The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which went into effect in 2018, has inspired similar and sometimes stricter laws in non-EU countries. Expect to see a similar move at the federal level in the United States, especially as states move to enact their own regulations. Studying up on these and other regulations will help you stay on the right side of the law and avoid hefty fines. Read more on [page 37](#).



## 4





















# Email Client Market Share

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Apple's iOS Mail and Gmail continue to rule the email client market share, but we also spotted some movement on the leaderboard, with a revamped Outlook on the rise. Plus, mobile remains the most popular reading environment.

## iOS Mail and Gmail continue to be the most popular email clients

The top email clients of 2017 have kept their positions on the leaderboard in 2018. The top three most popular clients remain Apple’s native iPhone app, Gmail, and the native mail app on Apple’s iPad. Both Apple’s iPhone and Gmail have gained a percentage point, closing the year at 29% and 27% respectively.

2017			2018		
1	 Apple iPhone	28%	1	 Apple iPhone	29%
2	 Gmail	26%	2	 Gmail	27%
3	 Apple iPad	11%	3	 Apple iPad	9%
4	 Apple Mail	7%	4	 Outlook	8%
5	 Outlook	6%	5	 Apple Mail	8%
6	 Samsung Mail	5%	6	 Yahoo! Mail	6%
7	 Outlook.com	4%	7	 Samsung Mail	3%
8	 Android	3%	8	 Outlook.com	2%
9	 Yahoo! Mail	2%	9	 Android	2%
10	 Windows Live Mail	1%	10	 Windows Live Mail	1%

### Are your subscribers opening in Gmail? In 2019, this will matter

With a number of big updates to Gmail—including the [revamped Promotions Tab](#) and the announcement of [AMP for Email](#)—email marketers should pay special attention to their Gmail opens in 2019.

Updates like these promise new opportunities to stand out in the inbox, but at the same time, they require additional resources. So, is it really worth spending more time and effort exploring those new opportunities, even though they can only be seen by subscribers who open in Gmail?

As it is so often, the answer is: It depends! The [Litmus Email Client Market Share data](#) shows a snapshot of email opens across all industry verticals and company sizes. Many brands in the B2C sector will likely see an even higher share of emails opened in Gmail. If your subscribers heavily rely on Gmail as their go-to email client, optimizing your emails for this specific reading environment might be well worth it.

## Outlook opens continue to rise

Outlook opens showed steady growth in 2017—a trend that continued in 2018. Outlook gained 2 percentage points over the last twelve months, with the December 2018 data showing 8% of all email opens happening in Outlook. This makes Outlook the fourth most popular email client, pushing Apple Mail from its No. 4 spot and nipping at the heels of Apple’s iPad that lost 2 percentage points throughout 2018, closing the year at 9%.



## Infrastructure consolidation causes increased Yahoo! Mail opens



The December 2018 email client market share data shows Yahoo! Mail accounting for 6% of all email opens. That’s up 4 percentage points since December 2017—a big jump!

At first sight it might look like Yahoo! Mail has seen a big bump in popularity. The actual reason for the rise in Yahoo! Mail opens might lie in changes to its infrastructure. In the first half of 2018, the team at Oath began merging the AOL and Yahoo! Mail infrastructure under the Oath umbrella and introduced image caching, now serving them via their own proxy servers.

## Get to know your audience

Email client usage differs by industry—and from brand to brand. Understand which email clients and devices are popular with your audience with Litmus Email Analytics.

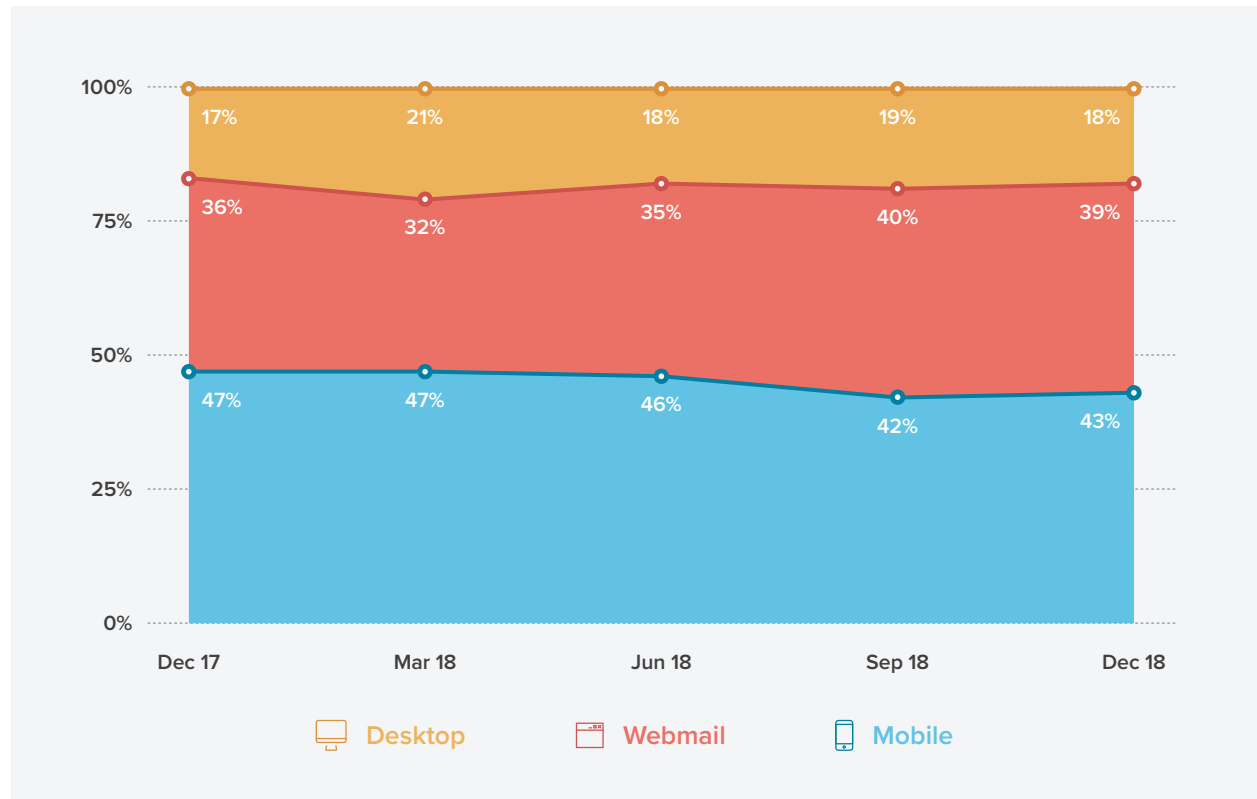




As a result, whether you're sending emails to AOL or Yahoo! Mail email addresses, they're now handled by the same message transfer agent, and, thus, might be reported together in your email analytics software.

## Mobile remains the most popular reading environment

Mobile continues to be the most popular reading environment for email. In December 2018, 43% of all emails were opened on mobile devices.



When looking at the development throughout 2018, though, it looks like mobile opens lost 4 percentage points, while opens in webmail clients grew 3 percentage points over the past twelve months. What's causing that change?

Remember those changes to the Yahoo! Mail infrastructure we mentioned above? Image caching eliminates the ability to determine a user's specific device or web browser, so all email opens in Yahoo! Mail, AOL, and Verizon might now look the same to your email tracking tools.

As a result, opens in the Yahoo! Mail app, for example, can no longer be attributed to a mobile reading environment and might get reported as webmail opens by default.



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# New Email Clients and Platforms

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From Outlook 2019 and new iPhones to the introduction of Apple’s Dark Mode and the rise of voice assistants—here are the new email clients, operating systems, and reading environments that email professionals must look out for.

# 1. Microsoft's Outlook 2019

In September, Microsoft released Outlook 2019, a new version of its popular desktop client. Outlook's bundle of versions ranks No. 4 on our [email client leaderboard](#) with a 9% share of the market.

The good news for email marketers is that Outlook 2019 doesn't come with any major surprises. Although Outlook 2019 is a new release, it largely implements some of the features that have been in use in Office 365 subscriptions. The major rendering changes are actually great for email marketers.

We'll let Rebecca Lawler, Program Manager on the Outlook Consumer team at Microsoft, sum things up:

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*"We're happy to bring improvements to Outlook that benefit both end users and the email marketing community, like better fallbacks when using web fonts and SVG support."*

**Rebecca Lawler,**

Outlook Consumer Program Manager



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Here's what we found while looking at the latest version of Microsoft Outlook:

## Message view

The inbox view is comparable to previous versions, as the chart to the right shows.

## Focused Inbox comes to Outlook for desktop

Focused Inbox—which has been available for Office 365 users—provides automatic sorting of messages, filtering out less-important ones into a separate folder in the inbox. Focused Inbox favors personal messages or emails from senders subscribers have previously interacted with.

Visible subject line length	25+ characters
Emoji in subject line	✓
Preview text support	✓
Preview text length	25+ characters, single line
Auto sorting (folders/tabs)	✓
Preview pane support	✓

Although Focused Inbox can look scary, email marketers shouldn't worry too much. As with Gmail's Promo Tab, not being in Focused Inbox [isn't the same thing as being marked as spam](#). It's just a useful way for users to maintain their focus on specific emails.

## Read-Aloud improves accessibility

The name describes the function: It reads text from an email out loud to the user. It relies on Microsoft's built-in text-to-speech (TTS) engine and can be enabled via a button in Outlook's application ribbon.

Again, this feature has been available for Office 365 users, but could see wider use with Outlook 2019 adoption.

The feature was designed to be an assistive device for users with visual disabilities, but it also reads emails on smart assistants like Siri on iOS, Amazon's Alexa, Microsoft's Cortana, and Google Home/Google Assistant.

## HTML and CSS Support

Rendering of HTML and CSS in Outlook 2019 remains largely unchanged. Although it still relies on Microsoft Word to render HTML emails, most of the bugs and techniques required to deal with Word's rendering are well-documented. At this point, you and your design team should be able to deal with any major problems Outlook throws your way.

CSS styles are supported both embedded or inline on elements and developers can target

Style in <head>	✓
Inline style support	✓
Media query support	✗
CSS attribute selector support	✓
Classes	✓
IDs	✓
Images enabled by default? *	✗
Animated GIF support	✗
ALT text support	✓
Styled ALT text support	✗
Background images **	✓
HTML5 video support	✗
Padding ***	✓
Margin ***	✓
Max-width ***	✓
Headers	✓
Paragraphs	✓
Web fonts	✗
Border radius	✗
Interactivity (checkboxes)	✗
Animation (transitions/keyframes)	✗

\*For unknown senders \*\*Using VML \*\*\*On some elements

elements any way they want, whether it's using attribute selectors, classes, or IDs.

## Outlook 2019 now supports SVG image formats

SVG, Scalable Vector Graphics, is an image format for vector graphics. [Unlike JPG, PNG, and GIF format images](#), SVG images are just plain text documents that describe the lines, shapes, and colors that make up the image.

Designers like SVGs because they are resolution-independent. They look sharp on any screen, while also keeping file sizes low. In theory, that would make it a great image file format for email.

However, support has traditionally been limited to Apple Mail and iOS Mail. With Outlook 2019, another key email client adds support for SVG, making it a more viable option for high-quality images in email, while holding down file sizes and loading times.



## Making Outlook better with the Litmus-Microsoft partnership—and your help

We all know that complex products at large companies can't change overnight, but we're thrilled to see Microsoft continue to make improvements to Outlook. Beyond the latest fixes to web font fallbacks and SVG support in Outlook 2019, the company [fixed media query support for Outlook mobile apps](#), announced [major updates to Outlook.com](#), and even added [animated GIF support on Windows 10 Mail](#)—a long-requested feature. Those fixes are a direct result of feedback from the email community as part of the [partnership between Litmus and Microsoft](#).

More improvements are coming, too, so email marketers should look forward to future versions of Outlook.

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*“At Microsoft, we’re excited to keep partnering with Litmus. We’re always listening and looking for ways to improve.”*

**Rebecca Lawler,**  
Outlook Consumer Program Manager



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To learn more about how we've been working with Microsoft, head over to our [partnership site](#), which has more information about what's changed since the partnership was announced, and—more importantly—how to get involved.

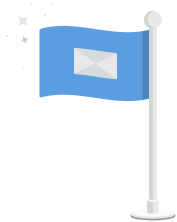
## Times New Roman is no longer Outlook's default fallback font

Another wonderful update is a fix for the Times New Roman web font problem. In previous versions, Outlook would default to Times New Roman, no matter which fallback font you had in place. A true nightmare for designers with a heart for typography. In Outlook 2019, web fonts properly display fallback fonts in the CSS font stack instead of defaulting to Times New Roman.

This means you no longer need special hacks to keep your fallback fonts on brand in Outlook 2019. However, you'll still need to include fixes for users of older Outlook versions.



*A win for [#emailgeeks](#) and lovers of [#typography](#):  
[@Outlook](#) 2019 no longer defaults to Times New Roman as a fallback font. 🎉*



### Action Items

- Enable Outlook 2019 in [Litmus Email Previews](#) to see how your emails display in this new email client.
- [Use semantic markup](#), and add the **role="presentation"** attribute to your HTML tables. Both of these will help accessibility features like Read Aloud understand and read the content of your emails.
- Research more ways to [keep your emails accessible](#).
- Spotted a rendering bug in Outlook 2019? Report it via the [Litmus-Microsoft feedback loop](#) and help us make Outlook better.

## 2. Apple's new iPhones

Another year, another round of new iPhones and a new version of iOS to download and decipher. But it's important to track any changes that can affect email inboxes, access, and rendering because iOS Mail is the No. 1 email client, even as Gmail nips at its heels.

Here's everything you need to know:

### New iPhone screen sizes and resolutions

Apple's September release introduced three new iPhones: the iPhone XS, the iPhone XS Max, and the iPhone XR. With a screen size of 5.8 inches, the iPhone XS shows the same dimensions as its predecessor. Resolution, pixel density, and pixel density ratio are identical, too.

The iPhone XS Max and the iPhone XR, on the other hand, come with larger screens. The iPhone XS Max is the largest iPhone in the market, with a 6.5 inch screen and a resolution of 2,688 x 1,242 pixels. The iPhone XR comes with a 6.1 inch display, but a lower pixel density.

	iPhone X	iPhone XS
Screen Sizes	5.8 inches	5.8 inches
Resolution	2436 x 1125	2436 x 1125
Pixel Density	458 ppi	458 ppi
Pixel Density Ratio	3	3

	iPhone X Max	iPhone XR
Screen Sizes	6.5 inches	6.1 inches
Resolution	2688 x 1242	1792 x 828
Pixel Density	458 ppi	326 ppi
Pixel Density Ratio	3	2

### Targeting new iOS devices with media queries:

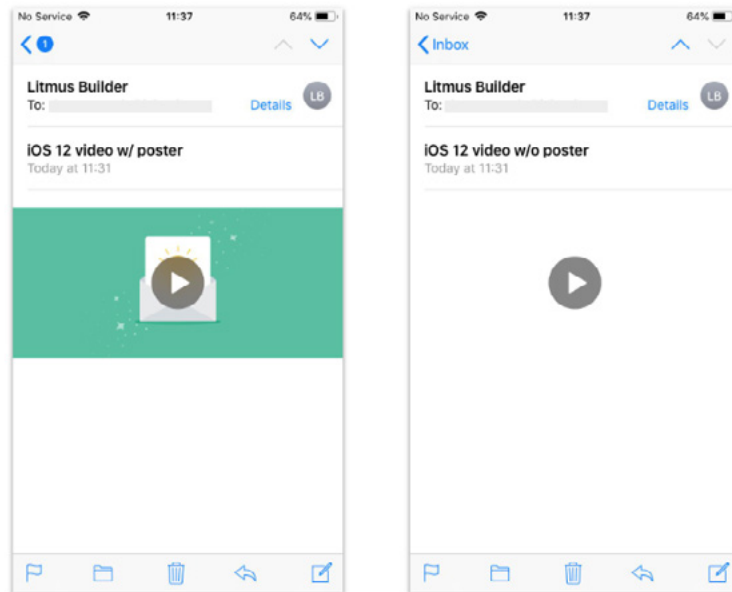
Although you can target the specific device sizes of each new iPhone, using such specific media queries is problematic, as those sizes are likely to change in the future.

A better method is to use a “breakpoint” for triggering responsive styles. That breakpoint is the same as with [previous iPhone models: 414px](#). Setting the media query to target **max-device-width: 414px** will make sure that responsive styles are shown on all three of the new iPhone models.

```
@media screen and (max-device-width: 414px) { /* Insert
```

## Poster attribute required to display HTML5 videos

iOS 12 supports HTML5 video, but we still see a bug that we already know from iOS 11. A preview image of your video will display only if you add a poster attribute. Without defining a poster image, your video will appear as blank.



*HTML5 video in iOS 12 with and without a poster attribute defined*



### Action Items

- Optimize your imagery for large screens—and high pixel density.** Make sure you [optimize your email's images for high-DPI screens](#). With the release of the iPhone XS and the XS Max, three of Apple's phone models now come with high-resolution displays with a pixel density of 459ppi. If you don't optimize your images for these high-DPI displays, your images might look blurry and pixelated and be less effective.
- Start testing your email in iOS 12.** Email Previews for the iPhone XS, XS Max, and XR are available in Litmus, so you can [start testing](#) right away. Not a Litmus customer yet? [Get started with Litmus today](#).



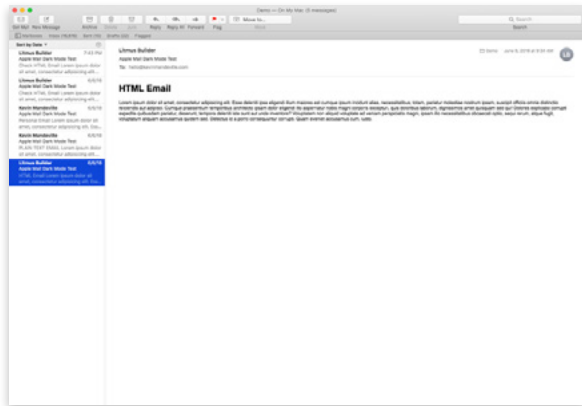
### 3. Apple introduces ‘Dark Mode’ in MacOS Mojave

Apple’s 15th release of its desktop operating system, macOS Mojave, comes with a prominent new feature: [Dark Mode](#). It uses a darker color palette for all windows, views, menus, and controls.

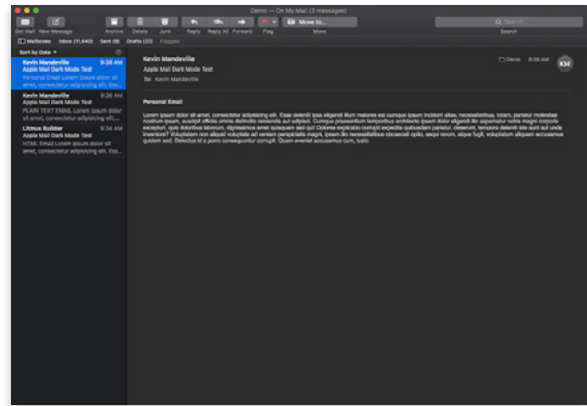
This makes the interface more suitable for work in low-light environments or at night. Users can set Dark Mode as their default interface style or have their Macs automatically switch between Light and Dark Mode depending on the time of day.

Dark Mode provides a dark theme for all major desktop apps, including Finder, iTunes, Photos, and what’s most important for us email geeks: Apple Mail.

Here’s what it looks like in use:



Apple Mail in Light Mode



A personal email in Dark Mode

### Bright-colored emails can lead to a subpar reader experience

Dark mode automatically adjusts the background color in plain-text emails to a darker tone. HTML emails, on the other hand, remain unchanged. Even if you do not have a background color defined in your HTML email, the background is still rendered as white. So you don’t have to worry about Dark Mode messing with your code or rendering experience for regular HTML emails out of the box.

However, brightly colored email backgrounds can create a jarring experience for end users in Dark Mode. Emails that switch from being dark to light (and vice versa) are exhausting to the eye and make for a subpar reading experience for the subscriber.

Unfortunately, you can't target individual Dark Mode users and serve them an optimized version of your email. Dark Mode introduces a new user setting that no universal standard supports. But just because you can't specifically target Dark Mode users (yet), that doesn't mean you can't optimize for the Dark Mode reading experience. Email designers have to rely on alternative techniques to ensure their emails look great in Dark Mode.



### Action Items

- Experiment with background colors other than white that would look good and work well in both light and dark environments.
- Optimize your email designs by creating a [Dark Mode or accessibility switcher](#) with WebKit targeting that lets users toggle between light or dark designs.
- Use Litmus [Email Previews](#) to view your emails in Apple Mail 12 Dark Mode.
- Learn more about Dark Mode from Kevin Mandeville in this guide: [Email Designers, Here's Your Next Challenge: Apple's Dark Mode](#).

## 4. Google launches Gmail Go

Google made another addition to its Go line of lightweight apps for emerging markets with the introduction of Gmail Go. Gmail Go is a stripped-down, lightweight version of Google's popular Gmail app.

It's a similar experience to existing Gmail apps and will initially only be used by a very small percentage of users. Kevin Mandeville and Jason Rodriguez covered the implications of this streamlined version of [Gmail in Email Design Podcast #96: Litmus Research, Google News, and Image Caching in Yahoo! Mail](#).

## 5. 'Alexa, Read My Email'

In December 2018, Amazon updated its Alexa voice assistant, giving it the skill to read, reply, archive, or delete your emails. As Kevin Mandeville [reports](#), Alexa will read the sender name, subject line, and text in an HTML email. It can read emojis but will ignore images and HTML attributes like **alt** text or **ARIA**.



“Alexa and the rise of voice-activated email is yet another strong reason to build semantic, accessible emails,” Kevin says.

When users say “Alexa, read my email” or “Alexa, check my email,” Alexa will report how many unread emails arrived in the previous 24 hours and indicate how many, if any, are marked important. For security, users can set a four-number security code that Alexa will ask for before accessing emails.

What you can’t do with Alexa (yet): mark email as spam, unsubscribe or compose a new email.

Right now, the new functions work on only Outlook and Gmail. To access the updated email functions, you’ll need to install the updated app from iOS or Android.

The update comes as the market for smart speakers with voice assistants gains double-digit adoption around the world. Consulting firm [Deloitte Global](#) predicts 250 million smart speakers will be installed worldwide by the end of 2019.



### Action Items

- Use proper semantic elements** in your email, especially for text. Don’t just rely on text inside of table cells. Use headings (h) and paragraphs (p) appropriately.
- If you still put key information inside images, this is your final warning to stop.** Alexa will ignore your images and the alt text you use to describe them, the same way that readers won’t see that information in emails viewed with images off. Use images to enhance your message, and put important information in message text.
- Choose emojis carefully.** We can think of a few emojis whose names will be startling when read out loud and out of context, especially in subject line and preview text.



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## Email Client Updates and Farewells

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Gmail was in the news all year long, from refreshing the user interface to bringing images and promotion codes into the Promotions tab. But other email clients were busy as well, giving subscribers more options to manage their email right in the inbox.

# Gmail updates

## 1. Google announces native support for AMP for Gmail

If you're an email geek—whether a designer, developer, or marketer—this is one of the top stories of the year.

Google announced in February that it would add native support for dynamic and interactive email powered by its [Accelerated Mobile Pages Project](#) (AMP), an open-source technology designed to improve the performance of web content, in particular on mobile devices.

Gmail will become the first email client to support AMP and, with that, the more advanced implementation of dynamic and interactive elements in email. Although Google didn't announce a date for rolling out support for AMP in Gmail inboxes, we can expect the launch to happen soon.

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*“AMP started as an effort to help publishers, but as its capabilities have expanded over time, it's now one of the best ways to build rich webpages. With this came the opportunity to modernize one of the most popular places where people spend their time: email.”*

**Aakash Sahney,**  
Product Manager, Gmail



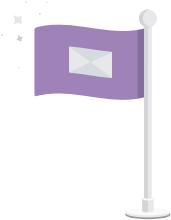
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### AMP for Gmail has challenges for marketers, designers

AMP for Gmail promises a new level of interactivity within an email, such as completing surveys, making purchases, or filling out forms without leaving the email. But it has some drawbacks, too:

- **You'll need to create a separate email just for your Gmail subscribers.** That's because Gmail requires a separate MIME-type for the AMP version of the email: text-x-amhtml.
- **It's not clear whether other inbox providers will pick up AMP.** In past statements Google has predicted that other providers would incorporate AMP, but, at this point, we have not seen it happen.

- **ESPs would need to add out-of-the box support for a third MIME type** and make changes to their platforms in order for users to leverage AMP functionality. A lack of support by ESPs will be a [major hurdle for marketers' adoption of AMP](#).
- **We don't know whether all versions of Gmail will support AMP.** [Gmail is known for inconsistent rendering](#), like showing significant differences in email rendering between accounts powered by Gmail addresses and those that use non-Gmail addresses via POP/IMAP. We might see mixed support for AMP across Gmail's platform, too.



### Action Items

- Learn more about AMP for Email in this blog post, [Gmail Announces Native Support for Dynamic and Interactive Email Powered by AMP](#). Also, listen to a special edition of the Email Design Podcast, "[#94: Instant Reaction to Gmail Announcing AMP Support](#)," in which we discuss the AMP for Gmail announcement.
- Assess your subscriber base and email program.** See whether investing time in testing AMP for Gmail is worth your efforts. Gmail holds 27% of the [email client market share](#) (No. 2 behind Apple's iPhone) and has an estimated [1 billion+ monthly active users](#). If Gmail is one of your subscribers' top email clients, too, and if your brand or products rely heavily on moving email readers to landing pages to complete actions, it could be worth your time to explore.
- Work with your email designers and developers.** Encourage them to check out [Google's documentation](#).

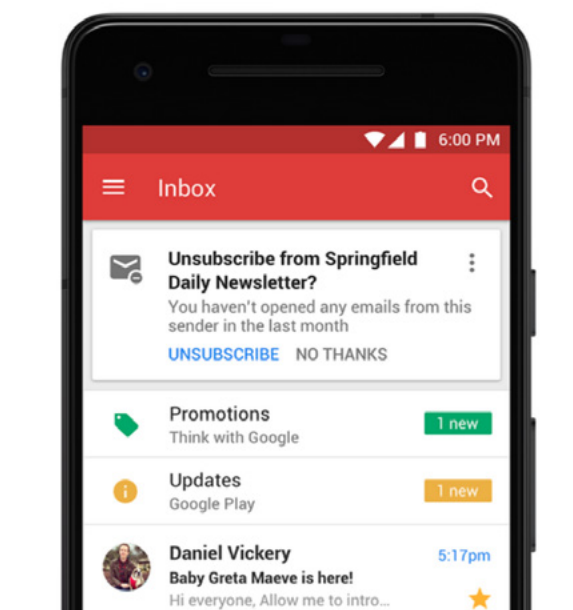
## 2. Gmail launches its new interface

On October 1, Gmail began retiring its old user interface when it turned off the ability to toggle between the [new UI it launched in April](#) and the old look. These are some of the biggest changes that would affect email marketers and designers:

## Unsubscribe suggestions

Formerly seen only in Inbox for Gmail but now part of the new UI, it includes several features that had previously been experimental. Among them: Unsubscribe suggestions—a feature that suggests users unsubscribe from emails they haven’t engaged with in the past four weeks.

That four-week window rattled marketers, but G Suite’s VP of Product Management David Thacker reassured them that Gmail would also consider other factors, such as sending frequency.



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*“Gmail can also recommend when to unsubscribe from mailing lists. Using intelligence, unsubscribe suggestions appear based on cues like how many emails you get from a sender and how many of them you actually read.”*

*David Thacker,*  
VP of Product Management



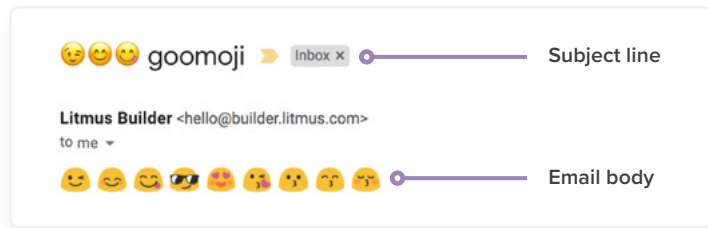
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## Goodbye, Goomojis (almost)

Oh, those Goomojis—Gmail’s gumdrop-shaped versions of the emojis marketers love to put in their subject lines and content to add a little pizzazz to their messaging.

The old UI replaced emojis with their Goomoji equivalents in both the subject line and the message body. In the new system, viewers will see the default emojis their operating systems use, but only in the subject line.

So, someone opening an email on an iPhone will see Apple's default emojis in the subject line and the Gomoji equivalent in the message, creating an awkward mix of styles.



### Continued support for hover and rollover effects

At one point during 2018, Gmail discontinued support for rollover and hover effects. The `:hover` element is popular among email designers because it allows you to add [simple but powerful interactive effects to your emails](#). Designers bemoaned the change, but, as if by magic, support for `:hover` returned in May.

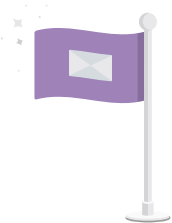
Gmail also fixed a bug that broke CSS styles when users manually enabled images in email messages.

### Roboto and Google Sans web fonts supported

Gmail traditionally hasn't supported [web fonts](#), and this technically hasn't changed with the new interface. There is, however, a small exception.

Gmail's new interface uses two popular web fonts: Google Sans and Roboto—and that means you can now utilize these two fonts in your emails, too. Simply add the fonts to your font-family CSS attribute if you want to use them in your email.

So, while font choices for email design in Gmail remain limited, the addition of Google Sans and Roboto allows email designers at least a little more flexibility with their email typography.



#### Action Items

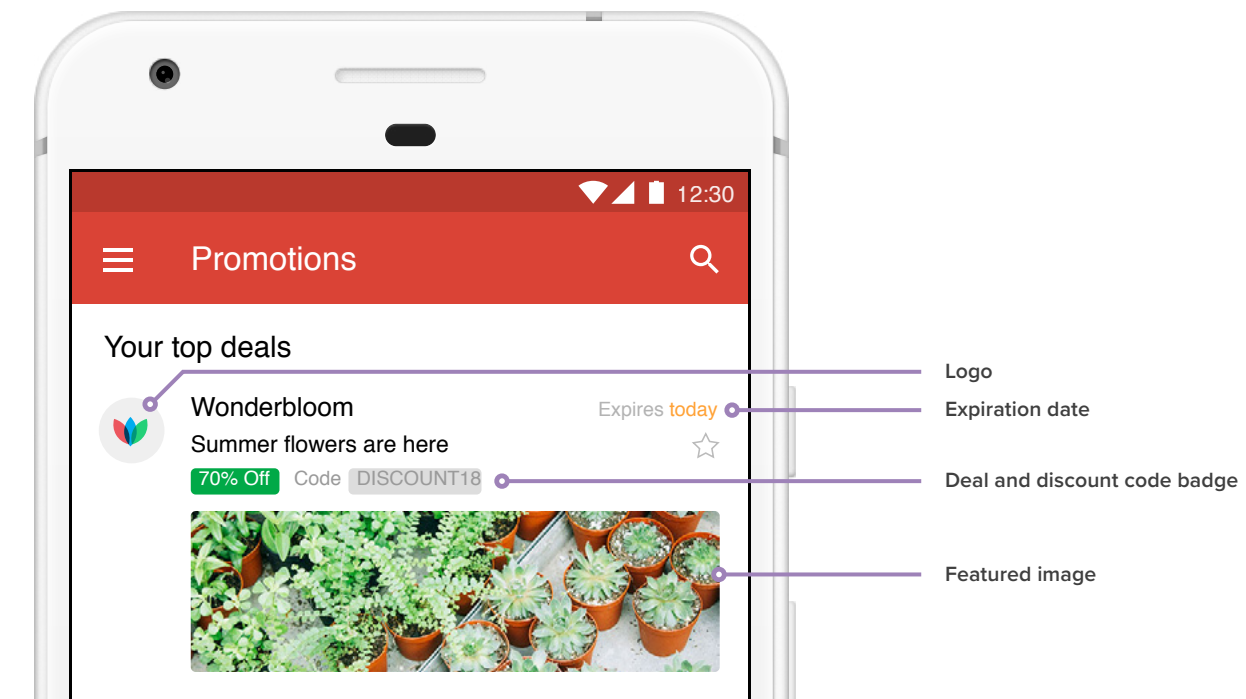
- Preview your emails in the new UI.** Email Previews for Gmail's new interface are available in Litmus. If you have a Litmus account, you can preview your emails in the new UI now. If you aren't a Litmus customer yet, [learn more about Litmus Email Previews](#) and [sign up today](#).
- [Learn about list-unsubscribe](#) and how its implementation can help you keep your email list clean and your email program healthy.



## 4. Gmail launches updates to the Promotions tab

But that's not it with Gmail updates for 2018. In December, [Gmail launched major updates to the Gmail Promotions tab](#), providing email marketers many more ways to make their emails more visible and valuable to recipients.

Using machine learning, Gmail identifies the most valuable messages for each user and groups them into bundles organized by topic or themes like *Top Deals* or *Top Picks*. Bundled emails have additional functionality: in addition to standard inbox text (like a subject line), marketers can include additional information like promotion codes, a featured image, and deal expiration dates—all visible to your subscribers before they open your email.



While any promotional email can get pulled into a bundle, the enriched preview featuring the custom image, logo, and deal details will only display if you annotate your email HTML. Annotation happens through a custom bit of JSON code that specifies deal details—discount codes, the type of offer, and a featured image, for example.

The new Promotions tab is live in Android and iOS Gmail apps and is expected to roll out to webmail users this year.

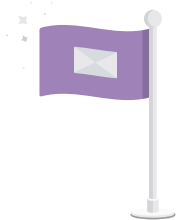


## Gmail partners with Litmus to help email marketers make the most out of Gmail's new Promotions tab

We teamed up with Gmail to give email marketers the resources to help optimize their emails for Gmail's new Promotions Tab, learn about common mistakes, and understand best practices to make their emails more valuable to Gmail users.

*"We're excited to team up with Litmus to empower marketers with the knowledge and tools they need to optimize their email for the new Promotions tab and deliver more value to our users."*

**Jordan Grossman,**  
Product Manager, Gmail



### Action Items

- Learn what's new in the Gmail Promotions tab**, and get answers to all frequently asked questions in our [exclusive webinar](#) with Jordan Grossman, Product Manager at Gmail.
- Customize your deals and annotate your email** in seconds with our handy [Gmail Promotions Builder](#). Make your emails stand out in the Promotions tab—without writing a single line of code.
- Learn about best practices** and get help troubleshooting your Gmail annotations with [Gmail's documentation for email developers](#) and [read answers to frequently asked questions on the Litmus blog](#).

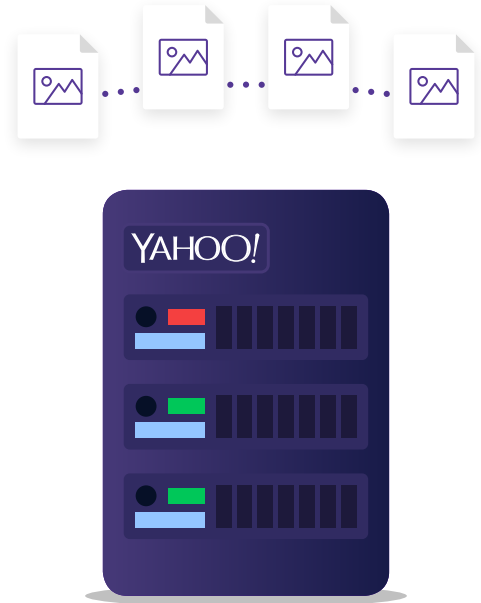
# Yahoo! Mail updates

## 1. Yahoo! Mail introduces image caching

Similar to Gmail's move in 2013, [images in emails sent to Yahoo! Mail users are now cached](#). This move can have serious repercussions for marketers with a high percentage of active Yahoo! Mail users.

Image caching is the practice of serving email images from its own proxy servers instead of the senders' servers. Subsequent views of the cached image will always load from the proxy server rather than the original server.

This effectively reroutes all the image downloads along with the associated tracking data.



### Image caching affects email tracking

Image caching reduces the amount of data you can get from tracking pixels in your emails, such as where, on which platforms, and how often your subscribers open your emails and how long they spend with them.

This loss of geolocation and engagement data can also mean personalizing messages with dynamic content becomes less accurate and reliable. Instead of serving content that reflects the geographical area where your customers are opening your messages, the content could reflect where the proxy server is located.

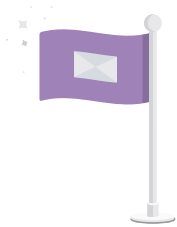
### Yahoo! Mail and AOL infrastructure migrations

The team at Oath began merging the AOL and Yahoo mail infrastructure under the Oath umbrella—another factor that affects email tracking. Whether you're sending emails to AOL or Yahoo! Mail email addresses, they're now handled by the same message transfer agent, and thus might be reported together in your email analytics software.

## 2. Yahoo! Mail introduces reminders and list-unsubscribe

On the heels of its move in late 2017 to highlight coupons, discounts, and other promotions in email messages, [Yahoo! Mail added functions that let users set reminders and unsubscribe from emails](#) without leaving the inbox.

Both measures are designed to make inboxes more useful to Yahoo! Mail's customers and to retain them as users. Marketers might worry that making opt-outs easier could lead to a subscriber exodus, but Gmail's addition of unsubscribe suggestions in 2017 has shown this hasn't happened yet.



### Action Items

- If a big chunk of your subscribers open your emails in Yahoo! Mail, scrutinize your email analytics data. Unexpected changes in your metrics—especially when it comes to looking at engagement tracking, geolocation data, or reading environments—might be caused by image caching and infrastructure migrations, not a change in your subscribers' behavior.
- To avoid serving incorrect dynamic content to your Yahoo! Mail subscribers, segment them out and serve fallback content that doesn't rely on geolocation information provided by email tracking data.
- Learn more about list-unsubscribe features in our [Ultimate Guide to List-Unsubscribe](#).
- Understand which email clients your audience uses to read email, and if they're affected by Yahoo! Mail's image caching using [Litmus Email Analytics](#).

## Outlook updates

### 1. Outlook introduces verified icons for business

As part of the Windows 10 update, Microsoft added [three new services](#) to its Outlook email service:

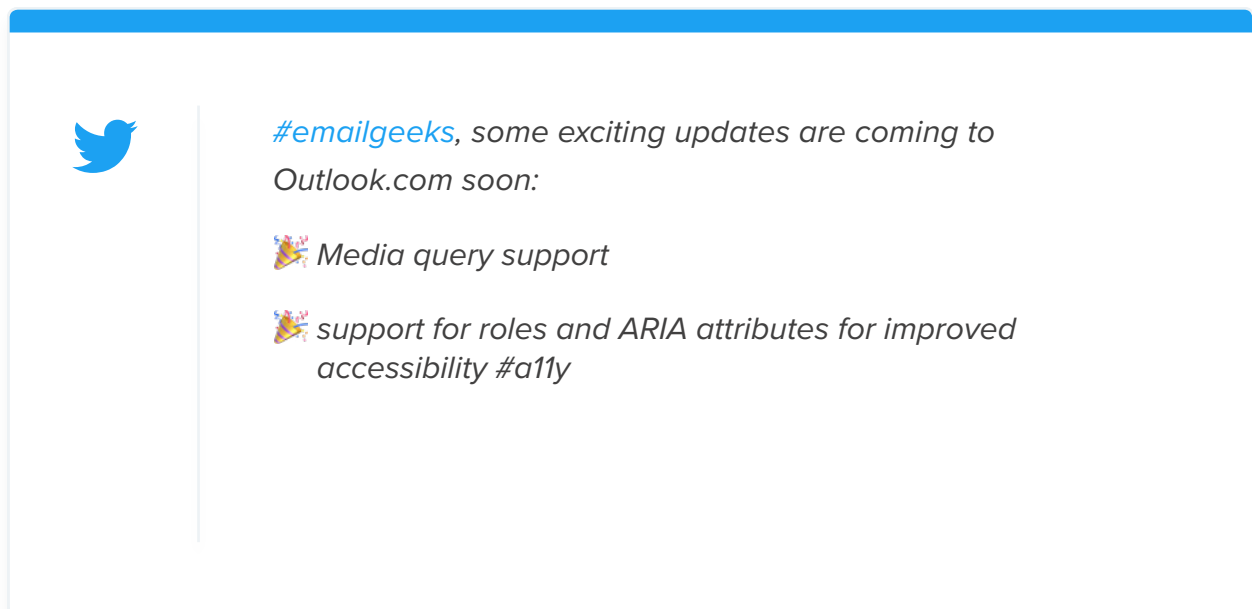
- **Verified business icons.** Similar to the brand logos of BIMI-verified senders that appear in Yahoo! Mail, Microsoft says the icons will “help you sort through the noise and interact more easily with the brands you love... making it easier for you to identify legitimate businesses in your inbox.”

- **Subscription portal.** This pane in the Outlook UI will help users “easily see what newsletters you’re enrolled in, and unsubscribe in one click.”
- **Visible email promotions in the inbox.** Microsoft says the move “[makes] it easy to find promotions in your inbox by surfacing offer details right in your message list, so you don’t have to open the email to see the deal.”

The changes are intended to help Outlook users fall in love with their inboxes again. So, the long-term effect could be positive for brands that users feel strongly about. But it also could mean that brands lacking those strong connections could sink out of sight.

## 2. Outlook.com updates media query support and improves accessibility

[Microsoft is overhauling its webmail client Outlook.com](#), and the results are mostly positive for marketers. At publication time these innovations were still being tested, but they will be rolled out to users over the next few months.



### Media queries supported

Outlook.com is beginning to support CSS media queries. This is important for marketers because media queries are the foundation of responsive email. They allow designers and developers to target specific attributes of an email client or web browser and adjust the styles of their email as needed.

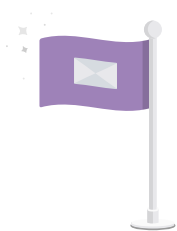
Email marketers can use media queries to optimize their campaigns for subscribers, no matter which device they use to check their Outlook.com inboxes.

## Accessibility improves

Outlook.com also no longer strips out two tools that are important for making email more accessible to subscribers with visual, physical, or cognitive and neurological disabilities.

Those two tools are roles and ARIA attributes, both of which are important for emails read on screen readers rather than conventionally.

Both of these innovations are another great result of the feedback we receive from the email community and our partnership with Microsoft. [Visit our partnership page](#) to learn more about our collaboration, including how to get involved, and see what we've accomplished so far.



### Action Items

- If you have a high percentage of subscribers who use Outlook, consider verifying your business** for email and sign up for the [beta-testing program](#).
- Include ARIA and role attributes** to better describe the content in your emails for disabled users and those using assistive technology like screen readers. One of the best ways to make your emails more accessible is by including the role attribute set to presentation on every table tag in your campaign. Doing so takes the tables out of the accessibility tree so that screen readers skip right to the content within those tables, instead of reading out every table row, column, and cell individually.
- Make Outlook.com part of your default testing clients** in [Litmus Email Previews](#) to ensure your emails continue to look great as Microsoft rolls out changes to the email client.



When email clients change support without warning, your brand reputation and customer experience are at risk.

With Litmus, you can see screenshots of your emails across 90+ apps and devices and ensure your emails look great and perform in all environments.

The image shows a side-by-side comparison of an email preview. The left side, labeled 'BEFORE LITMUS', shows a broken email with several errors: broken links, missing product images, wrong typeface, and a missing button. The right side, labeled 'AFTER LITMUS', shows the same email after being fixed, with correct links, correct product images, correct typeface, and a visible button.

**BEFORE LITMUS**

- Broken links ❌
- Missing product images ❌
- Wrong typeface ❌
- Missing button ❌

**AFTER LITMUS**

- Correct links ✅
- Correct product images ✅
- Correct typeface ✅
- Visible button ✅

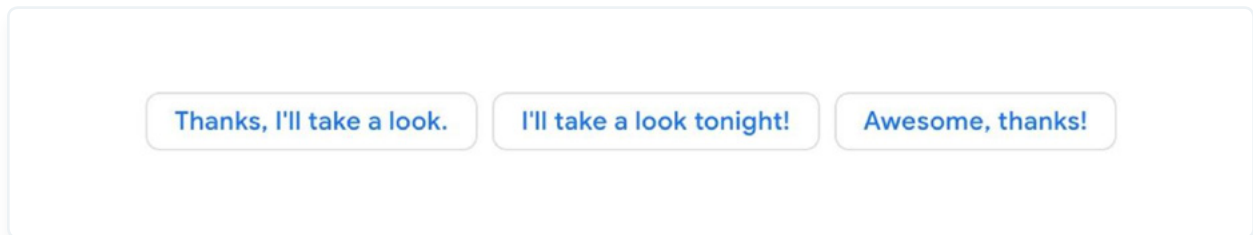
Get started with Litmus Email Previews and never send another broken email.

## Email client farewells

### Google shuts Inbox by Gmail

Now that Google has debuted the updated Gmail interface, support for Google's email sandbox, Inbox by Gmail, is to end sometime in 2019, possibly as soon as March. But Inbox, which had [some devoted users](#), will live on in many of the features that Google experimented with in Inbox, including these:

- **“Snooze:”** Lets you temporarily suspend emails until a future date or time.
- **Follow-ups (nudges):** Moves some old emails to the top of your inbox with a suggestion to act on them.
- **Hover:** A desktop function in which you can hover over emails in your inbox and act on them without opening, such as archiving or marking them as read.
- **Smart reply:** Suggests responses to personal emails that vary according to the content in the original message.



### Newton Email shut down in September

Newton launched as the free service CloudMagic in 2013 and transitioned to a paid subscription plan in 2016. Founder Rohit Nadhani explained in [a Medium post](#) that the company “explored various business models but couldn’t successfully figure out profitability & growth over the long term.” He cited the competition of free apps from Apple, Google, and Microsoft as too much to overcome.





7

## Email Industry Movers and Shakers

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Since 2012, the email service provider industry has seen roughly \$17 billion in mergers and acquisitions. In 2018, the industry continued to show clear signs of consolidation with blockbuster acquisitions of SendGrid and Marketo.

FEB

## February 2018

**Google launches AMP for Email:** Google announced it would [roll out Accelerated Mobile Pages](#) (AMP) capabilities to Gmail and that the technology would be freely available for other email providers to adopt. The new technology supports a range of email interactivity, as well as live content, which updates email content at the time of open rather than the time of send.

MAR

## March 2018

**Yahoo! Mail first to test BIMl:** Yahoo! Mail is the first email service to [test the Brand Indicators for Message Identification](#), a security standard announced in 2017. A combination of branding and security, BIMl rewards senders who fully authenticate their emails with SPF, DKIM, and DMARC by displaying their brand logos beside their sender name in the inbox.

APR

## April 2018

**Yahoo! fined in breach:** The inbox provider agreed to pay [\\$35 million](#) to settle charges that it misled investors by waiting nearly two years to disclose that Russian hackers stole email addresses and other data from 500 million users.

**Oath launches email scanning:** Oath, the parent company of AOL and Yahoo! Mail, told users of both services it would [begin scanning their emails](#) for use in targeted advertising. The practice, in place for Yahoo! Mail users, was extended to AOL subscribers for the first time.

**Microsoft email privacy case dropped:** The U.S. Supreme Court dismissed a [Justice Department lawsuit against Microsoft](#) that would have compelled the company to reveal email information that was stored on overseas servers after Congress passed the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act.

**Royal Mail fined £12,000 for spam:** The UK's [Information Commissioner's Office](#) fined the UK mail service for sending emails about parcel-post price changes to 327,014 people who had opted out of marketing emails. The ICO said the messages were marketing messages, not service alerts, as Royal Mail had claimed.

MAY

## May 2018

**ANA buys DMA:** The [Association of National Advertisers](#) acquired the Data & Marketing Association (formerly the Direct Marketing Association). The Email Experience Council, which is part of the DMA, was included in the purchase.

GDPR goes into effect: Two years after the European Union adopted the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#), it went into effect on May 25. The GDPR introduces new obligations to data processors and data controllers, including those who market to or collect data on EU residents.

JUN

## June 2018

**Campaign Monitor merges with Emma and Delivra:** Email service provider Emma, automation platform Delivra, and Campaign Monitor were joined together under the [Campaign Monitor brand](#). The three companies share a parent company, Insight Venture Partners, which invested in Campaign Monitor in 2014 and bought Emma and Delivra in 2017.

**Tesco ends email service:** The UK-based provider of groceries, phone, and financial services [turned off its tesco.net email service](#) on June 27, but said it would continue forwarding email until October. It continues to offer Tesco Mobile, the UK's largest mobile virtual network operator service.

JUL

## July 2018

**Cheetah Digital acquires Stellar Loyalty:** The Chicago-based cross-channel marketing-technology company bought Stellar, a real-time customer loyalty and engagement platform, but did not disclose terms. Email is a primary channel for cross-channel campaign execution for both firms.

**The State of California passes the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA).** The law will significantly strengthen privacy in the US when it goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2020—if it's not superseded by a federal privacy law that Congress might pass this year.

AUG

## August 2018

**Phrasee raises \$4 million in Series A funding:** [Phrasee](#), a London-based company specializing in artificial intelligence-powered copywriting for email, social, and mobile marketing, said it would use the investment from Albion Capital Group to fund its international expansion plans, including growing its U.S. operations.

SEP

## September 2018

**Trendline buys Inbox Pros:** The full-service email marketing agency [Trendline Interactive](#) used proceeds from funding provided by Growth Catalyst Partners to acquire Inbox Pros, adding deliverability, privacy, and compliance services to its portfolio of email services.

**Adobe buys Marketo:** [Adobe acquired the marketing software company](#) from Vista Equity Partners for \$4.75 billion, reportedly the largest acquisition in the company's history.

**Slack buys Astro to boost email:** The [workplace communications app acquired the email software company](#), which created the Astrobot for Slack email client, but did not disclose terms.

OCT

## October 2018

**Salesforce buys Rebel:** The business services company, which bought ExactTarget in 2012, added Rebel (formerly Rebelmail) to its [Salesforce Marketing Cloud](#), but did not disclose the price or terms. Rebel is best known for developing interactive emails that allow users to complete actions within an email instead of going to a landing page.

**Twilio acquires SendGrid:** Cloud technology company [Twilio bought email service provider SendGrid](#) in an all-stock deal valued at about \$2 billion, combining two firms that handle communications between apps and their users.

DEC

## December 2018

**Upland Software buys Adestra:** Upland, which makes enterprise work management software, [bought UK-based ESP Adestra](#) for \$60.2 million. Adestra's email platform will be combined with Upland's mobile messaging, customer engagement, and knowledge management solutions.

**Verizon reorganizes, renames struggling Oath:** The Oath brand—encompassing AOL, Yahoo!, and subsidiaries including HuffPost and TechCrunch—will become [Verizon Media Group](#), one of three divisions under the Verizon Communications Inc. banner.

**Dentsu Aegis Network buys DEG:** Digital Evolution Group will join Dentsu's Isobar agency and be known as [DEG, Linked by Isobar](#). DEG brings partnerships with Salesforce, Hootsuite, Sitecore, Adobe Magento, Google, and Microsoft.

While brands continue to have over two hundred email service providers to choose from, the ESP industry continues to show clear signs of consolidation. Learn more about the industry consolidation and its causes in Litmus' State of Email Service Providers report.



8

## Spam Laws, Email Security, and Privacy News

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Data security and privacy were among the top topics affecting email marketers in 2018, from the sweeping new set of laws in the European Union to the elimination of net neutrality in the United States and a major new consumer privacy act in California—which may lead to the passage of a US version of GDPR.

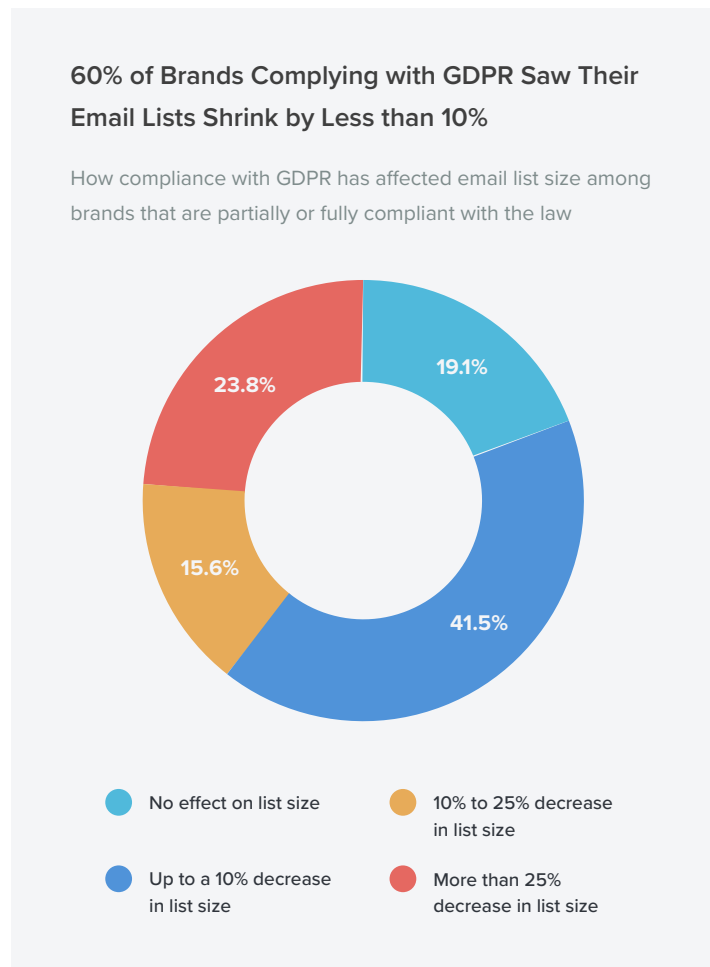
# 1. The European Union's General Data and Privacy Regulation went into effect

Despite all the overheated predictions that the EU's new laws governing consent, data, privacy, and security would be the end of email marketing as we know it, May 25 came and went without calamity—but also not without significant investments and headaches.

The new regulations, which the EU adopted in 2016, replaced the EU Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC. Unlike its predecessor law, GDPR provisions also apply to data collection, storage, processing, and security outside the EU.

The email world focused on the regulations governing storage and collection of consent to send marketing messages. The law says consent must be affirmative (no pre-checked boxes) and be “freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous.”

Litmus research in two studies found evidence that a clear majority of email marketers have not suffered the major damage the doomsayers predicted. From those findings, we came to two conclusions:



## Few brands saw major cuts in list size

Our survey of email marketers found that 60% of brands that comply in full or in part with GDPR saw either no effect on list size or a loss of less than 10%.

Although losing even 10% of a list might seem like a catastrophe, many of those lost addresses likely were either inactive or unengaged and were creating little or no value for the email program.

## Tighter regulations don't hurt email ROI

In another study, [Email Marketing ROI: The Factors that Lead to Better Returns](#), we found that stricter regulations did not limit the effectiveness of the email channel, thus not hurting businesses that use it to drive acquisition, revenue, engagement, and loyalty.

Brands in the US and brands in Europe and the UK generated very similar returns on their investments in email marketing, with EU countries' average ROI of 39:1 edging out America's 38:1, even though local anti-spam laws are much tighter in Europe.

**Our takeaway? Don't fear tighter regulations.** Email marketers who didn't follow basic industry best practices for acquisition, list management, and data protection had the most to lose before GDPR went into effect.

Maintaining good email habits reduces your risk, not just from GDPR but also from other legislation, such as the recently enacted [California Consumer Privacy Act](#), or federal-level legislation now under consideration in the US Congress.



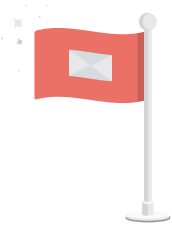
### Action Items

GDPR has long-term effects that will require fundamental shifts in your email strategies. Follow these three steps to stay on the right side of the law, whether you live in an EU nation or have customers or prospects in any of your databases whose rights are protected under the law:

#### Comply with the law, and stay compliant.

During the weeks following GDPR's enactment, a Litmus poll found [38% of marketers who are subject to the law weren't complying with it yet](#). We expect that number is much smaller now, but we also expect that a significant percentage of brands remain only partially compliant with the regulation. That can expose you to major risks of fines and other penalties.

If you're in that group, now is a good time to download a copy of the [GDPR statutes](#) and various interpretations.



### ○ **Sharpen your acquisition tactics.**

Strict consent requirements mean that brands must not only remove subscribers for whom they didn't have [GDPR-compliant consent](#) but also abandon tactics that helped grow lists quickly but no longer meet GDPR requirements for explicit opt-in and data transparency.

These include automatically opting in subscribers who download whitepapers and other content, adding people to your newsletter list who entered a contest, and similar tactics. Litmus research has found that some of these [problematic subscriber acquisition methods](#) lead to more incidences of blocks and blacklistings.

If you see your list growth slow down, explore new acquisition tactics, such as [using organic or paid social media to grow your email lists](#), or adding opt-in boxes to forms that currently aren't designed to collect opt-ins. Also look for ways to optimize your existing subscriber acquisition sources, such as testing benefits language and the number of fields on your signup forms.

[Litmus' State of Email Deliverability report](#) lists the most popular subscriber acquisition sources. Test to see whether these tactics are a good fit for your brand, and whether they deliver high-quality subscribers.

### ○ **Make subscriber retention a priority.**

Subscriber retention will become an important success metric for email programs—and a key priority for email marketers.

Use segmentation and targeting to create relevant messaging. Use data from a well-designed preference center, plus customer or subscriber behavior on your websites, to provide segmentation or triggered-messaging data. Use responses from an [unsubscribe survey](#) to explore improvements.

Plan to handle subscribers who stop interacting with your emails, such as launching [reengagement campaigns](#), a well-timed strategic message that targets inactive subscribers, reinforces your value proposition, and helps reduce the number of unsubscribes.



## 2. Denmark orders email encryption

In July, Denmark, a member of the European Union, became the [first country in the world to mandate encryption of email](#) containing more sensitive kinds of personal information.

GDPR defines information in this higher-level category as “personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation.”

Denmark’s requirement to encrypt messages with this information in it is a strict interpretation of GDPR’s mandate to secure this data.

### Missing guidance about what type of encryption marketers must implement

It’s not clear what kind of encryption the Danish law requires. Most ESPs and inbox providers already allow marketers to encrypt their emails using STARTTLS, Opportunistic TLS, or secure transport, although only 23% of marketers told us in our 2018 State of Email survey that they use this security protocol when sending their marketing emails.

A higher-level security protocol is end-to-end encryption, which requires both the sender and recipients to use keys to encrypt or decode messages. This is far more complicated, but at present, we have no guidance from the Danish government about which security protocol to use.

## 3. Net neutrality is still dead—or is it?

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted in late December 2017 to kill “net neutrality,” the Obama-era rule that banned broadband internet providers from throttling or blocking access to specific websites or charging companies for access to “fast lanes.”

Opponents of net neutrality said the rules stifled innovation and investment, but backers said the rules protected consumers against abuse by internet service providers, from charging higher rates to controlling users’ online activities.



That rule change, which also stripped the FCC of its rule-making authority over broadband, took effect in June. But, the FCC vote triggered a tsunami of lawsuits and legislative actions on both sides, keeping the issue alive even though the furor has died down.

### **State mandates, Senate vote**

Several states, including California and Washington, enacted their own versions of net neutrality. The Senate also voted to restore net neutrality, although the measure requires both House approval and President Trump's signature to become law.

### **Lawsuits, lawsuits everywhere**

Net-neutrality supporters who want the old rules reinstated have filed lawsuits challenging the FCC's authority, including one in the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals, the same court that upheld challenges to the net-neutrality order in 2015.

On the other side, the US Department of Justice and internet providers have sued California over its net neutrality law, claiming the move violated the Constitution's commerce clause. California agreed to delay enforcing its neutrality statute until the DC appeals court rules on the case.

## **4. California enacts the California Consumer Privacy Act**

Net neutrality wasn't the only issue firing up California state legislators this year. Data collection practices and security breaches spurred the state to enact the [California Consumer Privacy Act](#) (CCPA), which will significantly strengthen privacy in the US state when it goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

The CCPA focuses exclusively on data collection and privacy, and is roughly in line with the provisions of GDPR on those issues. The law states that it was triggered by the [Cambridge Analytica scandal](#) in which Facebook data for at least 87 million people was misused.

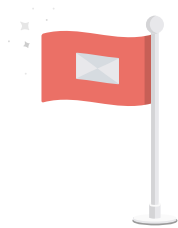
A separate bill still under consideration in California, [AB-2546](#), would have strengthened anti-spam laws and moved California—and in effect the rest of America—off [the opt-out marketing permission standard established by CAN-SPAM](#), putting it more in sync with international anti-spam laws.

However, the bill's author, Calif. Assembly member Ed Chau (D-49th District) ordered the bill to the Assembly's inactive file, effectively killing it for the current legislative session. It's not known whether the bill will come back in a future session.



## Will CCPA affect your brand?

Like Canada's Anti-Spam Law (CASL) and GDPR, CCPA will affect companies outside California because it applies to all brands that serve customers who are California residents. It's often easier to comply with the higher standard than try to address some of your audience differently.



### Action Items

Although the law has created its own flurry of questions and challenges, we've created a set of best practices to help you comply with the law because the trend toward stronger privacy laws is clear. See our guide, [CCPA: What Marketers Need to Know about the California Consumer Privacy Act](#), for details and why the law will prompt you to change your customer data collection and use.

#### Here's what you should consider doing:

- Reconsider whether you want to use third-party data.
- Reevaluate the data fields on your forms and profiles.
- Collect only data that you can use immediately.
- Create a mechanism that can delete a consumer's information, when requested.
- Don't sell information about your customers or users.

## 5. Brazil enacts a data privacy law

Brazilian President Michel Temer signed the new [General Data Privacy Law](#), which goes into effect in 2020.

Although the country is not one of the European Union's 28 member nations, many of the law's key provisions closely mirror the EU's GDPR, including its applicability to companies outside Brazil and potential for large fines (up to 2% of a company's previous year's global revenue).

Like GDPR, the *Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados Pessoais*, or LGPD, applies to data processing by companies within Brazil or companies outside the country when it affects Brazilian citizens. It also requires consent, but has higher protection levels for minors, "sensitive" data, and data related to health care or credit protection.

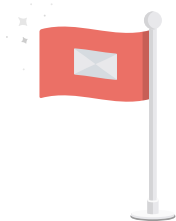
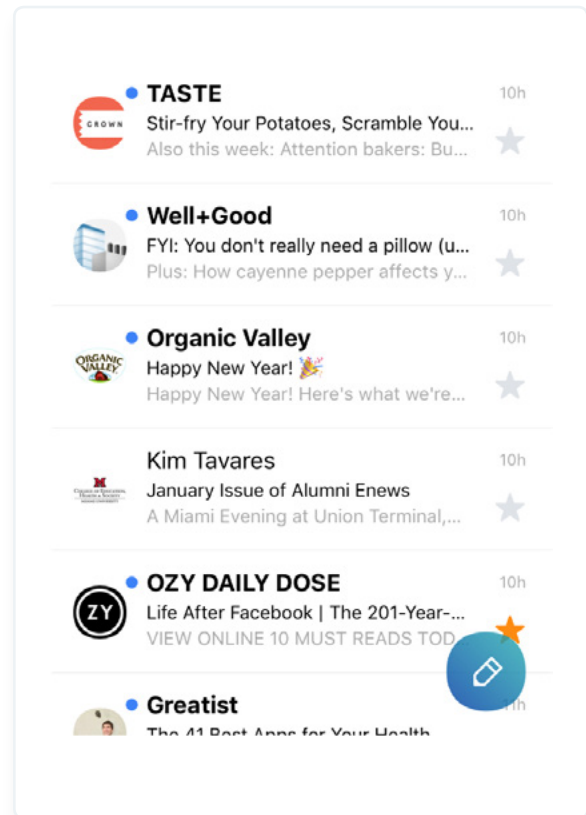
## 6. Fighting fraudulent email: Deployment of Brand Indicators for Message Identification (BIMI) begins

Yahoo! Mail is the first email client to beta-test [BIMI](#), an industry-wide set of standards that aims to cut down on fraudulent email and build trust in the inbox.

Announced in 2017, BIMI rewards senders that use Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (DMARC) and authenticate their emails using Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM). Messages from fully authenticated, verified senders display “brand indicators” (typically a logo) in the inbox. Users would see a default symbol in the inbox next to unverified senders.

BIMI’s backers say the brand indicators make it easier for subscribers to tell legitimate email from phishing messages, encourage subscribers to open and act on emails from trusted senders, and deliver brand impressions right in the inbox before the email is opened.

One of the senders to the right is not verified according to BIMI. Can you spot it?



### Action Items

- Learn about BIMI and its benefits for marketers, publishers, and other email senders in this blog post from Return Path: [BIMI: A New Approach to Increase Brand Recognition!](#)
- Learn how to [get started with brand indicators and BIMI](#).



9

## Four Challenges for Email Marketers in 2019

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Only you know what you need to do for your email program to achieve great results in 2019. But, if you want some goals to help you create your 2019 plan, we've laid out a great road map to get you started.

We're in the golden age of email marketing, but many marketers still need to close some big gaps before they can achieve all of the benefits email can bring to an effective digital marketing program.

## First, a thank-you

If you completed our State of Email Survey, took one of our polls, lobbed questions at us during our Litmus Live events, quizzed us during our webinars, or shot us questions and comments in the Litmus Community forums, thank you!

Your questions and responses in 2018 helped us generate research that showed us what's on your mind—how well you manage to get campaign after campaign out the door, what works and what you want to improve.

But they also helped us identify four major challenges that reveal how email marketing is evolving and what you must do to stay on top of the changes.

### 1. Seek out and eliminate inefficiencies in the email review and approval process.

**What the research shows:** The email review and approval stage is a crucial part of an effective workflow process, but our [2018 State of Email Workflows](#) report found that the bigger the company, the more onerous and time-consuming the email review process.

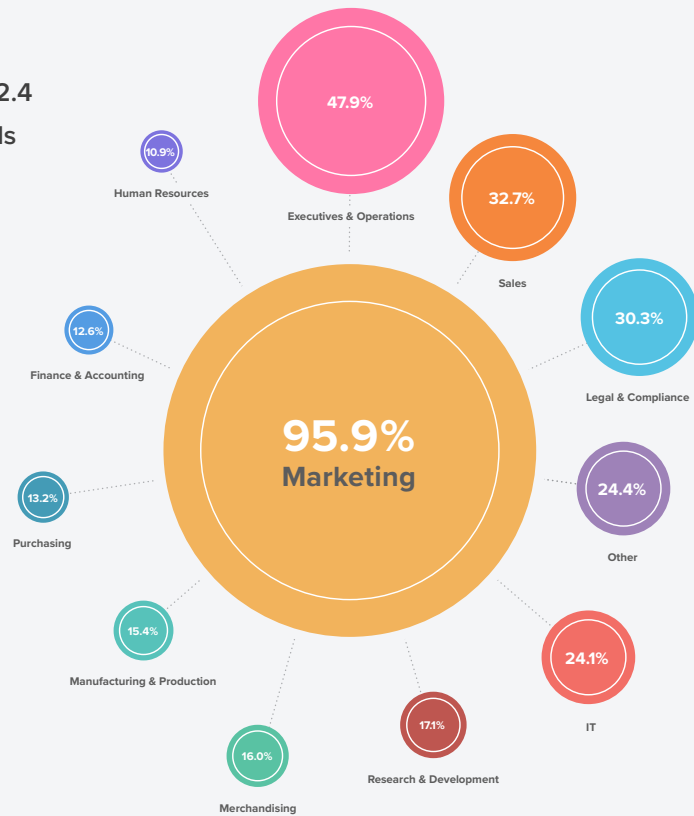
Marketers spend an average 3.9 hours getting emails reviewed and approved before launch, and they work with an average 2.4 other departments to get emails reviewed.



## Marketers Generally Work with 2.4 Other Departments to Get Emails Reviewed & Approved

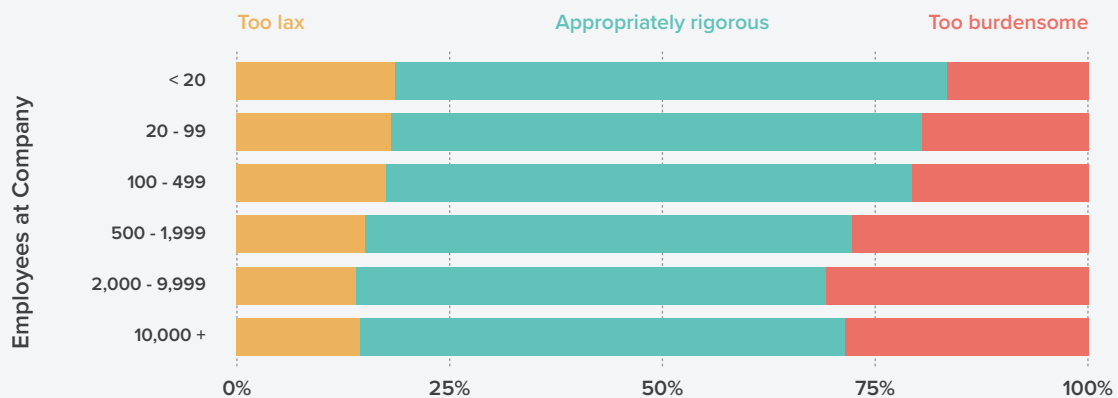
Which of the following departments are generally involved in the review and approval process for your typical marketing email? Select all that apply.

👤 1,847 respondents



Marketers who say their email programs are successful are 33% more likely to say their email review and approval process is appropriately rigorous. The process becomes more burdensome as company size increases, according to our [How to Improve Email Review Cycles and Email Approvals](#) whitepaper.

## Percentage of companies by size saying their email review and approval process is too lax, appropriate as-is, and too burdensome.



**What it means:** Marketers who say their email programs are successful spend more time on every stage of email creation except for the email review and approval stage than marketers who describe their programs as average or unsuccessful.

A lax review process can result in more email errors, but an onerous process has its costs, too. The research showed that marketers at companies with 10,000+ employees needed an average of 13 hours to get an email campaign reviewed and approved, which is more than twice the time needed by email programs with adequately rigorous review processes.

Now, multiply that by dozens or hundreds of email campaigns your company creates every year. That's a lot of time devoted to one part of the email process.



### Action Items

Look for efficiencies without sacrificing quality.

- Keep your executives out of the process.** Approvals don't need to go beyond the email manager/director level except in rare situations, such as a company-wide initiative or change in circumstances.
- Avoid sending emails on the same day you get the approval.** Let the email rest a day or so. Sending an email campaign after a hurried approval is a recipe for disaster.
- Streamline your email review and approval process with [Litmus Proof](#).** Share, consolidate, and resolve feedback in a single, centralized application so your team can cut review cycles and get more email out the door, faster.

### Helpful resources

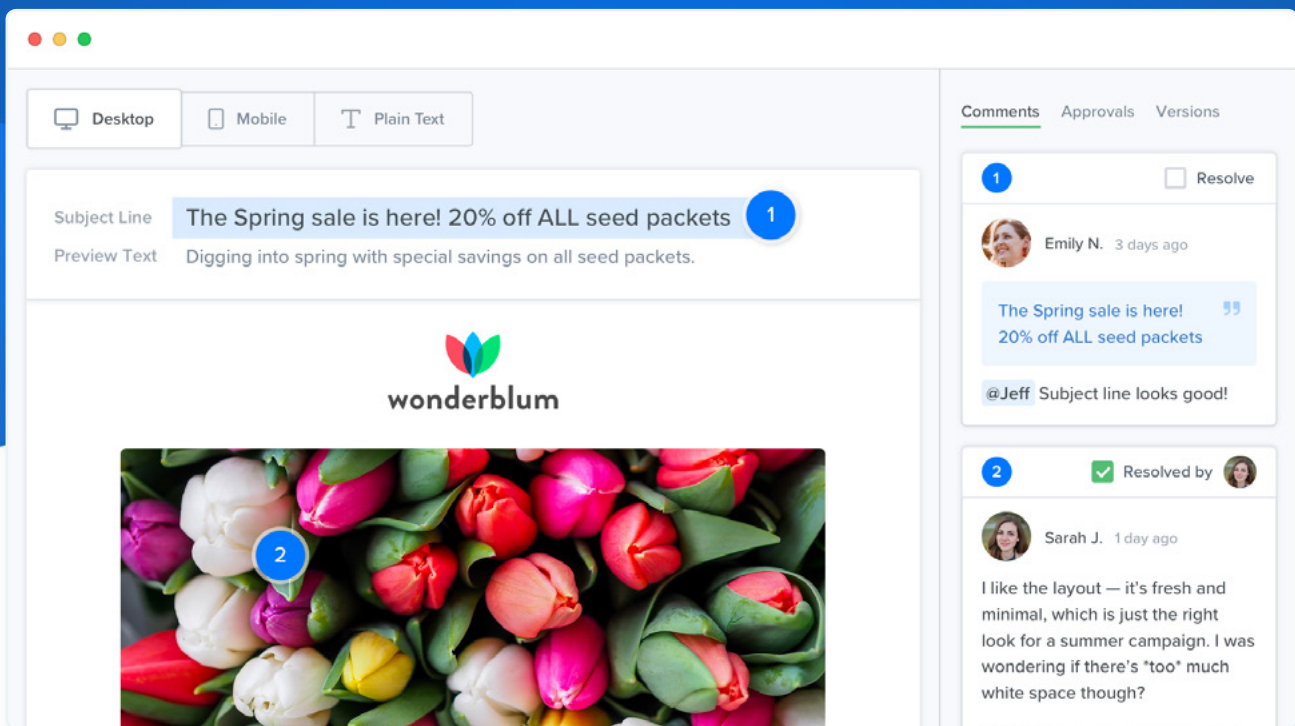
[Executive Summary: How to Improve Email Review Cycles and Email Approvals](#)

[2018 State of Email Workflows: How Marketers Plan, Build, Approve, & Send Emails](#)



# Simplify your feedback & approval process with Litmus Proof

Litmus Proof helps businesses eliminate the complicated, time-consuming, back-and-forth process of reviewing and approving emails.



## Proof allows you to...



Clearly mark edits and suggestions directly on mobile, desktop, and plain-text versions of an email to reduce review cycles



Share and resolve feedback in a single, centralized application

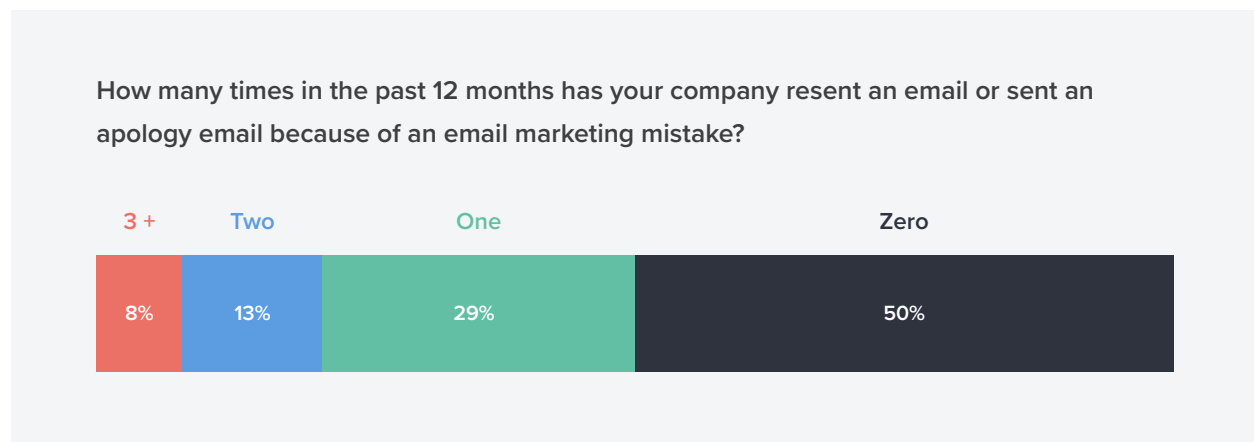


Assign specific reviewers or teams to each email, and keep the process moving with automated email notifications

## 2. Gain greater visibility into email performance to understand the subscriber experience.

**What the research shows:** As part of our workflow research, we studied whether marketers send apology emails after making mistakes, such as sending the wrong offer, having broken links in the message, or sending an offer to the wrong list.

50% of marketers sent at least one apology email in the past year.



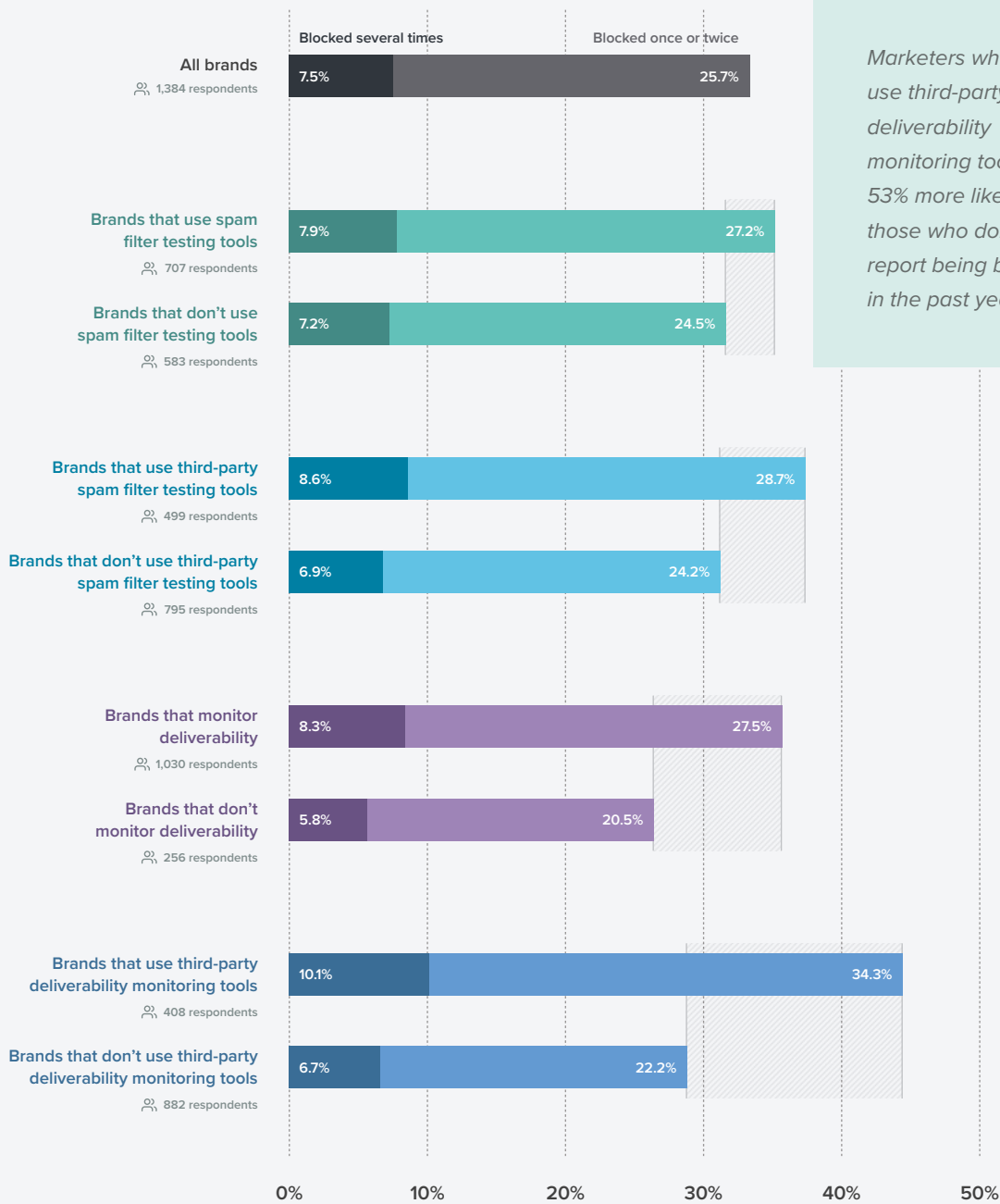
While we initially assumed that brands that send apology emails have poor QA processes and therefore are more prone to making errors, we were wrong. Companies that send apology emails tend to have more resources and better QA processes than companies that don't send them, according to our [Why a Lack of Email Marketing Mistakes Is a Red Flag](#) whitepaper.

We found a similar pattern when we looked at deliverability as part of our [2018 State of Email Analytics](#). Companies that monitor email deliverability were more likely to report being blocked by at least one inbox provider than brands that don't monitor their email deliverability. They were also more likely to report being blacklisted.



## Brands with Better Visibility into Their Deliverability Report Being Blocked at Higher Rates

Percentage of brands reporting blocks in the past 12 months among all brands, those using ESP-provided and third-party spam filter testing, and those using ESP-provided and third-party deliverability monitoring tools



Marketers who use third-party deliverability monitoring tools are 53% more likely than those who don't to report being blocked in the past year.

**What it means:** First, what it doesn't mean: Better-resourced companies with better QA processes aren't more prone to making mistakes that require an email follow-up. Companies that monitor their deliverability don't get blocked or blacklisted more often, either.

It does mean that these companies can see when mistakes happen or emails don't get delivered and can fix the problems instead of being in the dark.



### You can't react to things you can't see.

You can't fix a mistake if you don't check or test your emails before you send them or monitor them afterwards. You can't try to undo an ISP block or get off a blacklisting if you don't monitor your delivery.

Tracking and monitoring email performance across the board—from opens, clicks and conversions in the email to deliverability after the send—will show you where you need to add or improve your processes.

Not making mistakes or finding out that your emails have been blocked or blacklisted can lull you into a false sense of comfort. Nobody wants to mess up, but if you don't occasionally break something, it means you aren't trying new things. Brands that break things are more likely to be successful.

In 2019, push the envelope a little to achieve better results. Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Just make sure that you have good visibility into QA and performance so you'll be able to recognize your mistakes when you make them.



### Helpful resources

[Why a Lack of Email Marketing Mistakes Is a Red Flag](#)

[State of Email Marketing Mistakes](#)

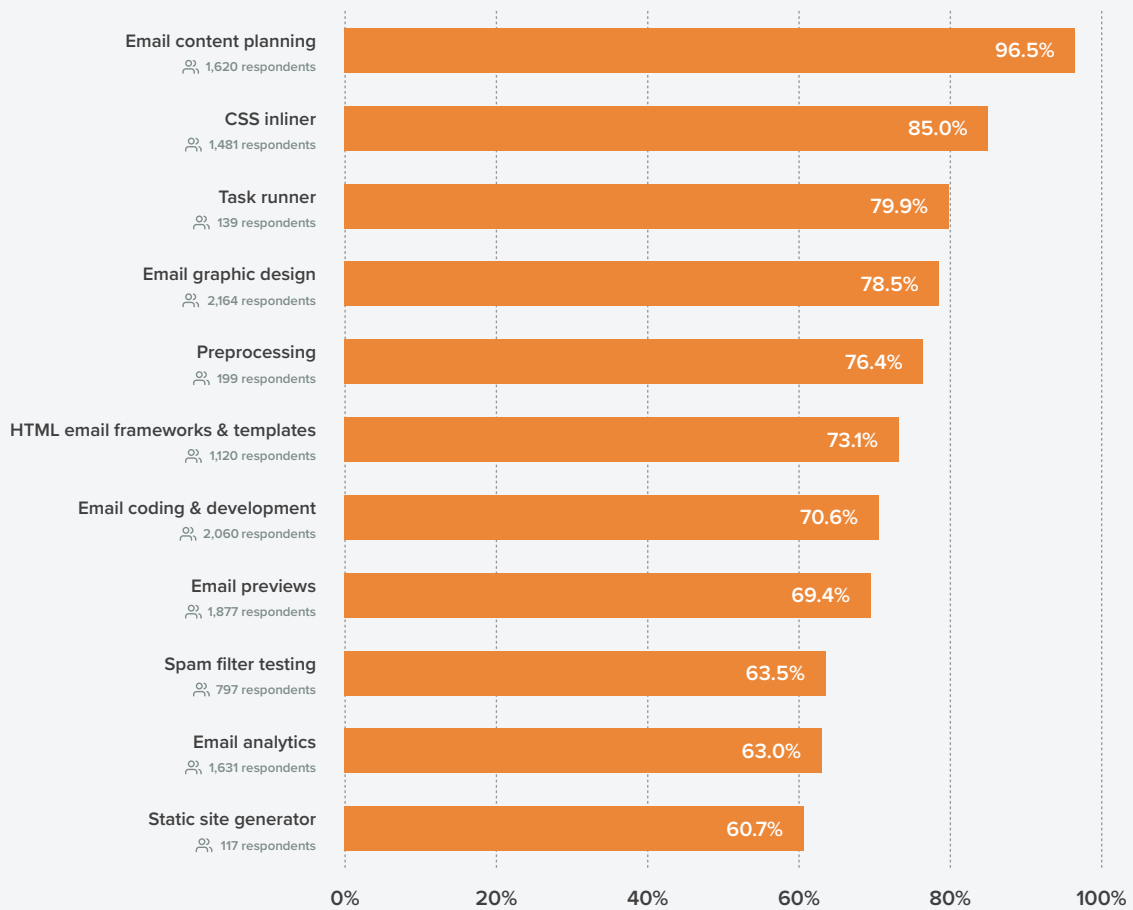
[How to Recover from Email Marketing Mistakes](#)

### 3. Move beyond basic ESP tools to achieve greater success.

**What the research shows:** Most marketers don't expect their ESPs to provide all of the planning, creative, coding, and analytics tools they need for their email programs. They routinely turn to third-party tools to supplement the features provided by their ESP.

#### Few Brands Rely Solely on Native ESP Functionality

Percentage of brands using third-party software instead of the functionality native to their email service provider to perform the following tasks or functions, among those brands that do or use these.




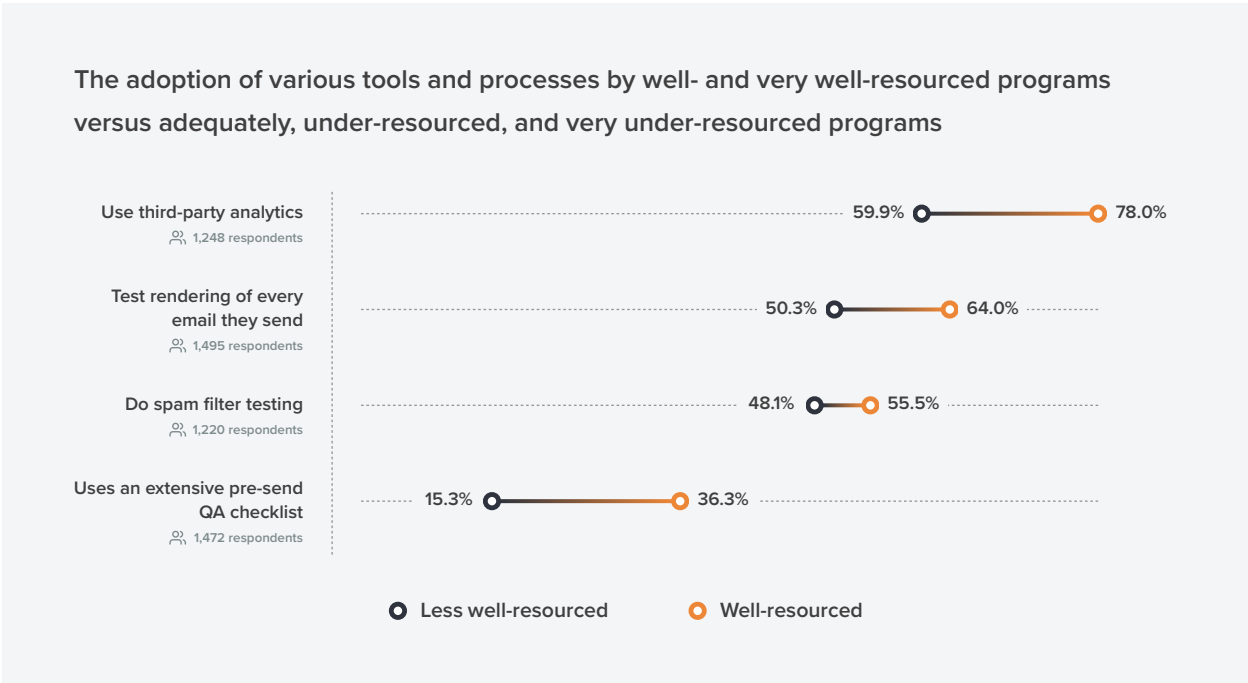
**What it means:** An ESP's primary job is to send your emails. Many will provide tools to help you do it more successfully, because they succeed when you succeed. But it's not realistic to assume that the tools your ESP provides are the best you can get.

We aren't knocking ESPs and the tools they provide. But our findings make it clear ESPs simply don't provide all of the functionality a brand needs.

Your ESP is not your email process. Brands need to layer other email marketing tools on that foundation before it's truly strong enough to support a successful email marketing program.

In fact, our research shows that add-on and supplemental tools have a significant effect on whether marketers feel like their email programs are well resourced. For instance, marketers who have access to third-party email analytics are 30% more likely to describe their email programs as well-resourced.

And marketers who test the rendering of every email they send, by using tools like email preview services, are 28% more likely to describe their email programs as well-resourced.

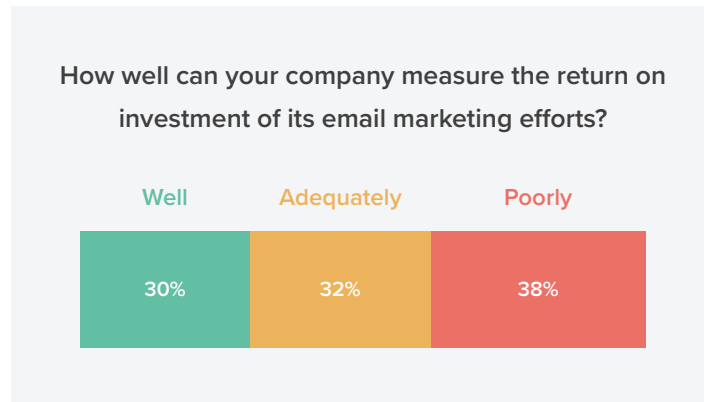


### Helpful resources

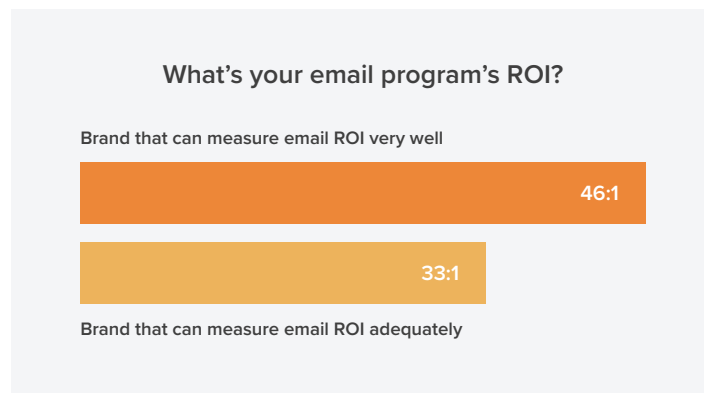
- [2018 State of Email Service Providers](#)
- [Email Marketing Staffing & Resourcing for Success](#)
- [Litmus Checklist](#)

## 4. Improve measurement of email results to monitor success and justify resource and staffing requests.

**What the research shows:** Only 30% of brands say they can measure their ROI well.



Brands that can measure ROI well see a higher ROI than brands that can't.



**What it means:** You don't get credit for the things you can't measure. We're in the golden age of analytics and performance, where you must measure everything. It's hard to get support for things if you can't show that they're successful.

The ROI measurement shown to the left is significant because it means that brands that can measure ROI successfully are more likely to see higher value from their emails—and when you can demonstrate that your program is generating more value, that leads to bigger budgets.

The consequence for brands that are less adept at measuring ROI is that not only are they leaving more money on the table, they also can't see that they're doing it. The solution is to have better processes that account for email's impact on the bottom line, whether through higher revenue or reduced costs.



### Helpful resources

[Email Marketing ROI: The Factors that Lead to Better Returns](#)

## Wrapping up

We've just taken you on a wild ride through all the changes and updates that are transforming the email industry bit by bit, every day. It can be overwhelming, but the primary lesson in our 2019 State of Email Report is that all of these changes are intended to keep email a useful, valuable, and vital resource in your customers' lives.

Adapting your email program to respond to these changes is no longer something you can put on your to-do list as chores to be tackled later.

Even the smallest change represents another step in the fundamental reshaping of email to meet outside expectations and requirements, whether they come from the law, from inbox providers or, most importantly, from your customers.

**Share this report with your broader email team**—the marketers, designers, and developers who make the email magic happen—and use it in your discussions with your executive team so they can make better-informed decisions about how your company uses email to achieve its business goals.

**Here's to a positive and profitable email year!**



*New laws, email client updates & changing customer expectations make our jobs challenging every day. Download [@litmusapp](#)'s 2019 State of Email Report to keep up with the ever-changing email industry.*