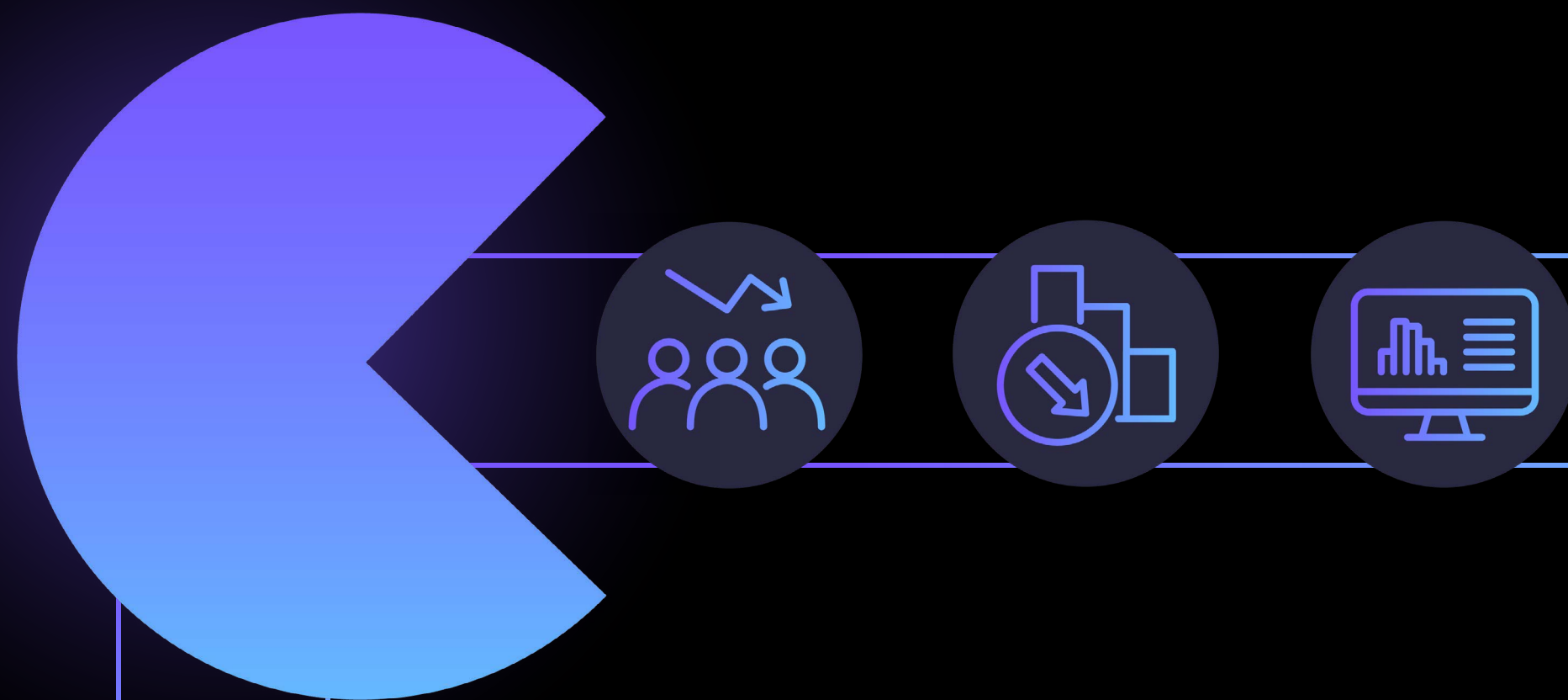


# AI ate your traffic

The email marketing revival playbook





# Welcome to the great email marketing revival

Your traffic didn't vanish overnight.  
But it's been fading.

First, your blogs stopped climbing the rankings. Then, your social posts slowed down. The clicks dried up. The comments thinned. And suddenly, your once-thriving content machine is now sputtering.

What happened?

AI changed the game. Search engines began answering questions before anyone reached your site.

Machine-generated summaries replaced human-created content in the feed. Organic reach stalled. Visibility tanked. Your content was still good, but no one was finding it.

This is the new reality of marketing in the AI age. But here's the thing: you're not out of options. You just need a channel that cuts through the noise—and lands directly in someone's inbox.

That's why more marketers are turning back to what's always worked: email. Because in a world of rented platforms and ever-changing algorithms, **email remains the one channel you truly own.**

Used strategically, email doesn't just bring traffic back. It revives your engagement. It rebuilds trust. It delivers ROI.

In this guide, we'll:

- [Uncover what's really happening to your traffic](#)
- [Discuss 5 actionable ways to reignite audience engagement](#)
- [Provide resources, and tips to jump-start your email comeback](#)



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# Chapter one 01

## The problem: AI isn't sending you traffic—it's replacing it

You may not have noticed it immediately—it didn't arrive with a bang—but its effects are being felt everywhere. Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally transforming how people search, discover, and interact with content online.

Just a few years ago, a well-placed blog post or a strong SEO strategy could reliably bring new visitors to your website. But today, that traffic pipeline is being rerouted. AI tools like **ChatGPT**, **Google's Search Generative Experience (SGE)**, and **Microsoft's Bing Copilot** are answering people's questions *within* the search results themselves—often without ever sending users to your website.

These AI-powered platforms scrape the web, synthesize answers, and deliver them instantly, minimizing the need for users to click through for more information. That means fewer eyeballs on your content, fewer opportunities to convert, and ultimately, less control over your **own** audience.





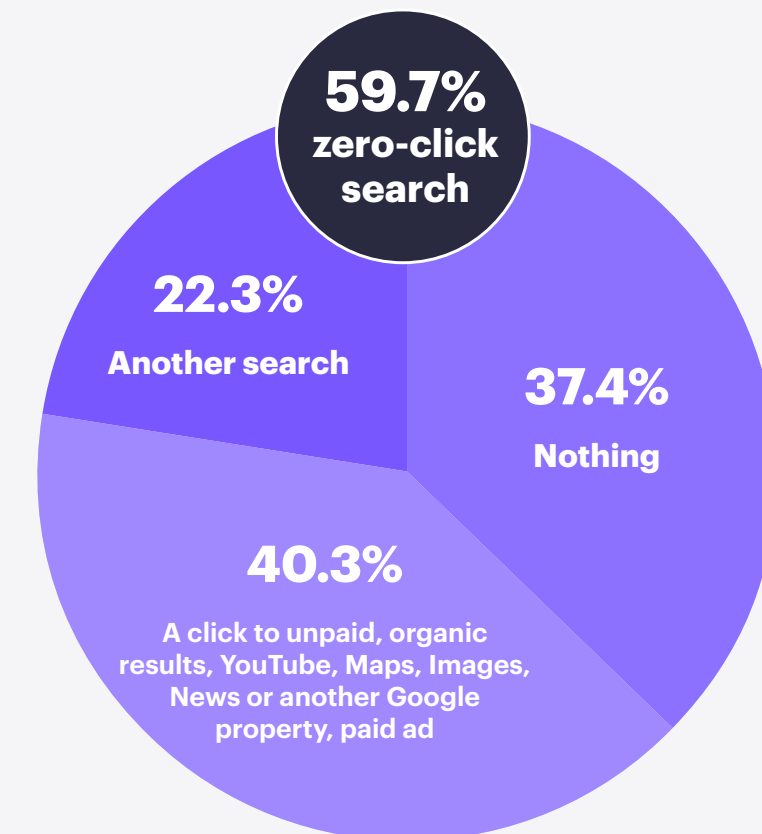
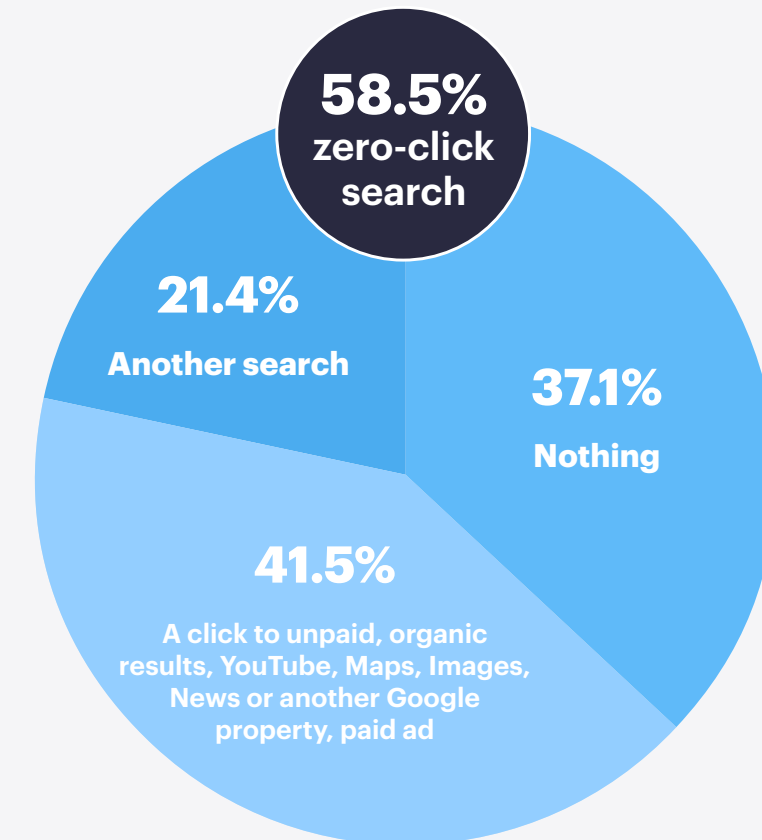
# The vanishing click

## Key statistics:

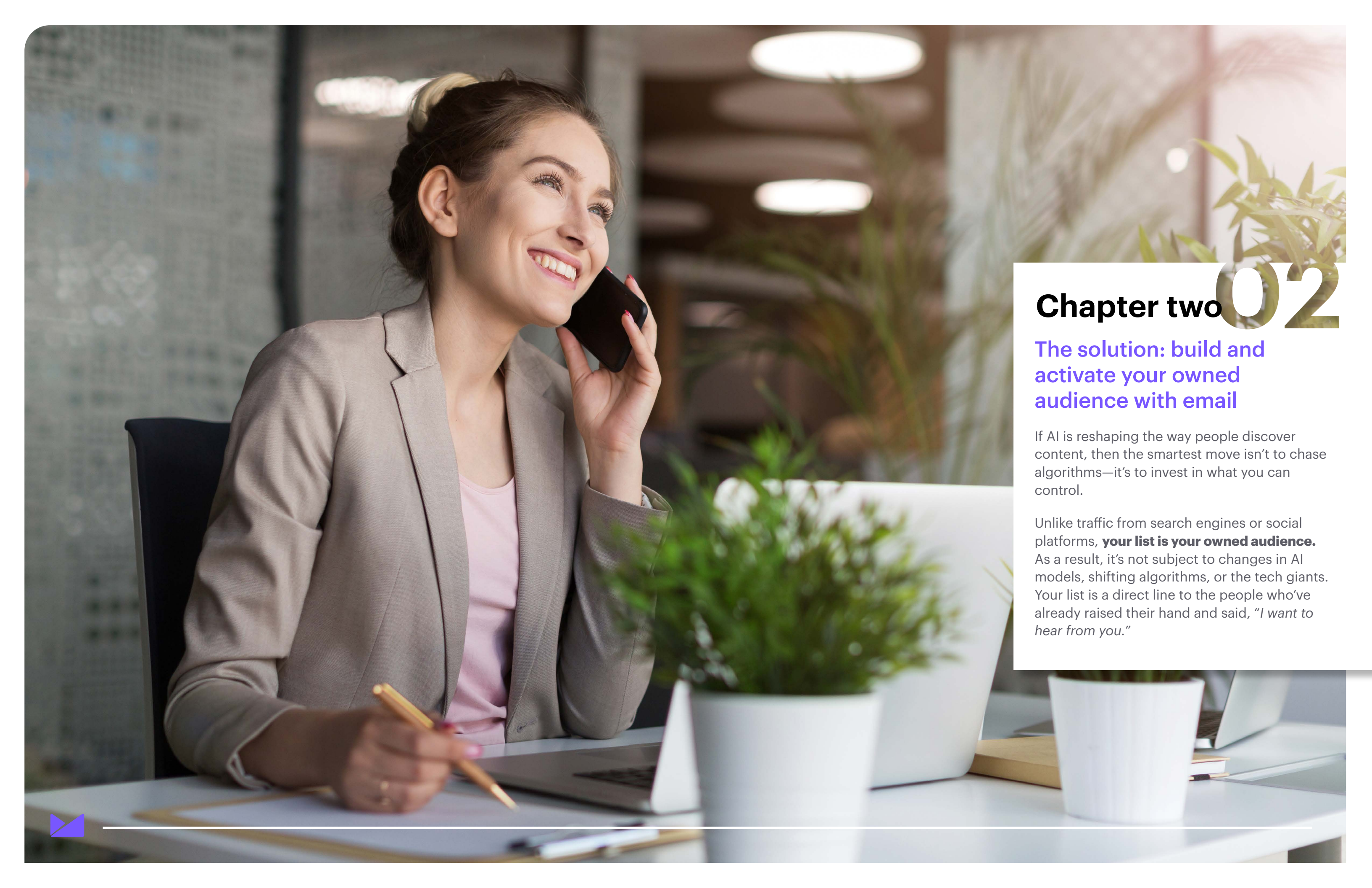
- According to [Sparktoro](#), **60% of Google searches result in zero clicks**
- AI-generated summaries pull data from you, not to you
- Paid traffic is more expensive with fewer returns

In a world where you're losing control of your traffic sources, email becomes more than a channel—it becomes your anchor. **Email gives you a direct, permission-based channel with zero algorithm interference.**

## What happens after a Google search?



Americans  
Europeans



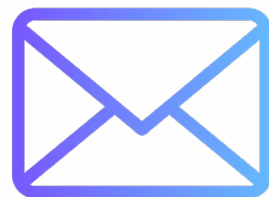
## Chapter two **02**

### The solution: build and activate your owned audience with email

If AI is reshaping the way people discover content, then the smartest move isn't to chase algorithms—it's to invest in what you can control.

Unlike traffic from search engines or social platforms, **your list is your owned audience.** As a result, it's not subject to changes in AI models, shifting algorithms, or the tech giants. Your list is a direct line to the people who've already raised their hand and said, *"I want to hear from you."*





# Why email still wins

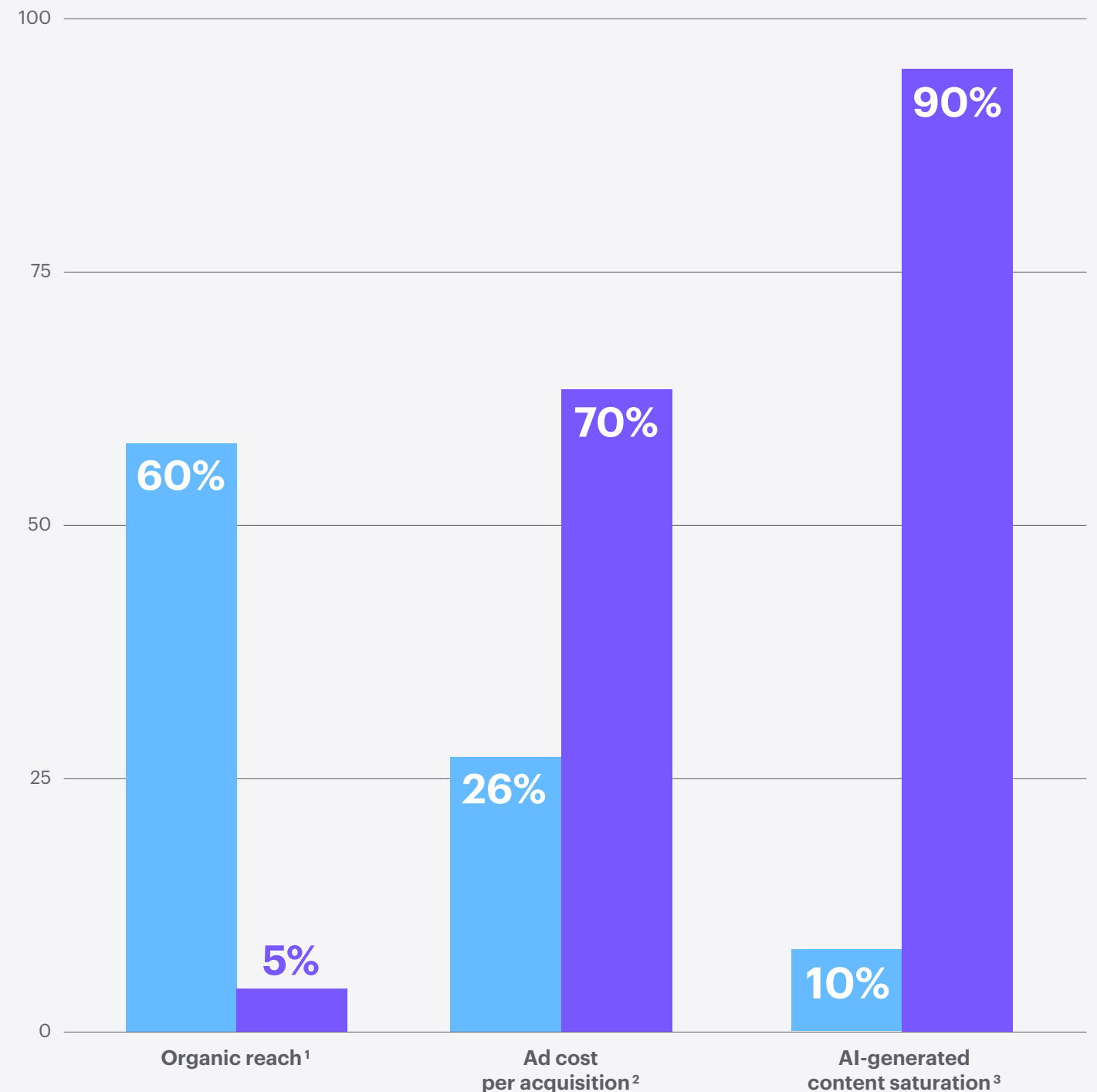
Email remains one of the most effective—and underutilized channels for building durable, high-value customer relationships. In fact, Campaign Monitor users experience a **28% higher ROI** on their email programs compared to other digital channels.

## Key statistics:

- According to [Limtus](#), email delivers **\$10-50 ROI for every \$1 spent** on email marketing.
- According to [SEO.com](#), personalized emails achieve transaction rates that are **6 times higher**.
- According to [Campaign Monitor](#), email marketing produces an average of **174% more conversions than social media**.

Email isn't just effective—it's efficient. While other channels compete for visibility and clicks, email consistently delivers measurable results. With a strong ROI, higher transaction rates, and superior retention, it's clear: if you want to drive action and build lasting relationships, email is the channel to bet on.

## Platform reliability & ROI – then vs. now



<sup>1</sup> Source: Hootsuite (2023), HubSpot

<sup>2</sup> Source: Wordstream, Revealbot (2023 data), Shopify Plus blog

<sup>3</sup> Source: Originality.ai (2024)

■ Then (2015)

■ Now (2025)

# Chapter three 03

## 5 ways to reignite engagement

This chapter outlines five practical ways to restore momentum and strengthen your connection with subscribers. Instead of chasing trends or starting from scratch, you'll learn how to make the most of what you already have and build a smarter, more sustainable email program.

Each section includes actionable steps to help you move quickly from idea to implementation. Whether you're reigniting an existing list or setting the foundation for long-term growth, these strategies will help you create an email program that performs—consistently.





STEP 1

# Start with what you own

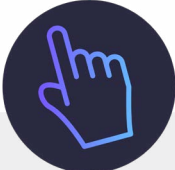
Before you create anything new, the smartest first step is to unlock the potential in what you already have—**your existing email list**.

One of the quickest ways to get started is to focus on a very specific (and often overlooked) segment: dormant subscribers.

These are people who signed up at some point but haven't opened, clicked, or interacted with your emails in a while. Don't count them out—there's still value here. In fact, according to a 2025 blog, **45% of recipients who received win-back emails read subsequent messages**, increasing the likelihood of future conversions and contributing to long-term ROI.

**Why this matters:**

- Re-engaging existing subscribers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones.
- These contacts already know your brand—they just need a good reason to come back.
- It's an easy win that sets the stage for new list growth later.



**Tools to take you further**  
Campaign Monitor's "The B2C Email Automation Recipe Book", pages 12-13

# Reignite dormant subscribers

## Segment your list

- Identify subscribers who haven't engaged in 60, 90, or 180 days (depending on your typical send cadence). Label them as "inactive."
- 

## Run a re-engagement series

- Send a short sequence (2–3 emails) with a simple message such as: "Still want to hear from us?" Be clear, friendly, and offer a benefit for staying subscribed—like a new free resource or special discount.
- 

## Make it easy to stay or go

- Include a clear CTA to remain subscribed ("Yes, I'm still in") and an easy opt-out. This helps clean your list and improve deliverability.
- 

## Track the results

- Monitor who opens or clicks during the campaign. Anyone who re-engages can be moved back into your regular email flow. The rest can be suppressed or sunsetted.

## STEP 2

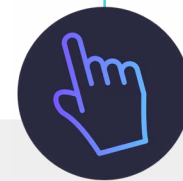
# Shift from one-and-done to evergreen automations

Your best content shouldn't be a one-time thing. Many marketers treat blog posts and email sends like a broadcast—once it's out, it's done. But a smart email strategy means building systems, not just moments. Enter: evergreen sequences.

Evergreen sequences are pre-written, automated email flows that deliver value over time. And they're not just a productivity hack—they're a revenue driver. According to Campaign Monitor, **automated emails generate 320% more revenue than non-automated ones.**

### Why this matters:

- Evergreen emails work continuously, delivering value and conversions over time.
- They create a consistent experience for every new subscriber, no matter when they join.
- This approach boosts ROI by nurturing leads instead of losing them after a single send.



### Tools to take you further

[Campaign Monitor's Email Marketing for Small Businesses: A Complete 2025 Guide](#)

# Build Evergreen sequences that work

## Mine your existing content for high performers

- Look through past blog posts, webinars, guides, or video content. What got the most traffic or engagement? Start there.
- 

## Create an Evergreen “best of” series

- Bundle 3–5 of your top pieces into a welcome flow or onboarding drip. Think of it as the greatest hits album for new subscribers.
- 

## Turn blog series into mini-courses

- If you’ve written content around a theme or challenge, break it into bite-sized lessons and deliver over a week or two via email.
- 

## Product or service education flows

- Explain how to get the most value out of what you offer. Walk subscribers through use cases, tips, or success stories across a few short emails.
- 

## Keep the cadence simple

- Don’t overcomplicate it. A once-a-week or twice-a-week send is plenty for most sequences. Focus on helpful, digestible content—not fluff.



### STEP 3

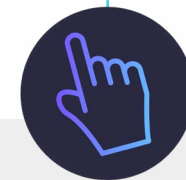
## Design for mobile & skimmability

More than half your audience isn't opening your emails at a desk—they're reading on the go, on a screen that fits in the palm of their hand.

Campaign Monitor's Design High-Performing Email Campaigns Guide shows that **63% of all email opens happen on mobile devices**. That means mobile-first design isn't just a nice-to-have—it's non-negotiable. If your emails are slow to load, hard to read, or cluttered on mobile, you'll lose your audience before they've even made it to your call to action.

#### Why this matters:

- Skimmable content makes main messages easy to grasp at a quick glance.
- Using clear headings, short paragraphs, and visual breaks make content easier to digest and improves engagement.
- Quick bites drive action by ensuring CTAs and key points are easy to find and act on.



#### Tools to take you further

Campaign Monitor's Creating Responsive Email Design: Email Coding and Optimization Techniques

# Make mobile the priority, not the afterthought

## Skip the giant hero images



Large header graphics can slow load times or dominate the mobile viewport. Keep images under 1MB, use compression tools, and test on different devices.

---

## Use large, accessible fonts



Stick to a minimum of 16px for body copy and 22–24px for headlines. Avoid fancy script fonts—clarity beats cleverness on a small screen.

---

## Write for the scroll



Break up text into short sentences and one idea per paragraph. Use bullets, bolding, and subheads to guide fast readers.

---

## Place CTAs high and make them tappable



Ensure your main call-to-action (CTA) appears above the fold and is big enough to easily tap with a thumb—at least 44x44 pixels in size.

---

## Preview on mobile before you send



Leverage your mobile preview feature. What looks good on desktop can break on mobile. Or, send a test to yourself, this way you can check mobile and desktop layouts.

---

## Stick to a single-column layout



Multi-column layouts can get messy on smaller screens. One column = clean, responsive, and reader-friendly.

## STEP 4

# Scale smart with automated flows

Email automation isn't just a time-saver—it's a relevance machine.

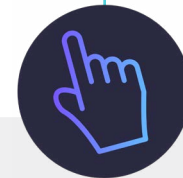
The best automations don't overwhelm your audience; they meet them at the perfect moment with exactly what they need. When done right, automated flows quietly power your entire email strategy in the background, helping you stay timely, personal, and profitable—without the manual send button.

### Key statistics:

- According to [Campaign Monitor](#), welcome emails average a **91% open rate**
- [Campaign Monitor](#) also notes cart abandonment emails **recover 10–20% of lost sales**
- A 2025 [Business.com](#) article states birthday emails drive 481% more transactions than regular promotional emails

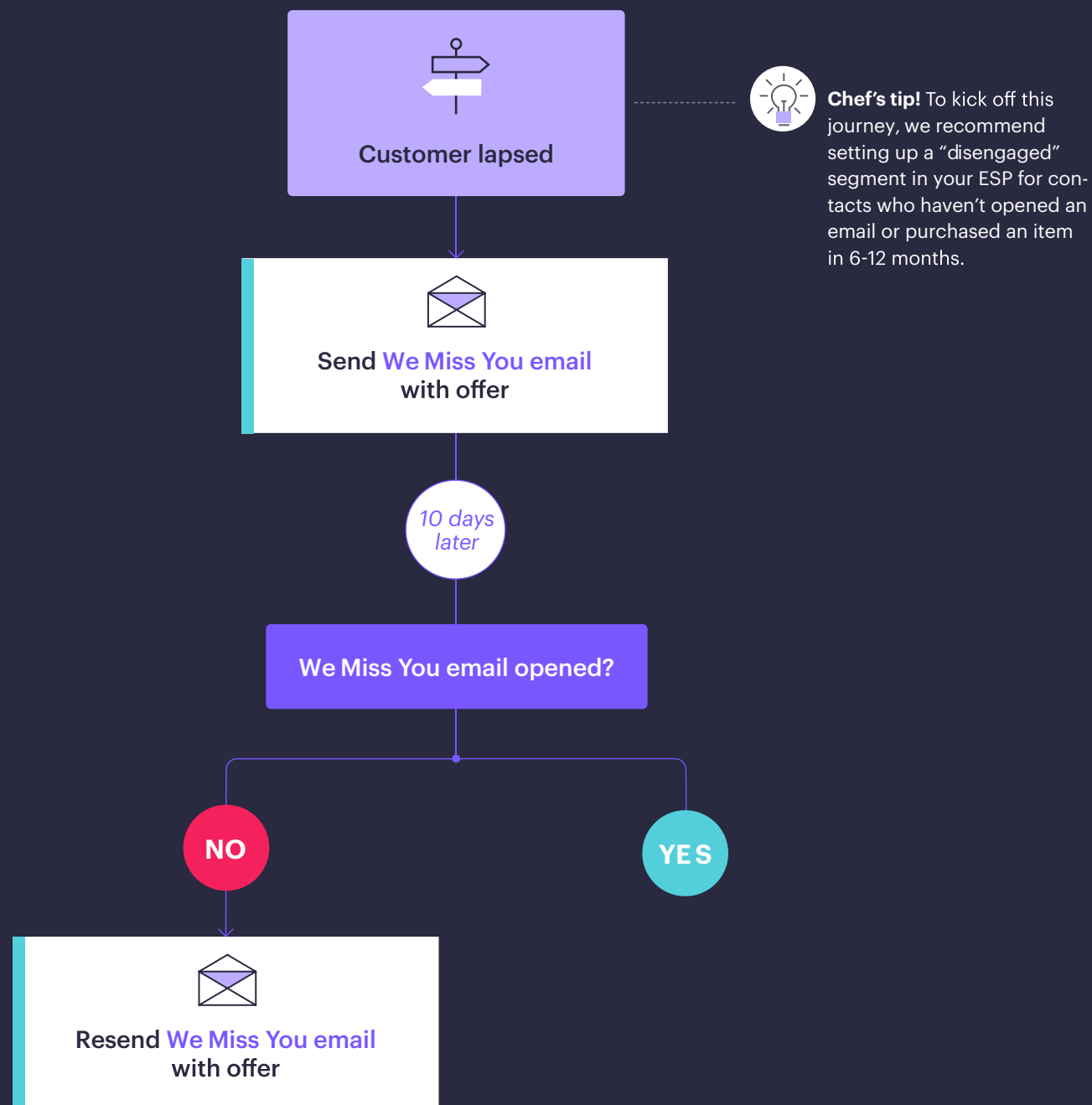
### Why this matters:

- Save time by handling repetitive tasks efficiently, freeing your team to focus on higher-value work.
- Ensure consistency and accuracy in your communications, reducing the risk of errors as your volume grows.
- Help deliver timely, personalized messages that improve the customer experience.



### Tools to take you further

[Campaign Monitor's Getting Started with Customer Journeys](#)



# Launch high-impact automations

## Set up an effective welcome journey

- Set the tone with 2–3 emails that greet new subscribers, offer value, and explain what to expect. Bonus: include a helpful freebie or discount.
- 

## Leverage win-back campaigns for inactive subscribers

- Trigger a short email series for contacts who haven't engaged in 30+ days. Ask if they still want in, and offer something new or exclusive to entice a return.
- 

## Implement abandoned cart reminders

- If you sell online or collect form data, set up automated nudges to bring people back. Keep it simple, warm, and benefit-focused.
- 

## Deploy post-purchase or post-signup educational flows

- Don't let the relationship go cold. Follow up with helpful content on how to use your product or get the most value from your service.
- 

## Utilize birthday or milestone message opportunities

- Special dates are synonymous with gift giving, so give your subscribers something they can't pass up such as a special deal, offer, or free gift.

## STEP 5

# Measure what actually matters

Email marketing isn't just about hitting send—it's about knowing what works and why.

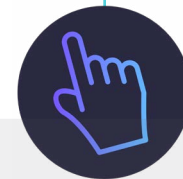
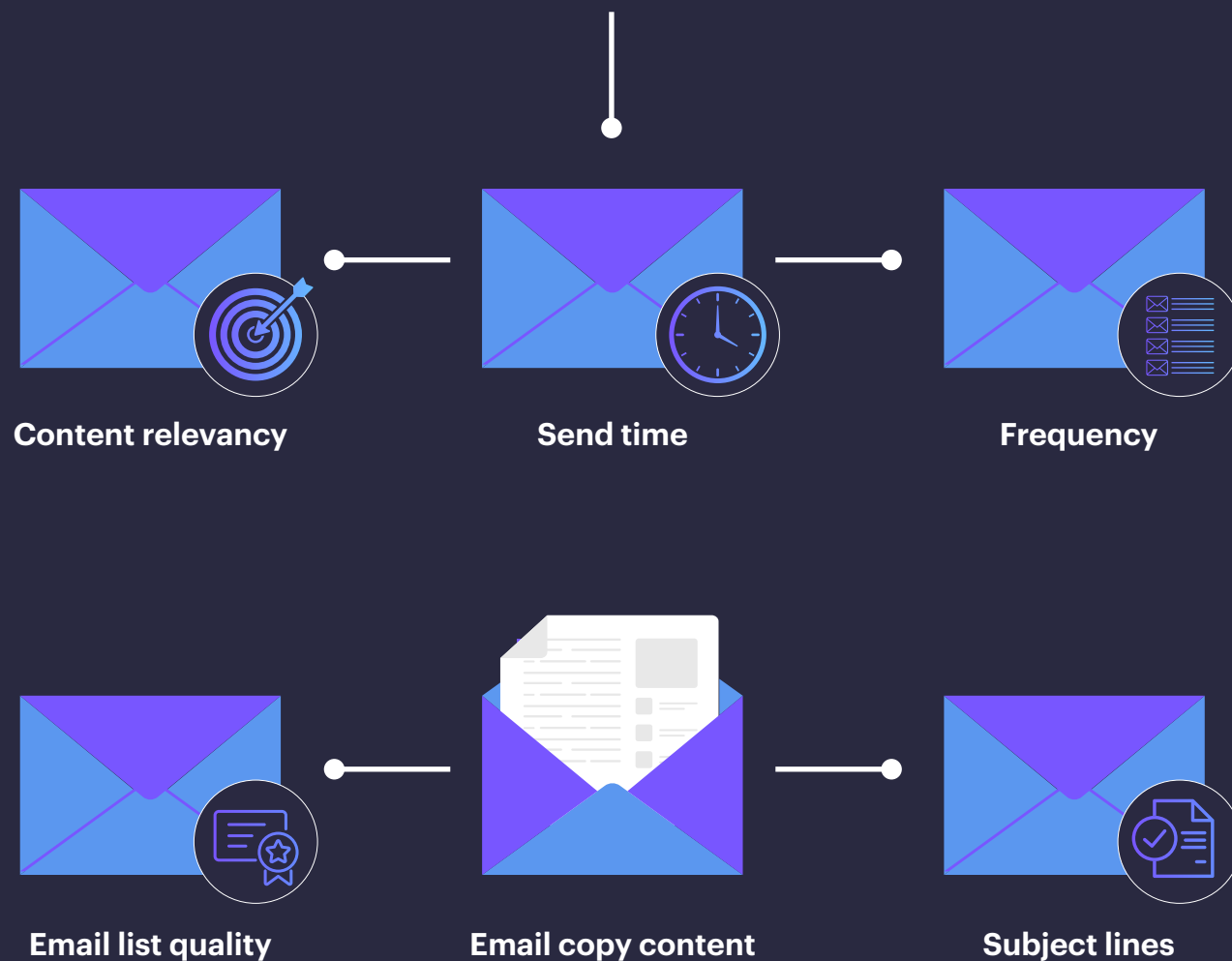
But in today's landscape, the metrics we once relied on—like open rates—have become less reliable. Thanks to features like Apple Mail Privacy Protection, a high open rate doesn't always mean people are paying attention.

By using a dashboard that shows click-to-open-rate (CTOR), list growth rate, conversions per send and tracks metrics over time, you can identify what's truly resonating.

### Why this matters:

- Marketers who track and test regularly see up to **28% higher ROI** on their email programs according to [Campaign Monitor's Ultimate Email Marketing Benchmarks for 2022: By Industry and Day](#).
- Metrics improve decision-making by providing data-backed insights on content, timing, and audience targeting.
- Tracking key metrics shows the impact of your email marketing and supports continued investment.

## EMAIL OPEN RATES



### Tools to take you further

Improve your campaign's with best practices benchmarks using Campaign Monitor's Campaign Score



# Track the metrics that move the needle

## Monitor click-to-open rate (CTOR)

- Unlike standard open rates, CTOR tells you how many people engaged with your content after opening it. It's a truer signal of whether your content is resonating.
- 

## Track the list growth rate

- A growing, healthy list is a sign of strong opt-in strategy. Watch for new subscribers monthly—and set a goal to grow by a certain percentage each quarter.
- 

## Measure conversions per send

- Clicks are good—but did anyone take action? Whether it's downloads, purchases, or form fills, assign a clear conversion goal to each campaign.
- 

## Use your analytics dashboard

- Campaign Monitor's built-in reporting tools let you compare campaign performance, identify trends, and optimize future sends based on actual data—not guesswork.
- 

## Test. Tweak. Repeat.

- Try A/B testing subject lines, CTAs, and send times. Even small changes can lead to better results when you test and iterate regularly.

# Email marketing revival toolkit

We've gathered all the tools, guides, and inspiration you need to put these tips into action. Explore checklists, templates, webinars, and articles designed to help you send smarter through the embedded links or via our Resources Hub.

## Getting started toolkit



- 1 AI killed my clicks – how email can save your funnel webinar
- 2 Anatomy of an effective welcome email
- 3 How to use a welcome email to engage your subscribers from the start

## Engagement and growth toolkit



- 1 The art of the customer win-back email
- 2 “Get more from your subscribers” engagement segment webinar
- 3 Guide to segmentation in marketing for the evolving marketer

## Automation and workflows toolkit



- 1 The marketing automation essentials
- 2 How to grow your business with email marketing automation
- 3 Email automation best practices

## Conversion and sales toolkit



- 1 What every small business needs to know to beat cart abandonment
- 2 3 Ways to dramatically improve your email results webinar
- 3 How to write compelling CTA copy

## Retention and loyalty toolkit



- 1 The complete guide to birthday emails
- 2 Steps to create a successful loyalty program
- 3 Using the preference center to retain and target your subscribers

## Design and deliverability toolkit



- 1 The really good email design checklist
- 2 4 Steps to improve email deliverability
- 3 The building blocks of email reputation



## About Campaign Monitor by Marigold

For more than two decades, Campaign Monitor by Marigold has empowered small businesses, nonprofits, and marketing agencies (and their clients) to create email marketing programs that deliver results. Our easy-to-use yet powerful platform makes email marketing accessible, while also helping customers grow their business, maximize ROI, and cultivate lasting relationships with their audience.

For more information about Campaign Monitor, or to try it for free, visit [campaignmonitor.com](https://campaignmonitor.com)