



QUESTLINE

# DISCOVERY

THE **ENGAGEMENT** FRONTIER

2016 **ENERGY UTILITY EMAIL**  
BENCHMARKS REPORT





DISCOVER EVERY

# THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE...

## 2016 ENERGY UTILITY EMAIL BENCHMARKS REPORT

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QUESTLINE









WE ARE...

# QUESTLINE

## THE LEADING CREATORS OF ENERGY UTILITY CUSTOMER CONTENT.

Questline is the only omnichannel content marketing and communications company dedicated to the daily pursuit of understanding and reaching energy utility customers.

We offer a unique complement of nearly 50 thought leaders, engineers, topic experts, marketers, developers, strategists, technical advisors, writers, producers, account service professionals, designers and art directors – all under one roof.

Our programs, products and services are specifically tailored to promote and deliver our energy utility clients' customer communications.

Research and understanding is an important component of our process. We're curious at our core as we continuously explore the best practices of leading brands in multiple markets to push the limits of technology in our efforts to reach your customers where they are.

That's engagement.

QUESTLINE.COM





## THE EXPEDITION **BEGINS.**

When is the best time to communicate with a Residential audience?

Does Reading Environment impact Open Rates?

Why do people watch cat videos?

Knowledge is power and being an effective marketer in the digital age is about discovery. Consumers are bombarded with messaging like never before, and perhaps, as a matter of sensory survival, they are imposing more filters on the voices they receive. This creates a difficult landscape for utilities to traverse in order to deliver their messages. Successful brands will seek out the data and insight vital to charting a path forward.

This third edition of the **Questline Energy Utility Email Benchmarks Report** provides the valuable data and metrics necessary to enable digital communicators to reach their intended targets. Embarking on an exploration of the data reinforces the effectiveness of email and digital newsletters while exploring opportunities for increased outreach strategies to cut through the noise of competing voices. These enhanced outreach efforts open meaningful dialogue with customers by empowering them to choose the way and frequency in which they interact with utilities. Customers continue to respond favorably to these programs with increasing frequency and are more responsive to subsequent communications.

In joining Questline's expedition through data comprised exclusively of electric and gas utility metrics, energy utility marketers will discover answers to questions that will inform the next stage of their digital marketing strategies. The cat videos, however, will most likely remain a mystery.



# A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



QUESTLINE



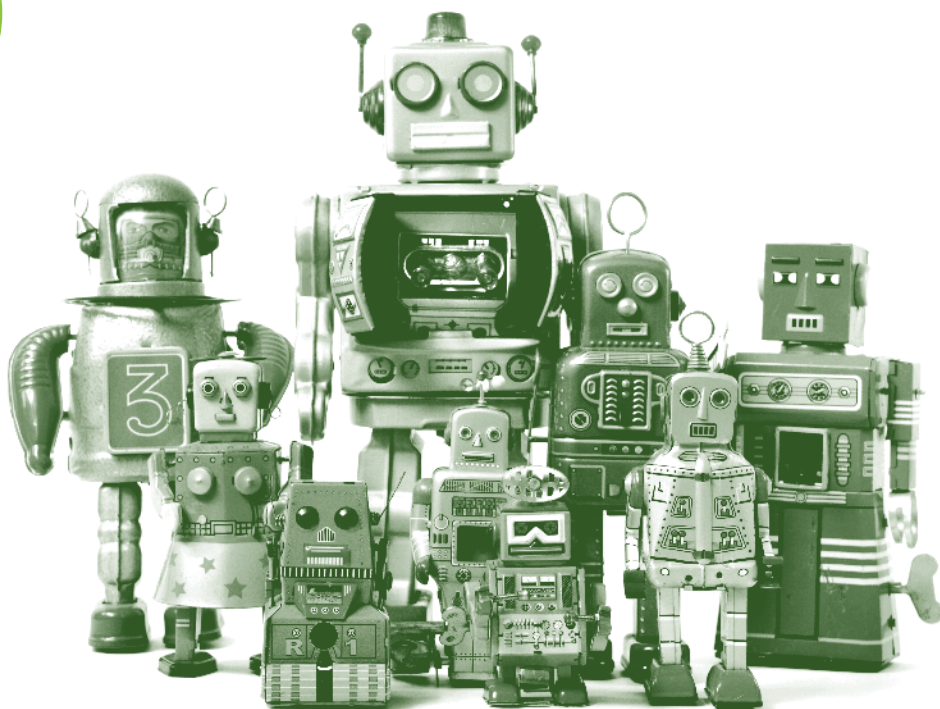
# ENG AGE

## PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF.

The moment utilities send an email, the message is out there. The big question, then, is how are customers responding?

Utilities can look at basic post-send metrics, but without insight into the larger industry analytic trends, communicators may not have the relevant context to accurately determine how messages are performing and determine communication strategies. Questline provides the big picture, contextual intelligence that helps utility communicators understand how their email communications are truly performing.

The third annual publication, the **2016 Questline Energy Utility Email Benchmarks Report**, examines data and analytics from more than 163 million emails sent from 450+ utilities across the United States from August 2015 to July 2016. The data is segmented by audience type, utility type and email type to give the energy utility industry the best benchmarks possible. The metrics presented within this report are based exclusively on electric and gas energy utility emails and are not combined with unrelated industry data.





A black and white photograph of a woman from behind, wearing a light-colored blazer and dark pants, painting a large mural on a wall. The mural depicts a cityscape with several buildings at the bottom and a large rocket ship launching from the left, with smoke billowing out. The sky is filled with various hand-drawn elements: a cloud, a flower, a sun, and some scribbles. A yellow-bordered box with text is positioned in the upper right area of the mural.

OVER 163 MILLION  
EMAILS ANALYZED



A woman with curly hair is looking at her smartphone. A yellow callout box points to the phone. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a public space with other people.

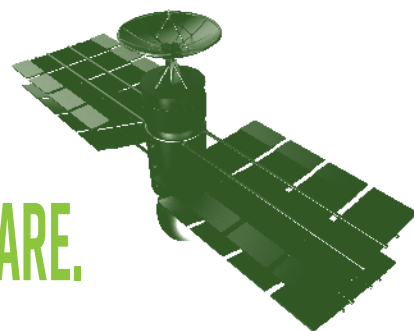
## **INCREASING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

is the most important objective for surveyed utility communicators' email marketing strategy.



# REACHING YOUR

CUSTOMERS  
WHERE THEY ARE.



## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The 2016 Energy Utility Email Benchmarks Report is designed to provide electric and gas utilities with actionable insights into utility email trends. The aggregate data serves as a benchmark to more accurately track performance, measure engagement and help determine future outreach strategies to maximize engagement.

## BIG PICTURE

It's all about engagement. In 2016, utilities saw an increase in customer engagement, with higher Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR) and Click-Through Rate (CTR). Both Delivery Rate and Open Rate decreased slightly from last year.

## SURVEY RESULTS

For a more complete picture, we surveyed utility communicators to get their views on email performance. Survey results can be found throughout the report, connecting the data with utility company insights.

## READING ENVIRONMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Questline's newest analytics on reading environment and engagement provide a depth of insight into what devices customers are using, and how they are engaging with email. The data shows nearly 60 percent of residential customers are opening email on mobile devices. Litmus enables us to take a closer look at how long customers have an email open, and whether they are reading, skimming or glancing at the digital content.

## EMAIL LIFECYCLE

Emails are reaching utility customers faster than ever before. Recipients are opening and clicking on emails more quickly than in 2015. More than 75 percent of emails are opened within the first 24 hours of sending. It takes less than one week to achieve more than 90 percent of both unique email opens and clicks.







## EMAIL JOURNEY

To discover the email journey, we explored typical email paths. Here are some key findings: Those who complete a Welcome Series are more likely to engage with future utility emails. By introducing email to new customers and maintaining consistent email touchpoints using digital newsletters, utilities are successfully nurturing subscribers and creating more engaged customers. Energy consumers who receive and open an email newsletter are more likely to engage with Program Promotion emails.









## BENCHMARK METRICS:

These important email metrics are the focus throughout this report:

-  Delivery Rate
-  Open Rate
-  Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR)
-  Click-Through Rate (CTR)
-  Complaint Rate
-  Opt-Out Rate



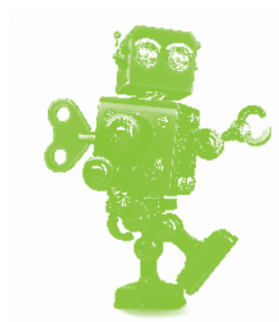
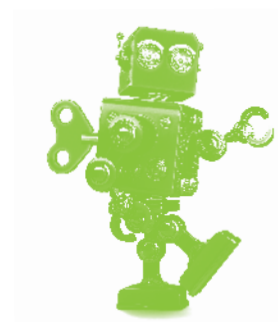
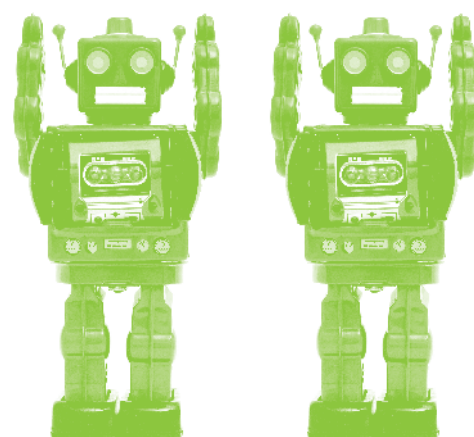
A good place to start is to look at overall rates across all utility emails. These overall metrics are derived from the aggregate of all utility email sends from August 1, 2015 through July 31, 2016. The term “Overall Rate” refers to these rates.

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Overall	98.36%	21.55%	8.11%	1.75%	0.02%	0.07%


## THE 2016 OVERALL RATES SHOW:

- 1 out of 5 utility customers opens an email
- 1 out of 12 utility customers that opens an email clicks on something in the email
- 7 out of every 10,000 unsubscribe, but only 2 out of 10,000 mark the email as spam

See our *Methodology* (p. 57) for how we compiled this data and the *Glossary of Terms* (p. 61) for definitions and calculations.



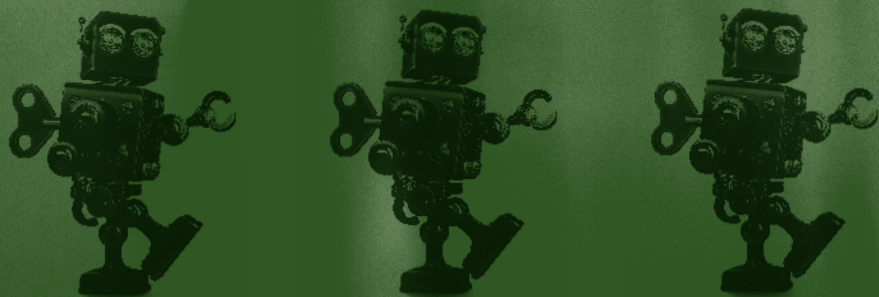




1 OUT OF 2 surveyed utility communicators uses post-click metrics to determine the business value of an email.

# BIG PICTURE







THE METRICS.





## 2013 – 2016 RATES

See the shifts in overall rates over the last four years:

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
2013	92.98%	19.94%	7.48%	1.66%	n/a	n/a
2014	93.30%	20.02%	8.82%	1.77%	n/a	n/a
2015	98.69%	22.34%	6.15%	1.31%	0.03%	0.01%
2016	98.36%	21.55%	8.11%	1.75%	0.02%	0.07%

**Moving in the right direction.** After decreasing last year, CTOR and CTR increased in 2016. While not quite as high as 2014, both CTOR and CTR were up more than 30 percent from the 2015 overall rate. In 2016, energy customers increasingly engaged with their utility company's email.

**Open Rate and Deliverability fell back slightly.** Both Open Rate and Delivery Rate decreased slightly. The changes amount to fractions of a percent. In fact, both rates remained above 2013 and 2014 figures.

**While Complaint Rate fell, Opt-Out Rate increased.** Utility customers did not mark email as spam as often, but were quicker to unsubscribe from email communications. Complaint and Opt-Out Rates were not included in the 2013 and 2014 reports.

Overall, the data paints a positive picture, with stable Delivery and Open Rates and an increase in CTOR.













# A VIEW FORWARD

## INSIGHT INTO OUR CATEGORIES & BREAKDOWNS

To provide the best comparison possible, benchmarks data is segmented into several categories. These categories are then divided into subcategories. If a category is not represented for a specific segment, it means there was not enough data during the benchmark time frame for report inclusion. It's important to know that for smaller subcategories only a few utilities may be represented.



### UTILITY TYPE

- Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU)
- Cooperatives (Co-op)
- Municipalities (Muni)



### EMAIL TYPE







- Email types were broken into five main categories:
- Welcome Series
  - Newsletter
  - Outage Communication
  - Program Promotion
  - Ancillary



### AUDIENCE TYPE

- Large Business (includes Managed or Key Accounts)
- Small Business
- Residential Customers

## RATES BY UTILITY TYPE







	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
IOU	98.37%	20.75%	7.59%	1.57%	0.02%	0.07%
Co-op	97.41%	25.95%	12.20%	3.16%	0.00%	0.16%
Muni	99.47%	27.37%	14.57%	3.99%	0.00%	0.18%

**IOUs remain the largest percentage of emails sent, making the overall rates mirror them the most.** About 95 percent of all emails analyzed are sent from IOUs, often the largest utility companies. They see the lowest Open Rates, Click-Through Rates and Click-to-Open Rates, while also having the largest Complaint Rate.

**Municipalities and Cooperatives sent mostly Newsletter emails during the benchmark period.** Newsletters account for almost all Municipality sends and two-thirds of Cooperative sends. This could be part of the reason for higher rates over IOUs. IOU sends are represented by a large portion of Program Promotion emails, while Cooperatives' and Municipalities' benchmarks rates are primarily Newsletters. Newsletters tend to outperform Program Promotion emails.

**Municipalities' emails garner the greatest engagement.** These emails receive almost double the CTOR and more than double the CTR of IOUs. They also have the highest Opt-Out Rate of the three utility types.

### GAS-ONLY UTILITIES WERE ALSO SEGMENTED OUT FOR REVIEW:

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Gas	93.52%	17.88%	18.92%	3.38%	0.00%	0.21%

**For gas-only utilities, Open Rate is lower, but engagement is high, with the overall highest CTOR.** When people open an email, they typically engage with content inside. This audience data is primarily from Newsletter sends, which traditionally garner greater engagement.


**Reaching these customers can be a challenge.** They have the lowest Delivery Rate and Open Rate out of any utility type. Increasing reach and engagement will result in higher CTRs.





CONNECTING TO  
YOUR **CUSTOMERS.**

# RATES BY EMAIL TYPE

	 <b>Delivery Rate</b>	 <b>Open Rate</b>	 <b>CTOR</b>	 <b>CTR</b>	 <b>Complaint Rate</b>	 <b>Opt-Out Rate</b>
Welcome Series	98.54%	43.16%	16.07%	5.62%	N/A	N/A
Newsletter	98.92%	20.18%	10.67%	2.15%	0.00%	0.12%
Outage Communication	97.16%	28.32%	3.65%	1.03%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.78%	30.03%	2.87%	0.86%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Update	96.50%	26.49%	4.58%	1.21%	0.02%	0.03%
Program Promotion	98.43%	19.43%	7.40%	1.44%	0.03%	0.06%
Appliance Recycling	99.27%	16.02%	5.43%	0.87%	0.05%	0.09%
Appliance Service Plans	98.45%	17.73%	3.75%	0.67%	0.02%	0.03%
Energy Efficiency	98.40%	18.25%	4.79%	0.87%	0.03%	0.08%
Lighting	98.93%	19.92%	10.34%	2.06%	0.03%	0.05%
Online Account Promotion	98.86%	25.72%	12.81%	3.30%	0.02%	0.02%
Paperless Billing	98.33%	18.63%	6.43%	1.20%	0.03%	0.02%
Payment Options	98.69%	24.60%	13.87%	3.41%	0.05%	0.03%
Rebates & Incentives	98.13%	20.85%	10.16%	2.12%	0.06%	0.14%
Storm Prep	98.13%	19.72%	8.80%	1.74%	0.02%	0.07%
Ancillary	97.61%	23.18%	7.62%	1.77%	0.03%	0.08%
Billing & Payment	92.86%	29.15%	11.44%	3.34%	0.03%	0.08%
Community	99.20%	21.02%	5.25%	1.10%	0.03%	0.09%
Event Promotion	97.60%	15.63%	5.35%	0.84%	0.03%	0.10%
Holiday	98.98%	18.70%	8.20%	1.53%	0.03%	0.09%
Ratemaking	95.49%	27.60%	5.65%	1.56%	0.03%	0.05%
Safety	96.33%	18.60%	2.55%	0.47%	0.02%	0.05%
Survey	99.27%	22.94%	6.75%	1.55%	0.03%	0.09%

**Welcome Series wins again.** As is becoming tradition, Welcome Series emails have the highest Open, Click-to-Open and Click-Through Rates of ALL email categories. True email success stories, Welcome Series communications reach customers at the beginning of the relationship, when they are most receptive and likely to connect.

See more on Welcome Series on p.34.

**Newsletters place second in email engagement.** Newsletters have the second-highest CTOR and CTR. Utility customers are engaging with Newsletter content more than Program Promotion and Ancillary content. Newsletters comprise about one-third of all email sends in this report.

For deeper insights on Newsletter performance, see p. 35.

**Outage Communications get customers' attention.** Outage Communication emails have the second-highest Open Rate. Customers are looking to be alerted to potential or actual outages. While Open Rates are high, CTOR and CTR were the lowest. Why? Many Outage Communications do not include specific, measurable call-to-action (CTA) links, meaning they are less likely to see a lot of engagement.

Find out more on Outage Communications on p. 39.



**Program Promotion emails are communications designed to prompt customer action like signing up for a utility program.** Utilities like seeing high CTRs, but unfortunately, Program Promotion emails fall below all other categories except Outage Communications, which, as stated previously, don't always include a measurable CTA.

*A breakdown on Program Promotions can be found on p. 43.*

**Ancillary emails' high Open Rates are largely attributed to Billing & Payment notices, and Ratemaking notices.** Consumers remain concerned about their bills and the rates they pay. The Ancillary category includes other common emails such as Event Promotions, Surveys and Holiday emails that do not fall under the other categories.

#### **OUTAGE COMMUNICATION SUBCATEGORY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Storm Approaching emails have a higher Open Rate, while Storm Update emails have a higher CTOR. People are more engaged with update emails. An initial warning email may contain enough information at the time sent, but when an update email comes, people tend to be seeking more detailed information and click on those subsequent communications.
- There are slightly more Storm Approaching emails sent in terms of total email send volume, but double the number of email deployments for Storm Update emails. This could signal that Storm Approaching emails are blasts to larger population centers, while Storm Updates target only affected areas.

#### **PROGRAM PROMOTION SUBCATEGORY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Payment Options and Online Account Promotion emails report the highest in Open Rate, CTOR and CTR. They even show higher CTRs and CTORs than Newsletters.
- Appliance Service Plans and Appliance Recycling are the least opened of the emails. They, along with Energy Efficiency emails, also see low engagement with the lowest CTRs and CTORs.
- Customers are most likely to unsubscribe from Rebates & Incentives emails or mark them as spam.

#### **ANCILLARY SUBCATEGORY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Like Payment Options in the Program Promotion category, Billing & Payment and Ratemaking have the highest Open Rates. As is expected, customers want to know what is happening with their bills, ways to make payments and how to manage their accounts.
- Holiday emails see the second-highest CTOR. Utility customers seem to appreciate simple greetings and 'thank you for being a customer' messaging.
- Event Promotion emails are the least opened with the highest Opt-Out Rate. The Complaint Rate remains consistent with Ancillary emails, however, signaling that while people might not be interested in the topic, they don't mark it as spam.
- Safety emails have the lowest engagement. These emails may not always have a measurable CTA, potentially skewing engagement results.







**ENERGY EFFICIENCY** was the most popular topic, with 84% of surveyed utility communicators sending emails about it.



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## RATES BY AUDIENCE TYPE

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	96.81%	23.07%	20.36%	4.70%	0.00%	0.22%
Small Business	97.52%	17.67%	7.95%	1.41%	0.01%	0.12%
Residential	98.46%	21.33%	7.73%	1.65%	0.02%	0.07%
Trade Allies	98.06%	16.98%	6.65%	1.13%	0.01%	0.13%

**Large Business customers are the most engaged.** Large Business customers have a higher Open Rate, CTOR and CTR. They open and engage more with content received than the other audiences.







**Residential and Small Business customers act similarly in terms of engagement.** They have about the same CTOR. To boost engagement, utilities can send more segmented and targeted messages to these audiences.

**Small Business customers and Trade Allies are the hardest to reach with the lowest Delivery and Open Rates.** To improve, utilities can take a close look at list management. Making the most of subject lines and from names may also help increase Open Rates.

**Residential customers have the lowest Opt-Out Rates, but the highest Complaint Rates.** This audience is more likely than Business customers to report spam. To decrease Opt-Outs and spam complaints, utility communicators can offer a detailed preference center where customers can proactively select the types of messages they want to receive.



## RATES BY AUDIENCE AND EMAIL TYPE

	Large Business					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	96.80%	23.81%	21.51%	5.12%	0.00%	0.23%
Outage Communication	96.93%	25.57%	6.19%	1.58%	0.00%	0.00%
Storm Approaching	96.51%	24.99%	5.25%	1.31%	0.00%	0.00%
Storm Update	97.70%	26.63%	7.78%	2.07%	0.00%	0.00%
Program Promotion	96.38%	17.74%	11.79%	2.09%	0.03%	0.13%
Energy Efficiency	96.96%	17.31%	11.66%	2.02%	0.04%	0.12%
Lighting	96.67%	16.70%	9.79%	1.63%	0.04%	0.14%
Rebates & Incentives	96.61%	25.79%	17.18%	4.43%	0.00%	0.13%
Ancillary	97.12%	16.79%	7.69%	1.29%	0.03%	0.15%
Event Promotion	97.19%	15.71%	6.00%	0.94%	0.02%	0.13%
Holiday	95.80%	16.86%	10.35%	1.75%	0.09%	0.26%
Ratemaking	97.98%	26.68%	13.73%	3.66%	0.00%	0.24%







**Newsletters lead the main categories in deliverability and engagement.** This communication goes out on a regular basis. Customers are most engaged with this email type.

**Large Business customers want money-saving options and to know how bills may be affected by ratemaking decisions.** Rebates & Incentives and Ratemaking subcategories have higher Open Rates than newsletters. These topics catch their attention. While this communication has a low Complaint Rate, the Unsubscribe Rate is high.

**Lighting emails have the most complaints and Opt-Outs.** Energy Efficiency emails come in second place. Both categories are under the overall Open Rate and CTOR for the Large Business audience.

**Outage Communications have the highest Open Rate, but low engagement.** The Large Business customers engage more frequently with Outage Communications updates than Storm Approaching emails, matching the overall trend.



	Small Business					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	98.10%	17.84%	8.86%	1.58%	0.00%	0.17%
Outage Communications	96.72%	20.46%	9.75%	1.99%	0.01%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.52%	21.39%	4.34%	0.93%	0.02%	0.01%
Storm Update	96.15%	19.80%	13.88%	2.75%	0.01%	0.05%
Program Promotion	97.84%	18.17%	5.38%	0.98%	0.03%	0.10%
Energy Efficiency	98.13%	18.70%	4.28%	0.80%	0.04%	0.12%
Lighting	97.96%	18.79%	6.33%	1.19%	0.05%	0.12%
Online Account Promotion	97.01%	14.03%	3.51%	0.49%	0.02%	0.01%
Rebates & Incentives	97.70%	18.73%	5.23%	0.98%	0.05%	0.11%
Storm Prep	98.40%	22.36%	8.26%	1.85%	0.02%	0.14%
Ancillary	96.77%	14.75%	4.95%	0.73%	0.03%	0.08%
Community	97.17%	14.82%	3.22%	0.48%	0.02%	0.04%
Event Promotion	97.21%	13.89%	5.64%	0.78%	0.03%	0.09%
Holiday	96.96%	13.68%	6.39%	0.87%	0.02%	0.06%
Ratemaking	96.81%	19.86%	3.32%	0.66%	0.02%	0.03%
Survey	98.38%	23.27%	7.99%	1.86%	0.08%	0.18%

**Outage information continues to be important to the Small Business audience.** This is the only audience in which Outage Communications outperform Newsletters in Open Rate, CTOR and CTR. Storm Prep Program emails also show higher Open Rates and CTRs.

**Program Promotions have slightly more Opens than Newsletters, but Newsletters have higher engagement.** Program Promotion emails are better at getting the Small Business customers' attention, but aren't always getting them to engage. Newsletters, by contrast, are having an impact.

**Outage Communications follow the overall trend; Storm Approaching emails have more Opens, and Storm Updates gain more clicks.** Small Business customers are more likely to unsubscribe from Storm updates.

**The data tells us Small Business customers may be less concerned with online account management.** This category has low Opens and clicks for the Small Business audience. The same is not true among Residential and Large Business segments.

**Small Business customers want to be heard.** Survey emails have high Open Rates and CTORs. They also have high Complaint and Unsubscribe Rates. Sending relevant surveys can help decrease complaints.



	Residential					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Welcome Series	98.54%	43.17%	16.08%	5.66%	N/A	N/A
Newsletter	99.12%	20.35%	10.36%	2.11%	0.00%	0.11%
Outage Communication	97.22%	29.45%	3.04%	0.89%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.81%	31.00%	2.76%	0.85%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Update	96.56%	27.69%	3.39%	0.94%	0.02%	0.03%
Program Promotion	98.44%	19.46%	7.43%	1.45%	0.03%	0.05%
Appliance Service Plans	98.45%	17.73%	3.75%	0.67%	0.02%	0.03%
Appliance Recycling	99.27%	16.02%	5.43%	0.87%	0.05%	0.09%
Energy Efficiency	98.42%	18.24%	4.79%	0.87%	0.03%	0.08%
Lighting	99.00%	20.02%	10.59%	2.12%	0.03%	0.05%
Online Account Promotion	99.48%	29.50%	14.24%	4.20%	0.02%	0.03%
Paperless Billing	98.33%	18.63%	6.43%	1.20%	0.03%	0.02%
Payment Options	98.69%	24.60%	13.87%	3.41%	0.05%	0.03%
Rebates & Incentives	98.13%	20.87%	10.16%	2.12%	0.06%	0.14%
Storm Prep	98.12%	19.60%	8.83%	1.73%	0.02%	0.06%
Ancillary	97.78%	25.26%	8.02%	2.03%	0.03%	0.08%
Billing & Payment	92.37%	31.15%	11.98%	3.73%	0.03%	0.07%
Community	99.39%	21.59%	5.37%	1.16%	0.03%	0.10%
Event Promotion	98.51%	20.40%	5.64%	1.15%	0.04%	0.14%
Holiday	99.37%	19.58%	8.39%	1.64%	0.03%	0.10%
Ratemaking	95.03%	30.21%	6.11%	1.85%	0.03%	0.05%
Safety	96.74%	19.13%	2.50%	0.48%	0.02%	0.05%

**Once opened, Newsletters engage Residential customers.** Newsletters have the second lowest Open Rate, but the highest CTOR and CTR. Compelling, concise subject lines and including the newsletter name in each subject line may help increase Open Rates.







**Outage Communication emails have the highest Open Rates.** More people open Storm Approaching emails, but Storm Update emails receive greater engagement. Storm emails may not include a CTA link.

**Residential customers care about their bills.** Ancillary emails have a high Open Rate driven by Billing & Payment and Ratemaking emails. There is high interest in opening Ratemaking emails, but Billing & Payment emails have almost double the CTOR and CTR.

**The Payment Options and Online Account Promotion categories also perform well.** Again, the Residential utility customer engages with emails about managing their bill and account.

**Residential customers are not as engaged when it comes to Appliance Service Plans or Appliance Recycling.** This audience has the lowest Open Rate and engagement, which may indicate these messages are a harder sell than some of the other promotional based emails. Appliance Recycling promotional emails are most likely to be marked as spam and show a high Unsubscribe Rate.

Within IOU email deployments, several utilities send emails to Trade Allies. Since this represents a unique group, the data was segmented for a closer look:







Trade Allies						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	97.87%	17.80%	11.12%	1.98%	0.00%	0.20%
Program Promotion	98.43%	15.51%	7.49%	1.16%	0.01%	0.13%
Rebates & Incentives	98.47%	16.02%	9.75%	1.56%	0.01%	0.13%
Ancillary	98.11%	16.66%	4.06%	0.68%	0.02%	0.10%
Event Promotion	98.11%	16.66%	4.06%	0.68%	0.02%	0.10%

**Trade Allies are most engaged with the utility Newsletter.** Despite low Delivery Rates and higher Opt-Out Rates, utilities that focus on list management and acquisition practices can improve.

**Rebates & Incentives edge out Event Promotion emails.** Close in Open Rate, Trade Allies are two times more likely to engage with Rebates & Incentives emails.

**This audience receives low email topic variety.** Event Promotion emails are the only Ancillary emails and Rebates & Incentives make up most of the Program Promotion category. No Outage Communications went to this audience.

While the majority of Newsletters go to electric or electric and gas combined utilities, there are a number of gas utilities sending email newsletters to their customers. Since this is another unique segment, it has been pulled out for separate comparison.

Gas Customers						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business Newsletter	93.04%	17.74%	20.19%	3.58%	0.00%	0.20%
Residential Newsletter	98.71%	20.16%	7.37%	1.49%	0.00%	0.41%

**Large Business customers remain the most engaged.** While Residential customers have the higher Delivery and Open Rates, Large Business customers see two times the engagement, doubling CTOR and CTR. Small Business customers are not listed in their own segment because there were not enough of them during the benchmark time frame for a representative sample. The select few are included with the Large Business customers.

**Gas customers are more likely to opt out.** The overall Opt-Out Rate is higher than the benchmark rate for both audiences, with Residential customers opting out twice as often as Large Business customers.



# YEAR-LONG REACH & EMAIL FREQUENCY

How many customers do utility companies typically reach by email over the course of a year? While Open Rates show the unique number who opened per send, the stat doesn't provide a long-term picture of who is reached throughout an entire year. It is essential to look across the benchmarks time frame to determine how many people opened at least one email.

## PROMOTIONAL EMAILS



## OUTAGE COMMUNICATION EMAILS



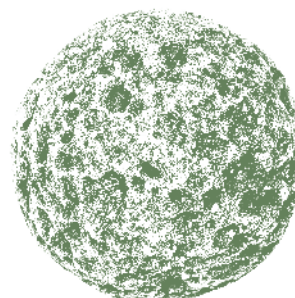
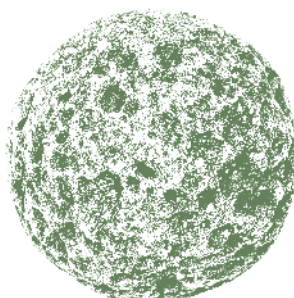
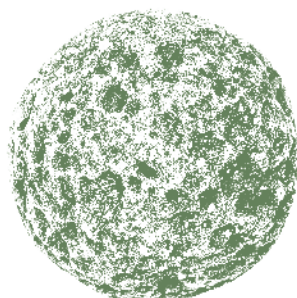
## NEWSLETTER EMAILS



Utilities reach the largest percentage of Residential customers via email. All communication types reached almost half of the Residential lists.

Both Large and Small Business customers are more likely to be reached by a Newsletter email than a Promotional email. Utilities can try including program information in a Newsletter to increase reach in delivering those messages.

Outage Communications reach the least Residential and Large Business customers. Small Business customers are more likely to open an Outage Communication than a Program Promotion email.





## 94% OF UTILITY COMMUNICATORS

find email Highly or Somewhat effective in regards to achieving their corporate objectives.

### HOW FREQUENTLY ARE YOU COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS VIA EMAIL?

	Less than once a month	Two times a month	Three times a month	Four or more times a month
Highly Effective	20.0%	33.3%	26.7%	20.0%
Somewhat Effective	51.1%	31.9%	12.8%	4.3%
Less Effective	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Not Effective	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Communicators typically wonder how frequently they should be emailing their customers. In the survey, Questline asked utility communicators how effective email is for helping achieve corporate objectives and compared it to the frequency of email sends.

### SURVEY FINDINGS:

- Those who emailed their customers three or more times a month all saw email as highly or somewhat effective in achieving corporate objectives.
- Utilities that report email as less effective or not effective only emailed customers one or two times a month on average.
- The largest volume of responses from those surveyed are emailing once or less a month. They find email to be somewhat effective.



Email Newsletters are a way to communicate regularly with customers, but there is often debate over how often a Newsletter should be sent. Questline looked at utility Newsletters sent monthly vs. quarterly and the average performance metrics across all audiences.

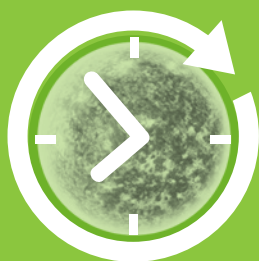
Quarterly Newsletters		Monthly Newsletters
25.3%	Open Rate	34.5%
22.0%	CTOR	31.0%
5.9%	CTR	10.8%
42.1%	Annual Open Reach	59.0%

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS**  
performed higher than quarterly Newsletters across all categories.

**SENDING MONTHLY**  
is the preferred frequency of 75% of benchmarked utilities.

# EMAIL LIFECYCLE

Once an email is sent, how long does it take to receive opens and clicks? To determine a typical email lifecycle, millions of sent emails were analyzed.



## 78% OF ALL EMAILS

are opened within the first 24 hours.  
This is up slightly from last year.

### LOOKING AT OPENS

The trend of customers looking at emails sooner continues in 2016. Almost 50 percent of Unique Clicks happen in the first three hours, one hour sooner than last year. Within the first week, 94 percent of all Unique Opens occur, compared to 91 percent last year.

Hours/Days	% of Unique Opens
1 hour	35.2%
2 hours	43.9%
3 hours	49.8%
4 hours	54.2%
5 hours	57.6%
6 hours	60.4%
8 hours	64.6%
12 hours	69.9%
16 hours	72.5%
24 hours	78.2%
2 days	84.9%
3 days	88.1%
4 days	90.5%
5 days	92.2%
6 days	93.2%
7 days	93.9%
8 days	94.5%
9 days	94.9%
10 days	95.2%
15 days	96.5%
20 days	97.2%
30 days	98.1%
60 days	99.0%

### LOOKING AT CLICKS

Not only are people opening emails quicker, they are clicking on links sooner. Half of all Unique Clicks occur in five hours. Last year, it took eight hours to reach 50 percent of clicks.

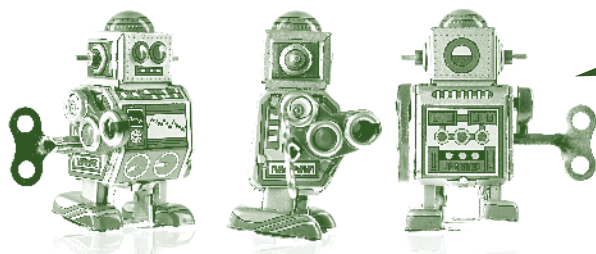
Hours/Days	% of Unique Clicks
1 hour	29.4%
2 hours	37.5%
3 hours	43.1%
4 hours	47.4%
5 hours	50.8%
6 hours	53.6%
8 hours	57.7%
12 hours	63.0%
16 hours	65.7%
24 hours	72.8%
2 days	80.9%
3 days	84.9%
4 days	88.0%
5 days	90.3%
6 days	91.7%
7 days	92.7%
8 days	93.5%
9 days	94.0%
10 days	94.5%
15 days	96.2%
20 days	97.1%
30 days	98.2%
60 days	99.2%





**50%** of all  
Unique Clicks  
occur in 5 hours.

After 5 days,  
utilities have  
reached  
of both **90%**  
Unique Opens  
and Clicks.



## 34% OF COMMUNICATORS

indicated email list growth is still the biggest challenge in utility email communications.

## ALL ABOUT YOUR LIST

There is a lot of focus on growing email lists. What are industry list trends? How does a list impact performance and success metrics? Read on for insights and answers.

### CURRENT LIST SIZE

In Questline's survey, utilities were polled to determine the percentage of customers they have email addresses for based on audience.

Audience	Less than 25%	25-50%	50-75%	More than 75%
Large Business	28%	18.5%	18.5%	35%
Small Business	50%	35%	7.5%	7.5%
Residential	39%	45%	12%	4%

The data shows utilities have the hardest time collecting addresses for Small Business and Residential customers, with 85 percent and 84 percent of those surveyed saying they have fewer than half of their customers' email addresses.

Large Business customers ranked first, with over 50 percent of their email addresses collected by utilities. This audience is the easiest to collect email addresses from.

### LIST GROWTH & ATTRITION

Over the last year, list growth and attrition were tracked to help benchmark the norms. When it comes to list growth, 69 percent of surveyed utility communicators increased their list, with the majority saying it 'increased a little' as opposed to 'increased a lot'.

Newsletter audiences were examined to see how the average list was affected throughout the year. List attrition refers to subscribers that are lost due to hard bounced email addresses, unsubscribes or spam complaints.

#### Residential Newsletter Audience:

- 23.2% Average List Growth
- 7.2% Average Attrition

#### Business Newsletter Audience:

- 10.0% Average List Growth
- 4.5% Average Attrition

For both audiences, attrition was more likely to be new subscribers who were added within the benchmark time frame. Those new to a list may not have given valid email addresses or may have opted out.





## HOW DOES LIST SIZE AFFECT OPEN RATE AND CLICK-THROUGH RATE?


Typically, smaller email sends are indicators of more segmented and targeted efforts. This is a best practice, a more effective way of reaching specific energy customers.

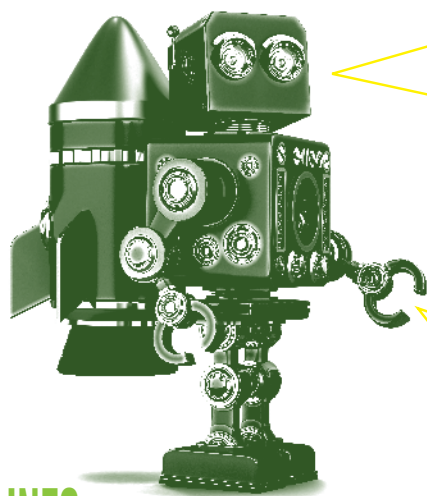
Questline examined all three audiences to look at the difference between average Open Rate and average CTR as list size increases.



	Large Business	
	Average Open Rate	Average CTR
1-100	39.7%	11.7%
100-500	23.3%	4.1%
500-1K	25.8%	4.4%
1K-5K	19.7%	2.1%
5K-10K	15.8%	1.5%
10K+	18.9%	2.2%

	Small Business	
	Average Open Rate	Average CTR
1-500	34.1%	5.5%
500-1K	19.8%	2.2%
1K-5K	23.3%	2.5%
5K-10K	19.7%	1.1%
10K-25K	21.9%	1.2%
25K-50K	21.0%	0.9%
50K-100K	16.8%	0.6%
100K-250K	15.8%	1.0%
250K+	21.9%	2.5%

	Residential	
	Average Open Rate	Average CTR
1-1K	48.0%	10.8%
1K-5K	30.0%	2.3%
5K-10K	30.8%	2.9%
10K-25K	23.2%	1.6%
25K-50K	26.1%	2.6%
50K-100K	27.7%	3.9%
100K-250K	22.5%	2.0%
250K-500K	20.0%	0.9%
500K-750K	20.3%	1.5%
750K+	23.8%	1.4%



As the average number of subject line characters decreases, the average  
**OPEN RATE INCREASES.**

As the average Click Rate increases, the average number of subject line  
**CHARACTERS DECREASES.**

## SUBJECT LINES

Writing a concise and compelling subject line that grabs attention can be a difficult part of crafting a successful email. Data was analyzed based on Open Rates and CTRs from the top 25 percent of performers.

	Average Open Rate	Average # of Characters
Top 25%	38.63%	41
50 – 75%	22.73%	42
25 – 50%	18.52%	46
Bottom 25%	14.93%	48

Again, the top 25 percent of emails by Click Rate had the lowest average number of characters in the subject line. Short, concise subject lines attract opens, which are necessary to receive clicks.

	Average Click Rate	Average # of Characters
Top 25%	7.61%	42
50 – 75%	1.58%	44
25 – 50%	0.78%	46
Bottom 25%	0.37%	45





**SUBJECT LINE BUZZWORDS**

What words are common in the top-performing subject lines? The top 25 percent of performers based on Open Rate often use these words in subject lines:

HOME **BILL** WEATHER **IMPORTANT** RESTORED **UTILITYCITY** INFORMATION  
**UPDATE** **ACCOUNTMANAGER** **POWER**  
ACTION **UTILITYNAME** **UPGRADE**  
LIGHTING **NEWSLETTER** ELECTRIC **RATE**  
ACCOUNT **EFFICIENCY** **UPGRADE** **FACTOR** STORM **SAVINGS**  
**PREPARED** **ENERGY** REQUIRED OUTAGE

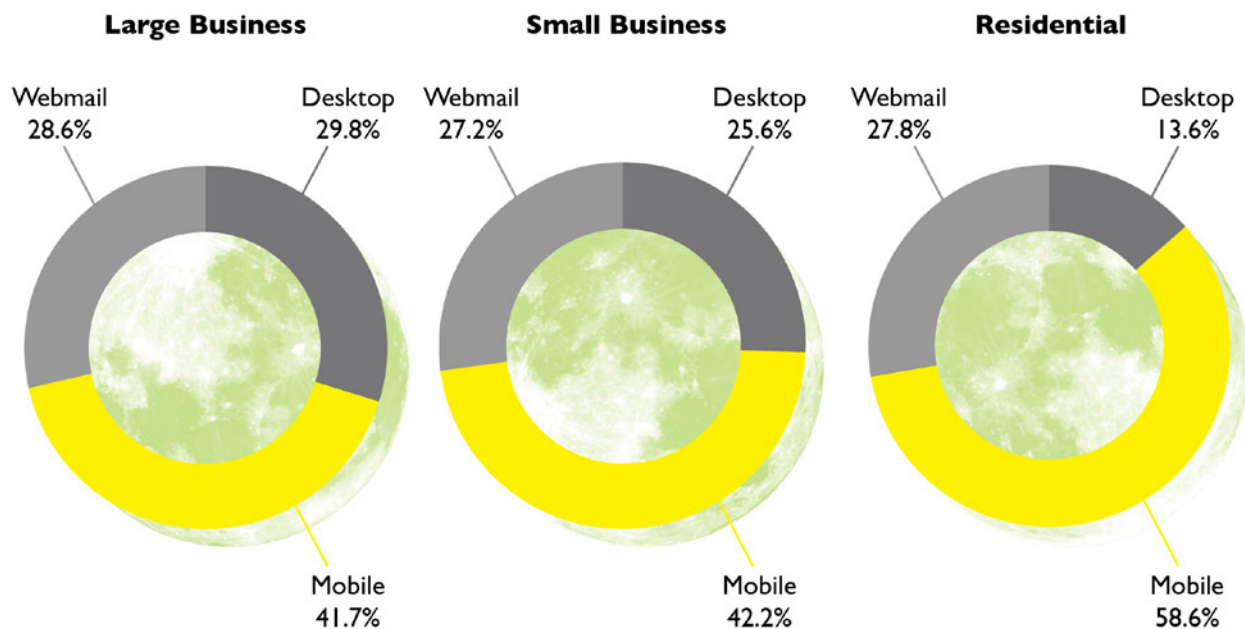
# EMAIL ENVIRONMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

As Questline's analytics capabilities expand, new statistical information on Reading Environment and Reading Engagement is included in this report.

## READING ENVIRONMENT

Reading Environment refers to the device customers use to open utility emails. The options are Desktop, Mobile and Webmail.

- **Desktop** includes installed software email clients viewed by opening a program on a computer, such as Outlook, Apple Mail or Thunderbird.
- **Mobile** includes email opened on a smartphone or tablet. If a customer uses Webmail on a mobile device, it is counted as a mobile environment.
- **Webmail** includes cloud-based email clients, such as Gmail, Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail, that are opened in a web browser.



**3 OUT OF 5 RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS ARE OPENING THEIR EMAILS ON A MOBILE DEVICE.**

**1 OUT OF 4 BUSINESS CUSTOMERS OPENS ON A DESKTOP.**

**Mobile continues to rise.** Residential customers are increasingly opening email on mobile devices. Almost half of Small Business customers are, too. Even Large Business customers see more than 40 percent opening email on a mobile device. Ensuring emails are mobile-responsive is critical for every audience.

**Large Business and Small Business audiences have similarities.** Small Business and Large Business customers see similar Webmail rates, but Small Business customers are more likely to open an email on a mobile device. Both audiences have double or almost double the Residential Opens on Desktop, with Large Business customers having a higher percentage.

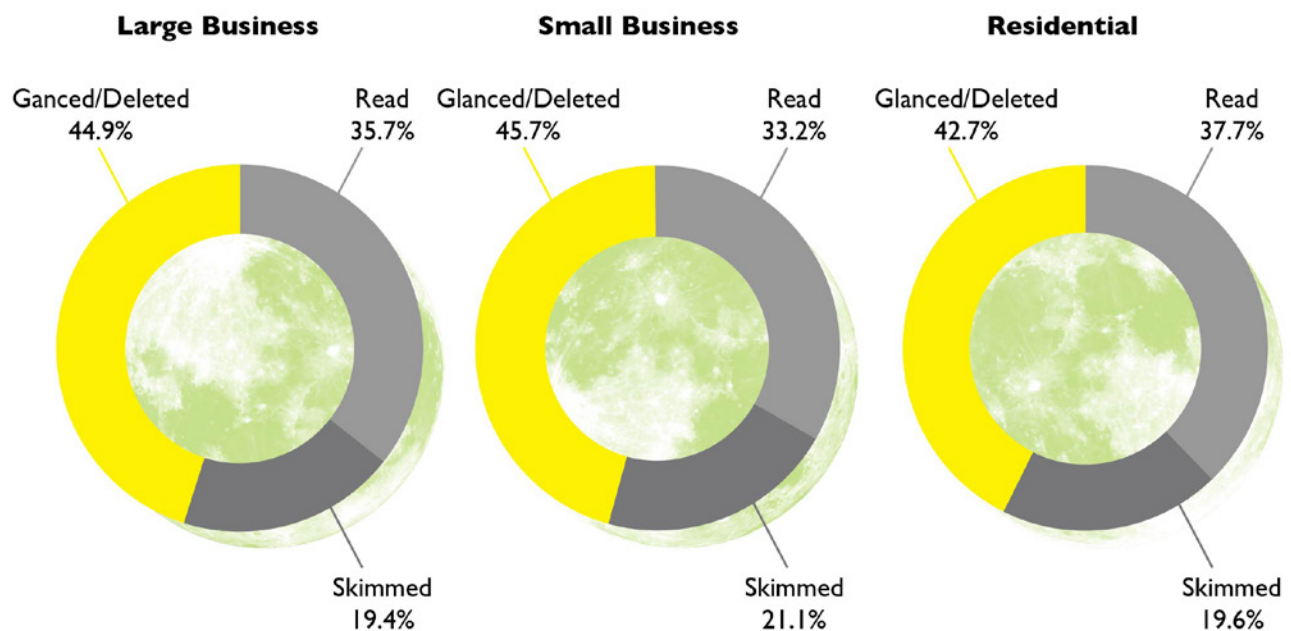




## READING ENGAGEMENT

Reading Engagement measures how long a customer has the email open.

- An email is considered **Read** when it is open for eight or more seconds.
- **Skimmed** emails are open for two or more seconds, but fewer than eight seconds.
- An email open for fewer than two seconds is called **Glanced/Deleted**.



**1 out of 2 customers is Skimming or Reading the emails.** Over half of all audiences are Skimming or Reading utility emails. They are all looking at the email for at least two seconds.

**4 out of 10 customers aren't looking at an email for more than two seconds.** Utilities can provide compelling, interactive content to keep readers captivated.

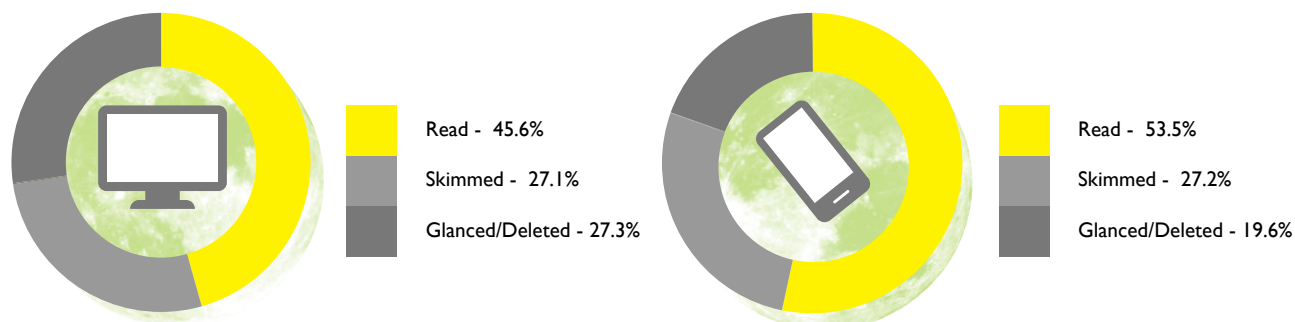
**The Skimmed and Glanced/Deleted categories are fairly consistent across all four audiences.** They are all within 2 percent of each other.

**Residential customers are most likely to Read emails and least likely to only Glance/Delete the emails.** Small Business customers, possibly being the most time-crunched, are most likely to only Glance/Delete the email.

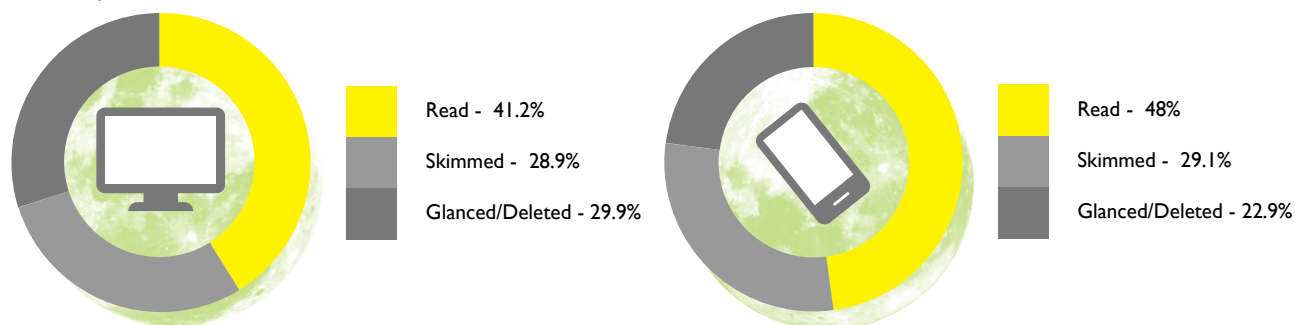
## COMBINING READING ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

How are customers engaging with email based on its environment? Reading Engagement and Reading Environment data were combined to find out. Because of the way Webmail is tracked, Reading Engagement is not calculated on Webmail opens and is excluded below:

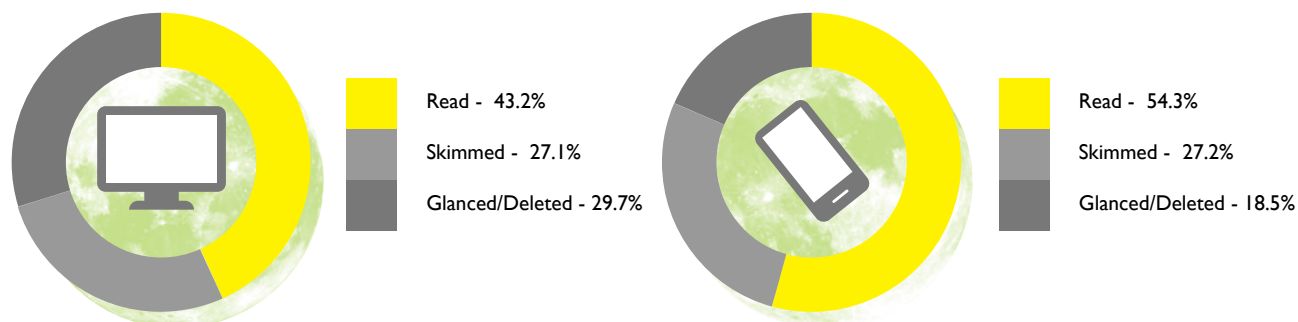
### Large Business



### Small Business



### Residential



**People Read on mobile devices.** Across all audiences, the Read percentage was higher on mobile than on desktop.

**It's easier to Glance/Delete on a desktop.** People are more likely to only Glance or Delete the email on the desktop environment for all three audiences.

**Skimming stays consistent across both devices for all audiences.** For all three audiences, there was less than a 0.2 percent difference for those who Skimmed between mobile and desktop.

**Residential customers Read the most on mobile.** Residential customers who open the majority of their emails on mobile devices have the highest mobile Read rate and the lowest desktop Glanced/Deleted. They also had the largest difference with a more than 10 percent difference between Read Engagement on mobile and Read Engagement on a desktop. They are engaging with emails on mobile devices more than other audiences.







**Large Business customers engage most on a desktop.** They have the highest percentage of desktop Reads and the lowest desktop Glance/Deleted percentage. This customer type is engaging more on a desktop computer, but still over half of customers opening on a mobile device Read the emails and over 80 percent Read or Skim on a mobile device.

**Small Business customers are hard to engage on both environments.** They show the lowest Read percentage for both mobile and desktop environments. More than half are deleting or only looking for fewer than two seconds.





## WELCOME SERIES - DEEPER LOOK

A Welcome Series is an automated email program that new customers are entered into when they sign up for service. Specific program details vary, but customers typically receive 3-5 messages at a regular cadence. These messages typically include an initial welcome and then introduce important account information, program highlights and outage details. Welcome Emails can be sent to both Business and Residential customers. During the benchmark time frame, Questline's data primarily covers Residential Welcome Series.

<b>2TIMES</b> Benchmark Open Rate	Welcome Series compared to overall			
<b>2TIMES</b> Benchmark CTOR	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
<b>3TIMES</b> Benchmark CTR				
Welcome Series Overall	98.54%	43.16%	16.07%	5.62%

Due to the difference in the way Complaint and Opt-Out Rates are tracked in automated programs during the benchmarks time frame, those metrics are not included in this year's report.

**ONLY 19%** of those surveyed are sending Welcome/Onboarding emails. This is a huge opportunity for utilities to improve.

	Welcome Series compared to last year			
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Welcome Series 2015	96.46%	40.98%	15.58%	4.80%
Welcome Series 2016	98.54%	43.16%	16.07%	5.62%






All four key Welcome Series metrics saw an increase this year over last year, reinforcing the effectiveness of enhanced outreach efforts. Customers continue to respond favorably to these programs and are proving far more responsive to future communications.

# NEWSLETTER - DEEPER LOOK

**3 OUT OF 4**

utility communicators surveyed are sending email newsletters.






Newsletters 2016

Newsletter				
 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Opt-Out Rate
98.92%	20.18%	10.67%	2.15%	0.12%

Newsletters compared to the 2016 overall benchmark:

- Higher Delivery Rate
- Open Rate slightly below
- Higher CTOR with a 32% increase
- Higher CTR with a 23% increase

## Newsletter compared to last year

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletters 2015	99.15%	21.57%	10.56%	2.13%	0.01%
Newsletters 2016	98.92%	20.18%	10.67%	2.15%	0.12%






- Delivery and Open Rate decreased
- CTOR and CTR are up slightly, about a 1% change from 2015

*Complaint Rate is not currently measured for the majority of newsletters sent.*



## QUARTILES MATTER

While it's helpful to utility communicators to know where they stand relative to overall benchmarks, it indicates only whether a company is above or below the overall benchmark. Quartiles can help utilities determine positioning analysis.

 Newsletter	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Large Business Electric				
Top Quartile	99.47%	33.12%	39.96%	10.87%
Median	98.12%	24.39%	25.00%	6.17%
Bottom Quartile	95.72%	19.19%	14.29%	3.39%
Large Business Gas				
Top Quartile	98.80%	26.32%	34.11%	7.59%
Median	97.32%	21.97%	22.10%	4.93%
Bottom Quartile	95.87%	17.69%	13.56%	2.59%
Small Business				
Top Quartile	99.04%	23.24%	12.89%	3.03%
Median	98.90%	20.08%	9.14%	1.83%
Bottom Quartile	98.31%	16.72%	6.84%	1.18%
Residential				
Top Quartile	99.43%	32.72%	39.61%	10.82%
Median	98.06%	24.12%	25.00%	6.10%
Bottom Quartile	95.73%	18.94%	14.29%	3.39%



QUESTLINE

# NEWSLETTER QUARTILES

## **NEWSLETTERS: A LOOK AT TOP-PERFORMING ARTICLES BY AUDIENCE**

What articles are most popular by audience type? Top content is based on Unique Clicks to Opens. Top performers are listed below:

### **NEWSLETTER – Electric Top Content**

#### **Large Business**

- Busted! 5 Energy Myths Exposed
- INFOGRAPHIC: Learning to Read a Motor Nameplate
- Oops! 5 Great Accidental Inventions
- 4 Steps to Optimizing Your LED Upgrade
- Beware! Wasted Energy May Be Haunting Your Facility

#### **Small Business**

- Slowing Your Air Handling Costs
- Making the Most of LED Lighting in Your Business
- 5 Ways to Pull the Plug on Plug Loads
- Lighting Options: LED Tubes Are Looking Up
- A Fresh Look at Refrigeration

#### **Residential**

- Saving Energy Room By Room: The Laundry
- What's Haunting Your Energy Bill?
- Saving Energy Room By Room: The Family Room
- 5 Things LEDs Can Do For You
- Saving Energy Room By Room: The Bedroom

### **NEWSLETTER – Gas Top Content**

#### **Large Business**

- 5 Strategies for Combustion Control
- Winter Fuel Price Outlook for 2016
- VIDEO: The Higher Efficiency of Condensing Boilers
- How Do They Do That? Gas Cooling
- GUIDE: Make Proper Boiler Maintenance Part of Your Routine

#### **Residential**

- 5 Ways to Lower Your Water Heating Costs
- Stop High Water Heating Costs
- Crank Up the Savings on Your Heating This Winter
- 6 Steps to a Warmer Basement
- Saving Energy Room By Room: The Family Room

**Numbers catch attention.** Many of the top-performing articles included a number in the title. This tells the reader exactly how many tips they are getting and what to expect from the article.

**Large Business customers are people, too.** This audience isn't immune to wanting to read something a little more interesting. Energy myths and accidental inventions can be very engaging.

**Small Business customers are interested in LEDs.** Two of the top articles are specifically about upgrading to LED lighting.

**The Saving Energy Room by Room series has been a hit with both Residential electric and gas customers.** Customers are interested in ways to lower costs, save money and be more comfortable.













# OUTAGE COMMUNICATION - DEEPER LOOK

Outage Communications are communications sent about a power outage that may be occurring or updates on a current outage.







**OVER 50%**

of utility communicators are sending Outage Communications via email.

Outage Communication compared to overall benchmarks						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Outage Communication 2016	97.16%	28.32%	3.65%	1.03%	0.02%	0.03%

Outage Communications see a 31.4 percent increase in the Open Rate from the overall benchmarks number.






Outage Communications have a CTOR of less than half overall benchmarks. Some of these communications focus only on quickly getting a message out, without asking readers to take action. This explains the lower CTR.






Outage Communications compared to last year						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Outage Communication 2015	98.11%	27.84%	2.60%	0.72%	0.03%	0.00%
Outage Communication 2016	97.16%	28.32%	3.65%	1.03%	0.02%	0.03%

- Deliverability is down slightly
- Open Rate is up slightly
- CTOR and CTR have increased as more utilities are creating templates that include CTAs to maps, social media pages, etc. instead of mostly text.

## QUARTILES MATTER

While it's helpful to utility communicators to know where they stand relative to overall benchmarks, it indicates only whether a company is above or below the overall benchmark. Quartiles can help utilities determine positioning analysis.

Business				
 Outage	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Top Quartile	98.26%	24.23%	13.84%	2.92%
Median	97.71%	21.18%	7.99%	1.63%
Bottom Quartile	96.84%	18.97%	3.18%	0.72%

Residential				
 Outage	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Top Quartile	99.08%	39.84%	2.47%	0.77%
Median	98.46%	35.47%	1.08%	0.35%
Bottom Quartile	97.45%	29.55%	0.52%	0.21%

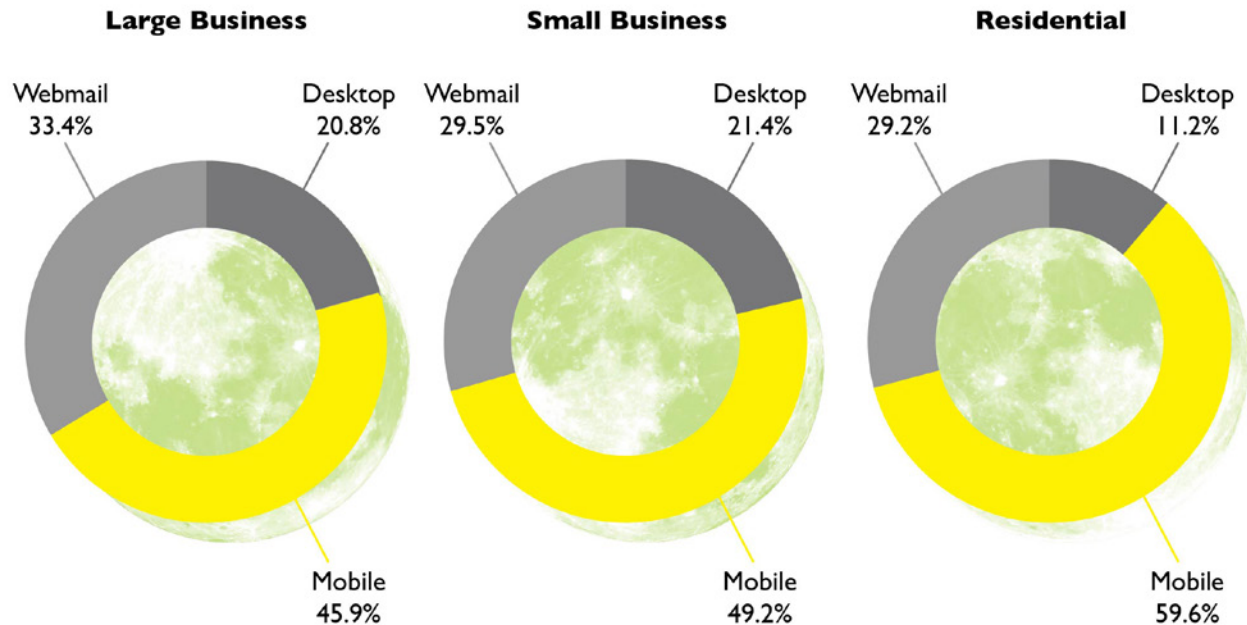


QUESTLINE

# OUTAGE QUARTILES

## OUTAGE COMMUNICATION & READING ENVIRONMENT

Are Outage Communications read in different Reading Environments? Questline found the following:



4% increase in Mobile for Large Business (41.7%), Desktop decreases by 9% (29.8%)

2% increase in Mobile for Small Business (47.2%), Desktop decreases by 4% (25.6%)

1% increase in Mobile for Residential (58.6%), Desktop decreases by 2% (13.6%)

The largest increase in Mobile readership occurs among Large Business customers, while Residential customers see a 1 percent increase. Business customers also see a significant decrease in Desktop opens. More Business customers are turning to Mobile and Webmail during outages. Outage Communications and information should be optimized for all environments.









Outage Communications are all about getting the information to customers quickly. For both Residential and Business customers, the average time until the email is opened is less on a mobile device. For fast, time-sensitive information, utility customers are increasingly turning to mobile communications.





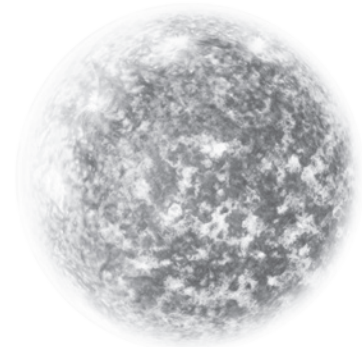
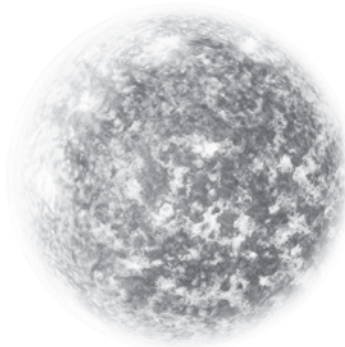
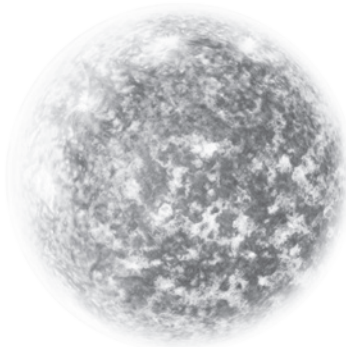








## PROGRAM PROMOTION - DEEPER LOOK

	Program Promotion					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Program Promotion 2016	98.43%	19.43%	7.40%	1.44%	0.03%	0.06%

### Program Promotion compared to the 2016 overall benchmark:

- Open Rate slightly below
- CTOR and CTR are slightly below the overall benchmark
- These tend to be more difficult topics for sparking engagement













	Program Promotion compared to last year					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Program Promotion 2015	98.50%	21.28%	7.17%	1.52%	0.04%	0.01%
Program Promotion 2016	98.43%	19.43%	7.40%	1.44%	0.03%	0.06%

- Largest change was seen in Open Rate, which decreased
- CTOR rose slightly, but CTR fell slightly
- Fewer Complaints, more Opt-Outs in 2016

## QUARTILES MATTER

While it's helpful to utility communicators to know where they stand relative to overall benchmarks, it indicates only whether a company is above or below the overall benchmark. Quartiles can help utilities determine positioning analysis.

Business Program Promotion				
 Promo	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Top Quartile	98.69%	20.83%	9.66%	1.98%
Median	97.99%	18.86%	7.05%	1.19%
Bottom Quartile	96.65%	16.20%	4.43%	0.76%

Residential Program Promotion				
 Promo	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR
Top Quartile	99.63%	26.57%	12.16%	3.56%
Median	99.42%	20.87%	7.01%	1.48%
Bottom Quartile	98.86%	17.39%	3.67%	0.65%

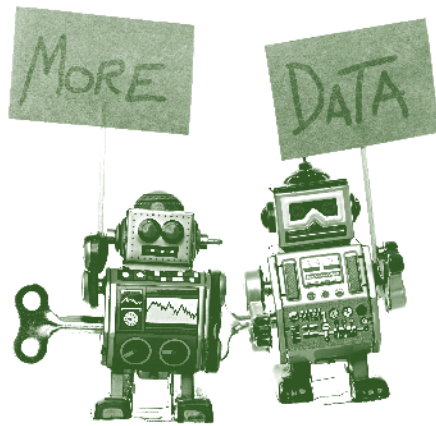


QUESTLINE

# PROGRAM QUARTILES













## EMAIL JOURNEY - TYING THE EMAIL USES TOGETHER

It's easy to examine each type of email communication separately. But many utilities are sending multiple types of communications. How do they work together?

### It all begins with a Welcome Series

Welcome Series is the highest performing email category, but what happens after the automated program is complete? To answer this question, Questline looked at those who have completed a Welcome Series, opening at least one of the Welcome Series emails. These are known as Welcome Series Graduates. They represent about 3 percent of Questline email volume and are a highly engaged audience.

Here is how they compare to the overall rates:

	Welcome Series Graduates					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Welcome Series Graduates	99.6%	29.45%	11.4%	3.4%	0.02%	0.03%
Non-Graduates	98.3%	20.9%	7.9%	1.7%	0.02%	0.03%
Percent Change	1.3%	41.3%	44.0%	103.5%	-17.6%	-7.0%







**WELCOME SERIES GRADUATES HAVE A HIGHER DELIVERY RATE, OPEN RATE, CTOR AND CTR. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE WITH FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS FROM UTILITIES THAN THOSE WHO HAVE NOT GONE THROUGH A WELCOME SERIES.**







The percent change represents the difference in the rates. While Complaint Rate and Opt-Out Rate have the same rounded percentage, the rates are lower for Graduates when the full numbers are examined.

### Welcome Series Graduates are:

- More likely to open an email from their utility
- More engaged with their utility and available programs
- Less likely to opt out or mark emails as spam

Program Promotion emails and Newsletters were examined to see how the Welcome Series Graduates performed specifically in these categories.

	Newsletter					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Welcome Series Graduates	99.8%	28.3%	15.1%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Non-Graduates	98.9%	20.1%	10.5%	2.1%	0.00%	0.00%
Newsletter Percent Change	0.9%	41.1%	44.0%	103.1%	-90.2%	-72.7%







	Program Promotion					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Welcome Series Graduates	99.4%	29.5%	10.8%	3.2%	0.03%	0.03%
Non-Graduates	98.3%	19.1%	7.1%	1.3%	0.05%	0.03%
Program Promotion Percent Change	1.1%	54.2%	52.9%	135.7%	-17.3%	-33.9%

Again, great news for Welcome Series Graduates, who out-perform everyone else across the board in both categories. The improvement is more impactful for Program Promotion emails, with a more than 50 percent increase in Open Rate and CTOR and a 135 percent increase in CTR.

#### Keep your customers' attention with a regular email newsletter

Welcome Series emails are very effective. They are designed for individuals moving into a utility company's territory and for those transferring service. This is typically a small subset of customers. A Newsletter email is sent on a monthly or quarterly basis to a larger group and provides utilities of all sizes ongoing communication with customers.

Questline analyzed Newsletter Readers, people who have opened at least one Newsletter during the benchmarks time frame. Newsletter Readers represent 48 percent of all Questline email addresses.







	Newsletter Readers					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter Readers	98.8%	26.4%	6.0%	1.6%	0.03%	0.04%
Others	97.4%	17.0%	7.6%	1.3%	0.03%	0.07%
Percent Change	1.4%	55.3%	-21.5%	21.8%	-20.4%	-42.0%

## NEWSLETTER READERS ARE:

- More likely to open other emails from utilities
- Less likely to opt out or mark utility emails as spam

While CTR increases by 21 percent, CTOR decreases by 20 percent. This change is due to the volume of increase in opens. The increase in clicks is lower than the increase in opens, but the number of unique clicks still increases for Newsletter Readers.

This upward trend remains true for all audiences:

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business Newsletter Readers	98.99%	26.49%	9.1%	2.42%	0.02%	0.11%
Large Business Others	96.03%	13.60%	10.86%	1.48%	0.02%	0.11%
Large Business % Change	3.08%	94.72%	-16.00%	63.57%	-24.88	-2.68
Small Business Newsletter Readers	98.86%	28.12%	6.15%	1.73%	0.02%	0.08%
Small Business Others	95.11%	10.00%	8.65%	0.86%	0.02%	0.07%
Small Business % Change	3.94%	181.27%	-28.84%	100.15%	-0.66%	19.65%
Residential Newsletter Readers	98.79%	26.32%	5.96%	1.57%	0.03%	0.04%
Residential Others	97.63%	17.59%	7.55%	1.33%	0.03%	0.07%
Residential % Change	1.19%	49.63%	-21.09%	18.07%	-21.52%	-46.74%

The largest increase in Opens is seen by Small Business customers, typically the hardest audience to reach. Their Open Rate percentage change doubles Large Business customers and almost quadruples the Residential percentage change.

Residential Newsletter readers are more receptive to other utility communications. Residential Newsletter Readers see the largest percentage change in Opt-Out Rate and the second highest in Complaint Rate.

Business Newsletter readers see the largest increase in CTR. Small Business Newsletter Readers see an increase of 100 percent, double that of non-Newsletter readers. Large Business Newsletter Readers see an increase of 64 percent.







## WELCOME SERIES AND NEWSLETTERS

begin regular email communications from utility to customer. This leads to more engaged customers receptive to future emails.



# UTILITY METRICS: ADVANCED INSIGHTS

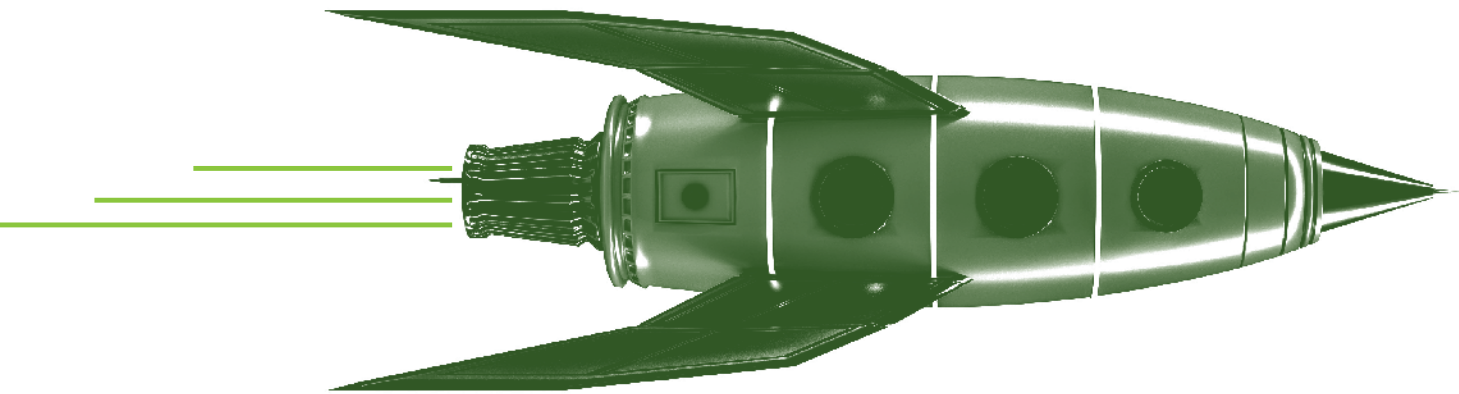
Below are the detailed breakdowns of the Benchmark Data by Utility Type.

IOU RATES BY AUDIENCE TYPE						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	96.99%	20.94%	21.69%	4.54%	0.01%	0.23%
Small Business	97.52%	17.67%	7.94%	1.40%	0.01%	0.12%
Residential	98.46%	21.04%	7.45%	1.57%	0.02%	0.07%
Trade Allies	98.07%	16.98%	6.63%	1.13%	0.01%	0.13%






**Large Business customers have the highest engagement of the audiences.** The majority of sends for this audience are Newsletters, which typically see higher engagement.

**Residential customers open emails, but don’t engage.** The Residential audience has the highest Open Rates, but lowest CTORs, aside from Trade Allies. Residential customers are opening utility emails but not engaging as much as Small or Large Business customers.

**Business customers are quick to unsubscribe.** Large and Small Business customers have higher Opt-Out Rates than Residential customers. Utilities can begin to reverse these numbers as they send more impactful, targeted content.



## IOU RATES BY EMAIL TYPE

	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	99.02%	19.18%	9.95%	1.91%	0.00%	0.11%
Outage Communication	97.15%	28.30%	3.64%	1.03%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.77%	30.01%	2.86%	0.86%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Update	96.50%	26.49%	4.58%	1.21%	0.02%	0.03%
Program Promotion	98.42%	19.39%	7.40%	1.43%	0.03%	0.06%
Appliance Recycling	99.27%	16.02%	5.43%	0.87%	0.05%	0.09%
Appliance Service Plans	98.45%	17.72%	3.75%	0.66%	0.02%	0.03%
Energy Efficiency	98.39%	18.08%	4.72%	0.85%	0.03%	0.08%
Lighting	98.93%	19.92%	10.34%	2.06%	0.03%	0.05%
Online Account Promotion	98.86%	25.72%	12.81%	3.30%	0.02%	0.02%
Paperless Billing	98.33%	18.63%	6.43%	1.20%	0.03%	0.02%
Payment Options	98.69%	24.60%	13.87%	3.41%	0.05%	0.03%
Rebates & Incentives	98.13%	20.85%	10.16%	2.12%	0.06%	0.14%
Storm Prep	98.13%	19.72%	8.80%	1.74%	0.02%	0.07%
Ancillary	97.58%	23.26%	7.71%	1.79%	0.03%	0.08%
Billing & Payment	92.75%	29.03%	11.57%	3.36%	0.03%	0.08%
Community	99.20%	21.02%	5.25%	1.10%	0.03%	0.09%
Event Promotion	97.52%	15.19%	5.47%	0.83%	0.03%	0.10%
Holiday	98.97%	18.72%	8.32%	1.56%	0.03%	0.09%
Ratemaking	95.49%	27.60%	5.65%	1.56%	0.03%	0.05%
Survey	99.27%	22.94%	6.75%	1.55%	0.03%	0.09%
Safety	96.33%	18.60%	2.55%	0.47%	0.02%	0.05%







**IOUs are similar to the overall rates.** This is because they represent the largest amount of emails sent.

**Customers click on Newsletters.** Newsletters have the lowest Open Rates, but the highest CTOR and CTR. Customers who open a Newsletter are engaging.

**Customers care about managing their account and payment options.** Those two subcategories have the highest Open Rates and engagement in the Program Promotion category. Following a similar path, Billing & Payment and Ratemaking lead the Ancillary category in Open Rates. Billing & Payment also leads the category in CTOR and CTR. There is less engagement with Ratemaking emails, but those communications may not include measurable CTAs.

**High engagement can come with a price.** Rebates & Incentives emails achieve high engagement, but also the highest Complaint and Unsubscribe Rates. IOUs will want to ensure they are sending appropriate rebate and incentive options to the right customers to help reverse that trend.

## IOU RATES BY AUDIENCE AND EMAIL TYPES

	LARGE BUSINESS					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	97.03%	21.85%	24.51%	5.36%	0.00%	0.25%
Outage Communication	96.93%	25.57%	6.19%	1.58%	0.00%	0.00%
Storm Approaching	96.51%	24.99%	5.25%	1.31%	0.00%	0.00%
Storm Update	97.70%	26.63%	7.78%	2.07%	0.00%	0.00%
Program Promotion	96.38%	17.74%	11.79%	2.09%	0.03%	0.13%
Energy Efficiency	96.96%	17.31%	11.66%	2.02%	0.04%	0.12%
Lighting	96.67%	16.70%	9.79%	1.63%	0.04%	0.14%
Rebates & Incentives	96.61%	25.79%	17.18%	4.43%	0.00%	0.13%
Ancillary	97.11%	16.77%	7.65%	1.28%	0.03%	0.15%
Event Promotion	97.18%	15.68%	5.94%	0.93%	0.02%	0.13%
Holiday	95.80%	16.86%	10.35%	1.75%	0.09%	0.26%
Ratemaking	97.98%	26.68%	13.73%	3.66%	0.00%	0.24%

**Rebates & Incentives and Ratemaking subcategories are the most engaging non-Newsletter email types for the Large Business audience.** They had the highest Open Rates (except for Storm Updates and Outage Communications), CTOR and CTR.


**Outage Communications have the highest Open Rate of the main categories.** Once again, Storm Updates see higher engagement than Storm Approaching emails.

**Newsletters perform well with this audience.** They have the highest CTOR and CTR for the audience. This audience is more engaged with their Newsletters.






## IOU RATES BY AUDIENCE AND EMAIL TYPES [CONT.]

	SMALL BUSINESS					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	98.11%	17.84%	8.85%	1.58%	0.00%	0.17%
Outage Communication	96.72%	20.46%	9.75%	1.99%	0.01%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.52%	21.39%	4.34%	0.93%	0.02%	0.01%
Storm Update	96.15%	19.80%	13.88%	2.75%	0.01%	0.05%
Program Promotion	97.84%	18.17%	5.38%	0.98%	0.03%	0.10%
Energy Efficiency	98.13%	18.70%	4.28%	0.80%	0.04%	0.12%
Lighting	97.96%	18.79%	6.33%	1.19%	0.05%	0.12%
Online Account Promotion	97.01%	14.03%	3.51%	0.49%	0.02%	0.01%
Rebates & Incentives	97.70%	18.73%	5.23%	0.98%	0.05%	0.11%
Storm Prep	98.40%	22.36%	8.26%	1.85%	0.02%	0.14%
Ancillary	96.77%	14.75%	4.95%	0.73%	0.03%	0.08%
Community	97.17%	14.82%	3.22%	0.48%	0.02%	0.04%
Event Promotion	97.21%	13.89%	5.64%	0.78%	0.03%	0.09%
Holiday	96.96%	13.68%	6.39%	0.87%	0.02%	0.06%
Ratemaking	96.81%	19.86%	3.32%	0.66%	0.02%	0.03%
Survey	98.38%	23.27%	7.99%	1.86%	0.08%	0.18%

**Among Small Businesses, Storm Prep and Survey emails perform well.** The stats show these customers want to be aware of outages that may affect their business. They also want to be heard. On the flip side, these categories tend to see high Unsubscribe Rates.

**Small Business customers want to stay informed during an outage.** Outage Communication has the top Open Rate, CTOR and CTR. An outage can really affect Small Business operations. These customers need and want to stay on top of fluid situations. Storm Update CTOR and CTR for this segment DOUBLED the overall rate for all utilities.

**This audience continues to be unique.** Generally, Small Business customers have lower engagement with Online Account Information than Residential customers and less interest in Rebates & Incentives than Large Business customers.

	RESIDENTIAL					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Newsletter	99.20%	19.32%	9.73%	1.88%	0.00%	0.09%
Outage Communication	97.21%	29.44%	3.03%	0.89%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Approaching	97.80%	30.98%	2.74%	0.85%	0.02%	0.03%
Storm Update	96.56%	27.69%	3.39%	0.94%	0.02%	0.03%
Program Promotion	98.44%	19.42%	7.42%	1.44%	0.03%	0.05%
Appliance Recycling	99.27%	16.02%	5.43%	0.87%	0.05%	0.09%
Appliance Service Plans	98.45%	17.72%	3.75%	0.66%	0.02%	0.03%
Energy Efficiency	98.40%	18.07%	4.71%	0.85%	0.03%	0.08%
Lighting	99.00%	20.02%	10.59%	2.12%	0.03%	0.05%
Online Account Promotion	99.48%	29.50%	14.24%	4.20%	0.02%	0.03%
Paperless Billing	98.33%	18.63%	6.43%	1.20%	0.03%	0.02%
Payment Options	98.69%	24.60%	13.87%	3.41%	0.05%	0.03%
Rebates & Incentives	98.13%	20.87%	10.16%	2.12%	0.06%	0.14%
Storm Prep	98.12%	19.60%	8.83%	1.73%	0.02%	0.06%
Ancillary	97.73%	25.41%	8.17%	2.07%	0.03%	0.08%
Billing & Payment	92.23%	31.06%	12.13%	3.77%	0.03%	0.07%
Community	99.39%	21.59%	5.37%	1.16%	0.03%	0.10%
Event Promotion	98.21%	18.71%	6.54%	1.22%	0.05%	0.16%
Holiday	99.37%	19.63%	8.54%	1.68%	0.03%	0.10%
Ratemaking	95.03%	30.21%	6.11%	1.85%	0.03%	0.05%
Survey	99.37%	22.90%	6.61%	1.51%	0.02%	0.08%
Safety	96.74%	19.13%	2.50%	0.48%	0.02%	0.05%







**Residential Newsletter Delivery Rate stands out as a winner.** This data shows that list collection and management should remain top of mind. These practices can be extended to other communication types to maximize outreach and engagement for overall success.

**Outage Communications offer information Residential customers are interested in receiving.** They have the highest overall Open Rate and low Opt-Outs and Complaints.

**Residential customers are concerned with their bills and managing their accounts.** The top subcategories between Program Promotion and Ancillary all relate to bills. Payment Options and Online Account Promotion have the highest Program Promotion Open Rates and Click Rates. In the Ancillary category, it is Billing & Payment and Ratemaking.

**Target your Event Promotion emails.** These tend to have the highest Complaint and Unsubscribe Rates. Sending select, relevant event emails to utility customers can help improve rates.

CO-OP METRICS

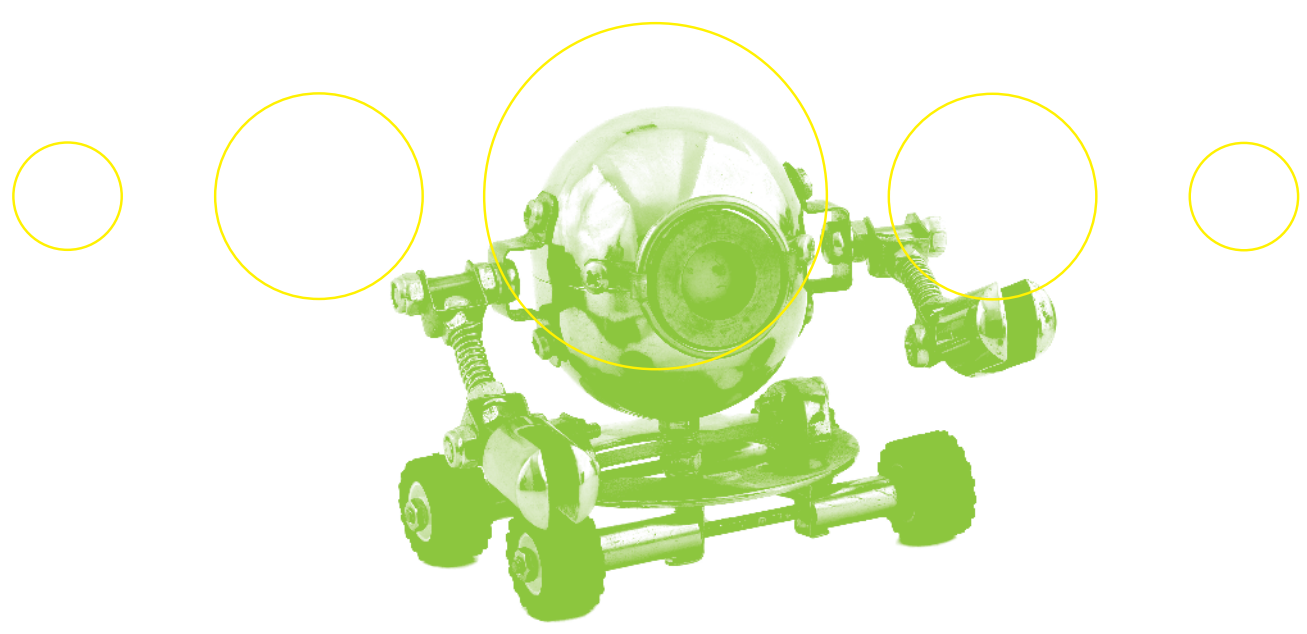
	CO-OP RATES BY AUDIENCE TYPE					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	98.45%	22.25%	28.49%	6.34%	0.00%	0.13%
Small Business	96.02%	32.06%	16.10%	5.16%	0.00%	0.39%
Residential	97.29%	26.41%	10.43%	2.75%	0.02%	0.17%

**Cooperatives see one out of four Large Business customers open an email and click.** This is more than three times the overall CTOR for all audiences.

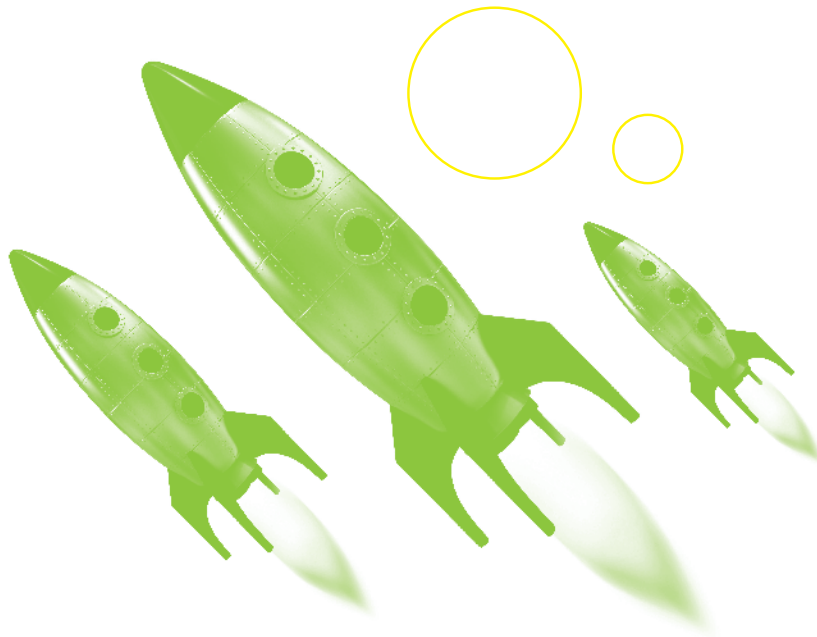
**Small Business customers have the best Open Rate, but lower engagement than Large Business customers.** Utilities are getting their Small Business customers’ attention, but can do more to engage them in the future (this audience is based only on Newsletters for Co-ops).

**Cooperatives need to be cautious with their Small Business customers.** This segment has three times the Opt-Out Rate of Large Business customers.

**One out of four Residential customers opens emails.** This is a higher Open Rate than the overall benchmarks. This segment also has the lowest CTOR of the audience types. Residential customers are opening the emails, but those communications may not be spurring additional engagement.













### CO-OP RATES BY AUDIENCE AND EMAIL TYPE

Other email categories are heavily weighted by a single utility, so the Cooperatives' audience and email type breakdown is based on a comparison of Newsletters by audience.

CO-OP NEWSLETTER RATES BY AUDIENCE						
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	98.45%	22.23%	28.51%	6.34%	0.00%	0.13%
Small Business	96.02%	32.06%	16.10%	5.16%	0.00%	0.39%
Residential	95.99%	29.40%	13.84%	4.07%	0.01%	0.23%

**Residential customers have the hardest inboxes to reach.** Residential customers have the lowest Delivery Rate.







**Cooperative Small Business customers are more likely to open than other Small Business customers.** They have the highest Open Rates, different from the overall rate and other utility types. Cooperatives are able to get customers to open emails but struggle with engagement.

**Large Business Customers engage, but getting them to open isn't easy for Cooperatives.** Large Business Cooperative customers have the lowest Open Rate, but remain still higher than the overall Open Rate. Once the customers open the email, they are the most engaged with the highest CTOR and CTR.

**Residential Cooperative customers are the least engaged of the three audiences.** However, they still outperform the Overall Rate.



## MUNI METRICS

	MUNI RATES BY AUDIENCE TYPE					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	98.07%	21.98%	25.75%	5.66%	0.00%	0.17%
Small Business	97.87%	17.11%	9.49%	1.62%	0.00%	0.33%
Residential	99.59%	27.84%	13.92%	3.88%	0.00%	0.18%

**Large Business Municipality customers are the most engaged of the group.** One out of four who opens the email engages.

**Emails catch Residential customers' attention.** This audience is most likely to open email, but the data reveals they are not as engaged with the content inside as Large Business customers. Residential customers have the best Delivery Rate of all three audiences.







**Engaging Small Business customers remains challenging.** Small Business recipients see a CTR and CTOR hovering slightly below and above the Overall Rate, respectively.

**The Opt-Out Rates for all three audiences more than double the Overall Rate.** Email recipients aren't afraid to unsubscribe if they aren't receiving relevant, timely and valuable information.

MUNI RATES BY AUDIENCE AND EMAIL TYPE

Municipality customers primarily sent Newsletters during the benchmarks time frame.

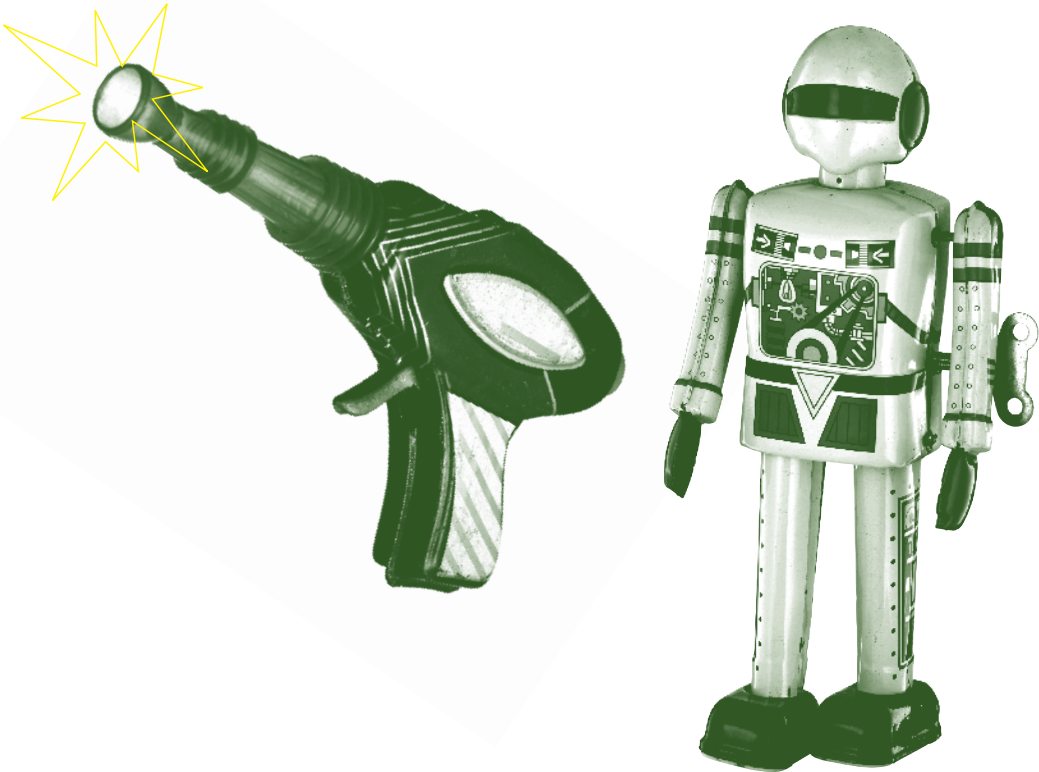
Rates by audience are below:

	NEWSLETTER RATES BY AUDIENCE					
	 Delivery Rate	 Open Rate	 CTOR	 CTR	 Complaint Rate	 Opt-Out Rate
Large Business	98.07%	21.98%	25.75%	5.66%	0.00%	0.17%
Small Business	97.87%	17.11%	9.49%	1.62%	0.00%	0.33%
Residential	99.59%	27.36%	14.27%	3.90%	0.00%	0.18%

**Residential customers respond to Municipality communications.** They have the highest Delivery and Open Rate. While their CTOR and CTR isn't the highest of the Municipality audiences, it is still higher than the overall Newsletter rate.

**Large Business Municipality customers have the highest engagement.** Their CTOR and CTR are more than double that of the overall benchmark Newsletter number.

**Municipalities struggle to reach Small Business customers.** The Delivery Rate, Open Rate, CTOR and CTR are all below the overall benchmark Newsletter number.





# METHODOLOGY:

## HOW DID WE DO THAT?

Questline compiled data from all messages sent by our more than 450 utility clients from August 1, 2015 through July 31, 2016. These clients covered all 50 states and included both electric and gas utilities. Questline excluded any email campaigns that were not Newsletters, sent to fewer than 20 people, sent as tests and/or sent to internal company lists. Newsletters were excluded from these rules because our database includes targeted Newsletters with fewer than 20 subscribers.

**A variety of email types were included and emails were segmented in several ways to develop the necessary benchmarks.**

- Each utility was classified as a Municipality, Cooperative or Investor-Owned Utility.
- Campaigns were segmented by audience and communication type. Audiences included Large Business, Small Business and Residential.
- If the campaign went to both Large Business and Small Business customers, it was classified as Small Business for this report. If it was sent to all audiences, it was classified as Residential.
- Types of communications included Program Promotion, Newsletter, Outage Communication, Welcome Series and an Ancillary category. Additional subcategories were defined where possible.

*For a breakdown of all email types, see Email Classifications (p. 60).*

- For each email and audience category, a minimum number of sends and utilities was required to ensure a reliable benchmark. If this was not met, those categories were not listed in the report. The Large Business, Small Business and Trade Allies audiences are the most likely to have a substantial volume from one or two utilities.

**The data was compiled from all Questline email delivery platforms and incorporated into its own database. Through analysis of the data:**

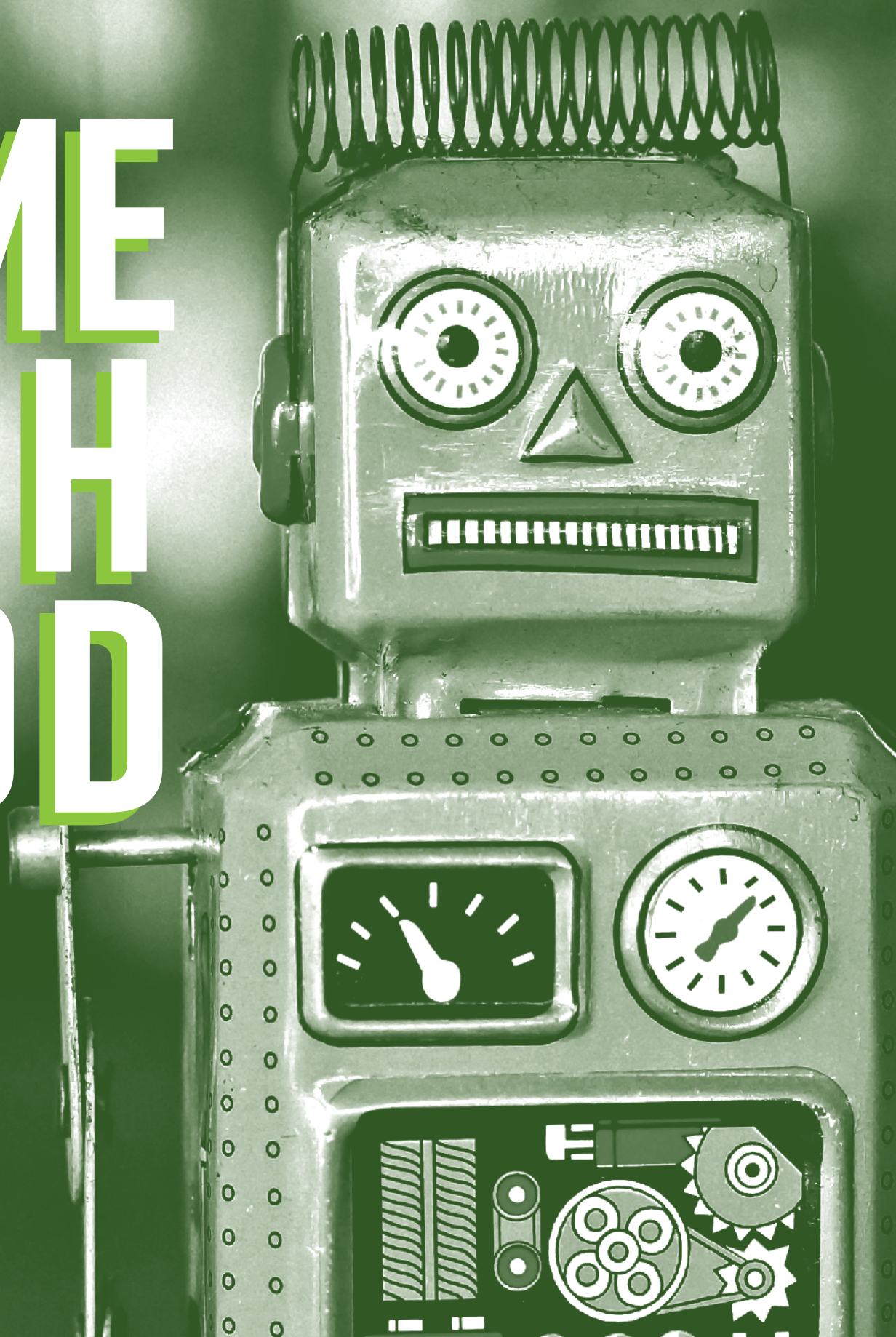
- We tracked overall Delivery Rates, Open Rates, Click-Through Rates, Click-to-Open Rates and Complaint Rates for each email send. Complaint Rates and custom preference center Opt-Outs for Newsletters sent from the RelationshipBuilder platform were not tracked.

*Please see the Glossary of Terms (p. 61) for definitions and calculations.*

- This year's report also incorporates data on Reading Engagement and Reading Environment. These metrics were collected by Litmus on sends from the Questline Engage platform from January 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 and includes over 14 million email opens.

The 2016 Energy Utility Email Benchmarks Report once again includes a survey of utility communicators. Survey responses were collected using an online survey during the month of August 2016. More than 1,500 utility communicators were invited to take the survey.

# METHOD









# EMAIL CLASSIFICATIONS:

**Welcome Series** – Email onboarding program for new customers or transfer customers

**Newsletters** – Email newsletters

**Outage Communication** – Emails related to an outage or possible warning of an outage

- Storm Approaching – Threat of power loss due to an approaching severe storm; these usually include safety tips and what to do if the power goes out
- Storm Update – Updates on how many people are without power, how the restoration process is going, etc.

**Program Promotion** – Emails promoting various utility programs

- Appliance Recycling – Emails promoting utility recycling programs or options for appliances (this would be closest to Fridge Recycling in the 2015 report)
- Appliance Service Plans – Emails promoting utility programs to repair or replace broken appliances at a cost to the customer
- Energy Efficiency – Emails promoting online energy use calculators, home/business energy audits, green initiatives, etc.
- Lighting – Emails advertising specific upgrades and promotions related to lighting
- Online Account Promotion – Emails encouraging customers to sign up for an online utility account
- Payment Options – Emails regarding various ways to pay bills such as wire transfers, onsite locations, etc.
- Paperless Billing – Emails promoting paperless billing programs
- Rebates & Incentives – Emails related to a specific rebate or incentive program, not generic rebate possibilities or pages listing all rebates
- Storm Prep – Emails promoting outage communications, such as outage maps, signing up for text alerts, etc; these are generic and not related to specific storms

**Ancillary** – Miscellaneous category for other communications

- Billing & Payment – Emails about billing information including any transactional emails; these are not emails about payment options or rate cases, but rather something specific to a bill or payment process
- Community – Emails promoting what the utility is doing within the community, such as giving back, investing or sponsoring events
- Event Promotion – Email invitations for webinars, seminars, training and trade shows
- Holiday – Emails celebrating the holidays and sending well wishes to customers
- Ratemaking – Emails announcing the utility filing for a rate case or the results of a rate case
- Safety – Emails providing a safety tip or warning
- Survey – Emails asking customers to take a survey

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A **Call to Action (CTA)** is a marketer's prompt to get the email reader to take a desired action. A CTA could be a hyperlink, button, image or any clickable item in an email.

A **Click** happens when an email recipient clicks on a link in an email.

**Click-Through Rate (CTR)** measures the rate of unique clicks to delivered emails.

**Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR)** differs by comparing the number of unique clicks to unique opens.

A **Complaint** occurs when a recipient classifies the email message as unwanted. This is more commonly known as marking the email as spam.

**Complaint Rate** calculates the total number of spam complaints in relation to messages delivered.

**Delivered Emails** are all sent emails minus any emails that bounce. This includes hard, soft and blocked bounces. A delivered email is one that has been successfully handed off to the recipient's mail server.

**Delivery Rate** is the number of delivered messages divided by the number of sends. Delivered messages are equal to the number sent subtracting all hard, soft and blocked bounces, as well as invalid addresses.

**Implied Open** is when an email client blocks a transparent pixel when loading an email, but the recipient still clicks. This also occurs when an image is not downloaded but the recipient still clicks.

**List Attrition** refers to the number of subscribers lost throughout the year. Lost subscribers are due to opt-outs, spam complaints and hard bounces.

**List Growth** is the amount the list grew over the course of the year. It's calculated by taking all subscribers in the list over the course of the year and dividing it by the total size of the prior year's list.

An **Open** occurs when all the images are downloaded in an HTML email. The server is notified when an image is downloaded and the email is recorded as an open.

**Open Rate** is the ratio of unique opens to the total delivered. This includes implied opens.

**Opt-Out Rate** measures those who opt out by using a one-click unsubscribe link in the email. If the email only contains a link to a preference center where they opt out, those are not counted in this report.

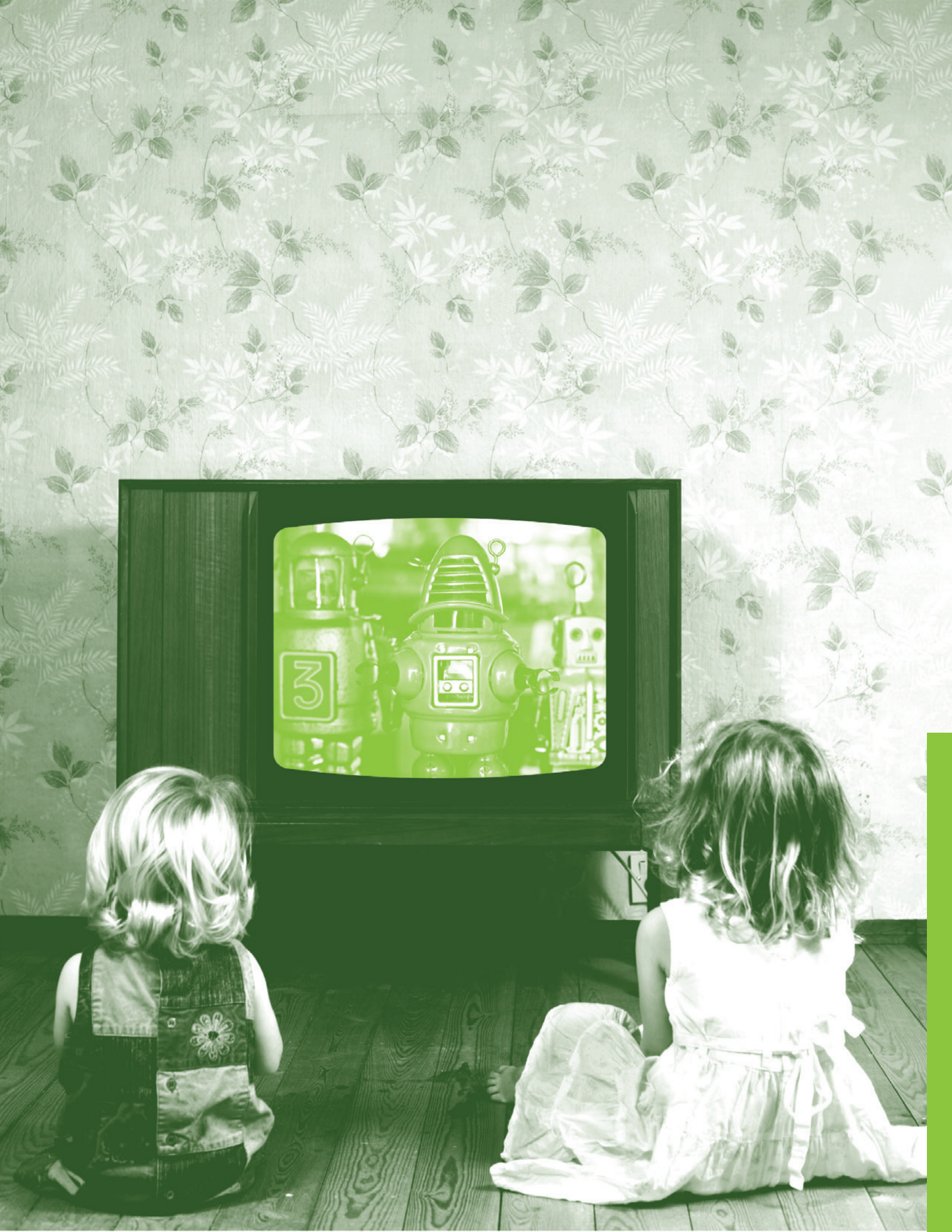
The **Overall Rate** refers to rates from the aggregate of the total volume of emails.

**Quartiles** divide the distribution of the rates into four groups with even frequencies.

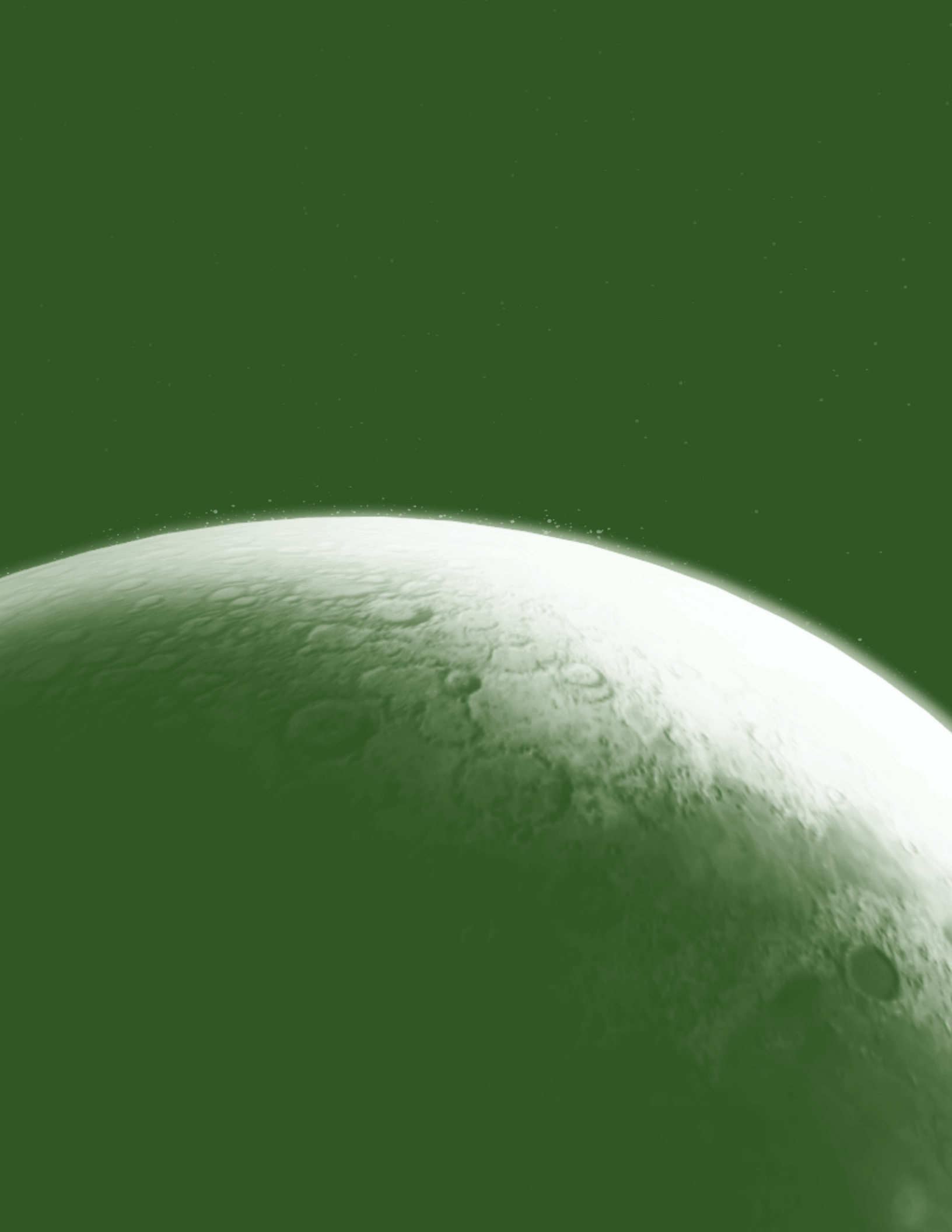
**Unique Opens** refer to distinct subscribers who either open or click an email.

**Welcome Series Graduate** is a customer who has completed a Welcome Series and opened at least one communication.









THANK YOU.



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