



Internal Email Benchmark Report 2021



Introduction

The world has changed drastically over the past year, and internal communications have been transformed forever. Yet, some things don't change. Email continues as the most widely used channel for internal communications—across organizations, industries, and the globe. In our [recent survey](#) and the [Gatehouse State of the Sector survey](#), email came out on top with over 95% of respondents stating they use email as their primary communication channel - and with good reason.

Email solves the big challenge of measuring internal communications. Email provides concrete metrics that help internal communicators track and assess the effectiveness of their efforts. It also provides data to prove the ROI of internal communications.

But beyond one's own data, there is a wealth of information in the internal comms industry that can help you make your email communication more impactful and effective. In this report, we have collected and analyzed the internal email metrics of 18 key industries to provide you with granular insights and best practices that will help you take your internal email strategy to the next level.

**All data has been compiled from anonymised internal email campaigns sent via ContactMonkey*



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1. Key Overview

1.1 Email campaigns analyzed

8400+

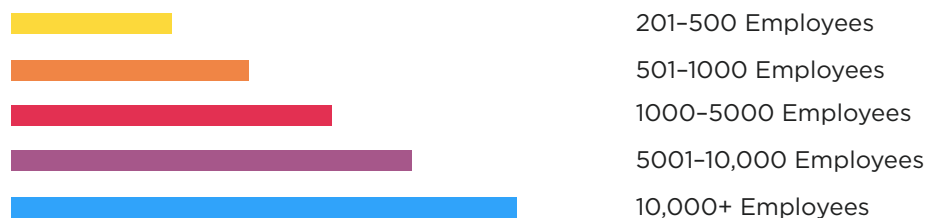
1.2 Industries analyzed

18 Industries

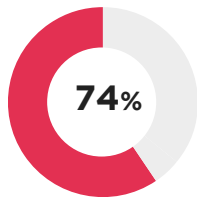
1. Automotive
2. Construction
3. Consumer Goods & Services
4. Education
5. Financial services
6. Food & Beverage
7. Government
8. Hospital & Healthcare
9. Insurance
10. Mining & Metals
11. Not for Profit
12. Pharmaceuticals
13. Real Estate
14. Retail
15. Sports
16. Technology
17. Telecommunications
18. Utilities, Oil, & Energy

1.3 Employee size

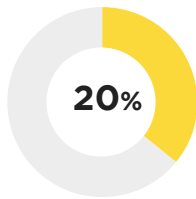
We analyzed companies of the following sizes:



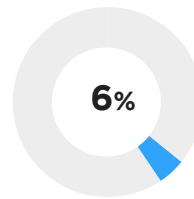
1.4 Email platform breakdown



Office 365
(Web Add-in)



Outlook Desktop
(non Office 365 COM Add-in)

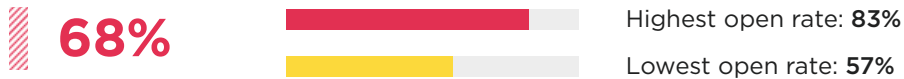


Gmail

2. Email Metrics for Internal Communications

2.1 Average email open rate

The average email open rate is the percentage of recipients who opened the emails out of the total number of recipients.



2.2 Average click rate

The average click rate is the percentage of recipients who clicked on specific links in the emails out of the total number of recipients.



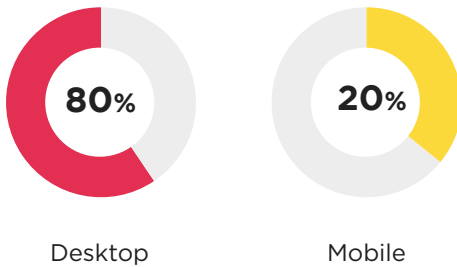
2.3 Average click-to-open rate

The average click-to-open rate is the percentage of recipients who clicked on specific links in the emails out of the total number of unique opens.



2.4 Desktop/Mobile breakdown

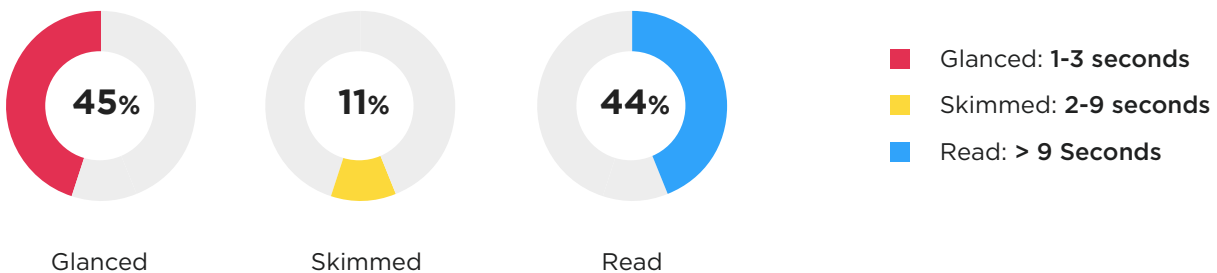
Desktop/Mobile breakdown is the percentage of recipients who view internal emails on desktop vs the percentage of recipients who view internal emails on mobile.



2.5 Read time

Read time is the average time a recipient spends reading an email.

While the open rate tells you whether your subject line is effective, read time indicates whether the content of your email is considered relevant and compelling by your audience. The below breakdown highlights that the majority of employee newsletters were hit-or-miss. 44% of recipients only glanced at the communications, while 45% were interested enough to spend time reading and engaging with the content of the email.



3. Email Metrics by Industry

3.1 Automotive

74%

Average Open Rate

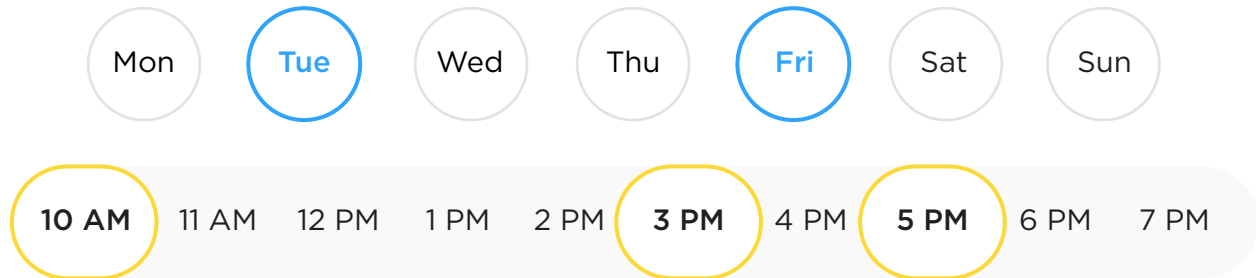
5%

Average Click Rate

8%

Average Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.2 Construction

54%

Average Open Rate

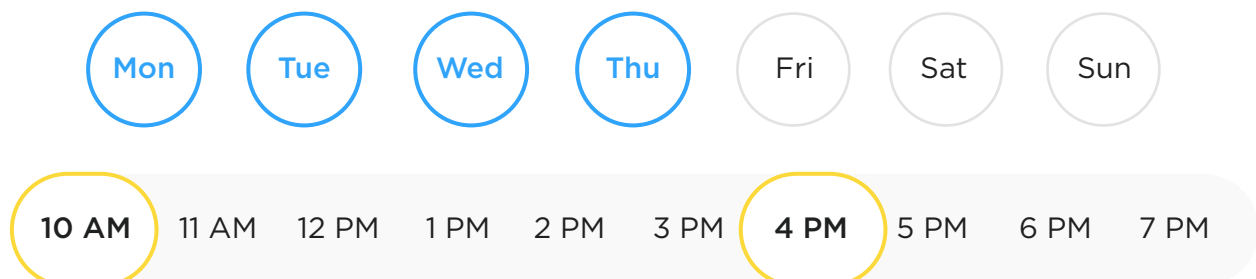
12%

Average Click Rate

14%

Average Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.3 Consumer

65%

Average
Open Rate

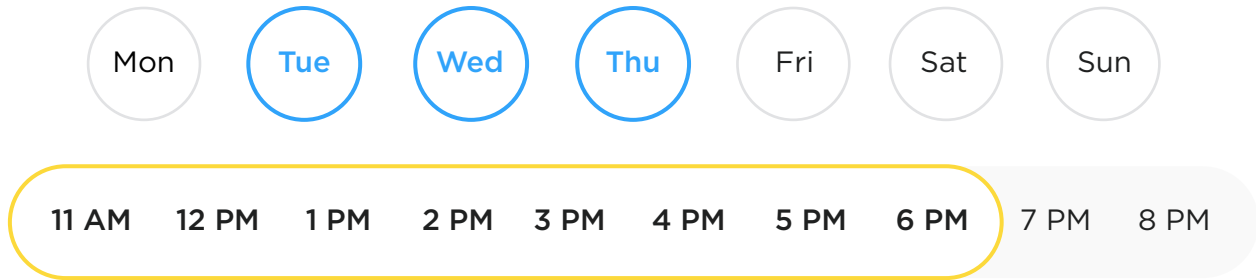
14%

Average
Click Rate

21%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.4 Education

64%

Average
Open Rate

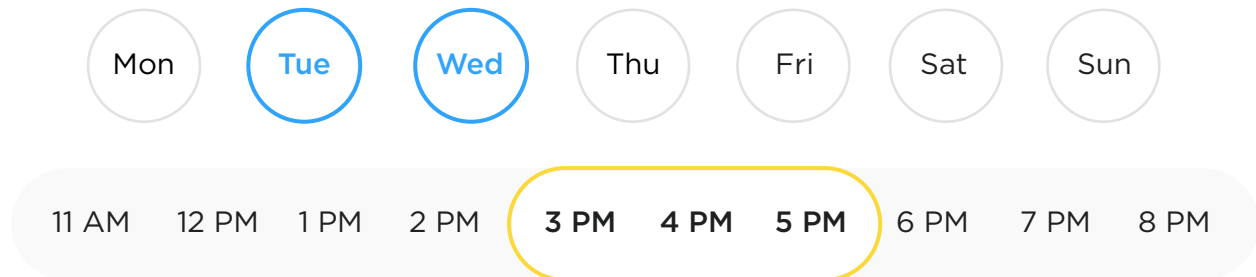
11%

Average
Click Rate

17%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.5 Financial Services

57%

Average
Open Rate

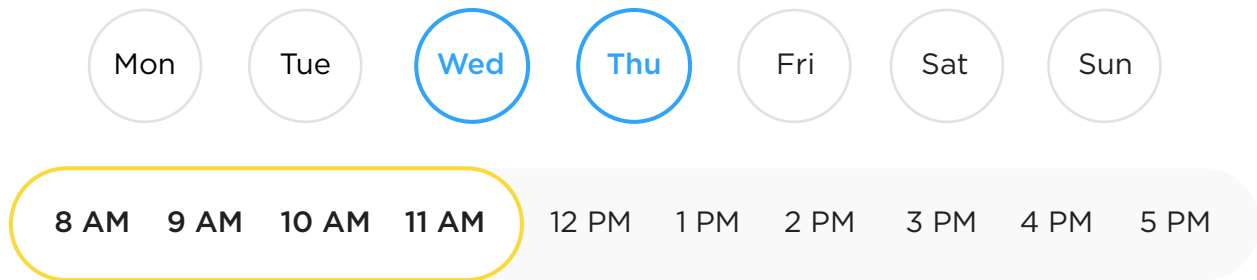
16%

Average
Click Rate

28%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.6 Food & Beverage

76%

Average
Open Rate

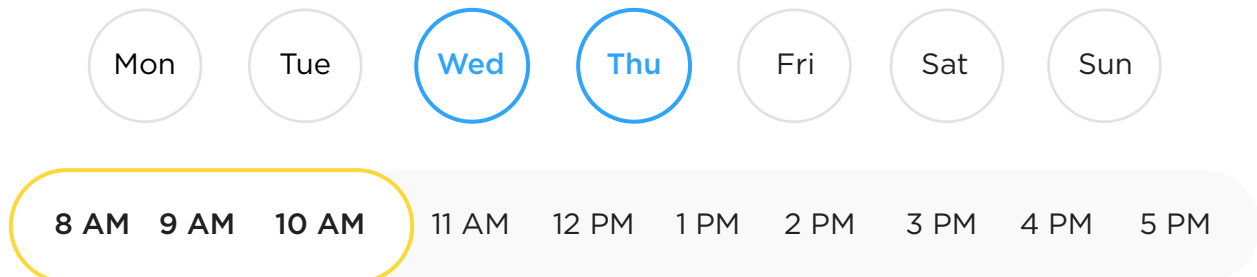
9%

Average
Click Rate

10%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.7 Government

70%

Average
Open Rate

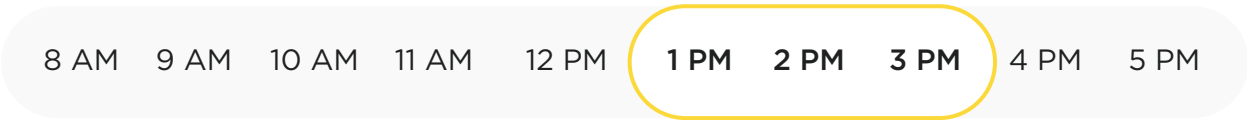
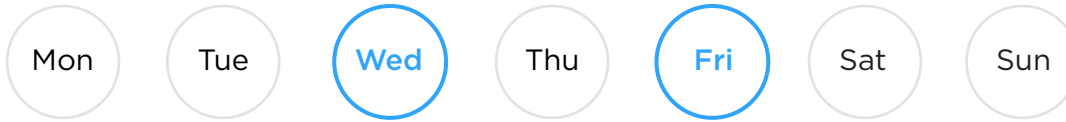
4%

Average
Click Rate

5%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.8 Hospital & Healthcare

70%

Average
Open Rate

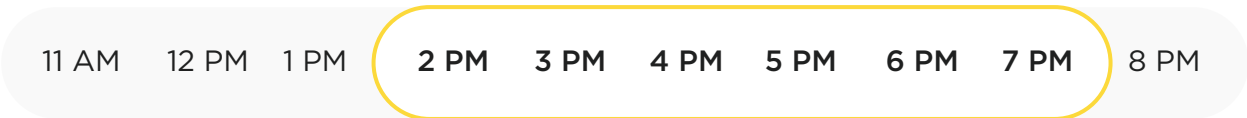
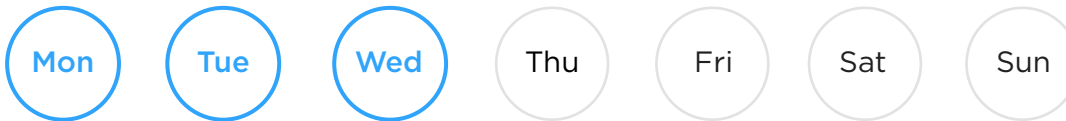
6%

Average
Click Rate

9%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.9 Insurance

77%

Average
Open Rate

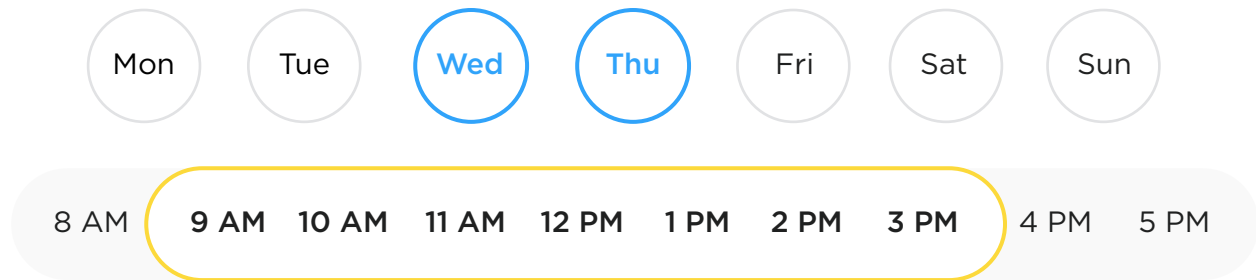
18%

Average
Click Rate

14%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.10 Mining & Metals

64%

Average
Open Rate

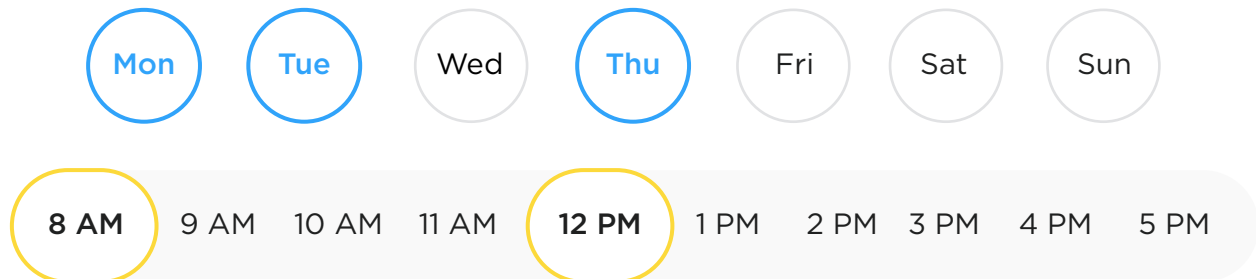
2%

Average
Click Rate

4%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.11 Not for Profit

63%

Average
Open Rate

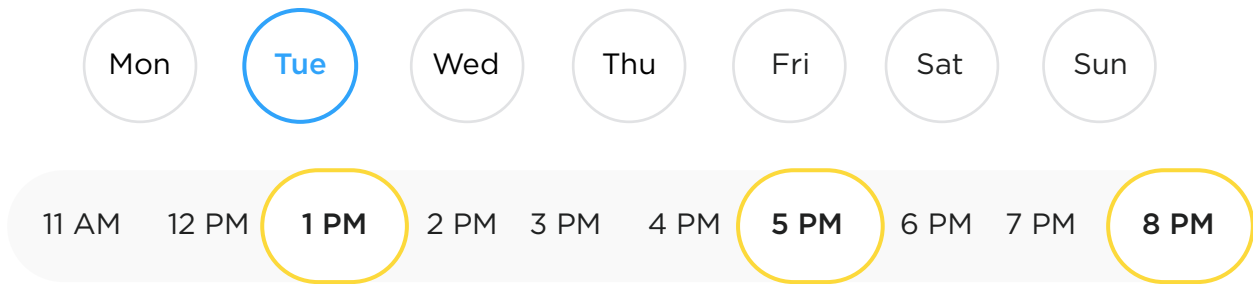
12%

Average
Click Rate

19%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.12 Pharmaceuticals

79%

Average
Open Rate

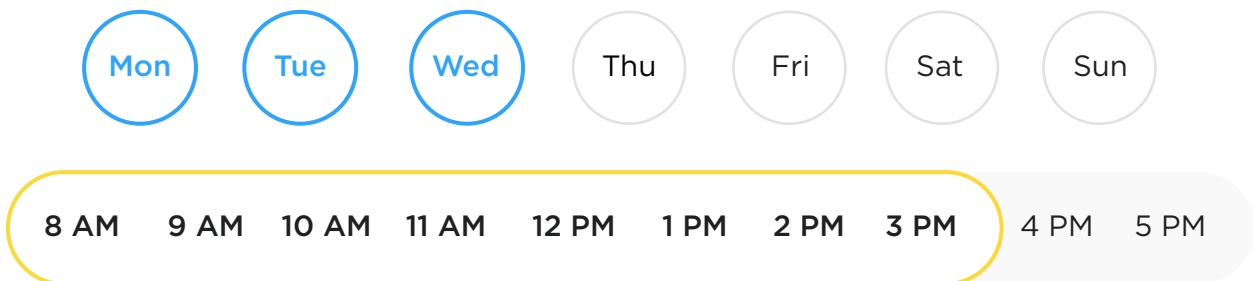
7%

Average
Click Rate

9%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.13 Real Estate

62%

Average
Open Rate

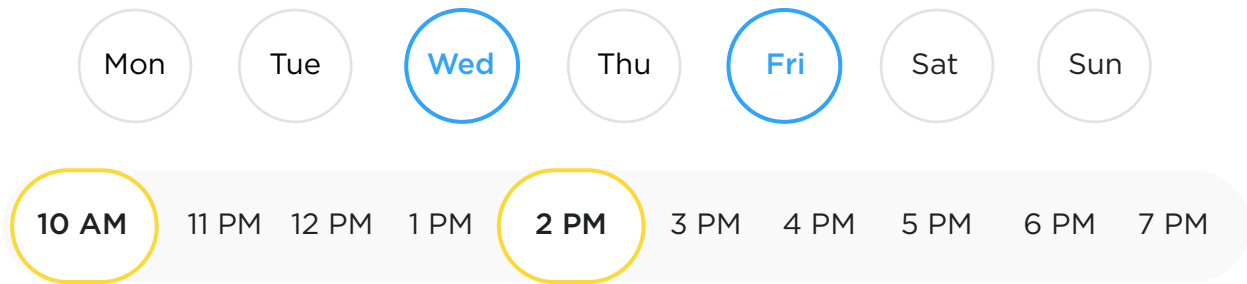
4%

Average
Click Rate

7%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.14 Retail

70%

Average
Open Rate

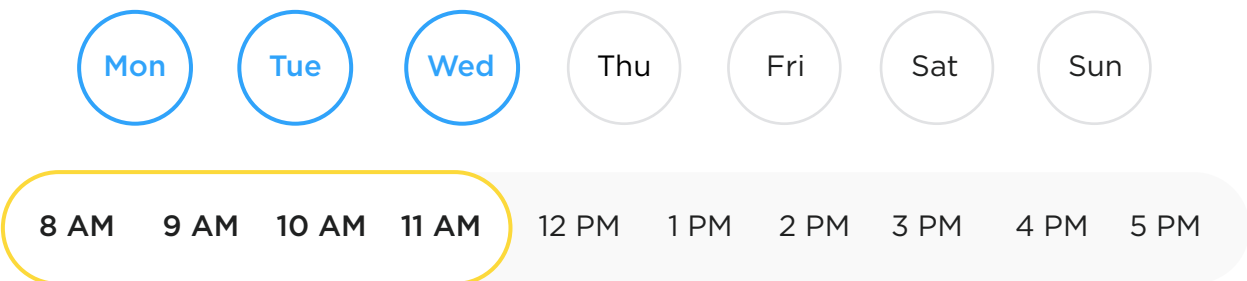
17%

Average
Click Rate

21%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.15 Sports

83%

Average
Open Rate

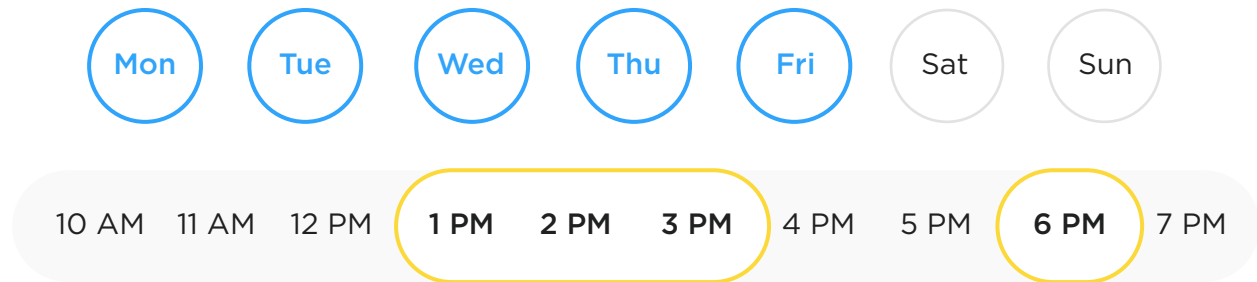
12%

Average
Click Rate

13%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.16 Technology

66%

Average
Open Rate

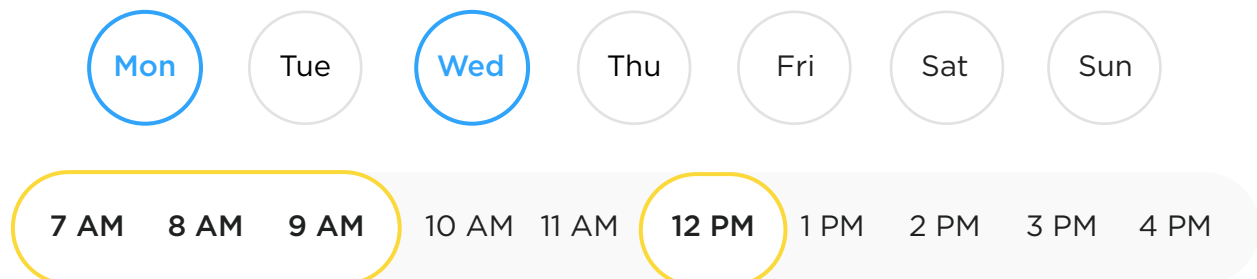
4%

Average
Click Rate

6%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.17 Telecommunications

77%

Average
Open Rate

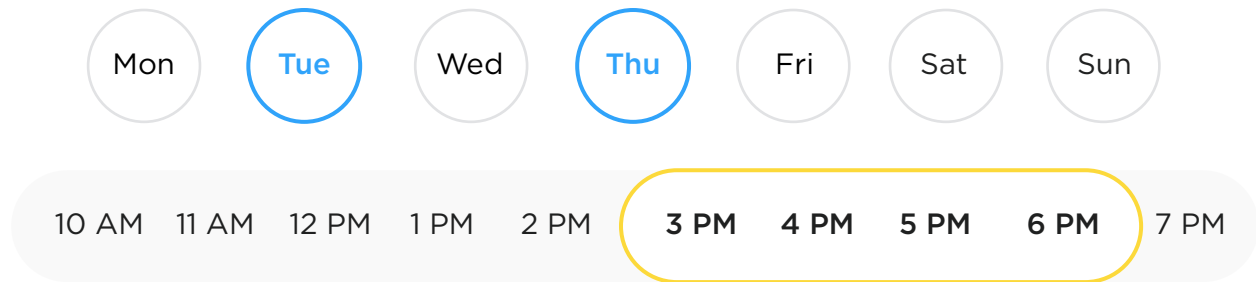
4%

Average
Click Rate

5%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



3.18 Utilities

58%

Average
Open Rate

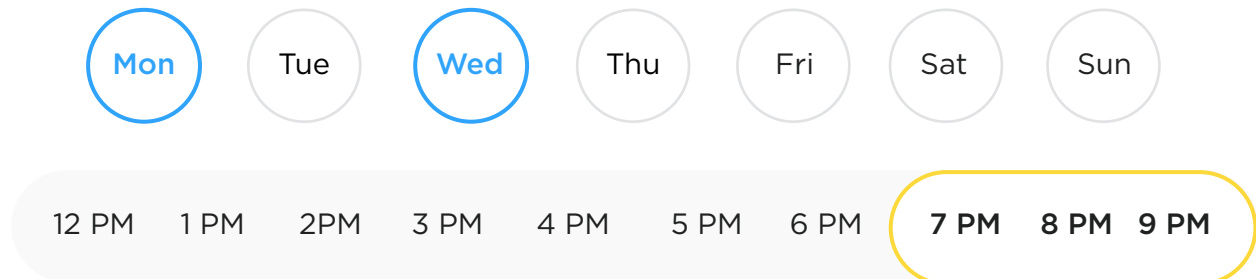
3%

Average
Click Rate

4%

Average
Click-to-Open Rate

Best Time and Day for Internal Emails:



4. Email Metrics by Employee Size

| Employee Size | 201-500 | 501-1000 | 1001-5000 | 5000-10,000 | 10,000+ |
|----------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| Average Open Rate | 69% | 69% | 69% | 75% | 71% |
| Average Click Rate | 9% | 17% | 9% | 7% | 9% |
| Average Click-to-Open Rate | 13% | 24% | 13% | 9% | 13% |
| Desktop | 82% | 82% | 81% | 84% | 83% |
| Mobile | 18% | 18% | 19% | 16% | 17% |
| Read Time of 1-3 seconds | 36% | 43% | 46% | 43% | 40% |
| Read Time of 3-9 seconds | 11% | 12% | 12% | 13% | 11% |
| Read Time of > 9 seconds | 53% | 46% | 42% | 44% | 49% |



5. Best Practices and Tips

5.1 Email frequency

5.1.1 Don't over or under communicate

The ideal internal email frequency can be tricky to nail down. For some, increasing frequency has worked wonders; for others it has completely backfired. Identifying the right cadence for your employee newsletters depends on your internal communications goals, rate of change at your company, number of employees, industry, and nature of work. Building your email frequency plan around these factors will help you identify whether weekly, monthly, quarterly, or event-based email communication fits your goals best. Once you have implemented a plan, it is crucial to collect and analyze employee feedback and other email metrics to verify that it's working for you.

5.1.2 Consistency is key

Along with determining the ideal frequency of your emails, it is a necessity to make sure you are communicating consistently. Consistent communication will help build a stronger relationship with your employees over time. Having a consistent email cadence also means employees will begin to expect the communication, and are therefore more likely to engage with it. If employees are in the habit of receiving a weekly newsletter on a specific day of the week, they'll start to look forward to receiving company updates and announcements on that day.



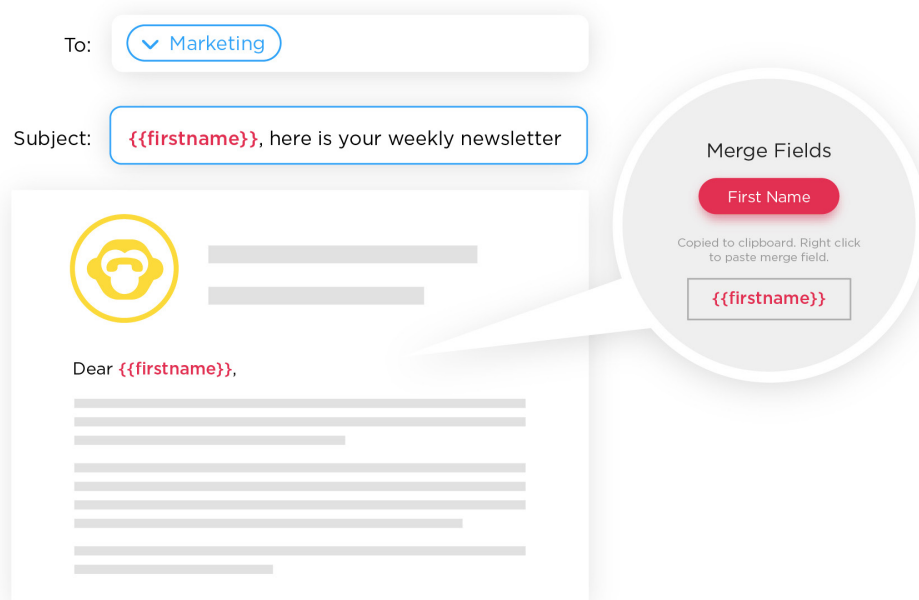
5.2 Tips for improving open rates

5.2.1 Captivating subject lines

Your email subject line is the first aspect of your internal communication an employee sees. Open rates will largely depend on whether your subject lines have captured the attention of the recipient. Here's a few tips on how you can create a captivating internal email subject line:

Personalization: Personalizing subject lines help increase open rates by 26%. Seeing one's name immediately captures attention and creates a sense of belonging.

Here's how ContactMonkey makes it easy to personalize your internal email subject lines using Merge Fields:



Create a sense of urgency: Use words that make it impossible for a recipient to ignore the email. Words like “now” or “fast” imply a deadline, compelling recipients to open the email.

Be specific: If employees are inundated with a bunch of emails, they will overlook cryptic subject lines that don't mean much to them. Use specific subject lines that explicitly highlight the content of the email. Assuming your email content is relevant to the recipients, a specific subject line is more likely to pique their interest.

Character count: Our advice is to keep your top email subject lines to no more than 42 characters. This ensures that your messages won't get cut off in mobile inboxes!

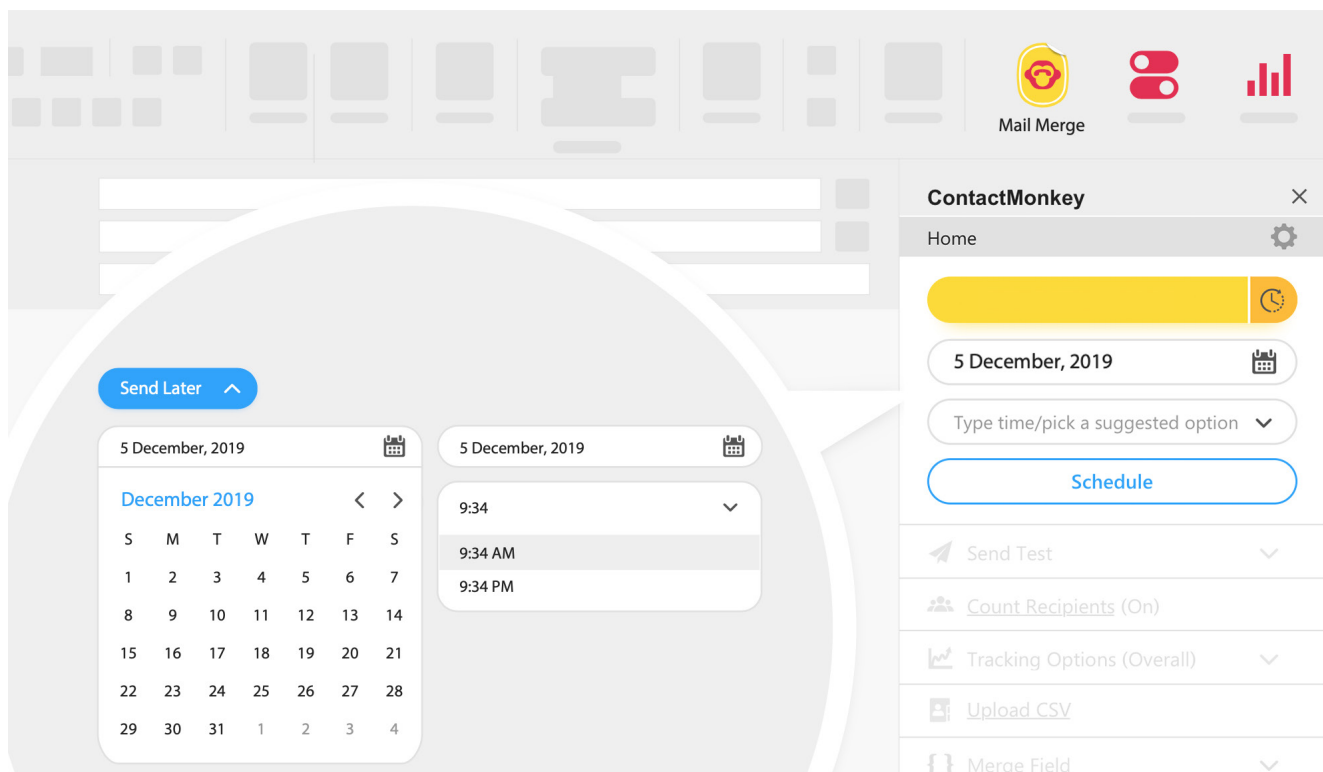
Use emojis: Using emojis in your email subject line can increase your email open rate by 29%, and are extremely effective in capturing your audience's attention.

5.2.2 Identify best time and day to send

Emails should not be sent on an ad-hoc basis if you truly want them to work. In order to have a consistent communication strategy, schedule emails so they reach your employees at the perfect time.

As highlighted in this report, there are certain days and times that promise stronger email open rates, depending on your industry. You should also consider the different time zones of your various office locations.

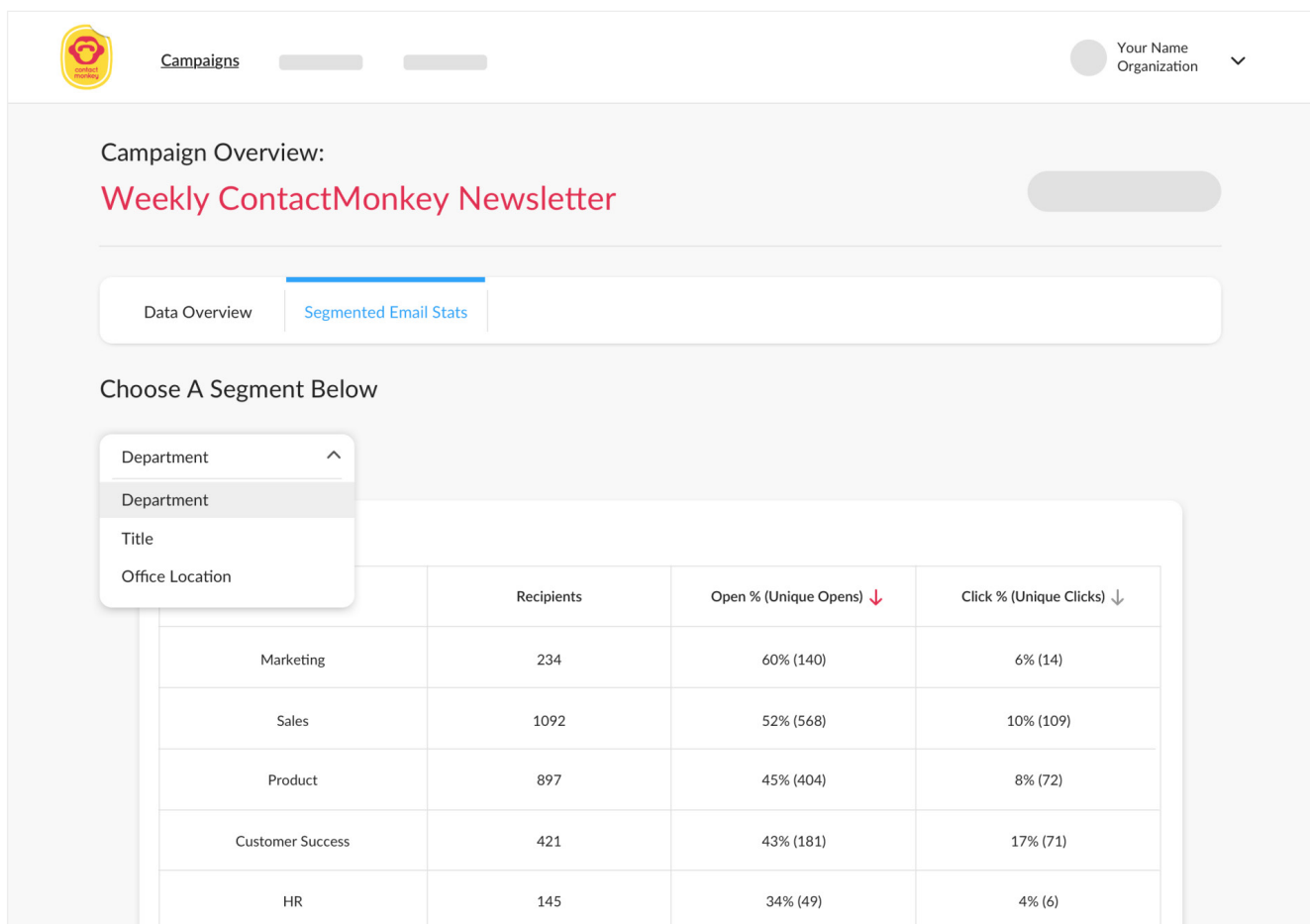
Here's how you can easily schedule emails using ContactMonkey:



5.2.3 Segment your email lists

List segmentation involves dividing your email recipients into targeted segments based on a pre-decided set of criteria. In internal communications, segmentation is often based on department, location, or company hierarchy. This helps deliver more personalized and relevant content to your employees, at the ideal time.

With ContactMonkey, you can use Segmented Email Stats to gain more granular insights on your email campaign based on Department, Title, and Location. This will help further refine your email communication approach.



The screenshot displays the ContactMonkey interface for a campaign titled "Weekly ContactMonkey Newsletter". The "Segmented Email Stats" tab is active, showing a table of metrics for different departments. A dropdown menu is open, listing "Department", "Title", and "Office Location" as available segmentation criteria.

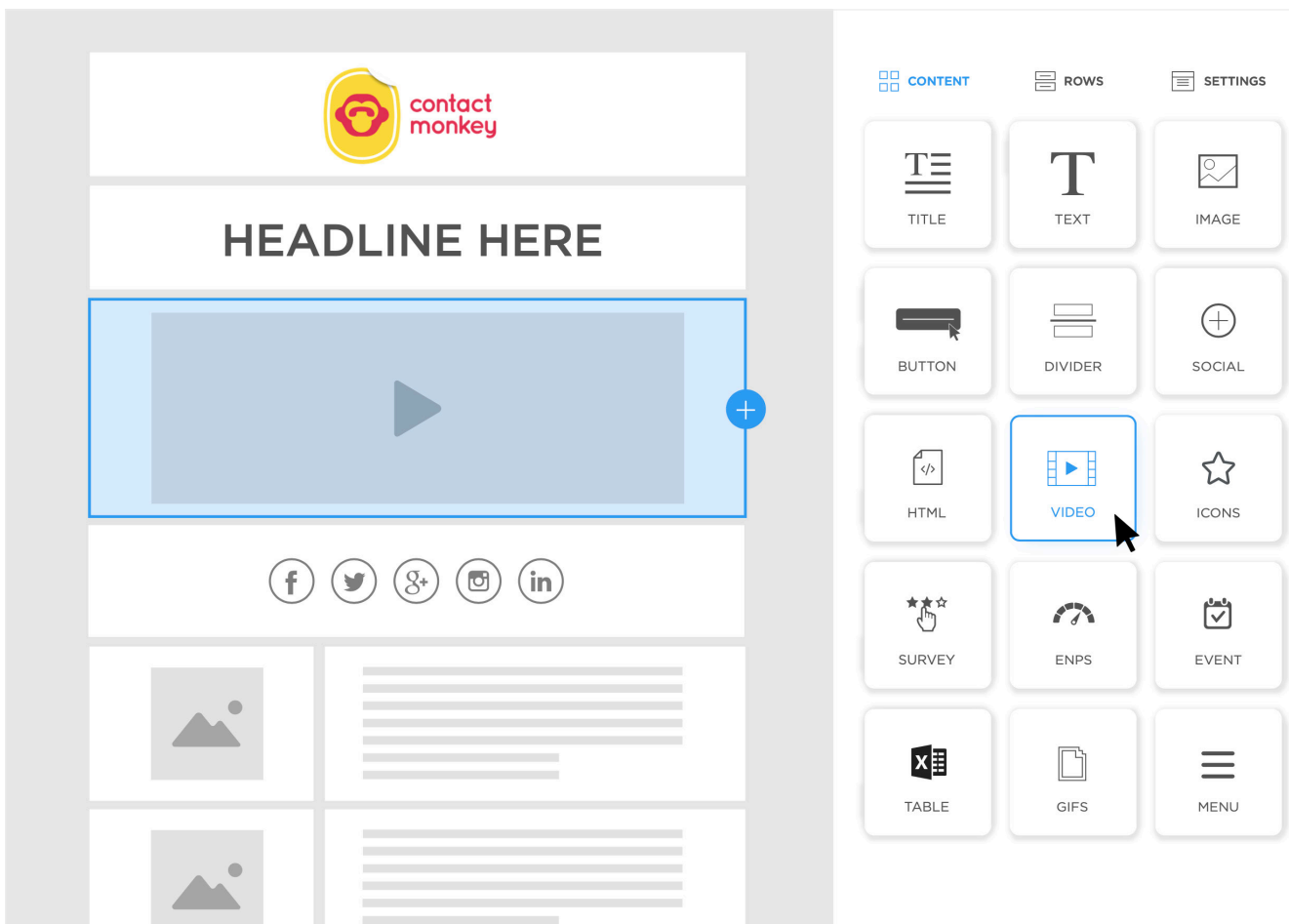
| | Recipients | Open % (Unique Opens) ↓ | Click % (Unique Clicks) ↓ |
|------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Marketing | 234 | 60% (140) | 6% (14) |
| Sales | 1092 | 52% (568) | 10% (109) |
| Product | 897 | 45% (404) | 8% (72) |
| Customer Success | 421 | 43% (181) | 17% (71) |
| HR | 145 | 34% (49) | 4% (6) |

5.3 Tips for improving click rates

5.3.1 Design beautiful layouts

Beautiful, responsive email designs are the cornerstone of an effective internal communications strategy. Email design is a great way to showcase your brand personality and company culture to your workforce. This is especially impactful now that most employees work remotely and don't have the opportunity to experience work culture at the office. It's also a great way to create a common experience for a workforce spread across different geographies.

That being said, designing effective layouts also has a direct impact on email engagement. Your layout should be clean, easy to navigate, mobile-friendly, and should successfully highlight the important engagement elements of your email content. This will not only increase clicks and create a seamless user experience for employees, but also encouraging them to engage with future internal emails.



5.3.2 Include engaging content and elements

Relatable content: Just like marketers, internal communicators need to recognize the interests and priorities of their audience—the employees. The content of your emails needs to be relatable. If employees do not find the communication they receive applicable, they will stop opening or engaging with your newsletters. This makes it harder to achieve your internal communications goals of maintaining consistent communication, building a dialogue with your workforce, and receiving candid employee feedback.

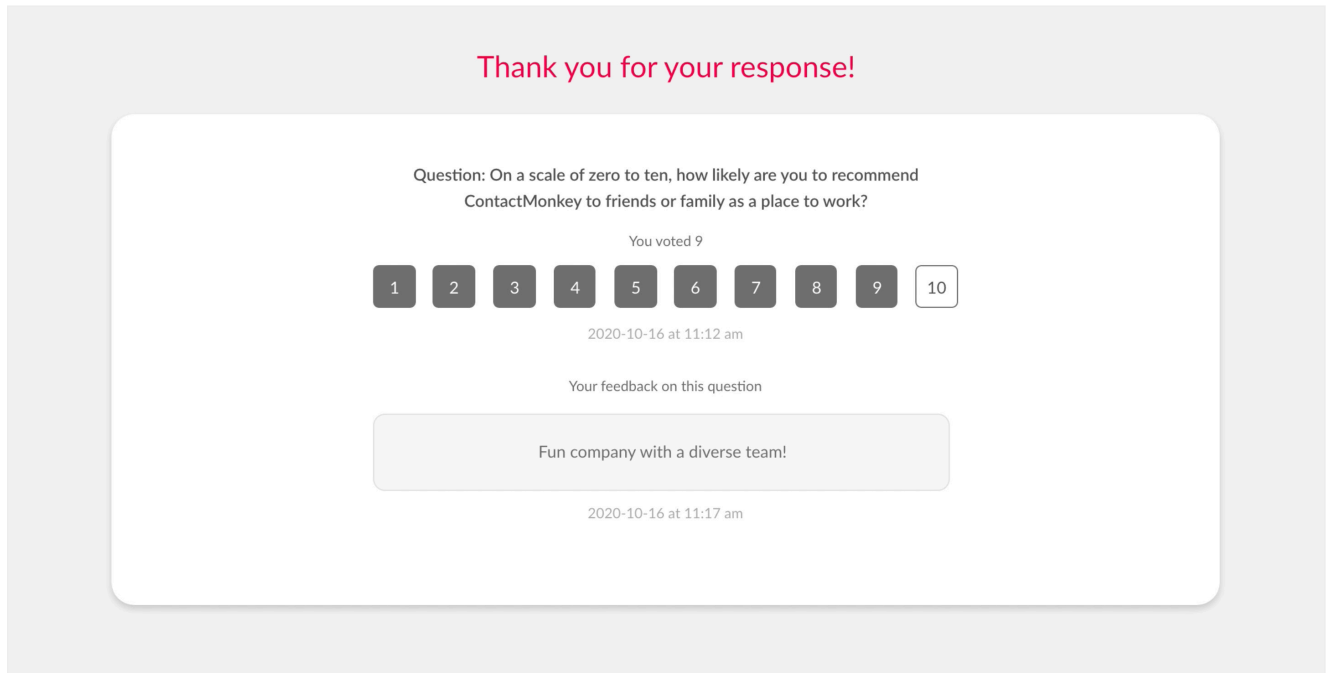
Shareable content: One of the best ways to amplify your reach is to include shareable content in your newsletters. When you include relatable content in your newsletters, make sure your employees can easily share the content they like. Use prominent buttons and social media share icons so employees immediately know how to share engaging content. Also, with 20% of employees accessing emails on their phones, it is key to ensure your emails are mobile-friendly.

[Bonus: Get our free newsletter content ideas tipsheet](#)

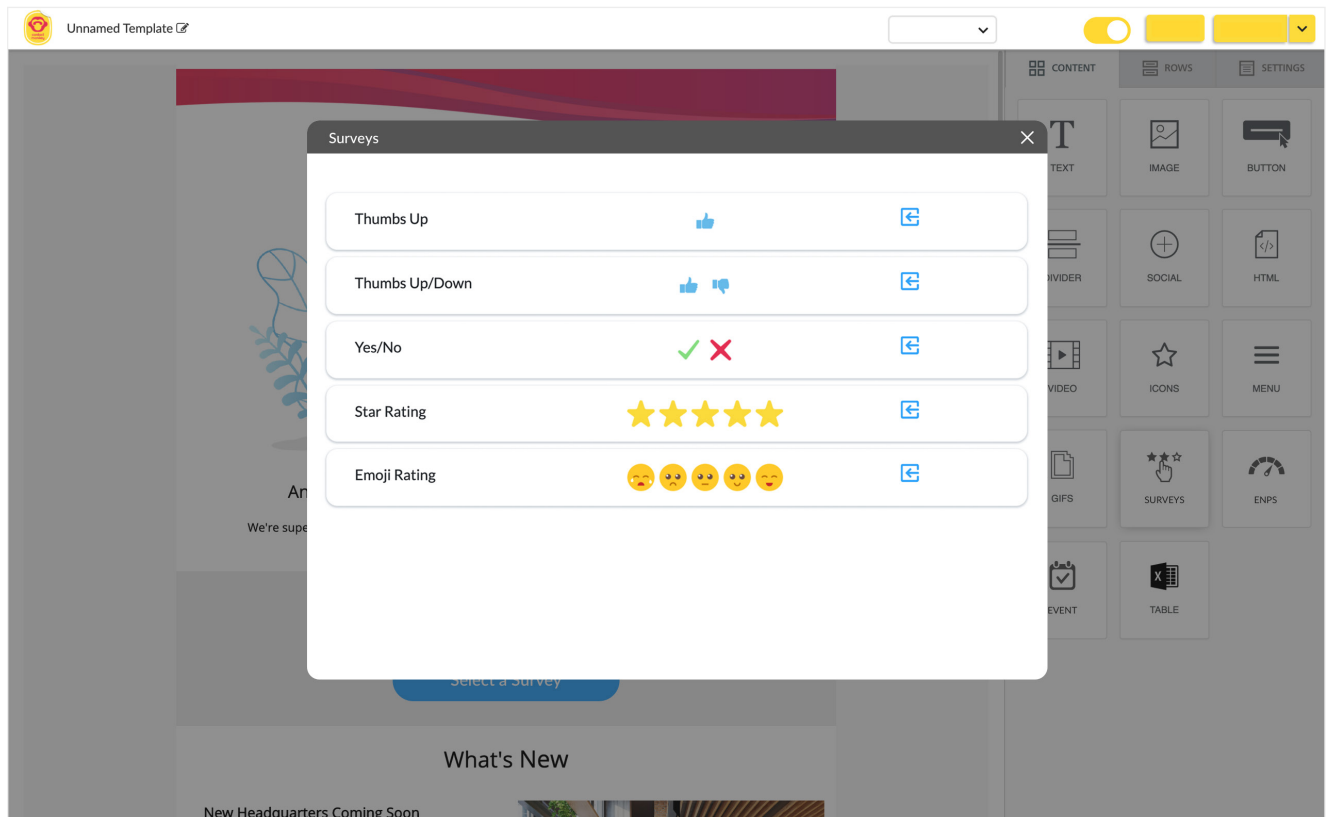
5.3.3 Drive a two-way conversation

Candid employee feedback: A common challenge cited by internal communicators is difficulty gathering honest employee feedback. This might be the biggest measurement hurdle, as the true measure of successful internal communications is how it makes your employees feel. There are several reasons why genuine employee feedback is difficult. Maybe your employees don't feel confident expressing their views. Enabling anonymous feedback is a solution to that. Another reason could be that employees lack the patience to respond to questionnaires or long surveys. Including rating scales like emoji reactions or star ratings in your emails is a quick way to capture feedback, and it requires little time and effort from employees.

Anonymous Comment



Survey Options



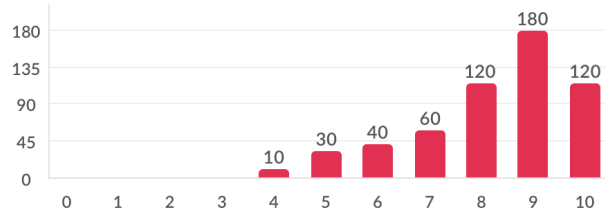
Pulse surveys: Annual employee surveys are commonplace at organizations. These long-form questionnaires are useful in assessing the performance of your long-term strategy, but there is a lot that can get missed over the course of a year. As you go through organizational changes, introduce new initiatives or training, announce internal or external news, and monitor employee sentiment in real time.

Pulse surveys are short surveys, which usually take under 5 minutes to complete. They can be used multiple times all year long to gauge how employees feel about a particular event. Pulse surveys are likely to garner a higher number of responses, and they also enable you to adapt your strategy based on real-time employee feedback.

eNPS: Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is a metric used to measure your employees' level of engagement. An eNPS survey asks employees to respond to an engagement-related question using a scale of zero to ten. With ContactMonkey, you can easily embed eNPS into your email newsletters and receive summarized insights on current employee engagement levels in your company.

Employee NPS

Question: On a scale of zero to ten, how likely are you to recommend ContactMonkey to friends or family as a place to work?



40
Employee NPS

54%
Promoters

32%
Passives

14%
Detractors

Detractors (0-6): **80 (14%)**

Passives (7 and 8): **180 (32%)**

Promoters (9 and 10): **300 (54%)**

Employee NPS = 54% (Promoters) - 14% (Detractors) = **40**

Comments 

6. Conclusion

While internal communicators experiment with a variety of channels, email will remain a constant component of most communication plans. However, it can be challenging to devise an effective email strategy without the right input. The key to successful internal communications is having access to vital metrics, along with useful insights.

As this report highlights, email performance varies across industries. A closer look at industry-specific data makes it evident that a winning internal email strategy doesn't have a one-stop-shop solution. Understanding employee preferences and behaviors in the context of your organization needs to be a continuous process in order to nail your internal email performance.

When it comes to improving open rates, click rates, and overall employee engagement, make sure you test different tactics and best practices to build a data-driven email communication plan for 2021.

We hope this sets you up for success!





About ContactMonkey

ContactMonkey is an internal communications and employee engagement tracking solution that integrates into Outlook and Gmail inboxes. We built our tool to help internal communicators transform employee newsletters into a two-way communication channel.

Use ContactMonkey to create, send, track, and measure employee feedback and the effectiveness of your corporate communications.

**Interested in learning more about how
ContactMonkey can help you drive employee
engagement from your inbox?**

[Book a Call](#)