



Relevance Wins:

What the 2025-2026 Association Email Benchmarks Reveal About High-Performing Emails

Speakers



Sherilyn Stack

Senior Success Advisor,
Higher Logic



David Jovel

Sales Engineering
Director, Higher Logic



Kelly Whelan

Senior Content Marketing
Manager, Higher Logic

Housekeeping

- This session is eligible for 1 CAE credit for attending
- The recording and CAE certificate will be sent to all registrants



Agenda

- **What we'll cover:**
 - About the Association Email Benchmark Report
 - Deliverability & Inbox Placement
 - Open & Click Rates
 - Subject Lines & Preheaders
 - Anatomy of a High-Performing Email
 - Segmentation & Personalization
 - Automation
 - A/B Testing

About the Association Email Benchmark Report



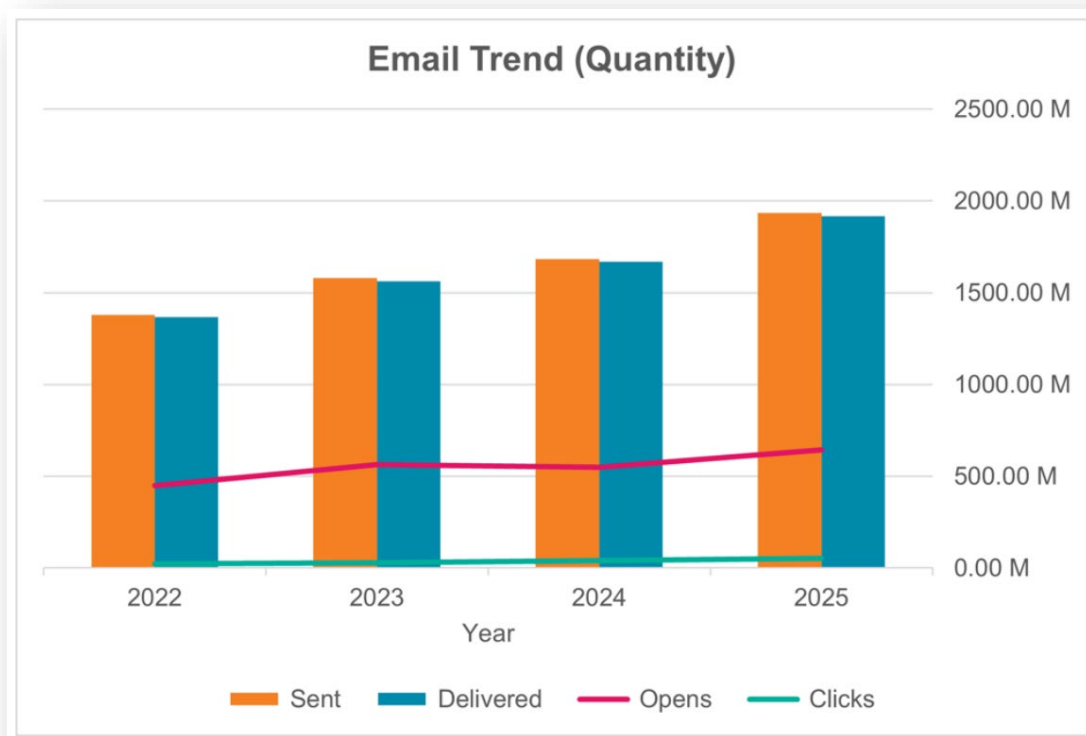
Association specific email data from approximately 1,500 associations and nonprofits and over 2 billion emails sent in the **US, Canada, Australia**, and other regions



hubs.li/Q047-79t0



The Current Email Landscape



- Email is the primary communication channel for members but email volume is at an all-time high.
- Privacy changes and inbox filtering make it harder to get to the inbox and be seen.
- Personalization is not optional.

POLL: What is your biggest email challenge right now?

- Low engagement (opens or clicks)
- Getting emails delivered to the inbox
- Creating content consistently
- Segmenting or personalizing emails
- Measuring results effectively

Association Email Benchmark Snapshot

Average Open Rate:

33.54%

Average Unsubscribe Rate:

0.11%

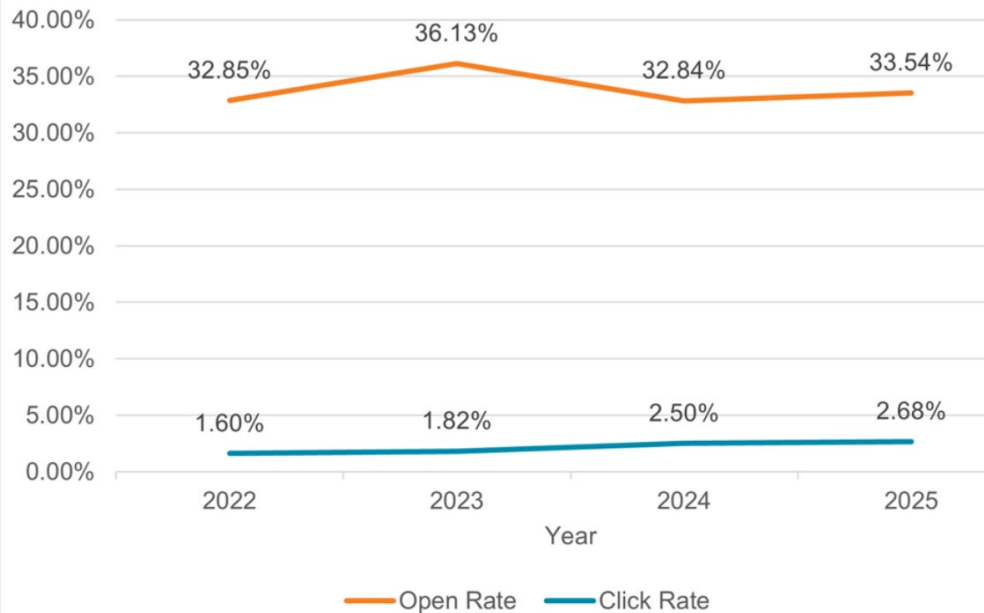
Average Click Rate:

2.68%

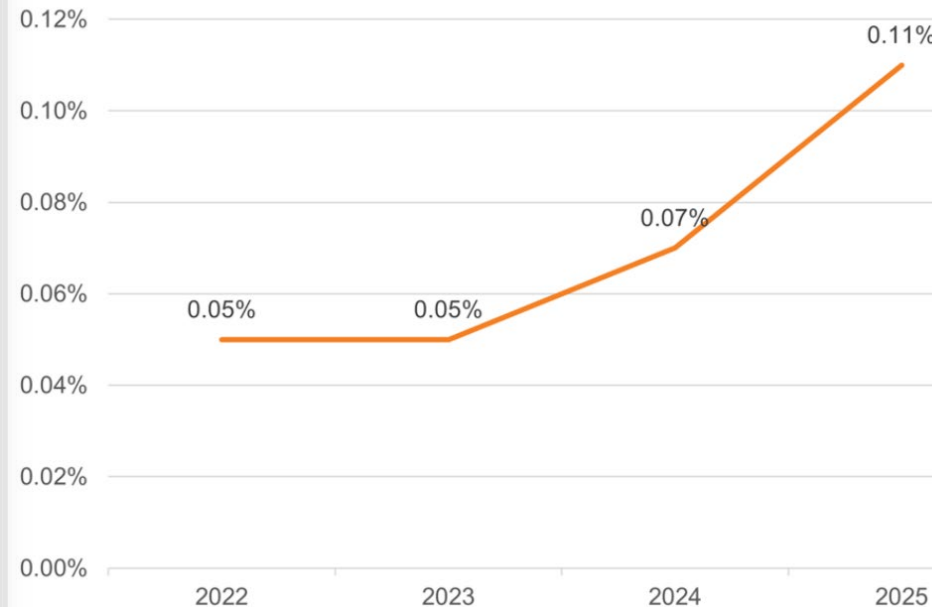
Average Mobile Open Rate:

1.73%

Open & Click Rate Trend (2022-2025)



Unsubscribe Rate Trend (2022-2025)



Deliverability & Inbox Placement

99%

Average Deliverability Rate

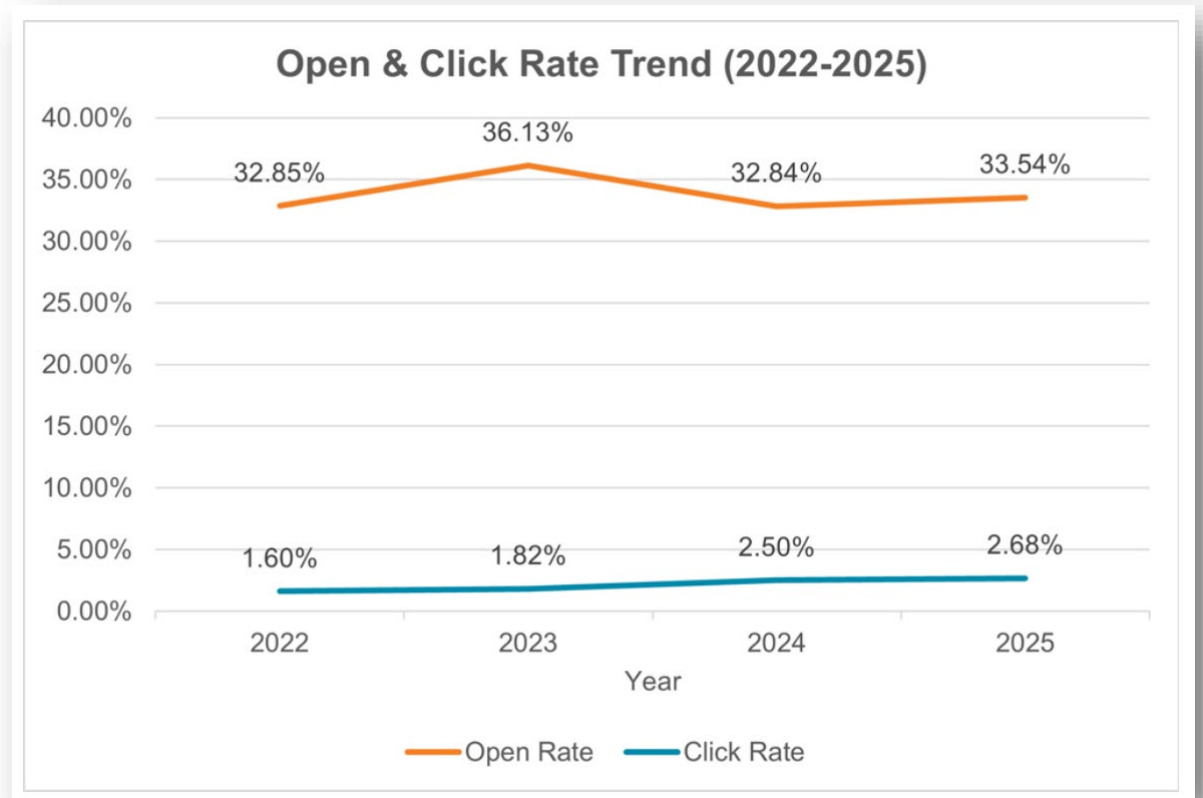
- Getting to the inbox matters; deliverability is the gatekeeper to all other metrics.
- Once in the inbox, we now compete with auto-filtering
- Protect your sender reputation:
 - Authentication
 - List hygiene
 - Relevance & engagement

POLL: What email metric do you review most often?

- Open rate
- Click rate
- Conversions (registrations, downloads, etc.)
- Deliverability / inbox placement
- We're still figuring that out

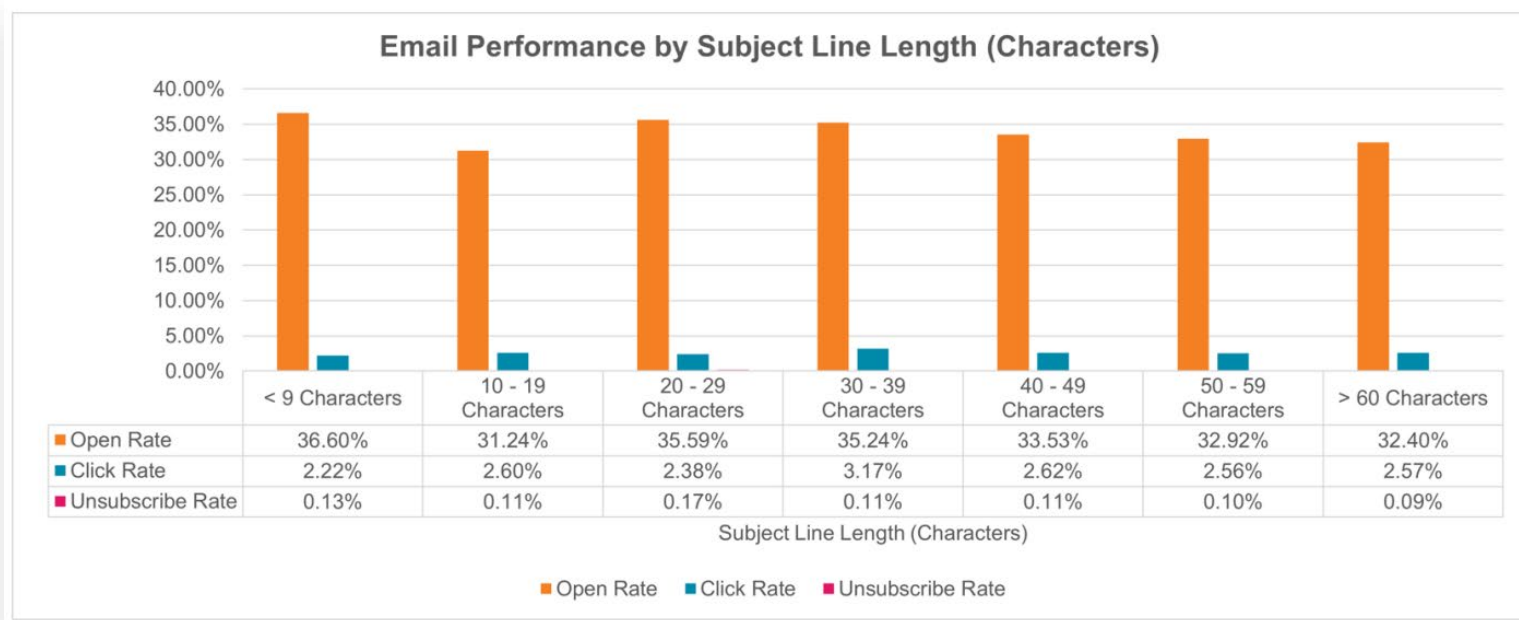
Open & Click Rates

- Opens are increasingly more directional metric (privacy protections, auto-opens)
- Clicks are a better indicator of intent
- Focus on conversions and goals

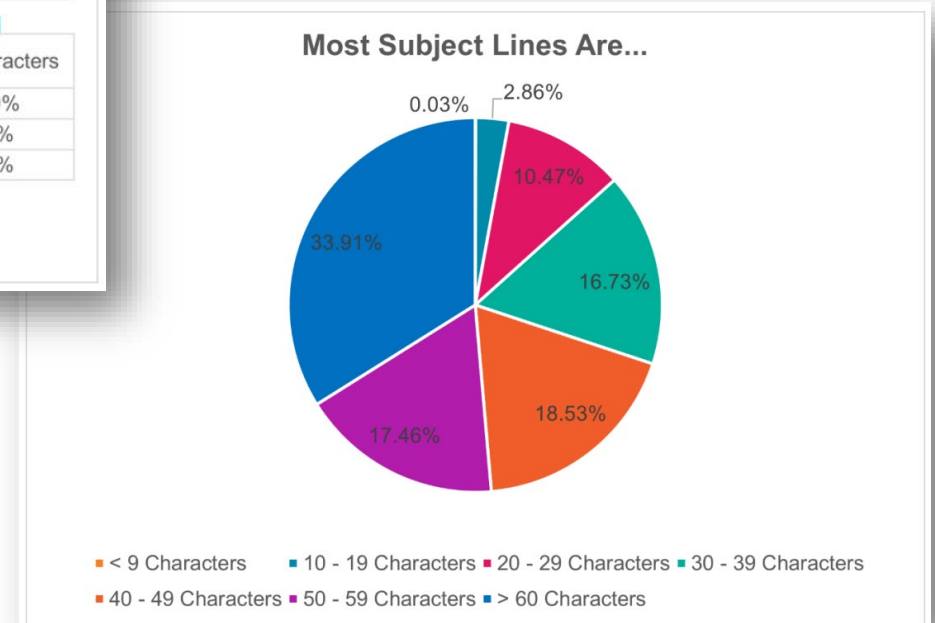


Subject Lines & Preheaders

- Shorter subject lines perform best (under 40 characters)
- Most inbox previews only show 33-40 characters



BUT most people send messages with subject lines between 40 and 60 characters



Examples

Short works, but it has to make sense and generate interest. Your goal: make someone pause.

Theme	Long (40-60 characters)	Short (20-30 characters)	Shorter (<10 characters)
Newsletter	Your monthly association newsletter is now available	March Member News	This Month
Membership Renewal	Keep Your Benefits: Renew Your Membership Today	Time to renew your membership	Renew now
Event/Conference	Registration is now open for our 2025 annual conference	Register for #AC2025	#AC2025
Certification	Advance Your Career with Certification This Year	Advance Your Career	Get certified
Curiosity	This small change could make a big difference	A small change that works	Try this
Question Hook	Are You Doing This Without Even Realizing It?	Are You Doing This?	Doing this?

Anatomy of an Email: Resource Release



Higher Logic's 2025-2026 Association Email Benchmark Report is here!

[DOWNLOAD REPORT](#)

Email is still your association's most important communication channel. But inbox competition is rising, open rates are declining, and leadership wants proof that your strategy is working.

So what does "strong performance" actually look like in 2026?

Our new 2025-2026 Association Email Benchmark Report analyzes data from 1,500 associations and over 2 billion emails to give you clear, association-specific benchmarks.

Download the report to learn:

- This year's average open, click, unsubscribe, and deliverability rates
- Why clicks matter more than opens
- How segmentation and automation impact performance
- How subject line length and email size impact engagement
- Monthly and day-of-week trends
- Industry-specific performance benchmarks

The biggest takeaway? Relevance scales better than volume.

See how your email performance compares, and where you can improve without just sending more emails.

[GET THE BENCHMARKS](#)

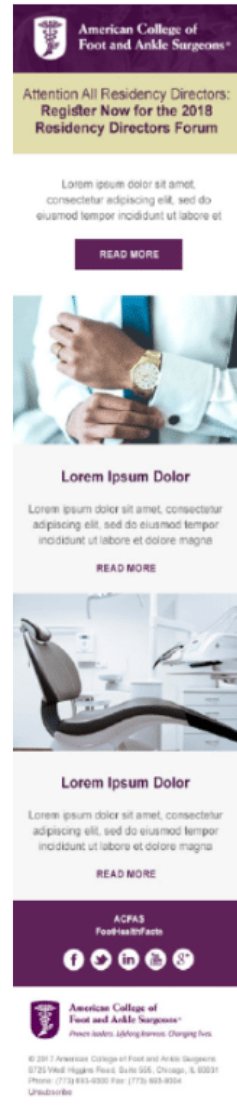
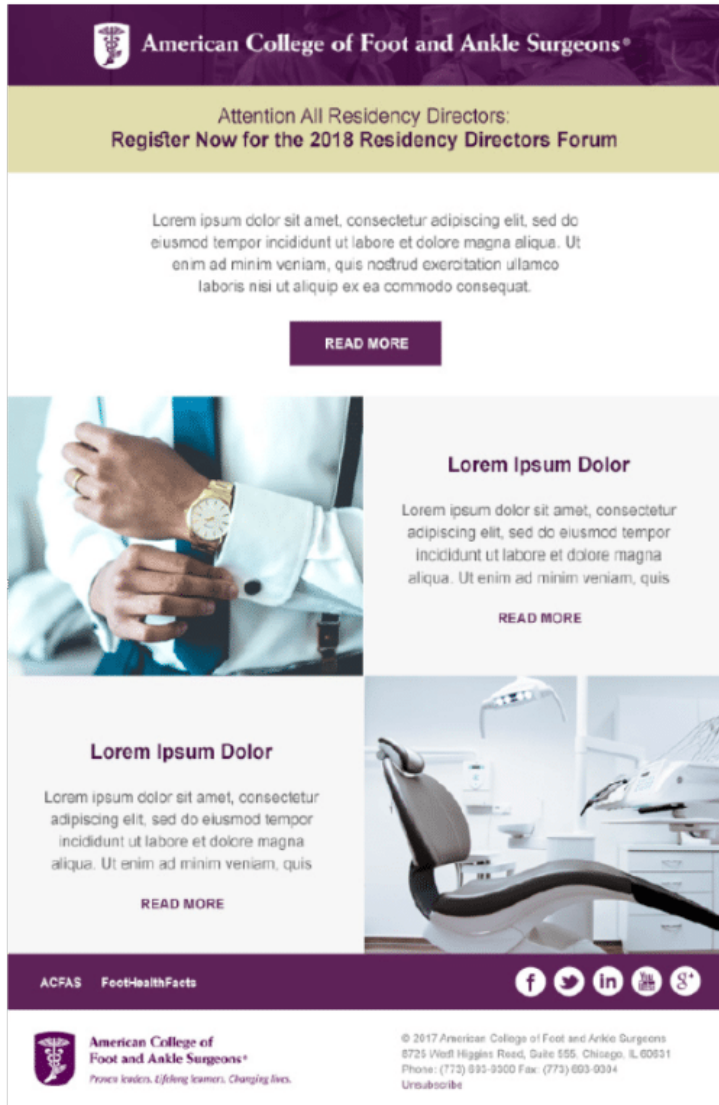
Higher Logic
4250 N Fairfax Drive, Suite 301
Arlington, VA, 22203

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage Preferences](#)

- Clear color contrast and easy to read font size
- CTA early and later
- Clean, bright images
- Bullets and whitespace to make it easily skimmable
- Pretty short (127 words)

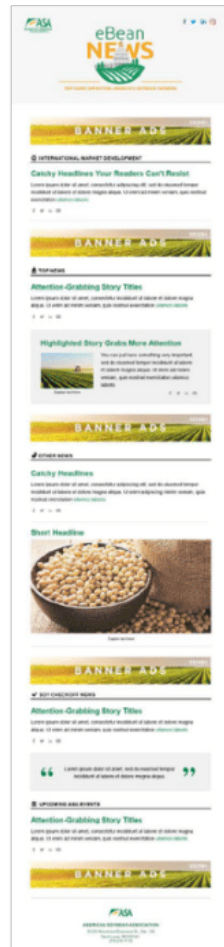
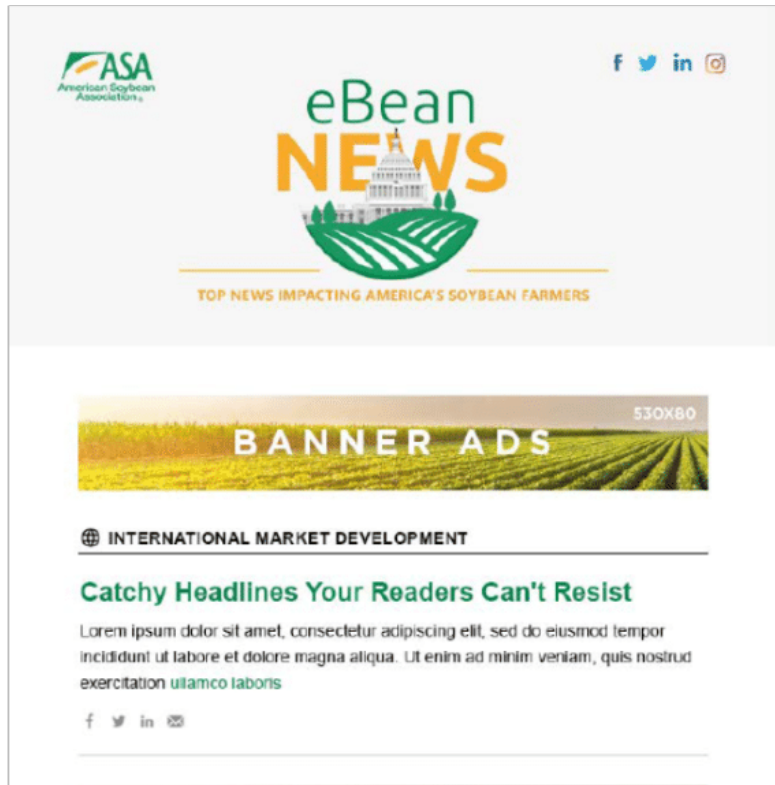


Anatomy of an Email: Event



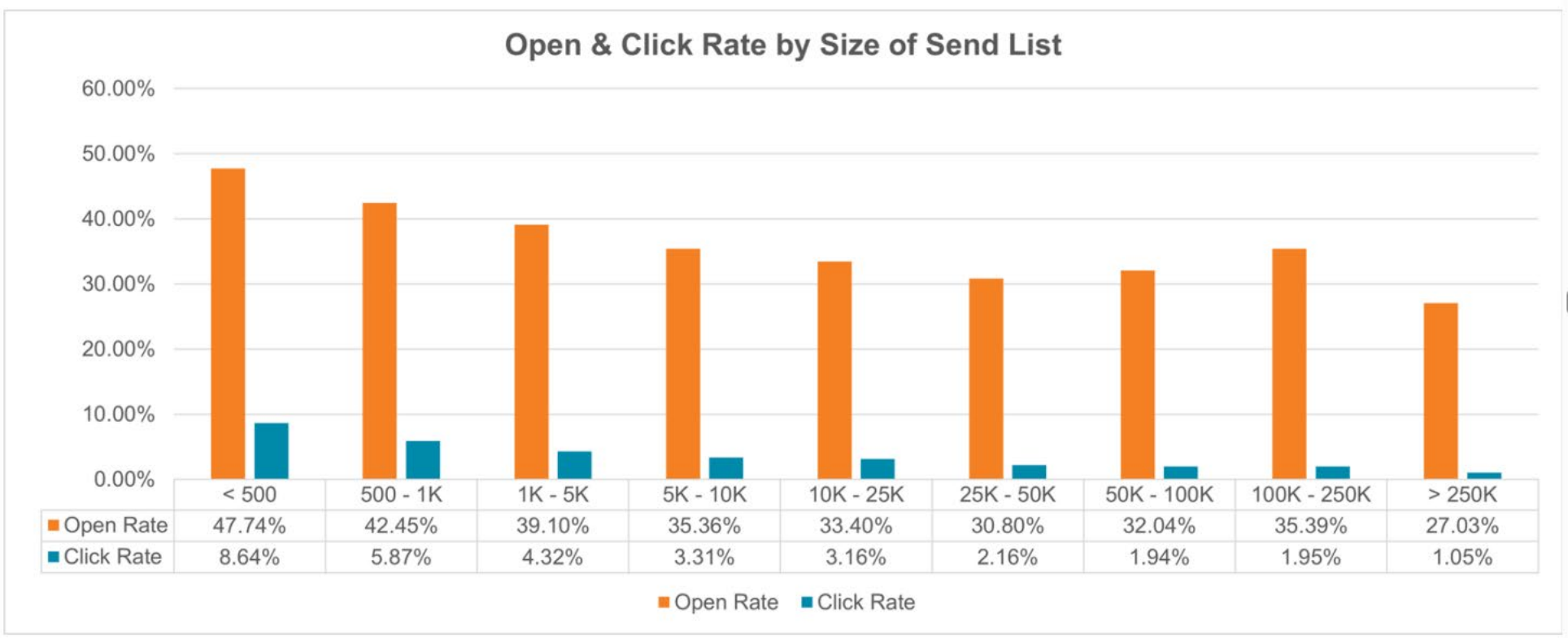
- Summary of email
- Clear header
- Early, clear CTA
- Balance of text and images
- Mobile-friendly version

Anatomy of an Email: Newsletter

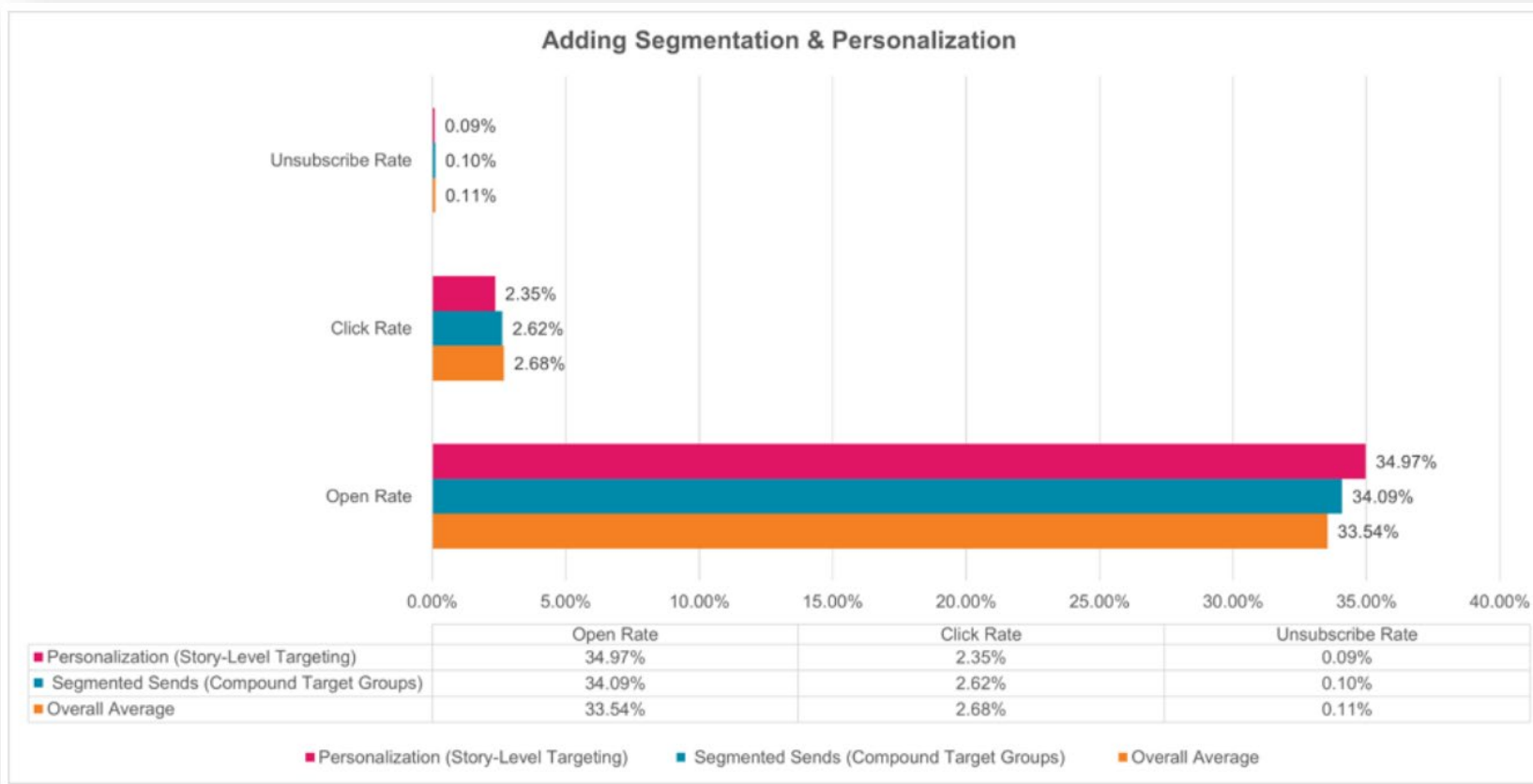


- Clear color contrast
- Clear headers
- Balance of text & images
- Lots of whitespace for easy reading

Targeted Lists Perform Better



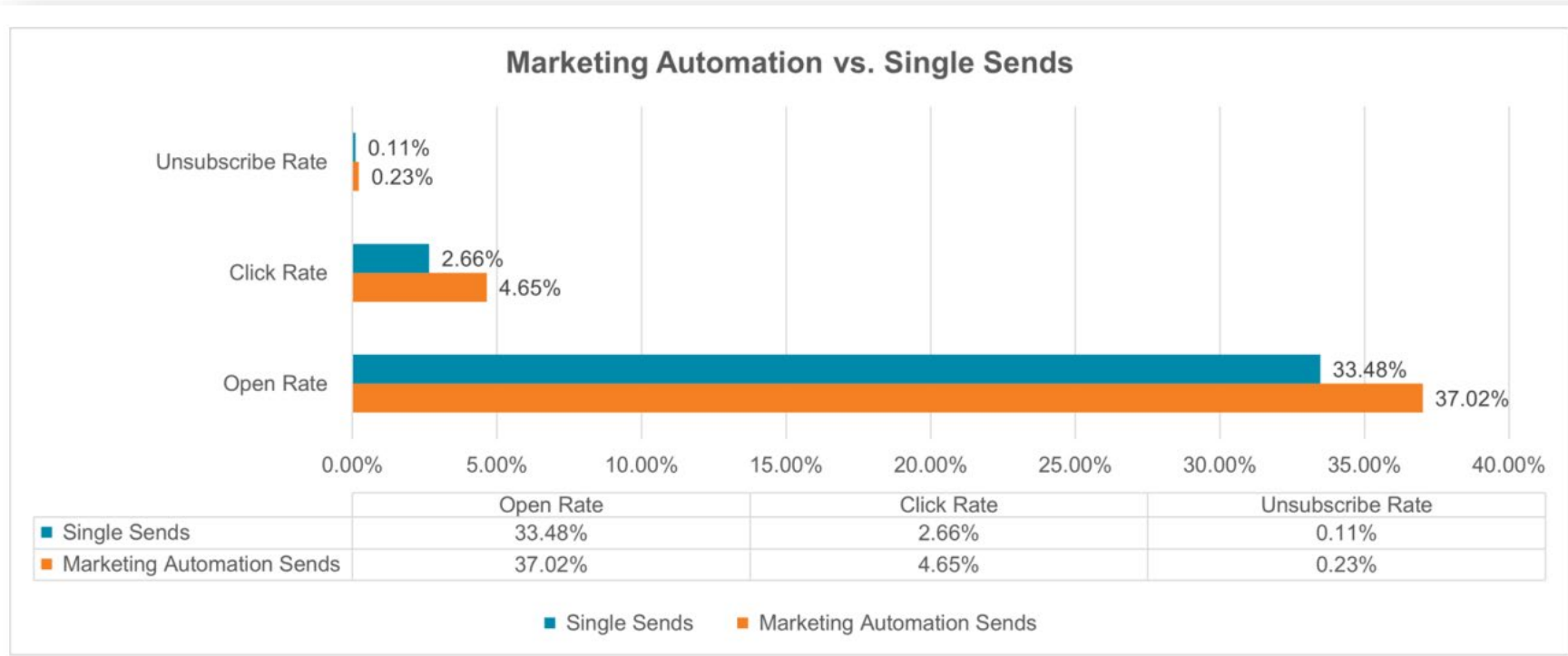
Segmentation & Personalization



Ideas:

- Career stage
- Membership status or type
- Volunteer status
- Action-based
- Engagement-based

Automation



Ideas:

- New member onboarding
- Event promotion/ follow up
- Renewal nudges
- Re-engagement/ win-back
- Community

Automating Campaigns: Simple

Smart Campaigns > Encourage Joining Communities

Encourage Joining Communities

Activate

This campaign contains a series of messages that encourages members to log in and join a community. Members who aren't a member of any community will be added to the campaign.

Entry Criteria

Not a member of any communities, was added to the community more than 7 days ago, and is a member

[View Contacts](#)

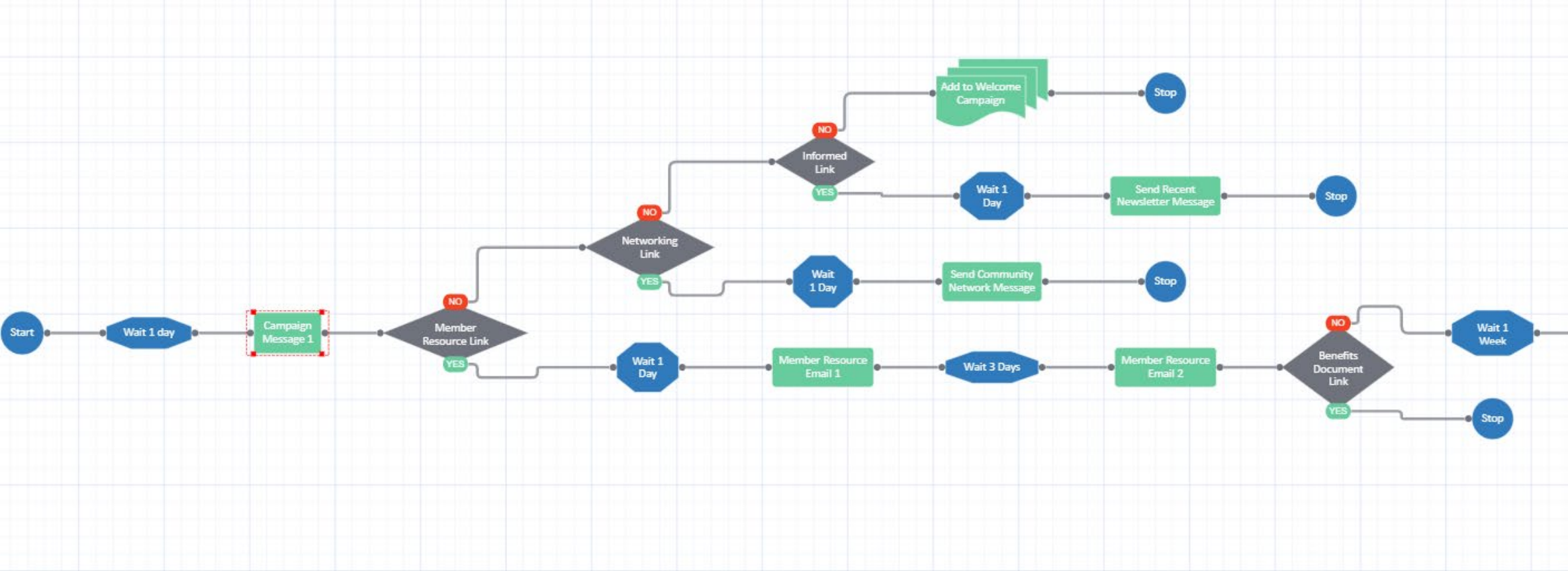
Success Criteria

Is a Member of At Least One Community

The Campaign



Automating Campaigns: Advanced



A/B Testing

- Test and automatically send the winners
- Test one thing at a time
- AI can help generate variants
- Ideas
 - Subject line length
 - Button vs. link text
 - CTA copy or placement
 - Layout variant
 - Personalized vs. Generic
 - Timing

Initially send

25% of contacts version A and 25% version B

Then wait

1 day and send the remaining contacts 50%

the version with the

Highest Delivery Rate

Envelope

None

Sender Profile

Select a sender

Friendly From

Subject Line

From

Friendly From

Thank you