

hitting the mark

Global cross-channel marketing report



About us

Dotdigital is a leading all-in-one marketing automation and personalization platform that empowers businesses to deliver personalized customer experiences across email, SMS, social, retargeting, and web. Combining the insights from unified customer data with drag-and-drop campaign automation and personalization tools, Dotdigital helps brands engage their target audience and drive revenue.

About Hitting the Mark

To provide valuable insights into the current marketing landscape, Dotdigital regularly publishes Hitting the Mark, a cross-channel marketing report. In this twelfth edition of the report, we've provided a deep dive into the marketing performance of 100 global brands. By analyzing data collection, personalization, email marketing, and campaign design, this edition identifies strengths, weaknesses, and emerging trends in the industry. Marketers can leverage these insights to benchmark their strategies, identify areas for improvement, and stay ahead of the competition.

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Executive summary

This edition of Hitting the Mark will be landing in one of the busiest times of the year for brands all over the world; widely abbreviated to BFCM (that’s Black Friday Cyber Monday for the uninitiated), only to be closely followed by Holiday which is the final home run before January sales start. And what better time of year to distinguish the cream from the crop and earmark excellence in a world that is noisier than ever. I’ll explain why.

Research shows that the BFCM craze is creeping forward, with discounting starting sooner than each preceding year. We consumers are addicted to a good sale and brands know it. And whilst a discount might bring us together, it’s not the glue that keeps us together. Many brands find this time of year a great opportunity to acquire new customers with enticing offers. What happens thereafter will determine whether these same shoppers will come back and become loyal brand advocates who don’t just turn up when there’s a discount going. Running successful marketing campaigns goes beyond price and, done well, helps protect profit margins and long-term customer lifetime value.

Let’s snap back to the report in hand. Our researchers here at Dotdigital (read: content marketing team by day, arbiters of all-things-marketing by night) found, there is more to good marketing than meets the eye, even if we do like campaigns that look the part.

In this edition of Hitting the Mark, we have broadened the scope of our research for full customer journey coverage. From when a customer first discovers your brand on-site or social all the way to cart and conversion. We also paid special

attention to data capture practices and how personalized campaigns were as a result.

Key findings from the report include:

- There is a clear correlation between local data regulations and brands’ propensity to capture customer data. The Americas fared best in terms of data collection with 26% of brands capturing zero-party data across the customer journey, that clearly still points to room for improvement though. A combination of data regulation changes can lead to FUD (read: fear, uncertainty, doubt) and inaction, when instead they should lead to the right action. Conscious and transparent data collection practices should help marketers serve better customer experiences and are in the consumer’s interest.
- Examples of good cross-channel personalization practices are hard to find and is where competitive advantage is at stake. Fewer than 10% of brands are turning their data collection practices into personalized experiences which suggests many are struggling to make their data actionable and deploy them cross-channel. This can point to a myriad of challenges which often take the shape of data siloes or data hygiene issues.

- Regions that have had a mobile-first leaning for longer are notably better at mobile number collection for the likes of SMS and WhatsApp. In APAC, we found that 33% of brands already collect this data on-site. The industry is making it easier to connect with consumers across mobile channels so it is key that brands who don’t have a mobile acquisition strategy catch up quick.

Besides shedding light on areas of opportunity

Methodology

To reach the insights of this year’s Hitting the Mark report, our researchers analyzed the websites and marketing campaigns of more than 100 brands across the world. We focused on five industries:



Over a four-week period, our researchers actively engaged with the brands’ email marketing campaigns and websites, simulating the behavior of real customers.

Key areas of evaluation included:

Website

We scrutinized websites for their search functionality, wishlist options, accessibility of sustainability policies, and , live chat features, and much more.

Data collection

We evaluated brands’ data collection practices, including the range of data gathered, the methods used, and the adoption of preference centers. We also analyzed the types of data being collected, such as location, interests, and SMS numbers.

Personalization

We assessed how brands are leveraging data to create relevant and engaging campaigns. Beyond first-name personalization, we explored the use of customer reviews, product recommendations, and dynamic imagery to enhance the customer experience.

Email best practice

We evaluated brands’ adherence to essential email marketing principles, such as friendly “from” names, clear unsubscribe processes, and view-in-browser links.

Campaign content

We analyzed the quality and relevance of email content, including the copy, balance of editorial and promotional content, use of FOMO language, and effectiveness of subject lines.

Campaign design

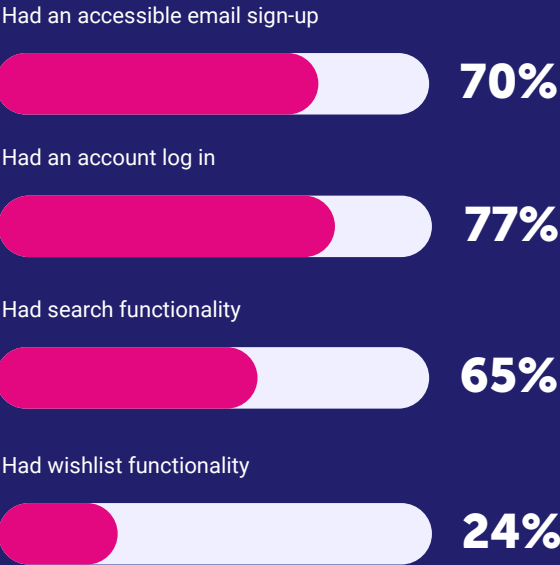
We assessed the visual appeal and effectiveness of

Key findings

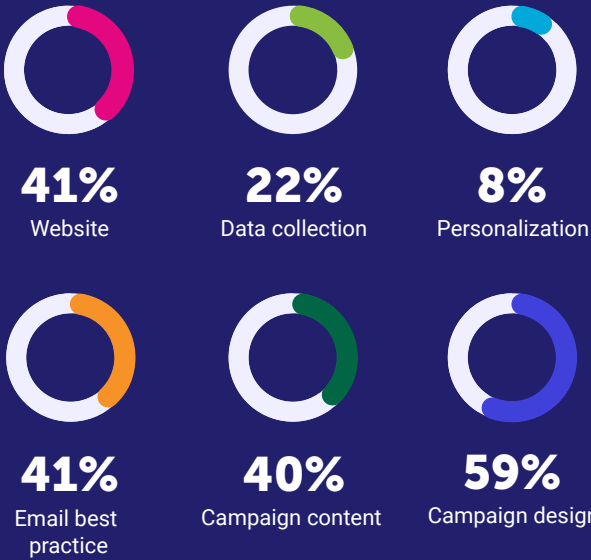
Key findings

Let's dive into the most impactful findings. Here we summarize how the 100+ brands that we analyzed fared in our research.

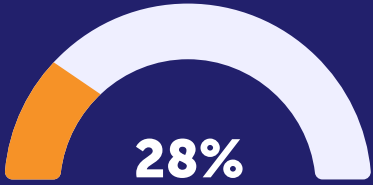
Website best practice adoption



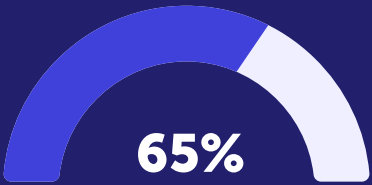
Global average scores (by evaluation area)



Incentivized sign-up



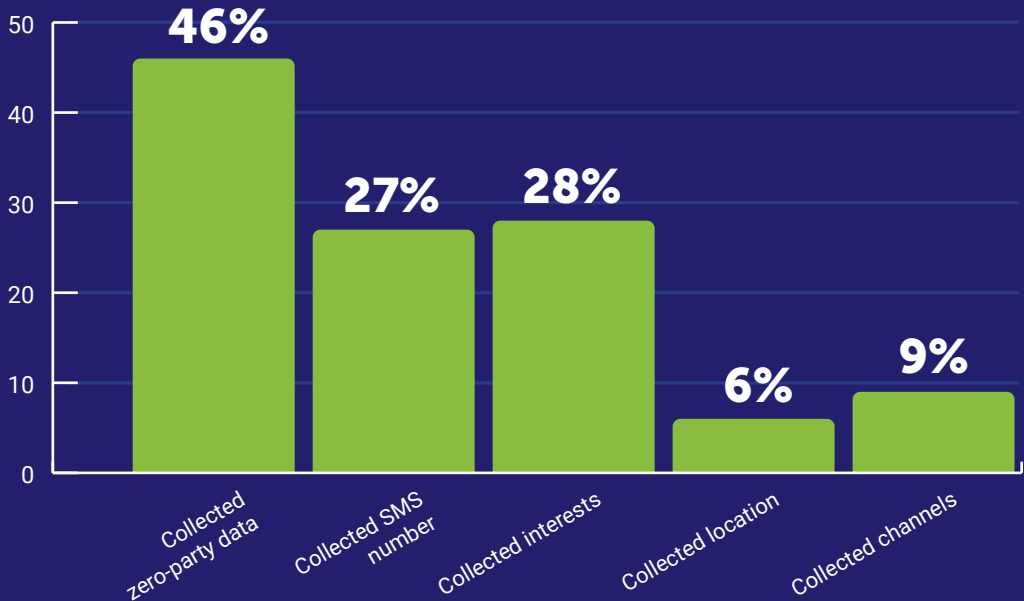
Collected feedback during unsubscribe process



Had a preference center



Data collection best practice adoption













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