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Internal Communication Benchmarks & Best Practices

2026

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How to use this report & create your own benchmarks

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Having an understanding of how your team engages with internal comms is key to building a strategy that prioritizes what they're (actually) interested in, and that starts with benchmarks!

Before you dive in, it's important to remember that benchmarks aren't about chasing perfect numbers. They're about creating a baseline to measure what's working and where there's room to grow!

Metrics like open rates, click-through rates, and engagement stats are a way to see how your team interacts with your messages and where you can improve. And while industry benchmarks can be helpful for context, the most important thing is to focus on what's meaningful for your team's priorities and goals. So, it's important to set your own benchmarks!

Setting your own benchmarks helps you measure progress and celebrate wins, no matter how small.
If your open rate is 60% and the "gold standard" is 80%, that doesn't mean you're failing. It means there's a great opportunity to fine-tune your approach — and every improvement is a step in the right direction.



Within this report, we've outlined what **Workshop** customers across 13 different industries and 580 companies are doing to give you a jump start.

LET'S DIVE IN!

What data is included in this report?

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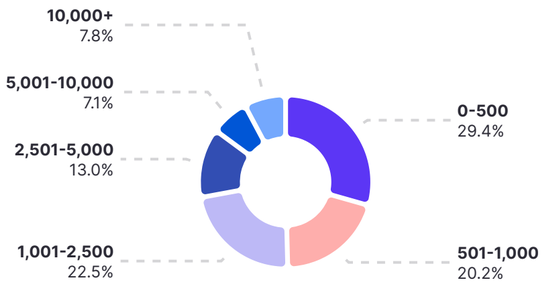
Source

This report is based on the results from

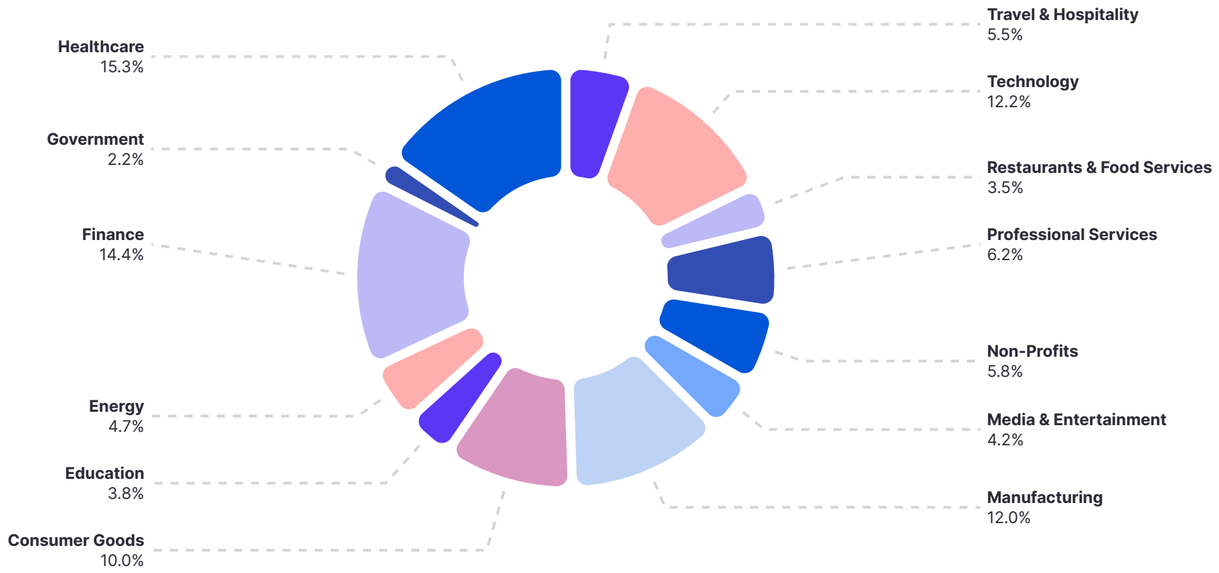
186
million emails
across 580 companies

Sent from
1/1/2025 - 12/31/2025

Company sizes



Industries included



STEVE MADDEN · BOMBAS · PAPA JOHNS · ASTON MARTIN · 1800 contacts · FastMed · HarperCollins

*Note: *Some companies are excluded for privacy and security reasons.*

Definitions for key metrics

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Number of recipients
The number of people on the “send” list for a given email.

Open rate
The percentage of unique recipients that opened an email (this number doesn’t include multiple opens).

Click rate
The percentage of unique recipients that clicked a link within an email (this number doesn’t count multiple clicks). *Only emails that include a link are included in this metric.*

Click-through rate
The percentage of opened emails that registered a “click” within the content

Read time
How long users spent interacting with the content of an email.
- **Read** (spent more than 8 seconds in the email)
- **Skimmed** (spent 3-8 seconds in the email)
- **Glanced** (opened but spent less than 3 seconds in the email)

Journeys
An automated email drip campaign that sends a pre-planned series of internal messages based on date or enrollment triggers

Pages
Branded, mobile-friendly landing pages that perfectly complement and extend your employee emails

Cici
Workshop’s built-in AI assistant that helps you plan, write, design, and send the internal communications of your dreams



At **Workshop**, we believe in the power of data to drive better communication. That’s why our platform is designed to give you actionable data at a glance, helping you track your progress and see your impact in real time. Your benchmarks are the foundation, and we’re here to help you build from there!

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Top 10 key takeaways

If you’re running internal comms, you already know that email is one of the best ways to reach your team. But are your emails actually working? We dug into the data from over 186 million emails to find out what’s really driving opens, clicks, and engagement.



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Here’s what you need to know:

1. **The internal email open rate benchmark has shifted — the new benchmark is 73%.** This year's dataset expanded significantly (+74% more recipients), and we're seeing a new median open rate of 73% across all companies. Context matters: compare yourself to your own prior data first!

2. **Sending 4–6 emails per week is the engagement sweet spot.** Companies sending 4–6 emails/week achieved the highest open rate and click-through rate. CTR drops sharply at 11+ emails/week, so don’t over-send to your employees!

3. **Smaller, more targeted sends dramatically outperform mass blasts**. Emails sent to fewer than 500 people achieve a 73% open rate vs. just 58% for sends to 5,000+ recipients. The smaller the list, the higher the relevance — and results!

4. **Personalization is one of the highest-ROI tactics available.** Emails using personalization (like {first name}) average a 71% open rate vs. 68% without. Try tailoring your emails and subject lines to make your comms feel more personal!

5. **Text-only emails outperform image emails on click-through rate.** 97% of all emails contain at least one image, yet text-only emails achieve a higher CTR (19% vs. 15%). When someone opens a plain-text email, they tend to be more engaged.

6. **Monday is the best day to send — and late afternoon has the highest click rates.** Mondays see the highest click rate (12%) and CTR (16%) of any weekday. Surprisingly, emails sent after 5pm achieve the highest CTR of any send time!

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Here’s what you need to know: (continued)

7. **Subject lines between 21–40 characters perform best.** The highest open rates belong to subject lines in the 21–40 character range at 72%. But slightly longer lines (41–80 characters) are a close-second at 70%, so don't overthink it!

8. **75% of Workshop customers used AI features in 2025.** 438 companies used AI-powered subject line generation or preview text, and over 16,000 emails were translated using AI.

9. **SMS click rates are nearly 3× higher than email click rates.** SMS messages sent through Workshop achieve a 29% average click rate vs. 11% for email. Friday is the strongest SMS day (30% click rate). SMS is a powerful complement to email for time-sensitive messages!

10. **After-hours send performance is highly industry-dependent.** Emails sent after 6pm hurt some industries (like Government, Manufacturing, and Consumer Goods) significantly, while others actually perform better after hours: Professional Services (+24%), Restaurants & Food Services (+12%), and Media & Entertainment (+5%).



Email benchmarks & best practices

What's a good open and click-through rate?

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Median open rate

73%

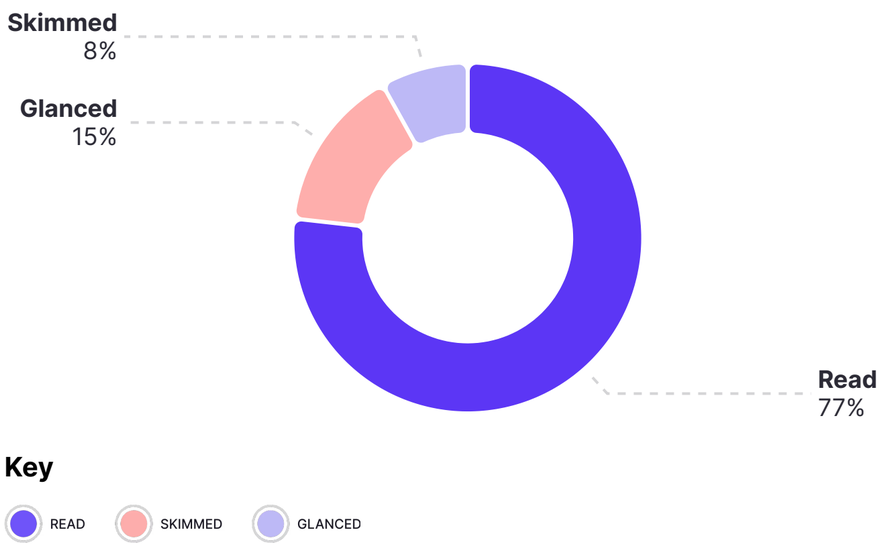
Avg. click rate

11%

Avg. click-through rate

15%

Avg. Read Time



Why use median instead of average open rate?

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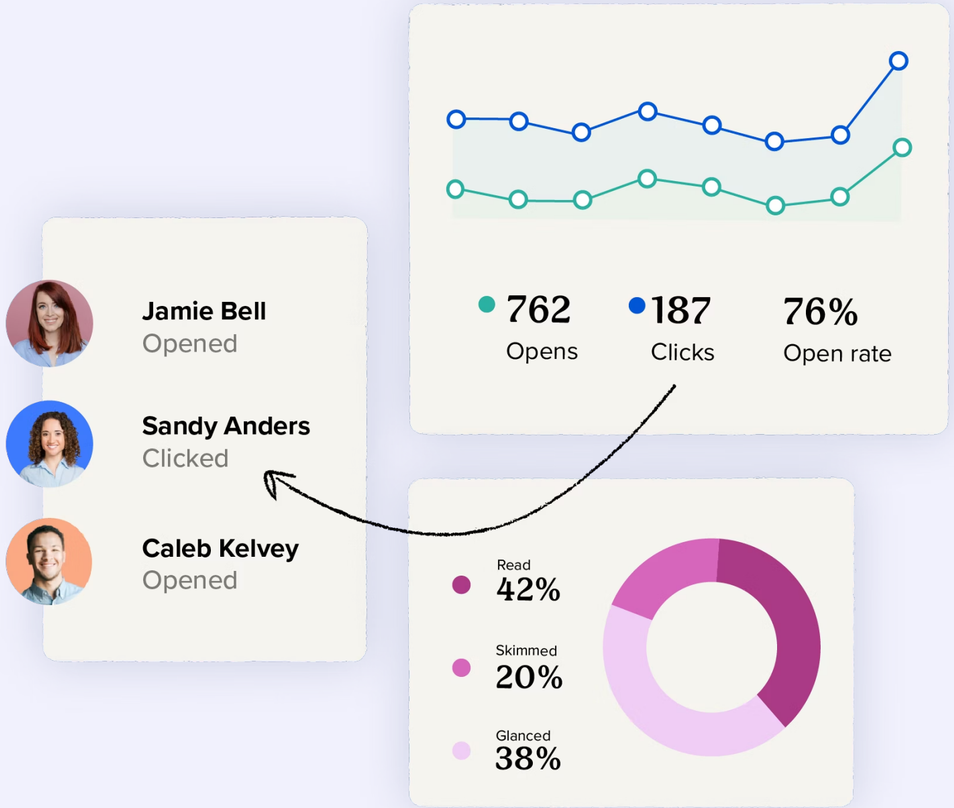
You'll notice this year's open rate benchmark (73% median) looks a touch lower than last year's (76% average) and that's because we made a deliberate change in how we calculate it! The email landscape is constantly changing, and with new factors like AI bots and filtered inboxes in the mix, averages can be pulled around by outliers on either end.

Why use the median instead of the average?

Internal communications teams come in all shapes and sizes, and open rates can swing dramatically depending on company size and industry. A 10,000-person enterprise has a very different inbox dynamic than a 200-person startup, and a healthcare organization sends to a different kind of audience than a tech company. The median gives you a truer "middle of the pack" number to benchmark against. However, the top quartile for open rates across **Workshop** customers is 83%!

We'll dig into how open rates shift across industries and company sizes later in the report, so you can find the comparison that actually matches your world.

The context points back to an important takeaway: the *technology* you use for internal email matters deeply to your open and click-through rates.



What's the best day & time to send an email?

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If you're optimizing for open rates,

9 AM on Monday!

If you're optimizing for clicks, consider late afternoon on Mondays (5pm in your sender's timezone usually has high click rates!).

On average, emails sent "after hours" (after 6 PM during traditional work days) see a 9% drop in open rate.



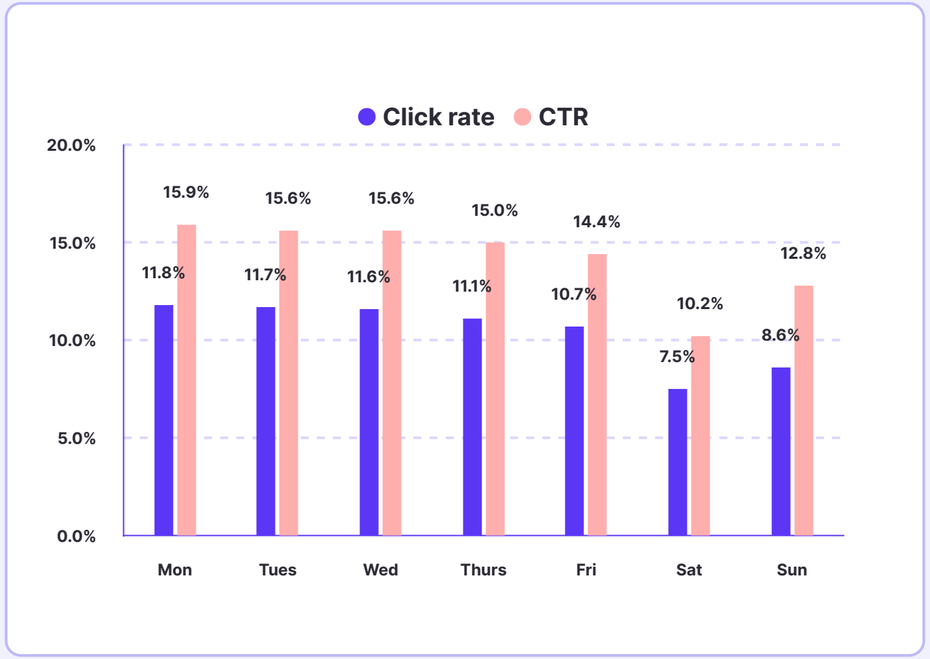
How often should emails be sent (and when)?

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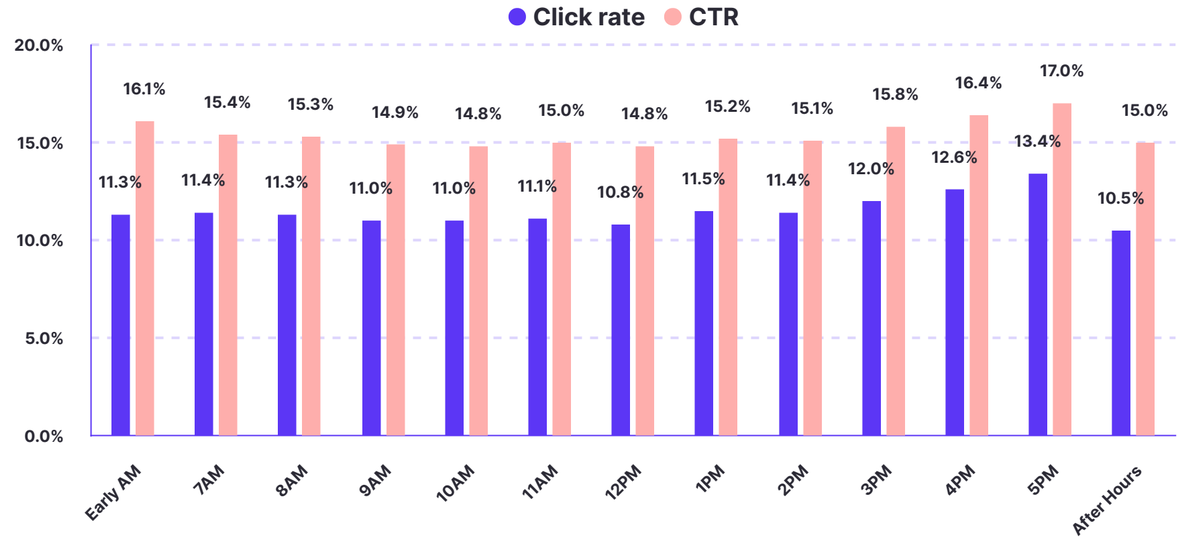
If you're optimizing for engagement, **4-6 emails per week.**

Sending 4–6 emails per week maximizes both open rate and click through rate. Above 10 sends/week, click through rate drops sharply, meanings your employees are opening, but no longer clicking.

Average click rate & click through rate by day of week



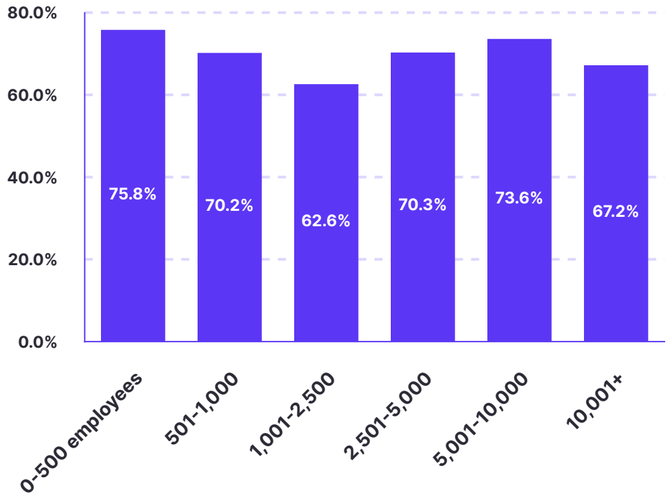
Average click rate & click through rate by time of day (sender's timezone)



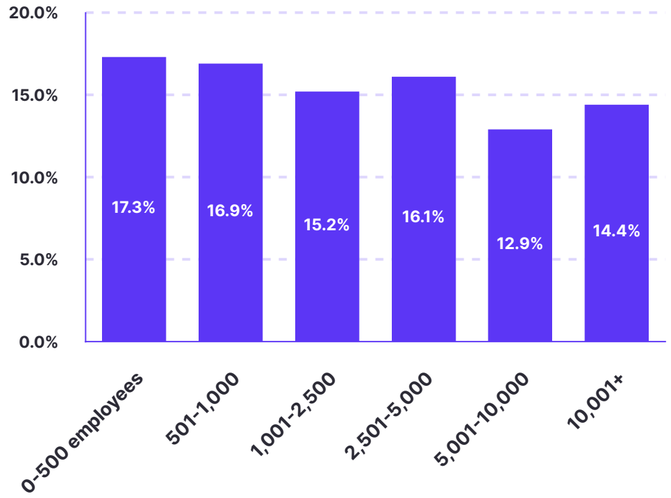
Email engagement by company size

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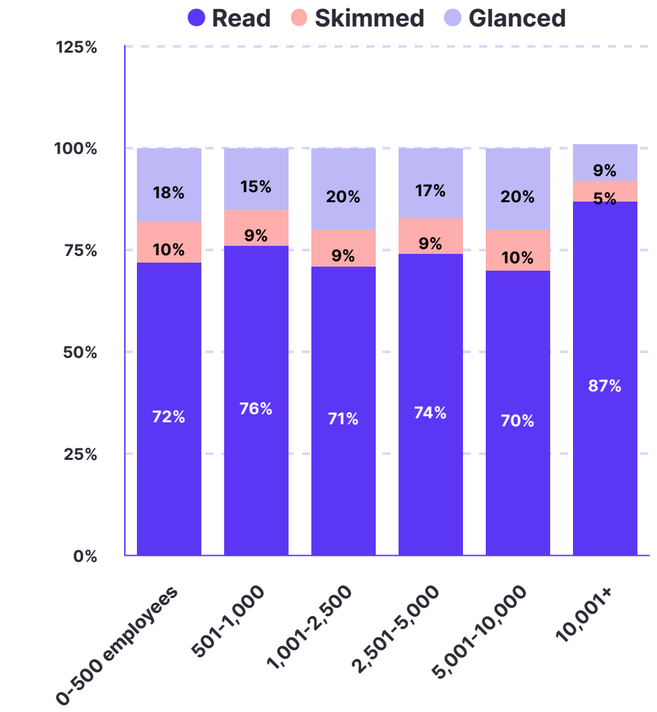
Average open rate by company size



Average click through rate by company size



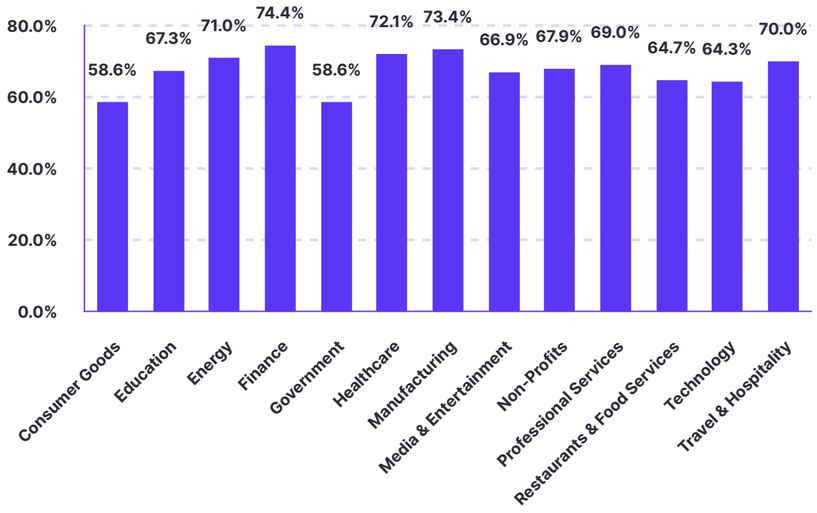
Average read time by company size



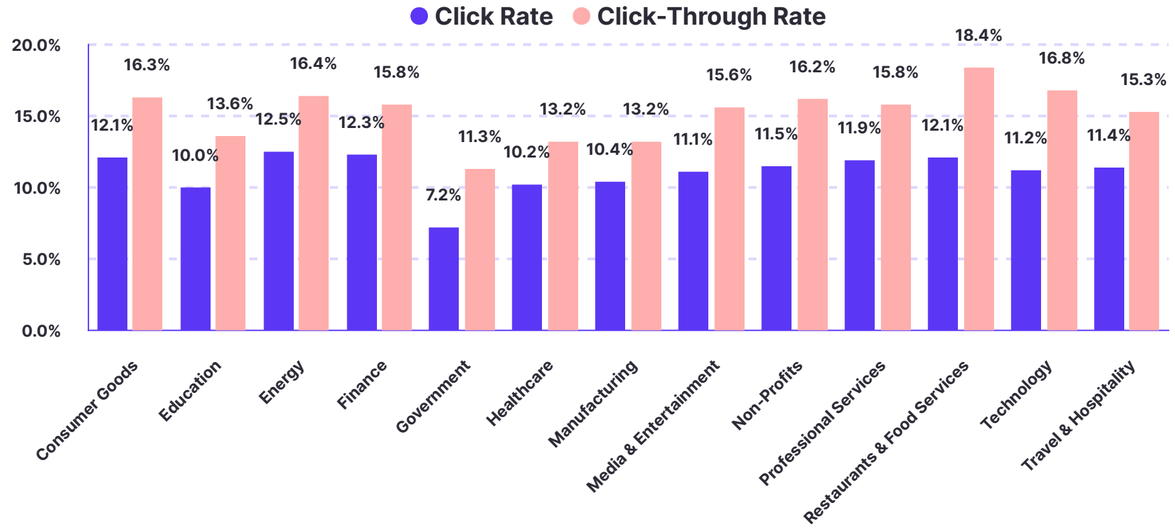
Email engagement by industry

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Average open rate by industry



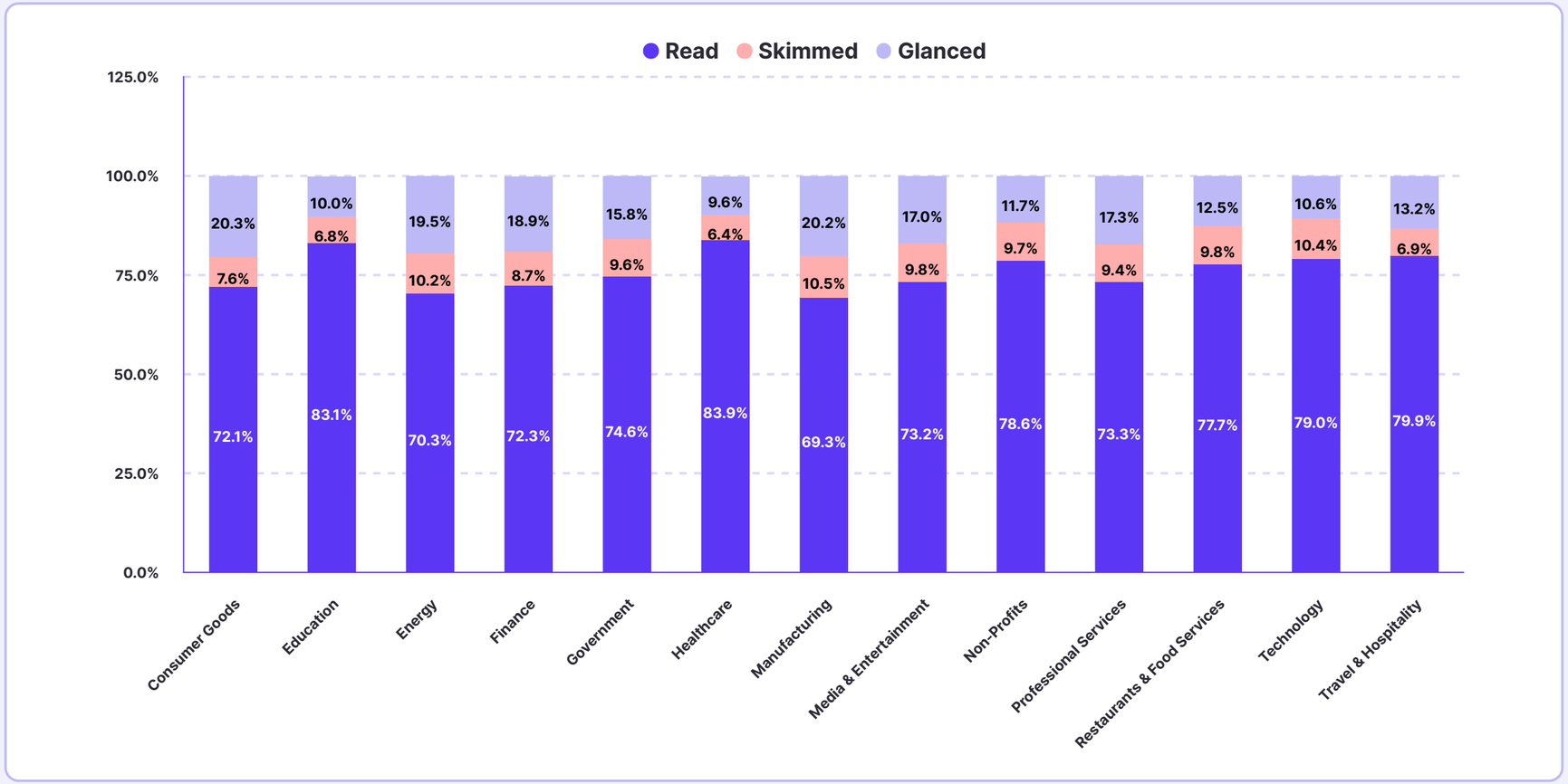
Average click through rate by industry



Email engagement by industry (continued)

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Average read time by industry





Open Rates

How to improve your open rates

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At Workshop, we set up every single internal comms team for success from the beginning, and often see open rates skyrocket *just* based on the right setup alone.

This includes:

- Removing any “external sender” banners from your internal emails
- Configuring your sends so your emails never land in employee spam folders
- Ghostwriting features, so you can send emails ‘from’ other leaders within the company (with the right permissions!)
- Scheduling and time zone sending features, so emails land in inboxes at the right time
- Automatically optimizing your emails for mobile or desktop viewing

It’s all possible with the right platform! ***Get in touch*** *with us if you’re running into any issues with any of the above.*



Quick open rate improvements you can try today

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Realistically, there are only so many things you can do to improve your open rate for any individual email (but it still may be more than you think)! Here are the major factors to consider:

Who the email is being sent from: Sending from leaders or individuals often performs better than “catch-all” emails for the company or specific departments (like hello@ or comms@).

The list you’re sending to: Does it *really* need to be an all-company email? Segmenting your audience just a bit, and tailoring the content for each, can have a huge impact on your open rates.

When you’re sending it: We prefer to use time-zone sending (available in Workshop!) whenever possible, but otherwise, just be really aware of when your email is hitting inboxes.

The subject line: We have *a lot* of tips on how to write these later on in this report!

The preview text: Have fun here! It’s a great place to add extra education or entertainment.



Remember: the goal is *not* to get a 100% open rate.

You'll never reach 100% of your employees through one channel alone! And while email can provide that incredible foundation, it's best to take a multi-channel approach with **4 simple tools** to meet employees where they are (and reiterate important info).

Here are three other channels to pair with your email strategy:

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SMS

Text messaging is our go-to for urgent or time-sensitive updates, especially for frontline or deskless workers who may not check email frequently (*or might not have corporate email addresses at all*)!



Teams or Slack

A more “chat-based” comms tool is great for messages that don’t need to live longer than 24 hours, or for quick reminders. *For example, follow up on a benefits enrollment email with a message: "Don’t forget to enroll - the deadline is Friday!"*



Intranet

Intranet adoption is *always* a struggle, and email can help drive traffic there. For detailed info that should be more evergreen or long-term, link emails your emails to intranet posts where employees can access more in-depth resources.

Others

Digital signage, all-hands meetings, manager communications, QR codes, PDFs, posters, internal podcasts...there are so many options!



Subject lines

How long should my subject line be?

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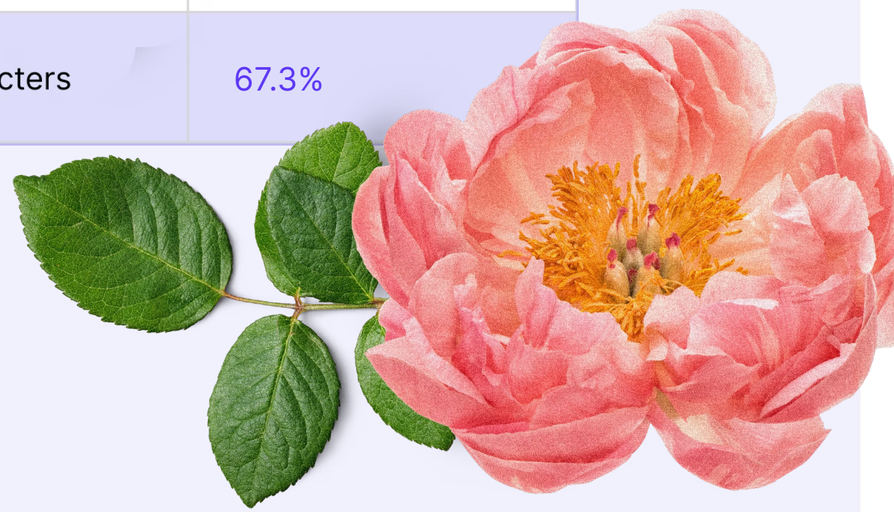
21-40 characters

PLUS:

8% of all subject lines use an emoji!

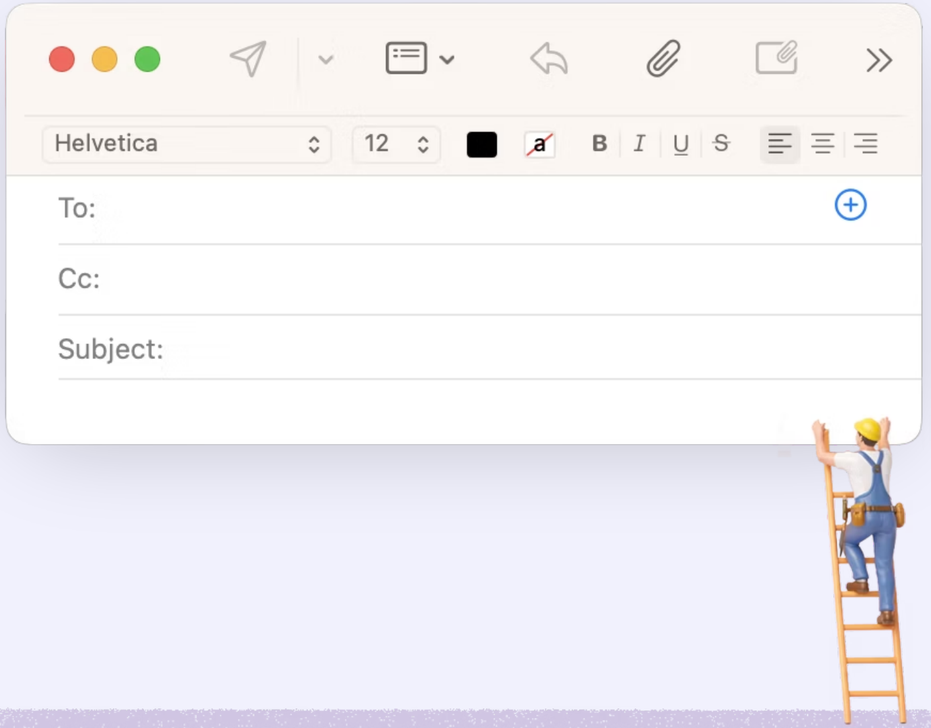
Emojis provide a marginal lift (+0.37 pts) and can help your email stand out in a crowded inbox.

Subject line length	Avg. open rate
0-20 Characters	65.5%
21-40 Characters	**72%**
41-80 Characters	70.1%
81+ Characters	67.3%



How to write better subject lines

We analyzed the subject lines of the best-performing emails in **Workshop**, and noticed a few common patterns among them. Here are some key approaches:



How to write better subject lines

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- **Highlighting employees:** Subject lines like "Meet our newest team members," "Shoutout to [Employee Name]!" or "A warm welcome to..." celebrate and recognize your team members.
- **Keeping everyone in the loop:** Be direct and transparent with subject lines such as "Important update: [Topic]," "What's changing with our team structure," or "CEO transition: What to expect."
- **Making it clear when action is needed:** If employees need to do something, spell it out with subject lines like "Action required: Submit by [Deadline]," "Reminder: Your benefits enrollment ends soon," or "Time to review: New policy updates."
- **Keeping things timely:** If it's tied to a specific timeframe, include it: "Happening this week: [Event]," "March 2024 updates," or "Week of March 13: What you need to know."
- **Driving excitement for events:** Get people interested in what's coming up with subject lines like "Join us at [Event Name]!" "National Summit: Registration now open," or "Countdown to our Year-End Celebration!"
- **Focusing on what employees care about:** If it's about pay, benefits, or perks, make it clear: "Your bonus details inside," "Payroll schedule: Here's what to know," or "New perks? You got it!"

Try A/B testing!

Workshop's **A/B testing** allows you to send two versions of an internal email to different audience segments to determine which subject line or content drives the most employee engagement!

Test only one variable at a time, such as personalization or emoji use, to accurately identify what moved the needle. Results are compared side-by-side in Workshop, allowing teams to apply winning subject lines to future communications!

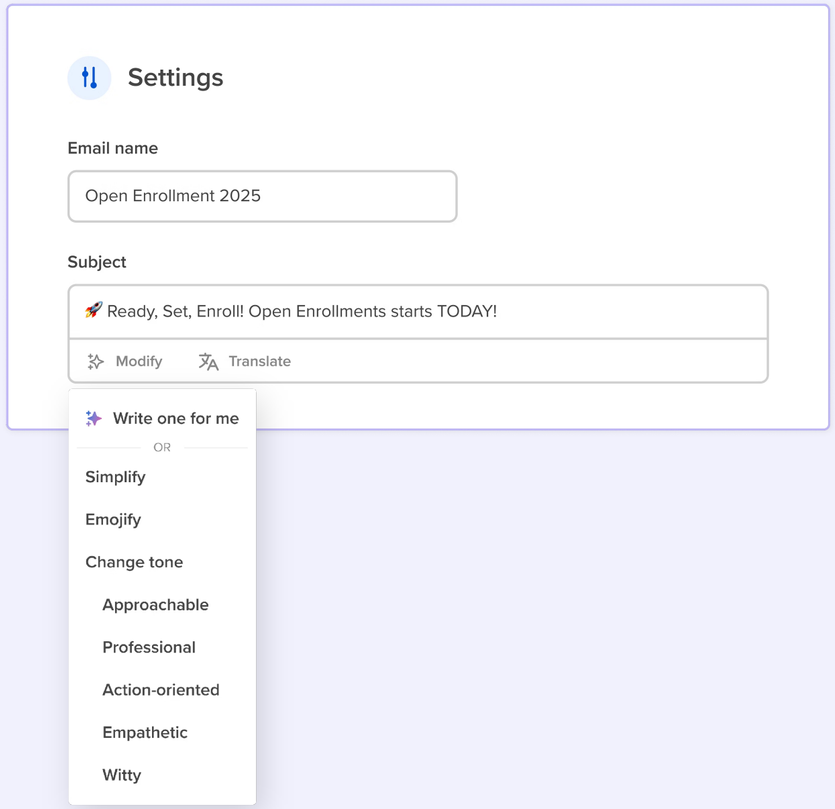
Stumped on subject lines? Get AI-suggested subject lines & preview text (based on the content of your email!)

It's just one of many features of **Workshop's** internal communications platform.

Generate ideas:
We'll suggest subject lines and preview text that match your message's tone and context—all grounded in the data we're sharing right here in this report!

Tweak your tone or shorten your copy:
Refine subject lines, polish preview text, or adjust tone and clarity in just a click.

Cross-post effortlessly:
Optimize messages for Slack, Teams, SharePoint, and more, so your comms land wherever they're shared.





Click-through rates

What's the ideal length of an email?

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The only way to find this answer is to test, test, test!

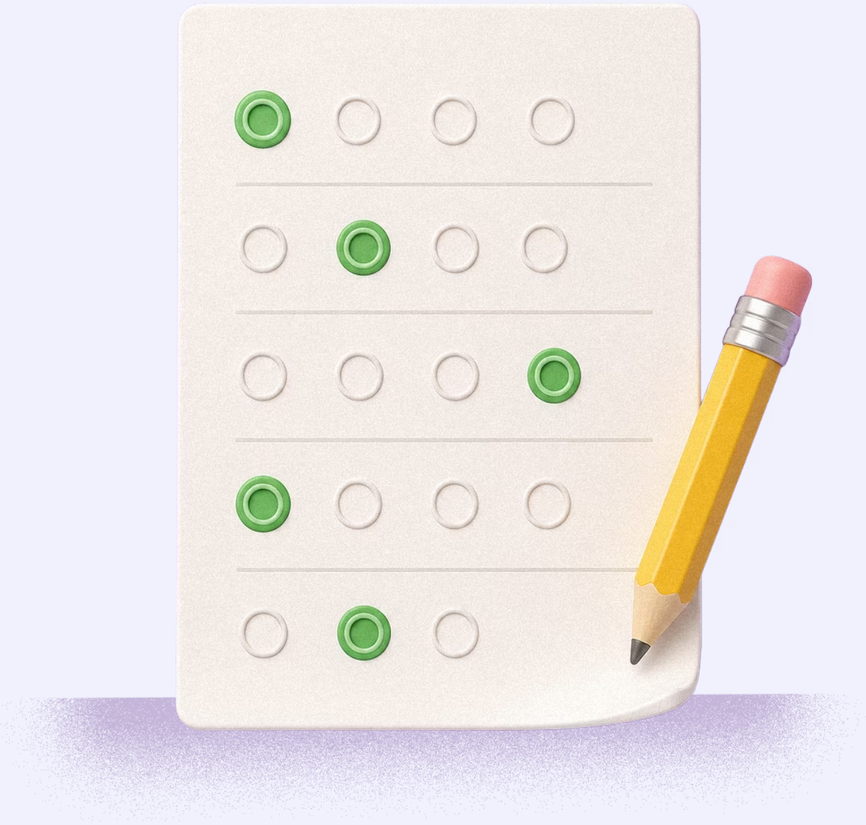
A conclusion we were able to draw in our data is that 201–500 words is the optimal length for open rate (72%). Keep most emails in the 200–500 word range and reserve longer formats for in-depth content (like newsletters!).

For most organizations:

A beautiful internal newsletter template that includes employee photos, branded elements, GIFs, and surveys is the key to engaging the team.

For organizations with a lot of frontline or deskless employees:

A simple, text-based, mobile-friendly design paired up with something like a “five things to know" works well.



How to improve your click-through rates

Here are a few of our favorite ways to boost our click-through rates:

Write like a human, not a corporate memo

If your email sounds robotic, it'll get ignored. Instead, try writing like you would in a Slack message or casual conversation.

- Avoid: "Dear employees, we are pleased to inform you of recent updates…"
  Try instead: *"Big news! Here's what's changing (and why you'll love it)."*
- Keep it short, friendly, and skimmable — bullets, bold text, and emojis (used sparingly!) can help.

Rule of thumb: If you wouldn't say it out loud to a coworker, rewrite it!

Make it visual

Designed emails are often better ways to tell a story, but plain-text emails can help drive a very simple, specific action.

Try these tips to make your sends more visual:

- Break up big paragraphs with headers, bullets, or icons
- Use high-quality images (bonus points for employee photos!)
- Try GIFs or quick videos for big announcements
- Test different layouts to see what works best (Workshop makes this easy!)



Quick win: Feature real team moments! Employees enjoy seeing familiar faces in their inbox.

How to improve your click-through rates

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Get personal + segment where you can

Not every email needs to go to every employee. When content feels relevant, engagement skyrockets.

- Segment by department, role, or location (don't make everyone read through the HQ events calendar)
- Customize subject lines or intros (e.g., "Marketing Team: Here's Your Q1 Recap")
- Make it feel personal—instead of "company updates," say "A quick note from [leader's name]."

Pro tip: *Employees are much more likely to engage with emails from their department leader than from a general company address.*

Make it easy (and fun) to click!

Your CTA (call to action) should be clear, compelling, and simple.

- Use action-oriented language: "Save your spot" is better than "Register here"
- Highlight the benefit: "Get early access to our new PTO tool"
- Limit choices: One strong CTA is better than five weak ones
- Gamify engagement: Try adding an "Easter egg" (e.g., the first five people to click get a coffee gift card!)

Pro tip: *Want more clicks? Encourage replies! Ask a quick question at the end:"Hit reply and tell us: what's your go-to workday playlist?"*



Identify your "super-engagers" (those who consistently open and click) vs. less-engaged groups, and tweak frequency accordingly. What do the people who use your emails seem to like?

Pro tip: *Don't guess, ask! These people are prime candidates for an internal comms feedback interview.*

4 TIPS FOR BETTER CLICK-THROUGH RATES

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1. Lead with value

Your first sentence (or graphic) should clearly state the benefit to the reader.

2. Keep emails concise

Make one or two key points and include one clear call-to-action.

3. Segment & personalize

Divide your sends so employees are confident that every message is relevant.

4. Make it fun to read

Use visuals - charts, pictures, GIFs, infographics, etc.





More email benchmarks and best practices

CROSS-POSTING

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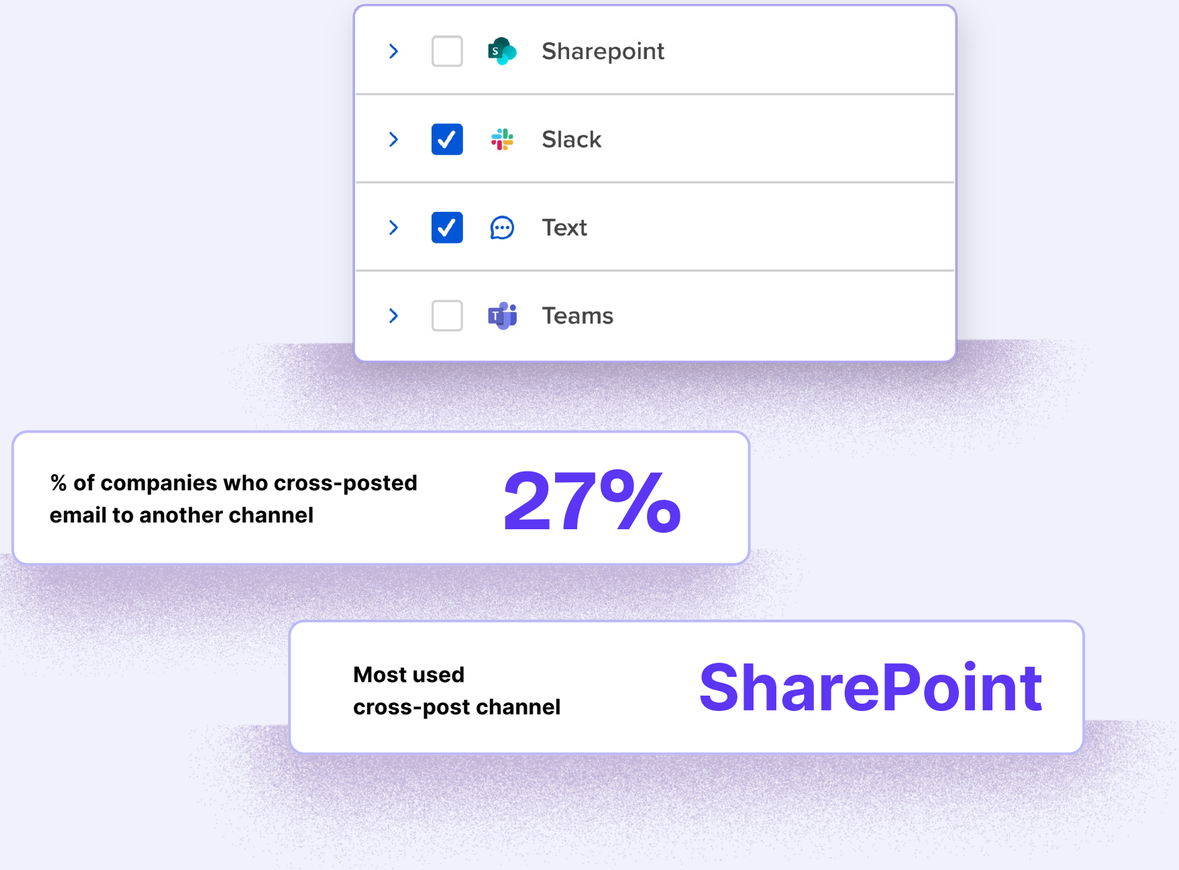
Cross-posting lets you reach employees wherever they are. The one-click cross-post feature in Workshop's email editor makes it easy to share to Teams, Slack, or SharePoint simultaneously!

Here are a few other ways our SharePoint integration can help streamline your comms:

Archive important updates: Keep newsletters, announcements, and key communications in an easy-to-reference location.

Track engagement: See exactly how many employees are accessing your emails from SharePoint through Workshop's analytics dashboard.

Simplify your workflow: No more manual copying and pasting — just set it and share!



USING PERSONALIZATION AND MERGE TAGS IN EMAILS

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Personalization delivers a consistent +3 point open rate lift, yet fewer than 1 in 8 emails used it in 2025. Adding even just a first name in the subject line or email copy is a low-effort, high-impact tactic for making your comms feel more tailored to your audience!

% of emails using personalization tokens (US)	**11%**
% of emails using personalization tokens (UK)	**32%**
Open rate: emails with personalization	**71%**
Open rate: emails without personalization	**68%**
Lift from personalization	**+3** percentage points

Personalization and merge tags best practices

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Personalization and merge tags can dramatically lift engagement when used thoughtfully — but they can also backfire when overused or mishandled. Here's how to get the most out of them:

Get the basics right first: If your contact records have blank fields, inconsistent capitalization, or junk values, the personalization used in your emails will expose that instantly. Audit your most-used fields regularly, and always set fallback values. Every token should have a default for when the field is empty. For example, start an email with “Hi {first name},” so the default is “Hi there,” instead of just “there,”.

Use merge tags to personalize meaning, not just greeting: The most effective use of tokens isn't in the salutation — it's in the body copy and CTA. Dynamically adjusting the content or the call-to-action based on what you know about someone is far more impactful than just swapping in a name at the top of the email

Go beyond the first name: First name personalization is just the start! Personalizations that actually make a difference tend to be behavioral or contextual:

- Department (Marketing, IT, HR)
- Company name
- Geographic location (e.g. Austin office vs Omaha office)
- Hire date

SURVEYS

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Adding single-question surveys directly to any email is great for quick check-ins, feedback on events, or a gut check on sentiment. Surveys are embedded right in the message, so employees can respond instantly from their phone or desktop (or wherever they're reading!).

Top surveys use cases

- **Yes/No response:** Ask your employees if they're attending an event
- **Rate this email/newsletter:** Use the 1-5 stars survey!
- **Feedback during onboarding:** Try the Mood survey to gauge how new employees are feeling throughout their onboarding journey!

Most popular survey type

Yes/No Response

New in 2026:

Surveys can now be added to campaigns! Now, you can measure sentiment or engagement over time or multiple sends. Track responses as they come in and break down results by location, department, or team. Share insights with leadership or use them to adjust your own strategy.

MORE EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

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- Emails that are sent to less than 1,000 people tend to perform better than emails sent to *more* than 1,000 people, so consider better targeting and segmentation. ***Contact us*** *if your distribution lists are an issue!*
- 80% of emails include a link; about a fourth of emails don't include one at all. You may not *need* one, depending on the email itself!
- 27% of Workshop customers have used our platform to "cross-post" an email to another communications channel, like Sharepoint, Teams, or Slack. It's actually a simple one-click process within our email editor!
- HR/Benefits emails drive the highest open and click rate. Employees actively want this information!
- Announcements and leadership updates are the most common types of emails sent.
- Event emails also tend to have particularly high open and click through rates!



SMS benchmarks & best practices

SMS Benchmarks:

ALL COMPANIES

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We analyzed over 1 million SMS sends:

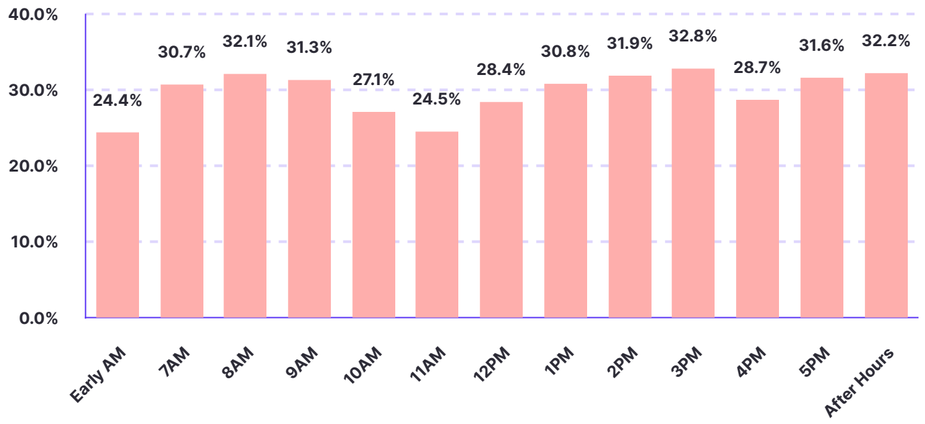
Median click rate

29%

Avg. opt-out rate

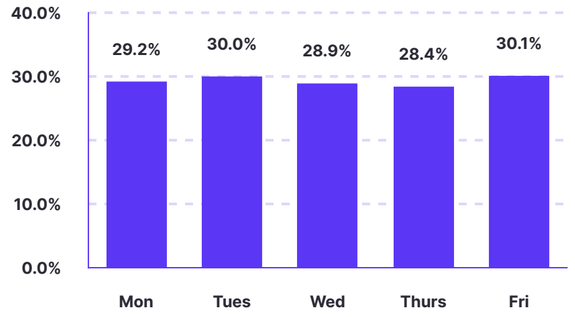
3%

Click rate vs. time



Click rate vs. day

Sender's time zone



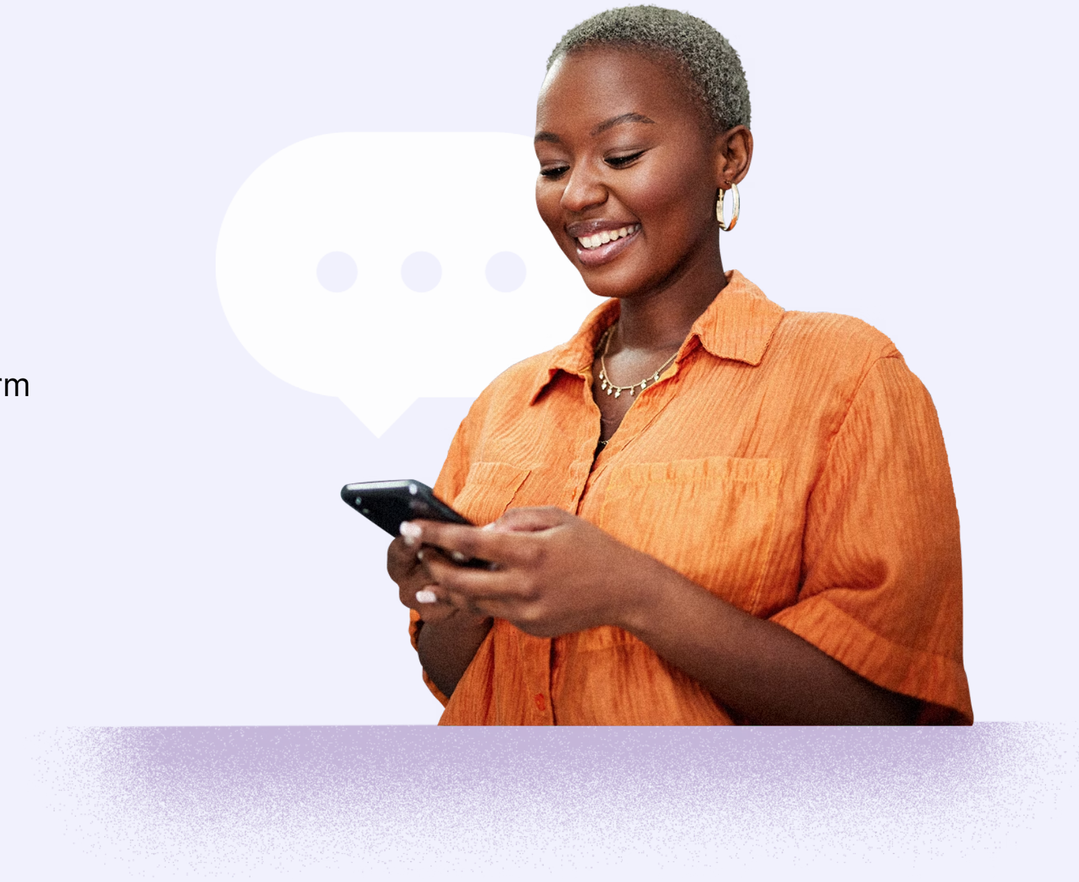
What’s the ideal send time for SMS?

Workshop

If you're optimizing for clicks,

mid-afternoon (3pm)

Avoid early morning and lunch time; click rates drop significantly. Keep messages short, include a single clear CTA, and always confirm opt-in status before sending!



Optimizing your SMS for clicks

Workshop

- **Keep your CTA front and center.** If you need your employees to take an action from your message, the link or button should appear early in the message so it doesn’t get lost.
- **Use a strong action verb when asking your employees to do something.** "Sign up," "Give feedback," or "RSVP" outperform vague phrases like "Click here" or "Learn more." The more specific, the better.
- **Timing matters a lot.** Emails sent early in the week, mid-morning tend to perform well, but test your audience specifically, as each industry is different!





Journeys benchmarks & best practices

Journeys Benchmarks:

ALL COMPANIES

Workshop

Journeys automate the messages you always mean to send (the welcome emails, the reminders, the moments worth celebrating) and make sure they go out at the right time, every time. Whether a message is triggered by a date, a list update, or a recurring schedule, Journeys take the manual work out of staying consistent.

Median open rate

83%

Avg. completion rate

96%

Avg. # of emails per journey

3

Journeys Use Cases

Workshop

Top Journey Use Cases

- **Weekly reminder**
- **New hire onboarding**
- **Open enrollment**
- **Company events**
- **Work anniversaries**
- **Birthdays**

More ways you can use Journeys:

IT/ Security trainings:
Why it's great: Drives compliance *without* annoying everyone.
Trigger: Added to "Training required" list

Return-from-leave:
(parental / medical / extended leave)
Why it's great: A high-empathy moment that's easy to overlook.
Trigger: Added to "Returning from leave" list

New hire "benefits + basics" drip (weeks 2–4)
Why it's great: People may forget what they learned about benefits on day one.
Trigger: Hire date + wait steps

Role change / promotion journey
Why it's great: Promotions are exciting… and chaotic. This adds clarity!
Trigger: Attribute change (Role/Level/Manager) or added to "Promoted" list

Employee lifecycle milestones
(90 days + 6 months)
Why it's great: Keeps retention and belonging from being "set it and forget it."
Trigger: Hire date

Optimizing your Journeys for clicks

Workshop

Match the message to where someone is in the journey. A click-through from an early awareness email means something different than one from a re-engagement sequence. Tailor CTAs to that intent.

Don't give people too many choices. One primary CTA per message generally outperforms two or three competing links. If you need secondary links, try creating a Page or utilizing your intranet or hub for this piece of comms instead!

Use wait steps strategically. Sending too fast in a sequence can overwhelm; too slow loses momentum. Look at where drop-off happens and experiment with timing between steps.

A/B test subject lines and CTAs systematically. Journeys are great for this because you can run variants at scale across a consistent audience segment!



NEW IN 2026!

BRANCHING

Workshop

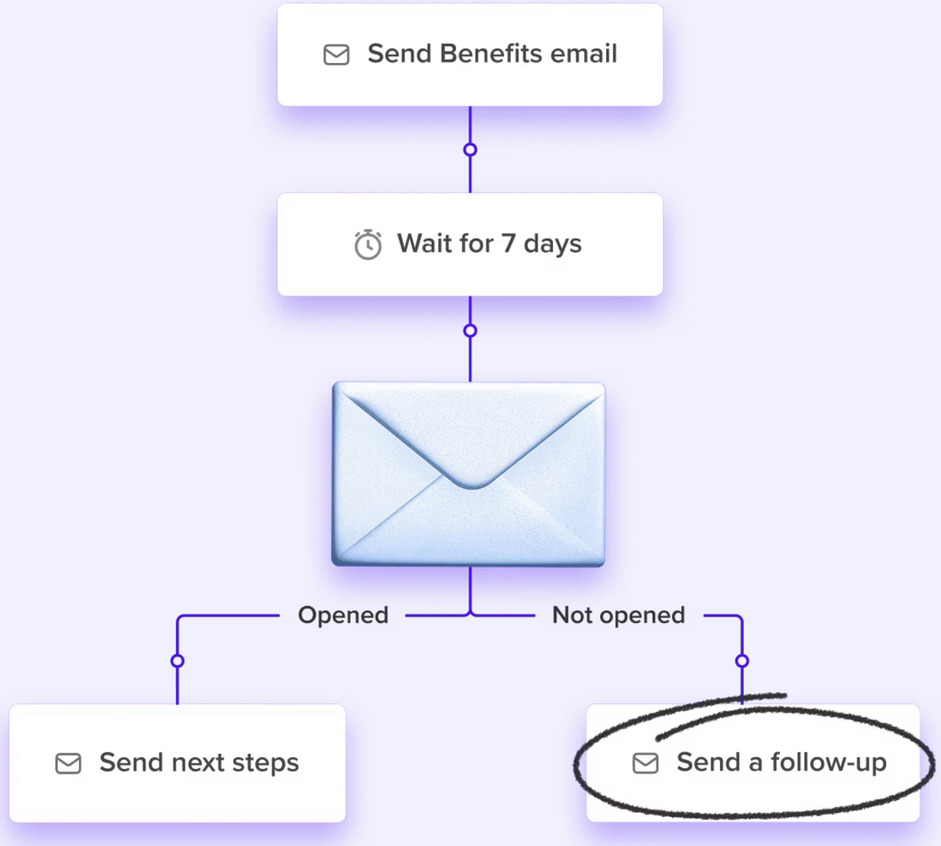
Each journey can branch based on what employees do (or don't do) what list they're on, or even which version of an email they should receive!

There are multiple ways to branch a Journey:

Behavior
Opened | Clicked | Ignored

Attributes
Role | Dept | Location

Actions
RSVP'd | Joined List | Subscribed



NEW IN 2026!

A/B TESTING

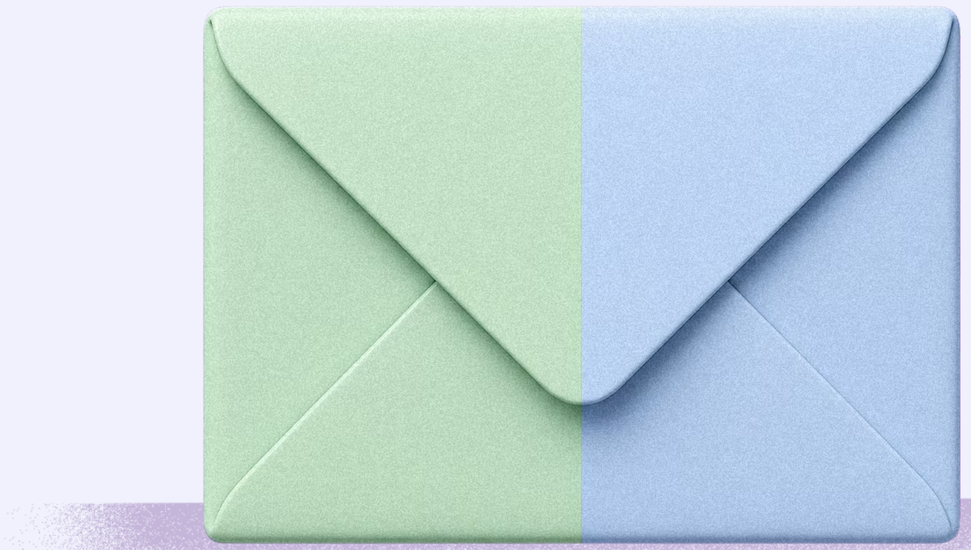
Workshop

Once you have branching set up in your journeys, you can also use them to test message variants. Send Variant A to half your audience and Variant B to the other half - then learn what actually drives action.

Try A/B testing:

- Subject lines *(the obvious one, but still the highest-leverage)*
- Opening line / first 50 words
- CTA wording and button color
- Email length (long-form vs. skimmable)
- Send time

Run one variable at a time so you know what made the difference, and apply the winner to your next send!





Pages best practices

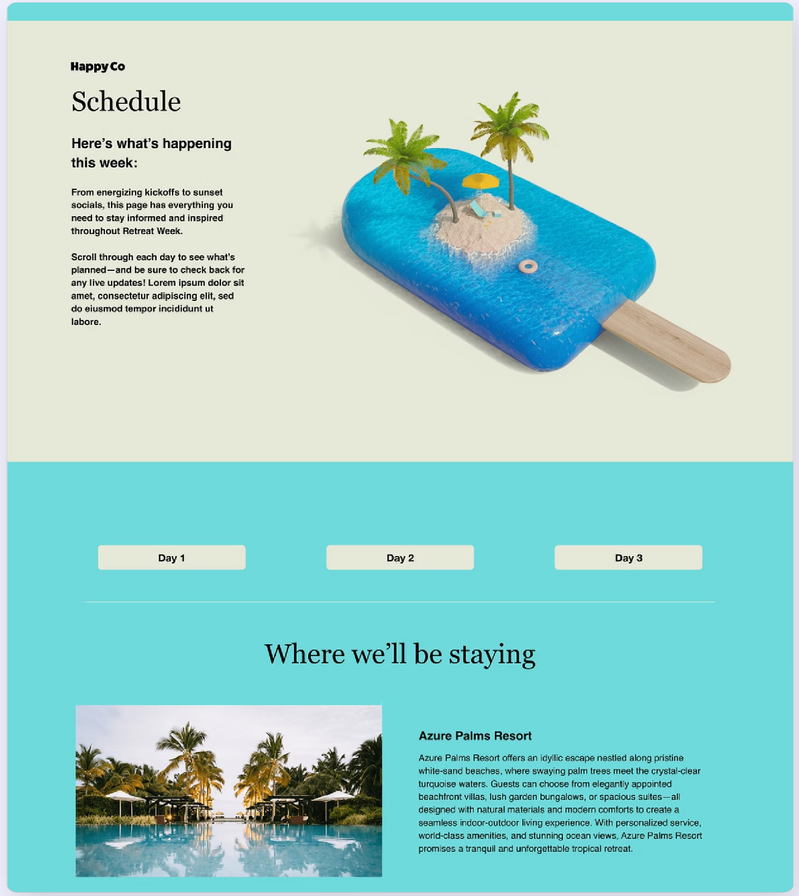
Top Page use cases

Workshop

Pages are branded, mobile-friendly landing pages that perfectly complement and extend your employee emails (no design or IT help required)! It's the perfect addition to your internal comms tech stack and keeps your emails short, sweet, and skimmable.

The most common use cases for Pages across Workshop customers are:

- **Company events & town halls**
  A central hub with agendas, speaker bios, FAQs, and post-event recaps (all in one place!)
- **Benefits & HR resource hubs**
  Think open enrollment guides, PTO policies, or wellness program details that employees can access anytime, without digging through their inboxes
- **Training & onboarding guides**
  Give new hires a branded, mobile-friendly home for everything they need in their first weeks on the job
- **Long-form memos or updates**
  Leadership messages, quarterly recaps, or strategy updates that deserve more breathing room



Optimizing your Pages for clicks

Workshop

If you want your employees to be able to easily find and take action on your Pages, try these tips:

1. Embed your Page link or preview card directly in your employee emails.

2. If you need employees to take action from your Page, include the primary CTA at the very top. The CTA should be visible without scrolling on both desktop and mobile (audit your pages on mobile view, not just desktop!).

3. Share the page link beyond emails. Share the link to your Page via QR code, Slack, SMS, digital signage, you name it!



Happy Co

Benefits Hub 2025

Get info on your latest benefits

Benefits Overview:

This year, we've upgraded our benefits buffet, and yes, it's all-you-can-enroll! From health plans with lower deductibles to new dental coverage that'll make your teeth sparkle , there's something for everyone. And guess what? We've added extra vision coverage that'll have you seeing 20/20 on your next tropical vacation (sunglasses included).

Plan Type	New Updates	Employee Favorites
Health	Lower premiums and out-of-pocket maximums!	Plan B - for those who like to keep it classic
Dental	Expanded coverage for orthodontics (hello, braces!)	Plan A - because who doesn't love savings?
Vision	More coverage for frames & contracts	Plan C - style and substance, all in one

Key Dates and Deadlines:

Open Enrollment begins: November 1st Deadline to make changes: November 15th (mark your calendar, set an alarm, train a parrot to remind you—whatever works!)

Remember, if you miss the deadline, the universe has spoken, and you'll be sticking with your current plan for another year. So, no pressure…but also, kinda pressure.

Open Enrollment Educational Resources

Not sure where to start? Here are some resources to help you navigate your options like a pro:

Q&A Sessions: Got burning questions? We've got answers. Drop by any of our live sessions to get the 411. (Bonus: Ask a question, and you may win a mystery prize!)



AI benchmarks & best practices

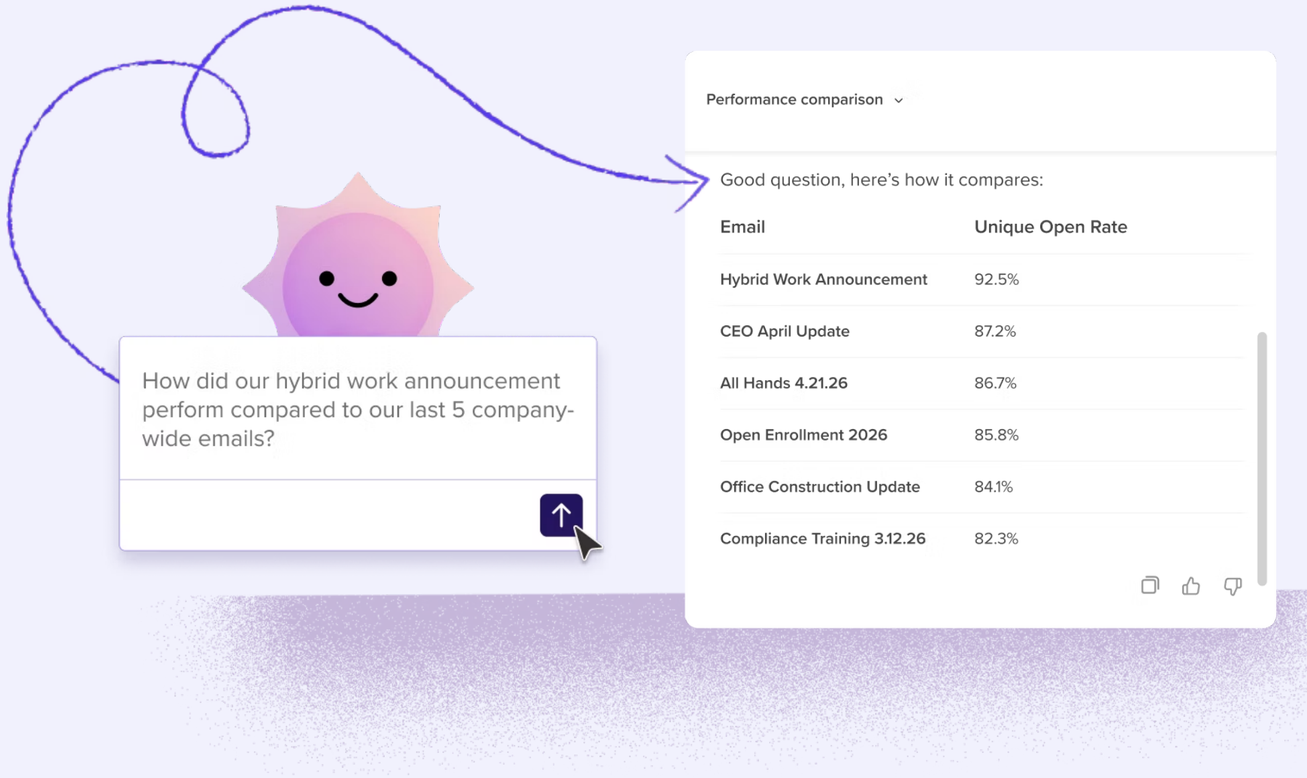
Cici: Your AI Communications Partner

Workshop

In the first half of 2026, we launched **Cici**, the only AI assistant built just for internal communicators! Cici helps Workshop users plan, create, analyze, and improve their comms by using information and analytics in their current campaigns, audiences, and engagement data.

Cici can help you:

- Draft email copy from a brief or bullet points
- Rewrite existing content in a different tone
- Generate cross-post summaries for Slack or Teams
- Suggest send timing based on engagement patterns
- Translate content for global audiences
- Analyze performance insights across all sends



PROMPT IDEAS FOR CICI

Workshop

- Write a subject line for a benefits enrollment reminder targeting employees in California.
- Rewrite this email in a warmer, more conversational tone for our retail associates.
- Who opened my email on Tuesday but didn't click?
- Show me my top engaged employees.
- Find recipients who haven't opened an email in 60 days.
- Which department was most engaged this month?
- Who never opens my emails?

The more specific you are, the better the output!

SUBJECT LINE & PREVIEW TEXT GENERATION

Workshop

AI-generated subject lines and preview text (powered by Cici, Workshop's built-in AI) are the most widely used AI features.

To get the most out of them:

Give context. Describe who the audience is, what action you want them to take, and what tone fits your company culture.

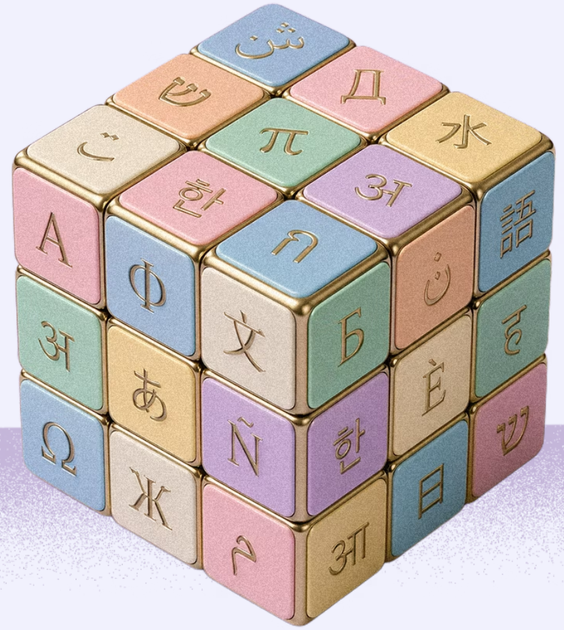
Use AI as a starting point. Edit for your organization's voice before sending!

Test AI-generated subject lines against your own. You may be surprised at what works!

75% of Workshop customers used AI features in 2025.

*Since its launch in early 2026, over 50% of customers are already using **Cici** (our AI assistant) regularly to create, send, manage, and measure their internal comms!*

Over 16,000 email translations were processed through Workshop's AI translation feature in 2025: a strong signal that global teams are using AI to close language barriers in internal comms! Manufacturing leads all industries with 5,500 translations, reflecting large, distributed workforces.





Internal communications benchmarks by industry

Email Benchmarks: Consumer Goods

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Tuesday at 10am

Read time breakdown

Read	72%
Skimmed	8%
Glanced	20%

Median open rate

64%

Avg. click rate

12%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Open Rate with Personalization

78%

Only 7% of emails sent by Consumer Goods organizations in 2025 used personalization, making it one of the biggest opportunities to increase open rate in 2026!

Open Rate w/o Personalization

57%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Consumer Goods

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

82%

Avg. click rate

19%

SMS

Avg. click rate

33%

Avg. opt-out rate

2%

Email Benchmarks: Education

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 7am

Read time breakdown

Read	83%
Skimmed	7%
Glanced	10%

Median open rate

69%

Avg. click rate

10%

Avg. click-through rate

14%

Open Rate with Personalization

72%

Open Rate w/o Personalization

66%

Email Benchmarks: Energy

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 10am

Read time breakdown

Read	70%
Skimmed	10%
Glanced	20%

Median open rate

73%

Avg. click rate

13%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Open Rate with Personalization

75%

Open Rate w/o Personalization

69%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Energy

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

75%

Avg. click rate

7%

SMS

Avg. click rate

18%

Avg. opt-out rate

2%

Email Benchmarks: Finance

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Wednesday at 10am

Read time breakdown

Read	72%
Skimmed	9%
Glanced	19%

Median open rate

77%

Avg. click rate

12%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Open Rate with Personalization

73%

Open Rate w/o Personalization

75%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Finance

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

65%

SMS

Avg. click rate

34%

industry leader!

Avg. opt-out rate

3%

#1 industry for AI tool utilization!

Email Benchmarks: Government

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 9am

Read time breakdown

Read	74%
Skimmed	10%
Glanced	16%

Median open rate

58%

Avg. click rate

7%

Avg. click-through rate

11%

After hours open rate drop

-15%

After-hours email performance drops sharply, so we can assume that government employees strongly prefer business-hours sends!

Other Comms Benchmarks: Government

Workshop

SMS

Avg. click rate

16%

Avg. opt-out rate

1%

Email Benchmarks: Healthcare

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 9am

Read time breakdown

Read	84%
Skimmed	6%
Glanced	10%

Median open rate

74%

Avg. click rate

10%

Avg. click-through rate

13%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Healthcare

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

69%

Avg. click rate

18%

SMS

Avg. click rate

29%

Avg. opt-out rate

2%

Published Page views

25,000+

Healthcare leads all industries with Pages published and Page views. Pages are an optimal channel for reaching healthcare employees!

Email Benchmarks: Manufacturing

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 9am

Median open rate

76%

Translated Emails

5,500

Avg. click rate

10%

Read time breakdown

Read	69%
Skimmed	11%
Glanced	20%

Avg. click-through rate

13%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Manufacturing

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

83%

Avg. click rate

21%

SMS

Avg. click rate

27%

Avg. opt-out rate

4%

#1 industry for email translations

Manufacturing leads all industries in AI translation usage, reflecting large, multilingual workforces.

Email Benchmarks: Media & Entertainment

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Tuesday at 9am

Read time breakdown

Read	73%
Skimmed	10%
Glanced	17%

Median open rate

69%

Avg. click rate

11%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Open Rate with Personalization

76%

Media & Entertainment sees the largest lift in open rates when personalization tokens are used. Uniquely, after-hours sends outperform business hours in this industry.

Open Rate w/o Personalization

65%

Email Benchmarks: Non-Profits

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Friday at 9am

Non-Profits uniquely peak on Fridays (22% of sends), unlike most industries that prefer earlier weekdays. CTR has increased, showing greater audience engagement despite lower average open rates (81% in 2025).

Read time breakdown

Read	73%
Skimmed	9%
Glanced	19%

Median open rate

72%

Avg. click rate

11%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Email Benchmarks: Professional Services

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 9am

Median open rate

72%

Avg. click rate

12%

Avg. click-through rate

16%

Open rate after hours increase

24%

After-hours sends outperform business hours, suggesting a workforce that reads emails outside of core hours. Glanced rate is high, so it may be worth testing shorter, punchier emails!

Read time breakdown

Read	73%
Skimmed	9%
Glanced	17%

Email Benchmarks: Restaurants & Food Services

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Monday at 10am

Median open rate

65%

Open rate after hours increase

12%

Avg. click rate

12%

Read time breakdown

Read	78%
Skimmed	10%
Glanced	13%

Avg. click-through rate

18%

Email Benchmarks: Restaurants & Food Services

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

72%

Avg. click rate

17%

Email Benchmarks: Technology

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Wednesday at 9am

Median open rate

68%

Open rate after hours drop

-17%

Avg. click rate

11%

Avg. click-through rate

17%

Read time breakdown

Read	79%
Skimmed	10%
Glanced	11%

Technology employees read emails thoroughly! Click rate improved in 2026, despite lower open rates. Technology ranks 3rd for AI feature adoption, proving AI is core to how tech-company communicators work.

Other Comms Benchmarks: Technology

Workshop

Journeys

Avg. open rate

89%

Avg. click rate

40%

SMS

Avg. click rate

22%

Avg. opt-out rate

2%

AI

Top AI feature used:
Email translations

Email Benchmarks: Travel & Hospitality

Workshop

Peak send day & time

Thursday at 9am

Read time breakdown

Read	80%
Skimmed	7%
Glanced	13%

Median open rate

71%

Avg. click rate

11%

Avg. click-through rate

15%

Other Comms Benchmarks: Travel & Hospitality

Workshop

SMS

Avg. click rate

21%

Avg. opt-out rate

2%



How to create your own benchmarks & best practices

Workshop

Forget chasing “perfect” numbers, your benchmarks should work for you.

It’s tempting to chase industry benchmarks, but the numbers that matter most are the ones that reflect your own team’s progress.

Open rates, clicks, and engagement metrics are signals. They help you understand what your employees actually pay attention to, what they skip, and where your messages could be clearer or more helpful. Instead of comparing your results to organizations with completely different cultures or workforces, start by measuring your own baseline and building from there.

If your open rate sits around 60% and continues to climb, that’s meaningful progress! If employees are clicking more links or engaging with content more than they did last quarter, you’re moving in the right direction. Internal communications works best when you measure improvement over time.

The right tools make that process much easier. Platforms designed for internal communications (like **Workshop**) bring your analytics directly into your workflow. You can quickly see who’s reading your emails, which links get the most clicks, and where engagement starts to taper off (all without wrestling with complicated reports or spreadsheets!).

Even better, you can break down your data by department, role, or location to understand what resonates with different parts of your organization. That makes it easier to experiment with new ideas, refine your content, and track how your communication evolves over time!

The goal isn’t just better metrics, it’s clearer, more effective communication that helps your team stay informed and connected.

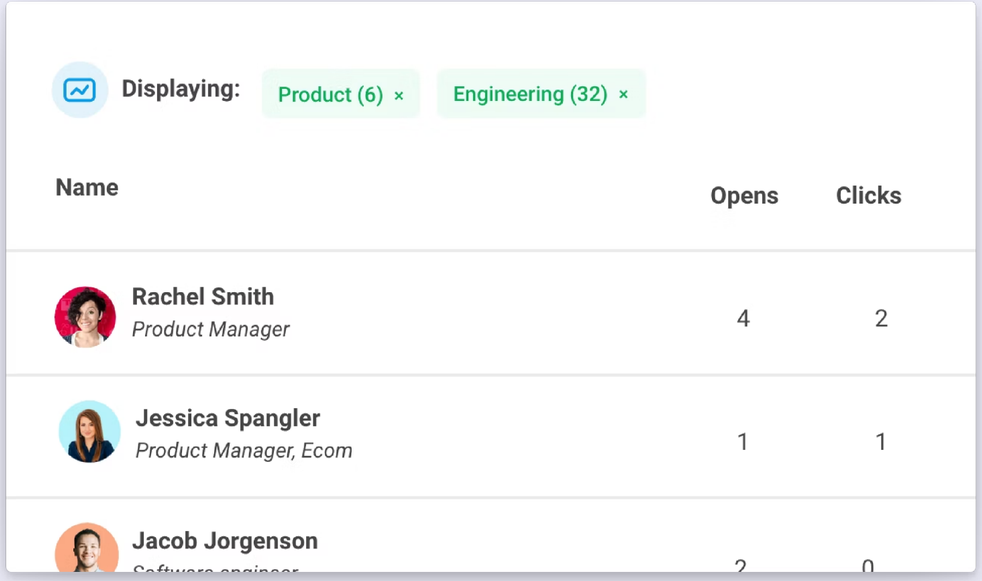


Benchmarks by department, role, location, etc.

Workshop

One of the most powerful things you can do with your comms data is segment it. Instead of looking at company-wide averages, ask:

- Are certain departments consistently less engaged with a specific type of email?
- Do employees in different locations or time zones open emails at different rates?
- Is your CEO actually reading the weekly all-hands recap?
- Has one specific team's engagement improved significantly after a change in your comms approach?



If you want to experiment, try A/B testing in Journeys! Carve off one department and send them a different version of your next newsletter. Compare their metrics to the rest of the company. You'll start to see differences immediately!

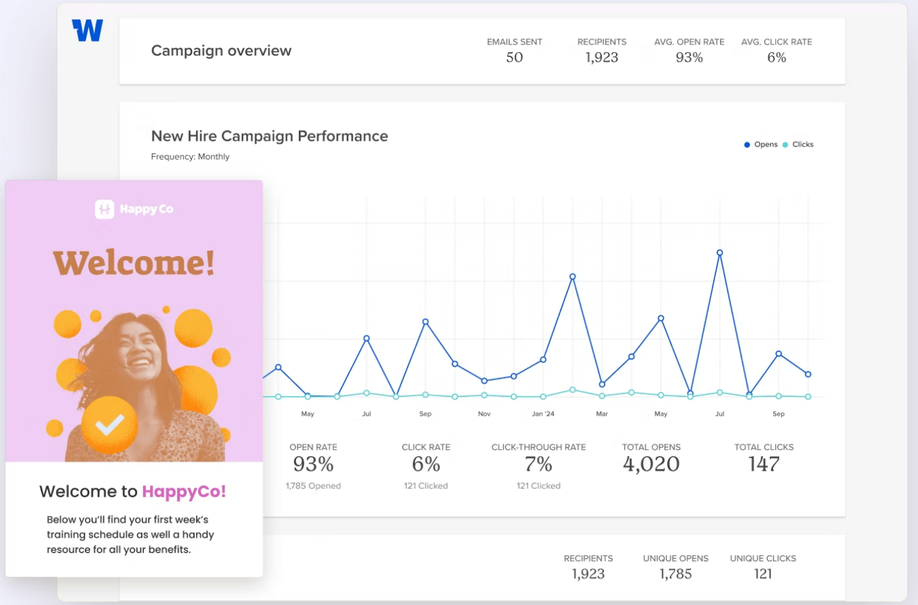
Workshop and Cici make this easy! Just ask Cici, or you can create segmented distribution lists, compare analytics by group, and track trends over time within a single dashboard right inside Workshop.

Campaign data

Workshop

Campaigns give you a bird's-eye view of how an ongoing series is trending over time (open rate, CTR, and engagement) across all sends in a sequence. This is especially valuable for recurring campaigns like monthly newsletters, CEO emails, or new hire onboarding series.

You can do this manually by pulling your data into a spreadsheet, or you can just ask Cici! It typically takes at least 3–5 sends before you can start drawing meaningful conclusions.



Look for patterns:

- Is engagement dropping off after a certain number of sends?
- Did a subject line change drive a notable spike?
- Is our performance trending up or down?

Using data & benchmarks to answer questions

Workshop

Analyzing data isn't always the easiest task, is it? Sometimes staring at a spreadsheet or chart can seem incredibly overwhelming.

Here's a shortlist of a few questions that can help you get at the heart of all of this information (and provide you with some awesome insights to share with leadership!)



- What was the most clicked link in this email?
- Which department was least likely to open this newsletter?
- Are employees opening this email up on their phone, or desktop?
- Are there any surprises in this data?
- What subject line has performed the best in this campaign?
- What kind of segmentation might improve our results?
- Is this information relevant to this particular employee or department?
- What have I learned here that I can apply to my next send?
- Which emails in the last quarter drove the most clicks, and what did they have in common?
- Are there segments of my workforce that are consistently under-engaged, and why?

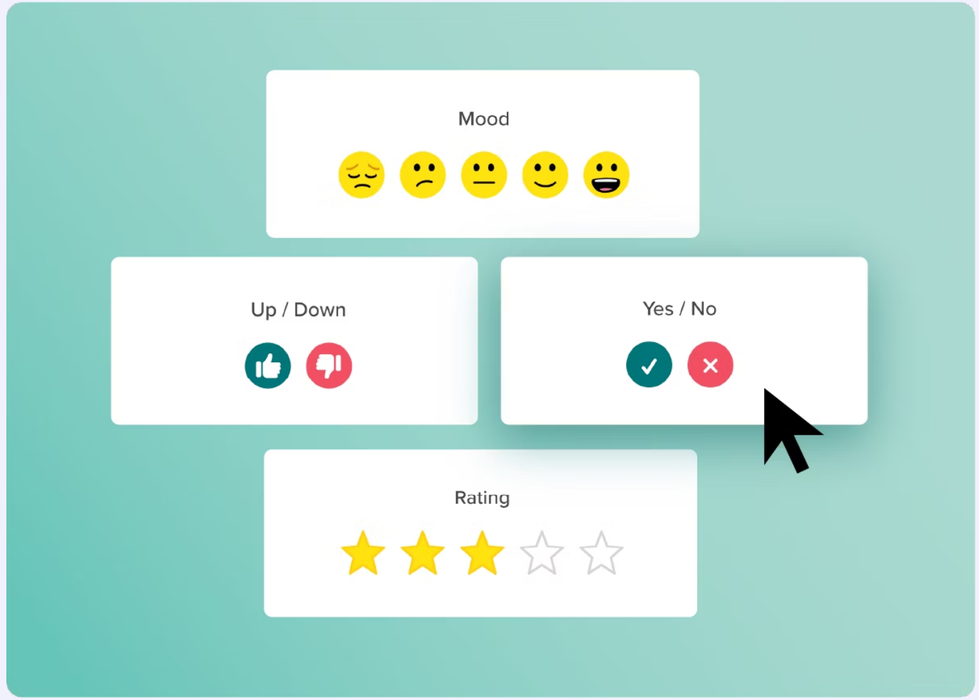
Don’t forget about qualitative feedback!

Workshop

Never discount the power of qualitative data. If employees consistently tell you they love a particular section of your newsletter, or your all-hands recap is the most-read thing you send, count it! Those are real measures of success. Including a quick pulse survey to gather feedback at the end of each newsletter is a simple way to quantify this!

Create a "smile file": a running collection of positive feedback, notable replies, and moments where your comms made a real difference. These are invaluable for sharing with leadership and for staying motivated on tough days.

If employees are regularly requesting a specific type of email, or if a topic keeps coming up in surveys and town halls, that's a signal. Let qualitative feedback inform your content strategy too, not just your metrics!



Workshop

Modern internal comms in 30 days (or less)

Learn more here →

