

2018

Email Marketing Benchmark Report



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www.signupto.com/email-marketing-benchmarks/

Thank you.

Welcome to the 2018 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

When you're running a business it can be difficult to find meaningful data to measure your marketing against. Reports on big businesses and US firms just aren't that useful for most organisations. That's why we created our Email Marketing Benchmarks.

This 2018 report is our 10th annual report. We hope that it continues to be a valuable resource to help you review and improve your email marketing performance.



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Introduction - background

Background and scope

For our 2018 report we analysed over 1 billion emails (over 20 billion individual data points) sent through the Sign-Up.to email marketing platform between 1st January and 31st December 2017. These are sent from a range of predominantly UK based SME and enterprise sized organisations and public sector departments.

Permission

This research is based on Permission Marketing credentials. All campaigns included in the results are sent to fully opted-in lists (never to 3rd party or purchased lists).

Date terminology

For the purposes of this report, data is referred to by the year in which it has been collected - hence data for the 2018 report is referred to as 2017.

Industry / sector classifications

This 2018 report documents campaigns according to 29 different industry/sector classifications. These sectors have been self-selected by the sender organisations. Some aspects of the report also include data from an additional 'null' classification (i.e. where no specific industry/sector has been set by the sender). This distinction is indicated where appropriate.

- Events / Music / Theatre/Club
- Music /Artist / DJ / Band / Management
- Restaurant / Hospitality
- Estate Agent
- Health /Beauty /Spa / Wellbeing
- Travel
- Publishing
- Banking / Finance
- Education / Training
- Charity / Non-Profit
- Public Relations
- Legal / Accounting
- Online Services
- Retail B2B
- Retail B2C
- Other Service B2C
- Other Service B2B
- Recruitment / HR
- Sales / Marketing / Design
- Government (Local / National)
- Wholesale
- Engineering / Manufacturing
- IT
- Community
- Sport / Leisure
- Medical
- TV / Film / Radio
- Fashion
- Construction / Tradesman

Introduction - definitions

Definitions - standard metrics

Unless otherwise specified all of the analysis reported here is based on **unique** user actions - e.g. in the calculation of open rate we only count the same recipient opening a campaign once.

- **Open rate:** the proportion of delivered emails that were opened (measured by an image load or link click); i.e. number opened / delivered.
- **Clicks or click-through rate:** the proportion of delivered emails that had a link clicked; i.e. unique clicks / delivered (sometimes referred to as CTR)
- **Unsubscribe rate:** the proportion of delivered emails that result in an unsubscribe; i.e. unsubscribes / delivered.
- **Bounced:** messages returned by the receiving mail server as undeliverable.
- **Delivered:** messages accepted for delivery by the receiving mail server (total sent - bounced).

Definitions - derived metrics

We also document 'derived' rates as these are often a better way to compare some aspects of campaign performance. Again, unless specified only **unique** user actions are counted.

- **Click-to-open (CTO) rate:** the proportion of opened emails that had a link clicked; i.e. unique clicks / opens.
- **Unsubscribes-to-opens (UTO) rate:** the proportion of opened emails that result in an unsubscribe; i.e. unsubscribes / opens.

We use these 'x-to-opens' figures as ways to compare the performance of the actual campaign content because they indicate what happens after the first objective of someone opening the campaign has been achieved.

Both standard and derived rates are typically expressed as a percentage. Unless specified (e.g. as a % change) any changes are typically specified as a difference between 2 percentage values.

Highlights - 2017

2017 Summary

| | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 25.44% | Open rate |
| 4.76% | Click-through rate |
| 0.47% | Unsubscribe rate |
| 12.50% | Click-to-open rate |
| 2.52% | Unsubscribe-to-open-rate |

Methodology

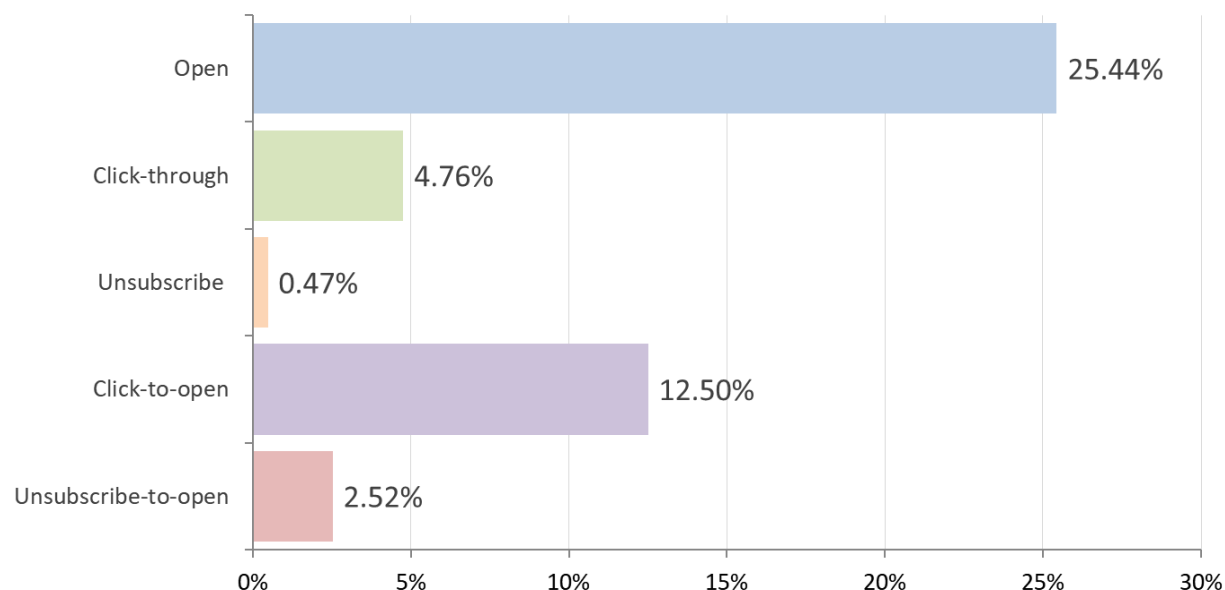
The open, click-through, unsubscribe, click-to-open (CTO) and unsubscribe-to-open (UTO) rates represent the overall average values of all sectors.

The overall values presented here are calculated as the average of the results of each sector. As with all of the results presented in this report, in order to eliminate statistical outliers any companies with zero or small send volumes are removed in the average calculations for each sector.

Standard Metrics

The graph below shows a summary of the 5 headline performance metrics of the Benchmark Report - open, click-through, unsubscribe, click-to-open (CTO) and unsubscribe-to-open (UTO) rates.

2017 summary - open, click-through, unsubscribe, CTO and UTO



Highlights - 2 year trend

Changes in the last 12 months

Open rate: increase from 24.79% to 25.44%
Click-through rate: increase from 4.19% to 4.76%
Unsubscribe rate: decrease from 0.49% to 0.47%
CTO rate: increase from 11.88% to 12.50%
UTO rate: decrease from 2.59% to 2.52%

Improved open and click performance

Increases in open, click-through and click-to-open rates all indicate improved performance on the 2016 data. Open rate increased by 2.62%, click-through rate by 13.6% and click-to-open rate by 5.22%.

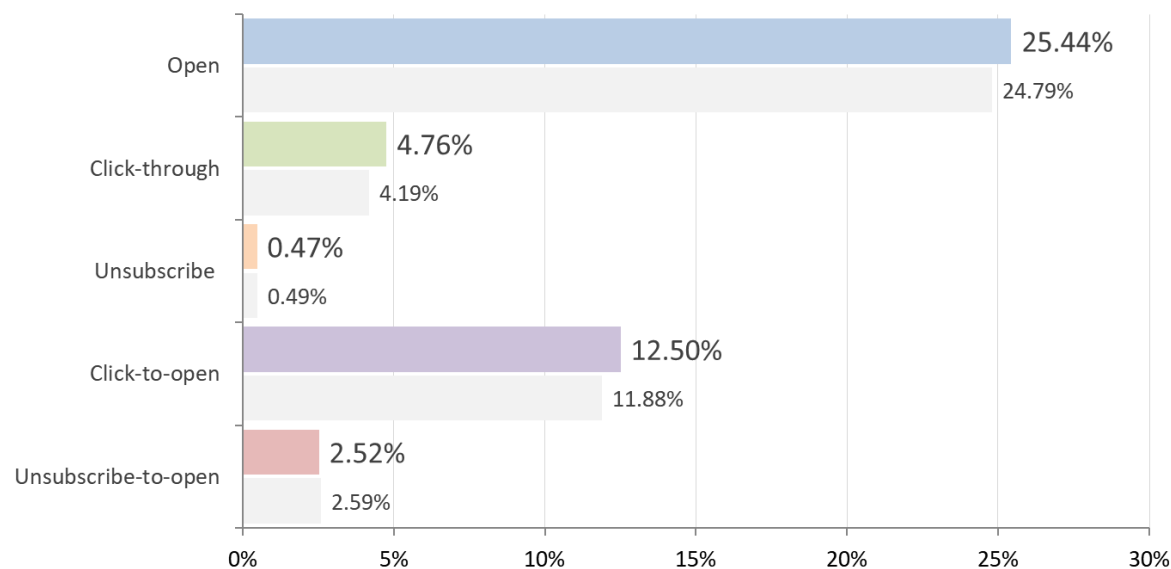
Improved unsubscribe performance

Decreases in unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rates also indicate improved performance on the 2016 data. Unsubscribe rate decreased by 4.08% and unsubscribe-to-open rate decreased by 2.70%.

Changes in the last 12 months

The graph below shows open, click-through, unsubscribe, click-to-open and unsubscribe-to-open rates for 2016 (grey) and 2017 (coloured).

Standard performance metrics - 2016-2017



Highlights - 6 year trend

Changes over the last 6 reports

The graph opposite shows the historical trend of each performance metric over the last 6 years, 2012-2017. Data for 2012-2016 is shown left to right in grey. Data for 2017 is shown coloured.

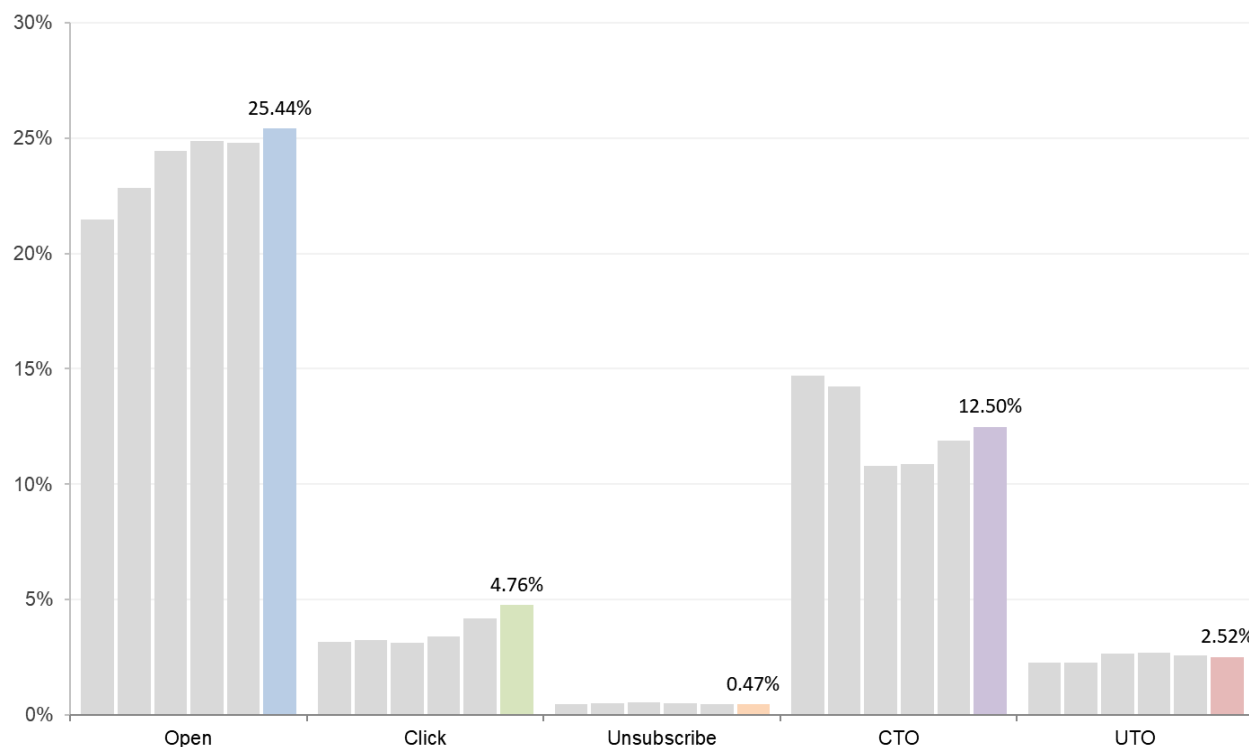
Improved open and click performance

At 25.44% and 4.76% respectively the open and click-through rates for 2017 both continue the upward trend and show a 6 year high. Whilst not a high, at 12.50% click-to-open rate continues a 4 year increasing trend.

Improved unsubscribe performance

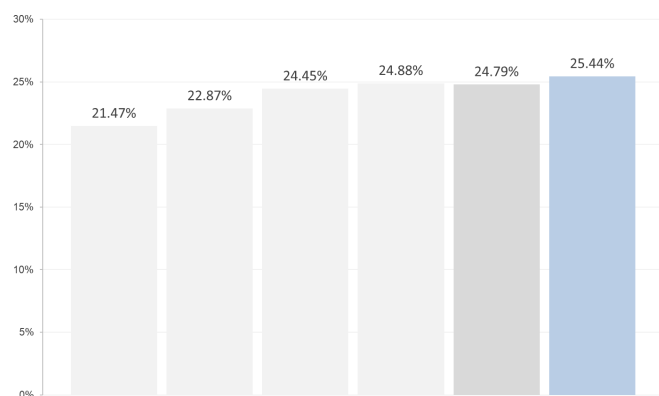
At 0.47% and 2.52% respectively, unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rates continue 4 and 3 year downward trends, with unsubscribe rate equalling the previous 6 year low.

Key metrics - 6 year trend

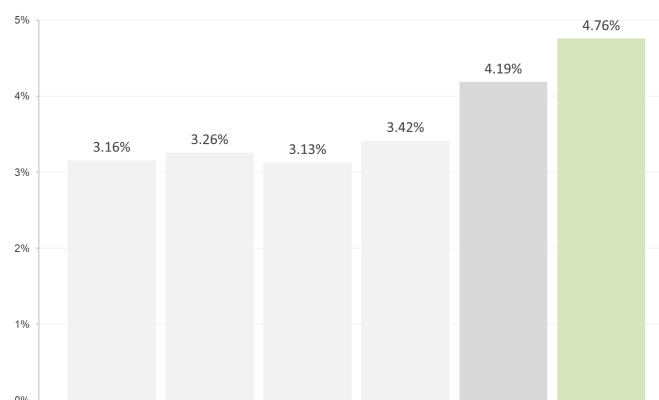


Highlights - 6 year trend

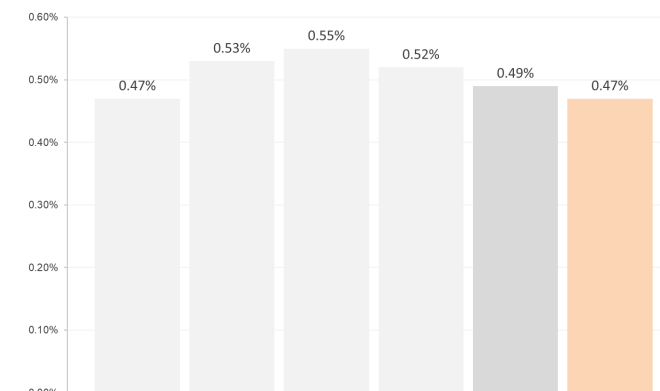
Open rate



Click-through rate



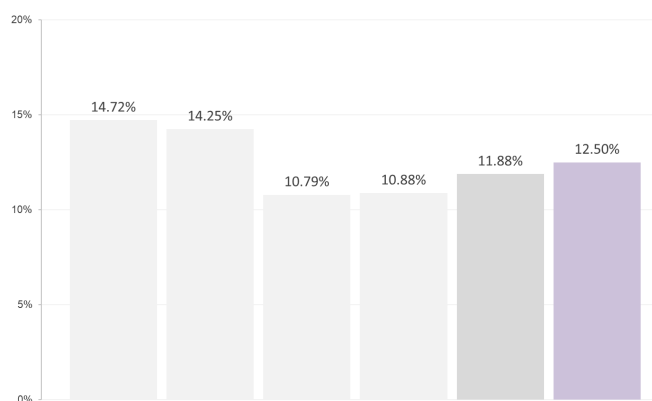
Unsubscribe rate



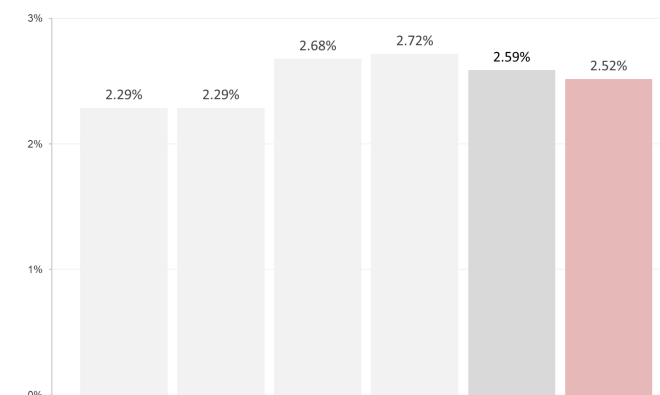
Changes over the last 6 reports

The graphs here show further detail of the historical trend of each individual standard performance metric over the last 6 years, 2012-2017. Data for 2012-2016 is shown left to right in grey. 2017 is shown coloured.

Click-to-open rate



Unsubscribe-to-open rate



Open rate - by sector

Summary 2017

25.44% Average
37.83% Maximum
16.92% Minimum

14 sectors above average

15 sectors below average

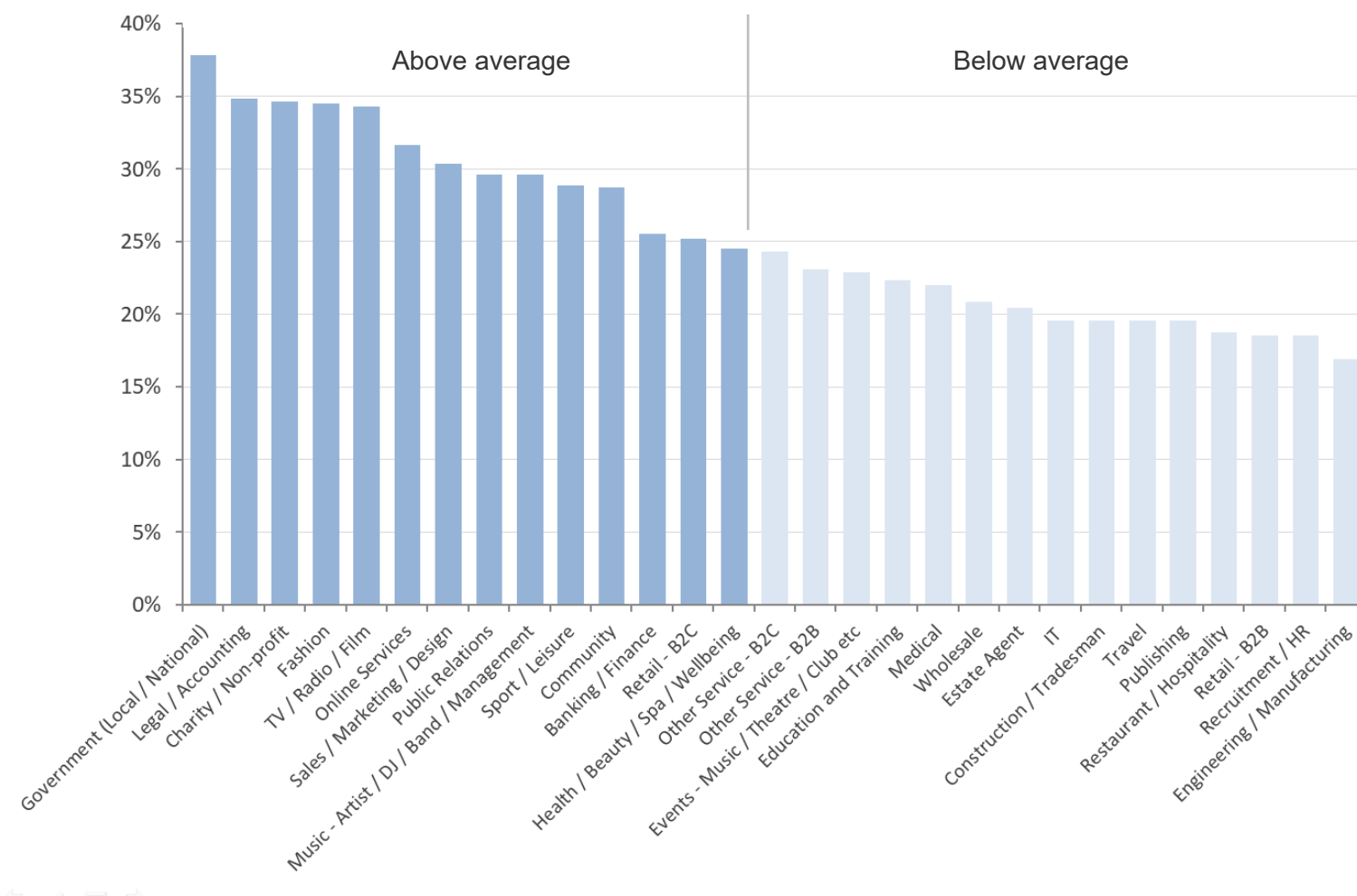
Top performing sectors

- Government (Local / National)
- Legal / Accounting
- Charity / Non-profit

Bottom performing sectors

- Retail - B2B
- Recruitment / HR
- Engineering / Manufacturing

Open rate by sector



Open rate - 3 year trend

Open rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows open rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015-2017.

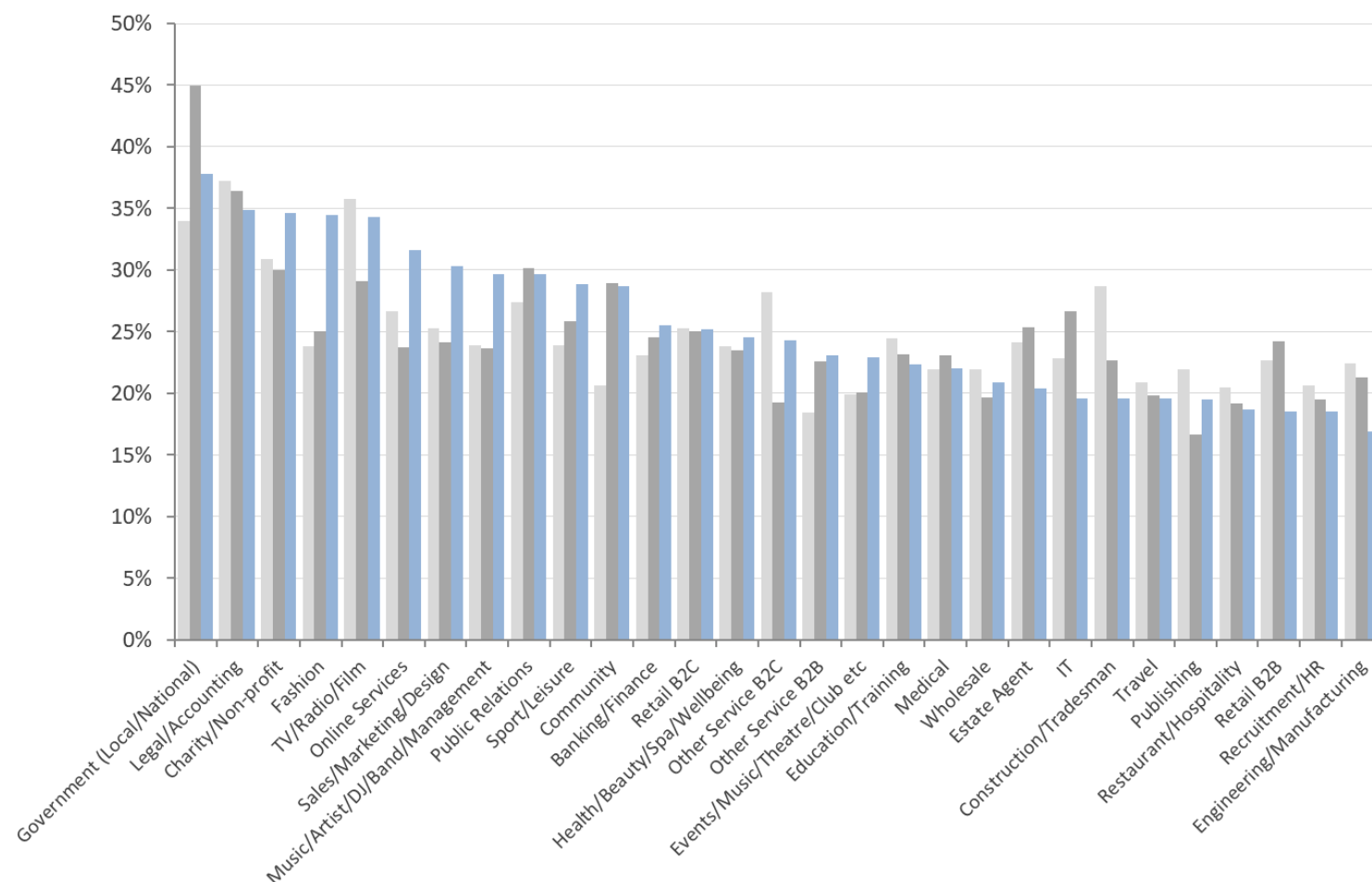
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Blue

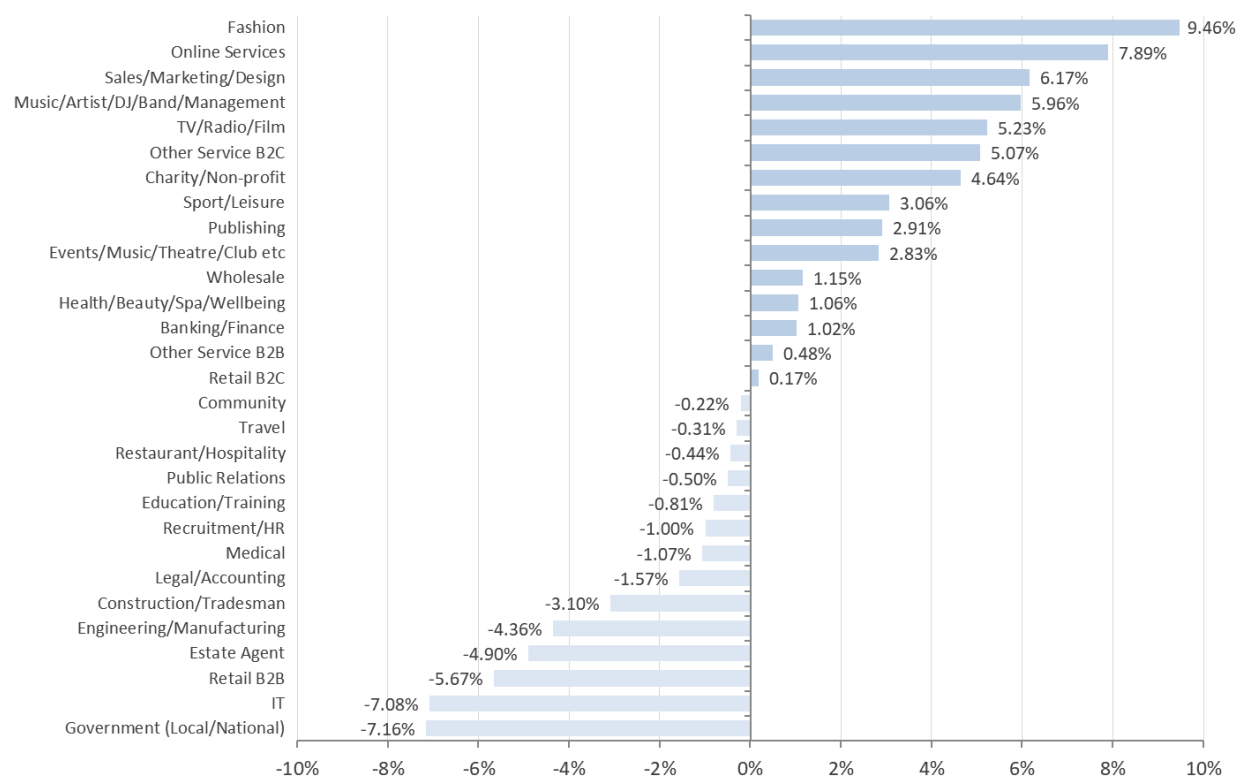
The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest open rate sectors of 2017.

Open rate by sector - 2015-2017



Open rate - 2016-2017

Open rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in open rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

15 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Fashion (+9.46%)
- Online Services (+7.89%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (+6.17%)

Reduced performance

14 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Government (Local / National) (-7.16%)
- IT (-7.08%)
- Retail - B2B (-5.67%)

Open rate - considerations

What impacts open rate?

Although we wouldn't generally consider open rate as an exclusive measure of campaign engagement it's a very common performance metric and often the first 'go-to' performance indicator.

- Sender recognition
- Subject line
- Timing

Sender recognition

Getting your subscribers to recognise and trust you as an email sender is a first step in getting your campaigns opened. As a genuine email marketer, SPF (Sender Policy Framework) and Sender ID should also be of interest. These are two slightly different ways that servers receiving email can verify that the person sending the message is allowed to send emails from that domain name. Consistently using a from-address and sender name will also allow you to build up recognition and an ongoing level of trust.

Subject line

Subject line is the second critical element in getting your email campaigns noticed and opened. Even if they recognise the sender, the subject line is your subscriber's first impression of what is likely to follow. A general rule of thumb is to keep it short and interesting. If you can capture your reader's attention and imagination in this short piece of text then an open is much more likely. Test it too. One of the simplest yet highest return improvements you can make to your email campaign is the testing of different subject lines.

Timing

Successful timing of an email delivery is an important part of being relevant. A large proportion of emails are opened soon after delivery so this is an important window of opportunity. Catching your reader at a time when the message is both convenient and timely can have a big impact on whether or not it is opened. Understanding the relationship between your objective, your audience and the nature of your content will provide valuable insight into when might be an optimum time to send your campaign.

Click-through rate - by sector

Summary 2017

4.76% Average
17.45% Maximum
1.26% Minimum

7 sectors above average
22 sectors below average

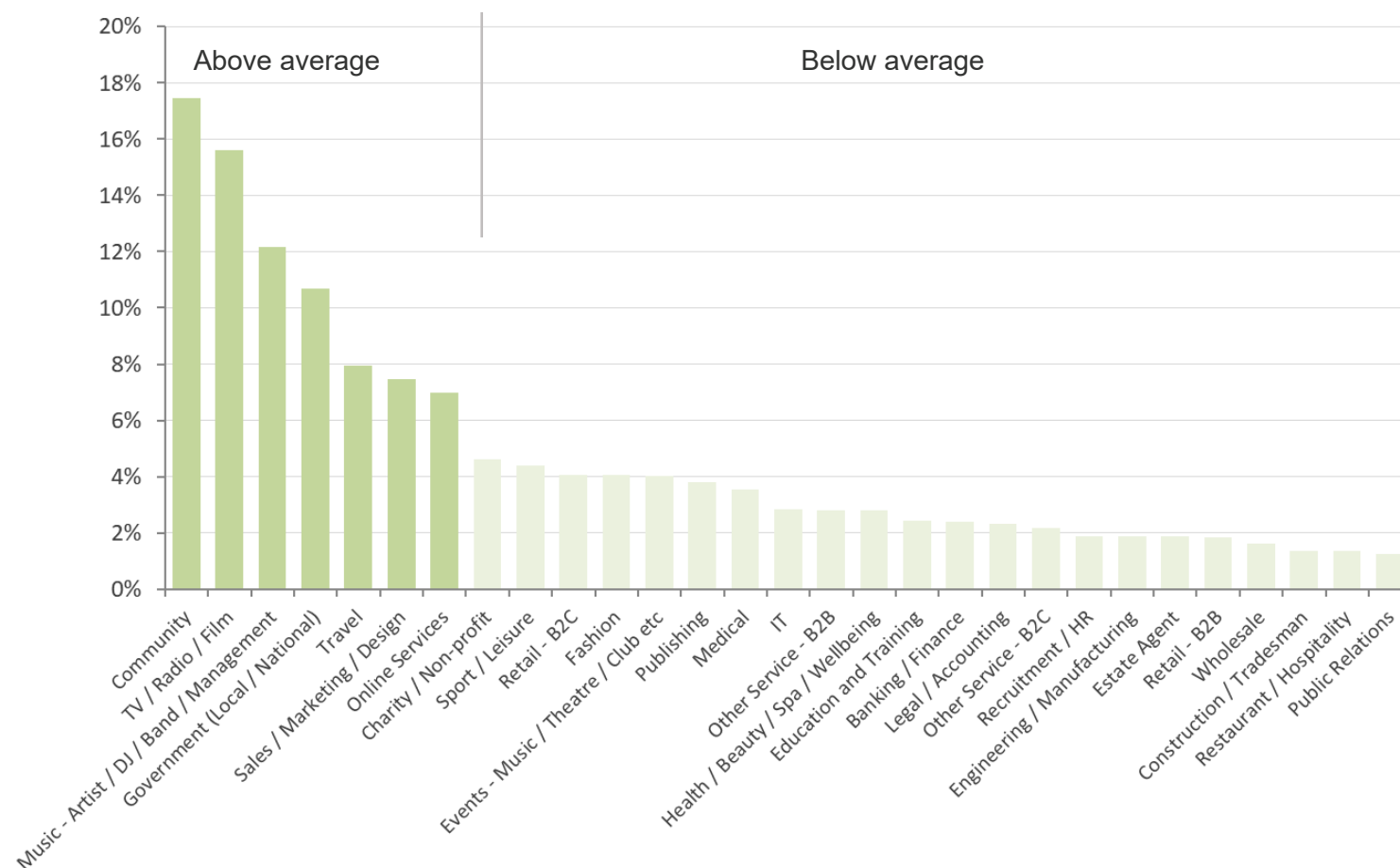
Top performing sectors

- Community
- TV / Radio / Film
- Music - Artist / DJ / Band /

Bottom performing sectors

- Construction / Tradesman
- Restaurant / Hospitality
- Public Relations

Click-through rate by sector



Click-through rate - 3 year trend

Click-through rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows click-through rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015-2017.

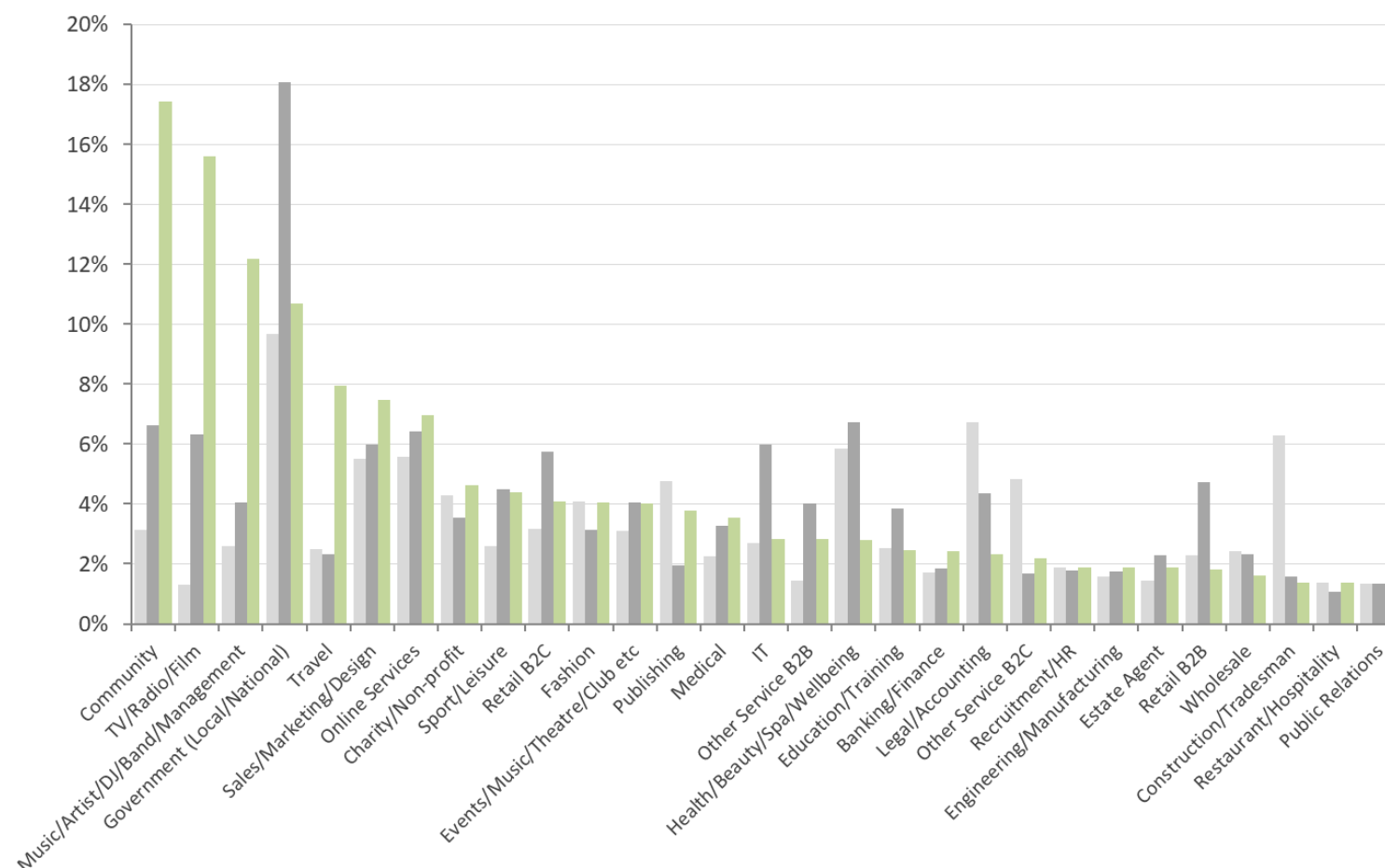
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Green

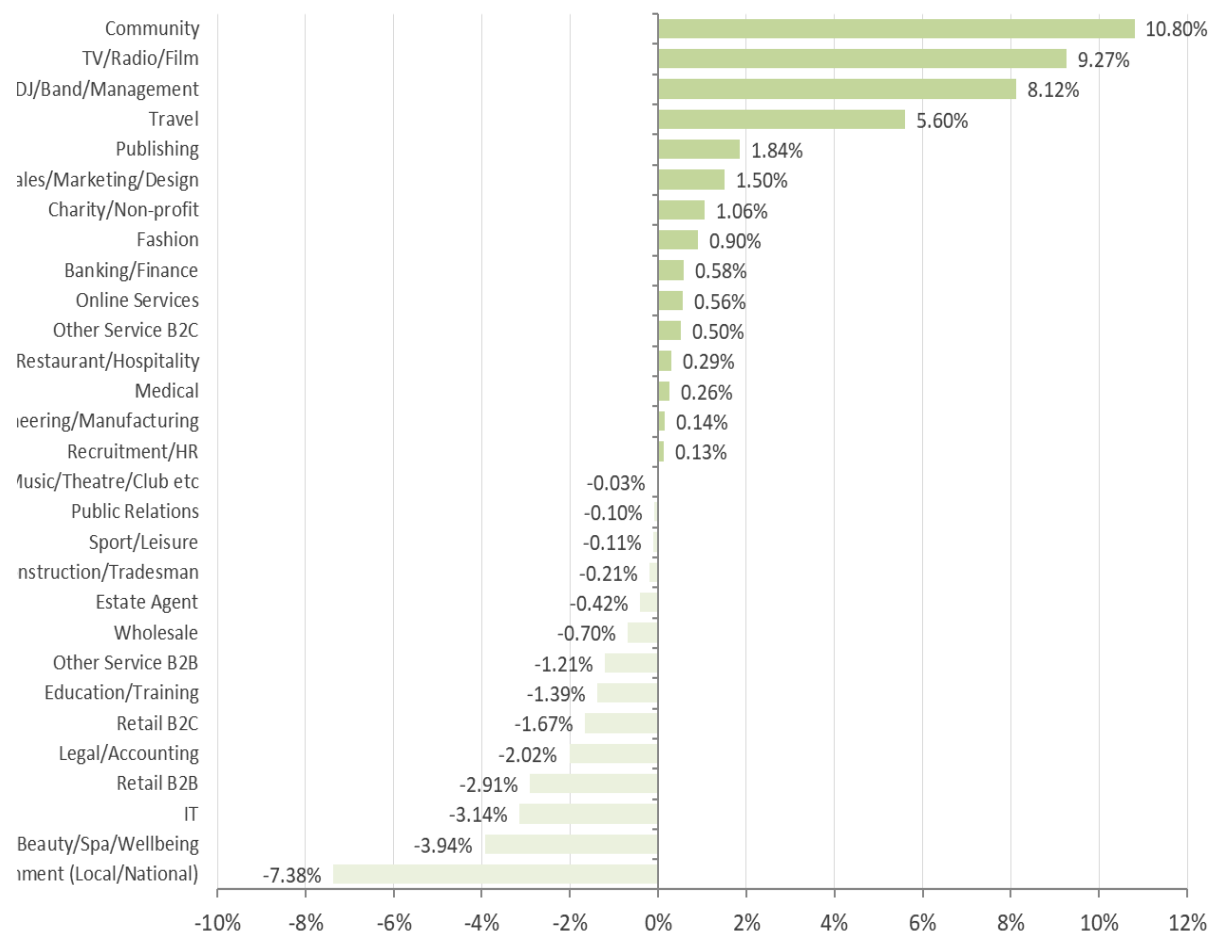
The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest click-through rate sectors of 2017.

Click-through rate by sector - 2015-2017



Click-through rate - 2016-2017

Click-through rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in click-through rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

15 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in click-through rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Community (+10.8%)
- TV / Radio / Film (+9.27%)
- Music - Artist / DJ / Band / Management (+8.12%)

Reduced performance

14 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in click-through rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- IT (-3.14%)
- Health / Beauty / Spa / Wellbeing (-3.94%)
- Government (Local / National) (-7.38%)

Click-through rate - considerations

What impacts click-through rate?

Analysing click-through performance is a very common if fairly elementary way of measuring campaign engagement. Not all campaigns have additional linked content, but many do and a reader who goes on to investigate further content is a positive sign of interest.

- Content
- Relevance
- Call to action

Content

It's important to understand that people commonly skim read content. This applies to all content, but it's especially evident with websites and emails. Many of your audience will be reading your email on a mobile or a tablet so make it quick and easy for your readers to find and digest the key points of your message. If you can do this well the core of your message will still be conveyed even if it is not read in detail.

Relevance

We engage with content which is relevant to us as individuals. Even adding a simple personalised greeting can add a sense of relevance. Precision marketing allows you to profile your audience according to various characteristics and then target content which is more relevant to them. Techniques like Dynamic Content can do this automatically but even a relatively simple segmentation of audience and content will improve relevance and have a dramatic effect on performance.

Call to action

A call to action that is easy to find, easy to understand and easy to click will increase the likelihood that this action will be taken. Text links can be fiddly, especially on a mobile device. Images can be good but it's not always clear that the image is also a call to action and images are not always displayed. Dedicated HTML call to action buttons work best as they are always displayed even when images are not. Make them easy to find and include a concise, clear and irresistible instruction to act.

Unsubscribe rate - by sector

Summary 2017

0.47% Average
1.65% Maximum
0.12% Minimum

10 sectors above average

19 sectors below average

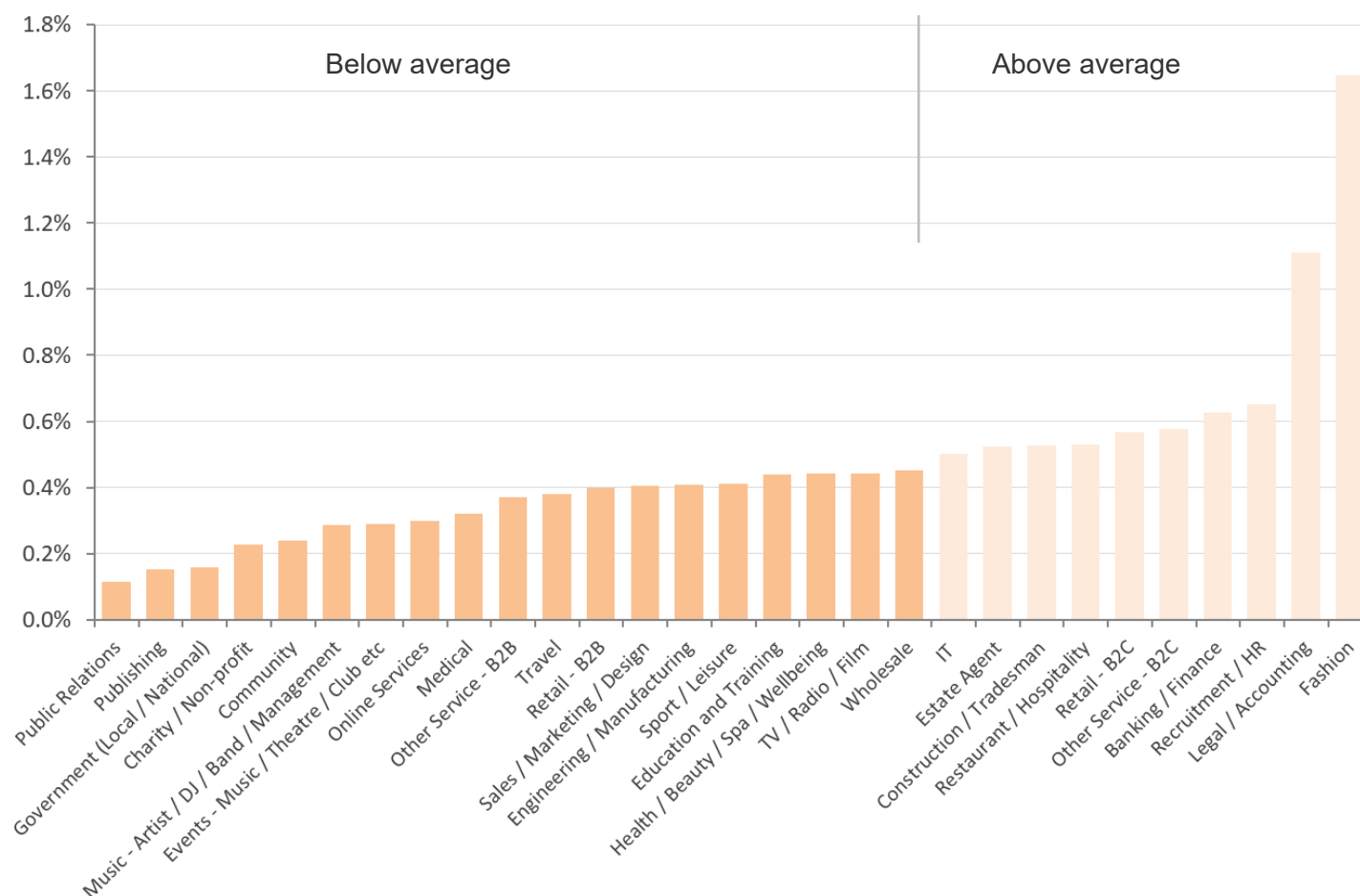
Top performing sectors

- Public Relations
- Publishing
- Government (Local / National)

Bottom performing sectors

- Recruitment / HR
- Legal / Accounting
- Fashion

Unsubscribe rate by sector



Unsubscribe rate - 3 year trend

Unsubscribe rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows unsubscribe rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015-2017.

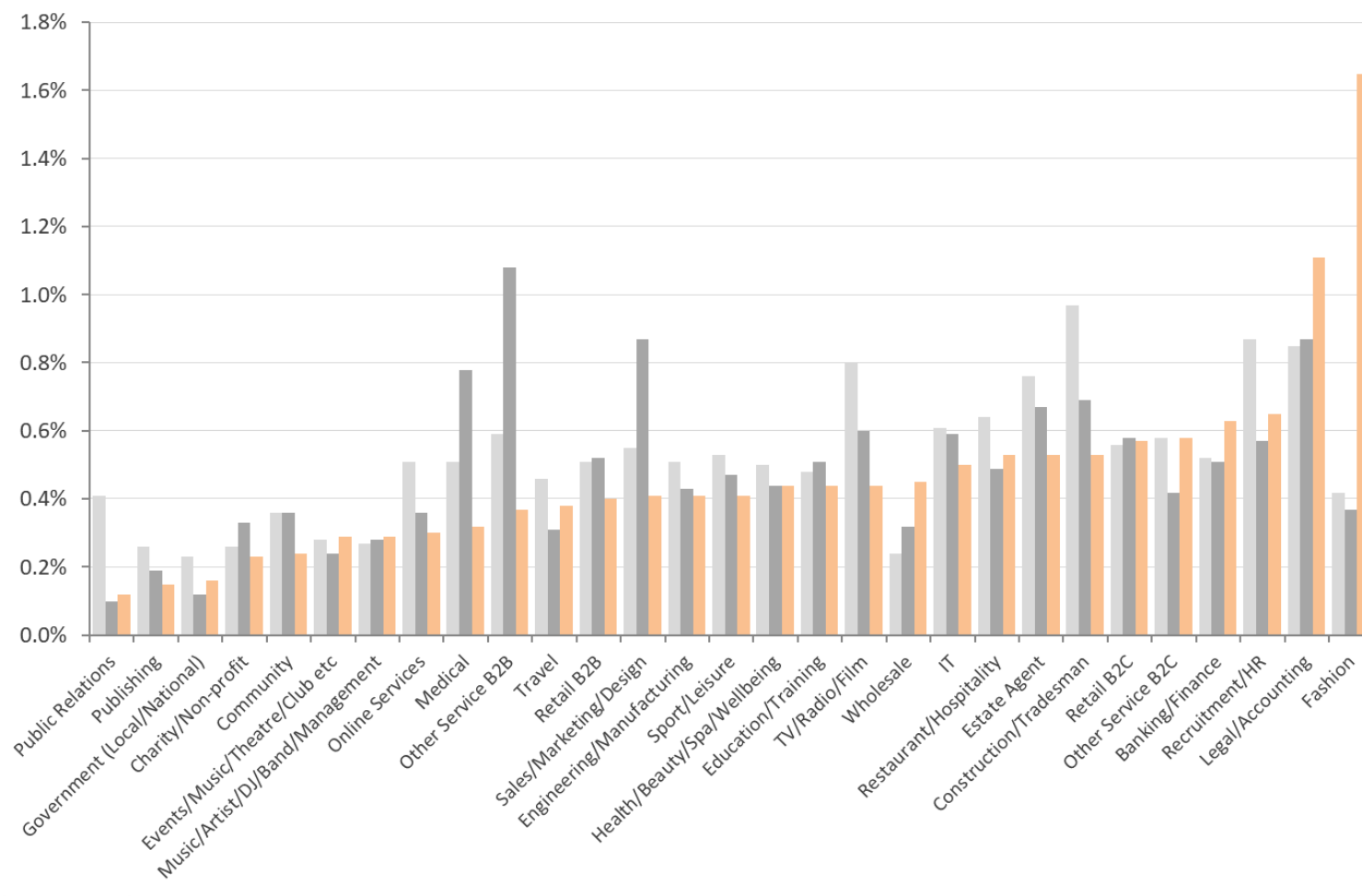
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Orange

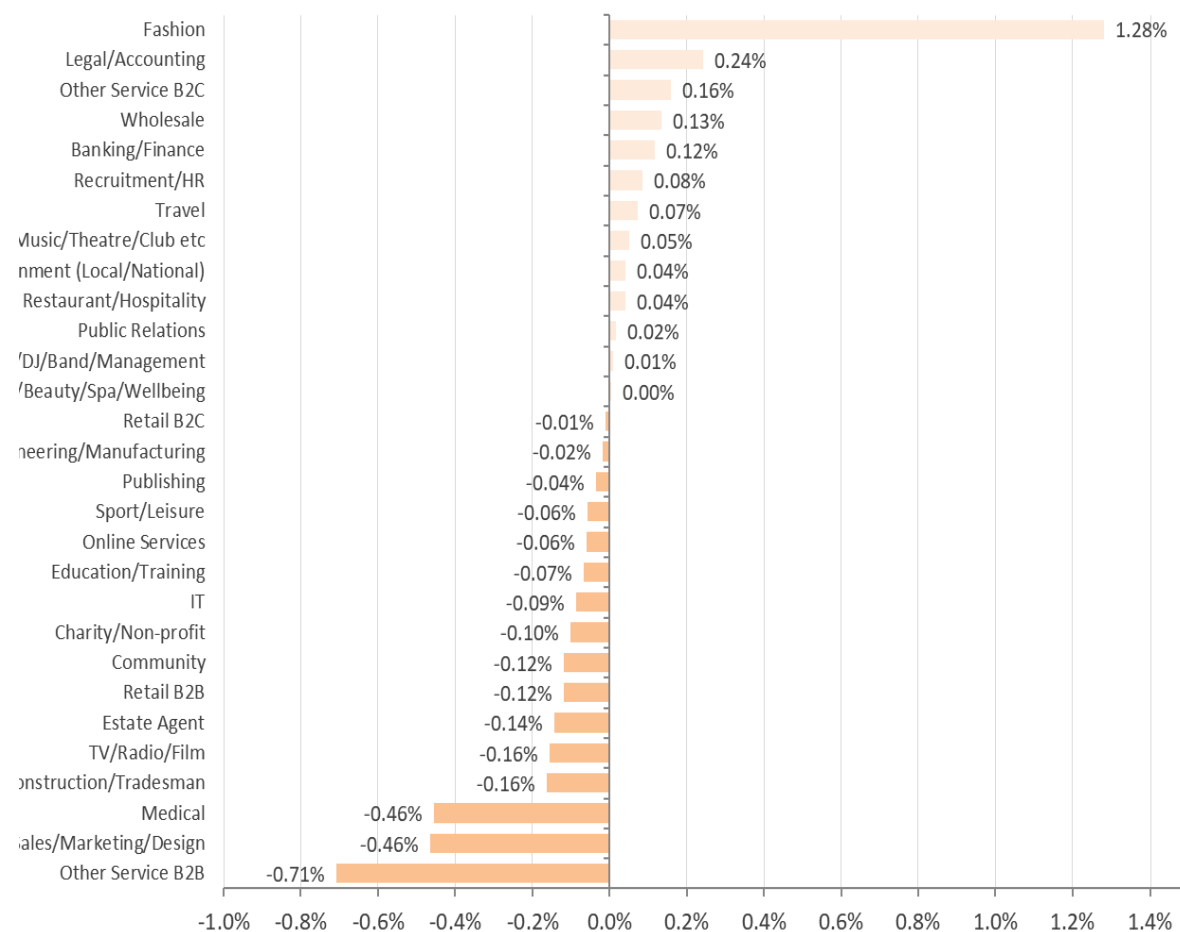
The results are ordered according to the lowest to highest unsubscribe rate sectors of 2017.

Unsubscribe rate by sector - 2015-2017



Unsubscribe rate - 2016-2017

Unsubscribe rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in unsubscribe rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

16 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in unsubscribe rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Medical (-0.46%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (-0.46%)
- Other Service - B2B (-0.71%)

Reduced performance

12 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in unsubscribe rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Fashion (+1.28%)
- Legal / Accounting (+0.24%)
- Other Service - B2C (+0.16%)

Unsubscribe rate - considerations

Understanding unsubscribes

Including an option to unsubscribe is a legal requirement of any email marketing activity.

Unsubscribes aren't something that you usually want to see when you're managing your email marketing but they can actually be good for you, so don't be afraid of making it easy for people to opt-out.

The unsubscribe metric generally measures those who specifically request to opt-out using the embedded unsubscribe option - it doesn't typically include non automated unsubscribes, i.e. those who reply or otherwise contact you to manually unsubscribe.

Make it easy

Always provide a robust and polite unsubscribe process and try to capture some information on the reason for leaving. Also consider offering a selective unsubscribe so that readers can set individual preferences on what they do and don't receive.

Some considerations

High unsubscribe rates are an active indication of dissatisfaction. High one-off unsubscribes might just indicate a campaign that's missed its target, but where high or growing unsubscribes are a trend it's likely to indicate more serious problems with your data, content or both.

- Is a rise in unsubscribes just a one-off or a growing trend? This will help you identify and address the cause.
- Check your data. Do you have permission and have you used this data in the way anticipated by your readers?
- Are you being relevant? Your reader cares enough to open your message, so unsubscribe is a clear indication that you are not addressing their needs or wishes.
- Ultimately, if unsubscribe is the desired action make it quick and easy to do and make sure your 'do not contact' list is updated and effective.

Click-to-open rate - by sector

Summary 2017

12.50% Average
45.48% Maximum
4.22% Minimum

9 sectors above average
20 sectors below average

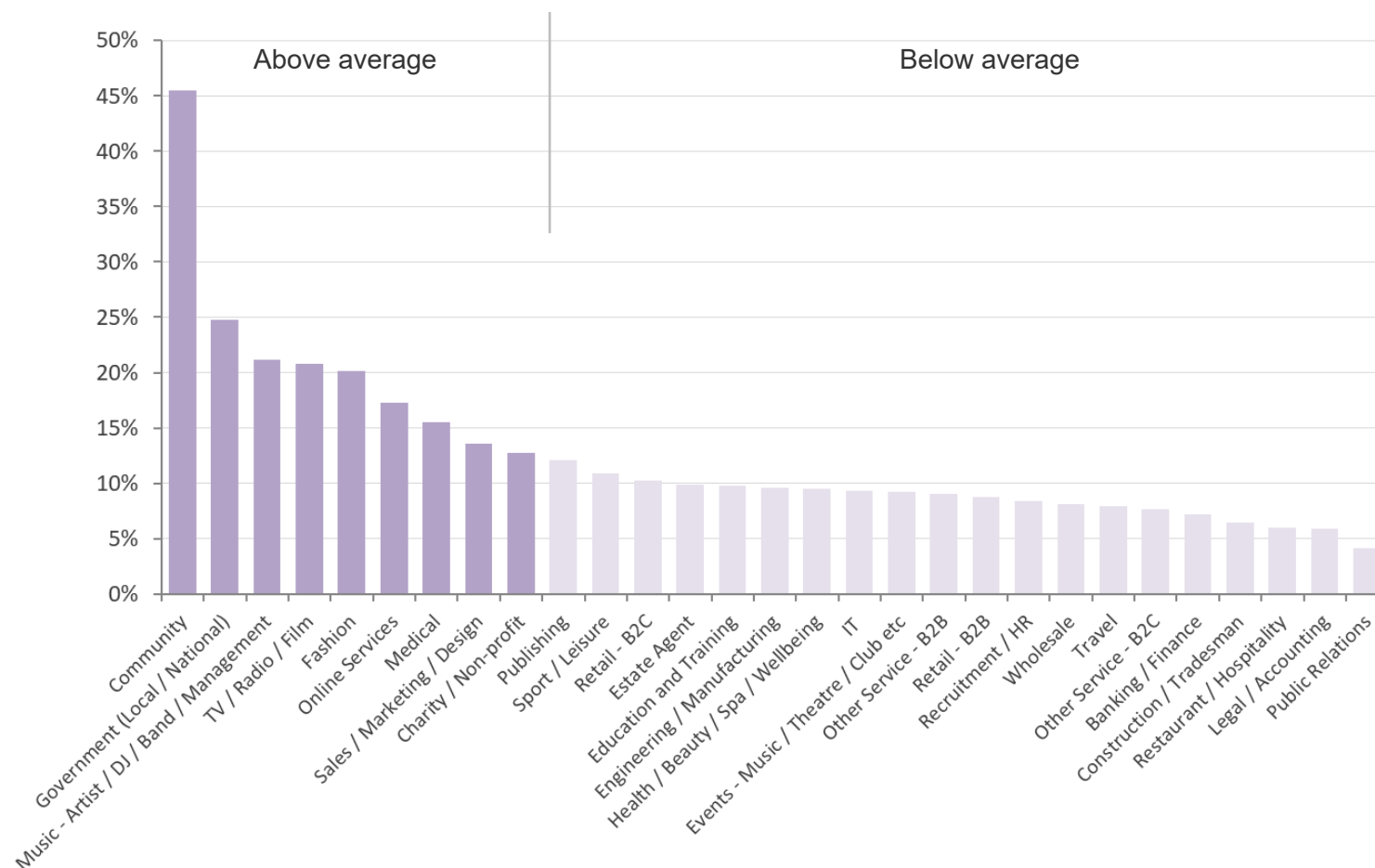
Top performing sectors

- Community
- Government (Local / National)
- Music - Artist / DJ / Band

Bottom performing sectors

- Restaurant / Hospitality
- Legal / Accounting
- Public Relations

Click-to-open rate by sector



Click-to-open rate - 3 year trend

Click-to-open rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows click-to-open rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015-2017.

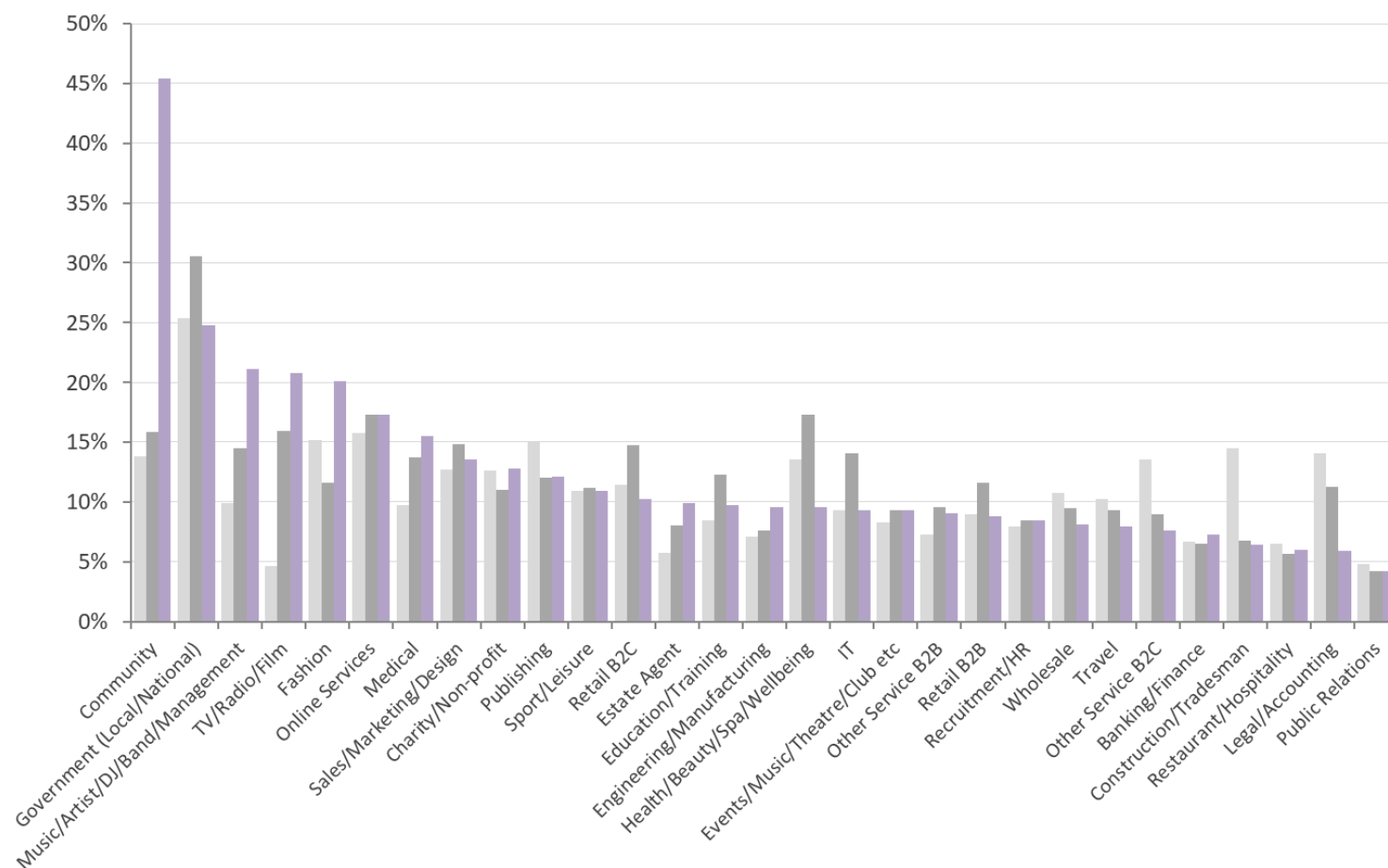
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Purple

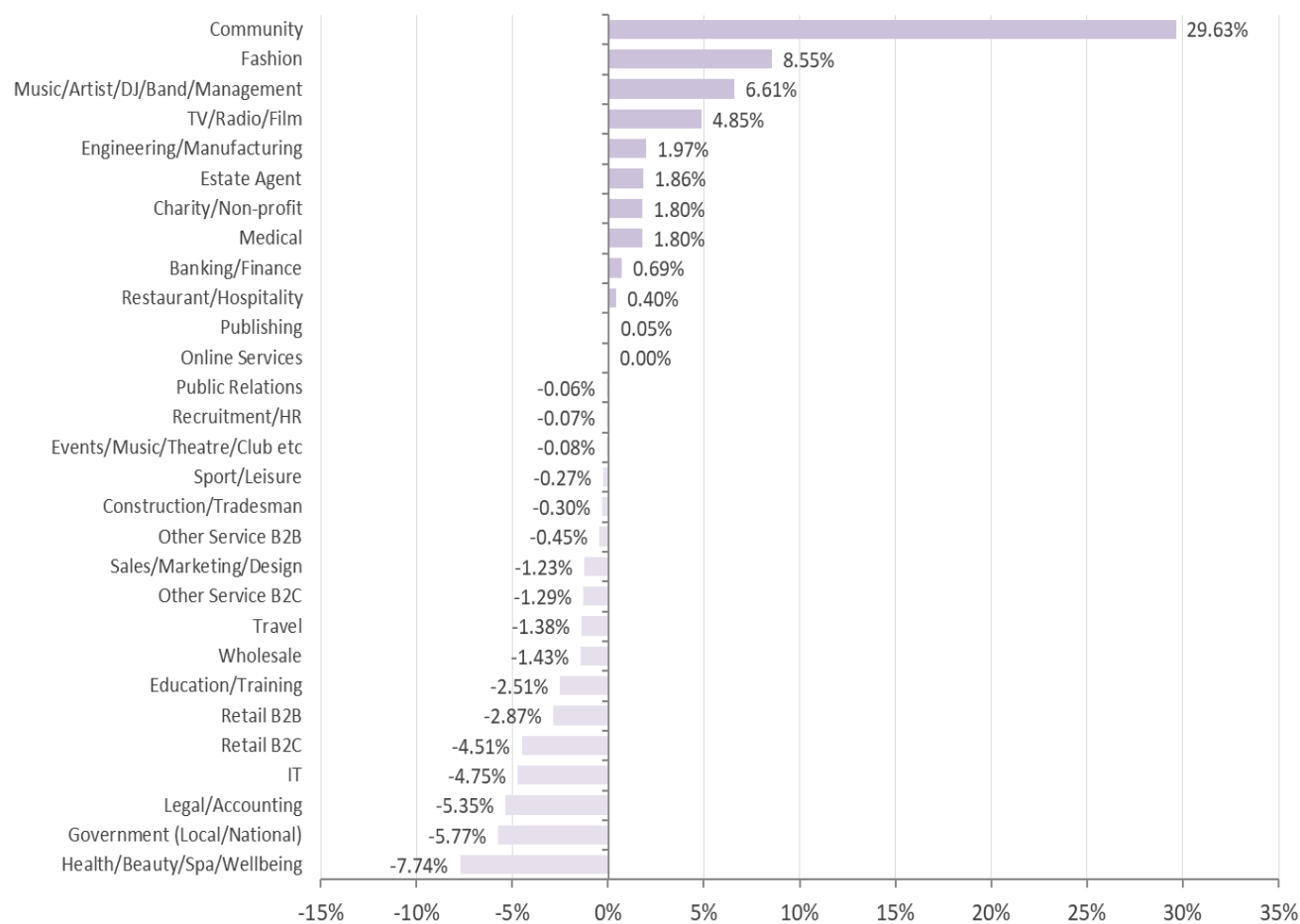
The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest click-to-open rate sectors of 2017.

Click-to-open rate by sector - 2015-2017



Click-to-open rate - 2016-2017

Click-to-open rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in click-to-open rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

11 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in click-to-open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Community (+29.63%)
- Fashion (+8.55%)
- Music - Artist / DJ / Band / Management (+6.61%)

Reduced performance

17 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in click-to-open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Legal / Accounting (-5.35%)
- Government (Local / National) (-5.77%)
- Health / Beauty / Spa / Wellbeing (-7.74%)

Click-to-open rate - considerations

Understanding click-to-opens

Click-to-open rate gives a deeper insight into campaign performance because it looks at post-open interactions in relation to opens rather than the total delivered. This puts the focus of the metric on the performance of the actual email content (the design, relevance and strength of your call to action), and removes factors which influenced the recipient to open the email (factors like subject line and sender recognition).

It's important to remember that different types of email campaigns will have different objectives. Not all campaigns contain click-through links and driving a click-through may not always be the primary objective. Many campaigns also contain multiple links - that's why we record unique instead of total clicks per open when calculating click-to-open rates.

Where campaigns contain multiple call to action links, a 'heat-map' can be an effective way of reviewing the relative engagement with each link. Understanding how subscribers are navigating and interacting with a campaign can be valuable in planning the placement of future content.

Goal-based metrics

Good as it is, the click-to-open rate is still a fairly basic performance metric. For further insight there are a number of more advanced goal-based options which delve more deeply into campaign effectiveness, e.g. the download of additional content or for eCommerce applications the completion of an online purchase. Goal-based metrics can be tracked as a one-off completion or monitored to provide behavioural insight over an extended period of time.

Engagement

Many email platforms simply take open and click performance as an adequate measure of engagement. In practice it's often necessary to take a much wider view considering a number of different factors such as the type and frequency of interaction and also subscriber behaviour over a prolonged period of time. Data shows that a holistic approach like this gives a more realistic measure of real-life engagement.

Further information on measuring engagement can be found in Section 15 of this report.

Unsubscribe-to-open rate - by sector

Summary 2017

2.52% Average
7.44% Maximum
0.58% Minimum

12 sectors above average

17 sectors below average

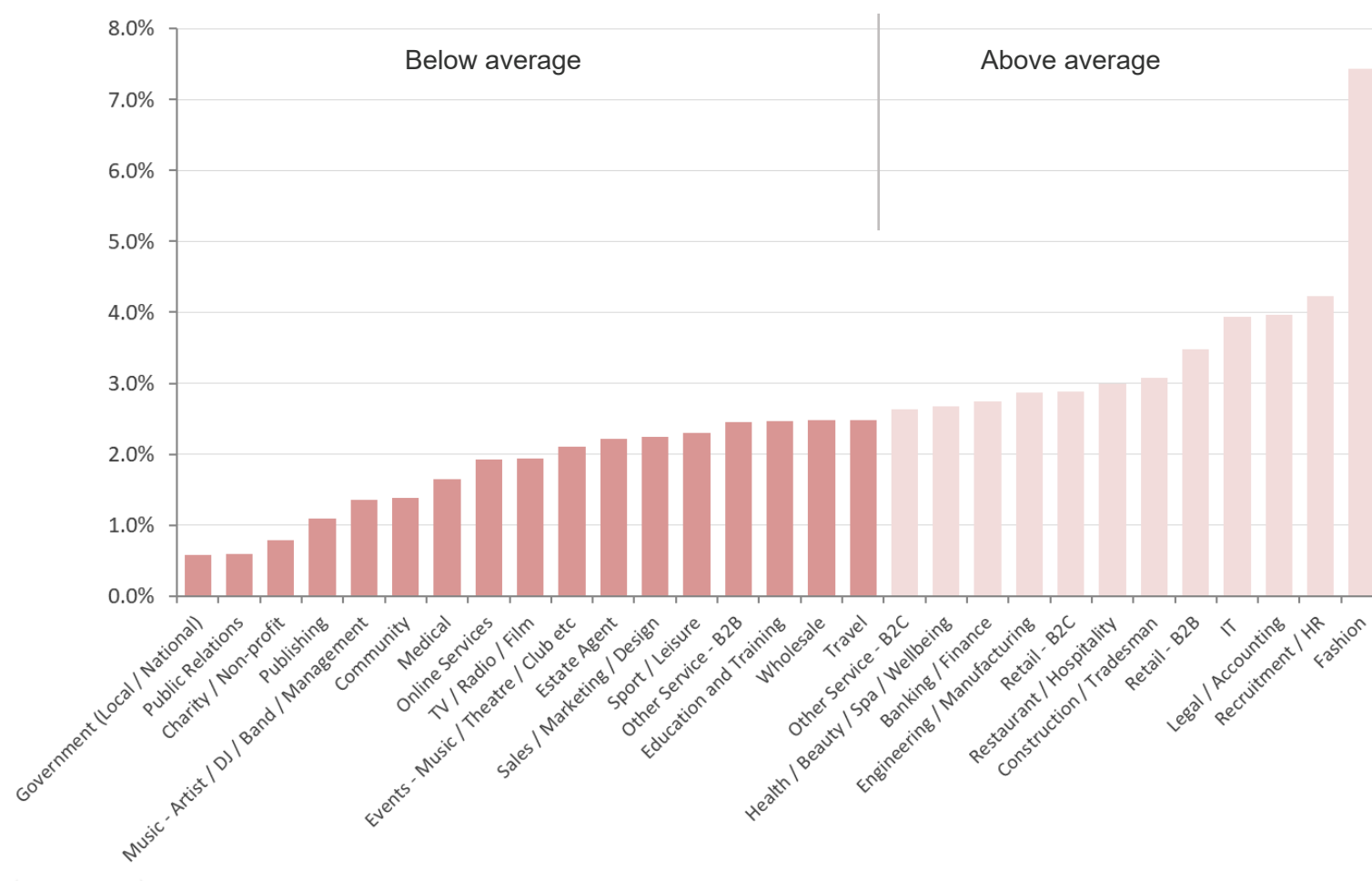
Top performing sectors

- Government (Local / National)
- Public Relations
- Charity / Non-profit

Bottom performing sectors

- Legal / Accounting
- Recruitment / HR
- Fashion

Unsubscribe-to-open rate by sector



Unsubscribe-to-open rate - 3 year trend

Unsubscribe-to-open rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows unsubscribe-to-open rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015-2017.

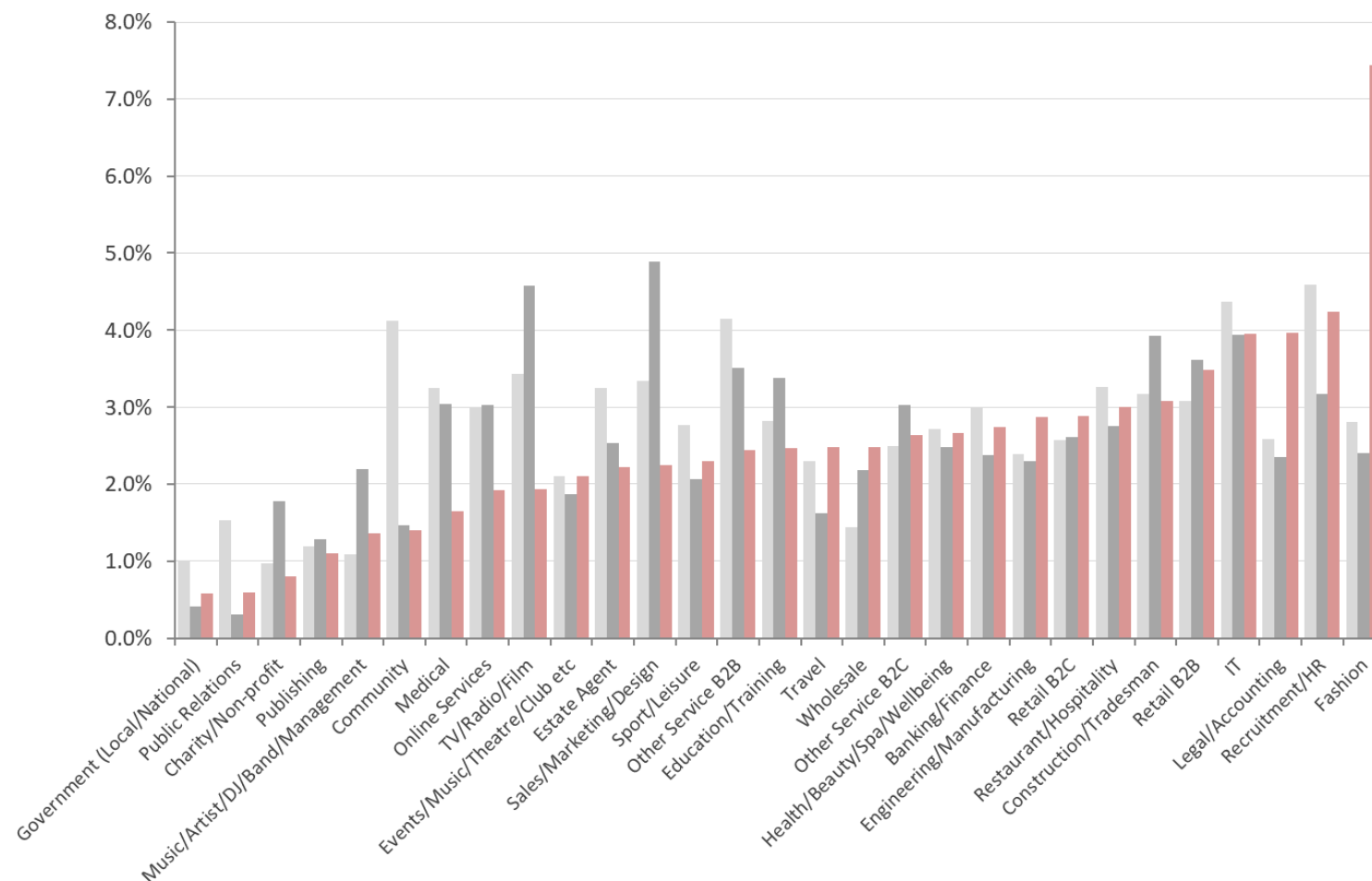
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Red

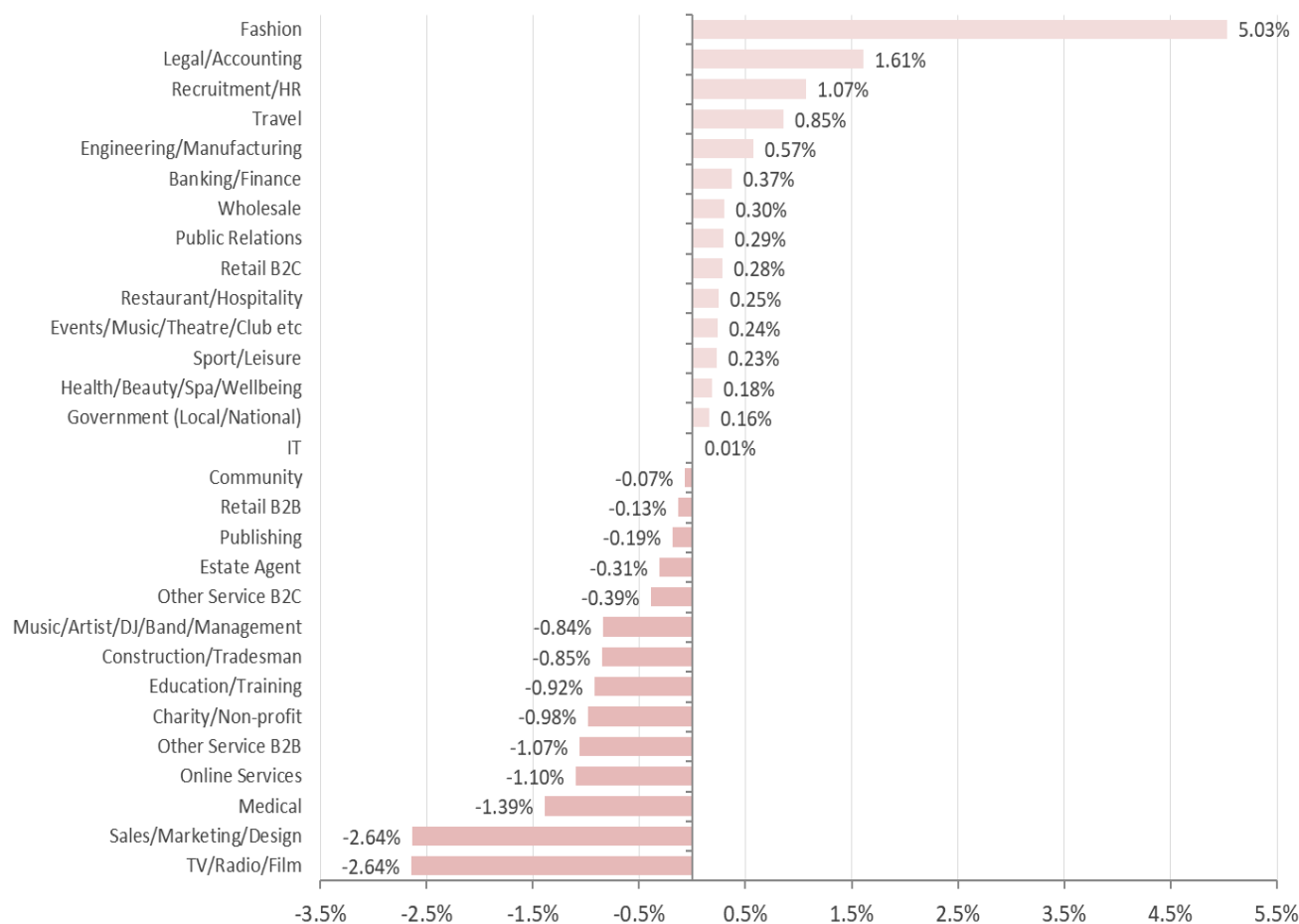
The results are ordered according to the lowest to highest unsubscribe-to-open rate sectors of 2017.

Unsubscribe-to-open rate by sector - 2015-2017



Unsubscribe-to-open rate - 2016-2017

Unsubscribe-to-open rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in unsubscribe-to-open rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

14 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in unsubscribe-to-open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Medical (-1.39%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (-2.64%)
- TV / Radio /Film (-2.64%)

Reduced performance

15 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in unsubscribe-to-open rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Fashion (+5.03%)
- Legal / Accounting (+1.61%)
- Recruitment / HR (+1.07%)

Click-through and click-to-open rate

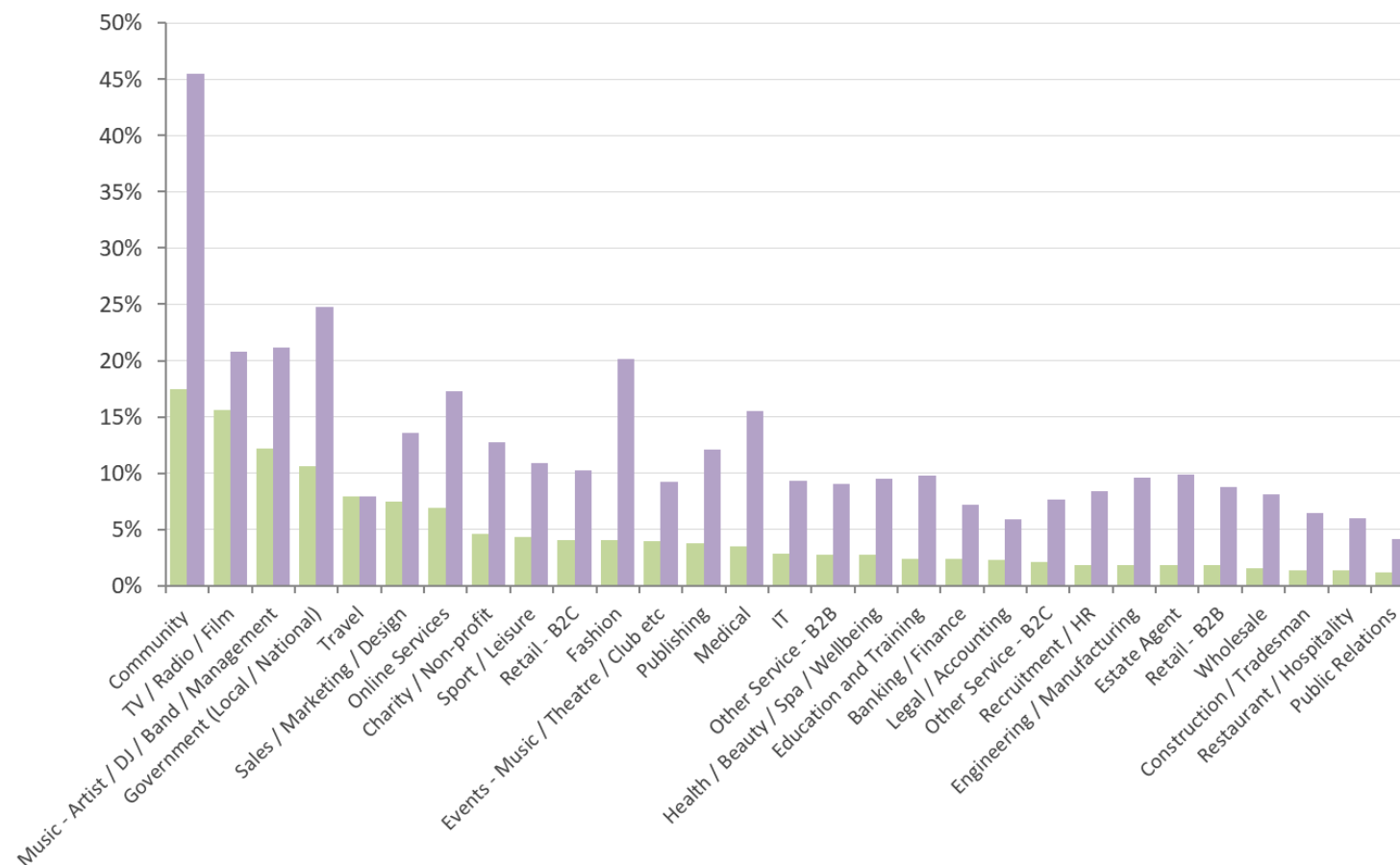
Summary

The graph opposite shows click-through (green) and click-to-open (purple) rates by sector, ordered by highest to lowest sector by click-through rate.

The highest click-through and click-to-open rates were seen in the Community sector (17.45% and 45.48% respectively).

The lowest click-through and click-to-open rates were in the Public Relations sector (1.26% and 4.22% respectively).

Click-through and click-to-open rate by sector



Unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rate

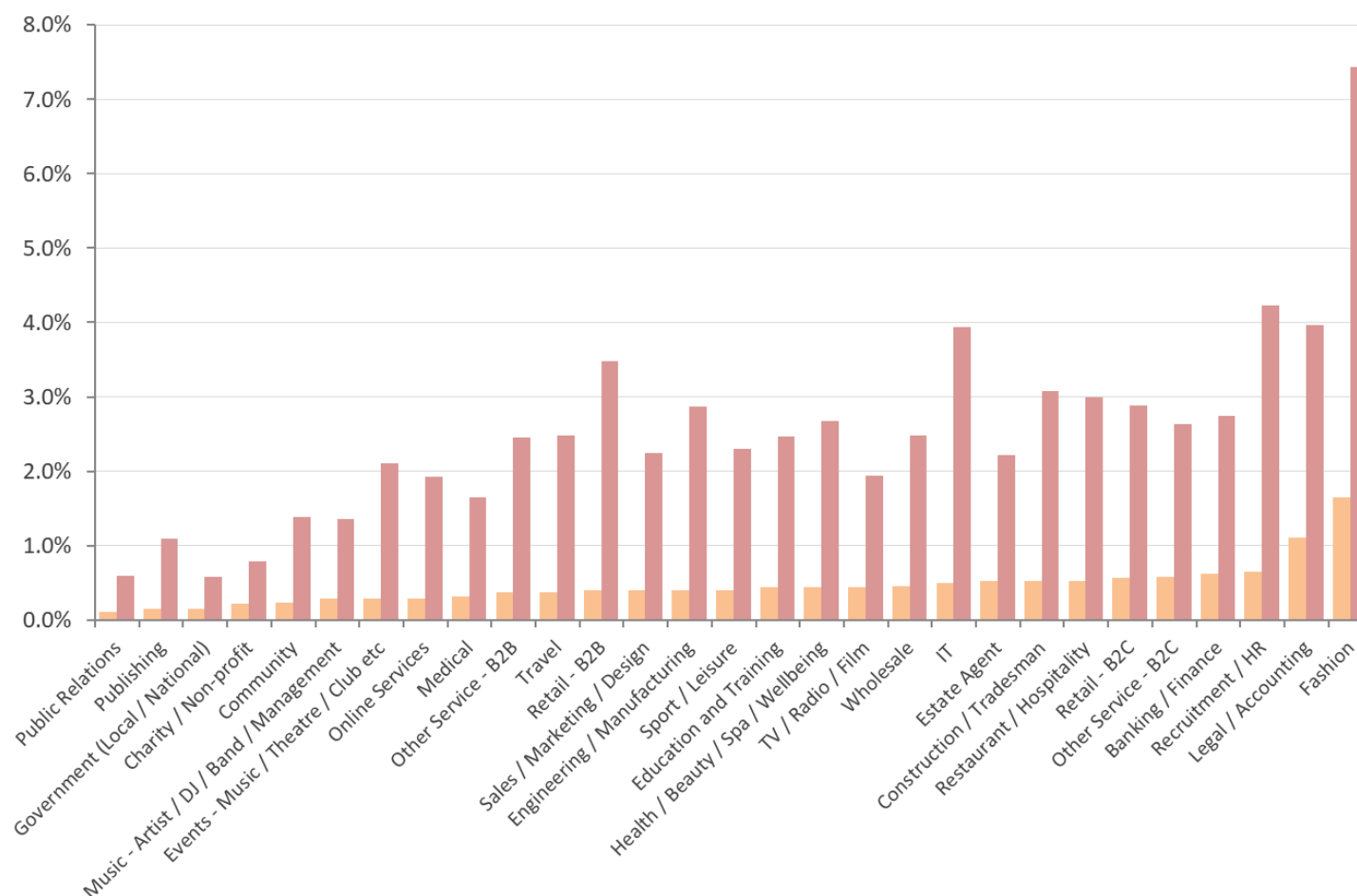
Summary

The graph opposite shows unsubscribe (orange) and unsubscribe-to-open (red) rates by sector, ordered by lowest to highest sector by unsubscribe rate.

The lowest unsubscribe rate was in the Public Relations sector (0.12%). The lowest unsubscribe-to-open rate was in Government (Local / National) (0.58%).

The highest unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rates were both in the Fashion sector (1.65% and 7.44% respectively).

Unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rate by sector



Delivery rate - by sector

Summary 2017

95.64% Average
99.19% Maximum
90.97% Minimum

16 sectors above average

13 sectors below average

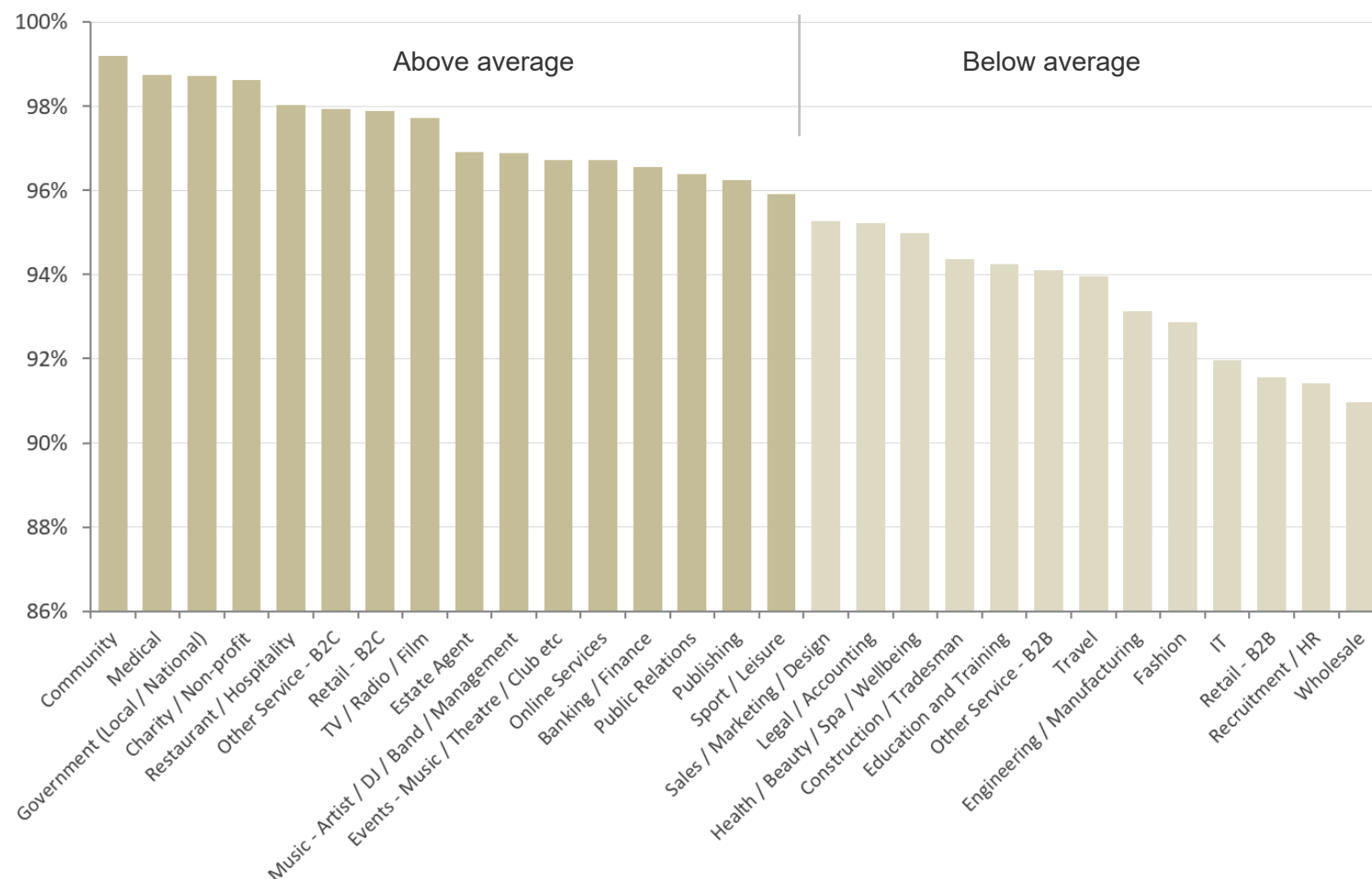
Top performing sectors

- Community
- Medical
- Government (Local / National)

Bottom performing sectors

- Retail - B2B
- Recruitment / HR
- Wholesale

Delivery rate by sector



Delivery rate - 3 year trend

Delivery rate

Last 3 years: 2015-2017

The graph opposite shows delivery rates for each sector for the last 3 years 2015 -2017.

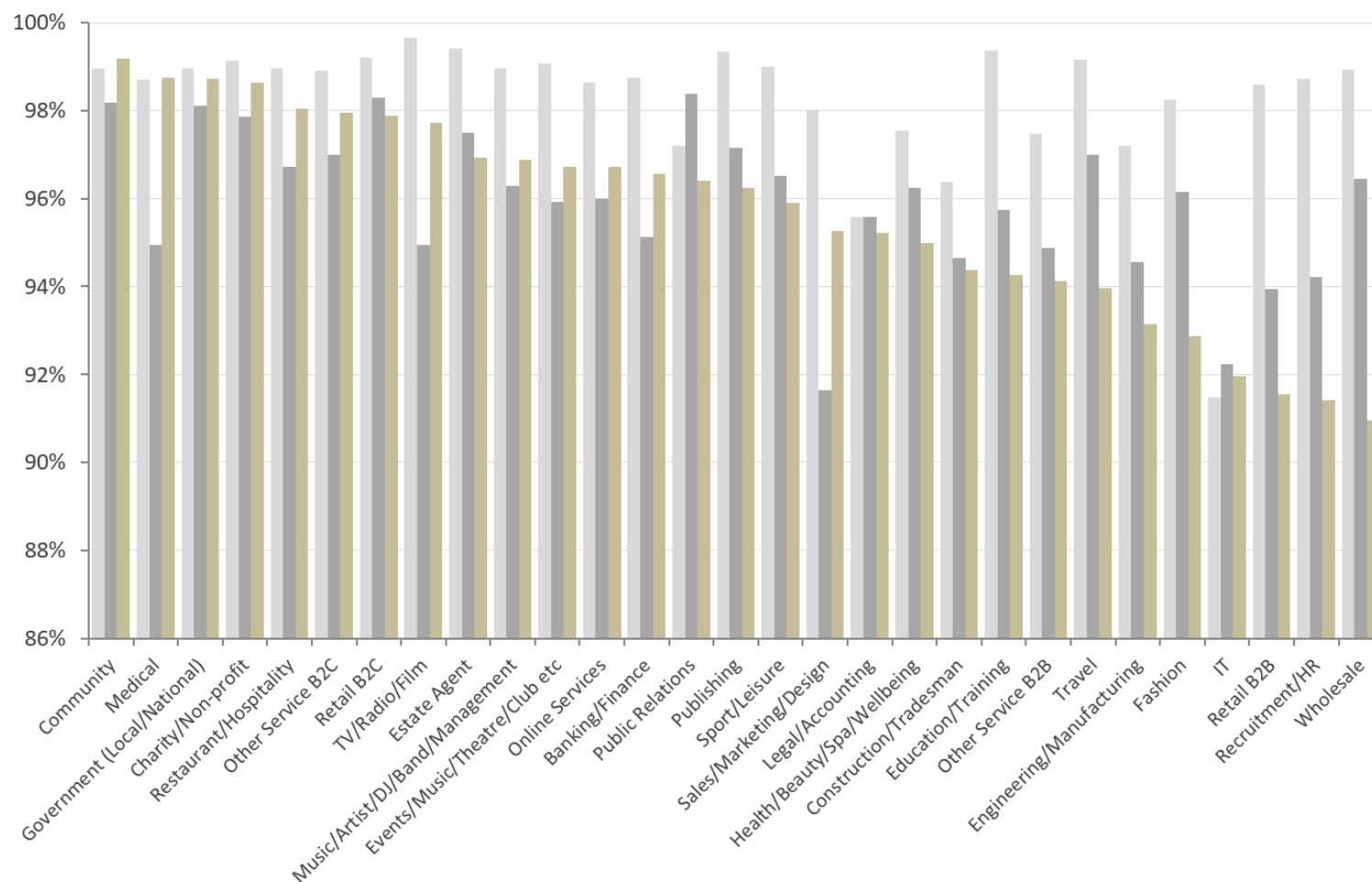
2015 - Light grey

2016 - Dark grey

2017 - Gold

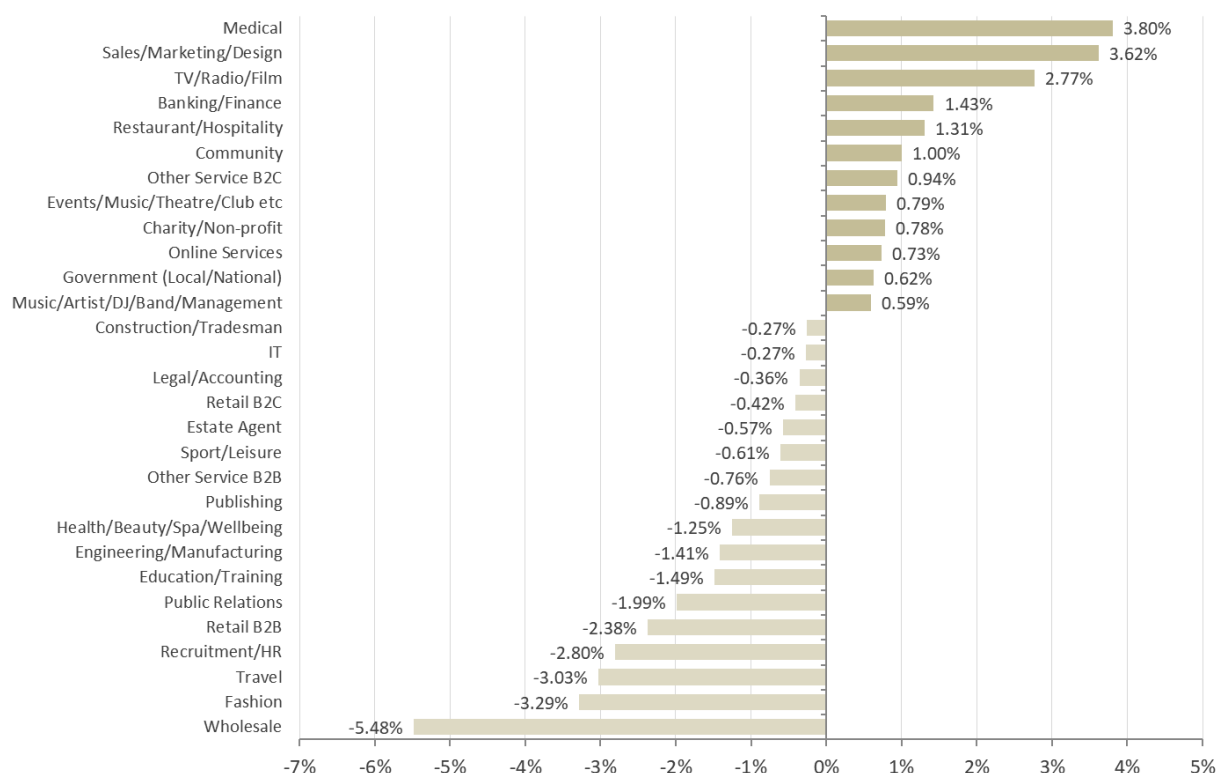
The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest delivery rate sectors of 2017.

Delivery rate by sector - 2015-2017



Delivery rate - 2016-2017

Delivery rate difference by sector - 2016-2017



The graph opposite shows the difference in delivery rate for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Improved performance

12 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in delivery rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Medical (+3.80%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (+3.62%)
- TV / Radio / Film (+2.77%)

Reduced performance

17 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in delivery rate with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Travel (-3.03%)
- Fashion (-3.29%)
- Wholesale (-5.48%)

Delivery rate - considerations

What impacts delivery?

Understanding the factors that affect email delivery is the first step towards improving your future campaigns. 3 of the most important considerations are:

- Data quality
- Reputation
- Content

Data quality

Data quality is a key factor in minimising delivery failure. Email data decays at around 3-4% per month so with a regular campaign schedule you should expect delivery success of 97% or higher. Having a robust process to collect, build and maintain a high quality of data is an important foundation of any email strategy. Integrating other related data applications, like a CRM system, will also ensure that your data is as up to date and robust as possible.

Reputation

Sender reputation is arguably now the most important factor in whether or not your emails are delivered. ISPs are becoming increasingly sophisticated in the way they actively monitor and approve email traffic for delivery. A history of positive interaction such as opening, clicking links and forwarding will act in your favour. By contrast a history of poor interaction and negative actions like marking as spam will make it much more likely that your current campaign will be removed.

Content

The quality of content is still important in getting your campaigns delivered. There's a general rule of thumb that if your content looks and feels like spam then ISPs are also likely to identify it as such and decline delivery. Check that your link destinations are working and valid. Also check your HTML code quality and items like ALT-text for images, and if you build your campaign solely with images or pack it full of spammy words then rejection is more likely.

Overall performance - highest performers

Overall performance in key metrics

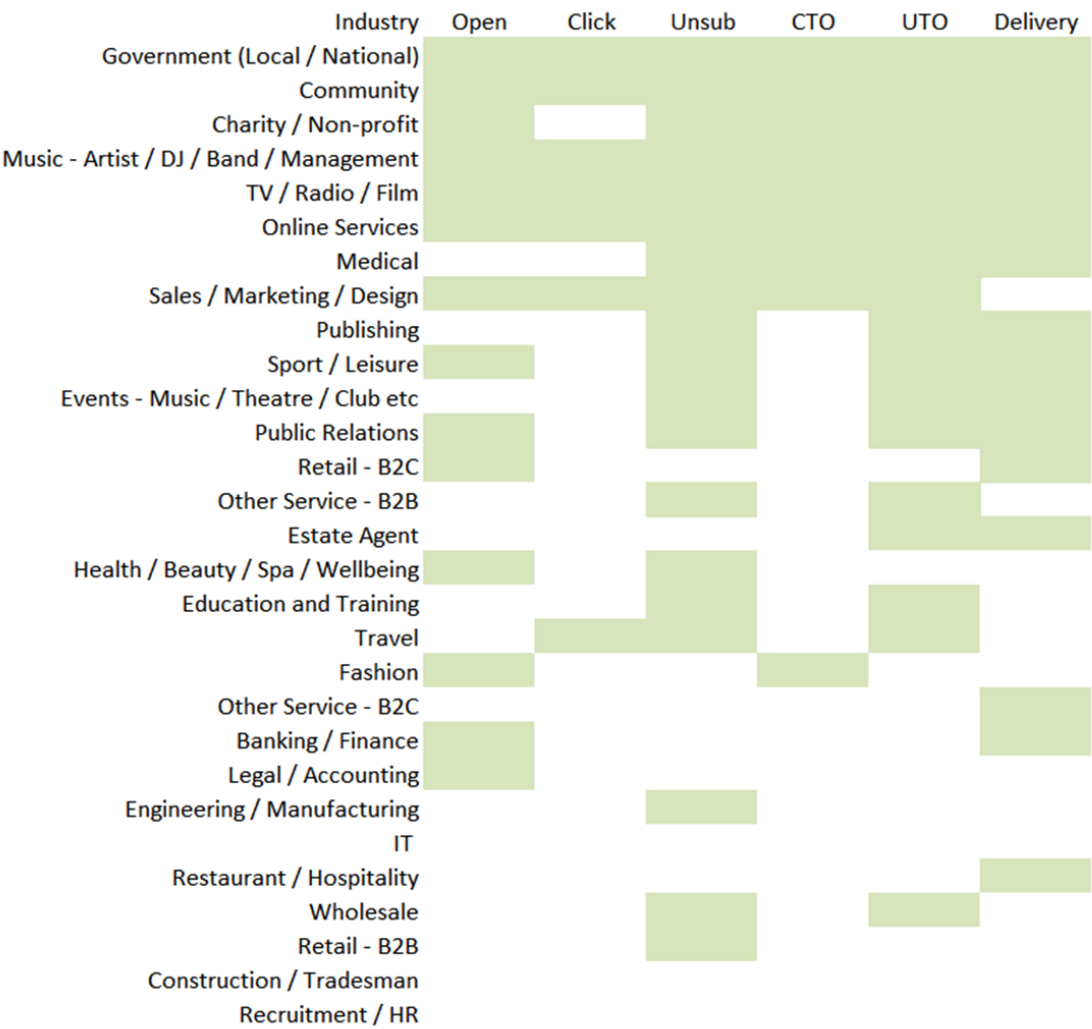
The charts opposite show above average (green) and below average (red) performance of each of the key metrics:

- Open rate
- Click-through rate
- Unsubscribe rate
- Click-to-open rate
- Unsubscribe-to-open rate
- Delivery rate

Above average is shown in green. Note that below average unsubscribe and unsubscribe-to-open rates are desirable so below average for these metrics are also shown in green.

Sectors are ordered top to bottom according to their overall average rank from each category.

Overall performance by sector - highest performers



Overall performance - lowest performers

Overall performance by sector - lowest performers

| Industry | Open | Click | Unsub | CTO | UTO | Delivery |
|---|------|-------|-------|-----|-----|----------|
| Recruitment / HR | | | | | | |
| Construction / Tradesman | | | | | | |
| Retail - B2B | | | | | | |
| Wholesale | | | | | | |
| Restaurant / Hospitality | | | | | | |
| IT | | | | | | |
| Engineering / Manufacturing | | | | | | |
| Legal / Accounting | | | | | | |
| Banking / Finance | | | | | | |
| Other Service - B2C | | | | | | |
| Fashion | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | |
| Education and Training | | | | | | |
| Health / Beauty / Spa / Wellbeing | | | | | | |
| Estate Agent | | | | | | |
| Other Service - B2B | | | | | | |
| Retail - B2C | | | | | | |
| Public Relations | | | | | | |
| Events - Music / Theatre / Club etc | | | | | | |
| Sport / Leisure | | | | | | |
| Publishing | | | | | | |
| Sales / Marketing / Design | | | | | | |
| Medical | | | | | | |
| Online Services | | | | | | |
| TV / Radio / Film | | | | | | |
| Music - Artist / DJ / Band / Management | | | | | | |
| Charity / Non-profit | | | | | | |
| Community | | | | | | |
| Government (Local / National) | | | | | | |

Above average performance for all metrics and top 3 by overall ranking

- Government (Local / National)
- Community
- Music - Artist / DJ / Band / Management
- TV / Radio / Film
- Online Services

1. Government (Local / National) - above in all 6 categories
2. Community - above in all 6 categories
3. Charity / Non-profit - above in 5 of 6 categories

Below average performance for all metrics and bottom 3 by overall ranking

- Recruitment / HR
- IT
- Construction / Tradesman

27. Retail - B2B - below in 5 of 6 categories
28. Construction / Tradesman - below in all 6 categories
29. Recruitment / HR - below in all 6 categories

Device type - opens

Device opens

For consistency with previous reports, the results for mobile device engagement are calculated using the total number of mobile and desktop interactions from each sector. The overall averages are the averages of each sector.

Mobile device opens have risen from around 27% in 2011 to over 50% in recent years. The charts opposite show desktop (light blue) and mobile (dark blue) opens as averaged across each tracked sector.

Results for 2017 show a slight reduction in mobile opens from 47.93% (rounded here to 48%) in 2016 to 47.42% in 2017, a 0.51% difference or 1.06% decrease.

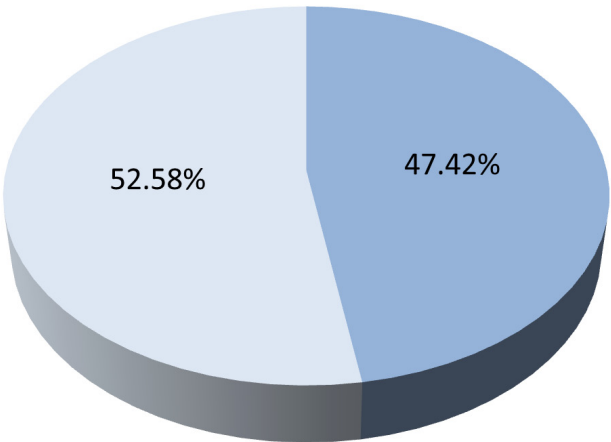
52.58%

Desktop opens

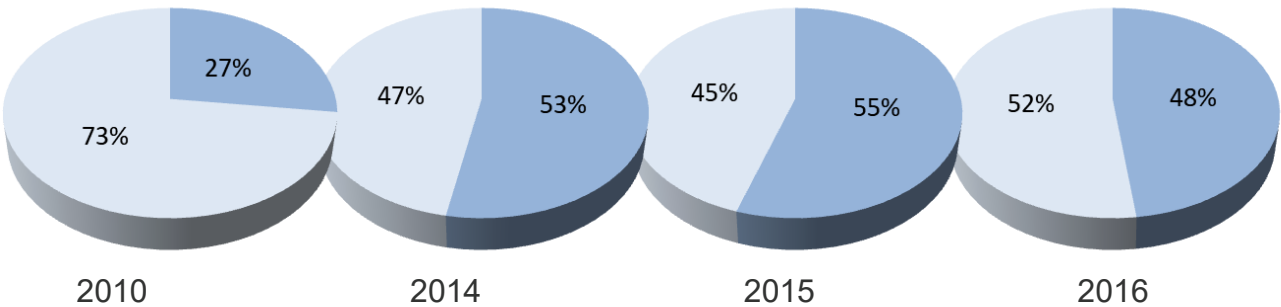
47.42%

Mobile opens

Opens - desktop vs mobile - 2017



Opens - desktop vs mobile - historical trend

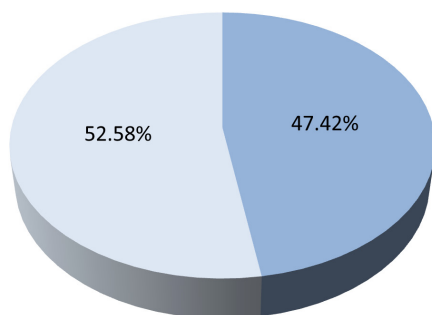


Device type - opens

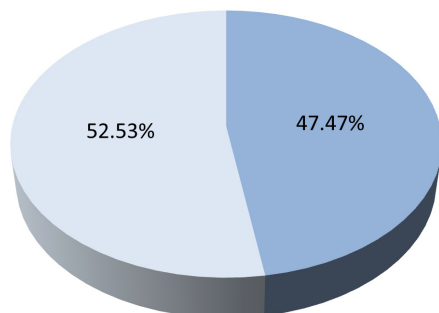
Device opens - interpretation

The charts below show 6 different interpretations of the opens data for mobile and desktop devices. Charts 1 and 2 show that inclusion of the 'null' sector (where no industry sector has been set) has little effect on the results. Charts 3 and 4 show the same effect but where all campaigns are averaged as a whole (irrespective of their sector classification). Charts 5 and 6 show the effect of including only those sectors in the top 10 and above average overall open rates.

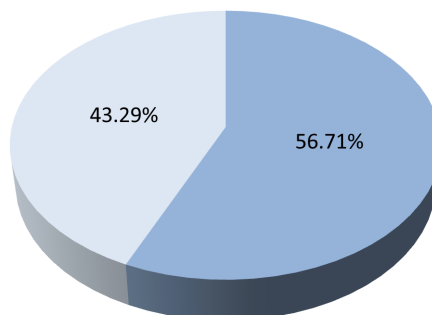
1. By sector averages (null classification excluded)



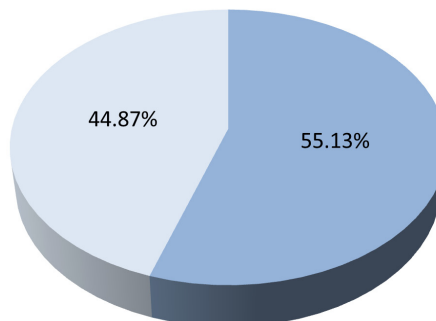
2. By sector averages (null classification included)



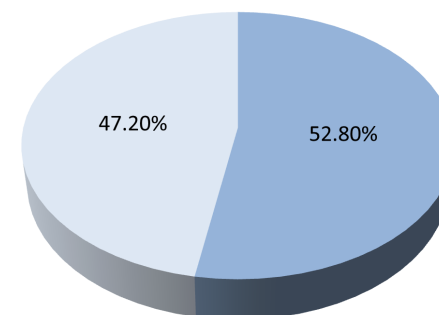
3. All emails (null classification excluded)



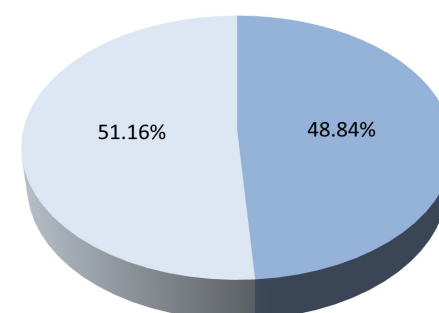
4. All emails (null classification included)



5. By sector averages (top 10 open rate sectors)



6. By sector averages (above average open rate sectors)



Device type - opens by sector

Device opens by sector

The graph opposite shows desktop (light blue) and mobile (dark blue) opens by sector.

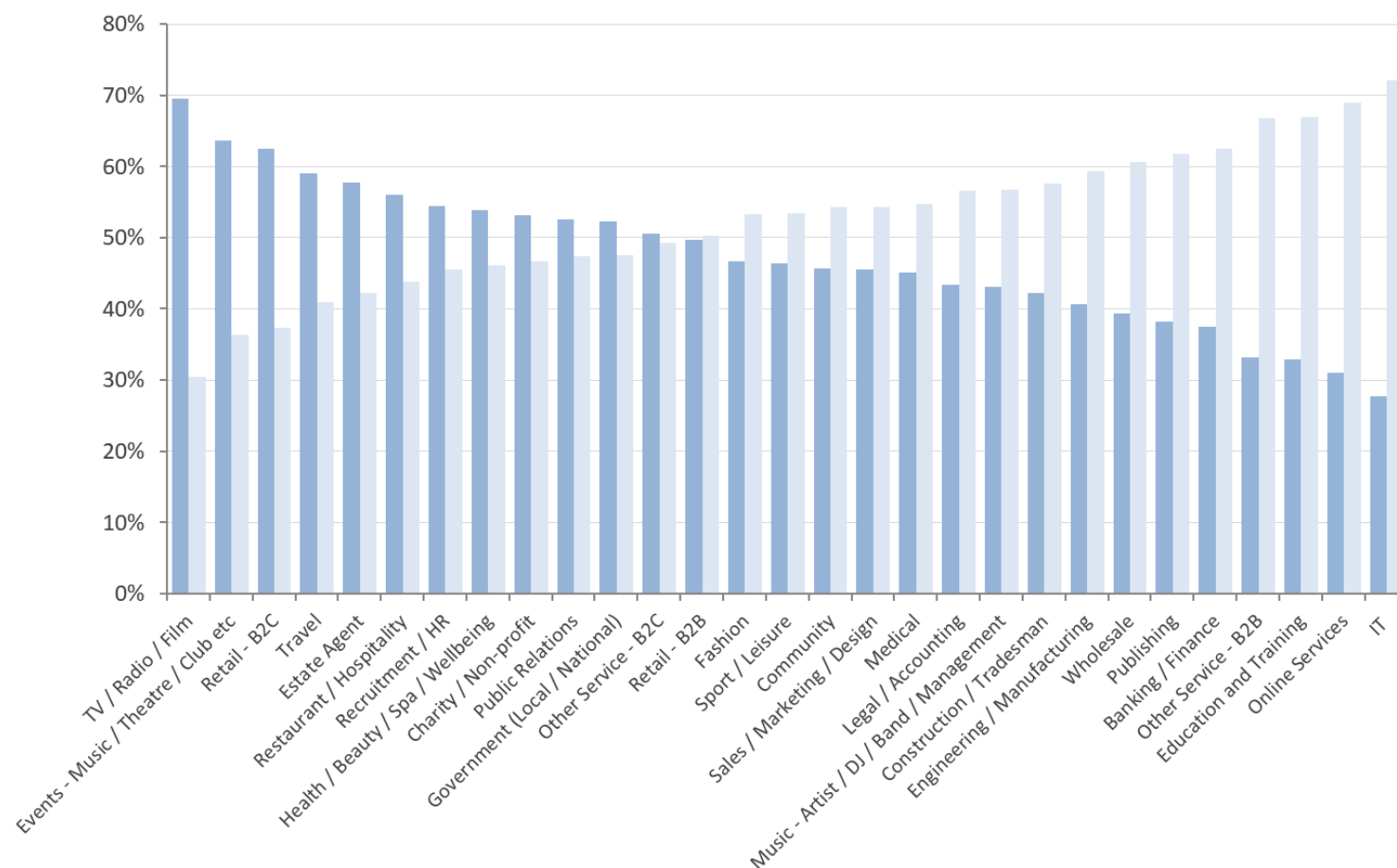
13 of the 29 sectors showed mobile open rate above the average with the highest being in

- TV / Radio / Film
- Events - Music / Theatre / Club
- Retail - B2C

16 of the 29 sectors showed mobile opens below the average with the lowest being in

- Education and Training
- Online Services
- IT

Open rate mobile vs desktop by sector 2017



Device type - mobile opens 2 year trend

Opens on mobile

Last 2 years: 2016-2017

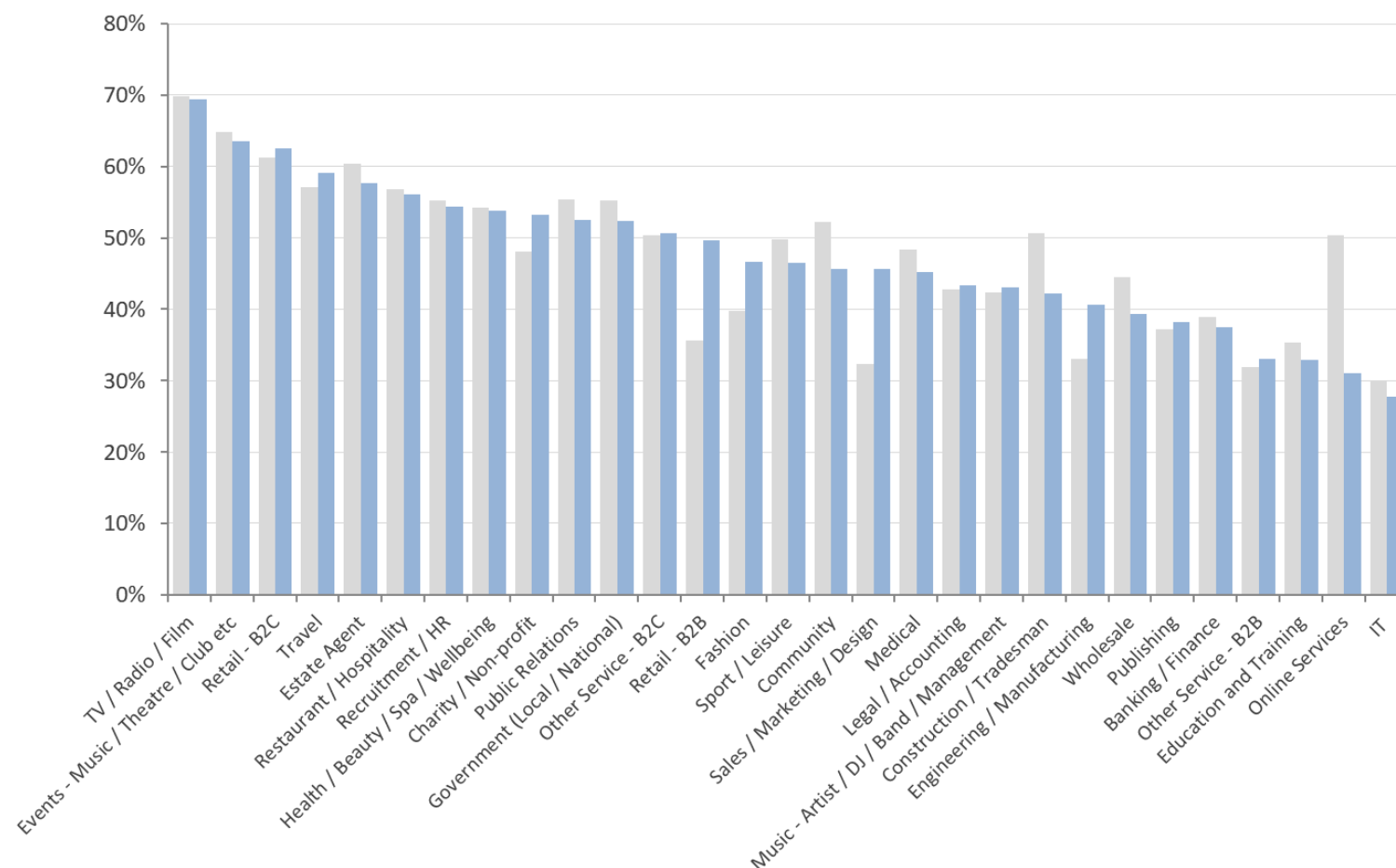
The graph opposite shows opens on a mobile device for each sector for the last 2 years 2016 -2017.

2016 - Grey

2017 - Blue

The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest mobile open sectors of 2017.

Open rate on a mobile device by sector - 2016-2017



Device type - mobile opens 2016-2017

The graph opposite shows the difference in opens on mobile for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Open rates on mobile by sector - difference 2016-2017

Increased mobile opens

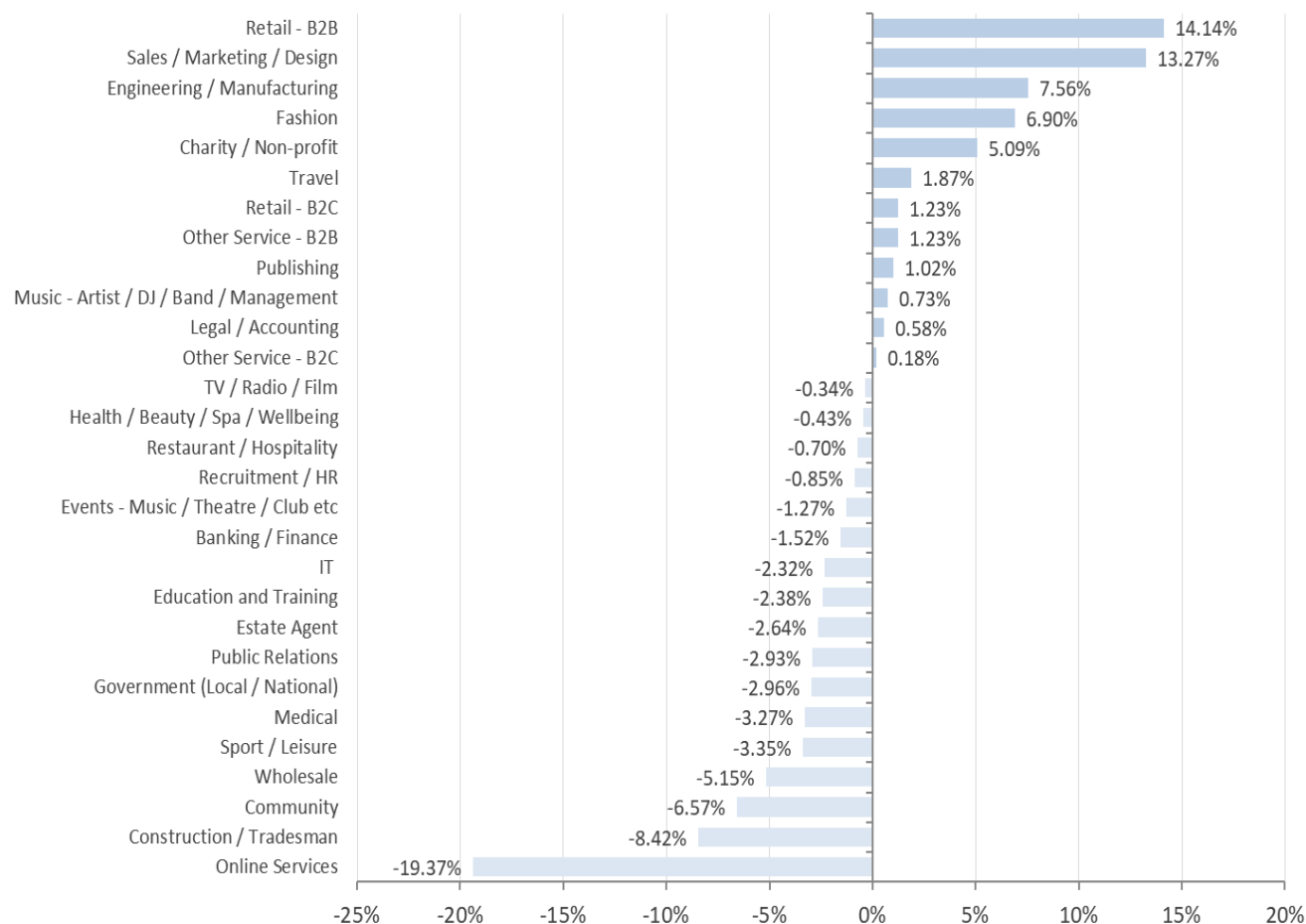
12 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in mobile opens with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Retail - B2B (+14.14%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (+13.27%)
- Engineering / Manufacturing (+7.56%)

Reduced mobile opens

17 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in mobile opens with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Community (-6.57%)
- Construction / Tradesman (-8.42%)
- Online Services (-19.37%)



Device type - click-through

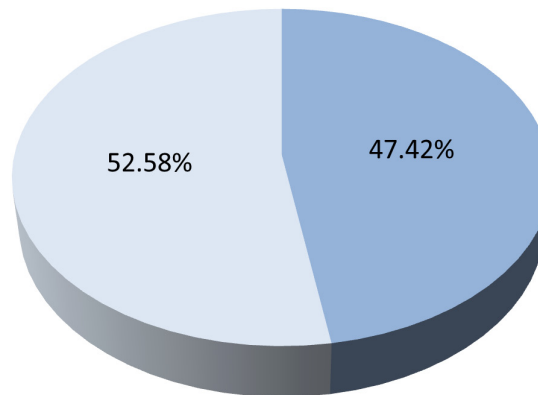
Device click-throughs

The chart opposite compares opens with click-throughs on desktop (light green) and mobile (dark green) as averaged across all tracked sectors. As with device opens the total number of interactions is considered in calculating the proportions of those on mobile and desktop.

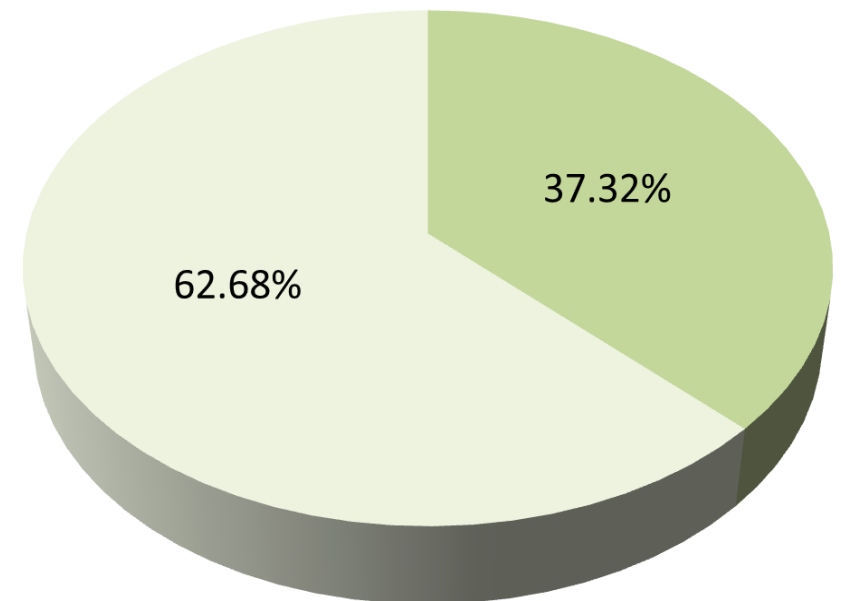
As in previous reports click-through on mobile devices show significantly lower averages across all sectors than the equivalent mobile opens.

| | |
|--------|------------------------|
| 47.42% | Opens (mobile) |
| 37.32% | Click-through (mobile) |

Opens - desktop vs mobile - 2017



Click-through - desktop vs mobile - 2017

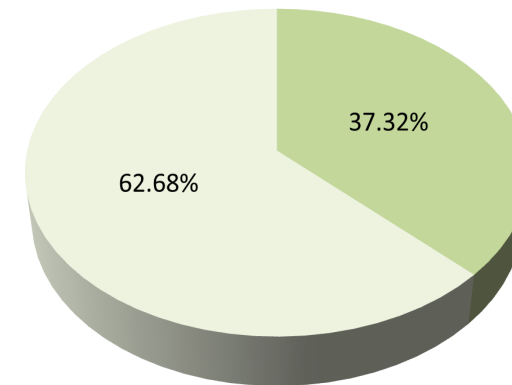


Device type - click-through

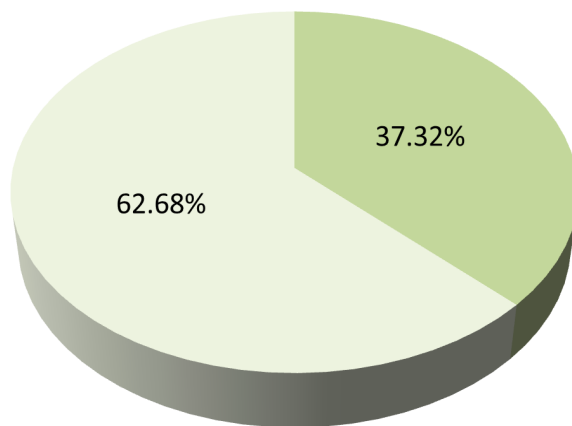
Device click-throughs

Applying similar interpretation to that of mobile opens, the 3 charts below show the effect of including the 'null' sector classification and of averaging click-through performance of all emails irrespective of their sector classification. Compared to mobile opens the results are less significant.

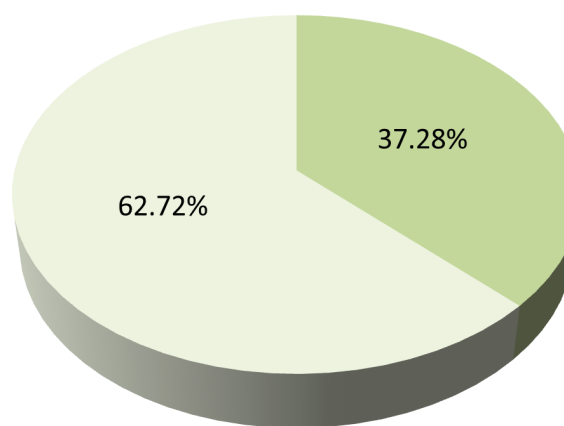
Click-through - desktop vs mobile - 2017



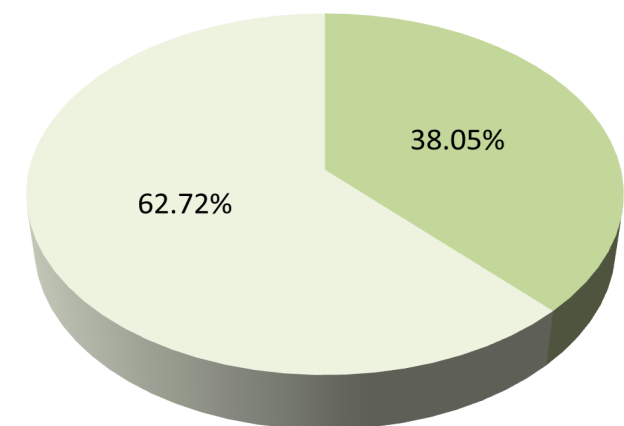
1. By sector averages (null classification excluded)



2. By sector averages (null classification included)



3. By all emails (null classification included)



Device type - click-through by sector

Device click-through by sector

The graph opposite shows desktop (light green) and mobile (dark green) click-throughs by sector.

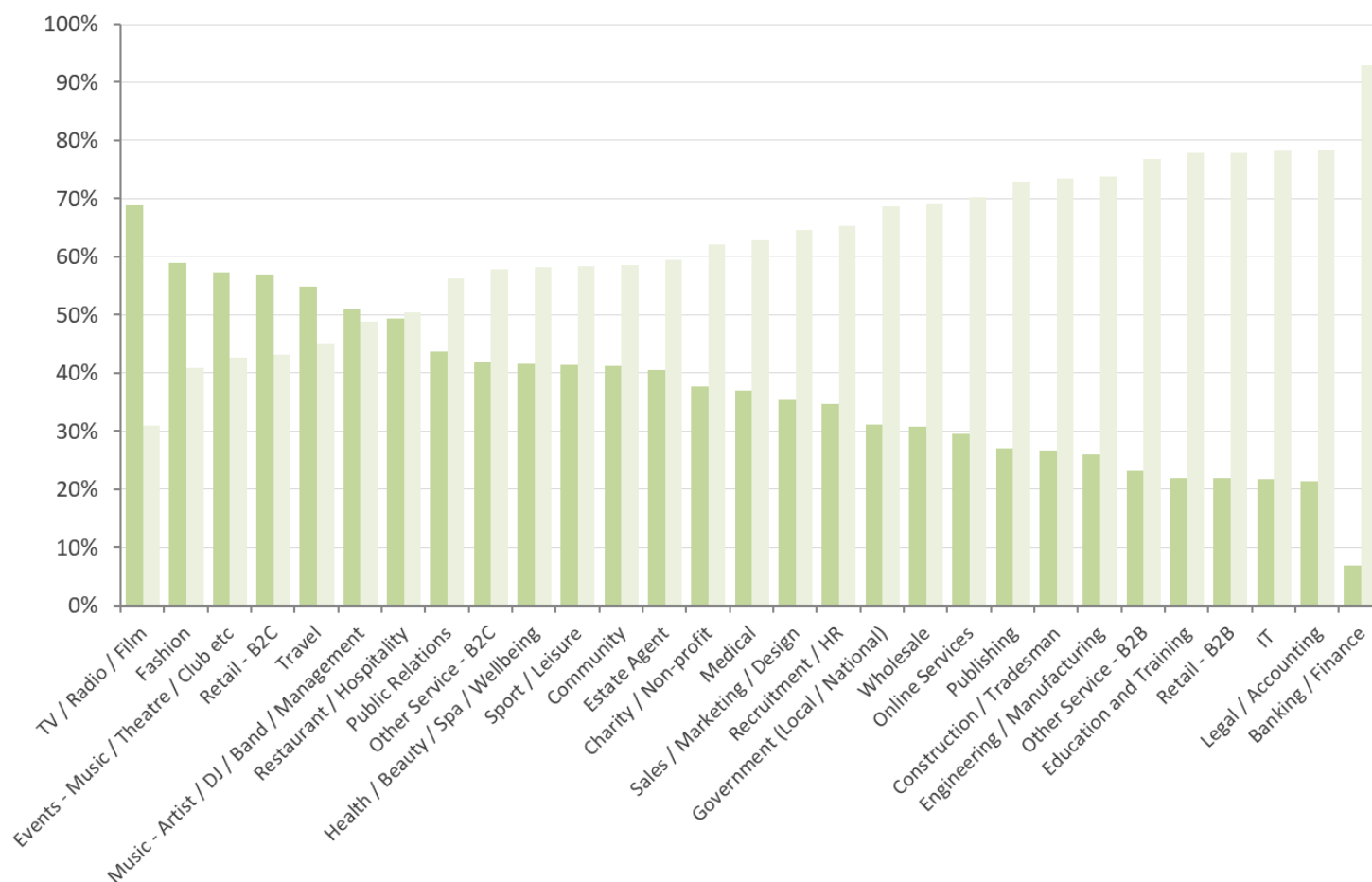
14 of the 29 sectors showed mobile click-throughs above the average with the highest being in

- TV / Radio / Film
- Fashion
- Events - Music / Theatre / Club

15 of the 29 sectors showed mobile click-throughs below the average with the lowest being in

- IT
- Legal / Accounting
- Banking / Finance

Click-through mobile vs desktop by sector 2017



Device type - mobile click-through 2 year trend

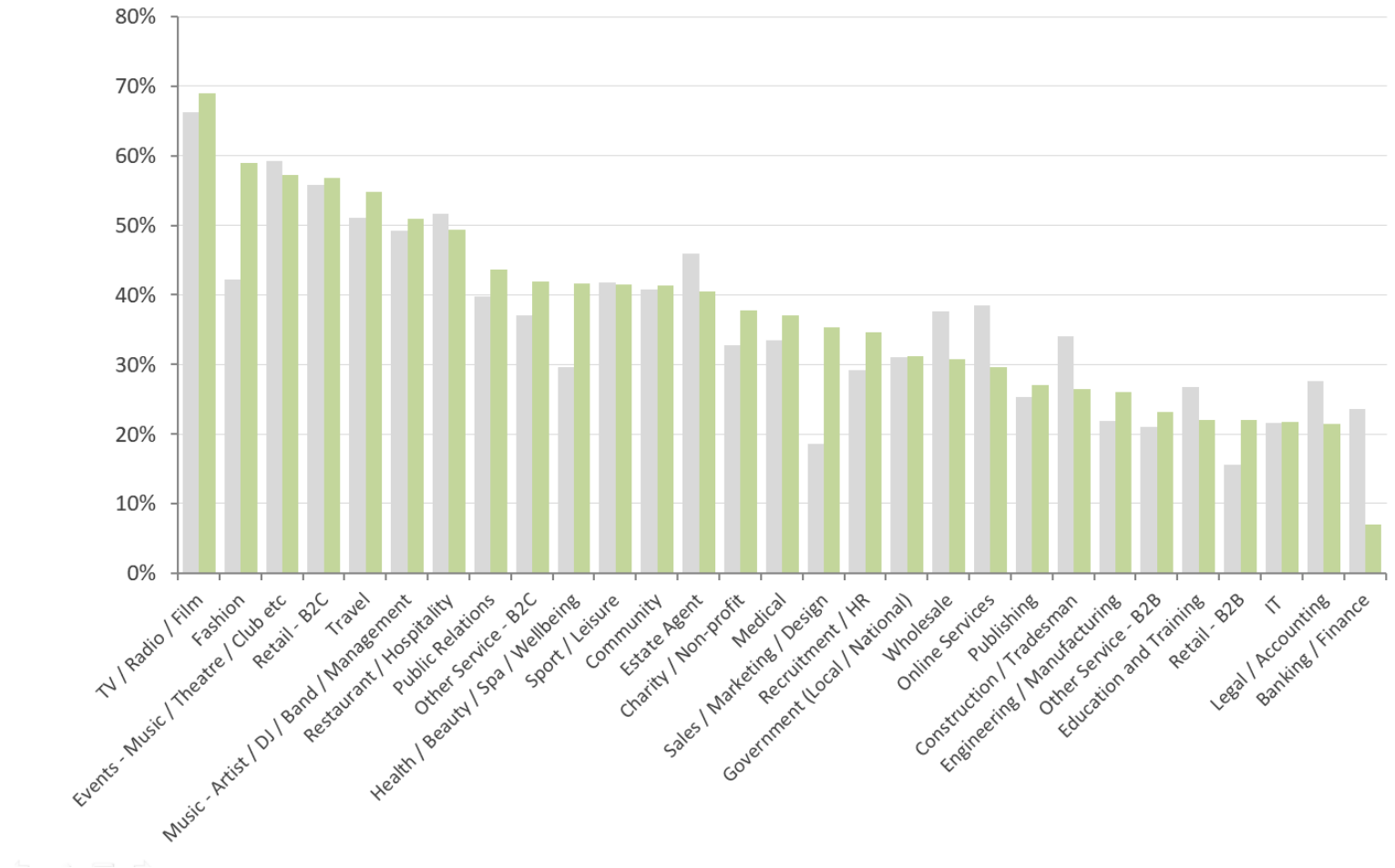
Click-through on mobile Last 2 years: 2016-2017

The graph opposite shows click-throughs on a mobile device for each sector for the last 2 years 2016-2017.

2016 - Grey
2017 - Green

The results are ordered according to the highest to lowest mobile click-through sectors of 2017.

Click-through on a mobile device by sector - 2016-2017



Device type - mobile click-through 2016-2017

The graph opposite shows the difference in click-through on mobile for each sector from 2016 to 2017.

Increased mobile click-through

19 of the 29 sectors showed an increase in mobile click-through with the largest differences being in the sectors:

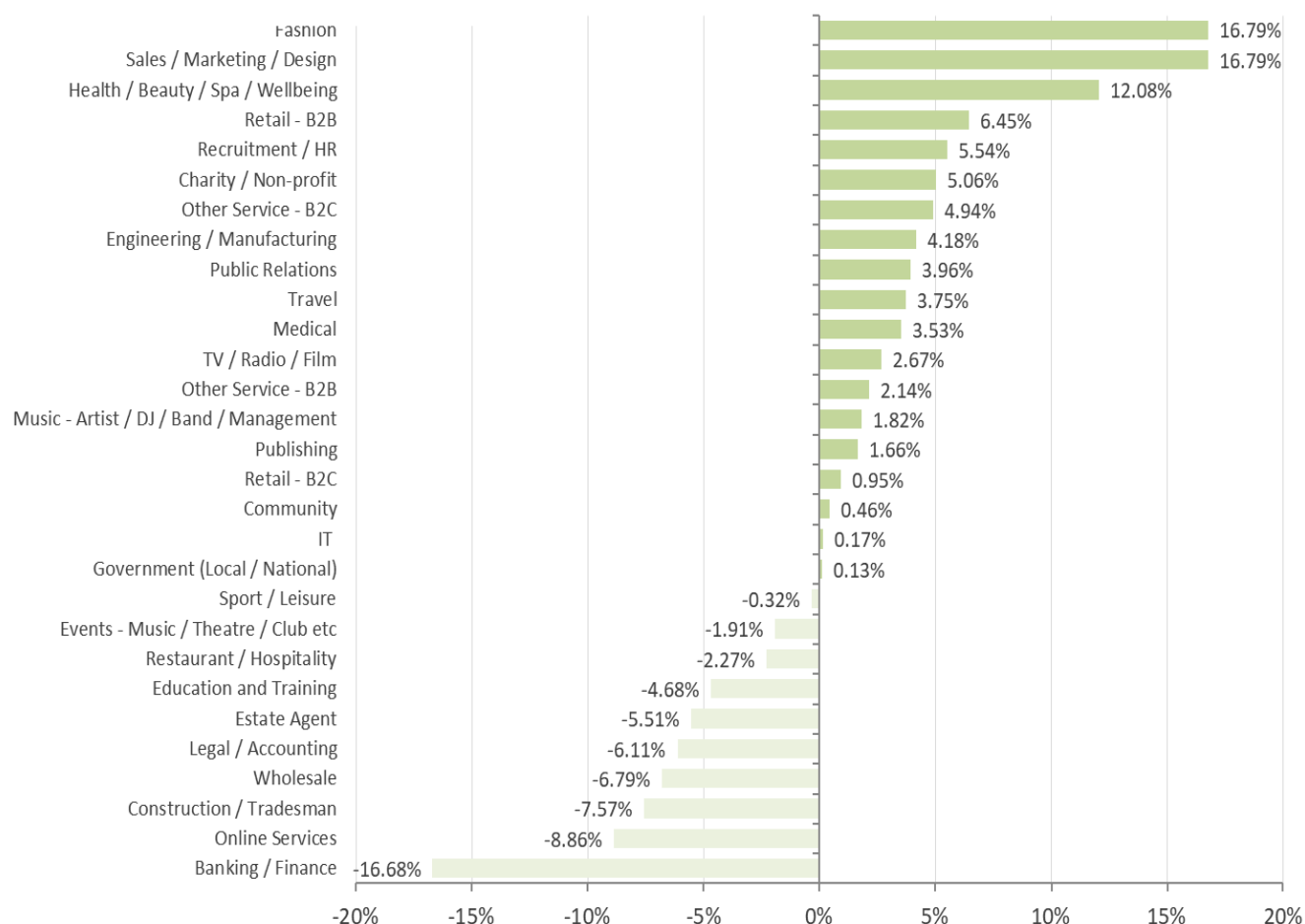
- Fashion (+16.79%)
- Sales / Marketing / Design (+16.79%)
- Health / Beauty / Spa / Wellbeing (+12.08%)

Reduced mobile click-through

10 of the 29 sectors showed a decrease in mobile click-through with the largest differences being in the sectors:

- Construction / Tradesman (-7.75%)
- Online Services (-8.86%)
- Banking / Finance (-16.68%)

Click-through rates on mobile by sector - difference 2016-2017



Marketing automation - overview

Summary

Automated campaigns typically exhibit significantly higher levels of engagement than non-automated. The graph opposite shows open, click-through and click-to-open rates for automated and non-automated campaigns.

Overall

25.44% Open rate
4.76% Click-through rate
12.50% Click-to-open rate

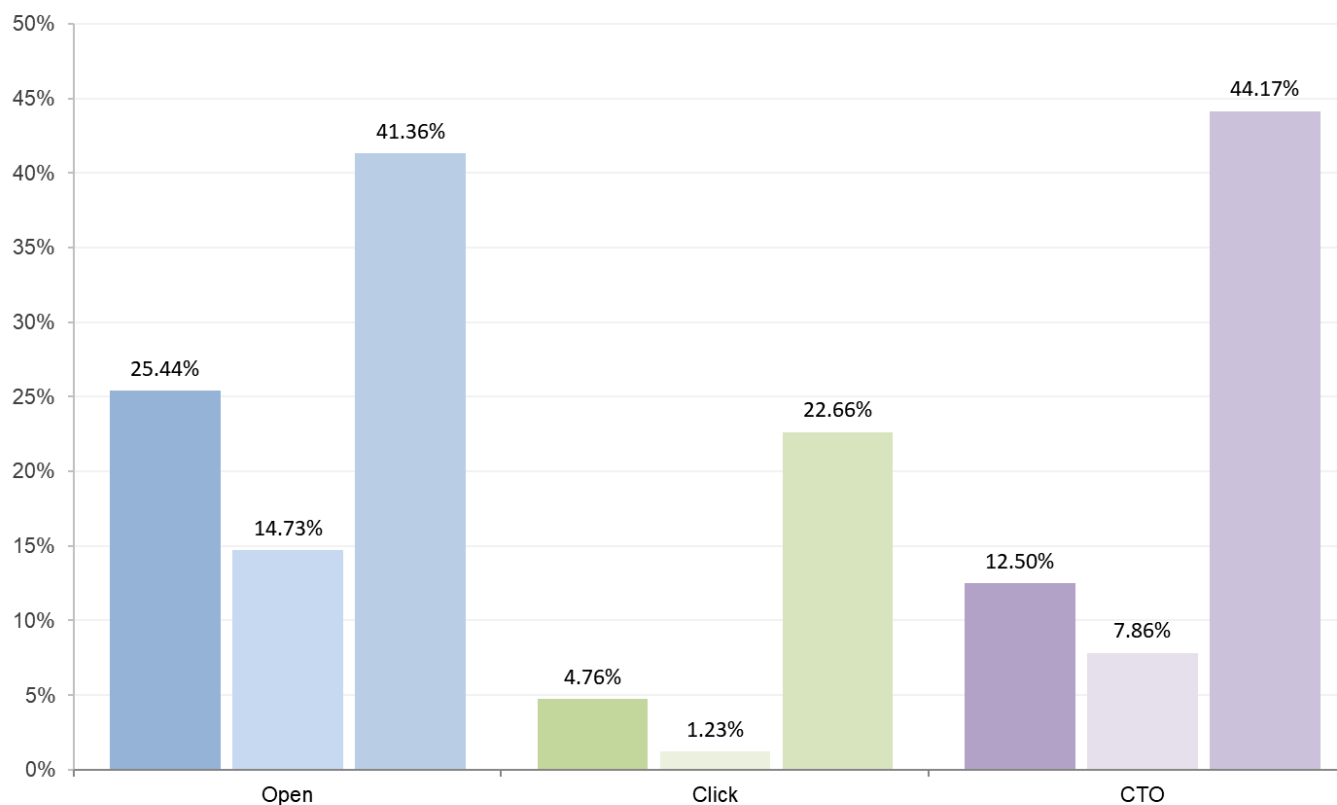
Automated emails

41.36% Open rate
22.66% Click-through rate
44.17% Click-to-open rate

Non-automated emails

14.73% Open rate
1.23% Click-through rate
7.86% Click-to-open rate

Open, click-through and CTO for automated and non-automated campaigns - 2017



Note - Although more frequent, due to their 1-1 nature automated campaigns represent a relatively small send volume compared to bulk send non-automated campaigns.

Marketing automation - open rate by sector

Automated campaigns

Open rate - by sector

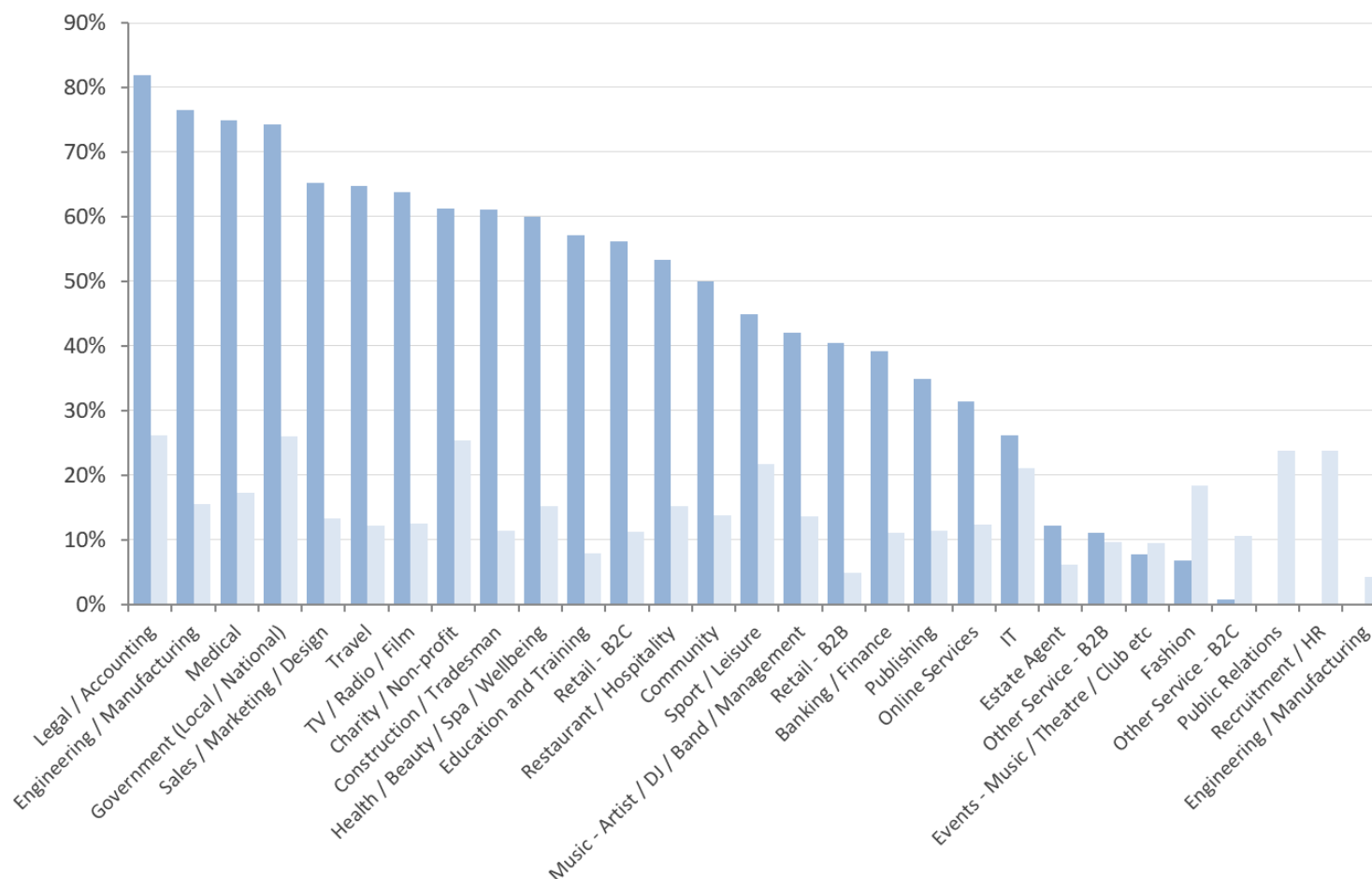
The graph opposite shows open rate for automated (dark blue) and non-automated (light blue) campaigns for each sector. The results are arranged from highest to lowest by automated opens.

Highest automated opens

- Legal / Accounting
- Engineering / Manufacturing
- Medical

Of these, only Legal / Accounting also exhibits higher than average overall open rates (second ranking). Engineering / Manufacturing was ranked as the lowest overall open rate.

Open rate for automated and non-automated campaigns by sector - 2017



Marketing automation - click-through rate by sector

Automated campaigns

Click-through rate - by sector

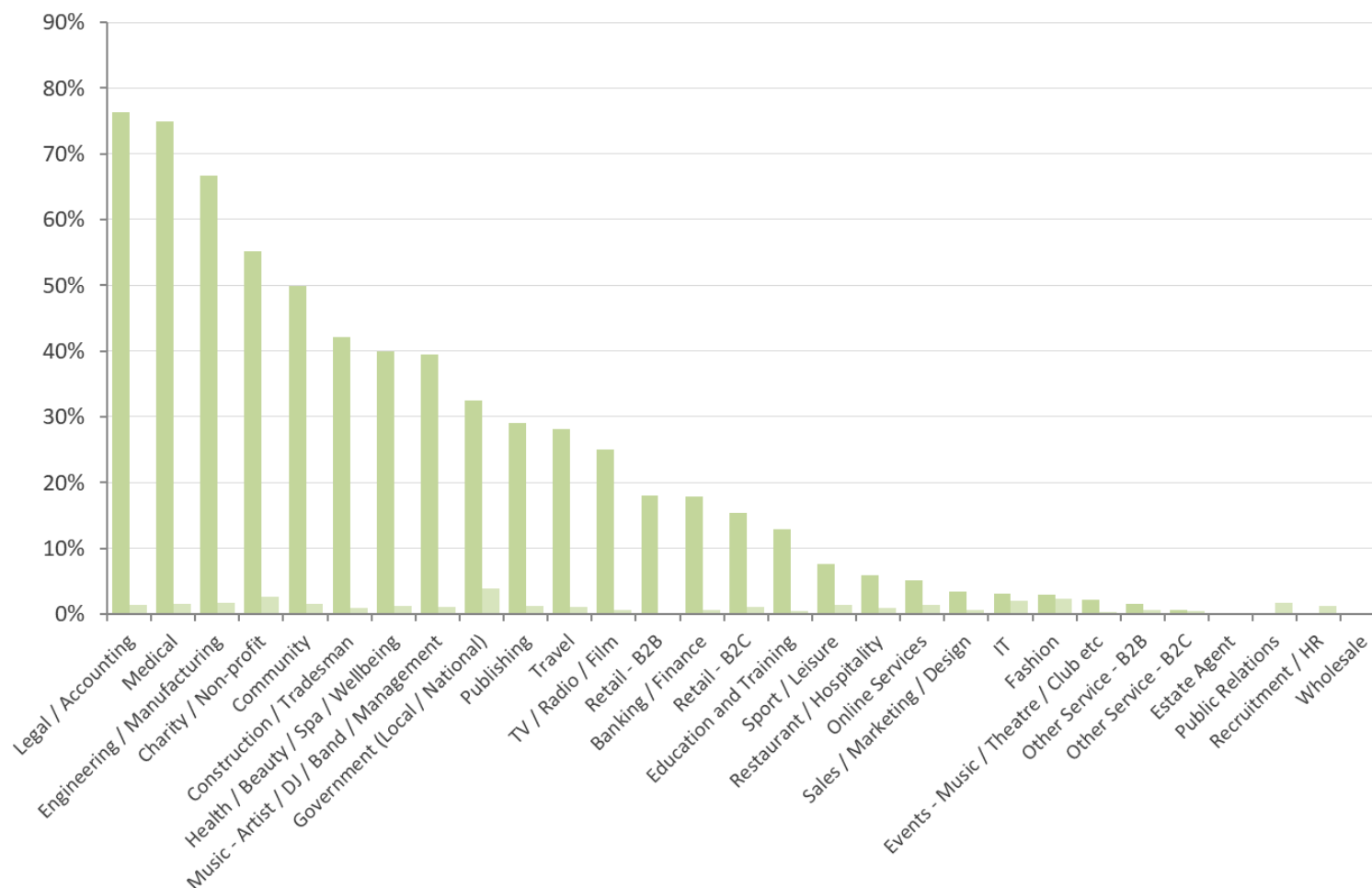
The graph opposite shows click-through rate for automated (dark green) and non-automated (light green) campaigns for each sector. The results are arranged from highest to lowest by automated click-throughs.

Highest automated click-throughs

- Legal / Accounting
- Medical
- Engineering / Manufacturing

These also correspond to the highest sectors for automated opens.

Click-through rate for automated and non-automated campaigns by sector - 2017



Marketing automation - click-to-open rate by sector

Automated campaigns CTO rate - by sector

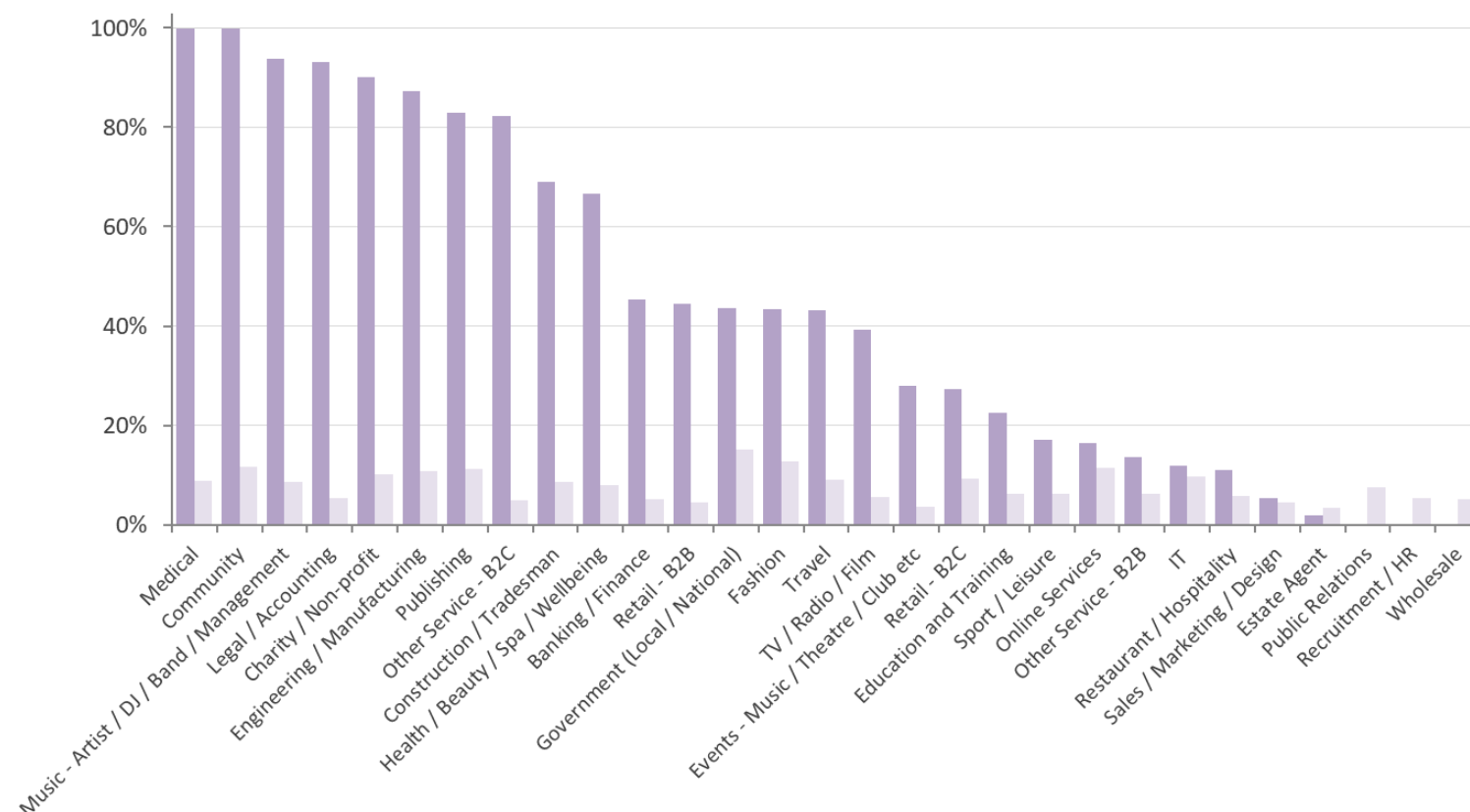
Click-to-open rate for automated and non-automated campaigns by sector - 2017

The graph opposite shows click-to-open rate for automated (dark purple) and non-automated (light purple) campaigns for each sector. The results are arranged from highest to lowest by automated click-to-opens.

Highest automated CTO

- Medical
- Community
- Music / Artist / DJ / Band

Medical and Community show extremely high (>99%) CTO for automated emails.

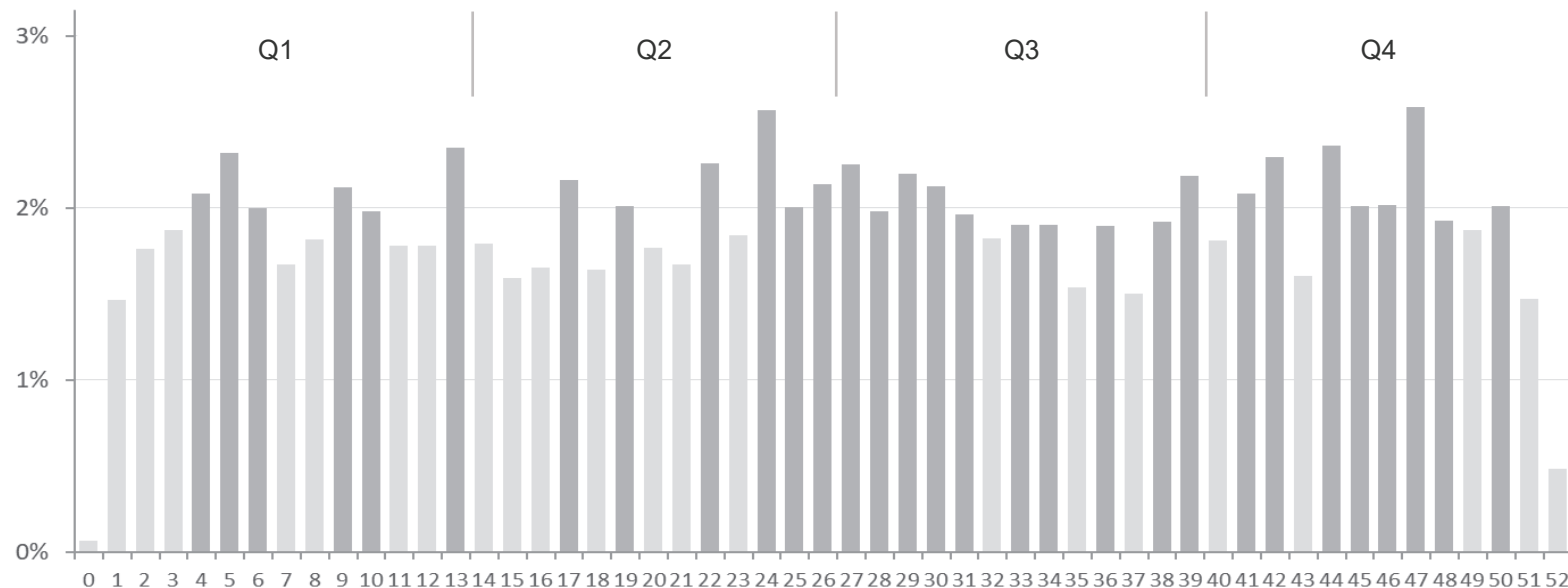


Send - by week of the year

Summary

The graph below shows the proportion of the total emails sent per week by all sectors. As a relatively large sample taken over a range of B2C and B2B sectors the average proportion of sends per week shows only a minor weekly variation - the average per week is 1.89% of the total. Peak values are seen in weeks 44 (2.37%), 24 (2.57%) and 47 (2.59%). Weeks with send volume above the weekly annual average are shown in darker grey.

% of send volume for each week of the year - Average of all sectors - 2017



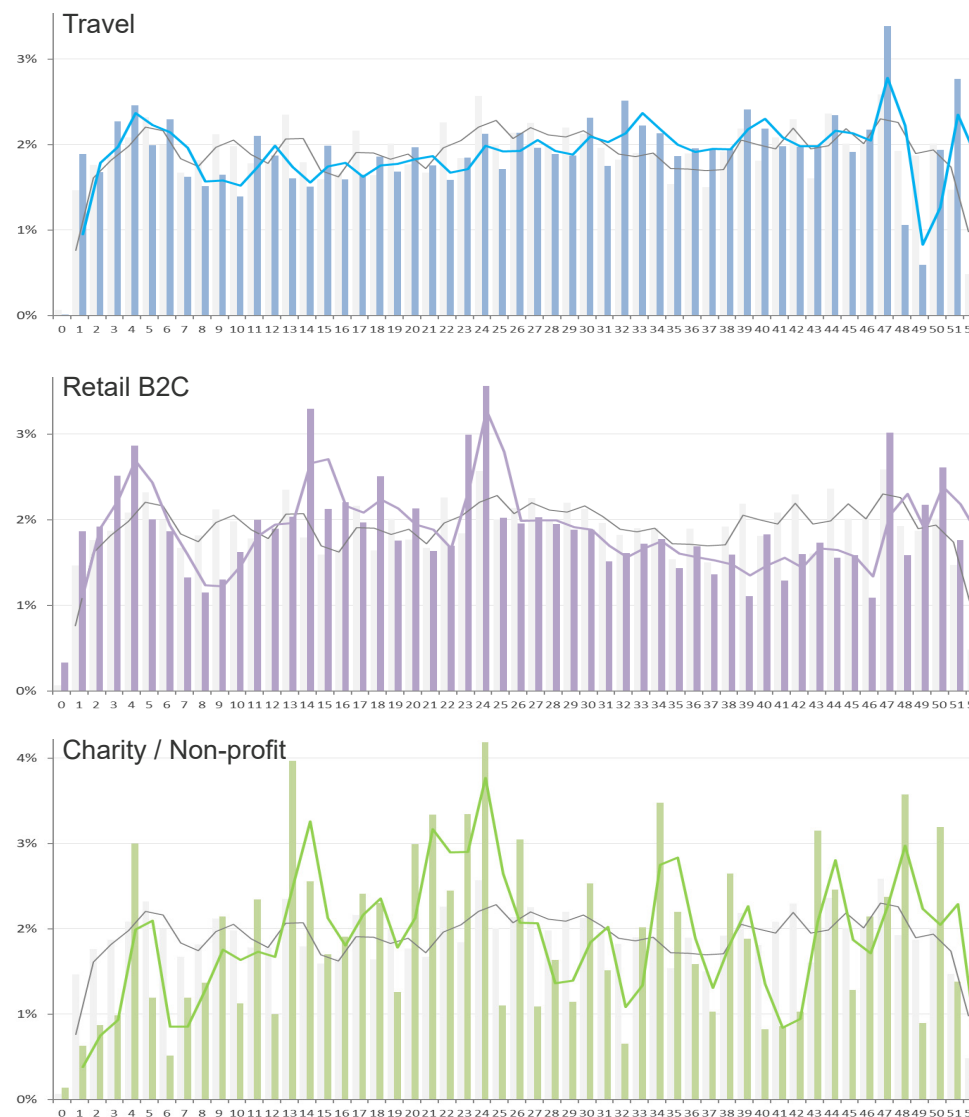
Send - by week of the year

Sends by week of the year - variation by sector

Although overall send volumes per week for all sectors combined show a relatively limited variation, a greater degree of variation is typically seen within specific sectors, both in B2C and B2B areas.

The graphs opposite show the same proportion of the weekly to total volume sends for each week of the year for three specific sectors. In each case the send proportion is compared to the overall distribution for all sectors (grey).

- Travel (blue)
- Retail B2C (purple)
- Charity / Non-profit (green)

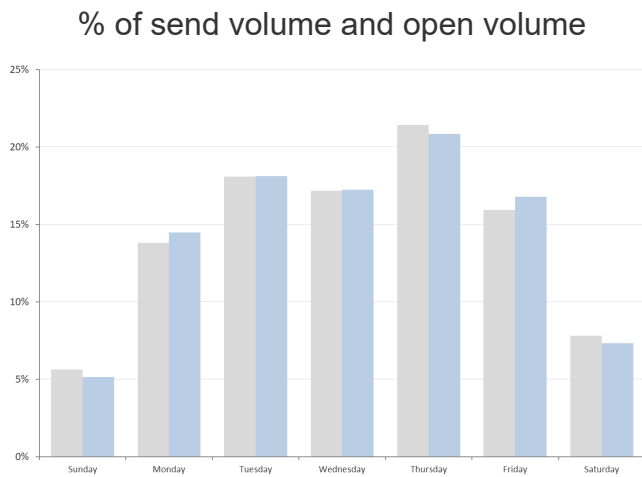


Send - by day of the week

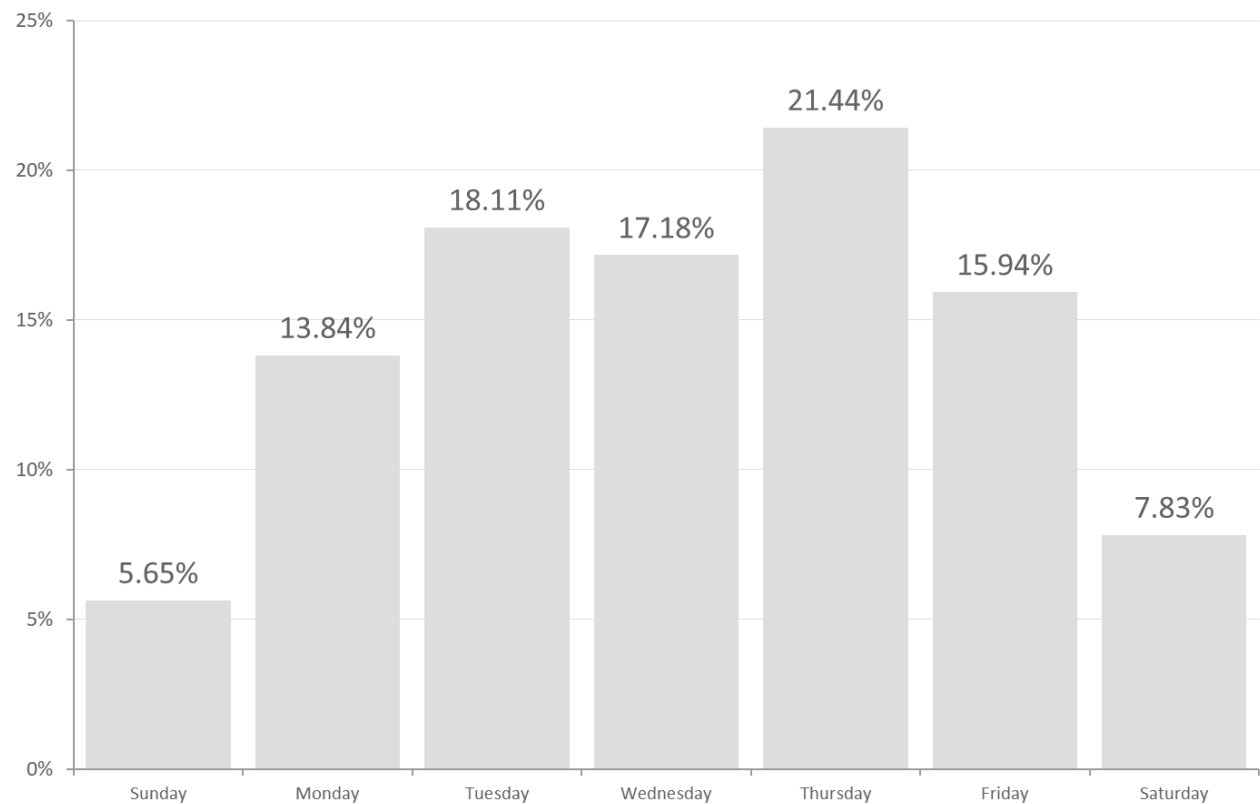
Summary

The graph opposite shows the proportion of all sends by day of the week for all sectors combined. As in previous years the peak is seen on Thursday (21.44%). The 2017 peak shows a slight reduction (from 22.29%) from the previous year.

The graph below shows the same data for both send and open volumes by day of the week.



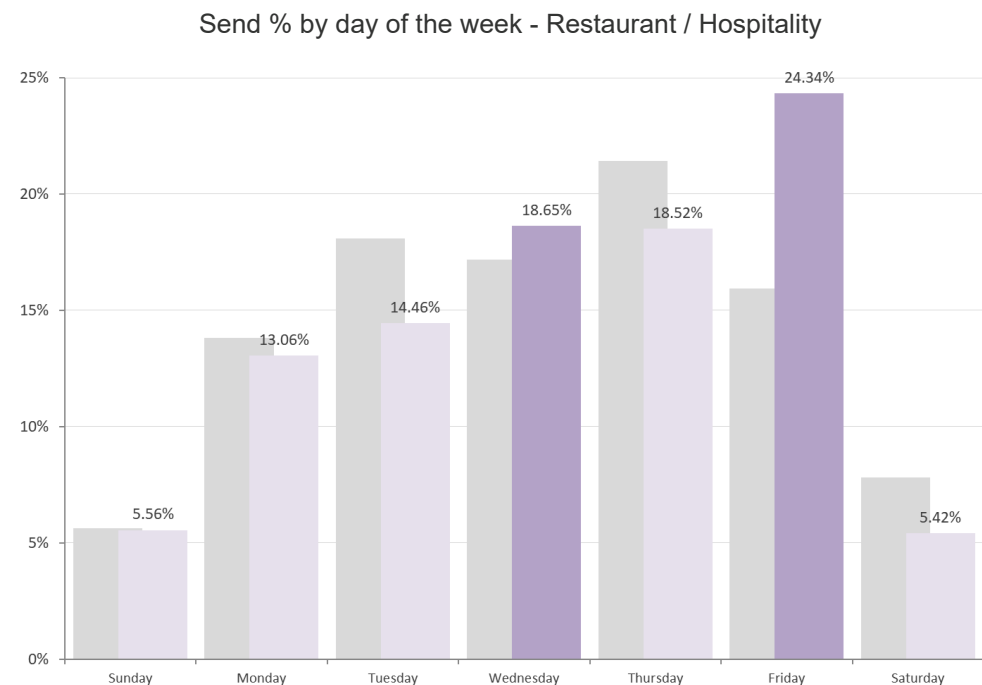
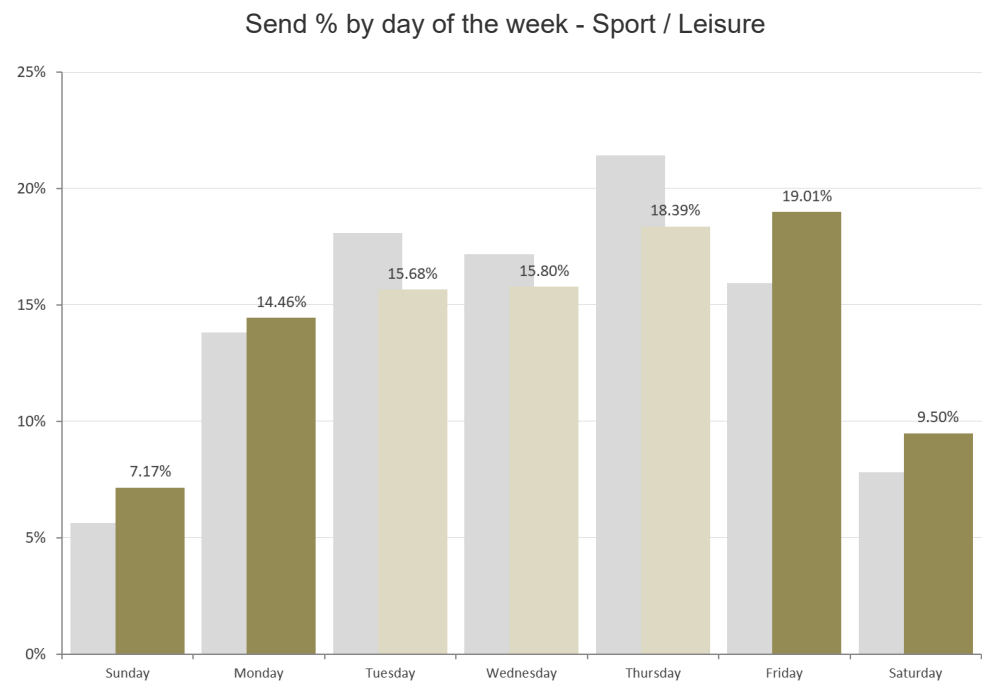
% of send volume for each day of the week - average of all sectors - 2017



Send - by day of the week

Sends by day of the week - sector variation

As with the other volume analysis, send proportions by day of the week show significant variation in the B2C / B2B sectors and within specific individual sectors. The graphs below show the daily variation for 2 selected sectors - Sport / Leisure and Restaurant / Hospitality. Both have a primarily B2C focus and show a trend towards higher volumes at the end of the week or weekend. In each case the average of all sectors is shown in grey. The darker columns show daily % results for each sector which are above the average for all sectors combined.

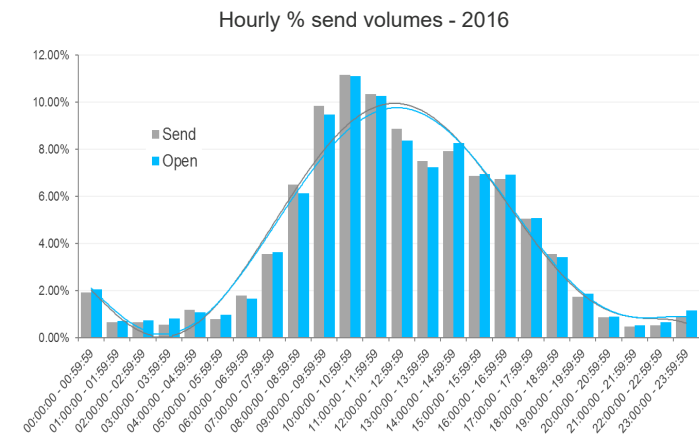


Send analysis - by hour of the day

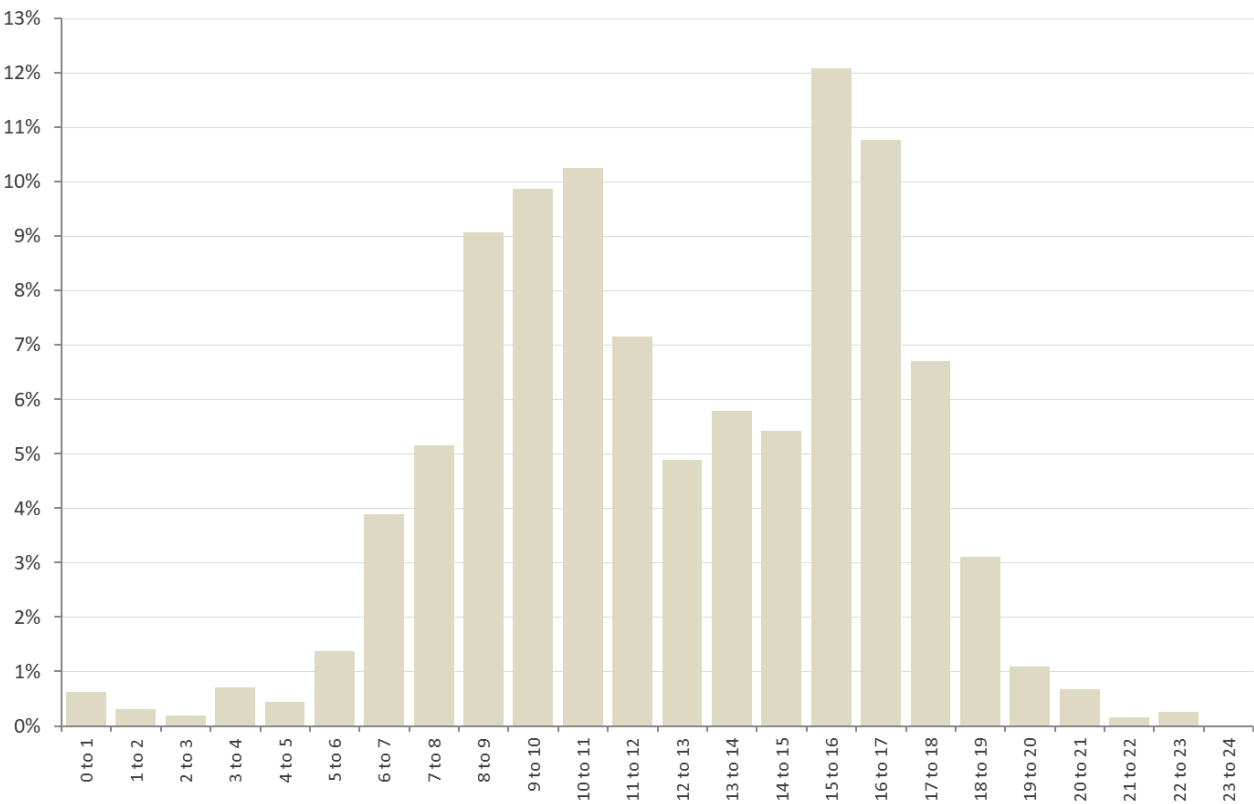
Summary

The graph opposite shows the proportion of all sends by hour of the day for all sectors combined. Results from 2017 show the previous year’s mid-morning peak (shown below) now being exceeded by that of between 15:00-16:00 hrs.

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| 10:00-11:00 hrs | 10.18% |
| 15:00-16:00 hrs | 13.04% |



% of send volume by hour of the day - Average of all sectors - 2017

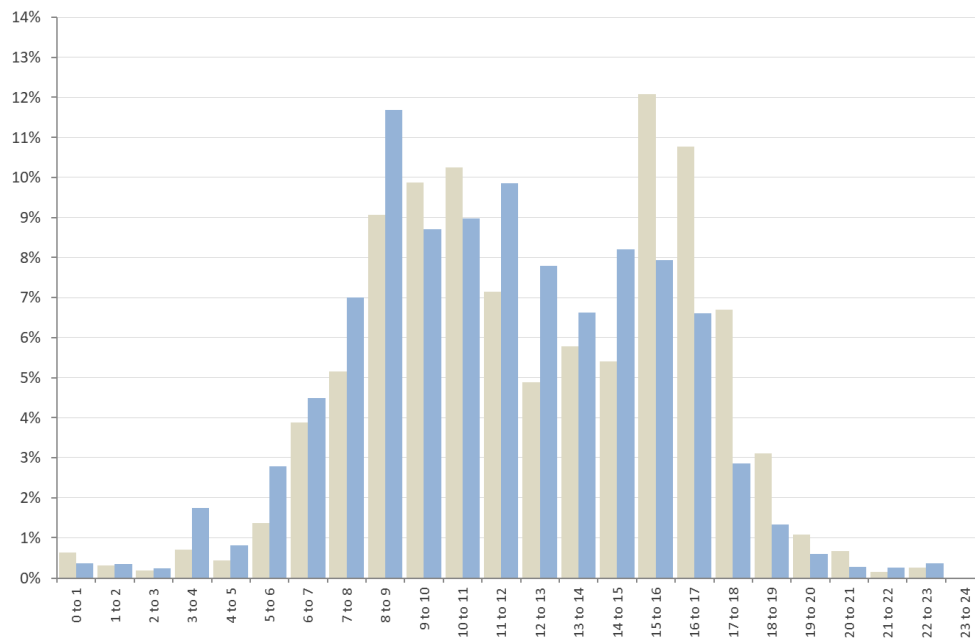


Send - by hour of the day

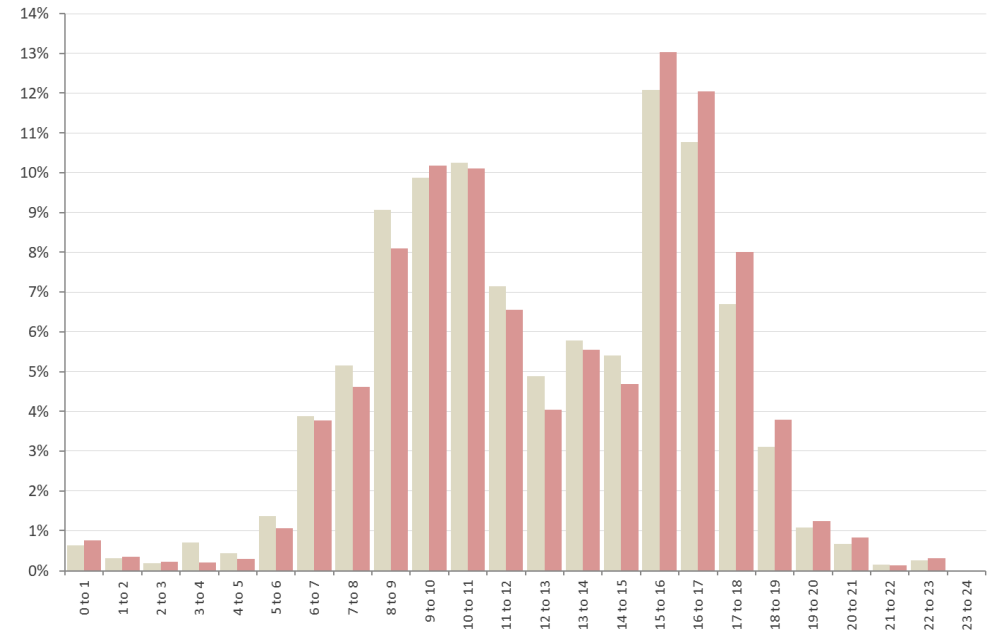
Sends by hour of the day - sector variation

As with the other volume analysis, send proportions by hour of the day also show significant variation - especially morning to afternoon. Although classification into B2B and B2C is a little subjective the graphs below show the hourly variation for those sectors primarily considered active in the B2B (blue) and B2C (red) sectors. In each case the hourly send proportions are compared to the overall values for all sectors.

% of send volume for each hour of the day - B2B sectors



% of send volume for each hour of the day - B2C sectors



Engagement - overview

Measuring engagement

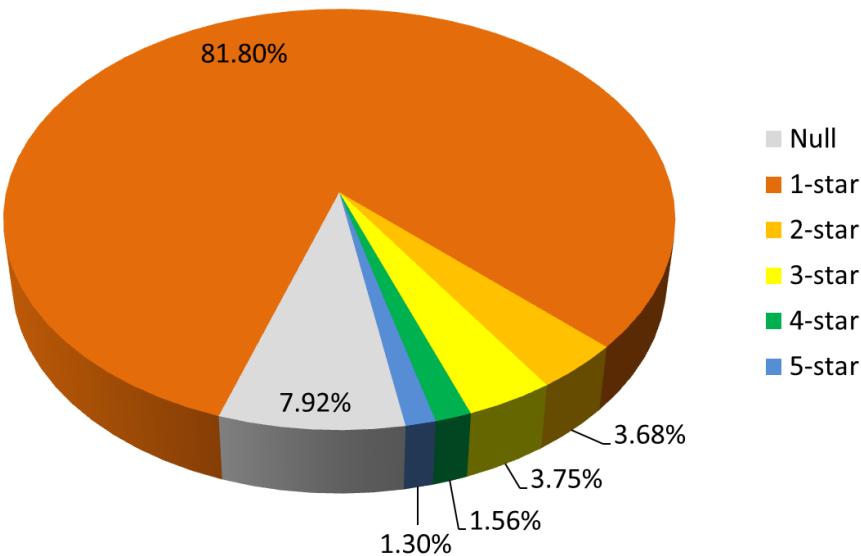
Many email platforms simply take standard open or click-through data as a measure of engagement.

This report includes a wider view using the multi-parameter engagement algorithm included in the Sign-Up.to platform. This takes into consideration a number of different engagement factors including both the type and frequency of interaction and subscriber behaviour over a prolonged period of time. Data fitting shows that this gives a more realistic measure of real-life engagement with email marketing campaigns.

Subscriber classification

Subscriber interaction data is dynamically assembled and used to classify each subscriber from 1-star (not engaged) to 5-star (highly engaged). A 'null' classification is also included at any time for subscribers for whom there is not yet sufficient engagement data. This provides a comprehensive but easy to understand measure of campaign engagement.

Engagement snapshot - all sectors overall - 2017



The chart above shows an overall snapshot showing subscriber engagement across all tracked sectors in each of the 6 engagement classifications for 2017.

| Classification | 2016 | 2017 |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| Null | 9.15% | 7.92% |
| 1-star | 79.01% | 81.80% |
| 2-star | 3.94% | 3.68% |
| 3-star | 4.07% | 3.75% |
| 4-star | 1.98% | 1.56% |
| 5-star. | 1.86% | 1.30 % |

Engagement - by sector

Engagement ranking - by sector

The graph opposite shows a snapshot of average subscriber engagement for each of the tracked sectors. For clarity the null engagement classifications have been removed.

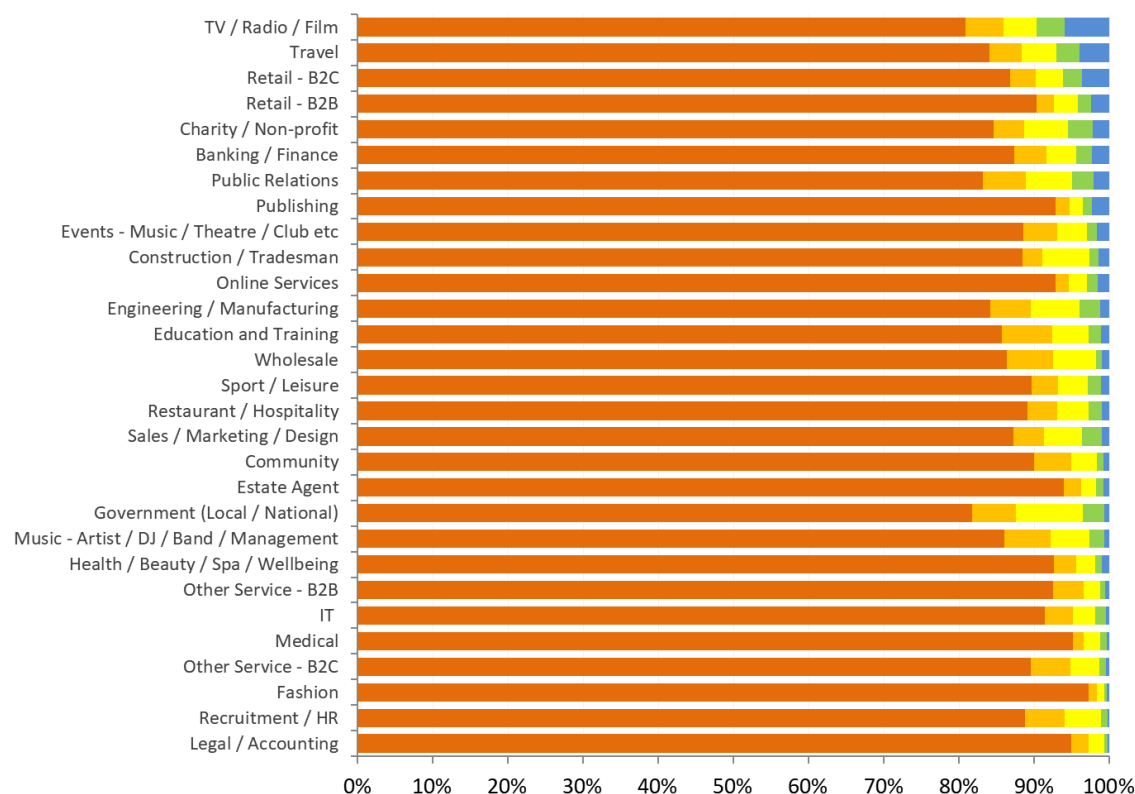
More on engagement profiling

Traditional email performance metrics give useful campaign-based feedback but for a more in-depth understanding of engagement it's necessary to look at a wider range of factors for individual subscribers and to consolidate this data over a prolonged period of time.

The engagement algorithm used for this report is fully automatic. It runs in the background collecting interaction data from each executed campaign, continually updating the subscriber ratings.

Engagement profiling can be used to target marginal subscribers with re-engagement campaigns or VIP subscribers with rewards and referral campaigns.

Engagement snapshot - by sector - end of 2017



More information on the Sign-Up.to engagement algorithm can be found in the 'Guide to Engagement' referenced in Appendix 2.

Raw data

| Industry sector | Open (%) | Click (%) | Unsub (%) | CTO (%) | UTO (%) | Delivery (%) |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Events - Music / Theatre / Club etc | 22.93% | 4.03% | 0.29% | 9.30% | 2.11% | 96.73% |
| Music - Artist / DJ / Band / Management | 29.65% | 12.18% | 0.29% | 21.17% | 1.36% | 96.88% |
| Restaurant / Hospitality | 18.73% | 1.37% | 0.53% | 6.05% | 3.01% | 98.04% |
| Estate Agent | 20.45% | 1.88% | 0.53% | 9.92% | 2.23% | 96.93% |
| Health / Beauty / Spa / Wellbeing | 24.56% | 2.80% | 0.44% | 9.56% | 2.67% | 94.99% |
| Travel | 19.57% | 7.95% | 0.38% | 7.95% | 2.48% | 93.97% |
| Publishing | 19.55% | 3.80% | 0.15% | 12.11% | 1.10% | 96.26% |
| Banking / Finance | 25.57% | 2.43% | 0.63% | 7.26% | 2.75% | 96.57% |
| Education and Training | 22.39% | 2.46% | 0.44% | 9.80% | 2.47% | 94.26% |
| Charity / Non-profit | 34.66% | 4.62% | 0.23% | 12.80% | 0.80% | 98.64% |
| Public Relations | 29.65% | 1.26% | 0.12% | 4.22% | 0.60% | 96.40% |
| Legal / Accounting | 34.86% | 2.34% | 1.11% | 5.95% | 3.97% | 95.22% |
| Online Services | 31.64% | 6.99% | 0.30% | 17.33% | 1.93% | 96.72% |
| Retail - B2B | 18.57% | 1.84% | 0.40% | 8.79% | 3.49% | 91.56% |
| Retail - B2C | 25.23% | 4.08% | 0.57% | 10.28% | 2.89% | 97.88% |
| Other Service - B2C | 24.34% | 2.19% | 0.58% | 7.68% | 2.64% | 97.95% |
| Other Service - B2B | 23.12% | 2.83% | 0.37% | 9.12% | 2.45% | 94.12% |
| Recruitment / HR | 18.54% | 1.91% | 0.65% | 8.46% | 4.24% | 91.42% |
| Sales / Marketing / Design | 30.36% | 7.48% | 0.41% | 13.60% | 2.25% | 95.27% |
| Government (Local / National) | 37.83% | 10.70% | 0.16% | 24.78% | 0.58% | 98.73% |
| Wholesale | 20.87% | 1.62% | 0.45% | 8.12% | 2.48% | 90.97% |
| Engineering / Manufacturing | 16.92% | 1.89% | 0.41% | 9.62% | 2.87% | 93.15% |
| IT | 19.61% | 2.85% | 0.50% | 9.31% | 3.95% | 91.96% |
| Community | 28.75% | 17.45% | 0.24% | 45.48% | 1.40% | 99.19% |
| Sport / Leisure | 28.91% | 4.39% | 0.41% | 10.97% | 2.30% | 95.91% |
| Medical | 22.02% | 3.55% | 0.32% | 15.55% | 1.65% | 98.76% |
| TV / Radio / Film | 34.32% | 15.61% | 0.44% | 20.83% | 1.94% | 97.73% |
| Fashion | 34.50% | 4.06% | 1.65% | 20.14% | 7.44% | 92.87% |
| Construction / Tradesman | 19.59% | 1.39% | 0.53% | 6.47% | 3.08% | 94.38% |

Additional resources

Previous email marketing benchmark reports

This 2018 report is our 10th annual Benchmark Report. Previous generations and archive compilations are available on our website.

<https://www.signupto.com/email-marketing-benchmarks/>



Email marketing Discovery Mornings

Join a guided tour through 10 best-practice topics in email marketing. Discovery Mornings are designed for all levels of expertise and suitable for users of any email marketing platform. Held regularly in central London and free to attend.

<https://www.signupto.com/resources/events/discovery-mornings/>



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<https://www.signupto.com/resources/guides/>



Email marketing blog

An extensive indexed library of email marketing related articles can be found at our regular blog site:

<https://www.signupto.com/news/>

About Sign-Up.to

Professional email marketing software and services

Sign-Up.to is an email and SMS marketing provider for professional businesses. Based on an established and popular self-service platform we specialise in helping businesses design, implement and execute high performing email marketing strategies.

Alongside our easy to use self-service platform, we offer a range of managed services, including, bespoke platform set-up and integration, advanced feature customisation and professional campaign outsourcing.

Further information

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Current revision: Feb-2018 (R3)