

2022

WINE INDUSTRY EMAIL BENCHMARK REPORT



JANUARY
2023

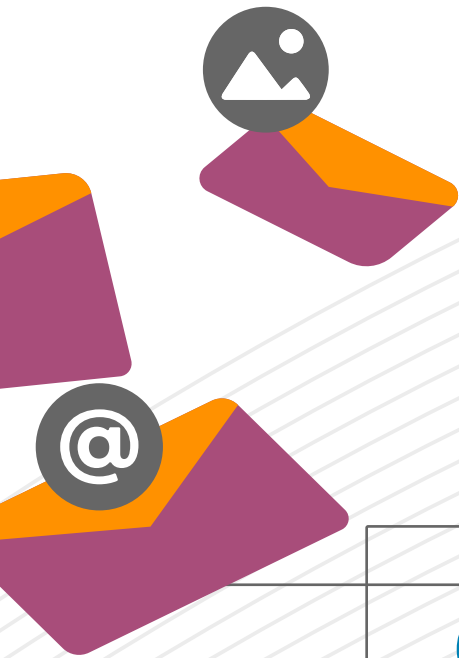
presented by
WineGlass Marketing



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our third email benchmark report. For those of you who are playing along at home, you may think it's been a while since we did one of these, and you'd be correct. We didn't do one in 2021 because the post-COVID trends were hard to interpret. We wanted to see if 2020 and 2021 were anomalies or did they set a new standard. We're proud to be able to provide you with answers on this, as we've included a five-year retrospective in this release with the years 2018 – 2022.

Our report shows that consumer responses to emails are evening out after very different data in 2020 and 2021. And while considerably mature as a channel and often misused, it still holds a firm place in the market mix as a direct response vehicle.



HISTORICAL DATA

01 FIVE YEAR TRENDS

02 INTERESTING COMPARISONS

2022 DATA

03 OPEN ME

04 CLICK ME

05 BUY ME

06 2022 BENCHMARK
SUMMARY

01

FIVE YEAR TRENDS

Why are we starting a 2022 report by looking back to 2018? We couldn't help but dig up our pre-2022 data to add to this report because it is a fantastic opportunity to track the impact of COVID on our email responses. The behavior changes of planned campaigns by wineries and customers' reactions during COVID and Shelter in Place should be evident by looking for anomalies. In this section, we've pulled historical data to compare to 2022 data and looked for trends.



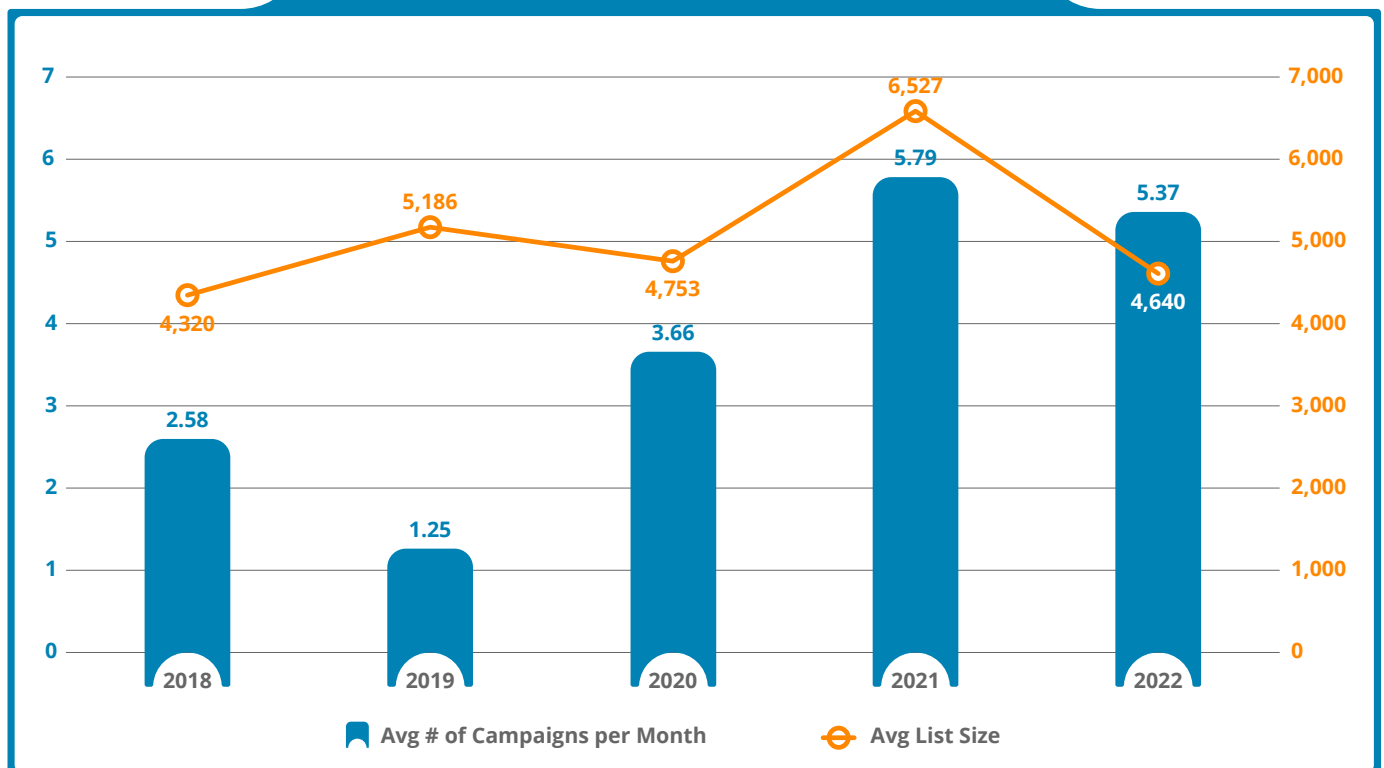
INCREASED FOCUS ON DATABASE AND CAMPAIGN FREQUENCY

COVID abruptly reminded us that keeping in touch with our customers is essential to our business survival. When the steady stream of new customers off the highway to our tasting rooms stopped, we found ways to talk to existing customers in our database, thus keeping the relationship alive. We remembered what we learned when that highway opened again in 2021. We kept adding names and coveting that connection, swearing we would never leave ourselves that vulnerable again. Between 2020 and 2021, the average database size jumped 37% to over 6.5k.

But, we took our feet off the gas because, in 2022, we saw it fall to the lowest point since 2018. Let's hope that in next year's benchmark study, we see increased attention in this area and that our databases grow again.

In five years, WineGlass Marketing grew, the size and complexity of our clients climbed, and the number of campaigns tracked each year increased. So the data might not contain the same wineries year to year. To account for this, each data point was averaged based on the individual campaigns and wineries to compare apples to apples.

01. CAMPAIGNS AND LIST SIZE



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

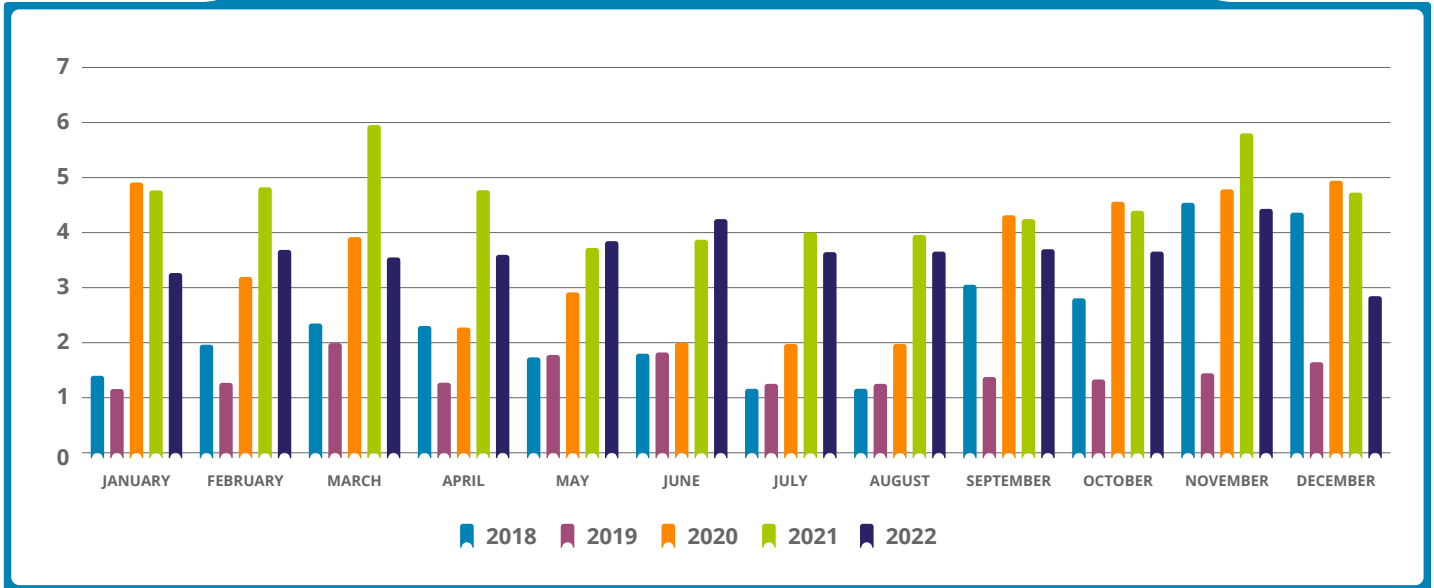
THE AVERAGE MONTHLY CAMPAIGNS PER WINERY ALSO FLUCTUATED

A data point with similar fluctuations is the average monthly campaigns each of our clients sent out. In 2018 we started at an average of roughly one campaign every other week. That frequency dropped to one a month in 2019, then during COVID, jumped to almost once a week, and in 2021 and 2022, our averages have been over once a week.

We interpret this increase as wineries finally started segmenting during COVID because they had the time and resources to look at their data. So, when 2021 came along, it was game on with A/B splits, automated drip campaigns, and segmented offers. We also noted a great deal more “resends” in the data from 2022, showing that more wineries are comfortable with reminding non-openers or non-responders that they’re missing out on a great deal. In 2022, the wineries surveyed reported an average of 5.27 campaigns per month – either completely new campaigns, resends, or different segments.



02. AVG # OF CAMPAIGNS BY MONTH



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



SEASONALITY IS STARTING TO CHANGE

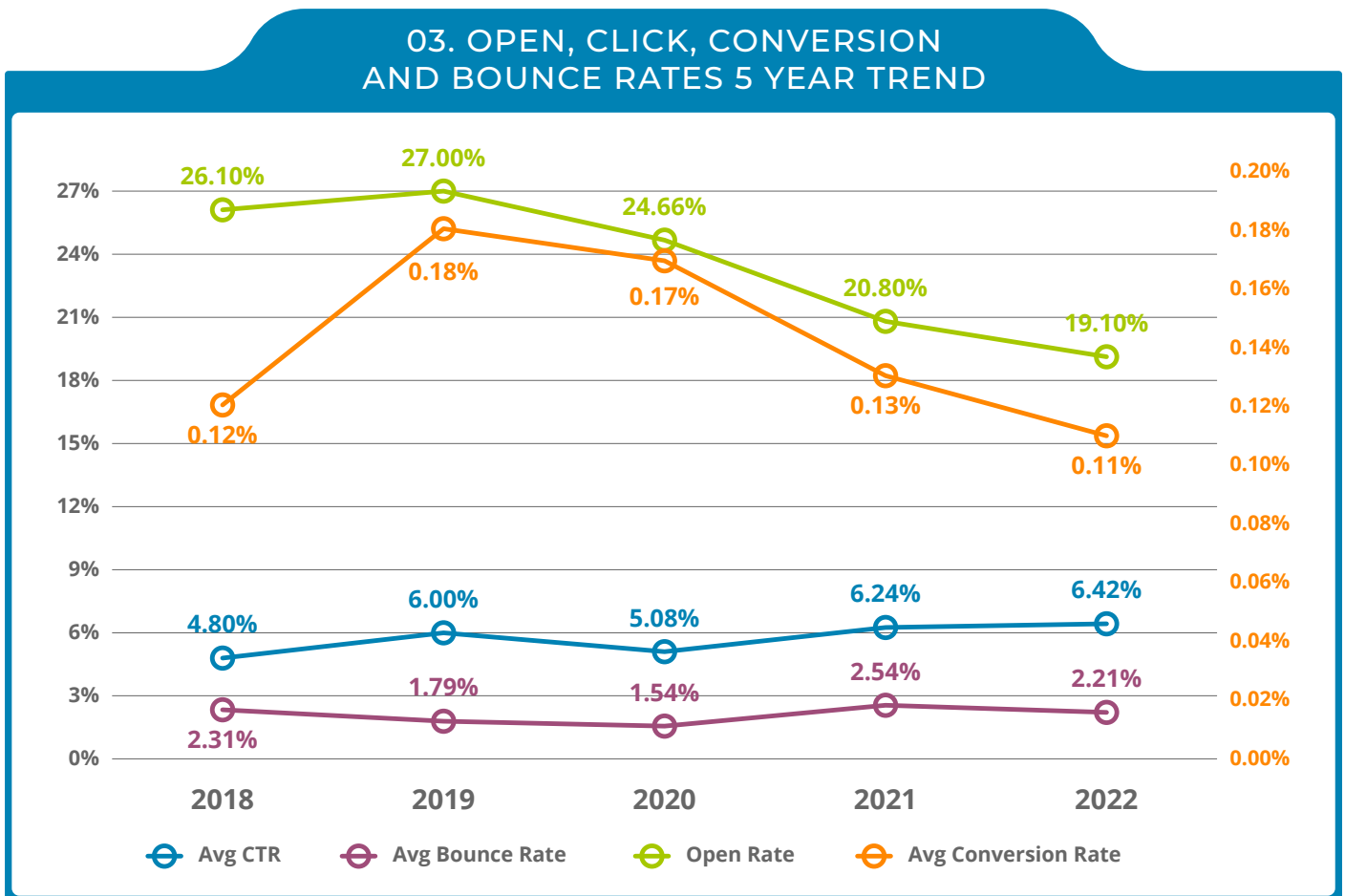
If we split out volume by month for these five years, we get an idea of the increase in campaigns in 2022 and the seasonal trends. Wineries cluster emails around club shipment times in March and fall harvest and load more holiday emails into the fourth quarter. This trend has been consistent throughout all five years.

However, in 2022 we saw more emails during the summer. Perhaps this is because of the increased adoption of summer “cold” shipping, or segmentation and testing are planned in the summer months to minimize the impact on crucial selling seasons. But we can say that going “dark” in the hot months is no longer a common practice.



OPEN RATE DECREASED, BUT CTR INCREASED

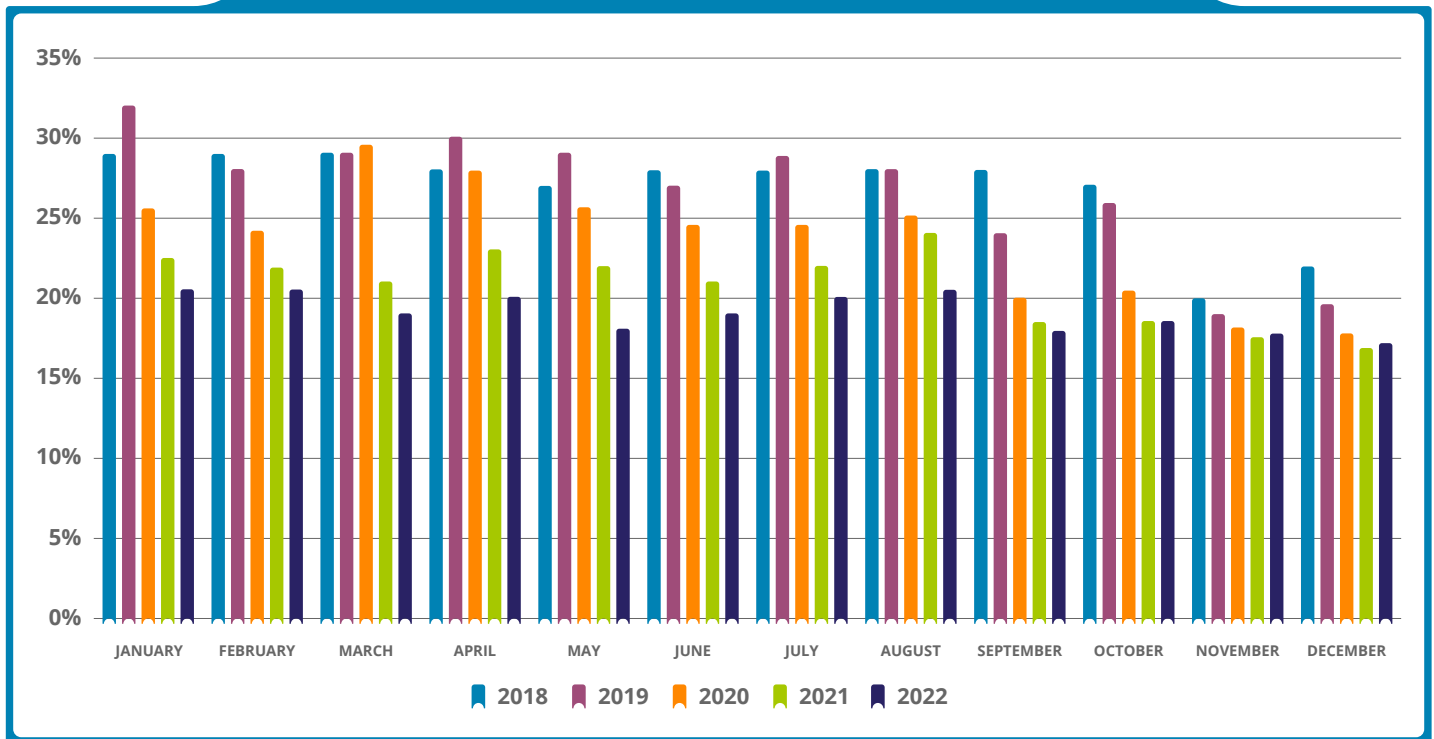
Open rates have been on a steady decline for the past three years. But don't worry; this is consistent with any industry trends and has been this way year over year since the first email was sent in the early 1990s. Why? Two reasons. First, as consumers, we're tired of emails. As any of you know, you work **hard** on that subject line and preview text to get attention. We must overcome considerable inbox clutter.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

Secondly, there is an inverse relationship with volume. As marketers, emails are cheap, so the ROI is worth it to send a lot of them. When consumers don't open them, we resend reminders. We get a few more opens, but typically these emails perform worse than the initial email launch, which brings down the overall campaign open rate.

04. AVERAGE OPEN RATES BY MONTH

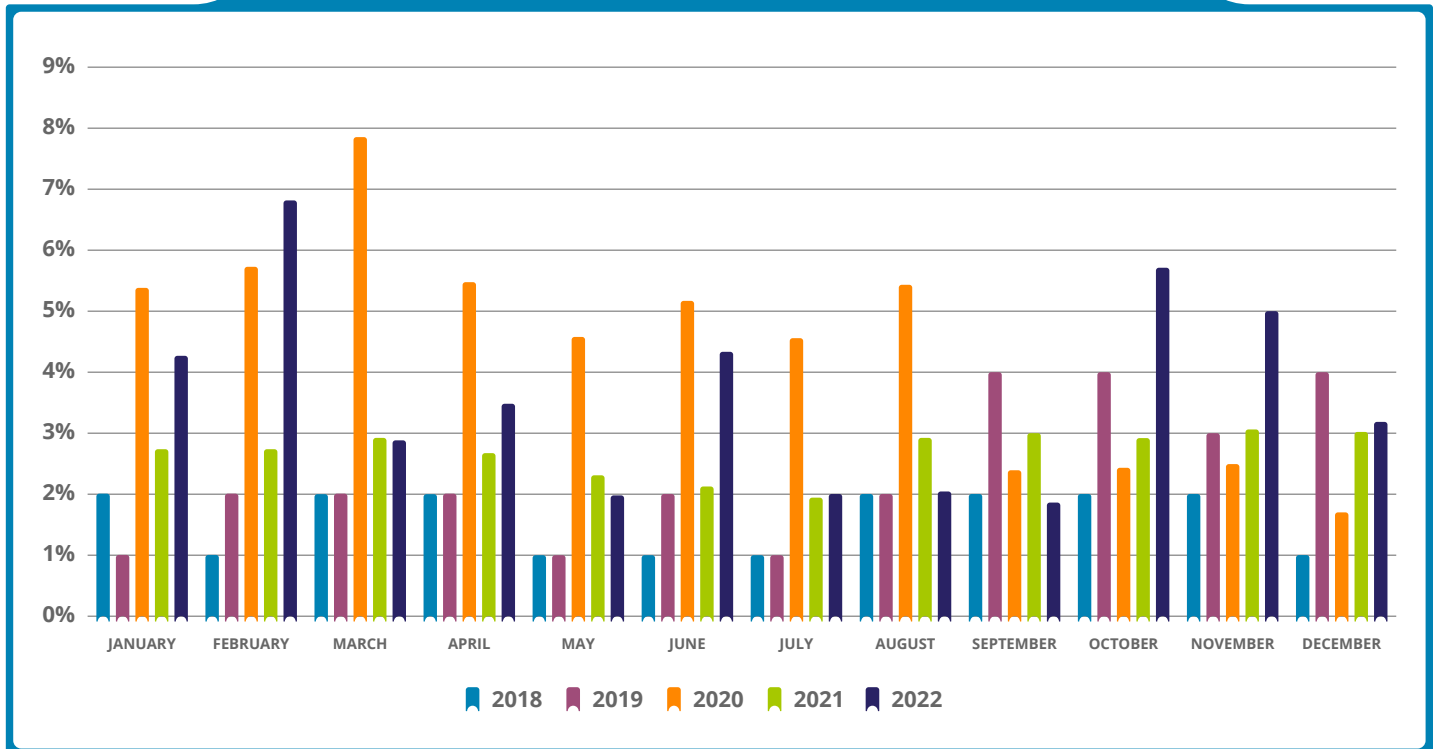


Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

In sync with our tendency to send more emails in Q4 – open rates by month show the inverse. Our customers are more likely to open our emails in Q1, Q2, and Q3 when there is less clutter in their inboxes. Open rates are the lowest in the fourth quarter when the email frequency is highest.

Click-through rates follow a similar seasonality to our frequency and show a higher CTR with more campaigns. Looking at this data, along with conversion rates and sales, we can confirm that Q1 and Q4 are still the primary online buying season; however, the spring and summer are seeing increased activity.

05. CLICK-THROUGH RATES BY MONTH



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

Email is far from dead or a bad investment, but to combat lowering open and click-through rates, there is little to do about maturing channel fatigue except write the best subject lines you can and create compelling content your targets want to read.

Speaking of content, if you get recipients to open, the good news is they like it; the click-through rates (CTR) increase yearly. The only thing we can attribute this to is better content. The levers contributing to click-through rates are best practices in design (buttons, white space, branding, etc.) and delivering content your customers care about. Bravo.

Sadly, when we look back at chart 03, although they clicked to the website, the conversion rate went down (shown on the chart with the orange line and right-hand secondary axis.) This decline is the fault of the website page, not the email. Click-through rates have increased. The emails enticed potential customers to open, read and click, but something happened. Google Analytics provides this data from the website. If wineries are not looking at their visitors' paths and creating custom landing pages for each email, the most compelling email in wine country may not end with a sale.

Looking at the bounce rates, with all the campaign increases in the past five years, wineries did an excellent job of keeping their lists clean and up-to-date, as evidenced by the decrease in bounce rate.

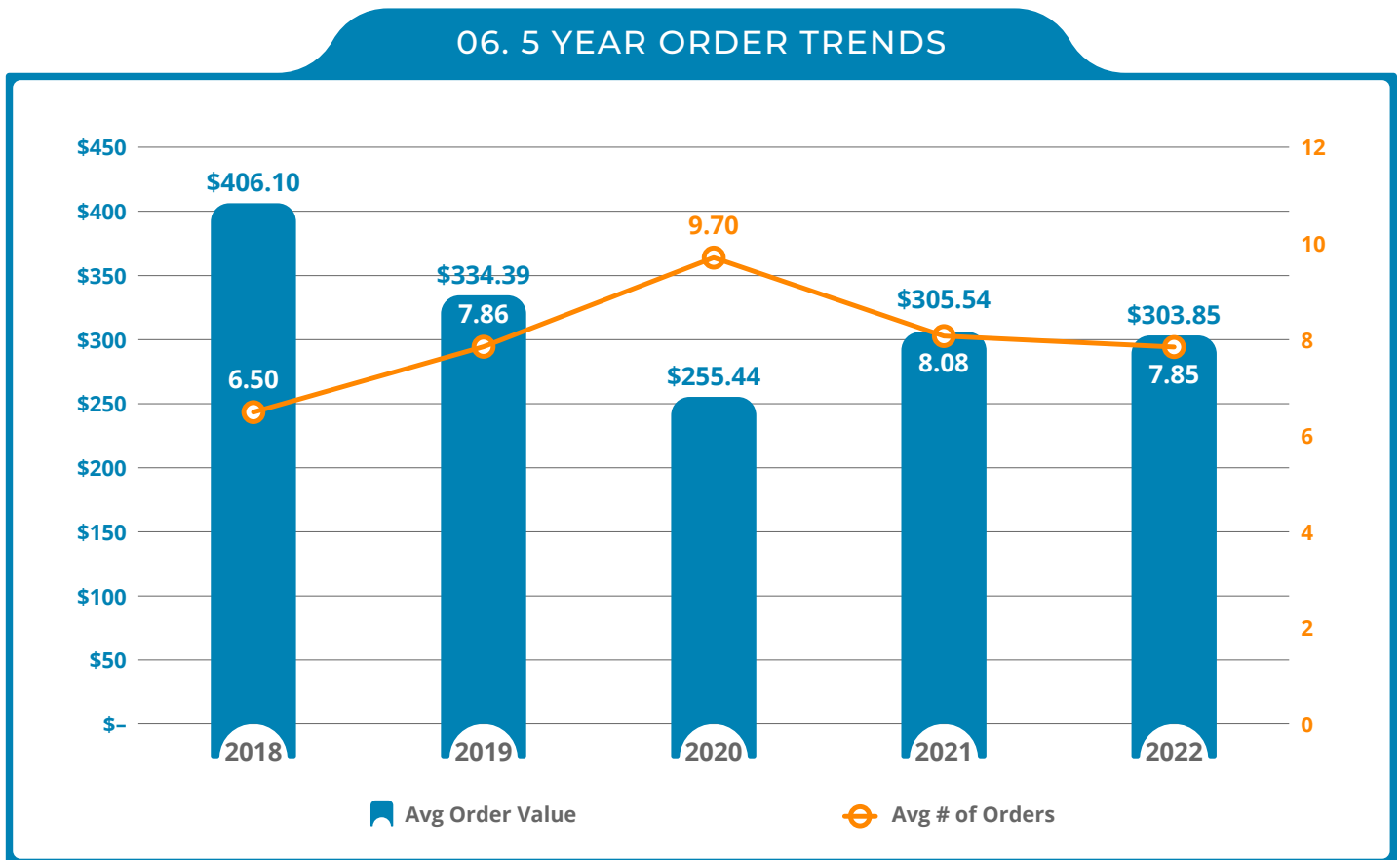
*We say better **content** and not better **offers** because when everyone slashed prices and offered steep discounts in 2020, the click-through rate actually went **down**.*



AOV AND AVERAGE ORDERS PER CAMPAIGN ARE BACK TO NORMAL

So, did all this convert to dollars? Sort of. This chart shows the Average Order Value in the blue bars, and the orange line is the average number of orders per campaign. It makes sense that during COVID, we saw a spike in orders (because there was no other way to order) yet a dive in AOV (due to discounts).

If you combine the relatively equal AOV and average orders per campaign for the past two years with the previous chart that demonstrates a decrease in conversion rate for 2021 and 2022, we see more frequent campaigns and higher prices to counteract the lower conversion. That is one way to compensate, but imagine the impact if that conversion rate went up.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

02

INTERESTING COMPARISONS

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not “Eureka!” (I found it!) but “That’s funny ...”

— Isaac Asimov

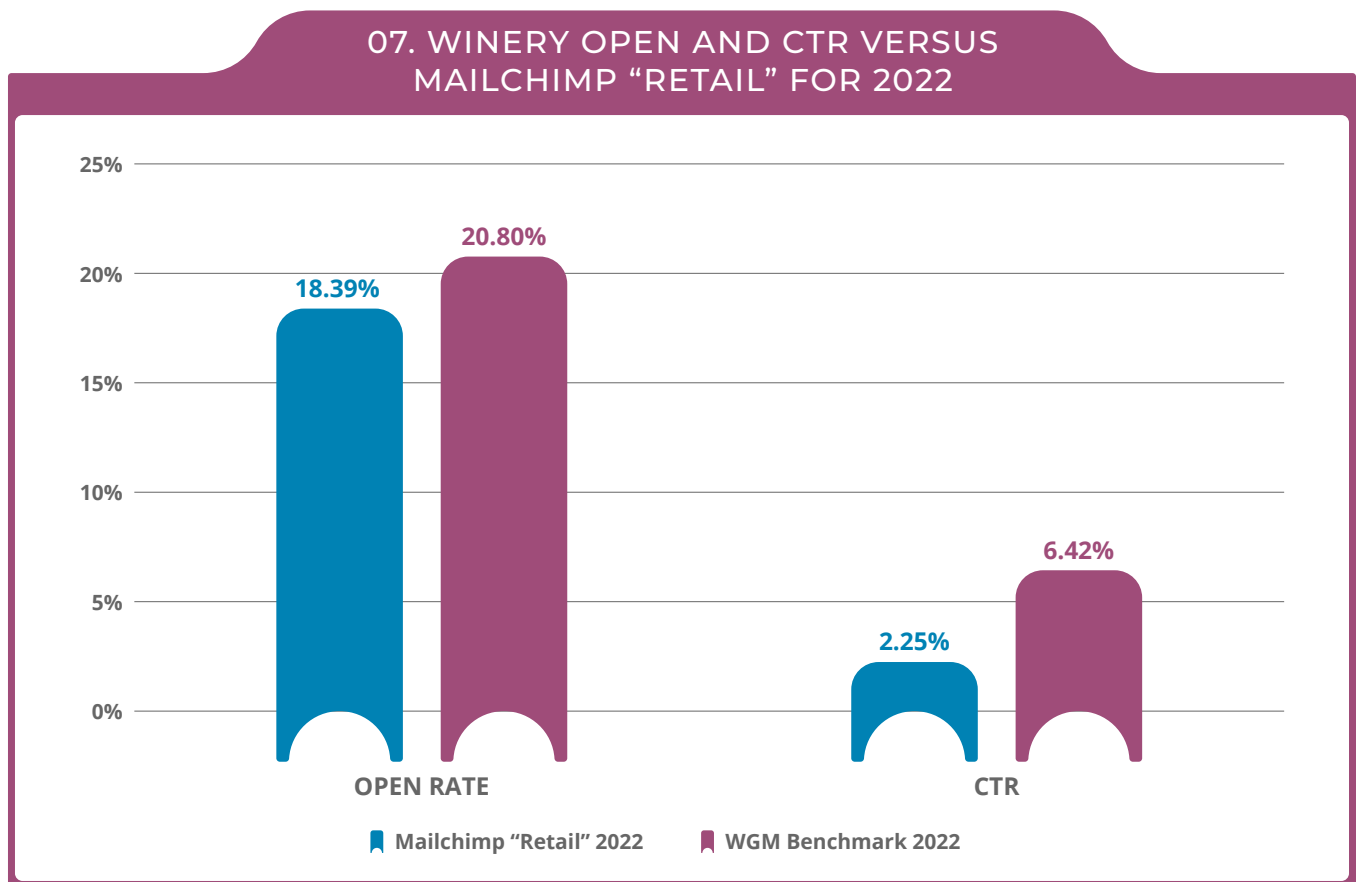


WINE PERFORMS BETTER THAN OTHER SEGMENTS

We started this report five years ago because there were no “wine” benchmarks. Unlike automotive, beauty, or computers with widely published standards, we couldn’t find any platform or database to look at wine, leaving us to look at “retail” as the closest facsimile.

Our average open rate for 2022 is 20.8%. Wine is 1.5% higher than industry standards if we compare this to the Mailchimp benchmarks for retail emails. The click-through rate for wine is almost 3x higher than published retail norms at 6.42%.

Wine performs better because our product and physical locations hold a strong emotional attachment to customers, and it is a fun hobby topic for them that allows them to escape their day momentarily and travel to wine country.

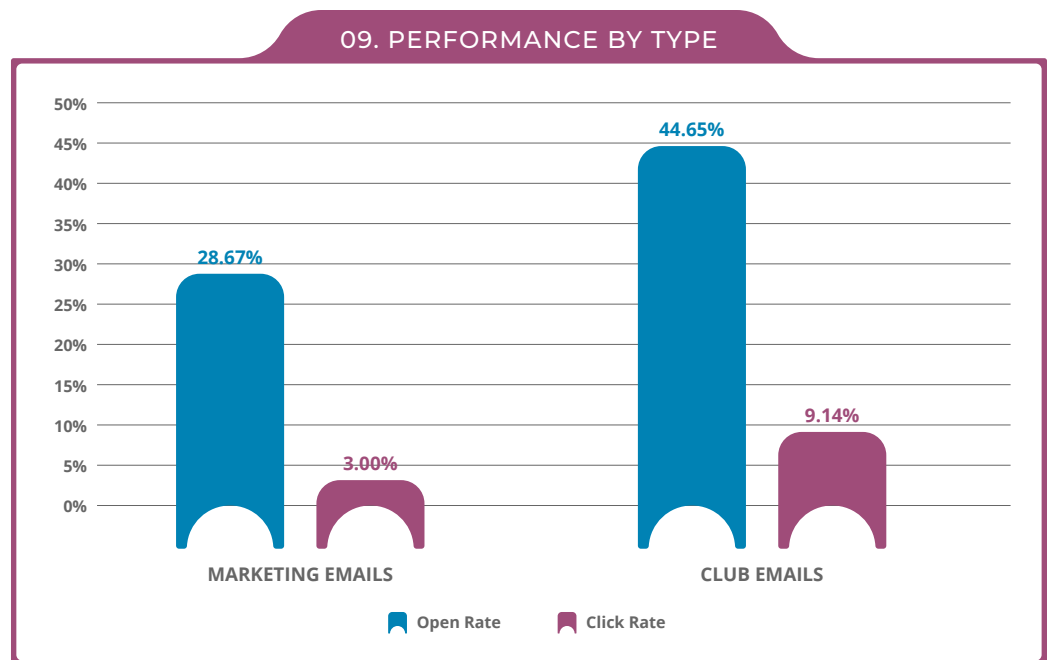


Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data
Mailchimp, 2022 benchmark report.

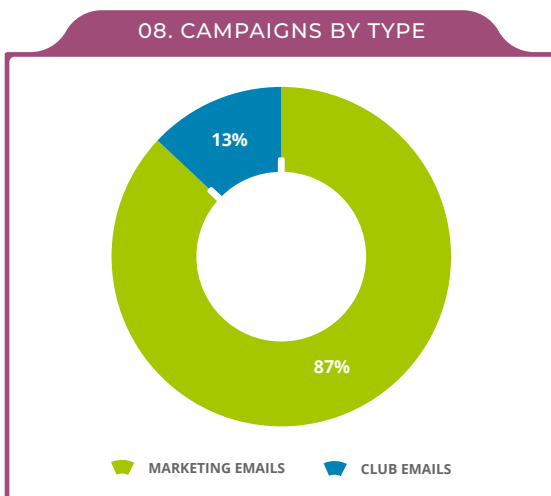
★ SEGMENTS AFFECT DATA

In the past two years, we noticed more wineries are adapting segmentation strategies to parse their lists. The most common segments are wine club versus non-wine club members. As you can see in the charts, marketing (non-club) emails comprise 87% of the campaigns in this study, and wineries sent 13% of campaigns only to club members.

Wineries should start looking at campaign responses by these segments because the response rates are very different. The average open rate of emails to just club members is almost twice as high as non-club, and club emails get three times the click rate.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



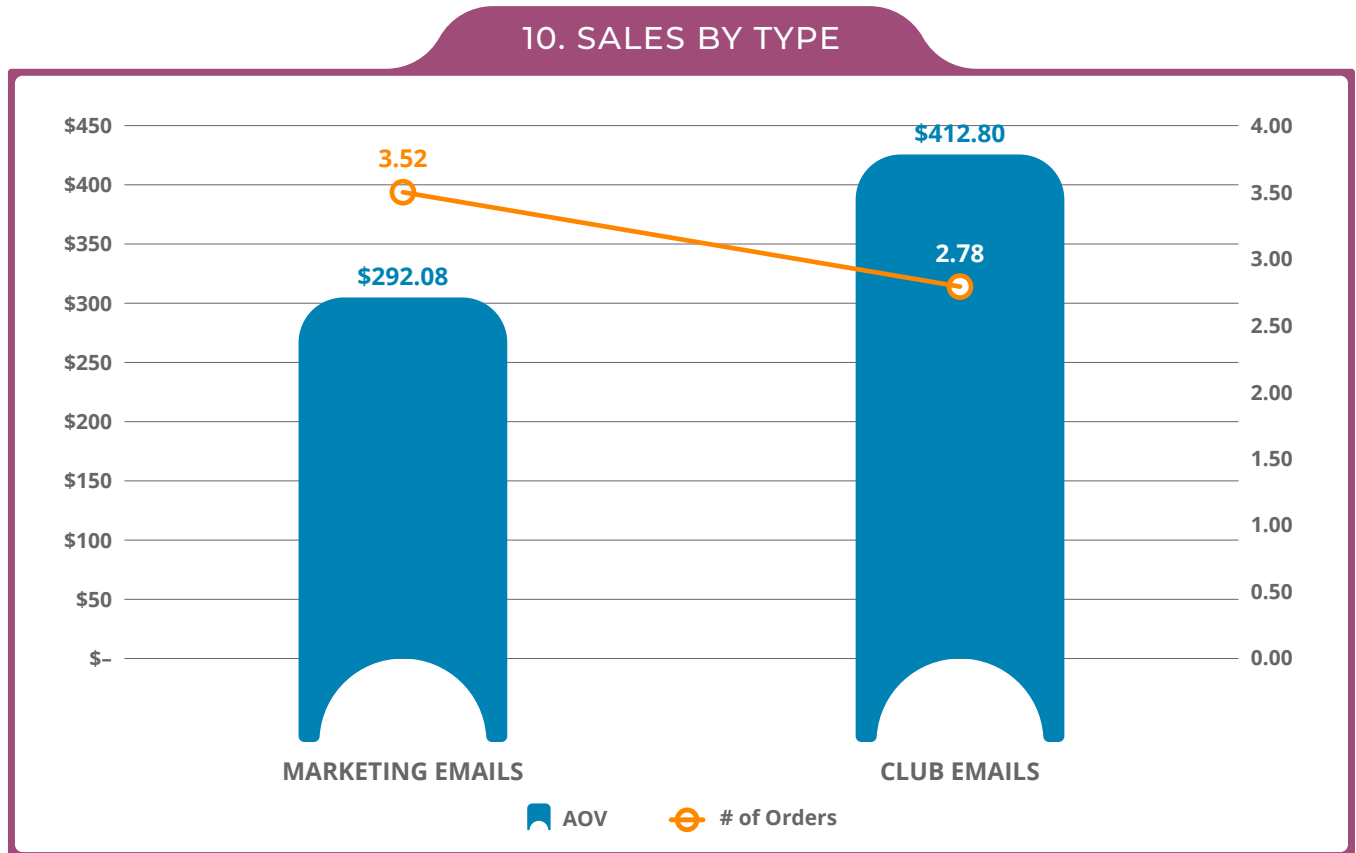
Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

The increased click-through performance is a combination of club member loyalty and content. It is logical as not only do they buy more, but many of the club emails are administrative, and the links therein are for important transactions like credit card updates and tracking information.



WINE CLUB MEMBERS BUY LESS FREQUENTLY BUT SPEND MORE

Campaigns targeted at the wine club also have a more significant average order value because the most loyal customers will buy more. However, the number of orders on average is less. Why? Because many emails to clubs contain invitations, club administration, or other non-sales content.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

The thought to separate these two groups is not so much to compare the two but to be aware that if you are a winery that sends more than 13% of campaigns to their club, you should shoot for a higher open and click-through rate than reported here. (Also, this is a strong demonstration of the power of segmentation!)

03

OPEN ME

In this section covering 2021 and 2022, we looked at 12,279 campaigns with 58,341,665 emails from 91 wineries over 27 months. Here's what we found...

An email can only do two things – entice the recipient to open it in the inbox and, once open, encourage the reader to click it to go somewhere. This section focuses on the first goal.



★ WHAT DRIVES OPEN RATE?

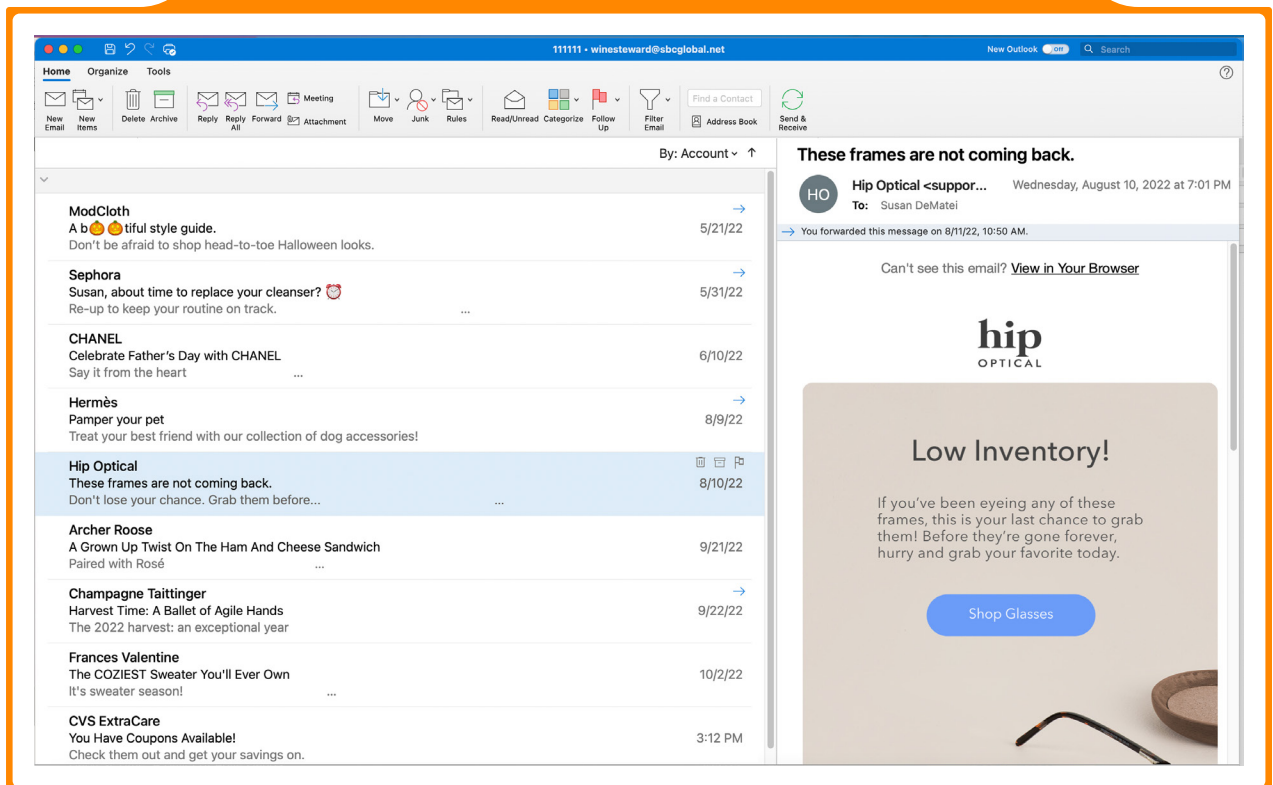
Three elements influencing the open rate are the **sender's name, the subject line, and the teaser text**. We did not analyze or identify wineries or the email content in this report, so we did not look at sender information or teaser text quantifiably.

We do have some overall suggestions for each, however. For sender information, the best practice is to use your winery name versus the proprietor's name, the tasting room manager's, or the wine club manager's. Even if a person or owner of the winery is very well known, you're asking your consumers to recall that name out of context in their inbox, plus you're losing all the positive association with the incredible experience they have

with your winery or wine. The sender's name impacts the open rate most, so don't risk losing that connection to the winery.

Teaser text is standard on most email clients and lives in the code of your email design. Teaser text is the tiny statement shown in the preview before you open an email. Do not simply repeat the subject line, as you're squandering characters that you could use to state your case. Consider this a continuation of the subject line with more information or an ad (teaser) for what is inside. If you do nothing, the code will pick up the first text it finds, which is usually a navigation header or email headline, and your opportunity is lost.

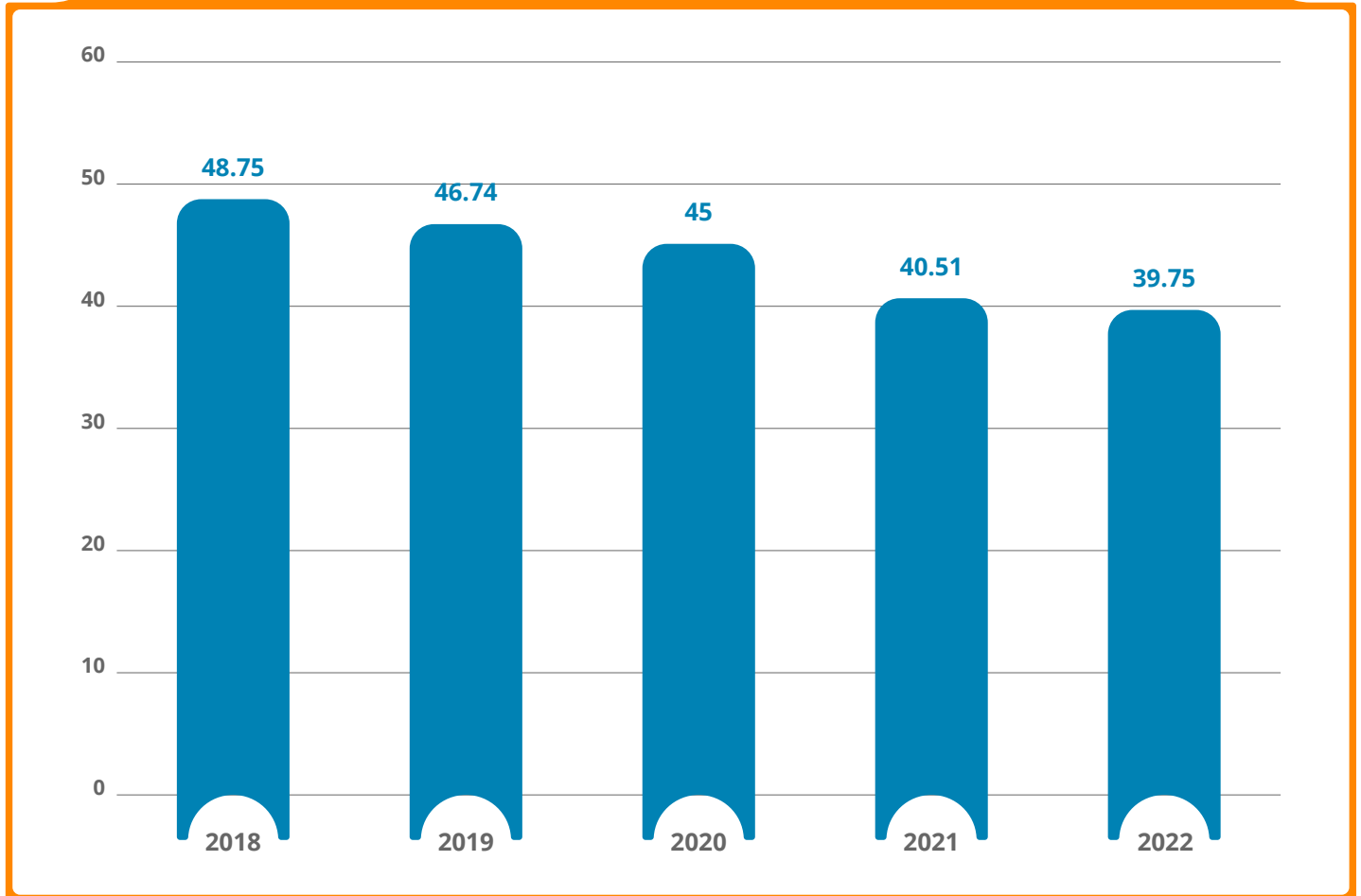
11. CLEAR SENDERS, SUBJECTS & TEASERS



SHOOT FOR SHORTER SUBJECTS

We live in a fast-paced and chock-full society full of distractions. One of the tools to combat this is being pointed and brief with any offer or direction. With subject lines, shorter is better. Use as few characters as possible to state a clear expectation of what someone will discover upon opening the email. (Spaces and punctuation included.) Either we are getting better at being concise, or our consumers are teaching us they don't have time to read our subject lines, as the average length of subject lines has declined for the past five years.

12. AVG SUBJECT LINE LENGTH (IN CHARACTERS) BY YEAR

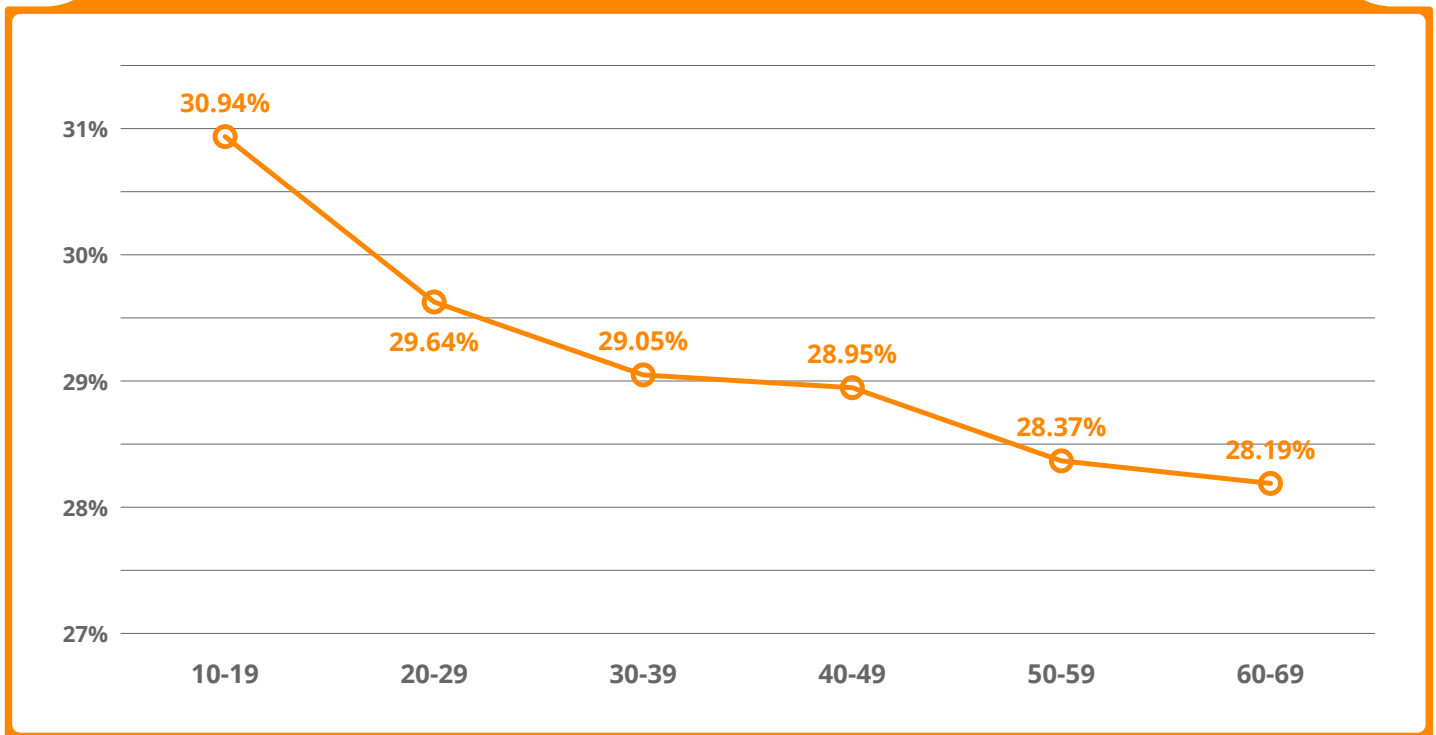


Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

★ LENGTH IMPACTS OPEN RATE

If you want proof that being verbose is the opposite of being compelling, look at the open rates by subject size. In our most recent data, those who kept their subject lines under 20 characters had a 2.5% better open rate than those over 60 characters.

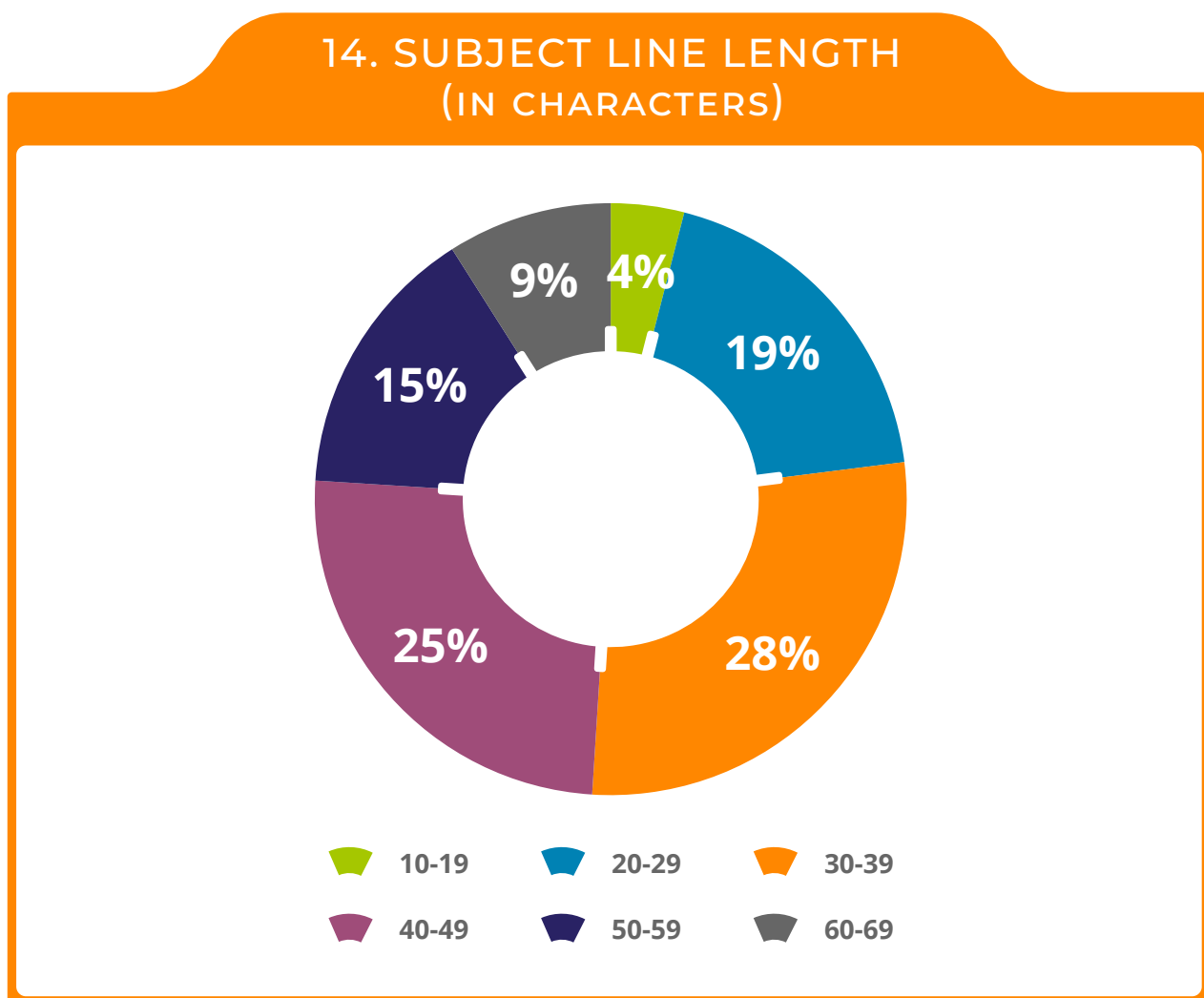
13. OPEN RATES BY SUBJECT LINE LENGTH (IN CHARACTERS)



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

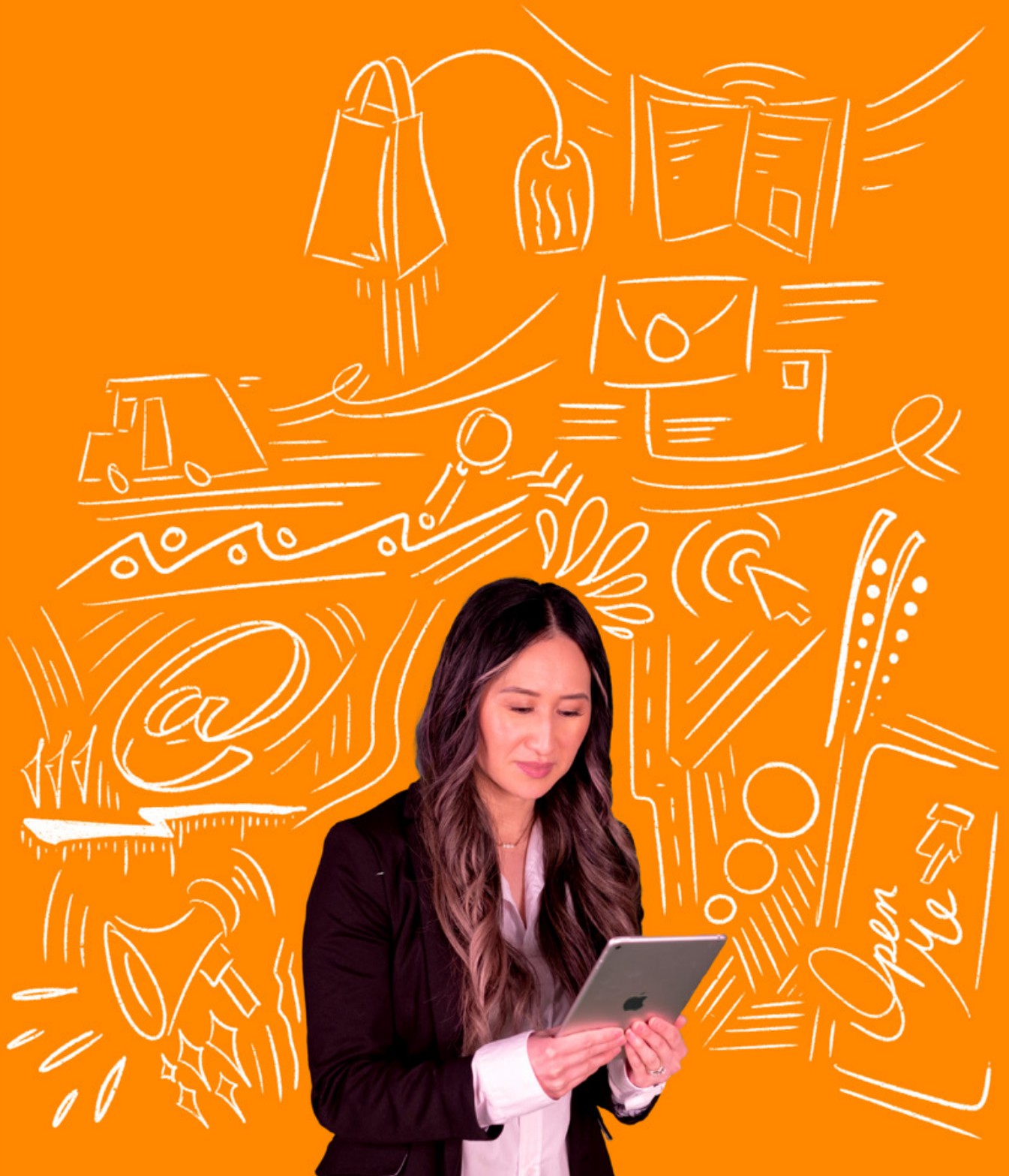
*One of the highest open rates in the study was only 16 characters:
Don't miss this.*

If we look back at that same data, only 4% of our campaigns could keep the subject lines under that 20-character threshold. 19% of campaign subject lines were a slim 20-29 characters, but the two largest groups fell between 30-39 and 40-49 characters. The 24% that were over 50 characters need edits, or they will find themselves heading for the inbox trashcan.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

But what about the content of the subject line? That matters, too, right? Yes, it does. In addition to choosing your words carefully, writing and punctuating subject lines also affects the open rate.



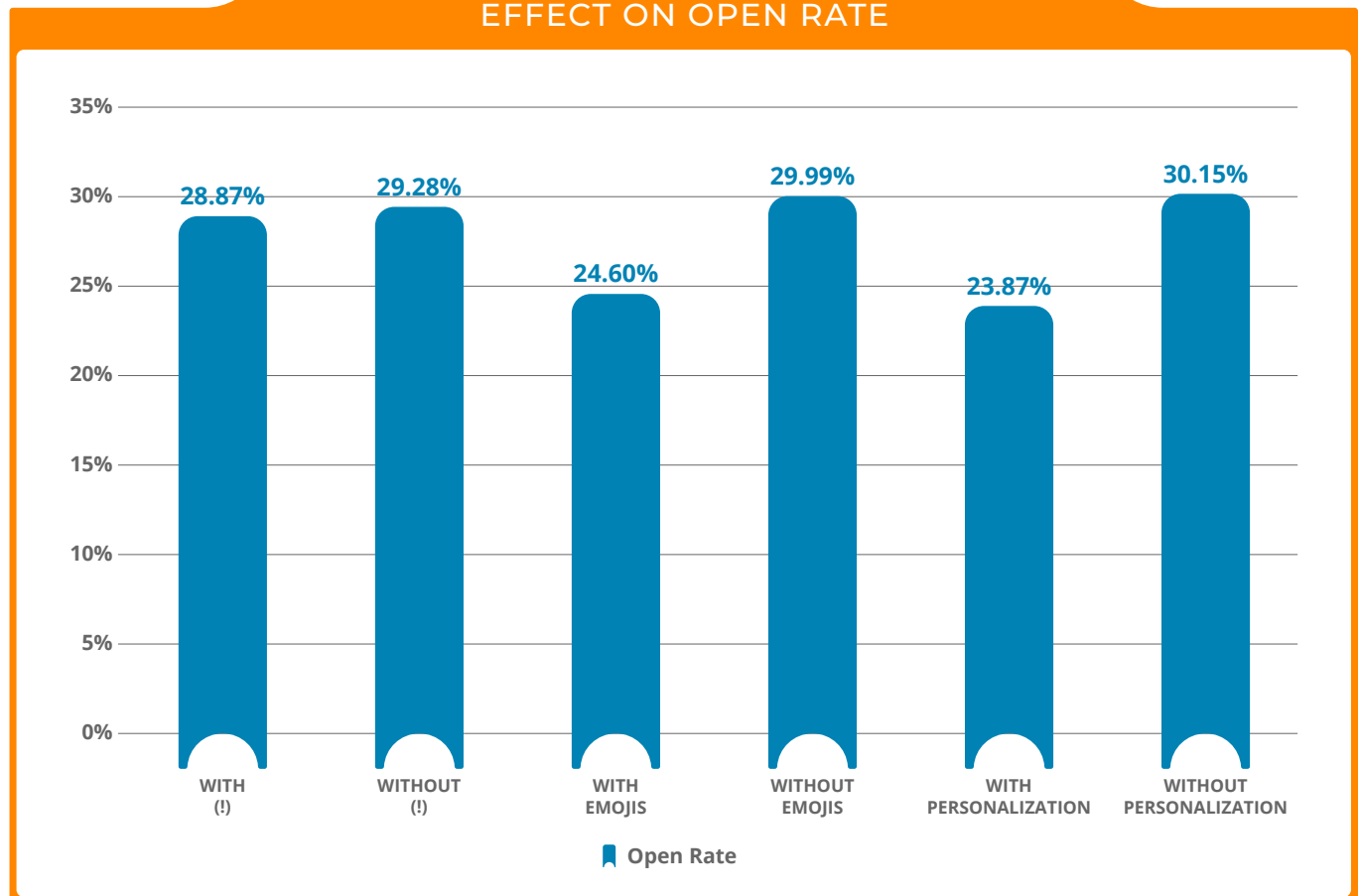
STOP YELLING! 🤖

We habitually put an exclamation point (!) on our subject lines because we hope our excitement will carry through. It doesn't. Although the delta is less than in years past, emails with subject lines without (!) are more likely to be opened.

In a reversal from our last report, subject lines with emojis performed five percentage points below those without emojis. It is possible that their novelty has worn off, and our customers see them as a lame attempt to get attention. Or worse, the emoji highlights the sales emails in our inbox like a beacon for the trashcan.

We noticed personalization starting to trend, so we reviewed that segment, too. Traditional teaching says personalized subject lines will get a higher open rate because it shows this email is for a single person. Either that fact is invalid, our audience is cynical and knows it is a simple mail merge or the seven wineries in our study that did personalization don't have a responsive database. But our data indicate that personalization did not help open rates.

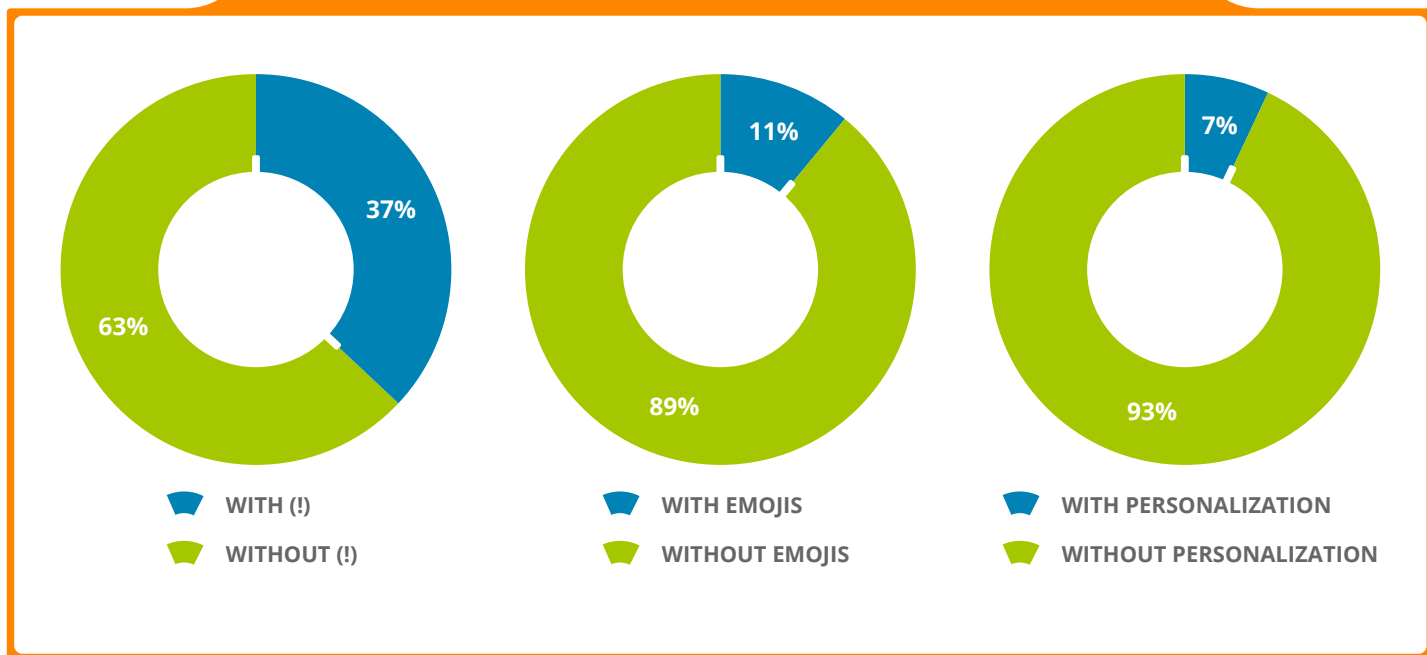
15. EMOJI, (!), AND PERSONALIZATION EFFECT ON OPEN RATE



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

To provide context, in our study, 37% of subject lines concluded with an exclamation point (!), 11% included emojis and only 7% featured personalization. If we can decrease the enthusiasm (!!!), we are on the right side of these trends.

16. EMOJI, (!), AND PERSONALIZATION USE



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

Of note, the most over-used emoji was the red wine glass 🍷, and we opened the floodgates with the number of emojis, with two and three being common. (The most we saw was five.)

04

CLICK ME

I think we have to recognize as an industry that users have a lot more choices and can click away to a lot more media. As a result, the advertising we create really needs to be something users want to see.

*—Susan Wojcicki
CEO of YouTube*

The email design primarily drives the click-through rate. The content, offers, and, most importantly, how well a winery has maintained a relationship with the database also affects if a customer will click. These are not quantifiable things to be discussed in a benchmark study. But we can address some static variables that affect when our customers click to go to the website, hopefully with the intention of buying.

17. DESIGNING TO INCREASE CLICK-THROUGH RATES

BULLDOG BLEND

About Us | Wines | Wine Club | Visit Us | News

Bulldog Blend Release Party

May 15, 2016, Noon - 4 pm

Come join us for a glass of wine and be the first to try the new Bulldog Blend. We'll have food catered to pair with the wines and live music. Wine Club members can pick up their shipment and try the new wines just released this past quarter. We'll also have some special library wines that we'll pull out to share with your friends.

Wine Club Members [RSVP HERE](#) | Guests - \$25 per person [RSVP HERE](#)

Bring your friends! We'd love to invite them to be a part of the Doghouse Winery family!

[Click to Purchase](#)

SPECIAL OFFER
Lorem ipsum dolor
20%
Lorem ipsum dolor. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur.

**Lorem ipsum dolor. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur.*

Copyright © 2016 All Rights Reserved. Bull Dog Blend Wine Company | Privacy Policy | Unsubscribe | Shipping Policy | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [@](#)

[Forward to a friend](#)

Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

Follow best practices in design to increase click-through including a clear masthead, navigation to the website, large images, brief copy and clear call-to-action buttons.



TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAYS ARE THE BEST DAYS TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGNS

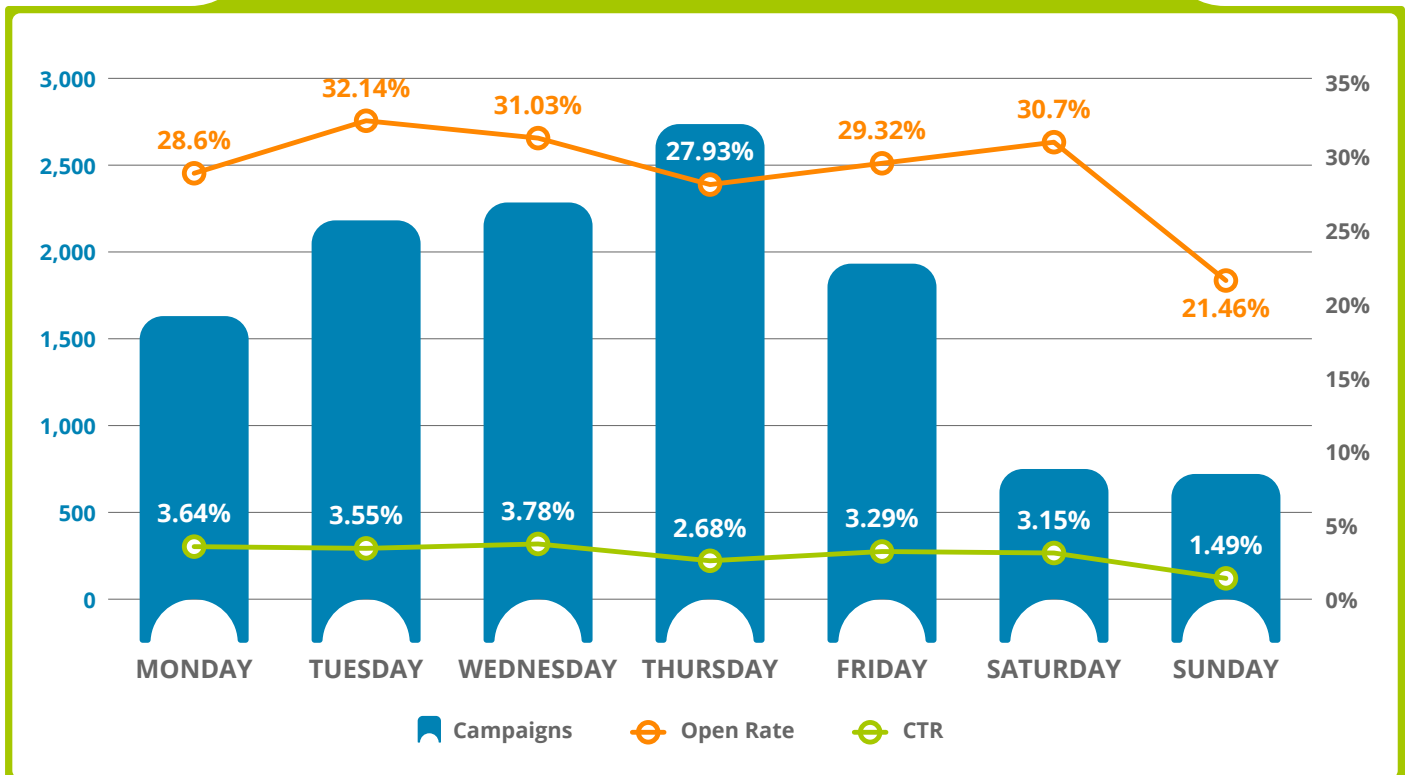
When looking at timing, it is essential to consider how many other emails compete for attention and when people appear primed to open and click. It used to be the gospel that you send your emails on Tuesday morning to reach your audience at work mid-morning. But now, we have cell phones and read our email 24/7 with no work computer required. Does this still hold true?

It appears it does. Tuesday has the highest open rate of 32.14% and the third-highest click-through rate of 3.55%. It is possible that emails that are opened earlier in the week are saved and acted upon later in the week, which would explain why the click rate is steady

while the open rate decreases. The highest click-through day is Wednesday, which would support that theory. Wednesday also has the second-highest open rate, so Tuesday and Wednesday are sound strategies.

However, Thursday sees the most campaigns, with Wednesday being a close second choice. And while Saturday holds some promise, campaigns on Sunday are not enticing anyone.

18. PERFORMANCE BY DAY OF THE WEEK

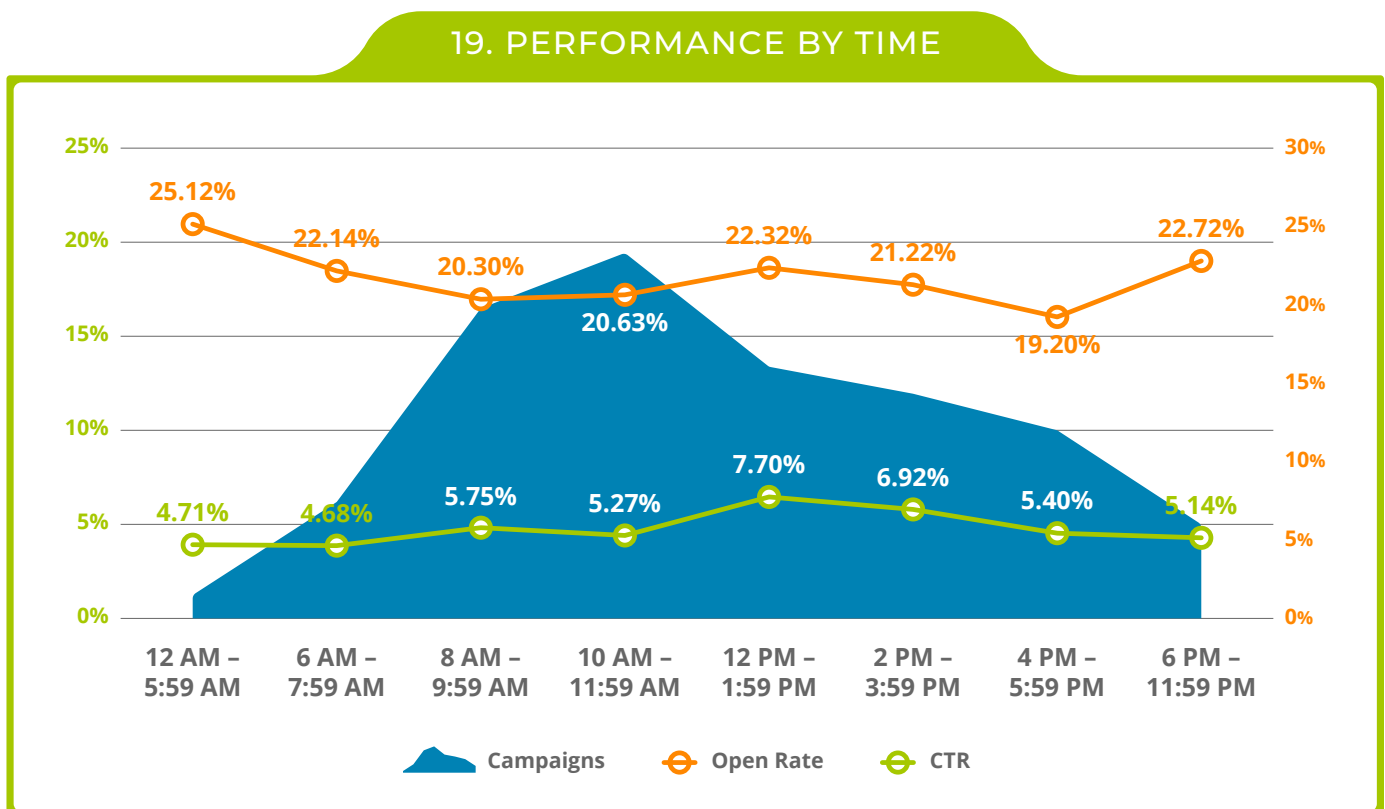


Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



OPEN RATES ARE HIGH AROUND WORK HOURS CLICK RATES SOAR IN THE AFTERNOONS

So how about the time of day? Here we plotted the volume of campaigns in blue, showing that most still prefer to send emails late in the morning. The highest open rates occur before and after work, which is also not surprising as many of us check emails during the bus or train ride home. The highest click-through rates are in the afternoon – specifically between noon and 4 pm. So it appears a good plan is to send in the morning to maximize that high open rate and then be in the inbox ready for action during the afternoon coffee break.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

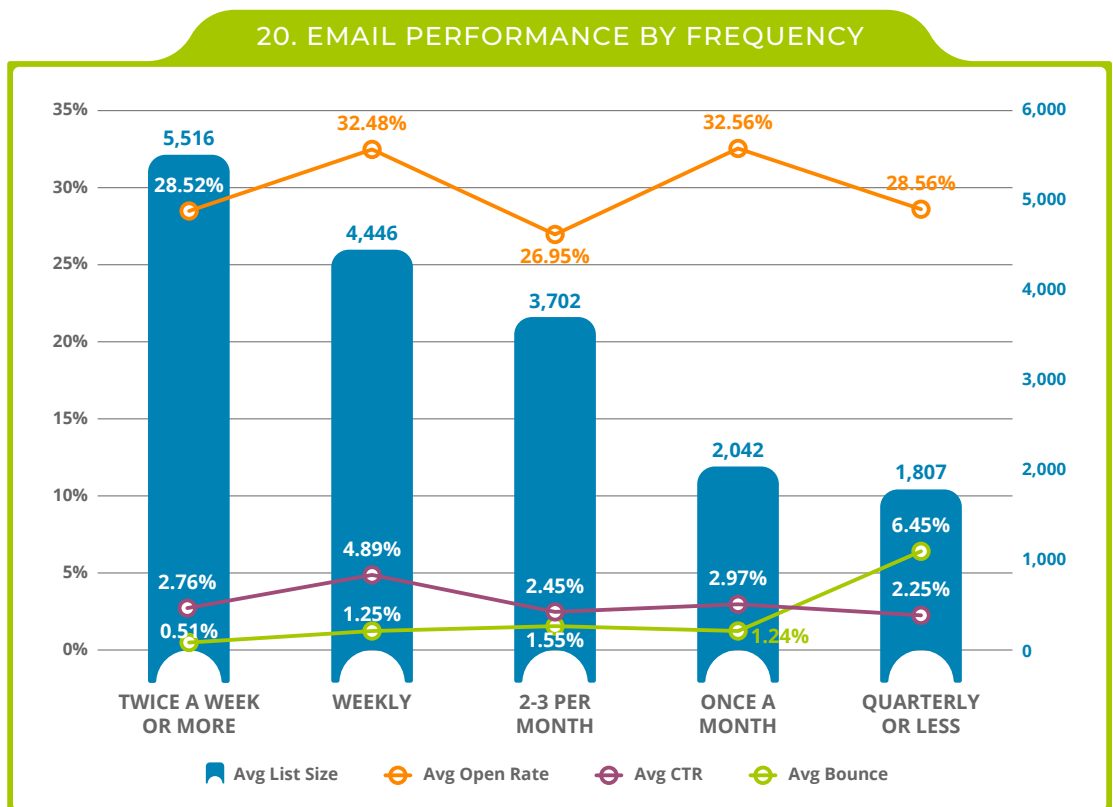
★ MOST WINERIES SEND 2-3 EMAILS A MONTH

We frequently hear, “I don’t want to bother my customers.” You will only bother them if you fail to send thoughtful and engaging content. But while understanding content has a lot to do with frequency, we can also look at the effect of repetition on open and click-through rates.

The health and connection of the database to the winery will have the most significant impact on determining the correct frequency of your email channel. Wine is neither a department store with a weekly (or daily) sale nor a mutual fund with a quarterly update. The ideal cadence for wine lies in between daily and quarterly.

How often do people want updates on wine? The data shows almost identical open and click-through rates for weekly and monthly. Interpret this as if you have news or serving suggestions or updates of value to the database; data shows you can send an email each week. Pull back on the frequency if you don’t have the time or staff to come up with such content. You need to decide what works for you.

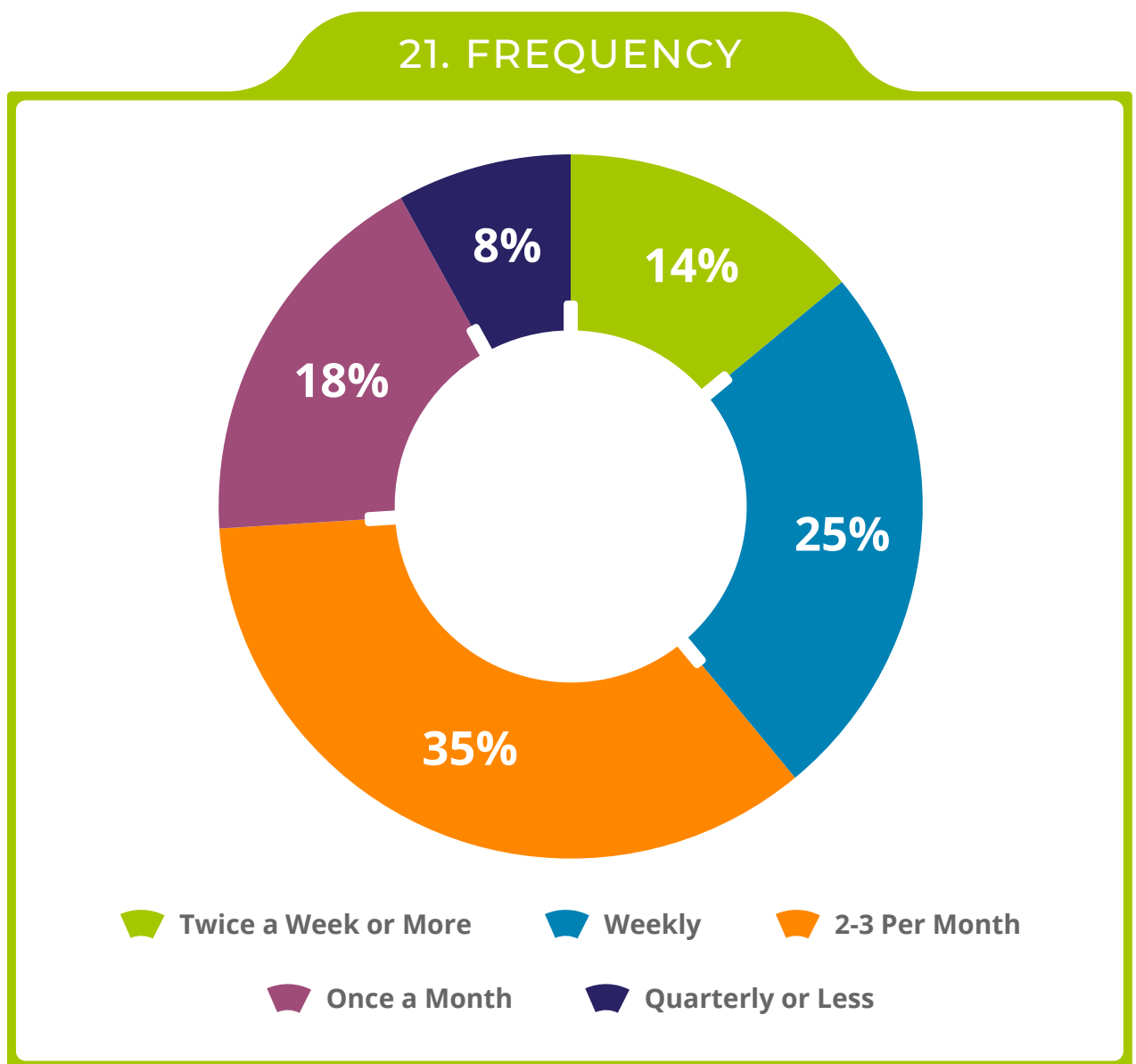
Clearly, the less you email your database, the more it decays. Those who seldom touch customers’ inboxes will see bounces, whereas those who are more frequently in contact keep the communication channels clean and working.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

In this study, few wineries launch multiple campaigns per week or quarterly. 25% of our wineries sent campaigns weekly, 35% sent 2 – 3 campaigns a month, and 18% monthly.

What cadence works best for your winery will depend on your resources to create and segment quality content and how well you've cultivated connections with your customers.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



05

BUY ME

If the ride is more fly, then you must buy.

—Snoop Dogg

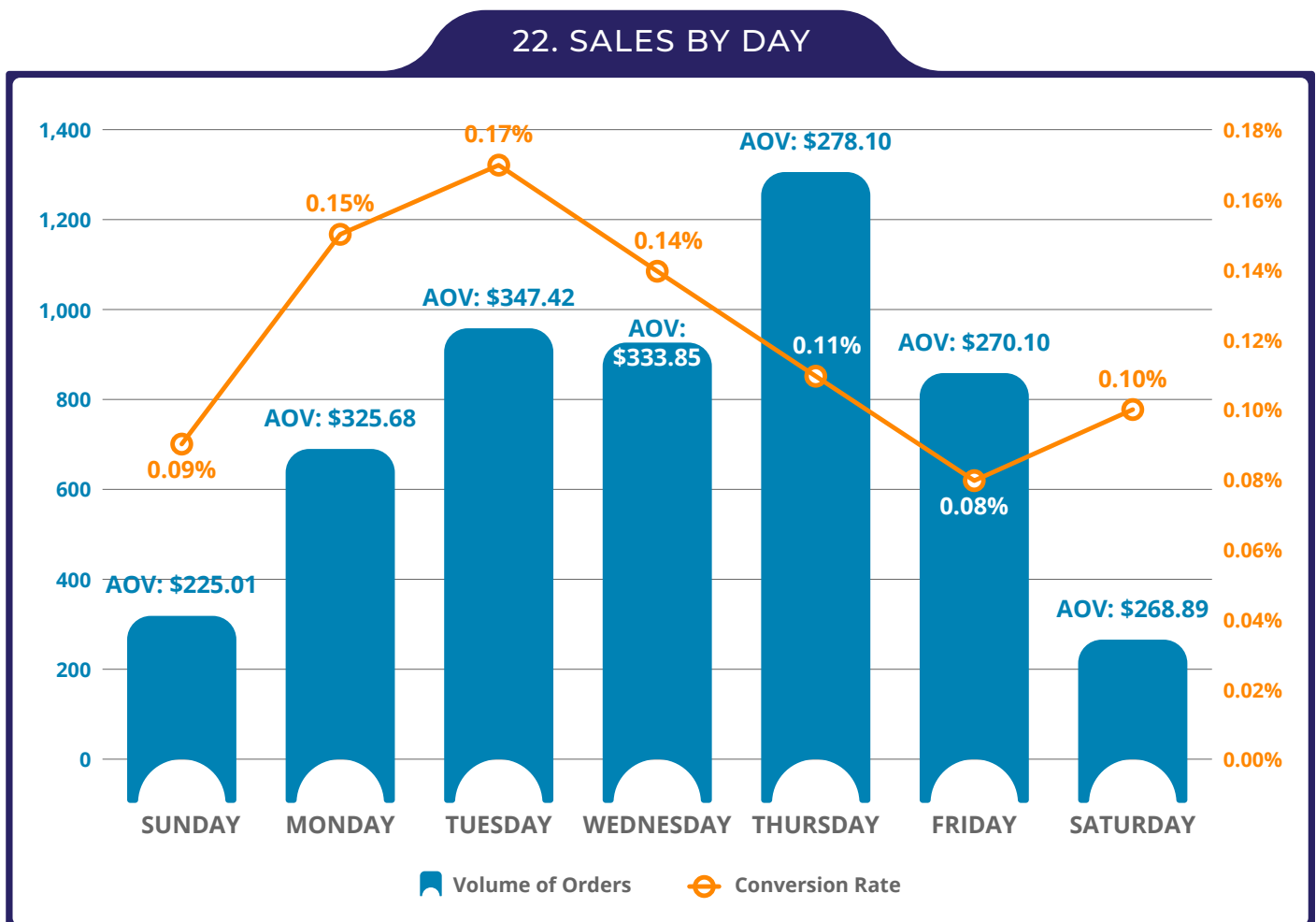




TUESDAY BOASTS THE HIGHEST CONVERSION RATE

At the end of the day, we want the sale. In looking at the subset of data from the emails asking for a sale, we have some recommendations. Thursday is when the most orders come in, which makes sense as we've seen in previous charts that this is the preferred day to launch campaigns, so we'd expect more volume. The highest conversion rate in sales and highest Average Order Value is Tuesday, cementing our recommendation based on Open Rate and Click-Through Rate. Wednesday would, again, be our second choice with the third most volume, the third highest conversion rate, and the second-best AOV.

If we didn't previously persuade you not to send emails on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, we hope this convinces you.



Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



06

2022 BENCHMARK SUMMARY

*Passion provides purpose, but data
drives decisions.*

—Andy Dunn
CEO of Bonobus

So here are our most recent benchmarks specifically for the wine industry. We recommend using this data to form your strategies and plans, but leave yourself enough room to test and explore. And remember the basics. This report's learning will only help if you already employ good messaging, design, and segmentation.

23. 2022 BENCHMARKS



0.11%
Average
Conversion
Rate to Sale



\$2,385.96
Average
Revenue per
Campaign



\$303.85
Average
Order
Value



7.85
Average
Number of Orders
per Campaign

Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data

24. 2022 BENCHMARKS



5.37
Average
Emails per
Month



4,640
Average
Send List
Size



39.75
Average
Subject Line
Length



19.10%
Average
Open
Rate



6.42%
Average
Click Through
Rate



2.21%
Average
Bounce
Rate

Source : WineGlass Marketing Aggregate Client Data



OUR SUMMARY CHECKLIST



- Follow design best practices.
- Thoughtfully plan out content that is valuable to your customers.
- Continue to add to and maintain your database.
- Segment as best you can, and if you have consistent segments, like a club, measure them individually as benchmarks vary.
- Group your campaigns and check your overall performance monthly. Have your own goals for improvement.
- Keep your subject lines short (under 20 characters).
- Say no to (!) and 🍷. Be cautious with personalization.
- Send on a Tuesday (first choice) or Wednesday (second choice).
- If content allows for it, send emails 2-4x a month.
- Continue to send reminder emails to non-opens and non-responders.
- Refrain from overloading your consumers with multiple emails in Q4 when open rates are low. Remember to have a consistent cadence throughout the year to establish trust and capture other sales periods.





WineGlass Marketing is the leading full-service and award-winning marketing agency for the adult beverage industry. You can find out more at www.wineglassmarketing.com

Service Offerings

Customer Acquisition

- Website design & maintenance
- Advertising (traditional & digital)
- Search Engine Optimization
- Search Engine Marketing
- Social Media marketing

Sales Strategy

- Email design & deployment
- Database segmentation & hygiene
- Content creation & delivery
- Competitive & customer research
- Partnership & influencer programs

Loyalty Marketing

- Trade tools & assets
- Strategic decks & market plans
- Wine Club analytics & planning
- Customer service & support
- Technology & tools implementations

Interested? View some samples of our work, check our website or dop us a line.

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