



stensul

5 REALITY CHECKS FOR EVERY EMAIL MARKETER



INTRODUCTION

It's 6pm, and while the sales team team is headed to the bar around the corner for a drink, you're in front of your computer hitting the refresh button. Yesterday, you were waiting for the designer to send back an updated graphic they promised you'd have "ASAP." You were asking yourself, "For real, how long does it take to change the color of a font on a banner image?" Meanwhile, the designer was asking himself, "How hard is it to learn how to change the font color on a banner image yourself?"

Today, you're waiting for your boss to forward you the email she received from a client that inexplicably looks terrible in Gmail on their Android device, and you need to figure out why. **Welcome to the glory of email marketing, #SSDD.**

We get it, we're email marketers, too. There are some things we need to get off our chest, though, because we want you to become the LeBron James, triple-double MVP of email you're meant to be. (And by triple-double, we're talking high double digits on the big three: % conversions, % re-engagement, and % ROI.)

So, we've put together the following 5 reality checks that won't show up in your next TPS Report, but will change the way you view--*and hopefully do*--email marketing.

OPEN ≠ SEEING YOUR EMAIL



1. OPENING ≠ SEEING YOUR EMAIL.

That's right. Mind blown? Let's give a little more detail. It's official now that **over half¹ of people who open your emails will be doing so on their mobile phone, and that 70%² of these people will immediately delete/skip your email if it's not easy to read on their device.** A little back of the napkin math tells you that 46% of everyone opening your email will never see all of your clever offers, animated GIFs, etc. if you're not creating **mobile responsive** (or at least mobile friendly) design templates.

Of course, you don't want to be guessing with these statistics. You should investigate how mobile your audience is or isn't to get a sense of the real impact. Moreover, if you're not already, you need to be testing what every campaign looks like (and not just in your own email inbox and on your mobile phone, use a testing platform such as [Email on Acid](#)) to make sure it looks flawless everywhere.

¹ Source: [HBR](#)

² Source: Acxiom

DON'T LET A BAD

SUBSCRIBER EXPERIENCE
HURT GOOD CONTENT



2. DON'T LET A BAD SUBSCRIBER EXPERIENCE HURT GOOD CONTENT.

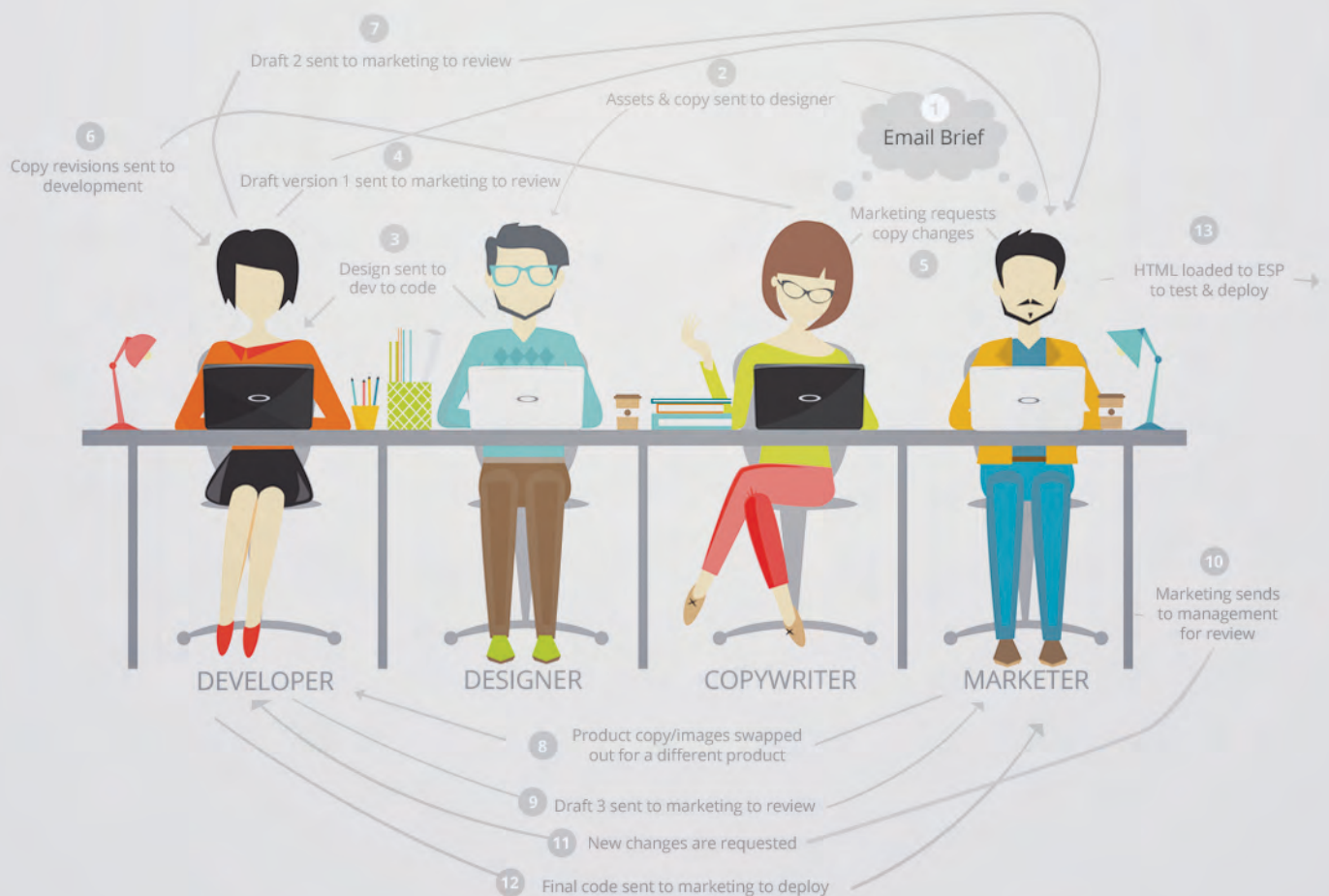
Ever had a friend who is constantly changing their personality, opinions, even the way they dress based on whoever is in the room around them at any given moment? Not for long, right? Because it's annoying. **Don't let your email marketing program become that annoying friend.**

Consistency of experience, design, messaging, and tone are critical for building a strong, three-dimensional, brand identity and positive subscriber experience. This reality extends to the more subtle details of your campaigns like logo format, placement, font colors, sizes, etc., as well. We're not saying that each campaign can't be its own unique snowflake, chock-full of wonderful new surprises, we're just saying that **changing the entire vibe on your audience every campaign gets confusing and may be a key driver of list churn.**

And don't forget the importance of making a good first impression. **Everything from the sender name, subject line, preheader text, and initial visual appearance has an enormous impact on the likelihood a subscriber is going to engage with subsequent campaigns.** 33%³ of recipients open an email based on subject line alone which makes nailing the subject line important, but it also means that 67% (or in other words, 2 out of 3 people you send to) are up for grabs and will defer to the email senders with whom they have the best historic experience.

³ Source: Salesforce

YOUR EMAIL CREATION WORKFLOW IS BROKEN



3. YOUR EMAIL CREATION WORKFLOW IS BROKEN.

It's now 6:45pm and your boss still hasn't forwarded the broken email, so you don't know if you should head home and tackle it the next day or if it'll show up in the next five minutes. Head in hands, you ask yourself, "What got me to this point?" **The answer: poor workflow.**

Over 80%⁴ of the email creation process, from ideation to hitting send, is spent in waiting periods between people involved in the process. Moreover, the average turnaround time on actual "hands on keyboard" work to resolve these bottlenecks is several hours⁵. This is how a process that in theory should take a few hours, ends up taking weeks.

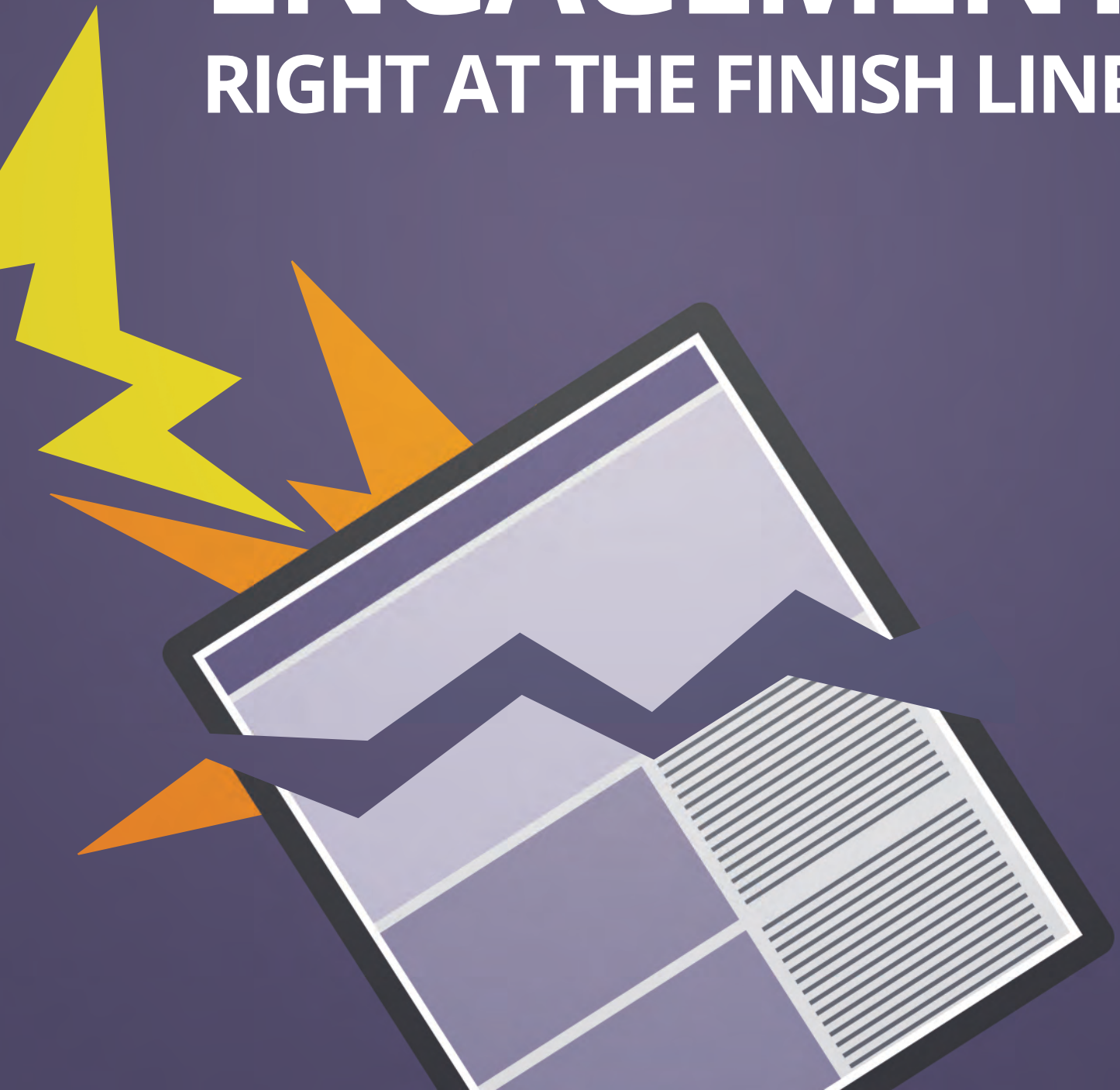
Classic examples include campaigns waiting for an image tweak from a design team, or a layout change from your email development team, which often fall to the bottom of the pile for design and development teams respectively amidst the presence of other high priority projects. This constant state of queueing and asymmetric priorities throughout the email creation process are enormously costly in terms of time to market for campaigns, ability to run tests/iterations of campaigns, as well as human capital invested in a broken workflow.

Establishing a lead who is responsible from end to end for shepherding deliverables along and syncing priorities across parties involved in the process (or automating the process entirely with platforms such as [stensul](#)) can create huge gains in efficiency and result in marketers being able to dedicate more time to content creation and data analysis.

⁴ Source: stensul Process Research Study (Fortune 500 clients), 2015

⁵ Source: stensul Process Research Study (Fortune 500 clients), 2015

STOP SLAMMING THE BRAKES ON ENGAGEMENT RIGHT AT THE FINISH LINE



4. STOP SLAMMING THE BRAKES ON ENGAGEMENT RIGHT AT THE FINISH LINE.

Finally, at 8:15pm your boss forwards that email--*probably while deep into their second glass of wine*--of the client email with the problems. He makes it a point to note that it's absolutely critical that the campaign is sent on time tomorrow at 7am so it's the first item in everyone's inboxes in the morning. You're over an hour late to your own date night, so you rush to identify the issue, fix the problem without realizing you broke one of the links in the campaign and head home to salvage your night.

Now, unbeknownst to you, a ticking time bomb is silently waiting for you in the morning. Right on time, at 7am.

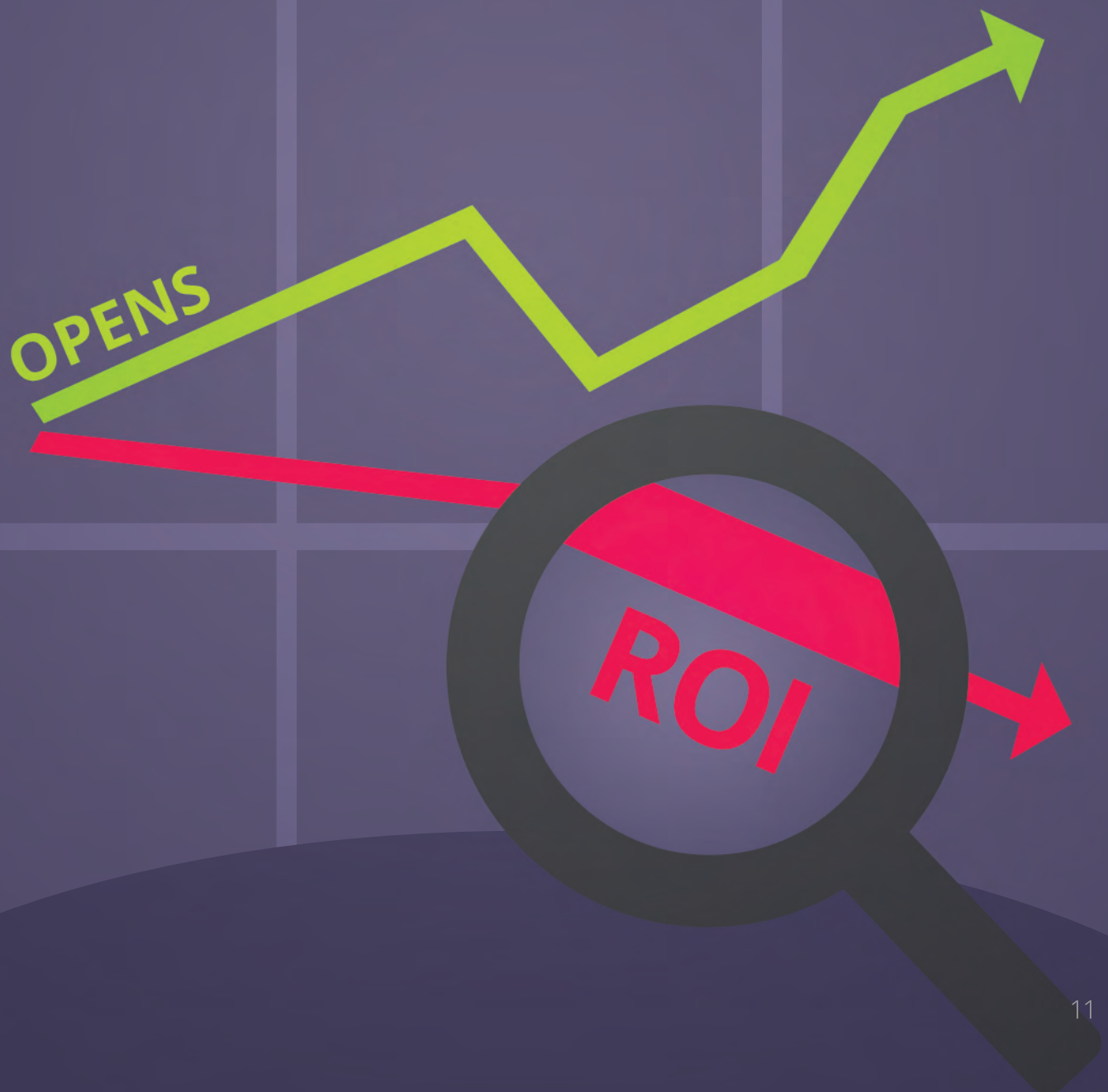
Testing campaign rendering across browsers, ISPs, and devices, while also testing for proper link structure, link destinations, and link tracking is often the achilles heel of email campaign performance. With **35%⁶ of online revenue originating from direct email campaigns/offers**, the importance of link paths should never be underestimated.

In addition to testing, the post-click destination is also often neglected in the rush to just "go live" with a campaign. For many marketing teams, these landing pages and websites fall outside the purview of the email marketer and thus risks creating a disjointed subscriber experience.

Never forget that ROI is ultimately determined by a series of events that a subscriber must complete. The easier, and more consistent that path is, the less you'll be giving away otherwise easy ROI wins.

⁶ Source: M+R

VANITY STATS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY OF THE REAL STORY



5. VANITY STATS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY OF THE REAL STORY.

Unfortunately, **the odds are that you're not learning as much from your emails as you think you are.** Opens and clicks tell less than half of the real story, and yet they still dominate most email marketing KPIs and scorecards. Email isn't a popularity contest where the most activity wins. **The real meat and potatoes lies in tracking conversions and ROI...** and then understanding that this is where the learning begins.

School's not out just yet though. Once you've graduated to proper conversion and ROI tracking, it's time to get all CSI: Miami and investigate the various underlying profiles and behaviors of your audience and their current/potential engagement with your campaigns.

Segmentation is an incredibly valuable approach to such research, however it is often done through a deductive (top down) approach vs. inductive (bottoms up). Deductive segmentation relies heavily on broad general patterns within an audience like gender, age, location, etc. where similar profiles are grouped into segments and subsequent conversions of these groups are measured.

Conversely, inductive segmentation starts by asking questions like, "What common characteristics (or lead sources) do people who convert (or who don't) share?". From these questions marketers can work their way back through the funnel to understand what segments are actually more likely to be highly correlated with ROI. Experiments can then focus on more actionable, well defined characteristics than generic broad based segments.

Longitudinal analysis, or tracking individuals and subscriber segments over multiple campaigns, is another often overlooked part of the email analytics spectrum. Given already challenging timelines and inefficient email creation processes, this kind of analysis can quickly become a “nice to have” and fall second in line to just “getting the campaign out the door.” However, efficient marketing organizations who regain the time to dig deeper into the data often find a treasure trove of hidden gems in their email marketing programs.

That’s enough for tonight though. Get some rest. You’ll need it.



Email on Acid provides email testing, troubleshooting and tracking tools to help you simplify and improve your email marketing efforts.

Our innovative suite of tools allows you to preview emails in 45 different email clients and devices, diagnose and solve deliverability issues and access the most comprehensive email analytics available.

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stensul

Large companies use stensul to reduce email production time by 90%, while also increasing their marketing email output 6-10x.

stensul allows non-technical marketers to create perfect, mobile responsive emails in minutes that are 100% compliant with your brand, design, and legal guidelines.

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