Resilience Redefined: The **2026** Customer Engagement Benchmarks

See Where You Stack Up

Key Takeaways

Before you dive into this year's channel benchmarks, here's a quick look at the top takeaways:

The Personalization Multiplier

The performance gap between generic and tailored messages has reached a breaking point in 2026. The "personalization multiplier" has exploded: tailored messages that were garnering a 2.4x conversion lift in 2024 now deliver a **massive 37.6x lift**, compared with generic messages. Marketers who fail to adapt are leaving approximately 97% of their potential revenue on the table.

The Database Liquidation Threat

Sending non-personalized messages is no longer just ineffective; it is an act of audience sabotage. Generic broadcasts can trigger an **unsubscribe rate up to 25 times higher** than journey-based messages. Marketers who refuse to move past batch and blast tactics are increasing subscriber churn with every irrelevant message they send.

The In-App Dark Horse

While traditional channels fight for consumer attention, In-App messaging has become the ultimate conversion closer. Reaching an efficiency breaking point, Journey-based In-App messages now deliver an average of 44.17% conversion rate across industries, **converting nearly 1 out of every 2 active users.**

Foreword

For over a decade, we have observed the evolution of digital engagement, but 2026 represents a definitive turning point. We have moved beyond the era of simple optimization into a period where the choices a marketer makes and the technology they employ determine the survival of the brand's digital presence. The data in this report confirms that the broadcast era is over: it has been replaced by a reality where reach is earned through relevance, or lost to AI-driven suppression.

What concerns me most in this year's findings is the stagnation of nearly half the market. Between 40% and 47% of marketers are still operating with basic personalization tactics that were designed for 2022. These brands are seeing diminishing returns and cratering open rates, yet many are masked by a false sense of security. They are missing the fact that their reach is shrinking and that their current stacks are effectively paying a "deliverability tax" (a technical penalty where mobile operating systems and email providers automatically silence or hide non-personalized messages before they even reach the customer). I believe resilience in 2026 is defined by a technical and strategic pivot. The marketers who are winning, those seeing up to **37x performance lift**, are those who have recognized that the digital channels can no longer operate as billboards.

This report is a call to action: to be resilient, you must move from mass communication to individualized journeys. The tools of the past cannot solve the challenges of 2026. It is time to adapt your strategy to the behavioral intent of your customers, or face further liquidation of your reachable audience.

Raviteja Dodda
Co-founder and CEO,
MoEngage

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Introduction

Today's marketing playbook is fractured.

On one side are marketers still relying on spray and pray tactics. They are seeing a 35% drop in message delivery because operating systems are increasingly classifying their generic messages as noise and hiding them from users.

On the other side are the resilient marketers. They have realized that personalization is no longer about preference; it is a technical key required to unlock essential brand touchpoints. By adapting to this new standard, they are seeing a "Personalization Multiplier" that has exploded to a **37.6x lift** in conversion.

In partnership with **Movable Ink** and **Tealium**, we analyzed 40 billion messages and surveyed 651 B2C marketers to better understand this divide. The findings are clear: the cost of irrelevance is now fatal. Generic broadcasts trigger unsubscribe rates up to **25 times higher** than those for journey-based messages. As a marketer, you are either building a resilience engine or you are liquidating your database.

This report breaks down the specific channel benchmarks across a variety of industries for 2026 and provides the roadmap you need to not just survive but thrive in the coming months.

Research Methodology

To ensure this report reflects the true state of the market, we combined proprietary data analysis with direct marketer feedback.

- **Data Volume:** Analyzed MoEngage proprietary customer data consisting of **40 billion messages** sent between November 2024 and November 2025, across Email, Push Notifications, and In-App.

- **Survey Data:** Drew insights from a **survey of 651 B2C marketers** in December 2025, regarding their channel-related strategies and challenges.

- **Expert Insights:** Included commentary and strategic perspectives from our partners at Movable Ink and Tealium.

| Industries	Retail & E-commerce Financial Services (BFSI) Quick Service Restaurants (QSR)
Campaign Types[1]	General Broadcast Behavior-based Personalization Journey-based Personalization
Channel Metrics[2]	Delivery Rate (DR) Unique Open Rate (OR) Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR) / Click-through Rate (CTR) Conversion Rate (CVR) Unsubscribe Rate

Channel-based Deep Dives

Email

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Push Notifications

_____

In-App Messaging

_____

Click to navigate
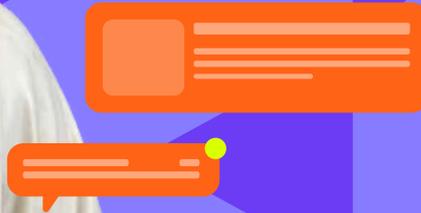
Before diving into specific industries, let's look at the baseline of channel-wise performance across the entire B2C landscape. These benchmarks reveal the widening gap between generic and personalized strategies.
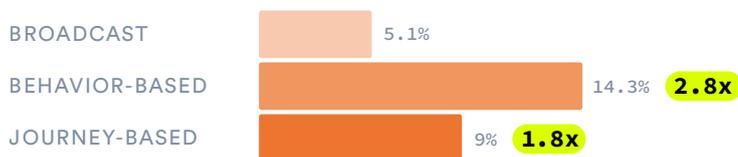
1) Email

> If you aren't using journey-based personalization in emails, you aren't just missing out on **3x more conversions**; you're actively shrinking your audience.
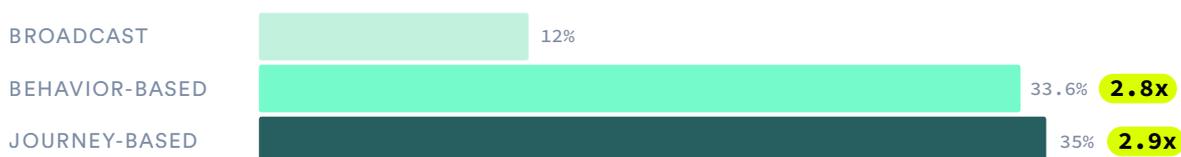
2026 Email Performance Benchmarks (All Industries)

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

BROADCAST	37.7%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	37.8%	1x
JOURNEY-BASED	40.2%	1.07x

CTOR *Click-to-Open Rate*

BROADCAST	5.1%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	14.3%	2.8x
JOURNEY-BASED	9%	1.8x

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	12%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	33.6%	2.8x
JOURNEY-BASED	35%	2.9x

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

BROADCAST	0.4%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	0.2%	0.5x
JOURNEY-BASED	0.1%	0.4x

Email is often seen as a reliable workhorse, but the data reveals a dangerous split. While 48.23% of marketers are using advanced personalization tactics and 68.5% are seeing year-over-year (YoY) performance improvements, almost 50% are still not personalizing or are using basic personalization.[3]

Specifically, marketers using journey-based personalization in their email achieve **3 times the conversion rate** of broadcast emails (11.98% vs 34.97%). This gap is critical because generic emails are not just converting less; they are actively liquidating databases with **unsubscribe rates more than double** that of personalized journeys (0.38% vs 0.15%).

> "Many organizations still treat email as an execution channel rather than a strategic revenue driver. Brands that hold too tightly to static creatives, mass messaging, and rigid processes often struggle to unlock email's full potential; while those that embrace dynamic, data-driven approaches are better positioned to drive performance and long-term growth."
>
> **MEAGHAN BILINSKI** | DIRECTOR – STRATEGY @ MOVABLE INK
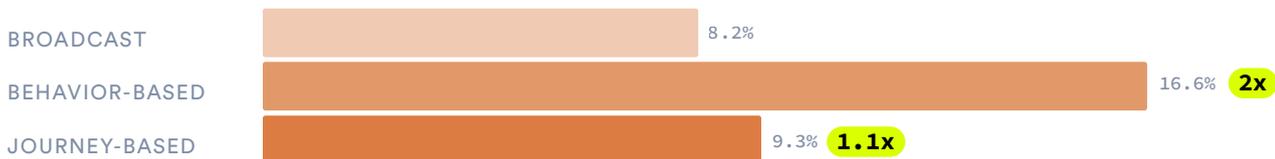
2) Push Notifications

When it comes to push notifications, personalization has become a technical necessity to bypass a **12% "deliverability tax"** and double engagement rates compared to generic noise.

2026 Push Notifications Performance Benchmarks (All Industries)

DELIVERY RATE

BROADCAST	80.7%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	93.1% **1.2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	88.1% **1.09x**

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	8.2%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	16.6% **2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	9.3% **1.1x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	9.4%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	24.7% **2.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	10.8% **1.1x**
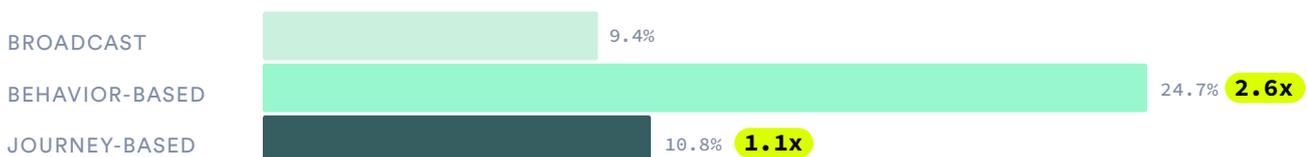
The era of batch-and-blast push notifications is also over, penalized by a **12% deliverability tax** imposed by operating systems that classify generic noise as spam. While broadcast messages struggle with an 80.73% delivery rate, behavior-based triggers achieve 93.07% delivery and double the CTR (16.57%).

Despite this, **43.63% of marketers are not personalizing** or even implementing basic levels of personalization on this channel, resulting in their messages being silenced before they ever reach their audience.[3]

> "When it comes to using advanced personalization, marketers face numerous resource constraints and data challenges. I believe getting advanced data into their channel platforms, or even working with outdated solutions, is a bigger problem than marketers failing to realize the value of personalization or avoiding it. So, it's often a technical hurdle rather than a lack of strategic intent."

ZACK WENTHE
DIRECTOR – PRODUCT MARKETING & CUSTOMER DATAEVANGELIST @ TEALIUM

3) In-App Messaging

In-app messaging is the most efficient revenue driver in 2026, converting nearly **1 in 2 active users.**

2026 In-App Messaging Performance Benchmarks (All Industries)

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	8.5%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	27.4%	**3.2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	25.5%	**2.98x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	9.5%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	36.6%	**3.8x**
JOURNEY-BASED	44.2%	**4.6x**

In-App Messaging remains the dark horse of the channel mix, overlooked by nearly 12% of marketers and tested less than any other channel (only 44.85% are testing it continuously vs 57.14% for email).[3] This neglect is a costly mistake, as Journey-based In-app messages deliver a staggering **44.17% CVR**, which is the highest across all industries and channels.

While Email and Push fight for attention outside the app, In-App is the ultimate "conversion closer." However, **46.39% of marketers are not personalizing** or even implementing basic levels of personalization on this channel, leaving the most efficient revenue driver in 2026 largely untapped.[3]

> "Originally owned by product teams, mobile messaging channels (like Push and In-app) suffered from fragmentation and a lack of strategy. Today, they are often still treated as an afterthought. This is a missed opportunity: mobile users are typically a brand's most high-value customers, yet their smaller audience size leads to underinvestment. To succeed, marketers must stop treating mobile channels as a side project and integrate them as a natural, scalable extension of their lifecycle strategy."
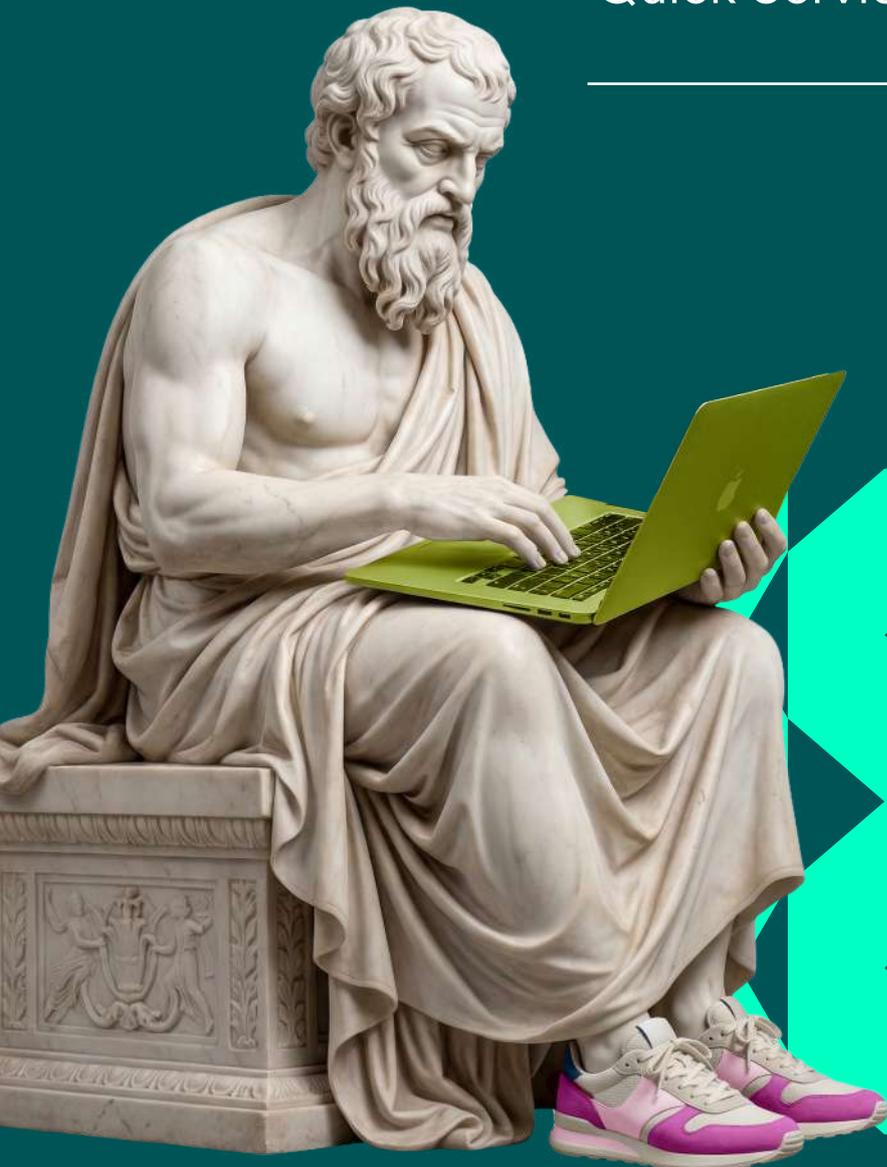>
> **MEAGHAN BILINSKI** | DIRECTOR – STRATEGY @ MOVABLE INK

Industry-based Deep Dives

Financial Services

Retail & Ecommerce

Quick Service Restaurants

Financial Services (BFSI)

While BFSI industry faces a deliverability tax on generic messages, shifting to utility-driven, behavior-based messaging across push and in-app channels unlocks up to a **16.5x conversion lift** and reclaims lost audience reach.

"Consumers are very aware of the information BFSI companies have, and therefore, they have a higher expectation of receiving personalized and useful content. The reality is that generic education messages underperform because this information is widely available and often not specific enough to add much value to consumers. The adage 'what's in it for me' is particularly important in financial interactions because consumers are not looking for generic answers."
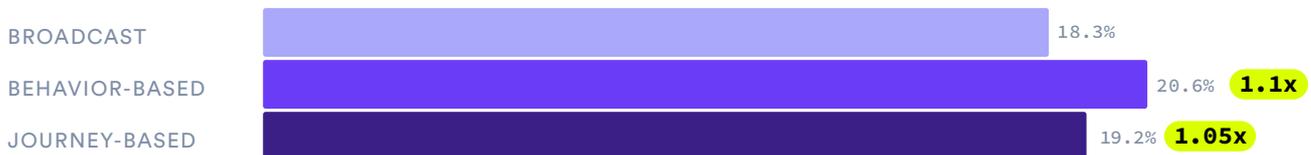
ZACK WENTHE
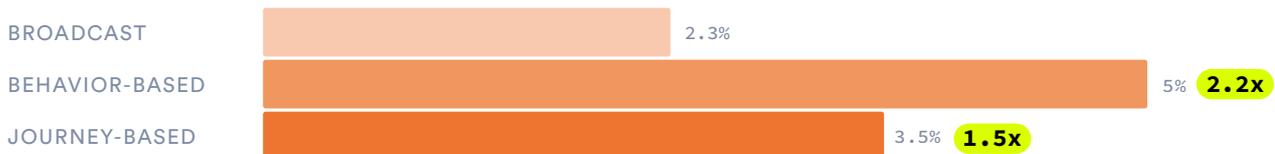DIRECTOR — PRODUCT MARKETING & CUSTOMER DATAEVANGELIST @ TEALIUM

1) Email

2026 Email Performance Benchmarks for BFSI Industry

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

BROADCAST	18.3%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	20.6%	**1.1x**
JOURNEY-BASED	19.2%	**1.05x**

CTOR *Click-to-Open Rate*

BROADCAST	2.3%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	5%	**2.2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	3.5%	**1.5x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	2.1%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	35.2%	**16.5x**
JOURNEY-BASED	7.3%	**3.4x**

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

BROADCAST	0.09%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	0.05%	**0.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	0.08%	**0.9x**

Trends and Observations

- **High Experimentation:** Email is the most commonly cited channel (68.04%) for YoY performance improvement among BFSI marketers and is the most continuously experimented with (59.79%).

- **Adoption Gap:** Despite the benefits, 58.76% of BFSI marketers are still stuck at "Basic" or no personalization for Email.

- **Performance Drop:** Comparing 2026 with 2024 data, email performance across most metrics has worsened for the industry. Journey-based email Open Rates dropped from 70% in 2024 to 19% in 2026.

- **Engagement Lift:** In 2026, BFSI Behavior-based emails have a massive 35.24% CVR, which is a 16.5x lift from broadcast emails.

What This Means

In the notification-heavy BFSI industry, marketers must compete with critical alerts, making utility-driven content more valuable than generic promotion. While journey-based open rates have cratered from 70% to 19% since 2024, the massive 16.5x conversion lift for behavior-based emails proves that customers reward finance brands that provide immediate, specific value.
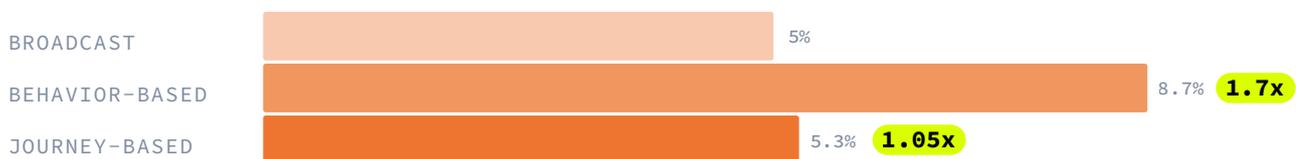
2) Push Notifications

2026 Push Notifications Performance Benchmarks for BFSI Industry

DELIVERY RATE

BROADCAST	71%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	93.8%	**1.3x**
JOURNEY-BASED	85.6%	**1.2x**

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	5%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	8.7%	**1.7x**
JOURNEY-BASED	5.3%	**1.05x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	8.9%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	15.2%	**1.7x**
JOURNEY-BASED	21.5%	**2.4x**
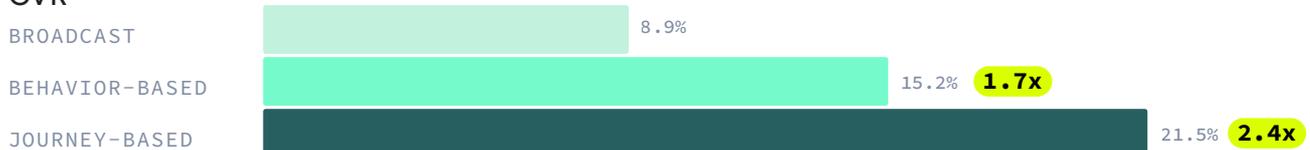
Trends and Observations

- **Delivery Gap:** There is a delivery gap of almost 23% between personalized and non-personalized push notifications (71.04% for Broadcast vs 93.76% for Behavior-based).

- **Higher Conversion:** Personalized push notifications in BFSI achieve a higher CVR (21.52%) than in Retail and QSR.

- **Low Usage:** Push notifications are the second-least-used channel among BFSI marketers, with 13.40% not using it at all.

- **Lack of Testing:** It is the channel tested least consistently (42.27%) by BFSI marketers after In-App messaging.

What This Means

For BFSI, push notifications act as essential utility nudges for transactions, yet marketers face a 23% delivery gap caused by OS filters silencing non-personalized content. By failing to personalize, finance brands are paying a deliverability tax that effectively locks them out of a quarter of their audience's devices.

3) In-App Messaging

2026 In-App Messaging Performance Benchmarks for BFSI Industry

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	5.9%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	6% 1.005x
JOURNEY-BASED	6.6% 1.1x

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	2.8%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	3% 1.07x
JOURNEY-BASED	19.8% 6.98x

Trends and Observations

- **High Conversion:** Journey-based In-App messages achieve nearly 20% CVR in the BFSI industry.

- **Personalization Multiplier:** Compared to broadcast messages, journey-based In-App messages are nearly 7 times more likely to convert a customer

- **Underutilization:** More than half the BFSI industry (50.51%) is still using "Basic" or no In-App personalization.

- **Lack of Testing:** The least continuously tested channel by BFSI marketers is In-app messaging (only 41.24%).

What This Means

In-App messaging serves as the definitive conversion closer for Financial Services, driving up to a 20% conversion rate once users are within the app environment. Despite being 7x more likely to convert than broadcast messages, the channel remains a "Dark Horse," significantly overlooked and undertested by the industry.

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES How BFSI Marketers Can Adapt in 2026

- ▶ **Prioritize Utility Over Promotion:** To bypass the 2026 OS-delivery filters, shift your strategy to "service-first" marketing. Ensure your marketing messages feel as urgent and relevant to maintain high delivery rates.

- ▶ **Overhaul your Martech Stack:** With nearly 60% of BFSI marketers planning to replace their Email Marketing Platform and 51% planning to replace their mobile messaging tools, you should audit your own stack to ensure it can handle real-time, behavior-based triggers rather than just batch sending.

- ▶ **Activate the Dark Horse:** Stop ignoring In-App messaging. Implement journey-based triggers within the app to capture the 20% conversion rate currently being left on the table by "Basic" personalization strategies.

- ▶ **Close the Delivery Gap:** Recognize that a 71% delivery rate on generic push notifications is a silent revenue killer. Use behavioral data to ensure your messages are classified as a priority by operating systems to instantly reclaim 23% of your audience.

Retail & Ecommerce

With broadcast email open rates collapsing by 60%, Retailers must pivot to automated behavioral triggers and In-App messages that guide shoppers towards the checkout page to capture a massive **37x email conversion multiplier** and up to a **47% In-App CVR.**
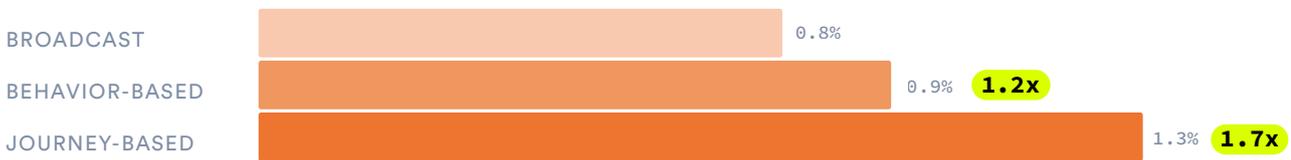
1) Email
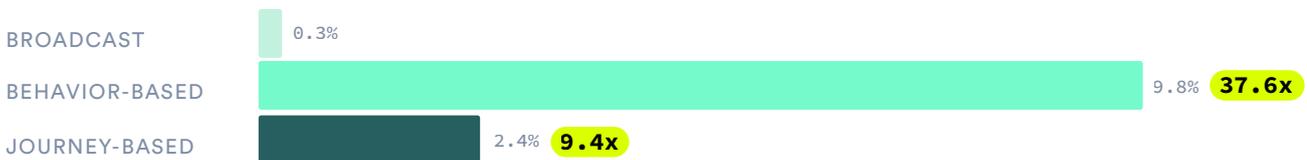
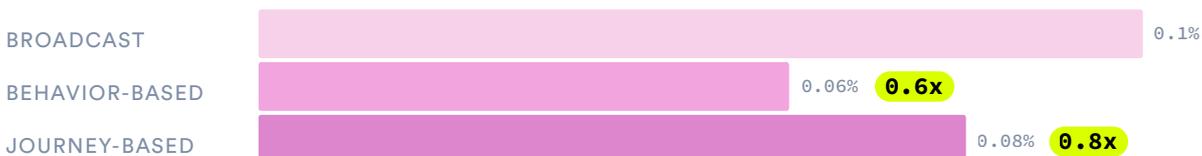2026 Email Performance Benchmarks for Retail Industry

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

BROADCAST	15%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	15.1%	**1.01x**
JOURNEY-BASED	21.5%	**1.4x**

CTOR *Click-to-Open Rate*

BROADCAST	0.8%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	0.9%	**1.2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	1.3%	**1.7x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	0.3%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	9.8%	**37.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	2.4%	**9.4x**

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

BROADCAST	0.1%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	0.06%	**0.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	0.08%	**0.8x**

Trends and Observations

- **High Adoption:** Email is the most common continuously experimented channel by Retail marketers (54.93%).

- **Open Rate Collapse:** Comparing 2026 with 2024 data, broadcast email open rates have seen a staggering 60% decline.

- **Personalization Multiplier:** Behavior-based messages are giving 37 times more conversions than broadcast emails (9.78% CVR vs 0.26%).

- **Martech Refresh:** Almost 55% of Retailers say the #1 segment of their martech stack they plan to replace in the next 12-18 months is their Email Marketing Platform.

What This Means

Retail and Ecommerce consumers have become incredibly selective, and the 60% drop in generic open rates signifies that mass-broadcast emails are effectively dead as a conversion tool. The real revenue engine is behavior-based messages, such as real-time cart abandonment and browsing triggers, which command a massive 37x conversion lift.

2) Push Notifications

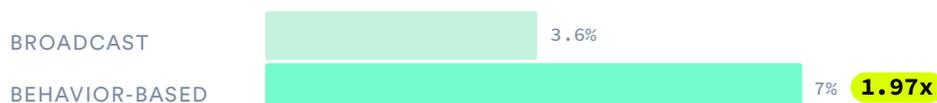2026 Push Notifications Performance Benchmarks for Retail Industry

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DELIVERY RATE

BROADCAST	55%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	90.2% **1.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	84% **1.5x**

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	1.8%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	5.8% **3.2x**
JOURNEY-BASED	6.2% **3.4x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	3.6%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	7% **1.97x**

Trends and Observations

- **Personalization Gap:** 45.07% of retail marketers are still using "basic" or no personalization on push notifications.

- **Performance Decline:** Push is the channel seeing the most common drop in YoY performance among retail marketers (7.75%).

- **Delivery Gap:** General Push delivery has plummeted to 55.03%, while Behavior-based Push has a 90.2% delivery rate.

- **CTR Growth:** Journey-based Push CTR has nearly doubled from 3.4% (2024) to 6.22% (2026).

What This Means

Retailers are facing a massive delivery cliff. For the same effort and cost, a retailer reaches 30% fewer consumers today than two years ago, unless they use personalization. This 35% gap is a deliverability tax on generic content imposed by mobile operating systems, filtering out retail spam. However, behavioral messages like "Your order has shipped" are granted priority message delivery. Retailers who continue to spray and pray will see diminishing returns, while those integrating personalized push messages into the customer journey are seeing 3x higher CTRs.

3) In-App Messaging

2026 In-App Messaging Performance Benchmarks for Retail Industry

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	37.4%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	32.1%	0.9x
JOURNEY-BASED	40.6%	1.08x

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	27.2%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	28.3%	1.04x
JOURNEY-BASED	47%	1.7x

Trends and Observations

- **Record-Breaking CVR:** Journey-based In-App messages boast a 46.99% Conversion Rate.

- **Performance Leader:** This channel has the highest conversion metrics across any channel and industry combination in the report.

- **Adoption Lag:** Despite its potential, it is the second least used channel among Retail marketers.

- **Personalization Gap:** 47.18% of retailers are still using basic or no personalization tactics on this channel.

What This Means

Retail is where In-App Messaging shows its true power as a conversion closer. For retailers, the app is no longer just a shopping portal; it is a personalized sales assistant. Nearly half of the users who click a journey-based message in the app make a purchase. Marketers staying with "Basic" strategies are missing out on the most effective bottom-of-the-funnel conversion tool available.

"

"Customer journey-based in-app messaging works so well in the Retail industry because today's shoppers expect every interaction to feel relevant, timely, and tailored to their needs. Journey-based messaging meets customers where they are in the moment, responding to their behavior, intent, and context in real time. By aligning communication to what the customer is actively doing or considering, retailers can fast-track relevance, reduce friction in the path to purchase, and create a more seamless, personalized experience that drives both conversion and loyalty."

MEAGHAN BILINSKI
DIRECTOR — STRATEGY @ MOVABLE INK

▶ **Automate to Survive:** Acknowledge that broadcast email is for awareness, not conversion. Shift your focus to automated behavioral triggers for use cases like cart abandonment to capture the 37x lift in revenue.

▶ **Reclaim Your Reach:** You are losing 35% of your audience to OS filters. To fix this, stop sending generic blasts and start sending behavior-based push notifications that earn "Priority" delivery status.

▶ **Close the Deal In-App:** With an almost 47% conversion rate, In-App messaging is your most powerful sales tool. Treat it as a personalized sales assistant that guides the user to checkout rather than a billboard banner.

▶ **Update Your Tech:** Join the 55% of retailers replacing their platforms. Ensure your new stack supports real-time behavioral triggers to enable the "right product, right moment" strategy that consumers now demand

"There is so much noise in the retail category that brands need to offer a unique perspective to maintain channel engagement. Sharing personalized shopping recommendations, outfit pairing suggestions, and education content on the next logical purchase are simple ways brands can make their messages more engaging. Also, answering the question of why a consumer needs to receive your message weekly is critical."

ZACK WENTHE
DIRECTOR – PRODUCT MARKETING & CUSTOMER DATAEVANGELIST @ TEALIUM

Quick Service Restaurants (QSR)

QSR brands see industry-leading engagement by solving real-time "hungry moments," but they face the highest penalty for irrelevance, with generic messages triggering **unsubscribe rates 25x higher** than personalized journeys.
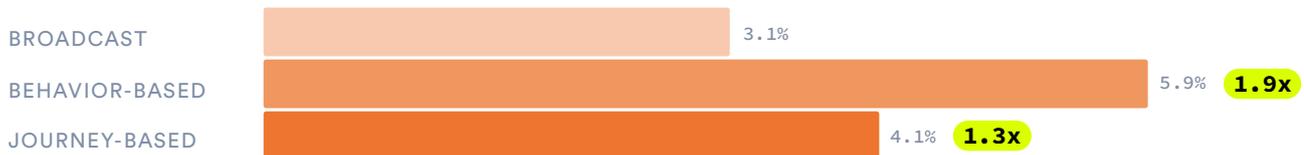
1) Email

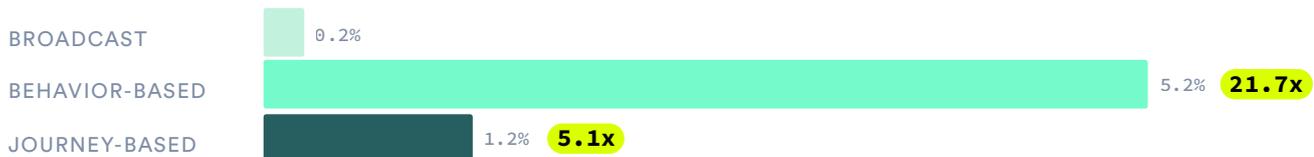2026 Email Performance Benchmarks for QSR Industry

UNIQUE OPEN RATE

BROADCAST	14%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	50.4% **3.6x**
JOURNEY-BASED	26.6% **1.9x**

CTOR *Click-to-Open Rate*

BROADCAST	3.1%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	5.9% **1.9x**
JOURNEY-BASED	4.1% **1.3x**

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	0.2%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	5.2% **21.7x**
JOURNEY-BASED	1.2% **5.1x**

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

BROADCAST	1.5%
BEHAVIOR-BASED	0.1% **0.07x**
JOURNEY-BASED	0.06% **0.04x**

Trends and Observations

- **Performance Improvement:** 66.67% of QSR marketers say their email performance has improved YoY.

- **Sky-High Open Rates:** Behavior-based email Open Rates sit at **50.41%** for the QSR industry, a 3.6x lift over general emails. For comparison, behavior-based messages have an open rate of just 15.14% in the Retail industry.

- **Database Liquidation:** Journey-based emails have an unsubscribe rate of just 0.06%, whereas Broadcast emails have an Unsubscribe Rate of 1.49%.
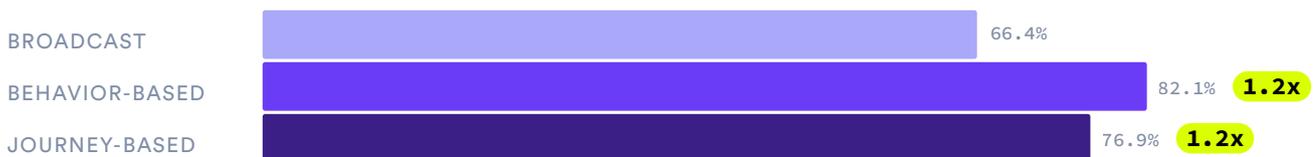
What This Means

The QSR industry is seeing engagement levels that other industries can only dream of because behavioral triggers are often tied to immediate physiological needs (e.g., hunger). Consumers are 3.5x more likely to open these emails because they solve a problem in real-time. However, QSR has the highest penalty for non-personalized marketing. There is a 25x difference in database retention, meaning consumers are extremely sensitive to noise. Generic emails cause unsubscribes at a rate 15x higher than the BFSI average, but personalized journeys earn the right to stay in the inbox.

2) Push Notifications

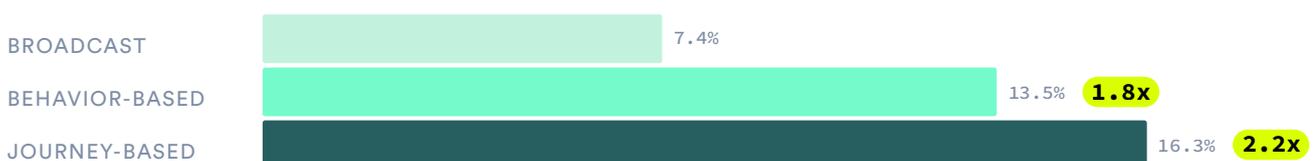2026 Push Notifications Performance Benchmarks for QSR Industry

DELIVERY RATE

BROADCAST	66.4%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	82.1%	1.2x
JOURNEY-BASED	76.9%	1.2x

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	1.3%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	5.7%	4.4x
JOURNEY-BASED	3.5%	2.7x

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	7.4%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	13.5%	1.8x
JOURNEY-BASED	16.3%	2.2x

Trends and Observations

- **Personalization Multiplier:** Behavior-based Push CTR in QSR is 5.71%, representing a 4.4x lift over General Push (1.29%).

- **Revenue Driver:** Journey-based push notifications provide 16.31% CVR, more than double that of broadcast messages.

- **Performance Drop:** Push is the most commonly cited channel for "same or worsening" performance (48.61%).

- **Adoption Lag:** It has the highest number of marketers implementing no personalization tactics (11.11%).
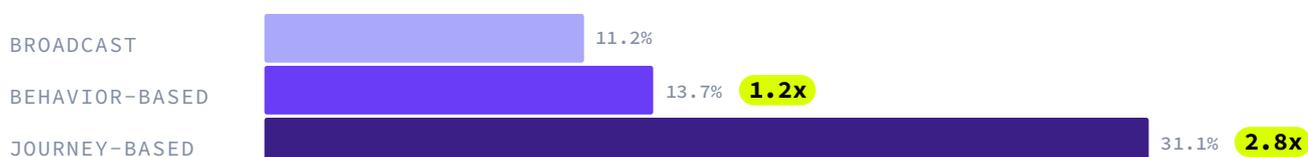
What This Means

In QSR, Push is a utility channel. A generic push from a food app is seen as a nuisance, but a behavioral push (e.g., "Your order is ready" or "Lunchtime offer near you") is highly effective. Marketers are seeing a 4.4x jump in engagement when they treat Push as a real-time bridge to the app. The sentiment around low performance likely stems from the high percentage of marketers still using spray-and-pray tactics, which consumers are increasingly ignoring.

3) In-App Messaging

2026 In-App Messaging Performance Benchmarks for QSR Industry

CTR *Click-through Rate*

BROADCAST	11.2%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	13.7%	1.2x
JOURNEY-BASED	31.1%	2.8x

CVR *Conversion Rate*

BROADCAST	2.1%	
BEHAVIOR-BASED	6.2%	3.03x
JOURNEY-BASED	24.8%	12.03x

Trends and Observations

- **Personalization Multiplier:** Journey-based In-App messages in QSR have a 24.78% CVR, a staggering 12x lift over General In-App messages (2.06%).

- **Underutilization:** Despite the high potential, it is the least used channel among QSR marketers, with nearly 1 in 5 not using it at all.

- **Lack of Testing:** It is the least continuously tested channel by QSR marketers (34.72%).


What This Means

A Broadcast In-app message is often ignored because it adds friction to the ordering process. However, a Journey-based nudge (e.g., "You're 5 points away from a free side") drives massive conversion because it enhances the experience. The 12x lift confirms that QSR marketers should use in-app journeys specifically for upselling and loyalty progression rather than general discovery. However, the lack of adoption of mobile channels like In-app suggests a significant missed opportunity for the industry.

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES — How QSR Marketers Can Adapt in 2026

- ▶ **Master the Timing:** Leverage the physiological nature of your industry. Use behavioral data to predict "hungry moments" and capture the 50% open rate you're eligible for.

- ▶ **Protect Your Database:** Recognize that your customers are highly sensitive to noise. Sending generic blasts risks audience erosion at a rate 15x higher than other industries. Personalize to retain permission to market.

- ▶ **Transform Push into Utility:** Stop using Push as a billboard. Use it as a utility channel (for sharing order updates, location-based offers, etc.) to drive a 4.4x lift in engagement.

- ▶ **Upsell via In-App:** Do not interrupt the ordering flow with general ads. Use journey-based In-App messages to drive loyalty and upsells (e.g., "Add fries to earn points"), unlocking a 12x conversion lift.

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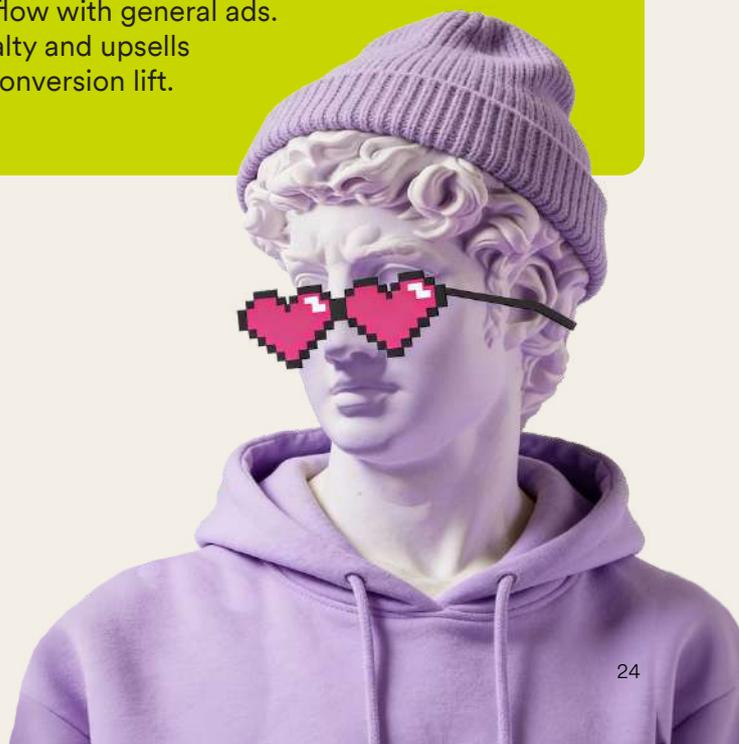
"Real-time engagement in the QSR industry is both a data collection and a data activation problem. Often, one side of the equation is forgotten, leading to either not having the right data to drive a real-time decision or not being able to react fast enough before the moment passes. There are tools in the market that are architected to solve both sides of that equation. But the first step is to understand which behaviors and interactions you want to influence; start simple, look for high-value moments, and build out a more robust program from there."

ZACK WENTHE
DIRECTOR — PRODUCT MARKETING & CUSTOMER DATAEVANGELIST @ TEALIUM

In a Nutshell: The Path to Resilience

The above benchmark data is clear. The spray-and-pray approach is officially extinct. We have moved from an era in which personalization was a nice-to-have feature to one in which it serves as a technical firewall. Without it, your messages are blocked by OS filters, your open rates plummet, and your database liquidates itself.

Resilience in 2026 requires a strategic pivot from basic triggers to behavior-based, individualized journeys. Accomplishing this at scale necessitates a shift toward AI-powered infrastructure capable of real-time decisioning, bridging the gap between manual capability and the hyper-relevance customers now demand. By investing in Martech that prioritizes these intelligent triggers, marketers can bypass filters and protect their reachable audience.

The fact that nearly half of all marketers plan to replace their email and mobile messaging platforms indicates a widespread recognition that legacy tools cannot survive 2026-era constraints. Those who bridge this gap with advanced, automated solutions are not just surviving; they are thriving, converting nearly 1 in 2 users inside the app, while others find their messages silenced.

The question is no longer about whether you should personalize, but how fast you can scale it. And for those ready to adapt, the rewards will be significant.

"
"Going into 2026, marketers need to take a step back and look at areas where they haven't been able to effectively personalize and evaluate if AI can help close the gap. Whether it's resources, audience selection, or content, AI has the opportunity to help drive significant personalization in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interactions that marketers didn't have the time or resources to influence before."

ZACK WENTHE
DIRECTOR – PRODUCT MARKETING & CUSTOMER DATAEVANGELIST @ TEALIUM

"
"For years, marketers have talked about delivering the *right message*, to the *right person*, at the right time, but until recently, the technology hasn't truly been able to deliver that promise at scale. With AI-powered solutions, we're finally at a point where real-time, individualized decisioning is possible, and that's changing what effective marketing looks like. Those leaning in are already seeing meaningful gains—driving stronger engagement that leads to actual revenue increases and making their programs more responsive to customer behavior. That level of 1:1 orchestration simply isn't possible manually or with legacy systems."

MEAGHAN BILINSKI
DIRECTOR – STRATEGY @ MOVABLE INK

How **MoEngage** Can Help

In order to succeed this year, you need an all-in-one **Customer Engagement Platform (CEP)** that enhances your omnichannel ecosystem. MoEngage provides the infrastructure to execute the strategies in this report, moving you from "Basic" to "Advanced" personalization.

✉ EMAIL

Maximize the performance of your **email campaigns** through advanced tools that ensure messages land in inboxes and drive results.
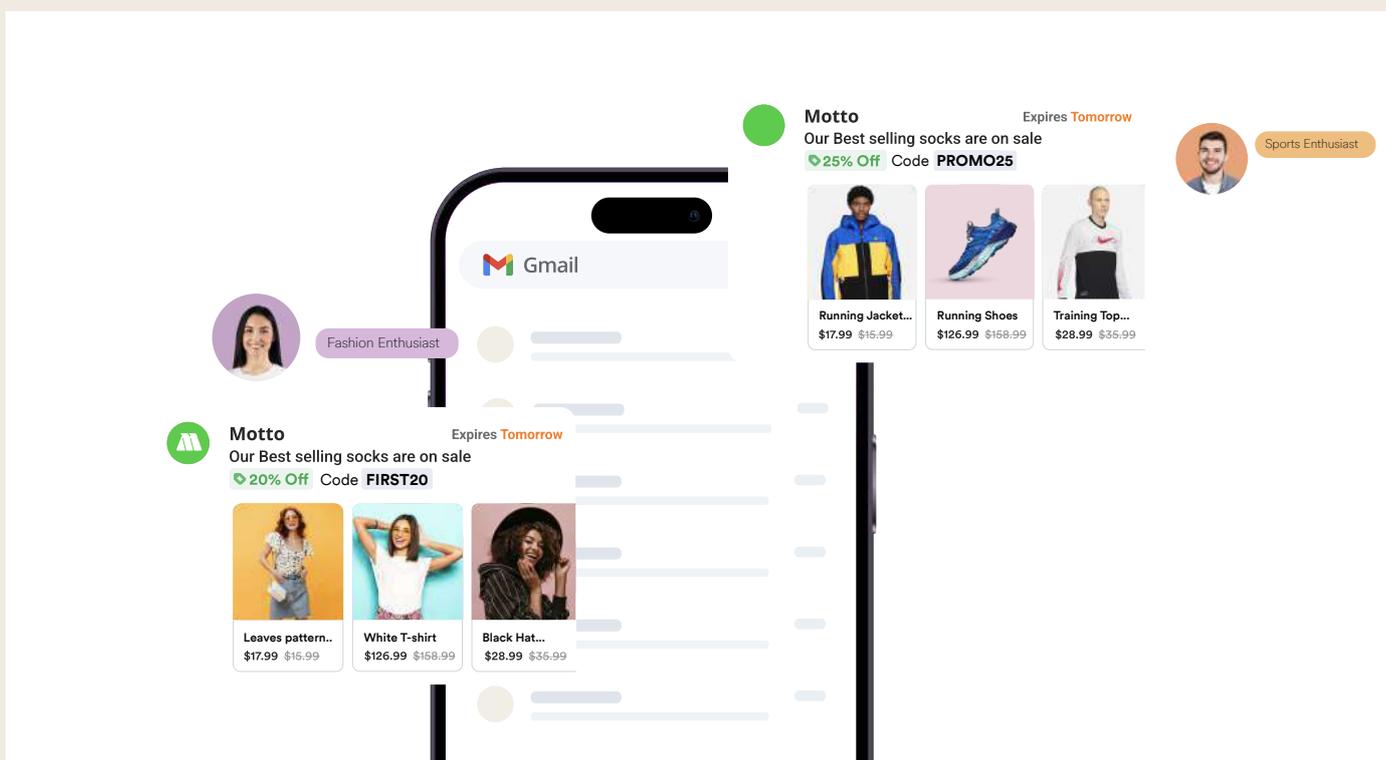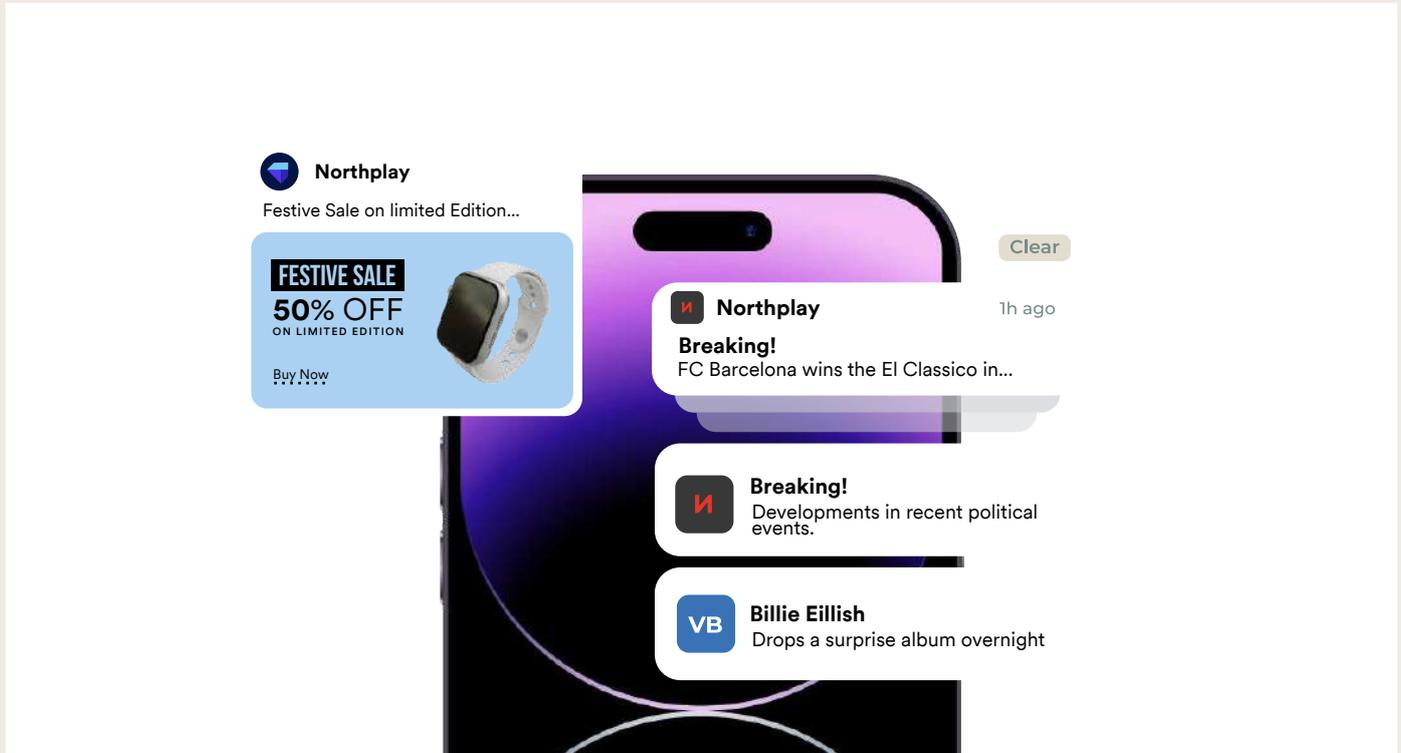

What sets us apart:

- **Excellence in Deliverability:** Ensure high delivery rates and continuous improvement with guided warm-up plans and AI-enabled A/B testing.

- **AI-Powered Optimization:** Harness Merlin AI to craft compelling subject lines that significantly boost open rates and engagement.

- **Gmail Annotations:** Bring messages to life in Gmail's Promo tab with images, codes, and offer dates, viewable to readers without opening the email.

- **Bot Filtering:** Filter out bot activity with "Adjusted Email Opens" to get a clear, accurate picture of your ROI-wise campaign performance, and build more effective follow-up strategies.

PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Simplify **push notifications** with robust capabilities that deliver impactful, user-friendly experiences that resonate with your audience.
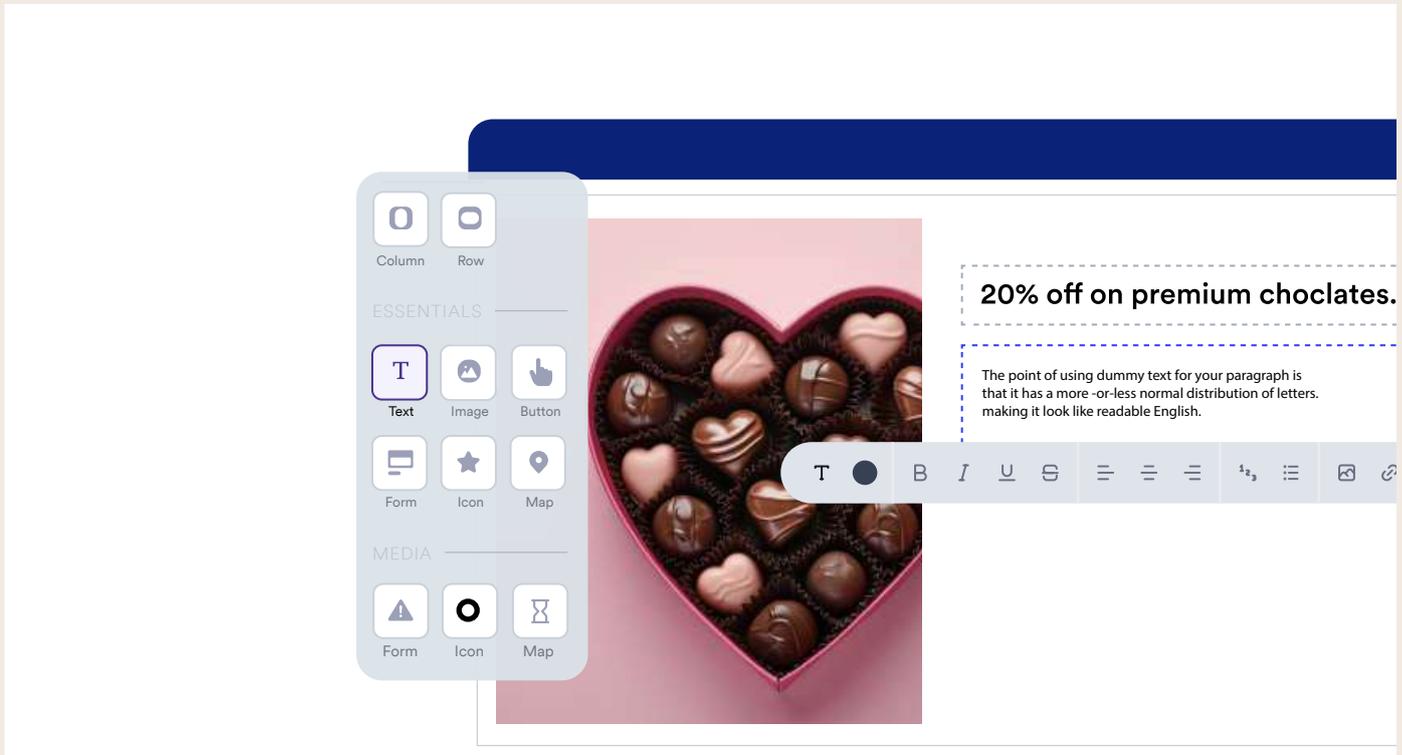

What sets us apart:

- **Expansive Template Library:** Access over 60 diverse templates for subtle nudges, Picture-in-Picture option, NPS/CSAT surveys, and gamification.

- **Maximized Reach:** Boost visibility with advanced channel amplification features engineered to expand reach through cross-channel fallback and orchestration.

- **User-Centric Design Philosophy:** Leverage non-intrusive nudges that contribute positively to the customer journey.

- **Live Activities:** Transform one-off alerts into persistent lock-screen widgets for real-time updates on critical events, such as flight status.

- **Responsive Engagement:** Engage when it matters most with real-time triggers and offline capabilities, reaching consumers even when they are not active.

⬆ IN-APP MESSAGING

Facilitate rich, contextual interactions with your users directly **within the app** using powerful solutions combined with MoEngage's AI capabilities.

What sets us apart:

- **Visually Engaging Experiences:** Capture attention effectively with animation support that adds visual appeal and dynamism to your messages.

- **Empowered Autonomy:** Grant business teams full control over the design and deployment of campaigns, reducing dependency on engineering.

- **In-Session Behavior:** Trigger messages based on real-time behavior within the current session without waiting for the next login.

- **Merlin AI:** Create campaign copy and images in just a few clicks to accelerate campaign creation.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Campaign Types Examined

- **General Broadcast:** These are mass messages sent to a broad segment of the audience, often focusing on general updates, promotions, or newsletters.

- **Behaviour-Based:** Triggered by specific customer actions or inactions (e.g., website visits, purchase history, and app usage), these messages are highly relevant and timely.

- **Journey-Based**: These messages are part of a predefined sequence or flow, designed to guide customers through a specific process, such as onboarding, cart recovery, or nurturing leads.

Appendix 2   Metrics Analyzed

Delivery Rate (DR)

The percentage of sent emails that successfully reach recipients' mailboxes, avoiding bounces.

$$DR = \frac{(\text{Total Emails Sent} - \text{Bounced Emails})}{\text{Total Emails Sent}} \times 100\%$$

Unique Open Rate (OR)

The percentage of unique recipients who opened the message.

$$OR = \frac{\text{Number of Unique Opens}}{\text{Number of Messages Sent}} \times 100\%$$

Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR) or Click-through Rate (CTR)

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a link within the message, out of those who opened it.

$$CTR = \frac{\text{Number of Unique Clicks}}{\text{Number of Unique Opens}} \times 100\%$$

Conversion Rate (CVR)

The percentage of recipients who completed a desired action (e.g., purchase, sign-up, download) after clicking on a link in the message. This metric directly reflects the campaign's impact on business goals.

$$CVR = \frac{\text{Number of Conversions}}{\text{Number of Unique Clicks}} \times 100\%$$
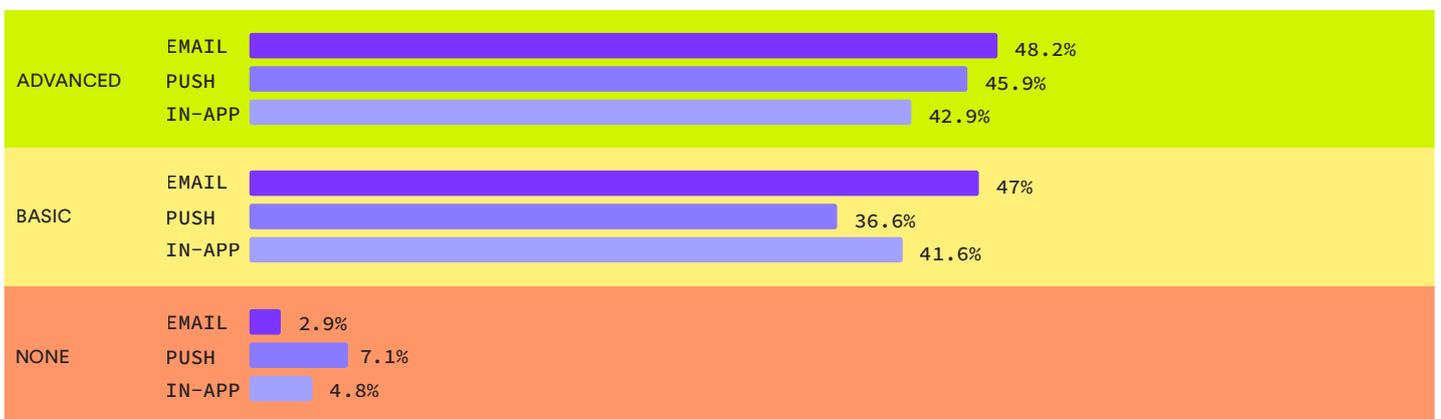
Unsubscribe Rate (UR)

The percentage of recipients who opted out of future emails after receiving the campaign. A high unsubscribe rate can indicate irrelevant content or over-communication.

$$UR = \frac{\text{Number of Unsubscribes}}{\text{Number of Emails Sent}} \times 100\%$$
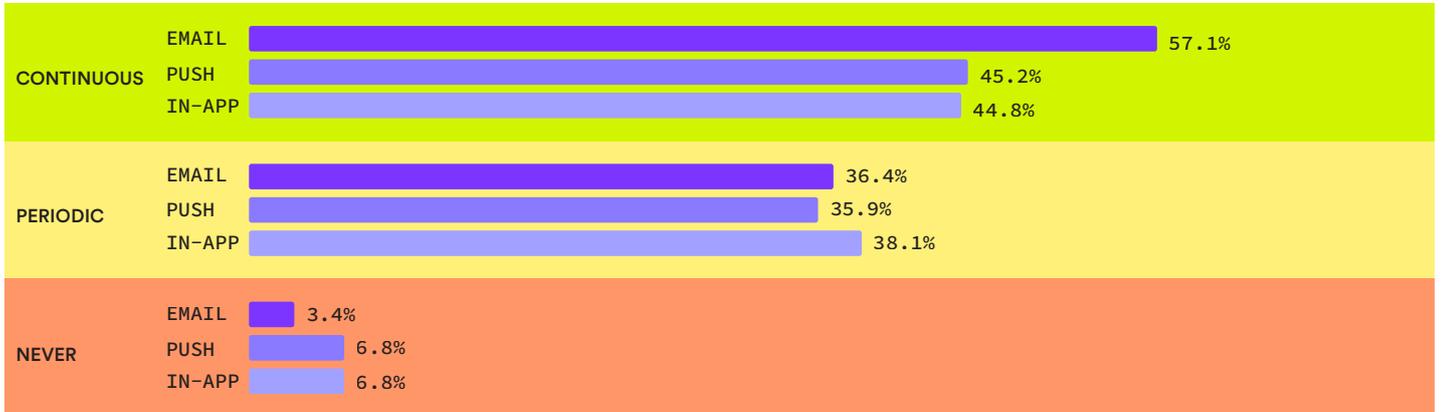
2026 Channel Maturity Matrix

	Performance YoY (% Better)	Personalization (% Advanced)	Experimentation (% Continuous)
Email	68.5%	48.2%	57.1%
Paid Social	60.2%	49%	51.9%
Website	56.2%	51.7%	50.8%
WhatsApp	51.2%	45.9%	47.4%
In-App Messaging	49.8%	42.8%	44.8%
Push Notifications	48.2%	45.9%	45.1%
SMS + RCS	44.7%	41.4%	46.8%

Personalization-Level Used

ADVANCED	EMAIL	48.2%
	PUSH	45.9%
	IN-APP	42.9%
BASIC	EMAIL	47%
	PUSH	36.6%
	IN-APP	41.6%
NONE	EMAIL	2.9%
	PUSH	7.1%
	IN-APP	4.8%

Experimentation Cadence Followed

CONTINUOUS
- EMAIL — 57.1%
- PUSH — 45.2%
- IN-APP — 44.8%

PERIODIC
- EMAIL — 36.4%
- PUSH — 35.9%
- IN-APP — 38.1%

NEVER
- EMAIL — 3.4%
- PUSH — 6.8%
- IN-APP — 6.8%

Current Performance vs Last Year

BETTER
- EMAIL — 68.5%
- PUSH — 48.2%
- IN-APP — 49.8%

SAME
- EMAIL — 26.7%
- PUSH — 33.3%
- IN-APP — 32.6%

WORSE
- EMAIL — 3.2%
- PUSH — 7.5%
- IN-APP — 5.8%

N/A
- EMAIL — 1.5%
- PUSH — 10.9%
- IN-APP — 11.8%