Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market
Why Study Educators?

We’re MDR, and since 1969 we’ve been helping brands and nonprofits connect with educators. Here’s what we’ve learned:

• Educators (meaning teachers, principals, administrators, professors, deans, etc.) are a distinct and plentiful audience.
• Educators stand out from the general public in ways that make them very desirable consumers.
• We have exclusive insights into how educators use technology and respond to digital media.

This comprehensive report will give you the understanding and the strategies that will allow you to generate leads and deepen relationships with an engaging audience: educators.

The Largest Study Available

A study is only as good as its source data, and MDR is in a unique position to draw solid conclusions about educators’ digital habits by examining the campaigns we deploy for, and with, our clients.

Our email insights have been pulled from 398,152,458 delivered prospecting emails, across 19,906 unique campaigns that have been deployed by MDR for 1,302 clients. That makes this report the most comprehensive study of how educators in the United States engage with email promotions.

For display advertising insights, we analyzed 97.1 million ad impressions, across over 580 unique display advertising campaigns.

Remember, MDR deploys prospecting emails, so the findings in this report should not be compared with emails sent to opt-in lists. For more information on prospecting vs. opt-in emails, see the Appendix.

From this wealth of data, MDR produces this Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market report which looks at how digital trend metrics have changed by comparing metrics across six industries over the years 2015, 2016, and the first half of 2017. In addition, we compare the results of K-12 in relation to Higher Education (HE) where we also compare Leadership engagement rates with Faculty rates.

A data set of this size can give you confidence in the findings. Use this report as a valid benchmark to analyze your digital campaigns and to understand the current practices and trends in marketing to the education industry. Know that because we mine data from diverse campaigns, you have a fuller picture of how online communication strategies are evolving.
The Educator Universe

Educators as a target market are hiding in plain sight, in every state and community. This audience of over seven million members in the U.S. is predominantly female and, as such, makes most of the purchase decisions in their households. They are identifiable by economic, demographic, firmographic, and cultural characteristics that allow marketers to target and connect with them.

Educators Make Ideal Consumers

In their demographics, values, spending habits, and interests, educators are an audience that ticks all the boxes for all brands. That’s the conclusion from a study MDR recently commissioned from Simmons Market Research: Teachers as Consumers: Background, Interests, Buying Patterns, and Media Uses. This study revealed that teachers are:

- **Demographic Stars** – in income, home ownership, and educational achievement
- **Affluent in Interest** – spending on travel, dining out, sports and fitness, and more

- **Savvy Buyers** – who research before buying and are loyal to brands that deliver
- **Media Mavens** – who do more reading, buy more online, and love their devices

Educators Are Digital Natives

This is the digital generation. For today’s students, technology is as natural a tool as their own hands. For educators, working in education means accepting that long hours, scarce resources, and tight budgets may be part of the equation. So, to speak their students’ language, and to manage their own busy lives on and off campus, it’s not surprising that educators have embraced the digital world in their use of email, online shopping, and social media.

How Marketers Can Use This Report

Marketers want to know:

- Are we speaking to the right audience with the right offer, and not wasting their time?
- Are we reaching them in the channels they prefer, and at the times of day and days of the week when they have a moment to read our message?
- Can our offers be fine-tuned to resonate more than others?

This report answers questions like these, and many more.

Use this report to learn how educators use digital content, the types of devices they use, and how they view and respond to email and web advertising. The lessons learned and best practices we’ve included will help you plan and execute smart education marketing campaigns that deliver results.

After decades of studying and engaging with educators, we’ve become firm believers that they represent an extraordinary opportunity for marketers, and by detailing their digital habits in this report, we hope to give you the tools to capture that opportunity for your company or nonprofit.
EMAIL INSIGHTS

Marketers continue their complicated relationship with email. There’s no denying that it continues to be an effective channel for engaging with educators. But, keeping it effective requires constant attention to educator behavior.

Simmons National Consumer Survey asked participants which forms of Internet advertising influenced them to purchase a product or service in the last three months. Emails were the most influential in prompting teachers to make a purchase. Given the amount of email advertising that many people receive, it seems remarkable that more than one in five teachers respond positively to promotional emails.

This result is reinforced by the findings in this report, which shows that best practices and hard data can reliably guide marketers in designing campaigns that will get the desired opens and click-throughs from this audience. A balance of smart science in targeting and segmentation, combined with the art of compelling subject lines, clear messaging, and mobile-friendly design is the best recipe for success in email marketing to educators.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Why do we use “Total”? For reports of this type, it is typical to compare MDR’s performance against totals that accurately represent all emails opened or clicked, including those that are forwarded, or messages that are opened on one device, then opened again on another device by the same person.

Why do we use “Unique”? Unique means an email was opened/clicked at least one time for each campaign. However, if an email is opened more than once by the same person, it is still counted only once. This metric is helpful in measuring engagement of an individual.

What is “Delivery Rate”? This metric is calculated by dividing the number of emails sent minus bounces by the number of emails sent. Delivery rate is important in determining your ability to successfully reach email recipients. This metric is valuable in measuring the quality of your email list management, as well as your ability to avoid spam filtering. Delivery rate is not a good measure of whether an email is going to the recipient’s inbox or junk folder. MDR’s Dirty Data Report discusses deliverability and steps you can take to ensure you are not seen as a spammer by ISPs.

How are “Total Open and Click-Through Rates” calculated? The total number of opens or clicks are divided by the total number of emails delivered. These rates include duplicate opens, clicks, and deliveries as they occur.

How are “Unique Open and Click-Through Rates” calculated? The unique number of opens or clicks are divided by the total number of emails delivered. These rates DO NOT include duplicate opens, clicks, and deliveries as they occur.
Email By the Numbers: Key findings and recommended strategies for email marketing

Delivery Rates by Segment

- **Higher Ed: Publishers**
  - Delivery Rate: 97.24%
  - 2015: 90.06%
  - 2016: 95.60%
  - 2017: 93.33%

- **K-12: Associations/Non-Profits**
  - Delivery Rate: 95.75%
  - 2015: 89.50%
  - 2016: 92.60%
  - 2017: 93.33%

Total Open Rate

- **Higher Ed**
  - Total Open Rate: 17.38%
  - 2015: 6.31%
  - 2016: 5.94%
  - 2017: 6.90%

- **K-12**
  - Total Open Rate: 6.90%
  - 2015: 6.94%
  - 2016: 6.51%
  - 2017: 6.90%

Total Click-Through Rate

- **Higher Ed**
  - Total Click-Through Rate: 2.82%
  - 2015: 2.82%
  - 2016: 2.54%
  - 2017: 2.38%

- **K-12**
  - Total Click-Through Rate: 0.87%
  - 2015: 0.95%
  - 2016: 0.94%
  - 2017: 0.87%

Device Determines Behavior

- More OPENS on mobile or tablet
- More CLICKS on laptop/desktop

Think mobile friendly design for emails and laptop/desktop for landing pages

Days of the Week

- **Popular SEND Days**
  - TUES, WED, THURS

- **HIGHEST OPEN RATE DAYS**
  - Higher Ed: TUES
  - K-12: THURS

Times of Day (EST)

- **Highest OPEN Rates**
  - 9am: K-12
  - 10am: Higher Ed

- **Highest CLICK Rates**
  - 11am: K-12 & Higher Ed

- **SWITCH from Desktop to Mobile**
  - 4pm: Higher Ed

The practice of smaller campaign sizes (<50,000) helps bypass spam filtering

We analyze the performance of 20 million emails sent monthly and make adjustments for improved engagement

Deliverability Trends Upward

- **Higher Ed: Publishers**
  - Delivery Rate:
    - 2015: 90.06%
    - 2016: 95.60%
    - 2017: 93.33%

- **K-12: Associations/Non-Profits**
  - Delivery Rate:
    - 2015: 89.50%
    - 2016: 92.60%
    - 2017: 93.33%

Higher Ed emails tend to be more targeted than K-12, leading to smaller campaigns, more relevant messaging, and better open rates

Copyright 2018 MDR
Engagement Trends Year Over Year

Overall Delivery Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>89.64%</td>
<td>91.91%</td>
<td>93.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ed</td>
<td>91.06%</td>
<td>94.07%</td>
<td>97.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Email Engagement Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Open Rate</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>4.64%</td>
<td>4.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Open Rate</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>7.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Click-Through Rate</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Click-Through</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis

MDR’s delivery rate (calculated by total delivered/total deployed) has been steadily trending upwards from July 2015 through June 2017 for both K-12 and Higher Ed. MDR expects the delivery rate to continue to climb as we make more improvements to our delivery methods for our clients.

A primary reason for improved delivery rates is the smaller size of campaigns. We find that campaigns of 50,000 emails or fewer see a dramatic improvement in delivery and open rates. Why?

- Sending large numbers of the same exact email to the same domain is a clear indicator that the emails are promotional.
- Being identified as promotional increases the likelihood of that email being rejected by the receiving domain (a soft bounce) or shunted to a spam folder.
- Improved open rates with consistently the same email design and schedule is a clear indicator of improved inbox placement.
Engagement Trends By Segment

Analysis

Delivery rates in the K-12 market were highest for the Association/Nonprofit segment, while delivery rates in the Higher Ed market were highest for the Publishers segment.

MDR’s average total open rate across all client deployments from July 2015 through June 2017 has been steadily increasing for the K-12 market and steadily decreasing for the Higher Ed market. MDR expects the open rate to continue to climb for the K-12 market. For the Higher Ed market, we are working closely with clients to help sharpen their subject lines to improve email opens.

MDR’s average total click-through rate across all client deployments has been increasing from July 2015 through June 2017 for the Higher Ed market. MDR expects to see the click-through rate for the K-12 market improve as we help clients realize performance improvements from applying best practices to email creative.

### K-12 Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Total Open Rate</th>
<th>Total CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association/Non-Profit</td>
<td>95.75%</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>91.34%</td>
<td>5.83%</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions/Degree Programs</td>
<td>95.39%</td>
<td>8.48%</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>93.60%</td>
<td>6.37%</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>94.59%</td>
<td>6.34%</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Higher Ed Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Total Open Rate</th>
<th>Total CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association/Non-Profit</td>
<td>96.45%</td>
<td>48.63%</td>
<td>5.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>97.16%</td>
<td>16.88%</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions/Degree Programs</td>
<td>96.78%</td>
<td>25.88%</td>
<td>2.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>97.24%</td>
<td>15.54%</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>95.73%</td>
<td>10.99%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOTAL Open Rate, TOTAL Click-Through Rate by Peer Group

Analysis

The Higher Education Leadership peer group continues to be the most accessible via email, while K-12 teachers continue to be the least accessible. This is likely due to the Higher Education Leadership group being targeted less frequently in campaigns by our customers. In addition, the higher education audience is more segmented, so they are less likely to be included in broad campaigns.

There’s an important lesson in this: While it is very common for companies to send the same email promotion to all teachers K-6, a kindergarten teacher has different needs than a fifth-grade teacher, and lack of message relevance will translate to lower open and click-through rates. Because Higher Ed promotions tend to focus more specifically by department (History, English, Mathematics), campaign sizes are naturally smaller, improving deliverability and message relevance, resulting in higher open and click-through rates.

Keep Campaigns Focused

In Higher Ed, targeting by department results in smaller campaign sizes, improving deliverability, message relevance, and performance.
Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market

**Email Insights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Total Open Rate</th>
<th>Total Click-Through Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>91.79%</td>
<td>26.36%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>95.37%</td>
<td>25.62%</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>97.28%</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.80%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.61%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Faculty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>90.48%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>2.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>93.53%</td>
<td>15.95%</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>97.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.48%</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.58%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>92.28%</td>
<td>7.39%</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>93.57%</td>
<td>6.08%</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>94.13%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.46%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.46%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>88.98%</td>
<td>5.81%</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>92.49%</td>
<td>5.52%</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>92.59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.82%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.97%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Date range 1/1/17-6/30/17.
**UNIQUE Open Rate, UNIQUE Click-Through Rate by Peer Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Unique Open Rate</th>
<th>Unique Click-Through Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>91.79%</td>
<td>10.47%</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>95.37%</td>
<td>10.02%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>97.28%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.74%</strong></td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Faculty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>90.48%</td>
<td>9.96%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>93.53%</td>
<td>9.77%</td>
<td>1.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>97.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.40%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.67%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>92.28%</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>93.57%</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>94.13%</strong></td>
<td>4.57%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>88.98%</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>92.49%</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017*</td>
<td><strong>92.59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.02%</strong></td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Date range 1/1/17-6/30/17.*
Average Campaign Size Impact on Email Engagement

Analysis

According to MDR data collected, smaller list sizes generally have higher deliverability rates. We advise clients to keep their campaign list sizes to under 50,000 to get the deliverability results they expect.

While delivery, total open, and total click-through rates are important metrics to assess email engagement, it is more helpful to look at unique open rates as an accurate measure of inbox placement.

Unique open rates are a clear indicator that more emails are being placed in the recipient’s inbox because they show increased engagement with email. However, all metrics should be taken into consideration together to get the total picture of your campaign and help you identify different issues that need to be addressed.

Go Small to Win Big

Smaller campaigns have higher open and click-through rates. In fact, every increase in campaign size shows a corresponding reduction in open and click-through rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Emails per Campaign</th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Total Open Rate</th>
<th>Total Click-Throughs</th>
<th>Total Click-Through Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>96.48%</td>
<td>15.56%</td>
<td>212,717</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>95.57%</td>
<td>11.61%</td>
<td>124,371</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>94.02%</td>
<td>10.92%</td>
<td>135,160</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>92.82%</td>
<td>9.08%</td>
<td>78,155</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>92.37%</td>
<td>7.97%</td>
<td>59,925</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>93.94%</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
<td>69,994</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>93.52%</td>
<td>8.17%</td>
<td>35,686</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>93.80%</td>
<td>7.15%</td>
<td>44,146</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>92.17%</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>62,185</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>92.34%</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
<td>57,866</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69,000</td>
<td>86.18%</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>499,672</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>89.83%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>237,919</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Delivery, Unique Open, and Unique Click-Through Rates by Campaign Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAXIMUM NUMBER OF EMAILS PER CAMPAIGN</th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
<th>Unique Open Rate</th>
<th>Unique Click-Through Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>96.48%</td>
<td>8.74%</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>95.57%</td>
<td>7.18%</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>94.02%</td>
<td>7.24%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>92.82%</td>
<td>6.05%</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>92.37%</td>
<td>4.95%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>93.94%</td>
<td>5.52%</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>93.52%</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>93.80%</td>
<td>4.85%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>92.17%</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>92.34%</td>
<td>4.63%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69,000</td>
<td>86.18%</td>
<td>4.62%</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>89.83%</td>
<td>4.06%</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market

Device Type Usage

Analysis

Distribution of devices used by recipients shows the growing importance of mobile-friendly email design. Although mobile devices and tablets make up about 50% of all opens, only 9% of all clicks are on mobile or tablets. This illustrates the importance of creating emails with a seamless user experience across all screen sizes, making it easy for users to open, click, and convert on any device.

Consider the Audience

While it has been conventional wisdom that educators assign devices distinct “jobs,” (i.e., smartphones are for email triage and quick replies, desktops are for landing pages), the generational shift to younger educators and technology improvements are changing that equation.

The lines between devices are getting more blurred every day, so the traditional excuse of “people don’t convert through mobile” is becoming less viable. Millennials and Generation Z (which many teachers fall into) generally do not have any issue clicking through an email and downloading a pdf or making a purchase on a mobile device. Designing for a variety of screen sizes will ensure that visitors of any age will be comfortable converting from your emails.
## Total Opens by Device Type and Segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Desktop</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>50.21%</td>
<td>39.41%</td>
<td>10.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association/Non-Profit</td>
<td>64.47%</td>
<td>29.06%</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>47.75%</td>
<td>41.05%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution/Degree Programs</td>
<td>55.04%</td>
<td>35.59%</td>
<td>9.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>58.14%</td>
<td>33.44%</td>
<td>8.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>39.08%</td>
<td>48.19%</td>
<td>12.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48.99%</td>
<td>40.14%</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Total Click-Throughs by Device Type and Segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Desktop</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>90.85%</td>
<td>7.44%</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association/Non-Profit</td>
<td>88.12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>90.80%</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution/Degree Programs</td>
<td>87.22%</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
<td>2.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>93.58%</td>
<td>5.15%</td>
<td>1.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>85.81%</td>
<td>11.53%</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
<td>9.96%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total Click-Throughs and Open Rates by Day of Week

Analysis

For our clients, the optimal days to send email continue to be during the business week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for both the K-12 and Higher Ed markets. Open rates for the K-12 market were highest for emails delivered on Thursdays, while open rates for the Higher Ed market were highest on Wednesdays. While engagement rates were slightly lower on weekends, there is still an opportunity to test sending on Saturdays and Sundays as some clients are seeing results on these days.

Target Hump Days

Because many holidays fall on Mondays such as Labor Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, or Easter Monday, or the first day back from a break, marketers may be avoiding sending on Mondays. Educators are suspected of spending less time reading work-related email on Fridays, too.
Total Click-Throughs and Open Rates by Time of Day

Analysis

The morning hours are the most popular email deployment time for the majority of campaigns and messages. The highest open rates occurred for emails delivered at 9:00 am EST for the K-12 market and 11:00 am EST for the Higher Ed market. The highest click-through rates occurred for emails delivered at 10:00 am EST for both the K-12 and Higher Ed markets.
Total Click-Through and Open Rates by Time of Day and Device Type

Analysis

With the continued proliferation of mobile devices, there is a marked shift of engagement from predominately desktop/laptop to mobile devices during the day, starting at 4:00 pm EST. Educators make use of desktop and laptop devices for checking email during the workday, then transition back to mobile devices in the off hours.
**Stay Ahead of These Trends**

What stood out to us from this report? How powerfully these emerging trends are impacting email campaigns to educators:

### Mobile Gains on Desktop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Opens</th>
<th>Total Clicks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>51.40%</td>
<td>88.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>47.27%</td>
<td>90.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>36.93%</td>
<td>8.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>42.31%</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>11.67%</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>10.42%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For educators, desktop/laptop continues to only slightly dominate as the preferred platform to view email. Only two segments (Consumer Goods & Services and Technology) had a higher percentage of mobile and tablet devices compared with desktop.

This further reinforces the importance of taking multiple screen sizes and devices into account when designing an email communication. We correlate the lower engagement rates on mobile devices to the lack of creative that has been designed and tested for optimum performance on a variety of mobile screens.

### Campaign Size Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Campaign Size</strong></td>
<td>25,921</td>
<td>23,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Open Rate</strong></td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Larger campaign sizes typically have lower overall engagement rates of email campaigns. 2017’s data reveals that the creation of smaller campaigns is increasing deliverability and open rates across the board. Every industry that reduced the size of their email campaigns saw a corresponding increase in engagement.

More of MDR’s clients who utilize our email deployment service are taking advantage of the built-in features that make it more cost-effective to run smaller campaigns. Subscription customers are generally more likely to send smaller, targeted campaigns because they are exempt from set-up and other fees that pay-as-you-go customers are charged. “Test and Roll” and split-test capabilities allow marketers to send smaller campaigns as tests and then “roll out” a standard campaign with an optimized message. This is a positive trend, because campaigns that are more targeted help increase opens and click-throughs, which translate to leads, conversions, sales, and other engagements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Open Rate</strong></td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Click-Through Rate</strong></td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While MDR’s average total open rate has increased considerably in 2017 compared with 2016, total click-through rates across all client deployments saw little improvement January 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 for both the K-12 and Higher Ed market. This leads to the logical conclusion of the importance of continually testing and improving email design.
**Personalization Works**

Personalizing both the “To” and “From” lines has grown in popularity and practice as performance measures continue to show its effectiveness. The following analysis of subject line personalization reflects the improvement in performance between an initial, non-personalized send, and the personalized re-send. Personalization, indeed double personalization in the To and From fields, is an emerging best practice that will undoubtedly be used more frequently as email sponsors become aware of its effectiveness and technology makes it easier to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Initial Send</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> ABC Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Earn Formal PD Credit with Micro-Credentials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Re-Send (Post-MDR Consultation)</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Jane Doe, Director of ABC Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> TN K-12 Teachers: Important information regarding your PD credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open Rate</th>
<th>Click Rate</th>
<th>Unsubscribe Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Send</strong></td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Re-Send</strong></td>
<td>10.41%</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Increase</strong></td>
<td>+244%</td>
<td>+310%</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION: EMAIL

From the nearly 400 million emails studied for this report, here are key takeaways you can apply to your email marketing strategies to educators:

Email Marketing Lessons Learned

Top performing email campaigns share common traits:

- **100%** average campaign size of less than 700 emails
- **35%** subject line begins with unique traits:
  - **Subject line with strong CTA such as:** Download, Hurry, Last Chance, Today Only, Offer Ends
  - **20%** included an offer that was free or heavily discounted
  - **20%** subject line begins with Reminder

Best Practices Deliver Best Results

These are the overall best practices that most contributed to our clients’ recent improvements in email campaign performance:

- **Segment Down to a Unique Audience**
  - Make campaign goals specific, realistic, and measurable
  - Segment to fewer than 50,000 emails for best results
  - Tell them how YOUR product or service solves THEIR specific problem

- **Personalize to Stand Out in the Inbox**
  - Personalize To and From fields to get opens
  - Insert dynamic content to show message relevance (for example, use the recipient’s first name, company name, job title, or location)

- **Make Every Word Count**
  - Ensure 90% of message is conveyed within subject line, preheader, and headline
  - Put your value statement up front
  - Talk THEIR benefit in CTA text
  - Sell the click-through, not the product

- **Design for the Eye of the Recipient**
  - Coordinate emails with landing pages
  - Use images sparingly and consider readability if images blocked
  - Move CTAs “above the fold”
  - Use contrasting colors
  - Consider the user experience of your email on all screen sizes
  - Seed your email list to see the recipients’ POV
Be a Welcome Sender

- Know your Sender Score
- Watch reply-to emails for deployment problems
- Manage hard and soft bounce-backs
- Warm up recipient IP addresses

Integrate Campaigns for Better Results

- Use multiple channels for more impact
- Be where your audience is
- Keep brand, message, and design consistent
- Make each channel touch lead to the next
- Select the right channels for the job

Mobile Email Best Practices

These best practices will help get your email campaigns in good shape for mobile users.

Simplify as Much as Possible

- Make links and buttons large enough so that they are easy for readers to “click” on at least 44 x 44px in dimension
- Remove full site navigation from email headers so the reader can focus on the core content of your message
- Deliver the value proposition quickly and include a clear call to action

Sizing and Placement

- Keep headers for mobile between 110-120px
- Design in a vertical manner with full width images. Single columns work well, but avoid complex tables
- Design for no more than 550px wide; 320-550px is a good width range for mobile
- Place the call to action above the fold
- Use larger fonts: 14px or larger is ideal for body text

Other Mobile Best Practices

- Choose contrasting colors to make your design “pop” and your message easier to read
- Add a short, highly relevant, value-centered headline at the very top of your email, so that even if readers have images turned off, they will still know what the email is about, why it is important to them, and how to take action

Test!

- Send test emails to co-workers who can see how the email looks on several types of devices, browsers, and email providers
- Make sure to test with images on and off to see how each displays
- Test what drives results. Shorter subject lines and more succinct copy may perform better for the mobile audience

Analyze and Adjust

- Use email reporting and web traffic analytics to get a handle on what devices your email recipients are using to open and click
- Watch trends in device use to help you further optimize your email marketing
- The best practices of email marketing still apply: targeting, relevancy, personalization, a strong call to action, and testing
DISPLAY ADVERTISING INSIGHTS

Educators spend a significant amount of time online for business and personal reasons. They spend time seeking materials to use in the classroom, and they are consumers like the rest of us, managing their busy lives by shopping, getting their news, and interacting in social spaces online. When Simmons National Consumer Survey asked participants which forms of Internet advertising influenced them to purchase a product or service in the last three months, 44% of educators said they had been encouraged to purchase a product or service as a result of online advertising. This demonstrates that web advertising is an effective ingredient in any campaign to capture educators’ attention and purchases.

Display advertising has come a long way from the days when advertisers competed for space on the limited number of sites that teachers were known to visit. Today’s display advertising can nearly match email in its targeting, especially when MDR helps marketers target educators by specific criteria like institution, job titles, or household demographics and delivers ads to educators wherever they go online. But all digital channels are subject to the ever-changing online landscape, so it’s important to keep an eye on what’s changing and why:

Web Advertising by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Click Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Click-Through rate trending upwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devices and Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Ad Impressions +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Clicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smartphones and Laptops/Desktops account for 88% of all ad impressions served and 66% of all clicks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Click-Through Rate Insights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest CTR SEGMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods &amp; Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ed → 0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 → 0.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest CTR by Campaign SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50,000 K-12 &amp; Higher Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most likely result of “ad blindness” in larger campaigns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest CTR by NUMBER of ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Spot: 7-9 ads per campaign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market

Delivery Rate Trend Year Over Year

Analysis

MDR’s display advertising engagement rates have been steadily trending upwards for both K-12 and Higher Ed. MDR expects the delivery rate to continue to climb as we make improvements to our delivery methods in addition to helping our clients improve their ad creative.

Average Display Advertising Engagement Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017*</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Ad Impressions</td>
<td>16.49MM</td>
<td>41.21M</td>
<td>39.40M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Clicks</td>
<td>34,105</td>
<td>69,122</td>
<td>72,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click-Through Rate</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Campaign Size</td>
<td>118,599</td>
<td>181,532</td>
<td>178,291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Date range 1/1/17-6/30/17.
**Digital Advertising Click-Through Rates and Impressions by Device Type**

**Analysis**

Smartphones account for 42% of impressions and 33% of click-throughs, demonstrating that while mobile devices are approaching parity with desktop/laptop devices, the total device landscape remains mixed. This further reinforces the need to consider multiple screen sizes and operating systems in use by your audience when designing ad creative, as well as the landing page the creative is driving visitors to.

**Impressions and Click-Throughs by Device**

- **Impressions by Device**
  - Laptops/Desktops: 42%
  - Smartphones: 31%
  - Tablets: 8%
  - Unknown: 4%

- **Clicks by Device**
  - Laptops/Desktops: 33%
  - Smartphones: 33%
  - Tablets: 3%
  - Unknown: 3%

---

**Digital Advertising Click-Through Rates by Segment**

**Analysis**

Click-through rates in the K-12 market were highest for the Publisher segment, while click-through rates in the Higher Ed market were highest for Consumer Goods & Services.

**Average Click-Through Rate by Segment**

- **Higher Ed**
- **K-12**

---

*Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market*
Digital Advertising Click-Through Rates by Campaign Size

Analysis

MDR found a direct correlation between the size of the digital advertising campaign and the click-through rates of ads within the campaign. We believe this is due to the phenomenon commonly referred to as “Ad Blindness.” This occurs when the audience marketed to has seen the ad creative so often that it no longer catches their attention.

This is further reinforced by the finding that the number of unique ad creatives used per advertising campaign directly correlates with improved click-through rates overall.

Average Click-Through Rate by Campaign Impression Size

Target More Ads to Fewer Eyes

Smaller campaign sizes and switching up the creative improves click-throughs and prevents “Ad Blindness.”

“The need for multiple ad creative is one of my key takeaways from the report.”

– Contributor, Sean McCloud

Average Click-Through Rate by Number of Ads Used Per Campaign
Percentage of Impressions Served to Specific Ad Sizes

Analysis
While pure ad size is a factor in click-through rate, there isn’t a strong enough correlation to say ad size alone is the contributor. It could be attributed to other factors such as the target audience selected, a strong call to action, or animation (“WOW” factor) which might all be driving click-through rates to high levels. Certainly, larger ad sizes give ad designers more latitude in seeking the “WOW.”

Average Click-Through Rate by Ad Size

Analysis
Although the 180 x 250 ad size received only 1% of all ad impressions served by MDR, it received a much higher than average click-through rate of 1.45%. We believe this is due to this ad size being underutilized with very little competition. This is further reinforced by the second least-used ad size 160 x 600 which has the second highest click-through rates. Less competition = higher CTR.

Go Where Competitors Aren’t
The 180 x 250 ad size, because it is underutilized, faces less competition and receives a higher CTR.
Top Trends to Watch

What stood out to us from this report? How powerfully these emerging trends are impacting web advertising campaigns to educators.

Remarketing Ads

With ad remarketing, you can target prospects who have viewed a particular product or certain web pages—providing a highly relevant and personalized user experience. Since as many as 96% of people who visit your website aren’t ready to buy, the method has become a powerful way to draw those prospects back into your conversion funnel. According to a study cited by CMO.com, the average click-through rate for remarked ads is 10 times greater than the average click-through rate for display ads.

A study on teachers as consumers we recently commissioned from Simmons Market Research found that, compared with the general public, more teachers have embraced online shopping:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Internet has changed the way I shop for products/services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Omni-Channel Marketing

Today, the increasing number of tools consumers have at their fingertips to learn about products and make purchase decisions has shifted the way people buy. Once, “shopping around” required physically driving from store to store. Now we have the Internet, smartphones, magazines, TV, and brick-and-mortar businesses as resources to learn about products.

That shift has birthed a form of marketing known as “omni-channel,” which assumes customers will interact with your business across channels, and at multiple points in their decision process, and so focuses on providing a seamless experience across all channels. If you’re a brick-and-mortar business with a website, you want the transition from your website to your storefront to be as easy as possible (to see a product on TV, research desktop, order it on mobile, and have it ready and waiting for you in the store, for example).

Web advertising has an important role to play in any omni-channel marketing campaign because so many consumers begin researching products online. This is especially true of teachers, as the Simmons study revealed:

- 76% of teachers say when they need information the first place they look is the Internet
- 69% say they are doing more shopping on the Internet than before
Mobile Ad Spend

Busy consumers are taking advantage of “everywhere connectivity” to do everything from managing their households, to keeping in touch with friends and family to shopping online. As digital natives, teachers lead the pack in relying on mobile devices for their multi-tasking lifestyle, using smartphones for more than just calls and photos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Smartphones</th>
<th>Tablets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit Websites</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messaging</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network/Blog</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch/Download/Stream Video</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to Music</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM/Chat</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Periodicals</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Games</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educators’ Use of Smartphones and Tablets

Those marketing to educators recognize that all this time spent on mobile devices represents an opportunity to reach teachers where they are spending more of their time, and so marketing budgets are following the shift of eyeballs from traditional channels to mobile.
FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION: DISPLAY ADS

From the nearly 100 million impressions from client campaigns studied for this report, here are key takeaways you can apply to your web advertising strategies to educators:

Web Advertising Lessons Learned

Top performing web ad campaigns share common traits:

- Campaign impression sizes at 50,000 impressions or fewer
- More than one ad creative per campaign to avoid “ad blindness”
- Optimized for multiple devices and ad sizes
- Take advantage of underutilized ad sizes to stand out

Best Practices Deliver Best Results

These are the best practices, that most contribute to client improvement, in web ad campaign performance:

- **Align Ads with Marketing Goals and Customer Value**
  - Campaigns with a defined goal and a clear consumer-facing message gain higher click-through and conversion rates
  - Keep ads focused on what your audience finds valuable
  - Avoid “drinking from the company water fountain” on what you find valuable or interesting about the offer

- **Know Your Target Audience**
  - Serve ads to your desired targeted audience only
  - Remember who you’re talking to and why you are reaching out
  - Use the words and design that will grab the attention of your specific audience

- **Support Your Click-Through URL**
  - Create a clear and engaging landing page experience for your target audience
  - Incorporate some of the banner’s graphical elements to tie together the user experience and track conversions

- **Keep It Simple**
  - Include a single, strong message and clear image or design that resonates with your brand and target audience
  - Avoid speedy color shifting and over-messaging your goal
  - Don’t distract your audience from the action you desire


**Show Them the $**

- Use actual dollar amounts, not percentages, when describing discounts ($5 off is more powerful than 20% off)
- Blue Hornet found 42% of respondents said that money off was the most attractive offer, with percentage discount coming in a distant second

**Make Your Call to Action Clear**

- Create a specific call to action for your target audience
- Use verbs statements such as “buy now,” or “get your bonus gift”
- Support the call to action by placing it on a button or set a clear designated click area
- For animated banners, keep your call to action locked on every frame

**Use of Animation**

- Avoid filling your banner ad with excessive animation: jumping, flashing, blurring, text going in and out, etc.
- Animation length should be a maximum of 15 seconds including multiple loops
- Always provide a backup GIF that is consistent with the end frame of your banner ad

**Manage Your File Size**

- Build against a lowest common denominator file size (40KB)

**Consider Your Banner Ad Page Position**

- Place banner ads above the fold, but keep a below-the-fold option open as a potential mid-campaign optimization to promote maximum exposure and results

**Optimize, Optimize, Optimize!**

- Implement a conversion tracking pixel on your landing page before you launch your campaign
- Consider using a targeted landing page for every promotion
- Utilize a web analytic tool, such as Google Analytics, to append a unique and trackable tag to the designated click-through URL for each of your banners
- Test various banner ad creative. Initially weight and serve each banner creative equally (within each format specification). As clicks and conversions start to come in, optimize and begin to serve a greater percentage of the better-performing creative
SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

A recommendation we make to all clients is to deploy multi-channel campaigns to maximize exposure to and engagement with educators. In particular, our experience shows that, as digital natives, teachers use social media frequently for both personal and professional uses, and social media should be a part of any multi-channel marketing strategy to educators.

We recommend cross-promotion vs. cross-posting, i.e., using the same post in all channels. Use channels strategically and translate messaging into the “local” language for each channel’s audience. For example:

- **Facebook** posts should make readers laugh, smile, or think to create social bonds with educators
- Know that teachers use **Pinterest** as a visual search engine to find, save, and share lessons, crafts, products, activities, and PD materials
- Focus timely and topical posts on **Twitter** where educators get their news and connect with education thinkers, leaders, and administrators
- Since teachers use **Instagram** to share what is actually happening in their classrooms vs. future ideas, keep posts reality based vs. aspirational

The statistics that follow are sourced from our WeAreTeachers social media channels and the findings from our 2017 Teachers as Consumers Report. This report was based on a research study commissioned from Simmons Market Research on consumers’ backgrounds, interests, buying patterns, and media uses.
The WeAreTeachers Audience

WeAreTeachers is active across many social channels. The four below have proven to be the most effective for engaging educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Followers</th>
<th>Frequency (visit at least weekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>1.9MM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>151,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>420,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>202,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paid Ads vs. Organic Posts: The Social Marketing Debate

While this is an ongoing conversation within the industry, for educators we come down on the side of both when used for appropriate strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organic Social Marketing</th>
<th>Paid Social Ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Relationship Nurturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience</td>
<td>Current followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Free; social marketing team time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Traffic</td>
<td>Sustained traffic over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facebook Advertising with WeAreTeachers

MDR partners with clients to run paid Facebook ads under both the client’s Facebook channel and our WeAreTeachers Facebook channel. There are benefits to both—and the following statistics show, on average, the results of these Facebook ad campaigns. These results are pulled from MDR delivered ads from Jan 1-Dec 31, 2017.

Facebook ads are a great way to nurture your audience through the marketing funnel. An average ad with 63K impressions will garner 790 interested and engaged link clicks back to your website to learn more.

Average Results of a Facebook Ad
(on both client and WeAreTeachers channels)

WeAreTeachers vs. Client Channel Ads

Ads run under the WeAreTeachers name have the benefit of reaching an already teacher-trusted audience—they’re engaged, and they know what they can expect from us. That’s why we take a teacher-voice approach when producing these ads; always talking with the educator, not at them. The success can be seen in the 7.24% average engagement rate per Facebook ad.

Ads run under a client channel, that are served to our audiences, have the benefit of giving the audience exactly what they’d expect. They are written in the voice of the client and drive directly to the client’s website—a seamless transition for an educator who has been identified in your target audience and is looking for relevant content. Average click-through rates are strong, and nearly compare to those on the WeAreTeachers channel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>client Channel Ads</th>
<th>vs</th>
<th>WeAreTeachers Channel Ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average CTR</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Engagement</td>
<td>2.21K</td>
<td>7.24K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average of:

- Impressions 63.42K
- Reach 38.70K
- Engagement 3.91K
- Link Clicks 790
- CTR 1.2%
Social Ads by the Numbers: Key Findings and Recommended Strategies

By the Month

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

Reach P Impressions

Engagement Rate

Average of Link Click-Through Rate
By Device Type

Analysis

We see much of our audience on mobile devices and tablets because they are portable. Think about when you use your phone—you’re browsing it while you’re in line at the grocery store or waiting in a doctor’s office. It’s easy and quick to open the Facebook app on your phone, which is why we see higher CTR and engagement rates than on a desktop computer. Tablets are also portable and offer a middle ground between mobile and desktop devices; they’re more portable and easier to access than a desktop or laptop, and offer a larger screen than a mobile device. Therefore, CTRs and engagement rates on tablets are relatively higher than desktop and mobile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Click-Through Rate</th>
<th>Average Engagement Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desktop</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
<td>3.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reach Educators All Year Long

Educators are most actively engaged during the month of July. They are settling into summer vacation and will soon be thinking about back-to-school—giving them the time to browse, like, comment and pin ideas on social that they previously didn’t have time for. When planning content, consider ideas that will grab a teacher’s attention, and that they will want to click through to. This is the month where they have more time to concentrate on what they are viewing—make it catchy, fun, and impactful. Think: Printables, free lessons, decorating ideas.

Alternatively, we see the highest number of impressions during the months of September and October. Back-to-school is in full swing, and teachers are gearing up for the holidays. During this time, they don’t have as much time to interact with content, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t browsing it. Consider creating content that they might save to reference later. Don’t get overly complicated; make things easy to understand.

Behind the Numbers

What are “Impressions”?  
The number of times your content is displayed.

What is “Reach”?  
The number of unique people who see your content.

What is “Engagement Rate”?  
The number of interactions people have with your content, divided by the number of overall impressions. Interactions include likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc.

What is “Average CTR”?  
The average click-through rate is calculated based on the number of clicks to a website, divided by the number of impressions.
The Content that Moves Teachers

Through our WeAreTeachers channels, we’ve learned there are specific themes that make social content successful with educator audiences:

- **Show them that you know them**—content should demonstrate a command of the issues they face in education or in their corner of the district or curriculum.
- **Give them something they can use**—classroom tools that are practical, relevant, visually appealing, and tailored to their needs.
- **Touch their hearts and help them help their kids**—emotionally engaging content and information, tools, and resources that help them advocate for children.
- **Timely or evergreen**—content that is current and topical to what they are teaching, or that is evergreen and useful from one school year to the next.
- **Make them laugh**—sharing insider humor shows that you “get it” and want to give them a lift.

Top Trends to Watch

What stood out to us from this report? How powerfully video and sharing are emerging as social marketing methods to engage educators:

**Video Content**

According to Cisco, 75% of the world’s mobile data traffic will be video by 2020. Video consumption is particularly evident on Facebook, where daily watch time for Facebook Live broadcasts has quadrupled in the last year. Time spent watching video on Instagram has increased by 80% in the same period. Additionally, Instagram reports that the number of video posts per day on the platform continues to increase four times, year-over-year.

Facebook also reports that people are drawn to mobile video because, compared to traditional TV, it’s 2.9% more likely to help them feel connected to friends and family and 1.9X more likely to give them something to talk about. In other words, it makes them feel like they are part of a community. Educators are no exception.

Again, MDR runs video ads on Facebook under client channels and under our WeAreTeachers channel. You’ll see below that WeAreTeachers’ video ads have a higher engagement rate and educators stick around to watch more of the video. On the contrary, videos that are displayed under a client brand receive better click-through rates because educators know what they are getting; it is clearly identified that a client is serving this content on behalf of themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Channel Video</th>
<th>WeAreTeachers Channel Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Icon" /> 2.13% Average CTR</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Icon" /> 28.60% Average CTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Icon" /> 16.62% Average Engagement</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Icon" /> 6.21% Watched at least half of video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Icon" /> 2.70% Watched at least half of video</td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Icon" /> 0.91% Average CTR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

[Image: Digital Marketing Trends in the Education Market]

Copyright 2018 MDR
Social Sharing

“Business buyers don’t buy your product; they buy into your approach to solving their problems.” says B2B Marketing Professional Laura Ramos.

Filling the pipeline with content across social channels is important to building value with your audience, but also takes considerable time and effort. We are seeing more brands including shared content from appropriate sources as part of their social media strategy. But there is a caveat: the content shared must be relevant, to the audience and the brand.

Brands are using likes, shares, and retweets to establish an area of expertise and build a reputation as a thought leader. Rather than bombarding followers with posts across a broad range of topics and hoping something clicks, they are carefully cultivating sources and signal boosting posts with something of value to offer followers.

Our recommendations for applying this trend with educators:

- **Relevance is vital**: sharing content that doesn’t bring value to your followers can actually dilute your brand in the eyes of educators.
- **Personalize the repost**: use the opportunity to express your point of view and call out the value in the post.
- **Use lists and alerts**: create lists of credible content sources in Twitter, or follow relevant hashtags to find tweets to retweet to your followers; create a Google alert with specific keywords to bring topical social posts to your attention.

### Lessons Learned from WeAreTeachers

#### Facebook
- **Video** posts continue to have the most engagement and the top editorial and partner posts on WeAreTeachers are consistently videos
- Shares from **photo** posts are **200% higher** than links alone
- **Quizzes**, holiday-themed content, and listicle articles are popular with educators

#### Pinterest
- **1.3 million educator pins** are shared on Pinterest each day. To stand out, be sure to treat Pinterest as a search engine and consider what teachers are looking for and optimize each board and pin for SEO

#### Twitter
- **Photo** tweets average a **35% boost** in retweets
- **Video** tweets get a **28% boost**
- **Quote** tweets get a **19% boost**
- Adding **numbers** gets a **17% boost**
- **Hashtags** get a **16% boost**

#### Instagram
- **Video** posts see **71% higher** average engagement
CONCLUSION

Because MDR is 100% committed to education, we are continually watching, measuring, and analyzing educators from every angle—economic, demographic, firmographic, technological, and cultural. Reports like this one are the product of our relentless curiosity about all things education and our commitment to helping brands, organizations, and educators build productive relationships. We hope you find it useful.

There’s More!

If you found this report valuable and want more insights into educators and the education market, visit MDREducation.com, check out our School of Thought blog, join a webinar, or browse our other reports.
APPENDIX

Report Definitions

Prospecting Email: A prospecting email is an unsolicited email that is sent to a recipient without prior contact or a request for information previously. Prospecting email can be compared with traditional advertising that the viewer did not consent to receive before viewing. Prospect emails are NOT spam emails because they follow specific guidelines and regulations. All MDR prospecting email is CAN-SPAM compliant.

Opt-In List (Subscription List): Opt-in email advertising or permission marketing is a method of advertising by email wherein the recipient of the advertisement has consented or opted-in to receive emails from a specific sender.

Total Open Rate: All emails opened, including those that are forwarded, or messages that are opened on one device, then opened again on another device by the same person. Calculated by total number of times an email was opened/total emails delivered.

Total Click-Through Rate: All click-throughs, including links that are clicked on multiple times by the same person. Calculated by total number of clicks/total number of emails delivered.

Unique Open Rate: Unique number of times an email was opened for each campaign. If an email is opened more than once by the same person, it is still counted only once. Calculated by unique number of opens/total number of emails delivered. These rates DO NOT include duplicate opens and deliveries as they occur.

Unique Click-Through Rate: Unique number of times an email was clicked for each campaign. If a link is clicked more than once by the same person, it is still counted only once. Calculated by unique number of clicks/total number of emails delivered. These rates DO NOT include duplicate clicks and deliveries as they occur.

Delivery Rate: Calculated by dividing the number of emails sent minus bounces by the number of emails sent. Delivery rate is important in determining your ability to successfully reach email recipients. This metric is valuable in measuring the quality of your email list management, as well as your ability to avoid spam filtering.

Industry Segment Breakdown Key

1. Publishers
   a. Publisher – College
   b. Publisher – Integrated
   c. Publisher – Other
   d. Publisher – Supplemental
   e. Publisher – Textbook K-12
2. Consumer Goods & Services
   a. Travel/Enrichment
   b. Consumer Products
   c. Content/Curriculum
   d. School Supply & Equipment
   e. Award/Emblem/Fundraising
   f. Assessment/Testing
3. Association/Nonprofit
4. Education Institution/Degree Programs
   a. Education Institution/Government
   b. Professional Development
5. Technology
   a. Technology/Infrastructure/Hardware
   b. App Developer/Platform/System
6. Other
   a. Other
   b. Agency/Broker/Wholesaler
CONTRIBUTORS

David Clemen
Director of Digital Marketing
MDR

With over 17 years of experience in business development, operations, advertising, and marketing, David Clemen possesses a deep repertoire of revenue-building skills and strategies. Proficient in the full gamut of paid advertising platforms and a sought-after expert in e-commerce, social media, and email marketing, David has developed high-margin marketing programs and increased market penetration and ROI for clients across a diverse spectrum of industries.

ClemenD@DNB.com
www.linkedin.com/in/david-clemen

Sean McCloud
Digital Advertising Product Manager
MDR

As part of the Integrated Marketing Services team, Sean is involved in MDR’s customer branded marketing efforts from emails to web ads. With a background in web development, he brings a comprehensive understanding of marketing in the digital space. Sean has more recently been focused on developing MDR’s digital audience offerings, which empower MDR’s customer branded and in-house marketing through the direct connect product suite.

McCloudS@DNB.com
www.linkedin.com/in/SeanMMcCloud

Danielle Barr
Director of Social Strategy
WeAreTeachers

Danielle has been a social strategist for nearly 10 years, working with a number of brands and publishers. She currently oversees the social strategy of the 11 WeAreTeachers and School Leaders Now channels, with a 2.3MM+ following. Additionally, Danielle works closely with clients to develop multi-channel content plans and robust social channels. She is heavily involved in video conception and production, and always looking to brainstorm on new and innovative ways to reach audiences digitally.

BarrD@DNB.com
www.linkedin.com/in/daniellenicolebarr
ABOUT MDR

MDR is a full-service school and community engagement partner. A division of Dun & Bradstreet, MDR is a different kind of integrated marketing services agency that combines rich data with unique digital, creative, and branding capabilities. We’ve been connecting brands through data and marketing services to educators, youth, and parents for nearly 50 years. Reach targeted audiences through our database and digital communities SchoolData, WeAreTeachers, WeAreParents, and School Leaders Now.