**Overall Results**

- **74%** of top retailers qualified as “Best of Class,” scoring 80% or higher and being CAN-SPAM/CASL compliant, up from 2017.
- **10 Retailers** had perfect scores (vs. 9 retailers in 2017 and 12 in 2016).

**Signup Practices**

- **31%** pop up a screen to solicit subscriptions and **25%** make a promotional offer for signups, both down from 2017.
- **12%** require re-entry of the email address and **15%** require account creation, up from 2017.
- **4%** used CAPTCHA to reduce the risk of bot signups and “list bombing”.

**Email Authentication and Security**

- Adoption of email authentication to help prevent business email compromise attacks, including spoofed and malicious email, improved in all areas.
- **SPF**: 100%
- **DKIM**: 100%
- **DMARC**: 71%
- **DMARC Enforcement**: 35%
- Opportunistic TLS adoption, which encrypts messages in transit between mail servers, rose from 90% to 96%.
- Thereby helping to prevent eavesdropping, rose from 90% to 96%.

**Mailing Practices**

- **74.5%** sent both a confirmation and a newsletter or promotional message.
- **40%** did not respond.
- **3.5%** sent only a confirmation with no follow up.
- **18.0%** sent only newsletters or promotional messages.
- The mailing cadence varied from 3 per day to one per month.
- 51% of retailers automatically stopped sending after no engagement (ranging from 1 day to 180 days, averaging 73 days), a significant multiple of the 19% seen in 2017.

Clear and conspicuous unsubscribe links were observed in 84% of retailer emails, a significant improvement after a steady decline to 76% in 2017.

Small text sizes for the unsubscribe link were used by one-third of retailers, but 10% increased text size to exceed minimum guidelines.

Readability of unsubscribe links improved slightly, though 29% still had unsubscribe text with contrast ratios below minimum W3C guidelines. And 64% were below W3C enhanced guidelines.

5.8 DAYS AVG. stopped sending messages immediately after the unsubscribe request was submitted (versus waiting the permitted 10 days), an improvement from 88% in 2017 and 86% in 2016.

Total violations of CAN-SPAM / CASL were 3.2% (6 retailers), a reduction by nearly half compared to 5.7% (11 retailers) last year.

Three mailed more than 10 days past the unsubscribe request, a drop from 8 in 2017 and 11 in 2016.

Three did not list a physical address in their email as required by CAN-SPAM and laws in other countries (consistent with 2017).

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https://otalliance.org/2018-email-marketing-unsubscribe-audit