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THE AUDIENCE GROWTH SURVEY

REPORT
#22



Dear reader,

Almost five years ago, ExactTarget published the *2009 Email List Growth Study*, an in-depth examination of marketers' top subscriber growth tactics. Since then, direct digital marketing has expanded far beyond email to include previously untapped channels like mobile and social media. The time has come to renew our research and update our findings about the strategies and tactics of successful audience development.

But why call it audience development instead of "list growth," as you may have heard in the past? Because your company needs audiences comprised of real people to survive. People are the building blocks of great audiences, and thanks to email, Facebook, Twitter, SMS, and mobile apps, you can have these push-button audiences at your fingertips. Unlike a "list," which is nothing more than a static collection of information, an energized audience can have the powerful vitality of a screaming crowd. This can be hard to remember when you're looking at names in a spreadsheet or avatars on a social media dashboard, but it's a critical distinction.

A broad, responsive audience allows you to reach customers more inexpensively than advertising, drive sales in a more on-demand fashion, and treat your customers as individuals instead of an anonymous public. A non-responsive audience can cast your brand's reputation into no-man's land, while a thriving audience can become your most valuable business asset.

As you read the findings in *SUBSCRIBERS, FANS, & FOLLOWERS #22: The Audience Growth Survey*, I hope you find data and insights that help you build, engage, and activate significant and invested multi-channel audiences. For even more insights on the emergence of proprietary audience development as a core marketing responsibility, be sure to check out my new book [AUDIENCE: Marketing in the Age of Subscribers, Fans, & Followers](#).

Whether your seat is in the C-suite or on the front lines of marketing, we thank you for being a part of our audience—and welcome your feedback.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Rohrs".

Jeffrey K. Rohrs

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Section I: Setting the Stage for Audience Growth	6
1. What is Effectiveness?	
2. Measures of Effectiveness	
Section II: Audience Growth Tactics	9
1. The Bedrock Audience: Growing Email Subscribers	
a. The Objectives	
b. All Tactics Considered	
c. Noteworthy Subscriber Growth Tactics	
2. The Social Media Audience: Attracting Fans and Followers	
a. The Objectives	
b. All Tactics Considered: Facebook	
c. Noteworthy Fan Growth Tactics	
d. All Tactics Considered: Twitter	
e. Noteworthy Follower Growth Tactics	
3. The Emerging Audience: Winning the Mobile Customer	
a. The Objectives	
b. All Tactics Considered: SMS	
c. Noteworthy SMS Subscriber Growth Tactics	
d. All Tactics Considered: Mobile App	
e. Noteworthy App User Growth Tactics	
Section III: Recommendations and Insights	26
1. The Blurring Lines between B2B and B2C	
2. Email Recommendations	
3. Social Media Recommendations	
4. Mobile Recommendations	
Conclusion	31

*“The audience is the most revered member of the theater.
Without an audience there is no theater.”*

- Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theater*

Introduction

Every performer has experienced the power of the audience’s energy and how that energy can change a performance—for better or for worse. The audience’s emotional responses, their palpable anticipation for what’s coming next and, of course, their ticket purchases fuel the performer and shape the performance.

Unless you’re a marketer who’s also an NFL quarterback, a presidential candidate, or a theater star, you may never have the experience of performing for thousands of screaming fans—but you do have the chance to create those same enraptured audiences around your brand.

Some of the top questions ExactTarget receives about audience growth are: “How do I get more email subscribers?” “How do I acquire more Facebook fans and Twitter followers?” and “How do I get more users to download my mobile app?”

Many marketers have a proclivity to think of audience growth predominantly as a numerical exercise. But adding vast amounts

of new subscribers, fans, and followers in the short-term doesn’t necessarily build audience attention and involvement over the long-term. This highlights a fundamental truth: **proprietary audience development is now a core marketing responsibility.** This type of audience growth does more than add sheer numbers. It gives you a deeply interested, engaged audience on tap.

In this report, we share what marketers have told us are the most effective tactics for building and engaging today’s audiences—so you can reach people as individuals, no matter what the channel.

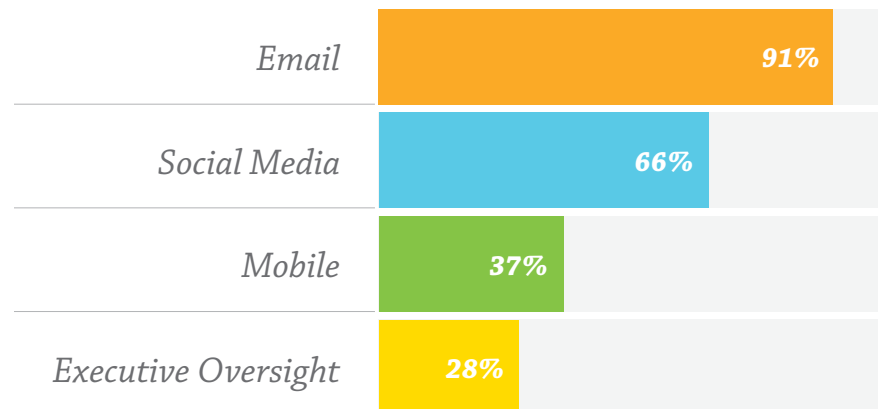
We’ll also analyze these tactics and provide top-line recommendations that you can incorporate into your own marketing program. Throughout these pages, you’ll find ways to build your brand’s audience and gather insights into the successes and failures of your fellow marketers—that is, if you decide to remain a member of this report’s audience for long enough.

Methodology

Continuing the award-winning *SUBSCRIBERS, FANS, & FOLLOWERS* research, this study revisits ExactTarget's 2009 *Email List Growth Study* for an updated benchmark of how organizations are building their direct marketing audiences.

The Audience Growth Survey looks at audience growth across email, Facebook, Twitter, SMS, and mobile app marketing. The study began with 17 interviews with marketers between April and July of 2013. Using insights from these interviews, a nationwide survey was developed and fielded from June 20 to August 5, surveying digital marketers predominantly from the United States. A total of 395 respondents completed the survey, with jurisdiction in the following marketing areas: email (91%), social media (66%), mobile (37%), and executive oversight (28%).

In which of the following marketing areas are you involved on a regular basis?



Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 395 Marketers



Section I:

Setting the Stage for Audience Growth

1 What is Effectiveness?

Effectiveness is a subjective term. In this survey, marketers rated email, Facebook, Twitter, SMS, and mobile app marketing tactics by their effectiveness, but how can that be quantified? While effectiveness is ultimately unique to each marketer, it's shaped by that marketer's business objectives and the key measures of overall ROI, the quality of new audience members, and the quantity of new audience members.

2 Measures of Effectiveness

When assessing their own priorities for growing new digital audiences across email, social media, and mobile channels, marketers tended to rate quality as more important than quantity when acquiring new audiences.

Marketers' preference for quality over quantity makes sense. Would you rather have an engaged, responsive audience of 100,000 real people, or an audience of 500,000 nonresponsive names on a list? Of course, you'd choose to be the marketer with the smaller and engaged audience, because an audience that is eager to receive your messages grows your bottom line.

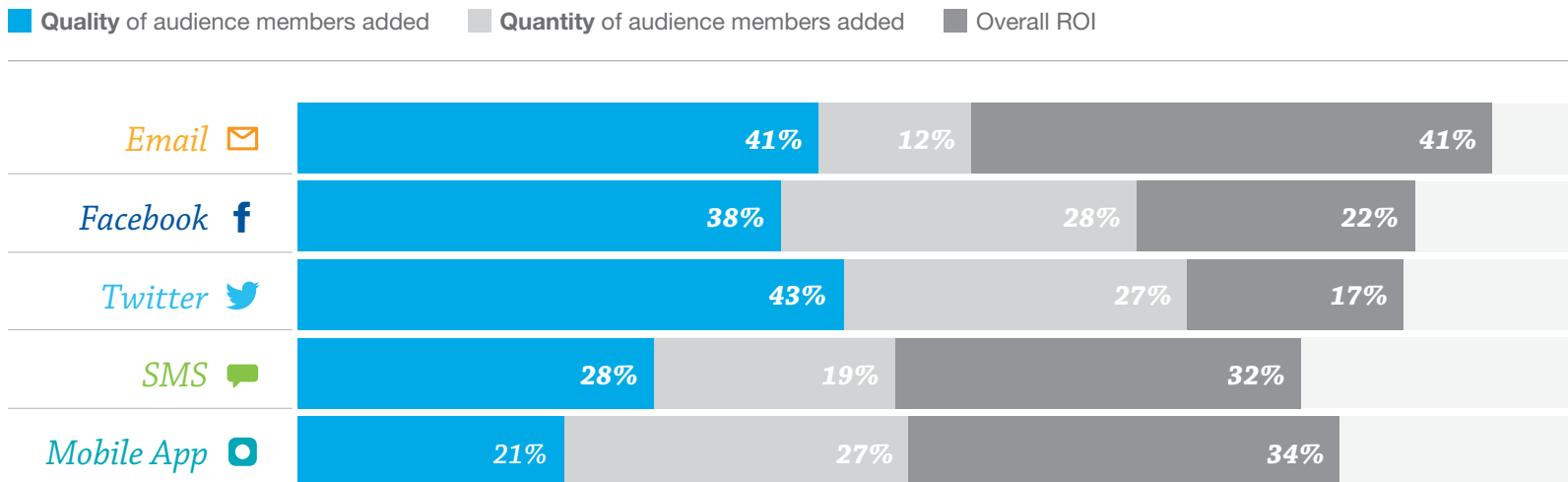
As shown in the chart below, email and mobile channels highlight the importance of ROI as another important measure of effectiveness.

For email marketers, overall ROI and quality of subscribers rated as equally important measurements.


In the two mobile channels studied—SMS and mobile apps—overall ROI, not quality, was the most important gauge of audience growth effectiveness. This preference for ROI could demonstrate that mobile marketers are relying on more measurable tactics (in other words, hard metrics) to determine the value of these newer channels.

All in all, an “effective” marketing tactic can mean something different to every marketer. As you consider every tactic in this report alongside your company's unique goals, recall that a tactic's effectiveness largely depends on what you're trying to achieve.

Most Important Measurement to Gauge Effectiveness



Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 329 Email Marketers; N = 181 Facebook Marketers; N = 176 Twitter Marketers; N = 68 SMS Marketers; N = 86 Mobile App Marketers.



“The goal is to be consistent for our audience across channels, because if we’re not, people catch on right away.”

- Larry Burns, StartSampling, Inc.

There’s No Silver Bullet

AUDIENCE PRO TIP

As we reviewed tactics for cross-channel audience growth, the elusive “silver bullet” never materialized. There is no guaranteed, one-size-fits-all tactic to grow the size, quality, and ROI of your audience. With every message sent and every metric pondered, marketers must ask themselves:

Which tactics fit my strategy and overall company objectives?

For example, email is the oldest channel detailed in this report, yet the ways marketers grow email subscribers are numerous and varied. While considering the tactics in this report, use them to spark ideas and test what works with your audience; tactics that others reported as ineffective may turn out to be the best in your arsenal.

You’ll find a wealth of tactics to choose from here, among which may be the perfect solution for building your audience—but you won’t find a tactic that’s certain to work for all marketers. Besides, you’re not looking for a silver bullet anyway. You’re looking for the right way to communicate with your unique audience.



Section II:

Audience Growth Tactics

1 The Bedrock Audience: Growing Email Subscribers

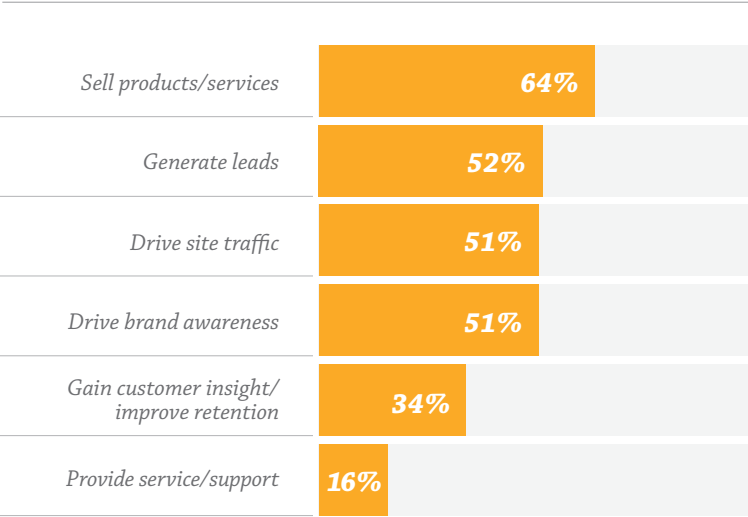
If you could start with only a single piece of data about a customer, you'd probably choose their email address because this channel is direct, easily measurable, and can be immediately activated. For this reason, consider email the bedrock audience, because it's so foundational to your overall marketing.

Growing Email Subscribers

The Objectives

91% of survey respondents reported being involved with email marketing on a regular basis. We asked email marketers to tell us about their primary objectives.

Top Email Marketing Objectives



Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 329 Email Marketers.

More marketers prioritize selling as a primary objective for email marketing than for social media and mobile channels. As selling is tied to overall ROI, this is consistent with the 41% of email marketers who identify overall ROI as the most important measurement to gauge effectiveness of their email program (see “Measures of Effectiveness” section).

In addition to using email to drive sales, email marketers understand the channel’s ability to prime subscribers for future purchases by generating leads and driving brand awareness. We see this demonstrated in the 41% of email marketers who also identify the quality of subscribers as their most important gauge of email subscriber growth effectiveness. Quality email subscribers help brands achieve their overall business objectives. So, as we seek to understand why certain email tactics are more effective than others, we filter our analysis through the lens of a tactic’s ability to secure high-quality subscribers who purchase, frequent the website, and respond to brand awareness campaigns.

All Tactics Considered

In search of the best subscriber growth tactics, we asked email marketers to identify which tactics they use to grow their email subscribers, and then rate how effective they consider the tactics they employ.

The “All Tactics Considered: Email” chart demonstrates the complexity of defining the “best” email subscriber growth tactics. If a tactic is popular among marketers, but its reported effectiveness is mediocre or low, can it be dubbed a “top” tactic? Alternately, if a tactic receives a high effectiveness rating but few marketers actually use it, can it be considered one of the best?

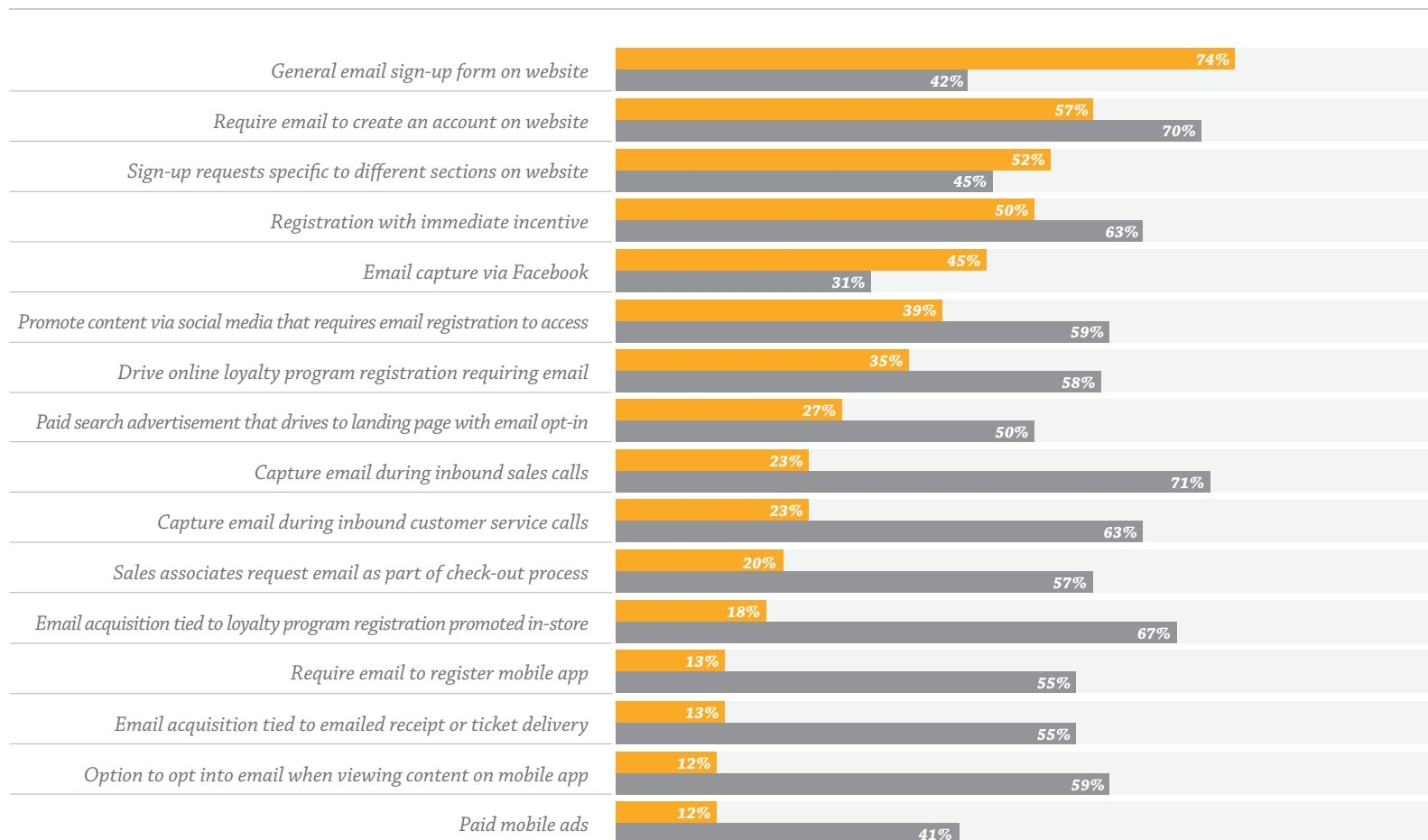
Each tactic serves a different purpose and involves varying levels of effort and maintenance. Some underutilized tactics may deserve higher adoption rates, while other underperforming tactics should be reconsidered in terms of the time and investment they draw from your team and budget.

All Tactics Considered: Email



■ % of Email Marketers Who Use

■ % of Email Marketers Who Reported it Effective



This chart shows use and effectiveness for many of the tactics surveyed. The full list of tactics is available at exacttarget.com/sff.

Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 329 Email Marketers.

Noteworthy Subscriber Growth Tactics

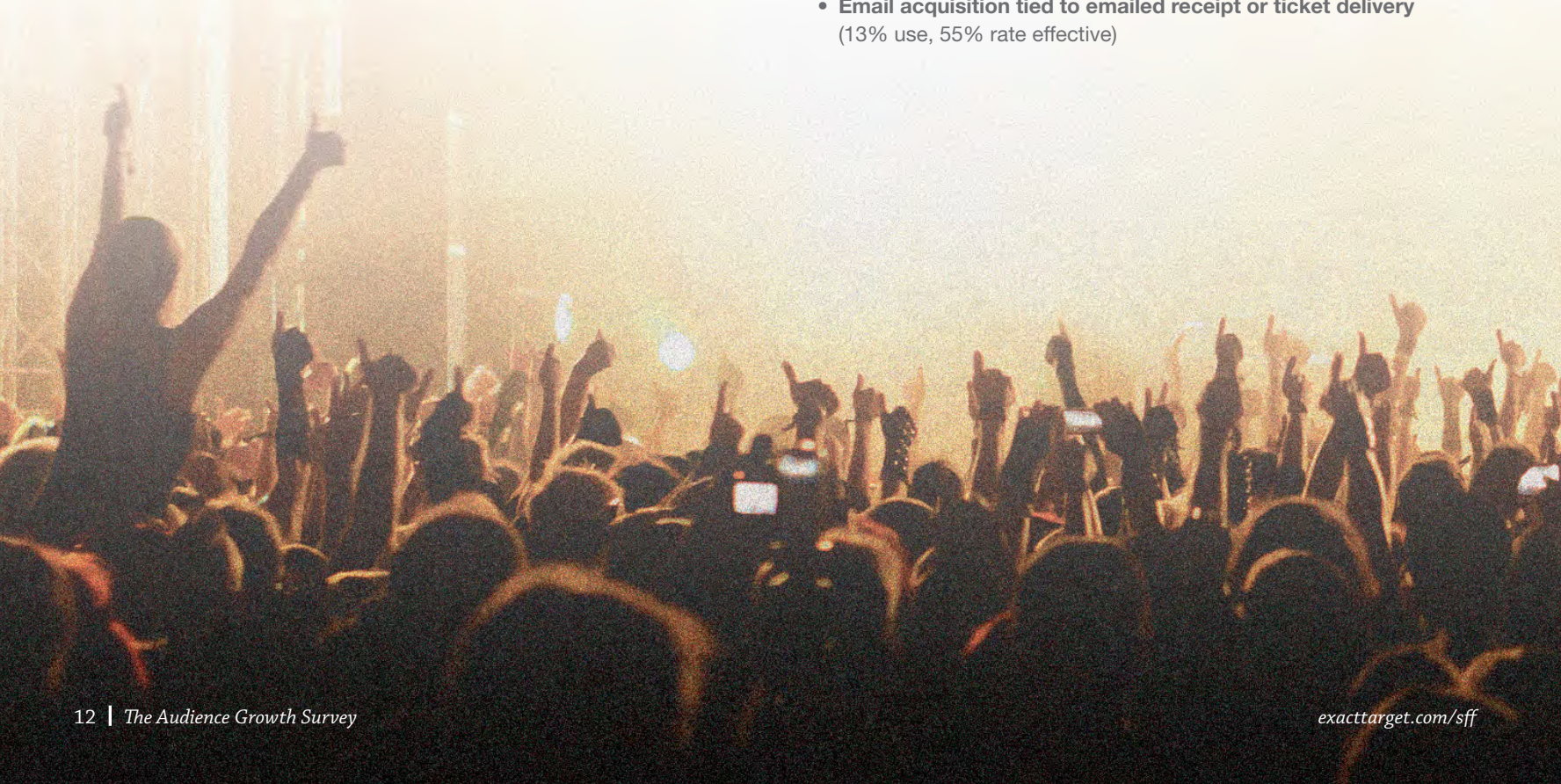
Some of the **most popular tactics for subscriber growth** don't have the highest effectiveness ratings, but rather may be widely used because they're so easy to implement. These tactics include:

- **General email sign-up form on website**
(74% use, 42% rate effective)
- **Sign-up requests specific to different sections on website**
(52% use, 45% rate effective)
- **Email capture via Facebook** (45% use, 31% rate effective)

These subscriber growth tactics may not drive vast amounts of high-quality leads, but they don't require much time or money. These tactics create an easy inlet for subscriber growth, but you shouldn't expect these tactics alone to fill your funnel.

Tactics such as inbound call center requests and in-store loyalty program acquisition are **high in reported effectiveness, but are used by a relatively small group of marketers** because they require a call center or brick-and-mortar location that not all brands have. In this offline category, these are the top performers that drive email subscriber growth:

- **Capture email during inbound sales calls** (23% use, 71% rate effective) **and service calls** (23% use, 63% rate effective)
- **Acquire email for loyalty program registration in-store**
(18% use, 67% rate effective)
- **Sales associate requests email during check-out process**
(20% use, 57% rate effective)
- **Email acquisition tied to emailed receipt or ticket delivery**
(13% use, 55% rate effective)



For marketers that do not have the option to test these offline tactics, consider implementing parallel tactics online. Just as a direct request from a sales associate is more likely to result in a customer's email address compared to a static in-store display, these online tactics have the same **direct-request effect and high effectiveness ratings**. For instance:

- **Require email to create an account on website**
(57% use, 70% rate effective)
- **Registration with incentive on website**
(50% use, 63% rate effective)
- **Drive online loyalty program registration requiring email address** (35% use, 58% rate effective)
- **Promote content via social media that requires email registration to access** (39% use, 59% rate effective)

Most importantly, these tactics reward new subscribers with something of immediate value (a new account on the website, an incentive, or loyalty program membership).

The greatest promise may lie in the tactics that are **not as commonly used, but are highly rated as effective**. For example, paid search advertisement that drives to a landing page with email opt-in (27% use, 50% rate effective) is in this category. Several mobile tactics could also fall under this category:

- **Option to opt into email when viewing mobile app content**
(12% use, 59% rate effective)
- **Require email to register mobile app**
(13% use, 55% rate effective)
- **Paid mobile ads** (12% use, 41% rate effective)

You can implement subscriber growth tactics online or offline, depending where your audience is and how they prefer to interact with your brand. Meet your audience where they are, and refine your strategies as each communication channel evolves.

See “Email Recommendations” later in this report for more insights on subscriber growth.



2 The Social Media Audience: Attracting Fans and Followers

70% of marketers surveyed reported being involved with social media marketing on a regular basis. When we polled these social media marketers on the importance of various social channels to their overall marketing strategy, Facebook was rated as slightly more important:

- 60% of social media marketers rank Facebook as important to their overall marketing.
- 52% of social media marketers rank Twitter as important to their overall marketing.

The Objectives

This chart shows how marketers define their top objectives for Facebook and Twitter marketing.

Both Facebook and Twitter are first and foremost brand awareness tools. Social media marketers don't prioritize selling and generating leads as much as driving brand awareness and site traffic.

38% of Facebook marketers and 43% of Twitter marketers say that adding quality fans and followers, respectively, are the most important measures of effectiveness for their audience growth efforts (see "Measures of Effectiveness" earlier in this report). These objectives help clarify what it means to add quality fans and followers who engage, visit the website, and may eventually become leads.

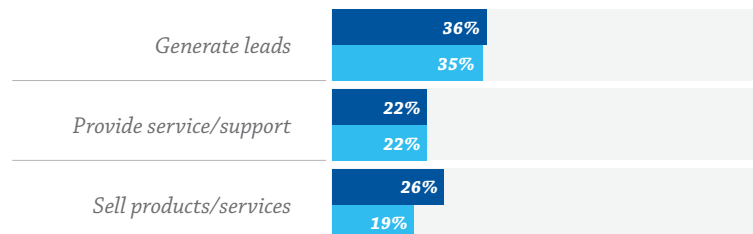
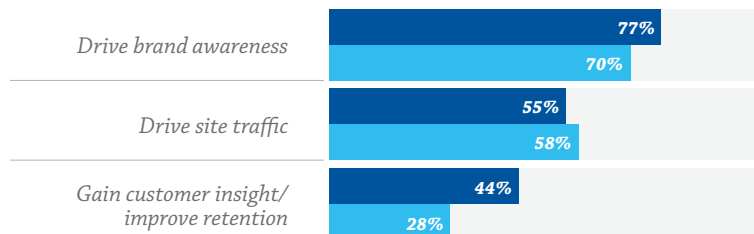
All Tactics Considered

We asked Facebook and Twitter marketers which marketing tactics they used in their audience growth efforts, as well as how effective they considered each tactic. Commonly used and commonly effective tactics aren't always one and the same.

The charts "All Tactics Considered: Facebook" and "All Tactics Considered: Twitter" display the total use and effectiveness ratings for social media tactics.

Top Social Media Marketing Objectives

■ Facebook ■ Twitter



Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 181 Facebook Marketers; N = 176 Twitter Marketers.



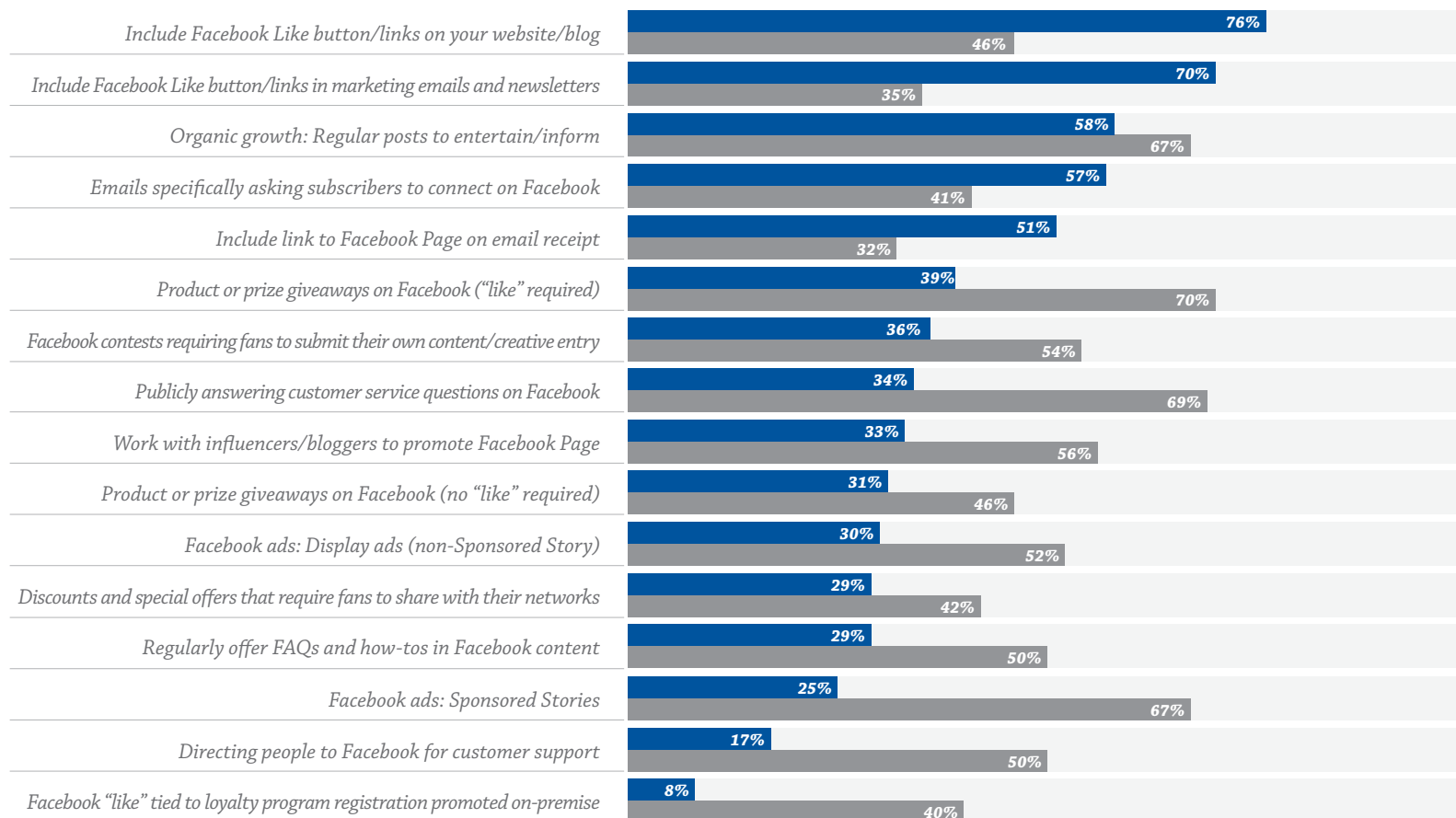
“With social, we’re starting to look at engagement metrics, such as shares, comments, Likes, tweets, and retweets. We want to see how our audience is amplifying our message and how it ripples across the Internet.”

- Chandra Magee, *The Economist*

All Tactics Considered: Facebook



■ % of Facebook Marketers Who Use ■ % of Facebook Marketers Who Reported it Effective



As this chart depicts, Facebook marketers reported the fan growth tactics they used and whether they found the tactics effective. Comparing both the use and effectiveness of a tactic provides a holistic perspective on the "best" methods of fan growth. Some tactics may be popular, but only result in moderate effectiveness, while others may be reported as largely effective but only among a small number of marketers. See the full list of tactics surveyed at exacttarget.com/sff.

Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 148 Facebook Marketers

Noteworthy Fan Growth Tactics

The two **most commonly used Facebook tactics** are not overwhelmingly effective, according to Facebook marketers. These tactics are including a Facebook Like button or link on a company's website/blog (93% use, 46% rate effective) or on emails/newsletters (70% use, 35% rate effective).

Seeing social media buttons on online brand properties is now the rule—not the exception. It's easy to place a "Like us on Facebook" button on your digital properties, and you may capture a few fans with minimal effort this way. Just remember to balance your expectations—this isn't likely to deliver as well as a more direct call-to-action that gives potential fans a reason to "like" your Page.

Community involvement tactics capitalize on Facebook's interactive nature (it's not just a place for brands to broadcast) and are found to be **highly effective, though fewer Facebook marketers employ these tactics**. The best-performing community involvement Facebook tactics are:

- **Organic growth** (58% use, 67% rate effective)
- **Working with influencers/bloggers** (33% use, 56% rate effective)
- **Facebook contests requiring fans to submit their own content/creative entry** (36% use, 54% rate effective)

We talk more about these elusive "organic growth" tactics in the Audience Pro Tip on page 20. And if you're not already experimenting with fan-driven Facebook content and influencer relations to drive new fans, you may consider trying these tactics.

Other **underutilized tactics with reports of high effectiveness** may provide great opportunities for growing your fan base:

- **Facebook ads: Sponsored Stories** (25% use, 67% rate effective)
- **Facebook ads: display ads (non-Sponsored Stories)** (30% use, 52% rate effective)
- **Answering customer service questions on Facebook**

(34% use, 69% rate effective)

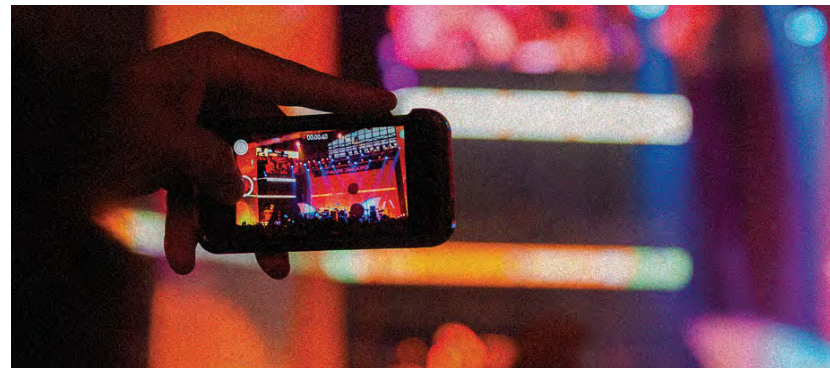
- **Directing people to Facebook for customer support** (17% use, 50% rate effective)
- **Regularly offering FAQs and how-tos in Facebook content** (29% use, 50% rate effective)

The "likes" have it. When marketers directly request a "like" as part of a giveaway or contest, they report **much greater effectiveness in fan growth**:

- **Product/prize giveaways with required "like"** (39% use, 70% rate effective)
- **Product/prize giveaways with no "like" required** (31% use, 46% rate effective)

When seeking new Facebook fans, contests and giveaways can boost audience energy and excitement about your page. Test new ways of implementing contests, whether it's fan-driven content or influencer hosting. Regardless of how you encourage new fans to join your page, remember that quality fans who share your posts and improve your page reach are much more valuable than a number of silent bystanders.

For more Facebook insights, see "Social Media Recommendations."

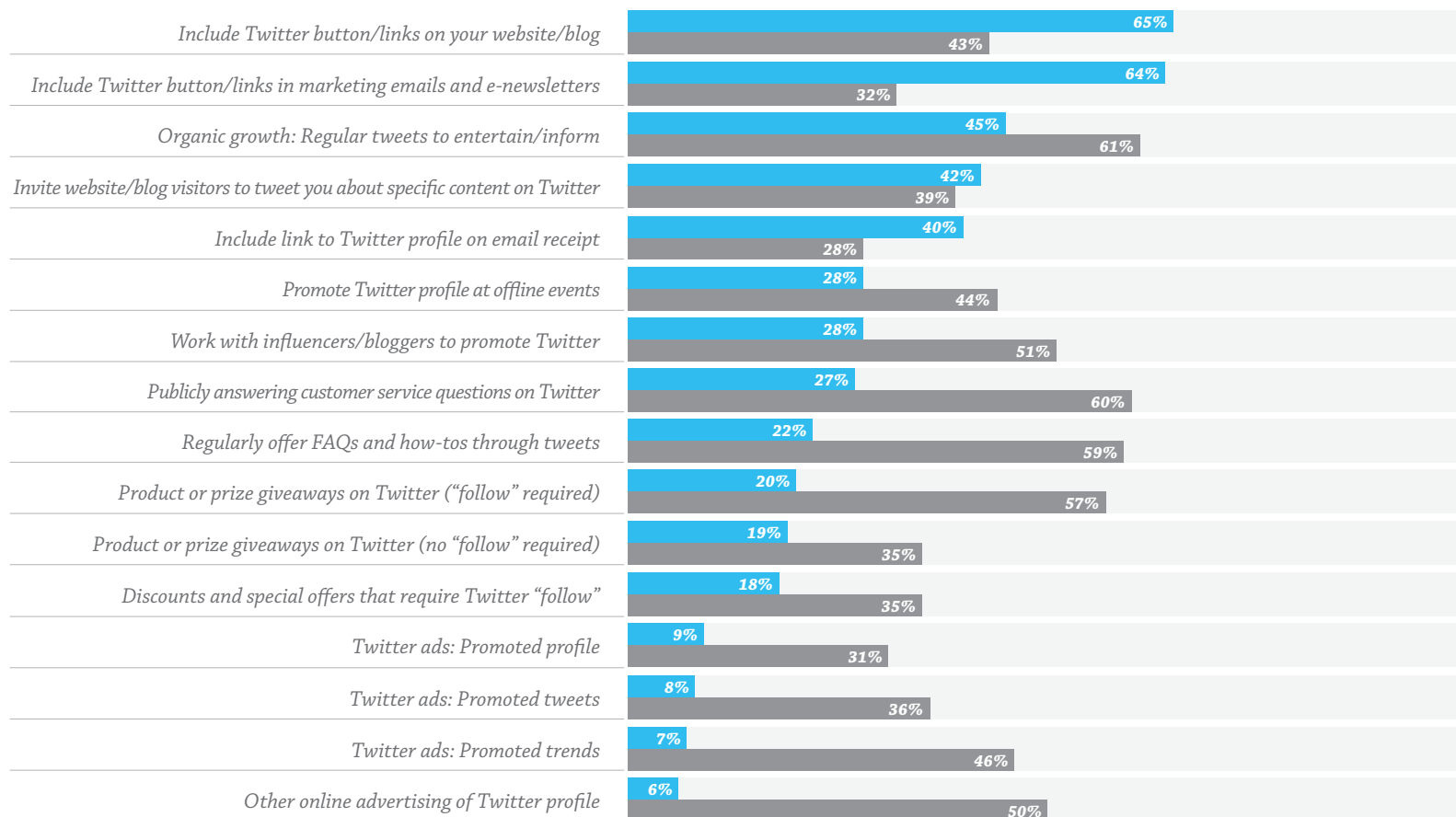


All Tactics Considered: Twitter



■ % of Twitter Marketers Who Use

■ % of Twitter Marketers Who Reported it Effective



As shown in this chart, Twitter marketers identified the tactics they used in follower growth efforts and then rated the tactics' effectiveness. Just as with email and Facebook, tactics' popularity didn't always correlate with effectiveness. See the full list of tactics surveyed at exacttarget.com/sff.

Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 129 Twitter Marketers

Noteworthy Twitter Tactics

Similarly to Facebook, the **most popular Twitter tactics didn't necessarily result in high effectiveness**. Examples of these tactics included a Twitter button or link either on a website or blog (65% use, 43% rate effective) or on emails and newsletters (64% use, 32% rate effective).

As with the Facebook button, a Twitter button alone is typically not a sufficiently compelling reason for people to stop what they're doing and follow a brand on Twitter. Compared to more engaging tactics that inform, entertain, or reward, the humble Twitter icon delivers less impressive results.

Community involvement tactics stand out in terms of their **high reported effectiveness, yet low utilization** by Twitter marketers. Along with organic growth (45% use, 61% rate effective), marketers said the following community-centric tactics were predominantly effective:

- **Product/prize giveaways with “follow” required**
(20% use, 57% rate effective)
- **Work with influencers/bloggers to promote Twitter profile**
(28% use, 51% rate effective)

Note that product/prize giveaways that do not require a “follow” perform significantly less successfully (19% use, 35% rate effective). In other words, ask for the “follow” for maximum results.

Alongside community involvement, customer support tactics **top the list for Twitter effectiveness, but are less popular**:

- **Publicly answering customer service questions on Twitter**
(27% use, 60% rate effective)
- **Regularly offer FAQs and how-tos through tweets**
(22% use, 59% rate effective)

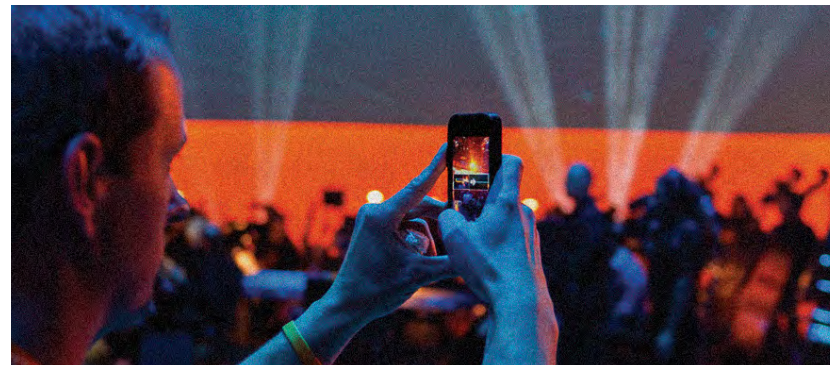
With approximately 60% of marketers rating these customer service tactics as effective but less than 30% adoption, more brands may want to consider Twitter an extension of their customer service team.

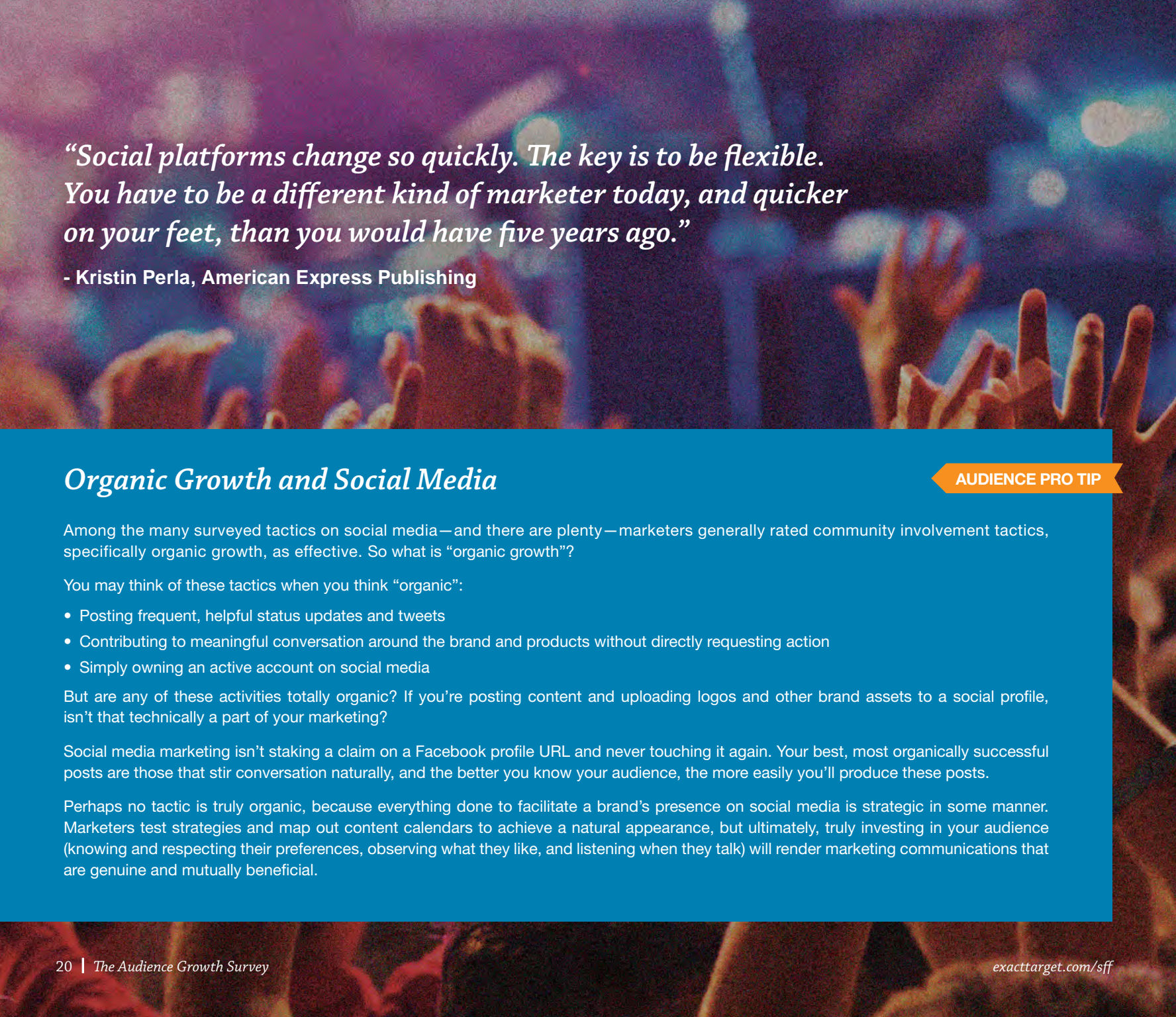
Though customer support requires significantly more investment in terms of time and resources, these tactics demonstrate markedly higher effectiveness. Overall, marketers risk missing a significant opportunity to grow their followers by not employing customer service via social media.

Though only a small percentage of marketers use advertising to grow Twitter followers, emerging tactics such as online advertising of your Twitter profile (like advertising your Twitter profile via paid search ad—6% use, 50% rate effective) and promoted trends (7% use, 46% rate effective) prompt further inquiry.

Experimentation is key when approaching Twitter. Test tactics to find what your followers prefer, and you'll maximize follower interest in retweeting and spreading your content. Great content and customer service are important pieces of your social strategy, whether on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or elsewhere.

Read further social media insights in the “Social Media Recommendations” section on page 29.





“Social platforms change so quickly. The key is to be flexible. You have to be a different kind of marketer today, and quicker on your feet, than you would have five years ago.”

- Kristin Perla, American Express Publishing

Organic Growth and Social Media

AUDIENCE PRO TIP

Among the many surveyed tactics on social media—and there are plenty—marketers generally rated community involvement tactics, specifically organic growth, as effective. So what is “organic growth”?

You may think of these tactics when you think “organic”:

- Posting frequent, helpful status updates and tweets
- Contributing to meaningful conversation around the brand and products without directly requesting action
- Simply owning an active account on social media

But are any of these activities totally organic? If you’re posting content and uploading logos and other brand assets to a social profile, isn’t that technically a part of your marketing?

Social media marketing isn’t staking a claim on a Facebook profile URL and never touching it again. Your best, most organically successful posts are those that stir conversation naturally, and the better you know your audience, the more easily you’ll produce these posts.

Perhaps no tactic is truly organic, because everything done to facilitate a brand’s presence on social media is strategic in some manner. Marketers test strategies and map out content calendars to achieve a natural appearance, but ultimately, truly investing in your audience (knowing and respecting their preferences, observing what they like, and listening when they talk) will render marketing communications that are genuine and mutually beneficial.

3 The Emerging Audience: Winning the Mobile Customer

Thirty-seven percent of surveyed marketers reported involvement with mobile marketing on a regular basis. Of those mobile marketers:

- 34% of marketers say mobile apps are important to their overall marketing efforts.
- 22% of marketers say SMS is important to their overall marketing efforts.

A small but growing number of marketers are embracing mobile, and they're employing a variety of tactics to grow the mobile audience on SMS and branded mobile apps.

The Objectives

Even though SMS and mobile apps both live on the mobile screen, marketers' objectives for each channel have a few differences, as shown in this chart.

SMS marketers' top objectives are selling products and generating leads—the same top two objectives as email. SMS subscribers have shared perhaps their most personal piece of contact information (their phone number) with a brand, meaning that SMS subscribers are among a brand's most engaged and committed fans.

Meanwhile, for mobile app marketers, the goal is equal parts brand awareness and sales, although 43% of mobile app marketers also rely on their app to improve customer retention and gain insights.

Few SMS and mobile app tactics are emerging as across-the-board effective, but marketers are experimenting with a variety of methods to win the mobile audience. Just as Facebook and Twitter are different social media entities, SMS and mobile app tactics must be considered uniquely as well.

Top Mobile Marketing Objectives

■ Mobile App ■ SMS



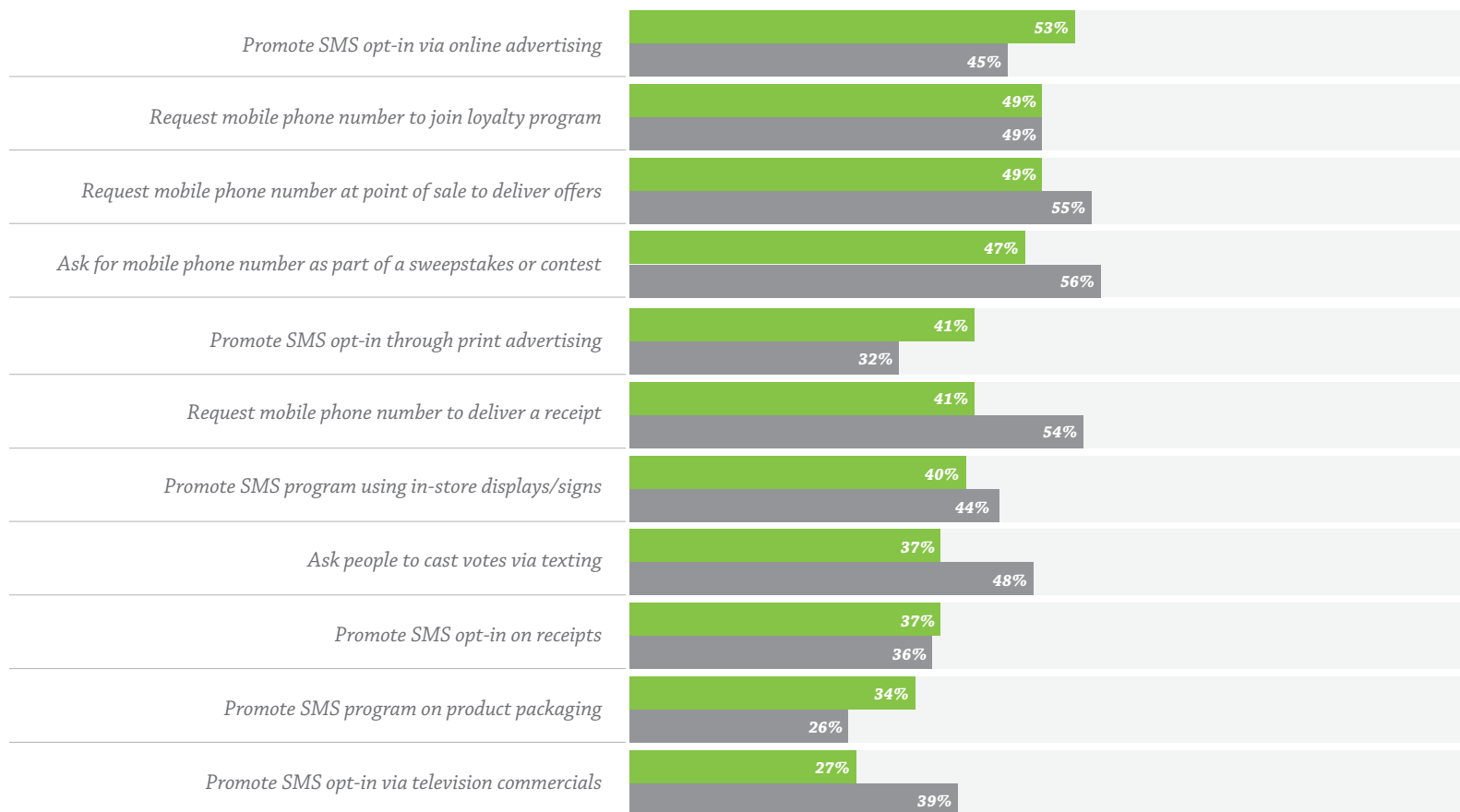
Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 68 SMS Marketers; N = 86 Mobile App Marketers.

All Tactics Considered: SMS



■ % of SMS Marketers Who Use

■ % of SMS Marketers Who Reported it Effective



SMS marketers selected the marketing tactics they used in their SMS subscriber growth efforts, and then rated their effectiveness. Due to the small sub-segment of marketers who use SMS tactics (17 percent of total respondents), their feedback should be directional, rather than declarative, in regard to the tactics' effectiveness. Many mobile marketing tactics are still in the experimentation phase, but understanding what some marketers currently find effective may help shape your approach to SMS.

Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 68 SMS Marketers

Noteworthy SMS Subscriber Growth Tactics

According to survey respondents, when prospective SMS subscribers are explicitly asked by a brand to relinquish their phone number in exchange for something of value, it's successful. **The top tactics in terms of reported effectiveness** include requesting a phone number:

- **As part of sweepstakes or contest** (47% use, 56% rate effective)
- **At point of sale to deliver offers** (49% use, 55% rate effective)
- **To deliver a receipt** (41% use, 54% rate effective)
- **To join loyalty program** (49% use, 49% rate effective)

Though fewer marketers report it to be effective (45%) than direct requests, the **most frequently used SMS subscriber growth tactic** is promoting SMS opt-in through online advertising (53% use). Supporting the idea that direct phone number requests are more effective than passive promotions, these more passive tactics rank lower both in use and reported effectiveness:

- **Promote SMS opt-in on receipts** (37% use, 36% rate effective)
- **Promote SMS program on product packaging** (34% use, 26% rate effective)
- **Promote opt-in in print advertising** (41% use, 32% rate effective)

To boost the effectiveness of your SMS subscriber growth efforts, consider swapping these passive print and packaging tactics for more direct interactions. For instance, instead of using printed receipts, train sales associates to make face-to-face requests during in-store transactions.

Direct requests don't necessarily have to transpire in person. Asking people to subscribe in unique ways, like a text-to-vote campaign, may be an effective means for attracting the mobile customer, depending on your brand:

- **Promote SMS opt-in in TV commercials** (27% use, 39% rate effective)
- **Ask people to cast a vote via texting** (37% use, 48% rate effective)

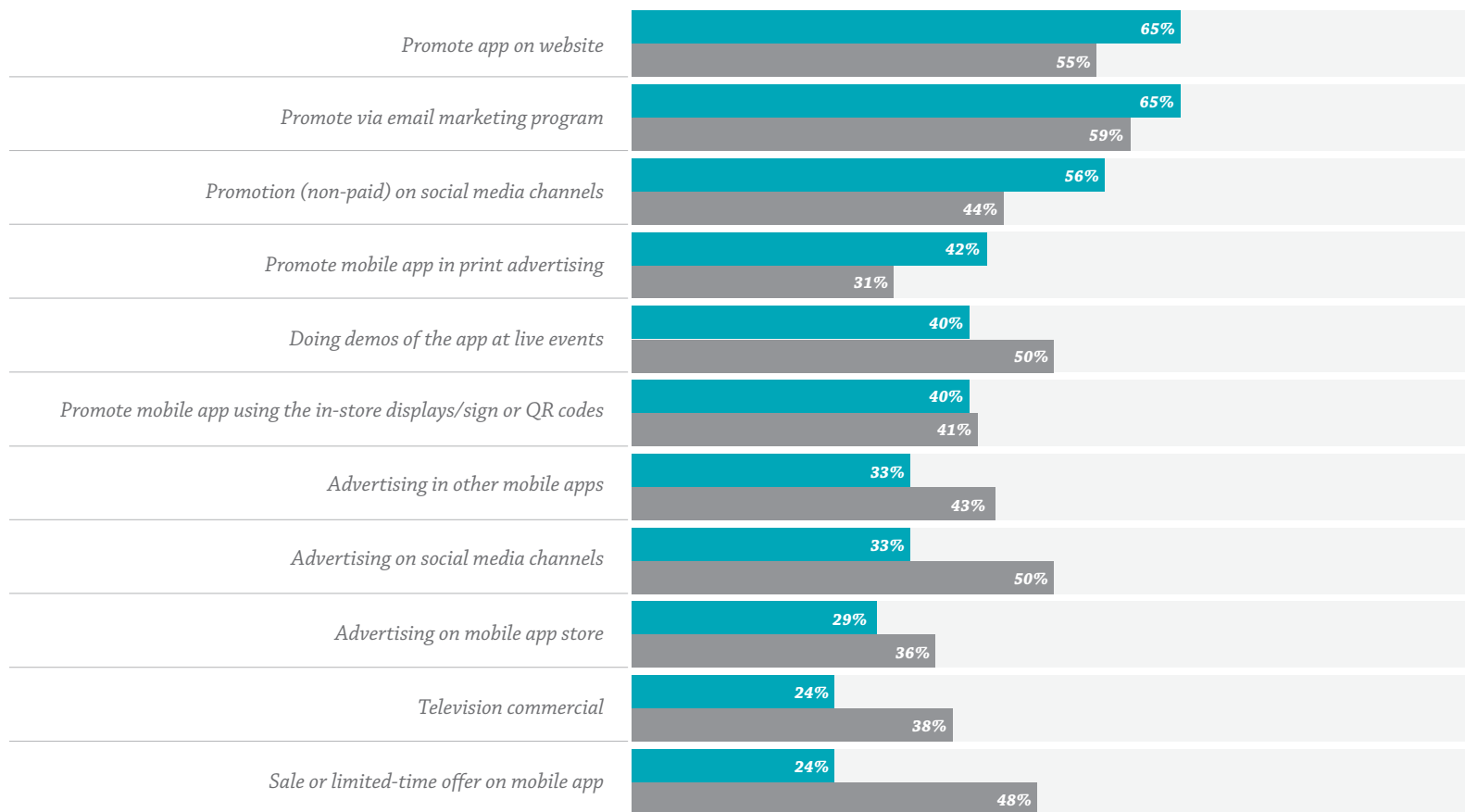
With the right incentive and under the right circumstances, people are willing to share their mobile phone numbers. Don't be shy—ask for the digits. But first, have a long-term plan for a valuable SMS program (not just a one-and-done gift if they subscribe) and train associates in the etiquette of making this request for personal information. More SMS recommendations follow in the “Mobile Recommendations” section.



All Tactics Considered: Mobile App



■ % of Mobile App Marketers Who Use ■ % of Mobile App Marketers Who Reported it Effective



Mobile app marketers identified the tactics they use to promote a branded mobile app, as well as the effectiveness they attribute to these tactics. Similar to SMS, because of the small group of marketers who currently employ app marketing tactics, we advise marketers to use these evaluations as directional rather than definitive. Mobile app marketing is an evolving science, but a few tactics lead the way as particularly effective for some marketers.

Source: 2013 Audience Growth Survey, August 2013. N = 86 Mobile App Marketers.

Noteworthy Mobile App Tactics

Mobile app promotions via email and website are **both the most commonly used tactics and the most effective** relative to the other tactics:

- **Promote via email marketing program**
(65% use, 59% rate effective)
- **Promote app on website** (65% use, 55% rate effective)

Mobile app marketers report success in using established digital channels like email and web to convert those audience members into mobile app users, creating more touchpoints with the valuable, highly connected mobile audience.

Other mobile app tactics seem to be **relatively underutilized but successful**. Fewer mobile marketers employ these tactics, though they hover around the 50% mark for those who rate them as effective:

- **Demos of app at live events** (40% use, 50% rate effective)
- **Paid/sponsored advertising on social media channels**
(33% use, 50% rate effective)
- **Sale or limited-time offer on mobile app**
(24% use, 48% rate effective)

Non-paid promotion of mobile apps via social media is the third most commonly used mobile app tactic (56% use), though fewer of the marketers who use it ranked it as effective (44% rate effective) compared to those who advertise on social media. The difference in reported effectiveness may not be great enough to merit the investment of more marketing dollars for some brands. Consider experimenting with advertising your mobile app as budget allows. For example:

- **Advertising in other mobile apps** (33% use, 43% rate effective)
- **Paid advertisement on mobile app store**
(29% use, 36% rate effective)

Depending on the nature of your mobile app (whether it's an app for ecommerce, content, customer service, or something else), you may consider a mixture of tactics to grow your mobile app users. Whether

that's advertising to existing customers on social media or promoting to your brand's already engaged email subscribers, the mobile app users you secure will likely become part of your most engaged push-button audience. Go for the push opt-in for an additional touchpoint.

As mobile channels mature and customers become more comfortable with mobile marketing, the most effective tactics to acquire app users will rise to the top. Testing is a marketer's best friend, and the tactics explored in this research are an excellent place to begin. For more suggestions on how to grow your app users, flip to "Mobile Recommendations" on page 30.





Section III:

Recommendations and Insights

Audience Growth: It's Show Time

As you consider audience growth strategies for your business, remember who your unique audience is; they have wants and needs that are distinctly different from any other audience. Also keep in mind the strengths of each channel alongside your personal metrics of marketing effectiveness.

1 The Blurring Lines between B2B and B2C

This research confirmed that the lines between business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing are increasingly fading. Historically, B2B and B2C marketing have been distinct practices with their own tactics, tools, and metrics. Yet these two areas of marketing are beginning to look more alike than different. Of the marketers surveyed:

- 36% were B2B marketers
- 35% were B2C marketers
- 29% are involved with both B2B and B2C marketing

Messaging tactics’ effectiveness differed only slightly between B2B and B2C marketers. For example, B2C marketers were more likely to indicate that they had success with Facebook, while Twitter tended to be a better audience growth tool for B2B marketers. B2C marketers used in-store and on-premise tactics more frequently and successfully, while B2B marketers reported more success with online events (such as webinars) and by targeting key industry influencers or bloggers.

However, when considering effectiveness ratings for tactics as a whole, B2B and B2C success rates tended to be largely indistinguishable in terms of reported effectiveness, marking a line-blurring between B2B and B2C marketing. Thanks to the one-to-one channels becoming more available to marketers, these traditional siloes are less divided.

The following chart shows the tactics that tended to perform better for B2C vs. B2B marketers.

Audience Growth Tactics for B2C and B2B

Better for B2C	Better for B2B
Email capture via Facebook	Email capture via Twitter
Facebook ads: Sponsored Stories and sidebar ads	Promoting Twitter profile at offline event
Product/prize giveaway on Twitter	Work with influencers/bloggers to promote Facebook Page
Sales associates request email as part of check-out process	Promote online events via email
Drive online loyalty program registration requiring email	

2 Email Recommendations

The tactics that most marketers rated as effective for email subscriber growth provided a perceived value trade-off for the customer. People are willing to provide an email address in exchange for:

- **Personal account with additional features and access**
- **An immediate incentive, such as a discount**
- **Loyalty program membership**

Your email subscribers comprise perhaps the largest part of the audience iceberg. Email has the tried-and-true ability to drive audience growth for other channels, like mobile app and social media growth. Some of the most popular audience growth tactics were mobile app promotion through email, as well as Twitter and Facebook buttons in emails. With clear and direct calls to cross-channel action, email has the capability of increasing subscribers' engagement with you on other channels, in addition to its utility as a sales and brand awareness channel in its own right.

In order to maximize email subscriber growth, focus on email deliverability, quality of messaging, and increased relevance through every send. Also strive to implement mobile optimization for all emails, as mobile opens on email are now consistently trending upwards of 40%¹.

“In the last year, we saw our mobile traffic really ramp up. We rolled out a new mobile-optimized version of our email that provided a huge engagement jump, simply by making the viewing process easier for our customers.”

- Ryan McIntyre, Thrillist

¹exacttarget.com/blog/email-open-rate-on-mobile-devices-tops-48-v2/

3 Social Media Recommendations

The social audience wants to interact with the personal, not corporate, side of your brand. Supplement your social media presence with new tactics frequently to test what works best with your audience. We noted several tactics that few marketers used, but with high reports of effectiveness. These emerging tactics should be tested, as they may soon be standard practice for social media marketers. On Facebook:

- **Require a “like” for giveaways**
- **Ask fans to submit their own content or a creative entry for Facebook contests**
- **Work with influencers/bloggers to promote Facebook Page**

And for Twitter:

- **Work with influencers/bloggers to promote Twitter profile**
- **Require a “follow” for Twitter contests**
- **Promote Twitter profile at offline community events**

Promotions that encourage sharing and social reach assistance from influencers are key tactics to watch and test. Customers dip into social media content as they see fit, so be sure your content is always in keeping with the nature of your audience, and always respond promptly to critiques and questions.

AUDIENCE PRO TIP

The One to Watch: Social Advertising

One important finding from this research: the growing prevalence (and effectiveness) of social media advertising for audience growth. Because social media is primarily for connecting, not selling, we might be tempted to think that ads on social networks are unwelcome and ineffective. Yet this isn't so when social ads appear organic.

The social media channels that your audience uses every day—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and the like—collect a wealth of data about their users. That data can be funneled into advertising power.

Our research shows that Facebook ads are more popular than Twitter ads. Of all marketers who regularly engage in Facebook marketing, 32% use Facebook ads (Sponsored Stories and/or sidebar ads). Conversely, of marketers surveyed who regularly market through Twitter, 10% use Twitter ads (promoted profiles, promoted tweets, and/or promoted trends).

Sponsored Stories (Facebook ads that allow brands to pay for an appearance in a user's news feed) are a promising tactic for Facebook marketers, as they were rated effective by 67% of the marketers who use them.

Sponsored Stories are effective because they align with why people get on Facebook: to see what their friends and acquaintances are doing. This is where organic meets paid advertising. Cloaked as an organic news feed story, Sponsored Stories clearly show why a user should be interested in an ad—because her boyfriend likes the brand, or because his best friend commented on it. Consider social advertising the next stage of your organic content strategy.

4 Mobile Recommendations

Consumers keep their mobile phones at the ready, and if your brand can earn a spot on those mobile phones, you'll have a direct line to them wherever they are.

However, companies still have to surmount customers' hesitancy to connect via SMS. Customers are concerned about privacy, and they certainly don't want their phone ringing at all hours with marketing messages (this isn't a concern for channels like Facebook, where a brand's status update would never interrupt someone's slumber).

To overcome the customer reluctance challenge, try building a little rapport with a face-to-face request. Few marketers are using these tactics as of yet, but high effectiveness has been reported:

- **Ask for a mobile phone number as part of a sweepstakes or contest**
- **Request a mobile phone number to deliver a receipt**
- **Request mobile phone number at point of sale to deliver offers**

Get inspiration from the other SMS tactics listed in "All Tactics Considered: SMS," and always offer SMS subscribers a preference center to dictate how often they'd like to be contacted.

When trying to grow mobile app users, remember that your existing channels may provide an initial boost in new users. For example, let existing email subscribers and social audiences know that your app is now available. As you grow the quantity and quality of your mobile app users, consider testing these tactics:

- **Acquire email addresses from new app users to suggest regular app updates and other communications from your brand**
- **Encourage activation of the app's push notifications (on-screen messages that appear within the device) to bolster reengagement and ask for actions on-demand**
- **Seek the SMS opt-in for an additional way to communicate**

All signs point to respect when marketing on mobile channels, whether it's SMS, push, or in-app notifications. Respect customers' time and don't overcommunicate, and you'll remain among the rock-star brands who retain a space on customers' mobile phones.



“The key to audience growth is understanding who’s in your audience, where and why they interact with you, and what they might be missing.”

- Jason Falls, CafePress

Conclusion

As you’ve seen in the findings of *The Audience Growth Survey*, you now have a myriad of ways to grow your proprietary audiences at your fingertips. The question is, which tactics work best for both your brand and target audience? The data in this report should spark some ideas, but ultimately, audience growth is a matter of testing what tactics will get your brand the largest, most responsive audience possible.

We encourage you to not only read this data, but to also share it with peers at your organization. Network at a local level, and look at what brands are doing both within and outside of your marketplace.

Audience development demands an ongoing strategy to inspire loyalty and engagement in the channels that best suit your brand. Your brand’s subscribers, fans, followers, and app users give you a

tremendous advantage against your competitors; they comprise a fundamental piece of your business assets.

For your brand’s audience development to succeed, it must be championed by the belief that change is not feared—it’s welcomed, because as long as your audience’s changing needs are met with content that speaks to them on the channels where they prefer to receive it, your audience growth efforts will always prosper.

You can affect and foster future audience growth through any of the channels listed in this report, and even channels that haven’t become a gleam in marketers’ eyes yet. There’s always more to discover about your audience, and the only tactic guaranteed to work is to keep listening. Let data be your guide to track and analyze, and always continue learning.



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With billions of hyper-connected customers on the planet, there's never been a better time to be a digital marketer. You have an incredible opportunity to use data and technology to drive relevant messages, to connect, to inspire.

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