2X revenue per email

How a top online houseware retailer increased the email CTR from 4.3% to 19.6% across Q1 and Q2 spring sale

4.6x ↑	2.4x ↑	53% ↓	6mo
CLICK THROUGH RATE	REVENUE PER EMAIL	UNSUBSCRIBE RATE	TIME TO RESULT
4.3% → 19.6%	$0.11 → $0.26	0.36% → 0.17%	Two campaigns

Background

A leading online retailer in the houseware category, selling cookware, kitchen tools, storage, and home organization across a broad catalog.

Email is one of its primary revenue channels, carrying roughly **1.4 million active subscribers** at a cadence of 8 to 10 campaigns a month.

The two campaigns in question were the Q1 discounted pricing program covering the full houseware range, and the Q2 spring sale. Both run annually, which makes the YoY comparison a like for like read rather than isolated events.

The challenge

For more than a year, the CTR on the promotional program sat **below 5%**. Also, the underlying challenge was that customer segmentation was built around historical behavioral data instead of customer intent.

The team had tested subject lines, send times, creative formats, and discount depth. Individual tests produced small movements that didn't hold. Unsubscribe rate had begun drifting upward and bounce rate was running higher than the team wanted.

The internal read was that the category had matured and that sub 5% was simply the ceiling for promotional email at this scale. We've seen the same issue in SaaS companies where nurture sequences are built around lifecycle stages instead of buying intent.

The engagement

Retained for two quarters, January through June, across the Q1 discounted pricing program and the Q2 spring sale. This is the framework we used.

WEEKS 1–4

Research

- 22 customer interviews, SKU-level behavioral data, two years of campaign history
- **Key finding:** the list was sorted by discount response, never by how customers thought about value

WEEKS 5–8

Segmentation

- Discount-responsiveness tiers replaced with intent-based segments
- Model validated against historical send data before anything shipped
- **First segmented campaign, week 8: 8.1% CTR**

WEEKS 9–26

Copy system

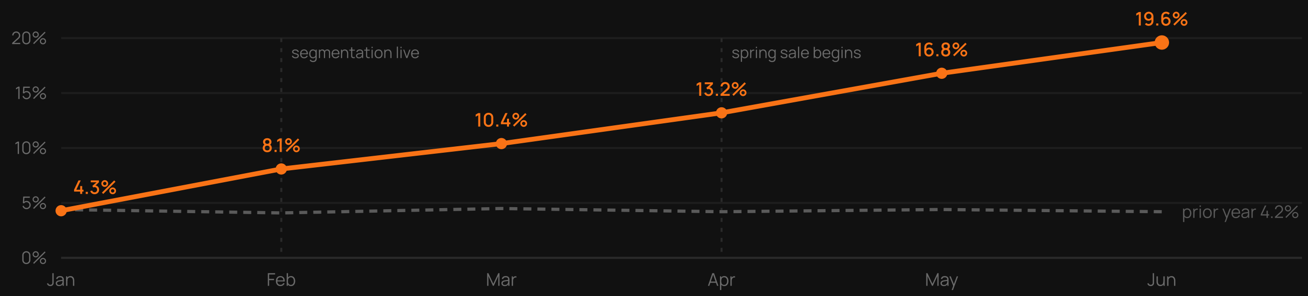
- Message frameworks written separately for each segment
- Weekly test cycle across both campaigns
- **The rate didn't jump — it compounded**

WEEK 22

Handover

- Segmentation docs, copy system, and test protocol transferred in-house
- Internal team has run the program since

MONTHLY CLICK THROUGH RATE VS. SAME PERIOD PRIOR YEAR



Results

Measured against the same two quarters the previous year.

	PRIOR YEAR	WITH MEDIASPHERE
Click through rate	4.3%	19.6%
Revenue per email sent	$0.11	$0.26
Subscribe rate, monthly	1.9%	2.6%
Unsubscribe rate	0.36%	0.17%
Bounce rate	1.4%	0.6%
Send volume, monthly	3.1M	3.0M
Average discount depth	24%	19%

Send volume is included because segmentation can inflate CTR by mailing fewer people. Volume held flat and total clicks rose roughly four and a half times.

Revenue per email more than doubled while discount depth fell five points, and unsubscribe and bounce both improved.

What the data actually said

The retailer segmented its list by discount responsiveness. Customers who had clicked coupons before were flagged as deal seekers and received offers more often. Everyone else received the same messages at a lower frequency.

This is a reasonable model. It is also a model built on how customers behaved toward the offer rather than on their relationship to the product.

Two buyers, opposite math

Houseware purchases cluster into two states that look identical in a CRM and behave nothing alike.

The replacement buyer

Has something that broke, wore out, or stopped being good enough. Their reference point is the item sitting in their kitchen and the friction of living without it.

Price tolerant, specification sensitive. They want to know they are buying the right thing.

The project buyer

Is moving, renovating, hosting, or building a gift list. Their reference point is a total budget they have already set in their head.

Price sensitive at project level, not item level. They care about what goes together.

Rebuilding around intent

The segmentation model sorts customers into three working states rather than two value tiers: **replacement**, inferred from depth on a single category and time since last purchase; **project**, inferred from breadth across complementary categories, cart composition, and lifecycle triggers; and **undifferentiated**, whose intent cannot yet be read.

Replacement messages supply the reference point directly, comparing against the cost of continuing with the item the customer already owns. Discount appears as a tiebreaker rather than as the argument. Project messages supply a budget frame instead — sequencing purchases and expressing savings against the project total rather than a list price nobody believes.

The undifferentiated segment received the largest change in thinking. Those sends stopped trying to convert and started trying to generate signal. Some of the earliest gains came from here, because these were the customers who had been absorbing the same undifferentiated blast for a year.

> Mediasphere rebuilt the approach from the ground up: audience research, segmentation, and copy that actually matched how our customers think about value. We finished at around 20% CTR. For a promotional email channel, that's a completely different result.
>
> Carmen Yanazzo, Pricing Manager

Why it worked

At first glance this was a copywriting problem. Rewriting the campaigns would have increased the numbers, but the underlying problem would still have been there. Mediasphere instead analyzed the behavioral data at hand, cataloging each customer intent and segmenting users on criteria that reflected how they actually buy.

If your promotional channel has been flat long enough that the team has stopped expecting it to move, the number is probably not the problem.

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