How Many Retail Communications Are Too Many?
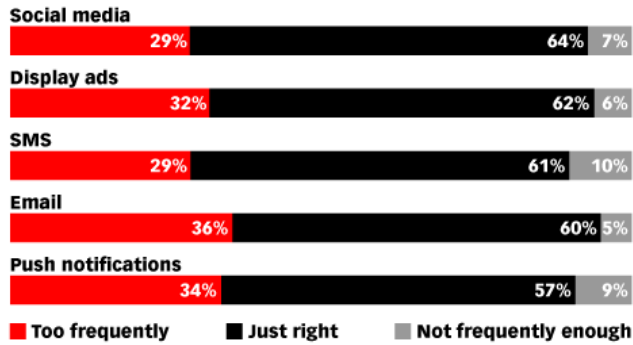
ARTICLE

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Retail messaging can often feel like a game of Goldilocks. Too many messages can frustrate and push consumers away, while fewer communications can put the brand at risk of no longer being relevant.

According to April 2019 data from Yes Marketing, an average of six in 10 US digital shoppers said the frequency of retail communications they receive from retailers they have previously purchased from is "just right."

While it sounds reassuring, this figure also means that roughly four in 10 are either being bombarded with retail communications or not getting messages as often as they'd like.

How Do US Digital Shoppers Feel About the Frequency of Retailer Communications?

% of respondents, by digital channel, April 2019

Social media

Too frequently	Just right	Not frequently enough
29%	64%	7%

Display ads

Too frequently	Just right	Not frequently enough
32%	62%	6%

SMS

Too frequently	Just right	Not frequently enough
29%	61%	10%

Email

Too frequently	Just right	Not frequently enough
36%	60%	5%

Push notifications

Too frequently	Just right	Not frequently enough
34%	57%	9%

■ **Too frequently** ■ **Just right** ■ **Not frequently enough**

Note: ages 18+; retailers which digital shoppers have previously purchased from; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Yes Marketing, "Customer Lifecycle Report: The Retail Shopper's Journey to Loyalty," June 27, 2019

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Some 10% of respondents said they didn't receive text messages from retailers frequently enough, while slightly fewer (9%) felt the same about push notifications.
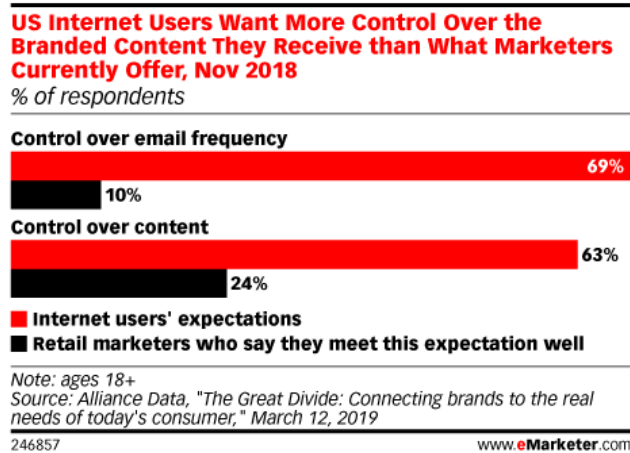
When it came to email, however, 36% of respondents said they were getting too many emails from retailers—more so than the communications they received on social media (29%), through display ads (32%) or via push notifications (34%).

That's not very surprising, especially when considering that email is one of the most popular communication channels. A January 2019 survey from omnichannel retail management company iVend Retail found that 62.9% of internet users worldwide preferred to get email communications from retailers—more than any other channel, including social media, a store's website or text message.

"Forward-looking digital marketers are challenging themselves to create a 360-degree view of their customers to center those experiences and reach them in the channels that make sense, at the right time, with the right message," said Nicole Perrin, principal analyst at eMarketer and author of our recent report, "Customer Experience 2019 (Part 4)—Messaging Frequency: The Building Block of a Better Customer Experience (A 4-Part Series)." "There are still many difficulties in making that happen. One such problem: It's impossible to know

how often audiences have been reached or to manage any particular frequency or cadence of messaging across platforms."

Many consumers want to control brand communications. Research from Alliance Data conducted last year found that many US internet users want more control over email frequency—and only a small number of marketers are OK with surrendering that control.

US Internet Users Want More Control Over the Branded Content They Receive than What Marketers Currently Offer, Nov 2018
% of respondents

Control over email frequency
69%
10%

Control over content
63%
24%

■ Internet users' expectations
■ Retail marketers who say they meet this expectation well

Note: ages 18+
Source: Alliance Data, "The Great Divide: Connecting brands to the real needs of today's consumer," March 12, 2019
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Giving up control may benefit marketers in the long run, especially as they continue to weave through the various challenges of managing messaging frequency.