

Reporting and analytics: what's going on?

Why advanced analytics and reporting are essential for marketers.

Packed with time-saving insights:

Multichannel reporting

Management dashboards

Audience analytics

Boosting performance



What counts is what works (and what's counted, works)

Make every marketing penny count

The elusive 50%

Attribution has been a challenge for marketers since the dawn of the advertising age. It's a problem embodied in the much-quoted observation: "Half of my advertising spend is wasted. The trouble is, I don't know which half." (Even here attribution is a problem. Was this John Wanamaker or Lord Leverhulme?)

These days, you can account for almost every penny you spend on promoting your organization and its products and services. Certainly, anything you publish in the digital realm can be tested and measured to a granular level.

In fact, your marketing can now generate so much data that a different challenge has emerged: how to bring it all together, and how to make sense of it all.

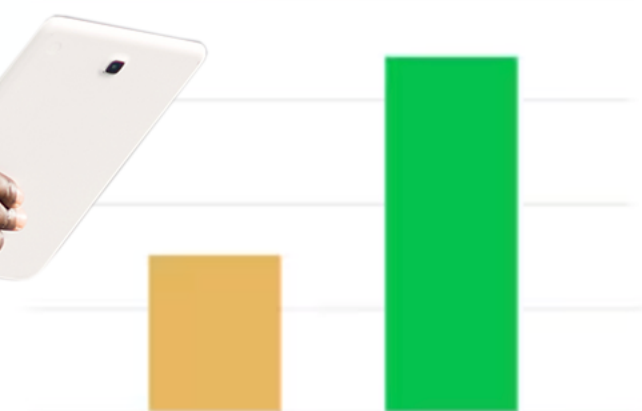
In this guide, we'll look at how to analyze and report on the performance of your digital marketing and ecommerce activities. We'll also explore how they impact the performance of your ecommerce and other online services.





Unsubscribe Rate

- Your Campaign
- Industry Avg.



The guide explores a range of reporting and analytics processes and systems, including:

- Analyzing email, SMS, and ecommerce performance
- Making sense of different reporting metrics
- Using customizable reports and dashboards
- Predictive analytics, revenue attribution, and audience insights
- Multi-channel reporting and unified insights
- Improving targeting, content optimization, and return on investment (ROI)
- Common challenges in reporting and analytics

Mailchimp offers valuable reporting across all plans, but the more sophisticated and detailed analytics capabilities require the Standard and Premium plans.

When you have a deeper understanding of how your marketing is performing, you can make better decisions about how you use your marketing budget. You can see what's working well, what needs changing, and what needs to be scrapped. You can also experiment with different channels, different creative treatments and other variables to see how you might get the very best value from your budget.

Getting a close grip on your marketing performance also allows you to reduce waste and make your spending more efficient. You can see quickly what's not working and take steps to correct or stop the activity before the costs get too high.

Get it together

Tracking performance across multiple channels

Screen savior

Historically, the challenge for digital marketers has always been to get a full picture of the performance of their campaigns. They're working with multiple channels, such as email, SMS, and social media, each with their own particular protocols and standards. Orchestrating them into a coherent picture can be very difficult.

Mailchimp integrations allow you to bring in data from other marketing platforms, such as Meta Lead Ads or Shopify ecommerce data, and report on that along with your email and SMS campaigns.

Users can configure their dashboards by audience, channels, and dates to do a deeper analysis of their campaign and customer engagement. They'll also get actionable insights on the next steps to take to improve engagement, such as setting up abandoned cart automations, or targeting key segments with personalized campaigns.





Go deeper

The Mailchimp analytics suite (check your plan for details) brings in more ways to overcome the siloes that previously prevented comprehensive analysis. It provides industry-aligned revenue attribution, as well as a conversion insights dashboard for deep ecommerce funnel insights.

Revenue attribution metrics give you a complete and accurate view of the revenue generated by your marketing activities, drawing on key engagement points such as email opens, SMS delivery interactions¹, and clicks. You can tweak the attribution settings to assess the performance of all the channels you are using for a campaign.

You also have the ability to track conversions within particular customer segments and profiles.

If you have an ecommerce site, the conversion dashboard provides a new level of analysis and insight into your customers' activity. As well as more detailed attribution data, you can see where there is most drop-off in a customer's purchase funnel and where in their journeys they are abandoning their carts. This level of insight allows you to take action to address the issues that seem to be affecting their decisions. You can also see when and how individual channels are driving conversions.

The metrics that matter

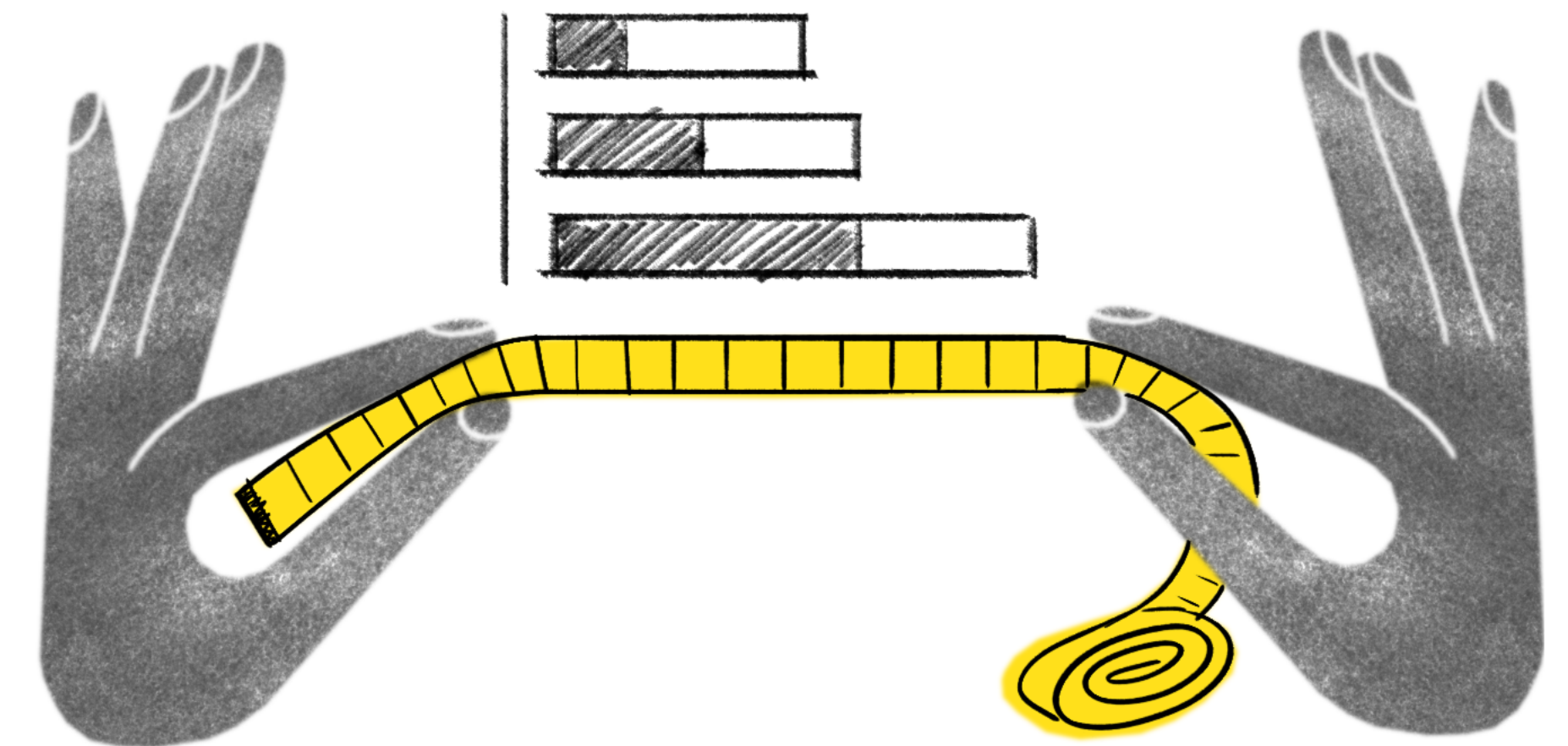
Tracking the essential measures of marketing success

Quick insights

There are some measures of success that are fundamental to the planning and management of your email and SMS marketing campaigns.

- Open rate, showing the percentage of customers that opened your message. Crucially, Mailchimp gives you the ability to eliminate automatic or 'bot' openings, as well as bot-driven email clicks and SMS clicks (check your plan for details). You can see how many people genuinely engaged with your message.
 - Click-through rate (CTR), showing how many customers clicked links in the message. Once they have
- opened your message, the next measure shows how successful you were in keeping people's attention and gaining enough of their interest to take positive action to find out more.
 - Conversion rate, showing how many people took the next critical step, such as purchasing a product or subscribing to a service.
 - Page views, showing which pages on an ecommerce site get more traffic, which elements generate actions, and how changes to elements like layout, text or images affect performance.

You can gain a huge amount of insight just from these measures. If your open rate is low, you can experiment with elements such as email subject lines, social post headlines, or the first line of an SMS message, to see which messages prompt more engagement.





You can test different ways of presenting your message to boost CTRs. Even a rate that is better than you expected can be improved upon. Indeed, a good CTR suggests that your message is resonating with your target audience and that you might achieve exponentially higher rates with just a few tweaks.

The same is true for conversion rates. A good conversion rate means that you are hitting a relevant and valuable seam of interest for your customers. It's worth testing different approaches to see if you can win even deeper engagement.

If you have an ecommerce site, it pays to monitor its performance continually. Every customer interaction, whether it's a click or the time they spend on a page, generates a useful data point that can help you improve the customer experience across the whole site.

Start with the finish

None of these metrics come into play unless you have the reporting and analytics processes in place to capture and interpret the relevant data. This is why all successful direct marketing plans start at the end: you have to set targets for all the elements you intend to measure and put the systems in place to capture the data you need.

The massive advantage that digital technologies give you as a marketer is the ability to capture, organize and analyze your data at speed and without the need for hours of manual work. With Mailchimp, even the Free and Essentials plans include some valuable levels of reporting, while the latest releases of our Premium and Standard plans incorporate integrated and customizable dashboards that enable sophisticated management of your reporting and analytics.

Dig deeper

Applying the insight to drive performance

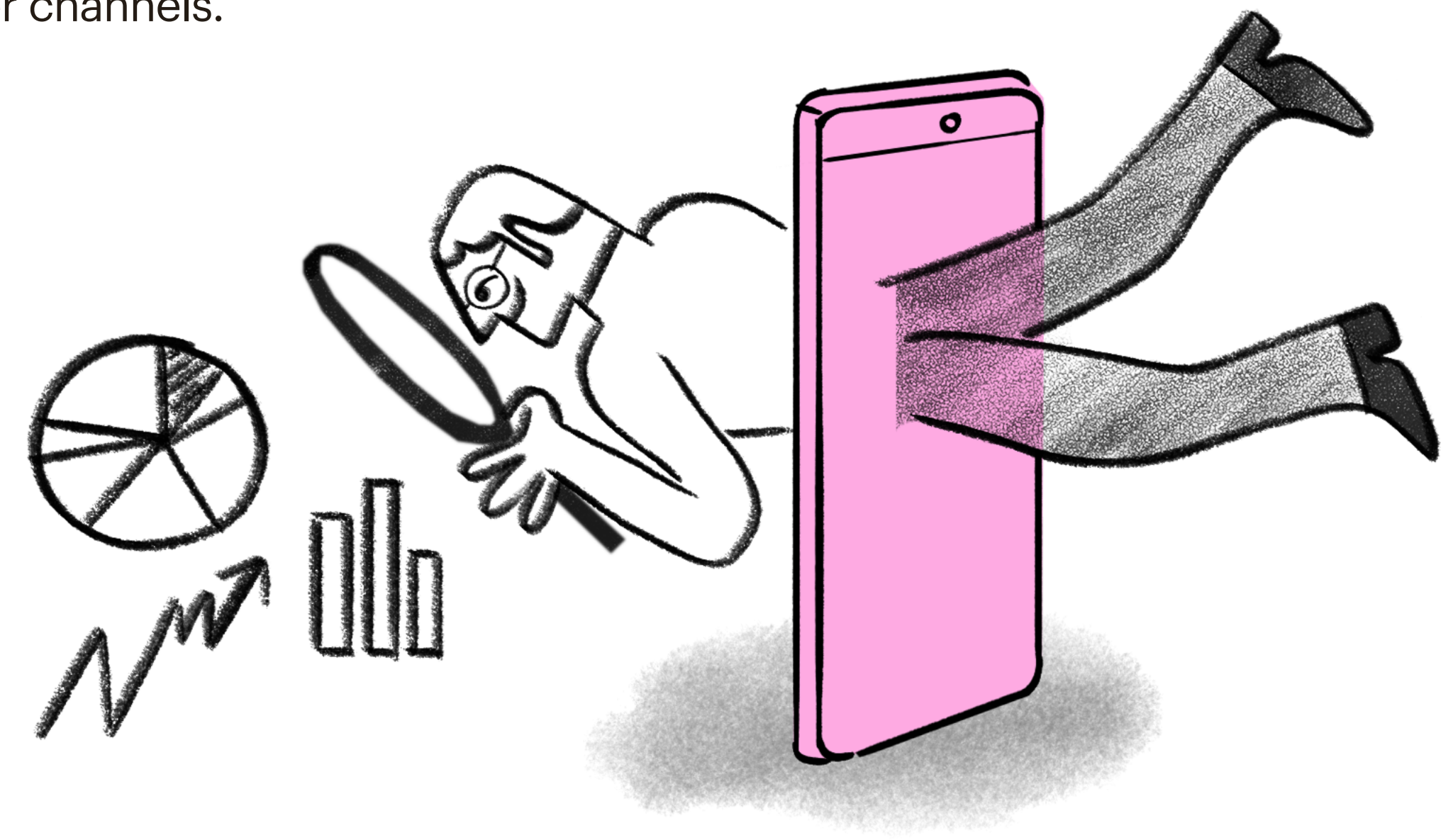
Segments that cut through

So far, we've looked at the basics of analytics and reporting. The next step is about deepening the impact of your campaigns, while keeping them efficient and potentially delivering improved return on marketing investment.

You can use the tools available in the Premium and Standard Mailchimp plans to help turn the insights from your analytics into meaningful audience segments. Mailchimp provides plenty of information about how to segment your customer base, but some good places to start include:

- Channel—you can identify patterns of response that show which customers seem to prefer email to SMS, or which offers work better in which channel.
- Offers—you can create segments based on the types of offer that work best with particular groups of customers.
- Price—as your conversion rates improve, you will be able to see how different groups of customers respond to different price points. Some will prefer premium-priced offerings, others might be acutely price sensitive.

These are just a few of the ways you can segment your customer base and they are not mutually exclusive. You'll have customers that are frequent purchasers who are all about the same age, but respond best to SMS messages, rather than email or other channels.





Dispose of waste

It is this ability to work smarter with your data that unlocks efficiency and helps to reduce waste. Better targeting and more effective messaging, based on detailed customer insight, could mean a better return on your marketing investment.

For example, if you know that some groups of customers are not interested in certain types of offer, you can exclude them from some of your activity. Similarly, if an offer works well with a particular group, you can try it with other groups to see if they like it too.

You might also find that changing the timing of a campaign makes a difference, so that sending an email in the morning drives greater response than in the afternoon. The Send Time Optimization function within Standard and Premium Mailchimp plans draws on anonymized data from thousands of email sends, helping to determine when your recipients are most likely to open an email.

There are many ways to refine and focus your marketing activities, all based on data derived from actual customer behavior. Effective reporting and analytics help to reduce guesswork and sharpen up performance across the board.

Getting testy

Setting goals and testing performance

A/B and beyond

This brings us to another of the fundamentals of direct marketing, which separates it as a discipline from general advertising. Here's where you find out which 50% of your spend is really working, so you can try to improve performance with each new campaign.

You can use the data you gather through your reporting and analytics process to test and improve your marketing activities. The simplest approach is the A/B test, where you test one variable with a sample group of customers. It might be a subject line, a way of presenting the offer, or an image. You see which one of two options performs better and make that the approach to the whole segment.

Never stop learning

The key is to keep testing and retesting, working with different variables—price, timing, headlines and so on—to try and improve performance with each new step. If you have an ecommerce site, you can test the headlines, the layout, the colors, the positioning of offers and many more options to extend dwell time, boost engagement, and help drive conversions.

Successful and effective testing relies on data that is up-to-date and accurate. And it becomes a virtuous circle: the better your data, the more meaningful your testing, which generates even better data.



Aim high

Setting up an effective reporting and analytics process relies on good planning. First of all, you need to set the goals that you want to achieve and decide how you are going to know when you’ve achieved them.

These might be campaign-specific, tactical goals, such as winning new customers, or achieving a specific increase in revenue. Or you might have a more strategic goal, such as customer retention or improved engagement.

You then need to decide which key performance indicators (KPIs) will be most useful and valuable to you in achieving your goals. Mailchimp offers extensive guidance on setting KPIs for campaigns and ecommerce sites.

As a starting point, Mailchimp sets out four basic elements that make up a KPI:

- **A measure**—a percentage, a specific number, a measure of frequency, or some other way of measuring the KPI.
- **A target**—the numeric measures you choose give you a solid idea of how close you come to reaching targets in a given timeframe.
- **A data source**—this is where your reporting and analytics process comes in: you need reliable, manageable sources of data to ensure your measures are accurate.
- **Reporting frequency**—you can choose weekly, monthly, or quarterly reporting, depending on your industry and what's being measured. Monthly KPIs are common, because they allow enough time for meaningful change while keeping track of anything that needs attention before it becomes a problem—or a missed opportunity

Keep it focused

It’s easy to get carried away when you have so much data and so many ways of working with it. You don’t have to measure every little thing, you just need to focus on the measures that matter most to you.

When revenue is your priority, vanity metrics like social media followers are less important than measurements that drive actual business growth. The most effective metrics connect marketing activities to revenue outcomes and customer behavior.

Consistency is key: tracking a small suite of measurements over time reveals meaningful patterns that will guide your planning and decision-making.

The tools of the trade

Turning numbers into insight

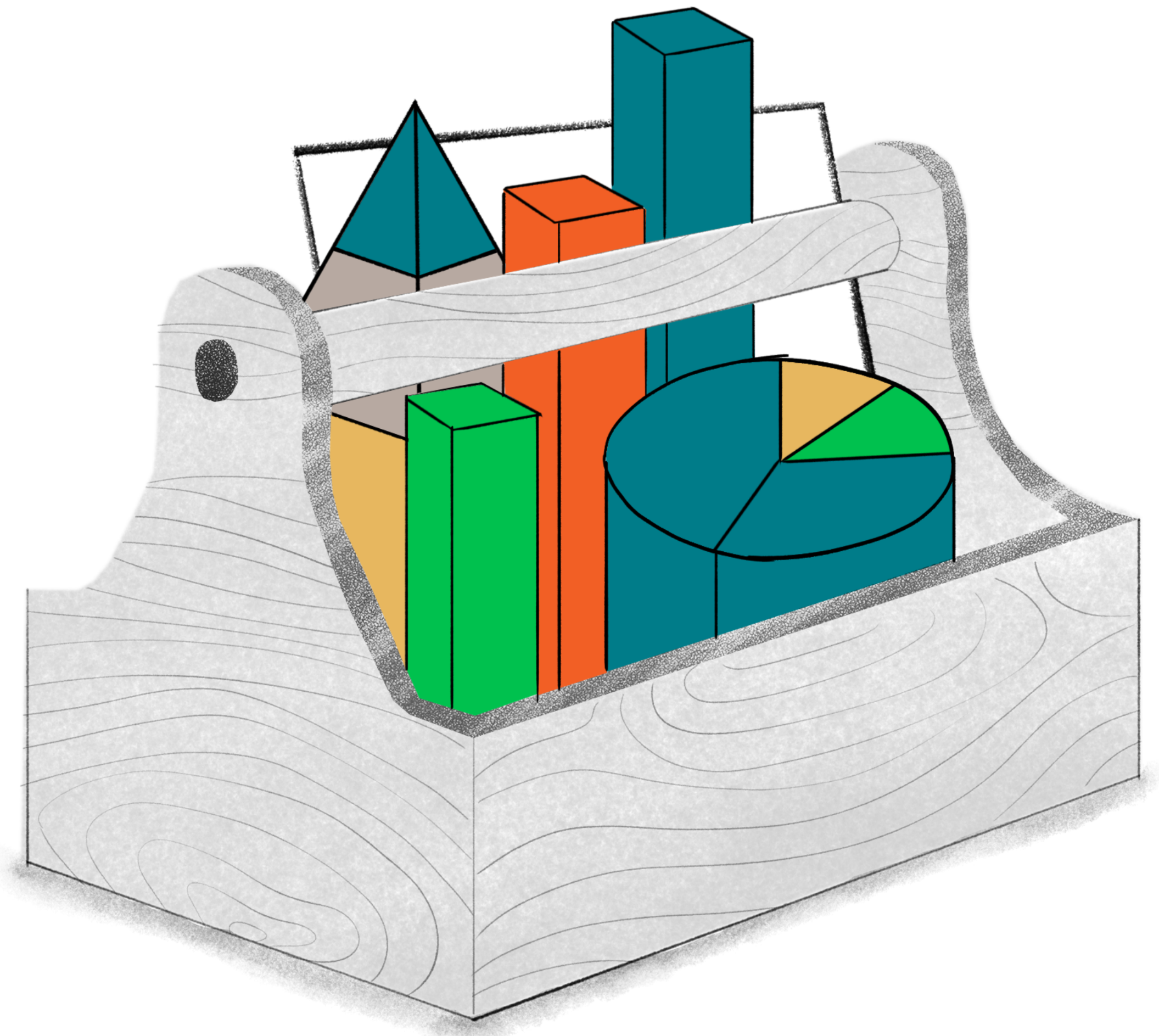
Get to work

Now let's look at the resources available to you within Mailchimp to help you turn your marketing data into actionable insights. The features and functionality vary according to your plan, but both the Standard and Premium paid plans offer plenty of tools to help you set up a smart reporting and analytics process. These include the ability to create integrated reports that give you key insights on a single dashboard. The new features include:

- **Enhanced audience analytics:** a unified, actionable view of audience growth and engagement metrics across multiple channels.

You have a single source of insight on which to base timely, data-driven decisions to achieve your marketing and revenue goals.

- **Accurate, flexible revenue attribution:** new attribution windows and controls, helping to demonstrate ROI through improved analysis of your brand influence and marketing impact.
- **In-depth insights on conversion performance:** a new conversion dashboard brings together conversion metrics and store activity to provide actionable insights, such as where automations might boost conversions and drive higher sales growth.²



Pictures and visions

Your dashboards are your portals into the world of your customers and their relationship with you. It should show you how your marketing activity affects their behavior, what floats their boats, and what makes their hearts sink. At the same time, they should show you how much of a mark you’re making with your money.

You can use different levels of reporting and analysis according to the information you need. The dashboards and visualization tools within Mailchimp (check your plan for details) can provide you with an overview of metrics such as marketing, store and contact activity and engagement. But then, if numbers are your thing, you can get deep into the data and do more granular investigations.

A good dashboard includes a range of functions to make it easy to work with your data:

Customizable reporting features:

Your reporting and analytics need to work for everyone who needs them, from marketing managers to C-suite executives. You might want daily tactical reports for team members, weekly summaries for managers, and monthly strategic overviews for executives. [Mailchimp Custom Reports](#) can provide automated report generation, scheduled email updates, and the ability to drill down into specific metrics for deeper analysis.²

Intuitive user experience:

The dashboard's interface should offer clear navigation and logical organization of information. You must be able to find what you need quickly, without having to click through multiple screens, or make sense of complicated layouts.

Unified insights:

You need to pull data from various sources—social media platforms, your CRM dashboard, email marketing tools, website analytics, and more—into a single, unified view. Seeing the key metrics from each channel in one place can save hours of switching between platforms and manual analysis.

Visualization:

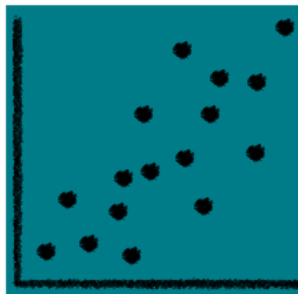
Your data is trying to tell you something. But not all data speaks the same language. Charts and graphs help you see at a glance what the data is saying, but you need to choose the right visual format to make sense of each data set.



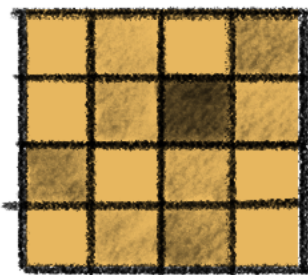
- **Pie Charts** provide quick and clear comparisons between segments or categories, with simple color coding to show which group is which. You can see immediately which groups are dominant and which are less significant.



- **Line Charts** are the most useful way to visualize changes over time, because they can show small changes over shorter periods, as well as longer-term trends. It's easier to spot the variations when you can plot the data over shorter or longer periods.



- **Scatter Plots** are used when you have two variables that pair well together. A scatter diagram makes it easier for people to see the relationship between the two factors, and work out what it means for your business.



- **Heat Maps** are used widely in website analysis, because they show clearly where the hotspots are on a page, and how customers are engaging with the different elements. You can see what's working well, or what's in need of attention, and test the insight on other areas of your site.



- **Bar graphs** are great for showing differences in size or quantity between categories and classes. A vertical bar chart is helpful when comparing different categories, such as age groups or product classes. A horizontal bar chart is ideal if you're showing categories with long names.

See what happiness looks like

Understanding your audiences

Getting to know them

We're now at the heart of the matter. That is, we're focused on how your customers are feeling. The charts, the dashboards, the insights, they're all ways to get to know your customers better, and give them a better experience, no matter how they interact with you.

You grow revenue by inspiring existing customers to spend more, more often, and by winning the hearts and minds of new customers. You grow profit by serving those customers' wants, needs and expectations as efficiently as you can, with minimal waste of your sales and marketing spend.

This makes audience analytics one of the most important functions of your reporting and analytics process. Marketers talk about personalization, content optimization, customer advocacy and a wealth of other jargon terms that are actually important issues. And all of them need reliable reporting and smart analysis of the reported data.

Mailchimp's audience analytics tools allow you to track a wide range of key factors, including the channels that are bringing the most new contacts, and many more variables.



Meet your ideal customer

As your understanding of your audience grows, you can build ideal customer profiles (ICPs), setting out the parameters that define your most profitable and loyal customers. An ICP forms a kind of benchmark, against which you can measure new contacts and determine how closely they fit the profile.

You can have more than one ICP, depending on the product range or services that you offer. The profile helps you zero in on the customers who align best with your portfolio of offerings. Instead of casting a wide net, you focus your resources on connecting with the people most likely to buy, stay loyal, and recommend you to others. This approach streamlines your marketing efforts, improves customer acquisition, and boosts long-term growth.

What will be

A deeper pool of management information also means you can apply the insights to predictive analysis. Mailchimp is equipped with several predictive analytics tools (check your plan for details) that can help with tasks such as testing, forecasting and strategic planning.

The great advantage of working with data-driven predictive tools is that your forecasts and predictions are based on hard evidence. While it's true that past behaviors do not guarantee future actions—we're only human, after all—in direct marketing and e-commerce, our choices are often far more predictable than we might like to think.

You can configure your analysis to show what customers have in common, and where they are different from each other. This allows you to trial offers that have worked in one segment in a segment that, at face value, has nothing in common with another group. The data might show you that the second group actually responds to certain types of offer, or certain messages, in a similar way to the first.

Channel your energy

Tracking the performance of your communications

Communications build-up

The reporting and analytics tools within Mailchimp can give you rich detail on the key areas of your digital marketing (check your plan for details), including email, SMS, social media, and your ecommerce site.

Check your email

Your email reporting begins with an overview showing the key elements of the campaign. Alongside essentials like open rate and click rate, the report includes details such as the number of recipients, the number of orders generated and the total revenue. You can also see which links performed best and how the email compares with industry benchmarks.

You can dig deeper into the individual variables for more insights that can help improve performance for the next round of activity. If you have integrated your Mailchimp account with Facebook, you can see the impact the email had on the social sphere in the shape of likes, clicks, shares, and other factors.

There is also an E-commerce tab within your email report, which provides a breakdown of each recipient's purchases, so you can quickly identify who bought what after opening your email. If your email includes products from multiple connected stores, you can filter the purchase data by each store.



Read more into texts

You have similar reporting and analytics capabilities for your SMS campaigns, with an overview that includes audience details, a preview of the message and the amount of SMS credits used. Note that the information in your SMS report is specific to your SMS marketing program’s sending country.

The Monitor Performance section shows the number of subscribed contacts a message was sent to and the percentage of messages that were successfully delivered to a recipient. The click rate tells you which messages registered a click, and the unsubscribed rate shows the percentage of contacts who unsubscribed from a successfully delivered message.

If you have implemented Mailchimp’s ecommerce integrations, such as Shopify or WooCommerce, you can see metrics such as revenue, the number of orders, and average order revenue.

Stay commercially minded

Depending on your Mailchimp plan and integrations, your ecommerce dashboard can serve as the command center of your business, bringing together all your critical metrics and KPIs in one place.

Your dashboard can automatically bring together information from your marketing tools, inventory system, and other platforms to create easy-to-digest visual reports.

You can track revenue, analyze customer purchase patterns, and measure marketing ROI. You have a unified view of key business metrics and goals for all stakeholders and team members.

Key metrics to track include:

- Sales, including total revenue and sales growth over time
- Average order value (AOV)
- Conversion rates by channel

Your ecommerce reporting and analytics can also track factors such as the value of a customer to your business over time, cart abandonment rates, and customer retention rates.

Getting better and better

Rely on your metrics to drive growth

Honest insight

The real value in reporting and analytics lies in the proof it gives you of the success—or otherwise—of your strategy and your messaging. Data doesn't hold back: it'll show you the good news, but if something isn't working, it'll tell you straight. The key is to rely on the numbers and take the necessary action.

We've seen how lessons learned in one campaign, or from the response of a particular audience segment, can be applied to other activities. Continuous testing and monitoring allow you to respond quickly to opportunities for improvement, or to troubleshoot in areas that are not up to scratch.

Positive optimization

The channels you're measuring rely on words and pictures to convey your message. Every word, every punctuation mark, every tint or crop, can make a meaningful difference to the performance of each asset, whether it's an email, an SMS message or a page on an ecommerce site.

You can configure your reporting and analytics processes to track key elements of your content, so you can see what works and what misses the mark. If you, or your creatives, have come up with an approach that is not meeting your targets, you'll just have to accept that what you love isn't what your audience likes!



Content consultant

Every email or SMS send adds to your knowledge. You don’t have to make drastic changes if you're worried about the impact of a particular asset. A simple layout adjustment or rephrasing of a headline might make all the difference.

Each time, it’s personal

The other great benefit of effective reporting and analysis is the ability to personalize messaging and content to different audience groups. The more you know about your audiences, the more you are able to adapt offers and messaging to suit their tastes and preferences.

Personalization is a subtle art. You can trust your audience to be smart enough to recognize when an offer is relevant to them, without you having to spell it out.

Using the insights gained from your analytics, you can create customer experiences that help customers feel valued and respected.

A great many factors can influence this. Some customers might appreciate more frequent communications, others may become resistant if you contact them more than once a quarter. Some will be price sensitive, others might be irritated by too many attempts to cross-sell or upsell.

Every interaction, or even lack of interaction, tells you a bit more about your customers. You can refine your customer segments, or create new segments based on the characteristics that become apparent as the data becomes more detailed.

Contented customers

These same insights loop back to your content creation. If there is a particular aspect of your product or service that seems to appeal to your customers, then you can invest in content that explores that aspect in more detail.

The best content is always fresh, relevant and valuable to the reader. The language and the presentation are important, especially to keep customers engaged as they read, but in the end it’s the subject matter that will capture their attention and make them want to click, download, or get in touch.

A lot of knowledge is a valuable thing

Your marketing speaks volumes: you just have to listen and learn

Where art meets science

Marketing, even automated, digital marketing, is a human thing. We, as humans, are trying to persuade other humans to listen to us, and to take actions that they might not even have considered until we suggested them.

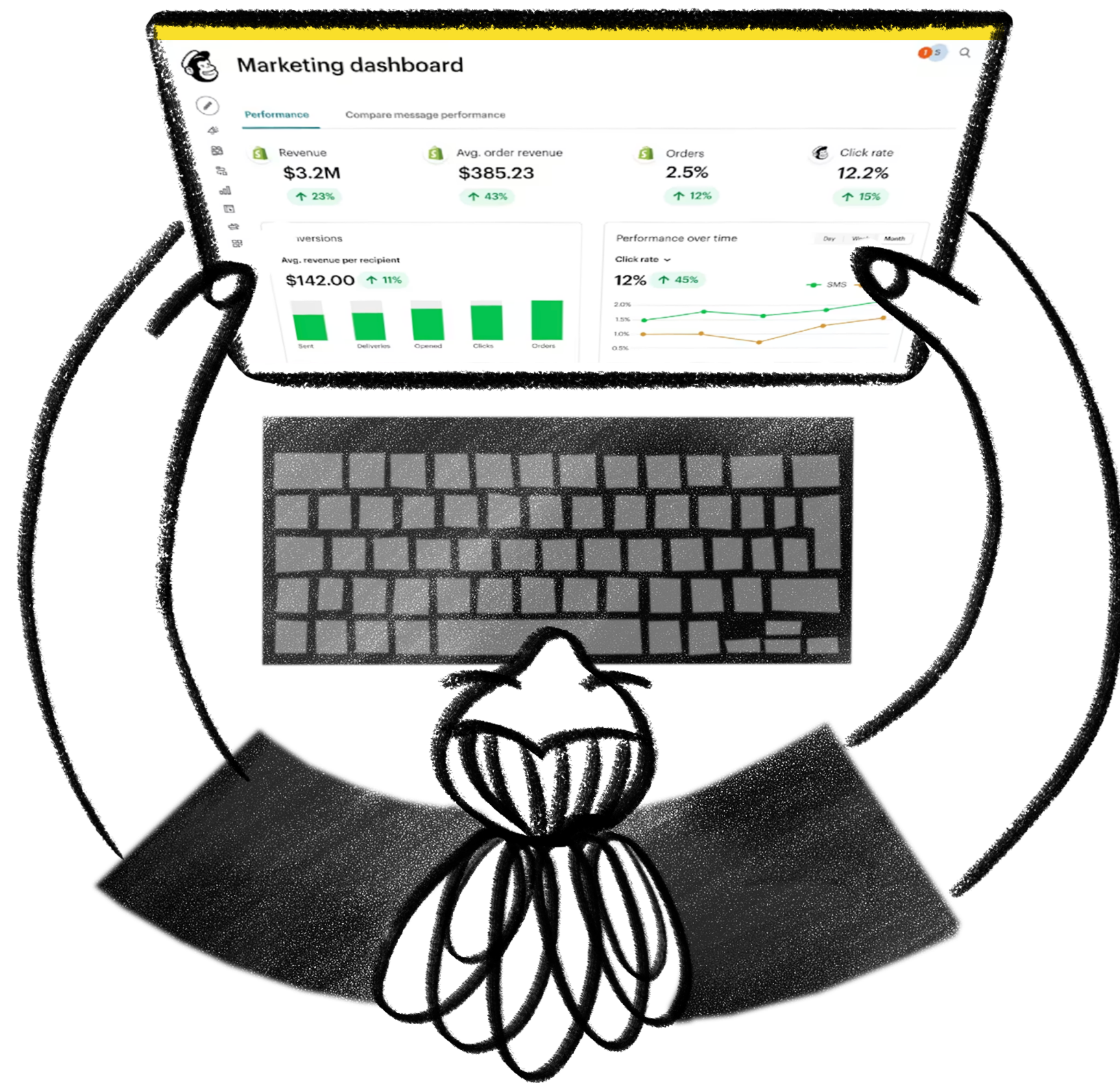
Reporting and analytics use rational, inanimate data to help us shape personalized, human experiences. It's a science, but the interpretation and application of the insights it gives us are more intuitive, almost artistic processes.

Intelligence at your fingertips

The evolution of reporting and analytics technology gives you more marketing insight than ever before. More importantly, it gives you the ability to act swiftly on the intelligence flowing through your dashboards.

The graphic, at-a-glance presentation of key trends allows you to make better-informed, more timely decisions. You can adjust campaigns on the fly, or make more effective plans for your next budget round, based on actual audience behavior and clear patterns and trends





Money matters

And then there's the bottom line, literally. Improved targeting, personalization, and content all serve to drive potentially higher and more profitable revenues. At the same time, you can reduce wasted time and effort, always focusing on the customer profiles that are proven to be responsive and loyal.

With Mailchimp Standard and Premium plans, you have powerful tools that can simplify and automate many of the reporting and analytics processes you need to help grow your business.

You can see how your marketing channels are working together through a single, configurable dashboard, with detailed intelligence on conversion and attribution. And you can see how your ecommerce site is performing, with fresh insight into conversion rates and patterns of purchasing.

There may be no such place as marketing nirvana. But the reporting and analytics tools in the hands of today's marketers mean that we're about as close as we have ever been.

Ready to transform your marketing intelligence?

[Explore Mailchimp ↗](#)

[Sign up now ↗](#)

Footnotes:

- 1. SMS Marketing: SMS is available as an add-on to paid plans in select countries. Application and agreement to terms is required before purchasing credits. Messages can only be delivered to contacts in the country selected. Australia messaging available only for contacts with +61 country code. SMS credits are added to your account after purchase and approval. Credits are issued monthly and unused credits expire and do not roll over. MMS only available for Standard and Premium plans sending to US and Canada contacts. Pricing varies. Click here for details.
- 2. Availability of features and functionality varies by plan type. For details, view plans and pricing.

Disclaimers:

- 1. This content is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For legal questions or concerns, please consult a qualified attorney.
- 2. Integrations sold separately. Availability of features and functionality varies by plan type. Certain functionality described is dependent upon the integration and/or a paid plan. For details, please view Mailchimp’s various plans and pricing.

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