

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Response: Time of Day

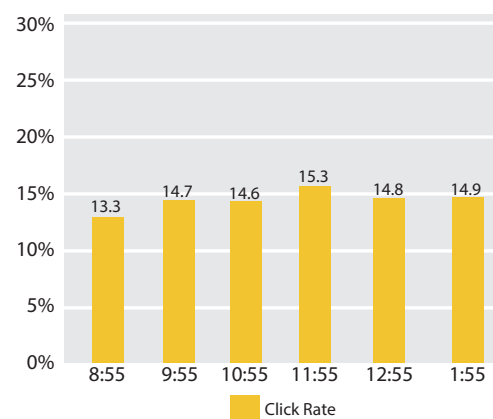
Lunchtime emails maximize click and open rates

Agency Objective. Increase open and click rates in response to an email announcing a workplace survey.

Background. The General Service Administration (GSA)'s Public Buildings Service (PBS) owns or leases over 9,600 assets, with more than 370 million square feet of space for over a million Federal employees.⁷⁹ Each year, PBS sends Federal employees the Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSS), the results of which help determine Federal facilities strategy. In 2014, PBS collaborated with the Social and Behavioral Sciences Team (SBST) to simplify the survey and test different messages for launching the survey, with the goal of increasing response rates.

Methods. In scaling the successful messages from the TSS launch pilot (see above, "TSS Response: Calendar Invite"), PBS spread out the full launch emails among the intended 873,755 recipients over the course of Thursday, July 10, 2014. In order to reduce burden on the survey site contractor and ensure the site operated, the same email was scheduled to be sent to randomly selected groups of 96,000 federal employees every hour over the course of the day (at 8:55 a.m., 9:55 a.m., etc.) (all send times Eastern). The response to these launch emails overloaded the survey contractor's website, and further emails were postponed following the 1:55 p.m. email (the remaining workers were sent launch emails over the following week; see below, "TSS Response: Subject Lines and Day of Week"). Data on recipient agency and location came from Office of Personnel Management (OPM) records. GovDelivery, the email service, provided data on email open and click rates.

Results. Relative to the 8:55 a.m. send, the highest email open and click rates came near noon, at the 11:55 a.m. send. Controlling for the effects of states and agency of recipients, emails sent at 11:55 a.m. had an open rate that was 2.5 percentage points higher ($p < 0.01$, 95% CI [2.16, 2.86]), and a click rate that was 1.5 percentage points higher ($p < 0.01$, 95% CI [1.19, 1.82])—that is, sending emails three hours later meant that approximately 1,500 more people read and followed through on the email request.



Conclusions. Lunchtime was a better time of day than 9 a.m. to send workplace survey requests to a work email address to maximize open and click rates. These lessons may be useful for other broad workplace requests. Moreover, the methods of testing different times of sending workplace email requests are more broadly applicable across the Federal Government.

⁷⁹ Background information on the Public Buildings Service is available here: gsa.gov/portal/content/104444