

# **Executive Summary Report**

**Project Title:** Email Effectiveness When Changing Cadence

**Client:** Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc. (AWG)

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## 1. Introduction

Associated Wholesale Grocers (AWG), the largest cooperative food wholesaler in the U.S., serves over 1,100 member companies and 3,400 locations across 31 states. In 2023, AWG Brands' marketing emails were sent bi-weekly. In 2024, this cadence shifted to weekly. This study evaluates the impact of this change in cadence on email engagement and recommends the most effective strategy moving forward.

## 2. Objectives

- Analyze two years of email marketing metrics.
  - Compare engagement rates across different cadences.
  - Identify high- and low-performing domains and URLs.
  - Provide a data-driven recommendation for the optimal email frequency.
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## 3. Key Findings from the Exploratory Data Analysis

### 3.1 Overall Engagement Trends (2023 vs 2024)

#### Open and Click Rates:

Engagement was generally higher in 2023, with more domains showing strong performance. In 2024, most domains saw a decline in open and click activity. Only a few domains maintained or slightly improved.

#### Click-to-View Ratios:

Click-to-view performance was stronger overall in 2023. While some domains improved in 2024, most showed a slight drop. The overall conversion from views to clicks was more consistent in 2023.

### **Engagement Distribution and Patterns:**

Engagement was more evenly distributed and higher in 2023. In 2024, engagement became more concentrated at lower levels. Fewer domains showed improvement.

### **Overall Engagement Shift:**

2023 showed stronger and more balanced engagement. In 2024, overall interaction declined. High-performing domains remained stable, but most others dropped.

## **3.2 Engagement by Time of Day and Month**

### **Engagement by Time of Day:**

**Morning (9–10 AM) is the optimal time to send emails to maximize opens and clicks.**

- **Highest Engagement at 9 AM**

In both 2023 and 2024, Total Views % peaked around 9:00 AM, indicating that recipients are more likely to open emails in the morning. Multiple views suggest that morning emails not only attract attention but are also revisited more often.

- **Stable Unique Views % Throughout the Day**

The Unique Views % remained relatively stable across different hours, implying that unique opens are evenly distributed throughout the day, but repeated views are concentrated in the morning.

- **Clicks Slightly Peak Around 10 AM**

Total Clicks % showed a minor peak around 10:00 AM, suggesting that recipients are more likely to engage with links shortly after opening emails in the morning.

- **Consistent Clicks-to-Views Ratio**

The Clicks-to-Views ratio remained stable throughout different times of day, indicating a consistent conversion from views to clicks.

- **Very Low Web Views Across All Times**

The Web Views % remained very low regardless of time, suggesting that recipients prefer reading emails directly within their email client rather than through a web link.

### **Engagement by Month:**

**2023 outperformed 2024 across all metrics.**

**2023 had the strongest engagement during August-September and December.**

**2024 saw an overall decline in engagement, especially after mid-year, indicating the need for improved content and strategy.**

- **Unique Views %:** In 2023, Unique Views % fluctuated and peaked in February and mid-year, while in 2024, it was generally lower and declined significantly after mid-year, increasing only in December.
- **Unique Clicks %:** 2023 showed more volatility but consistently higher unique click rates, especially during the second half of the year. In 2024, Unique Clicks % declined steadily, increasing only in December.
- **Total Views %:** 2023 had higher peaks, especially at the beginning and end of the year (around holidays), while 2024 maintained lower and more stable total views.
- **Total Clicks %:** 2023 experienced a noticeable mid-year peak, while 2024 showed a gradual decline throughout the year, increasing only in December.
- **Clicks-to-Views Ratio:** 2023 maintained a higher clicks-to-views ratio overall. In contrast, 2024 started similar to 2023 but declined steadily over time, reflecting decreasing link engagement.

### **3.3 Engagement by Domain**

- **Top Performers:**
  1. **awginc.com** have the best performance in both 2023 and 2024
  2. **deleted.emfluence.com** ranked on the second in 2023
  3. **cosentinos.com** and **outlook.com** also performed strongly, but they both showed a noticeable drop from 2023 to 2024
- **Declining Domains:**

1. All the domain shows a declining trend from 2023 to 2024 except the **awginc.com** and **footgiant.com**
  2. **outlook.com**, **gmail.com**, **cobornsinc.com**, and **tcmarkets.com** all declined significantly from 2023 to 2024
- **Positive Outliers:**
    1. **awginc.com** and **footgiant.com** stand out with a noticeable increase from 2023 to 2024.
    2. **robertscompanyinc.com** also saw improvement, although it's still a low-engagement domain overall.

### 3.4 URL Performance and Link Effectiveness

- **2023 Links:**
  1. **Top 5 Common URLs by Unique Clicks**
    - System Link: View As Webpage – 110 clicks
    - Box Link #1– 100 clicks
    - Box Link #2– 180 clicks
    - Box Link #3– 440 clicks
    - Promotions Site (Salesforce) – 520 clicks
    - The Promotions Site led with the highest unique clicks, while all three Box links showed strong engagement, indicating valuable content or repeated internal use. Overall, 2023 URLs reflect well-structured content delivery with high user interest.
  2. **Top 5 Common URLs by Total Clicks**
    - System Link: View As Webpage – 180 clicks
    - Box Link #1 – 280 clicks
    - Box Link #2 – 420 clicks
    - Box Link #3 – 700 clicks
    - Promotions Site (Salesforce) – 900+ clicks
    - The Promotions Site again dominated in total clicks, suggesting not only high reach but also repeat visits. Box links also received heavy use, likely due to multiple access by different users. This reflects strong ongoing content relevance in 2023 campaigns.
  3. **View Percentage Analysis**
    - **Yearly Average View Percentage:**

2023: ~3.2%

2024: ~2.1%

View rate in 2023 was significantly higher, indicating stronger user interest in emails that year

- **Monthly Trends:** Peaks observed in March (~4.5%) and September (~6.8%) for 2023 suggest seasonal or campaign-based engagement spikes. 2024 had a single early peak in March (~4.8%), with declining engagement throughout the rest of the year.
- **Distribution Analysis (Boxplot & Histogram):** Both years show a right-skewed distribution—most URLs have low view rates. The skew was more extreme in 2024, suggesting a higher proportion of underperforming links. More high outliers (view percentage > 50%) were observed in 2023.

- **2024 Links:**

1. **Top 5 Common URLs by Unique Clicks**

- System Link: View As Webpage – 130 clicks
- Box Link #1– 130 clicks
- Box Link #2 – 60 clicks
- Box Link #3 – 360 clicks
- Promotions Site (Salesforce) – 950 clicks
- The Promotions Site saw a sharp rise in unique clicks, more than doubling from 2023, likely due to improved visibility or messaging. Other URLs remained stable or dropped slightly, with Box Link #2 notably underperforming year-over-year.

2. **Top 5 Common URLs by Total Clicks**

- System Link: View As Webpage – 260 clicks
- Box Link #1 – 360 clicks
- Box Link #2 – 90 clicks
- Box Link #3 – 650 clicks
- Promotions Site (Salesforce) – 2,100+ clicks
- Total clicks on the Promotions Site more than doubled, confirming its standout role in 2024 campaigns. The rest of the list saw modest shifts, except Box Link

#2, which dropped sharply—possibly indicating relevance issues or reduced audience reach.

3. View Percentage Analysis

- **Yearly Average View Percentage: 2024:** ~2.1%, lower than 3.2% in 2023 suggests a general decline in email engagement and interest in 2024.
- **Monthly Trends:** Peak occurred in **March (~4.8%)**, but view rates declined sharply afterward. Most months in 2024 remained below 2%, signaling weak sustained engagement.
- **Distribution Analysis:** View percentages in 2024 were more right-skewed, indicating a larger share of underperforming URLs. Fewer high-performing outliers (e.g., links with 30%+ views) were observed, pointing to overall decreased impact.

4. Metric Comparison Summary

Metric	2023 (Bi-weekly)	2024 (Weekly)
Total Views %	~35	~24
Unique Views %	~19	~15
Total Clicks %	~13	~6
Unique Clicks %	~3	~2
Clicks-to-Views %	~16	~15
Bounces %	0.43	0.06
Unsubscribes %	0.003	0.007

## 5. Recommendations - Cadence Strategy

Based on the comprehensive evaluation across engagement, deliverability, domain performance, and seasonal responsiveness, we recommend the following:

### i. Adopt a Hybrid Cadence Approach

The analysis indicates that while weekly emails in 2024 provided consistency, they resulted in a decline in overall engagement metrics compared to 2023. Conversely, the biweekly cadence in 2023 achieved higher click-to-view ratios and engagement peaks during key months.

- Continue with **weekly emails** during high-engagement periods such as **September** and **December**, where promotions or seasonal content draw increased attention.
- Revert to a **biweekly cadence** during lower-traffic months such as **April and May** and prevent unsubscribe spikes.

### ii. Segment Lists by Engagement Level

Domain-level analysis revealed varying degrees of engagement across recipients.

- **High-performing domains** such as **awginc.com** and **foodgiant.com** should continue receiving regular weekly content due to their sustained high engagement.
- **Lower-performing domains** should receive more selective and **less frequent** communications. Use **personalized subject lines** and **tailored content** to increase relevance and responsiveness.

### iii. Optimize Email Send Timing

Hourly engagement analysis shows that emails sent in the **9:00 AM to 10:00 AM window** consistently recorded the highest open and click rates.

- Set email dispatch timing within this range to enhance visibility and engagement across recipients.

### iv. Monitor and Optimize URL Performance

Link analytics indicate that a few high-performing URLs drive the majority of clicks, while several underperform consistently.



- Continue tracking **top-performing URLs** and repackage successful ones in future campaigns.
  - Regularly review and revise **underperforming links** to improve user interaction and overall email effectiveness.
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## 6. Conclusion

Overall, the shift from a biweekly to a weekly email cadence resulted in a measurable decline in engagement across most metrics and domains. While certain periods and segments benefited from weekly communications, the broader trend suggests that a more strategic, hybrid approach would better align with recipient behavior and maximize effectiveness. By combining cadence adjustments with engagement-based list segmentation, optimized send times, and continuous link performance monitoring, AWG can strengthen email marketing outcomes, reduce unsubscribe rates, and better sustain customer attention over time.

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