



Marketing Research

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It is with great pleasure to say that working alongside you for this marketing research project has enlightened us and given us real world experience in our field of study. Over the past few months our group has been incredibly dedicated in acquiring significant data and information that can be further utilized for your dealership

With this project we have seen the hardships and obstacles that come along in the industry. This experience has provided all of our group members with very valuable interpersonal skills that we can further put to the tests on our own individual paths.

Below you will find our group members' methods of contact if you have any follow up questions or concerns in regards to the report. Our most preferred method of communication is email, however if you do require immediate assistance feel free to directly contact us.

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One last time, we would like to say thank you for allowing us this opportunity to grow as dedicated students, for you prompt communication to any questions we had and for showing us around your beautiful dealership. We hope that our findings will provide aid to your constant search for a viable, definite answer to your issues.

Best regards,

Andrei Roman, Sujay Sedani, Jordan Mayers, Jack Koski

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Executive Summary

Lexus of Edmonton is the leading luxury car dealership in Edmonton and currently seeking to optimize and improve their email marketing campaigns. At the beginning of the semester, our group was tasked with finding the right email marketing frequency, and ways to improve their email marketing efficiency. We specifically focused on the luxury car owner segment and how they responded to email marketing. In addition, we had a target demographic of 18-65-year olds. Throughout the three months of the research, our report garnered the inefficiencies of email marketing practices and most importantly how they could be improved. The report also shows how newsletter subscribers interact, what times they are likely to open an email, and what device they view the email on. The research project included a literature review, four in depth interviews, and 146 participants from our questionnaire. The questionnaire included twelve structured questions that would produce data that could be extrapolated and lead to our main findings.

Our main findings include 111 of our 146 participants (76%) use their smartphones to access emails. More specifically, those aged 35 and younger are more likely to check emails on their smartphones. This shows that the days of using a computer to check your emails are becoming obsolete. The other major finding includes the statistical evidence of a high correlation with the age group of 18-35 checking their emails in the afternoon (12 PM- 6 PM) and those aged 36 and older check emails in the morning (6 AM-12 PM). Also, a majority of the 146 participants preferred the emails to be bi-weekly or monthly as opposed to a few times during the week. Another major finding of this research project is that Lastly, our questionnaire participants preferred to open emails that provide maintenance and service reminders, so they know when to come back to Lexus of Edmonton.

In conclusion, our data illustrated that it would be beneficial to send monthly or bi-weekly emails compared to sending multiple emails per week. In terms of email content, the newsletter subscribers are looking for relevant content and if it is not providing value to them then it is likely they will unsubscribe. To conclude, there has been an increase of everybody using their smartphones to check emails and it would strongly recommend that Lexus of Edmonton optimizes their emails for mobile devices as the currently do not. By making this change, this will both increase the open rate and the click through rate of emails, while simultaneously reducing the unsubscribe rate.

Problem Definition

Background

Lexus of Edmonton is an automotive dealership located in the West End of Edmonton, Alberta that offers prospective customers an innovative approach to buying a new or used Lexus vehicle. What separates this dealership from others of different or the same brand, is showing customers a luxury experience separate from purchasing a vehicle. Lexus of Edmonton also boasts the highest online reviews in the country on multiple channels, valuing the consumer experience above all else. Currently, Lexus of Edmonton is struggling to improve consumer involvement in their email marketing campaigns and have seen customer unsubscription rates increase as a result. The initial issue was thought to simply be the frequency of emails sent leading to boredom and complacency of customers ignoring the emails. However, the issue stems from several underlying problems such as lack of proper segmentation strategy, emails having no relevance to the recipient, and the overall formatting of emails not being useful for those using mobile devices. The purpose of this research project is to collect qualitative and quantitative data that explores the preferences of consumers regarding email marketing campaigns, while remaining focus on the target market and their preferred frequency of receiving emails from an automotive dealership.

Tasks Performed

Prior to administering and creating the questionnaire, we performed many tasks related to discovering consumer preferences regarding email marketing campaigns. The initial process was to conduct secondary research through scholarly articles, news journals, and company websites to find out more background about the industry, as well as individuals' overall beliefs about email marketing. This provided many useful insights regarding the general effectiveness of email marketing campaigns and after analyzing the overall industry it was made clear that finding effective means of reaching prospective consumers through email channels is increasingly challenging, though important facet of organizational management and marketing.

Prior to conducting thorough secondary we had a meeting with our client, Lexus of Edmonton and met with our client representatives in charge of this research project to further define the management research problem and discover insights about the dealership and the overall industry. This allowed us not only to meet the individuals in charge of the day-to-day life of the dealership, but also provided qualitative information pertaining to the values and identity of Lexus of Edmonton.

After secondary research and the initial meeting with our client was conducted, we were then able to formulate potential areas of research for the remainder of this project. We decided the best and most efficient method of conducting qualitative research was through in-depth interviews. The reason we decided to use this qualitative method, instead of focus groups, was to have the freedom to interview individuals from different areas of interest (current Lexus of Edmonton vehicle owner, executives and sales personnel from other dealerships, and an email marketing expert) to uncover as thorough and relevant topics of interest.

Once the interviews were conducted, analyzed, and interpreted we were able to create themes relating to the responses we received based on the questions asked. After the themes were created, we were able to develop more in-depth areas of interests and create a questionnaire that would be released online aiming at the target market, while collecting general results from consumers pertaining to email marketing campaigns. The questionnaire consists of twelve questions relating to consumer preferences about email marketing campaigns while collecting pertinent demographic information to relate the target market to email preferences. The results have been collected and disseminated in-depth, we have conducted various forms of data analysis in relation to the results received.

With all these steps completed in the correct order we were able to analyze our results in the most effective way and simplify the issue presented by management of Lexus of Edmonton. With this method we were also able to find areas of interest previously not researched that may prove useful to increase consumer involvement and open rates.

Definition of the Management and Marketing Research Problem

Management Problem

The management problem is simply finding ways to increase exposure and action of consumers through email marketing campaigns. Management at Lexus of Edmonton is concerned with the frequency of emails sent. They believe that they are not achieving a proper, consistent number of emails sent to consumers and this is causing an increase in customers unsubscribing.

Marketing Research Problem

The marketing problem is identifying and interpreting the various reasons for consumers unwillingness to not only open emails sent by Lexus of Edmonton, but why consumers are reluctant to receive or even open these emails in the first place. Through the secondary research discovered in the literature report, the questions devised for the in-depth interviews are tailored to find out the accuracy of information. The marketing research problem attempts to identify the potential underlying causes of rising unsubscription rates, not only pertaining to the frequency of emails, but improving content and segmentation strategies to provide consumers with information they would find important and increasing open rates.

Analytical Framework

In order to define the framework of this research study and define the marketing research problem, initial qualitative and quantitative research must be conducted through in-depth interviews and secondary research gathering, respectively. The purpose of this research project was to determine the optimal frequency of business to consumer email marketing campaigns and uncover a multitude of underlying problems potentially resulting in lack of consumer involvement pertaining to email campaigns. We created specific research questions of interest relating to the data gathered through primary and secondary research methods. Below is an analysis of the research questions and hypothesis of each, as well as a description of the quantity and quality of qualitative and quantitative data collected.

Literature Review

The first step we took to develop our analytical framework was gathering pre-existing, relevant information around our research problem. To gather this secondary data, we conducted a literature review, where we analyzed 20 peer-reviewed, scholarly articles. The information we wanted to obtain from this analysis pertained to improving Lexus' understanding of consumer's email preferences. Our research revolved around email frequency, content, marketing factors, other email metrics, as well as consumer demographics and marketing specific to the automotive industry. The articles we found became incredibly useful in giving us background knowledge surrounding the potential research questions we were hypothesizing. We started our research broadly and found some conclusive evidence of this marketing channels importance. Email marketing is shown to be one of the most effective advertising campaigns still relevant to today, according to a vast majority of marketers "email generates the highest ROI compared to all other marketing channels" (Campaign Monitor, 2018).

This is useful information, but we needed to find out how often consumers should be contacted. Upon further research, we discovered that many other companies were having problems with their email campaigns. A research study by Xi Zhang, Kumar, and Koray Cosguner examines the average monthly email frequency, open rates, and purchase decisions finding that when the retailer sent about 6.9 emails, the consumers opened only 1.64 of those emails and made 0.69 purchase decisions related to the email itself (2017). This data showed us clearly that consumers aren't opening all of the emails that a business sends them. The goal then is to increase open rates and directly influence consumers purchase habits with useful email marketing campaigns.

To further dissect this issue Zhang, Kumar, and Koray identify three different consumers and analyze the differences in open rates and purchase decisions to see how the same email can influence individuals differently. Customer 1 had low in opening emails and making purchase decisions, Customer 2 was average, and Customer 3 was high in both areas. Their findings were probably what anyone would expect, the first consumer didn't read emails thus made very little purchase decisions, the second consumer showed direct correlation between opening emails and making purchase decisions, however not as many as the third consumer who opened emails at the highest frequency and made not only more purchase decisions but spent more money and time

reading emails (Zhang, Kumar, Koray, 2017). These findings display the effectiveness of segmenting different groups of consumers to increase impact; the consumer with the highest open rates and purchase behavior should receive the highest, content rich frequency of emails. A segmentation strategy is definitely a smart idea, that's if you have the pre-existing required email metric information to base the decision off of.

Another aspect we wanted to learn more about is the platform that users are regularly checking their emails on. Joanna Pachner emphasizes the importance of the distinction between different devices stating that emails received on mobile devices must be structured differently; a more concise and easily readable message with “key info placed high” (2014), having high action links and buttons, and “reduce overcrowding” (2014). The age group predominantly checking emails on mobile devices are those 18-24 (89%) and 25-34 (86%) while those aged 35 and older only check emails around 69% of the time on mobile devices (Dietzen, 2017). Those who graduated high school are twice as likely to use primarily mobile technology (Gallagher et. al., 2017). Through this data we gained the knowledge that there was a key distinction between different platforms, and an increasing large focus towards mobile devices.

With the secondary data we've already collected, we wanted to get a better understanding of what makes email marketing campaigns effective, and whether they can be improved. From our research, we found the email content is the most important part of the email. Assuming there is an enticing subject line, the next part you will be drawn to is the email's content. Based on a study done in Finland, the following metrics were realized. Firstly, the click through rate of the average email is 16% and an open rate of 20% (Merisavo 2004). Further in this study we learned that link placement determines the probability of getting a click. An email can be looked at as four regions. The northeast (67%) and northwest (58%) regions of an email receive the most and least amount of click respectively (Kumar, 2018). In general, the north half of an email gets more clicks compared to the bottom half. The email content must give a reason for the subscriber to open it, and most importantly stay subscribed. It may be easy to replace a newsletter subscriber, but not easy to replace the same loyalty that one had. The subject line is a specific area of interest for any organization, as it is the first point of communication with the consumer. According to an experimental study done by Navdeep, Wheeler, and Chintagunta, when the recipient's name for example is shown in the subject line the probability of the email being opened by the recipient increases by 20% (2016). These studies gave us a better understanding of the different email qualities that consumers are drawn to and what they hold most important.

Qualitative Research

Through all the secondary data we were able to collect pertaining to the problem that Lexus of Edmonton identified, we were able to formulate a better understanding of the primary research we'd need to obtain. This collection of primary research was done by conducting 4 separate in-depth interviews with industry experts, consumers, and marketing experts. These interviews provided a full, accurate scope to the issue proposed and helped us discover as much useful, specific information relating to the industry while remaining focused on email marketing and the target market. We chose to do in-depth interviews over conducting focus groups because we know the information, we'd gather from our chosen participants would be more conclusive and insightful. We interviewed an automotive mechanic who was also a Lexus customer, an automotive sales and service advisor, an email marketing professional and dealership sales manager. We formed our questions around the secondary data we collected, beginning broad with questions about marketing campaigns in general, then moving towards more email specific questions. We wanted to get opinions, attitudes and beliefs of our participant's towards different aspects of email content, and email metrics such as frequency, open rates, CTRs, CTAs, etc. Using the interview transcripts, we then synthesized the answer's into codes and formed themes off of similarities we found.

One of the first important themes we found was related to email frequency. From our gathered primary data, we've hypothesized that companies should avoid sending emails more than bi-weekly. One of Lexus's concerns were also that Lexus Canada send out emails as well. In relation to that, other dealerships communicate with headquarters regarding when the main office is planning to send out an email and then dealerships can choose to skip a week, which is especially beneficial if it is not top of the line content. From communicating with dealership employees, we have understood that they also tend to change their means of communications in order to avoid an abundance of outgoing emails. By not consistently bombarding clients with emails, you can avoid low click through rates and prevent unsubscribe rates from increasing.

The participants we interviewed, though not all were experts in email marketing, either directly or indirectly promoted the idea of segmentation strategy being crucial to any marketing efforts. Specifically pertaining to email marketing, the participants stressed the importance of ensuring the message a business is sending is relevant to the current needs and wants of the consumer. Each interviewee expressed not only the cruciality of proper, effective segmentation strategy to ensure the intended message is received and acknowledged by the consumer, but also stated the consequences of ineffective separation in messages; trust between the business and consumer decreases, the likelihood the consumer believes the message to be spam increases, and consumers tend to ignore future messages, even those that may prove relevant to their needs and wants.

Retention techniques and persuasive writing are also crucial for a successful email marketing campaign. This is noted when you constantly improve a newsletter to tailor it to your customer's liking. This can be made possible with the likes of multivariate testing where you constantly change the bold, italics, and colors to see how the audience reacts. Persuasive writing is imperative for an email newsletters success, it can either convince your customer to respond with a purchase and it could potentially deter them from opening an email again. Another trend

we noticed is that emails should be mobile optimized and catered towards mobile devices. This is noted as almost 70% of the emails you receive you will be opened on your mobile device. If the subscriber opens an email and it shows a bunch of images missing that will cause them to be frustrated and lead to an increase in the unsubscribe rate.

The last important theme we synthesized was that email data statistics are imperative to the success of an email newsletter. Therefore, terms like the subscribe rate and unsubscribe rate should be heavily focused on. It is more common to know why people subscribe rather than why they unsubscribe. This is exactly why there should be a feedback page as to why they are choosing to unsubscribe. The other important terms include open rate and click through rate respectively. The open rate can be increased based on the topic, the relevant information they provide and if the email incentive is enticing enough. The click through rate varies as sometimes the link is worth clicking on if the information is above the link. In conclusion, having a focus on increasing subscribers and maintaining a good open and click through rate will lead to a successful email newsletter campaign.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Component 1: Determine consumers preferred ideal frequency of receiving emails from a business, more specifically an automotive dealership.

Research Question: What is your ideal frequency of receiving emails from a business/organization?

Hypothesis: Based on the in-depth interviews and secondary scholarly articles collected and analyzed, we decided that most consumers would typically prefer bi-weekly emails, that is once every two weeks, is usually the most optimal frequency of sending emails to consumers.

Component 2: Identify which platform/device consumers are using most to check emails to tailor the messages sent to the optimal device. Emails look different on contrasting devices and if the same format is sent to the mass public, the purpose of the message may not be received as intended.

Research Question: What device/platform do you use to check emails most frequently? (Options include: Smartphone, Computer, Tablet, and Other which included Fax Machines)

Hypothesis: We wanted to include a correlation matrix examining age groups and devices used most often to check emails, so the hypothesis we developed was that individuals aged 18-25 would show the highest frequency of checking emails on mobile devices, and those older than 26 would check emails most frequently on a computer. Based on our secondary research this was accurately able to be predicted.

Component 3: Can the current email marketing campaigns sent out by Lexus of Edmonton be improved through modifying qualities of the email, more specifically what qualities of a subject line can be improved.

Research Question: What aspects of an email's subject line would attract you most as a consumer? Please rank each aspect (Ranking: 1-low importance, 5-high importance)

Hypothesis: Based on our primary and secondary research, in-depth interviews and quantitative research, we have concluded that certain aspects of email campaigns subject lines are more desired

or important than others. Out of the five options provided in our questionnaire we believed personalization and having an attractive title would be the most important aspects for consumers.

Component 4: Can the specific times of sending an email be improved to optimize the likelihood the recipient will open the email based on the recipients age.

Research Question: When do you check emails most frequently? What is your current age?

Hypothesis: Based on the quantitative secondary data, we hypothesize that individuals 36 years and older prefer to check their emails in the morning, while those 18-35 are more likely look through their emails in the afternoon or night (12 p.m. - 12 a.m.).

Quantitative Research Design

Target Population, Sampling Frame

When we crafted our questionnaire, the target population that we had in mind were luxury car owners. What we intended to find out was how luxury car owners interact with email marketing practices. With our questionnaire we aimed to target luxury car owners, but we also had answers from people who did not own a luxury car. This happened to be helpful as it gave more insight to compare and contrast how luxury and non-luxury car owners interact with emails. Our target population included luxury car owners that were 18-65 years old and this included some MacEwan University students but more specifically young professionals in the workplace, employees with a large discretionary income, and established executives. The responses were not limited to only local respondents in the Edmonton area. Collectively, we believed that it was better to understand how the vast majority of people that owned luxury cars respond to emails than just a local sample. This in turn proved to be successful as the data gave us high variance and information that can lead our client to changes that will increase interaction from their email list and in turn improve the conversion rate and such. Our group made an emphasis to reach out to people that we personally knew that owned luxury cars so that the data would be accurate.

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Gender		
Male	90	62%
Female	52	37%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
Age		
18-25	101	69%
26-35	22	15%
36-50	12	8%
51-65	8	6%
66 and older	3	2%
Total Respondents	146	100%

Field Work Data Collection

Our data collection included a sample size of 146 participants. Of that sample size, it was determined that 72 of those participants already owned a luxury vehicle. That left 74 responses to non-luxury car owners. Our group was able to get these responses by using Google Forms. Google Forms ended up being the most useful software and it provided us with ample information on the responses we received. In terms of distribution, we distributed the survey to anyone that has luxury vehicles and directly reached them by using Facebook and LinkedIn. Those social media sites gave us some great responses. Then we specifically targeted luxury car owners on Lexus related car forums, and then other luxury car forums on Reddit. In terms of personal interactions, we would ask students from MacEwan University that fit the criteria and call other participants that would help this survey.

We've used a random sampling technique specific to each social media platform. For instance, on Facebook we chose to target every third luxury car page instead of using a random sampling technique based on individuals because we wanted to make sure we were gaining responses from the desired target demographic. Reddit was conducted in a similar manner, where every third luxury vehicle page or email marketing page was contacted and allowed the survey to be posted. On LinkedIn we did use a random sampling technique based on each individual, where we sent the questionnaire to every fifth person on each of our contacts list.

Development of Questionnaire

In terms of developing our questionnaire, we ensured that it was concise but generated responses that we would lead to relevant data that could be extrapolated. A majority of our questions involved topics that were originally found in our literature report. Those particular topics included email frequency, platforms used to check emails, and what is the most important part of an email. In addition, our group ensured that we implemented the sandwich model so that it would retain our respondent into finishing the survey, and not lead to them exiting abruptly. This included asking lighter questions to start the survey, then asking the main questions in the middle, and lastly asking personal questions such as gender towards the end of the questionnaire.

In terms of the questions asked, a majority of them were structured, but for a few of them were opened so that they could enter their opinion. The other portion actually lead to some answers that we did not expect, and actually helped us by getting more opinions from the participants of our survey.

Ethical Issues

The ethical interests of our respondents throughout our project was our utmost care, and we did not run into any ethical issues. When we posted the questionnaire on social media sites, we asked the moderator if it we could be granted consent to post the questionnaire. Also, when we administered the in depth interviews, we made the names of the interviewees private, and made sure they signed a consent form. This was due to confidentiality considerations. In our questionnaire we did ask for the respondent's gender in order to pair the information with our demographics. In our questionnaire we ensured that the gender of our survey participants would only be used as a metric that would be related to email marketing practices. In conclusion, we were

not alerted by the participants or professor that our questionnaire, and in-depth interviews were unethical.

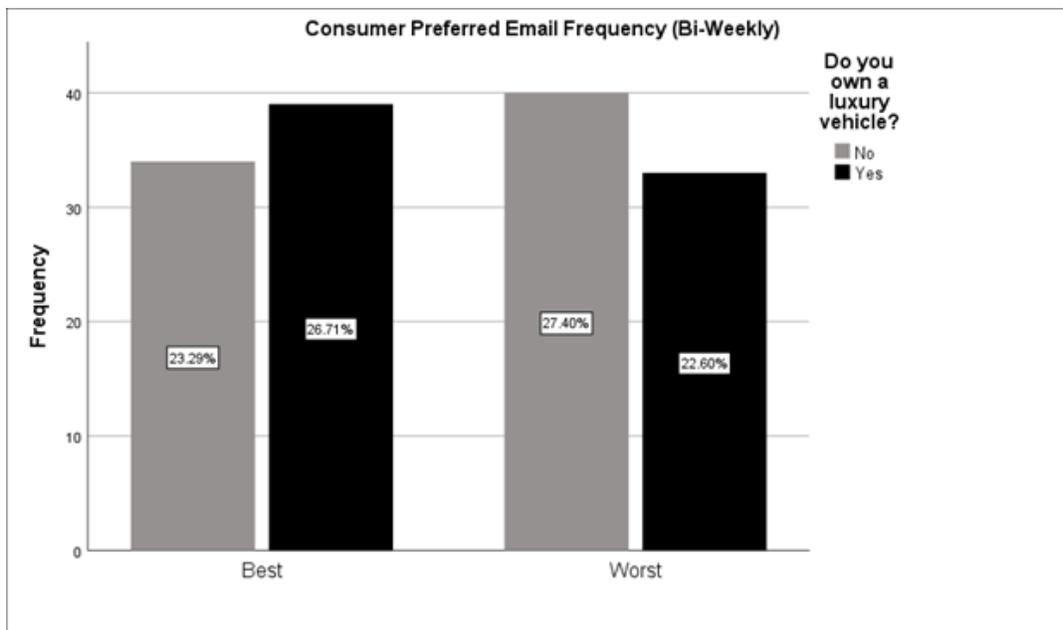
Data Analysis and Results

Hypothesis 1: Based on the in-depth interviews and secondary scholarly articles collected and analyzed, we concluded that most consumers would typically prefer bi-weekly emails, that is once every two weeks, is usually the most optimal frequency of sending emails to consumers. The in-depth interviews also provided insights into the preferences of those who do not currently own luxury vehicles and what their preferred email frequency is.

Bi-Weekly / Ownership Crosstabulation

	Consumer Preferred Email Frequency (Bi-weekly)		Total
	No	Yes	
Best	34	39	73
Worst	40	33	73
Total	74	72	146

(Figure B.1 Frequency Table: Consumer Preferred Email Frequency-Bi-Weekly)



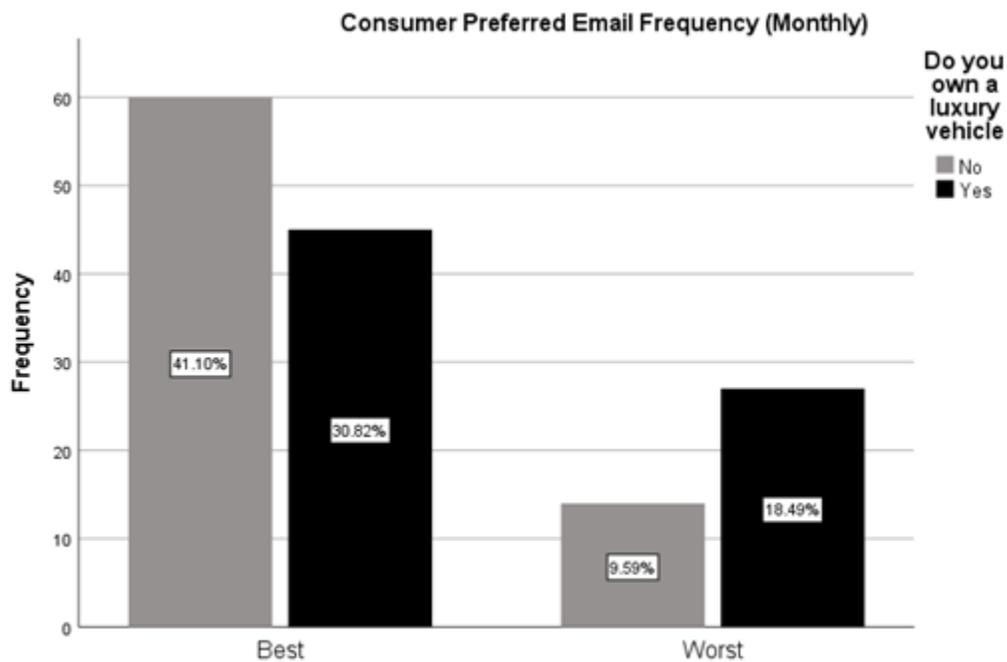
(Figure B.2 Bar Graph: Consumer Preferred Email Frequency-Bi-Weekly)

Monthly / Ownership Crosstabulation

	Consumer Preferred Email Frequency (Monthly)		Total
	No	Yes	
Best	60	45	105
Worst	14	27	41
Total	74	72	146

(Figure B.3 Frequency Table: Consumer Preferred Email Frequency-Monthly)

(Figure B.4 Bar Graph: Consumer Preferred Email Frequency-Monthly)



The most effective data analysis for a concise breakdown of the information collected was found to be a cross tabulation of whether a respondent currently owned a luxury vehicle and what their preferred frequency of receiving emails was found to be. The “best” and “worst” analysis is provided as a result of how we chose to structure the questionnaire, where we asked respondents whether the provided timeline was, in their opinion, the most ideal or least ideal frequency of receiving emails. The purpose of examining whether or not a respondent currently owns a luxury vehicle is to accurately display the data we have collected, while also providing insights into how Lexus of Edmonton should send their emails and how often specific consumers should be contacted. The email campaign Lexus of Edmonton uses doesn’t specifically vary based on the current ownership of a luxury Lexus vehicle, instead emails are sent on the basis of a prior purchase, however individuals may not currently still possess the vehicle they purchased but will still receive emails. It is important to not only be able to communicate messages with existing Lexus of Edmonton customer, but it is also crucial to understand how potential prospective customers and previous owners prefer receiving emails.

The two most consumer preferred frequencies of receiving emails, based on the results of our questionnaire was found to be bi-weekly and monthly emails. It is important to note that in the questionnaire our potential answers also included daily, weekly, a few times a year, and never, however the results predominantly showed that consumer found those frequency options to be the worst, or were simply unrealistic for email marketing campaigns, thus are not included in this data analysis. Based on the data analysis we’ve conducted we can see that bi-weekly emails are fairly even with those who own a luxury vehicle currently prefer this frequency and those who don’t show a lower frequency of preferring bi-weekly emails. From this analysis we can conclude that bi-weekly emails are fairly preferred evenly regardless of current ownership of a luxury vehicle. When analyzing monthly frequency, we see much larger preference for receiving emails on a monthly basis. The results for this specific frequency also show that regardless of current ownership of a luxury vehicle, monthly is by far the most preferred frequency of receiving emails from businesses, more specifically automotive dealerships.

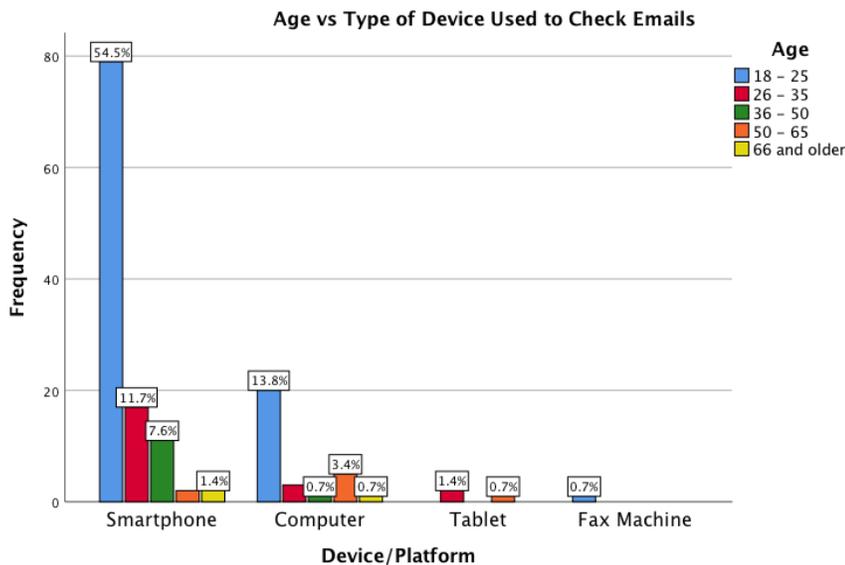
Hypothesis 2: We wanted to include a correlation matrix examining age groups and devices used most often to check emails, so the hypothesis we developed was that individuals aged 18-25 would show the highest frequency of checking emails on mobile devices, and those older than 26 would check emails most frequently on a computer. Based on our secondary research this was accurately able to be predicted.

Age vs Type of Device Used to Check Emails

		Age					Total
		18 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 50	50 - 65	66 and older	
Device/Platform	Smartphone	79	17	11	2	2	111
	Computer	20	3	1	5	1	30
	Tablet	0	2	0	1	0	3
	Fax Machine	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		100	22	12	8	3	145

(Figure C.1 Frequency Table: Age vs Type of Device used to Check Emails)

(Figure C.2 Scattered Bar Graph: Age vs Type of Device used to Check Emails)



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.962 ^a	12	.021
Likelihood Ratio	20.822	12	.053
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.531	1	.060
N of Valid Cases	145		

(Figure C.3 Chi-Square Tests: Age vs Device used to Check Emails)

P-Value = 0.021

Alpha = 0.05

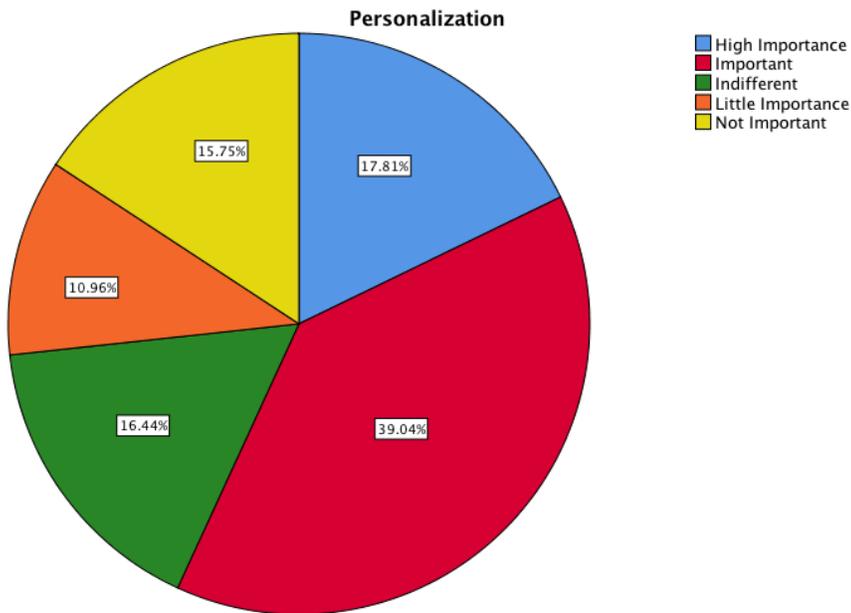
Since $0.021 < 0.05$, we have statistical evidence, based on the results of the questionnaire, that age is significantly related to what device is used to check emails. More specifically, those aged 35 and younger are more likely to access and check emails on mobile devices specifically and those aged older are more likely to check emails on the computer and mobile device. What this data analysis tells us is that mobile devices are highly preferred for checking emails, based on the respondents. Simply by looking at the above graphs and descriptive statistics, we can infer that the use of a smartphone is the most common way that people tend to verify emails. We reject our original hypothesis as the vast majority of all age groups prefer to use their cellular device for checking emails opposed to anything else. It seems as if even the computer is becoming a limited method for verifying the content. Nearly 75% of our sample size preferred using a smartphone and only 20% say that they use a computer. These findings are critically important not only to Lexus of Edmonton, but to email marketing campaigns everywhere. Most emails are structured to be read on a computer format, so if prospective consumers are trying to read certain emails on their smart device, the message is lost and the entire email can look sloppy, reflecting negatively on the business itself.

Hypothesis 3: Based on our primary and secondary research, in-depth interviews and quantitative research, we have concluded that certain aspects of email campaigns are more desired or important than others. Out of the five options provided in our questionnaire we believed personalization and having an attractive title would be the most important aspects for consumers.

Personalization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High Importance	26	17.8	17.8	17.8
	Important	57	39.0	39.0	56.8
	Indifferent	24	16.4	16.4	73.3
	Little Importance	16	11.0	11.0	84.2
	Not Important	23	15.8	15.8	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

(Figure D.1 Frequency Table: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Personalization)

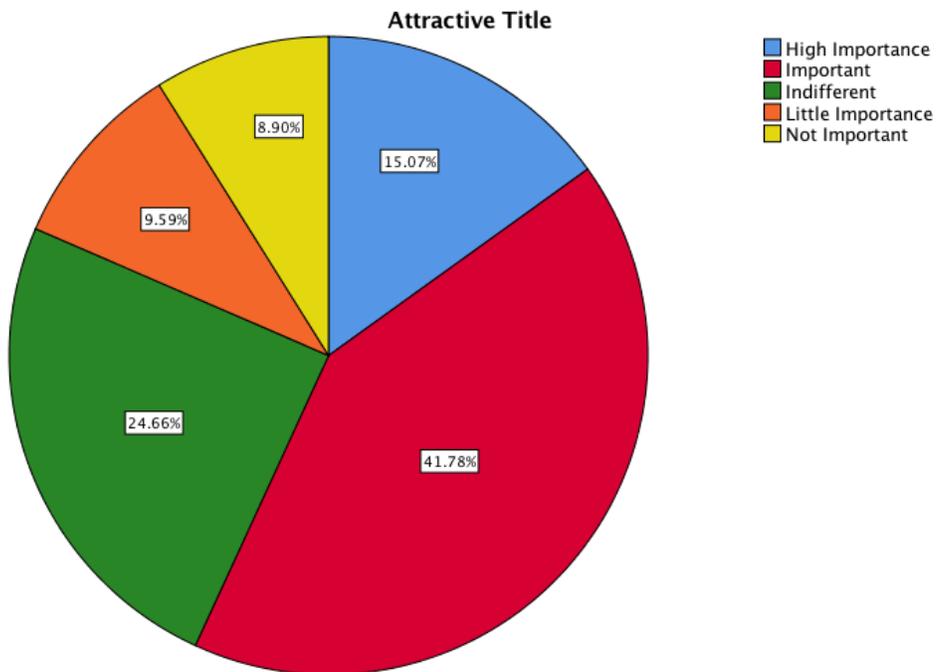


(Figure D.2 Pie Chart: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Personalization)

Attractive Title

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High Importance	22	15.1	15.1	15.1
	Important	61	41.8	41.8	56.8
	Indifferent	36	24.7	24.7	81.5
	Little Importance	14	9.6	9.6	91.1
	Not Important	13	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

(Figure D.3 Frequency Table: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Attractive Titles)

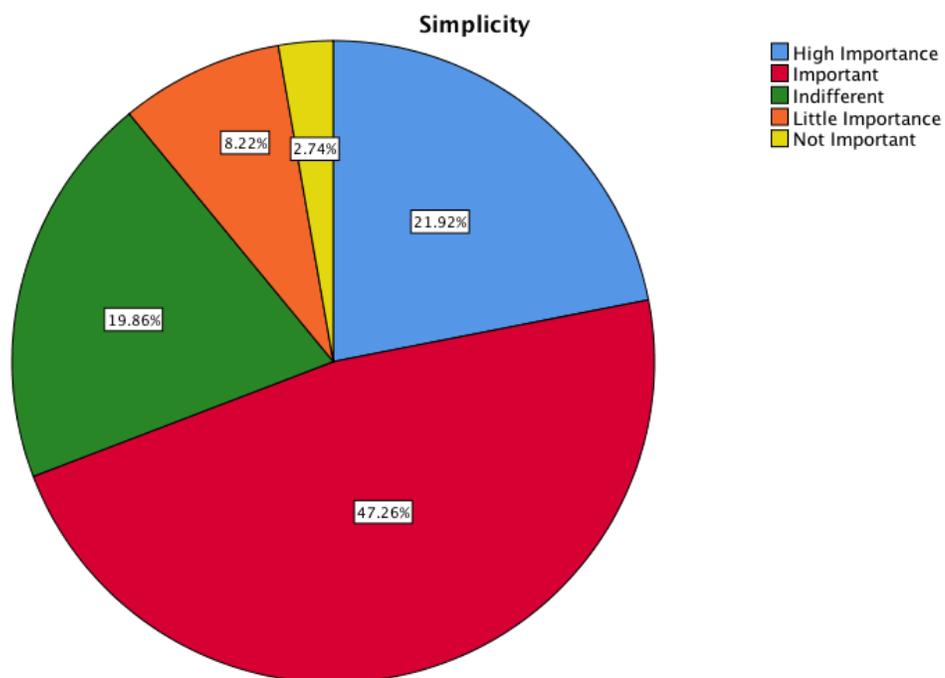


(Figure D.4 Pie Chart: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Attractive Title)

Simplicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High Importance	32	21.9	21.9	21.9
	Important	69	47.3	47.3	69.2
	Indifferent	29	19.9	19.9	89.0
	Little Importance	12	8.2	8.2	97.3
	Not Important	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

(Figure D.5 Frequency Table: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Simplicity)

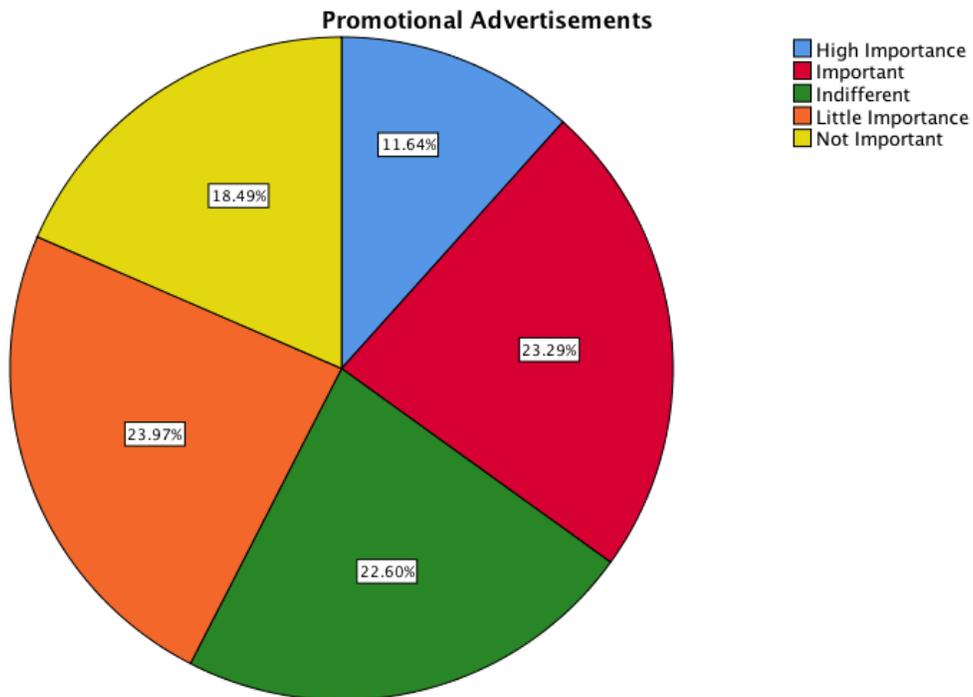


(Figure D.6 Pie Chart: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Simplicity)

Promotional Advertisements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High Importance	17	11.6	11.6	11.6
	Important	34	23.3	23.3	34.9
	Indifferent	33	22.6	22.6	57.5
	Little Importance	35	24.0	24.0	81.5
	Not Important	27	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

(Figure D.7 Frequency Table: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Promotional Advertisements)

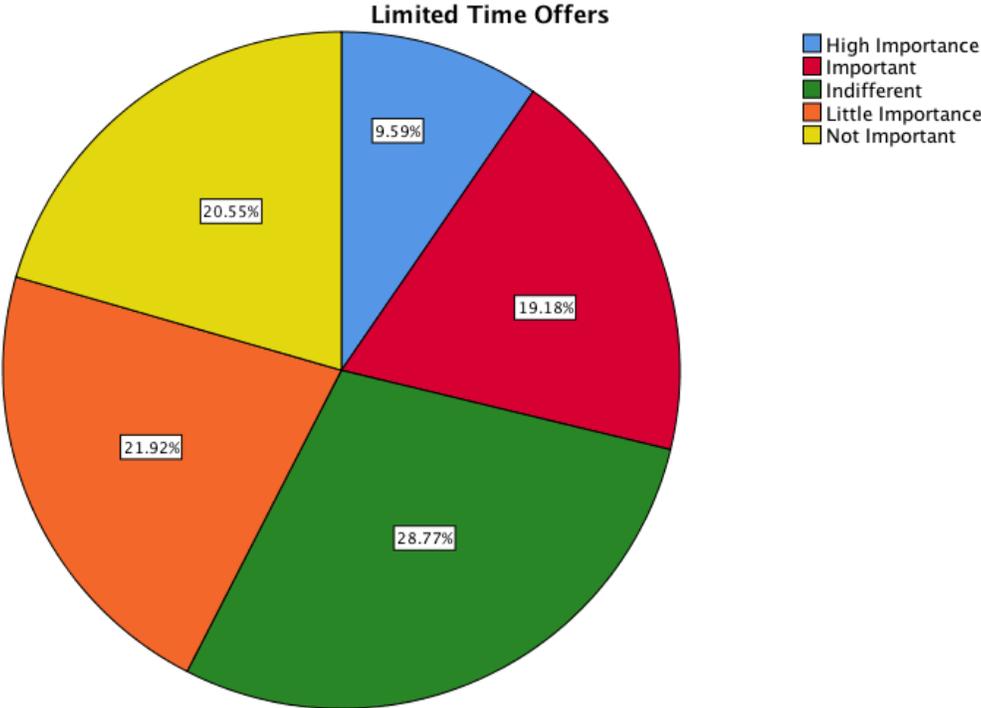


(Figure D.8 Pie Chart: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Promotional Advertisements)

Limited Time Offers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High Importance	14	9.6	9.6	9.6
	Important	28	19.2	19.2	28.8
	Indifferent	42	28.8	28.8	57.5
	Little Importance	32	21.9	21.9	79.5
	Not Important	30	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

(Figure D.9 Frequency Table: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Limited Time Offers)



(Figure D.10 Pie Chart: Aspects of Emails Subject Line-Limited Time Offers)

The subject line is probably one of the most important aspects of any email, potentially more so than the content itself. The subject line is the very first thing the recipient will read prior to opening the email and if it looks like spam or doesn't have relevance to the individual the email is likely to not be opened in the first place. The purpose of this question and the responding data analysis is to discover what aspects of an email's subject line can be improved and what is most attractive, based on consumer preferences.

In our qualitative and quantitative research process we decided to focus on five aspects of an email's subject line: personalization, having an attractive title, simplicity, promotional advertisements, and limited time offers. Based on the data we've collected, and the analysis method used, we can conclude that the most preferred aspect of an email's subject line is simplicity: the percentage of respondents who answered either highly important or important equals 69.18%, while only 10.96% of respondents felt simplicity was of little importance or not important. The least important aspect of an email marketing campaign based on our results is limited time offers (little importance or not important equaling 42.47% of responses) and promotional advertisements (little importance or not important equaling 42.46% of responses). Respondents were also most highly indifferent in these two qualities of subject lines, resulting in 22.6% and 28.77% respectively. Data analysis has been conducted without correlation or cross tabulation methods for the purpose of generalizing the results based on the total amount of responses.

Hypothesis 4: In the quantitative secondary data research process, we discovered that the likelihood of an individual, based on their age demographic those middle-aged and older (40 years and older) will be more likely to check emails in the morning (6 a.m.-12 p.m.) and those younger are more likely to check emails in the afternoon or at night (12 p.m. - 12 a.m.).

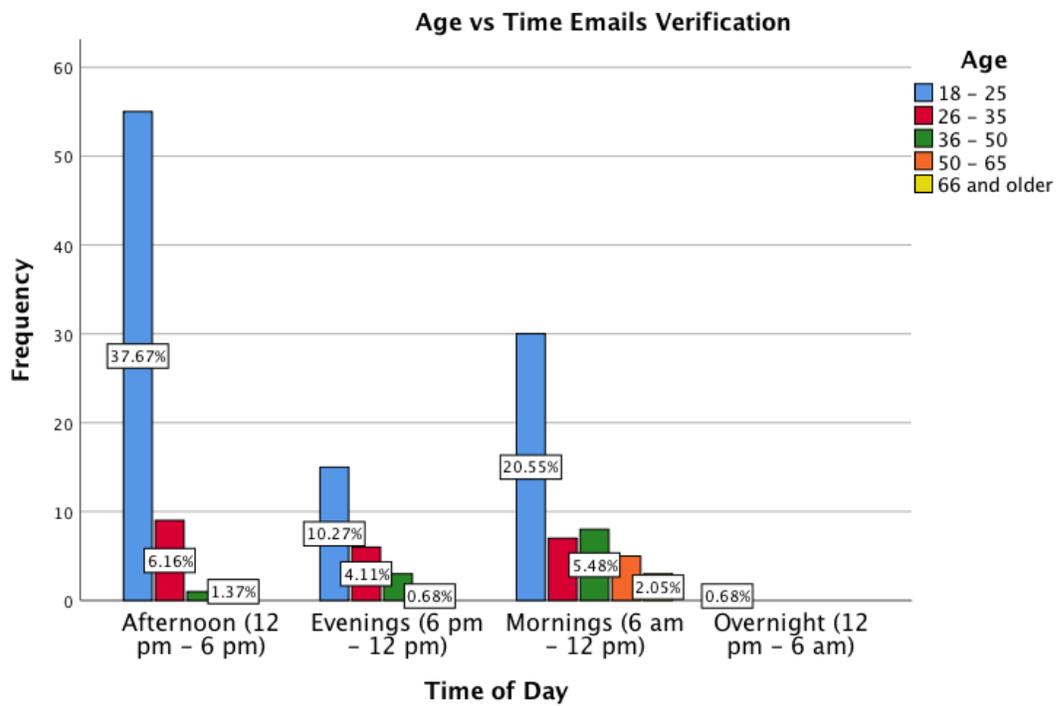
Null Hypothesis (H₀): There are no differences between age ranges in relationship to when individuals check their emails.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There are differences between age ranges in relationship to when individuals check their emails.

Time of Day / Age Crosstabulation

		Age					Total
		18 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 50	50 - 65	66 and older	
When do you check your emails?	Afternoon (12 pm - 6 pm)	55	9	1	2	0	67
	Evenings (6 pm - 12 pm)	15	6	3	1	0	25
	Mornings (6 am - 12 pm)	30	7	8	5	3	53
	Overnight (12 pm - 6 am)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		101	22	12	8	3	146

(Figure E.1 Frequency Table: Age vs When do you Check your Emails?)



(Figure E.2 Stacked Bar Chart: Age vs When do you Check your Emails?)

Hypothesis Testing: Age vs Time Email Verification

Age:

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	14.428 ^a	3	4.809	5.273	.002
Intercept	31.297	1	31.297	34.314	.000
When do you check your emails?	14.428	3	4.809	5.273	.002
Error	129.517	142	.912		
Total	500.000	146			
Corrected Total	143.945	145			

(Figure E.3 Hypothesis Testing Regression Analysis: Age vs When do you Check your Emails?)

a. R Squared = .100 (Adjusted R Squared = .081)

F-Statistic = 5.273

P-Value = 0.02

Alpha = 0.05

Since $0.02 < 0.05$ we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. Since the P-value is smaller than the Alpha level we can conclude that there is significant statistical evidence that age is related to when emails are checked. Particularly, there is statistical evidence that there is higher correlation with those aged 18-35 checking emails most frequently in the afternoon (12 p.m.-6 p.m.) and those aged 36 and older show higher frequencies of checking emails in the mornings (6 a.m.-12 p.m.). It is also interesting to examine the r-squared value or coefficient of determination (0.1) based on the regression, which explains that about 10% of the variation in the time that emails are checked during the day can be explained by the age of the respondents.

However, it is important to note that there is significant differences in the frequency of respondents based on age. Most notably, our results display about 69.2% of respondents are aged 18-25, 15.1% of respondents are aged 26-35, and only 15.8% of respondents are aged older than

36. While this is a significant difference, interpretations of the data can be generalized allowing an accurate display of data, based on the responses we've collected.

We decided to separate age groups from 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, 51-65, and 66 and older primarily due to the results we've discovered while searching for secondary research. With this general quantitative information, it was clear that this should be a focal point of this research project and the ages should be separated as such. By distinguishing by these age groups, we were able to find more specific, accurate results for further statistical inference.

Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Send emails on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.

Our data portrayed some very interesting results. For our first hypothesis testing we only used bi-weekly and monthly data. The results on preferred frequency were highest in the category of a few times per year, however our group decided that only sending 3-4 emails per year does not seem like a feasible amount. In turn we have chosen to focus on bi-weekly and monthly. From our understanding, our client is sending multiple emails per week. We suggest that our client begins with small incremental changes. To start off, they should change their procedures that they only send emails bi-weekly and closely monitor any changes in results. With the new analytics, if they are still satisfied, they can further drop to sending monthly emails. The frequency of emails being sent was originally the topic of interest and the management problem identified for this research project, however from our research there appears to be more underlying causes for rising unsubscrition rates. From both qualitative and quantitative research, we have concluded that the most prominent factor that keeps the audience engaged and prevents unsubscribe rates is the relativity of the content. If the information does not directly pertain to the individual receiving the email, re-evaluation of customer info must be further analyzed.

II. Analyze the age group of prospective email clients to accurately segment the email marketing campaign.

As we can see from the findings in the data analysis section, age is the primary demographic factor we have chosen to analyze against a variety of factors. The reasoning behind this is that Lexus of Edmonton, although is a luxury brand, appeals to consumers ranging a number of income brackets. Lexus is becoming more affordable luxury and the presence of a used car dealership in the building behind. With these factors in mind, we decided segmentation strategy based on age would prove most beneficial for the scopes of this project. Our findings show that age, when examined against what time people check their emails and what device is used to check emails there is a strong case for age influencing each. Most younger individuals (35 and lower) tend to check their emails most frequently on their mobile devices, while those older tend to use a combination of both mobile devices and computers, however they prefer the latter. When examining what times individuals check emails, we found that that same younger demographic tends to check emails in the afternoon or evenings (12 p.m.-6 p.m., 6 p.m.-12 p.m.) and the older demographic tends to check emails in the morning (6 a.m.-12 p.m.). We suggest that a

segmentation approach based on age of the recipient would be most beneficial to optimize open rates and consumer awareness.

III. Make emails more adaptable to mobile devices.

It was with no surprise to us that the vast majority of individuals check their emails on their smartphone. Even individuals that are part of an older target market seem to be slowly migrating to that form of communication. By inspecting the samples received from Lexus of Edmonton, our group has concluded that they need to find an alternative way to distribute their email marketing campaigns as their current method does not optimize for mobile. By not being smartphone friendly, Lexus has roughly 75% of their emails completely ignored. Even when analyzing the device used to check emails versus age, we found the results to be fairly skewed for all ages towards using a smart device most prominently to check emails. It is our suggestion that Lexus attempt to make emails more mobile friendly to increase not only current open rates, but open rates in the future. If a prospective client is receiving an email that has relevance to their given situation and the email is adaptable to the device, they are using to check said email, there is a highly likely chance that same individual will read future emails.

Limitations

Every research project comes with limitations. In our scenario, we have encountered difficulties at each step of the way. Working with Lexus of Edmonton in relation with their struggles of finding the ideal email marketing frequency has proved to be quite the project. The first limitations we have encountered in our research happened during our literature review. When deciding which scholarly articles or journals we would include in our analysis, our group came across the impediment that the sources we chose were focusing on international markets; not directly related to Lexus of Edmonton's target audience. Up next, when organizing our qualitative analysis and conducting our interviews, we struggled to find the right individuals who would fit our criteria and research assignment. Secondly, when dealing with industry professionals, they seem to be very selective in the information that they choose to share with university students for their projects.

Our next limitation hit us when our group was aiming to hit our target quota for the quantitative analysis. Targeting desired groups in such a short amount of time was a shortcoming in the amount of data that we retrieved. With the survey, we have noticed a few individuals refuse to complete our research survey due to the platform that we were using to conduct the research. Our survey was based on a google form and when we decided to choose this platform as our method of collecting data, we completely overlooked that our target audience would have to sign in to a google account in order to complete the survey. While no emails were collected from those who did complete the questionnaire, it was a slight bottleneck for our data accumulation process.

The last constraint was very generic to the whole research project, not just individual sections. Lexus of Edmonton has been a pleasure to work with and they have assisted us every step of the way, however as a dealership, they do not accumulate any of their own data to monitor

the results of their email marketing campaigns. If such data could have been provided for us, we could have had a stronger focus on some areas that seemed more problematic. Overall, our group was able to overcome any of the challenges we encountered, whether it was content related or time constraints, we believe that our research and finding present an accurate representation of the problem that Lexus of Edmonton is having and that the solutions we are presenting will depict some incremental changes if properly implemented.

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Appendix

Appendices A: Copy of the Questionnaire

1. Do you own a luxury vehicle? (i.e. Lexus, BMW, Audi)
 - Yes
 - No

2. Do you own, lease, or finance your current vehicle?
 - Lease Finance
 - Own Other (please specify): _____

3. How frequently do you check your emails?
 - Minutes within the time the email is received Once a Week
 - Daily Once Every 2 Weeks
 - 2-3 Times per Week

4. When do you check your emails most frequently?
 - Mornings (6 a.m.-12 p.m.) Evenings (6 p.m.-12 p.m.)
 - Afternoon (12 p.m.-6 p.m.) Overnight (12 p.m.-6 a.m.)

5. What device/platform do you use to check emails most frequently?
 - Smart Phone Tablet
 - Computer Other (please specify): _____

6. If receiving an email from an automotive dealership, which type of email would you pay most attention too? (Check all that apply)
 - Promotional Opportunities Newsletters (General Information)
 - Dealership Event Invitations New Car Model Information
 - Maintenance (Service) Reminders Other (please specify): _____

7. What aspects of an emails subject line would attract you, as a consumer, most? Please rank each aspect of an emails subject line with a check in the box that most applies to your personal opinion.

	Not Important	Little Importance	Indifferent	Important	Very Important
Personalization	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Attractive/Catchy Title	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Simplicity (Concise and to the Point)					
Promotions (Advertisements)					
Limited Time Offers					
Humour					

8. Click through options (additional links placed inside an email, redirecting you to another source) are used widely in email marketing campaigns, what is the likelihood that you would use these links if prompted to do so?



9. What aspects of any email marketing campaign seem most appealing? What qualities are most important to you and would prompt you to open future emails from the original source?

- Appealing Subject Line
- Use of Images
- Specific Brands (i.e. I only open emails from Lexus)
- Information Being Relevant
- Other (please specify):

10. What is your ideal frequency of receiving emails from a business/organization?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Bi-Weekly (Twice a Month)
- Monthly
- Only a Few Times a Year
- Never

11. What is your Gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

12. What is your current age?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-50
- 50-65
- 66 and older

Appendices B: In-Depth Interview Participant Profile

	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Participant #4
Setting	Restaurant (Boston Pizza)	Participant's home	Second Cup	Dealership Office
Age	23	21	37	34
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male
Occupation	Automotive Mechanic (Lexus of Edmonton Customer)	Automotive Sales/Service Advisor	Email Marketing	Sales Manager Grant Miller Motors
Time Duration	35 minutes	35 minutes	33 minutes	31
Recording Method	Recorded on phone and transcribed	Recorded on phone and transcribed	Recorded on phone and transcribed	Recorded on phone and transcribed
Moderator	Sujay	Jack	Jordan	Andrei

Appendices C: Discussion Guide from Qualitative Research

The qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews, four interviews were conducted in total, spanning across a variety of fields and demographics of individuals. The reason we decided to use participants from different fields was to ensure the information collected could be generalized and interpreted for uses specific to the Lexus of Edmonton proposed issue. Ten open-ended questions were asked to participants relating to email marketing, segmentation strategies, incentive programs, and email frequency. The purpose of these questions was to discover qualitative data from experts and consumers pertaining to email marketing campaigns and frequency to further gain knowledge about opinions towards these campaigns.

The questions were formulated based on the lack of available secondary research, requiring us to find more, pertinent information relating to the field of interest. Each individual conducted an individual one-on-one interview with a decision maker/expert of their choice, allowing each member to learn crucial information pertaining to a subject of interest. The interviews were then separately transcribed and coded on the basis of critical information that directly related to the proposed issue. Afterwards, group members collectively organized the qualitative information into categories of interest that fit well with the answers provided by

participants. Finally, those categories and subcategories were organized into themes to effectively interpret the qualitative information provided through interviews and ensure simplicity when conducting the following secondary research.

The in-depth interviews were chosen instead of using focus groups or other means of collecting data to ensure confidence and comfortability for all participants, allowing us to uncover the most useful information. Another reason depth interviews were used is to allow group members to interview participants in specific, different fields of interest to gain general knowledge that correlates with one another based on the issue at hand. The simplicity of the interview process made data collection much easier and more specific, allowing more pertinent questions to be as relevant as possible.

Appendices D: Analysis of Findings from Qualitative Research

1. Improving email content through retention techniques and persuasive writing

Based on our results from our interviewees, we can conclude that retention techniques and persuasive writing are equally crucial for a successful email marketing campaign. This is noted when you constantly improve a newsletter to tailor it to your customer's liking. This can be made possible with the likes of multivariate testing where you constantly change the bold, italics, and colours to see how the audience reacts. Persuasive writing is imperative for an email newsletters success. Persuasive writing can either convince your customer to respond with a purchase and it could potentially deter them from opening an email again. In persuasive writing, you have to come across as providing relevant information without being viewed as overbearing simultaneously. Persuasive writing is closely associated with email incentives. Since persuasive writing is needed to convince the readers to purchase the email based incentive. Lastly, it is recommended that the email is mobile responsive and is catered towards mobile devices. This is noted as almost 70% of the emails you receive you will be opened on your mobile device. If the subscriber opens up an email and it shows a bunch of images missing that will cause them to be frustrated and lead to an increase in the unsubscribe rate. With that in mind, those are the essential reasons to improve email content through retention techniques and persuasive writing.

2. Ensuring business to consumer emails aren't treated as spam

For a business to separate itself in email marketing it has to identify its target goals and most importantly email frequency. When it comes to email frequency you want to be in the consumer eyes but not annoying to the extent they want to unsubscribe. The critical idea of making sure your email is not identified as spam is having an opt in feature where they confirm that they want to be emailed. Without, having confirmed that they want to be emailed there is a good chance it will be filtered as spam. In addition, you want to have a catchy subject line so that the email will not be triggered as spam. Lastly, low open rates, not including an unsubscribe link, using spam trigger emails, and the subscriber not recognizing your email can lead to business to consumer emails being treated as spam.

3. Optimizing email marketing frequency (sending enough but not too much so it doesn't lead to increasing the unsubscribe rate)

Using email marketing as a means of communication can have a few different goals depending on the company. Some companies use emails simply to drive sales and increase profit, while others use it to build relationships and brand loyalty. In relation to our clients, Lexus of Edmonton, our findings have been pretty meaningful. From all of gathered data, companies should avoid sending emails more than bi-weekly. One of Lexus's concerns were also that Lexus Canada send out emails as well. In relation to that, other dealerships communicate with headquarters in regards to when the main office is planning to send out an email and then dealerships can choose to skip a week, which is especially beneficial if it is not top of the line content. From communicating with dealership employees, we have understood that they also tend to change their means of communications in order to avoid an abundance of outgoing emails. For instance, whenever Lexus is hosting an event, instead of proceeding to send out another non-personalized mass email, they could potentially do a flyer or postcard to spread word about their upcoming event. By not consistently bombarding clients with emails, you can avoid low click through rates and prevent unsubscribe rates from increasing.

4. Effectively using segmentation strategies to ensure consumers find the message relevant

The participants we interviewed, though not all were experts in email marketing, either directly or indirectly promoted the idea of segmentation strategy being crucial to any marketing efforts. Specifically pertaining to email marketing, the participants stressed the importance of ensuring the message a business is sending is relevant to the current needs and wants of the consumer. Each interviewee expressed not only the cruciality of proper, effective segmentation strategy to ensure the intended message is received and acknowledged by the consumer, but also stated the consequences of ineffective separation in messages: trust between the business and consumer decreases, the likelihood the consumer believes the message to be spam increases, and consumers tend to ignore future messages, even those that may prove relevant to their needs and wants. Segmenting through demographics is an important first step, however our participants pointed out that timing of emails (pertaining to facets such as whether a consumer had just purchased a vehicle) are also incredibly important. For example, why would a consumer who just recently purchased a brand new vehicle be interested in receiving emails regarding the purchase of another only a week later?

5. Using email data statistics to improve marketing efforts, exposure, promoting action

Based on the research that was conducted email data statistics are imperative to the success of an email newsletter. Therefore, terms like the subscribe rate and unsubscribe rate should be heavily focused on. It is more common to know why people subscribe rather than why they unsubscribe. This is exactly why there should be a feedback page as to why they are choosing to unsubscribe. The other important terms include open rate and click through rate respectively. The open rate can be defined as the percentage in which the subscriber opens your emails and the click through rate is the percentage for when they click on links. The open rate can be increased based

on the topic, the relevant information they provide and if the email incentive is enticing enough. The click through rate varies as sometimes the link is worth clicking on if the information is above the link. In conclusion, having a focus on increasing subscribers and maintaining a good open and click through rate will lead to a successful email newsletter campaign.

Appendices E: Tables of Univariate Analysis

Do you Own a Luxury Vehicle?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	74	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Yes	72	49.3	49.3	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

Device Used

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Smartphone	111	76.0	76.6	76.6
	Computer	30	20.5	20.7	97.2
	Tablet	3	2.1	2.1	99.3
	Fax Machine	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	145	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.7		
Total		146	100.0		

Click Through Options: Likelihood to Use Them (1=Worst, 5=Best)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	28	19.2	19.2	19.2
	2	40	27.4	27.4	46.6
	3	45	30.8	30.8	77.4
	4	25	17.1	17.1	94.5
	5	8	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	54	37.0	37.0	37.0
	Male	90	61.6	61.6	98.6
	Prefer not to say	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

Appendices F: Tables of Bivariate Analysis

Age vs Do you own a Luxury Vehicle?

		own_luxury_vehicle_coded		Total
		No	Yes	
Age_coded	18 - 25	65	36	101
	26 - 35	6	16	22
	36 - 50	2	10	12
	50 - 65	1	7	8
	66 and older	0	3	3
Total		74	72	146

Age vs Click Through Options: Likelihood to Use Them (1=Worst, 5=Best)

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
		Age	18 - 25	19	30	29	16
26 - 35	5		5	8	3	1	22
36 - 50	3		4	4	1	0	12
50 - 65	0		1	4	3	0	8
66 and older	1		0	0	2	0	3
Total	28	40	45	25	8	146	

Gender vs Do you own a Luxury Vehicle?

		Do you own a luxury vehicle?		
		No	Yes	Total
Gender	Female	46	8	54
	Male	27	63	90
	Prefer not to say	1	1	2
Total		74	72	146

Gender vs When do you Check Emails?

		When do you check emails?				Total
		Afternoon (12 pm - 6 pm)	Evenings (6 pm - 12 pm)	Mornings (6 am - 12 pm)	Overnight (12 pm - 6 am)	
Gender	Female	24	7	22	1	54
	Male	42	18	30	0	90
	Prefer not to say	1	0	1	0	2
Total		67	25	53	1	146

Gender vs Device Used to Check Emails

		device_RECODED				Total
		Smartphone	Computer	Tablet	Fax Machine	
Gender	Female	40	14	0	0	54
	Male	71	14	3	1	89
	Prefer not to say	0	2	0	0	2
Total		111	30	3	1	145

Gender vs Click Through Options: Likelihood to use Them (1=Worst, 5=Best)

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
		Gender	Female	11	14	19	7
Male	16		26	26	17	5	90
Prefer not to say	1		0	0	1	0	2
Total		28	40	45	25	8	146