

# SOCAP 1999 MEMBER E-MAIL/ INTERNET BENCHMARK SURVEY RESULTS

SOCAP members recently responded to a broadcast fax survey which provides us with a snapshot of current e-mail practices in consumer affairs/customer service.

***First, we wanted to see how companies were positioning Internet for customer contact:***

57% encourage consumers to contact them through the Internet by making it easy  
 36% provide the capabilities for their consumers to contact them through the Internet, but don't actively encourage it  
 7% discourage consumers from contacting them through the Internet (See note below regarding weekly consumer contact which shows the effect of positioning)

***How are companies making their web site and/or e-mail address known to consumers?***

68% print their web site address on packages and in advertisements  
 62% post their toll-free number on their web site  
 58% offer a consumer contact web-form in one or more sections of their web site  
 50% post their e-mail address on their web site  
 28% print an e-mail address on their packages and in advertisements  
 26% said that every page of their web site has a "contact us" feature

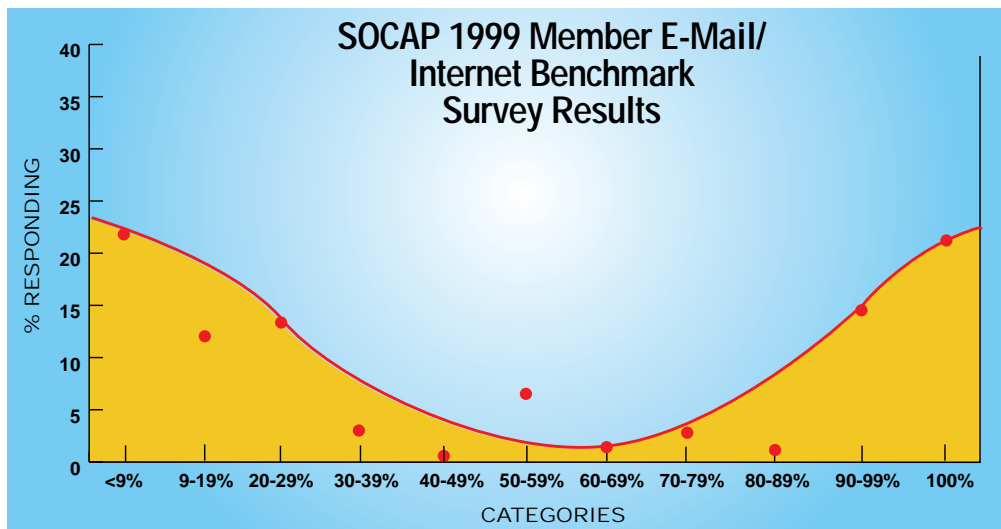
***Weekly consumer contact*** through the Internet is currently averaging 1,047 compared to one year ago when the average was 409 — an increase of 156%! Those that did not have a web site prior to 1999 (28%) averaged 778 e-mails per week. Of great interest is that the average current consumer contact for those companies that encourage consumers to contact them was the highest current average at 1,172 and one year ago at 471. Those that don't actively encourage consumer contact via the Internet had a current average of 324 and 201 one year ago. Of those companies that discourage contact, the current average weekly contact was 81, a decrease from 185 one year ago.

***The percentages of type of consumer contact*** seems to be slowly shifting toward e-mail. The following chart shows percentages of consumer contacts by method:

	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999YTD</b>	<b>%Increase/(Decrease)</b>
% Mail	20%	17%	(3%)
% Phone	71%	69%	(2%)
% Fax	2%	2%	—
% E-mail	7%	12%	+5%

Although the average percentage of ***e-mail contacts that require follow up*** with phone call(s) and/or mail is 48%, the mode below shows quite a different story:

22%	< 9%
12%	9-19%
15%	20-29%
3%	30-39%
<1%	40-49%
7%	50-59%
2%	60-69%
3%	70-79%
<1%	80-89%
14%	90-99%
21%	100%



Comparing response turnaround standards versus actual across methods consumers use to contact companies:

	<b>Turnaround Standard/Goal</b>	<b>Turnaround Avg. Actual</b>
Mail Avg	5 days (80% <5 days)	Avg 6 days
Phone	Avg 16 hours (Highest % <24)	Avg 17 hours
E-mail	Avg 30 hours (51% were at 24 hours, 20% at 48 hours, all others <5%)	Avg 39 hours

Consumer affairs departments are staffing for Internet response as follows:

- 65% are integrated with internal call center
- 25% have separate internal net-reps
- 10% are integrated with outsourced call center
- <1% have separate outsourced net-reps

The following **technologies are used at call centers** to support consumers who contact the company via e-mail:

- 45% use an e-mail management system
- 45% use web-forms for consumer response
- 9% currently use self-serve web-enabled knowledge base or reference manual
- 5% use interactive or two-way chat, discussion forums, or bulletin boards
- 4% use universal queuing or web-integrated ACD
- 2% use a call agent button on web site

Currently, 82% of the companies who responded are **tracking consumer information** received from the Internet. Of those, 89% integrate this information with consumer information from phone calls and mail. A surprising 69% **plan to use their database information to re-contact consumers in the future** (i.e. relationship marketing).

Thanks to all the SOCAP members who responded to the broadcast fax survey. We hope you find the results interesting and useful in benchmarking your activities.