

2021 STATE OF SENDING:

Welcome to the Human-to-Human Era

How B2B buyer and customer engagement has become more human from 2020 to now



Sendoso

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INTRODUCTION:

An Opportunity for More Human Connection

2020 blurred the lines between B2B and B2C. The COVID-19 pandemic and social justice conversations pushed brands to be more open and honest—and ultimately more human—with buyers and customers.

In 2021, **human connection is priority #1**. While personalization tactics were already on the rise before the pandemic, B2B buyers and customers expect experiences that are similar to that of a B2C consumer. In using B2C-like tactics to engage target audiences, B2B professionals brought the **“human-to-human” (H2H)** concept of audience engagement to the forefront. Simple gestures like congratulating a buyer or customer on their marriage or asking how their family dog is doing are no longer small talk—they’re standard components of the audience experience.

But last year’s shift in the B2B sector left us curious:

Is H2H the new standard for B2B audience engagement?

As a result, this year’s 2021 State of Sending looks a lot different. Instead of solely reporting about our own data, we surveyed 750 B2B marketers, salespeople, and customer experience (CX) decision-makers—who we’ll call “revenue leaders”—to see if our B2B world evolved into one that’s more H2H. We also looked at data from thousands of teams sending across the globe to understand the most popular sends, trends, and highlights from the last twelve months. Our research resulted in the **first comprehensive H2H report in the market**.

In the first half of this report, we’ll use our data to recap what our customers experienced in 2020. For the second half, we’ll look ahead to the rest of 2021 and cover what B2B revenue leaders are doing to be more human in their audience engagement.

Here’s what we found.

“In 2021, **human connection is priority #1**. While personalization tactics were already on the rise before the pandemic, B2B buyers and customers expect experiences that are similar to that of a B2C consumer.”



How Sending Changed in 2020

A snapshot of Sendoso's user sending data





2020 Send Trends

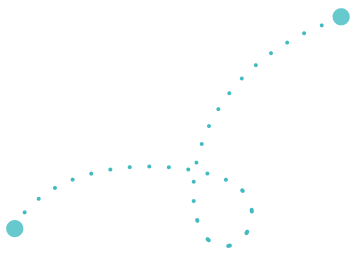
When the pandemic hit, companies went all-in on digital tactics like email, online ads, and virtual events—and the same idea initially applied to sending. **We saw a staggering 60% increase in eGifts sent, while physical sends dropped by 34%, and direct sends dipped by 20%.**

But once teams got their footing in engaging buyers and customers in the pandemic setting, we slowly saw an increase in physical and direct sends. With our quick launch of [Address Confirmation](#) (more on that in our next section), our customers saw sending as an effective way to connect with audiences disjointed from working in their homes or in socially distanced office setups.

[Eighty-three percent of consumers](#) feel positively about receiving packages, meaning buyers and customers see specialized gifts from organizations as **tokens of appreciation**. That connection, along with the physical elements of sending, enabled businesses to control how target audiences engage with their brand when being in person wasn't possible. Sends also give organizations a tangible way to get in front of people regardless of where they work—**opening up valuable engagement opportunities that drive revenue, especially as audiences are overwhelmed with digital tactics.**

81% of revenue leaders think their target audiences are digitally fatigued. Learn more on page 8.

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The gradual return of direct and physical sends also impacted local businesses through [Sendoso Direct](#), which enables our customers to send personalized or branded items like cookies, wine, cocktail kits, succulents, and more from our network of locally owned small businesses.



More than \$5,000,000 went to local businesses via Sendoso Direct last year.

Even after physical sends returned to pre-pandemic levels, eGifts were still a popular choice for Sendoso customers in 2020. **More than 200,000 eGifts** were sent via Sendoso and eGifts made up six out of our top eight overall sends for the year.



eGifts resonated well with target audiences—70% of all eGifts were redeemed within 4 days by recipients.

More than 200,000 eGifts were sent via Sendoso and eGifts made up six out of our top eight overall sends for the year.



A Breakdown of Sendoso's Top Sends in 2020

	Most popular direct sends	Most popular physical sends	Most popular eGifts
1	Cookies	Yeti tumbler	Amazon.com
2	Virtual wine tasting	Yeti rambler	Starbucks
3	Succulents	Educational brochures	Visa
4	Cocktail kit	Mini flashlight	Uber
5	Brownies	Bose case	DoorDash
6	Gift basket	Spice tray	Uber Eats
7	Snackbox	Informational one-sheeter	Grubhub
8	Artisan chocolates	Coffee gift card	Target





Confirming Addresses in a Remote World

As the pandemic unfolded in March 2020, we knew customers would be challenged to send direct mail, gifts, and swag to remote customers and buyers scattered across different locations.

Before the pandemic, we were planning to introduce [Address Confirmation](#) in 2020. But given the challenge presented by remote work settings, we launched the feature early to help our customers. Address Confirmation ensures your item is delivered to wherever your buyer or customer is working, no matter if it's at home or in the office. For added security, the address they enter is only used for each one-time send and is not saved in our system.

After analyzing 10 months of sending data since Address Confirmation's introduction on March 25, 2020, we found it **only took an average of 1.01 days from send creation for an address to be confirmed**. The quick turnaround time indicated that many buyers and customers were craving personal interaction and were excited by the prospect of receiving something special—especially during the COVID-19 lockdown.

68% of addresses were confirmed in less than 1 day through Address Confirmation in 2020

Sendoso

snapdocs

With the help of Address Confirmation, **Snapdocs** achieved an **84% response rate**, created **7 new sales opportunities**, and influenced **\$5.5 million in pipeline revenue** for its book launch.



With the new WFX movement (work from anywhere), I see the importance of differentiating outreach and making it more personal. I think email is going to get noisy, so finding a way to someone's home doorstep is even more critical.

—Adam Carr, VP Global Sales at Miro



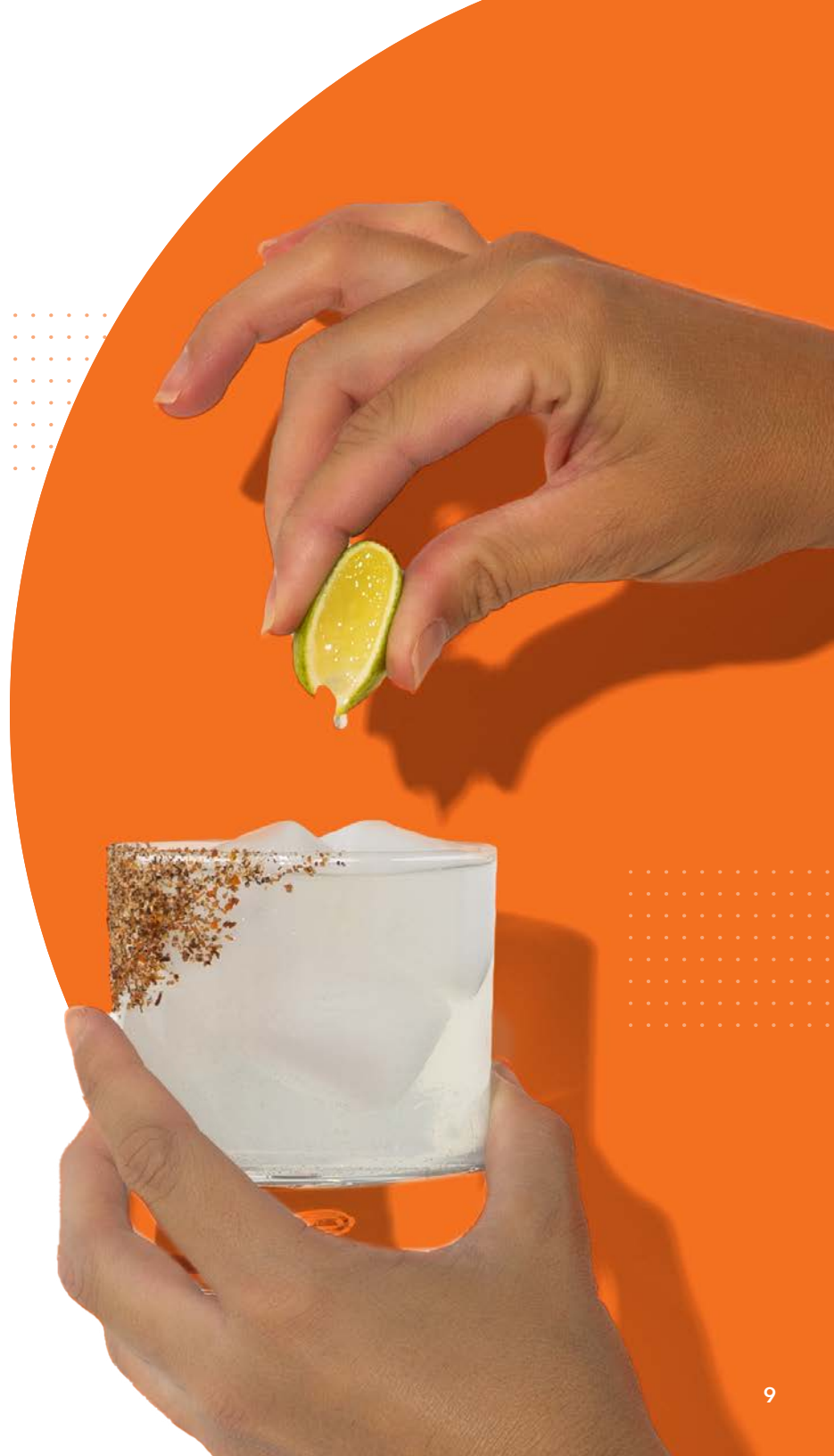
Timing of Sends

Our customers could previously rely on knowing when a buyer or customer would **physically** be in their office. But with most people working from home, the usual 9-to-5 hours didn't necessarily apply.

In 2020, redemption rates of eGifts were highest (70%+) between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. PST when **fewer eGifts are sent**. Redemption rates plummeted to less than 40% during business hours of 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. PST. We also saw nearly the same results apply to the days items were sent: Redemption rates were **highest on the weekends** and dropped to less than 40% during typical business days (Monday through Friday).

The opportunity: If you want to get in front of a hard-to-reach buyer, you're more likely to garner a response outside of normal business hours. Consider sending a scheduled message with an eGift link during that time.

Highest Rates of eGift Redemption By Time and Days of the Week



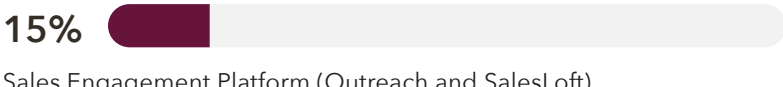
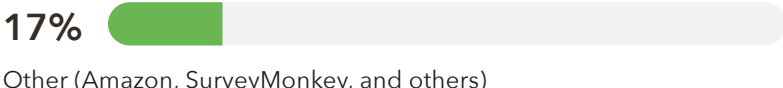
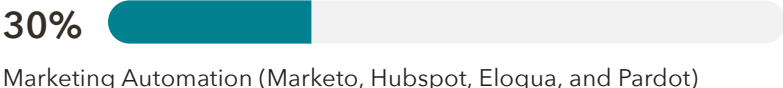


Integrations Used for Sending: 2019 vs. 2020

Integrations with Sendoso enable our customers to develop creative sending campaigns with the business software they already use. And while the world went remote and subsequently became more virtual, we saw a substantial 15% integration usage increase in 2020.

Integrations allowed customers to seamlessly and personally engage with target audiences through direct mail and gifting opportunities, especially as people became more reliant on technology in a remote world. The top three integrations used by Sendoso customers included **Salesforce, Marketo, and Outreach.**

2020 Sendoso Integrations By the Numbers



Having those integrations [Outreach and Salesforce] has been amazing. I don't know how we were executing sends before them.

—Jessica Pate, Account-Based Marketing Manager at Siteimprove





Teams Sending

Sales and business development representatives (SDRs and BDRs) only made up 22% of teams that executed sends in 2019. In 2020, those professionals made up **the largest majority of sending teams at 42% of all Sendoso customers.**

While fewer marketers use the platform, they are often executing the most sends either at the top of the funnel or on behalf of their sales or CX teams. In fact, **marketers accounted for almost half a million sends in 2020—more than any other team.**

Conversely, sales reps and SDRs often use Sendoso to build 1:1 relationships with decision-makers and customers, an objective that took greater precedence during the pandemic. The significant jump in SDRs and BDRs using Sendoso indicates that marketers are moving away from sending on behalf of individual reps and instead **empowering them to build those 1:1 connections at scale themselves.**

Senders Broken Down by Team	
SDRs/BDRs	42%
General Sales	25%
Marketing	16%
Customer Success and Support	6%
Other	6%
Executives/Other Management	4%



The account-based marketing (ABM) and sales teams at **Snowflake** leveraged Sendoso to enable collaboration between a test group of SDRs, account executives, and inside sales reps for an outreach campaign. Through touchpoints like lunch and coffee eGifts, the team cut through the digital noise to grab the attention of decision-makers during stay-at-home orders. **The result? A 98% increase in meeting show rates and a 50% meeting-to-opportunity conversion rate.**



How Revenue Leaders Are Tackling 2021

Evaluating industry third-party data

2021

A 3D staircase graphic on an orange background. The year '2021' is written in large white outline font. The staircase consists of several steps, each a rectangular block, ascending from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a solid orange color with a subtle pattern of small white dots on the left side.



The H2H Era Is Officially Here

Don't just take it from us: **88% of revenue leaders said their engagement strategy has taken a more human-to-human approach since March 2020.** Remote work environments and the near elimination of in-person business interactions affected respondents' ability to get personal. In fact, 80% said the inability to travel or meet in person impacted their ability to build deeper human connections with buyers and customers.

As a result, revenue leaders shifted strategies and naturally ushered in a H2H focus. Ninety-five percent of respondents said it's important to build a personal human connection with buyers and customers when closing a sale. And 91% agreed that building a personal or human connection became more important to closing sales since March 2020.

Additionally, just because 12% of respondents don't use a H2H approach, **doesn't mean they wouldn't like to.** For most respondents, not using a H2H strategy came down to a lack of budget.

Reasons Why Revenue Leaders Did Not Implement a H2H Approach

Lack of budget/resources	39%
Company never considered human approach	29%
Fear of losing buyers/customers	28%
Resistance from company leadership	27%
Resistance from fellow company colleagues	11%

See how our customers pivoted their engagement strategies in 2020 by using Sendoso to increase remote customer and buyer engagement, drive virtual event attendance, generate revenue, and much more in our **"Out of the Box: Creative ABX Campaigns for Marketing, Sales and CX"** eBook.





H2H Strategies Show Early Returns

The H2H era may be in its infancy, but revenue leaders are already experiencing positive results. Revenue leaders using a H2H strategy believe it can help their company **achieve higher client retention, deeper client relationships, and more closed sales.**

Furthermore, respondents said they are practicing a H2H approach by having more personal conversations with their audience, checking in for non-business reasons with buyers and customers, and using personalized outreach. We saw H2H happen in real time with our customers, who used Sendoso to send grocery and food delivery eGifts to buyers and customers sheltering in place. Additionally, conversations about [public health](#), [Black Lives Matter](#), [voting rights](#), and other social issues crossed over into brand relations in 2020, including the B2B space.

A critical way 44% of respondents got more personal about these issues was by publicly addressing social issues with target audiences –and a clear majority (84%) said they received a positive response.

Over \$200,000 was donated to various charities in 2020 through Sendoso, which allows recipients to either apply a gifted dollar amount or donate a gift card to a charity of their choice.

Ways Revenue Leaders Engaged Buyers and Customers On a More Human Level Over the Past 12 Months



Engaged in more personal conversations with buyers/customers



Checked in on buyers/customers for non-business reasons



Personalized outreach based on buyer/customer interests



Shared more about their lives and experiences with buyers/customers



Publicly addressed certain social issues



Results Revenue Leaders Think They Can Achieve by Building Personal and Human Connections with Their Target Audience



Higher client retention



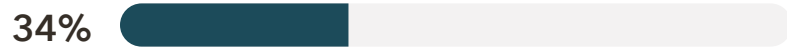
Deeper client relationships



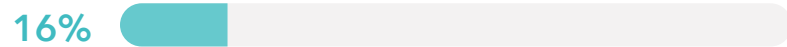
Closing sales



Motivating or energizing employees



Higher conversion rates



Lower marketing costs



Although revenue leaders don't associate lower marketing costs with better human connections, investing in an H2H approach can yield a substantial return on investment (ROI) when done right. For example, [FireMon](#) leveraged Sendoso for their "Sips & Security" virtual event to drive a whopping \$1.8 million in net new pipeline, surpassing their ROI goal for the initiative by 570%.



The Digital Fatigue Is Real

In-person meetings and events fell by the wayside during the pandemic and spurred an all-out digital blitz from brands: **Virtual events skyrocketed** by 1,000%, **marketing emails** by 62%, sales calls by 28%, and ad spend by 22%. While these numbers are understandable in the context of the pandemic, they've also had a side effect. **Eighty percent of revenue leaders said target audiences are fatigued by increased virtual and digital engagement efforts.**

And while virtual events are a new norm, they're not helping with personalization: **92% of respondents agreed that virtual meetings, events, webinars, and conferences need to be more personalized and interactive to be more effective in the next 12 months.**

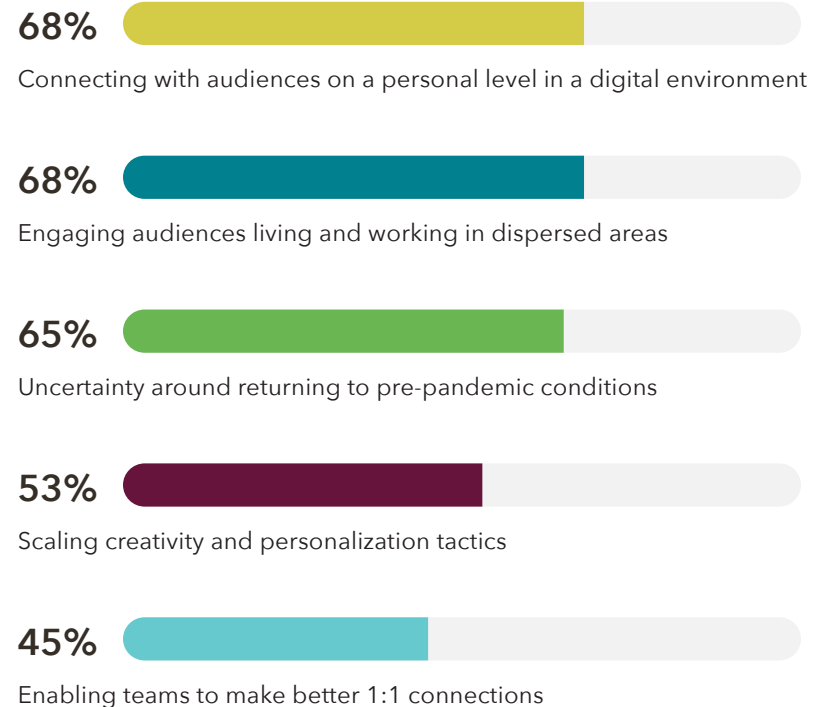
In the end, respondents anticipate that personally connecting with audiences in a digital environment will be their top barrier to customer engagement over the next year.



There is so much noise out there. With 361 billion emails being sent daily, how will yours stand out? DELETE! That's what most of us do with most of our email, or we just let it pile up and never look at it. If you want a response, you better do your homework. Research and find out what matters to me. Be prepared to send me that message many times in many ways if you expect a response.

—Alice Heiman of Alice Heiman, LLC

Greatest Barriers to Customer Engagement Priorities in the Next 12 Months





Revenue Leaders Need to Rethink Investments

It appears that revenue leaders are also digitally fatigued—**direct mail was the top tactic respondents plan on using for their audience engagement in the next year**, followed by direct phone calls and personalized email marketing.

CRMs and customer enablement tools led the way in planned martech usage. Yet personalization tools like ABM, AI, and sending platforms ranked toward the bottom of planned martech usage.

Considering that most respondents plan on using a H2H engagement strategy, revenue leaders may need to reconsider their martech stack to include personalization tools. Many respondents simply may not be aware of the capabilities this technology provides.

For example, until recently, direct mail practitioners knew the channel was effective, but unfortunately couldn't measure the revenue attribution of their direct mail campaigns. With Sendoso, you can integrate the platform directly into your CRM, marketing automation, and sales engagement tools to track the ROI of direct mail and eGift campaigns.

Marketing Tactics Revenue Leaders Plan to Use in the Next 12 Months, Ranked by Planned Usage	
1	Direct mail
2	Direct phone calls
3	Personalized email marketing
4	Experiences
5	eGifts
6	Paid online ads
7	Connectivity tools
8	Content marketing/SEO

“With COVID-19 still raging and many knowledgeable workers continuing to work from home, direct mail will have a banner year in 2021 and be the most powerful tool for getting on the radar of prospects who have become digitally overwhelmed with an onslaught of sales emails and LinkedIn messages.”

—Brad Zomick, VP Marketing at Forage



Martech Revenue Leaders Plan to Use in the Next 12 Months, Ranked by Planned Usage

- 1 Customer relationship management (CRM) platform
- 2 Customer enablement
- 3 Marketing automation platform
- 4 Sales engagement platform
- 5 Sending platform
- 6 Account-based marketing (ABM) platform
- 7 Artificial intelligence (AI) technology

Sendoso

ExtraHop

With the ability to track their direct mail campaigns, [ExtraHop](#) saw a **1400% increase in pipeline influenced** and a **57X return on pipeline** with Sendoso. Learn how they achieved these results and more by reading their success story.





Sending Is Still On the Rise

Seventy-nine percent of revenue leaders plan to use sending strategies (direct mail, eGifts, or experiences) in the next 12 months. Most revenue leaders (53%) execute **1 to 30 sends** to customers or buyers per month, and a large contingent (43%) execute **31 to 60+ sends** on a monthly basis. And **71% expect the number of monthly sends to increase** over the next 12 months.

The top three sends respondents plan on using in the next 12 months are eGift cards, custom-branded swag bundles, and experiences.

Most revenue leaders (35%) feel sending initiatives best support middle-of-the-funnel areas in marketing, sales, and customer success. Additionally, respondents use sends to support events and customer gifting the most.

The biggest advantages in using sends for our field of revenue leaders? **Standing out from the competition and the ability to be creative or personal.**

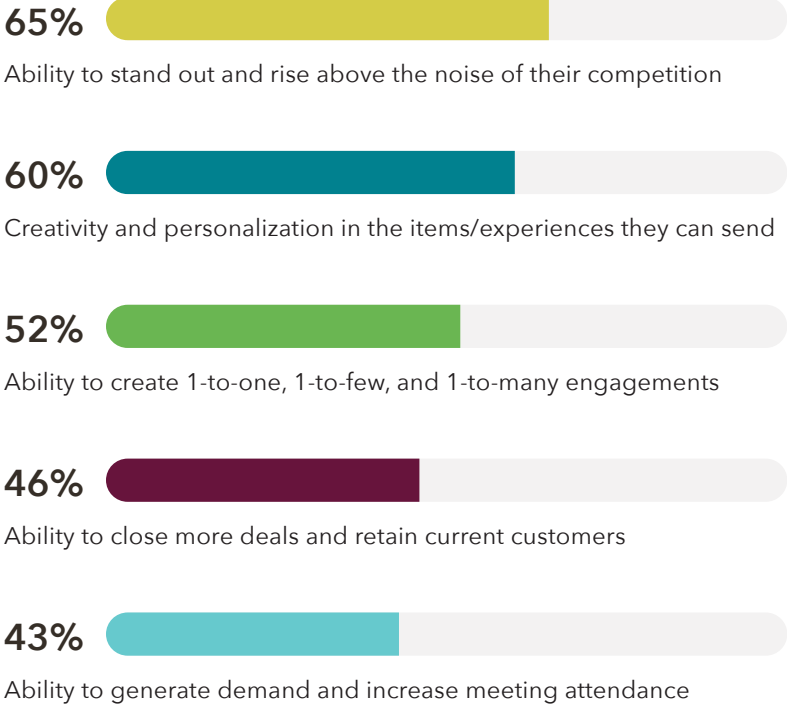


Physical, participatory and 'not-too-business-y' campaigns will become critical to build the most memorable experiences and lasting connections. Things like delivering swag boxes, incorporating workouts or facilitating small group activities will help draw people in and overcome screen fatigue.

—Kate Athmer, VP Growth at Bombora



Advantages Revenue Leaders See in Using Sending Campaigns for Customer Engagement



Initiatives or Events Revenue Leaders Support with Sending Campaigns

52%

Events (virtual and/or in-person)

48%

Customer gifting

38%

Account-based marketing

38%

Sales lifecycle

34%

Remote engagement

29%

Demand generation

Planned Sends from Revenue Leaders

- 1 eGift card
- 2 Custom-branded swag bundles
- 3 Experiences
- 4 Handwritten notes
- 5 Lunch eGift
- 6 Coffee/tea eGift
- 7 Perishables
- 8 Wine/champagne/beer

eGifts were the most sent item by Sendoso customers in 2020. However, not all eGifts are created equal. For example, for Sendoso customers, 22% of eGifts from Starbucks generated meetings compared to just 4% for Dunkin' and Amazon.

Pro tip: Ensure the message you include with your eGift correlates with what's being sent. Don't simply send an eGift and expect your recipient to keep the conversation going. Ensure you have a follow-up plan in place to keep your recipient engaged.



CONCLUSION:

The H2H Era Is Only Just Beginning

In the same way we've learned to operate through Zoom meetings, minimal business travel, and working from home, we expect to see a new business environment for the future—**one where virtual and physical worlds are intertwined**. This notion is especially more likely as multiple companies commit to [long-term remote work arrangements](#).

Revenue leaders were already on their way to a more humanized approach to customer engagement, but it's clear the last year kicked that movement into overdrive. While we've been physically disconnected from each other for health and safety reasons, revenue leaders have been doing all they can to be more human in this situation.

Using a H2H approach ultimately means being creative to build deeper relationships with buyers and customers. And in 2021, **we expect revenue leaders to set themselves apart by creating more human connections with the people that are important to their organization.**

How those companies engage with their audiences says more about their brand than anything else. Revenue teams must be nimble, with diverse strategies and a variety of ways to engage buyers and customers. They also require the ability to take a more human approach both in one-to-one interactions and at scale.

Sending direct mail, eGifts, experiences, and more allows them to be agile, creative, and, most importantly, connected to their audience. Most revenue leaders expect to increase their sending over the next 12 months—**making the investment in a Sending Platform even more critical so that they can measure the return on their investment.**

Regardless of what channel you're using, there's always another person at the other end of your outreach. The future is human. By personalizing your approach with sending across the entire customer lifecycle, taking time to genuinely get to know buyers and customers, and prioritizing that human at the other end of your send, you can **succeed in the era of H2H.**



Visit sendoso.com to learn more and request your custom demo.



Methodology

Sendoso surveyed 750 full-time U.S. marketing, sales, and customer success decision-makers in February 2021. All respondents were at the managerial level or above and directly involved in choosing or helping their organization implement new marketing, sales, or customer experience technology, including buying or selecting new tools.



Respondent Breakdown by Department	
Marketing	250
Sales	250
Customer success	250

Respondent Breakdown by Position Level	
Manager	50%
Senior manager	18%
Director	16%
Vice president	5%
Senior vice president	4%
C-suite	7%



Sendoso, the leading Sending Platform™, is the most effective way for revenue-generating teams to stand out with new ways to engage at strategic points throughout the customer journey. By connecting digital and physical strategies, companies can engage, acquire, and retain customers easier than ever before. Founded in 2016, Sendoso is trusted by over 500 companies and has a vast global footprint, with a presence in North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

Learn more at sendoso.com.

