



The UK Email Marketing Benchmark Report 2010 (Q1 & 2)



This report is the result of an analysis of over 200 million email marketing messages sent through the Sign-Up.to online marketing platform in the 6 months from 1st January - 30th June 2010.

These email campaigns are from small-medium sized UK organisations and have been sent to UK recipients. All of these messages were permission-based and sent to opted-in lists (never to 3rd party or purchased lists).

The 23 industry sectors listed here have been self-selected by the sending organisations. For details of the calculation methods and additional graphs and tables, please see the appendix at the end of this document.

We hope you find this report interesting and useful. As with any averages they're a useful starting point for analysing your own performance, but as we comment on throughout, there are many individual factors which influence different campaigns and which factors you should use to judge your success. *For definitions of terms and details of how we calculate these statistics, please see the appendix at the end of this report.*

Please feel free to pass this document around, post excerpts and links, we'd love you to - all we ask is that you include a link and attribution to www.sign-up.to when you do.

You can find the latest online version of this report at www.sign-up.to/email-benchmarks/

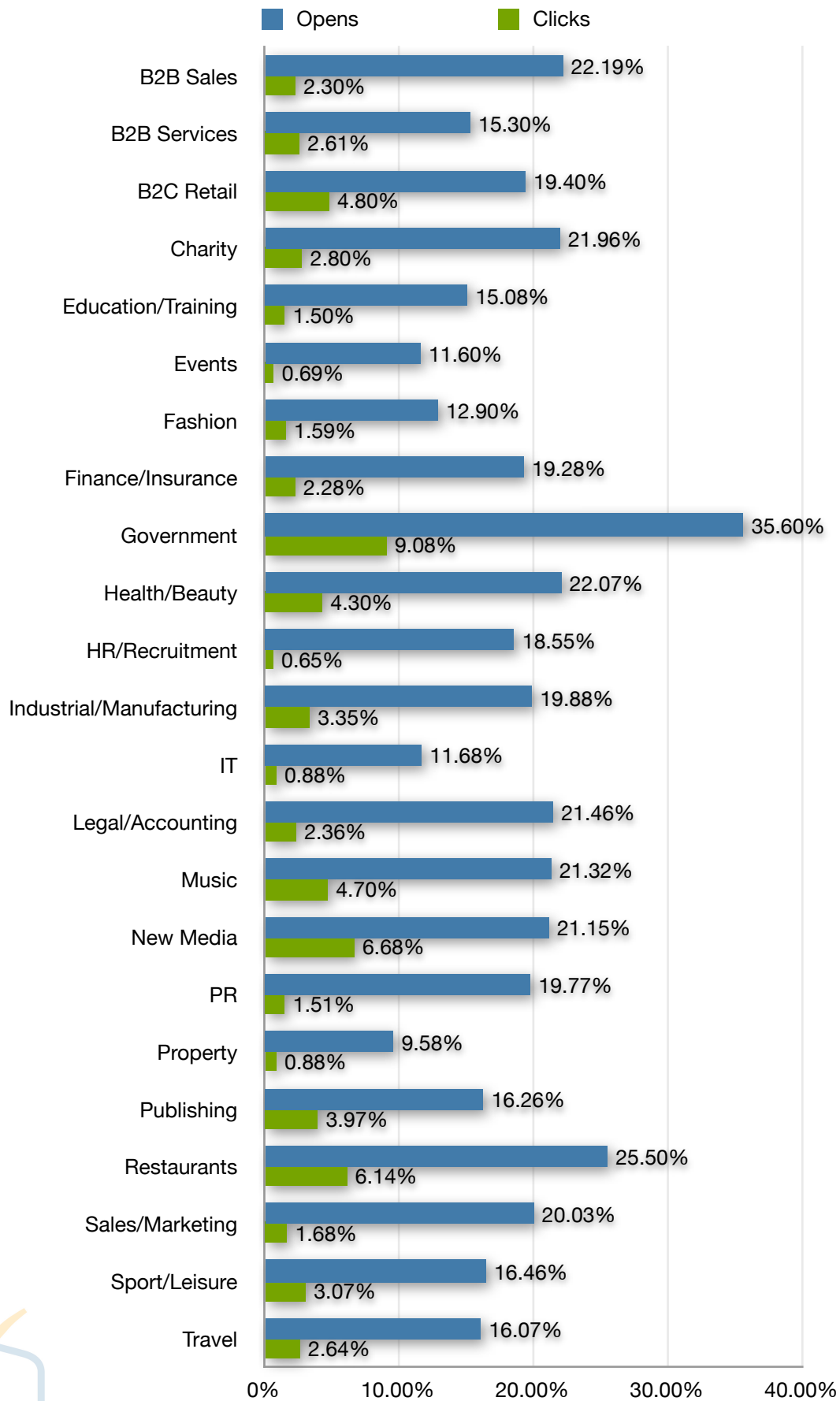
Overall averages

Disregarding sectors, the overall averages for the first half of 2010 were:

- Open rate: 17.98%
- Click-through rate: 3.56%
- Unsubscription rate: 0.20%



How do open and click-through rates compare across sectors?



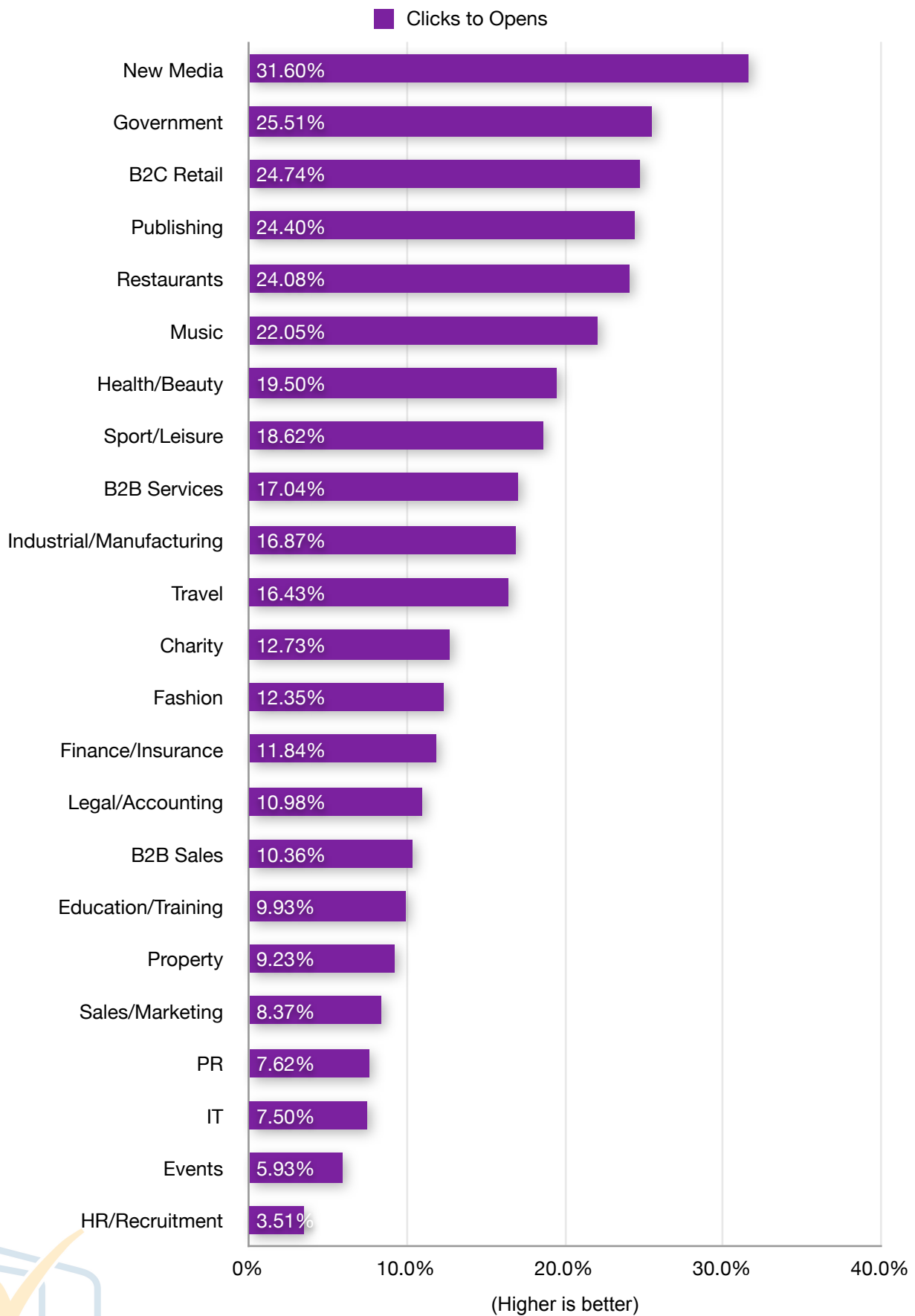
From our 2009 report most sectors maintained very similar open and click rates. However, there have been a number of notable changes, all of which seem to be linked to the general economic climate - here's a quick look at the highlights:

- **Restaurants** gained significantly, moving from 20.31% to 25.50% open rate and seeing a big rise in clicks (from 2.16% to 6.14%) - we've seen a lot of email campaigns in this sector moving to a focus on vouchers and discount offers, boosting engagement dramatically.
- **Music** has also seen a big increase, from a 16.29% open rate in 2009 to 21.32% (and from 1.46% to 4.70% click-through rate) - here again we've seen a shift towards more value driven fan engagement campaigns (free track giveaways, discounts etc.) which have improved engagement.
- **Legal & Accounting** saw the biggest rise in open rate, from 13.48% in 2009 to 21.46% today - the campaigns we've seen here have shown a shift towards being advice driven rather than sales led and this seems to be appealing to business customers looking for guidance in these tough times.
- **Government** emails still lead the pack, they've shown a drop in open and click rate since 2009 but this seems to be more of a result of a higher proportion of plain text informational campaigns being sent (which don't track opens and contain the data in the email rather than as a click through to a site) than any other major trends.
- **Property** was a big loser, dropping from 13.11% to 9.58% open rate in the last 12 months, not surprising really given the state of the UK property market at the start of the year.

For individual charts of sector open, click and unsubscription rates ranked in order of performance, see the Appendix at the end of this report.



Which sectors have the best campaign engagement?



This chart gives us a good indication of the level of engagement that the email campaigns themselves generate, by looking at the proportion of people who click on a campaign after opening it.

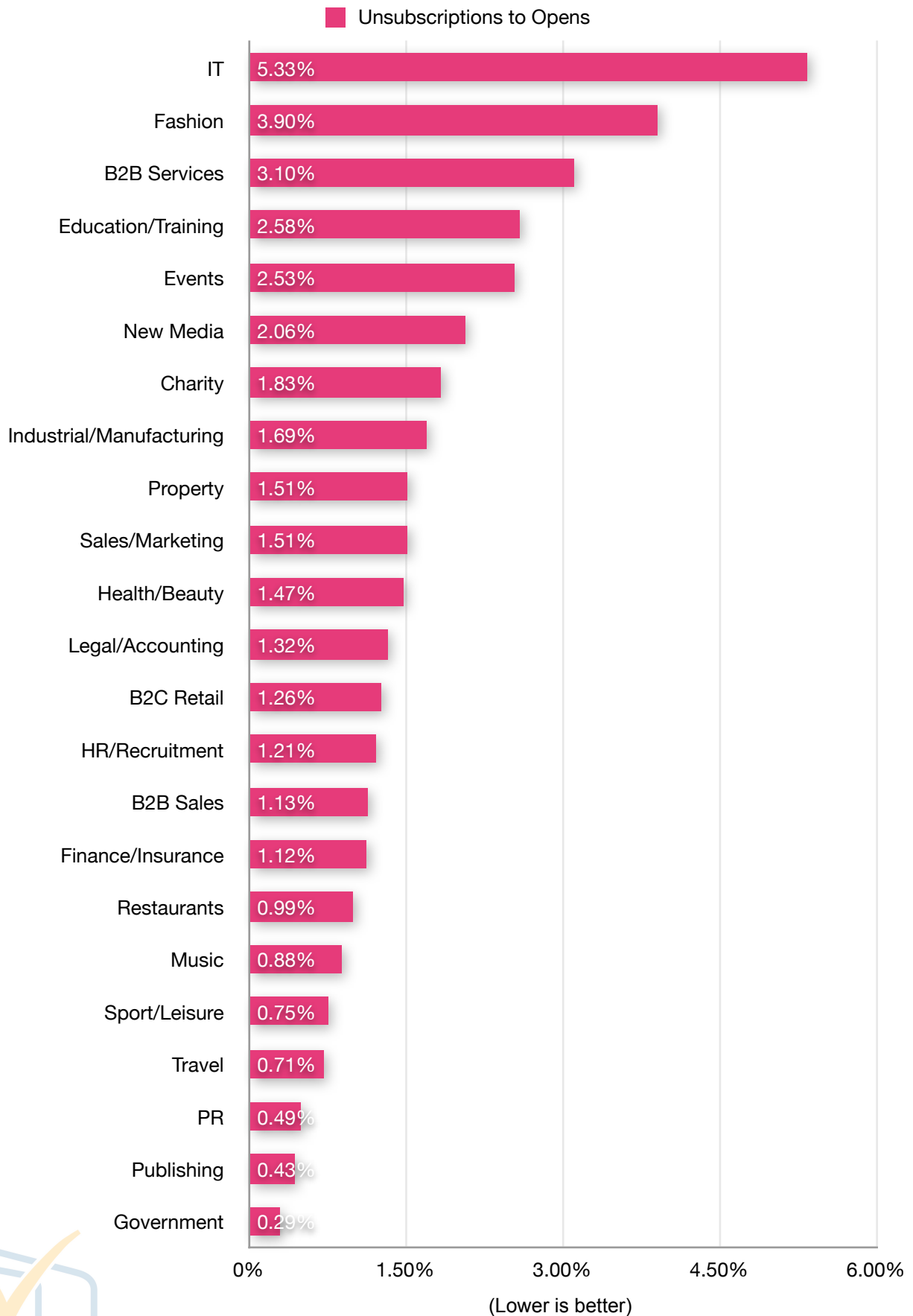
Where the aim of a campaign isn't to generate a click to a landing page (in the case of informational emails or those designed to elicit a response by email) this isn't a good measure but for most industries it's a very good way to compare engagement.

What we can learn from this data:

- **HR/Recruitment** on first glance has taken a hammering, seeing click-to-open rate drop from 21.70% to 3.51%. Such a massive decline deserved some investigation - what we found was exactly what we mentioned above - the majority of these campaigns have switched to detailing all of the required information in the body of the email and soliciting responses by email rather than through a website.
- **Restaurants** were again a big climber, from 11.11% in 2009 to 24.08%. As mentioned before we've seen a shift in the nature of most restaurant email marketing towards value driven offers, vouchers etc. and many of these require recipients to click through to download a voucher or register for the offer, something they seem very willing to do.
- **B2C Retail** has remained relatively steady, reflecting what we've been hearing from our e-commerce based clients who make up the majority of this sector. The suffering of the high street doesn't seem to have hit the e-commerce world to anything like the same degree, although we've seen a lot of promotional activity so it's definitely taken some effort.



Which sectors have the highest reader loyalty?



To measure reader loyalty, we look at the ratio of unsubscriptions to opens - a good indicator of the relevance of a campaign to the audience. Unsubscription rate alone is a useful measure but doesn't take into account people who simply discard messages without ever opening them - the worst possible result for an email marketer!

The good news is that most sectors perform excellently here, showing a marked improvement over 2009's figures and yet again we see government leading the pack.

What we can learn from this data:

- **IT** saw the biggest increase (that's a bad thing!) from 3.33% up to 5.33%, perhaps a result of falling budgets in the SME sector this year as we saw no discernible changes in the types of campaigns being sent.
- **HR/Recruitment** saw a big improvement, dropping from 2.78% to 1.21% - confirmation that the sharp drop in engagement metrics we saw earlier was as a result of a change in campaign format and the limitations of email measurement rather than disengagement of the audience.
- **Fashion** is a new category introduced for 2010. Whilst the ratio here is high it is perhaps an indication of the rapidly changing nature of the industry - time will tell; in future reports we'll be able to compare how this tracks over time and hopefully spot some trends.





Appendix - more charts and tables

In this appendix we've included charts breaking down some of these statistics further as well as details of how we calculate these numbers and tables of the raw percentages, in case you're curious!

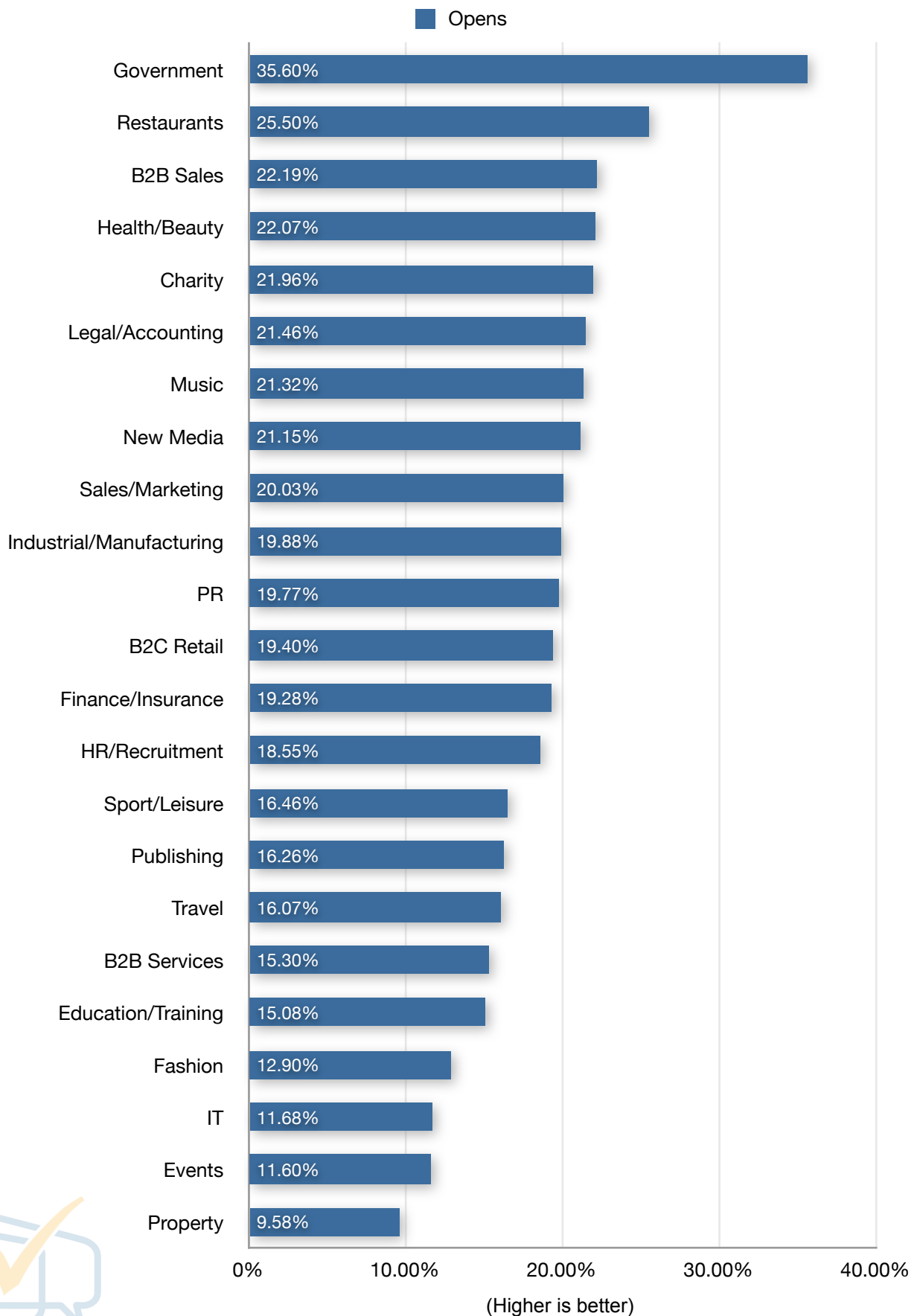
A little bit about Sign-Up.to

We're a 7 year old, UK based company providing software, services and support to thousands of UK businesses to help them communicate better with their customers using email marketing, SMS and social media.

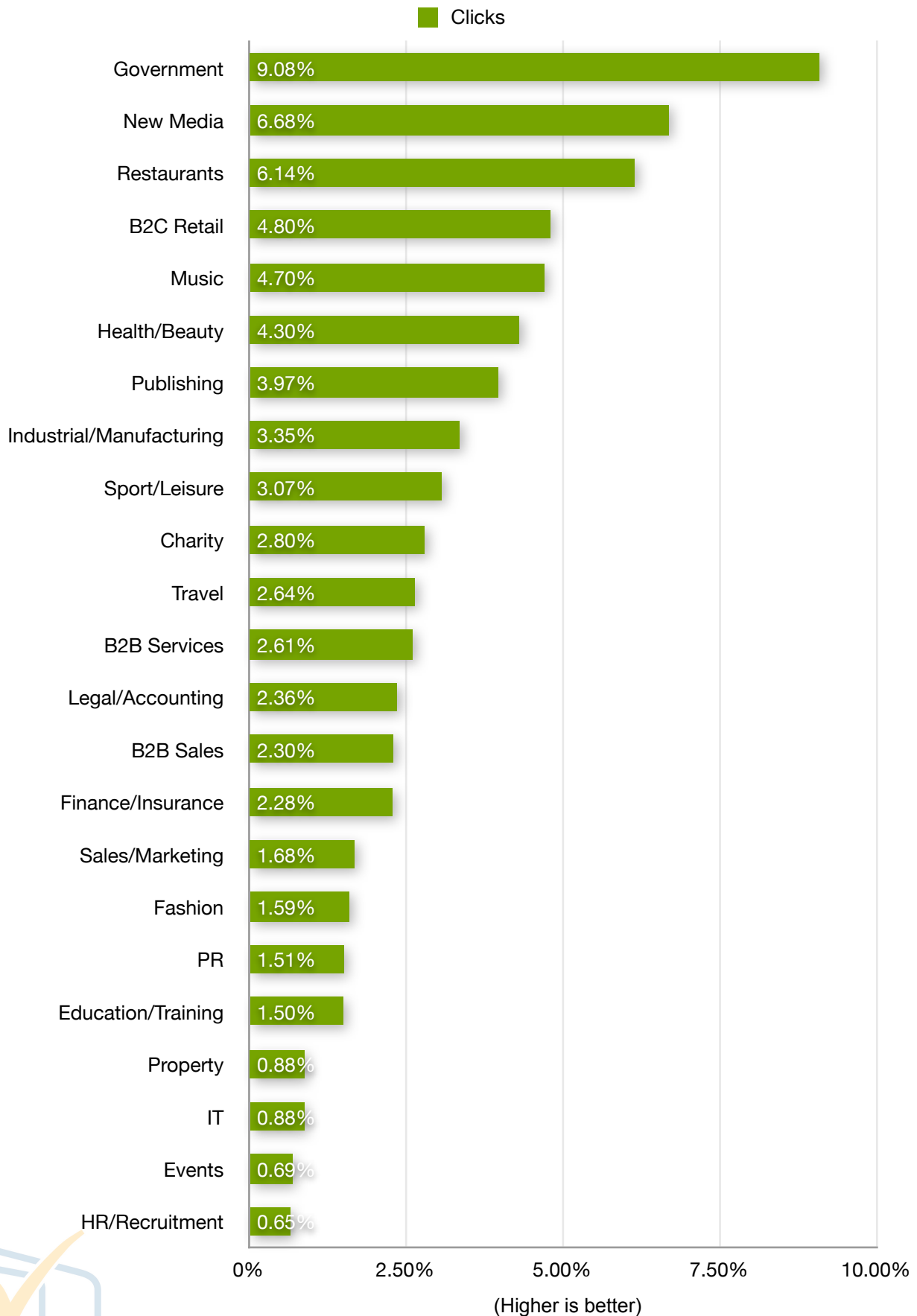
To find out more about what we do visit us at www.sign-up.to drop us an email at solutions@sign-up.to or give us a call on 020 3355 2630 - we'd love to hear from you.



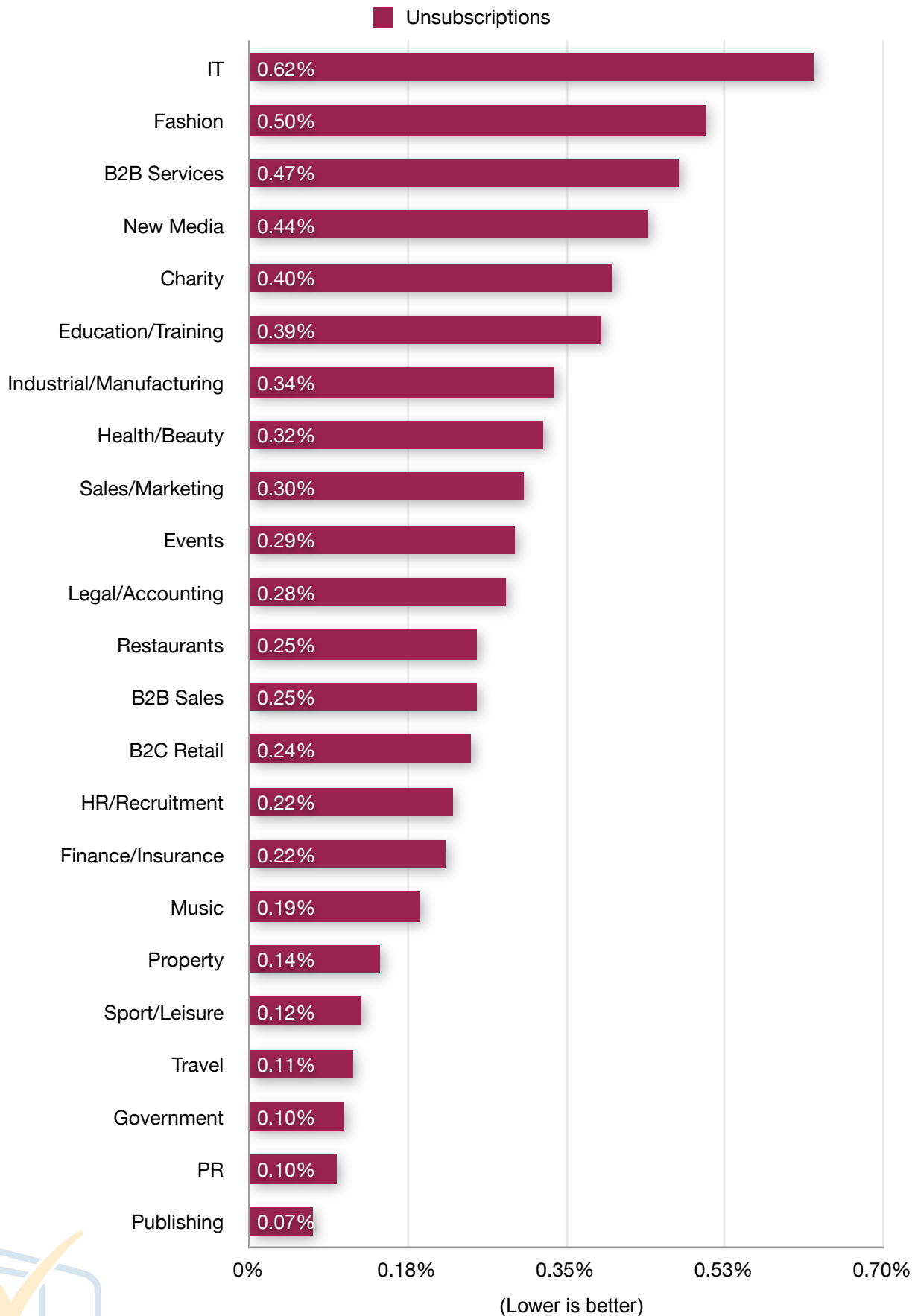
Which sector has the best open rate?



Which sector has the best click-through rate?



Which sectors get the most unsubscriptions?



Raw data

For the numerically inclined, here's the raw percentages in table format.

	Opens	Clicks	Unsubs	Click to Open	Open to Unsub
B2B Sales	22.19%	2.30%	0.25%	10.36%	1.13%
B2B Services	15.30%	2.61%	0.47%	17.04%	3.10%
B2C Retail	19.40%	4.80%	0.24%	24.74%	1.26%
Charity	21.96%	2.80%	0.40%	12.73%	1.83%
Education/Training	15.08%	1.50%	0.39%	9.93%	2.58%
Events	11.60%	0.69%	0.29%	5.93%	2.53%
Fashion	12.90%	1.59%	0.50%	12.35%	3.90%
Finance/Insurance	19.28%	2.28%	0.22%	11.84%	1.12%
Government	35.60%	9.08%	0.10%	25.51%	0.29%
Health/Beauty	22.07%	4.30%	0.32%	19.50%	1.47%
HR/Recruitment	18.55%	0.65%	0.22%	3.51%	1.21%
Industrial/Manufacturing	19.88%	3.35%	0.34%	16.87%	1.69%
IT	11.68%	0.88%	0.62%	7.50%	5.33%
Legal/Accounting	21.46%	2.36%	0.28%	10.98%	1.32%
Music	21.32%	4.70%	0.19%	22.05%	0.88%
New Media	21.15%	6.68%	0.44%	31.60%	2.06%
PR	19.77%	1.51%	0.10%	7.62%	0.49%
Property	9.58%	0.88%	0.14%	9.23%	1.51%
Publishing	16.26%	3.97%	0.07%	24.40%	0.43%
Restaurants	25.50%	6.14%	0.25%	24.08%	0.99%
Sales/Marketing	20.03%	1.68%	0.30%	8.37%	1.51%
Sport/Leisure	16.46%	3.07%	0.12%	18.62%	0.75%
Travel	16.07%	2.64%	0.11%	16.43%	0.71%



Defining terms

Let's define some of the terms we're using as several of these figures can be (and often are!) calculated in different ways.

All figures we use are based on unique user actions - for example we only count the same recipient opening a campaign once, if they open that campaign again we don't count that as another open.

- **Bounced:** messages returned by the receiving mail server as undeliverable
- **Delivered:** messages accepted for delivery by the receiving mail server (*total sent - bounced*)
- **Open Rate:** the percentage of delivered emails that were opened (measured by an image load or link click); i.e. *number opened / delivered*
- **Clicks:** the percentage of delivered emails that had a link clicked; i.e. *unique clicks / delivered*
- **Unsubscribes:** the percentage of delivered emails that result in an unsubscription; i.e. *unsubscribes / delivered*

For some of the reports we use different ratios, as these are a better way to compare some aspects of campaign performance - these are:

- **Click to Open:** the percentage of opened emails that had a link clicked; i.e. *unique clicks / opens*
- **Unsubscribe to Open:** the percentage of opened emails that result in an unsubscription; i.e. *unsubscribes / opens*

We use these 'x to Open' figures as ways to compare the performance of the actual campaign content because these look at what happens after the first objective of someone actually opening the campaign has been achieved.

