validity

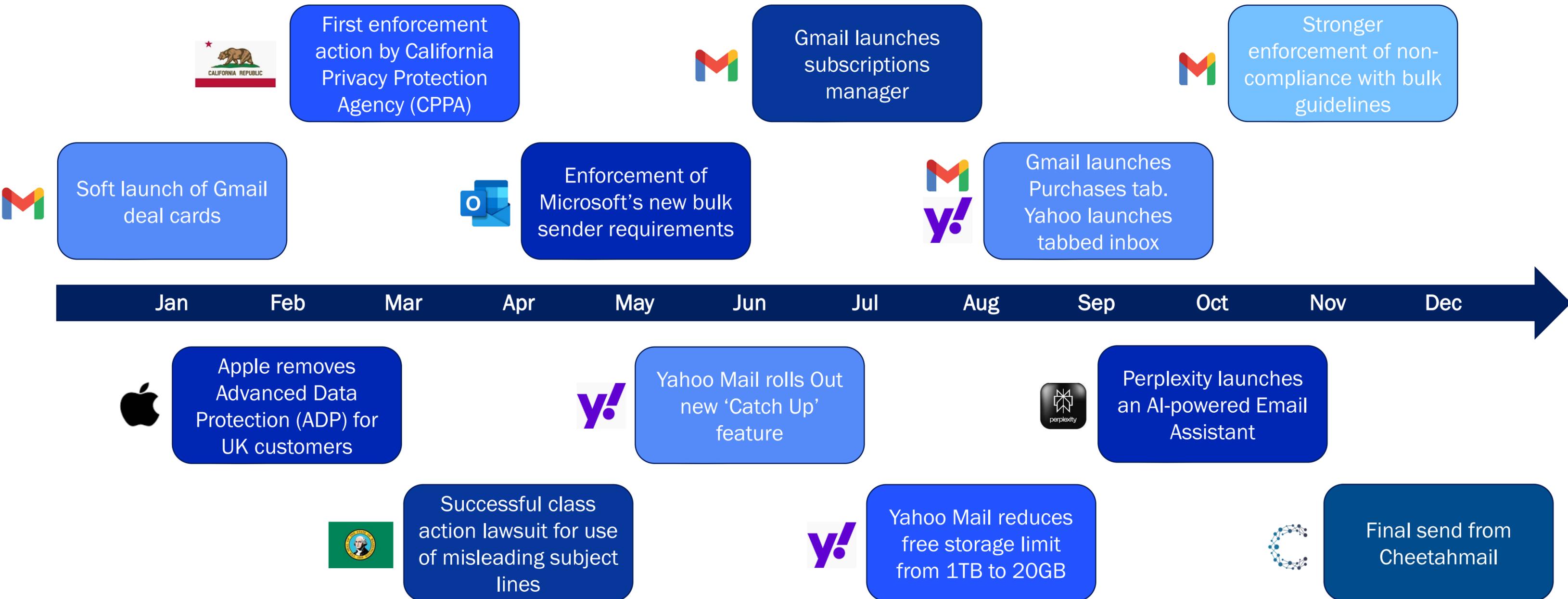# 2026 Email Marketing Trends & Predictions

Guy Hanson

VP of Customer Engagement, Validity
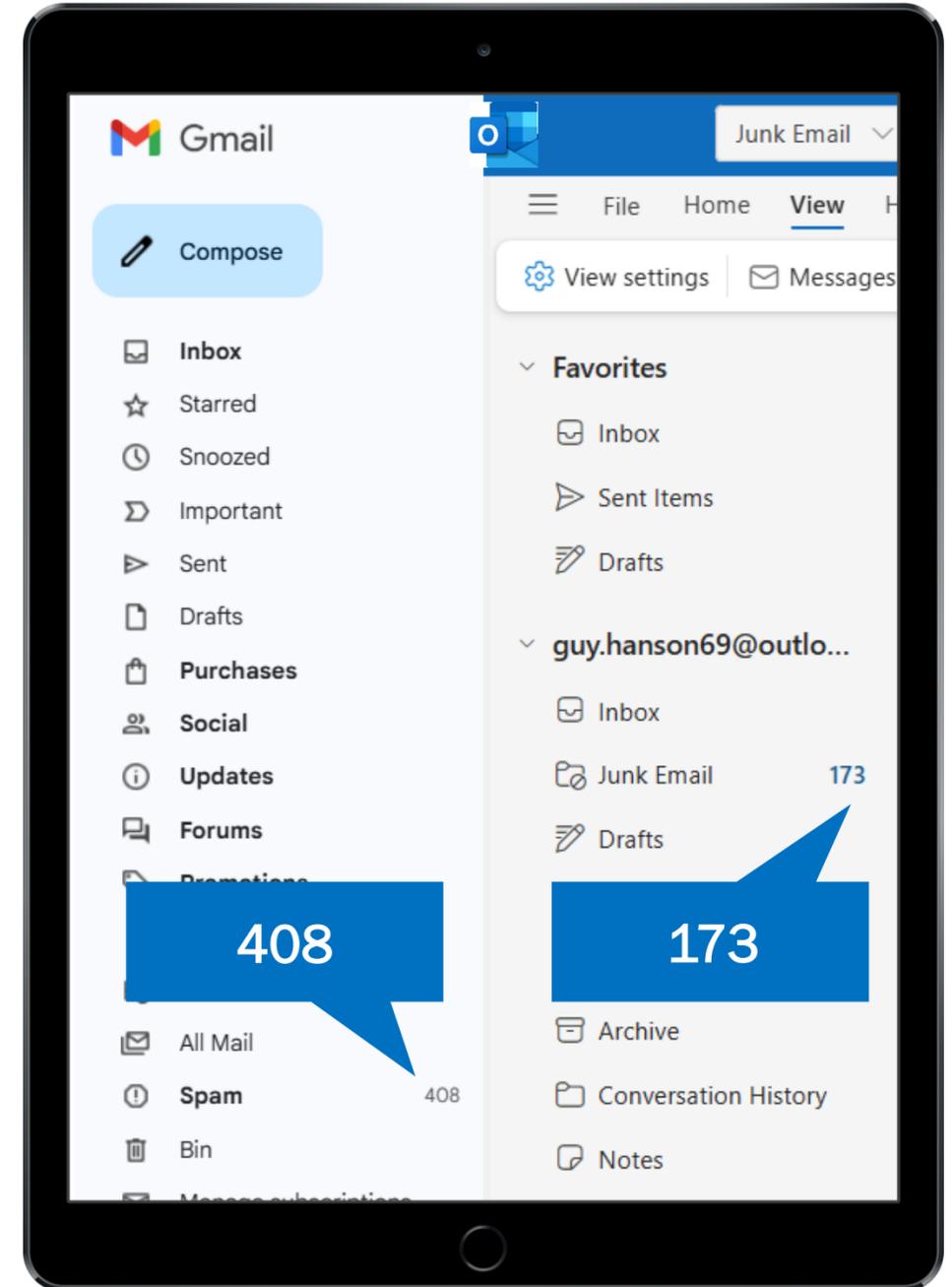
www.linkedin.com/in/guyhanson

2025 in Review

First enforcement action by California Privacy Protection Agency (CPPA)

Gmail launches subscriptions manager

Stronger enforcement of non-compliance with bulk guidelines

Soft launch of Gmail deal cards

Enforcement of Microsoft's new bulk sender requirements

Gmail launches Purchases tab. Yahoo launches tabbed inbox

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Apple removes Advanced Data Protection (ADP) for UK customers

Yahoo Mail rolls Out new 'Catch Up' feature

Perplexity launches an AI-powered Email Assistant

Successful class action lawsuit for use of misleading subject lines

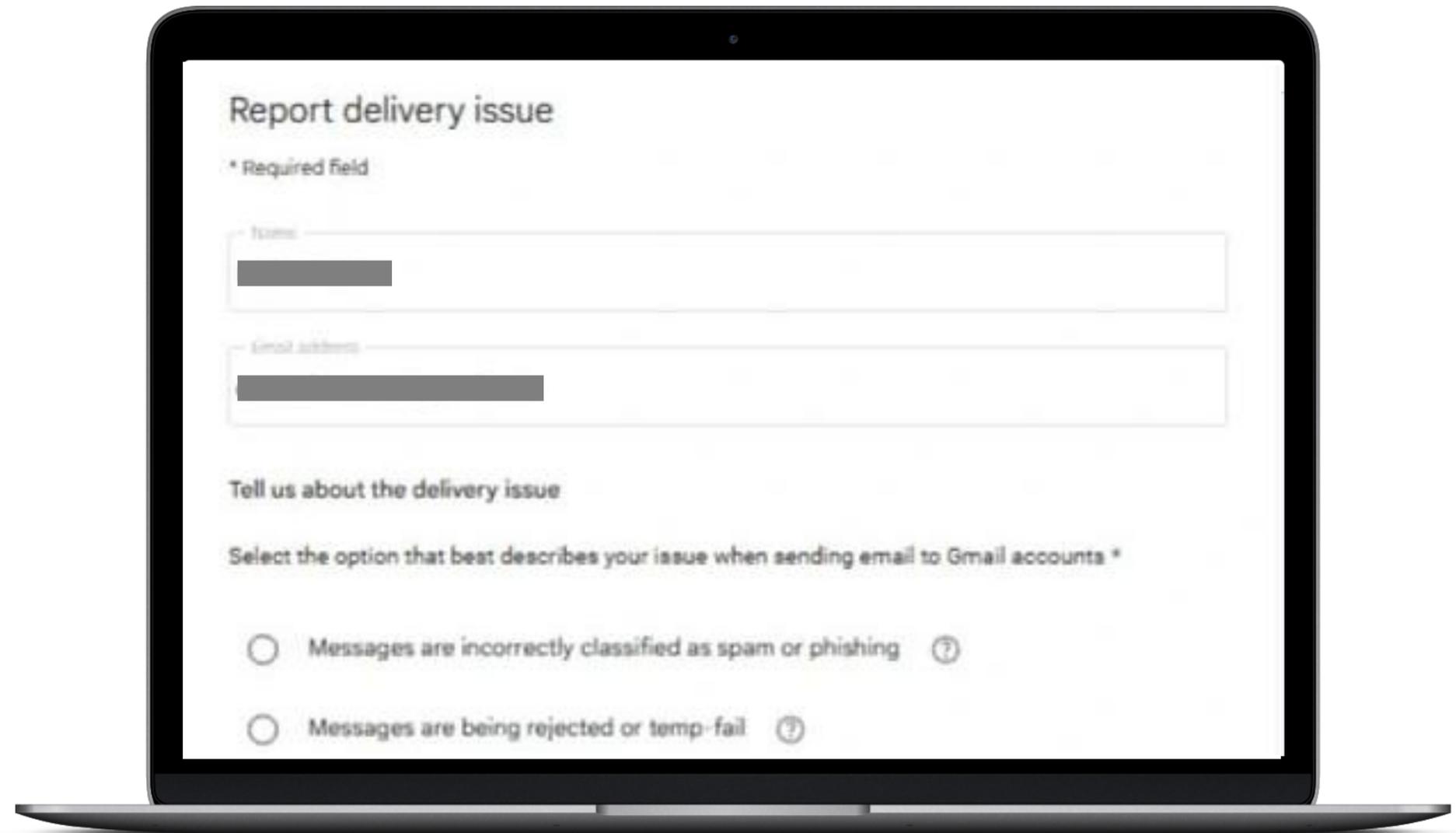Yahoo Mail reduces free storage limit from 1TB to 20GB
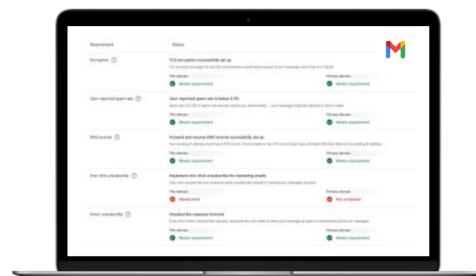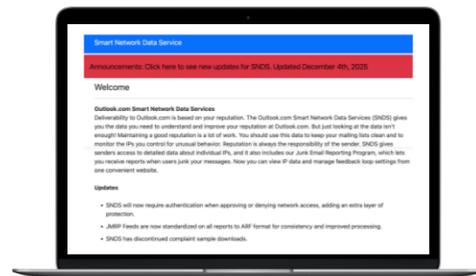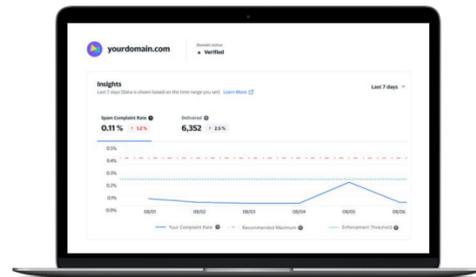
Final send from Cheetahmail

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2026: Mailbox Providers

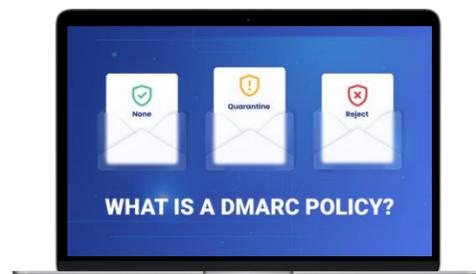# Deliverability

Postmaster Tools

Bulk Sender Requirements

MTA-STS: (Mail Transfer Agent Strict Transport Security) - an email security standard that requires email servers to use encrypted connections (TLS) and valid certificates

DMARC Alignment: anticipate a future state where where both SPF *and* DKIM will need to both pass and align in order for DMARC to pass.

DMARC Policy: will be tightened up so that "p=none" is no longer acceptable, and senders will be required to implement either "p=quarantine" or "p=reject"

2026: Artificial Intelligence

AI in the Inbox

Gmail: Google's AI Gemini is now available in Gmail to make it "your personal, proactive inbox assistant" by summarizing inbox content, and drafting replies
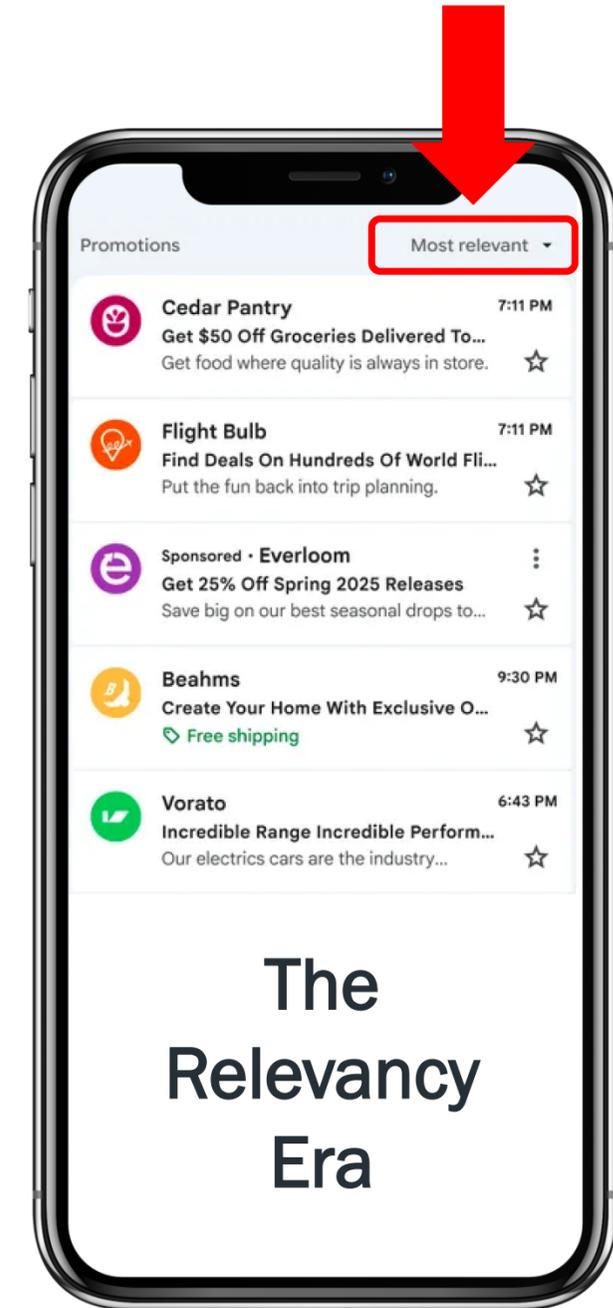
Email Assistants: Perplexity connects directly with email accounts to organise messages, draft replies, and schedule meetings while matching tone and communication style

Email Crime: SpamGPT is essentially a "CRM for cybercriminals" reducing the skill barrier for mass spam and ransomware campaigns

Unintended Consequences

The Relevancy Era

Consumer Pushback

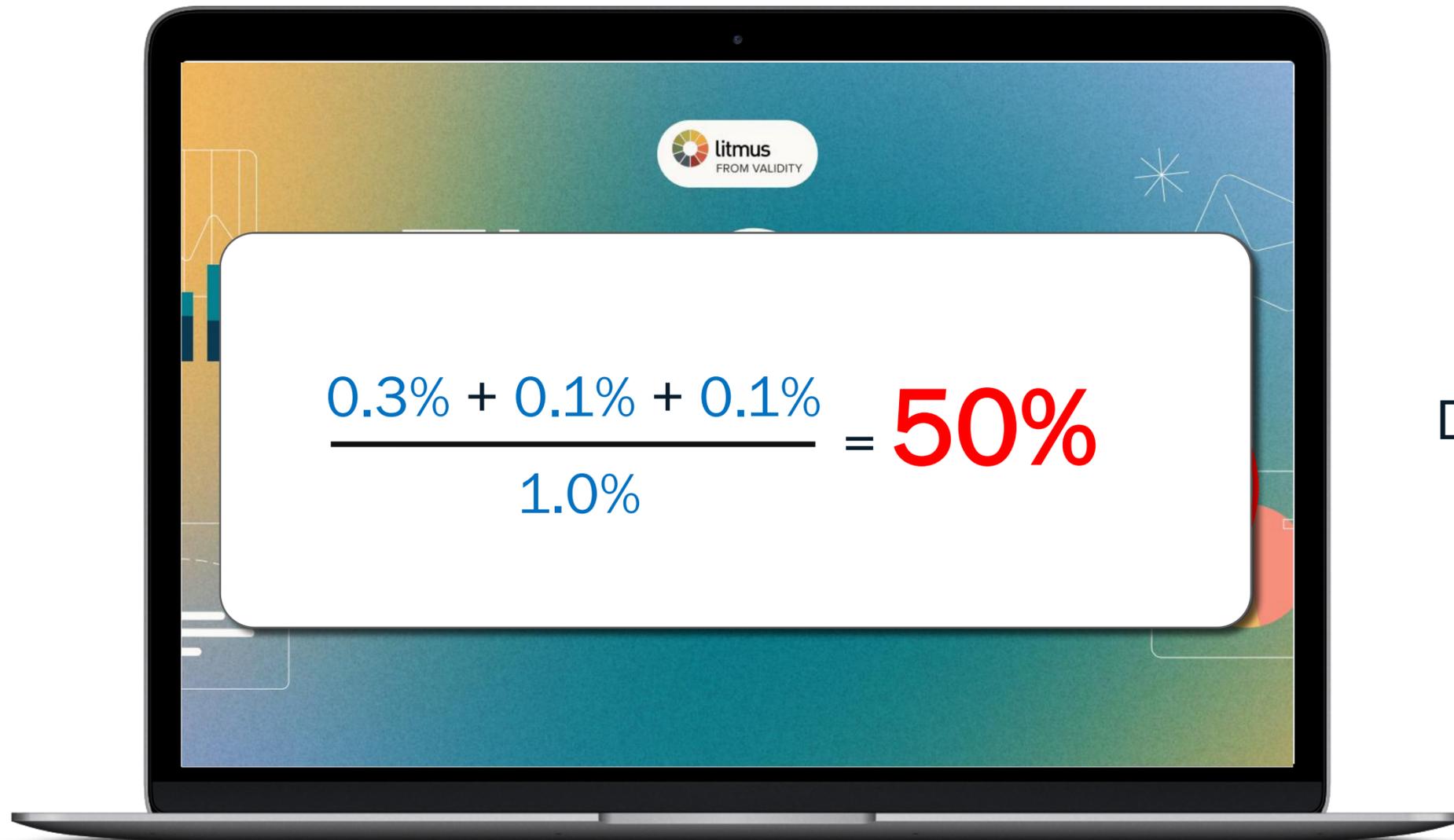

> Concerns about AI in the inbox
  - Important details missed/wrong
  - Bias & tone
  - Privacy

> Instead of designing **for AI**, we need to design *with* **AI**
  - Clear and intentional campaign goals
  - Rigorous list cleansing
  - Targeted personalization and content
  - Optimised reporting & analysis

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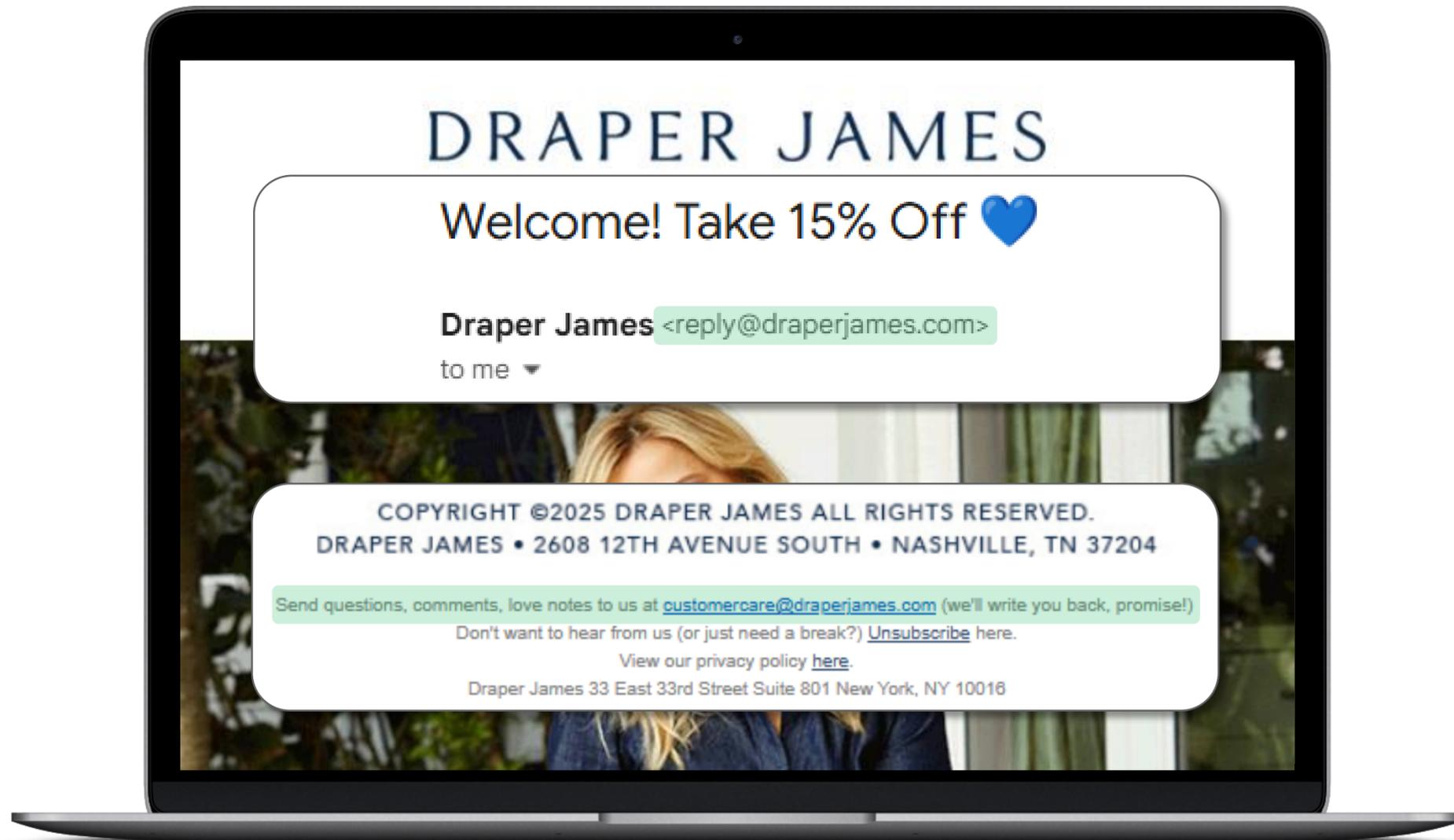
2026: Email Metrics

Going Deeper into the Conversion Funnel

$$\frac{0.3\% + 0.1\% + 0.1\%}{1.0\%} = 50\%$$

$$\text{Disaffection Rate} = \frac{\text{Unsubscribes} + \text{Complaints} + \text{Bounces}}{\text{Clicks}} * 100$$

Source: Litmus State of Email Report 2025
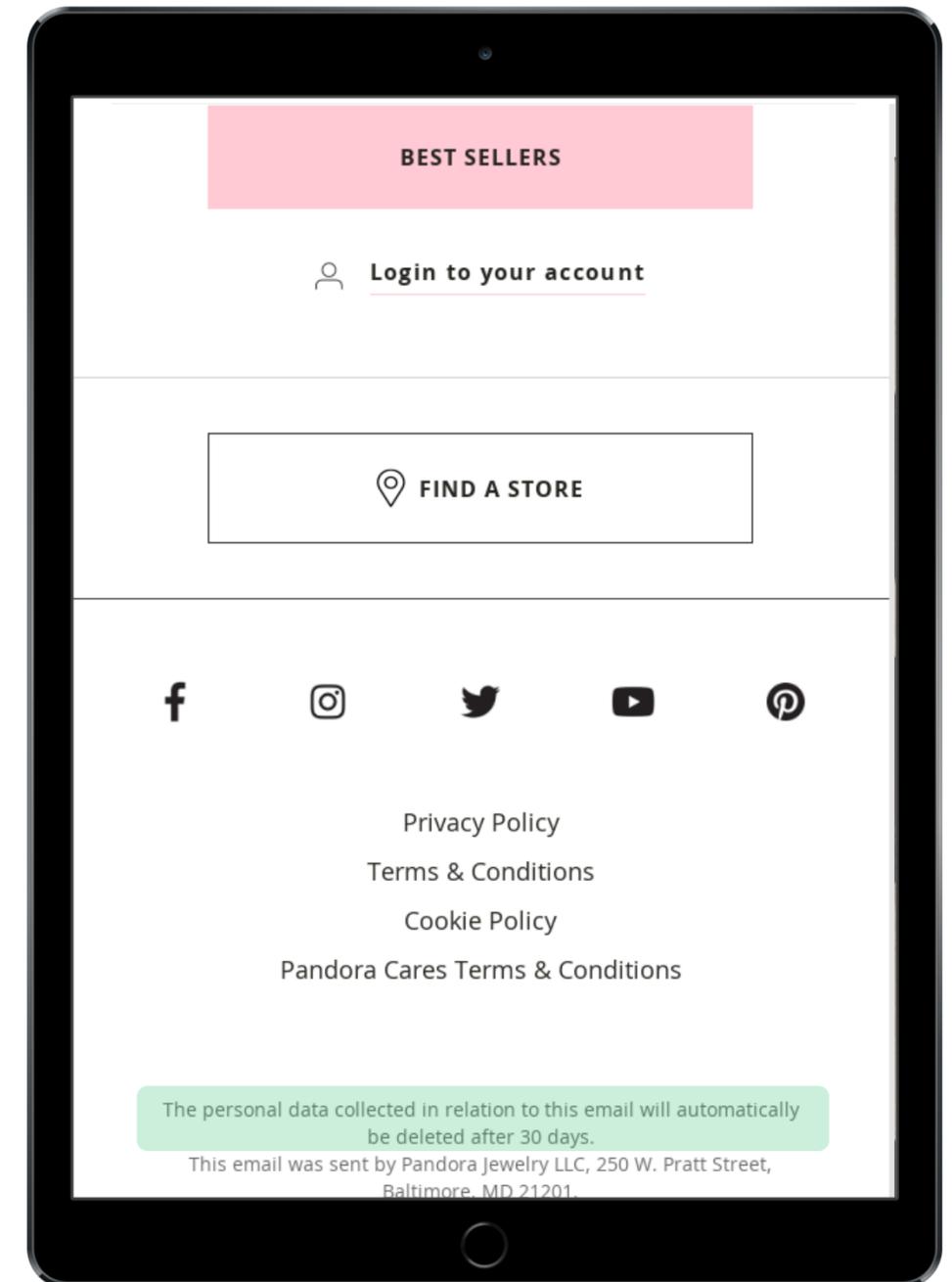
Reply Rates

$$Reply\ Rate = \frac{Replies}{Delivered\ Emails} * 100$$

Source: Microsoft Tech Community
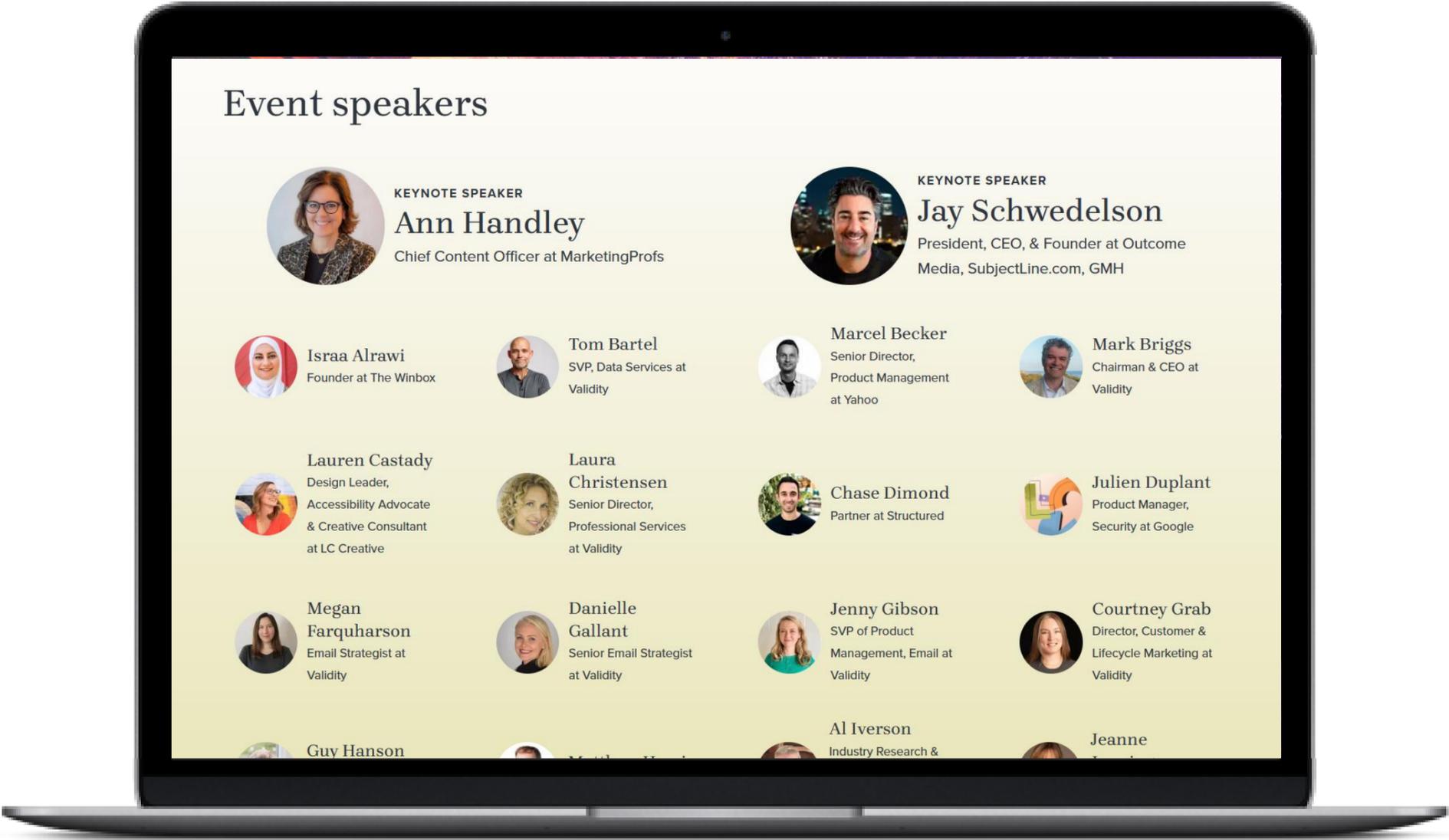
Measuring Trust

https://trustedadvisor.com/why-trust-matters/understanding-trust/understanding-the-trust-equation

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