AXIOS HQ

The best time to send an internal communication

A data-dive into 8.7 million email deliveries
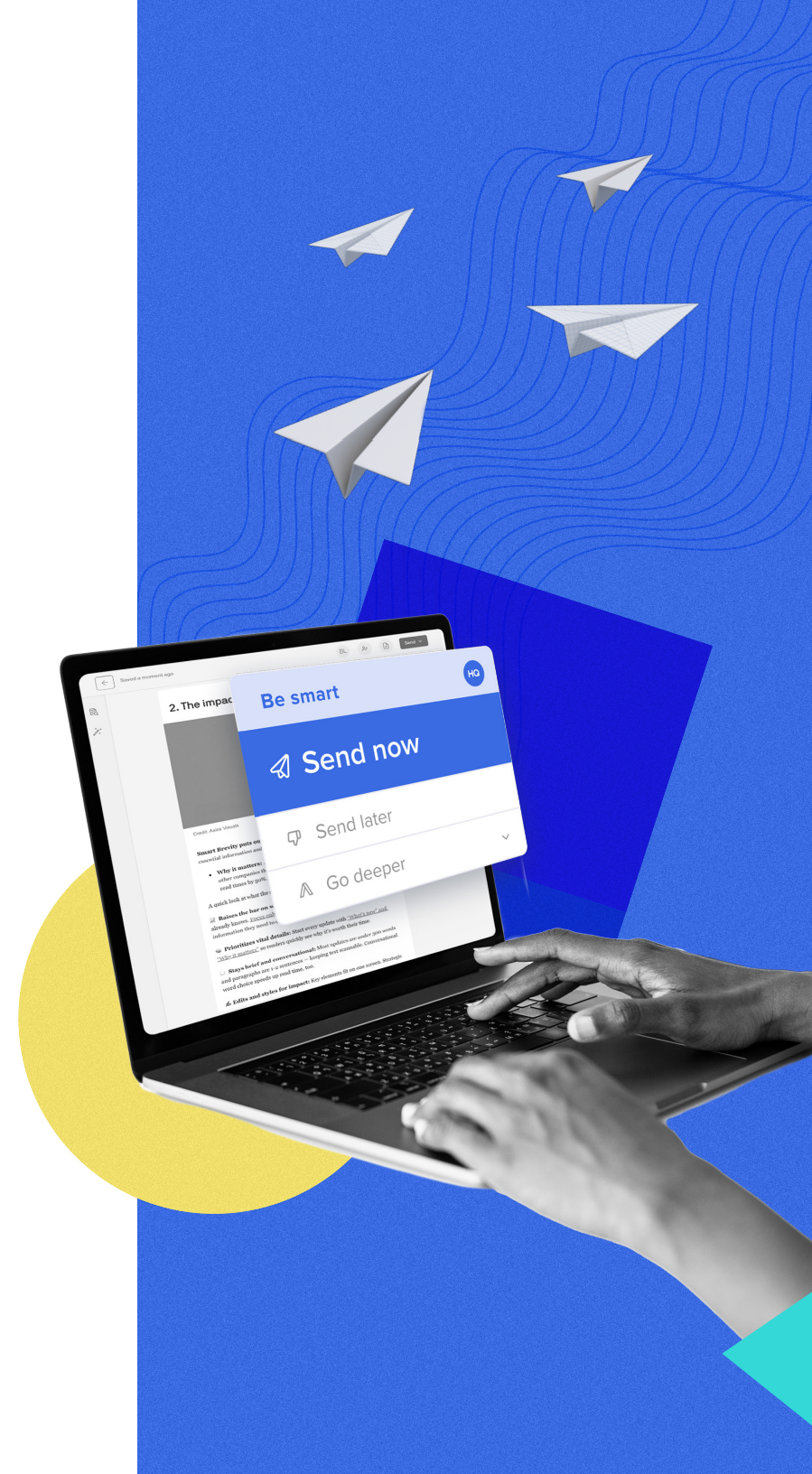
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Introduction

You can have the most essential messages in the world, but if you don't send them at a time when employees or stakeholders can read, absorb, and act on them, you're stunting everyone's potential — and costing the organization productivity, time, and money along the way.

- **Why it matters:** More than 70% of employees say they'd prefer that their leaders send vital internal updates by email. Sharpen the way you use that channel, and it can make the difference between an aligned workforce and one that frays.

To find the best time to send an internal communication, we analyzed the average open rates of 8.7 million email deliveries sent through Axios HQ — an AI-powered platform for essential workplace communication — between January 2022 and March 2023. We looked at average open rates through three different lenses:

- Best overall send day

- Best overall send time

- Best send day and send time

We also analyzed the data by org size to understand how engagement will vary as teams grow and internal structures become more complex. Our data spans 215 organizations in different industries and stages of growth — from teams with fewer than 50 employees to global enterprises.

To ensure our trends were significant, we removed send windows with fewer than two editions or fewer than 350 deliveries.
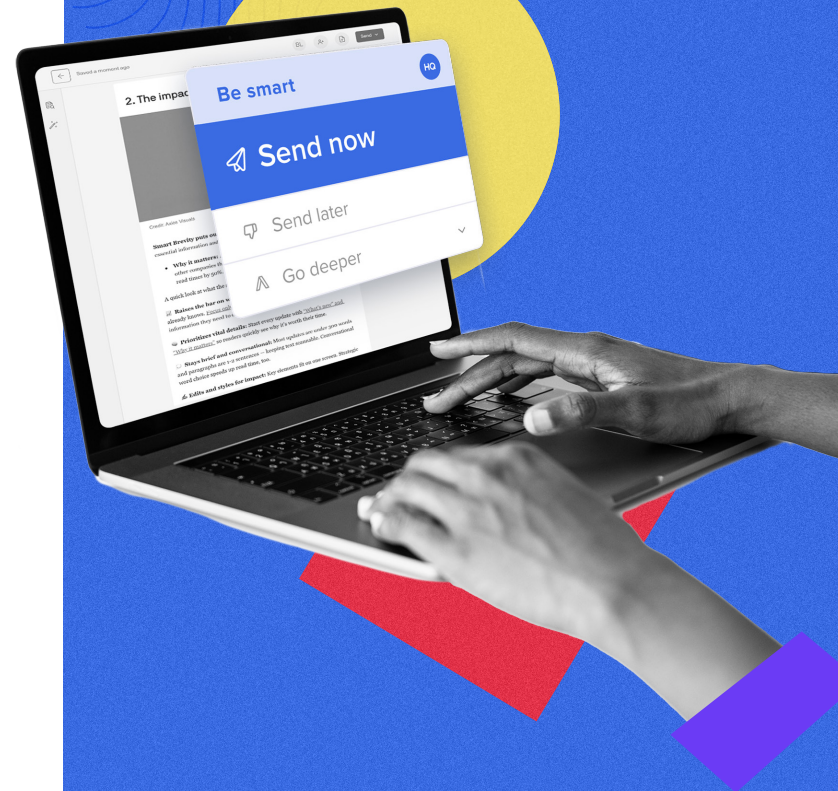
One surprising trend

The metrics you're about to see are from organizations around the world — most U.S.-based — sending internal communications around the clock.

- **Our goal** is to analyze that data and share clear benchmarks that can guide your internal communication strategy and optimize engagement.

- **Your goal** is to consider this data within the context of your culture.

Many of the "best send" windows — at organizations of all sizes — land on Sunday afternoons or in the earliest hours of a weekday morning.

- **What that means:** You may see stronger engagement if your vital communications are at the top of employee inboxes before the hustle and bustle of the day begins.

We also recognize, for some organizations, sending updates outside of normal working hours may feel like an infringement on employee time or team culture. In each section of this report, you'll also see a complete data set for the best day-and-time to send so you can choose the highest performing option that's right for you.

Best days to send an internal communication

Start with what you know about inbox competition: There's a lot, and it's mostly noise — like marketing and other nonessential outreach that rolls in — with most employees receiving hundreds of messages on channels that aren't effective for them.

You're playing a volume game. And while you can't control when brands and other organizations will send marketing-style outreach, you can understand it and use it to your advantage. Focus on sending essential, recurring communications during data-backed send windows — boosting the chances folks see it quickly and read it fully.

What Axios HQ data shows:

- **Best:** Sunday and Monday sends have an average open rate of 54%.

- **Next best:** Tuesday and Wednesday sends have an average open rate of 52%.

- **Worst:** Saturday sends have an average open rate of 31%.

Go deeper: The state of essential workplace communications

The best day to send is
Sunday/Monday

The best day to send an internal communication

| 54% | 54% | 52% | 52% | 47% | 49% | 31% |

Average open rate

| S | M | T | W | TH | F | S |
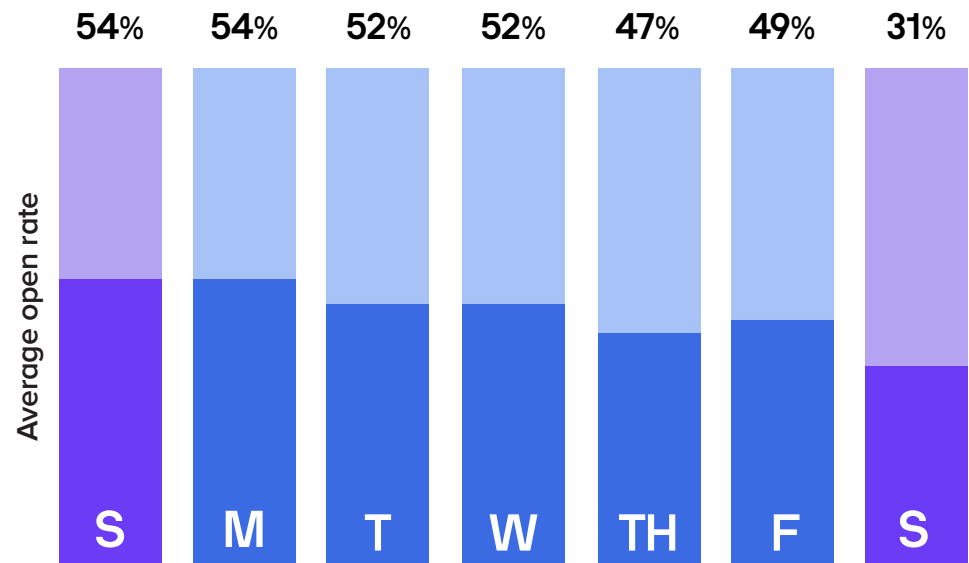
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Best times to send an internal communication

Now take your optimization one step further. Drill into the times of day employees and stakeholders are able to stop what they're doing and focus on the essential communications you share — the type of update that might take 3 – 5 minutes to read.

Most team members spend 23% of their week in meetings with the "ideal meeting window" falling 10am – 2pm — when folks are more likely to be busy. With that insight, you can begin to map your best-send days against folks' most available windows.

What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Sends 3am – 6am EST have an average open rate of 70%.

- **Next best:** Sends 12am – 3am EST have an average open rate of 65%.

- **Worst:** Sends between 9pm – 12am EST have an average open rate of 37%.

Go deeper: The communication channels employees want leaders to use

The best time to send is

3am – 6am

The best time to send an internal communication

65%	70%	54%	53%	50%	48%	42%	37%

Average open rate

| 12am–3am | 3am–6am | 6am–9am | 9am–12pm | 12pm–3pm | 3pm–6pm | 6pm–9pm | 9pm–12am |

All times are in EST

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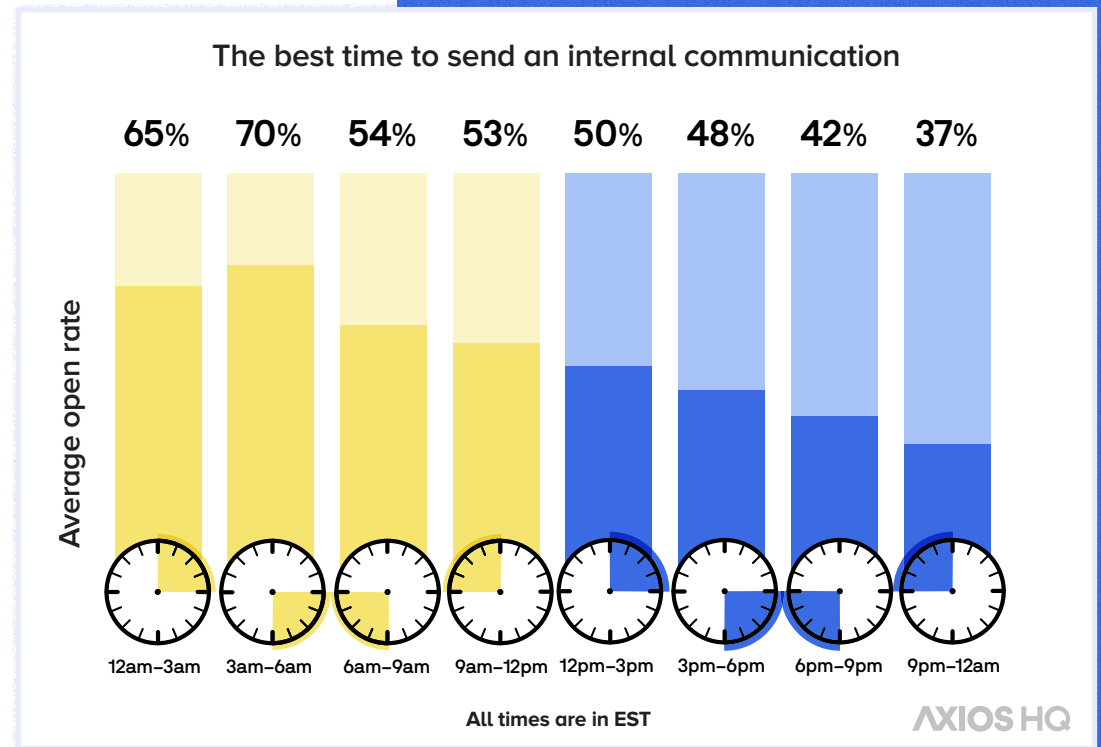
Best day and time to send an internal communication

Once you take all the daily distractions and work priorities into account, you can find the best-day-and-time combination to send staff or stakeholders your essential workplace communications. Your very best window will be unique to your organization, but if you're just starting out or trying to experiment, these can be your benchmarks.

What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Sunday sends 3pm – 6pm have an average open rate of 94%.

- **Next best:** Sunday sends 6pm – 9pm have an average open rate of 86%.

- **Worst:** Saturday sends 6am – 12pm have an average open rate of 21%.

While far fewer essential communications are sent Saturday and Sunday — about 2% of deliveries — updates sent on those days earn the highest open rates. Remember, send windows don't always equate to reading windows. Shipping an internal communication during low-competition times, like Sunday night, can ensure they are top of mind — and top of inbox — during your readers' most available hours, like first thing Monday morning.

Go deeper: How to make any essential communication shorter, clearer, and more engaging

The best overall day and time is
Sunday 3pm – 6pm

The best day and time to send an internal communication

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
12am – 3am EST		65%	73%	66%	69%	52%	
3am – 6am EST		69%	75%	69%	75%	69%	
6am – 9am EST		54%	51%	59%	56%	50%	21%
9am – 12pm EST	56%	53%	59%	57%	41%	54%	21%
12pm – 3pm EST	36%	50%	57%	53%	42%	51%	70%
3pm – 6pm EST	94%	52%	49%	48%	45%	49%	
6pm – 9pm EST	86%	57%	41%	33%	50%	37%	57%
9pm – 12am EST	75%	63%	65%	29%	59%	23%	
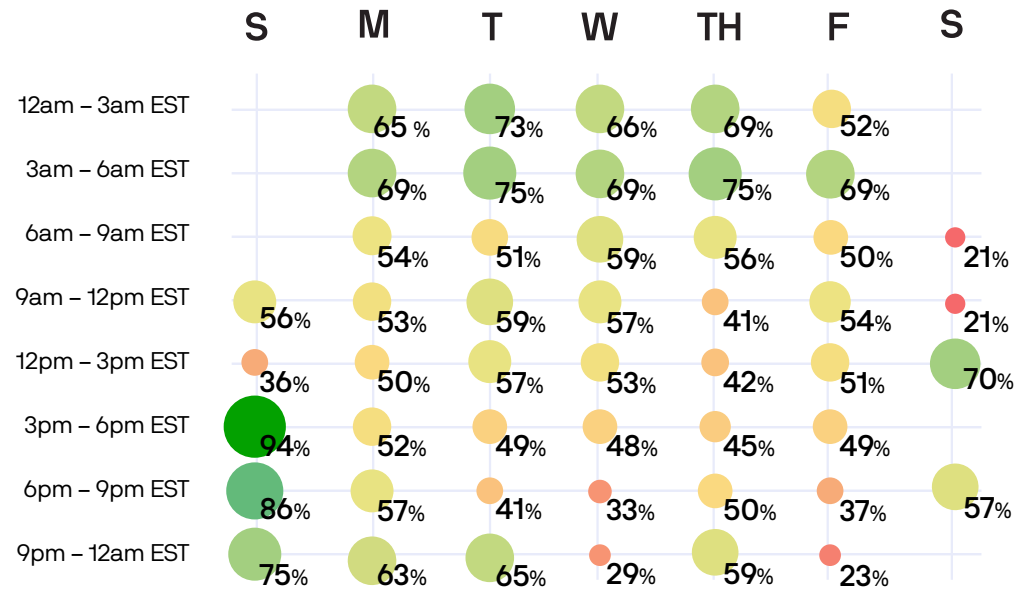
Average open rate

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Best send times by org size

Every organization has its own pulse, purpose, and employee preferences — and they evolve as you grow. We took a deeper dive into our data to see how internal open rates evolve along with them.

1 – 499

500 – 2,499

2,500 – 9,999

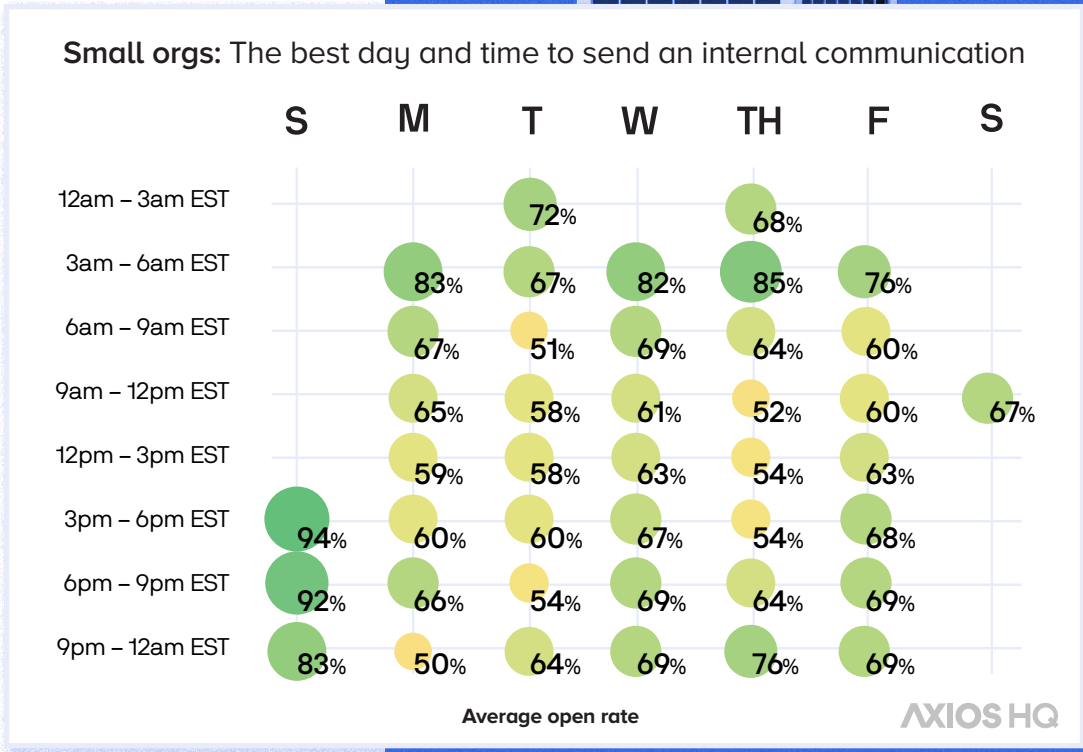10,000+

When to send: Small organizations

Small organizations — with 1 – 499 employees — are powerful, nimble, but also vulnerable. They can move quickly, test, adjust, and try again with few roadblocks, but any breakdown in alignment can create issues just as quickly.

Leaders who stay focused on a strong mission, shared vision, and reliable, consistent communication help teams stay focused, productive, and bought-in on shared goals. But small teams may not yet have a centralized communication function — making it everyone's responsibility to understand when and how to communicate.

What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Sunday sends 3pm – 9pm have an average open rate of 92% – 94%.

- **Next best:** Thursday sends 3am – 6am have an average open rate of 85%.

- **Worst:** Monday sends 9pm – 12am have an average open rate of 50%.

Go deeper: How AI will impact workplace communication

1 – 499

The best time for small orgs is

Sunday 3pm – 6pm

Small orgs: The best day and time to send an internal communication

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
12am – 3am EST			72%		68%		
3am – 6am EST		83%	67%	82%	85%	76%	
6am – 9am EST		67%	51%	69%	64%	60%	
9am – 12pm EST		65%	58%	61%	52%	60%	67%
12pm – 3pm EST		59%	58%	63%	54%	63%	
3pm – 6pm EST	94%	60%	60%	67%	54%	68%	
6pm – 9pm EST	92%	66%	54%	69%	64%	69%	
9pm – 12am EST	83%	50%	64%	69%	76%	69%	

Average open rate

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When to send: Medium organizations

Medium organizations — with 500 – 2,499 employees — may have more offices, differently located teams, or hybrid staff to communicate with. Many communication teams are still small and growing, too.

Department leaders and subject-matter experts all have a role to play in bringing developments and updates to the communications team and in helping them share it accurately. That requires alignment and understanding on when and how to collaborate.
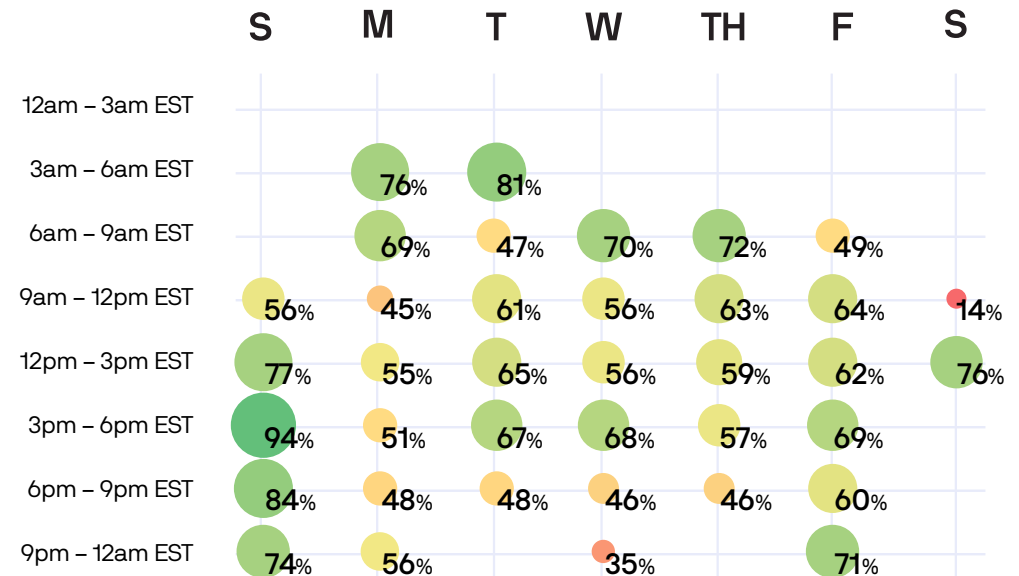
What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Sunday sends 3pm – 9pm have an average open rate of 84% – 94%.

- **Next best:** Tuesday sends 3am – 6am have an average open rate of 81%.

- **Worst:** Saturday sends 9am – 12pm have an average open rate of 14%.

Go deeper: Identify your essential communicators — and teach them to be more effective

500 – 2,499

The best time for medium orgs is

Sunday 3pm — 6pm

Medium orgs: The best day and time to send an internal communication

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
12am – 3am EST							
3am – 6am EST		76%	81%				
6am – 9am EST		69%	47%	70%	72%	49%	
9am – 12pm EST	56%	45%	61%	56%	63%	64%	14%
12pm – 3pm EST	77%	55%	65%	56%	59%	62%	76%
3pm – 6pm EST	94%	51%	67%	68%	57%	69%	
6pm – 9pm EST	84%	48%	48%	46%	46%	60%	
9pm – 12am EST	74%	56%		35%		71%	

Average open rate

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When to send: Large organizations

Large organizations — with 2,500 – 9,999 employees — tend to see lower open rates, on average, than smaller teams due to the size and span of their audience. They're more siloed, too, with different departments and regions so large and unique that they can operate as distinct business units.

That makes it harder for internal communicators to not only cascade updates across a company, but to stay highly relevant to all employees. And it becomes even more important to find the right time to send organization-wide updates.

What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Wednesday sends 9am – 12pm have an average open rate of 73%.

- **Next best:** Monday and Tuesday sends 9am – 12pm have an average open rate of 70%.

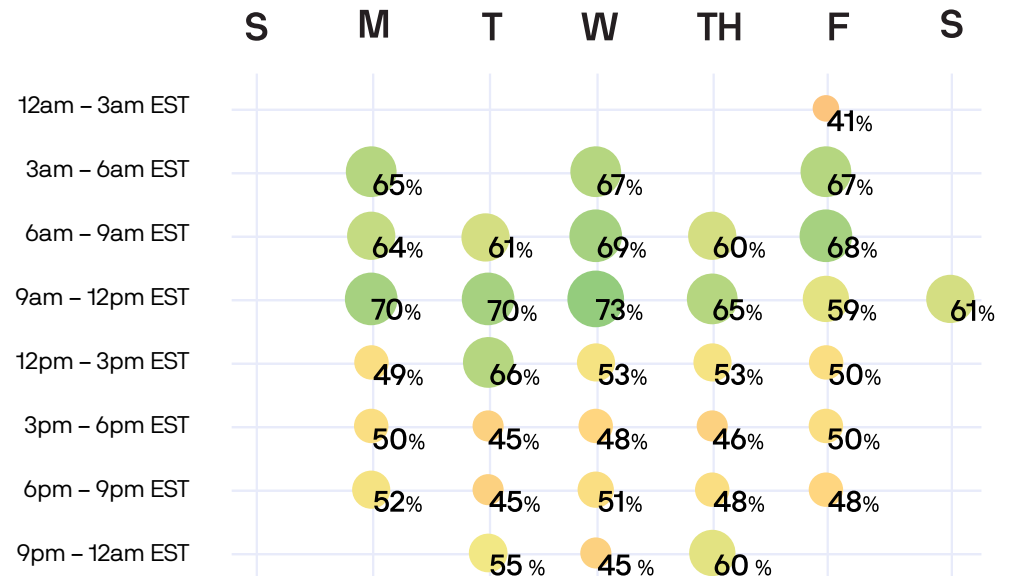- **Worst:** Friday sends 12am – 3am have an average open rate of 41%.

It's worth noting internal communications sent 12am – 12pm had higher average open rates, overall, than updates sent in the afternoon and evening. Let that guide how you test your send schedule to see what resonates with readers.

Go deeper: A smarter way to cascade essential information at your organization

2,500 – 9,999

The best time for large orgs is
Wednesday 9am – 12pm

Large orgs: The best day and time to send an internal communication

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
12am – 3am EST						41%	
3am – 6am EST		65%		67%		67%	
6am – 9am EST		64%	61%	69%	60%	68%	
9am – 12pm EST		70%	70%	73%	65%	59%	61%
12pm – 3pm EST		49%	66%	53%	53%	50%	
3pm – 6pm EST		50%	45%	48%	46%	50%	
6pm – 9pm EST		52%	45%	51%	48%	48%	
9pm – 12am EST			55%	45%	60%		

Average open rate

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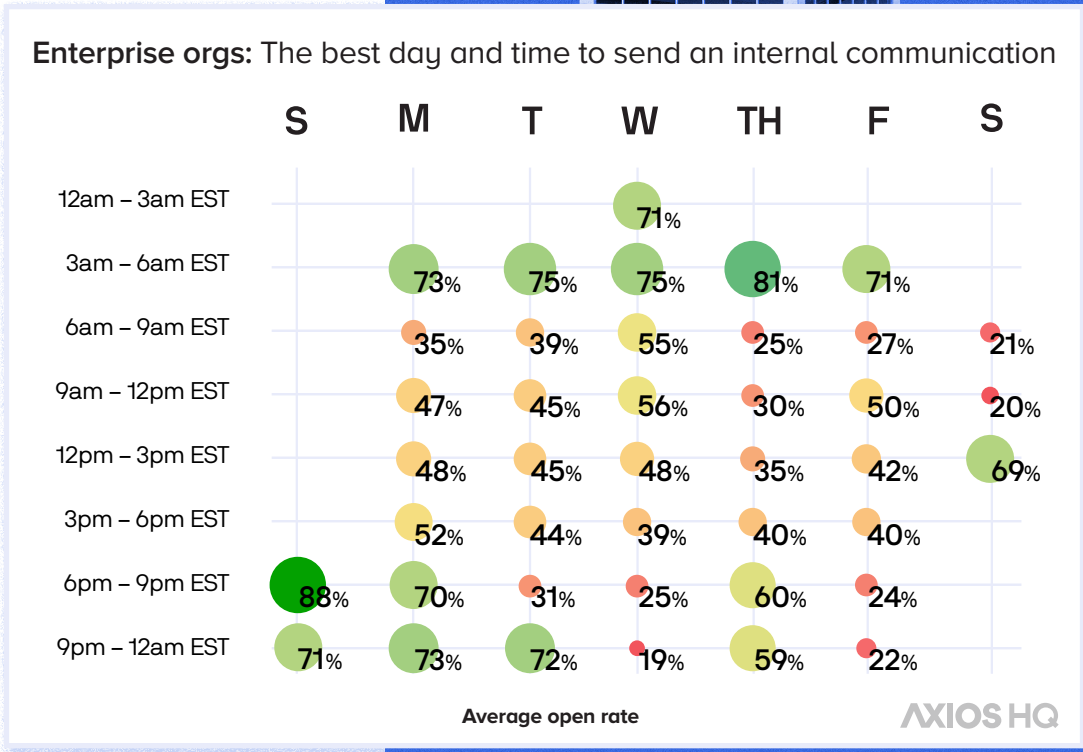
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When to send: Enterprise organizations

Enterprise organizations — with 10,000+ employees — had the lowest overall open rates, yet still had several send windows that reached or exceeded 75%, so it's still possible to engage a great majority of employees with internal email communication. You just have to break through the noise.

Done well, these communications become teams' single source of truth so they feel connected — no matter how far apart they are. Pay attention to time zones, office differences, and team culture when sending emails. That way, you increase your open rates along with engagement and morale.

What Axios HQ data shows, in EST:

- **Best:** Sunday sends 6pm — 9pm and Thursday sends 3am — 6am have an average open rate of 81% — 88%.

- **Next best:** Tuesday and Wednesday sends 3am — 6am have an average open rate of 75%.

- **Worst:** Wednesday sends 9pm — 12am have an average open rate of 19%.

Go deeper: How to earn stakeholder buy-in when evolving your communication strategy

10,000+

The best time for enterprise orgs is

Sunday 6pm — 9pm

Enterprise orgs: The best day and time to send an internal communication

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
12am – 3am EST				71%			
3am – 6am EST		73%	75%	75%	81%	71%	
6am – 9am EST		35%	39%	55%	25%	27%	21%
9am – 12pm EST		47%	45%	56%	30%	50%	20%
12pm – 3pm EST		48%	45%	48%	35%	42%	69%
3pm – 6pm EST		52%	44%	39%	40%	40%	
6pm – 9pm EST	88%	70%	31%	25%	60%	24%	
9pm – 12am EST	71%	73%	72%	19%	59%	22%	

Average open rate

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Tips to improve your send strategy

Successful sends come from studying your audience — knowing when they are at their desks, what days are heavy with meetings, and if some might only be able to check email before or after they join an assembly line. All that data will help you find the best day and time to send essential internal communications.
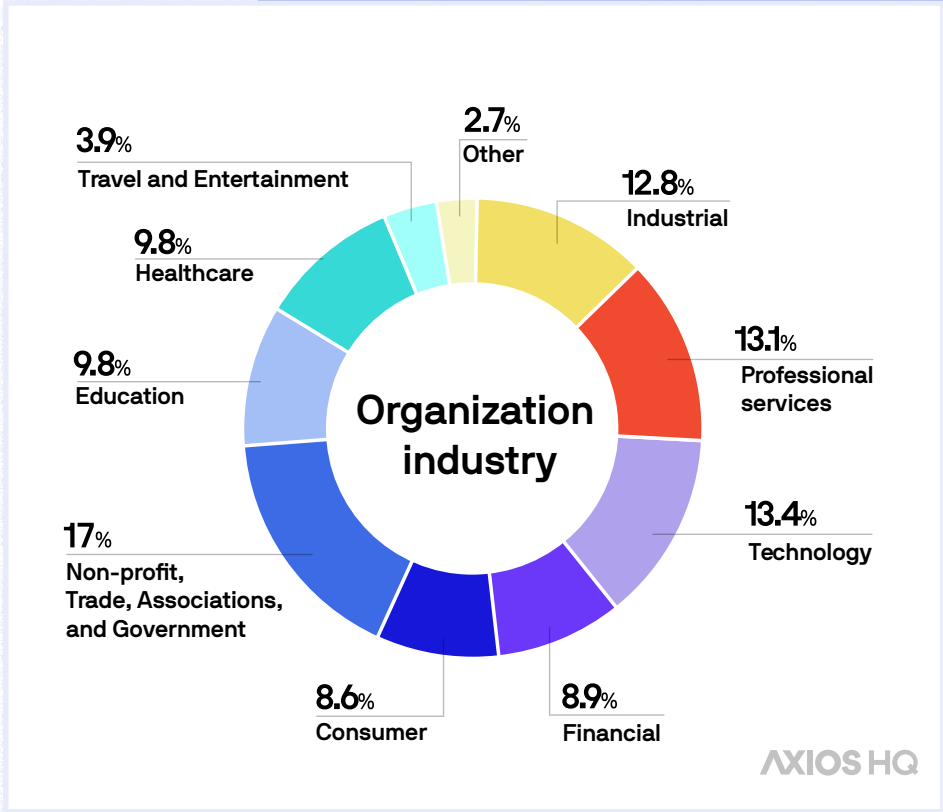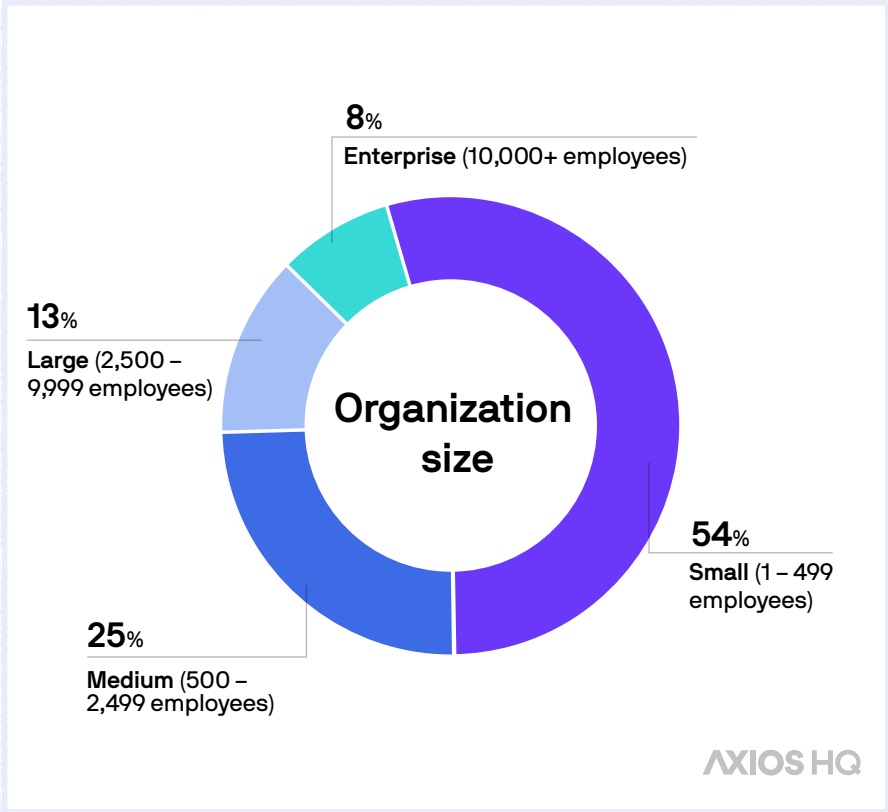
Your quick checklist:

☐ **Take stock.** Audit your existing content, cadence, and success rate. See what's connecting with your audience currently so you can build on it. Keeping readers engaged and being their single source of truth will go far in building better communication across the org.

☐ **Collect feedback.** With employees scattered across different teams and time zones, you need to zero in on the topics they want — and need — to hear most. Poll employees to see what they want more or less of. Adjust your content strategy accordingly.

☐ **Measure and modify.** Build a better baseline by looking beyond only basic email metrics. Focus on engagement rates, retention rates, and other quantitative ways to measure the success of your internal communications.
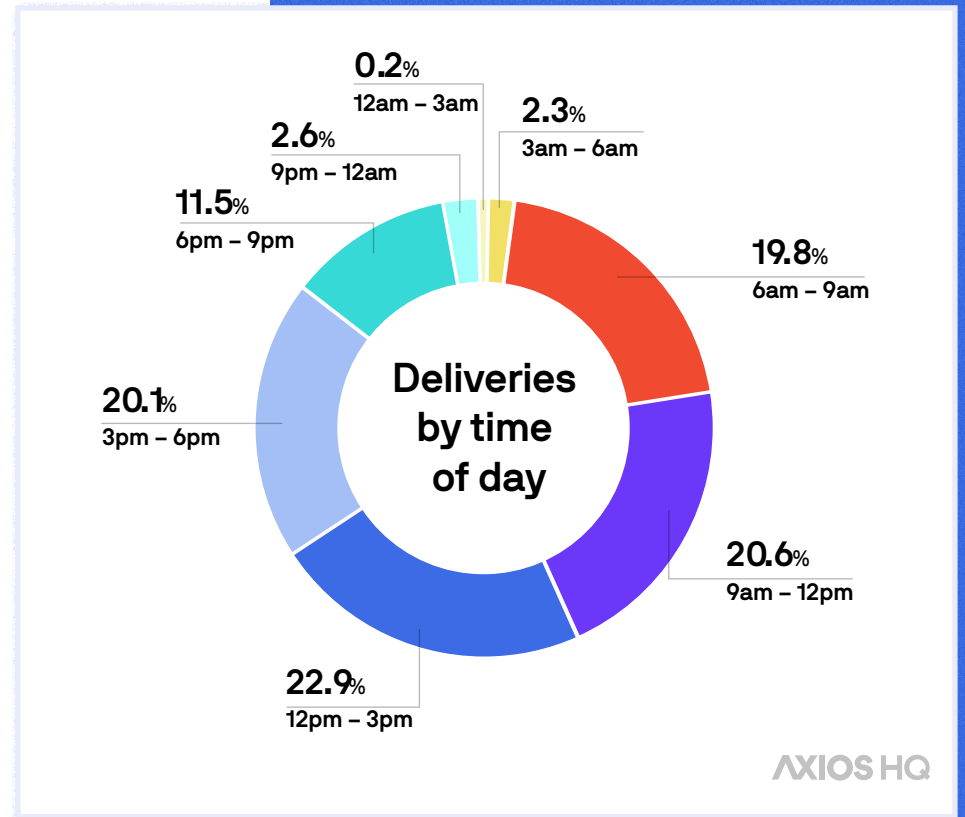
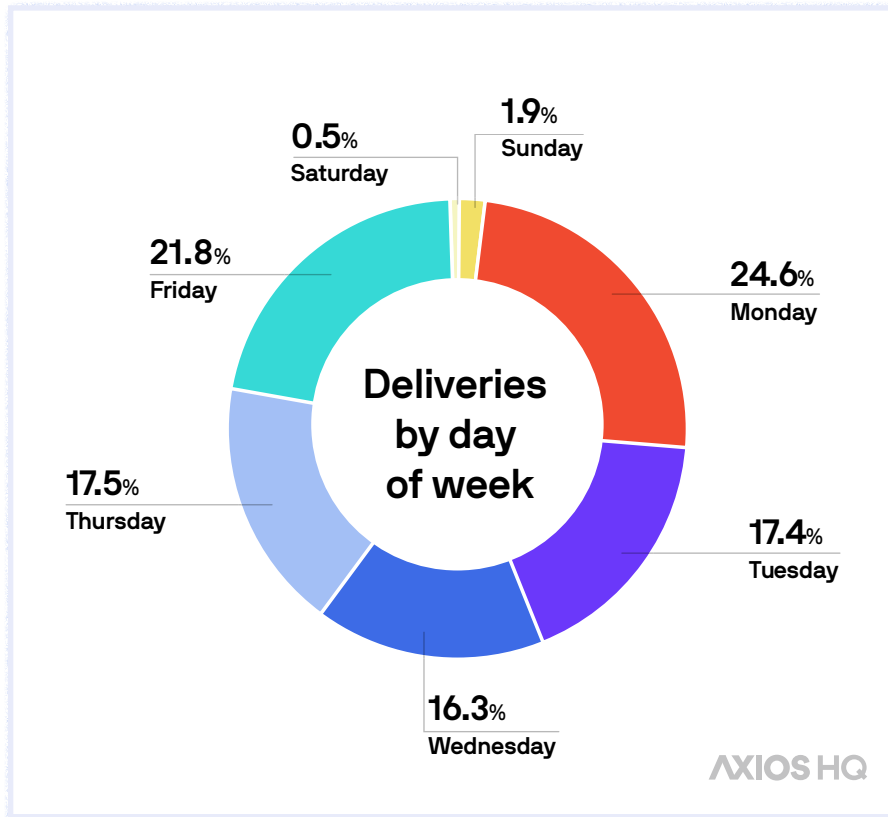**The bottom line:** Your unique cadence and send time will depend on your employees and work week, but the data in this report will give you benchmarks for where to start. And once you find your stride, you'll start to see improvements across the board — like more engaged employees, better team retention, and rising morale — that keep your organization aligned and headed in the right direction.

Methodology

We analyzed data from 8.7 million email deliveries through Axios HQ. It spans 215 organizations sending internal communications from January 2022 through March 2023. Below is a breakdown.

Organization size

- 8% Enterprise (10,000+ employees)
- 13% Large (2,500 – 9,999 employees)
- 54% Small (1 – 499 employees)
- 25% Medium (500 – 2,499 employees)

Organization industry

- 3.9% Travel and Entertainment
- 2.7% Other
- 12.8% Industrial
- 9.8% Healthcare
- 13.1% Professional services
- 9.8% Education
- 13.4% Technology
- 17% Non-profit, Trade, Associations, and Government
- 8.6% Consumer
- 8.9% Financial

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Methodology

Deliveries by day of week

- 1.9% Sunday
- 24.6% Monday
- 17.4% Tuesday
- 16.3% Wednesday
- 17.5% Thursday
- 21.8% Friday
- 0.5% Saturday

Deliveries by time of day

- 0.2% 12am – 3am
- 2.3% 3am – 6am
- 19.8% 6am – 9am
- 20.6% 9am – 12pm
- 22.9% 12pm – 3pm
- 20.1% 3pm – 6pm
- 11.5% 6pm – 9pm
- 2.6% 9pm – 12am

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Axios HQ is the only Essential Communications Management platform helping organizations plan, compose, deliver, and measure their vital internal communications.

- **Rooted in years of research** — and built with powerful generative AI — Axios HQ uses a science-backed methodology to make internal communications clearer and more engaging.

- **Your key audiences stay focused** and aligned, and you earn their time and trust.

Organizations large and small — like Walmart, Tyson, and Everfi — trust Axios HQ as their key to better organizational alignment and reader engagement.

See how Axios HQ has helped hundreds of organizations elevate what matters.

Get a demo

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Elevate what matters