



Into
THE INBOX



■ ■ Into the Inbox

The concept of getting your emails safely into the inbox of users without getting lost, driven to spam folders and blocked is called deliverability. On the course of your mail's journey, numerous hurdles have to be dealt. Once, those elements are found, the number of emails reaching out your contact's inbox will increase.

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Attention newbies!

Check out with the “Tips and Tricks” Handbook on deliverability and know the factors affecting deliverability, and its interrelated negative aspects. Make sure you finish the first part before entering this arena. Since, “Into the inbox” will have in-depth analyses of concepts related to deliverability. Follow the worldwide standards of spam laws and stick to it.

Don't get too smart with spam filters and ISP related components. They are designed efficiently with numerous algorithms to stop intruders, spammers, and illegitimate users from destroying the communication taking place between both the ends(sender end and receiver end). So, spammers stop playing around!

Your To-do-list

Be a genuine sender

Often, legitimate senders struggle to gain the reputation of the receiving end's mail server. When your emails reach the inbox without proper format and sender name users analyzing your mail would match its characteristics with that of a spammer. A study had found that one in six emails are not reaching their destination.

So, being good but not presenting in a good way will give you no good. Show up your good-hearted skills while designing, addressing and providing information about your product. Have your arsenal of templates ready before engaging in the act of sending mail. A good sender never borrows a random list of contacts from some third party. A purchased list is not appreciated even it is a renowned company. People are always afraid of trojan, virus, phishing scams, and other malicious intruders

Being genuine is easy if you look for these elements in your email. The points as follows

- 1) Do not send a campaign with a single image. Because you won't be getting a considerable amount of open and click rates. Many anti-spam systems of rules and semantics classify these campaigns as spam. Be proportionate when it comes to designing your template.
- 2) A valid domain address would increase the positive response by a huge margin.
- 3) Make sure the contact you message, knows you well. It would be great if the user is a double opt-in or at least a single opt-in .

Don't look like a spammer

A spammer messages you daily, trying to intrude at all possible levels. Analyzing the difference between good and bad won't fall within the shadows of a fellow user.

A user senses certain negative aspects while seeing your emails. Being legitimate is fine. But, looking legal depends on upon the way you design emails in a technically sound way.

“ Be updated with the CAN-SPAM Act”

This act was proposed in 2003 with so many restrictions. After this, email marketing went to its peak. The email should have certain things as mentioned below.

- 1) Always give a clear subject line. Avoiding the subject line won't do any good.
- 2) Check your subject line's reach by performing A/B split tests. Look for ambivalent characteristics in it and avoid if any.
- 3) Should have a visible opt-out option and company address in the footer is a must.

Additional care on subject line

Take good care of your title, because if it is not good, your email's going to be shot dead right away.

- 1) Words that relate to medicine, money, dating and other porn related entities finds the back door, instantly.
- 2) Writing all CAPS, using excessive punctuations, and misspelling of words dampens your good boy nature. Don't go for a free email service at any cost. Wind your mind, fine and begin your innings with Campaigns!

Sender reputation



It's time to pull off prestige. Sender reputation can be defined as the status given to you by Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Email Service Providers (ESP) by your past activities through their service. A good sender reputation is essential for more open rates and, of course, deluging deliverability. Gradually, increase the rapport between you and them.

Factors ISP look for in you:

- 1) Spam trap hits and honey pot hits
- 2) Rate of user complaints
- 3) Rate of bounces
- 4) Blacklist listings
- 5) Volume of your email

On the other side, your recipients are also responsible for the reputation of yours. The potential threats are low open and click rate, numerous opt-outs and abuse rates. What is the purpose of hanging out with a spammy guy who behaves abnormally, killing the semantics of deliverability for any ISP? To ensure the proper functioning of the overall components involved, ISP always tends to remain on the safer side. The less your recipients react to your mail, the more you are going to get screwed up! Engaging is a good sign, they are showing interest in you.

Few tips:

- 1) Make sure you do not mail to the bounced recipients. Always get the unengaged recipients out of the list unless you want to see some serious downfall.
- 2) Stop buying lists from vendors and other third parties. Contacts coming into your lists should have opted-in through sign-up forms.
- 3) Regular engagement is crucial. Find the key element that makes them land at your website.

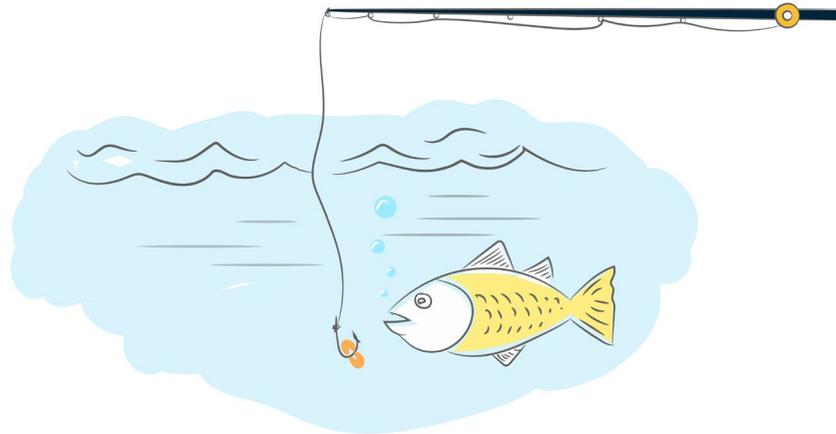
Sender score

Sender score is a measurement scale of values ranging from 0-100. The more close you are to 100, the more likely your messages float to the inbox of your users. Below 50 is considered dangerous. Anyhow, a good range would be above 85. A sender score is calculated by the ISP and its associated units. Score more, reach far. A decent sender score will ascend the deliverability rate.

Know how to deal with “spam traps” and “honeypots”

Don't be a scapegoat to these setups. Reputation is an art of escapism where you choose the right path and neglect the rest. Let's see how they can spoil the email reaching probability if you don't play the right moves.

Spam traps



Email marketing's arch rival is spam. Everything, from exotic offers to erotic content, spam masters the underworld of email marketing. To capture this game spoiler, spam traps are set forth as vigilantes. To make the unwanted email out of the race, spam traps are set, thereby luring them apart from the rest of the legitimate emails. Spam traps are of many types. Firstly, purchased lists where you randomly buy email addresses from the internet.

However, due to typos in the email also many sender's reputations get spoiled. Finally, spam traps catch your mail when you try sending it to an expired email address. Spam traps are set by ISP, anti-spam organizations and much more. What you have to worry about is simple. Take a closer look at how to get rid of these troublemakers. If you are not a spammer, read these listings below. And, if you are, spam traps are for you!

No.1 : Buying contact's database is bullshit! Collect email addresses legally.

No.2 : Double opt-in method would do!

No.3 : Monitor contact's activities and clean your database frequently.

No.4 : Send a welcome message, immediately after the user registers to your service.

No.5 : Know who complained and unsubscribed!

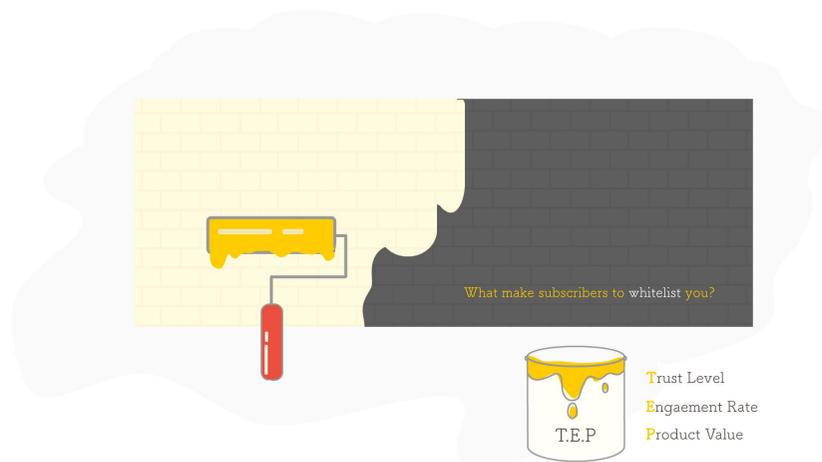
No.6 : If your contact is not interested, let them unsubscribe. Engage with the interested contacts alone.

Honeypots

Spam traps and honeypots do the same work of catching spammers. But, what separates them is their manner of working. Honeypots are purposely created setups for catching spams, illegitimate emails, and spammers. This cause serious deliverability issues to the sender. It happens when the list is full of rented addresses and randomly collected contacts. On the other hand, spam traps are timed out addresses(no longer in use).

Go white

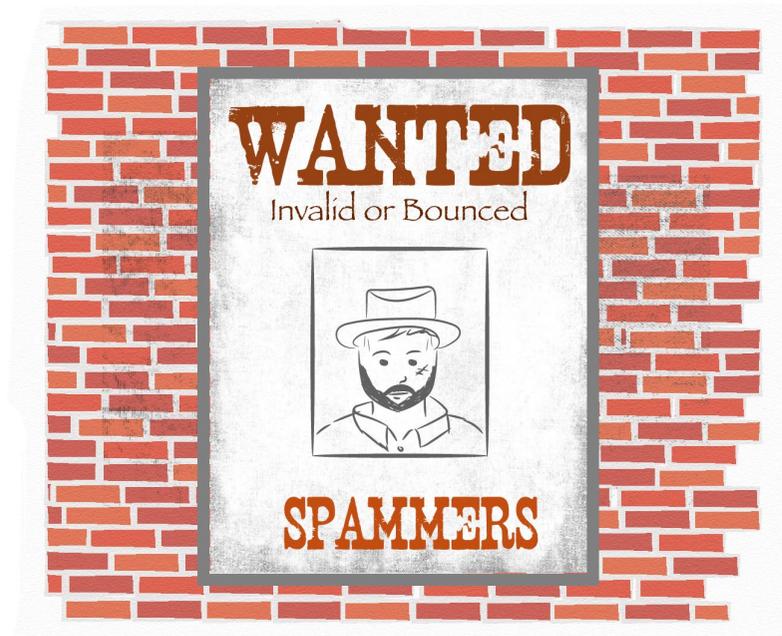
Why this title? Thinking about peace? Bang on, right you are! But, wait for the explanation. It is from your list which is going to cross all the hurdles that come its way, reaching the destination safely. When you get whitelisted, the probability of losing your gained reputation is 99% avoided. Just take a look at the concept of witelisting and the dark side- Blacklists



The idea of whitelisting

may white list you. It is easy when you get them reply to you. Immediately, try sending a follow-up message asking, whether he/she has received your information. As a result of doing this, you are creating a chance for replying to your mail. Thus, you'll get added to their address books. Being a safe sender increases your chances of getting delivered. Most importantly, you need to know the gadgets used widely. Get into your user's contact list and feel the difference in reputation, later. Whitelisting is the exact opposite of blacklisting.

The concept of blacklisting



Making your contacts whitelist you takes time. Probably, two out of six It is a matter of acceptance and rejection.

Several DNS based black hole lists(alias blacklists) checks you with certain criteria. And, if you fail in it, you will be thrown out. More the spam complaints, more the chance of getting caught. Test your mail several times, as it would increase the likelihood of getting delivered. Cleaning your lists keeps you away from blacklists.

Avoid getting blacklisted

- 1) Show some difference in your emails, each time. No similar content is going to help you succeed. Avoid being complicated and redundant.
- 2) Don't get tempted toward buying a list for free, or for a feeble cost. Send emails to individuals who got in via sign up forms.
- 3) Appropriate usage of words and the right amount of images would keep you in safer zones.
- 4) Never include ALL CAPS in subject line.
- 5) Stop changing your template frequently.

Five attributes of a trusted sender

- 1) One who authenticates his/her domain
- 2) One who maintains secrecy and maintains message integrity.
- 3) One who has the appropriate volume of contacts concerning the years he/she is in the business.
- 4) One who regularly engages with hi/her customer base.
- 5) One who has little bounce rates and increased open rates.

Five myths about deliverability

Myth 1: A small scale company would find it too hard to hit the inbox!
(Just kidding..)

Reality: What matters the most is the ratio. Simply ISP can never see differences between a small scale company and a large scale company. They just work their algorithm for every sender, nothing more than that. However, be patient when it comes to sender reputation.

Myth 2: When my sender score is high, I should have high deliverability.

(Oh, really.)

Reality: A sender score is a static score for a dynamic entity. Got it! Yes, sender score fluctuates. Depending upon the time, complaint rates registered, and ISP's measure, the sender score varies.

Myth 3: When unsubscribe rates increase, you are done.(Hola greenhorns!)

Reality: When there is a considerable amount of new contacts coming in, then you don't want to worry about people leaving. Also, letting users unsubscribe keeps your list clean with interested contacts. Just say goodbye!

Myth 4: Switching IP would make my emails get into the inbox. I am sure it will.(Phew!)

Reality: It would further raise the doubt flag in the minds of the ISPs.

Myth 5: My reputation depends on the ISP, algorithms, spam filters, etc. (Not me. just you!)

Reality: Be responsible! It is you who have crafted the whole set up. Once, it is logical, interestingly designed, watch out for the toppings. i.e. ISP, spam filters, sender score, and so on. You'll inevitably become a remarkable marketer using emails.

Conclusion

The good news for you is that, and you can improve your sender score, open rates, clicks, trust and also can get whitelisted with most of your contacts, be whatever your current stats tend to be. Just pay keen attention to the templates used, words involved, subject lines included, pre-headers association with the subject, and the lists of contacts with you. Be updated with the CAN-SPAM Act and regulations followed in each and every country. In the upcoming series, concepts and ideas related to email authentication, emails landing in spam folders will be discussed.



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