



HOW TO Skyrocket Your Email Open Rates.

Get Ready to Discover Everything You Need to Know
About Email Deliverability.

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Introduction

Email marketing has come a long way since the first campaign was sent in 1978, and it remains one of the most valuable tools in the modern marketer's business strategy. In fact, the 2019 Email Marketing Census from Econsultancy and Adestra found that 73% of respondents considered email marketing an 'excellent' channel, compared to 72% for SEO and 67% for paid search (PPC).

Email marketing is sometimes dismissed as 'spamming' people. But if you are sending valuable content, at the right time, to people who have opted in to your mailing list, then it shouldn't be considered spam. Alongside being a very effective channel, email marketing also delivers great ROI. According to a 2019 report from DMA, for every dollar you spend on email marketing, you can expect an average ROI of \$42.

But all your hard work crafting targeted, relevant, and timely emails to your customers or prospects will be useless if you don't do everything you can to optimize email deliverability. Ensuring your email deliverability is on point, helps to skyrocket your open rates too.

This guide will give you a complete overview of email deliverability in 2021 and beyond. We'll explain why it is important, what constitutes good email deliverability, how to ensure your emails get through to your recipients, and much more.

So, grab yourself a coffee and get ready to discover everything you need to know about email deliverability.



1. What Is Email Deliverability?

Email deliverability refers to the ability to deliver emails to your recipient's inboxes. It is usually measured as a percentage of the number of emails that are successfully received, divided by the total emails sent.

A lot happens between sending and receiving an email. The email you send is processed by multiple email servers, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and mailbox providers, each with their own set of rules that are designed to reduce spam and verify the sender. All of which can affect your email deliverability.

Many marketers consider deliverability as one of their most important email marketing metrics. This is because it greatly effects the results of an email marketing campaign. Good email deliverability also helps you earn trust from your email service provider, so you can continue building data lists and sending campaigns.



2. Why Is Email Deliverability Important?



There are a variety of reasons why email deliverability is important for ambitious marketers.

These include:

1

It helps you manage your email marketing campaigns more effectively. To refine your messaging, understand your audience, create remarketing campaigns, succeed at lead generation, and boost customer loyalty, you need to be able to learn from your campaign results.

2

It helps deliver good ROI. To benefit from the great ROI email marketing offers, you need those emails to be received. If the recipients can't see the perfectly crafted content you've been sending them, your brand engagement and conversions will suffer.

3

It shows your Mailbox Provider (MBP) that you care about best practice. Your email marketing activity must demonstrate that you only send emails to opted-in, engaged recipients who have active email addresses. If you do so, your MBP will trust you to keep building those data lists and sending campaigns.

3. What Factors Affect Email Deliverability?

There are several issues that can affect email deliverability. These can be distilled into the following three factors:

1 **Sender reputation:** Your sender reputation is based on your website domain's score, which indicates how trusted you are. Sender reputation is based on your bounce rates, the volumes of emails you send, any issues with blacklisting, and complaints. We will cover building a good sender reputation on page 9.

2 **Content:** If your email content is of a high quality, it is far more likely to make it to your recipient's inbox. This means no spammy subject lines, malicious-looking URLs, strange formatting, suspicious attachments, incorrect spelling in domain names, and poor writing in general.

3 **Identification:** The emails you send are checked and monitored by gatekeepers that protect your subscriber's inbox and ISP. They check you are using an accepted set of standard protocols that are considered best practice for email marketing. These include Domain-Based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC), Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM) and Sender Policy Framework (SPF).

4. What Are Good Email Delivery Statistics?

As with all your marketing activities, it's a good idea to benchmark your email delivery rates against your competitors.

Broadly speaking, marketing emails tend to have poorer open rates than transactional emails. This is because transactional emails are usually sent after a specific action has been performed such as an order or download request. The recipient is expecting to receive the email and should trust the domain it comes from, so they will be far more inclined to open it.

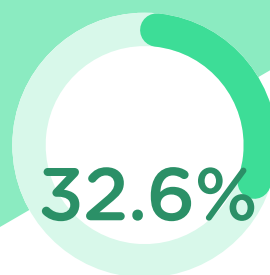
According to a 2021 report from Smart Insights the average open rate for all industries is 16.97%. While it's useful to see these high-level figures, it is more valuable to see the average open rates for your particular industry. The report found that real estate businesses can benchmark against an average open rate of 14.58%, but marketers working in travel and tourism should aim for an average open rate of 32.6%. The disparity between these figures could be due to a number of factors. Though if you consider the amount of enjoyment elicited from holiday-related emails as opposed to updates from your estate agent – well, you do the math!



Average open rate
for all industries



Average open rate
real estate businesses



Average open rate
travel and tourism

5. What Are the Main Factors That Determine Sender Reputation?

Sender reputation refers to the level of trust ISPs have with your domain. This gauge acts as a signal to ISPs about the likelihood of you sending spam or conducting malicious activity.

The main factors that determine sender reputation include:

- **The number of emails you send**

This is particularly relevant if you are sending from a new IP address that hasn't earned trust from the gatekeepers yet.

- **How often you send emails**

Sending emails on an unusually frequent basis could trigger warnings of spamming activity.

- **The number of hard bounces your campaigns get**

Soft bounces can be a contributing factor to sender reputation, though generally much less so.

- **Your emails going straight to the spam or junk folder**

- **The level of interaction and engagement your emails get**

If recipients open your emails, click on links, or share the content it shows your messaging is useful, relevant, trusted, and valuable to your audience.

- **How many people unsubscribe**

6. What Can You Do to Improve Your Sender Reputation?

Fortunately, there are a variety of straightforward, actionable, and cost-effective methods for improving your sender reputation. Let's take a look.

- **Warm up your IP**

When you're sending email campaigns from a new IP, try to start with small amounts at first. 50 addresses for the first round, then 100, 200, and so forth.

- **Don't send large campaigns suddenly**

ISPs adjust their metrics to reflect patterns in your email marketing activity. An unexpected change in volume or frequency may be interpreted as spam activity and your campaign could be blocked or blacklisted.

- **Use an Email Service Provider that offers email domain authentication**

Some Email Service Providers apply domain authentication by default. This technique verifies whether sent emails are actually sent by the sender. This helps prevent your emails from ending up in the dreaded spam folder.

- **Manage your data lists well**

Always remove fake email addresses, subscribers that have not engaged for a while, or addresses that you don't have permission to contact.

- **Always send valuable, relevant content**

If the information you send is high-quality you shouldn't have a problem with unusual amounts of people unsubscribing or reporting spam.

- **Encourage positive engagement with your emails**

Naturally, you don't want to litter your content with links, but make sure you give your readers a good reason to click on your articles or engage on social media. Delivering well-targeted, useful content, and including compelling calls to action should result in more opens and clicks - which are great trust indicators for ISPs. If relevant, you could also try to encourage your recipient to reply to the email - a sure sign of trust, and positive engagement.

- **Check for spammy content**

Try not to include subject lines with an overstated sense of urgency or use of words like 'free' or 'cashback'. You should also avoid suspicious-looking URLs, or dodgy sender addresses such as freerewards@business.com. As part of your quality checks, you'll already be checking for broken links, poor spelling, and suchlike. For email deliverability purposes, you should also include checking the unsubscribe links work and that the design looks professional and legitimate.

7. Who Is Involved In Email Deliverability?

There are three parties involved in email deliverability. They are as follows:

- **The Senders**

This includes credible email marketers like you, Email Service Providers who help smooth the journey for marketers by vouching for your trustworthiness and helping you bypass ISP gatekeepers and spammers.

- **The Gateways**

These are the ISP gatekeepers who protect individuals and companies from spam. The types of gatekeepers range from large ISPs like Sky Broadband to small scale anti-spam providers, and organizations that manage blacklisting.

- **The email recipients**

These are the people whose inbox you are targeting.



Apple announced its iOS 15 update of this fall will contain two features that are likely to impact email marketing.

The first is Mail Privacy Protection, allowing users to mask their IP address. This prevents senders to know if and when recipients opened their email, negatively impacting email open rates.

The second one - Hide My Email - cloaks a user's email address and forwards emails to their real email address. This prevents senders from knowing the real contact details of their receivers and might cause deliverability issues as it's unclear whether these email addresses are legitimate or burners.

What the true impact of these features will be, remains to be seen. Keep an eye on our blog for more information.

[Read more](#)

8. How Do I Make Sure My First Email to a New Contact Gets Delivered?

The first email is one of the most important interactions you will ever have with a new contact, but it is also the riskiest email send. Failing to optimize email deliverability could mean getting relegated to the dreaded spam folder.

To help ensure your first email to a new contact gets delivered, you should follow all the steps outlined above. In addition - as a responsible marketer - you should only be contacting leads that were harvested from ethical sources, such as through your contact form. But it is also worth checking that your contact form has not been infiltrated by a spambot.

Your Checklist for Optimizing Email Deliverability.

As we near the end of this guide on all you need to know about email deliverability, you'll hopefully be feeling a lot more confident about optimizing your campaign content and identifying any technical issues you need to address. There is plenty to remember, and consider, particularly alongside all your other marketing tasks. With this in mind, we have compiled a handy checklist of things to avoid and things to do when optimizing your email deliverability.

Following this checklist should give you a much better chance of increasing your email deliverability rates and getting a better ROI on your email marketing. The best thing about it? It is clickable, so start to tick off the boxes!

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does your subject line contain any spammy words or an inappropriate sense of urgency? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you added a line in the content to encourage your recipients to add your email address to their address book? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Is your subject line compelling, and relevant to your reader? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you encouraged replies to your email (where appropriate)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Is your content valuable, useful, and designed to appeal specifically to your target audience? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a clear unsubscribe link in your email? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the email content reflect where your recipient is in the customer journey, or buying cycle? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you included your brand name in the email address to build trust? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you included compelling calls to action that encourage readers to click, favorite, forward, and share? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Where possible, have you checked that your contacts have engaged with a similar email in the past, and segmented the recipient list accordingly? |



Have you planned the frequency, and scheduling so they reflect normal activity, and won't alert ISPs to spam?



Have you authenticated your email domain?



Are your emails segmented into batches?



Have you used a 'real person' email address as the sender, rather than no-reply@ or similar?



Have you used a SPF-record to verify your IP?



Have you checked if your IP is on any blacklists?



Did you conduct data audits, and cleaned your data?



Are you registered for feedback loops from your ISP?



Have you personalized your content, where possible?



Have you set up a mailbox to report spam issues?



Is there an opt-in or double opt-in form on your website?



Are you reviewing your email marketing analytics regularly?



Have you checked the opt-in form for spambot attacks?



Which brings us neatly to our final point in this article - the importance of using your email marketing analytics to strengthen your email deliverability. Naturally, this includes your:

- Open rates,
- Bounce rates,
- And unsubscribe rates.

But it is also very useful to review your:

- Click through rates,
- The number of people who forward your email,
- And the amount your data list is growing and shrinking.

This holistic approach will help you segment your data lists better so the right people see the right information just when they need it. It will also help inform remarketing and upsell and cross-sell campaigns and build social media engagement.

Your email campaigns are one of the strongest elements in your overall marketing and communications strategy. Making sure your emails land in your recipient's inbox, and they help to build customer loyalty, and trust - as well as increasing conversions, is vital.

If you follow the above steps, you should be well on your way to boosting those engagement rates and optimizing the deliverability of your emails in no time at all.

Getting started with Mobile Marketing Cloud?

If you need any help making sure your email deliverability is 100% optimized, contact us today. We can help.

[Contact Sales](#)

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