



# Get Your Emails in the Inbox: Improve Delivery Rates and Sender Reputation

Improve your email marketing results by getting your message across better

## Table of contents

Executive summary .....	2
Why Aren't My Emails Being Delivered? .....	2
What is Sender Reputation and How Do I Build It? .....	2
Use Quality Data.....	2
Send Emails Consistently .....	3
Avoid Using Spam Phrases & Triggers.....	3
Bounce Management .....	3
What Can an Email Service Provider Do for Me? .....	4
Conclusion .....	4



## Executive summary

More and more marketers are becoming concerned about the sophistication of spam filters in blocking legitimate marketing emails and images; a recent survey has found that 45% rate it as one of the biggest challenges facing them. So what can be done to ensure your targeted email campaigns get through to your contacts?

In this white paper, we shall take you through:

- Why emails get blocked in the first place
- What you can do to minimise email bounces and undelivered messages, and...
- What email service providers can do to ensure you have the highest open & deliverability rates possible

Now marketing expenditure is coming under closer scrutiny, it's essential that you are striving to get the maximum return on investment possible. That means observing best-practice and passing the spam filters. By the end of this white paper, you will have the 'know how' necessary to reach your goals.

## Why Aren't My Emails Being Delivered?

You've convinced subscribers that your email campaigns have value – now you just have to convince the spam filters the same thing.

Trouble is, not all spam filters are built alike. Depending on the internet service provider (ISP), they might assess your emails on something as simple as the number of 'spam phrases' in your email, or something as complex as your sender reputation.

## What is Sender Reputation and How Do I Build It?

Some of the more sophisticated spam filters will build a profile of your IP address (the physical location where your emails are coming from), called a 'sender reputation', based on the quality and quantity of emails you send.

More specifically, the determining factors are:

- How long you've been sending emails from your IP address for
- How frequently and consistently you've been sending those emails
- How often those emails have received high spam scores
- How many of those emails have 'bounced back', undelivered

To illustrate: a sender who has sent on average 1,000 emails every month for the past six years with a small percentage of those mails scoring higher than average on the spam scale will have a very good reputation.

Their emails will be subjected to less rigorous inspections and are more likely to get past filters.

There are plenty of technical tactics that aid the deliverability of email – but for now we're going to focus on the best practices more immediately within your control.

## Use Quality Data

Poor quality data can create a lot of 'hard bounces'. These are emails that can't be delivered because the email address is invalid – it might be misspelled or not exist anymore. These bounces are very detrimental to sender reputation and can occur frequently when using cheap, mass-collected contact data.

Invariably, the highest quality data is that which you gather yourself by organic means: taking the email addresses of existing clients and using data capture forms on your site to get visiting prospects' details. You can get more people to sign





up by using incentives and advertising the benefits of signing up for the email campaign on your website, e.g. 'Exclusive Offers / Content'

If you do want to buy your business data, ensure it is from a reputable provider – check for feedback and comments about them across the web and don't get lured in by low prices.

√ **Quick Tip!**

Ensure visitors to your site enter their addresses correctly by adding an extra 'confirm email address' field to your data capture. Also, introduce an automatic spell check for common misspellings of email provider names on your contact list (e.g. 'hotmial', 'yahoo' etc).

**Send Emails Consistently**

Emails sent out on a regular basis (weekly, fortnightly, monthly) and at similar volumes tend to come from organised operations. Spammers on the other hand tend to be quite sporadic and unfocused in their scams. By establishing an email schedule from day one, you will help send clear signals to the ISPs that you are a legitimate sender.

√ **Quick Tip!**

Capturing data organically instead of buying it means your contact list will grow more steadily. This is important because ISPs are generally suspicious of surges in email volume. An overnight jump from 1,000 to 5,000 emails will make them question the sudden increase.

**Avoid Using Spam Phrases & Triggers**

Take a moment to look through your email junk folder: the majority of messages there will have certain phrases and tell-tale spam signs about them in common. Watch out for phrases that make sense in a business marketing context but are a big no-no for ISPs:

- 'Bad credit' or 'credit' on its own, either in the body or the subject line of the email
- Phrases like 'special offer', 'we offer' and 'free'
- Use of exclamation marks, pound signs, dollar signs and all capitals in the subject line - even one of these makes a difference so its best to avoid them altogether

Most good ESPs will provide tools to help you identify these trigger words & characters.

√ **Quick Tip!**

When composing the subject line, don't obsess over trying to capture the recipient's attention with bold, outlandish and 'spammy' claims – write about what the user will find inside in the email, how they might benefit and leave it at that.

**Bounce Management**

In addition to 'hard bounces', you can have 'soft bounces', usually as a result of recipients being out of office, on holiday or their inbox being full. Both kinds of bounces need to be addressed, but in the following ways:

**Hard bounces:** if the address is invalid because of an obvious spelling error, correct it and try again; otherwise, delete the contact from your list.

**Soft bounces:** since the reason for the bounced email might be only temporary, set up a system to re-send the email a set amount of times automatically.

√ **Quick Tip!**

The amount of times you choose to re-send the email is at your discretion but keep it low as possible - multiple re-sends (three or more) could harm your sender reputation.



powered by eMailCampaigner | forward to a friend | unsubscribe  
This email was sent to: [email address] | [email address] by Floor Heating Online (Thermal Radiators Limited), Unit 3, 400 Cornwell Road, Gornally, NE Linn, DN11 2RN, 0138242200  
 If you did not request to receive this email, please contact us



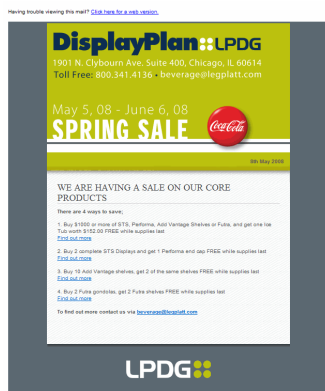
## What Can an Email Service Provider Do for Me?

There's an array of technical issues that contribute to a positive sender reputation that you may or may not be aware of. These include:

- Whether you share an IP address with other email marketers
- Whether your emails can be 'authenticated'
- Creating feedback loops from ISPs

**Shared IP Addresses:** if several companies are sharing an IP address, they are in effect sharing the same sender reputation. If just one of those companies indulges in spam-like practices, the deliverability of everyone's campaigns will suffer.

A similar problem occurs if you conduct an email campaign from your personal or business correspondence email account: if too many of your campaigns fall foul of the spam filters and your IP address is blacklisted, you'll find it difficult to deliver business emails to clients.



Some ESPs group their clients into appropriate reputation pools ensuring that clients' individual email activity has minimal effect on anyone else's; alternatively, some will create and host an unique IP address for you at an extra cost.

**Email authentication:** most ISPs now check to see if your emails have received authentication from standard-bearers such as SenderID, SPF and Return Path. If not, your email's legitimacy is questioned and less likely to be delivered.

To be authenticated, emails claiming to be from your domain e.g. www.companyx.com must be traceable back to an IP address registered to that

domain (ReverseDNS). If yours isn't, the emails don't receive authentication.

The more established ESPs will have existing relationships with authentication services, so by signing up with them, your campaigns will receive automatic authenticated status.

**Feedback Loops:** these loops give users a bit-by-bit breakdown of an emails' spam score, listing every feature that's triggered a spam warning and how many points each feature notched up.

As such, these feedback loops are especially useful for:

- Identifying phrases, characters and other factors contributing to spam complaints
- Keeping up-to-date with the most recent blacklisted features so you can avoid using them in future

ESPs can gather this feedback and relate it on to you.

They are also great list-clean tools: if a recipient has registered a SPAM complaint against you, EPSs can find out who and remove them from your list to preserve your hard-earned sender-reputation.

## Conclusion

The creation of a strong sender reputation depends upon following many different best practices, many of which are well within your control. However, to get the edge over your competitors it will take the help of an experienced email service provider.

There are no secrets to successful email marketing and its transparency is one of its most attractive features. Unlike traditional print and media advertising channels - where it can be difficult to find out why a campaign was unsuccessful and didn't reach its target audience - email marketing can generate instant feedback loops that show you



where you may have gone wrong and show you how to fix them.

Using an email service provider takes care of all the structural work needed when establishing feedback loops, creating unique domains and IP addresses, and setting up authentication processes. That gives you more time to spend on creating unique content and writing attractive subject lines that will convince prospects to move through your sales pipeline to become customers.

**eMailCampaigner** is a practical solution to your permission based email requirements that helps you manage, create and monitor your e-marketing program.

Let us show you how you can:

- **Dramatically reduce costs** through switching from direct mail to email marketing
- Use advanced reporting in real-time to **enjoy a faster sales process**
- **Increase profitability** with highly targeted campaigns
- **Reduce production time** spent creating projects with our friendly template system

Just some of the great brands that trust us to achieve their marketing objectives:



Call us on **0870 770 4990** to find out how we can help you meet your business objectives or visit [www.eMailCampaigner.com](http://www.eMailCampaigner.com) to find out more today or contact

eMailCampaigner.com  
A product from Doctor Net Limited  
Pleer House, 1 Fennel Street  
Manchester, M4 3DU  
T: 0870 770 4990 - F: 0870 770 4991