

Your Email Deliverability FAQ

10 of the Most Commonly Asked
Deliverability Questions, Answered!



What you will learn:

- The importance of email today
- What is email deliverability
- What is an IP reputation
- What affects email deliverability
- How to improve your email deliverability



Ready? Let's go!



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CHAPTER 1

Is Email Still Important for Businesses?



In a recent study by HubSpot, 93% of businesses in the B2B space use email as a part of their marketing and communication strategy. Whether businesses are sending marketing, transactional, or internal email, it should be no surprise that email has been, is, and will continue to be an extremely prominent tool in marketing, transactional, and general business communication.

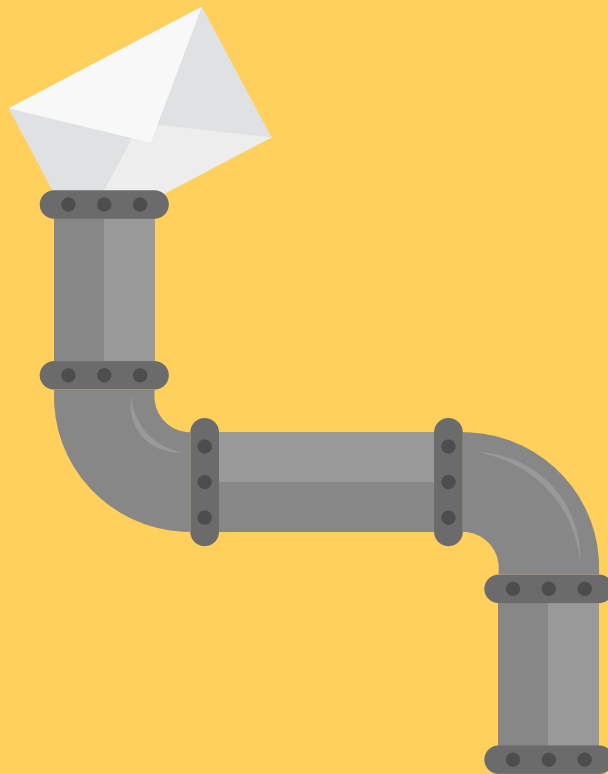
Now you're probably thinking, millennials are the future and they don't care about email, right? They prefer more modern, streamlined communication like texting and direct messaging, don't they? In reality, according to the aforementioned report, 73% of millennials actually prefer communication like newsletters, order receipts, and promotional offers to come as email.

The verdict is in: email isn't going anywhere any time soon. As a matter of fact, all signs point to significant growth in the future.

If email isn't already a part of your marketing or communication strategy, it should be. And whether you're new to high-volume email sending for your business, application, or platform, or you have an established email infrastructure, deliverability is going to be one of the most important topics of focus.

CHAPTER 2

What is Email Deliverability?



Email deliverability

is the effectiveness of getting email successfully into recipients' inboxes. If your deliverability is bad, your email isn't reaching your recipients, which can cause major operational setbacks for your business.





How Does Poor Deliverability Affect Businesses?

Marketing Email

If you send **marketing email**, the effect of poor deliverability is simply a low return on your email investment. If your marketing emails aren't being seen, they aren't reaching important stakeholders, and they aren't producing and nurturing leads as intended.

Example: It's Friday night and Jeff is looking for a place to get dinner with his wife. He is hungry and ready to spend some of his hard earned money for a quality dinner. His favorite restaurant, to which he hasn't been in a while, sends him a promotional email asking him to stop in for dinner and experience some of their great specials and drink deals. If Jeff would have seen the email, it would have been an obvious choice. Unfortunately, Jeff's favorite restaurant has a lousy email infrastructure and doesn't follow email best practices. Their message gets sent right to Jeff's junk folder. Jeff misses out on a great meal, and his favorite restaurant misses out on a happy customer.

Transactional Email

If you send **transactional email** like order confirmations, email receipts, or password resets, the negative effect of poor deliverability could be a dissatisfied customer, an increase in customer support demand, and higher customer attrition rates.

How Does Poor Deliverability Affect Businesses?



Example: Mike is trying to file his taxes with a top online tax service. He creates an account, but is quickly distracted and doesn't get back online until the next day. Unfortunately, Mike forgot his password, so like anyone who forgets their password, he submits his email and waits for a password reset email to arrive in his inbox. The online tax service has a poor email infrastructure and does not follow email best practices. As a result, Mike never gets the email, is not able to reset his password, and can't get into his new account. Mike has no choice but to set up another account with the first tax service's top competitor. He files his taxes through the second firm.

Personal Email

If you are an administrator for a corporation that sends **person-to-person email**, poor deliverability can cause gaps in internal communication that cost your company time, money, and other valuable resources.

Example: Megan works for a large corporation. She sends out time-sensitive emails updating 50 people of important project deadlines. Unfortunately, multiple recipients out of the 50 inadvertently mark the email as spam because of a poorly written subject line. The spam filter picks up on this reaction from her recipients and starts blocking all of her messages from reaching their intended recipients. Employees of the corporation aren't getting their project timelines and their projects slowly start to become a mess. They are being mismanaged, all because of poor email deliverability.

CHAPTER 3

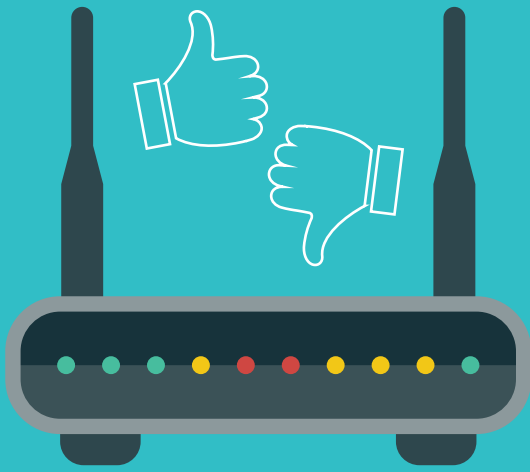
What Affects Email Deliverability?



Email deliverability is a tricky topic. So tricky in fact that many high-volume email senders will enlist the help of an **email service provider** to help them make the most of their email delivery. Email deliverability is tricky because there are so many pieces to the puzzle. Rather than tweaking one thing here and one thing there, improving your deliverability requires you to take a comprehensive approach, adjusting several factors together.

In this guide we are going to dive into three major factors contributing to your email deliverability:





IP Reputation

One of the biggest factors that determines your deliverability is your [IP reputation](#). Believe it or not, some senders don't even know that such a thing exists. If you fall into that category, don't worry. We've got you covered!

What is an IP Reputation?

Every time you send an email, your IP address is a part of the email header, not visible to the recipient. Because your IP address is a part of every email you send, mailbox providers are able to monitor your sending practices. As these mailbox providers collect data on your sending habits, you will start to build a reputation associated with your IP address. Mailbox providers use this information to find and stop senders whose habits reflect that of a spammer or bad actor.

How is an IP Reputation Determined?

Mailbox providers take a number of factors into consideration when monitoring your sending practices, such as the number of spam complaints you generate, your sending volume, the frequency with which you send to unknown users, your presence on industry blacklists, and more. Taking all of this data into consideration, the mailbox provider will associate your IP address with a unique score that reflects your reputation as a sender. This score will help determine whether or not your future email makes it to recipients' inboxes, is put in spam folders, or gets blocked.

IP Reputation



If you start to notice that more and more of your emails aren't making it to the inbox, it could be a direct result of your sending practices.

While your IP reputation is largely a function of your behavior as a sender, there are other factors that can contribute to a poor reputation which are unrelated to your sending behavior. For example, if you are a low-volume sender, you're more than likely operating through an IP address that's shared with other senders. This means that the poor sending habits of others could tarnish your reputation and hurt your deliverability.

This is why most senders should work with an email service provider, like SocketLabs, who carefully maintain their IP addresses. ESP's ensure that senders are getting the most from their email platform, even through a shared IP address.

How Do I Improve My IP Reputation?

If you're just getting started with high-volume email sending, or even if you're a seasoned veteran looking to improve your deliverability, you can start with these four steps. Remember, the better your IP reputation is, the better your deliverability will be.

1. **Don't send email to unsuspecting recipients**

It's a good idea to stick with opt-in lists so only people who want to see your emails are receiving them. This will lead to more clicks, opens, saves, forwards, and positive interactions that will help your reputation. If you start sending bulk email to an unreliable, purchased email list, you will see a spike in spam placements, blocks, unread message deletes, and other negative reactions. At the end of the day, negative trends in user engagement will hurt your IP reputation severely.

2. **Warm up your IP address**

If you are a new bulk email sender operating through a designated IP address, you will



likely want to warm that IP address over the course of a month or so, depending on your sending volume. This means that you initially limit the number of emails you send through your new IP address, gradually increasing the volume over time.

Why do you need to do this? Mailbox providers will flag any new sender IP address if they send too much email, too soon. By sending too much email on a new IP address, you will tarnish your IP reputation and ruin your deliverability. To learn more about IP warming, read our blog on [how to warm up an IP address](#).

3. Separate your marketing and transactional email streams

Generally speaking, marketing vs. transactional emails are two very different types of emails and they typically generate very different feedback. For example, transactional emails, like order confirmations and receipts, are important to the recipient and will typically receive positive engagement. On the other hand, marketing emails, like promotional offers, typically aren't as essential to the recipient and won't receive the same amount or type of engagement.

If you send your marketing and transactional emails through the same server, the lesser performance of your marketing email campaign could diminish the great performance of your transactional email. The worse your email performs as a whole, the more your IP reputation will decline and the more your email will land in the spam folder. To read more about how to separate your email streams, [read our blog on mail streams](#).

4. Manage Your Email Bounce Rates

A bounce is when an email reaches the recipient's mail server but encounters an error before making it to its final destination (the mailbox). The number of emails that bounce compared to the total number of emails you send is a percentage referred



to as the bounce rate. For example, if you send 50,000 emails and 5,000 of them bounce, your bounce rate would be 10% – yikes! Time to speak to a professional. Here are a few best practices to help minimize bounces for your messages:

- **Regularly clean your email lists** – Recipients who complain or have not interacted with your email in a while should be regularly cleaned from your sending lists. This will not only reduce your risk of bounces, it will also reduce the amount of negative engagement your email receives. This type of “list hygiene” can go a long way in improving your overall email deliverability.
- **Send email only to opt-in lists** – As mentioned previously, sending email only to people who want to receive it will decrease your bounce rates and increase your engagement. **We highly advise against sending your email to a purchased email list** as it will severely damage your sender reputation and overall deliverability.
- **Immediately remove hard bounces** – It is important that you remove hard bounces from your email lists immediately after the bounce occurs. Hard bounces are monitored by mailbox providers very closely and will greatly impact your deliverability if not taken care of. Because this task can get incredibly tedious, many senders will use an email service provider like SocketLabs who has built-in bounce processing that will automatically add hard bounces to a suppression list. This process ensures these inactive addresses do not continuously receive your email.

If you want to learn more about email bounces and the different types that exist, [view our complete blog on the topic](#).



Email Content

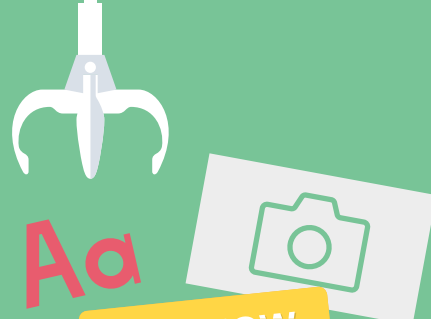
Aside from your IP reputation, the quality of the email messages you send will have a large impact on how deliverable they are. Poor quality messages are more likely to get stuck in a spam filter. And even if a message makes it past the automated filters, it still has to get past the human filter, otherwise known as the recipient, who may also mark a message as spam. A clean, well-structured email design will help get your email where it needs to be, and will help your recipient engage with it in a positive manner.

How to Improve Your Email Content?

It should come as no surprise that senders with the worst deliverability will commonly have the worst-designed email. While there is no definitively right or wrong email design, or a universal template that delineates an effective email message from an ineffective one, there are some general guidelines that can help:

- The email content should be easily consumable for desktop and mobile users; screen size should never be an issue.
- The information in the email should be simple and easily consumable for quick readers on the go. Links that lead readers to your website should be easily accessible and very clear on where the link will take them.
- The email design should be visually appealing and consistent with your brand so that the reader can easily recognize who the email is from and feel comfortable interacting positively with it.

Email Content



- The email should be tailored to the people who will read it. Take some time to understand your audience and choose a design that will appeal most to them.
- There should always be an “unsubscribe” link in the bottom of the email so recipients can easily unsubscribe, rather than marking you as spam, if they don’t want your emails. This is a requirement for marketing messages in order to comply with CAN-SPAM rules.

Again, there is no definitive right or wrong format that will ensure better email deliverability 100% of the time. With that said, perfecting your email content and figuring out what works best for your business is essential so you can improve and maintain your deliverability.



Spam Filters

To keep deliverability strong, you need to understand spam filters and how they work. This way, you can understand what's required to work around them and achieve the best possible results for your email.

What is a Spam Filter?

The more you know about how a spam filter works, the more of an edge you will have on your competition. Rather than fearing spam filters and making them your enemy, you need to make them a tool to use to your advantage.

Truthfully, a spam filter is hard to define, as there is no singular spam filter that judges all email across all mailbox providers. Rather, each mailbox provider, company, and individual user can have their own configurable devices, software, algorithms and/or machine learning technology that will act as their spam filter. No matter what the spam filter looks like, or what technology it uses, they all serve the same purpose of dissecting and evaluating email traffic in an attempt to separate the good from the bad. To learn more about spam filters and the different types that exist, [check out our complete article on email spam filters](#).

Why are My Emails Going to Spam?

If you are starting to notice that more of your emails are going to spam and you are trying

Spam Filters



to diagnose the situation, start by asking yourself these basic questions:

- Did I get permission from my recipients to receive my mail through an opt-in list?
- Are my messages receiving negative engagement from recipients, such as unsubscribes, junk filter placements, and a low rate of opens?
- Do I currently have a bad IP reputation from previous or existing habits?
- Is my email missing an unsubscribe link? (If so, we recommend putting one in immediately)
- Does my email design follow best practices?

To see the full list and get a comprehensive description of each point, [visit our blog on the topic.](#)

CHAPTER 4

How To Improve Email Deliverability?



As you have probably noticed, there are some recurring themes in this guide as to how to improve your email deliverability. While there are a ton of different routes you can take, no matter what kind of sender you are, we recommend starting with some of the best practices that you have seen throughout this guide:

Maintaining good email list hygiene	Get permission from your recipients
Make effective email content that provides value to its recipients	
Remove hard bounces	Learn about spam filters and how to avoid getting stuck in them

Get Started With SocketLabs

You made it! We have finally reached the end of the SocketLabs email deliverability FAQ guide. Hopefully you have a better understanding of some of the major factors that impact email deliverability: IP reputation, email content, and spam filters. We reviewed some of the 'top tips' that will help your email succeed, regardless of what type of messages you're sending.

Deliverability is a very complex topic, but understanding how it works and what you can do to improve your email success will certainly drive your organization's productivity.

If figuring out your deliverability challenges is a larger or more complex undertaking than you anticipated, you can join the millions of other email senders who use the help of an email service provider like [SocketLabs](#). We offer the right mix of technology and technique to help your email delivery strategy reach its highest potential.



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