

How to Get all Your Emails Opened

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How to Get All Your Emails Opened

Dear Friend and Subscriber,

Are you worried about getting your email promotions delivered and opened by prospects?

If not, you should be. . .

Consumer email studies show that **70% of email received in the US is perceived as spam**. And, to make matters worse, according to Jupiter Research, **17% of permission email is being erroneously blocked** by ISP filters. ISPs and filter companies even acknowledge that a percentage of the email they block as junk is actually legitimate email that's been stopped by mistake.

To market successfully by email you need to make sure your emails not only get through the filters but also are not labeled as spam by your recipient.

Yes, even requested email can be pigeon holed as spam if you're not careful. When your email is seen as spam it either ends up in the trash or it is filtered into the junk folder. In worst case scenarios, your email can be reported as spam by users and then all your other messages to that domain (think AOL, Yahoo) will be blocked.

Email is a great marketing tool, but it only works if it is delivered and opened. All too often email marketers send out their messages to a list of subscribers oblivious to the fact that it's not getting through or being seen.

If your email marketing returns are not what you expect, it may be because your prospects and subscribers are never seeing your messages.

You can get 5%, 10%, 20% and even higher returns from your email promotions.

The key is to make sure your emails get delivered and opened.

Just imagine for a minute if your emails had a 50% open rate, 30% click through rate and 10% sales. Think of the money your business would make!

Is it really possible . . .

Definitely!

The previous email letters in this series discussed how to develop responsive follow-up letters. Now your next step is to make sure those persuasive emails get delivered and opened.

If you're thinking to yourself, isn't it my ISPs responsibility to get my email delivered? Why should I have to worry? Stop right here!

First, you have to take responsibility for your email marketing if you want to generate serious profits for your business. To ignore deliverability and/or ignore whether your messages are being opened, puts your business income at risk.

Second, your ISP does not control what you put into your message. If you include content that triggers a spam filter your email will be stopped dead, no matter who you use for an ISP. Furthermore, your ISP does not write the subject lines for your emails and your subject line is critical to your open rates.

If you want to make money with email marketing, you need to know the basic rules of deliverability as well as know the keys to get readers to open your messages.

Having been in the email-marketing field for over 10 years, and being responsible for helping our 15,000 SendFree.com mailing-list members improve their deliverability, I know how it's done.

I will share my insider knowledge with you that will at least double your open rates, if you agree to put them into action.

You'll do it? Good.

Then let's review the 4 key rules to response . . .

1) Your List

Deliverability starts with your list-building practices. You should focus on growing your list with the names of individuals who have requested and confirmed their wish to be on your list. Purchasing generic optin lead lists and bulk emailing people is not the right way to build your list.

You want your list members to have registered for your list specifically. Those who request your specific offer and grant you permission to email them further will appreciate and respond to your emails. They will not complain or provide bad addresses as generic optin leads often do - both of which cause delivery problems for you.

Where do you get quality list members?

The best subscribers are individuals who sign-up at your web site! Thus you want to be certain you have SendFree web forms in place to capture your visitor's contact information.

The next best subscribers are individuals who register for your specific offer through a co-registration form. Over 60% of marketers surveyed, who use co-registration names, say that co-registration names perform almost as well or as well as sign-ups generated from their own site and are a good investment.

Would you like the name of the co-registration service I use?

Check out – <http://www.sendfree.com/sponsor.htm>

2) Your Email Sending Software

The system you use to send your email affects deliverability. Using bulk emailing software from your desktop computer is not going to work. Nor is trying to bulk email using your regular ISP, as they're not set-up to send mass emails. Don't even bother with these options.

You need to be using software designed for mailing to lists. You can establish an account with an email service provider that is designed to send to mailing lists. Or you can purchase mailing list software and install it on your own server that you'll then have to host and maintain. Having your own server gives you more control, but you do need more technical know-how. Hosting your own server is also more expensive. An account with an email service provider, like SendFree.com, is designed to be user friendly and, as you would be sharing the servers with other users, it's less costly.

You want to make sure the software system or email service provider you select for sending your emailing does the following.

a) Is set-up with reverse DNS lookups.

Most receiving ISP will not accept email from a mail server that is unable to identify itself with a reverse DNS.

b) Capable of meeting ISP volume thresholds.

ISPs such as Yahoo and AOL have limits on how much email they'll accept from a server at one time. Too much and you will be blocked. Your software needs to manage the connection to the receiving ISPs so that your emails go through in small batches.

c) Use authentication protocols such as SPF/SenderID or DomainKeys.

These protocols inform ISPs that you are who you say you are so they then allow your email through.

d) Clean your list regularly of bad addresses.

Undeliverables and removals should be eliminated from your list immediately. Receiving ISPs will block email from sources that continually send to bad email addresses.

Don't know a DNS lookup from SPF/Sender ID?

Do yourself a favor. Make life easy and use an established email service provider like SendFree.com. SendFree will take care of all the above issues for you at less cost than hosting your list yourself.

3) Your Message

The content of your message has considerable influence on whether or not it will be delivered. There are numerous content filter hazards your message has to navigate. Let's review the most prominent filters you should be aware of.

a) Edge network filters.

These filters block spammy looking content before it even gets to the ISP. The most well known of this types of filter is Brightmail who works with MSN/Hotmail

If your message has content that Brightmail deems to be spam, your message gets eliminated before it ever gets to the MSN/Hotmail email box. Thus your email doesn't even end up in a junk folder. Nor does the message get bounced back as bad. Instead the email just disappears. You may think your email is going through but, in fact, it's going no where.

b) ISP's reputation filters.

This type of filter monitors users' complaints about messages. If there is content in your message, specifically URLs that the ISP has received complaints about, the ISP will block your email. AOL uses a reputation system to block or allow your email. When you have content in your message that AOL rejects, they'll return an error code to you saying you have a URL in your email that is generating substantial complaints.

c) Third-party filters such as SpamAssassin.

These filters evaluate your message's content for spammy-ness. If you have too many spam triggers they'll reject the message from being delivered.

How do you help your message negotiate the spam filters?

Keep your message short.

The shorter your message the less likely you'll have a word / phrase that triggers a filter. What's more, the buzz on the Internet right now is that short emails are better. People read email quickly, just scanning to see if there's something worthy of response, or if it should be trashed.

According to EmailLabs readers spend only 15-20 seconds on each email they open. So if you can get your message to fit in the first screen, you'll get a better response.

Have a long letter?

Rather than sending your full message in the body of the email, send a short teaser with a link to a web page or PDF. A reader who commits to going to your site from a link in your email, in order to get your full message, is much more likely to focus on what you have to say and respond. **Check your message's content for deliverability to the main ISPs - Yahoo, MSN/Hotmail and AOL.**

Studies show that these 3 ISPs make up 60% of all the email addresses individuals use to optin to email communications. The easiest way to test these 3 ISPs is to have an account with each. If your messages get through to you at your test accounts, you know you're passing through the filters.

You also can use the free delivery checker service SendFree provides at - <http://www.sendfree.com/dchecker.html>

Should you find your messages are not getting delivered, SendFree provides you with resources to check the content of your messages for spamminess. SendFree works with you to get your email through!

4) Your Subscriber

Once your message has negotiated the filters of the ISPs, you have to get past your subscriber's inbox filters. Your subscribers will have 2 types of filters.

The first type of filters are external.

- **Email program settings.**

Most email programs are defaulted to not show images and some do not show links. If you're sending HTML email, this can severely effect the presentation of your HTML message.

- **Third party software.**

These programs scan the content of messages to determine if the email is legit. They often are based upon the users own choices. They'll place what they deem spam into a users junk folder.

- **Challenge/response.**

An email is triggered asking for the sender's confirmation before delivery. You therefore have to respond to the confirmation email before the email you sent will go through.

- **Bulk/junk folders.**

Email programs and/or ISPs place spammy looking messages into these folders. Messages in these folders automatically get deleted unless acted upon by the user.

- **"Report spam" button.**

Many people use this button rather than the unsubscribe link for email they've decided they don't want. It doesn't matter if your email is spam or not, you can still get reported. (If you're reported too often all your messages go to the junk folder and you can even get blocked by the ISP.)

The trick to getting through these external filters is to get your subscribers to "whitelist" your "From" address and place your "From" address in their address book. A whitelisted address gets you past all the above filters and into their inboxes.

In order to get your address whitelisted, you have to ask! Therefore your sign-up page, confirmation page, or confirmation email must instruct your subscribers to whitelist your “From” address. You can find free Whitelisting Instructions for the various ISPs inside your SendFree account.

The second type of filters to bypass include internal or personal filters.

You have to start thinking of your email as being guilty of being spam until proven innocent. Your subscribers get a lot of email. They view the majority of it as spam (70%). Your email is spam to them until they recognize it as email they want and requested.

The key is to get your email recognized.

Recognition is based on 2 main factors.

a) The “From” address.

65% of email users state the “From” address is what compels them to open a message. If they recognize who you are in the “From” your email gets opened.

b) The “Subject line”.

31% of email users state the Subject line” is what compels them to open a message. If they are enticed by your message’s subject, your email gets opened.

What are some enticing subject lines?

- * **Discount Offers**
- * **Compelling information/news**
- * **New product announcements**
- * **Free shipping offers**

Another good tactic, rather than stating an offer in the subject, is to try a more personal approach. No, this does not mean personalizing the subject line with the recipient’s first name.

Instead, you can give your subject lines a personal friendly tone. Here are some examples –

This finally came . . .
Here’s what I promised . . .
This makes sense . . .

You'll note all of the subject lines include the dot, dot, dot at the end. This is one technique some experts use to get their email opened. As the dots leave the reader curious. Using the words, This , Here and About also help arouse curiosity.

When your subject line grabs your readers attention, and the user knows who you are based upon your "From" address, your message gets the all important click to be opened and read.

Earlier on, I asked you the question: "If I share my insider knowledge with you, which can at least double your open rates, will you agree to put them into action?"

Since you're still reading this, I'm going to assume you answered, "Yes." Well, now that I've told you how to implement the 4 rules to effective email marketing deliverability – you need to act on this information.

The first step is to sign-up for a SendFree account if you haven't done so already. You'll find many of the tools you need to check your email for deliverability at the site - <http://www.sendfree.com>

SendFree gives you a free 30 day trial to test the service. Follow the steps outlined above and I guarantee you will see a dramatic increase in your open rates!

How will you know what your open rates are?

Stay tuned to your email box for the next piece in this series. Find out why successful online business owners know tracking is critical to sales! And discover how to use tracking to test your campaigns for dramatic results.

Talk to you soon!

Abbie Drew
DEMC Publisher

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