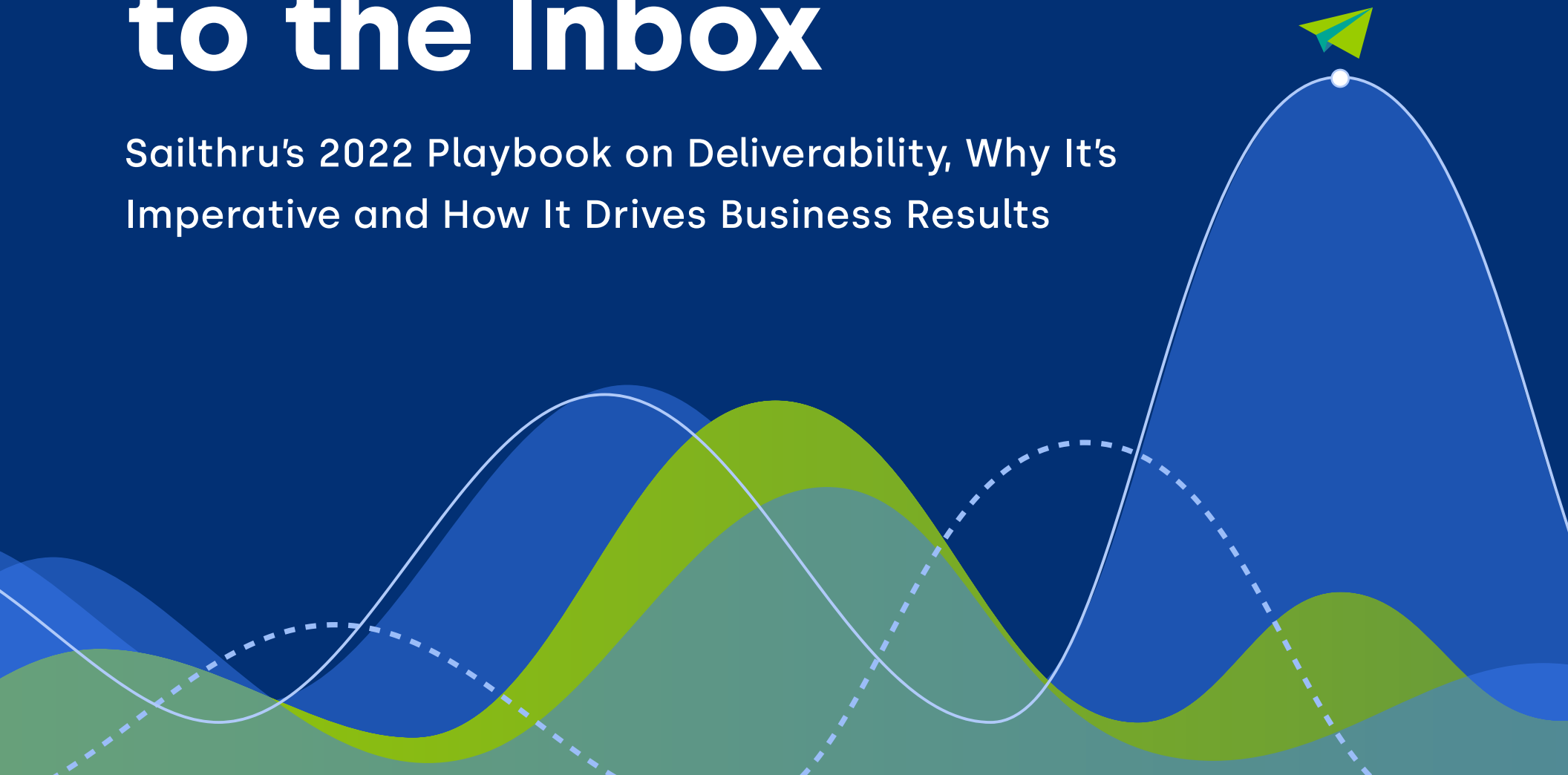


Delivering Results to the Inbox

Sailthru's 2022 Playbook on Deliverability, Why It's
Imperative and How It Drives Business Results





Introduction to Deliverability

Every day, people receive more than 293 billion emails, a staggering number that only represents the tip of the iceberg. Why? The actual number of emails sent is closer to 5.9 quadrillion, with the overwhelming majority blocked outright or delivered to the spam folder.

Something many people don't realize is that to the major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) — Gmail, Yahoo!, Hotmail, Comcast and AOL — “spam” doesn't refer to marketing messages people may find annoying, but rather malicious email filled with scams and viruses. In order to protect their networks and their customers, the ISPs cast a wide net. **If a message is deemed to be spam by the ISP's filters, it's dead on arrival, never to see the light of the inbox, as protecting users' inboxes is the top priority of any ISP.** That's why strong deliverability is essential for any email marketer.

Deliverability is the unsung hero of email marketing, ultimately ensuring a company's emails reach their

intended recipients. It's determined by a host of factors, including the engagement of your subscribers and the quality of your lists. All together, these factors result in your sender reputation score, which is used to determine how the ISPs treat your email stream. Deliverability is also a background player, so far in the shadows that many people don't think about it, until there's a major issue.

That's why Sailthru's deliverability team created this guide. Read on to learn more about how deliverability works on the back-end and how it impacts revenue, your sender reputation and how to maintain a good one, and best practices for list management, email content and more.

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Glossary of Terms

To understand deliverability is to begin with a vocabulary lesson. There are a ton of terms, many of which are acronyms, such as ISP and ESP. Here's a breakdown:

Bounce:

When an email is undeliverable, it bounces, which can fall into two categories:

Soft Bounce:

These occur when the ISP is blocking your email due to reputation issues or because of something temporary, like a full inbox or a down server. If you see a major spike in soft bounces at any ISP, you should address it immediately. Users who have soft bounced are still valid and should be included in your next send.

Hard Bounce:

When you send a message to a non-existent or invalid email address — think typos or a deactivated account — it will hard bounce. This is a permanent failure, and a metric that factors into sender reputation, so these users should be removed from your list.

Delivered:

A message is considered delivered when the ISP has successfully accepted the message. This does not equate to the message being delivered to the inbox, however.

Domain:

Referring to the locations of servers and devices connected to the Internet, domain names can represent various IP addresses, such as sailthru.com.

Domain Name System (DNS):

This system maps a human-friendly domain name into a server IP address, almost like a telephone book. An MX type DNS record specifies where mail destined for a particular domain name should be sent. A TXT type DNS is used to contextualize information about the domain for authentication purposes.

Domain-Based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (DMARC):

DMARC allows senders to see how their domains are being used to send email and tell the world how to handle illegitimate messages they appear to have sent. Sitting on top of SPF and DKIM, DMARC is used to eliminate fraud and can protect senders and subscribers from phishing and spoofing.

DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM):

This is used as a form of authentication to digitally sign a message, ensuring the sender has permission to use the domain and that the message wasn't tampered with in transit.

Email Service Provider (ESP):

Think Sailthru.

Feedback Loop:

For the ISPs that offer this service, feedback loops allow senders to receive a report every time someone marks their email as spam or junk, helping them identify issues early.

Inbox Placement Rate:

When mail is accepted into an ISP's network, this figure refers to how many messages are delivered to the inbox.

Internet Protocol (IP):

A number assigned to any device that's connected to the Internet, your IP address is how the ISPs identify you and your server.

Internet Service Provider (ISP):

Think Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo!, Verizon, Comcast and AT&T.

Sender Reputation:

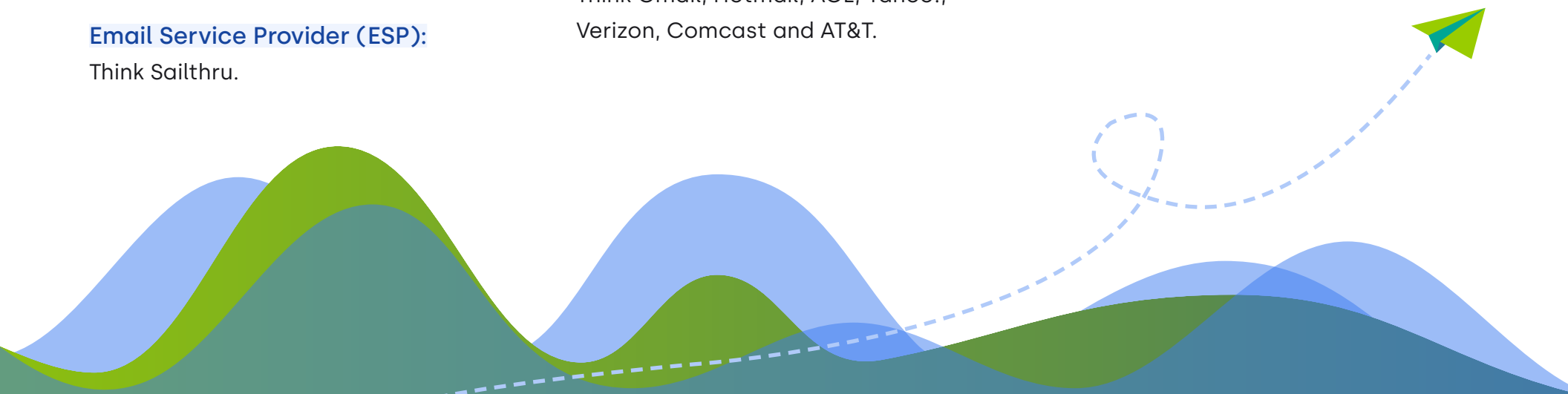
This is literally a score tied to you as an email sender, dictating the majority of email filtering. We'll cover this more in depth on page 6.

Sender Policy Framework (SPF):

Identifying whether a sending server has permission to send mail from a particular domain, SPF is used to authenticate the Return-Path From address, which normally only appears in message headers.

Subdomain:

This is an extension of a brand's web domain, usually email.brand.com. Typically used for a brand's marketing emails, subdomains are often seen in the "from" address.

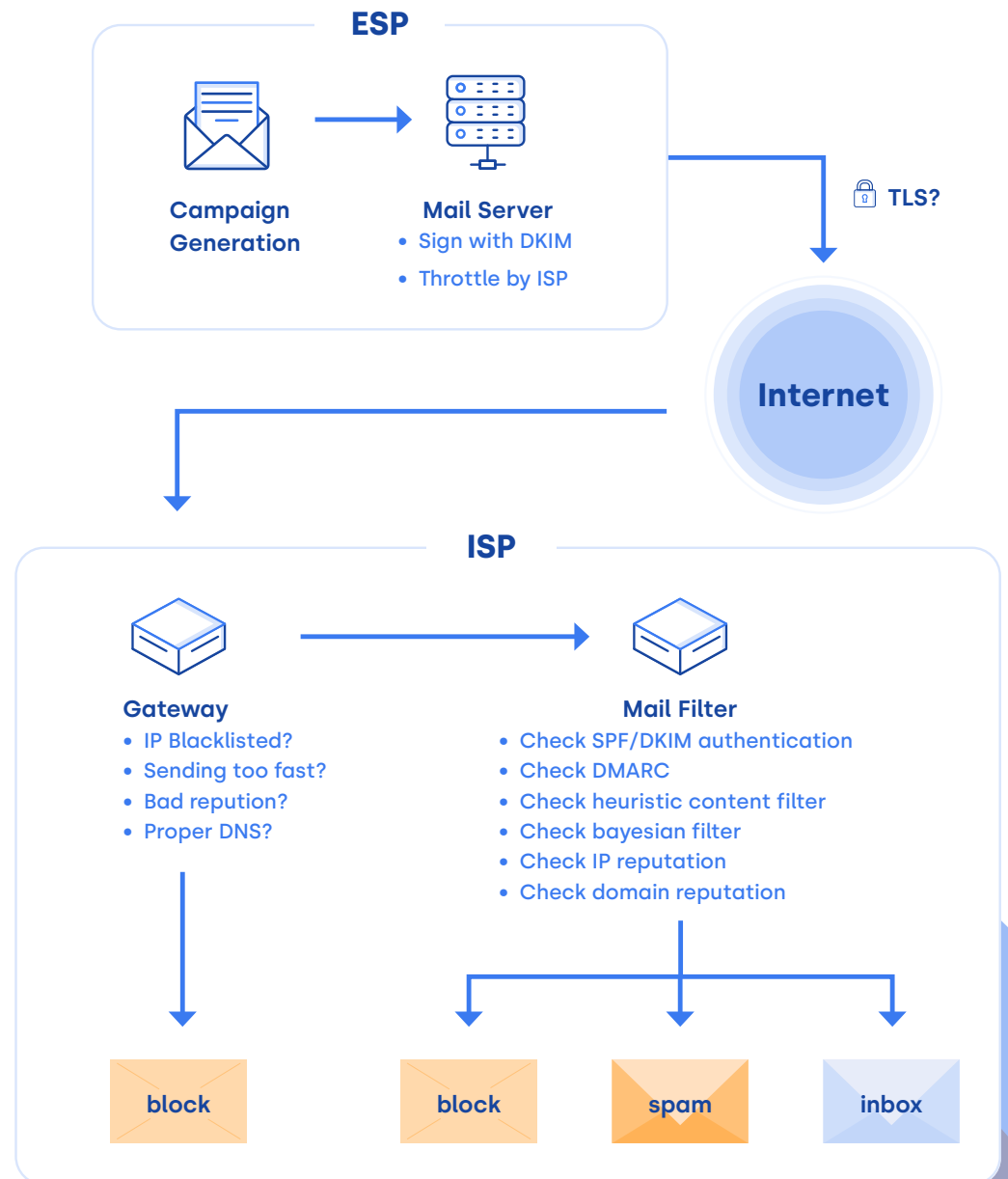


The Complex Path to the Inbox

Now that you've had that vocabulary lesson, we can get into the mechanics of how deliverability works.

Once you press send on your ESP's platform, the campaign email goes into a queue to be delivered to the ISPs. They then accept the mail as fast as possible, on a "first come, first serve" basis. This depends on the domain name in the "To" field, for which DNS is used to identify the recipient's address. Next, mail filters check SPF and DKIM authentication, the email's header and content, blacklists, and sender/ IP/domain reputation. Those checks determine whether mail should be accepted by their network and delivered to the end user's inbox or junk folder.

Though it may only take a few seconds, every email takes a complex journey to the inbox. Here's what it looks like.





How Deliverability Drives Revenue

Email is the most lucrative marketing channel, hands down. According to the 2018 Response Rate Report from the Association of National Advertisers and the Data & Marketing Association, email averages a 145% ROI, far higher than social media, display ads, paid search and direct mail. But of course, that's contingent on people actually receiving your email, which is why deliverability is so important.

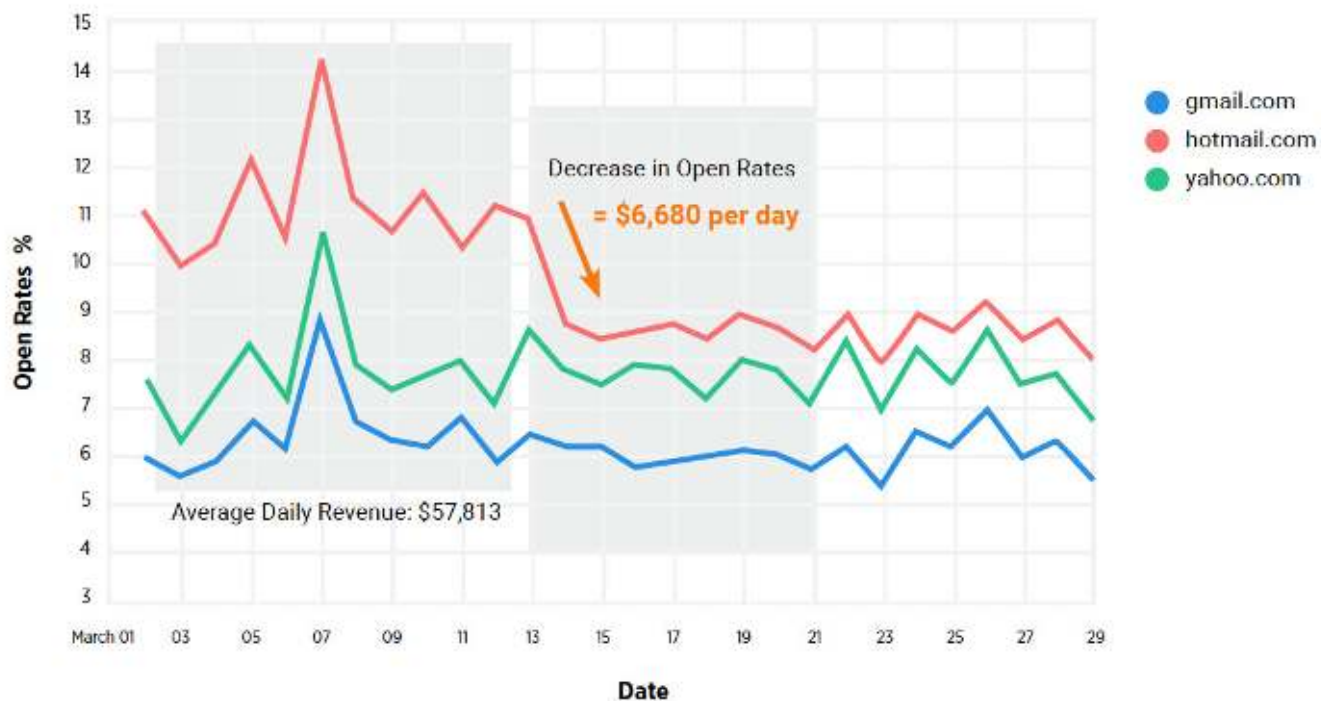
According to Return Path's 2018 Deliverability Benchmark Report, the average Inbox Placement Rate is 85%. That means if you send an email to 100,000 subscribers, you can reasonably expect 15,000 of those messages to be marked as spam or disappear into the void. Last year, our sister brand Campaign Monitor analyzed billions of emails in order to determine a series of benchmarks for different industries and even days of the week. The average clickthrough rate is 3.02% for media brands and 2.25% for retailers. So of the 85,000 people who received your email, 1,912 are

potential customers. Two years of Barilliance data found that email conversion rate is on the rise, with 17.75% of clickedthrough emails resulting in a purchase last year. Of your 1,912 potential customers, that means 339 sales. If your average order value is \$150, you just made \$50,850. Now say you get your Inbox Placement Rate up a single percentage point. Using the same math, you have 23 more potential customers, four more sales and \$600 more in revenue. That doesn't sound like much, but remember, that's just one email.

Analyzing billions of emails, Campaign Monitor compiled these benchmarks for the average clickthrough rate by industry and day of the week.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Advertising & Marketing Agencies	2.70%	2.69%	2.67%	2.67%	2.65%	2.66%	2.47%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2.72%	3.07%	3.16%	3.72%	3.25%	5.59%	2.43%
Automotive & Aerospace	1.47%	2.18%	2.07%	2.70%	2.22%	1.86%	2.20%
Construction, Contracting, & Manufacturing	2.23%	2.71%	2.68%	2.93%	2.83%	2.81%	3.11%
Consumer Packaged Goods	1.63%	1.95%	1.78%	2.00%	1.92%	1.93%	1.33%
Education	2.68%	2.73%	3.05%	2.76%	2.81%	2.80%	2.49%
Engineering, Architecture & Design	2.36%	3.01%	2.64%	2.82%	2.91%	2.67%	2.47%
Financial Services	2.41%	2.60%	2.73%	2.71%	2.75%	2.83%	2.57%
Food & Beverage	2.06%	1.33%	2.23%	1.73%	2.03%	1.37%	2.06%
Government	1.96%	2.75%	3.50%	3.24%	3.14%	2.79%	2.56%
Healthcare Services	2.57%	2.55%	2.64%	2.77%	2.91%	2.91%	2.32%
IT / Tech / Software Services	2.55%	2.69%	2.71%	2.71%	2.72%	2.77%	2.76%
Logistics & Wholesale	2.11%	2.84%	2.56%	2.64%	2.50%	3.85%	2.45%
Media, Entertainment, & Publishing	3.01%	3.17%	3.06%	3.07%	2.94%	2.98%	2.79%
Nonprofit	2.35%	2.70%	2.69%	2.62%	2.66%	2.70%	2.67%
Other	2.44%	2.74%	2.46%	2.45%	2.63%	2.58%	2.48%
Professional Services	1.72%	2.38%	2.47%	2.36%	2.47%	2.39%	1.85%
Real Estate Agents & Brokers	2.05%	2.46%	2.07%	2.78%	1.40%	1.67%	2.84%
Real Estate, Design, & Construction Activities	4.51%	2.82%	2.97%	3.49%	2.90%	2.79%	2.84%
Retail	2.20%	2.20%	2.37%	2.26%	2.31%	2.17%	2.14%
Travel & Hospitality, & Leisure	1.85%	2.22%	2.20%	2.18%	2.10%	2.15%	1.87%
Unknown	2.99%	2.87%	2.77%	2.74%	2.79%	2.83%	2.82%
All Industries (average)	2.66%	2.73%	2.71%	2.70%	2.70%	2.71%	2.59%

Here's a real example from a Sailthru customer. Analyzing the company's open rates throughout March, we found that its average daily revenue is \$57,813, a number that decreased 11.5% as open rates decreased mid-month.



Inbox placement and revenue have a symbiotic relationship, as demonstrated by this Sailthru client's sends over one month.



"Sending Email People Love" and What That Means for Your Reputation

In the email world, each major ISP has its own "secret sauce," referring to the numerous metrics they evaluate to yield a sender reputation score. While each ISP's scoring algorithm is different, many of the metrics are the same.

A sender can help positively influence their overall reputation by engaging in healthy practices and driving metrics such as user engagement, user complaints and user invalids. However, there are many additional influences. For example, Yahoo! has more than 4,500 signals that ISPs review when determining sender reputation. Many of these signals change dynamically based on the current stream of email ISPs receive. What might be good today may be suspicious tomorrow.

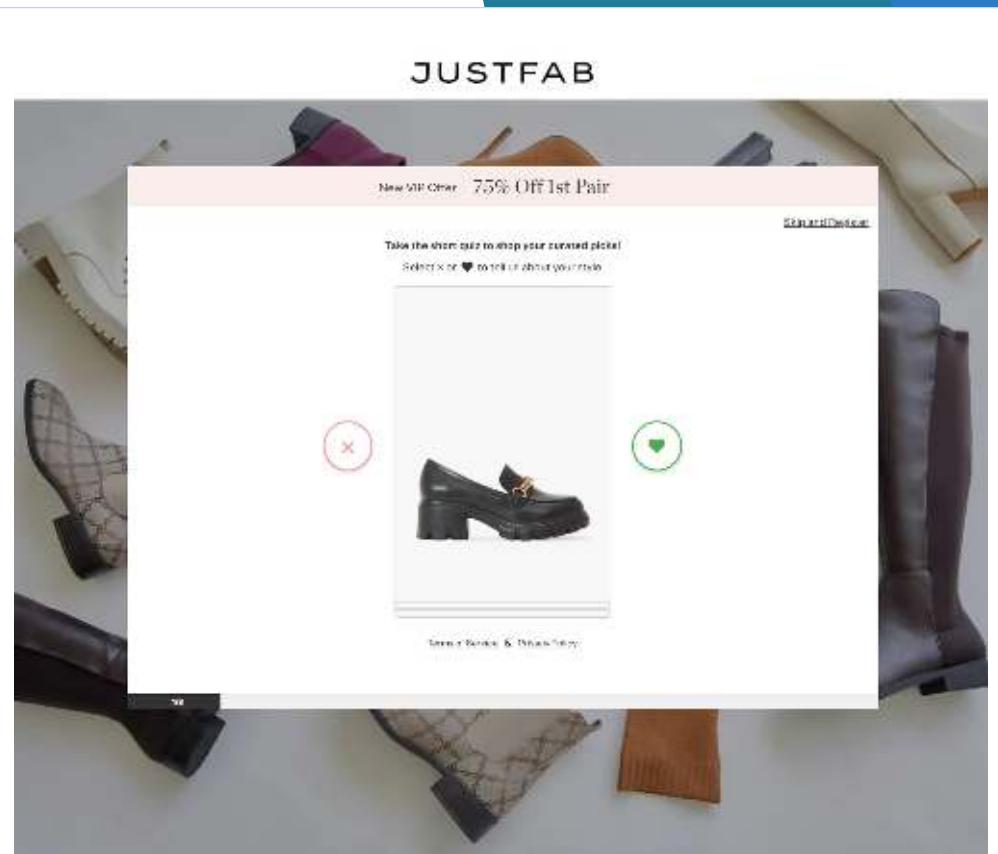
Unfortunately, spammers are always trying to mimic and clone legitimate email to fool these mechanisms. The top priority of all ISPs is to keep their end users safe from malicious senders, which makes maintaining a positive sender reputation more important than ever.

From an engagement perspective, you can see the number of unique and total opens, unsubscribes and critical blacklists. ISPs can see all that and more: how much time people spent reading a message, whether they added you

to their address book, replies and forwards, whether they moved to a different folder. They can also see whether people have deleted your messages without even reading them. Even without that data, sender reputation is largely dictated by factors within your control. We'll never know all of the different reputation criterion, which constantly change. There are a few main drivers every email marketer can optimize for, such as engagement. Think about the content of the emails you send. Are they relevant and engaging? To quote one major ISP postmaster, "Send email people LOVE."

So, how do you create email people love? Here are three tips:

1. **Start with smart data collection.** Learn as much about the consumer as is necessary to create a great user experience. For example, the TechStyle Fashion Group brands — JustFab, ShoeDazzle, Fabletics, FabKids and Savage X Fenty — quiz new shoppers about their sizes, style preferences and even celebrity fashion inspirations.



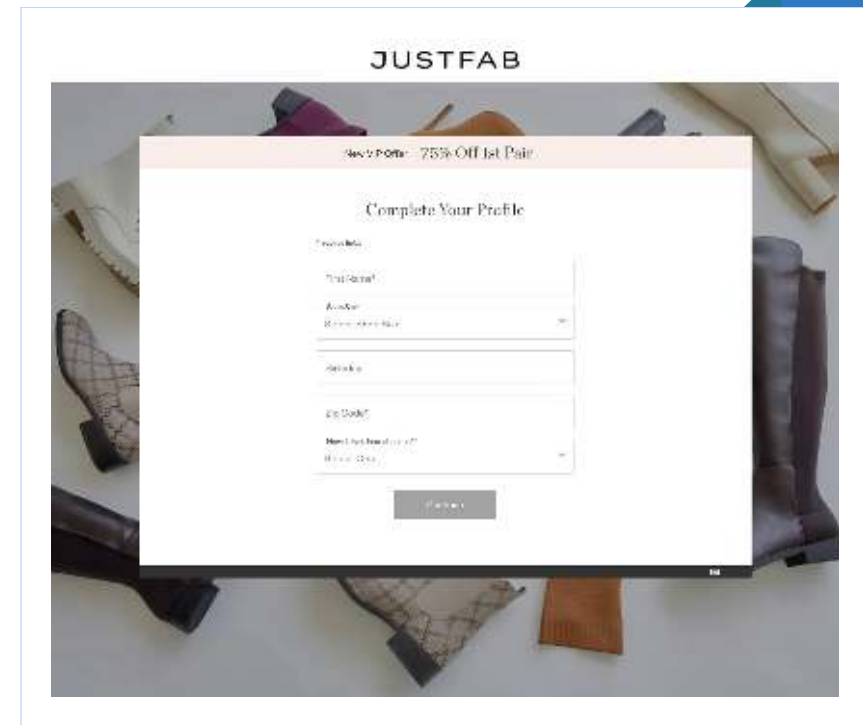
The TechStyle Fashion Group brands send new subscribers style quizzes to learn their preferences in order to keep communications hyper-relevant.

2. **Utilize the personalized data to segment and send relevant messages.** This is, of course, why the TechStyle brands ask for so much information. Learning consumers' tastes early and thoroughly enables the retailers to keep their recommendations hyper-relevant, increasing engagement among end users while decreasing the likelihood they mark messages as spam.
3. **Pay attention to how your users are interacting with your messages.** Treat your engaged and lessengaged audiences differently. Preference centers and suppression lists are key here, which we'll cover in more detail on **page 9**.

Reputation Maintenance

Just because you've created email people love doesn't mean your work is done. Be sure to maintain your reputation by proactively monitoring open rates at top domains. Open rates should be consistent across the top ISPs. If one is significantly lower than the rest, you may have an inboxing issue at that particular ISP.

You should also proactively monitor the critical blacklists and spam traps. If a sender appears on certain blacklists, the ISPs will flat out block their entire mailstream, even if



they're otherwise regarded as a healthy sender. Designed to catch spammers red-handed, spam traps are operator-maintained email addresses that, in many cases, have never been opted in to a sender's list. Other spam traps are recycled, meaning that they had been signed up, but abandoned for a significant length of time, causing the ISP to bounce. Recycled spam traps are generally indicative of an old, poor quality list. Either way, continually messaging these addresses and routinely hitting spam traps will lead to a blacklisting.



Looking at List Management

An engaged list will typically see click to open rates north of 15%, with low opt-outs and abuse complaints. Open rates are a pillar of sender reputation and if yours dip below 10%, that's a sign of low engagement.

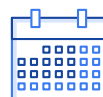
An engaged list will typically see click to open rates north of 15%, with low opt-outs and abuse complaints. Open rates are a pillar of sender reputation and if yours dip below 10%, that's a sign of low engagement.

Since engagement is a universal factor in deliverability, list management is exceptionally important. Keep your lists healthy and up-to-date with suppression lists of inactive subscribers. Sure, that decreases the size of your list, but removing inactive and disengaged subscribers also drives up open rates and inbox placement. On the flip side, poor list quality hurts inboxing. The rule of thumb is, however long it took to get into a messy situation is about how long it will take to resolve. The fallback from one poor campaign could take a week; poor list quality over time can take several months.

Pay careful attention to your user acquisition flow. Make sure you give your potential subscriber a compelling reason for them to have opted in to your email, rather than forcing them to give their email address — in this instance, people are twice as likely to provide a bogus address. Given the ease of typos, it's also important to double check addresses for obvious mistakes, such as "gnail.com."

Most senders suppress inactives between three months and one year of inactivity, though the right time frame depends on your business model, open rates, frequency of sends, list source and age of data.

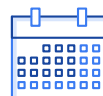
Many variables factor into how long you should wait to suppress inactive users, but here's a good place to start.



Suppress inactives after:

3 MONTHS

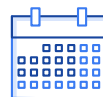
where signup
> 1 month ago



Suppress inactives after:

6 MONTHS

where signup
> 1 month ago



Suppress inactives after:

1 YEAR

where signup
> 1 month ago

Which level to choose? Depends on...

- business model
- open rates
- list source
- frequency of sends
- age of data

Is Your Content Optimized for Deliverability?

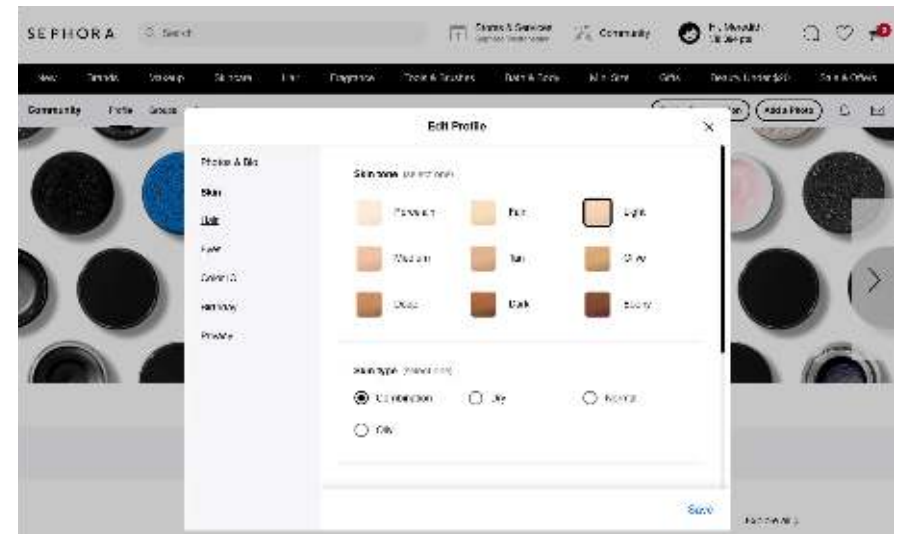
While deliverability largely happens behind the scenes, the content of your messages does play a factor. Here are some best practices to keep in mind:

- Make sure HTML is compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium, the Internet's main standards organization. Better known as W3C, the group's website has a helpful [validator tool](#).
- Avoid JavaScript in the message body. Because JavaScript isn't naturally compatible with email, it may not load properly.
- Mix up HTML and text, rather than using one giant image.
- Use a consistent, branded From address — one that makes your brand identifiable.
- Add alt text to every image.
- Remember that the ideal message width is between 600 and 700 pixels.
- Never use link shorteners other than your own. Branded shortlinks like Goo.gl are popular with spammers looking to direct people toward malware and viruses. As a result, they're less popular with ISPs and often blacklisted.
- Avoid images with shared domains. They're often used by thousands of senders and if one of them is on a blacklist, that can impact everyone else.
- Optimize your subject lines for engagement and delivery.
- Include a proper business name and address, as well as a functioning and easy-to-spot unsubscribe link.
- Use a list unsubscribe header.

Why Preference Centers Are Paramount

Think about the customer experience from a new subscriber's perspective. Welcome emails have an unusually high open rate, about 86% higher than other marketing emails. It makes sense; the customer just told you they want to hear from your brand. That new subscriber engagement wanes quickly, which is why your signup page is so important.

Sephora asks new customers a lot of questions, even about their ethnic background. On first glance, someone might want to know why that's relevant. In fact, the General Data Protection Regulation (we'll cover the GDPR in far more detail on page 15) defines race and ethnicity as "sensitive personal data," granting them extra protection. But while that's totally inappropriate for most brands to ask, it's relevant in Sephora's case. Understanding customers' skin tones helps the brand recommend the right products.



Sephora asks new customers for a lot of information, all of which is necessary for recommending the right beauty and skincare products.

It's equally important to have a preference center, especially if you have multiple mailing lists. Just because someone signs up for your list doesn't necessarily mean they want to hear from you all the time.

To maintain subscriber engagement, preference centers are a must — especially if you have multiple mailing lists. BuzzFeed has more than 40!

Be sure to have a preference center, especially if you have multiple mailing lists — BuzzFeed, for example, has more than 40. Preference centers are a great way to offer choices to customize sends, boosting engagement by allowing someone to stay active on a single list rather than opting out altogether. Preference centers should also be easy to update, respecting consumers' wishes to opt-out if they so choose.

If you make it difficult, people won't opt-out. But then they will mark you as spam, hurting you more in the long run.

The screenshot shows the BuzzFeed website's preference center for newsletters. At the top, the BuzzFeed logo is on the left, and navigation links for Quizzes, TV & Movies, Shopping, Videos, News, and Tasty are in the center. On the right, there are links for Sign in, a search icon, and a 'LOL win' badge. Below the navigation is a blue banner with the text 'Please enter your email address below:' followed by an email input field and a 'Sign up' button. Underneath the input field, it says 'Select the newsletters you'd like dropped in your inbox.' and 'By entering your email and clicking subscribe, you're agreeing to let us send you customized marketing messages about us and our advertising partners. You are also agreeing to our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.'

Below the banner is a section titled 'Trending Newsletters' with the subtitle 'Keep up with trending buzz you'll want to share with friends.' This section contains a grid of nine newsletter options, each with a header image, a title, a frequency, and a brief description:

- BuzzFeed Daily**: 5 updates a week. Keep up with the latest daily buzz with the BuzzFeed Daily newsletter!
- BuzzFeed Quizzes**: 3 updates a week. The quizzes you know and love delivered straight to your inbox!
- Tasty**: 4 updates a week. Recipes, food quizzes, & cooking hacks.
- Tasty Cooking Club**: 1 update a week. A newsletter about cooking the easy, Tasty way.
- As/Is**: 3 updates a week. Style tips, makeup advice, and must-have products.
- Nifty Home**: 3 updates a week. DIY projects, organization tips, & home decor recommendations.
- Shopping**: 3 updates a week. Find great products - plus cool stuff you didn't even know you needed.
- Bring Me!**: 1 update a week. Get travel tips, inspiration, destination guides, & more!
- TV & Movies**: 3 updates a week. Get all the best moments in pop culture & entertainment delivered to your inbox.

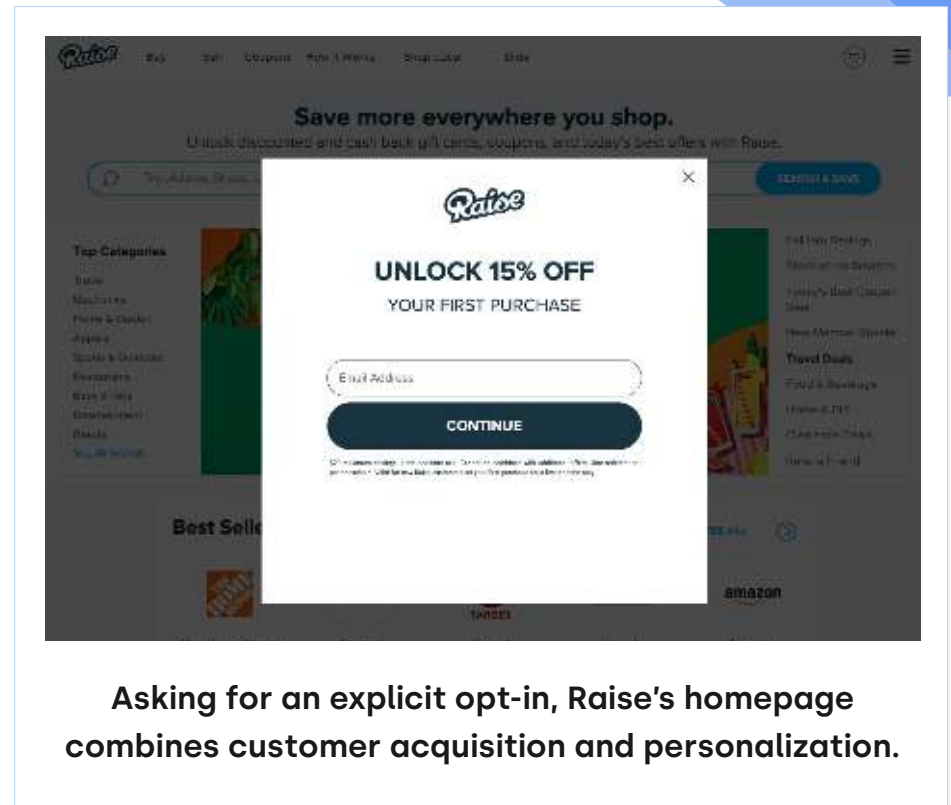
Permission Practices: The Good, the Bad and the Gray Area

Not all permission practices were created equally. How users are collected in the first place has an impact on data quality. Once you collect users, you should make sure to keep an audit trail of permission, something global regulations increasingly require.

Best Practices

Explicit opt-ins, when someone checks a box to confirm that they want to receive your messages, are great because they mean the subscriber has explicitly and voluntarily invited you into their inbox. As more privacy regulations are put into place around the world, they're also increasingly mandated by the law, which we'll cover in greater detail on page 15. For Sailthru customers, explicit opt-ins often take the form of a checkbox on a signup or registration page on one of our Overlays. Displayed as either a modal window or top bar, Overlays live at the top of the webpage, using existing data to bring personalization to customer acquisition.

Double opt-ins are even better. Requiring people to confirm their subscription, they weed out any accidental signups. These opt-ins promote a great customer experience, getting your relationship off on the right foot.



Asking for an explicit opt-in, Raise's homepage combines customer acquisition and personalization.

Once you have explicit consent to email a subscriber, it's a good idea to include **permission reminders** in your messages. They're often seen in the footer alongside the unsubscribe link, reminding the customer that they signed up to receive emails. They fight forgetfulness and spam complaints.

The Gray Area

There are explicit opt-ins and there are implicit opt-ins. Examples of the latter include instances when a customer fills out a form to download content or register for an event. You technically have permission to email the customer under most jurisdictions, but they didn't necessarily sign up to receive all your emails. As a result, implicit opt-ins risk your messages making their way to customers' junk folders.

Sweepstakes and competitions represent another signup tactic that falls somewhere on the spectrum in between "best practice" and "best-avoided practice." These are an effective way to grow your email list, but they can also be risky. They don't always disclose that while you can win a Hawaiian vacation, you will be subscribed to the company's mailing list. In the example below, Thrillist's official rules mentioned that entrants consent to receive commercial emails.

Worst Practices (a.k.a. Things You Shouldn't Do, Ever!)

Checkboxes shouldn't be pre-checked opt-ins. Like sweepstakes, making someone explicitly uncheck the box can have a good impact on your subscriber list, if not your engaged subscriber list. However, some regulations, such as the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation or the GDPR, don't consider this express consent. Along those lines, co-registration should be avoided. When a consumer registers for an offer, co-registration allows them to simultaneously opt-in to multiple offers. As a result, their data will be transferred to both advertisers on the form. They may not



Sweepstakes are an effective but risky way to grow your email list; failure to disclose your intentions here could hurt deliverability in the long run.

necessarily want to be contacted. On the opposite end of the spectrum from explicit opt-ins are email appending and purchased lists. Also known as e-appending, the former involves obtaining email addresses by matching known customer data against a vendor's database. The latter refers to those lists you purchased, filled with people who haven't actually subscribed to your emails. They may immediately flag you as spam on principle. Sailthru is one of many ESPs to ban this practice, which can get your account blacklisted or terminated. Always use your own lists.

Email Headers and Return-Paths

Email headers verify the origin of a message, functioning similarly to the stamp on a letter. Just as a snail mail recipient can see the journey their letter took from one post office to the next, email recipients can see the electronic equivalent. Email headers are full of useful information for anyone who wants to see.

Open any marketing email in Gmail and along the top right, you'll see three buttons: a star, an arrow to reply, and three dots with more options, one being "Show original."

It shows when the message was created and how long it took to arrive in the user's inbox. Email headers also include authentication results; SPF and DKIM should both say "PASS."

When you message an individual and spell their name wrong, the email will come back to you with a delivery status notification marked failure, otherwise known as a bounce message.

To maximize deliverability, keep your email headers clean and your return-path customized. That creates a consistency that simplifies the authentication process.

Message ID	<20200131151508.5e34447c071eff002674f0916@sailthru.com
Created at:	Fri, Jan 31, 2022 at 10:15 AM (Delivered after 1 second)
From:	Raise <raise@e-mail.raise.com> Using sailthru.com
To:	nmorris@sailthru.com
Subject:	Welcome to the Raise family!
SPF:	PASS with IP 192.64.236.46 Learn more
DKIM:	'PASS' with domain e-mail.fabletics.com Learn more
DMARC:	'PASS' Learn more

Email Legislations Around the World

Over the last year, there were major data breaches from Facebook, Marriott, Facebook again and Capital One, among others. Consumers are increasingly concerned with their privacy, which in turn, factors into deliverability as more laws are put into place. 2020 is going to be a major year for federal privacy regulations and new ones are still developing over the world. Here are four of the major regulations:



Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-SPAM), 2003

- **The Gist:** Outlining regulations for commercial email senders, the CAN-SPAM Act is also known as "I CAN SPAM" due to its low bar for sending mail.
- **Consent:** Express consent isn't required prior to sending. To opt-out, senders can't require any user information other than their email address.
- **Timeline:** Unsubscribes must be clear, simple and included in each email sent. They must also be processed within 10 days and the link must be valid for 30 days.
- **Penalties:** Up to \$16,000 per email



General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018

- **The Gist:** The GDPR goes beyond email with very strong consent provisions for collecting and using customer data. It applies to any organization with any data on any person in the entire European Union.
- **Consent:** The rules here are strict: Consent checkboxes can't be pre-checked or bundled with another purpose, and records must be kept.
- **Timeline:** Organizations have 30 days to respond to a GDPR request.
- **Penalties:** Up to €20 million or 4% of the worldwide annual revenue from the previous year, whichever is higher

Email Legislations Around the World



Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), 2014

- **The Gist:** One of the toughest anti-spam regulations on the planet, CASL applies to any commercial electronic messages sent to or from Canada.
- **Consent:** Senders must have — and keep a record of — either express or implied consent. The latter refers to instances when someone hasn't outright said, "Don't email me," though pre-checked opt-in boxes aren't allowed. Consent also can't be bundled with another purpose.
- **Timeline:** Unsubscribes must be clear, simple and included in each email sent. They must also be processed within 10 days and the link must be valid for up to 60 days.
- **Penalties:** Up to \$1 million for individuals and \$10 million for businesses



California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), 2020

- **The Gist:** This new (and still being amended) legislation obliges businesses to inform California residents how their data is shared with third parties, including buy- and sell-side platforms. The CCPA is the first privacy legislation of its kind in the U.S. and many other states will follow suit throughout 2020.
- **Consent:** Californians have the right to disclosure, as well as the choice to opt-out of data collection and ad targeting.
- **Timeline:** Businesses must respond to verifiable consumer requests within 45 days.
- **Penalties:** Up to \$2,500 for each violation or \$7,500 for each intentional violation. Consumers can also bring a civil action between \$100 and \$750.

Getting Started

Delivering Results to the Inbox is full of best practices, though it's worth noting that priorities may vary from one ISP to the next. Before doing anything that may impact your deliverability or accidentally hurt your reputation, it's important to consult with your company's legal counsel. **As you get started, we've put together this helpful checklist:**

Reputation Management

- Always gain recipient permission, sending what they've signed up to receive and keeping an audit trail of permission.
- Proactively monitor all email sends, addressing deliverability issues ASAP.
- Have real-time ISP block alerts in place.
- Monitor critical and impactful blacklists 24/7.
- Use third-party data, such as that from email analytics and deliverability platform 250ok, to see inbox placement and spam trap hits." change it to "Use third-party data to see inbox placement and spam trap hits.
- Monitor drops in delivery rates and open rates. Look for changes in open rates at top ISPs to ensure your mail is delivering to the inbox and not the junk folder.
- Ensure you're following the ISPs' acceptable usage policies, as well as any legal regulations.

List Management

- Filter based on recipient engagement activity. Put suppressions in place to send to active users and fewer sends to less engaged.
- Use a re-engagement series for those users who may not be active. However, you should phase out sending to these users if they do not engage after a certain period of time.
- Use a preference center so that you can capture user preferences to possibly opt-down and customize to how people would like to hear from you.
- Always track acquisition source and audit trail of permission.
- Use reCaptcha on sign up pages to prevent bots.
- Ask subscribers to add you to their safe senders list or address book.
- Review hard bounces, keeping your overall bounce rate under 1%. This is especially important for welcome series, as these messages are the first touch and will likely have the highest hard bounce rates.
- Generate reports to provide insight into bounces, complaints and unsubscribes.

Technical

- Set up feedback loops with ISPs to record any users that mark mail as spam, allowing them to be removed from your list.
- Ensure authentication of each sender using SPF and DKIM.
- Look at setting up DMARC on your sending domain. This takes a lot of review and work and should not be just turned on.
- Ensure your ESP throttles email sends based on ISP SMTP response codes and optimizes mail to send at the correct speeds and rates.

To learn more about Sailthru's deliverability services, visit www.sailthru.com/services

If you've got any questions, our team would love to hear from you: deliverability@sailthru.com

About Sailthru

Sailthru, a CM Group brand, helps modern marketers drive higher revenue, improve customer lifetime value, and reduce churn by using its powerful suite of connected capabilities. Sailthru's high-performance email, website personalization, mobile marketing automation, and unique integrations power new customer acquisition by leveraging machine learning and first-party data to easily deliver relevant, personalized engagement across all channels. The world's most innovative publishers, including Insider, Refinery29, and Food52, and the world's fastest-growing ecommerce companies, including Everlane, Thrive Market, and MZ Wallace, trust Sailthru to help them succeed.

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