



QRC – Email Best Practices

As Internet service providers (ISPs) like Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc., crack down on spam and unwanted email messages, we have all seen the benefits in our own inboxes through a reduction in spam. These benefits, however, come at the expense of email deliverability rates across all industries using email marketing. It is estimated that a full 20% of commercial emails never make it to their intended destination due to increased filtering and blocking by ISPs as they combat spam and junk mail.

Many factors impact deliverability and sender reputations:

- Bounce rates- are we sending emails to inboxes that no longer exist, or have we typed an address in wrong?
- Complaints- How often are people marking our emails as spam?
- Spam traps- Are we sending emails to dead inboxes that have been converted to spam traps by the ISPs, or emails harvested from websites and sold through third parties?
- Engagement- Are recipients opening our emails and clicking through or are they deleting the email without reading?
- List Hygiene- Are we cleaning up our lists to sunset unengaged users and removing bounced addresses?

Our email domains and sponsored tools are a shared resource for all of us to use. As ISPs determine if emails will make it into your customer's inboxes, it is important to follow these best practices to increase our deliverability rates and to protect our sender reputation.

1. Develop an email strategy

- Define your goals and develop a strategy to accomplish them. A solid strategy will include who you plan to send to, what content you plan to send, how often you will contact them, and when you plan to email them.
- Create a calendar that includes all the key components of a solid strategy to help you plan and execute.
- Email your clients/prospects at a time they would expect to hear from you or are most free to respond, which will depend on your unique recipient list. If you are unsure, you can start with using the industry established practice of sending to your lists mid-morning on Tuesday and monitor its effectiveness going forward.
- For frequency, a good place to start is with a bi-monthly or monthly reach out. Monitor your email campaigns (Best Practice #4) and adjust the key components of your strategy as needed to accomplish your goals.



Email best practices cont.

2. Have a relationship with your recipients

- Send emails to clients and prospects that know who you are and will be receptive to your message.
- Before purchasing manufactured or third-party email lists, consider that email addresses on these lists will have high bounce rates and may contain spam trap addresses which can lead to blacklisting by ISPs.

3. Send to targeted and engaged recipient lists

- Think quality over quantity. Sending an email to a targeted, segmented list that is interested in the message will result in better results and fewer spam complaints and opt outs.
- Do not send "blast" emails. ISPs look for significant variances in emails delivered each day/week in an attempt to identify spammers. Large peaks or inconsistent volumes from senders are noticed by ISPs, and they react accordingly.

4. Monitor your email campaign effectiveness

- Use the available reporting in the tool you use to review the open rates, click rates and opt outs for your email campaigns, and adjust your strategy as needed. Questions to consider as you review the report include is this the right content for this audience? Am I sending too many emails to this list?
- Follow up with recipients that you find under the **Clicks** and **Opens** category on the reporting- these recipients are the most engaged and have shown an interest in what you sent them.

5. Practice good list hygiene

- Use the available reporting in the tool you use to review the opt outs and bounces from your email campaigns within 72 hours of sending.
- Do not continue to email to any address that bounces or is undeliverable- promptly remove those addresses from your all of your lists paying special attention to any orders you may have placed for future delivery.
- Regularly review your lists to remove unengaged recipients. Continuing to email to recipients that have not shown any interest in receiving emails leads to low engagement and deliverability issues.
- All users need to adhere to these best practices to ensure continued deliverability of email. Bad practices will affect all users of a shared tool, and not just the users that do not follow best practices.
- The home office will be monitoring email usage on the tools we sponsor and contacting users that display behaviors that may affect our deliverability rates in the future.