





Deliverability: What You Need to Know

The email landscape is evolving, and it now features spam filters with AI technology that make it harder than ever to reach the inbox. Here is a quick look at the fundamentals of email deliverability for marketers.

THE FOUR KEY CONCEPTS

1. Send Email for Which People Ask

Always respect a user's decision to opt in or out of your emails. It's essential to get explicit permission from users and make clear the emails for which someone signs up.

DO	DON'T
 Be transparent about what you will send and how frequently it will be sent	 Use pre-checked boxes on webforms
 Make it easy for people to unsubscribe (The "unsubscribe" button should have white space around it and be in a font that's easy to read. It should not be surrounded by text in a sentence.)	 Automatically add people to your list without explicit consent (The ONE exception is if they made a purchase from you – this is implicit consent.)

2. Send Email People Expect


Make sure you only send people email content for which they sign up. If someone fills out a preference form and selects one email list, do not add them to other lists or send them content for which they did not sign up. Email lists from trade shows and partner companies can also be problematic. If the attendee did not stop by your booth, they don't expect to hear from you. People on an email list from a partner company also don't expect to hear from you. A better way to handle email lists from partner companies is to have your partner company send the email while you provide the content.

 *Pro Tip:* Use the Insight Portal to look up email addresses in your contact list/query. Remember the people and faces behind the email addresses.

3. Send Email People Want

Engaging content is critical. Inbox providers (e.g. Google, Yahoo, etc.) are watching how users interact with emails. Do users open an email, click a link, and add the sender to their contacts? Positive behaviors performed by the user will bolster your sender reputation and increase your chances of reaching the inbox. Negative behaviors (e.g. marking an email as spam, deleting without opening, etc.) will hurt your sender reputation and increase the chances of landing in the spam folder.

For more information, visit inntopia.com



 *Pro Tip:* Make sure your email templates are formatted to look good across all devices and inbox providers. Emails that are hard to read or hard to click on can reduce engagement.

4. Authenticate Your Emails

Email authentication methods are security techniques that work behind the scenes to tell inbox providers that you are who you say you are.

Email authentication methods are added to your sending domain (i.e. the email address you use when you send emails from Watson/Acoustic or Blue Hornet) by your IT or website administrator. Two of the most essential email authentication methods are Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and Domain Keyed Identified Mail (DKIM).

Email Authentication Methods

	SPF Sender Policy Framework	Tells inbox providers that the email came from an IP address authorized by your domain.
	DKIM Domain Keyed Identified Mail	A digital signature added to your emails that tells inbox providers that the email's sending domain is authorized by the owner of the domain. It also verifies that parts of the email were not modified in transit.

It's important to confirm that your SPF and DKIM records are still valid. Both can be checked using free online tools such as [MX toolbox](#). DKIM is harder to verify; ask your Account Manager if you have questions.



Note: If you change website hosting services, check with your IT/website administrator to confirm that these records move to the new server.

DELIVERABILITY METRICS SHOULD BE KPI'S

Content Metrics

Monitoring a few key content metrics over time will help you understand if customers want your email (key concept #3) and help you spot deliverability problems early. Important metrics to track include:

- **Open Rate** – Overall metric measuring interest in your email (15% benchmark*).
If you notice a decrease in open rate, it could mean the email did not resonate with your audience. If your list and content have not changed and you notice the drop over the course of sending two or more emails, it could indicate a deliverability problem.
- **Clickthrough Rate** – Overall metric measuring calls-to-action (2% benchmark*).
- **Click-To-Open Rate (“Effective Rate” in Acoustic campaigns)** – More specific metric measuring how effective your email content is at driving people to act (8.6% benchmark*).
- **Unsubscribe Rate** – A high unsubscribe rate indicates the email did not resonate with your audience (.14% benchmark*).

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Deliverability Metrics

Monitoring deliverability metrics over time and per inbox provider will help you spot list hygiene issues and deliverability problems. It's especially important to monitor the following metrics:

- **Delivery Rate** – Tells you if the inbox provider accepted the email you sent. A delivery rate that trends lower indicates email providers are starting to block your emails.

Even if the delivery rate is high, this does not mean the email was delivered to the inbox; it could have been delivered to the spam folder.
- **Hard Bounces** – High hard bounce rate (over 2.2%*) indicates there is an issue with list hygiene. Think about where the list came from and whether the email addresses were correctly added without spelling mistakes.
- **Soft Bounces** – High soft bounce rates (or a soft bounce rate that spikes or trends higher) can indicate deliverability problems.
- **Abuse Complaints** – Should be very low (overall rate of 0.02% or lower*). Gmail does not send abuse complaints from individual subscribers. Other inbox providers don't send all abuse complaints; they send a representative sample. Yahoo/AOL is especially prone to soft bouncing your emails if they receive too many abuse complaints.

If you encounter deliverability issues or have additional questions, contact the [Inntopia Digital Services team](#). We want to help you get your emails into your guest's inbox.

* Benchmark numbers from IBM's 2018 Marketing Benchmark Report
<https://www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/L2VNQYQ0>