
A Step by Step Guide:

How to stop
your emails
ending up
as junk



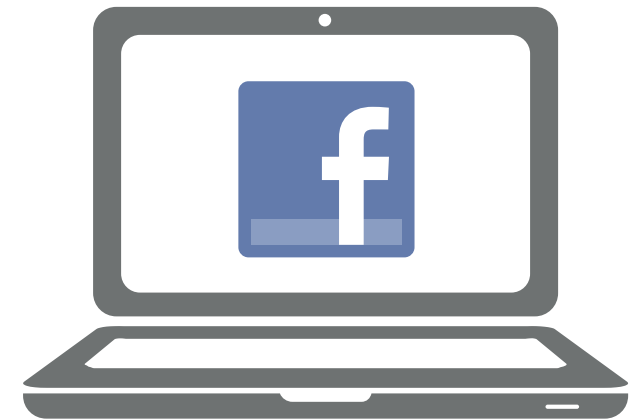
INTRODUCTION

Email is still a powerful and influential marketing channel but, with the growing popularity of social media as a means of communication, it is a method that is often overlooked.

A recent Econsultancy email census showed that **55%** of company respondents attributed over **10%** of their total sales to email marketing, showing just how important email can be as part of a successful marketing campaign.

As every email marketer knows, your completely legitimate messages can sometimes end up in the junk folder. But, as every **great** email marketer knows, there are steps you can take to avoid this dead-end.

Read on to find out more...



1. MINIMISE COMPLAINTS

A complaint is when a recipient clicks '*this is spam*' or reports your sender email to their web administrator. This is basically because they either don't want to receive your email or because the content is irrelevant or uninteresting to them.

The ideal is to keep complaints to a minimum.

THEREFORE...

- Start out by sending recipients a welcome email, telling them what to expect from you.
- Include an **unsubscribe** button which is easy to navigate to, allowing those that aren't interested to let you know straight away.
- Keep your messages consistent in their content.
- Don't send them too often and you'll be on the right road to minimising the number of times your emails get reported as spam.

2. CLEAN YOUR CONTACT LIST



An unhealthy email list is certain to damage your chances of reaching an inbox. It may feel like a painful wrench to reduce the size of your email list, but sending to dead email addresses is worse than not sending at all.



So how can you keep your email list clean? Firstly, you should monitor your 'dead user' rate, which is users that have never opened your email, or are 'hard errors', meaning a resend won't result in a delivery. It's best to remove these contacts from your list as soon as possible.

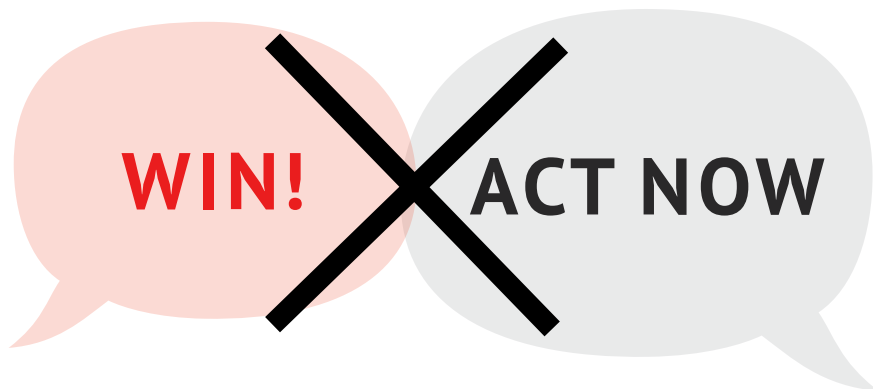


Avoid bought lists if possible. They may seem tempting, but can do more harm than good. They are often old and inaccurate, or feature people who are simply not interested in your offering. As the main point of sending emails is to give information about your products or services to people who actually want it, it's best to keep it organic - incentivise the sign up and offer subscribers exclusive content or offers and reap the rewards of a healthy contact list.

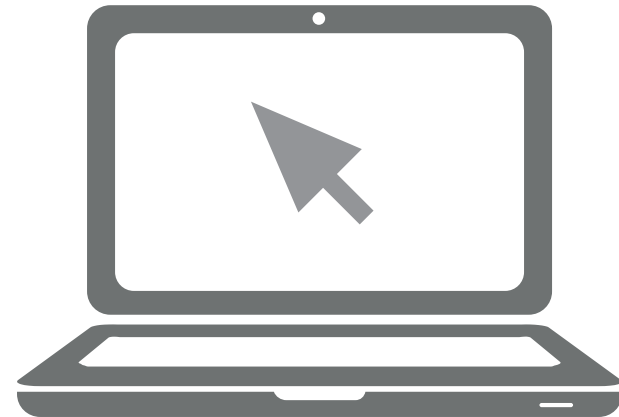
3. MONITOR MESSAGE CONTENT

The content of your email is the part that's going to grab your customer's attention. It's important to make sure what you're sending is something that not only helps reinforce your brand values, but is also eye-catching enough to grab your customers' interest.

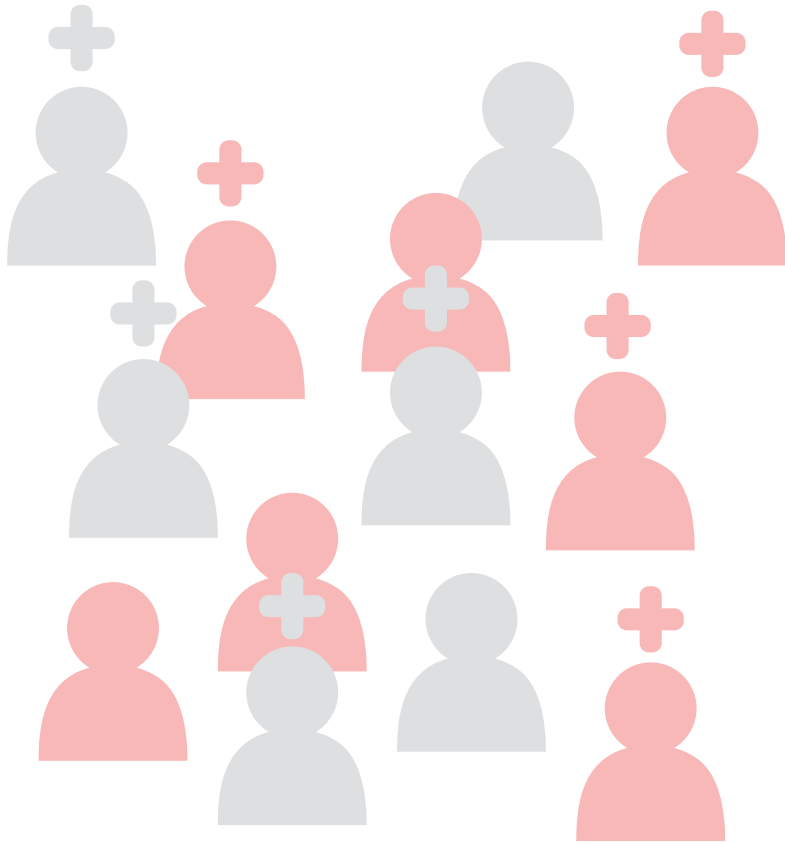
That said, make sure you avoid spam words, such as 'win' or 'act now!' which are a sure fire way to ensure your message won't get delivered. As well as this, don't add attachments and keep an eye on the image to text ratio.



Keep the content interesting and true to the values that you want your brand to convey, using language that invites your customer to engage with your message and that hopefully persuades them to click through to your website.



4. ENGAGE YOUR SUBSCRIBERS



Making sure your content is spot on is important. It's also vital to remember that, as your contact list grows, the need to segment your contact list does too. This means you can tailor the content of your emails to the needs of the segments that you are sending them to. For example, providing different special offers depending on the length of time since a customer's last purchase or, more simply, just sending out a different message to men and women.

ISPs are becoming savvier to marketers and are now monitoring how much engagement your emails elicit. So, if you constantly blast out irrelevant emails which get ignored by your recipient list, your chances of reaching the inbox further down the line will be greatly diminished.

5. USE SOLID INFRASTRUCTURE

Make sure your sending infrastructure is of a high quality, with a SPF record and DKIM key in place, along with a sender ID and reply to address. The setup of these features generally comes as standard with most large email service providers, but it's useful to know the details.

SPF is a validation system that verifies the sender's IP address and verifies that you're allowed to send from your domain. Sender ID is a similar system, which goes a step further and verifies the header address of the email. Similarly, a DKIM key is a method that associates a domain name with an email message, giving the sender permission to send emails.

It's always useful to have a reply to address that's monitored and active.

Apart from being able to monitor any replies, it further verifies your identity and strengthens your infrastructure.

6. LOOK AFTER YOUR IP ADDRESS

The flippant amongst us might think that these checks are all well and good but, if things go wrong, you can just change your email and IP address and start from scratch right? Unfortunately, it's not that simple. An IP address needs to have a degree of history to be trusted by ISPs, making it crucial to keep things clean and resort to using a new IP as a last resort only|

7. CHECK YOUR SCORE

As with any digital strategy, it's vital to monitor your activity and the results achieved. To get a simple overview of your reputation you can use the free site senderscore.org which checks your IP and gives you a score out of 100, compared to other email senders, taking into account how mailbox providers will evaluate you.

Feedback loops are a way to monitor complaints made against your IP, which are initiated when someone presses the 'spam' button in their email provider. Simply enter the IP(s) you're sending from and verify the email associated with your IP. This means that on a campaign basis you can monitor what makes your recipients tick or press the dreaded button.

If you want to discuss how Livelink can help to stop your emails ending up as junk, contact us [here](#)

