



## Getting the Most of Your E-mail Marketing



**M**ore than 20 percent of legitimate marketing messages never make it to the intended inboxes, according to the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#), an association whose members are responsible for selling over 86 percent of online advertising in the U.S.

As a result, many marketing messages—even from legitimate marketers like you—never make it to their intended recipient. The reason is that spam filtering—at either the server or client level—incorrectly identifies these undelivered messages as spam.

Here's a list of things you can do to minimize this problem:

- 1 Make your marketing messages opt-in.** Instead of automatically sending marketing messages to clients or prospects, ask for their permission. Tell them exactly what they'll be getting and how frequently.
- 2 Send a confirmation after someone requests to be put on your mailing list.** After someone signs up, send a welcome note that reminds them what they'll be getting and when, provides an opt-out address, and reminds them to add
- 3 Keep records of opt-ins.** Sometimes people forget what they sign up for—if too many complain to their ISP, the ISP could tag you as a spammer. If this happens, having records that show the e-mail address and IP address can protect you from being blacklisted by the ISP.
- 4 Send only what you promised to send.** Sending more information could cause your readers to tune out your messages or even unsubscribe. According

your e-mail address to any spam filters.

to the Return Path Second Annual Holiday Consumer Email Survey, January 2006, 43.5 percent of online shoppers who signed up for a retailer's mailing list got more e-mail than they expected, up from 39.6 percent in 2004. Of those who received "excess email," 68 percent deleted additional emails, 33.6 percent reported the sender as a spammer to their ISP, and 30.5 percent unsubscribed. (Download a copy of the study at [here](#).)

**5 Keep your lists clean.** When your list contains a lot of addresses that don't exist at the ISP, the ISP may flag your domain as a spammer. To keep your list clean, design your sign-up forms so subscribers have to confirm their

address, immediately remove any bounces from your list, and consider running your list through an e-mail change-of-address service.

**6 Consider authenticating your e-mail to ensure delivery.** Authentication helps recipients verify that messages from your domain are really coming from you, and not a spammer or phisher. Some Internet service providers (ISPs) require senders to use authentication to ensure delivery. Unfortunately, no standards exist, so talk with your ISP or in-house IT staff.

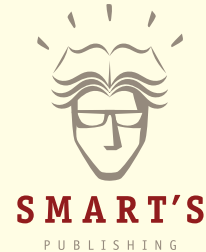
**7 Watch the content of your messages.** In addition to filtering out messages from certain domains, spam filters check incoming messages for "triggers" typically associated with spam or phishing. Avoid using dollar signs, exclamation points or quotation marks in subject lines. Other words to avoid in the subject line include: Free, Call Now, credit, Discount, Earn, Eliminate Debt, Double your income, You're a Winner!, information you requested, loans, million dollars, multi level marketing, opportunity, Reverses Aging, Search Engine Listing...and the list goes on. Spam filters will also scan content for "triggers" as well, so avoid over-using any of these phrases.

You can check your marketing messages for their ability to bypass spam filters absolutely free at [ezinecheck.com](#). Simply copy your text into

the window and the scanner will score your message. Incidentally, this message rated a 18.501. The filter classified this as, "Over the edge. Most spam filters will throw this out," primarily because of our use of the "trigger words" listed in #7 above.

If this message gets past your spam filters and you have any thoughts, please let us know. If you have a friend who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you have any comments, please complete the form at [our web site](#).

*Until next time—The smart marketers at*



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