



AVOIDING SPAM FILTERS

presented by Maxmail

What's Inside

Hello. This guide is going to discuss that four lettered dirty word, spam. Spam accounts for 85% of all emails sent and according to the guys at ReturnPath 20% of emails never reach the inbox due to spam filters. Even though you're not planning to spam, spam filters stop many permission-based emails all the time. Understanding how to avoid getting caught in a spam filter will do wonders for your email marketing campaign.

This guide will set you straight. We'll tell you what spam is. We'll even let you know what turns spam filters on and how you can avoid your email campaigns being filtered out into the junk folder.

In this guide you will learn:

- What spam is
- What spam filters are
- How to create a permission based list
- How to avoid spamming your list

If you have any questions, our support team is here to help or visit our [online resource centre](#).

Now, let's get started.

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What is Spam?

Spam is unsolicited email sent to a list of people. It is not okay to buy a list and then send unsolicited emails to that list. That is spamming. However, if you wrote individual, personalized emails to each recipient that contained unique content requesting permission to send further email communications, that would not be spam.

If you send global email campaigns, you need to be aware of anti-spam laws in the countries you send emails to. Anti-spam legislation varies from country to country, so to avoid abuse reports and large fines do some reading up in the countries you're sending emails to. Here's a good start:

New Zealand

[The Unsolicited Electronic Messages ACT 2007](#)

United States

[CAN-SPAM Act 2003](#)

Australia

[The Spam Act 2003: A practical guide for businesses](#)

Rest of World

<http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/spam/law.html>

To get you started this is what you should or should not be doing in your emails:

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Don't use misleading subject lines

The subject line should clearly state the content of the email. If the email is an advertisement, state this. The receivers of your email should know what they are opening and there should be no surprises here.

Don't use misleading header information

The from-names, reply-tos or other address details should all be valid. Additionally you should provide a physical postal address for the sender.

Always include a way for people to opt out

You must always provide an unsubscribe link. In Maxmail once a recipient has unsubscribed they are automatically added to your **Suppression List**. To view or add unsubscribers:

1. Navigate to the **Manage Subscribers** tab
2. Select **Suppression List** from the left hand menu

If you send emails to a list, and you get an unusual amount of SPAM complaints (more than 1 out of 1,000), ISPs will begin blocking future emails from your company.

They will also request (that's putting it mildly) that Maxmail shut down your account. So if you don't have proof that each recipient on your list has opted-in to receive your emails, or otherwise meets the above requirements, don't import them into Maxmail.

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How Spam Filters Work

Spam filters are a tool the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) use to identify and trap spammers. If you may be spamming or following bad sender practices a spam filter will alert the ISP. Once you've been flagged as a spammer it will be extremely difficult for you to deliver emails to ISPs.

Even though you're not intentionally spamming, your email campaign could trigger SPAM filters for multiple reasons, causing your emails to end up in the junk folder. There are different types of spam traps and different degrees of repercussions for hitting them. If you get caught by a more severe spam trap, ISPs will immediately block your IP address and your "from domain". Being caught by a severe spam trap could take 6 – 12 months for your sender reputation to recover. Bad news for you.

If you hit a less severe spam trap, chances are you'll be sent to the junk folder. The spam filter will still alert the ISPs however, to monitor future hits. If your email campaign continues to go into the junk folder, it is likely that the email address has gone dormant or inactive. If you keep emailing to these addresses your deliverability rate will surely drop. Your email marketing won't do too well if you can't send emails.

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One of the easiest ways to avoid spam filters is to create a permission-based list using a double opt-in method. Further on in the guide we talk about how to avoid getting caught in a spam filter.

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Create a Double Opt-In Method

Create a permission based list by using a double opt-in method. If you don't have permission to send emails to people then technically you are spamming.

To create a focused list of people who want your emails, create a **double opt in campaign**. A double opt-in campaign is a method used where an email address is validated by asking the subscriber to reply or click on a confirmation link confirming that they would like to receive further messages.

1. Create a second email to re-confirm subscribers
2. Set up email address to send the reconfirmation emails
3. View those who opted in. These are your double opt ins.

Approximately 20% of subscribers will not click the link to confirm their subscription. It is okay to send a reminder opt in email of a monthly frequency two or three times.

What ever double opt-in method you choose to use, keep a record of when and how your subscribers gave permission.

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Tips to Avoid the SPAM Folder

Now that you've learnt a bit about how the anti-SPAM world works. Try the following tips for your next email campaigns to increase your inbox placement rate and email conversions.

1. Avoid Purchased Lists

Purchased lists can tarnish your reputation as a sender. Don't do it. These lists are filled with dead emails and spam traps and quickly send red flags to email providers that the email you are sending is unsolicited.

No matter how expensive, this goes against our Terms of Use. No rented lists even if they are 'opted in'. And no third party lists either.

2. Watch What You Say in your subject line

Spam filters block not only words and phrases but also symbols, all caps, exclamation points and language with a sense of urgency.

Obvious words/phrases that trigger spam filters include:

- Cash
- Weight loss

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- Money
- Huge sale
- Huge deals
- Store credit
- Easy income
- Free download
- Take our survey
- Gift card
- Diet
- Millions
- Job alert
- Free gift
- Free shipping
- Discount coupon

3. Get Certified!

If you have a dedicated IP address at your web host, look at getting certified by SenderScore.org from [Return Path](#). Return Path will audit your mailing practices; give you a [Sender Score Certified](#) status.

SenderScore will help you get to know what ISPs and email clients think about your emails. This lookup will tell you what you need to change to improve your emails and shows you the overall health of your email campaigns.

A Sender Score Certified status will guarantee that your email gets through to inboxes of most major ISPs.

4. Play nice, play fair

Don't be marked as a spammer and avoid permanent damage to your reputation.

- Don't insert random characters in the subject line to deceive spam filters.

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- Don't start a subject line with Re: or Fwd: to fool spam filters
- Don't conceal a text message in an image
- Don't use misleading claims in the subject lines.

5. Be careful of your *'From'* field

Mailbox providers evaluate more than just the sender's IP, domain and content. Yahoo! Mail, in particular, pays close attention to your *From* field addresses.

6. Maintain a steady flow of communication

Maintaining a steady flow of communication. Send frequently in order to stay in the minds of your customers rather than once a month so you're not forgotten.

If your subscribers don't recognize you from the *'From'* field, they may delete your message, or worse, mark it as SPAM. This hurts your *'open'* rate and increases the likelihood of your solicited emails ending up in the junk folder in the future.

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7. Keep your lists clean

If your email list is unmanaged you will highly cause spam complaints, undelivered messages and unsubscribes, emails won't be opened and your content is wasted. Internet service providers, spam filters, and email security services exist to block emails which don't meet certain thresholds for a suitable email campaign.

Cleaning your lists on a regular basis ensures your email delivery rate is as high as it can be. Get to know your lists and understand why cleaning it regularly is in your favor when performing in open rates, ROI and beating spam filters.

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