



Email Deliverability:

Don't Miss the Mark Delivering
Your Customer Communications



Not All Customer Communications Are Created Equal



When it comes to engaging consumers, it's no secret that outbound phone calls just don't cut it anymore—the world has gone digital and so have consumer preferences. In fact, 59.5% of consumers prefer email as their first choice for communication.

But just adding email into your customer communication mix isn't enough—if your messages never reach their inbox, it doesn't matter what that customer's preferred method of communication may be.

The saying goes “don't shoot the messenger,” but it's time to re-evaluate how well that messenger is actually delivering your messages.

It's time to start measuring deliverability.

In this eBook, we'll take a deeper dive into the differences between delivery rate and *deliverability* rate, how email actually works for customer communications and its unique challenges, best practices to follow, and how Retain measures up.

Email Deliverability:

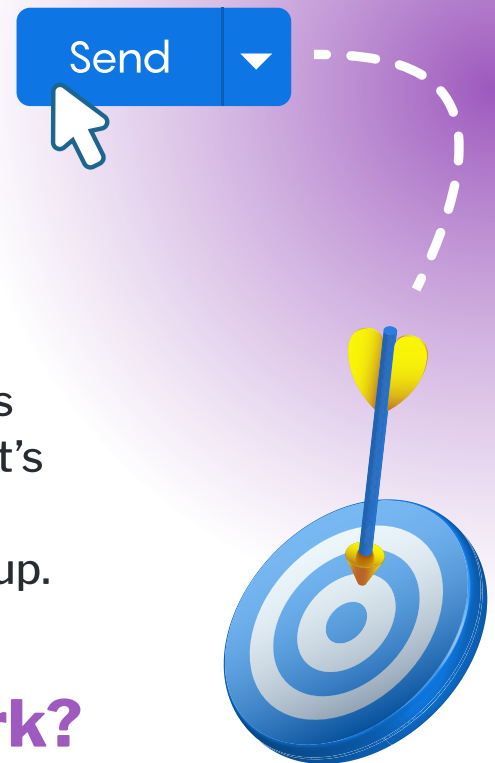
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How It Works: the Hidden Anatomy of Email

There are more factors than you may realize that go into whether or not your email reaches the target mark into a consumer's inbox, so let's look at the hidden anatomy of email and the factors that influence where your emails end up.

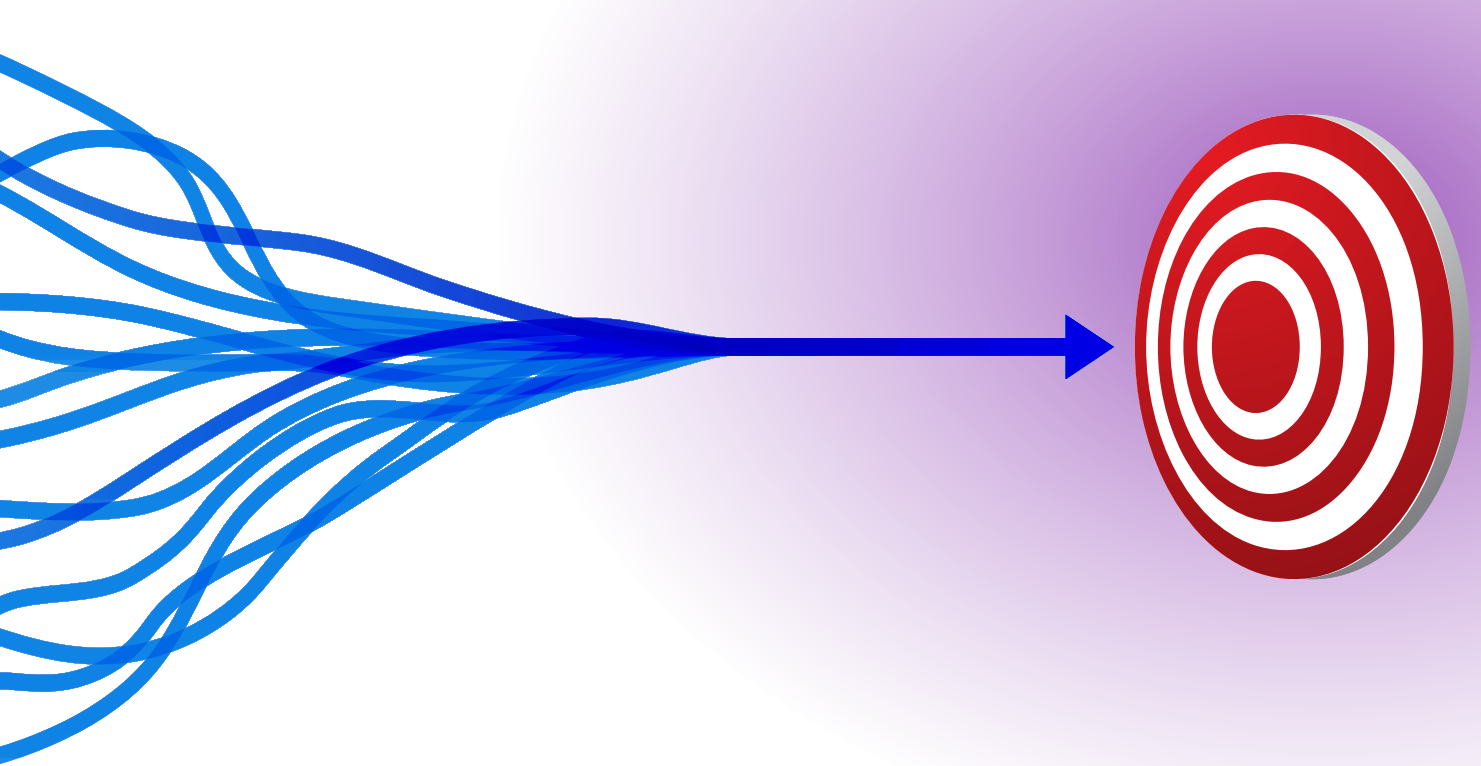


How Does Email Actually Work?

When you hit the “send” button, your email service provider (ESP) sends the email to the recipient's mail server through various protocols such as SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol). The delivery process involves establishing a connection with the recipient's mail server, transferring the email content, and receiving a response indicating whether the email was accepted or rejected by the mailbox provider.

Several key factors play into whether an email gets tagged in spam or junk or filtered into “social” or “promotion” categories:

- Mailbox providers and anti-spam filters make inbox placement decisions based on a 30-day rolling history of sender reputation metrics
- Inbox placement is based on the subscriber's interaction, regardless of your business model
- All types of emails are subject to the same filtering, regardless of content



At Retain, every time we send an email our email providers notify us of events like delivery, open, click, hard bounce (such as an email being sent to an invalid or nonexistent email address), soft bounce (typically an indicator of a temporary technical issue on the recipient's end), and spam complaints.

In the case of bounces, Retain stores that data and categorizes it as not delivered. Emails that result in a soft bounce are temporary bounces and could get delivered within 72 hours. For hard bounces, we will not send to those again—or it severely hurts our reputation among ESPs and ISPs. Retain presumes that any hard bounce or undelivered soft-bounce (one that is not delivered after 72 hours of the first soft bounce) has not been delivered.

Now that you have a better understanding of what goes on behind the scenes, let's look at how to measure if your email program is working or not—and **introduce the most important metric you're not measuring for consumer engagement:**

Deliverability

Delivery vs Deliverability



What is Email Delivery Rate?

Did the email you sent actually make it to the recipient?

Email Delivery Rate refers to the successful transmission of an email from the sender to the recipient's mail server. It is the measurement of emails delivered divided by the number of emails sent. Bounces (when an email gets rejected by the mail server for any reason) and failures will impact this number.

What is Email Deliverability?



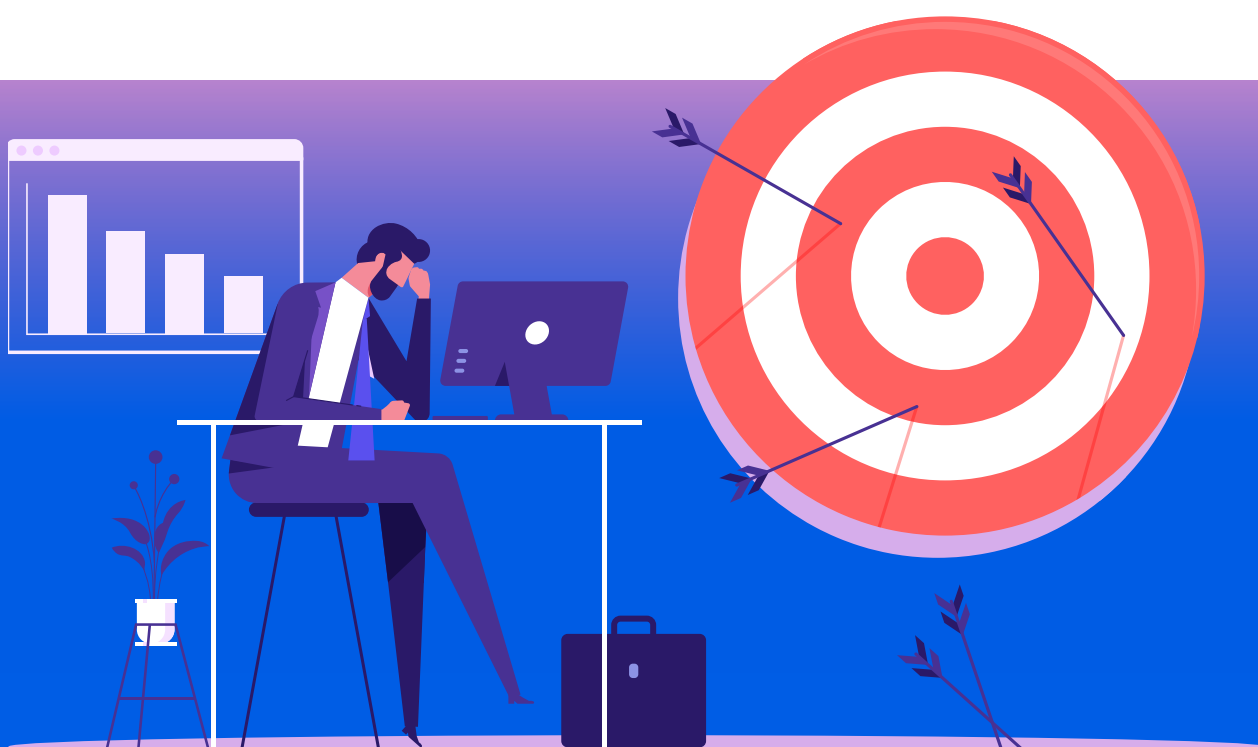
Did the email you sent actually make it to the inbox—or did it get caught in spam?

Successful email delivery, aka your email was accepted by the recipient's mail server, doesn't mean that it actually makes it into their inbox. Deliverability, or inboxing rate, divides how many emails reach the recipient's inbox, as opposed to their spam folder, by the total number of emails sent. Your deliverability is influenced by a variety of fluctuating factors, including Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

Why are Internet Service Providers (ISPs) So Selective?

When you consider that approximately 85% of email volume is spam, it should be no surprise the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are selective on what emails get accepted and which actually reach the inbox. But there are three key initiatives ISPs consider:

To protect email account owners from	To protect and prioritize company resources	To continue driving revenue
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spam• Scams• Poor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited email engines i.e. mail servers• Limited bandwidth• Limited personnel or internal expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower email interaction reduces ad impressions and revenue• Too many emails can lead to account abandonment from subscribers



Best Practices to Get Your Emails Delivered



Understanding all of these different components and how they all interact are important elements to a successful email program, but it doesn't guarantee you'll hit your target every time. **Let's look at several best practices to follow to get your emails closer to a bullseye:**

- ✓ Build and maintain a positive sender reputation with ISPs and ESPs
- ✓ Ensure good email list hygiene
- ✓ Send to actively engaged subscribers
- ✓ Maintain consistent volume and cadence (avoid spikes)
- ✓ Avoid spammy subject lines
- ✓ Develop valuable content that would engage subscribers

While many of these best practices may seem like no-brainers, achieving them can take more skill and effort than most businesses expect. Each of these contribute to email delivery rates and more importantly, deliverability to recipients' inboxes—key drivers towards consumer engagement and your bottom line.

How Retain Measures Up

Now you have a better understanding of how email works for consumer communications, the differences and importances of measuring delivery rates and deliverability rates, plus a few of the best practices every organization should follow—which is a lot for any company to integrate and implement internally.

But partnering with a digital-first delivery platform like Retain can catch your business up to speed and exceed the national industry averages in email metrics:



Delivery Rate	
Retain Delivery Rate	Average Industry Rate
98.6%	90%

Deliverability Rate	
Retain Deliverability Rate	Average Industry Rate
87%	84.8%

Open Rate	
Retain Open Rate	Average Industry Rate
32.8%	27.76%

Click Rate	
Retain Click Rate	Average Industry Rate
1.74%	1.3%

The Retain Difference

So how does Retain perform above and beyond the competition for email delivery and engagement?

Retain's dedicated Email Operations and Deliverability Team proactively monitor and make adjustments, along with using our patented optimization engine to dynamically make updates in realtime. Our team of deliverability experts proactively stay on top of ESP best practices and maintain relationships with ISPs for optimal email acceptance rates.

Additionally, Retain allows your business to use a suite of digital communication channels including email and SMS to meet your customers where they are. It is designed to scale seamlessly and cost-effectively to meet the needs of your organization at any given time.

Ready to Hit a Bullseye in Your Customer Communications?

Schedule a consultation to learn more about what influences email delivery and deliverability rates and how Retain consistently performs above the rest.

[Schedule a Consultation Today»»»](#)





About Retain

Retain by TrueML Products is an intelligent delivery platform that leverages a patented optimization engine to determine the optimal time and channel to deliver the client's communications within the confines of the compliance requirements outlined by the client.