**Standard Warm-Up Campaign**

# 1.1 Background

The major ISPs throttle inbound traffic from IP addresses; even if the IP addresses/domains are whitelisted with the ISP. ISPs are becoming more cautious with traffic in order to give them greater protection from spam and phishing attacks.

A favourable reputation is measured by low bounce rates and low spam complaint rates for a given day, and over the history of the IP address. The lower the spam complaint rate and the lower the bounce rate with a consistent traffic volume, the better the reputation. As a reputation gains favour, the ISPs will increase their traffic threshold for the given IP address.

# 1.2 Quality of Recipients

The goal during a “wam-up” period is to email recipients that are least likely to complain or bounce. As such, the initial lists should be comprised of high quality email addresses according to the following criteria:

* Email addresses that have interacted in the past six (6) months\* (Interaction is defined as opening an email, clicking on a link in an email, or making a purchase)
* Email addresses that have recently opted-in
* Email addresses that are known to be consistently loyal to the customer brand and will understand the change in From Address from your previous provider.

**\*** Addresses older than six (6) months, and certainly older than a year, have a lower “quality” rating because of the increased likelihood of those recipients to click the “This is spam” button. Depending upon the age of the email address, the email address may have been recycled by the ISP to another individual which could also cause recipient complaints.

# 1.3 Number of recipients for the initial warm-up campaign

As mentioned above, your list of warm-up recipients should have only high-quality recipients. The ideal number of recipients from each of the major ISPs is shown in the table below.

The daily volumes listed represent the maximum recommended volumes for each domain.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ISP** | **Volume Per Day** | **Total Volume** |
| **AOL** | 3,500 | 24,500 |
| **Gmail** | 5,000 | 35,000 |
| **MSN/Hotmail** | 10,000 | 70,000 |
| **Virgin** | 2,500 | 17,500 |
| **Yahoo** | 5,000 | 35,000 |
| **Other** | Unlimited | Single |

If a list does not have the recommended maximum totals as shown adjust the daily campaign launch limits to provide an even number of daily emails to the specific domain during the warm-up period.

The warm-up campaign process typically lasts seven (7) days (“warm-up” week). However, this time could vary depending upon the spam complaint and bounce rate metrics from the warm-up week launches and the desired daily launch volume. (Please see the “Acceptable Rates of Bounces and Spam Complaints” section near the end of this document for further information about acceptable metrics for a positive reputation.)

There are several other domains controlled by the major ISPs. Recipients from these domains should be included in the relevant warm-up list if possible. The list created should include global email addresses for the major ISPs shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AOL** | **GMAIL** | **MSN** | **VIRGIN** | **YAHOO** |
| 1aol.com | gmail.co.uk | hotmail | ntlworld | btbroadbandoffice.com |
| 2aol.com | google.com | live | virgin | btbusinessoffice.com |
| 3aol.com | googlemail | msn | virginmedia | btclick.com |
| 4aol.com |  | prodigy.net.mx | virginmedia.blackberry.com | btconnect.com |
| 5aol.com |  | q.com |  | btinternet.com |
| 6aol.com |  | windowslive |  | btopenworld.com |
| 7aol.com |  | qwest |  | rocketmail.com |
| 8aol.com |  | webtv |  | sbcglobal.net |
| 9aol.com |  | Outlook |  | talk21.com |
| aim.com |  |  |  | yahoo |
| aol |  |  |  | yahoo.com.au |
| aol.com.ar |  |  |  | yahoo.com.cn |
| aol.com.au |  |  |  | yahoo.com.hk |
| aol.com.br |  |  |  | yahoo.com.mx |
| aol.com.mx |  |  |  | yahoo.com.sg |
| aol.com.pr |  |  |  | yahoo.com.tw |
| aolmail.com |  |  |  | ymail.com |
| compuserve.com |  |  |  | ameritech.net |
| cs.com |  |  |  | flash.net |
| dial.pipex |  |  |  | pacbell.net |
| gateway |  |  |  | prodigy.net |
| homechoice.co.uk |  |  |  | swbell.net |
| jp.aol.com |  |  |  | nvbell.net |
| netscape |  |  |  | snet.net |
| pipex.it |  |  |  | att.com |
| talktalk |  |  |  | att.net |
| tiscali |  |  |  | worldnet.att.net |
| tiscalinet |  |  |  | rogers.com |
| wmconnect.com |  |  |  | bellsouth |

# 1.4 Message Content Guidelines

During the reputation building period the best warm-up campaigns (and initial campaigns following the warm-up) are those that your subscribers will recognise as being from a brand they trust and are most likely to respond to positively. Messages that are clearly branded/in-line with your brand, encourage response and demonstrate to the recipient the benefits of receiving mail from you are ideal.

Email campaigns that promote and reward a customer’s loyalty are also desirable.

Re-activation, upsell, lead generation campaigns, or the like naturally have a higher bounce rate and spam complaint rate and an IP address with a neutral reputation or short reputation history does not have enough history to weather the natural spikes of the more aggressive promotional campaigns.

The reasoning is akin to a financial credit score – if your credit history is short, so creditors provide you a low spending limit, and after establishing a consistent payment history and history of responsible spending the creditors increase your credit limit and give you allowances for small blips that may occur in your credit life.

Recipients are quite choosey when scanning their inboxes and can delete or mark a message as spam based on the “from” address, sender name or subject without opening the message. Clearly stating the customer's brand in these locations as obviously as possible should help keep the customer's spam complaint rate low.

Where possible, recipients should also be encouraged to add this new “from” address to any ‘safe’ list or ‘trusted source’ list provided by their ISP as this will dramatically improve a new sender’s reputation.

# 1.5 Final Steps to Complete the Warm-up Process

Assuming everything has gone successfully there are one or two final checks that should be completed before finishing any White Listing Campaign.

# 1.5.1 Ensure ISP White Listing has Completed Before Sending

Consult with Alchemy Worx and the ESP in question to confirm that the White Listing has complete. Most major ESP’s will have Deliverability Experts on hand to help you and who will often contact the ISP’s directly to ensure this certification.

# 1.5.2 Assess the Success of Your Warm-up Process.

In order to understand the successful of the warm-up process, please review the following:

Look for the bounce and complaint rates. Consult with Alchemy Worx and the ESP in question to determine if the mailings are within a “safe” range and under the ISP’s acceptable threshold to move forward.

Once these results have been evaluated it is safe to migrate the rest of the distribution list and send the first few campaigns.

During the IP address reputation building campaigns, it is important to keep the numbers of Spam Complaints and bounces low. As mentioned above, these numbers should be monitored on a daily basis. If these numbers get higher than the thresholds in the table below, please contact your Deliverability Consultant immediately.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ISP** | **AOL** | **GMAIL** | **MSN** | **YAHOO** | **VIRGIN** |
| **Max Send Volume per Day** | 3,500 | 5,000 | 10,000 | 5,000 | 2,500 |
| **Acceptable Spam Complaint Rate** | 0.10% | N/A | 0.30% | 0.10% | 0.10% |
| **Acceptable Bounce Rate** | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| **High Bounce Rate** | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% |