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Email Warmup Guide

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Introduction

If you're starting out sending emails for the very first time, you need to convince every mailbox provider (that's Gmail, Yahoo, Comcast, Live.com, etc.) that you're a legitimate sender.

The need to establish your reputation is equally true when you're moving from one Email Service Provider (ESP) to another. Even if you're using an existing "from" email address with your new ESP, you still need to re-prove your reputation. The reason is that the mailbox providers become suspicious any time your emails all of a sudden start coming from a new set of IP addresses.

This guide helps you present yourself in the best light possible to the mailbox providers.

I've giving you insights to the major consumer email mailbox providers because each has their own nuances.

This guide assumes that you already have the basics in place:
1. You are sending emails using a business "from" email address.
2. You are using an ESP to send your emails.
3. You have configured your ESP account for SPF, DKIM, and DMARC authentication.

If you have neither of the above, then stop, get them set up and return to this guide when you're done.

How to use this guide

Familiarize yourself with what each mailbox provider considers "inbox-worthy". Adjust how many emails you send each day according to the warmup plans.

Resist the temptation to start blasting right away. Building your reputation as a legitimate sender is worth the patience you invest.

As I always say, "If ya ain't makin' the inbox, ya ain't making money."

Gmail

With over 2.5 active email accounts, chances are that 80% to 95% of your email list will be Gmail email addresses.

Gmail is strict with new IP addresses, prioritizing engagement (opens and clicks) and penalizing spam complaints or low engagement. The warm-up focuses on low initial volumes to highly engaged recipients, with gradual increases.

Key Guidelines
- **Max Cold Traffic Volume**: ~1,000–2,000 emails/day, scaling to 10,000+/day with good engagement.
- **Engagement Focus:** Send to your most engaged subscribers (e.g., opened/clicked in last 30 days).
- **Monitor:** Bounces (<1%), spam complaints (<0.1%), and ensure emails land in the inbox (not Promotions/Spam).
- **Frequency:** Send 5–7 days/week to maintain consistency.
- **Content:** Use familiar branding, clear CTAs, and avoid spammy keywords (e.g., "free," "win").

Day	Volume/Day	Notes
1-3	50-100	Send to most engaged contacts.
4-7	100-250	Keep sending to most engaged. Start including less engaged once you're sending to your full group of most engaged. Maintain consistent send time.
8-14	250-500	Include more subscribers. Monitor your bounces and spam complaints
15-21	500-1000	Scale to broader segments, ensure <0.1% complaints. Pause if bounces exceed 1%.
22-30	1000-2000	Gradually approach max cold traffic volume. Adjust based on engagement metrics.

Gmail

Additional Tips

- Use Gmail Postmaster Tools to monitor domain/IP reputation.
- Avoid sudden spikes; increase volume by ~20–30% every 3–4 days if metrics are stable.
- If issues arise (e.g., spam complaints), reduce volume by 50% and focus on hyper-engaged segments.

Yahoo/AOL

Yahoo and AOL share the same infrastructure, so the warm-up strategy is similar but slightly more conservative due to AOL's smaller user base and stricter filtering.

Key Guidelines
- **Max Cold Traffic Volume:** ~1,000–3,000 emails/day for new IPs, scaling to 10,000+/day.
- **Engagement Focus:** Target highly engaged AOL users (recent openers/clickers).
- **Monitor:** Bounces (<1%), spam complaints (<0.05%), and inbox placement.
- **Frequency:** Send 5–6 days/week.
- **Content:** Use clean, non-spammy content with clear CTAs and branding.

Day	Volume/Day	Notes
1-3	50-100	Send to most engaged contacts.
4-7	100-300	Keep sending to most engaged. Start including less engaged once you're sending to your full group of most engaged. Maintain consistent send time.
8-14	300-800	Include more subscribers. Monitor your bounces and spam complaints
15-21	800-1500	Scale to broader segments, ensure <0.05% complaints. Pause if bounces exceed 1%.
22-30	1500-3000	Gradually approach max cold traffic volume. Adjust based on engagement metrics.

Additional Tips
- Yahoo/AOL are VERY sensitive to spam complaints; keep rates below 0.05%.
- Leverage Yahoo/AOL Feedback Loop to monitor complainers.
- Avoid large attachments or heavy HTML to prevent filtering.

Microsoft

Microsoft owns Outlook, Hotmail, MSN, and Live domains.

Key Guidelines
- **Max Cold Traffic Volume:** ~1,000–2,500 emails/day initially, scaling to 10,000–15,000+/day with strong engagement.
- **Engagement Focus:** Send to highly engaged recipients (opened/clicked in last 30–60 days) to build positive signals.
- **Monitor:** Bounces (<1%), spam complaints (<0.05%)
- **Frequency:** Send 5–7 days/week for consistency.

Day	Volume/Day	Notes
1-3	50-100	Send to most engaged contacts.
4-7	100-300	Keep sending to most engaged. Start including less engaged once you're sending to your full group of most engaged. Maintain consistent send time and volume.
8-14	300-800	Include more subscribers. Monitor your bounces and spam complaints
15-21	800-1500	Scale to broader segments, ensure <0.05% complaints. Pause if bounces exceed 1%.
22-30	1500-3000	Gradually approach max cold traffic volume. Adjust based on engagement metrics. Scale to 5000+/day by 30 days.

Additional Tips
- Microsoft Postmaster Tools: Use to monitor domain/IP reputation and detect filtering issues early.
- Volume Increases: Increase volume by ~20–30% every 3–4 days if metrics are stable (bounces <1%, complaints <0.05%). Avoid sudden spikes, as Microsoft may block new IPs.
- Feedback Loops: If your ESP supports Microsoft's Complaint Feedback Loop, use it to remove complainers immediately.

Apple

Microsoft owns iCloud, me.com, and mac.com domains

Key Guidelines
- **Max Cold Traffic Volume:** ~500–1,500 emails/day initially, scaling to 5,000–10,000+/day with strong engagement.
- **Engagement Focus:** Send to highly engaged recipients (opened/clicked in last 30–60 days) to establish trust with Apple's filters.
- **Monitor:** Bounces (<1%), spam complaints (<0.05%)
- **Frequency:** Send 5–7 days/week for consistent signaling.

Day	Volume/Day	Notes
1-3	20-50	Send to most engaged contacts.
4-7	50-150	Keep sending to most engaged. Start including less engaged once you're sending to your full group of most engaged. Maintain consistent send time and volume.
8-14	150-400	Include more subscribers. Monitor your bounces and spam complaints
15-21	400-800	Scale to broader segments, ensure <0.05% complaints. Pause if bounces exceed 1%.
22-30	800-1500	Gradually approach max cold traffic volume. Adjust based on engagement metrics. Scale to 2000-3000 per day by 30 days.

Additional Tips
- Volume Increases: Increase volume by ~20–25% every 3–4 days if metrics are stable. Avoid sudden spikes, as Apple may throttle or bounce emails (e.g., Code 421 errors).
- Deliverability Issues: If emails land in spam or bounce (e.g., 421 errors), reduce volume by 50% and send only to hyper-engaged users for 3–5 days. Contact icloudadmin@apple.com with bounce details if issues persist.

Resources

Each of these tools listed below are free to use

Google Postmaster Tools – monitor your Gmail sending reputation
https://www.gmail.com/postmaster/

Yahoo Feedback Loop – track campaign complaints from Yahoo/AOL accounts
https://senders.yahooinc.com/complaint-feedback-loop/

MxToolbox – all-inclusive tool chest for validating your authentication configuration, and monitoring if your sending domain and/or IP addresses appear on blocklists
https://mxtoolbox.com/NetworkTools.aspx

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