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I'M BUILDING A PROFITABLE ONLINE BUSINESS WITH TOOLS
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INTRODUCTION TO EMAIL DELIVERABILITY

Email deliverability issues are a serious problem, and that problem is getting worse. Estimates claim that over 50 billion spam messages are sent out every day, and many of those spam emails contain viruses or phishing attempts that could harm consumers.

Many Internet service providers have started blocking these messages, using filters that are triggered by certain senders or certain words. Some of these words are very common words like “free” and “money.”

It can be difficult to write an email that doesn't contain some of these trigger words. Unfortunately, these steps that are necessary for protecting consumers from these billions of unsolicited emails also make it difficult to get legitimate messages through.

Legitimate emails often end up in spam boxes, where they are never even seen by the recipient. Sometimes they never even make it to the spam box at all, and are instead blocked at the ISP server level.

Taking steps to improve your email deliverability is a very important part of email marketing. If you can increase your deliverability by a relatively small margin, you can increase your profits by a shocking amount.

There are a number of services out there that help you improve your deliverability. Many of them are very reputable and can work wonders for your business, and others aren't very effective.

We are going to take a look at some of the steps these services take to increase your email deliverability, and how to find the companies that are likely to really help you. But first, let's look at how you can work to get more emails through to your subscribers! It's important for you to know this because, as you will see, it is vital that your list is managed correctly from the very beginning.

CHAPTER 1: STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE DELIVERABILITY

IMPROVE REPUTATION AND REDUCE COMPLAINTS

The number one factor ISPs use in determining whether or not your messages get through is the reputation of your company and domain.

ISPs will often judge your messages by how recipients respond to the messages you send. This may include how many recipients delete your messages before or after opening them, and how many hit the “spam” button if that ISP has one for their email system.

The factors ISPs usually look at when determining your reputation may include things such as the number of complaints your company has received at that ISP, how large the message is that you sent, how many bounced or undeliverable emails you have sent to their ISP, the content of the messages, how long the domain used to send the email has been in operation, and they may also check various lists such as blacklists and accreditation lists.

Complaints are a big problem for email marketers of all types. Although complaints are a normal part of this method of communication, problems come whenever you get “excessive” complaints. ISPs vary on what they consider excessive.

A complaint here and there isn’t likely to cause many problems, but if you get complaints on a regular basis, you are probably going to run into issues. In order to keep your complaints down, you will need to provide quality information on a regular basis so that your list members don’t start seeing your messages as unsolicited.

You will need to treat them well, and quickly honor all removal requests. Keeping your complaints to the lowest possible level will really benefit you in the long run.

You can reduce your complaint rate by being sure to include your company's name in the "from" field and possibly in the subject. Remind users in the email that they subscribed to your list in case they have forgotten they joined on purpose. Include very clear unsubscribe links in every email. And make sure you honor unsubscribe requests quickly.

Another thing to watch out for is the quality of your list. ISPs take notice when a particular sender mails out a large quantity of undeliverable messages. Spammers often use very low-quality lists that they have purchased or harvested through the use of "bots" that crawl the Internet gathering email addresses.

These lists often have a very high rate of undeliverable messages, because the email addresses on the lists are often outdated. When the owner of the email address stops using the ISP's service, their email address is typically canceled.

When this happens, the emails that go to that address are bounced or marked undeliverable. If a sender happens to send too many of these undeliverable messages, the receiving ISP may decide the sender needs to be blocked.

For this reason, you should be careful to keep your list as clean as possible. This means periodically removing email addresses that are no longer functioning. If your email service has the option, you could set it to remove any email address that bounces more than twice. This will help keep your bounce rate under five percent, which is generally considered a safe rate.

There are two types of email bounces - hard bounces and soft bounces. Soft bounces are not really anything to worry about. A soft bounce occurs when a mail server is temporarily down, the recipient's inbox is full, or there is another temporary delivery error.

Hard bounces are those that are caused by permanent errors. These happen when an email address is no longer valid or has been closed. These addresses should be removed from your list right away, because these can cause problems with your reputation.

There are a number of codes that are sent back from various ISPs that let you know if a delivery failure was permanent. Some of these include “undeliverable address,” “unknown address,” “user unknown,” “unknown user,” and “mailbox not found.” If you have the capability, you should set your email system to remove these automatically.

EMAIL CONTENT

You will also need to be careful about the content of the emails you send out. Make sure your messages are branded carefully so that the recipient recognizes that the messages are from you.

You need to have a system in place where users can easily change their subscription settings. And you should make sure you use compelling subjects and send out quality information so that your recipients are less likely to complain.

In addition to guarding against complaints, you should take care to avoid many of the common tactics that cause email filters to be triggered. There are several tactics you should avoid in your messages.

1. Don't use JavaScript, Visual Basic, or other scripting languages in your messages. These can set off email blockers or virus protection software.
2. Don't embed images, but host them on your own server. Messages that contain embedded graphics or other media are often blocked or filtered.
3. Send your messages in text format or hand-coded HTML. Using HTML editors can cause your messages to be filtered.
4. Be careful about using words that spammers commonly use. Words like free, money, sex, nude, Viagra, prescription, investment, leads, pharmacy, guarantee, mortgage, and casino often trip email filters.

SPAM FILTER TRIGGERS

Below is a comprehensive lists of these words and phrases, excluding body parts and adult-themed references that should be obvious! Not all of these listed will trigger email filters, but if you can avoid them, you should.

100% free	Collect your \$	For just \$
100% guarantee	Combined with any other offer	For permanent remove
1-800	Compare rates	Free access
1-888	Compete for your business	Free cell phone
4U	Confidentiality assured	Free consultation
Accept credit cards	Confidentially on all orders	Free cruise
Act now!	Congratulations	Free DVD
Additional income	Consolidate debt and credit	Free free free
Addresses on CD	Copy accurately	Free grant money
All natural	Copy dvds	Free hosting
Amazing	Credit bureaus	Free installation
Apply Online	Credit card offers	Free investment
As seen on	Cures baldness	Free leads
Auto email removal	Custom quote	Free membership
Avoid bankruptcy	Dear email	Free money
Be amazed	Dear fellow entrepreneur	Free offer
Be considered spam	Dear friend	Free passwords
Be your own boss	Dear homeowner	Free preview
Being a member	Dear somebody	Free priority mail
Big bucks	Debt free	Free quote
Bill 1618	Deleted from further	Free sample
Billing address	Different reply to	Free trial
Billion dollars	Dig up dirt on friends	Free website
Brand new pager	Direct email	Free yourself
Bulk email	Direct marketing	Full refund
Buy direct	Discusses search engine listings	Further transmission
Buy recommendation	Do it today	Future mailing
Buying judgments	Don't delete	Future promotion
Cable converter	Don't hesitate!	Get it now
Call free	Drastically reduced	Get out of debt
Call now	Earn extra income	Get paid
Call toll free	Earn per week	Get started now
Calling creditors	Easy terms	Get your free sample
Cancel at any time	Eliminate bad credit	Gift certificate
Can't live without	Email harvest	Great internet services
Cash bonus	Email marketing	Great offer
Cash in on	Excluded from our mailing	Guarantee
Casino	Expect to earn	Hair loss product
Cell phone cancer scam	F r e e	Have you been turned down?
Cents on the dollar	Fantastic deal	Hidden assets
Check or money order	Fast Viagra delivery	Home based business
Click below	Featured on tv	Home business opportunity
Click here for removal	Financial freedom	Home employment
Click here link	Find out anything	Home shopping
Click here to be removed	For free	Human growth hormone
Click here to remove	For instant access	If only it were that easy
Click to remove		In accordance with laws
Click to remove mailto		Increase sales

Increase traffic	No middleman	Remove me in the subject
Increase your revenue	No obligation	Remove on the subject line
Information you requested	No purchase necessary	Remove request
Insurance	No questions asked	Remove subject
Investment decision	No selling	Remove you from our mail
It's effective	No strings attached	Remove@
Join millions of Americans	Not intended	Removed from any
Joke of the day	Off shore	Removed from future mail
Laser printer	Offer expires	Removed from future offer
Life insurance quote	Offers coupon	Removed from our database
Limited time	Offers extra cash	Removed from our list
Long distance phone offer	Once in lifetime	Removed from our mailing
Lose inches	One hundred percent free	Removed from this mailing
Lose weight	One time mailing	Removes wrinkles
Lower interest rates	One time message	Reply remove subject
Lower monthly payment	Onetime mailing	Requires initial investment
Lowest price	Online biz opportunity	Reserves the right
Luxury car	Online pharmacy	Respond with the word
Mail in order form	Online promotion	Reverses aging
Mailto:remove	Only \$	Risk free
Mailto:unsub	Opportunity	Round the world
Making money online	Opt in	Safeguard notice
Marketing solutions	Order now	Satisfaction guaranteed
Mass email	Order status	Save \$
Meet singles	Orders shipped by priority	Save big money
Member stuff	mail	Save up to
Message contains disclaimer	Outstanding values	Score with babes
Message is sent in	Pennies a day	Section 301
compliance	Please read	Sent in full compliance
MLM	Please respond with remove	Special offer message
Money back	Potential earnings	Special promotion
Money making	Print form signature	Stop snoring
Money on the internet	Print out and fax	Subject line of remove
Month trial offer	Produced and sent out	This is not a spam
More Internet traffic	Profits	This is not spam
Mortgage rates	Pure profit	This message is not spam
Multi level marketing	R e m o v e	To be deleted
Name brand	Reached you in error	To be removed
New customers only	Real thing	To be taken off
New domain extensions	Receive this message	To remove from
Nigerian	Received this email	Visit our web site
No age restrictions	Received this in error	Visit our website
No catch	Receiving this email	Webmasters only
No claim forms	Receiving this message	With the subject remove
No cost	Receiving this special offer	Work from home
No credit check	Reduce body fat	You are a winner
No disappointment	Refinance home	You have won
No experience	Removal information	You registered with
No fees	Removal instructions	You wish to be removed
No gimmick	Remove as the subject	Your business on the Internet
No inventory	Remove in quotes	Your email removed
No investment	Remove in subject	Your feedback form
No medical exams	Remove in the subject	Your time and interest

If possible, you should authenticate your emails. Many spammers hide their emails by trying to trick the recipient into thinking the message is from a large, trusted company like a financial institution.

AUTHENTICATION

Authentication lets an ISP verify the sender of an email so that they are sure the email did, in fact, come from the sender it claims to be from. Authentication is a technical process that is typically handled by your ISP or your web hosting tech support. If your email system doesn't already have an authentication setting built in, you will probably have to consult with a professional in order to get it set up for you.

REVERSE DNS

If you are emailing from your own domain name, you must have reverse DNS (rDNS) set up for your domain. This simply means that your sending IP address is mapped to your domain. rDNS is something your hosting company typically takes care of at your request. When you send email from your domain, rDNS enables the receiving mail server to match the incoming IP to the domain, which is a key factor in getting your email delivered. rDNS is important because if no valid domain name is found to match the IP address, then the email is blocked.

A lot of this may seem difficult to keep up with. That's understandable. There is actually a lot of work that goes into keeping your messages deliverable! Many list owners become overwhelmed about the amount of work it takes to ensure maximum deliverability. That is where email accreditation and deliverability services can come in handy.

CHAPTER 2: WHY EMAIL MARKETERS USE DELIVERABILITY SERVICES

Accreditation is quickly becoming the method of choice for ensuring maximum deliverability. In order to become accredited, you must already have a good reputation. This means you need to manage your list properly from the start.

Because you must already have a good reputation, becoming accredited is not a magical cure for low deliverability rates. And once you have been accredited, you will have to work hard to keep your status. But once you become a certified email sender, you will be able to reach exceptional deliverability levels.

In order to get accredited, you will have to pay one of the third-party accreditation services to verify your system. In addition to paying them, you will have to pass a series of checks for them to verify that you are a legitimate sender and that your messages should be trusted.

Accreditation requires that certain standards be met. For example, you will be required to show that your system is permission-based, or opt-in. You will need to have complaint levels that are lower than the industry standard. You will need to have a very good system in place to manage undeliverable messages. And you will also need to provide unsubscribe links in every email.

Once you have received your accreditation, many ISPs will treat your emails as trusted. Your messages will instantly bypass all filters and go straight to the inboxes of your subscribers. Sometimes ISPs will even deliver your messages with images enabled by default, which really helps increase response rates.

There are several well-known email accreditation and deliverability services. They each have their own processes for accreditation and assistance, so you can choose which one you believe might work best for your company.

Some of the services even offer auto-responder components that manage your mailing list for you in order to ensure maximum deliverability. Many of them have very reasonable prices considering how beneficial the service can be.

Later in this book, we will get into the actual services and what to look for, as well as show you what people are saying about the services so that you can make an informed decision about what you want to do to manage your own email deliverability issues.

CHAPTER 3: EMAIL DELIVERABILITY SERVICES

There are hundreds of services that claim to be email accreditation or certification services, but the truth is that only a handful of these are legitimate services that can actually assist you in improving your deliverability.

Most of these so-called accreditation services don't actually do much of anything for you. They do not have relationships with any of the major ISPs, and they can't really help you become white-listed with them.

Others do work one-on-one with the major ISPs, and they have the clout to make sure your messages get through. These are the services that are truly worth the money, and they can make a huge difference in your deliverability.

If you are happy with a 70% deliverability rate with your campaigns, then email accreditation is not for your business. However, for most businesses, a 30% delivery failure rate might as well be a catastrophic campaign and considered to be hemorrhaging money.

There are basically two types of email accreditation services. The first are the backbones who actually are the authorities.

The other are superimposed services or value-added resellers that take the authority's services and add their special service, which tends to be a set of tools that include present and future email campaign plan management, sign-up form wizards, auto-responders, and templates.

Going straight to the source is usually your best bet, because you will get that one-on-one service and you can be sure that the actions of the service you're

using (or their other clients) won't hurt your business. If you use one of the backbone providers, you will ensure that only your actions will make a difference.

SURETYMAIL

One of the most popular accreditation services is [SuretyMail](#). SuretyMail has a wide variety of clients, including some of the world's most popular auto-responder services. Their clients include [Aweber Communications](#), [GetResponse](#), and [Constant Contact](#).

SuretyMail has a very good reputation for being extremely reliable. They are known for having excellent support and responding to questions and concerns quickly. The reason why so many major companies use SuretyMail for their accreditation is because they have a reputation for being the best in the business.

SuretyMail works direct with all of the major ISPs. They don't just hand you some meaningless certificate that claims you're accredited and then leave you to fend for yourself. They actually work hard to make sure you are properly accredited with ISPs like AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, Sprint, SBC, Earthlink, and many more.

In addition to working with major ISPs, SuretyMail also works with several of the most popular spam blocking services, including SpamBouncer, SpamCheck, SpamAssassin, and SpamCop.

They help get you accredited right at the source of potential problems, so you can feel safe knowing your emails will always make it to their intended recipients. One benefit of SuretyMail is that their service is open to email marketers of all sizes.

Some services are "enterprise" solutions, meaning they only work with larger corporate clients. SuretyMail works with everyone from Fortune 500 corporations to individuals. They're also affordable even for beginners, with prices starting as low as \$10 per month for hobby newsletter publications.

SuretyMail doesn't perform an audit of your email messages like most companies. They know that companies change their email delivery policies often, and your current policies may not accurately reflect how you will deliver messages in the future.

Instead of performing these expensive audits, they keep your mail server's IP address in their database. ISPs and spam blockers then check the database to find out if your IP is listed in the database. If the IP is there, the sender will be considered trusted.

In addition to keeping your IP in the database, other information is also stored about the way you send out messages. It will store information about your opt-in policies, whether you use rDNS (Reverse DNS) or SPF (Sender Policy Framework), and other information.

SuretyMail is one of the few companies that offer a money-back guarantee. If you try their service and you decide it hasn't helped you, they will refund your money. There is no long-term obligation when you use their service. If you decide the service is no longer performing or necessary for you, they will refund that month's fee.

Although their monthly fees are very reasonable, you should be aware that there is a \$500 application fee to get started. This covers the cost of their initial screening process and setting up your account.

HABEAS

Habeas is another very popular email accreditation service. They are partnered with VeriSign to offer additional security and validation by verifying the legitimacy of the sender.

Habeas was the first email accreditation service to use VeriSign's VDL (Verified Domains List) as part of their process for verifying senders. Habeas claims to have the largest database of email reputations.

This database is called the SenderIndex, and it contains over 60,000,000 IP addresses and domains. Senders in this database are separated into three categories. The SafeList category is comprised of senders that have passed their accreditation program.

The AcceptList is made up of senders who have passed the index's tests, but haven't been accredited. The BlockList is comprised of senders that have failed most of the tests, showing them to be likely spammers or phishers.

Habeas works with many big-name clients, including PCH.com (Publisher's Clearing House) and Burpee, the garden supply company. Other high-profile clients include PGA, BizRate, TicketsNow, and Getty Images.

Habeas claims over 98% of PCH's messages get through to the intended recipients. Burpee actually increased their sales by 10% due to the remarkable improvement in deliverability after becoming accredited.

Habeas has a special service that gives prospective clients a free reputation check. They will audit your messages and tell you whether you are on any blacklists or if they detect any other problems with your mailings. This is a fantastic free service, and most people could benefit by finding out how they are doing with their mailing list management and delivery.

The company's website claims they are the leading Email Trust Authority. They say they are the only company that helps ISPs and other providers in two ways: by certifying the mailing practices of senders, and by classifying mail into various types that can be used to determine the validity of the messages.

Habeas has very rigorous tests to determine the reputation of their senders. This is one reason why they have very good relationships with many ISPs and networks. They can do an audit on a sender that does an assessment of the sender's email reputation based on current blacklists, various consumer complaint databases, and a thorough analysis of the infrastructure of the sender's mail delivery system.

The audit also checks the sender's policies and practices to ensure that the sender isn't doing anything that could have an adverse impact on their reputation, and to be sure they are in full compliance with industry standards for permission-based mailing.

Habeas claims this service helps keep companies off blacklists, isolate and eliminate any potential deliverability problems, improve deliverability instantly, increase ROI by getting more emails to the intended recipients, and gets senders on the Habeas SafeList.

The company says the Habeas SafeList is the most widely used database of certified email senders available. Some of the rigorous standards required to make it on to the list include:

- Verifiable opt-in status for all recipients (also known as “double opt-in”)
- Unsubscribe links that are very visible and work properly
- Unsubscribe requests must be honored within ten business days
- Email addresses that bounce multiple times must be removed
- Subject lines must be accurate and not vague
- Harvested email addresses cannot be used
- Senders must have a visible privacy policy
- There must be a system in place for complaint and abuse reports
- All emails must contain a valid physical mailing address
- Complaint levels must be well below industry standard

These are just some of the many factors Habeas looks at, so it is important to consult with them to find out exactly what you need in order to be certified with them.

During the audit process, they check many other areas. They have a very long list of factors they consider in the audit process, so it is important to make sure you comply with each one of them before you request your audit.

If any problems are found, you will be given a chance to correct them. It is best to have your system as clean as possible before you apply for your audit. This will help you get approved faster and with a better reputation score.

For pricing, Habeas is a little vague, which means you have to contact their support staff for exact pricing. It all depends on your email volume – the more you send, the more money you'll spend, but you also get discount pricing for bulk email deliverability.

SENDER SCORE

Sender Score Certified is another email accreditation service that has wide acceptance in the industry. They work with many of the top ISPs, including Microsoft, Hotmail, Roadrunner, and Cox.

They are also used by many of the leading email filtering systems like Spam Assassin, Barracuda, and Cloudmark. Their clients include Fortune 500 companies and thousands of universities.

Sender Score's website claims they are the only email accreditation program that has a very deep coverage in both corporate and consumer markets. They have some pretty big numbers to back up this statement.

They claim to help determine the deliverability of around 40% of all inboxes, and about 67% of consumer email boxes. They do have a hefty market share, and that makes them one of the leading services for email accreditation.

The website states that a recent study showed that their Certified members received a 21% increase in their deliverability rates, which of course would result in higher profits and a much greater ROI.

Another significant advantage of using Sender Score is the recent announcement by Microsoft that Sender Score Certified clients would get additional privileges when email to their Windows Live Mail users. One of the most powerful of these privileges is the enabling of links and images by default, which is shown to significantly increase response.

Sender Score does have a very strict list of guidelines for senders. Most of the guidelines are industry standards, so if you are in compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 and you have passed audits with other companies, you are probably good to go with Sender Score.

Some of their guidelines include:

- Meticulously maintained email list
- Authentication records which are published
- Very few complaints
- List maintenance system to remove bad addresses
- Excellent security in place
- Opt-in, permission-based system
- Full disclosure of the nature of the messages that will be sent
- Visible and working unsubscribe option

One great feature of Sender Score is the fact that you get daily reports about your email reputation. This lets you keep on top of your reputation, so you can quickly address any problems that may arise.

Sender Score's parent company, Return Path, provides an outstanding array of services, in addition to their Certification program, to help email senders get the most out of their mailing. One such service is email delivery monitoring, which helps you track the success of your email campaigns, improve them, and spot any potential problems. This is all done automatically, so it's a big time-saver.

Email delivery optimization is another important service they provide. They constantly monitor your mailings, they work directly with ISPs to mediate any problems that may arise, and they give you personal service to make sure you are constantly in compliance with the Certification guidelines.

Mailing list hygiene is a service you may not want to miss. They say that about 8% of the average email list consists of bad addresses, email addresses that are no longer valid or were false to begin with. They use several hundred algorithms that are exclusive to Sender Score to weed out bad addresses.

Overall, Sender Score has an excellent reputation in the industry. They have deliverability to over 1.2 billion email inboxes, which is well above many of their competitors.

In fact, they claim to help determine the deliverability of about 80% of the mailboxes that are controlled by the world's top 20 ISPs. They process a mind-blowing five billion requests to their Certified database every day!

GOODMAIL

Goodmail is another one of the top four email accreditation service providers and they work with AOL, AT&T, British Telecom, Comcast, Cox Communications, RoadRunner, Verizon, and Yahoo!. And when you are certified to deliver to AOL, that means you are also getting through to the servers they operate, such as AIM.com, CS.com (CompuServe), and WMCONNECT.com (WalMart Online).

Goodmail's email is trademarked as CertifiedEmail, and they assure 100% delivery. Links and images rendered by default, and you get a special Blue Ribbon Envelope icon for your messages that tells customers your emails are safe and approved.

Partners that provide tools to email senders for Goodmail are:

- Email Data Source – database of marketing campaigns of over 18,000 brands so you can compare campaigns across the board.
- Pivotal Veracity – tools for tracking and optimizing email campaigns
- TRUSTe – insures opt-in consent
- Partners that provide tools to ISPS and Mailbox providers are:
- Bizanga – helps handle large amounts of email
- Cloudmark – active filter that kills abusive and malicious emails
- Lazlo – a new webmail interface that supports easy delivery of CertifiedEmail (Goodmail) messages.
- Message Systems – another bulk email processor to handle large volumes of mail.

Getting started with Goodmail can be pricey depending on your budget. You pay \$399 to get accredited, and pay around \$2.50 for every 1,000 emails sent. If you are on the fence about whether Goodmail is good for you, then you will be happy to know there is a free trial available. Just fill out a company profile and you will be contacted and told if your company qualifies for the free trial.

CHAPTER 4: EMAIL ACCREDITATION VALUE-ADDED RESELLERS (VARs)

In addition to the standard backbone accreditation providers, there are many programs that offer all-in-one service at prices that are lower than the cost of becoming certified on your own.

If you are a small business owner, you might consider going with one of these providers, especially if you don't already have a good infrastructure in place to deal with mailing list hygiene and list management.

There are two main VARs that are used by Internet marketers: [Aweber](#) and [GetResponse](#). [Aweber](#) has recently changed their pricing structure. This move seemingly alienates a vast majority of customers who had medium to large lists.

Many switched to [GetResponse](#) because, although [Aweber](#) allowed them to keep their current pricing under a grandfather clause, the action of raising the fees was thought to be an unfair practice.

AWEBER

[Aweber's](#) services start at \$19 per month for 500 subscribers all the way up to \$149 for 25,000 subscribers. Having more than 25,000 subscribers requires a consultation so that they can cater to your business.

All plans come with a risk-free, 30-day trial. Its features include:

- Storage of present and future email newsletters for automation.
- Opt-in box wizard for your site
- Auto-responder management
- Multiple email campaign management

- Ready to use templates
- High deliverability

GETRESPONSE

Equally popular among Internet Marketers, [GetResponse's](#) service is feature-packed, and is now considered the VAR of choice for accreditation and deliverability services. You are billed only a monthly charge for their service which starts at \$17.95, and you can pay for up to a year in advance for \$145.40.

[GetReponse](#) features include:

- Unlimited messages, message length, auto-responders, and templates
- Embedded graphics, spreadsheets, Word, and PDF documents
- Embedded audio and video
- High deliverability
- Statistics and tracking
- Newsletter hosting
- Support by email, toll free telephone, fax, message board, or chat.

These providers can be very useful for smaller companies who can't yet afford to become certified on their own, because these companies are already certified. They also handle things like consumer complaints, so you don't have to field any of those yourself.

Additionally, these services typically include full mailing list management, auto-responder capabilities, full CAN-SPAM compliance, multiple mailing lists, and their servers are already white-listed, which allows you maximum deliverability right from the start.

If your company can afford to run its own mailing server and become certified with one of the major backbone providers, it is probably best that you do so. This gives you greater flexibility, and you won't have to conform to the rules of one of the VAR services. But these smaller services are a good starting point for smaller companies who don't need or cannot afford their own certification.

CONCLUSION

Email deliverability services should be etched into your business plan from the beginning. But if you're already mid-stream in your success, it's never too late to improve your email success rates and start seeing renewed success with your marketing efforts. Treat your list reputation like your credit report – keep it clean and healthy and monitor it for optimal performance.

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