

## Keep E-mail Campaigns Out of the Spam Can with StrongMail

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Companies have come to rely increasingly on e-mail for their B2B and B2C marketing initiatives. As concerns around spam and phishing mount, many of these campaigns are failing as messages are being non-delivered. The StrongMail Platform, a combination of three e-mail delivery, integration and management technologies, increases deliverability and management of these e-mail campaigns.

### **Not All Bulk E-mail Is Spam**

Enterprises that use mass e-mail run the risk of message non-delivery because valid messages may be considered spam. Reasons for mass e-mailing include direct marketing campaigns or for the delivery of high volumes of requested material (e.g. newsletters). Non-delivery can result from bounced messages and third-party throttling of delivery rates, to outright blacklisting. While the former two impede the ability to send e-mail, the latter completely stops it, eliminating the capacity to do business.

Utilizing a tool or service that can increase e-mail deliverability becomes essential. If that tool also includes enhanced capabilities for the management of and reporting on the e-mail campaign, the value is further increased.

### **Increasing E-mail Deliverability**

At the most basic level, the [StrongMail MTA](#) component of the StrongMail Platform enhances deliverability because it is a dedicated appliance designed to handle the extreme volumes of traffic common today. By ensuring that the physical sending infrastructure is able to process e-mail messages in the first place, deliverability can be increased, though this is not sufficient to resolve all issues.

In addition to the use of dedicated hardware, the StrongMail MTA includes monitoring and management capabilities. These ensure that the e-mail flow rates do not exceed the acceptable limits of the ISPs in the communication channel and that external throttling does not occur. This software also looks for bad e-mail addresses (including malformed addresses and abandoned accounts) to eliminate them from future mailing programs and eliminate bounces. Collectively, these techniques serve to reduce and/or remove the likelihood that the sender becomes blacklisted.

Furthermore, by integrating support for the current e-mail authentication protocols, such as those from [Cisco DKIM](#), [Microsoft Sender ID](#) and [Yahoo! DomainKeys](#), validity of the mail distributed can be assured, increasing the likelihood of acceptance.

### **Beyond Deliverability: Customization and Management**

The [StrongMail EAS](#) component of the Platform further increases the value of e-mail by providing for tight integration with enterprise applications and data pools. This integration allows for the mining of data from existing sources within the company that then leads to the automated creation of the targeted, customized messages essential to e-mail marketing campaigns.

### **About StrongMail**

StrongMail provides dedicated solutions in the e-mail delivery market space. A relatively recent entrant to the space, the StrongMail Platform is the vendor's only line of business. At the core, the StrongMail Platform deploys a dedicated Mail Transfer Agent (MTA) hosted within its proprietary Email Application Server (EAS). These solutions are coupled with Message Studio, a dedicated e-mail campaign management solution.

The final component of the StrongMail Platform, [Message Studio](#), allows for the tracking and management of ongoing campaigns. This component enables measurement of delivery, open, and click-through rates among other data points, and the capturing of this information into concise reports. This information can then be used to improve the current campaign or to enhance future ones.

### Other Options Do Exist

StrongMail is not the only player in the e-mail marketing space. Alternate providers exist that offer similar solutions, and numerous online services are available as well. Furthermore, many common CRM tools include e-mail campaign management capabilities. Caveats with these alternate options include:

- **Limited capabilities.** StrongMail offers a very comprehensive package in a simple to implement plug-and-play appliance. Most other products in this space are software solutions with either fewer capabilities or increased implementation requirements.
- **Limited control.** Any time service providers are used, the risk of loss of control exists. Though most of the providers tout simple-to-use portals for easy creation and management of campaigns, the inclusion of a third party can, and likely will, introduce complications.
- **Increased management.** Maintaining strong, positive relationships with ISPs is essential where dedicated solutions are not used. CRM plug-ins tend to offer only the most basic capabilities, and these rarely include the ability to manage deliverability as well as dedicated solutions.

### E-mail Marketing Options

A variety of alternate solutions exist that compete with StrongMail though not necessarily directly. Some examples are listed here:

- [Bronto](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [IntelliContact](#)
- [mySAP CRM](#)
- [Silverpop](#)

### Recommendations

1. **If the company mass delivers e-mail, investigate delivery and management solutions.** To achieve the highest levels of effectiveness for mass e-mail delivery a dedicated solution has become mandatory. The ability of these solutions to monitor and manage e-mail campaigns on the fly ensures the highest levels of delivery.
2. **Determine whether a solution should be run in-house or outsourced.** The critical factor in making this determination is comparing resources versus control. Can the appropriate staff be made available and does the company wish to surrender aspects of control? Cost may not be a factor since staffing an internal solution could equal or exceed the cost of using a provider.
3. **If planning on running the solution in-house, then look at StrongMail.** While certainly not the only solution in the space, the StrongMail Platform offers a good combination of capabilities in an easy to implement and utilize package. This blend of attributes makes it worthy of consideration.

### Bottom Line

For those enterprises involved in the mass-mailing of valid e-mail, an e-mail deliverability and management solution has become essential. The StrongMail Platform from StrongMail represents a solid solution that warrants investigation.

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