INBOX BETTER

How To Maximize Email Open Rates, Engagement & CTR To Drive More Sales and More Profit

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By Jimmy Kim, CEO, Sendlane

About Jimmy Kim
 Jimmy Kim is the Chief Executive Officer and one of the Co-Founders of Sendlane. Based out of San Diego, California, Jimmy has been a digital marketer for the past 6+ years and is responsible for selling over $50 Million of products. Before his ventures online, Jimmy rose from the ranks, started off by washing cars at a local dealership and eventually ended up being one of the youngest General Managers in the country by the age of 25. After being burnt out working 80+ hours a week, he eventually turned to Internet Marketing. He found a passion in email marketing and in 2013 helped find Sendlane as one of the co-founders.

About Sendlane
 Sendlane is the most complete email marketing suite. We help you capture your visitor’s email and deliver your messages! The company is owned and operated by 3 industry leading Internet Marketers and Entrepreneurs. With a combined 32+ years of marketing experience, and over $150 Million in online revenue generated in the digital space, we KNOW how important email marketing is to anyone’s business, small or large.

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Introduction

Emails are the soul of your business.

They fuel engagement, engage people with your message, and turn clicks into profit.

Today, you’re going to discover not only the best way to get emails delivered—to actually guarantee your emails make it to the inbox of everyone on your list—you’re also going to learn how to increase open rates, maximize engagement, and generate massive profits.

This guide is based on real-world case study examples, developed through my experience as the CEO of SendLane.

At SendLane, we’ve developed innovative new techniques, strategies, and software designed to provide amazing experiences for your email subscribers.

In the process and during development, we’ve worked with dozens of email marketing innovators, email hosts, domain providers, 7+ figure per year email-based entrepreneurs, and marketers just like you.

I’ve witnessed it all—either in practice or in research—and today is your chance to step inside my complete archive of what’s working right now.

You’re about to discover how to...

» Set Up Your Emails for Success
» Test Your Content to Ensure Delivery
» Avoid “Email Curse Words” Keeping You Out of the Inbox
» The Ins-and-Outs of Link Cloaking
» When to Email (and Why)
» Optimize Autoresponder Sequences
» Build Trust with Your Subscribers
» And Much, Much, More!
Everything you need to know about the latest trends in email marketing is included in this guide.

Developed following the latest trends, what’s working right now, and the real-world tested strategies marketers are using to get more opens, drive more clicks, and generate more profit—these strategies are sure-fire ways you’ll use to optimize email marketing.

**Be sure you take notes and implement these ideas.** I know *(for a fact!)* this is what’s working right now.

Good luck out there!

Jimmy Kim
CEO, Send lane

P.S. If you’re ready to **discover exactly how Send lane can help guarantee your emails are delivered to your audience**...

[Click here to learn more right now](#)
Get Your Own Domain
Never Use Free Email Service

Let’s start with your email provider and the reasons why you should never choose a FREE email address to send your emails from.

Sendlane conducted a long-term customer case study, where we compared data from our customers who were using free and paid email providers. We spoke with industry leading experts — many of whom are actually responsible for setting the filters that end up putting a ton of marketing messages in the spam folder.

What we discovered was that free providers rarely worked. What’s more... there’s a new policy going into effect, where soon, they won’t work at all...

You see, most, if not all, free providers do not signature authenticate their emails.

What this means is that these free hosts use another email service provider on their behalf.

Keep reading and discover why free providers just don’t work (and why you should immediately start using a paid email host if you aren’t already).
DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication Reporting & Conformance) is Coming...

**Long story short:** Yahoo, AOL, Google, and Microsoft, *which is what most of people worldwide use*, are among the email providers who will use these policies. This means that any email that ends in @yahoo, @aol, @gmail, @outlook, @hotmail, @msn, or @live will *no longer be delivered if it is in your autoresponder ‘From’ address!*

The result: You could end up being *red flagged* by these free service providers for sending to emails that over 90% of people worldwide use!

Increase email delivery rates and automate your email marketing process with Sendlane.

To avoid the spam folder, you need to have a paid email host.

If you decide to create a Sendlane account, your emails will be trusted by more email hosts because *Sendlane signature authenticates your emails.*

An ideal setup for most applications is to set up a paid email address (you can get one for as low as $10 a year – *more on this in the next section*) and *use an email marketing management and automation tool like Sendlane to help guarantee your messages get delivered.*

In the next section, you’ll learn how to set up an inexpensive yet highly effective email address. You’ll use this address along with the additional steps in this report to ensure your emails stay out of the spam folder.

*That brings us to the next tip...*
Why You Need to Set Up a Domain Name And Create the Ideal “Send From” Address

Getting a paid email host to send your emails from is the first step you absolutely need to take to guarantee your emails get delivered.

If you’re using Yahoo, AOL, Live/Hotmail, or Gmail right now, you have to stop what you are doing and follow my instructions here...

Because following this strategy costs basically nothing and dramatically increases your chances of getting emails in the inbox!

In fact, as I mentioned above, you can set up an email address and start automating your email process with Sendlane in just a few minutes.

Here’s how to set up your domain name:

1. **Buy a domain name.**
   - It costs about $10 per year.
   - I suggest using namecheap.com, but you can use any domain buying service you like.

2. **Sign up for Google Apps.**
   - It only costs $5 per month.
   - That’s practically nothing compared to what most people invest to get a business off the ground.

3. **Create your “send from” name.**
   - Make sure you choose your “send from” name wisely so you don’t fall into “spam folder traps”, which I’ll cover soon...
Using Google Apps, you’ll be able to set up an email with your domain name and use the normal Gmail interface to read incoming emails. You can even use the forwarding option at your domain to send emails to Gmail.

As I mentioned above, one of the obstacles you’re always trying to avoid is the automated “spam folder traps.” These “traps” are computer programs set to detect “spam” activity. One of the triggers they use is the name you put before the “@” sign in your email address.

Upon initial setup, you’ll create an address to “send from.”

**You want to make sure this address does not contain the following:**

- ![Admin](false)
- ![Info](false)
- ![News](false)
- ![No Reply](false)
- ![Reply](false)

If your email address reads “admin@domain.com” you’ll have a serious problem with spam filters.

During our own multi-variate testing as well as research across the email automation and marketing industry, we’ve discovered that using “Admin” or “Info” or similar “send from” names before the “@” in email address is a popular practice.

It’s true that many of the largest companies you get emails from every day use “Admin” or similar “send from” lines for their emails.

Nearly all of these companies are “cleared” by email providers and Gmail’s spam filtering technology—your email address is not automatically cleared.

This is also one of the reasons you need to follow the next step I’m going to share...

Because your email address is an “unknown” to Gmail and other providers, computer algorithms set up to detect spam will be monitoring the address, subject line, and content of your emails.

*Let’s talk about why you need to...*
Always Test Your Email Address and Emails

After you have your email address set up, you need to start testing.

This may be one of the most important parts!

If you don’t test, your emails may end up in your subscriber’s spam folders without you ever knowing it!

To test, you need to send emails to your own inbox.

This takes a few minutes, but it is worth it.

As you test, see if they land in your spam folder (be sure not to have the address you are sending from in your address book or whitelisted).

If they do, you have a problem.
Here are the 3 primary reasons emails end up in a spam folder:

These are in order, so you should test in this order!

Here’s how the process works if you send an email to a Gmail address (remember 90% of people you’ll send to are using Gmail)...

Now in general, Gmail will first look at the email address you are sending from to determine if your email should go in the “Spam” folder or not.

If your new subscriber has never received an email from you before, this is one of the first things Gmail's spam algorithms look for.

But, if you followed my instructions to set up a paid email provider with your own domain, you shouldn’t have many email address issues with a brand new address—especially if you are using Sendlane to manage your Autoresponders and Opt-In process.

That’s why “Email Address Issues” are the last thing you should check if your messages are landing in “Spam.”

After the email address, Google spam detection algorithms look at the subject lines and content of your emails.

*You shouldn't have many email address issues if you followed my instructions to set up a paid email provider, especially if you are using Sendlane.
This process makes sense if you think about it like Search Engine Optimization. It’s the same principle.

Gmail is looking to **see if your content is “unique” and compares it against other content rated as “spam” by its users and computers.**

Just like web SEO, email providers (like Google/Gmail) **“rate your content.”** They basically determine how original it is, if it is high quality, and if it is something people haven’t seen before.

If you’re using content that looks like spam, you’re likely to land in the spam folder.

**For our purposes, let’s continue to call this “email SEO.”**

Your subscribers’ email provider is looking at your content and determining how likely it is people want to read it.

And it starts with originality.

This is huge and it’s where a lot of marketers make their biggest mistake, so **listen up to the next step...**
Email SEO – How Rules from Search Engine Optimization Now Apply to Email

Content is the very first item on your email test list. It’s rapidly becoming the most important element of the emails you send.

We’re calling this process “email SEO” because it works just like traditional website SEO:

You need to guarantee your content is original to you.

This rule revolves around the way Gmail and other providers’ spam detection systems work.

I mentioned in the last section the “originality” rule computers use to quickly scour your emails and determine the likelihood they are “spam,” something your subscriber doesn’t want to read, or a “promotion.”

At Sendlane, we call this process “content rating.”

Let’s discuss it from the perspective of Gmail...

Gmail looks at all the content being sent to people using Gmail accounts. Computers catalog it. The information is stored in massive data centers for later use.

When you send an email, Gmail’s spam detection system first looks at your email address and then to your content, comparing the email you sent against a giant database of emails Gmail users have already received.

If your content is close enough to this to be considered a “duplicate,” your emails end up in the spam folder. And once you’re tagged, they may stay there forever.
You can end up in the spam folder without doing anything wrong (and how to avoid it)

One of the blessings and curses of modern email marketers are “swipe packages.”

Currently, when you purchase a product, course, or become an affiliate with an offer, you’re often provided “done for you” swipe emails you can send to your list.

Many marketers just like you sign up as an affiliate and take advantage of done for you emails...

I’ve even done it!

This is exactly where most people go wrong!

If you send swipe emails or done for you emails to your list, you’re going to get caught in the spam folder because Gmail is out there looking for duplicate content.

When email providers see different people (and a lot of them) sending the exact same content to people, they get suspicious. They have programs set up to analyze and detect it. And they stop delivering your emails and put you in the spam folder for it!

In 2016, there is no more copying and pasting email swipes!

To avoid the spam folder, you need to put any swipe emails in your autoresponder series in your own words.

Make sure you do this! Use swipes as a guide, but make them your own.

This brings us to another important content issue — specific words you need to avoid...
Avoid These “Email Curse Words…”

Gmail and other email hosts your subscribers use also have filters on specific words—it’s especially important to avoid these words in your first few emails!

You can use them eventually, but you have to avoid them until you have a relationship of opens built up and you know you are not hitting the spam folder.

Once you are trusted, once people are engaging with your content, you can start to use these words.

**Remember while you are following this list:**
**Your goal is always to stand out.**

And it’s not just your subscribers you want to “stand out” to.

You’re trying to stand out to avoid spam filters designed to determine if you are “just like everyone else.”

My suggestion is to find creative ways to avoid these words, especially in your first few emails. In the process, you’ll create better, unique emails people will also be more likely to open and read.

I call these words “Email Curse Words.” Forty of the commonly used ones are to the right. These are all definitely on the Gmail “mark this as spam” list.

For a more complete list, click here.

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40 Common “Email Curse Words”

1. #1
2. $$$
3. 100% Free (or) Satisfied
4. 50% off
5. Act Now!
6. Amazing
7. Buy
8. Cash Bonus
9. Click here
10. Congratulations
11. Expect to earn
12. F R E E (or) Free ____
13. Friend
14. How To...
15. Income
16. Internet marketing
17. It’s effective
18. Join millions
19. Limited time
20. Lose weight
21. Make $ (or) Money
22. Mortgage
23. New customers only
24. No experience
25. Now
26. Offer expires
27. Opportunity
28. Order today
29. Per week
30. Prize
31. Promise you
32. Sign up free today
33. Stop
34. Success
35. Unlimited
36. Urgent
37. Vacation
38. While you sleep
39. Work from home
40. You’re a Winner!
We’ve tested a lot of these words at Sendlane, so we know that they land you in the spam folder and on Gmail’s “spammer list.”

They don’t work because people have abused them.

Words like “free” and “guaranteed” get used all the time.

Avoid them in your first emails and use them later after you are getting opens!

You really need to avoid these words in subject lines.

If you make it to step 2 of the testing process I mentioned earlier — *if you’re hitting the spam folder and you’ve already tested your content* — you should look and see if any of the curse words I just listed are in your subject line.

Remember, these curse words count in the body as well as the subject line of your email.

Let’s move on to the next tip — *a vital tool you’ll use to get your emails into the inbox.*
Why You Need to Cloak & Hide All Links

As an email marketer, you’re going to send the same link as another marketer in an email.

It will happen.

You may be sharing a piece of interesting content you know people will love, you may have an affiliate link, you may have your own promotion...

Using the principles we’ve already discussed, think about how having the same links in your emails as other marketers will change your chances of hitting the inbox.

If a bunch of marketers are sending the same promotion, Gmail (or other email providers) take a look at the links everyone’s sending (it’s all the same link) and it triggers their spam filters.

They say, “Oh, my God, this person is using the same link over and over again.”

What’s going to happen? It’s going to end up in spam.

Now, on a particular offer or digital marketing product in most cases, it gets hundreds of thousands of clicks to it. When hundreds of thousands occur on anything, well, chances are everyone’s going to flag it down.

Email providers are going to filter out your messages as spam if you use the same links.

Fortunately, there is a way to hide links!

And it actually does more than just get your emails around spam filters!
It’s called “link cloaking.”

Link cloaking is disguising what an actual link is by using a shorter URL.

This is important because it allows you to make a link look different, shortening it so that it doesn’t look “ugly.”

You can also use a cloaked link to redirect people to a different page if a page goes down. You can understand how this can be incredibly useful if you want to switch where you’ll send people if they click on an email in an Autoresponder sequence days or months after you’ve written or sent it.

I suggest checking out ClickPerfect for link cloaking.

We’ve been testing ClickPerfect for months and it’s really working well.

It offers a ton of functionality and it’s the perfect starting point for link cloaking.

There are a lot of other link cloaking services out there, so you don’t have to use it, but be sure to give it a look.

Additionally, you should always keep your links embedded in text. Like this one that sends you to Sendlane. Split testing shows more people click on links embedded in text.

Now let’s talk about another consideration that won’t help you get past spam filters, but will help get your emails opened!
The Best Time to Send Your Emails

Getting your emails read matters just as much as getting out of the spam folder and into the inbox.

Following the principles I just shared, you’ll be able to make sure people are seeing your emails show up.

Now, let’s get people reading your emails by sending them at the right time.

When it comes to the best time to mail, you have to understand three primary principles you can follow.

You can use...

3 PRIMARY PRINCIPLES FOR BEST TIMES TO SEND_emails

1. **Industry Best Practice**
2. **Social Engagement for Your Audience**
3. **The Copy & Paste Strategy**

Let me explain all of them briefly so you can choose one, but you should really test all three yourself to see which works best for your audience.

First things first, there is what we call a best practice — that’s industry standard...
Industry Best Practice

If you are “cold emailing” and you don’t really have a defined data set to determine when to mail, **this is what the standard schedule looks like according to established experts...**

- 8 AM to 9 AM EST
- 3 PM to 4 PM EST

If you are mailing once a day, pick one of these two times. For twice a day mailing? Use both.

This is the “industry standard.”

A second way (and this is actually pretty interesting—I’ve been testing it) is to use Facebook Fan Page engagement to determine when your audience is active...

**Social Engagement for Your Audience**

What’s great about this is that you can interact with your audience via email at the time they are most likely to already be engaged with you—basically you are “fresh in their mind.”

If you get it right, this can really increase open rates.

Check you Facebook Fan Page stats and see when your audience is interacting the most with your posts and content.

Once you find out when they are interacting the most, that’s the time you mail.
Here’s another strategy I call it the copy and paste strategy because you’ll basically be copying what I’ve tested...

**The Copy & Paste Strategy**

If you don’t have any data about your audience or list and you really want to know what days to mail, I suggest doing what I do...

**This is what I also tested out...**

If you’re going to go Monday through Thursday use 3PM to 4PM. This is when people are active, about to get out of work, and thinking about doing something else.

Fridays mail only at 9AM.

This is because most people take off early on Friday.

Now regarding the weekend...

Saturdays are traditionally bad for me and you can get away with Sundays after 12PM noon but before 3 PM.

Usually Sundays are a “wild card.”

Again, this isn’t the only way to do it. This is just what I’ve recognized—and what my personal testing has shown.

**But here’s the key...**

Be consistent.
At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter which of the three strategies you use.

You can follow what I’ve experienced and used, go for the industry standard, or run your own tests and look at Facebook and content engagement.

**No matter what you decide to do, you have to keep it consistent.**

You are the person who is nurturing your audience. Teach them to expect your emails at a certain time.

It doesn’t matter if you mail at midnight every day. It doesn’t matter if you mail at 4AM every day. It doesn’t matter if you mail at 3AM every day. Your audience will respond to the way you mail.

**Train your subscribers to expect your emails!**
BONUS TIPS: Additional Considerations

The ideas I’ve just discussed are excellent starting points.

Develop strong content, make sure it is unique and in your voice, test, train your audience to expect emails at a specific time, and be patient as you build a relationship with them.

These are some of the most important email lessons you can use to dramatically increase engagement.

Now, I’d like to talk about additional email considerations.

I’m putting these at the end, but it doesn’t mean they aren’t important!

Now I don’t want you to get too caught up on these things, but as you test, tweak, and master your email list take these considerations into account...
#1: Your First Email in a Sequence

Your first email of an autoresponder is one of the most important messages you'll send to your list.

It will have the **highest open rate.** The **highest engagement.**

People will read this email as long as you can get it in the inbox.

That means you need to use this email to **set the tone for what is going to happen next.**

From this one point, people will decide if they are going to open the next email you send.

Put time into the first email in your sequence. **Show your personality. Show them why they should listen to you and how you can help.**

People want to see that you are a real person who wants to talk with them and help them through their problems.

Don’t try to do this later. You’ll be wasting your time.

Do it in your very first email and set the tone.
#2: What to do About Unsubscribes

One of the biggest setbacks you’ll face after you start to get emails out of the spam folder and into the inbox are unsubscribes.

People will click “Unsubscribe” and decide not to hear from you anymore.

You’re going to wonder what you can do about it.

My best advice is: **Don’t do anything about them.**

*Let them go.*

**Work on what you can do with the people who are still there!**

#3: When to Use Long, Medium and Short Emails

This is something I see often.

**People want to know how long their emails should be.**

*Short? Long? Medium?*

*200 words? 1,000 words?*

*What works best?*

The thing is, there is no right or wrong answer.

For the best users and the best practices I’ve seen, **you got to mix it up.** Occasionally send a long email, send short updates here and there, and throw a medium email in once and a while.

Also, **test different lengths and see what works** for you!

*Have higher CTRs on short emails? Use them! Longer emails are working better? Go with it! Notice longer emails on Wednesdays work better for some reason? You have your answer!*
One rule I always go by is to ask yourself: “How can I complete the story?”

With every email, you want to remind your reader why they are there and what they get out of the email.

Figure out what length you need to accomplish that, and use it.

#4: Subject Lines

Subject lines are actually more important than the body of your emails. It’s what gets the email opened.

Out of the average 145 emails a day people get, you need to stand out.

Picture your audience skimming through their inbox or dragging down the push notification on their phone. What is going to get their attention?

It’s got to be 4, 5 or 6 words (and that’s the max you should use).

You shouldn’t get crazy with punctuation and things like question marks and exclamation points. Just don’t do it.

Be honest about what’s in the email, be clever, grab attention with just 5 words or so.

And remember — always avoid the words from the “Email Curse Words” list I gave you earlier!

Never put these in a subject line.
#5: Staying Out of the Promotions Tab

The default Gmail inbox has a “promotions tab” people barely open.

You've likely seen it before.

And you want your emails to stay out of it.

*How do you stay out of promotions?* It's easy...

**First, avoid company names.**

Don't say big company names like Yahoo, Google, Alexa, Amazon and others.

The software that sorts emails sees these and thinks, “must be a promotion” and puts you in the promotion tab.

**Second, keep it plain text.**

Always use plain text email. Stay away from scripts, graphics, and all that stuff.

Sure, templates look great — but they are a surefire way to end up in promotions. Templated emails look like promotional emails and Gmail inboxes are set up to filter them out by default.

**Third, use unique images.**

If you have to use an image, it needs to be yours.

This works just like the content SEO strategy we talked about earlier. Email providers filter out emails that use the same content as others.

When you send a popular image in your email, you actually end up making it look like a lot of other content your subscribers are getting and your emails end up in spam or promotions.

*That's it!*
Need Help Finding Subscribers, Getting Emails Opened, and Increasing Clicks?

If you’re looking for an easier way to manage all aspects of email marketing without having to use 3, 4, 5, or more different software tools, I'd like to invite you to try Sendlane.

Using Sendlane, you can set up seamless Landing Pages or Opt-Ins and build automated email sequences from them in a single system.

If you’re interested, we’ll deliver your emails for you, give you the tools you need to create opt-in pages with ease, and help you optimize every step of the process to increase open rate.

Just Click Here to Try Sendlane.

Many of the principles I’ve described are fully automated within Sendlane.

We can easily help you create well-designed emails, automate the time they are sent, and optimize your email marketing process to your audience.

Click here to learn more and try it.

Thanks for reading!

Jimmy Kim
CEO, Sendlane