



Reputation Warmup

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1 Foreword

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3 Reputation

One of the key factors which determines how your emails are handled by mailbox providers (such as Gmail, Outlook, ...) is “reputation”. Reputation is a score that each provider assigns to an email stream they see coming from a certain sender. This score is usually assigned to IPs and/or domains and is influenced by a large number of deliverability aspects. It will ultimately determine if your emails will arrive in the inbox, the spam folder or be blocked entirely.

When you are just getting started or when you acquire new IP(s) or domain(s), your reputation is usually quite neutral. This means mailbox providers don’t know you and are not sure if the traffic you’re sending their way is trustworthy. Therefore, they will be cautious and apply strict filtering during the first mailings. To gain their trust, it’s important to go through a “warmup” phase, during which you will slowly introduce your domain, IPs and emails to them and build up your reputation score.

4 The Warmup Phase

Reputation can be tied to your IP(s) and your domain(s). Each mailbox provider determines how they calculate a reputation score and what metrics will be involved in this process. Because of this there can be a lot of differences between how providers handle these things. One thing they all have in common though, is that you need to warm up your reputation.

Warming up your reputation takes on average about 6 weeks depending on the quality and consistency of your traffic. During this process you will limit your volume and sending speed. Additionally, it’s important that during this period you send emails to your **most engaged users** only (users who have clicked and viewed your emails recently – preferably during the past 2 weeks). Try to keep your mailings as consistent as possible, preferably daily batches which start small and increase on a daily basis.

As mentioned before, the sending speed and volume will be lowered significantly during the first mailings and will be increased after every successful campaign. A successful mailing means the overall results of the campaign are positive. In that case, the speed will be increased. We will also check external tools such as Google Postmaster Tools, SNDS, Returnpath, ... to check domain and IP reputation progress. If certain issues are detected, such as abnormally low engagement results, bounces containing messages from mailbox providers that tell us to slow down, external tools showing issues or emails arriving in the spam folder, it might be wise not to increase the speed and maybe even lower it depending on the situation you’re dealing with. Don’t worry if the initial campaigns struggle with some issues during warmup. This is to be expected on a new environment and will improve over time.

To give you an idea of what would be a good warmup schedule we added one below. Do keep in mind that this is an average schedule which might need to be adjusted for your needs and your types of campaigns. Our deliverability team can help you customize this.

4.1 GENERAL DOMAINS

| Day | GMAIL.COM | Hotmail-Outlook | Yahoo/AOL/Verizon | Others |
|-----|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|--------|
| 1 | 200 | 5,000 | 10,000 | 2,500 |
| 2 | 200 | 5,500 | 13,000 | 2,800 |
| 3 | 200 | 6,100 | 17,000 | 3,400 |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 4 | 300 | 6,700 | 22,000 | 4,000 |
| 5 | 400 | 7,300 | 28,500 | 4,500 |
| 6 | 500 | 8,100 | 37,000 | 5,000 |
| 7 | 700 | 8,900 | 48,500 | 6,000 |
| 8 | 900 | 10,500 | 62,500 | 7,500 |
| 9 | 1,300 | 13,000 | 81,500 | 9,000 |
| 10 | 1,900 | 15,500 | 106,000 | 11,500 |
| 11 | 2,700 | 18,500 | 138,000 | 15,000 |
| 12 | 3,700 | 22,000 | 179,000 | 25,000 |
| 13 | 5,000 | 26,500 | 233,000 | 40,000 |
| 14 | 8,000 | 31,500 | 303,000 | 60,000 |
| 15 | 16,000 | 41,500 | 394,000 | 90,000 |
| 16 | 26,000 | 53,500 | 512,000 | 150,000 |
| 17 | 50,000 | 69,500 | 665,000 | 220,000 |
| 18 | 90,000 | 90,500 | 865,000 | 350,000 |
| 19 | 150,000 | 118,000 | 1,120,000 | 500,000 |
| 20 | 200,000 | 153,000 | 1,460,000 | 650,000 |
| 21 | 270,000 | 199,000 | 1,900,000 | 800,000 |
| 22 | 350,000 | 259,000 | 2,470,000 | 1,100,000 |
| 23 | 420,000 | 337,000 | 3,210,000 | 1,500,000 |
| 24 | 500,000 | 438,000 | 4,180,000 | 1,900,000 |
| 25 | 650,000 | 569,000 | 5,430,000 | 2,500,000 |
| 26 | 800,000 | 740,000 | 7,060,000 | 3,200,000 |
| 27 | 950,000 | 960,000 | 9,170,000 | 4,000,000 |
| 28 | 1,100,000 | 1,250,000 | 11,930,000 | 5,960,000 |
| ... | Volume +30% | Volume +50% | Volume +30% | Volume +50% |

4.2 FRENCH DOMAINS

| Day | Orange.fr | LaPoste | Free.fr |
|-----|-----------|---------|---------|
| 1 | 1,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| 2 | 1,300 | 4,200 | 4,200 |
| 3 | 1,700 | 4,400 | 4,400 |
| 4 | 2,200 | 4,700 | 4,700 |
| 5 | 2,900 | 5,100 | 5,100 |
| 6 | 3,700 | 5,700 | 5,700 |
| 7 | 4,800 | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| 8 | 6,300 | 7,200 | 7,200 |

| | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 9 | 8,200 | 8,500 | 8,500 |
| 10 | 10,500 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| 11 | 14,000 | 14,000 | 14,000 |
| 12 | 18,000 | 17,000 | 17,000 |
| 13 | 23,500 | 22,000 | 22,000 |
| 14 | 30,500 | 30,000 | 30,000 |
| 15 | 39,500 | 40,000 | 40,000 |
| 16 | 51,000 | 55,000 | 55,000 |
| 17 | 66,500 | 70,000 | 70,000 |
| 18 | 86,500 | 95,000 | 95,000 |
| 19 | 112,000 | 130,000 | 130,000 |
| 20 | 146,000 | 180,000 | 180,000 |
| 21 | 190,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 |
| 22 | 247,000 | 380,000 | 380,000 |
| 23 | 321,000 | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| 24 | 418,000 | 750,000 | 750,000 |
| 25 | 543,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 26 | 706,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 |
| 27 | 917,000 | 2,200,000 | 2,200,000 |
| 28 | 1,190,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 |
| ... | Volume +30% | Volume +30% | Volume +30% |

4.3 ITALIAN DOMAINS

| Day | Libero;it |
|-----|-----------|
| 1 | 2,500 |
| 2 | 2,800 |
| 3 | 3,400 |
| 4 | 4,000 |
| 5 | 4,500 |
| 6 | 5,000 |
| 7 | 6,000 |
| 8 | 7,500 |
| 9 | 9,000 |
| 10 | 11,500 |

| | |
|-----|-------------|
| 11 | 15,000 |
| 12 | 25,000 |
| 13 | 40,000 |
| 14 | 60,000 |
| 15 | 90,000 |
| 16 | 150,000 |
| 17 | 220,000 |
| 18 | 350,000 |
| 19 | 500,000 |
| 20 | 650,000 |
| 21 | 800,000 |
| 22 | 1,100,000 |
| 23 | 1,500,000 |
| 24 | 1,900,000 |
| 25 | 2,500,000 |
| 26 | 3,200,000 |
| 28 | 5,960,000 |
| ... | Volume +30% |

A few notes about these volumes:

- They are maximum volumes per sending domain
- Sending less is allowed but the volumes for the following day will have to be recalculated
- Sending more is not allowed
- Use your most engaged users (e.g. last-30-day-openers) first
- Monitor delivery rates and open rates and look for patterns

5 SUMMARY

During the warmup period:

- Start slow and slowly ramp up the (daily) volume
- Target your most engaged users first
- Try not to target a user more than once per day
- Follow the schedule
- Follow the advise of the deliverability team
- Don't make any unexpected moves

To give you an example: We've had a case in which the client didn't follow the schedule and increased the daily volume significantly over night. As a result, their domain reputation at Gmail dropped from "high" to "Bad" in less than 4 days. All of their emails arrived in the spam folder as a result. It took over a month to restore the domain reputation and get their emails back into the inbox.