Ebook:

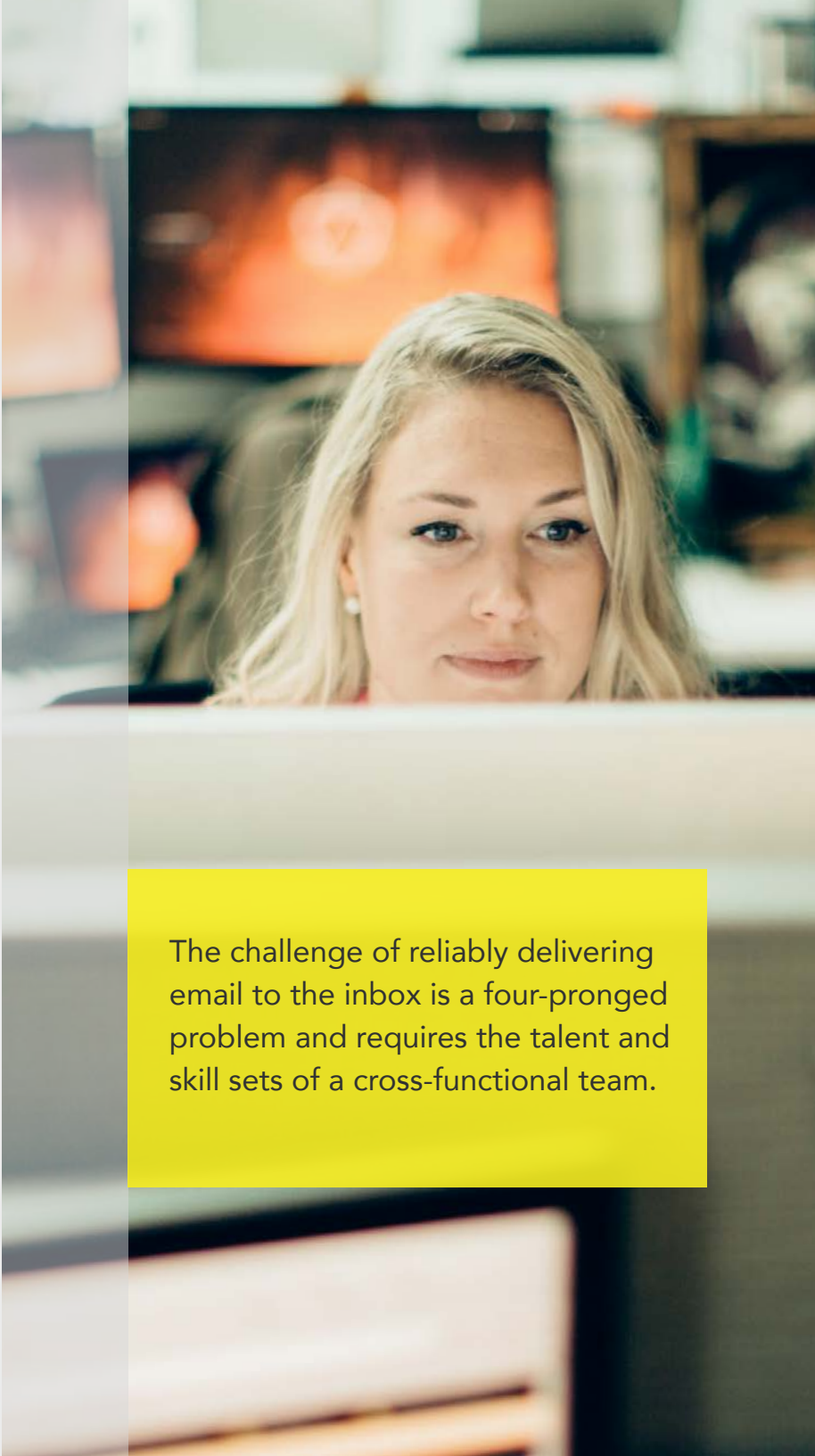# 4 TIPS FOR EVALUATING AN EMAIL DELIVERY PROVIDER

ORACLE® + Dyn

**Ebook:**

# 4 Tips For Evaluating An Email Delivery Provider

## Introduction

For businesses around the world, getting both transactional and bulk email messages to their intended recipients' inboxes has proven to be an ongoing challenge. Research has shown that the benefit of ensuring inbox delivery yields better engagement of users, and as a result, more conversions of business for companies.

The challenge of reliably delivering email to the inbox is a four-pronged problem and requires the talent and skill sets of a cross-functional team. It's often an understaffed area of most businesses, especially as email delivery is generally outside a company's core mission.

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## Solving the Email Delivery Problem

Email delivery as a managed service allows businesses to focus on what they do best, while infrastructure and email delivery experts answer the ongoing day-to-day challenges of ensuring inbox delivery.

With that said, here's how this four-pronged approach will help you evaluate and select an email delivery provider that can give you:

- A highly robust SMTP/MTA platform to send email messages

- A suite of deep analytical tools to give marketers and administrators insight into delivery

- An established reputation for delivering high quality email vs. spam

- A team of email delivery professionals focused on monitoring the flow of messages and to provide guidance to customers experiencing issues with message content

By focusing a team of experts in email technology, internet infrastructure, and software engineering, managed email delivery providers assist enterprises in solving the email delivery problem, thereby driving revenue through user engagement.

## Tip 1: Ask About Their Email Delivery Message Transfer Agent (MTA) Platform

A great email delivery program all starts with a robust MTA platform. Having more than one MTA system in various geographic locations is best for redundancy, but running your own email server can be costly and time consuming.

For best performance, IP addresses and domain names used for relaying email can be configured and managed by the system automatically to ensure ongoing email delivery. It is also important to check them regularly against real-time DNS blacklists and reputation databases such as SenderScore.org. These checks alert you if IPs and/or domains have delivery issues and if they should be removed from use immediately, replaced by IPs and domains held in a warm state, ready to relay email.

Having an MTA that includes support for email authentication, such as Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM), is incredibly important. These are areas where configuration issues can account for significant delivery problems, so having setup wizards and verification available can help avoid or minimize errors.

Holistic management of SMTP connections is an additional factor in ensuring delivery. MTAs are able to receive continuous feedback about the delivery status of messages with all mail destinations, allowing you

to gain insight into send volumes and message cadence. This can allow you to strategically queue and deliver messages to ISPs with the best opportunity of getting into the inbox.

This can also significantly improve delivery rates to large mailbox providers such as AOL, Yahoo, Gmail, Outlook, and others.

## Tip 2: Learn More About Their Analytical Tools

Ensuring that customers have access to data and reports to measure the success of transactional messaging and campaigns is critical. Ensure you are getting the most out of your email delivery provider with analytical data about the delivery of email, message bounce and spam complaints, as well as insight into inbox delivery rates.

Each email you send has the potential to give you valuable insight regarding your campaigns and your customers. Logging each send—including the "from" address, "to" address, and delivery status—for future analysis can help you see trends over time. While it is important to analyze the messages that make it to the inbox, those that don't make it are just as important.

Additionally, should a recipient mark a message as spam and the hosting ISP supports email feedback loops (FBL), reports from the FBL can be sent back to be processed by your email delivery provider's system. Email recipients who bounce or mark your messages as SPAM should automatically be added to an account-level suppression list. This will inhibit future mailings to the bouncing or complaining address, thereby reducing the overall bounce and complaint rates that can affect your sender reputation.

Another area where you can gain valuable insight into your customers is through open tracking. Monitoring whether a customer opens, skims, or completely reads a message can help you create better, custom-targeted campaigns specific to the things with which they most commonly interact.

Similarly, tracking the links that the customer clicks within the email can provide valuable information on what is and isn't working in your messages. The more granular an email delivery provider allows you to get with your tracking, the better.

Finally, it is important for your email delivery provider to offer a feature that performs verification of inbox delivery. This feature sends your messages to select inboxes at various ISPs and shows you which ISPs/mailbox providers sent your message to the inbox or to the junk folder. With this information, you can work on fixing your delivery to certain providers or decide whether or not you want to avoid sending to certain types of addresses to increase your delivery rate. Also, look for a provider that allows you to run your messages through a spam filter to help spot potential problems.

**Whether you're a seasoned sender or just starting out on the deliverability journey, Dyn can help**

Learn more at: **dyn.com/email**

## Tip 3: Make Sure Their IPs Have an Established Reputation

Reputation has become a major driver within spam filters today. The decision of placing an email in the spam folder or inbox is highly reliant on the reputation of the IP address and domain the email is seen coming from. In more extreme scenarios, entire IP subnets can be blacklisted, causing the majority of mail to be sent to the spam folder.

Reputation is established after sending consistent mail over an IP address at a notable volume for several days or weeks. Reputation similarly can go away after several weeks with no sending. Ensuring your email delivery provider has the capability of taking your volume of mail and establishing a reputation among shared or dedicated IPs with similar quality mail is essential to ensuring inbox delivery.

## Tip 4: Inquire About Your Access to Email Delivery Professionals

Even with the most robust delivery and reporting systems supporting the technical needs of our customers, it takes a team of email delivery professionals to continuously monitor message flow to the inbox. Email delivery teams constantly monitor the state of the MTA infrastructure and are ready to respond to potential delivery issues surrounding ISP message relay rates (volume and cadence), IP and domain reputation, and inbox acceptance rates.

Through years of email industry involvement and networking, these teams are typically able to directly reach out to ISPs to get issues resolved quickly when they do arise — a luxury that most companies with in-house delivery systems don't have.

Ensuring that customers send engaging emails that people actually want to read is another major factor to ensure ongoing delivery of messages to the inbox. It is important to find an email delivery provider with a team that offers feedback on what customers can do to improve their delivery based on analysis of their previous sends. Working closely with your email delivery provider can greatly improve overall recipient engagement.

## Summary

Following these 4 tips for improved email delivery will lead you to the provider that is right for you. Working closely with your provider, more of your customers will receive your messages in their inbox, improving user engagement and increasing conversions — all good things for growing a business.
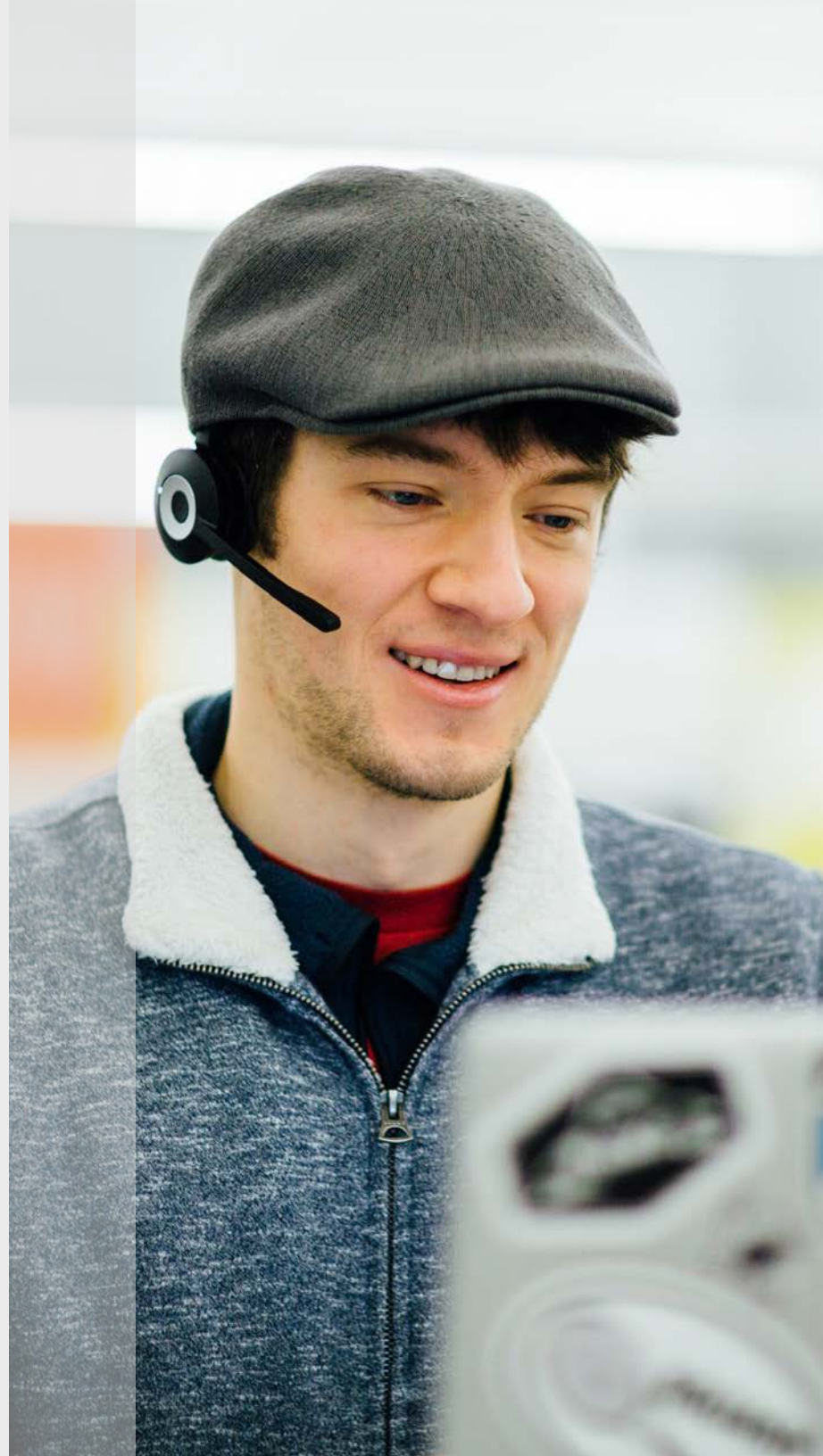
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