



# Solutions for Email Subscriber Management

How to Maximize Deliverability  
with your Mailing List

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*Your Email Delivery Experts*

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A background image showing a woman in the foreground looking directly at the camera, and a man partially visible behind her. The image is overlaid with semi-transparent blue and white geometric shapes.

# Do You **Stand Out** To Your Customers?

A company's relationships with clients is, without question, the most important factor in its success. Without knowledge of your clients, their relationship to the organization, and historical background a marketing campaign is likely to suffer greatly from irrelevance and loss of interest from potentially long term clients.

Managing your member lists correctly with tools provided by your Email Service Provider can provide you with a useful pool of members to pick from and engage in successful campaigns. This paper will discuss what problems exist in list management and how to resolve them and improve your list.

*Improving your subscriber list will improve your deliverability, response rates, and your business.*

# Problem #1: Who are my subscribers?

A common problem in list management is in assuming your client list is also your subscriber list. Unless your clients gave you specific consent to send them more than a transactional mailing, (i.e. a sales receipt or password reset), the email address cannot be considered a subscriber. Similarly, obtaining a list from a partner organization, list broker, or publicly available records, is not a valid opt-in subscriber list acquisition process.

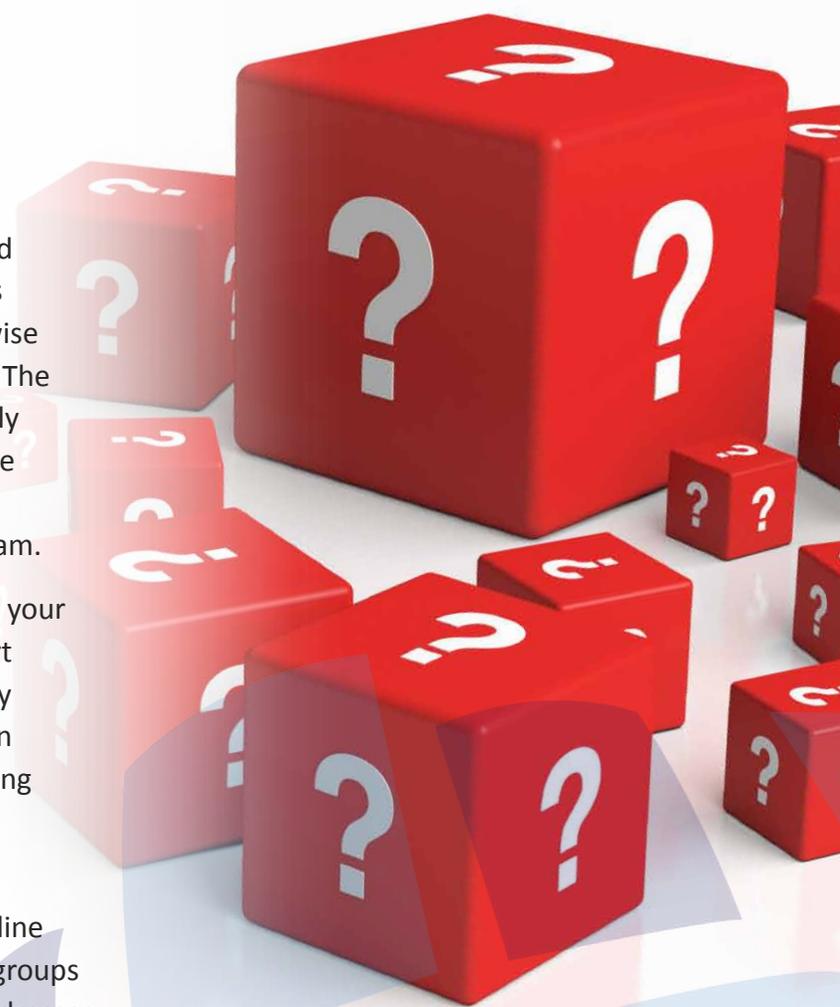
The criteria for a list starts with permission. Each of your recipients must have indicated, within a reasonable period of time, that they want to receive your newsletters. You must also set an expectation for the mailing content and frequency and let them know they may unsubscribe (opt-out) at any time and have that request honored.

This is not to say your membership must only come from your website's signup center, sale

checkout page, or other internet enabled method. You may entreat current clients by emailing them individually, or otherwise contacting them and obtaining consent. The sooner you obtain this permission, ideally during the first contact you have with the client, the more likely the member is to welcome your email and not deem it spam.

Another problem is the assumption that your email clients' address books are also part of your subscriber base. Though this may be in part true, this list is likely to contain undesirable addresses to mail to, including 'noreply@', 'help@' or other wildcard addresses known as 'role' accounts.

Wildcards come from people making online purchases, or joining social networking groups and discussion lists. Sending to these addresses will spoil an otherwise valid and lucrative subscriber list and will harm your deliverability.



## Problem #2: Who aren't my subscribers?

Just as you build and maintain a meticulous file of subscriber requests and confirmations, a good list manager should build a suppression file alongside this. This live file ideally contains all members who have not confirmed their subscription within a thirty day period, unsubscribed from your campaigns, who have become invalid or otherwise are undeliverable addresses, as well as addresses whose subscription to the list cannot be accounted for.

A reputable ESP can provide you with an automated opt-out process that processes and retains inactive subscriber addresses, removes them from your active recipients file, and which can be exported to your desktop or otherwise linked to your own client relationship management software.

*Sending people email when they never agreed to receive it is obnoxious, and illegal.*

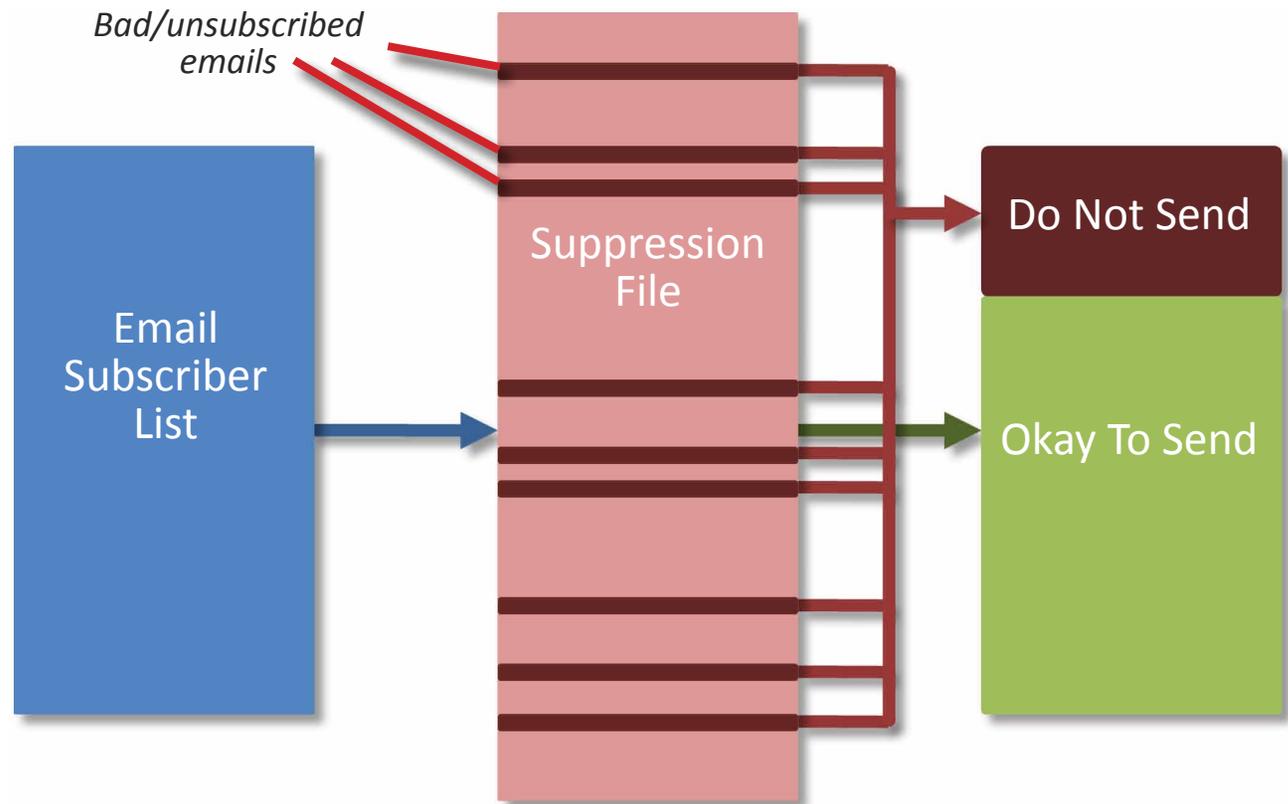
## Using a suppression list helps deliverability, while sending without filtering hurts your reputation.

Suppression files typically grow in small increments as members opt-out or otherwise become invalid recipients due to cancelled or inactive accounts, domain name changes, or other factors that affect a member's presence on your list. There are factors that can cause a suppression list to enlarge suddenly, such as:

1. Larger than normal gaps in mailing activity
2. Sending irrelevant content in place of the anticipated or expected content
3. Importing new addresses from publicly available or otherwise non-opt in sources

Always try to maintain your newsletter's quality, frequency, and membership, and be mindful of any changes you make. Considering these factors will save an administrator from the far more time consuming task of replacing lost members en masse.

Use a suppression file to filter out bad or unsubscribed email addresses:



## Problem 3: When should I add subscribers to my list?

The short answer: **immediately.**

By importing and adding members as quickly as possible to your list you ensure the list is comprised of timely, interested members anticipating your mail. The administrator's next move is clear: initiate a welcoming campaign.

After obtaining your newest members, create a segment that can be used to target these newcomers and acclimate them to your campaigns. Though the situations vary, members are expecting something that resembles your site, event, or brand name in their inbox along with relevant offers or information.

Though your members have an idea of who you are, having visited your site or through a previously established reputation, no

precedent has been set for your email content or campaign style. You may wish to consider publishing previous offers or newsletters on your subscribe forms and landing pages to establish a point of reference for your subscribers' relationship to this channel.

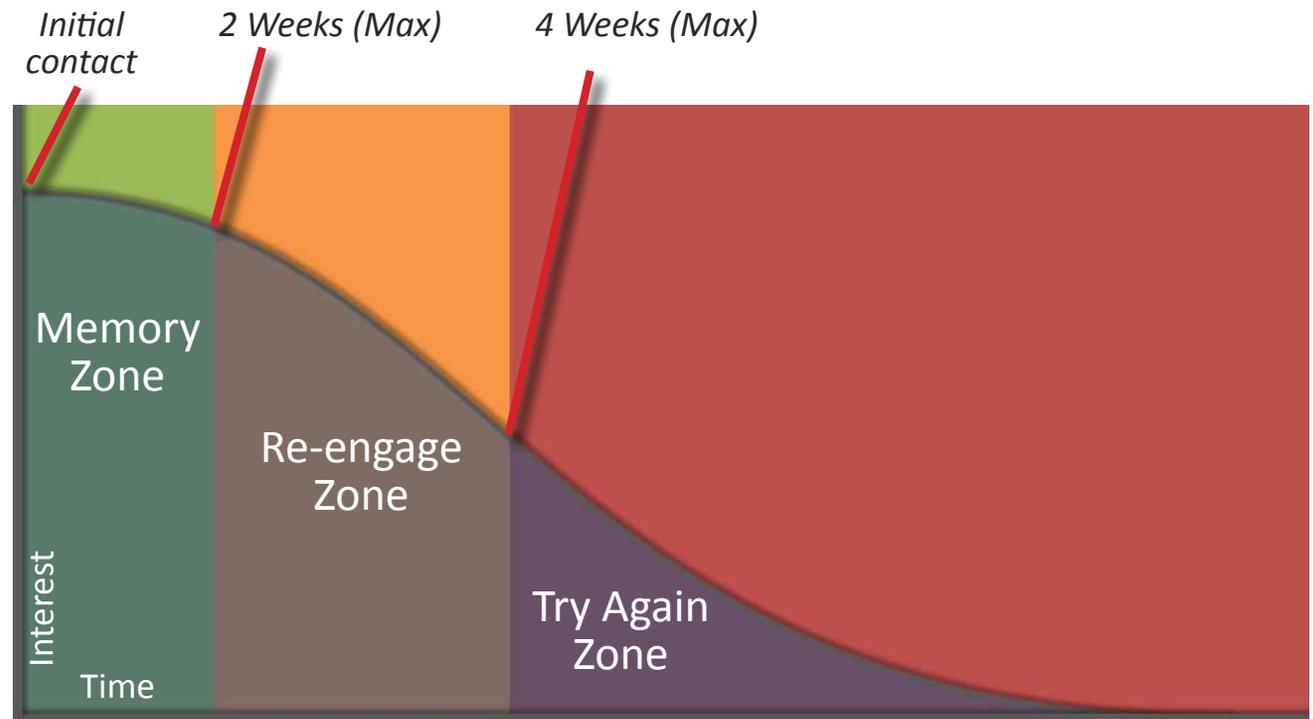
In your welcoming campaign you may choose to provide the recipient with things such as a 'greatest hits' from past issues, special offers and landing pages for first time recipients, and links to your site's subscription management page to customize their name, content, and frequency preferences. The campaign should have a definitive beginning and completion date, whether sent manually or by automated trigger, and should leave the recipient looking forward to your next regular campaign.

*The sooner you add subscribers to your list, the sooner you set expectations for the frequency and content in your campaigns.*

Expecting immediate acceptance by adding members without a campaign is tantamount to a forced handshake at a convention, which is obligatory and impersonal. Recall that you are sending to an inbox crowded with other offers, personal mail, and that your mailing can quickly become lost in the user's inbox. Thus, timing your campaigns and relevancy are crucial to not just this mailing, but the next one as well.

Delaying adding members to the list plays into the 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality. Though your member has subscribed at some point, in most cases their interest is only in your reaction. Expecting members to remain interested in your organization after weeks of inactivity on your part is hubris defined and will result in lower response by the consumer and lowered value of your hard-won membership.

*Interest drops off as the time between initial contact and the first email lengthens:*



## Problem 4: How do I manage my list and avoid running it into the ground?

Now that your members are in place, the welcoming campaign is over, and you are accounting for inactive recipients your attention should be focused on the quantifiable results from each campaign. Your ESP should provide a dashboard where each campaigns activity can be easily scanned and exported for later review. This information may include clickthroughs, opens, purchase tracking, and other factors that show the success of each campaign. It is up to you, the administrator, to translate each campaigns results into a plan of action for the next campaign.

*Subscribers tell you what they want by their activity in response to your emails. Use this data to create better campaigns.*

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*If you track activity, you can perfect your strategy. If you perfect your strategy, you can raise response.*

As previously stated, your relationship with recipients is the most important key to your campaign success. Recognize that members are individuals who rate, consciously or unconsciously, the importance of each element in your mail. They will guide you in creating and segmenting your next campaign.

Your ESP should provide the ability to separate or segment members by their interest in each element of the last mailing and allow you to take that information and customize the next piece of content to their specific interests.

For example, if your organization offers products available in red, green, or blue, knowing which members like which colors will allow you to build a segment, send relevant content to it, and drive the correct member to the landing page most likely to generate a sale. Assuming all members are interested in all products or the entirety of your messages will lead to lowered results and a greater turnover in your hard-won subscriber base.

## Conclusion

Though your ESP can provide the tools to manage a list, it is the administrator's responsibility to use them, observe the results, and adjust the lists sending and subscriber practices per campaign. Remaining static and ignorant of changes in the lists dynamics will result in the eventual failure to broadcast your message and deliver quantifiable results.

*Improving subscriber list management techniques will improve deliverability, increase revenues, and raise your marketing ROI.*

## About Net Atlantic

Founded in 1995, Net Atlantic, Inc. is a global email service provider (ESP) offering email marketing solutions, branded reseller programs and dedicated email marketing servers. Net Atlantic's goal is to help businesses maximize ROI with email tools like A/B/N split testing, triggered and sequential mailings, custom surveys, click streaming, spam analysis tools, open database connectivity, and an open API (application program interface for even further customization). Net Atlantic was one of the first email marketing companies.

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