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Why Your Email Lands in Spam, and How to Fix It

When your own emails get flagged as junk, it costs you customers you never hear from. The cause is usually fixable, and mostly a one-time setup.

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You send a quote, a reply, an invoice, a simple "thanks for reaching out," and it never gets read. Not because the customer ignored it. Because it landed in their spam folder, or vanished into a filter they never check. You have no idea it happened, and neither do they. The conversation just quietly dies.

This is one of the most frustrating problems in small business, precisely because it is invisible. The work looks done. The email looks sent. And the customer is left thinking you never got back to them.

The good news is that this is rarely bad luck, and it is rarely about what you wrote. It is almost always about whether the systems that sort email can confirm your message really came from you. Once you understand that, the fix is mostly a one-time setup, and the difference can be dramatic.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Email gets filtered mostly when systems **cannot confirm a message truly came from you**.
- The fix is largely a **one-time setup** that proves your domain is really sending the mail.
- **Send from your own business address**, not a free personal account, and look like a real business.
- This has become **stricter, not looser**: the big providers now expect proof, not the benefit of the doubt.

Why Good Email Gets Treated as Junk

Spam filters have an impossible job: sort the real mail from a relentless tide of scams, many of which pretend to be a legitimate business. So they have stopped giving senders the benefit of the doubt.

The single biggest question a filter asks is, in plain terms: can I prove this message actually came from who it claims to? Scammers constantly forge sender addresses, so anything a filter cannot verify is treated with suspicion. If your email is not set up to prove it is genuinely from your domain, it can get lumped in with the very forgeries it has nothing to do with. You get punished not for being a scammer, but for looking unverified.

The encouraging part is that proving you are genuine is something you set up once, behind the scenes, and then largely forget.

The Setup That Tells Filters You're Real

Behind every domain (your web address, the part after the @ in your email) there are a few settings that act like a signature and a public notice, vouching that mail from your address is really yours. You do not need to understand the machinery. You need to know it exists and that it should be in place.

When these are configured correctly, the receiving systems can check your mail against them and confirm it is legitimate. When they are missing or wrong, your perfectly honest email looks unverified, and filters treat unverified mail harshly. This is the most common reason a small business's email underperforms, and it is usually invisible until someone checks for it.

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THIS PART

This is a setup task, not a habit. Get these settings right once, and they keep working in the background for every email you send afterward. It is one of the highest-return hours you can spend on the unglamorous side of your business.

Send From Your Own Address

There is a simpler signal that quietly works against a lot of small businesses: sending important mail from a free personal account.

An address at a free consumer service is fine for personal use. For your business, it does two things you do not want. It looks less credible to the customer, who half-notices that a real company is writing from a generic personal inbox. And it makes the verification above harder, because you do not control that domain the way you control your own. Sending from an address at your own domain, the same name as your website, looks professional and lets you prove the mail is yours. It is a small change that pays off in both trust and deliverability.

Don't Look Like the Thing Filters Are Trained to Catch

Beyond the technical setup, a few habits keep you on the right side of the filters, because they are the habits real businesses tend to have and scammers tend not to.

Write like a person, not a billboard. Mail stuffed with all-caps, exclamation marks, and "act now" urgency trips the same wires as junk. Be careful with sending the same message to a large list all at once, especially to people who never asked to hear from you, which is a classic spam pattern. Make it easy for genuine subscribers to stop hearing from you if they want to. And keep the basics of your own accounts secure, because a hacked email account that starts blasting spam will get your domain flagged fast. (Those basics are worth getting right anyway. We cover them in [cybersecurity basics every small business and town should have](#).)

Why This Got Stricter, Not Looser

If it feels like this has gotten harder lately, you are not imagining it.

The largest email providers have tightened their expectations, and the trend is firmly in one direction: prove you are who you say you are, or expect to be filtered. They did this to cut down on the flood of scams, which is good for everyone, but it does mean the old approach of "just hit send and hope" no longer holds up. Mail that is not properly set up is treated worse than it was a few years ago, not better. The bar has moved, and it is not moving back.

It Should Just Work, Every Time

Email is still how most business actually gets done: the quote, the confirmation, the follow-up that turns an inquiry into a customer. If a meaningful share of it is silently disappearing, that is not a small leak. It is leads and goodwill draining away where you cannot see it. (It is also why a website that reliably captures and follows up on inquiries matters so much. More on that in [your website should be your hardest-working employee](#).)

The fix is not glamorous, but it is real and largely permanent: prove your mail is genuine, send from your own address, and avoid looking like the thing filters are built to stop. Do that, and your email goes back to doing its quiet, essential job: arriving, and getting read.

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Not sure whether your email is reaching people? Get in touch and we will check how your domain is set up and get your mail landing where it should: in the inbox.

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