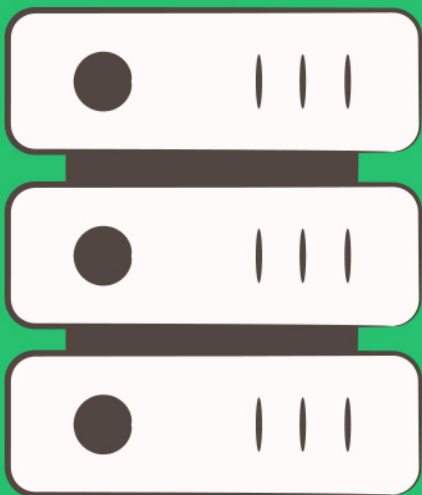


# How to **warm-up** a dedicated IP



# How to warm-up a dedicated IP

At Zoho Campaigns you can choose either shared or dedicated IP addresses to send your emails. You can choose the IP based on the business requirements and your daily email volume.

When you decide to use a dedicated IP for your domain, you must warm it up before you start sending emails. This is because mailbox providers and Internet Service Provider (ISP) view email from a new IP address as suspicious until they establish a positive reputation. Therefore it is always recommended to warm-up your IP before you start sending emails.

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## What is IP warm-up?

IP warming is the process of methodically adding email volume to a new IP address gradually over several days and weeks in order to establish a positive reputation with mailbox providers and ISP.

## What is IP reputation?

IP reputation is a measure of your IP's credibility. ISPs and mailbox providers rate credibility in different ways. Some assign a score from 0 to 100 and some grade credibility as good or bad, or sometimes as low, medium and high. Whenever you send emails, ISPs and mailbox providers carefully assess the emails and the impact it creates.

### **Your IP earns a positive reputation under the following circumstances:**

- 1) When your emails don't contain spammy content.
- 2) The recipients read all of your emails.
- 3) When your emails keep the recipients engaged.
- 4) When you authenticate your sender domain.

### **Your IP earns a negative score and loses its credibility under the following circumstances:**

- 1) When your emails have spammy content.
- 2) When recipients mark your email as spam.
- 3) When your emails receive lot of bounces.
- 4) When your emails receive lot of unsubscribes.

- 5) When recipients delete your email without opening it.
- 6) When your sender domain or the urls used in your email is blacklisted.

## Why IP reputation is important

Mailbox providers offer inbox placement only for emails from the IPs that have very high credibility. If your IP's reputation is poor, it can lead to slower email delivery, email rejection (soft bounces) and sometimes your emails will be classified as spam. This will seriously affect on-time inbox placement and conversion. To ensure the success of your email campaigns, it is essential to have a positive IP reputation.

Lets take a look at the techniques that can be used to warm-up your IP.

## Warm-up pre-requisites

**Before you start warming up your dedicated IP, you must do the following:**

- 1) Implement authentication techniques like SPF, DKIM, DMARC and update the records and domain keys. Click [here](#) to learn about setting up SPF and DKIM TXT records for your domain.
- 2) Subscribe to the feedback services offered by mailbox providers. This will help you monitor your sender domain's reputation during the warm up procedure.
- 3) Clean your mailing list and segment it. You must identify the active contacts in your mailing list as they will be the first to receive emails during the warm up procedure.

4) Identify the campaign which received the highest open rate and click rate. You can craft emails on the lines of your most successful campaign and send it during the warm-up activity.

## Warm-up procedure

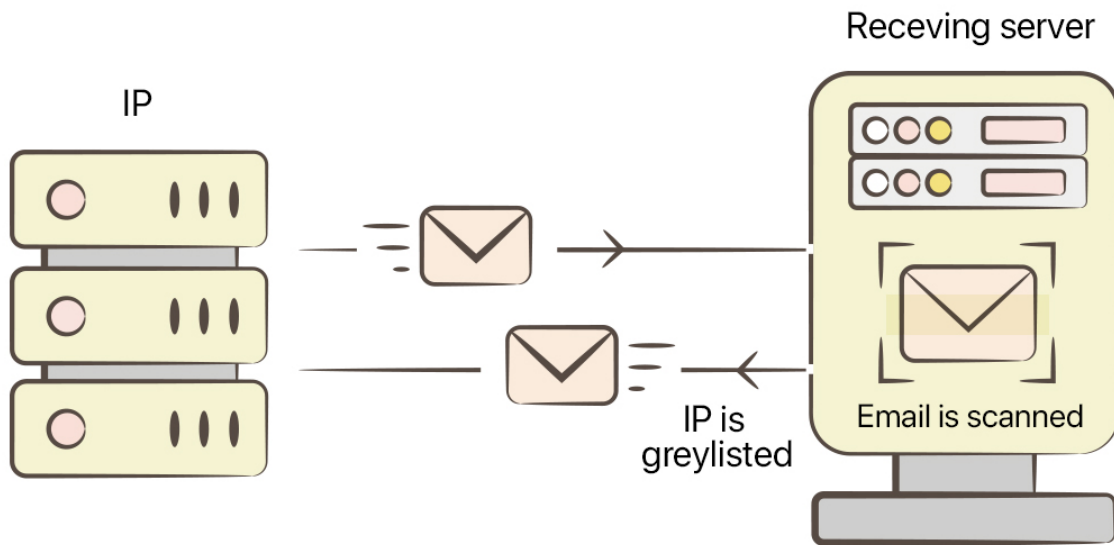
The goal of IP warm-up is to ramp up the sending capacity of an IP to the level you anticipated. You can start off by sending 50 emails on day 1 and double the number once in two or three days until you send the anticipated number of emails.

Day	Number of emails
1	50
2	50
3	100
4	100
5	200
6	200
7	400
8	400
9	800
10	800

11	1600
12	1600
13	3200
14	3200
15	6400
16	6400
17	12800
18	12800
19	25600
20	25600
21	51200

During this approach, you may face delivery issues when your IP is greylisted, blacklisted or when your emails receive spam markings and complaints. In such situations you must revisit and correct your sending rate and sending practices to resolve the issues. Let us learn more about the issues that may arise during the warm-up procedure and its solutions.

## When your IP is greylisted



When you are sending emails from a new IP, sometimes you will experience slower acceptance of your emails or email rejection. This will happen when your IP is greylisted.

Lets learn more about the reasons for email deferrals and rejection.

### Temporary deferral

Temporary deferral is a condition where the receiving server temporarily refuses to deliver your emails. This does not mean that your emails will not be delivered forever. It means that your emails will not be delivered until the issue that led to the deferral is resolved.

### Reasons for temporary deferrals are:

- 1) The receiving server does not have any open port to receive your email.
- 2) The receiving server is experiencing some technical difficulties.
- 3) The receiving server doesn't recognize your IP.



Normally, our Mail Transfer Agent (MTA) will attempt to send emails for up to 96 hours until the email is delivered. The time taken to deliver the emails will vary according to the issue faced by our MTA. If the emails can't be delivered over the stipulated period, it will be considered as a soft bounce.

During the warm-up procedure, if your emails experience temporary deferral, you should reduce the email volume and send half of what you had sent earlier or even less to ensure safe delivery.

### **If your emails have spammy content**

When you send emails, the recipient server scans its content before accepting it. If your emails contain spammy content, the receiving server will reject your emails. In such scenarios, you should revisit your email content, identify and remove the spammy elements and then try to send the emails again.

After making the necessary changes to the email content, when you resume the warm-up procedure, send very few emails to verify the response you get. If your emails are received well and if they are not rejected, you can slowly increase the email volume.

### **If your sending rate is high**

When you send a large volume of emails through a new IP, your emails may get rejected and you may get one of the following messages:

“Rate limit temporarily exceeded”

“You have reached a limit for sending mail”

This is because you would have added a lot of recipients in a single email or you would have sent a huge volume of emails within a short period.

The receiving server will not be able to accept your emails immediately and your emails will be rejected. Sometimes your emails will be flagged as spam or will be quarantined.

During the warm-up procedure, if your emails are rejected due to a high sending rate, you must stop sending the current email volume. When you send the next batch of emails, your email volume should be half of what you had sent earlier or even lesser.

For example, let's assume that you have been sending 500 emails. You decide to increase the email volume and start sending 1000 emails per day. If you face delivery issues when you send 1000 emails per day, you must stop sending emails immediately. You must resume the warm-up procedure by sending 500 or even 250 emails per day. You can slowly increase the email volume based on successful email delivery.

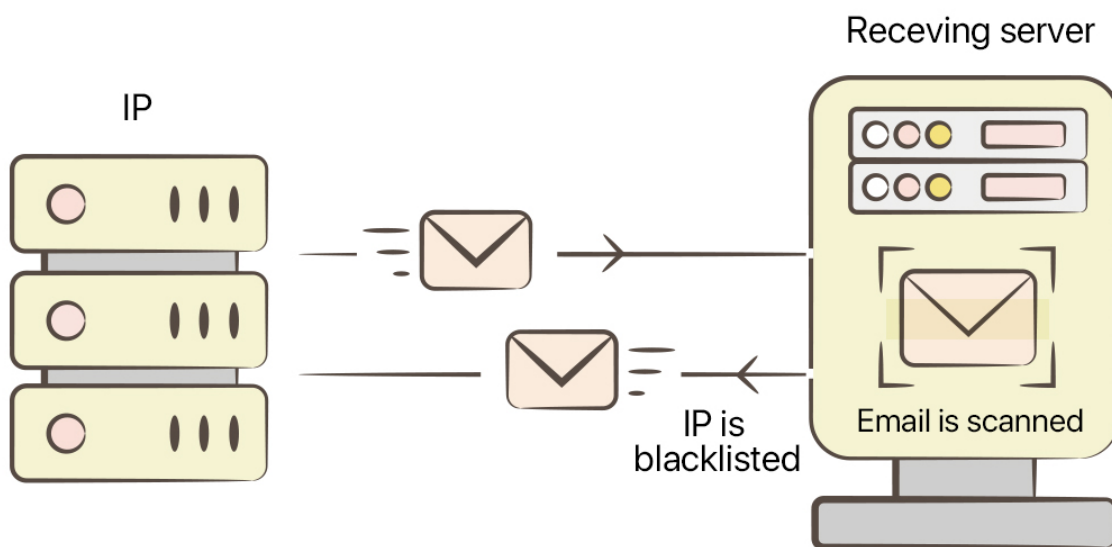
### **If your previous email campaigns have received complaints or unsubscribes**

The performance of your previous campaigns will affect your future campaigns. If your previous email campaign has received complaints and a lot of unsubscribes, the receiving server will take this into consideration and reject your emails. In such scenarios, you should perform the following actions:

- 1) Identify the source of the complaint and take corrective measures.
- 2) Verify the mailing list to which you have sent emails.
- 3) Revisit the email content and verify if it is crafted properly and if it is relevant to the recipient's need and interest.

When you resume the warm-up procedure, after rectifying the flaw, you must send very few emails to test the response. You can send emails to your active contacts first. If your emails are received well and they don't receive complaints or unsubscribes, you can send emails to other contacts and slowly increase the email volume. This will help you improve inbox placement and prevent your IP from earning a negative reputation score.

## When your IP is blacklisted

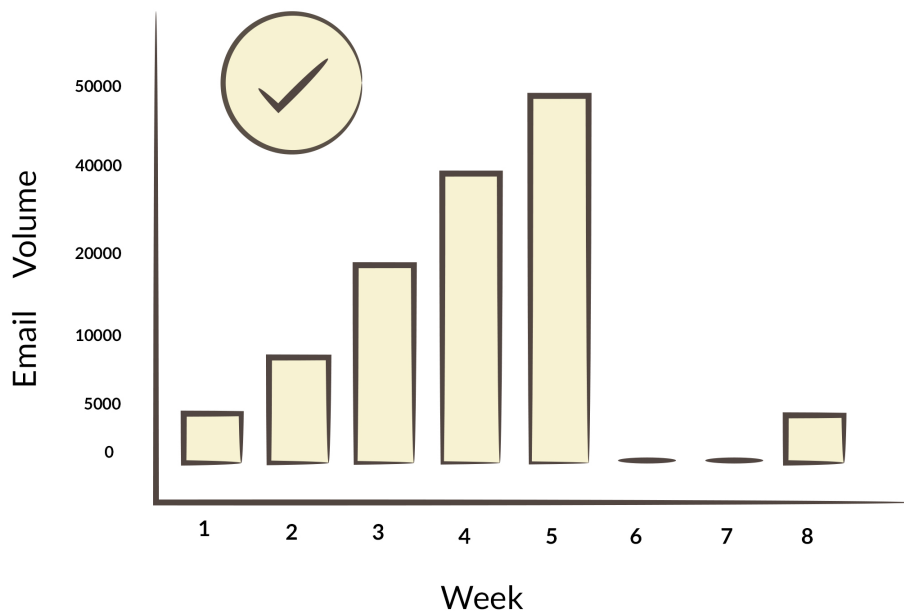
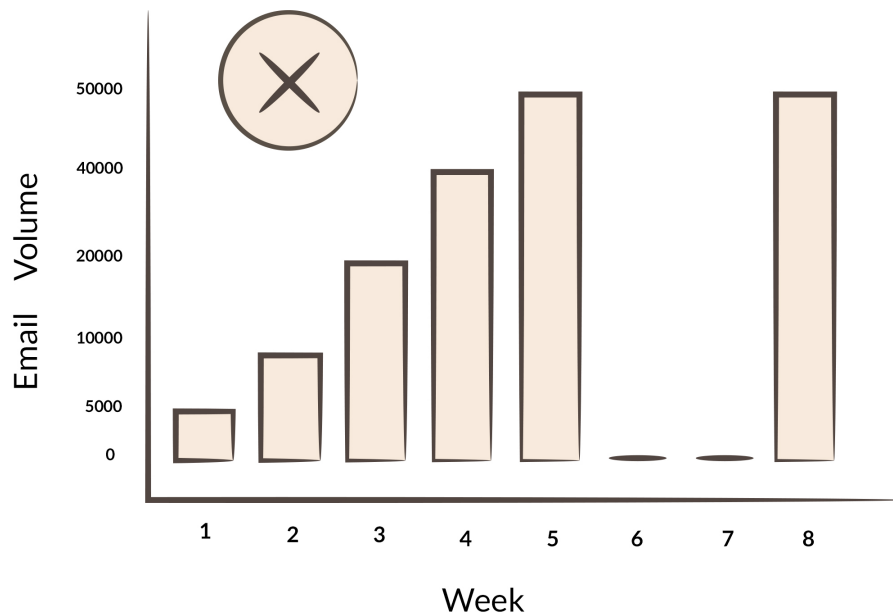


When you are warming up a new IP, sometimes your emails may get rejected. This will happen when mailbox providers or anti spam services blacklist your IP. In such cases you must immediately stop sending emails through the IP. You must visit the guidelines and best practices listed by the mailbox provider and blacklist service provider and rectify your sending practices.

Then, you must request the mailbox provider and the black list service provider to delist your IP by explaining the corrective measures you have taken. The delisting process may take a day, or few week or even a month. Until then, you should not send emails through the IP.

If the suspension period is more than three days, you should restart the warm up procedure from scratch. You should start sending 50 emails per day and slowly increase the email volume.

## When you stop the warm-up procedure and resume it after a short break



During the warm-up procedure, If you stop the procedure all of a sudden, leave a gap and resume the warm-up procedure from where you left, you will face delivery issues.

When you send a considerable volume of emails for a while, abruptly stop sending emails for a period and suddenly send a huge volume of emails, your activity will resemble that of spammers. This behavior will kindle the suspicion of the mailbox provider and they might reject your emails.

For example, during the warm up procedure, lets assume that you have been sending 50000 emails per day. Now you stop sending emails for a couple of weeks. After a few weeks of inactivity, if you resume the warm-up procedure from where you left by sending 50000 emails, you will face delivery issues.

This is because mailbox providers will track the history along with your reputation when they receive a huge volume of emails from an IP. Since you stopped sending emails for a couple of weeks, you would have sent 0 emails during that period. If you send 50000 emails after the brief period of inactivity, mailbox providers will observe a huge spike in the email volume. This will definitely lead to delivery issues like email rejection.

In such scenarios, you should restart the warm up procedure from scratch. You should start sending 50 emails per day and slowly increase the email volume.

## When your emails receive spam markings

When your emails are marked spam, you should immediately stop sending emails and dive deep to identify the reason. You should verify the email subject and content and ensure that the emails address the recipients needs and interest. You should resume sending emails only after correcting the flaw.

## Can we quickly warm-up an IP?

A new IP gains reputation gradually over a period of time. If you try to quickly warm up your IP by sending a huge volume of emails right from the beginning, mailbox providers and ISPs will notice a spike in the emails from the IP and consider it suspicious. This will incur a negative reputation for the IP. It is always better to slowly build your IP's reputation as it will help you in the long run.

## Best practices for IP warm-up

- 1) During the warm up process, keep monitoring the recipient's response, open rate, click rate and the bounce report.
- 2) If most of your contacts use Gmail, you can use the [Google Postmaster Tool](#) to monitor your IP's reputation.
- 3) You can also run your IP through spam databases like Spamhaus and blacklists to ensure that your IP has not been blacklisted. If your IP has been blacklisted, you must take necessary actions to whitelist your IP.

Warming up a new IP is not something you can achieve overnight. When you warm up a new IP, you incorporate a series of hygienic techniques into your sending practice. These techniques not only prepares your IP to send emails, but also earns a positive reputation from mailbox providers and ISPs. If used properly, a dedicated IP can work wonders for your email campaigns. All you have to do is incorporate healthy practices and stick to them everyday.



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