



**"MARKETING"**

# **HOW TO TRASH YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION WITH EMAIL**

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## "MARKETING" HOW TO TRASH YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION WITH EMAIL

**L**ike your credit report and other government or privately tracked information, your email address is part of your online identity. There is no short-cut to establishing a good online reputation. It's a bigger part of your business reputation than most people think, and it's just as easy to trash.

Here's how:

### **CHANGING IDENTITY**

I've seen an increase in some unscrupulous sales people changing their email address slightly, thereby fooling spam filters. In order to do this, you need to own your domain name (ie mydomain.com) and control your email addresses.

You send a message as dave@mydomain.com. Because it's spam, eventually it's blocked by most spam filters. The following week, because someone told you it was clever and good marketing practice, you change your email to dave2@mydomain.com and send another email.

Many people's spam filters are not set to block entire domains (ie anything that comes from any address in mydomain.com). So, if you've seen the same person sending you emails, even though you added them to your "junk" list, that's probably why.



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### **SPAM**

Yes, the old favorite and the one that started it all. Anyone who uses email knows that spam is "unwanted bulk email". When I define it, I take out the word "bulk". I never ceased to be amazed that many email senders consider it "okay" to send me a bunch of crap I never wanted and call it "business to business" messages to try and avoid being labeled as spam.

I see this a lot in real estate. Some agents swear by it, the theory being if you throw enough, something will stick. I guarantee that most of those listing emails are ending up with blocked sender rules in spam filters, and both an email and business reputation are being ruined.

### **MASKING**

Making your email address appear from one address when it's actually from another. This is a favored "phishing" method and many email systems are blocking this type of email. Yet they still come in.

In order to mask your address you need some technical savvy, but it's also possible to trash someone else's reputation with it. I found that one of my own domain names was being used by someone to send out spam. As a result, I started getting emails from spam blockers and individuals notifying me about viruses that I'd attached on emails I'd never sent. Someone had "masked" a



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genetic address (ie email@mydomain.com), a address I didn't even have a mailbox for.

Fortunately, I have a "catch-all" address in case someone misspells my name, so I was receiving anything addressed to my domain. Once your domain is "blacklisted", it's very hard to get back...

### "EMOTICONS"

Everyone's seen these, the little happy faces or animations that you can "download for free" and make your emails a little more special. While I'm a big advocate of "free is good", many of these email addons come with spyware that is difficult to remove.

Some of these "freebies" track messages, capture address and other information and then spam the recipients. By sending these "laced" messages, you risk spreading malware (malicious software). Finally, many of these tools increase the size of the message substantially, taking up space that the recipient may not have.

### SIGNING PEOPLE UP WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE

This happens quite a bit. Someone conversing with you doesn't automatically give you the right to add them to your mailing list. Many people are too polite to



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say anything, but they never forget...

### **JOKES, "CHECK THIS OUT" ETC**

On the heels of the last point, comes this one. It's bad enough to sign someone up for your emails without their permission, but when you start forwarding jokes, prayer requests or other unsolicited (yes, spam), I think you're out of line.

Personal and business emails should remain separate. You could end up forwarding a virus, or worse still, offending someone. Haven't you received emails that have been forwarded dozens of times?

See all those other addresses in there? Ever wonder how some people get your information?

I still see a lot of "if you forward this to 10 people now, you'll get rich quick" messages from people I thought might know better. Sigh.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Big attachments take up space. Some email routers won't even forward them. Some may contain viruses. Repeatedly sending big attachments will get you added to junk lists and might even get your domain blacklisted.



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### **BCC (Blind Carbon Copy)**

You send an email to recipient A and blind copy recipient B. That's okay, we all need to do this from time to time. You send an email to yourself and blind copy your entire address book. Not so smart.

You may not even be aware that many email systems won't forward emails that have too many BCC'd recipients...and they don't tell you.

So, if you want to trash your online "street cred", try some of the above. You should start getting results pretty quickly.