

Tips for Avoiding Spam

What steps can I take to minimize the chance that my survey invitation/reminder email from Qualtrics will be marked as spam?

First, we want to describe how survey invitations are often marked as spam.

This often depends on the kind of engagement (open/clicks) you get with your audiences. Mailbox providers look less at the content of the email and more at how users are engaging, so if the mailbox provider determines that too many people are providing negative feedback or not engaging at all, emails will be moved into the spam folder. The things we see most that can send your emails to the spam folder are:

- High number of spam complaints (users clicking “this is spam” within their mailbox provider)
- Low number of active subscribers (people are not opening your emails)
- Email was sent to a spam trap (email addresses that exist for the sole purpose of catching senders that don’t clean their list – a spam trap will never open/click an email)

Based on those three things, we recommend the following to ensure you avoid those issues:

- **Set expectations up front with your email recipients:** when they are added to your list, let them know how many surveys they might expect to receive and give them options for receiving less email (if possible) or to opt out → this helps reduce spam complaints
- **Send relevant messaging:** not only do you want to make sure you don’t send to the whole population every time, you also want to only send to those whom the topic is applicable → this helps reduce spam complaints and keeps active subscribers high
- **Remove inactive subscribers:** if someone hasn’t opened any email from you in a while, remove them from your list → this helps keep active subscribers high and reduces risk of hitting spam traps

The content of your email matters too. When survey invitation emails from Qualtrics mimic emails commonly sent from spammers, there is a chance your email will be flagged. Here are some content-related tips:

- Avoid exclamation points!
- Avoid multiple exclamation points!!!!!!
- AVOID ABUSE OF CAPS
- Check your grammar and your spelling carefully (filters look for signs of grammar/spelling mistakes)
- Avoid mentions of giveaways, prizes, gift cards and sweepstakes
- Avoid phrases like “chance to win”
- Avoid phrases like “randomly selected”
- Avoid creating a sense of urgency with your language
- Avoid all hidden links. Hidden links are links that not show where it really goes like “[click here](#)”. Instead keep the link text true to the actual URL: <https://email.osu.edu/>
- Do not send reminder emails that have the exact same language, but with the addition of “Reminder” in the subject line

The following website may also be helpful as you are thinking about content:

<https://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/401-reasons-your-email-is-spam.html>

Below are two website tools that test how likely your email is to go to spam:

<http://www.isnotspam.com/>

<https://www.mail-tester.com/>