NAVIGATING EMAIL AND SMS DELIVERABILITY

BEST PRACTICES FOR GETTING YOUR MESSAGES SEEN!

What is deliverability?
Deliverability is the ability to get your email and text messages seen by your subscribers, members, and supporters. This is something we used to take for granted: if people are subscribed to our email or SMS programs, they'll see our messages. But over the past decade, providers have made significant changes that make it harder and harder to get our messages seen.

Why does deliverability matter?
It can take a lot of resources (time and money) to improve your organization's deliverability. So why bother?

- **CONNECTION**
  - You want your audience (members, supporters, activists, donors), to feel engaged with and informed about your mission and campaigns.
- **REPUTATION**
  - You want your supporters to see you as a trusted messenger and believe the messages you send are important and valuable.
- **FUNDRAISING**
  - Email and SMS are major donation channels, but supporters need to see your messages to respond.
- **ADVOCACY**
  - Similar to fundraising, if people don't see your emails/SMS, they'll miss opportunities to sign petitions, volunteer, etc.

Currently, we are in a "Deliverability Crisis"!
There are many causes for this crisis, including changes in user behavior, saturation of email and SMS inboxes (you're not just competing with other organizations - you're competing with every company that messages your subscribers), and lack of understanding of one's audience/subscribers.

...And Email and SMS Providers Have Noticed
Email services like gmail and SMS providers like Apple want to keep users on their platforms. They've responded by:

- Shifting from a pure 1-1 model to an algorithmic model like social media (where predictive algorithms try to decide what you actually want to see
- Different inboxes (like the "promotions" tab in gmail)
- Stricter rules for SMS

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THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE DELIVERABILITY

1. **Watch your block, bounce and unsubscribe rates.** High rates of these tell providers you might be a spammer. If any of these rates go above 1%, make sure you're sending to the right audiences.
2. **Keep your click and open rates high.** These tell providers that your subscribers want to hear from you. Send more to highly engaged segments of your audience.
3. **If you are increasing your send volume, do it gradually.** Don't be afraid to message your subscribers frequently, especially those who are highly engaged. But if you're increasing your send volume, do it gradually, and keep an eye on the metrics from #1.

Worksheets & Resources

Slides from Climate Advocacy Lab/The Movement Cooperative Deliverability Training

Recording of Deliverability Training

Action Network's Deliverability Guide

The full slides linked above offer dozens of useful resources for those who really want to delve into the nitty gritty of email and SMS deliverability!