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BLACKOUT

A Shocking Story Of How You Can Do Everything Right And Still Get Your Profits Cut In Half By Spam Filters

PLUS – Two Specific Actions You Can Take To Avoid A Similar Email Quagmire

Last week I launched a new product... and I did more than \$382,000.00 in sales in the first three days.

That is a really large number, and I am gratified to have done it... and I am thankful to all my clients and partners.

But the REALLY amazing thing is that the number could have been TWICE as big if my web site hadn't been blocked from approximately half of the Internet.

This "blacklisting" can happen to anyone at anytime... and it is very important that you understand what happened.

It cost me a lot of money this week – and I don't want that to happen to you.

I am just thankful that I was actually USING my Product Launch Formula. It was in full swing... and the powerful momentum I built I was still able to produce some amazing sales figures, even if my message was only getting through to half the Internet.

Better to do half and pull in \$382k, than to get half of a \$7,000 launch...

You Press The "Send" Button...

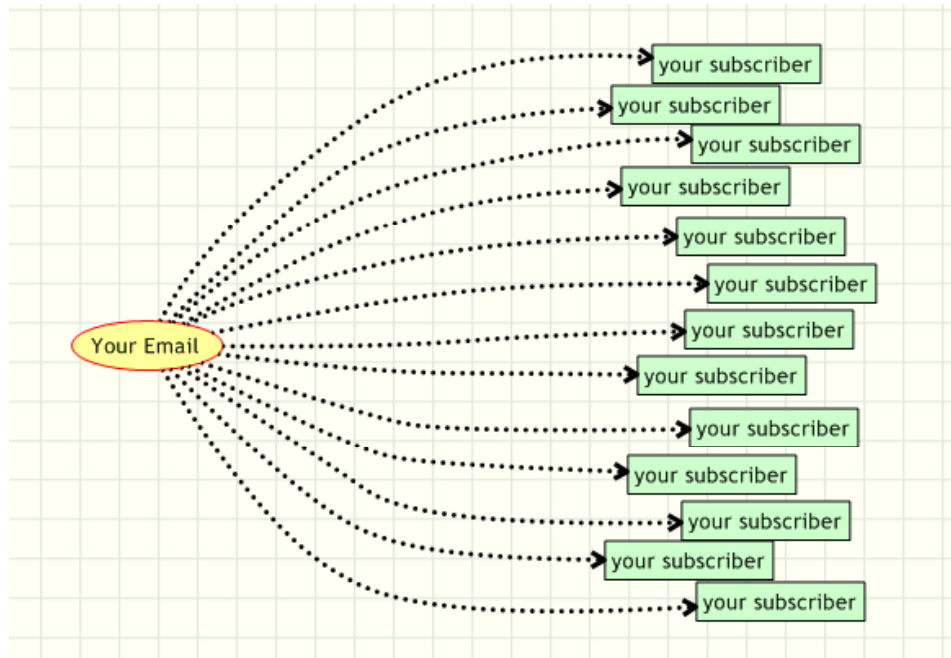
Suppose you are sending out email to your subscribers...

And if you have any partners or affiliates, they are sending out email for you as well.

You are playing by all the rules, running a squeaky clean operation. You make sure your email doesn't have any of those words or phrases that could possibly trip any spam filters.

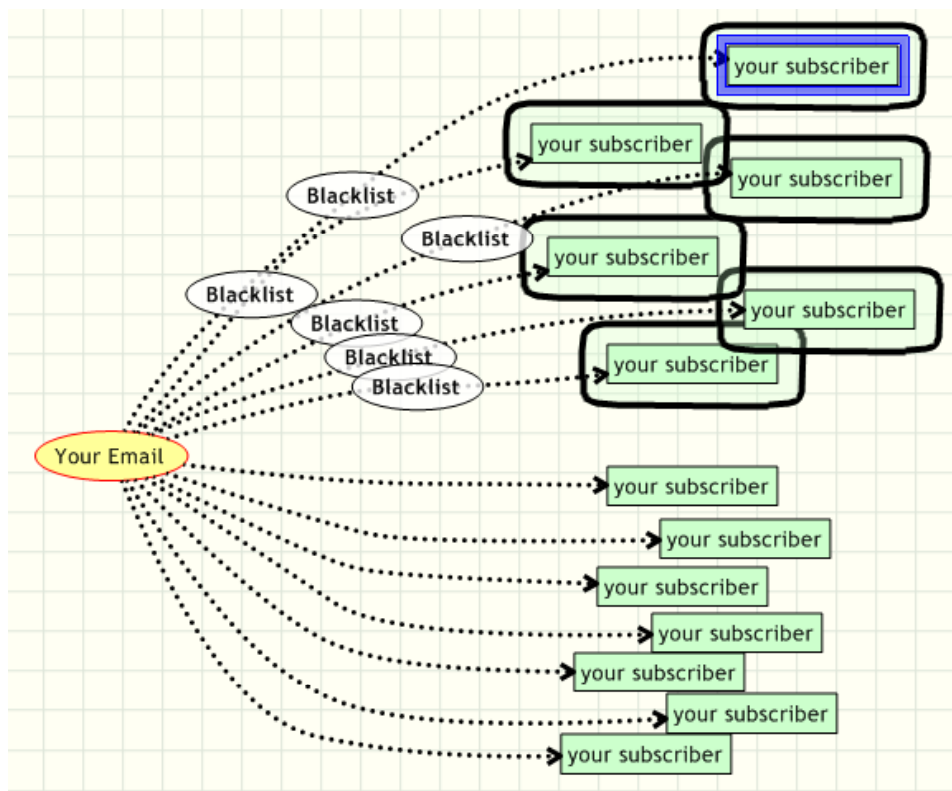
In fact, you take the extra step to run your email pieces through the various spam filters just to make sure they are clean.

This is probably what you think is happening...



Now, that's a bright rosy picture... all your email happily landing in your subscribers inbox.

However, the picture might end up looking like this:



All those black boxes around your subscribers are blacklist filters – those email addresses won't receive **ANY EMAIL THAT MENTIONS A BLACKLISTED WEB SITE.**

That is what happened to me last week...

300 Million Email Addresses... BLACKED OUT!

I will tell you right off – that 300 million number is the minimum. There is no way to know the exact number.

HOWEVER, I will tell you that it is more likely well over 500 million.

The best estimates I can get are that 50% of the Internet was blocked from receiving ANY email that even MENTIONED my domain name – ProductLaunchFormula.com. Which means that probably half the people that wanted to buy my course didn't even know the sales letter was posted!

All because my domain was listed on three separate "blacklists."

Now here is the REALLY interesting thing – I have NEVER sent even a SINGLE email from the domain that was blacklisted!

Please read that last sentence carefully. I didn't land on these blacklists because of the email I sent!

Since the blackout, I have had a lot of people send me email telling me what they think caused the problem – they gave all kinds of reasons, from my IP address, to my web host, to my MX record...on and on. **Unfortunately, all of those people were wrong...** this issue is much more complex than just about anyone realizes.

And it could impact YOU under the right set of circumstances...**even if you are PLAYING BY THE RULES.**

BLACKLISTS And The Common Denominator...

There are LOTS of different blacklists. As far as I can tell, there are ZERO standards for them... anyone can start a blacklist any time they like. Some of them are rather murky organizations – it is hard to tell exactly who runs them or how they are run. And you often have no way of knowing what ISPs are using which lists.

Most of the blacklists hide their listing criteria, the same way that Google hides its ranking criteria. And for the same reason – to keep people from “gaming” them.

Nevertheless, it is important for you to understand what you are up against. That is what this report is all about.

Now if you have been online for any length of time, you know that email gets filtered. Even if you have been just sending personal email with your friends, you know that it can be easy to trip spam filters.

And if you have been PUBLISHING online, then you undoubtedly know that you have to worry about what you put in your message... or else it can get filtered.

That is NOT what I am talking about...

The Kill Word...

I am talking about having your DOMAIN NAME become a “kill word”. No matter who sends the email. No matter how they send it.

That's right... last Friday, if **you** sent an email to **your own mother** that was completely blank except for the term “ProductLaunchFormula.com,” then your email would have

tripped these filters. **If your mother had a Hotmail or MSN or Comcast address, or an address at any of the services run by Outblaze, she would not have gotten your email.**

This is how it happened...

In the last 10 days or so, my product launch created an incredible firestorm on the Internet. Literally millions of pieces of email were flying around talking about my impending product launch.

(That was all part of my plan – to turn my product launch into a HUGE event that had the marketplace just buzzing. And the plan worked perfectly.)

Some of those emails were from me... publishing to my “announcement list” of people that wanted to know about my product.

Lots of those emails were from my partners, promoting my product and all the free information I was giving away ahead of the launch.

And many of those emails were from people caught up in the frenzy leading up to my launch... people emailing their friends about my new product.

Those MILLIONS of emails all had one common thread – they contained my domain name – ProductLaunchFormula.com.

The “Evil” Button

OK, maybe the word “evil” is a bit strong. But “the button” certainly causes an awful lot of needless damage...

Inside many email programs (for example, at Yahoo and AOL) there is a button for reporting spam. It is generically call the “This Is Spam” button.

The theory is that if a user receives spam, they click on that button to report it.

Unfortunately, there are many ignorant or lazy users who use that button to unsubscribe from lists they asked to be on. They sign up for your list, and then when they no longer want to receive your email, they press that “spam” button instead of clicking the unsubscribe link.

Then there is another entire group of people who sign up for your list and then forget that they did so... or they don’t recognize the mail as coming from you... and they hit the “This Is Spam” button.

This WILL happen to you if you publish via email. I guarantee it. Some small percentage of your subscribers will report your email as spam.

In general, those people hitting that nasty “This Is Spam” button don’t matter much.

But when you have MILLIONS of emails being sent, then the number of people reporting that email as spam starts to add up.

And that is where the trouble starts...

The One-Two-Three Punch: Brightmail, MessageLabs, and Outblaze SURBL

Now you may have never heard of those three blacklists... but they impact a huge amount of email. For example, anyone who uses Hotmail, MSN, or Comcast either didn't get our mail, or had it flagged as spam... whether they knew it or not.

One of the things these blacklists do is look for domain names or URLs and, if they see one that enough users have said is spam-based, they trigger – they either block the email or raise the spam score.

And there is apparently another filter – if your domain is less than 90 days old, then there is a lot less tolerance for your domain name ending up in a lot of email being reported as spam.

My ProductLaunchFormula.com domain was less than 90 days old.

And with so much email flying around with the domain in it, there was bound to be a lot of lazy or misinformed people who pressed that “spam button”.

In other words, **my domain was hit with a double whammy**... and it became a “kill word”... any email with my domain in it was filtered by any ISP that used those filters.

Playing By The Rules Is Not Enough...

I want to be very clear about this... my business is squeaky clean.

My host is super clean, and doesn't tolerate web sites that advertise using spam. I have a dedicated IP address.

My email list host – Aweber.com – is SUPER clean, has great deliverability, and does not tolerate spam.

I have been publishing online since 1996. And ever since day one, **I have played completely by the rules.**

I have sent THOUSANDS of ezines, email newsletters, and autoresponder broadcasts.

My best guess is that the total is something like 5,700 email broadcasts.

EVERY SINGLE ONE of them was permission-based... I only sent those emails to people who specifically asked for them.

And more than three years ago I changed all my lists to confirmed opt-in... to make sure that my operation was cleaner than clean.

Unfortunately, that is not enough anymore...

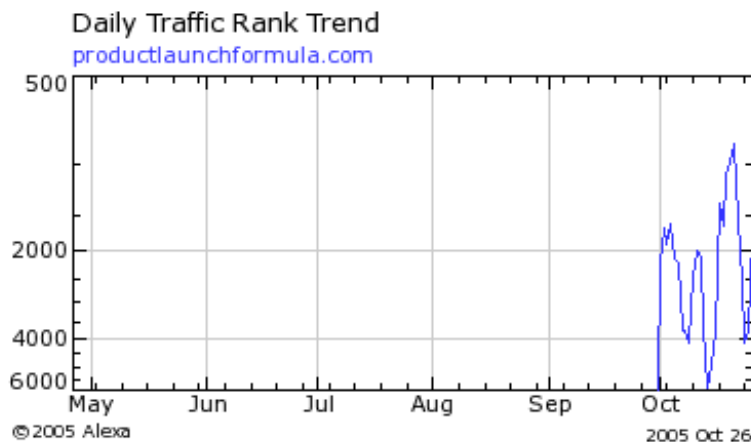
Victim Of My Own Success?

When the story of the way my site was blacklisted started making the rounds, there was lots of conjecture... had I been a victim of my own success? After all, my product is all about creating a FRENZY around a new product launch.

And yes, I had created a frenzy.

Even with the blacklisting, and half the email being sent to promote my product launch being blocked, I still sold 382 copies of my \$997.00 Product Launch Formula in the first 72 hours.

And take a look at my Alexa.com ranking – I basically went from zero up to somewhere in the top 1000, literally overnight:



The bottom line is that my launch generated SO much buzz that it generated too many "spam button" hits across too many lists. And all those clicks counted against me... I really was a victim of my own success.

Of course, that only validates my formula... it shows what a brand new web site and a brand new business can do if you apply the process.

Remember... I haven't ever sold a product in the "Internet marketing" niche. I didn't have a business, or any real list. All of this buzz, all of this traffic was created by applying my own formula.

And remember, that traffic, those sales, and the buzz were all created while half the Internet couldn't receive any of the email that was being sent for it.

Nevertheless, with the blacklisting problems I experienced... I need to make a VERY slight change in the Formula.

How Can You Avoid The Blacklists?

Now obviously, this blacklist situation has been very painful for me. I have had to pull down the order form off my web site – and that site was generating \$124 per MINUTE for the first couple of days it was up.

That hurts... but I will tell you more about that in a minute.

For now, let me give you the quick fixes so you don't end up in a similar situation.

#1

The first thing you can do is make sure the domain you are using is more than 90 days old. This means you must have REGISTERED the domain more than 90 days before you do any volume of mail pointing to it.

#2

The second thing you can do is to have your partners use "redirects" when they send people to your site. In other words, have them point to an address on their site, or a third site, that re-directs people to your site.

There are many ways to do this automatically, and I am not going to go into all of them here (this is a "quick and dirty" report – I just want to get it in as many people's hands as possible, as quickly as I can).

Another option (which is possibly safer) is to have your partners send people to a page on their site that "pre-sells" them and has a link for them to click on if they want more information.

Is It That Simple?

Yes, those two steps sound way too simple. But if I had known about them eight days ago, it might have been worth an extra \$380,000 in sales to me.

Ouch.

Think about that.

In any case, there are other things you need to do to avoid all spam filter issues... and they are beyond the scope of this report.

But don't overlook those two steps. They cost me a small fortune...

\$124 Per Minute...

OK, you might be wondering why I pulled down my order page even though it was making an INSANE amount of money.

The answer is really pretty simple – it was the only fair thing for my potential clients and for my partners.

You see, I put together a huge \$2,000.00 bonus for everyone who bought in the first week that my product was on sale.

One of the tactics that I teach in my Product Launch Formula is to give people a reason to act when you launch your product. And that is exactly what I was doing.

I designed this bonus to give people a HUGE incentive to get my course immediately.

The problem is, only about half the people who should have been getting the message about my course were actually getting it. That wasn't fair to all those people who SHOULD have been hearing about my course, and that wasn't fair to my partners... who were diligently mailing their subscribers about my course.

So three days into my one-week product launch, I pulled the offer down...

The RE-LAUNCH

Now that the dust has settled some (and we are off the Outblaze blacklist), I am going to re-release the Product Launch Formula.

And we still have four days left in the original launch promotion... that means you have FOUR DAYS left to get the original bonus package.

The re-launch will be this Monday at noon eastern time. And there will a special bonus for the first people to buy... so make sure you are there on time.

This is the URL:

<http://productlaunchformula.com>

We still have about 85 copies left from our initial run.

If you miss out on getting one of those copies, there will be a delay... but it won't be too bad. I have ordered another 500 copies - I just hung up the phone from our fulfillment house 30 seconds ago, and they said they should be ready to go by the end of next week.

In addition, you can follow any breaking news on the blackout at my blog:

<http://productlaunchformula.com/blog>

That's all for now. I will probably be putting together a more detailed report after ALL the dust settles and I can further investigate the entire thing.

Best regards,
Jeff Walker

PS: If you really want to know how to create a FIRESTORM about your product – the same way I just did it... then you owe it to yourself to check [out Product Launch Formula](#) now.