

# Email Deliverability Rates Impacted by Time Campaigns Sent

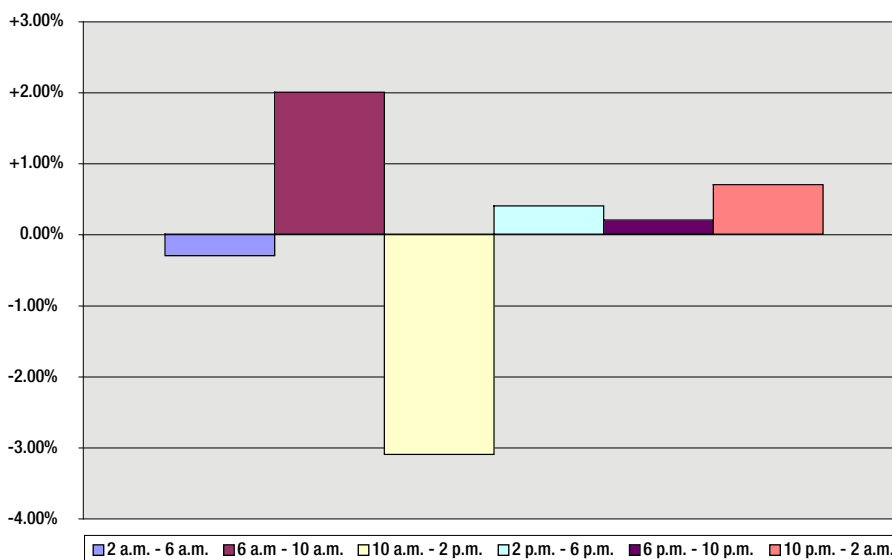
## *Mondays emerge as strongest deliverability days*

Marketers sending permission-based email campaigns can see their overall deliverability rate vary by as much as ten percent, purely based on the day of week and time of day mailings occur. Delivery percentage variances show the percent improvement or decline companies can expect to see to their deliverability averages based on when mailing occurs. Significant variances occur when looking at different times, days, and time/day combinations.

### *Delivery by time of day*

The highest delivery rates were obtained when campaigns were sent between 6 – 10 a.m. ET, when deliverability rises above average by 2.0 percent. The worst delivery rates are usually seen from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m ET, when it falls to 3.1% below average. This means that if Company A usually sees a 90 percent delivery success rate when mailing between 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. ET, its delivery rate would rise to more than 95 percent if mailed between 6 a.m - 10 a.m ET.

**Chart 1: Delivery improvement by Time of Day**



When looking at time of day, there does seem to be a correlation between the highest incidences of spam mailings and lower marketing email delivery rates. According to recent data reported by SpamCop, most spam is reported between 9-3 p.m. ET, which mirrors the data our Index shows for the worst times of day to achieve deliverability success.

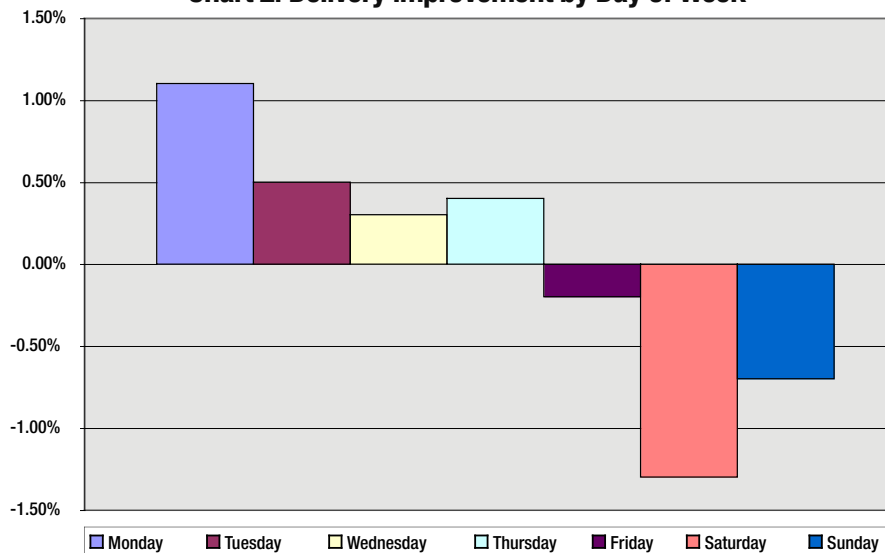
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**Best day of week to send email**

Monday proved to be the strongest day of the week for delivery, with all weekdays doing better than weekend days in aggregate. Saturday had the lowest delivery rates overall, though two time buckets on Saturday did fare better than any other time/day combinations (see chart 4).



**Chart 2: Delivery improvement by Day of Week**

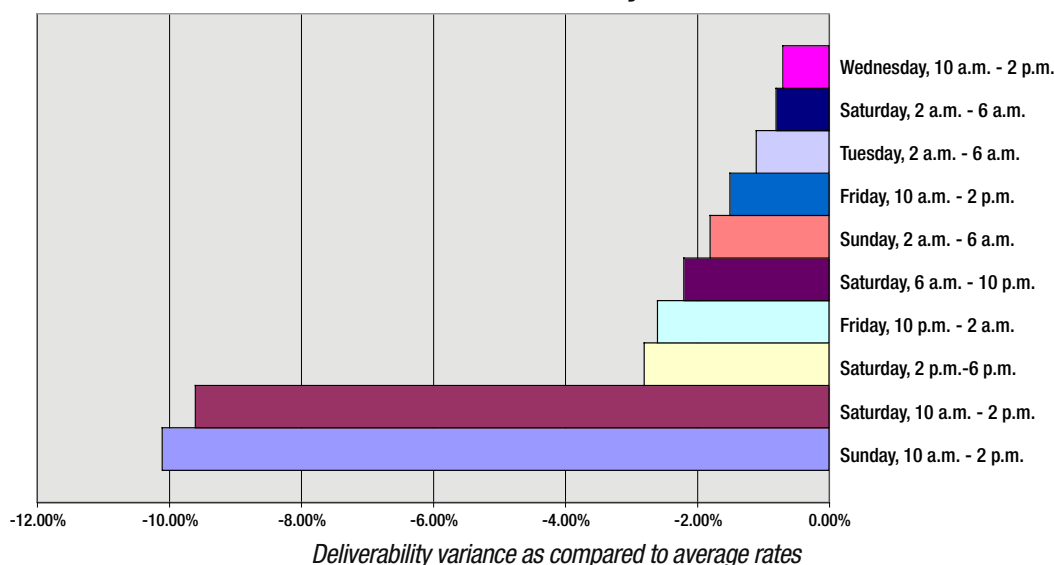


Some spam filters consider time and day as part of their spam identification process. Analysis of Outlook 2003\*, for example, shows that its spam filter weights partly by day and time – and, email sent on Saturday or Sunday receives a higher spam weighting than email sent during the week.

**Delivery by Day/Time Combination**

The most significant variance in deliverability shown in this Index is that mailing on Saturdays or Sundays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. ET results in the worst email deliverability rates. As compared to the average, Sunday at that time sees a 10.1 percent drop in delivery, while Saturday sees a 9.5 percent drop.

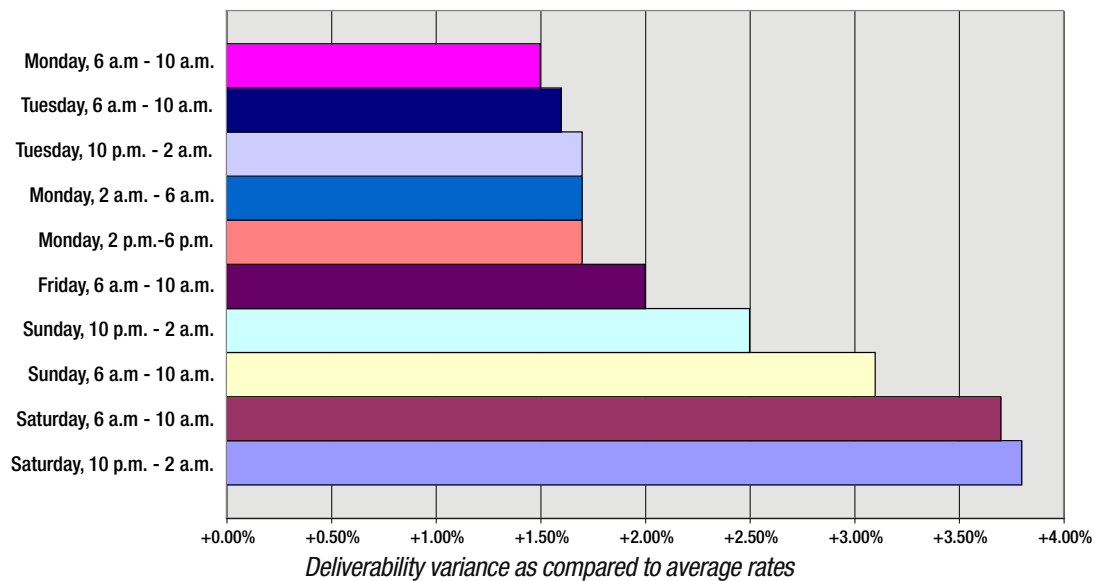
**Chart 3: 10 Worst Time/Day Parts to Mail**



\* MAPI Labs

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**Chart 4: 10 Best Time/Day Parts to Mail**



**Index Summary**

Deliverability success is measured by a matrix of performance metrics for how email reaches the inbox, including by campaign, by ISP, by time of day, by spam filter triggers and other blocking analysis. A March 2004 study released by Return Path showed that nearly 20 percent of email does not get delivered to the inbox as intended, largely because it gets mistaken as spam. This latest study shows that delivery rates are impacted by time and day emails are sent, as well as by technical, content or other blocking issues.

“While time and day delivery success should be a key consideration when doing any email campaign, marketers should recognize that it is just one point to test,” says George Bilbrey, VP and GM of deliverability services at Return Path. “But when you consider a margin as wide as 10 percent just between days and day-parts, it is clear that managing the combined deliverability influencers can have a significant impact on your email program success and response rates.”

Based on this Time of Day Index, Bilbrey suggests the following guidelines for marketing email events:

- Mail on weekdays, not weekends. Delivery rates on the weekends are generally lower and fluctuate more widely than delivery rates for campaigns sent on weekdays.
- If mailings are sent on weekends, the best times are between 6-10 a.m. ET or between 10 p.m. – 2 a.m. ET
- Email campaigns sent between 6-10 a.m. ET achieve higher delivery rates than any other time period across all days.
- Monday mailings receive higher overall delivery rates, followed by Tuesday, Thursday, and Wednesday.

**Methodology**

The Return Path Deliverability Index is based on more than 16,000 campaigns (representing 3.4 mm email messages) sent between January 1, 2004 and April 31, 2004. Delivery rates across those campaigns were normalized by factoring in all campaign and company delivery data for that time period. The Index shows the variance by time and day as compared to a particular company’s delivery average.

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