

## **Preventing your e-mail from landing in the spam box**

E-mail marketing can be an inexpensive, immediate and environmentally friendly way to reach donors or members — if you play by the rules. It takes a little time and know-how to avoid being labeled a spammer and ending up in recipients' junk mail folders.

To ensure the efficacy of your marketing campaigns and maintain your organization's good reputation, heed the following e-mail dos and don'ts.

**Do:** Obtain permission to e-mail your audience. Ask visitors to your Web site to opt in to your mailing lists when they register, and request e-mail addresses on all correspondence and solicitations. Generally, it's a good idea to separately confirm a recipient's choice to receive e-mail from you.

**Do:** Use simple, straightforward subject lines that avoid common spam filter triggers. These include excessive punctuation or capitalization, and red flag phrases such as "act now," "free offer" and "important information." Many e-mail marketing software packages will analyze your content for potential spam triggers so you can edit before you hit the send button.

**Do:** Make it possible for recipients to halt unwanted e-mail from you. Include in your messages a link that allows them to quickly and easily opt out of your e-mail list.

**Don't:** Obscure your organization's identity in the "from" field, use the same address in the "to" and "from" fields, or leave any fields blank.

**Don't:** Forget to ask recipients to add you to their "safe senders," "safe recipients" or similar e-mail lists. Internet service providers (ISPs) such as AOL have "white lists" of legitimate mailers. Contact ISPs to request that your e-mail address be included in theirs.

**Don't:** Bombard recipients with daily or weekly appeals and updates. This will likely annoy most of them. Instead, stick to a monthly or quarterly schedule and deviate from it only in the event of an emergency.