



CASE STUDY

Virgin Atlantic Airways Soars to 100% Inbox Placement Rate with Validity Everest.



Virgin Atlantic took to the skies in 1984, determined to shake up the travel industry. The airline offers nonstop transatlantic routes to destinations across the world. Their mission is to become the world's most-loved travel company. Their journey to this destination starts with creating exciting alternatives to the norm and bringing them to life with originality, color, and flair.

The Highlights:

100% INBOX PLACEMENT RATE	99/100 SENDER REPUTATION	Up to 355% CLICK-THROUGH RATE UPLIFT IN OPTIMIZED CAMPAIGNS
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The challenge:

Standing out in a competitive travel industry and meeting fluctuating seasonal demand.

Since 1984, travelers have relied on Virgin Atlantic to safely reach their destinations across the world.

Virgin Atlantic depends on the email channel to communicate with customers about travel arrangements, check in with Flying Club members, and entice travelers shopping for their next vacation.

However, winning and retaining customer loyalty via email is no easy task.

Virgin Atlantic's emails must stand out from the competition as new entrants and established threats battle for market share in increasingly crowded consumer inboxes.

Plus, demand in the travel industry can be seasonal, usually peaking during the summer months. This means Virgin Atlantic must ramp up and scale down their email campaigns accordingly.

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Deliverability is vital when thinking about our overall revenue. If only a certain percentage of our subscribers are reachable, there's a significant impact on our program's success.

Tom Nowell
Marketing Technology
Specialist, Virgin Atlantic

These normal fluctuations were compounded in the aftermath of COVID-19. Demand for travel soared as customers proved eager to take vacations they had delayed for two years.

Amid these challenges, Virgin Atlantic's email program was an essential marketing tool and a key revenue driver. With revenue on the line, the team at Virgin Atlantic knew they couldn't gamble with their email deliverability—their ability to reach subscribers' inboxes instead of their spam folders.

That's why they developed a partnership with Validity as they continued to deliver a first-class email experience to their subscribers.

The solution:

Constant email innovation, supported by the Everest email deliverability platform and Sender Certification program.


Standing out from the competition required Virgin Atlantic to be agile, innovative, and relentlessly creative in their email outreach.

“Crowded inboxes mean email personalization is more important than ever,” said Jon Lockie, Email Designer and Developer at Virgin Atlantic. “We really need to make the most of our unique brand and tone of voice, as well as the impactful messaging of our ‘see the world differently’ campaign to provide content that's personalized to the individual.”

However, the team at Virgin knows the foundation for any competitive email strategy is solid email deliverability.

“Deliverability often falls off the radar with some brands, but it's always front of mind for us and high on our list of KPIs,” said Tom Nowell, Marketing Technology Specialist at Virgin Atlantic. “As a brand, we fully understand we need to make sure our customers are receiving the right message at the right time, particularly when it's critical information that could impact their travel.”

With deliverability and sender reputation top of mind, the team at Virgin Atlantic relies on Validity Everest, the market-leading email deliverability platform, to achieve full visibility of their email performance—and to be alerted to any deliverability threats or engagement dips. Virgin Atlantic uses Everest's dashboards to get deep inbox placement insights, aggregated reporting, and



key engagement metrics for each campaign in one place.

Since joining Validity's exclusive Sender Certification program, Virgin Atlantic has enjoyed priority status with leading mailbox providers and spam filtering vendors worldwide, helping them achieve superior inbox placement, even during peak sending times for the travel industry.

Virgin Atlantic also uses Everest to strengthen its competitive intelligence. "The traditional way of getting competitive intel was to sign up for different email programs with test accounts—which was time consuming," said Lockie.

Now, Everest provides the Virgin Atlantic team with an enhanced view of their competitors' sending practices, including send volume and frequency, subject lines, and challenge areas. "This excited many people on our team," said Lockie. "Plus, we're excited about the capabilities of Validity MailCharts, which provides us with additional top-level insights and visuals of the latest industry emails to get a real idea of what makes successful content."

Virgin Atlantic also uses Everest's design testing features to ensure every email will render exactly as expected across every device type and major mailbox provider. "Everest's design and content functionality helps us ensure optimum email performance across 100+ environments, track best practice alignment, and manage incompatibilities to provide suitable fallbacks where we're introducing new interactive techniques," said Nowell.

The results:

Best-in-class email performance and the confidence to try new, innovative email tactics.

Armed with these features and capabilities, Virgin Atlantic's email performance has reached new heights.

"We want to ensure we perform the best we possibly can in this competitive space," said Nowell. "And to do so, we need to keep a constant eye on our sender reputation through the platform's regular reports, maintain healthy data quality, and of course, ensure our content meets the requirements of certain mailbox providers, which links back to the design and content piece." said Nowell.

Virgin Atlantic's vigilance has paid off. The company maintains a consistent 100 percent inbox placement rate across all major mailbox providers, despite fluctuations in sending volume due to seasonal demand. Their Sender Score



We can be masters of our own destiny. We've got the expertise within our team, are building the skill sets we need, and of course, can still feed off the expert support of organizations like Validity to make sure we have the tools and insights to keep us on the right path.

Tom Nowell

Marketing Technology
Specialist, Virgin Atlantic



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is consistently between 99 and 100—putting them firmly in league with best-in-class senders. Additionally, Virgin Atlantic's Certification compliance metrics for complaints, unknown users, SRD votes, and spam trap hits are green across the board.

With these foundational elements in place, the Virgin Atlantic team can enjoy peace of mind that their emails are reaching subscribers as intended—and can focus on pursuing a wide range of innovative email tactics.

“It sounds fluffy, but we genuinely aspire to be the most-loved travel company, and our inspiration really does come from wanting to drive personalized experiences for the customer,” said Jon Lockie.

Driven by this mission, Virgin Atlantic delivers highly personalized email messaging to its customers, drawing on the latest technologies and competitive intelligence. Virgin Atlantic's monthly newsletter uses subscriber preferences to serve distinct customer segments with literally tens of thousands of unique permutations. Their templates include dynamic carousels, GIF animations, click-to-reveal components, and hover maps, along with best practices like dark mode optimization. These elements are backed by Everest's testing features to ensure that each message appears in the inbox as intended.

Virgin Atlantic's emails also include live feedback modules. These modules show over 90 percent of subscribers find the company's emails useful—and provide a wealth of comments and suggestions that feed into the company's internal KPIs.

These initiatives are all overlaid by continual testing to enhance performance. For example, Virgin Atlantic recently optimized their email header space to include a call to action personalized to the customer's preferred route and cabin selection. When testing this new version against the existing static version, the reporting across that testing period showed a 355 percent uplift in click-through rates.

In the future, Virgin Atlantic will continue to search for new ways to deliver an optimal email experience. They are currently implementing Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC), which will eventually activate Brand Indicators for Message Identification (BIMI)—enabling them to display their company logo in subscribers' inboxes.

“Everything we do links back to that mission to provide our customers an email experience they can really attribute to a most-loved travel company,” concluded Nowell.

