Boot Barn achieves an annual revenue uplift of $1.1 million with Validity Sender Certification.

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Boot Barn was founded in 1978 and has grown to become the largest western and work wear retailer in the United States. Boot Barn has an uncompromising desire to support local communities by offering the broadest selection of cowboy boots, work boots, western wear, workwear, western-inspired fashion pieces, and outdoor gear.

The Highlights:

100%	99	$1.1 Million
INBOX PLACEMENT RATE	SENDER SCORE	ANNUAL REVENUE UPLIFT

The challenge:

Maintaining strong deliverability and avoiding spam filters as a high-volume, high-frequency sender.

Boot Barn is a western and work wear retailer headquartered in Irvine, California.
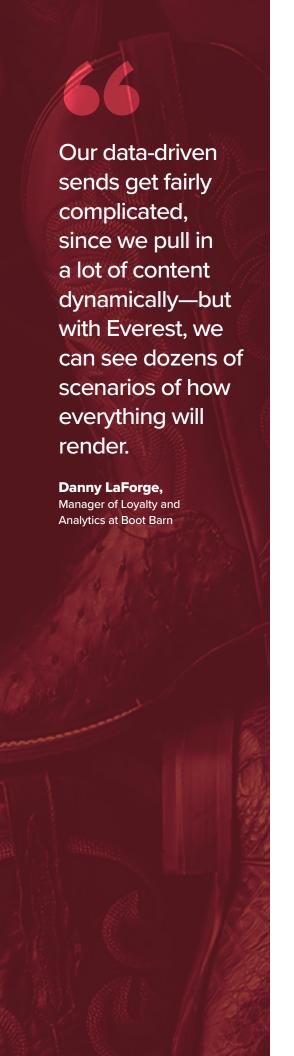
The Boot Barn team uses the email channel primarily to build brand awareness and direct traffic to their brick-and-mortar stores, where the majority of the brand's transactions take place.

Boot Barn operates a high-volume, high-frequency email program. They send billions of emails per year on behalf of their various brands—including daily messages segmented by each subscriber's purchase history.

"Our email program is very focused on driving foot traffic to our stores," explained Danny LaForge, Manager of Loyalty and Analytics at Boot Barn. "We put a lot of time into our creative to highlight authentic western imagery and a broad selection of products."

However, this email strategy presents unique challenges.

Sending in such large quantities can lead to increased pressures on email deliverability. High-volume senders are often penalized with stricter filtering by major mailbox providers like Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, and Microsoft.

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And while large images like those used by Boot Barn are eye-catching, they run the risk of being rejected by receiving filters with image size triggers.

Further complicating matters, Boot Barn's contact database evolves constantly. Boot Barn adds thousands of email addresses to their database each week from in-store collections and website forms. Due to typos and other human errors, some of these contacts are invalid. Mailing to these contacts significantly damaged Boot Barn's sender reputation, and ultimately, their deliverability.

To overcome these deliverability challenges and keep their subscriber base engaged, Boot Barn turned to Validity, the leading provider of email deliverability and CRM data management solutions.
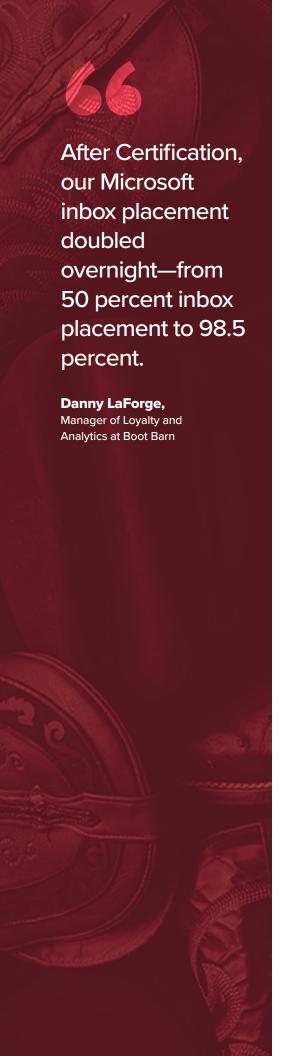
The solution:

The security of Validity's Sender Certification program and Everest email deliverability platform.

Pre-Validity, Boot Barn's sender reputation was below their target, particularly with Microsoft, which includes Outlook and Hotmail. At its lowest point, the company dipped below 50 percent average inbox placement with this mailbox provider.

"This was especially problematic during holiday campaigns when we needed to make sure all emails made it to our subscribers' inboxes," said LaForge.

At this pivotal moment, Boot Barn decided to implement Everest, Validity's email deliverability platform. As LaForge describes, "email deliverability can feel like a black box." However, the new platform gave the Boot Barn team a clear, comprehensive view of their email performance, including spam trap volume, with each major mailbox provider.

Boot Barn particularly enjoys Everest's Design and Content module to ensure their email creative renders exactly as expected in clients' inboxes. This gives them the freedom and peace of mind to test new templates and design elements.

"Our data-driven sends get fairly complicated, since we pull in a lot of content dynamically—but with Everest, we can see dozens of scenarios of how everything will render," said LaForge.

To further protect their email program from declines in deliverability, Boot Barn also completed Validity's Sender Certification program, which gave them priority status with mailbox providers worldwide.

The recommendation to pursue Certification came from Boot Barn's email service provider (ESP), Cordial, during their transition to the new sending platform. Cordial explained that certification would protect Boot Barn's email performance throughout the migration process, which is notoriously prone to deliverability threats.

For LaForge, this suggestion was a no-brainer. He had worked with Validity before and was well aware of the benefits.

To make the case to Boot Barn's leadership team, LaForge performed a quick cost analysis showing the Certification program's potential.

"As it turned out, we would be saving more by paying for Certification, since we'd be making it up in additional email revenue," said LaForge.

Certification ultimately paved the way for a smooth ESP migration. "We ran into some trouble early in the migration process, particularly with Microsoft," recalled LaForge. "We eventually decided to take a step back from the migration until we were Certified, which made things much smoother."

The results:

An additional 60 million emails into subscribers' inboxes each year—an uplift worth $1,100,000.

After partnering with Validity, Boot Barn saw email performance uplifts quickly.

"After Certification, our Microsoft inbox placement doubled overnight—from 50 percent inbox placement to 98.5 percent," recalled LaForge.

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The company now enjoys an average inbox placement rate of 99.7 percent across Microsoft, Yahoo, AOL, and Gmail—almost 15 percentage points higher than the global benchmark.

Their Sender Score is an impressive 99—demonstrating that Boot Barn's sender reputation is not affected by their high sending volume.

Furthermore, Boot Barn's Certified status means they can proactively detect and solve deliverability problems before their performance dips.

Due to the Certification benefit, Boot Barn can place an additional 90 million emails into subscribers' inboxes each year. Although Boot Barn does not view email as a primary revenue-driving channel, the Certification benefit helped them boost annual revenue by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

LaForge considers Validity's expert support to be the one of the most valuable aspects of the partnership.

"I judge any vendor by who they give us as a representative—and this is probably Validity's biggest strength," said LaForge. "We have a monthly meeting with our rep to get an in-depth overview of our performance, talk about trends and what others are doing, and solve any issues."

Boot Barn also benefits from the close working relationship between Validity and Cordial, their ESP, which helps the team keep their reporting and performance improvement efforts clear and consistent.

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For more information visit
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