validity

The Road to the Inbox
How to Fast-Track Your Emails to the Finish Line

Imagine you've signed up to run a road race, but when you get to the starting line, you realize it's an obstacle course, complete with hurdles, roadblocks, and rocky terrain. Things are about to get way more complicated...

This is like when email marketers realize reaching the inbox isn't as simple as hitting "send." The path to the inbox finish line is much more treacherous.

Did you know **one in six emails** never reaches the inbox? These emails might be filtered to spam folders, blocked by mailbox providers, or simply go missing—and many senders have no idea they're falling short.

Follow this map to see the obstacles you might encounter on the way and how to successfully maneuver them.

START — YOUR EMAIL SERVICE PROVIDER (ESP)
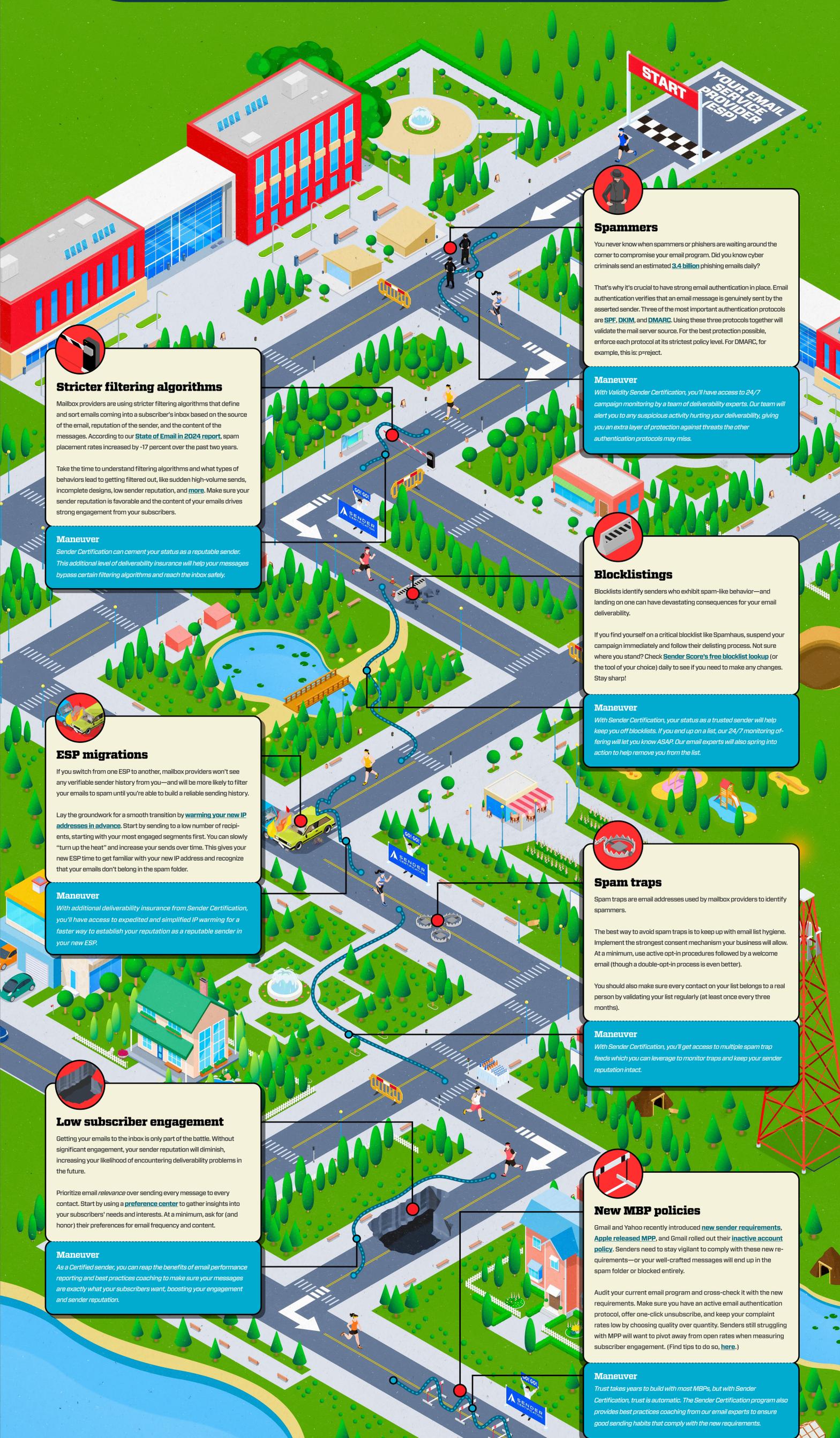
Spammers

You never know when spammers or phishers are waiting around the corner to compromise your email program. Did you know cyber criminals send an estimated **3.4 billion** phishing emails daily?

That's why it's crucial to have strong email authentication in place. Email authentication verifies that an email message is genuinely sent by the asserted sender. Three of the most important authentication protocols are **SPF**, **DKIM**, and **DMARC**. Using these three protocols together will validate the mail server source. For the best protection possible, enforce each protocol at its strictest policy level. For DMARC, for example, this is: p=reject.

Maneuver
With Validity Sender Certification, you'll have access to 24/7 campaign monitoring by a team of deliverability experts. Our team will alert you to any suspicious activity hurting your deliverability, giving you an extra layer of protection against threats the other authentication protocols may miss.

Stricter filtering algorithms

Mailbox providers are using stricter filtering algorithms that define and sort emails coming into a subscriber's inbox based on the source of the email, reputation of the sender, and the content of the messages. According to the **State of Email in 2024 report**, spam placement rates increased by ~17 percent over the past two years.

Take the time to understand filtering algorithms and what types of behaviors lead to getting filtered out, like sudden high-volume sends, incomplete designs, low sender reputation, and **more**. Make sure your sender reputation is favorable and the content of your emails drives strong engagement from your subscribers.

Maneuver
Sender Certification can cement your status as a reputable sender. This additional level of deliverability insurance will help your messages bypass certain filtering algorithms and reach the inbox safely.

Blocklistings

Blocklists identify senders who exhibit spam-like behavior—and landing on one can have devastating consequences for your email deliverability.

If you find yourself on a critical blocklist like Spamhaus, suspend your campaign immediately and follow their delisting process. Not sure where you stand? Check **Sender Score's free blocklist lookup** (or the tool of your choice) daily to see if you need to make any changes. Stay sharp!

Maneuver
With Sender Certification, your status as a trusted sender will help keep you off blocklists. If you end up on a list, our 24/7 monitoring offering will let you know ASAP. Our email experts will also spring into action to help remove you from the list.

ESP migrations

If you switch from one ESP to another, mailbox providers won't see any verifiable sender history from you—and will be more likely to filter your emails to spam until you're able to build a reliable sending history.

Lay the groundwork for a smooth transition by **warming your new IP addresses in advance**. Start by sending to a low number of recipients, starting with your most engaged segments first. You can slowly "turn up the heat" and increase your sends over time. This gives your new ESP time to get familiar with your new IP address and recognize that your emails don't belong in the spam folder.

Maneuver
With additional deliverability insurance from Sender Certification, you'll have access to expedited and simplified IP warming for a faster way to establish your reputation as a reputable sender in your new ESP.

Spam traps

Spam traps are email addresses used by mailbox providers to identify spammers.

The best way to avoid spam traps is to keep up with email list hygiene. Implement the strongest consent mechanism your business will allow. At a minimum, use active opt-in procedures followed by a welcome email (though a double-opt-in process is even better).

You should also make sure every contact on your list belongs to a real person by validating your list regularly (at least once every three months).

Maneuver
With Sender Certification, you'll get access to multiple spam trap feeds which you can leverage to monitor traps and keep your sender reputation intact.

Low subscriber engagement

Getting your emails to the inbox is only part of the battle. Without significant engagement, your sender reputation will diminish, increasing your likelihood of encountering deliverability problems in the future.

Prioritize email relevance over sending every message to every contact. Start by using a **preference center** to gather insights into your subscribers' needs and interests. At a minimum, ask for (and honor) their preferences for email frequency and content.

Maneuver
As a Certified sender, you can reap the benefits of email performance reporting and best practices coaching to make sure your messages are exactly what your subscribers want, boosting your engagement and sender reputation.

New MBP policies

Gmail and Yahoo recently introduced **new sender requirements**, **Apple released MPP**, and Gmail rolled out their **inactive account policy**. Senders need to stay vigilant to comply with these new requirements—or your well-crafted messages will end up in the spam folder or blocked entirely.

Audit your current email program and cross-check it with the new requirements. Make sure you have an active email authentication protocol, offer one-click unsubscribe, and keep your complaint rates low by choosing quality over quantity. Senders still struggling with MPP will want to pivot away from open rates when measuring subscriber engagement. (Find tips to do so, **here**.)

Maneuver
Trust takes years to build with most MBPs, but with Sender Certification, trust is automatic. The Sender Certification program also provides best practices coaching from our email experts to ensure good sending habits that comply with the new requirements.

FINISH — INBOX

SENDER CERTIFICATION

Send confidently with Sender Certification

The path to the inbox doesn't have to be treacherous. It can be a smooth road that gets your messages from point A to point B with ease, with the support of Sender Certification.

Sender Certification provides an added layer of email deliverability insurance to help senders detect and avoid deliverability threats. Those who qualify for this exclusive program enjoy increased inbox placement rates, expedited IP warming, deliverability data straight from MBPs, and a 24/7 dedicated compliance team committed to helping you find and fix issues.

The result? On average, senders who qualify for our program get 27 million more emails to the inbox per year.

Check out the full rundown of Sender Certification here