Chapter Email Communications FAQ

1. Why a commercial email platform?
Email is an important way that chapters communicate with their members. CAN-SPAM regulations and industry best practices require chapters to take special actions to ensure that members' communication preferences, privacy, and data security are respected when sending mass emails to members. Commercial email platforms are designed to make it easy for organizations to comply with these requirements. Mass emails sent through individual email accounts with Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo, or other email services are not compliant with these regulations and practices.

2. What is CANSPAM?
The CAN-SPAM Act establishes requirements for commercial email messages, gives recipients the right to have you stop emailing them, and spells out tough penalties for violations. Email messages sent by ASSP and from ASSP chapters are covered in this legislation. There are seven core tenets of the legislation:
1. Don't use false or misleading header information.
2. Don't use deceptive subject lines.
3. Identify the message as a commercial message.
4. Tell recipients where you're located.
5. Tell recipients how to opt out from future emails.
6. Honor opt-out requests promptly.
7. Monitor what others are doing on your behalf.

You can learn more about the CAN-SPAM Act on the Federal Trade Commission's website.

3. Why Real Magnet?
A commercial email service is included with the ASSP webhosting agreement. This means that any chapter with a webhosting agreement with ASSP has access to a commercial email platform to communicate with members, as well as training on how to use the platform, included in their monthly fee. ASSP began offering this service through MailChimp. In 2017, ASSP switched to Real Magnet to improve functionality, gain better integration with and segmentation of rosters, and receive a higher level of customer service from the vendor for our chapter accounts.

4. How is email deliverability measured?
There are three key indicators to measure the success of email campaign and that you can track in your Real Magnet dashboard:

- *Delivery rate:* this is the percentage of your emails that get through your recipients' email servers. It does not necessarily mean that the message gets to their inboxes. While the message may not have been blocked by the server, the content or construction of the message may have triggered various filters unique to each company's firewall set-up or that send the messages to spam or junk folders, promotional folders, or other folders the recipient may have set up themselves.
- *Open rate:* this is the percentage of your emails that are opened by your recipients. It does not count previews, so your recipients may have seen the information without actually clicking on the message.
- *Click through rate:* this is the percentage of people that click on a link in your email. Good email content includes a link to your website that will enable your recipients to take action, like register for a meeting or read more of a news story.

5. What kind of deliverability should my chapter expect?
Since the change to Real Magnet, the deliverability indicators for ASSP communications have increased and exceeded industry average. The trend is also being seen by most chapters using Real Magnet (Note: industry average varies by study).

Indicator	Industry Average	ASSP Average with Real Magnet	ASSP Average with MailChimp
Delivery	90% - 95% or higher	99%	99%
Open	11.66% - 25.63%	29%	24%
Click through	1.6% – 2.96%	3%	2.2%

6. How can my chapter improve the deliverability of our emails?
First, it is important to recognize that while email is a convenient way to communicate with your chapter members, sometimes your messages may not get through to every member. This is the nature of communicating as an organization via email in today's email-saturated world. Email services, employers, and individuals all have a range of options to establish their own filters and preferences designed to keep their data secure and to help them see the information that is most important to them. And as both legitimate email marketing and fraudulent spam messages become more common and sophisticated, those filters adapt to make it even harder for messages to get through.

At the same time, there are a number of best practices you can follow to help your messages get through spam filters to improve deliverability, mostly around the construction of your email message. Tips to improve email deliverability are posted in Officer Central, and additional guidance is regularly shared in Chapter Services Update. These include guidance on:
- Using clear subject lines & "from" addresses
- Avoiding the use of language commonly used in spam messages
- Keeping your message primarily text-based and avoiding the use of a single image as the body of your message

7. I sent a test email to myself, but didn't see the final message when it went out – what happened?

Sending the same message multiple times to the same recipient triggers spam filters. To avoid this issue, Real Magnet will never send the exact same message to the same recipient more than once. If you received the test message, you will not receive the final message when it is sent. If you want to see the final message that is delivered to members, save the message under a new name before sending.

8. What does "batch" mean in Real Magnet?
Messages sent to a large number of recipients at one time commonly trigger spam filters. To address this, Real Magnet may send your chapter emails out to smaller segments of your chapter membership at a time. On the receiving end, servers may also be adjusting when specific types of messages come through their local filters. This means that sometimes one member of your chapter may receive a chapter email several hours or even a day after another. This is okay and is actually a sign that all the systems are functioning well.

9. What if my messages follow best practices but a member still says they aren't receiving our emails?
If you or members of your chapter are having difficulty getting ASSP emails delivered to their inbox, it may be because the individual has opted out of receiving messages or because the messages are being blocked by the ISP or company's Spam filter.

Opted Out
It is surprisingly common for individuals to opt out of receiving all emails from an organization when they only intended to opt out of receiving certain kinds of emails. Members can change their preferences by clicking "update information" in their profile online or email CustomerServices@assp.org and request to receive chapter emails to ensure their preferences are up-to-date.

Messages being blocked
In this type of situation, the first step should be whitelisting ASSP at your desktop computer or through your company's IT department. Whitelisting is a way to identify ASSP as a safe sender from whom you want to receive messages. Instructions for desktop level whitelisting (which you can do) as well as whitelisting instructions for your IT team to apply at the server level can be found here.
- Whitelist chapter emails. For example, updates@chapter.assp.org, wherein chapter.assp.org would be replaced by your chapter's web address (e.x. chicago.assp.org).
- Whitelist Society emails using bounce@send.assp.org.

10. What if a member has followed whitelisting instructions and is still having trouble receiving chapter emails?
If you or a member of your chapter is still reporting trouble with receiving chapter emails after completing the whitelisting instructions (or verifying with their IT department that the instructions have been followed), please provide the name and email address of the member to ChapterWebUpdates@assp.org for further troubleshooting.

11. How does email fit into a broader communications plan?
Email is just one tool for you to use when communicating with members. As noted throughout this FAQ, how individuals and companies filter, organize, and respond their emails is always evolving. No message sent through any service will ever reach the inbox of 100% of the intended recipients.

We encourage chapters to develop a comprehensive communications strategy to keep members informed about the opportunities at your chapter.
- *Website*: your chapter website is your primary channel for members to learn about your chapter and its events. Your emails should direct people to your website to take action and no email should contain information that can't be found on your chapter website. Keep your website up-to-date so that members and guests know they can always go there to learn about upcoming meetings and events, whether or not an email prompts them to do so. ASSP offers webhosting packages to chapters and additional support is available by emailing ChapterWebUpdates@assp.org.
- *Social media*: social media can be a great way to engage your members and open up two-way communication with them about chapter events. Like email, your social media posts should direct people to your website to take action and should not contain vital information that cannot be found on your website. Guidance for managing chapter social media accounts is available from Officer Central.