



# **BUILDING A STRONG AND AGILE EMAIL OPERATION**

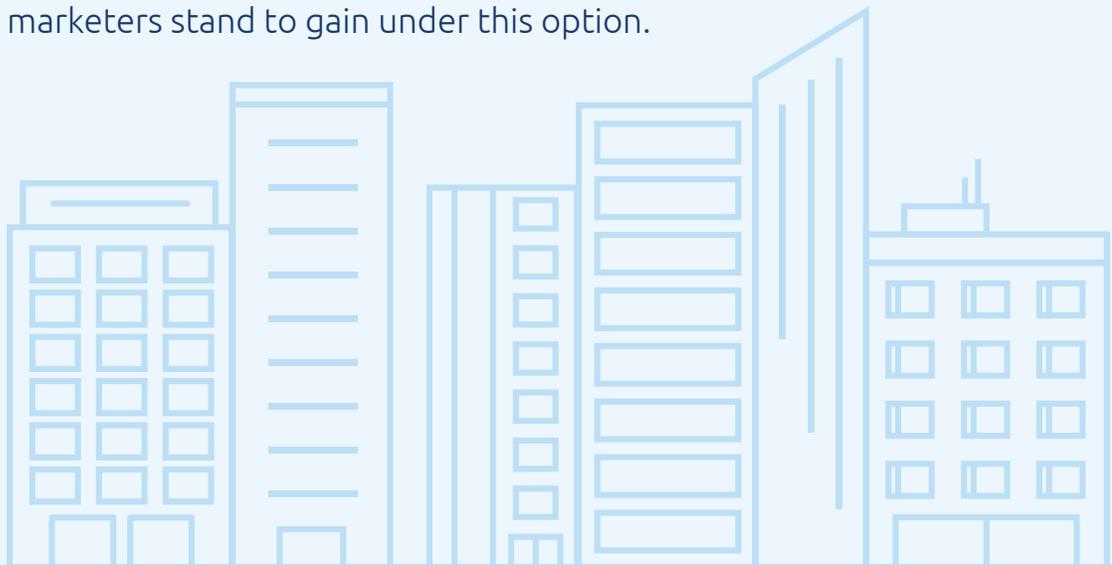
The Case for Separating  
The Front-End Platform from  
The Back-End Delivery Vendors with  
a Best-of-Breed Solution





## **Abstract**

The email marketing world is vast. There are countless platforms and infrastructures that marketers can use to send emails from. This whitepaper focuses on the unique [Ongage](#) offering and best-of-breed approach. This email marketing platform offers agility and flexibility for email marketers, by separating the front-end platform from the back-end delivery vendors. We review the many cost, value and time benefits marketers stand to gain under this option.



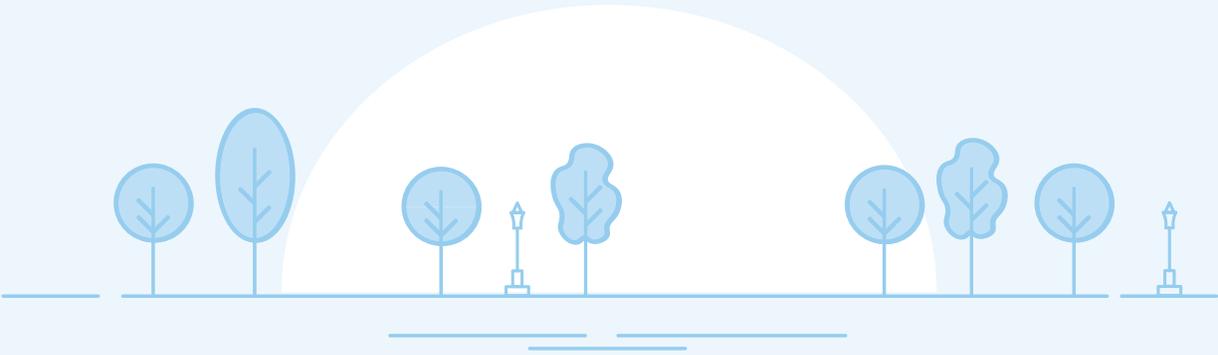
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# INTRODUCTION





## What is a Best-of-Breed Solution?

James is looking to buy a shiny new car. He's not looking for the objectively best car, but rather the best car for him, that best fits his needs. He wants the engine of a Porsche, the body of a Mustang and the efficiency of a Prius. In a perfect world, James could enjoy a hybrid car like this, or best-of-breed combination. Such a solution incorporates the best product components from different vendors, in order to best meet overall needs.

This best-of-breed solution provides three key benefits. First, best fit to ones given needs. Second, by mixing and matching different components, the solution is much more flexible and agile. The individual

building blocks can be easily updated, upgraded and swapped, without affecting other component systems. And finally, it is possible to incorporate specialized pieces, with greater strengths than would ordinarily be possible. For James, this may mean a set of tires when going off-road for the sake of performance, and another set when in the city for efficiency.

In essence, the end best-of-breed result allows for maximization of potential.

## What is a Best-of-Breed Email Marketing Solution?

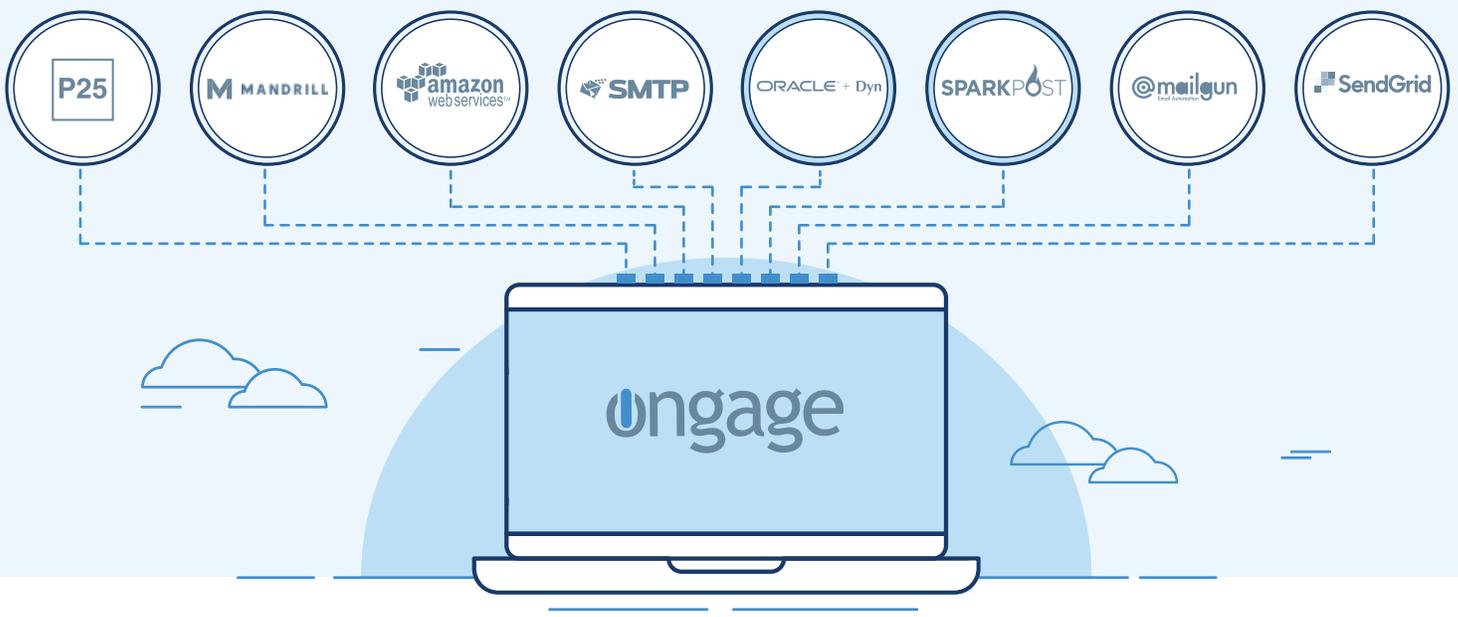
In the marketing world, there is a growing trend away from utilizing a single software provider for every marketing function,

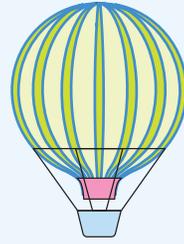
toward utilizing the best fit components, and adopting a combined best-of-breed approach to marketing. For example, a solution for lead generation, paid media, retargeting, SEO and so on. Specifically in the email marketing operations space, there are a vast array of options.

In this whitepaper, we will explore email platforms, including Ongage, that is premised on this concept of best-of-breed email marketing. The Ongage platform provides for separation of the

front-end platform, from the back-end delivery vendors.

We will discuss the various avenues in which it improves email marketing operations, including managing different IPs for different audiences, managing multiple web properties and connecting multiple SMTPs from the same dashboard to utilize simultaneously within campaign execution.





SECTION 1

**A Best-of-Breed  
Email Marketing  
Solution | The Whys**



As mentioned, this paper will focus on separating the email marketing platform front-end from the delivery vendor back-end. In other words, we'll discuss the benefits of adopting an email marketing solution with a dashboard separate from the SMTP infrastructure.

Leading cloud SMTP services (such as Amazon SES, Dyn, Mailgun, SparkPost and Sendgrid) are highly desirable, offering specialized email delivery infrastructure at a cost efficient price. That said, these services can be targeted toward more tech-savvy organizations. Often such



require IT integrations for setup, which restrict accessibility for organizations with development resource limitations. In addition, SMTP services may lack a feature-rich email marketing front-end, again, presenting further challenges as a stand-alone solution.

On the other end of the spectrum, Email Service Providers (ESPs) offer a complete solution, by packaging together the platform front-end and vendor delivery back-end. This option can offer a breadth of features and convenience for some marketers. That said, ESPs are typically priced high (especially for enterprise solutions) and present significant challenges with agility and flexibility, as this option ties email marketing execution to the ESP delivery system.

A best-of-breed email marketing solution allows marketers to tap into the benefits of both. Just like James, that wanted the best car for himself, this combined solution enables email marketers to select and incorporate required elements, whilst maintaining flexibility and cost-efficiency. In other words, the solution provides access to a strong SMTP infrastructure to manage the technical side of email delivery, coupled with a feature-rich platform front-end, to easily and efficiently manage customer lists, segmentation, content, and analytics.

One marketer may present requirements for user-friendly platform front-end to manage campaigns and content. Another may focus on delivery and the



quality of the back-end vendor. In both cases, a degree of agility provides great advantage and cost efficiency.

Further, since many times companies have a single email marketing solution for multiple departments, the needs of departments may vary.

Some departments have fully integrated APIs and advanced development capabilities, while others need a more

user-friendly front-end from which to manage campaigns.

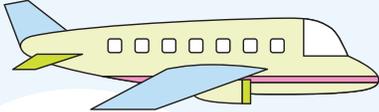
In summary, an email marketing solution with separate platform front-end from delivery vendor back-end enables marketers to access state-of-the-art SMTP infrastructures, flexibility, features, cost-savings; all accessible for non-developers.





SECTION 2

# The Benefits for Single SMTP Vendor Users





As noted above, the combined best-of-breed solution provides two main advantages for email marketers. First, the ability to enjoy strong SMTP infrastructures without needing complex IT integration, and second, the access to a feature-rich front-end to manage campaigns, contacts, content and analytics.

In this section, we'll move forward to discuss use cases that demonstrate further advantages of this solution for email marketers with a single SMTP vendor provider. These use cases encompass marketing activities with a single SMTP vendor coupled with multiple SMTP sub-accounts.

There are countless use cases in which a marketer will benefit from managing

email operations from a single dashboard. The main use cases explored below include: (1) Audiences with different engagement levels, (2) Organizations with multiple web properties, and (3) Different types of mailings (such as transactional and promotional).

### **Audiences with Different Engagement Levels**

In every email marketing operation, there are some more engaged users, and other less engaged. This may be the result of numerous factors including lead acquisition, product interest, time, age, and more. Though a normal occurrence in any audience list, there is much to gain when adopting an approach to manage these different engagement levels separately.



In such a case, the best practice approach is to utilize multiple IPs, which can be managed through multiple SMTP sub-accounts, thereby targeting your engaged users and less engaged users through different IP addresses.

Engaged users reliably open and click mailings, and should be managed on a separate sub-account, with high IP reputation. This practice ensures high deliverability to the most engaged users, and maintains the stellar IP reputation for future marketing activities to them.

Other less engaged users, or those that do not always open or click emails, should be funneled through a different sub-account, with a different IP reputation. Doing so ensures deliverability for the most engaged users will be protected from the behavior of less engaged.



## A USEFUL TIP FROM ONGAGE:

**Treat your less engaged users in a different manner:**

- Reduce frequency of mailings to maintain a solid IP reputation.
- Create specialized re-engagement content.
- Reach users via other marketing channels and provide benefits for reconnecting via email.



The potential result of not implementing this approach could, in time, result in less engaged users negatively impacting IP reputation and delivery, thereby hampering the entire email operation.

How does a robust email marketing platform, like Ongage, fit this methodology?

An advanced email marketing platform provides smooth management of different SMTP sub-accounts and routing rules for users within a single campaign. That is, it is possible to define rules that route emails for more engaged users to be sent through your premium IP address. Meanwhile, less engaged users will be routed from the other lesser IP address, or sub-account. Moreover, a robust front-end will achieve easy definition of engaged and less engaged segmentation via behavioral rules.

For example, users that have not opened

an email in the last 30, 60 or 90 days, can be segmented as less engaged, and simply excluded from specific campaigns. Further, Ongage provides functionality to have such segments excluded automatically from future mailings. This both safe-proofs marketing operations from user error, and improves efficiency. Such alternate segments to consider defining with behavioral measures includes those that did not click on emails, did not register, or did not make a purchase.

### **Organizations with Multiple Web Properties**

Many organizations manage multiple web properties, relating to unique brands or unique mailing genres. For example, a digital agency may manage mailings across sport, culture and news. Though there might be overlap of users between lists for the individual mailings, in general,



these activities have different audiences, needs and interests. In a case like this, the common and best practice is to manage unique properties on separate sub-accounts and IPs.

So how can an advanced email marketing platform contribute here?

One of the major wins of managing multiple web properties on different sub-accounts, is that each web property sending reputation can be easily managed. That is, the sending domain, sending IP and tracking domain. Such separation ensures that the reputation and activities of one will not affect another.

To further simplify, unique web properties can be managed via unique lists (or silo database), ultimately resulting in an organized setup. In this case, each list then functions as a sub-account, meaning that

all related activities for this web property is separated from the others. By list, contact management, campaign planning, content organization and analytics are streamlined, making logistics much easier.

Separation can grant a more holistic view of the entire email operation, as unique lists are managed from a single marketing dashboard. Further opportunity for easy cross-promotional activities across web properties, shared content, statistic comparison and evaluation of performance across each avail. For example promote the sports newsletter on the culture one by importing the template from one list to the other.

Finally, in the event that operational team members only manage a specific web property, it can be advisable to restrict access. Ongage features functionality for easy management of user access and restrictions.

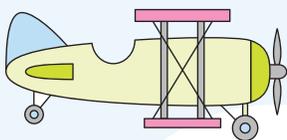
## Different Types of Mailings

This part explores the different kind of mailings email marketers tend to send. Some emails are expected by the audience, while others not so much. In the table ahead we review common types of mailings, and explore the benefits of managing them via multiple SMTP sub-accounts.

TYPE OF MAILING	WHY USE A SEPARATE SUB-ACCOUNT
<b>Transactional / Promotional</b>	<p><a href="#">Transactional campaigns receive 8X more opens</a> than regular campaigns. For example, confirmation of registration, a purchase invoice or a message notification. Users are much more likely to engage with transactional emails, and less likely to unsubscribe or complain.</p> <p>Promotional campaigns, especially large scale ones that are not segmented, often trip up spam filters and have reduced engagement, putting your IP reputation at risk.</p>
<b>Paying Subscriber / Non Paying subscriber</b>	<p>If a service offers premium and freemium options, its paying users definitely expect to receive emails. It is of the utmost importance to have an IP/SMTP sub-account that has a good reputation and high deliverability rate for these kind of situations.</p>
<b>Retention / Acquisition</b>	<p>Retention campaigns are aimed at knowledgeable users that signed up and are interested in the service. While not on the same level of transactional campaigns, users who receive these mailing are generally at a lower risk of complaining.</p> <p>Acquisition campaigns, on the other hand, are often broad and recipients are less likely to open and click the emails.</p> <p>Keep these groups on separate IPs and sub-accounts in order to maintain IP reputation.</p>

SECTION 3

# The Benefits for Multiple SMTP Vendor Users





According to Ongage customer data, 63% of customers utilize Ongage front-end, combined with a single SMTP vendor. This proportion includes both single, and multiple SMTP sub-accounts of the same vendor provider. There are many advantages in connecting more than one SMTP vendor to service email operations, as completed by the remaining 37% of Ongage customers. Just like James' tires from the beginning of this article, where the best product component is matched for the driving purpose, the same applies to SMTP vendors. It is possible to route and connect SMTPs at will, to suit the strengths of each one at the appropriate time.

In this part of the paper, we will explore the opportunities that open up when

utilizing more than a single SMTP delivery vendor, something that simply can't be done when opting with an ESP.

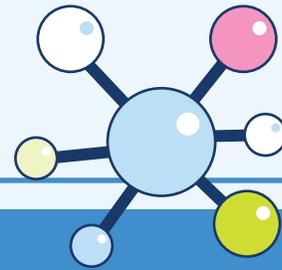
## **Reduce Costs | Increase Margins**

### **The Email Marketing Agency Use Case**

Email marketing agencies typically manage marketing operations on behalf of multiple clients, with varying levels of value. For those higher value, there may be a preference to use a top-tier SMTP vendor, albeit more expensive, to achieve superior sending speed and delivery. When tied to a single ESP or SMTP provider, marketers would be limited on delivery choices and will opt for the same expensive SMTP when mailing lower value clients.

However, when a component based solution is in place, it becomes easy to connect multiple SMTP vendors to a single dashboard and reduce costs. Switch between SMTPs with the click of a button, and route high value clients through the top-tier SMTP. Meanwhile, the lower-tier SMTP will handle the emails for the lower value clients at a lesser cost.

Another key advantage of utilizing multiple SMTP vendors relates to content. Consider the case of managing various clients from different industries, for example travel, classifieds, and online gaming. Certain SMTPs and ESPs have restrictions against operating in certain industries, such as online gaming. By utilizing multiple vendors, an appropriate SMTP vendor can be connected for each industry, saving the headache of



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migrating the entire operation to a different SMTP vendor.

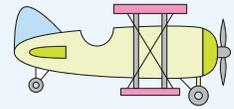
### The Email Marketing Audience Use Case

As explored in Section 2, marketing lists typically contain both engaged and less engaged users. As previously discussed, best practice is to manage these two user segments via different IPs, thus preserving strong reputation for future engaged users. Whilst this methodology is beneficial for delivery, this approach can also dramatically impact profit margins.

For example, Amazon SES is a top-tier SMTP vendor, with strong infrastructure and delivery results. Operating with a self-service model, this vendor offers low costs for marketers. That said, Amazon SES is very strict with negative metrics such as hard bounces and complaints. Accordingly,



Route higher value engaged users via Amazon SES at a low cost. Meanwhile, mailings to less engaged users may be better suited to another connected SMTP (such as Dyn, Mailgun or SparkPost).



there can be risks presented when mailing all activities, since higher spam complaints may result in account suspension.

When working with a best-of-breed solution and connecting multiple SMTP vendors to the same dashboard, marketers can optimize delivery and significantly increase margins. Route higher value engaged users via Amazon SES at a low cost. Meanwhile, mailings to less engaged users may be better suited to another connected SMTP (such as Dyn, Mailgun or SparkPost).

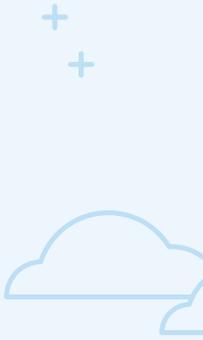
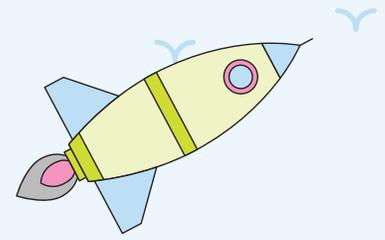
### **The Case for Redundancy**

Another case for using multiple SMTP vendors is redundancy. While rare, SMTP

vendor outages do happen. When using a single SMTP or an ESP, it is possible to experience a failure when sending a campaign, resulting in lost revenues. Connecting a number of SMTPs to a single front-end allows to circumvent this issue. Once an SMTP experiences an outage, choose a different one from the dashboard, from which the campaign will be sent.

The above is applicable for organizations that use an on-premise MTA solution as well. If the on-premise solution falters for whatever reason, quickly connect a cloud-based SMTP to overcome this issue, and avoid a failed campaign.





SECTION 4

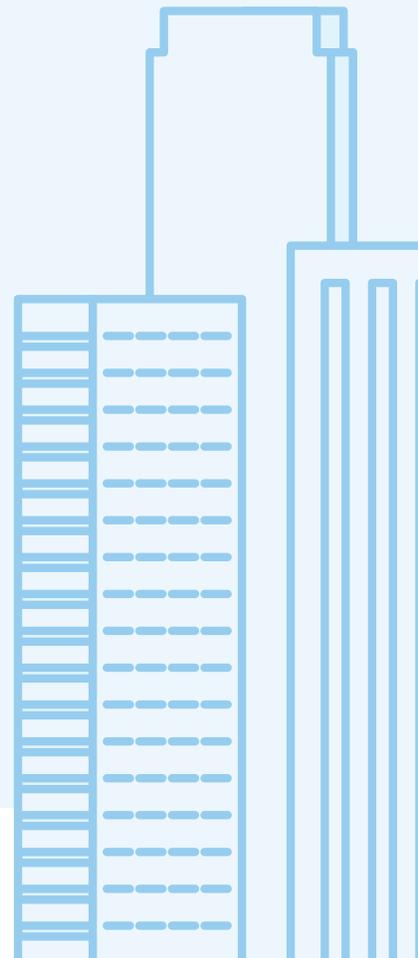
**Additional Benefits  
of Separating  
Back-End from the  
Front-End**





In addition to enjoying a feature-rich dashboard, managing multiple SMTP sub-accounts with ease, and benefiting from multiple SMTP vendors, there are a few more advantages of adopting a best-of-breed email marketing solution such as Ongage.

This section discusses the benefits of a component based solution when migrating to a different SMTP, implementing API and backend integrations and employing a combined on-premise and cloud solution.





## Migrating to a Different SMTP

Migrating to a different SMTP is complicated and involves many pains (see box on next page). When switching SMTP vendors, all contacts, content, analytics and other data must be transferred from the previous vendor to the new.

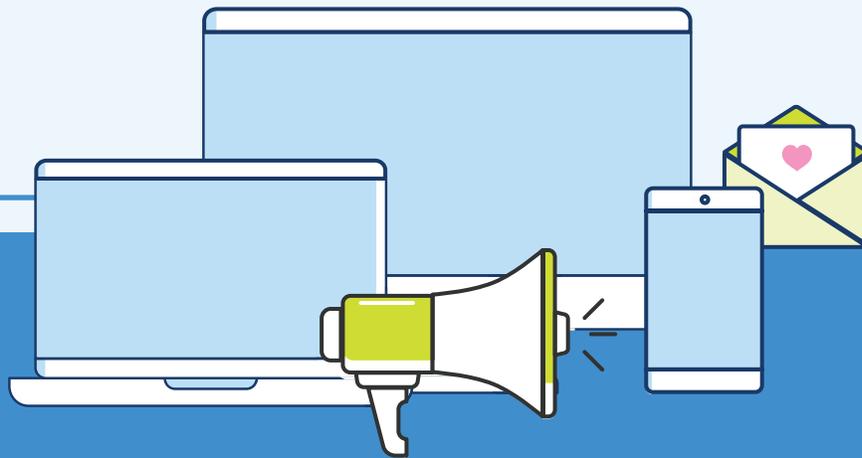
In the case of a best-of-breed solution, such as Ongage, multiple SMTPs can be connected and campaigns routed with ease. Further, all lists, content and account settings are centrally managed. The overall result is that switching costs for migrating are substantially reduced.

## Advanced API / Backend Integration

As discussed previously, a component based solution provides flexibility and agility to combine best fit building blocks. Further to delivery vendor integrations, email marketing intelligence may be enhanced with integrations of analytics, re-engagement or reporting tools. In addition, direct database, XML or server to server integration are more achievable.

On top of the above, whilst ESP clients may encounter limitations with API integrations and webhooks, which may limit the ability to gain enhanced insights, SMTPs typically offer greater flexibility.





## THE PAINS OF MIGRATION

Migrating to a different SMTP poses several difficulties:

- Upon opting to change SMTP vendor, two email operations will be operating simultaneously. While the new IP is being warmed with the new vendor, it is imperative to maintain regular activity with the previous. This can present challenges for sync of unsubscribes, bounces and complaints. Moreover, managing content, contacts and analytics across two vendors can also prove difficult and time consuming.
- Robust API integrations that were part of the operation, such as transactional email sends and extraction of behavioral statistics, will need to be reconfigured once again with the new vendor.

## Combining On-Premise and Cloud Solutions

On-premise solutions (such as PowerMTA, Mailer, MailerQ and EmailSuccess) can be quite expensive, especially in the initial run. In the case of sending large volumes of email per month (over a few millions), this solution can prove cost effective in the long run (along with other advantages).

An on-premise MTA is usually beneficial for sending account billings mailers (such as

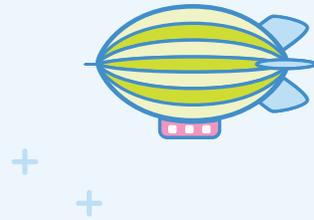
invoices), rather than marketing ones, due to high IT costs of managing multiple IPs.

Plugging a cloud-based SMTP to the email marketing operation might improve ROI. Send billing emails through the on-premise MTA, and marketing emails through the cloud-based SMTP, all from a single dashboard.

As discussed previously, the benefit of redundancy is also prevalent in this case.







There are many benefits of utilizing an email marketing platform that separates the front-end from the back-end. Ongage is an example of such a marketing tool, providing non-developers access to state-of-the-art SMTP infrastructure combined with a feature-rich front-end.

Marketers are able to manage multiple SMTP sub-accounts from a single vendor. In turn, campaigns can be routed via different SMTP accounts or vendors, as based on user engagement, web property or mailing purpose. In essence, this practice can provide a more holistic view of the entire operation, and allow for improved delivery, streamlined analytics and cost efficiencies.

Lastly, this solution can further unlock benefits upon connecting multiple SMTP infrastructures to the same single

dashboard. SMTP migration is simplified, protection against outages is gained and API integration and webhooks are readily available. By the same token, it is possible to route different value users through different value SMTP vendors for higher margins and better reach.

When setting up an email marketing operation, there are many options to choose from. Each option has its own advantages and disadvantages, making the choice quite difficult. With a best-of-breed email marketing platform, one have the power to choose carefully each component that best fits its needs, creating a whole that is greater than its sum of parts. A whole that is strong and flexible, and can bend and adapt to to the marketing winds of change.





## ABOUT US

Ongage is an advanced email marketing platform designed to improve campaign effectiveness by providing a feature-rich dashboard. It offers email marketers seamless access to top-tier SMTP delivery vendors, and the ability to execute campaigns via one or more email delivery systems. Coupled together with a marketing analytics suite, the end result being improved deliverability, performance and ROI.

## CONTACT US

For more information on how Ongage can suit your email marketing needs

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