

The Best of Both Breeds

5 Use Cases for Hybrid Email Infrastructure

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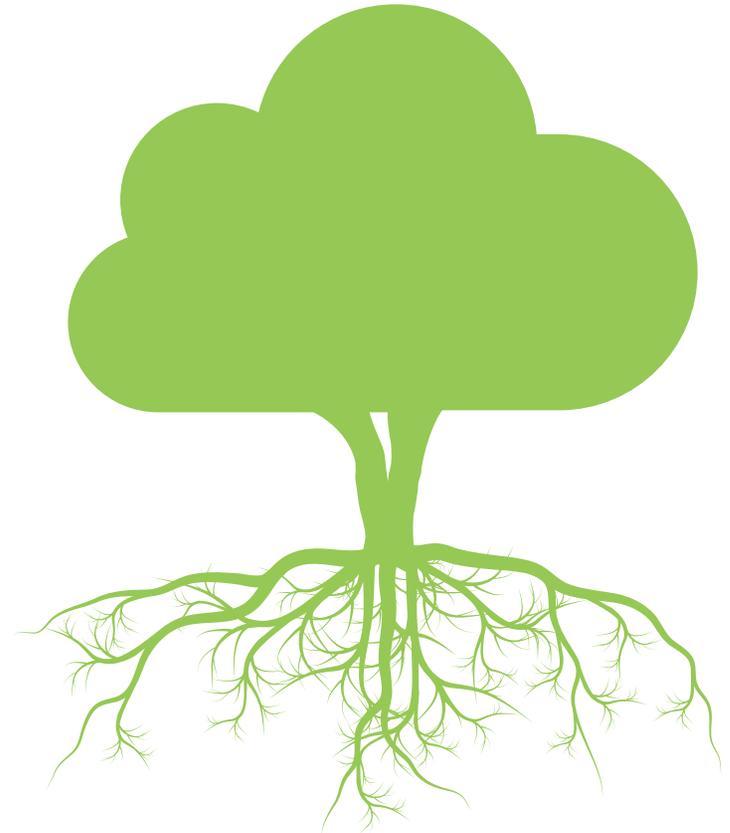
Why a Hybrid?

In plant and animal breeding, the textbook motivation for hybridizing different species is to merge the best characteristics from each. Done right, you end up with an outcome that can be more than the sum of its parts.

When it comes to a company's email infrastructure, the same thinking applies: **a hybrid solution, leveraging the best of two very different breeds, can deliver a host of advantages** you'd likely never realize by sticking with a single approach.

Email evolution equals two species of solution

Early in the era of email evolution, companies began to use this promising new tool to reach and engage customers. It was a straightforward proposition: if you were one of those companies, you invested in your own on-premises software to self-manage your sending. You had complete control and a clear channel: by hitting the send button, you put your message in front of your audience. Simple!



But evolution, as we know, generates undesirables, too. As email's popularity grew, we saw the spawn of spam.

To block it, ISPs made it harder to get to the inbox, and that meant marketers using in-house email infrastructure were stuck dealing with all the complex issues springing up around deliverability. Most businesses, even today, only see a deliverability rate of 87%, which means 13% never reach their target. That's a big bite taken out of potential revenue.



Then came cloud computing, and it bred a brand-new option for email marketers: the Email Service Provider (ESP). Now, you could outsource your sending capabilities and focus on your email strategy and campaigns, not infrastructure. The glowing promise of this next stage of email evolution? That ESPs would solve those nagging deliverability problems.

Yet many of those marketers have found that outsourcing to an ESP doesn't automatically accomplish this. Plus, there are new challenges to consider: if all you need is a sending mechanism, employing an ESP can be overkill. And if your email volumes grow, the cost of using that ESP can skyrocket. The solution you've picked in place of an on-premises infrastructure might become expensive enough to place your email marketing program in danger of extinction.

Why choose, if you can use both?

So what's the best approach for today's email marketer? Your own on-premises email infrastructure, with full control over deliverability and cost? Or outsourcing to a cloud email service provider?

Actually, **it doesn't have to be an either/or proposition.**

Adopting a hybrid approach to your email infrastructure lets you **take advantage of the best of each.** Here are five compelling reasons why that can make real sense for your enterprise.

1 Use Sending Options for Different Mail Streams

The main benefit of a hybrid email infrastructure is the fact it gives you options. While on-premises infrastructure is great in many situations, it's not perfect for every instance that arises. The same sometimes holds true for cloud-based email infrastructures. It's better to send some types of mail through the cloud, while other types are more easily triggered from inside the organization and sent via on-premises servers. A hybrid approach allows you to **pick and choose the best solution for each mailstream** your company has.

Examples? A campaign-type e-blast to a segment of your audience might be best suited to cloud-based sending, while triggered transactional mail (like password resets or shipping confirmations) might be a better fit for on-premises sends, especially when legacy in-house transaction systems are hard-wired to generate or trigger these mails.

Moreover, **segregating different types of mailstreams is a recommended best practice that leads to better deliverability.** That's because each message that bounces or gets reported as spam counts against the reputation of the sender. This reduces deliverability of future messages from that sender, or leads to them being blocked entirely.

Using the same sending mechanism for every type of email—user, marketing, transactional, alerts—means that a rogue email in any of these areas jeopardizes the deliverability of every message your company sends. Diversifying how you send email, therefore, helps protect you against just such a mishap.



2 Offload your Deliverability and Hardware Headaches

Managing deliverability can be a headache. A thumping, big-league migraine headache, in fact. Senders need to follow a host of rules in order to get their mail delivered, and each mailbox provider has their own rules, too, that may differ from the next provider in line. Worse yet, those rules are constantly changing as ISPs wage their never-ending war on spam.

Moreover, you may have already built workflows and business rules for your on-premises email program you don't want—or can't afford—to change. You might think this leaves you rigidly locked in to those processes, but **a hybrid approach can help you escape that snare.**

How? Let's say you're using an in-house software product (like Message Systems' Momentum or PowerMTA, if you'll allow the plug) but don't want to take on any deliverability hassles that might have occurred. Using a cloud-based solution (like our SparkPost platform) can be simple:

by opening an account and changing a few configuration settings, your deliverability optimization becomes the responsibility of experts who deal with those challenges on an everyday basis. Meanwhile, your existing on-premises systems stay intact, while you focus on your core business activities... and on how to manage the extra conversions and revenue you'll probably see by handing off those deliverability headaches to specialists.

Speaking of offloading: outsourcing your sending operations also means **eliminating the headaches of maintaining and managing whatever hardware and network infrastructure** you were deploying to handle this demanding chore.

Greater revenue, lower costs, fewer headaches?
There's a term for that: it's a **win-win-win.**

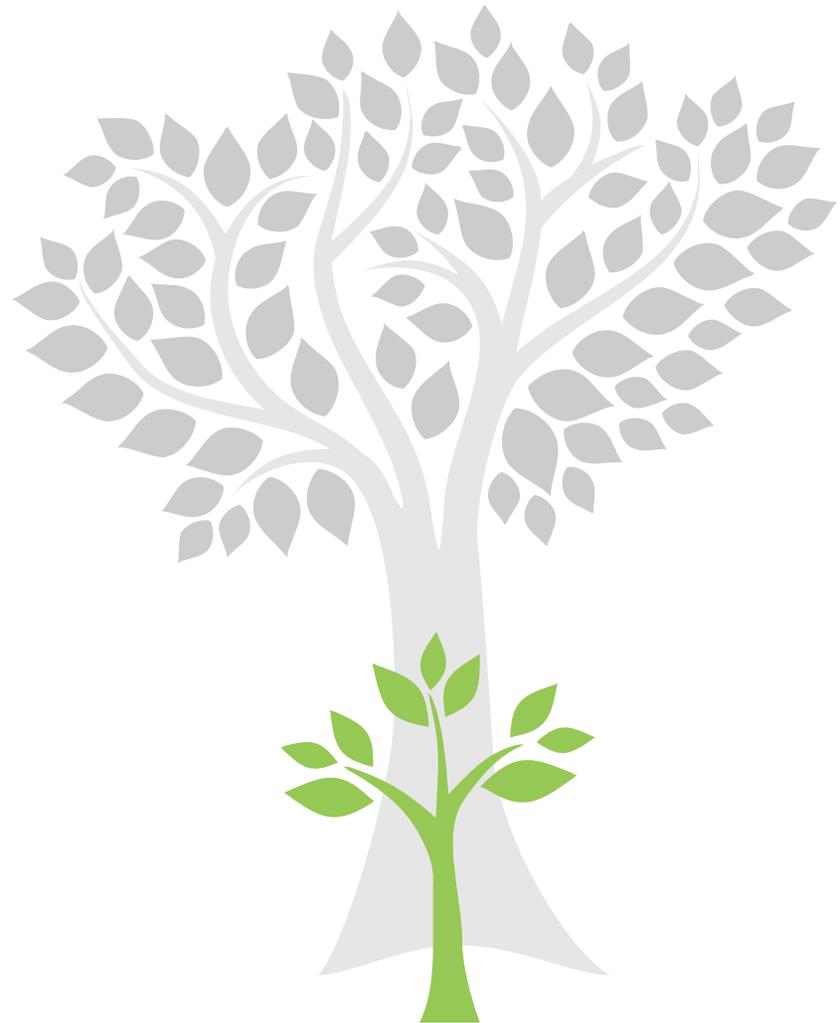


3 Scale Easily for Seasonal and Peak Sending Rates

Scalability can be a huge imperative, as message volumes can have a habit of turning unpredictable, or fluctuating wildly across your marketing calendar. A major product launch may create a one-time spike in your send volume that's orders of magnitude greater than normal. Seasonal spikes can happen too, or are driven by calendar events: retailers often find themselves sending one hundred times their typical volume during the Black Friday weekend, as just one example.

Being able to **respond quickly to a sudden market opportunity** is another situation where scalability comes in handy. An auto-maker going up against Volkswagen might want to be able to seize on VW's recent scandalous bad press by sending a special offer to VW lease customers who are coming off their contracts.

It doesn't make sense to expand your on-premises hardware footprint simply to deal with single-instance or periodic bursts of activity. That's where a hybrid architecture pays dividends: your **cloud service vendor can absorb the extra demand**, whenever or however it happens, thanks to their inherent scalability. Sparing you the extra long-term investment you'd otherwise have to make in on-premises assets.



4

Ensure Redundancy and Recovery, and Minimize Latency

A hybrid sending architecture almost automatically guarantees you've got redundancy, thanks to having two active sending environments in use. Switching between the two permits you to **carry on with your sends even if one fails**. Whether or not that happens automatically depends on how you've integrated the two systems, but even without that integration, you've still got a backup system available.

If email is mission-critical to daily operations at your enterprise, this is the kind of redundancy and disaster recovery capacity that eliminates a lot of worries.

Internet latency can be a real issue if you're using sending apps that are strictly hosted in the cloud. Network latency is beyond your control, frankly, so if you're sending emails that might be compromised by any latency, your own private on-premises environment gives you an option where connectivity can be controlled via your own Quality of Service techniques. Again, **by employing a hybrid infrastructure, you're providing for a wide variety of contingencies**.



5 Gain Flexibility for Security and Privacy Compliance

Data security: now, more than ever, it's a concern for almost every business. It's also a traditional sticking point for adopting cloud-based platforms or solutions, since many assume that data housed in the cloud isn't as secure as keeping it behind the walls of the company. Moreover, some heavily-regulated industries need to have certain types of data remain strictly within the organization's own servers and safeguards.

If you're in this situation, **a hybrid approach offers invaluable flexibility**. Your most sensitive data can stay inside your internally-managed systems, while less-sensitive data can be routed through the cloud.

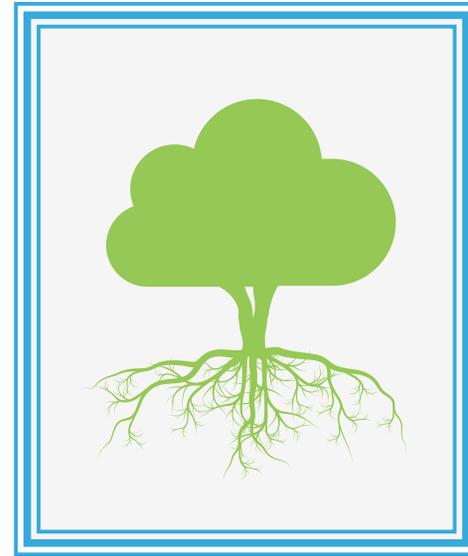


Portrait of a Hybrid

Since it's a hybrid configuration, you've got a broad selection of deployment options available to you, and your infrastructure might be completely different from another firm's email architecture. But here's one example of how a hybrid email infrastructure might take shape.

One company deploying a hybrid solution is an email service provider that has built a client-facing platform that incorporates PowerMTA under the hood of its suite of email marketing tools. This company has integrated SparkPost's cloud infrastructure to provide **additional sending capacity** and a means of **accelerating delivery of high-priority message streams**. Additionally, traditional hurdles for new senders, such as IP address warm-up, are mitigated by the established cloud-based sending infrastructure. As a result, **onboarding of new customers has become a much more rapid and efficient process**. That's a major benefit for a company that is in the business of helping its clients to deliver **better marketing emails, faster**.

Another firm that has found a hybrid implementation to be ideal for its business is a media company that markets highly personalized email content to its subscribers. It uses on-premises content management infrastructure to generate messages based on business rules that incorporate subscription information, customer



preferences, and other data. Rather than navigate the technical and operational challenges of message deliverability by itself, however, the company has turned to the SparkPost cloud to **offload deliverability issues**. As a result, the publisher has focused on its core business and the newsletter generation process, while realizing the **operational expertise of a dedicated cloud provider**.

In both of these cases, the business retains key business assets on-premises, while leveraging the elasticity and operational benefits of the cloud to quickly scale to meet any need, without the sizable hit to the bottom line that would come from keeping email implementation strictly in-house.

Hybrid Infrastructure: A More Evolved Solution

You've undoubtedly heard the cloud extolled as being the only solution that matters for the future of enterprise email. So, you might have taken a long, hard look at migrating your email infrastructure entirely to a cloud-based solution.

But the truly optimal answer for your business might not be a rip-and-replace leap into completely virtual deployment. We've covered five areas where a hybrid sending architecture, uniting the security and controllability of an on-premises installation with **the scalability and flexibility of a cloud-based service, offer advantages across the board:** in cost control, improved deliverability, elevated revenue, rock-solid redundancy and more.

By adapting the best from both breeds of email infrastructure, you can create a solution that's custom-suited to your company, and can help your email marketing evolve for years to come.



SparkPost is the cloud solution from the world's number one email infrastructure provider, whose customers—including Pinterest, Twitter, CareerBuilder, LinkedIn, Groupon, Salesforce, Marketo, Zillow, and Comcast—send over 3 trillion messages a year, over 25% of the world's legitimate email. Our service outperforms every other cloud or on-premises alternative, and these companies choose us to provide the deliverability, speed and insight they need to drive customer engagement for their business.

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