



•contactsend

SmartRelay

Imagine taking advantage of a standard SMTP interface, powerful message management tools, and all the benefits provided by the professional digital marketing specialists that are Contactlab, to optimize your transactional and service email communications...

You've just begun to imagine the strengths of SmartRelay.



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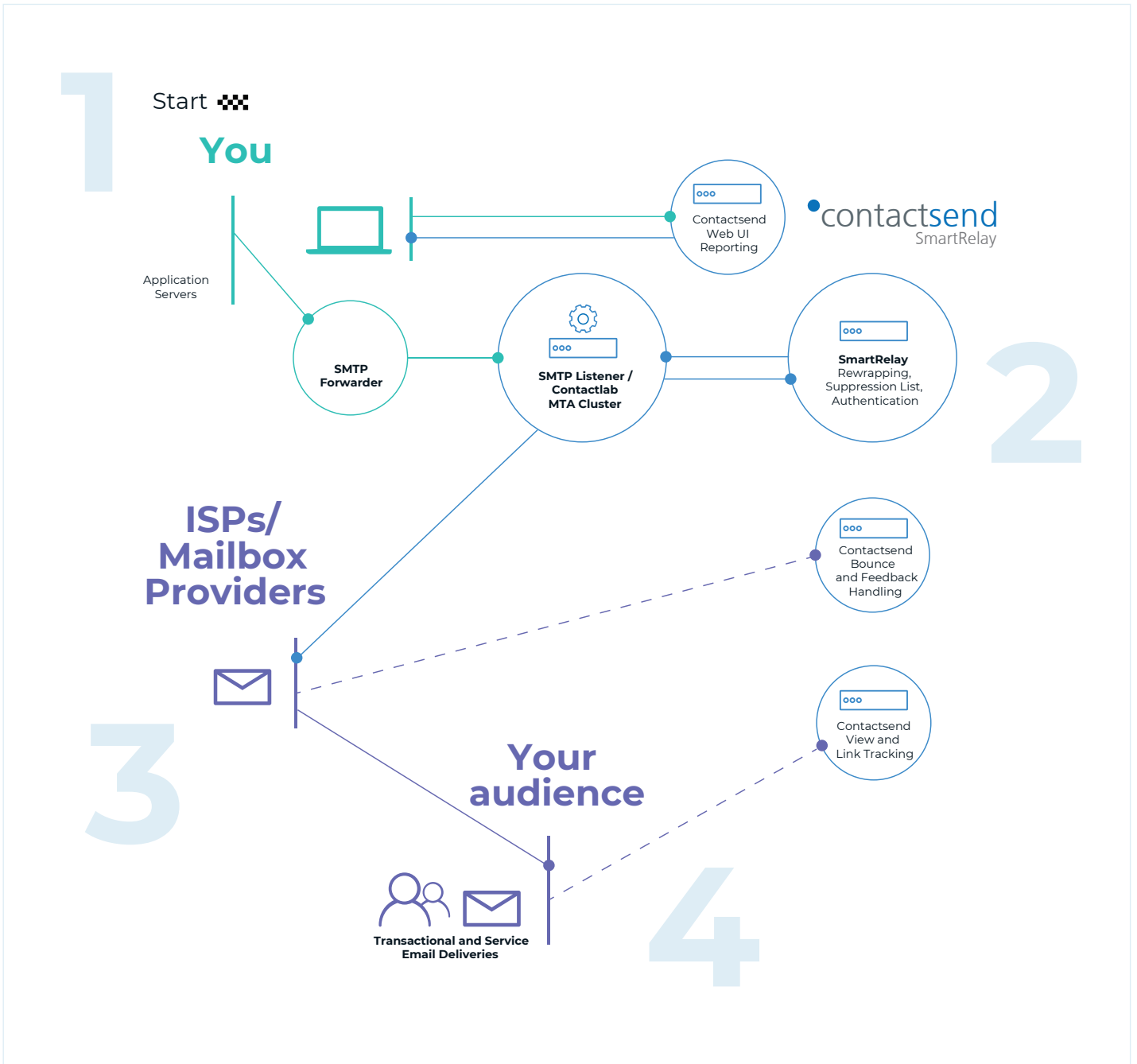
You've just begun to imagine the strengths of SmartRelay.

SmartRelay:

- Acts as a transparent interface between your email message-generating applications and the intended recipients
- Relays your outgoing email messages through a simple SMTP connection
- Operates through a SMTP listener and Contactlab's high-performance messaging subsystem
- Manage:
 - Email authentication
 - Feedback handling
 - Automatic bounce management
 - View and link tracking
 - Suppression list management
 - Statistics and reports
- Can be accessed using the dedicated SmartRelay UI
- Helps you conform with industry best practices, and avoid falling short of the requirements that most ISPs demand of a reputable sender
- Ensures that your reputation remains firmly in your hands



How does SmartRelay work?



SmartRelay conceptual architecture



SmartRelay provides you with all the features of secure and efficient, SMTP-based, transactional email message management service - effectively combining your local email applications with Contactlab's professional message delivery system.

SmartRelay also ensure you have feedback, report and statistics you need, to make the most of your ongoing relationships with your recipients. .

Your local environment

To take advantage of the inherent features of SMTP, we recommend that you set up a small, local SMTP forwarder to act as the outgoing message interface between your application servers and Contactlab. While your email message-generating applications could communicate directly with us, there are considerable advantages in using an SMTP forwarder, for example:

- Simplified system security:
 - Only one subsystem opens outbound SMTP connections, instead of potentially a large number of application servers
 - If your outbound flow is compromised, you can simply turn off the SMTP forwarder while investigating
- Your applications do not need to handle temporary connectivity issues:
 - The SMTP forwarder uses its local storage and the features of SMTP to manage such situations
- Traffic peaks are smoothed by the SMTP forwarder:
 - If, for example, the agreed resource limits are reached on our side, your SMTP forwarder simply stores and re-sends any affected messages a little later

The Contactlab environment

The initial access point for your SMTP connections with us is through the dedicated SMTP listener, hosted on our high performance message transfer agent (MTA) cluster.

SMTP listener

To conserve available resources and to add an additional layer of security, the SMTP listener is configured to allow a maximum number of simultaneous inbound SMTP connections.

When messages are accepted, they are forwarded by the MTA cluster to the SmartRelay engine.

The SmartRelay engine

The SmartRelay engine is responsible for applying any relevant suppression list, as well as automatically re-wrapping all messages, so that delivery-related aspects of SMTP and MIME can later be managed by Contactlab. It also maintains statistics and system updates.

Once the messages have been re-wrapped, they are returned to the MTA cluster for delivery to their final destination.



The MTA cluster

SmartRelay uses our dedicated high-performance MTA subsystem, ensuring that your email streams are entirely independent of those belonging to any other customer, helping to protect your reputation and assigned resources as a result.

The MTA cluster:

- Applies all mandatory and optional queuing parameters, based upon:
 - General throttling agreements
 - Any specific destination domain requirements
 - Any agreed customer configuration requirements
- Sends each message to its assigned destination

Inbound and outbound queue management is kept entirely separate.

Email authentication

Major mail service providers (MSPs) require volume senders to adopt at least one email authentication system, while each MSP is free to select the authentication technology that they prefer.

If this requirement is ignored, messages from the sender are progressively deprioritized.

SmartRelay implements all the necessary authentication technologies, including STARTTLS and DomainKeys identified (DKIM) signing, to ensure that your emails meet these requirements.

DKIM also enables you to safely implement DMARC, if you intend to do so.

Feedback management

SmartRelay provides access to a range of powerful email feedback management features.

Automatic delivery error management

Delivery errors (bounces) and non-delivery reports must be managed in well-defined ways, to comply with sender best practices. Internet service providers (ISPs) require large senders to strictly adhere to their rules, which are frequently updated. The message re-wrapping that SmartRelay undertakes before sending emails, ensures that bounces are sent back to Contactlab. They are then automatically classified our bounce handler subsystem, which are monitored and update frequently by our technical team.

Feedback loop events management

The most important factor in building your reputation is your complaint rate, which is the ratio of total messages over the number of spam/abuse complaints. This is measured by each mail service provider (MSP).

Some major MSPs offer a feedback loop (FBL) feed to qualifying professional senders. This delivers a message to the sender whenever one of the MSP users clicks the This is spam button. But because MSPs carry out extensive qualification checks before setting up such facilities, they are not usually available to non-specialized senders.

FBL feeds for all relevant MSPs are automatically available to you, through the FBL handling subsystem.

And because we continuously watch for new feeds becoming available, you automatically benefit from any additions, without the need to ask.



List-unsubscribe processing

Providing your message recipients with a readily available unsubscribe option is a fundamental best practice and is also a legal requirement in certain countries. Doing so also helps to protect your reputation, by giving your recipients an alternative to clicking the This is spam button in their email client.

But adding an unsubscribe option yourself means that you also need to set up the infrastructure locally, to manage any responses.

SmartRelay adds a list-unsubscribe header to every message automatically. You don't even need to do anything to activate list-unsubscribe support. It is carried out automatically when SmartRelay re-wraps each message.

View and link tracking

SmartRelay ensures that you have the following optional features readily available:

- Tracking when and how often a recipient views a particular message
- Tracking the use of links within an HTML email

These features can be used for all of your HTML email messages, none of them, or applied on a message-by-message basis, by using simple header-based controls.

Statistics and event data

SmartRelay have secure access to readily-understandable analytical reports covering, for example, the number of mailings, bounces, complaints and similar. You can use a dedicated SmartRelay web-based application. Interface's credentials are provided in the setup phase.



When should I use SmartRelay?

SmartRelay is best used to send and manage transactional and service emails, when the simplicity of a standard SMTP interface matches your needs and:

You would like to automatically benefit from several advanced features, such as:

- The powerful MTA cluster
- Email authentication
- Automatic bounce management
- Feedback loop events management
- Suppression list management

You do not require, for example, the comprehensive configuration features and delivery capabilities provided.

Once SmartRelay is set up and configured, taking advantage of all of its inherent benefits to keep in touch with your recipients, is practically as simple as writing and sending an email

Other Contactsend SmartRelay documentation is available from:

<http://developer.contactlab.com>