

Journey to Yahoo Inbox From Different SMTP Providers: SendGrid, MailGun, and Custom SMTP

This analysis explores the key factors influencing how quickly emails reach the Yahoo inbox from different SMTP providers — SendGrid, MailGun, and custom SMTP. The goal is to find the best provider and settings for fastest inbox delivery.



About Warmy and the Research Team

Warmy is the leading email deliverability technology, helping businesses improve their inbox placement, sender reputation, and overall email performance. Powered by AI-driven strategies.

The Warmy Research Team is a dedicated group of email deliverability-certified experts focused on analyzing and optimizing email-sending practices.

Through continuous testing, data-driven insights, and innovative methodologies, they uncover factors that impact deliverability and translate findings into actionable improvements for Warmy's platform. Their expertise helps businesses navigate the complexities of email deliverability with confidence.



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Definition of Key Factors

IP Type :

IP Type defines whether your sending IP is **Dedicated** (used only by you) or **Shared** (used by many).

Template :

Refers to the content structure of your warmup emails. There are **Custom Templates** and Warmup Templates (default system-generated warmups).

Balance :

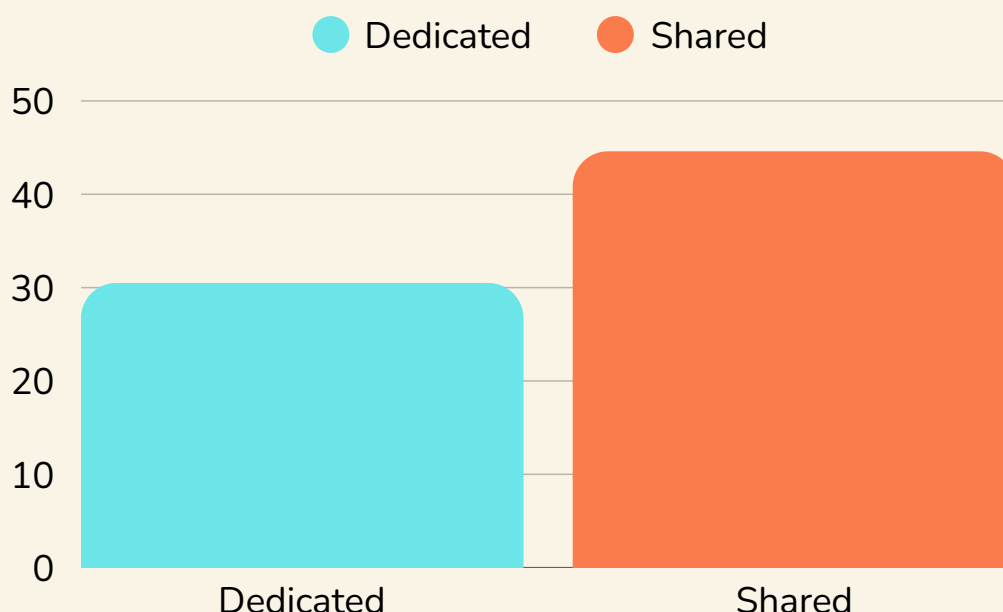
Shows the percentage of warmup volume sent specifically to Yahoo addresses.

IMAP :

Indicates whether the receiving inboxes can open, click, and reply to warmup emails across devices and in real-time.

Impact of IP Type: Dedicated vs. Shared IP

Average Days to Inbox: Dedicated vs. Shared IP Pool (Across All ESPs)



Results:

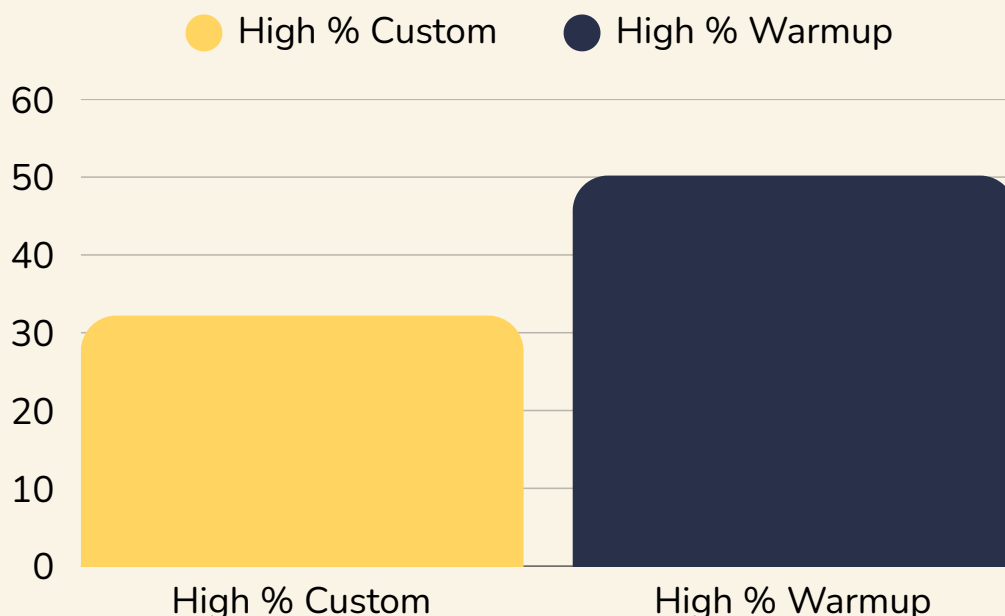
- **Dedicated IP:** 30.5 days
- **Shared IP:** 44.6 days

Insights:

- Using Dedicated IPs during warmup significantly speeds up Yahoo Inbox placement.
- **Dedicated IPs reduce** warmup time by **~32%** compared to **Shared IPs**, providing faster and more stable reputation building and predictable Yahoo inbox placement for high-volume campaigns.

Impact of High % Custom vs. High % Warm-up Templates

*Average Days to Inbox:
High % Custom vs High % Warmup (Default) Templates
(Across All ESPs)*



Results:

- **High % Custom Templates:** 32 days
- **High % Warmup Templates:** 50 days

Insights:

- Using **high percentages of custom templates speeds up Yahoo Inbox placement by ~36%** on average compared to using default templates only.
- Custom templates increase content variety and engagement signals, which Yahoo prefers, allowing for faster warmup and improved sender reputation across all ESPs.

Impact of High % Custom vs. High % Warm-up Templates

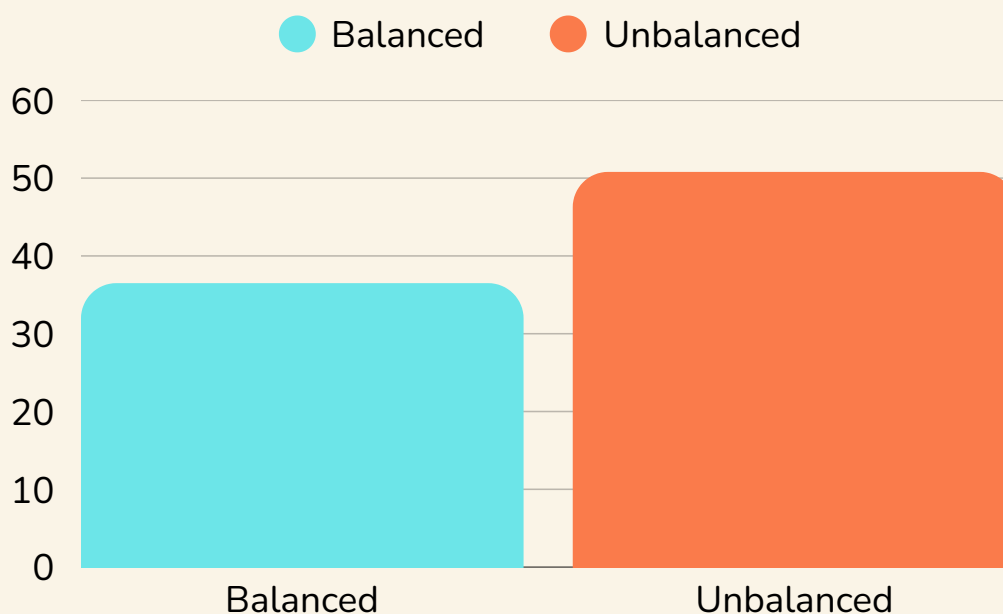
Why do custom templates matter?

- Default templates help warm up your domain and build sender reputation.
- However, since many users warm up using the same default templates, providers can't clearly understand your unique content and brand.
- Using your own custom templates during warmup makes your brand more recognizable and warms up your actual email content. This helps your templates build a good reputation in the network, making spam filters trust your brand and content.

Default templates warm up your domain, but custom templates warm up your brand and your specific content.

Impact of Sending Balance

*Average Days to Inbox:
Balanced vs Unbalanced Sending (Across All ESPs)*



Results:

- **Balanced:** 36.5 days
- **Unbalanced:** 50.8 days

Insights:

- Using balance **reduces Yahoo Inbox warmup time by ~28%**, making it a highly effective factor to implement during warmup strategies.

Impact of Sending Balance

Why does Yahoo Balance matter?

- It helps you focus your warmup on Yahoo to build trust and improve inbox placement. The best practice is to gradually increase your Yahoo balance by 5-10% each week or 2-3% every 3 days.
- This creates a smooth, consistent increase in Yahoo-specific traffic, giving you a higher chance of reaching the inbox.

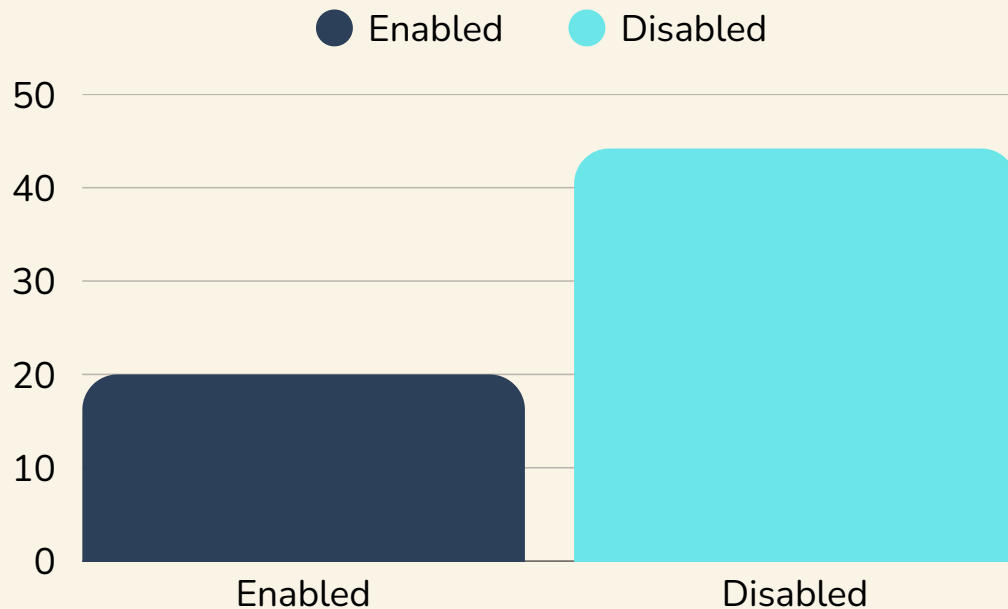
⚠ A word of caution:

If you have high outgoing volumes (e.g., 2,000 emails/day) and suddenly switch your balance from 0% to 100% Yahoo, it can damage your IP and domain reputation, leading to spam placement or even rejections.

The “outgoing traffic” refers to the total sending volume

Impact of IMAP / Reply Ability

*Average Days to Inbox:
IMAP Enabled vs. Disabled (Across All ESPs)*



Results:

- **With IMAP (Custom SMTP):** 20 days
- **Without IMAP:** 44 days

Insights:

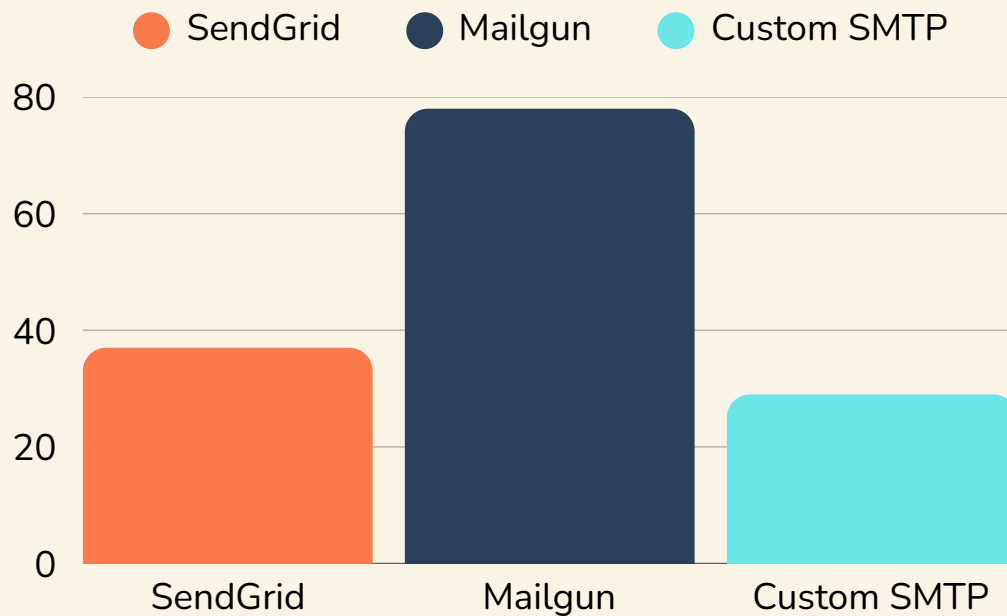
- IMAP reduces Yahoo Inbox warmup time by ~55% on Custom SMTP.

Impact of IMAP / Reply Ability

💡 **Why does IMAP matter, and why is only Custom SMTP able to have it?**

- IMAP allows your warmup inbox to receive, open, click, and reply to emails. While opens and clicks can be simulated on any ESP (SendGrid, Mailgun, Custom SMTP) using seed lists, but you will never be able to receive email without IMAP
- Replies are strong trust signal for Yahoo, boosting your sender reputation and significantly accelerating Inbox placement.
- Since SendGrid and Mailgun warmup inboxes can only send (no IMAP), you can get opens and clicks there, but cannot receive replies.
- Only Custom SMTP warmup allows full IMAP engagement, including replies, making it the fastest way to warm up your sender reputation with Yahoo.

Average Days to Yahoo Inbox Across ESPs



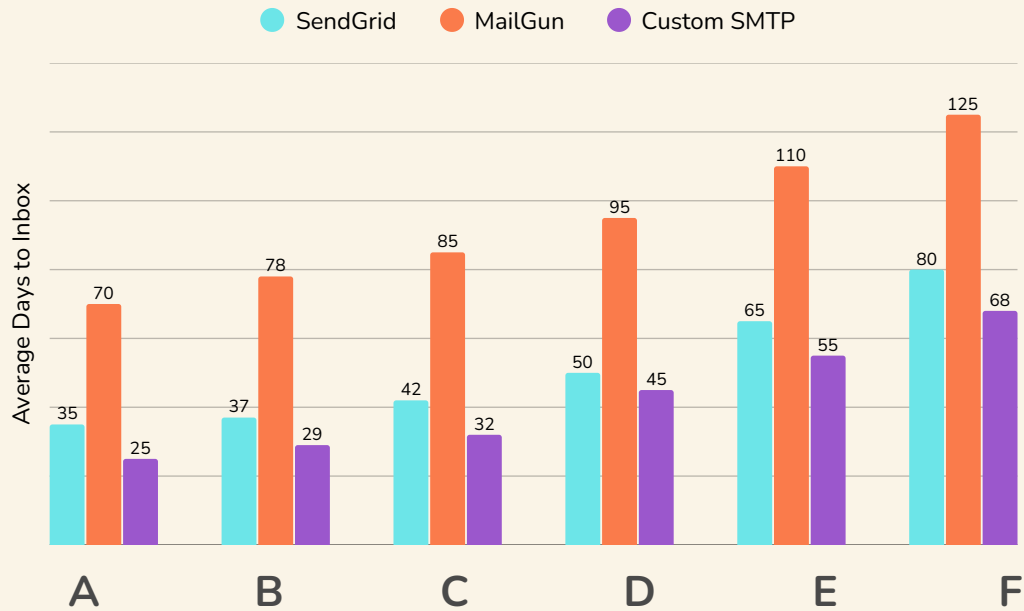
Results:

- **SendGrid:** ~37 days
- **Mailgun:** ~78 days
- **Custom SMTP:** ~29 days

Insights:

- **Custom SMTP** is the **fastest**, reaching Yahoo Inbox **~63%** faster than Mailgun and **~22%** faster than SendGrid on average. SendGrid also shows stable results and is **~52%** faster than Mailgun.

Compilation of Factors of Average Days to Inbox Across ESPs



This chart shows the average days to reach Yahoo Inbox across SendGrid, Mailgun, and Custom SMTP using six unique combination of factors. The same data is presented in table form in the next page.

Compilation of Factors of Average Days to Inbox Across ESPs

Combination of Factors	SendGrid	Mailgun	Custom SMTP
A. Dedicated IP Custom Template Balanced sending IMAP enabled	~35 days	~70 days	~25 days
B. Dedicated IP Custom Template Balanced sending IMAP disabled	~37 days	~78 days	~29 days
C. Dedicated IP Custom Template Unbalanced sending IMAP enabled	~42 days	~85 days	~32 days
D. Dedicated IP Custom Template Unbalanced sending IMAP enabled	~50 days	~95 days	~45 days
E. Shared IP Default Template Balanced sending IMAP disabled	~65 days	~110 days	~55 days
F. Shared IP Default Template Unbalanced sending IMAP disabled	~80 days	~125 days	~68 days

Conclusion

Dedicated IPs and Custom Templates significantly reduce warmup time across all ESPs. Dedicated IPs help build a clean sender reputation, improving inbox placement on Yahoo. Using Custom Templates (not system-generated warmups) increases content variety, which Yahoo prefers, speeding up inbox placement.

Using a balanced Yahoo sending strategy further speeds up inbox placement. A balanced warmup trains Yahoo to trust your IP and content.

IMAP on Custom SMTP adds extra speed by allowing replies and engagement. While IMAP alone does not guarantee inboxing, it supports engagement signals that improve your sender reputation.

Shared IPs and Default Templates increase warmup time, especially when Yahoo balance is not used.



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