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AIX TRAINING GUIDE 3 OF 15 · FREE

Setting Up SMTP2GO From Start To Finish

Every step in order: your account, your sender domain, the DNS records in cPanel or Cloudflare, DMARC, your API key, the ResultsAiX Mailer, your first test and sensible limits.

Kevin Fahey · ResultsAiX.com

SMTP2GO is the sending service I use and the one I recommend to almost everyone starting out. Guide 2 explains why. This guide is the hands-on part: we set it up together, from an empty inbox to your first broadcast leaving your WordPress site, signed for your own domain.

Set aside about an hour. Most of that is waiting a few minutes for DNS records to go live. The actual clicking takes twenty minutes, and you only do it once.

Throughout this guide I use an example business called Brightline Coaching. Wherever you see that, use your own domain. The Mailer screens are real ResultsAiX screens. For the SMTP2GO and DNS screens, every step is written out with the exact button and menu names, so you can follow along on your own screen.

What you will have by the end of this guide

- An SMTP2GO account with your own domain verified, every email signed with DKIM
- SPF alignment and a DMARC record in place, the three checks inbox providers look for
- SMTP2GO connected to the ResultsAiX Mailer and a successful test in your inbox
- Bounces, spam complaints and unsubscribes flowing back to the Mailer automatically
- Sensible daily and hourly limits, and a gentle warm-up for your first big send

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PART 1

The Whole Setup At A Glance

Here is everything we are about to do, in the order we do it. Each step builds on the one before, so follow them in order and you will not need to come back to any of them.



When you finish, every email the Mailer sends goes out through SMTP2GO's servers, signed for your own domain, with SPF, DKIM and DMARC all passing. That is exactly what Gmail, Outlook and Yahoo want to see from a sender.

The Three Checks Inbox Providers Make

Check	What It Proves	How You Get It With SMTP2GO
SPF	The server that sent the email is allowed to send for the domain behind it.	The return-path CNAME record (it starts with "em").
DKIM	The email was signed by your domain and was not changed on the way.	The DKIM CNAME record (it ends in "._domainkey").
DMARC	Your domain tells inboxes what to do with mail that fails, and where to send reports. It passes when SPF or DKIM pass for your From domain.	One TXT record you add yourself, in Step 5.

PART 2

Before You Start

> **Tip**
>
> Open three browser tabs before you begin: SMTP2GO, your DNS (cPanel or Cloudflare) and your WordPress admin. You will move between them, and it is much faster with all three side by side.

Have these ready and the whole setup flows in one sitting:

What	Why You Need It
Your own domain	For example yoursite.com. Your emails go out from an address on it.
Access to your DNS	Where your domain's records live. Usually your hosting's cPanel (the Zone Editor) or Cloudflare. If you are not sure, it is wherever your domain's nameservers point.
A work email address	SMTP2GO signs you up with an address on your own domain, for example sarah@yoursite.com, rather than a free mailbox address.
A mobile phone	SMTP2GO sends a 5-digit code by SMS to confirm your account.
The ResultsAiX Mailer	Installed and licensed on your WordPress site. Guide 1 shows you how.
Your From address	The address readers see, for example hello@yoursite.com. Make it an address you can read replies at.

STEP 1

Create Your SMTP2GO Account

1. Go to **smtp2go.com** and click **Sign Up**. The free plan needs no card and lets you send 1,000 emails a month while you set up.
2. Enter your **Work email** on your own domain, your **Full Name** and your **Company**, then **Create a Password**.
3. Enter your **Contact Phone Number**. SMTP2GO sends you a 5-digit code by SMS. Type it in.
4. Open the account activation email SMTP2GO sends you and click the confirmation link. You are now in your SMTP2GO dashboard.
5. When you are ready for more than the free allowance, choose a plan on the pricing page. You can start free today and upgrade later without changing anything in the Mailer.

> **Good to know about a new paid account**
>
> Every new paid SMTP2GO account starts with a sending quota of 1,000 emails a day while their team completes a quick one-time review. As you approach that number, the account is assessed and fully activated. In Step 11 we set the Mailer to match, so your first sends flow smoothly through the review.

STEP 2

Add Your Sender Domain

SMTP2GO only sends from senders you have verified. You can verify a single email address, or your whole domain. Always verify the domain: it is what signs your email with DKIM and aligns SPF, and it lets you send from any address on that domain.

1. In the SMTP2GO menu on the left, open **Sending**, then **Verified Senders**.
2. Under **Sender domains**, click **Add Sender Domain**.
3. Type your domain, for example **yoursite.com**, and continue.

4 SMTP2GO now shows you three CNAME records to add to your DNS. Keep this page open: you will copy from it in Step 3.

The Three Records You Will See

The numbers in your records are unique to your account. Here is what each one looks like for Brightline Coaching, using example numbers:

Purpose	Type	Name (Host)	Points To
Return path (SPF)	CNAME	em123456.yoursite.com	return.smtp2go.net
DKIM signing	CNAME	s123456._domainkey.yoursite.com	dkim.smtp2go.net
Link tracking	CNAME	link.yoursite.com	The value SMTP2GO shows

Copy the exact names and values from your own SMTP2GO screen. The return-path record points your bounce address at SMTP2GO, which publishes the right SPF for you, so there is nothing to change in an SPF record you already have. The DKIM record lets SMTP2GO sign every email for your domain. The tracking record gives SMTP2GO's links a secure address on your own domain.

> **Tip**
>
> Copy each value with the copy button or by selecting the whole field, then paste it. One missing letter is the difference between a record that verifies in minutes and one you have to check again, so pasting beats typing every time.

STEP 3

Add The DNS Records

Now we add those three records where your domain's DNS lives. Use the section that matches your setup: cPanel, or Cloudflare. If your domain uses Cloudflare's nameservers, use Cloudflare even if your website is on cPanel hosting.

In cPanel (Zone Editor)

1. Log in to cPanel and open **Zone Editor**, in the **Domains** section.
2. Find yoursite.com in the list and click **+ CNAME Record** beside it.
3. In **Name**, paste the first record's name, for example **em123456**. cPanel completes it to em123456.yoursite.com for you.
4. In **CNAME**, paste where it points, for example **return.smtp2go.net**.
5. Click **Add a CNAME Record**.
6. Repeat for the DKIM record (s123456._domainkey pointing to dkim.smtp2go.net) and the tracking record (link pointing to the value SMTP2GO shows).
7. Click **Manage** beside your domain to see all three in the list, each with the type CNAME.

In Cloudflare

1. Log in to Cloudflare, choose your domain, then open **DNS**, then **Records**.
2. Click **Add record** and set **Type** to **CNAME**.
3. In **Name**, paste the host part of the first record, for example **em123456**. Cloudflare adds your domain to it.
4. In **Target**, paste where it points, for example **return.smtp2go.net**.
5. Click the orange cloud beside **Proxy status** so it turns grey and reads **DNS only**. Leave TTL on Auto.
6. Click **Save**.
7. Repeat for the DKIM record and the tracking record, each one set to **DNS only**.

> **Why DNS only**
>
> Cloudflare's proxy (the orange cloud) is made for websites. Email records need to point straight at SMTP2GO, so SMTP2GO can see them and verify your domain. The grey cloud, DNS only, does exactly that. Your website records stay proxied as they are.

Other DNS Hosts

Every DNS host has the same three fields under different names: a type (CNAME), a name or host (em123456) and a value, target or points-to (return.smtp2go.net). Some hosts want only the host part in the name box, and some want the full name ending in your domain. If your host adds the domain for you, enter only the host part.

STEP 4

Watch It Verify

1. Go back to SMTP2GO, **Sending**, then **Verified Senders**.
2. SMTP2GO checks your records automatically every few minutes. You can also open your domain and ask it to check now.
3. As each record is found, it shows a green tick. When all three are green, your domain is verified.

New records often go live within minutes. On some DNS hosts they take a few hours to spread around the world, so if the ticks are not all green yet, make a coffee, carry on to Step 5 and look again afterwards.

> **Your domain is verified**
>
> From now on, every email SMTP2GO sends for yoursite.com is signed with DKIM and its return path is on your own domain. That is the foundation of great delivery.

STEP 5

Add DMARC

DMARC is a short TXT record that tells inbox providers your domain is properly set up, what to do with any email that fails your checks, and where to send reports. Gmail and Yahoo ask bulk senders to have one. It takes two minutes.

Your domain has one DMARC record at most. If you already have one, keep it. If not, add this:

Type	Name (Host)	Value
TXT	_dmarc	v=DMARC1; p=none; rua=mailto:dmarc@yoursite.com

- **p=none** starts you in monitoring mode: inboxes deliver as normal and send you reports. It is the right place to start.
- **rua=** is the address that receives the daily reports. Use an address on your domain that you are happy to fill with automated reports.

Adding It In cPanel

1. In **Zone Editor**, click **Manage** beside your domain.
2. Click the arrow beside **+ Add Record** and choose to add a **TXT** record.
3. Set **Name** to **_dmarc** (cPanel completes it to _dmarc.yoursite.com), and paste the value into the record box.
4. Click **Save Record**.

Adding It In Cloudflare

1. In **DNS**, then **Records**, click **Add record**.
2. Set **Type** to **TXT**, **Name** to **_dmarc**, and paste the value into **Content**.
3. Click **Save**. TXT records have no proxy setting, so there is nothing else to choose.

> **Moving up later**
>
> Once your reports show your email passing for a few weeks, you can change p=none to p=quarantine, and later p=reject. That tells inboxes to treat anyone pretending to be you as spam, which protects your name. Guide 4 covers this step by step.

The Mailer That Works With Your Sending Service

The ResultsAiX Mailer runs your list, broadcasts and automations on your own WordPress, and connects to SMTP2GO with one API key.

See ResultsAiX Mailer →

STEP 6

Create Your API Key

The Mailer talks to SMTP2GO through its API, which is fast and lets the Mailer send in batches. The API key is the password for that connection.

1. In SMTP2GO, open **Sending**, then **API Keys**.
2. Add a new API key.
3. Give it a **Description** you will recognise, for example **Brightline Mailer**.
4. Leave the **Rate Limit** at its default of unlimited. The Mailer does the pacing for you (Step 11).
5. Under **Permissions**, make sure the key can send email. The Mailer uses SMTP2GO's email send and email batch endpoints.
6. Leave SMTP2GO's **Unsubscribe Footer**, **Open Tracking** and **Click Tracking** switched off for this key. The Mailer adds its own unsubscribe link and tracks opens and clicks itself, so everything lands in your Mailer reports.
7. Save the key and copy it. SMTP2GO API keys start with **api-** followed by 32 characters.

> **Keep it like a password**
>
> Paste the key straight into the Mailer in the next step. If you ever need a new one, create another key in the same place, paste it into the Mailer and disable the old one.

Prefer SMTP? That Works Too

SMTP2GO also works as a classic SMTP server. Most people should use the API connection above. If you have a reason to use SMTP instead, create a username and password under **Sending**, then **SMTP Users**, and use these details with the Mailer's **Bring-your-own SMTP** connection:

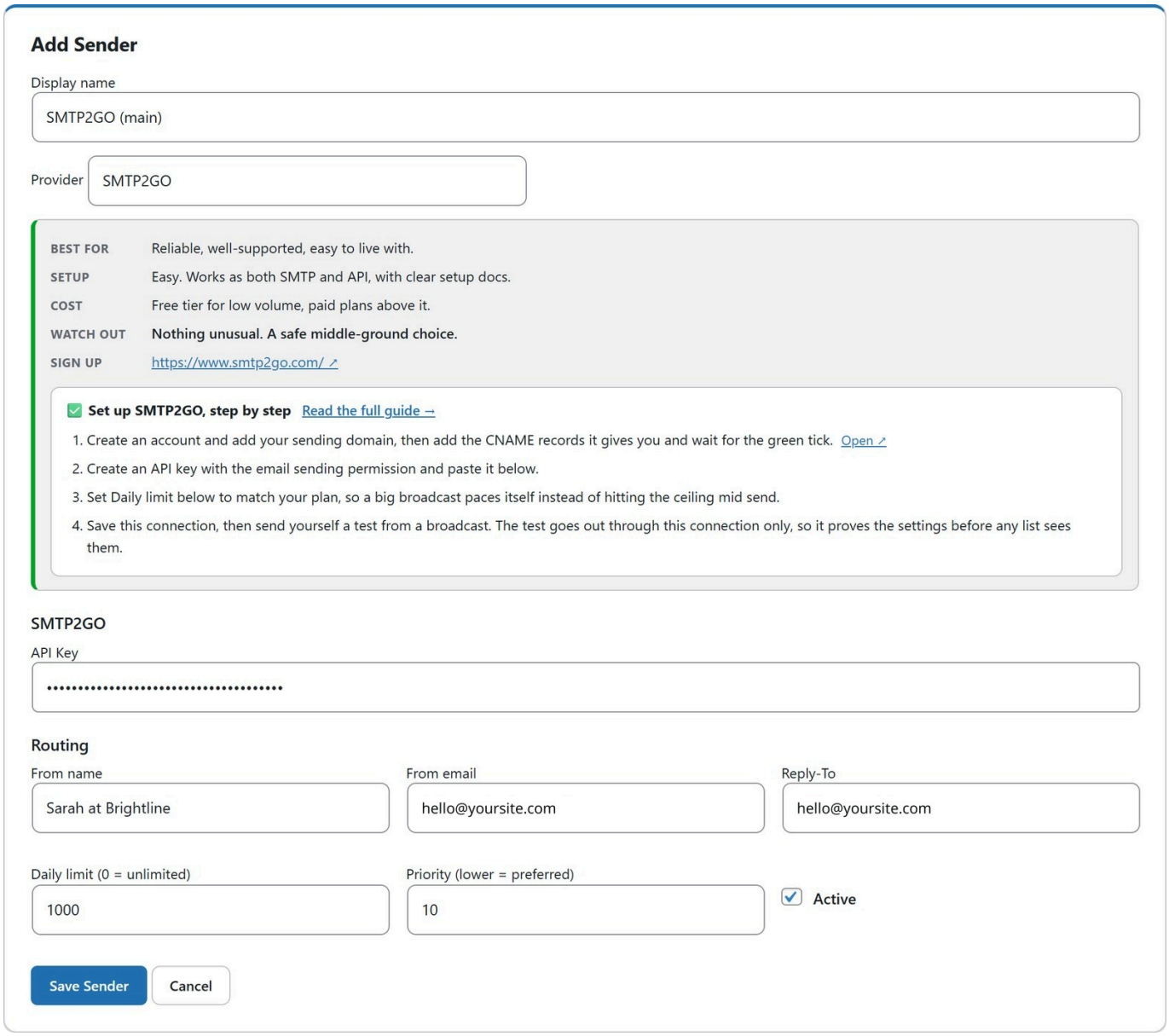
Setting	Value
Host	mail.smtp2go.com
Port and Encryption	587 with TLS, or 465 with SSL (2525 and 8025 also work with TLS)
Username and Password	The SMTP User you created in SMTP2GO

STEP 7

Connect It To The Mailer

Now the fun part. Over to your WordPress admin.

1. Open the ResultsAiX Mailer, then **Delivery**, then **Sending**.
2. Click **+ Add Sender**.
3. In **Display name**, type a name you will recognise, for example **SMTP2GO (main)**.
4. In **Provider**, choose **SMTP2GO**. A short guide for SMTP2GO appears, with its setup steps in order and a link to the full article in the Training tab.
5. Paste your key into **API Key**.
6. Fill in the Routing section using the table below.
7. Click **Save Sender**.



Choose SMTP2GO, paste your key, set the routing.

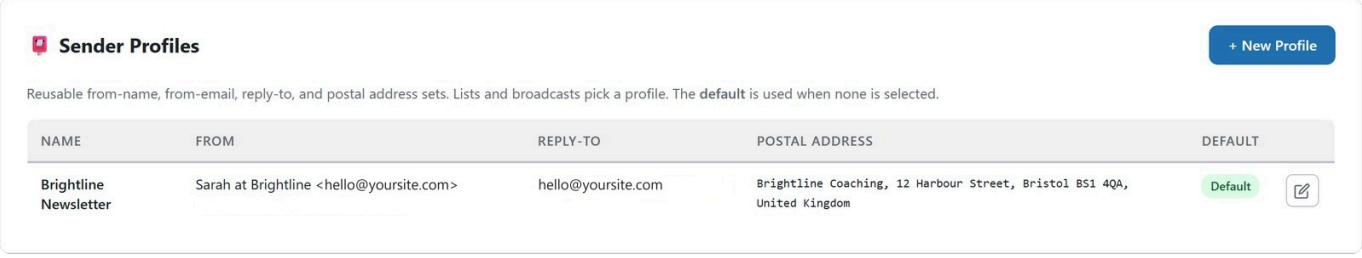
Field	What To Enter
From name	The name readers see, for example Sarah at Brightline.
From email	An address on your verified domain, for example hello@yoursite.com.
Reply-To	Where replies go. Often the same address.

Daily limit (0 = unlimited)	For a brand new paid account, 1,000. On the free plan, 200. Step 11 shows what to set as you grow.
Priority (lower = preferred)	10. The lowest number sends first, so this becomes your main connection.
Active	Ticked.

Your new connection appears in the Sending Providers table, showing its provider, priority, sends today and daily limit.

Set Your Default Sender

While you are here, open **Setup**, then **Settings**, and look at **Sender Profiles**. Your default profile holds the From name, From email and Reply-To used everywhere a broadcast or list does not choose its own, plus your **Sender Postal Address**. The law in most countries asks for a postal address in commercial email, and the Mailer adds it to the footer of every email for you, under the unsubscribe link. Set it once and you are covered everywhere.



Your default sender and postal address.

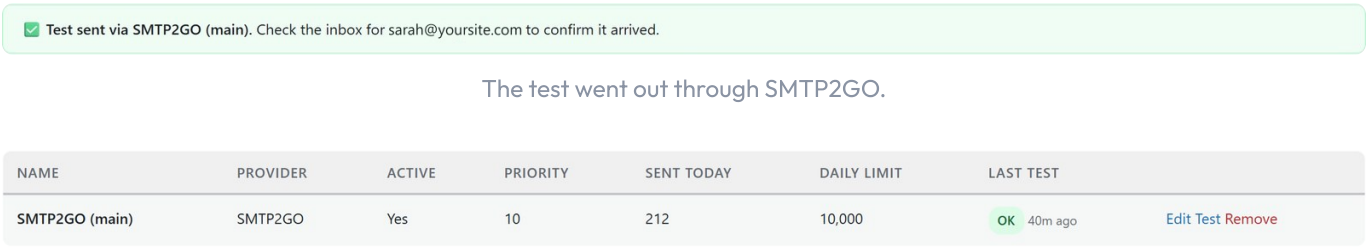
See ResultsAiX Mailer →

STEP 8

Send Your First Test

1. In the Sending Providers table, find **SMTP2GO (main)** and click **Test**.
2. The Mailer sends a test email through SMTP2GO to your site's admin email address, and shows a green confirmation at the top of the screen.
3. The Last test column now shows **OK** with the time.

4. Open your inbox and find the test email.



The test went out through SMTP2GO.

Connected, tested and ready to send.

Check The Three Passes In Gmail

If your test went to a Gmail address, this is the most satisfying check in email:

1. Open the test email in Gmail.
2. Click the three dots at the top right of the message and choose **Show original**.
3. At the top you will see **SPF: PASS**, **DKIM: PASS** and **DMARC: PASS**, with your domain beside them.

Three passes means inbox providers can prove the email came from you, through a server you approved, exactly as you sent it. You can also send a test from any broadcast before it goes out, so you see the real email in your own inbox first.

> **You are sending**
>
> Your Mailer is now connected to SMTP2GO, on your own domain, with SPF, DKIM and DMARC all passing. The next three steps make it run beautifully on its own.

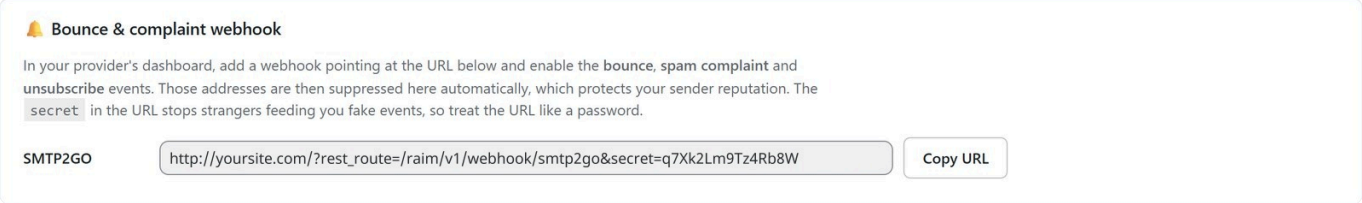
STEP 9

Connect The Webhook

A webhook is how SMTP2GO tells the Mailer, instantly, when an email bounces, when someone marks it as spam or when someone unsubscribes through SMTP2GO. The Mailer then takes them off future sends automatically, so your list stays clean without you lifting a finger.

Copy The URL From The Mailer

1. On the Mailer's **Sending** tab, scroll to **Bounce & complaint webhook**. It appears once you have an API connection.
2. Beside SMTP2GO, click **Copy URL**.



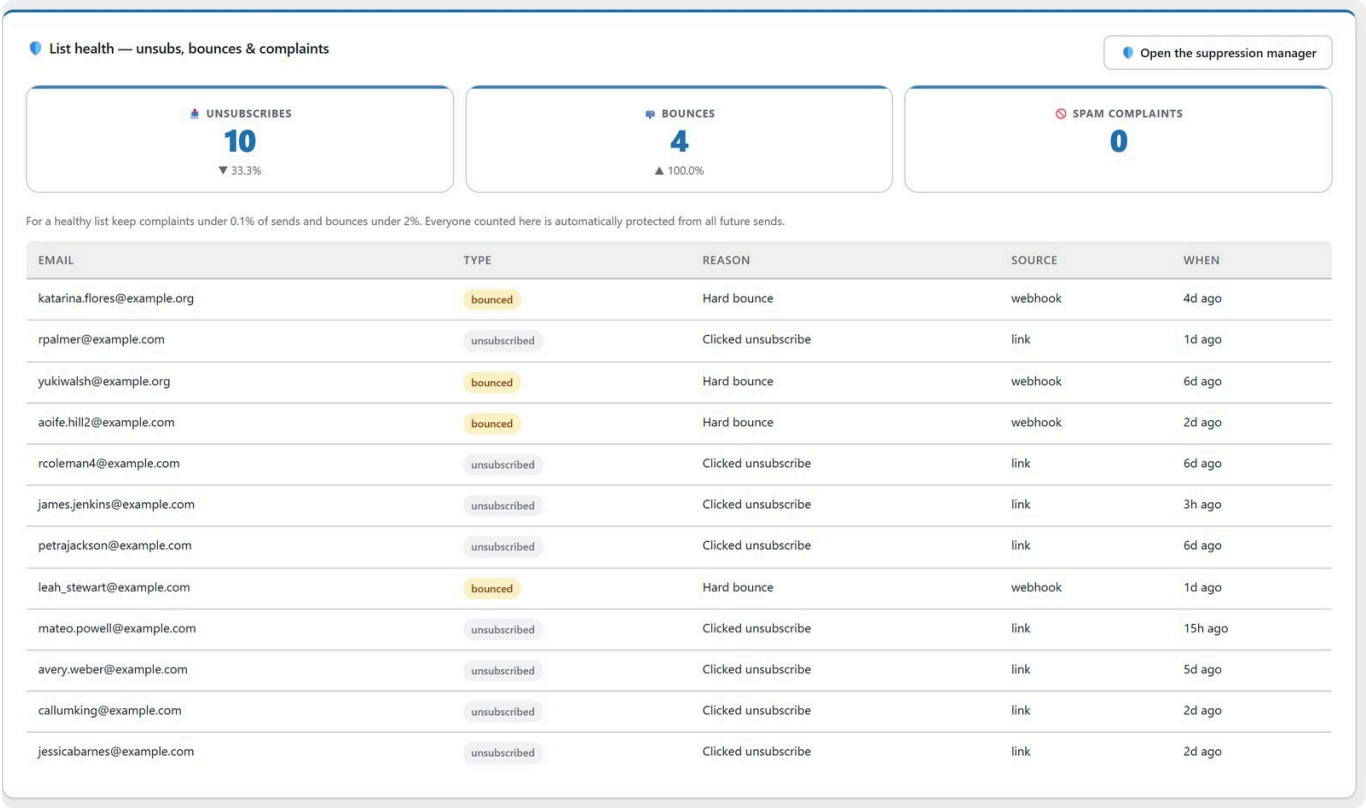
Copy this URL into SMTP2GO's webhook.

The URL carries a secret, which is how the Mailer knows the events really come from your account. Treat it like a password and paste it only into SMTP2GO.

Add It In SMTP2GO

1. In SMTP2GO, open **Settings**, then **Webhooks**, and click **Add Webhook**.
2. Paste the Mailer's URL into **URL**.
3. Under **Users**, choose the API key you created in Step 6.
4. Set **Output type** to **JSON**.
5. Under **Email events to include**, tick **Bounce**, **Spam** and **Unsubscribe**.
6. Click **Save changes**. You can then click **Test this webhook** to send a sample event.

From now on, the Mailer handles each event the right way. A hard bounce (an address that does not exist) is blocked straight away. A soft bounce (a full mailbox, a busy server) is recorded and the person stays on your list, unless it keeps happening: five soft bounces within ninety days and the address is treated as gone. Spam complaints and unsubscribes are protected from all future sends immediately.



Bounces and complaints flow back on their own.

STEP 10

Read Your Reports

You now have two sets of reports, and they work beautifully together. The Mailer tells you what your readers did. SMTP2GO tells you what happened to each email on its way to the inbox.

Where	What It Tells You
SMTP2GO Dashboard	Emails sent, delivered, bounced and spam figures at a glance, with your bounce rate for the last 30 days.
SMTP2GO Reports, then Activity	Every single email, searchable by recipient, subject or sender, with each event: processed, delivered, opened, clicked, bounced. Paid plans keep 30 days, the free plan 5.
SMTP2GO Reports, then Suppressions	Addresses SMTP2GO will not send to because they complained or unsubscribed through SMTP2GO.

Mailer broadcast report	Delivered, opens, clicks, unsubscribes and revenue for each broadcast, live while it sends.
Mailer Reports, List Health	Unsubscribes, bounces and spam complaints for any date range, with the latest events and which provider reported them.

The Numbers Healthy Senders Keep

Measure	Healthy Range
Bounce rate	Under 2% is great. SMTP2GO rates anything under 8% as Good.
Spam complaints	Under 0.1% of what you send.
Delivered	Close to everything you sent, on a list of people who asked to hear from you.

Look at your SMTP2GO dashboard after each broadcast for the first few weeks. It takes one minute, and you will quickly get a feel for what your normal numbers look like.

STEP 11

Set Sensible Limits

The last step makes your sending smooth and steady. The Mailer gives you three controls, and together they mean you can press send on a big broadcast and let it flow out at exactly the right pace.

1. The Daily Limit On The Connection

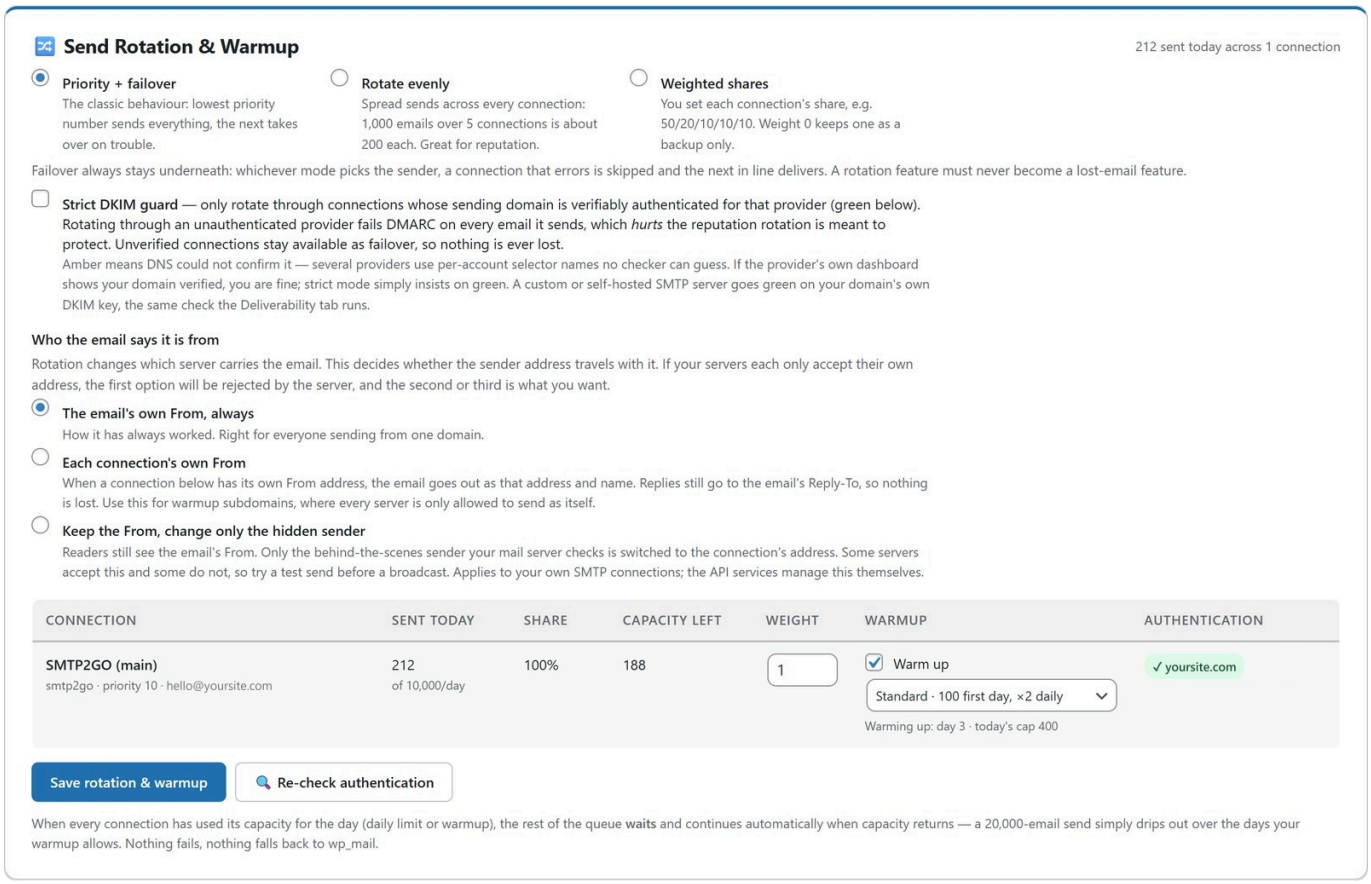
This is the most the connection sends in one day. When it is reached, the rest of the queue waits and carries on the next day, automatically. Set it to suit your plan:

Your SMTP2GO Plan	Daily Limit To Set
Free plan	200 (the free plan's daily allowance)
New paid account, first days	1,000, while SMTP2GO completes its one-time review
Paid plan, after review	Your biggest send in one day, and within your monthly allowance. For example 10,000 on a 50,000 plan if you send a few broadcasts a week
Large plans	Your planned daily volume. Set 0 for unlimited if your plan comfortably covers everything

2. Warmup For Your First Big Send

A new SMTP2GO account sending from your domain for the first time builds its reputation fastest by starting small and growing. Below the providers table, in **Send Rotation & Warmup**, tick **Warm up** on your SMTP2GO row and choose **Standard**: 100 emails on day one, doubling each day. Click **Save rotation & warmup**.

Now send your broadcast to your whole list as normal. Each day the queue sends up to that day's cap and the rest waits politely for the next day. The row shows exactly where it is, for example "Warming up: day 3, today's cap 400". When the cap reaches your daily limit, warmup is complete and the daily limit takes over.

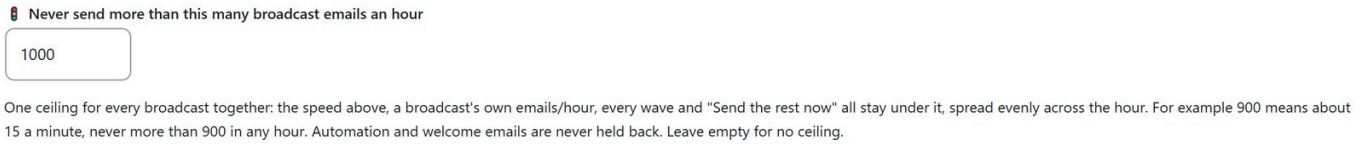


Warmup grows your sending day by day.

Day	Standard Pace Cap	Total Sent By Then
1	100	100
2	200	300
3	400	700
4	800	1,500
5	1,600	3,100
6	3,200	6,300
7	6,400	12,700
8	12,800	25,500

3. The Hourly Ceiling

Open **Setup**, then **Settings**, and under Operations find **Never send more than this many broadcast emails an hour**. This is one ceiling for all your broadcasts together, spread evenly across the hour. Your automations and welcome emails are never held back by it, so a new subscriber always gets their welcome straight away.



One hourly ceiling for every broadcast.

Your List	A Good Hourly Ceiling
Up to 5,000 people	500 to 1,000 an hour
5,000 to 50,000 people	1,000 to 2,000 an hour
Over 50,000 people	2,000 an hour or more, with your most engaged people first

A steady pace looks calm and regular to every inbox provider, and it spreads your clicks and replies over the day. On my own list I send at about 2,000 an hour. Beside the ceiling you will also find **Queue batch size** and **Queue interval (seconds)**, which set your normal speed (batch 2000 with interval 3600 is a steady 2,000 an hour), and an optional sending window if you like your broadcasts to go out only between certain hours.

> **Most engaged first**
>
> For a promotion to a big list, choose **Send in waves, most engaged first** on the broadcast's Review and send step. Wave 1 goes to people who opened or clicked in the last 30 days, and you send the next wave when you are ready. Your best readers see it first, and your sending reputation grows with every wave.

When You Grow: Add A Second Connection

One day your list will be big enough that you want a second connection, perhaps a second SMTP2GO account or Amazon SES for its low cost at volume. Add it with **+ Add Sender**, give it priority 20, and it becomes automatic backup straight away. Or choose **Rotate evenly** or **Weighted shares** in the Send Rotation & Warmup panel to share every send between them. Guide 2 explains how each mode works.

Rotation, Warmup And An Hourly Ceiling, Built In

Everything you just set up comes with the ResultsAiX Mailer: unlimited subscribers and broadcasts on your own WordPress, sending through the services you choose.

See ResultsAiX Mailer →

PART 3

Your First 7 Days

DAY 1

Set Up

- Create your SMTP2GO account
- Add your sender domain and the three CNAMEs
- Add your DMARC record
- Create your API key

DAY 2

Connect

- Confirm the three green ticks in Verified Senders
- Add the SMTP2GO connection in the Mailer
- Click Test and check Show original in Gmail
- Set your Sender Profile and postal address

DAYS 3 TO 4

Automate

- Connect the webhook for Bounce, Spam and Unsubscribe
- Set the daily limit and tick Warm up (Standard)
- Set your hourly ceiling
- Send a test broadcast to yourself

DAYS 5 TO 7

Send

- Send your first broadcast, most engaged first
- Watch the broadcast report fill up live
- Look at the SMTP2GO dashboard beside it
- Plan next week's email on the calendar

By day 7 you will have

A professional sending setup that most businesses never get right: your own domain, three authentication passes, automatic bounce and complaint handling, a gentle warm-up and a steady pace. Every broadcast from here builds on it.

PART 4

Questions People Ask

Do I need to change my existing SPF record?

No. SMTP2GO's return-path CNAME points your bounce address at SMTP2GO, which publishes the right SPF for it. Your existing SPF record stays exactly as it is.

Can I send from any address on my domain?

Yes. Once the domain is verified, any address on it can send, for example hello@, news@ or sarah@yoursite.com.

Should I use the API or SMTP?

The API. It is the Mailer's built-in SMTP2GO connection, it sends in batches for speed, and it needs only one key. SMTP is there if you ever need it, through the Bring-your-own SMTP connection.

Can I start on the free plan?

Yes. The free plan sends 1,000 emails a month, up to 200 a day. Set the Mailer's daily limit to 200, and move to a paid plan when your list outgrows it. Nothing changes in the Mailer when you upgrade.

PART 5

What To Read Next

This is the third of 15 free AiX Training Guides. With your sending set up, Guide 4 shows you everything that helps your emails reach the inbox, and Guide 5 moves your list across to the Mailer.

1 Getting Started With ResultsAiX →

2 The Complete SMTP Service Guide →

3 Setting Up SMTP2GO From Start To Finish *(you are here)*

4 Email Deliverability: Reach The Inbox →

5 Moving Your Email List To The AiX Mailer →

6 Email Automations Playbook →

7 How To Grow Your Email List With ResultsAiX →

8 How To Build Sales Funnels, Start To Finish →

9 How To Move Your Membership To ResultsAiX →

10 Running Customer Support With AI →

11 Launching A Product With Affiliates And JV Partners →

12 ResultsAiX For 6 And 7 Figure Marketers →

13 WP Conversion Tracker: Track Every Click And Every Sale →

14 WP Sync: Connect All Your Tools Without A Monthly Automation Bill →

15 Automated Webinars That Sell →

Your First Step, Today

Do Step 1 and Step 2 tonight: create your SMTP2GO account and add your sender domain. Paste in the three CNAME records before bed, and by morning they will be green and waiting for you.

Every Tool On One Key

The ResultsAiX Bundle gives you the Mailer plus every other ResultsAiX plugin, so your pages, funnels, tracking and email work as one system on your own WordPress.

See The ResultsAiX Bundle →

Keep Going

All 15 AiX Training Guides are free on the ResultsAiX blog, each with its own PDF.

Docs: resultsaix.com/docs · Training videos: resultsaix.com/training

ResultsAiX.com

by Kevin Fahey