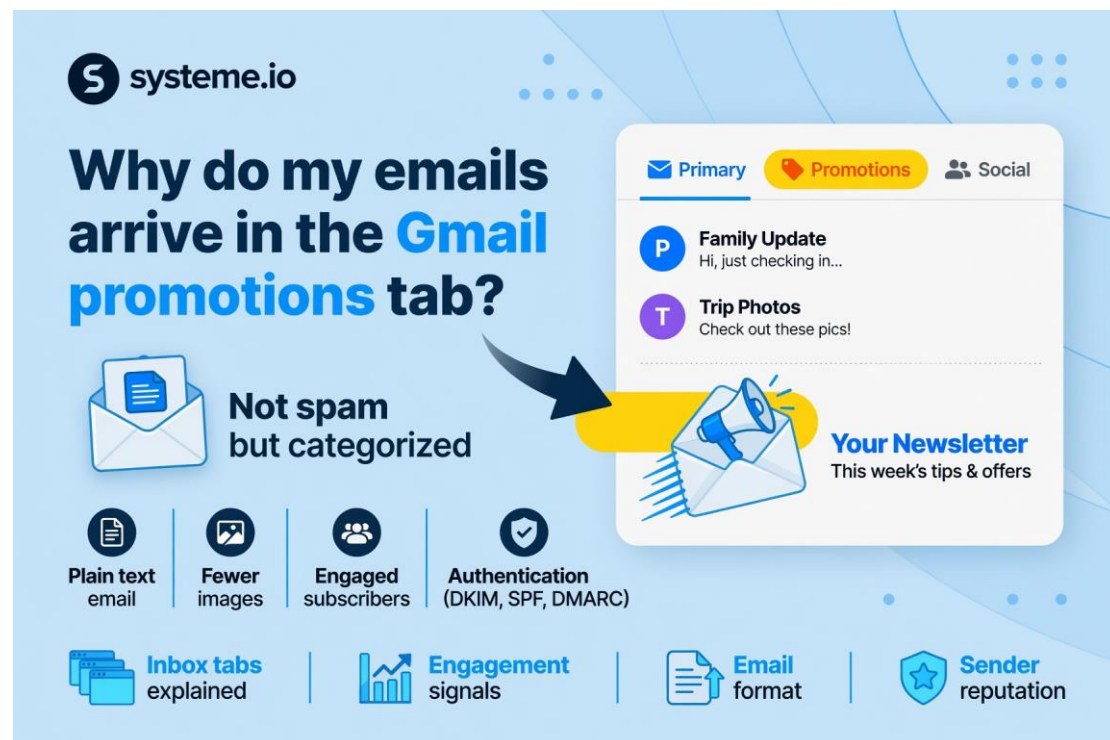


# Why Do My Emails Arrive in the Gmail Promotions Tab?

## Introduction

If you send newsletters or campaigns from [systeme.io](https://systeme.io), Gmail may sort your messages into the **Promotions** tab instead of **Primary**. That is **not the same as spam**—delivery succeeded, but Gmail labeled the message as marketing.

This guide follows official help (article 369): how Gmail tabs work, why it matters for opens and revenue, and what you can realistically change in content, format, authentication, and testing.



## Gmail Inbox Tabs Explained

Gmail's tabbed inbox groups mail into categories. The three main ones:

- **Primary** — messages Gmail treats as important or personal (direct exchanges, priority mail).
- **Social** — notifications from social platforms.
- **Promotions** — most marketing emails, newsletters, and commercial offers.

Each tab is still part of the **inbox**. The separate **Spam** folder is for messages Gmail rejects as unwanted or abusive. Landing in Promotions means classification, not automatic deliverability failure.

## Why Tab Placement Matters

Where an email lands affects performance:

- **Primary** — more visible, especially on mobile notifications for many users.
- **Opened more often** and typically more clicks and conversions.
- **Promotions** — read later or skipped if subscribers only watch Primary.

A drop in open rate after switching ESP or sender identity can partly reflect temporary Promotions (or spam) routing while Gmail learns your new sender profile—see deliverability articles for reputation recovery.

## Content and Intent (Main Signal)

The first factor is **message content**. Gmail analyzes language and structure to infer intent:

- **Personal** tone (conversation, confirmation, one-to-one style) → more often treated as non-commercial.
- **Promotional**, automated, or newsletter-style copy → **Promotions** tab.

Email to a friend looks nothing like a brand blast—and Gmail’s models detect that. [systeme.io](#) marketing emails are **designed as campaigns**, so Promotions placement is common and expected for many sends.

## Text vs Images and Email Format

Marketing emails often contain many images; personal mail usually has few. Gmail uses that as a **promotional signal**.

**Find a good text/image balance:**

- Highly visual emails (banners, graphic blocks) → more easily classified as **Promotions**.
- Short emails with several images can still look like marketing.
- Longer emails with **one or two images** are often less aggressively flagged.

On [systeme.io](#), the **Classic editor** suits simple, text-forward newsletters; the **Visual editor** adds layout that can increase “marketing” signals. Many

creators report **higher deliverability engagement** with lighter, text-based mail when appropriate—not a guarantee of Primary tab, but healthier overall signals.

## Authenticate Your Domain

Use a sending address on your **custom domain** (for example `contact@yourdomain.com`) and authenticate with **SPF**, **DKIM**, and **DMARC**.

On [systeme.io](#), domain setup is guided in Settings → Emails. Authentication lets Gmail verify you are the **legitimate sender**. It strongly supports **deliverability** (avoiding spam) but **does not alone control** which tab receives the message.

Walkthrough: [How to Authenticate Your Domain Name for Email Sending](#) and [How to Create a DMARC Record](#).

## Engagement and Sender Reputation

Gmail also uses **recipient behavior**: opens, clicks, moves between tabs, spam reports, and whether users star or reply. Engaged subscribers who regularly read your mail can influence how future messages are sorted—for that user.

Platform-side habits still matter: permission-only lists, open rates above ~20%, low bounces and spam complaints (see [Advanced Deliverability Tips](#) and [Manual List Cleaning](#)).

Ask engaged readers to **drag one message from Promotions to Primary** and confirm “always do this”—Gmail learns per mailbox. Encourage adding your address to contacts in welcome emails when it fits your brand tone.

## Iterate With Tests

There is no single switch for “always Primary.” In practice, run **iterative tests**—like A/B tests on [systeme.io](#) or any ESP:

- Subject line style (conversational vs offer-heavy).
- Classic vs visual layout.
- Amount of images and buttons.
- Preview text and footer density.

Compare opens and clicks by segment. Promotions placement for promotional content can still perform well if your audience checks that tab—optimize for **engagement and revenue**, not tab obsession alone.

## Promotions vs Spam vs Pending

| Folder / tab            | Meaning                         | Action                                               |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Promotions              | Inbox; marketing classification | Improve content balance, engagement, tests.          |
| Spam                    | Filtered as unwanted            | Auth, list hygiene, spam words, reputation.          |
| Not delivered / pending | Platform or ISP block           | See <a href="#">Why Aren't My Emails Being Sent?</a> |

## Troubleshooting

| Issue                                          | Likely Cause                | Recommended Action                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| All campaigns in Promotions                    | Normal for bulk marketing   | Text-forward tests; engage list; educate subscribers on tabs. |
| Sudden move to spam                            | Reputation or content spike | Clean list; review copy; check auth and pools.                |
| Open rate fell after migration                 | New sender profile          | Mail engaged first; consistent domain/From; warm up.          |
| Heavy visual template                          | Promotional layout signals  | Try classic editor; fewer banners/buttons.                    |
| One subscriber sees Primary, others Promotions | Per-user Gmail learning     | Ask fans to move + star; segment engaged readers.             |
| Generic/free From address                      | Weak trust signals          | Branded domain + full authentication.                         |

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Promotions = spam?

No—different folder and intent.

### Why Promotions?

Gmail classifies marketing-style bulk mail.

## **Auth → Primary?**

Auth helps delivery; tabs are separate.

## **Images matter?**

Heavy graphics increase Promotions signals.

## **What to test?**

Subject, editor type, images, copy—measure results.

## **Related Resources**

- [How to Improve Your Email Deliverability](#)
- [Good Practices for Email Deliverability](#)
- [Advanced Deliverability Tips](#)
- [How to Authenticate Your Domain Name for Email Sending](#)

Send and optimize email on [systeme.io](#).

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