

digicert® | **Blockworks**

Enhancing Email Trust and Engagement

Blockworks & DigiCert Mark Certificate



CASE STUDY

Blockworks rehabilitates domain reputation and improves email open rates using DigiCert Mark Certificate

Executive Summary

Company name: Blockworks
Industry: Media
Headquarters: New York, NY

Key business requirements:

- Rebuild domain reputation weakened by years of poor email hygiene
- Provide immediate visual proof that Blockworks emails originate from a legitimate source
- Increase open rates and improve subscriber engagement with Blockworks newsletters

Solution:

- DigiCert Common Mark Certificate (CMC)

Key outcomes:

- Inbox placement of The Breakdown newsletter jumped to nearly 100% within weeks
- Re-engagement emails to dormant subscribers achieved a 40% open rate, up from 0%
- Open rates increased from 20% to 50%, reflecting renewed reader trust and recognition



Requirement

Restore brand credibility with inbox providers and newsletter subscribers

New York-based Blockworks provides research and insights into the constantly evolving cryptocurrency industry. In addition, the company produces two newsletters, including their flagship newsletter, The Breakdown. But over the last couple of years, newsletter editions were not reaching subscriber inboxes. Too often, inbox providers like Gmail, Apple Mail, and Yahoo! Mail shunted these newsletters straight into spam folders. "They saw words like 'cryptocurrency,' 'blockchain,' or 'finance,' and their filters thought we were scammers, an issue we'll deal with for as long as we cover this industry," explained Molly Jane Zuckerman, former senior media strategist at Blockworks.

When Blockworks launched its newsletter arm in April 2024, Zuckerman and Hannah Finnerty, head of media operations at Blockworks, began troubleshooting what was causing the drop in newsletter deliverability. "Blockworks had been sending emails for five years, but they hadn't really looked at statistics," Zuckerman said. She quickly saw that a lack of proper email hygiene over the years had caused the company's domain authority and IP reputation to "drop off a cliff," she said.

According to Zuckerman, organizations that send a lot of emails must tick several boxes to ensure they reach their intended recipients. "Of course, the emails must be high-quality, but you also have to make sure everything on the back end is on point," she explained. "You need to show inbox providers that you're doing your best because it's an AI world now, and emails will get filtered out. And readers need assurance that we are really Blockworks, and we're really sending them this email."

Solution

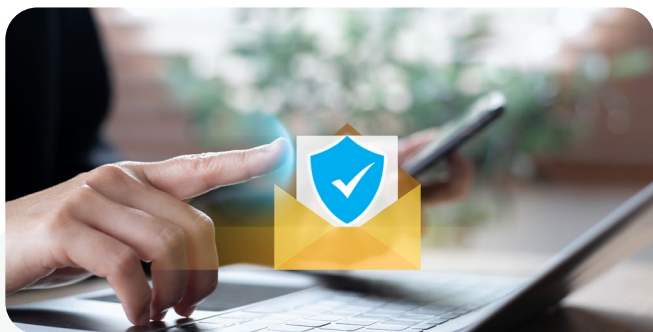
DigiCert Mark Certificate delivers visible proof of legitimacy to inbox providers and newsletter recipients

In 2024, Blockworks migrated their newsletters to beehiiv, a publishing platform that requires users to configure DMARC (Domain-Based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance), an email authentication standard. DMARC prevents spoofed emails from being sent using the Blockworks domain, while enabling inbox providers like Gmail to confirm that Blockworks is the legitimate sender. But Blockworks needed additional help to restore brand credibility with inbox providers and newsletter subscribers. They needed a way to visually prove that emails sent from their domain were legitimate and trustworthy.

At the Inbox Collective Newsletter Conference in May 2025, Zuckerman learned how the BIMI (Brand Indicators for Message Identification) standard and Mark Certificate could work with DMARC to provide inbox providers and newsletter subscribers with a visual cue, showing that emails from their domain were legitimate.

BIMI enables the ability to display an organization's logo in supported inboxes—but it needs some type of Mark Certificate to prove to inbox providers that the sender owns both the domain and logo referenced in the BIMI record. A DigiCert Mark Certificate takes trust one step further by authorizing inbox providers to display the logo.

After researching expert insights and peer feedback, Blockworks bought a DigiCert Common Mark Certificate (CMC) in May 2025. The company liked that CMCs don't require a trademarked logo for that logo to surface in inboxes, allowing them to deploy that validation as they figured out the trademark process. According to Finnerty, DigiCert quickly validated the Blockworks domain and logo, with the logo showing up live in inboxes within a week.



Restoring deliverability and sender reputation

Soon after their verified logo showed up live, Blockworks saw their domain reputation bounce back from its earlier freefall, “from bad to great.” Deliverability of The Breakdown improved to almost 100% within a few weeks of deploying DigiCert Common Mark Certificate. By providing the company's logo, the inbox providers were assured of the legitimacy of Blockworks' email communications.

“It was about putting our best foot forward for Google and showing them we're real, and it seemed to work,” Zuckerman said. She also noted that the need to restore the company's sender reputation dovetailed with the security concerns that inbox providers and recipients have about unmarked emails potentially coming from attack vectors. Unlike most security-related initiatives, the deployment of BIMI and CMC was a marketing-led initiative. According to Zuckerman, the company hadn't really studied their statistics and realized the steps needed to rehabilitate their domain reputation. “Ultimately, it's the marketing person checking the open rates to tell sales at the end of the day,” she said.

Winning back dormant subscribers and boosting open rates

In tandem with rehabilitating their brand reputation with inbox providers, Blockworks performed a deep clean of The Breakdown's email subscriber list. Before this list clean, open rates for The Breakdown averaged around 20%, weighed down by tens of thousands of fake or inactive addresses. After culling these addresses from their subscriber roles, Blockworks began a slow, deliberate re-engagement initiative with dormant subscribers—a group that included those who last opened the newsletter years earlier.

Zuckerman said they followed up with these inactive subscribers in groups of 1,000 at a time. “We sent a special email to encourage them to resubscribe, and we averaged a 40% open rate for this email. Prior to deploying our CMC, the open rate for these groups was 0%,” Zuckerman said.

Overall, open rates for The Breakdown jumped from 20.7% in May to 52.1% in July. As of Fall 2025, the open rate has remained at more than 50%. “The only difference between then and now is we're using a Mark Certificate,” Zuckerman said. “It's about brand authenticity. The logo is another incentive to get them to click.”

Strengthening brand authenticity and trust

Zuckerman pointed out that the imprimatur of authenticity provided by Mark Certificates isn't enough in themselves to keep people active subscribers. "At the end of the day, how do you get someone to read your email? It's the subject line and then the quality of the content," she said. But for subscribers to make that choice, the emails need to land in their inboxes where they can be seen and a verified logo that can tell readers at a glance this email is legitimate and trustworthy."

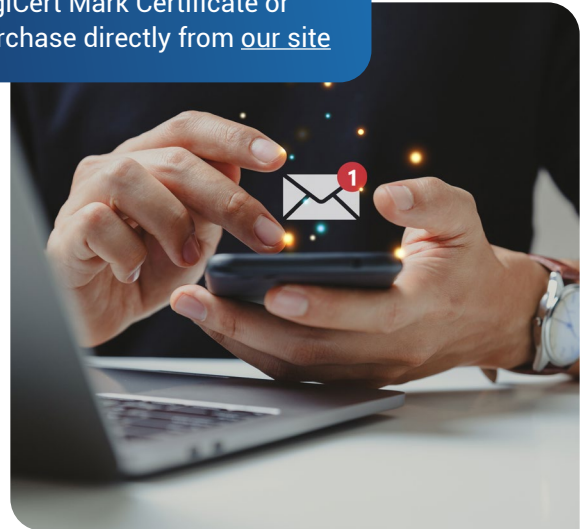
Said Zuckerman: "No matter how amazing your newsletter is, you have to get them to click for them to engage. The logo that our CMC allows us to show gives them that extra incentive."

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