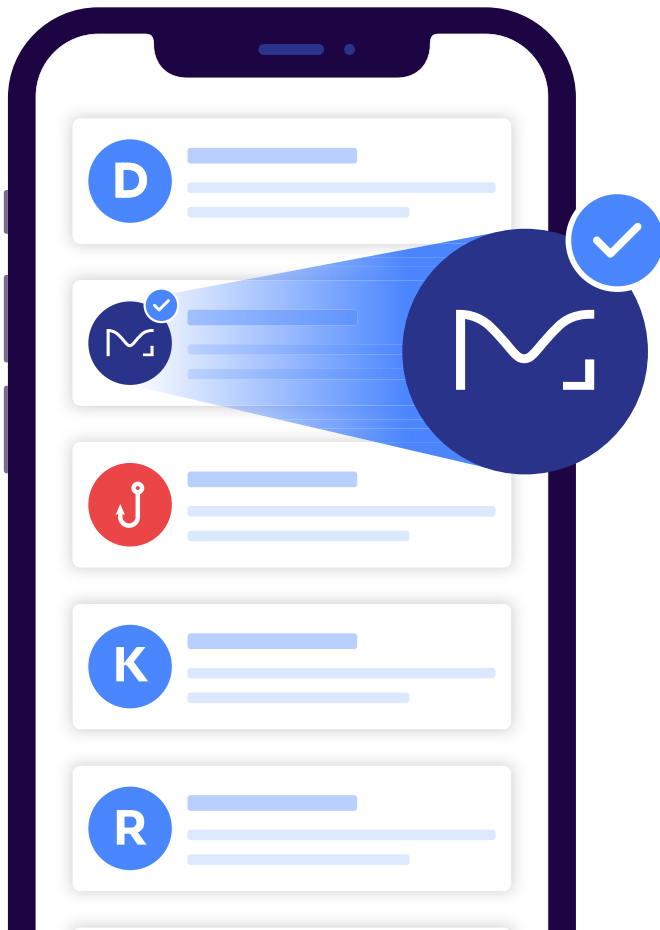VALIMAIL

THE COMPLETE
Guide
TO BIMI

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
BIMI AND HOW IT WORKS

INTRODUCTION

People today are busier than ever, and their inboxes are cluttered with email, some messages are wanted and some are not. Recipients get frustrated searching through their inboxes looking for specific messages, such as a receipt from a recent purchase, information about an upcoming event, or a coupon code for an ongoing sale. Sometimes, recipients don't bother opening or ignore marketing emails because they don't stand out amongst all the unopened emails in their inbox.

BIMI (Brand Indicators For Message Identification) is a way for domain owners to stand out in the inbox and make their email easily identifiable for their recipients. With BIMI, a domain owner can specify a logo to display next to messages at participating mailbox providers, and so long as those messages are properly authenticated with DMARC and the messages land in the inbox, they'll stand out from the crowd.

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This Complete Guide to BIMI will walk you through everything you need to know about BIMI, *including*:

01
WHAT
IS BIMI?

02
ESTABLISHING
A CERTIFICATE

03
HOW BIMI
WORKS

04
WHICH
PROVIDERS
SUPPORT
BIMI

05
HOW
BIMI AND
DMARC
WORK
TOGETHER

06
WHY BIMI
IS A MUST-
HAVE

07
HOW TO SET
UP BIMI

08
HOW TO
DEPLOY
(AND
AUTOMATE)
BIMI

09
HOW TO
VERIFY BIMI
IS SET UP
CORRECTLY

10
GETTING
STARTED
WITH BIMI

11
VALIMAIL'S
BIMI
SIMULATOR

VALIMAIL

WHAT IS BIMI?

01

[BIMI (Brand Indicators for Message Identification)](#) is a new email specification that puts brands in control of how their logo appears within supporting email clients. Simply put, BIMI allows companies to tell inbox providers what logos they'd like to appear in customers' and prospects' inboxes rather than just letting the inbox provider display generic avatars or the company's initials.

BIMI works with the following protocols to safeguard your domain from being hacked by a malicious actor to forward fraudulent emails:

DKIM (domain keys identified mail)

SPF (sender policy framework)

DMARC (domain-based message authentication, reporting, and conformance)

Unfortunately, manually setting up BIMI can be complex and technical. You need a specific file to [design a BIMI logo](#), certifications, DMARC at Enforcement, and a [BIMI record](#) on your domain's DNS server.

We won't beat around the bush—it's a lot to manage on your own. That's why services like [Valimail Amplify](#) have emerged—to streamline and automate the BIMI process to enable consistency at scale.

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ESTABLISHING A CERTIFICATE

BIMI relies on Mark Certificates (MCs), which are digital certificates that assert that the domain's right to use the logo in question has been verified. This verification and issuance of MCs is done by an organization known as a Mark Verifying Authority (MVA), and there are two types of MCs: the Verified Mark Certificate (VMC) and the Common Mark Certificate (CMC). The validation process for both VMCs and CMCs is essentially the same for both; the key difference between the two is in the kinds of logos that the certificates support.

A VMC is issued for the following two kinds of logos:
Trademarks – A mark that has been officially trademarked in a supported country (country support is defined by the participating mailbox providers)
Government Marks – A mark granted to or used by a government organization through an official statute, regulation, treaty, or government action as it appears or is described in the granting document.

The CMC is an alternative to the VMC, and it's a little more flexible since a logo trademark isn't required.

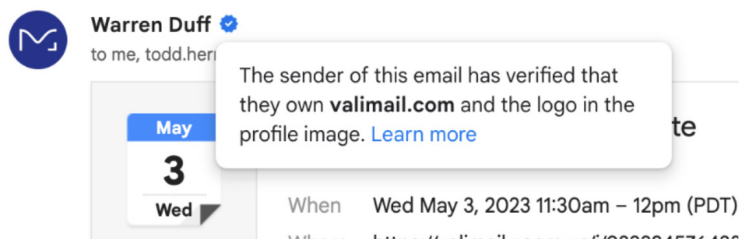**There are two main use cases for this certificate:**
Prior Use Marks – A domain owner can show they've been using that logo in that format for at least a year (verified using the Internet Archive)
Modified Registered Marks – Logos that are modified versions of trademarked logos

Both the VMC and the CMC can support the display of a BIMI logo, although mailbox providers might treat each differently.

As of September 2024, Google will now allow use of the CMC, rather than just relying on the VMC. Many more organizations can now brand their emails with their logo whether or not they have a trademark in place. Going forward, we believe that Google plans to close loopholes that allow logos in the inbox via other means, meaning, in the future, BIMI will be the only way to get your logo in the inbox.

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Google Workspace's Checkmark Icon

The key difference between a VMC and a CMC for domain owners is the display on mail sent to Gmail and domains hosted by Google Workspace. Messages that qualify for BIMI logo display that are accompanied by a certificate will see a checkmark icon next to the names of senders, elevating the protection provided by DMARC into something tangible for users worldwide. Only users with a VMC will get Google's blue checkmark; CMCs are not eligible for this added feature.

With the new Gmail checkmark, users can see that the protections from DMARC are in place. Currently, the majority of email senders won't have a checkmark next to their names, but this release showcases the importance of strong email authentication for Google.
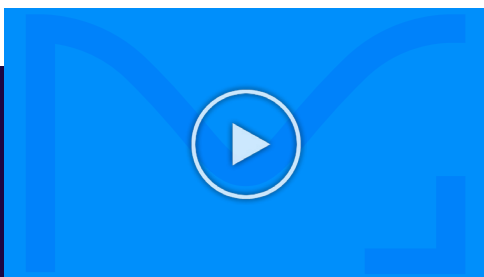
According to Google, in order to take advantage of BIMI and this new checkmark, "ensure that your organization has adopted DMARC, and that you have validated your logo with a VMC, issued by a Certificate Authority such as Entrust or DigiCert."

Previously, this update was web-only, with the release of CMCs, Google also added the ability to have the Blue Checkmark display on iOS and Android mobile. The change is an excellent step forward for anyone who has implemented DMARC and BIMI for their organization.

Valimail is the world leader in automated DMARC enforcement, and we partner with Digicert to help companies implement BIMI in their outgoing emails. Watch our co-hosted webinar to learn how IT and Marketing can join forces in combating phishing and improving consumer trust.

Let's Talk DMARC and BIMI How Marketing and IT Can Work Together EMEA

Watch Video >

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HOW BIMI WORKS

01
BIMI Files

There are two files that make BIMI work for a domain owner; one is a CMC or VMC (a digital certificate) and the other is the logo (a graphics file in SVG Tiny PS format). A domain owner needs to publish a record in DNS at a specific location, and that record must contain two tag/value pairs. One tag has as its value the URL of the location from which the domain owner's MC can be retrieved, and the other has as its value the URL of the location from which the domain owner's logo file can be retrieved.

02
Email Delivery

When an email is sent from the sender's domain to a recipient, the email is delivered to the recipient's email server.

03
Verification and Logo Retrieval:

The recipient's email server should first do DMARC validation on the message, and only check for BIMI if DMARC or other authentication methods pass. If DMARC passes and a BIMI record exists, the recipient email server then retrieves the CMC or VMC and the logo file. The recipient email server validates the CMC or VMC and can pull the logo directly from there, or it can compare the logo in the CMC or VMC with the logo in the logo file, and display the logo if they match.

04
Inbox Display:

If all verification checks pass, the recipient's email service displays the sender's logo in the recipient's inbox next to the email.

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Which Providers SUPPORT BIMI

Even though all these inboxes participate, they may have different requirements for implementing BIMI. In the past, Google has required only a VMC. In an exciting change, they now accept CMCs, which means more companies can use BIMI without a trade-mark. With this update, companies now have more control over their logo.

On the other hand, Yahoo doesn't require any certificates. Instead, they rely on sending reputation to determine whether or not a domain is eligible for BIMI.

However, if your BIMI record includes an MC, they will use that to inform your BIMI eligibility.

With Google adopting CMC, across Yahoo, AOL, and Gmail, you can get your logo in front of 80% of your emailing list without needing a trademarked logo. As BIMI becomes more accessible with Google's acceptance of CMCs, more companies will start getting their logo in the inbox. Don't let your logo be the only gray initial in your recipient's inbox. Adopt BIMI today, whether you use a CMC or VMC.

HERE'S A QUICK LIST OF MAILBOX PROVIDERS THAT SUPPORT BIMI:

Supports BIMI

- Apple
- yahoo!
- au
- Google
- onet POCZTA
- Zoner
- LA POSTE
- Fastmail
- ZONE
- Zoho Mail
- CLOUDMARK A PROOFPOINT COMPANY

Considering BIMI

- BT
- at mail
- QUALITIA
- COMCAST
- SEZNAM.CZ
- GMX WEB.DE
- YAHOO! JAPAN

Does Not Support BIMI

- Microsoft

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05
HOW BIMI & DMARC work together

In order to participate in BIMI, your emails need to pass DMARC authentication checks to ensure your brand hasn't been impersonated—then, your brand's logo can be displayed.

Set DMARC Policy

none	quarantine	reject

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO DO TO PREPARE TO SET UP BIMI:

01

Authenticate all of your emails
with SPF, DKIM, and DMARC

02

Ensure your DMARC policy is at enforcement

- This means either "p=quarantine" or "p=reject"
- No sp=none and no pct<100

03

Publish a BIMI record for your domain in DNS

Where required, obtain a VMC or CMC, certifying that you own the logo as most mailbox providers that participate in BIMI require an MC to support the logo.

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WHY BIMI IS A MUST HAVE

Marketers are always looking for ways to stand out in the inbox and BIMI represents a massive opportunity for marketers to grow brand awareness and customer engagement. Being able to control your logo when sending emails, newsletters, receipts, offers, etc., is invaluable. It's similar to having the perfect, consistent vanity URLs and display names across social media profiles.

The FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) reports that United States-based Businesses lost more than $2 billion through email fraud between 2014 and 2019. And think of how much money is lost but has yet to be reported.

It's low-cost but shows consistency, conveys trust, and increases recognition and reach. Initial pilots have shown an increase in engagement by an average of 3-4% when inboxes display trusted brand logos next to email messages—and that's on top of the average 10% increase in deliverability that DMARC at enforcement already provides.

Here's a quick list of reasons your organization needs BIMI:

Awareness: Whether recipients open your email or not, putting your logo in front of them increases brand awareness and recognition.

Engagement: Email messages with on-brand logos stand out in the inbox, increasing open rates and engagement.

Trust: Subscribers will recognize and trust your messages in the inbox, boosting open rates, engagement, and conversions.

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07
HOW TO SET UP BIMI

Setting up BIMI may seem intimidating at first, but you can get it done by following these **7 simple steps**

1

SENDING DOMAIN
Determine your sending domain, where you'll upload the BIMI TXT record to the DNS server. Seek help from the IT department or the cybersecurity department.

2

EMAIL AUTHENTICATION PROTOCOLS
Check that your email authentication protocols are implemented and functioning. You have to use domain keys identified mail (DKIM), sender policy framework (SPF), or both.

3

DMARC POLICY
Set up your DMARC policy to p=quarantine or p=reject (not p=none). There are also some other settings in the DMARC record.

4

BIMI LOGO
Design a BIMI logo as an SVG file that will be transferred to the DNS server. One must use the SVG tiny 1.2 formats, which are protected and safe.

5

VMC/CMC
Obtain a VMC or CMC for your logo from a recognized organization. DigiCert and Entrust are the two famous authentic certificate authorities.

6

DNS SERVER
Disclose your BIMI TXT record to the DNS server. Remember to double-check the location of your logo file. It may need to be corrected.

7

VERIFY BIMI
Review that BIMI works and that your logo shows up as intended. You can verify that your BIMI setup works correctly using Valimail's free BIMI checker

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08

HOW TO DEPLOY
and automate BIMI

BIMI deployment can be a bit complex. To make it easier to deploy BIMI, various services exist to automatically create a BIMI record. Such tools are called BIMI generators.
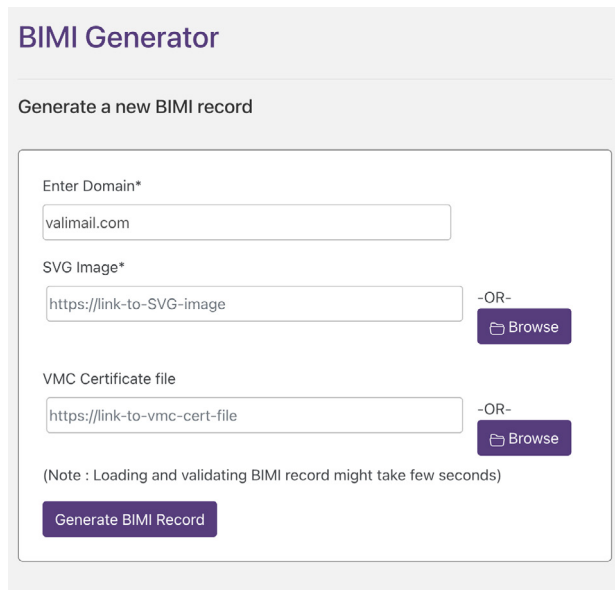
In addition to these fairly simple tools that just generate one part of BIMI, there are more complete automation tools that handle more of the BIMI deployment process for you (like Valimail Amplify).

Some engineers only need help with a specific step in the BIMI deployment process, while others may prefer a comprehensive commercial product to handle as much of BIMI as possible.

Fortunately, there are tools that exist on both ends of the spectrum. Learn how to debug BIMI issues manually or with our checker in our comprehensive BIMI Checker resource.

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Using a BIMI Generator

Most services that call themselves a BIMI generator really only generate one part of a BIMI deployment: the BIMI record. To see this in practice, let's use one of the most popular BIMI generators, BIMI Group's BIMI Inspector.
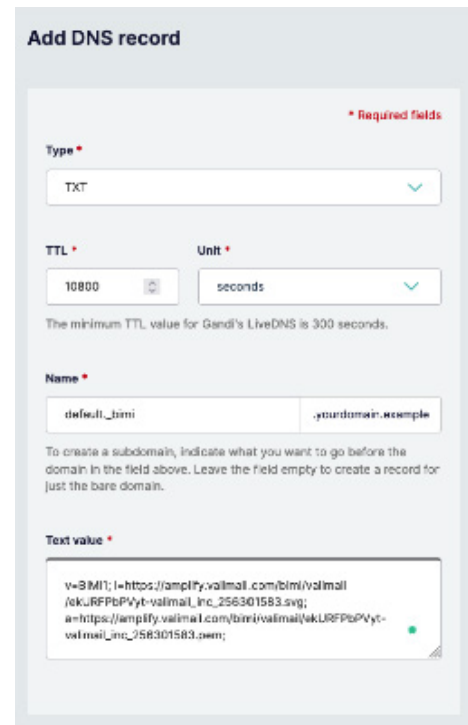

Clicking the "Generate BIMI Record" button provides us with a BIMI record's text:

```
default._bimi.valimail.com TXT v=BIMI1;
l=https://amplify.valimail.com/bimi/
valimail/ekURFPbPVyt-valimail_
inc_256301583.svg; a=https://amplify.
valimail.com/bimi/valimail/ekURFPbPVyt-
valimail_inc_256301583.pem;
```

Voila, we have the raw text of a BIMI record. To deploy this record, we simply add it as a DNS record.

So far, the BIMI generator has deployed a BIMI record—but we still need to acquire a VMC or CMC, convert our logo to BIMI's custom image format, ensure that DMARC is deployed, and more. Thus, the BIMI generator only took care of a small part of the process for us.

You can learn more about how the BIMI works by reading our companion BIMI Record article

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Automating BIMI

Although the phrase "BIMI generator" is mainly associated with tools that help you create a BIMI record, there are many more aspects of BIMI that are ripe for automation. Let's learn how to generate various other aspects of BIMI.

BIMI LOGO CONVERTER
BIMI logos follow a special format called SVG Tiny Portable/Secure (SVG P/S). There is a tool to convert a standard SVG file to SVG P/S available as a script for Windows, Linux, and Adobe Illustrator (Linux is not supported yet, unfortunately). The conversion scripts are accessible via Github.

FACILITATING THE VERIFICATION PROCESS
Obtaining your CMC or VMC can be an arduous, strict, and expensive process—and there are no small, dedicated tools that handle this part of the process for you. Fortunately, Valimail partners directly with DigiCert to streamline and facilitate the process, meaning less work and troubleshooting for you.

Learn more about complying with BIMI's standards for logo images by reading our BIMI Logo article

DMARC-as-a-Service

You'll need to first deploy DMARC to comply with BIMI. BIMI is sometimes even described as a "reward" for senders who comply with DMARC. Learn more about how DMARC works by reading: What is DMARC?

Valimail offers Valimail Enforce, a mature product that handles DMARC for you, thus tackling one of the biggest hurdles to BIMI.

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09

HOW TO VERIFY BIMI is set-up correctly

Getting BIMI right from the get-go involves getting a lot of small details right—especially if you've opted to go the manual route and implement (and maintain) it on your own.

For example, you need to host a cryptographic file that proves the domain owner's right to use the logo, and you must have a strong DMARC policy and a compliant BIMI logo.
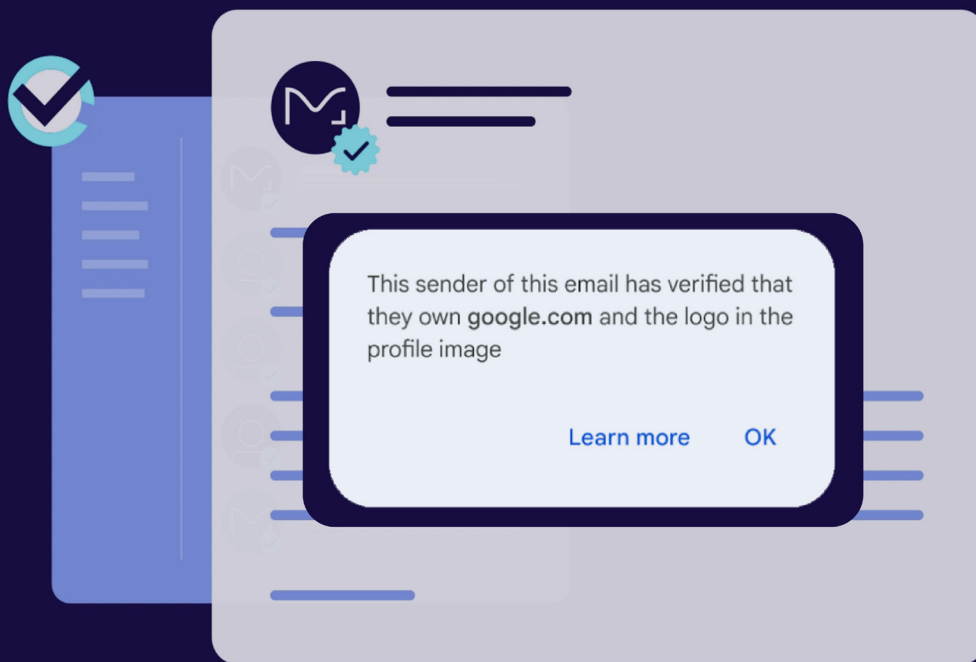
We built Valimail's BIMI Checker to streamline verifying and troubleshooting this process. It's simple, free, and easy to use. Just plug in your domain, and we'll let you know if it's properly configured for BIMI. If it's not, we'll let you know why, whether that's because you don't have DMARC at Enforcement or a legitimate logo in your BIMI record.

Need help with more troubleshooting and debugging? Check out our comprehensive **BIMI Checker resource.**

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Getting Started
WITH BIMI

Valimail has fast-tracked the BIMI process with a scalable solution for organizations with multiple brand entities, domains, and logos. We have partnered with leading certificate authorities to handle the acquisition and management of Verified Mark Certificates.

As the leader in helping organizations get to DMARC enforcement and a founding and leading member of the working group developing BIMI, Valimail is the trusted partner who can help you achieve your email goals. Get started by checking if you're BIMI eligible by using Valimail's BIMI checker tool.

This sender of this email has verified that they own **google.com** and the logo in the profile image

Learn more   OK

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VALIMAIL'S BIMI SIMULATOR

Is BIMI worth it for your brand? With Valimail's first-of-its-kind BIMI Simulator, you can now get more insights into how impactful BIMI can be for your organization. See what your email would look like with a BIMI logo, discover your potential brand impression opportunity, and be inspired by how other companies are using BIMI.

"Brand amplification and protection via BIMI adds additional ROI benefits to DMARC enforcement. Our pioneering work with the ecosystem on the BIMI standard extends past security and helps increase top line revenue. By visualizing the impact of BIMI, we're motivating departments outside of security to partner with their infrastructure, messaging, and security teams to build a stronger defense against phishing and impersonation, while ensuring their brand's integrity in every inbox."

– Alexander Garcia-Tobar, CEO and Co-Founder of Valimail

Here's an example of what your BIMI Simulator report could look like:
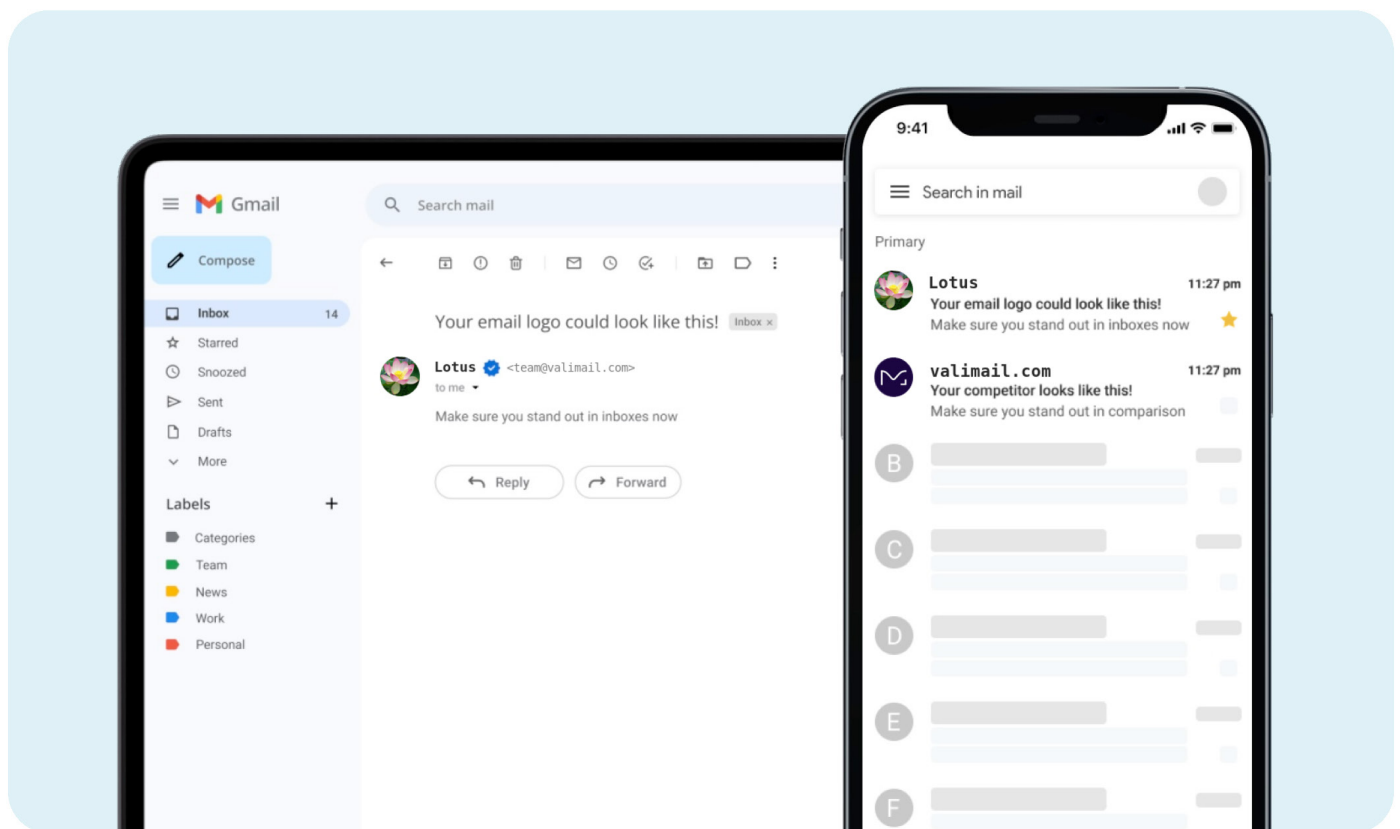
VALIMAIL

LOTUS'

CASE FOR

BIMI

Simulator
BIMI

BIMI (Brand Indicators For Message Identification) is an emerging security technology that attaches your brand's logo to your authenticated email messages so customers can know they are from your email service. It helps validate your email marketing and builds trust with customers.

Here's what your emails for valimail.com could look like if you had BIMI!

It also looks like your competitor has BIMI. As such, their emails are showcasing their logo. Make sure you're not falling behind!
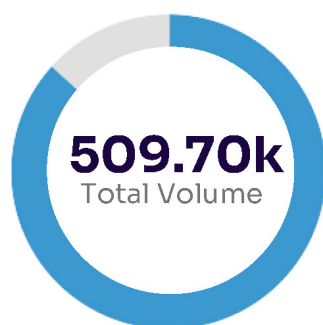
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Audience Insights
BIMI

BIMI is currently supported on Google, Yahoo, Apple, Fastmail, Zoho, Laposte, Zone, Zoner, Cloud Mark, GMX, Pomoc.poctaz, and Au. Remember, every logo that gets seen in the inbox is a brand impression. Use this report to see how much having a BIMI logo could impact your email audience. Just think about how those brand impressions could add up – more opens, more site visits, and potentially more revenue.

Brand Impressions for valimail.com

Last 30 Days

509.70k
Total Volume

●	BIMI Mailbox Providers	86.7%	441.68k
●	Non BIMI Mailbox Providers	13.3%	68.02k

Top BIMI Mailbox Providers for valimail.com

Last 30 Days

Bar chart — Email Impressions (y-axis: 0, 110,004, 220,008, 330,012, 440,016) by BIMI Mailbox Providers (x-axis: Google, Zoho, Yahoo, Others). Google bar reaches ~440,016; other bars near 0.

Inspiration
BIMI

Check out a few randomly selected companies using BIMI to display their logos in customers' inbox.

Current BIMI Examples

Visa Inc.
visa.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 01/2025

Twilio Inc.
twilio.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 12/2024

Shopify Inc.
shopify.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 11/2024

United Parcel Service, Inc
ups.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 11/2024

NVIDIA Corporation
nvidia.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 11/2024

Valimail Inc
valimail.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 09/2024

Randstad North America, Inc.
randstadusa.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 05/2024

Apple Inc.
applemusic.com

✓ Verified Mark Certificate   Issued: 03/2024

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Get Started With
AMPLIFY

Your BIMI Eligible Domains

Great job getting the hard DMARC work done for these domains. Now it's time to reap the rewards and show your recipients! These domains are all ready for BIMI:

- acme-devices.com
- dkimeverywhere.com
- dkimeverywhere.net
- dmarcdns.com
- バリメール.com
- dkimeverywhere.info
- dkimeverywhere.org
- dmarcdns.info

Get your personalized BIMI Simulator report

Valimail's BIMI Simulator empowers brands to not only visualize their logo in the inbox but also to understand the potential impact on engagement and brand recognition. By quantifying the benefits of BIMI, organizations can make informed decisions and leverage email as a powerful marketing tool.

Ready to see what this report looks like for your domains? You can access this complimentary report in the Valimail suite: Enforce, Monitor, or Amplify. If you don't have a Valimail account yet, sign up for Valimail Monitor for free!

Sign up for Valimail Amplify today
to add your brand logo to every customer inbox.

Fast track getting your logo on every email with Valimail Amplify and see a boost in email open rates.

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