

THE ULTIMATE PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST FOR EVERY AND ANY EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN OR NEWSLETTER

44 POWERFUL POINTS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

We've all had the awful realisation that we've made a huge mistake in our email, milliseconds after we click 'send'.

Perhaps you've spotted a glaring spelling error. Perhaps you forgot to attach the attachment. Perhaps you accidentally hit 'reply all' when your snarky remarks were 100% intended for the eyes of one colleague only.

But embarrassing as a dodgy email is when sent to one person, it's nothing compared to the all-consuming despair you get when you unleash your mistake-ridden missive on your entire email list.

To help you avert this disastrous fate, we've put together this super-handly pre-flight checklist. It's a rundown of EVERYTHING you need to check/mull over/watch out for before shooting your emails off to those recipients.

That's only if you want to maximise open rates, engagement, click-through rates, sales, profits and family holidays. Which you do... don't you?

Let's get started then.

1 THE FROM FIELD

Who's the email coming from? You? Your company? Your pet Chihuahua?

Hint: it makes most sense to opt for the person or entity that your recipients are expecting to receive that particular content from. This formula might help:

Newsletter = the company name

Sales piece = the account manager's name

Company performance and news = the CEO / CFO's name (if recognised)

2 THE SUBJECT LINE

Have you used one of these **7 tried-and-trusted subject line** recipes?



The FOMO One



The Self-Improvement One



The If-Then One



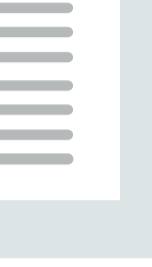
The Free Gift One



The Cliffhanger One



The Direct-Informal One



The Controversial One

3 Is your subject line personalised?

(You can boost your open rates by **13%** with something personal for each recipient - like their name in the subject line!)

4 Is the key info within the first 50 characters?

If not, they might skip right past it.

5 Spell checked?

Do they make sense? Are they repetitive?

Emailout Admin
From Field

Contact Import Complete
Subject Line

Emailout - Free Email Marketing
Image ALT text

Import success Hello, The import of your contacts...
Body text

7 And when they don't use a pre-header?

Some email clients will take the **ALT text of the first image and show this instead**. So if you haven't created relevant ALT text? This could get weird. Make sure you do.

8 Spell checked?

THE BODY

9 Is your brand instantly recognisable as soon as they open the email?

Define a brand voice that's uniquely, memorably and authentically 'you'. But make sure it's a voice your audience would want to listen to, too.

11 Check the personalisation datafield fallback.

What fallback do you have if some of your data is missing?
For example;

[Firstname] / "there" = Hi Dave / Hi there

[Company] / "your company" = we hope NewCo is benefiting from... / we hope your company is benefiting from...

Get the picture?

10 Use personalisation as much as possible.

You know - write as if you're writing to a buddy. It's engaging, **confirms the email is from you** (not some automated machine) and uplifts conversion.

12 Have you nailed the body text?

Proofread it out loud; are there any **typos or grammos**?
How does it flow?

Get a **second pair of eyes** on it. Spotting your own mistakes is super hard.

Test for spelling, grammar & readability.

Short, punchy and to-the-point sentences work best. You've got 5-8 seconds to engage your recipient, so hit 'em hard and fast!

13 Are the headlines consistent in...



Colour?



Font?

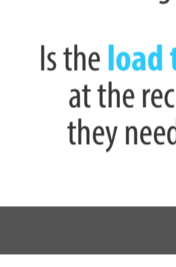


Size?



And linked if appropriate?

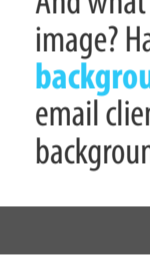
14 Is your Call-to-Action (CTA)...



Clear?
Compelling?
Linked?

Repeated more than once (if it's within a longish newsletter)?
Super strong with a sense of urgency? (Give them a reason to click it NOW)

15 Do your links...



Look like links?
Go to the page you expected? (Get that colleague to double check for you, too)

16 And what about those all-important images?

Does **EVERY** one of them have ALT text that's relevant to the email campaign?
Have you **linked them** to the most appropriate squeeze page, offer or blog post on your site?
Is the **load time acceptable** at the recipient's end, or do they need to be optimised?



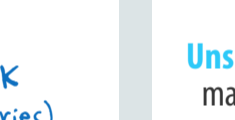
If you're using animated GIFs - great! But have you **tested them in Outlook** to see if the static image versions cut the mustard?

And what about the background image? Have you set a **default background colour** if a recipient's email client doesn't accept background images?

17 Can't Read Link? Have you included a link to an online version at the top of your email?

18 Want new subscribers?

(Yes, we all do).



So why not include a way for people who are forwarded your email to jump on the bandwagon (i.e. subscribe to your list) too?

E.g. 'Was this email forwarded to you and wish to get our valuable tips and tricks dropped in your inbox weekly/fortnightly/monthly too? Click here' (link to your newsletter opt-in form).

THE FOOTER

19 Time to be compliant.

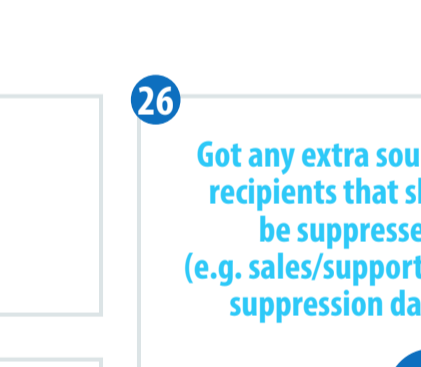
Your company footer should contain your legal company name, registered address and company number.
(yep, that's a legal requirement for UK senders as well as several other territories).

20 UNSUBSCRIBE

Unsubscribe link present? It's also mandatory (but don't unsubscribe yourself from a test email though!)

21 Add a prominent Preference Centre link.

Allow your recipients to remove or add themselves to multiple lists which you have marked as public. Put them in the driving seat. They'll thank you for it (as will the European Laws!)



22 Got your social media icons looking pretty?

Got your social media icons looking pretty? Click them all. Are they going where they're supposed to?

23 Add some permission text.

Remind recipients why you're emailing them.



E.g. 'You requested our monthly email newsletter on the 24/12/2017 when you bought from our website - thanks again'

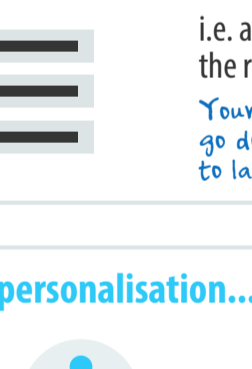
You can add this information via a **personalisation field** or dynamic content so that it's nice and unique for every recipient.

THE DATA

24 Have you uploaded the latest copy of your database, including personalisation datafields (updating all existing lists)?

25 Do you have a qualified opt-in from all of them, which is GDPR-compliant?

If in doubt, don't pollute your existing email list without knowledge of their confirmed opt-in status. It's crucial to keep things above board. And who wants to spam prospects anyway?



26 Got any extra sources of recipients that should be supported (e.g. sales/support teams' suppression data)?



And if so, have you **updated** your master email suppression list? Do it.

27 Have you properly segmented your list?



i.e. are you sending the right email to the right (updated) list?
Your monthly team booze-up pics might not go down too well with the people you invited to last year's awards evening.

28 As for personalisation...



Have you uploaded the correct datafields for personalisation?



Checked you have the **majority** populated?

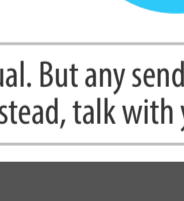


Have a **suitable fallback word** or phrase, like we mentioned before? (e.g. 'Hi [Firstname]/Dave /There')

THE TECH

29 What's your sender score (0-100)?

In the high 90's? Then congrats: that's acceptable.



You can get your sending IP from the headers of your delivered test campaigns (your provider may send test emails from a different IP from LIVE sends, so test both IPs).

30 Do a blacklist check - you might get some surprising results.

Check your live sending **IP address**.



Check the **domain** of your sending email address.

Not all blacklists are born equal. But any sender score below 90 or blacklisting whatsoever and you should NOT send. Instead, talk with your email service provider and get it sorted.

THE TEST(S)

31 Run a test with your colleagues.



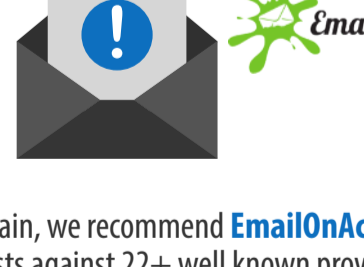
Test multiple email clients - Outlook, Gmail etc. Then tweak and test again.

32 Is your campaign optimised for mobile?



(It always will be with [EmailOut.com](#))

33 Everything seems hunky-dory? Don't count on it.



Use third party **email design test software** to check in multiple email clients and devices (desktop/tablet/mobile). We recommend **EmailOnAcid for 70+** different client/device combinations - **it's free to use within the EmailOut.com 'Request Spam Test' function.**

34 Now that the design is flawless, run a full spam test with a third party provider.



Again, we recommend **EmailOnAcid**, which tests against 22+ well known providers and protocols. And yes, **it's free to use within the EmailOut.com 'Request Spam Test' function.**

35 A/B split test to maximise conversions.

Have you created slightly different versions of your campaign copy and design to test which perform best?

How about your subject lines? No? **This valuable post** will tell you why you should.



36 Testing complete?



Good stuff. Now create your plain text version. It's usually just an **automatic 1-click operation** - view the copy afterwards and optimise formatting.

THE BUY IN

37 Does the campaign need to be signed off internally?

Go get that approval.

38 Have all stakeholders been informed?

e.g. Does the sales team know you've offered 10% off product X and when they may receive orders/enquiries? Keep everyone in the loop.

THE TIMING

39 Always send your newsletter/campaigns out on the same day, at the same time?

Then that's when your recipients will be expecting them. So don't disappoint.

40 If not, check your reports & analysis. When do you get the highest...



Open rates (day/time)?



Click through rates (day/time)?



Orders (day/time)?

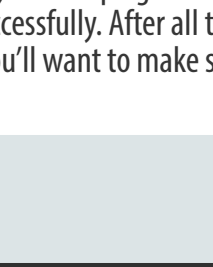
Schedule your campaign to hit the highest of the most appropriate metric(s).

41 Have you made sure your colleagues aren't hitting those recipients with another campaign at the same time? Don't bombard them. Play the subtle game.



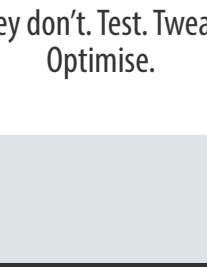
THE ANALYSIS

42 Boom. It's time to send.



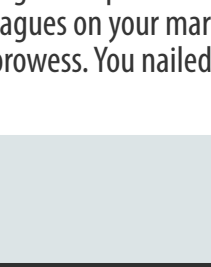
Now **check your reports after the first 10 mins** to make sure your campaign is sending successfully. After all this work, you'll want to make sure it is!

43 Periodically review results so that you do more of what your recipients want and less of what they don't. Test. Tweak. Optimise.



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