



Cold Email Deliverability Checklist

Everything to verify before your first email hits send

33 items

6 sections

~20 min to complete

HOW TO USE: Work top-to-bottom. Fix DNS (Section 1) before anything else. Tick each box as you complete it. Aim to complete all 6 sections before your first campaign goes live. This is a pre-flight checklist, not optional guidance.

DNS Domain & DNS Setup DNS CHECKLIST

- 1 **Set up a dedicated sending domain**
Never cold-email from your primary domain. A subdomain (mail.yourco.com) keeps your main domain reputation safe.
- 2 **Configure SPF record**
Tells receiving servers exactly which IPs can send on your behalf. Missing SPF = immediate suspicion.
- 3 **Set up DKIM signing (2048-bit key)**
Cryptographically signs every outgoing email. Without it, Gmail and Outlook treat you as unverified.
- 4 **Add DMARC policy (start p=none)**
Instructs receivers what to do when SPF/DKIM fail. Start monitoring, then tighten to quarantine/reject.
- 5 **Verify MX records on sending domain**
Outbound-only domains still need MX so bounces return correctly — missing MX raises flags.
- 6 **Set custom tracking domain**
Using your own domain for open/click tracking avoids shared-domain reputation bleed from other senders.

WARMUP Email Warmup WARMUP CHECKLIST

- 1 **Start warmup 2–4 weeks before launch**
Fresh domains have zero inbox reputation. Providers are suspicious by default — build trust before you sell.
- 2 **Begin at 10–20 emails/day, ramp 15% daily**
Sudden volume spikes are the clearest automation signal. Steady growth mimics a real human sender.
- 3 **Use LeadSnipper built-in warmup pools**
Automated human-like warmup activity — replies, opens, rescues from spam — builds sender score fast.
- 4 **Target 90%+ inbox placement during warmup**
If warmup emails land in spam, stop. Fix DNS before you touch a real prospect list.
- 5 **Never skip warmup on any new domain**
A domain used only for web traffic has zero email reputation. Even 'established' domains start at zero.

INFRA Technical Configuration INFRA CHECKLIST

- 1 **Connect your own AWS SES account**
Shared infrastructure means one bad neighbor tanks your deliverability. Own your sending IPs entirely.
- 2 **Verify sending domain inside AWS SES**
AWS requires explicit domain verification before routing any email — this is non-optional.
- 3 **Set bounce alert threshold at 3–4%**
AWS suspends accounts above 5% bounce rate. Catch the problem at 3% before it becomes a crisis.



LISTS

List Hygiene

LISTS CHECKLIST

- Verify every address before importing**
Invalid addresses generate hard bounces — the single fastest way to destroy your sender reputation.
- Remove role-based addresses (info@, admin@)**
Role inboxes are shared, over-filtered, and often monitored for spam. Never cold-email them.
- Scrub known spam trap patterns**
One spam trap hit can blacklist your IP across major networks. Clean lists before every send.
- Segment cold vs. warm contacts — never mix**
Blending cold email into a warm list degrades the warm list's reputation. Keep them separate.
- Suppress unsubscribes and bounces immediately**
Re-contacting opted-out recipients raises complaints and exposes you to CAN-SPAM / GDPR liability.

COPY

Email Content & Copy

COPY CHECKLIST

- Subject lines under 60 chars — no spam trigger words**
Words like FREE, GUARANTEED, or ACT NOW get flagged before a human ever sees your message.
- Keep cold emails under 150 words**
Shorter emails feel personal and 1:1. Long emails read like newsletters and get filtered like them.
- Personalize beyond first name — use company, role, or trigger**
First-name merge tags alone don't fool spam filters or buyers. Genuine relevance does.
- Maximum 1 link per cold email**
Multiple links spike spam scores and dilute your single call-to-action.
- Run every draft through a spam scorer (Mail-Tester / GlockApps)**
Reveals filter flags before you hit send — not after your campaign tanks.
- A/B test subject lines on 10–20% of list before full send**
Real data beats opinions. Let the winning subject line earn the full list.

SEND

Sending Behaviour

SEND CHECKLIST

- Cap at 100–200 emails/day per domain while warming**
Volume is a signal. Inbox providers reward restrained new senders with better placement.
- Schedule sends during 8–11 AM or 1–3 PM recipient timezone**
Emails sent at 2 AM local get buried. Hitting business hours raises open rates and lowers complaints.
- Add 30–180 second random delay between sends**
Machine-gun send intervals are a textbook automation flag. Random delays mimic human behavior.
- Rotate sender identities for high-volume campaigns**
Spreading sends across multiple domains and inboxes distributes reputation risk.
- Pause immediately if bounce rate exceeds 4%**
Do not wait for AWS to suspend you. Pause, re-validate your list, then resume slowly.
- Monitor blacklists weekly (MXToolbox, Spamhaus, Barracuda)**
Getting blacklisted without knowing about it is a data problem. Weekly checks fix it.