Pre-Send Email Checklist

25 checks in six groups. Complete the audience and header checks before reviewing the content. Reset or copy the checklist for every campaign.

Group 1: Audience (the group that causes the expensive mistakes)

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
1	The right segment is selected, and it is the segment the brief names	Open the segment; read its conditions, not its name	Wrong audience		
2	Recipient count is within the normal range for this program (for example, within 25% of the last five sends)	Compare to the sends log	A broken segment condition, or a full-list send by accident		
3	Suppressions applied: unsubscribed, complained, bounced, in a sunset flow, and suppression lists from other systems	Segment exclusions visible; reconciliation current	Complaints and bounces		
4	Unengaged tier excluded for campaigns (received 5+ emails, no click in the inactivity window)	Exclusion present	Engagement and placement drop		
5	No profile mailed in the last 90+ days without an approved reactivation plan	Filter the segment by last send	A cold-list blast		
6	Frequency cap respected across brands and programs for everyone in the segment	Cross-program check	Fatigue, unsubscribes		
7	Seed and test addresses included; internal "do not mail" list excluded	List check	No visibility of the real send; internal complaints		

Group 2: Headers and authentication

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
8	From name and From domain are the usual ones for this program	Preview headers	Recognition loss; alignment failure		
9	Reply-To is a monitored mailbox	Send a test, reply to it	Lost replies; Microsoft recommends a valid, monitored P2 address		
10	One-click unsubscribe headers present (List-Unsubscribe, List-Unsubscribe-Post)	Send a test to Gmail; look for the Unsubscribe link next to the sender	Non-compliance for bulk senders		
11	SPF, DKIM and DMARC pass and align on the test	Gmail "Show original"	Rate limits or rejections		
12	Tracking and link domains are branded and resolve	Click two links in the test	Shortener or unknown-domain filtering		

Group 3: Content

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
13	Subject line and preheader have no placeholders, test text or wrong brand	Read them in the inbox preview	The classic "oops"		
14	Personalization fields have fallbacks ("there" if no first name)	Send to a test profile with blank fields	"Hi FNAME"		
15	Every link goes where its text says, with the right UTM	Click every link	Broken promise; wrong attribution		
16	Offer, price, dates and codes match the brief	Read against the brief	Costly correction		
17	Visible unsubscribe link and physical address in the footer	Footer check	CAN-SPAM and provider requirements		
18	Images have alt text; plain-text version exists and reads correctly	Toggle images off; view plain text	Blank email in some clients		
19	Renders on mobile; no horizontal scroll; buttons tappable	Device preview	Lost clicks		

Group 4: Timing

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
20	Send time and time zone are what the brief says	Scheduler	3 a.m. sends		
21	No other send to the same audience within the cap window	Calendar check	Fatigue		
22	Nothing in the news, the product or the account (outage, incident) makes this send wrong today	Ask	Tone-deaf send		

Group 5: Compliance

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
23	Everyone in the segment has consent for this message type and brand; no transactional template carries promotional content without unsubscribe	Consent field; template type	Violations; complaints		
24	Regulated content reviewed (health, finance, claims, sweepstakes); for healthcare, nothing patient-specific in a marketing stream	Reviewer sign-off	Legal exposure		

Group 6: Measurement

#	Check	How to verify	Fail means	Result	Note
25	Campaign named by convention, goal and primary metric recorded, holdout or cohort frozen if this is a test	Campaign record	Unmeasurable send		