The Designer → Developer Email Handoff Checklist

A complete handoff is the fastest way to get an email built right the first time. Missing assets, unclear links, and designs that can't work in email clients cause most build delays and revision rounds.

Designers and project managers can use this checklist before sending a design to development. Each item answers a question your developer would otherwise have to ask.

Design file and layout

- [ ] Design shared with view or edit access (Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD, or layered PSD), not just a flat image or PDF
- [ ] Desktop design built at the email's real width, usually 600–640px
- [ ] Mobile design included, or notes on how sections should stack
- [ ] Layers and frames named clearly and grouped by section
- [ ] Spacing consistent, ideally on a simple grid (e.g. multiples of 8px)
- [ ] Final version clearly marked, with old drafts removed or archived
- [ ] Reusable modules flagged if this is part of a template or design system

Typography

- [ ] Font family, size, weight, and line height noted for every text style (headline, body, button, footer)
- [ ] Web font files or a hosted link (e.g. Google Fonts) provided, with license confirmed for email use
- [ ] Fallback fonts chosen for clients that don't support web fonts, such as Outlook desktop
- [ ] Body text at least 14px, ideally 16px on mobile
- [ ] Headlines kept as live text where possible, not baked into images

Colors and dark mode

- [ ] Exact hex codes listed for every color: backgrounds, text, buttons, links, and dividers

- [ ] Text and background pairs pass contrast checks (4.5:1 for normal text, 3:1 for large text)
- [ ] Dark mode version or guidance included, such as alternate colors and a light logo
- [ ] Link color and style (underlined or not) specified
- [ ] Button hover states noted, if wanted (supported in some clients only)

Images and assets

- [ ] All images exported at 2× their display size for sharp retina screens, or marked as exportable in the design file
- [ ] Photos as JPG, graphics with transparency as PNG, animations as GIF
- [ ] Logo provided in light and dark versions, ideally as transparent PNGs
- [ ] Icons (social, feature) provided individually, not flattened into a larger image
- [ ] Animated GIFs come with the first frame designed to work as a static fallback
- [ ] Alt text written for every meaningful image
- [ ] Image rights confirmed for stock photos and third-party graphics

Copy, links, and content

- [ ] Final, approved copy provided, ideally in an editable doc rather than only in the design
- [ ] Subject line and preheader text supplied
- [ ] Destination URL listed for every link, button, and image link
- [ ] UTM or tracking parameters specified, or the naming convention to follow
- [ ] Personalization fields named, with fallback text for missing data
- [ ] Footer details included: company address, unsubscribe wording, and legal disclaimers
- [ ] Which ESP the email will be sent from (Mailchimp, Klaviyo, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, HubSpot, etc.)

Interactive and technical notes

- [ ] Any interactive elements (carousels, accordions, countdown timers) flagged, with a fallback for clients that don't support them
- [ ] Dynamic or conditional content explained: which sections change for which audiences
- [ ] Background images over text noted, since Outlook needs special handling for them

- [ ] Target email clients or audience priorities shared, if known (e.g. "80% of our list opens on iPhone")
- [ ] Deadline for the first build and the send date confirmed
- [ ] One contact named for questions and approvals

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