The Pre-Send Email QA Checklist

Once an email is sent, you can't take it back. This checklist catches the mistakes that most often slip through: broken links, missing tracking, typos, rendering bugs, and compliance gaps.

Run it on the final build, after every last-minute change, and before you schedule the send. It works best with a second pair of eyes.

Content and copy

- [ ] Subject line final, checked for typos, and under about 50 characters so it isn't cut off on mobile
- [ ] Preheader text written, matches the subject, and doesn't fall back to "View in browser"
- [ ] From name and from address correct
- [ ] Copy matches the approved version word for word
- [ ] Spelling and grammar proofread, including headlines and buttons
- [ ] Prices, dates, promo codes, and offer terms double-checked
- [ ] Personalization tags (merge fields) render correctly and have fallbacks for missing data
- [ ] Dynamic or conditional content tested for each audience version

Links and tracking

- [ ] Every link clicked and lands on the right page, including images, buttons, and footer links
- [ ] No placeholder links left (`#`, `example.com`, or staging URLs)
- [ ] UTM parameters present and consistent with the campaign naming
- [ ] ESP click tracking turned on, and tracked links still resolve correctly
- [ ] `mailto:` and `tel:` links work on mobile
- [ ] "View in browser" link works
- [ ] Unsubscribe and preference-center links work and point to the right list

Images

- [ ] All images load, hosted on a live server (not a local or staging path)
- [ ] Images sized for their slot and exported at 2× for sharp retina display
- [ ] File sizes kept small, ideally under about 200KB each; GIFs kept under about 1MB
- [ ] Width and height attributes set so layouts hold while images load
- [ ] Alt text present on every image, with empty alt for decorative ones
- [ ] Email still makes sense with images turned off

Code and rendering

- [ ] HTML file size under about 100KB, so Gmail doesn't clip the message (its limit is around 102KB)
- [ ] Rendering checked in the major clients your audience uses: Apple Mail, Gmail (web and app), Outlook (desktop, web, and app), and Yahoo
- [ ] Mobile layout checked on a real phone: columns stack, text is readable, buttons are tappable
- [ ] Dark mode checked in at least Apple Mail, Gmail for iOS, and Outlook
- [ ] Fonts fall back gracefully where web fonts aren't supported
- [ ] No leftover test content, comments with internal notes, or unused code
- [ ] Plain-text version included and readable
- [ ] Accessibility basics checked: contrast, headings, alt text, and descriptive links

Deliverability and compliance

- [ ] Physical mailing address included in the footer (required by CAN-SPAM in the US)
- [ ] Clear unsubscribe link present, plus a one-click unsubscribe header for Gmail and Yahoo bulk-sender rules
- [ ] Sending domain authenticated with SPF, DKIM, and DMARC
- [ ] Subject line accurate and not misleading
- [ ] Healthy balance of text and images; the email isn't a single large image
- [ ] Spam-trigger phrasing and excessive caps or exclamation points avoided
- [ ] Consent rules met for the audience's region (for example, GDPR for EU recipients)
- [ ] Spam filter test run, if your ESP or testing tool offers one

Final send setup

- [ ] Correct audience, list, or segment selected, with suppression lists applied
- [ ] Send date, time, and time zone confirmed
- [ ] A/B test settings (if any) checked: variants, split size, and winning metric
- [ ] Test send received in a real inbox and reviewed one last time
- [ ] Final sign-off given by the person responsible for approval
- [ ] Someone available after send to monitor results and catch issues

Want this handled for you?

Inbox Standard runs a full QA pass on every email we build, so issues are caught before they reach your list. We work directly with brands and white-label for agencies. Get in touch for a quote.