

Email QA Checklist

THE TOP 30 RULES TO CHECK BEFORE HITTING SEND

Email QA can be a painful process: the countless revisions, never-ending back-and-forths and that nagging feeling that you missed something moments after a message is sent. To reduce some of that stress, here are the most common standards and best practices that email teams include in their QA workflows. Check these off, and send with confidence.

SUBJECT LINE AND PREVIEW TEXT

- ✓ **Subject line capitalization:** Check that the first letter of each significant word is capitalized.
- ✓ **Subject line length:** Verify the subject line is between 40 and 60 characters.
- ✓ **Hidden preview text:** Check for a hidden preheader with non-empty text content.
- ✓ **Preview text length:** Verify the hidden preheader text is between 85 and 200 characters.

CONTENT AND COPY

- ✓ **CTA button text:** Verify all CTA buttons use specific, action-oriented text.
- ✓ **Placeholder text:** Check for unreplaced merge tags or Lorem Ipsum text.
- ✓ **Copyright check:** Verify the copyright year in the footer matches the current year.
- ✓ **Trademark superscript:** Ensure all trademark symbols are wrapped in tags for proper superscript display.

DESIGN AND BRAND

- ✓ **Font compliance:** Verify all font-family declarations include a web-safe fallback font.
- ✓ **Image-to-text ratio:** Check whether the email is primarily image-based with minimal HTML text.
- ✓ **Email width:** Check the main container width is between 600px and 700px.

LINKS AND TRACKING

- ✓ **Link verification:** Check all href URLs have valid domains and no syntax errors.
- ✓ **HTTPS:** Verify all external URLs use https://. Fail if any use http://.
- ✓ **Tracking codes:** Check all CTA links for UTM parameters. Ignore unsubscribe, footer and social links.

COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL

- ✓ **Unsubscribe link:** Verify a valid opt-out mechanism is present and clearly visible.
- ✓ **Footer physical address:** Check that the footer contains a complete physical mailing address, including street, city, and country.
- ✓ **Privacy policy:** Verify the email contains a visible link to a privacy policy page.
- ✓ **No pre-checked boxes:** Check that form checkboxes are not pre-checked by default.

ACCESSIBILITY

- ✓ **Image alt text:** Check all content images have descriptive alt text.
- ✓ **Minimum font size:** Check that primary body text uses a font size of 14px or larger.
- ✓ **Color contrast ratio:** Fail if any text/background pair falls below 4.5:1.

TECHNICAL AND RENDERING

- ✓ **Mobile-responsive layout:** Verify at least one @media query with mobile breakpoints is present.
- ✓ **Dark mode compatibility:** Check for @media (prefers-color-scheme: dark) CSS blocks or color-scheme meta declaration.
- ✓ **Social media links:** Check the footer for links to social media profile domains.

PERSONALIZATION

- ✓ **Personalization tokens:** Check all merge tags are syntactically correct.
- ✓ **Fallback values:** Verify every personalization token has a fallback value defined inline.
- ✓ **Dynamic content:** Check all dynamic content blocks have a defined audience condition and an ELSE fallback segment.

ISP-SPECIFIC

- ✓ **Gmail email size:** Estimate whether the HTML content appears to significantly exceed 102KB.
- ✓ **Outlook VML fallback:** Check all background images have a VML fallback inside Outlook conditional comments.
- ✓ **Apple Mail Privacy Protection:** Check for the presence of a 1x1 tracking pixel.

QA THAT PLAYS BY YOUR RULES

Want to add more rules and automate this checklist entirely? Inbox Monster's Custom QA lets you create specialized rule catalogs all within a single workflow. Start with 80+ common rules with email best practices baked in, then customize your own rule set to match the way your team works. Every email is also given a Sendability™ Score to prove it's ready for deployment. Custom QA gives email teams the confidence to send faster without sacrificing quality. Learn more at inboxmonster.com/blog/inbox-monster-custom-qa.

ABOUT INBOX MONSTER

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