

# List Hygiene

Last Modified on 10/02/2025 9:31 am MST

This article applies to:

[Max Classic](#)

1. [What is List Hygiene?](#)
2. [List Hygiene Best Practices](#)
3. [Sender Reputation](#)
4. [Your Content](#)
5. [Your Email Service Provider \(ESP\)](#)
6. [Your Sender Domain](#)
7. [Regular List Cleanup](#)
8. [Key Takeaway](#)
9. [Looking for extra help?](#)

Your contacts engage with your business in many ways—calls, texts, website visits, purchases, and more. Email is just one channel, and not everyone prefers it. That's okay! The goal is to send marketing emails only to people who find them valuable, while managing others in ways that fit how they prefer to engage.

Keeping your list clean improves your **deliverability** and ensures your emails reach the inboxes of those who truly want them. Two factors matter most:

1. **List Hygiene** – keeping your list clean and engaged
2. **Sender Reputation** – how mailbox providers (like Google, Microsoft, Yahoo) view your sending practices

---

## What is List Hygiene?

**List hygiene** is the ongoing practice of maintaining your contact list so that:

- Email addresses are valid and active
- Contacts are engaged with your content
- Unengaged or invalid addresses are removed before they harm your reputation

Regularly cleaning your list reduces the risk of:

- [Spam complaints](#)
- [Spam trap hits](#)
- [Hard bounces \(invalid addresses\)](#)
- [Lower inbox placement](#)

---

## List Hygiene Best Practices

- **Collect good data** – Carefully enter and confirm email addresses (e.g., `flyinghigh@keap.com` vs. `flying.hi@keap.com`).
  - **Use double opt-in** – Require new subscribers to confirm via email before being added. This ensures the address is valid and they truly want your content.
  - **Avoid purchased lists** – They often contain invalid addresses and spam traps that can quickly ruin your sender reputation.
  - **Send re-engagement campaigns** – For contacts who haven't engaged in **3–6 months**, send a campaign asking them to confirm if they still want your emails.
  - **Remove or opt-out unengaged contacts** – If someone hasn't engaged in **6+ months**, it's better to remove them than risk deliverability issues.
  - **Monitor bounces:**
    - **Hard bounces** (address doesn't exist): remove immediately.
    - **Soft bounces** (temporary issues): suppress after 3–5 bounces.
  - **Use Keap's Automated List Management** – Automatically marks contacts as:
  - **Unengaged Marketable** (after ~3–4 months): still sendable but considered inactive.
  - **Unengaged Non-Marketable** (after ~6 months): no longer eligible for marketing emails until they re-engage.
  - **Segment your list** – Use tags to group contacts by interest and send targeted campaigns, rather than blasting the same content to everyone.
- 

## Sender Reputation

Your **sender reputation** is how mailbox providers judge whether your emails are trustworthy and inbox-worthy. It's influenced by:

## Your Content

- Avoid spam-like subject lines and language
- Maintain a healthy image-to-text ratio (~20% images, 80% text)
- Be mindful of links—don't include domains with poor reputations

## Your Email Service Provider (ESP)

An ESP (like Keap, Mailchimp, or Emma) is the engine behind your emails—not Gmail or Outlook. Your ESP's practices impact deliverability.

At Keap, we:

- Vet customer lists and monitor sending behavior
- Authenticate email for legitimacy (SPF, DKIM, DMARC)
- Manage bounces
- Monitor IP reputation
- Maintain a dedicated compliance team

## Your Sender Domain

Your sending domain (everything after the “@” in your email address) has its own reputation. Problems like spam complaints, spam trap hits, or consistently sending to unengaged recipients can damage it—even if you switch ESPs.

---

## Regular List Cleanup

- If you **already clean regularly**: continue every few months by sending re-engagement campaigns, tagging unengaged contacts, and removing those who remain inactive.
  - If you **haven’t cleaned in a long time**: don’t try to re-engage very old or inactive contacts. Instead, find and tag them, then remove them from your marketing lists.
- 

## Key Takeaway

Healthy list hygiene ensures you’re only sending to people who actually want your emails. This improves engagement, strengthens your sender reputation, and keeps your emails in the inbox—right where they belong.

## Looking for extra help?

If you’d like professional guidance with your email practices or recommended tools to improve your email practices and deliverability, check out these trusted partners:

- Email Deliverability specialist training, consulting and software
    - [EmailSmart](#)
  - List Cleaning
    - [SpamClean](#)
    - [ListDefender](#)
    - [Klean13](#)
    - [EmailSmart Pro Tools](#)
  - Form Security
    - [Spamkill](#)
    - [ListDefender](#)
-