

# How unengaged contacts reduce the effectiveness of your email deliverability

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This article applies to:

[Max Classic](#)

## Understanding Email Engagement and Why It Matters

### What Is Email Engagement?

**Email engagement** refers to how actively your contacts interact with your emails. It measures actions like **opens**, **clicks**, and some **form submissions** — and how recently those actions occurred. We measure engagement in **days since a contact last**:

- Opened or clicked an email
- Filled out a form

Engagement helps determine whether your emails land in the inbox, spam folder, or get blocked altogether.

### Types of Engagement

#### Positive Engagement

These are the actions that show interest and help boost your sender reputation:

- Opening your emails
- Clicking on links
- Moving mail from the spam/junk folder to the inbox

#### Negative Engagement

These are warning signs that a contact is not finding value in your emails:

- Unsubscribing
- Marking your email as spam
- Deleting your email without opening
- Leaving mail in the spam/junk folder

### Why Does Engagement Matter?

Sending to unengaged or uninterested contacts can:

- Lower your open and click rates

- Increase the chance of hitting **spam traps** (email addresses used by inbox providers or third-party monitors to detect poor list hygiene)
- Damage your sender reputation
- Cause your emails to land in spam or be blocked entirely

**Key Rule:** Only send marketing emails to contacts who have engaged within the **last 90 days**.

## Key Factors That Influence Engagement

Several things impact how your contacts interact with your emails:

- **Content quality** – Is it valuable, relevant, and easy to read?
- **Subject lines** – Are they attention-grabbing and aligned with the email content? Are they clear and compelling?
- **Email design** – Is it mobile-friendly, visually appealing, and easy to navigate?
- **Send frequency** – Are you emailing too often, or not often enough?

## Keap vs. Personal Email

Emails sent from Keap are treated differently from personal 1:1 emails. As an **Email Service Provider (ESP)**, Keap is recognized by inbox providers (like Gmail or Outlook) as a bulk sender. This means:

- Keap is an **Email Service Provider (ESP)**
- ESPs send large volumes and are identified as bulk senders
- Inbox providers apply stricter filters and require higher engagement

Poor engagement affects not just one message — it impacts ALL future mail.

## How to Avoid Sending to Unengaged Contacts

To maintain healthy deliverability:

1. **Monitor engagement** using Keap's list management tools
2. **Send re-engagement campaigns** to inactive contacts
3. **Stop marketing to unresponsive contacts**
4. **Focus on quality over quantity**

*Keap will automatically flag unengaged contacts and help prevent accidental sends to those who are no longer responsive.*

## Email Compliance Success: The 3 Pillars

1. **List Quality**

Only send to contacts who expect and want your emails. Engagement proves interest.

2. **Content Quality**

Make sure every message is relevant, on-brand, and not spammy. Bad content causes opt-outs, spam complaints, and disengagement.

### 3. Send Frequency

Too many emails — even with great content — can lead to fatigue and opt-outs. Find the right cadence for your audience.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Engagement** – Number of days since a contact opened/clicked an email, filled a form, or purchased.
- **Bounce Rate** – % of emails rejected by inbox providers.  
*Formula: Bounced / Sent*
- **Deliverability** – % of emails accepted by inbox providers.  
*Formula: (Sent - Bounced) / Sent*
- **Open Rate** – % of recipients who opened your email.  
*Formula: Opened / (Sent - Bounced)*
- **Click Rate** – % of recipients who clicked a link.  
*Formula: Clicked / (Sent - Bounced)*
- **Blacklist** – A list of domains or IPs flagged for spammy behavior. Being listed reduces or blocks email delivery.

## Final Thoughts

Keeping your list clean and your audience engaged is essential to successful email marketing. Keap's built-in tools and automation help you track, maintain, and improve engagement — so your emails land where they belong: the inbox.

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