

Engagement Essentials: Understanding Email Engagement and Why It Matters

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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

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.

Best Practices for Sending to Unengaged Contacts

In early Q4, 2025, Keap will begin restricting email to contacts who have not engaged in the last 18 months . To maintain strong deliverability and comply with this policy, it’s critical to manage unengaged contacts proactively.

Managing Unengaged Contacts: Volume-Based Strategy

Unengaged contact handling should be based on **how often you email them**, not just how long ago they opted in. Here’s a recommended approach based on email volume per contact:

Contact Lifecycle by Email Count

- **Emails 1–4:** Regular marketing content
- **Emails 5–6:** **Send re-engagement messages**
- **Emails 7–8:** Send **double opt-in** emails to confirm continued interest
- **No confirmation within 10 days of Email 8, Opt the contact out** and stop sending email

Low Frequency Exception: If you send only one email per month, use **calendar months** rather than email count for timing.

Adjusting the Timeline Based on Send Frequency

Emails/Month	Re-engagement	Double Opt-in	Opt-out If No Confirmation
1/month	Month 4–5 (Email 4–5)	Month 6–7 (Email 6–7)	After 10 days from Email 7
2/month	Month 3 (Email 5–6)	Month 4 (Email 7–8)	After 10 days from Email 8
4/month	Month 2 (Email 5–6)	Month 2 (Email 7–8)	After 10 days from Email 8
5–7/month	Month 1 (Email 5–6)	Month 1–2 (Email 7–8)	After 10 days from Email 8
8+/month	Month 1 (Email 5–6)	Month 1 (Email 7–8)	After 10 days from Email 8

What You Should Do Now

- **Track** your average emails per contact per month.
- **Implement** this re-engagement timeline into your email strategy.
- **Suppress or opt-out** any contacts who do not confirm after the double opt-in window.
- **Ensure compliance** with Keap's upcoming 18-month engagement policy starting September 2025.

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.

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](#)
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