



# Email Marketing Glossary of Terms



**A/B Testing:** A method of testing in which a small, random sample of an email list is split in two. One email is sent to the list A and another modified email is sent to list B. Depending on the Open and Click Rate behavior of the lists either A or B is chosen as the final email to be sent. Be sure to test only one parameter at a time or else the results will not be conclusive. You can test which of these parameters when changed make a difference: From Name, From Email Address, Subject Line, Email Content and Email Design.

**Above the fold:** A design term referring to the top half (when discussing email) of an email. The majority of effective emails contain the most important elements above the fold, which often is viewed by more recipients.

**Authentication:** An automated process used by Internet service providers (ISPs) and email service providers (ESPs) to verify an email sender's identity.

**Autoresponder:** An email message that is automatically generated and sent to new subscribers, inquiries, unsubscribers, and so on. E.g. a Welcome email when anyone opts in to your emails.

**Black list:** A list of IP addresses or domains of email senders that are thought to be sending spam. The list can be created by ISPs, third-party sources, or corporations. It allows them to block email from blacklisted sources, thereby reducing spam in the inbox. See some of the black lists [here](#).

**Bounce:** A message that does not get delivered. There are two categories of bounces: hard bounces and soft bounces. A hard bounce occurs when the email address no longer exists or is invalid. A soft bounce is most likely a temporary setback (that is, due to a server problem on the recipient's end like if the mailbox is full) to the inbox of an active email address.

**Campaign:** Name of a set of emails that are sent out. E.g. Summer Holidays Campaign ( which may have 3 emails going out one every two weeks during summer)

**CAN-SPAM:** U.S. legislation governing commercial email marketing.

**Click-through:** The act of a reader clicking on a link in an email message.

**Click-through rate:** Number of individuals clicking on at least one link to the number of emails sent out or delivered.

**Conversion:** When the reader clicks an email and takes a desired action on the website such as downloading a white paper or registering for an event

**Deliverability:** Measures your success at getting email delivered to the recipient. Also refers to the issues around the process of getting email from the source to the recipient.

**Dictionary attacks:** Spammers search valid e-mail addresses at a specific domain by guessing e-mail address using common usernames in email addresses at that domain. For example, trying geeta@example.com, geetaa@example.com, geetab@example.com, etc. and any that are accepted for delivery by the recipient email server, instead of rejected, are added to the list of theoretically valid e-mail addresses for that domain.

**Domain name system (DNS):** The system that translates domain names into IP addresses on the Internet.

**Domain keys:** An authentication scheme developed by Yahoo in an effort to curb phishing and spam.

**Double opt-in:** This is a way in which permission to send email is taken. For example, a recipient subscribes or “opts in” to a list. Then a confirmation email is sent to the address requiring the reader to take action to activate the subscription usually by clicking on a link in that email.

**Email Attachment:** Any file or document that is sent along with the email.

**Email client:** Any type of software that readers use to read email. Examples are Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes.

**Email service provider (ESP):** A vendor that sends email messages on behalf of others and normally provides list management and campaign reporting tools.

**False positive:** A legitimate email message that is mistakenly filtered as spam.

**Filter:** Software that categorizes incoming email messages based on criteria, such as content or sender, to identify and then block spam or viruses.

**Forward:** When the recipient of an email message sends it on to someone he or she thinks might find it interesting or benefit from.

**Frequency:** The interval at which email messages are sent (daily, weekly, monthly, and so on).

**From Address:** This refers to the From Name and the From Email Address that the reader sees.

**Ham:** Informal opposite of Spam. This means your email is legitimate.

**Hard bounce:** Occurs when the email address no longer exists or is invalid and delivery is not available.

**Header:** In an email message, refers to the lines that precede the body and include information on the sender, recipient subject, sending time, receiving time, and so on. Also used to indicate the top part of the email message itself, particularly in email newsletters (logo, table of contents, and so on).

**HTML/text:** The two predominant formats that emails are created and delivered in. HTML stands for Hypertext Markup Language and most notably differs from text in that it can feature images, fonts, and colors as well as code that can provide additional reporting to the sender.

**IP address:** A number that indicates the physical location of any device connected to the Internet. (IP stands for Internet protocol.)

**Image suppression / Image blocking:** When images in an incoming email are “turned off” or blocked by an email client and are not displayed to the intended recipient.

**Internet service provider (ISP):** Providers of Internet connection services and email address services. Some examples are VSNL and Yahoo! Rediff etc.

**List hygiene:** The act of keeping an email list clean by removing bounces and unsubscribes properly.

**Open rate:** Measuring the number of readers who download a small 1 pixel tracking image. This is often used as a (relatively loose) indication of how many people viewed the email. If images are turned off then the open cannot be measured.

**Opt-in:** When someone asks to receive email and grants permission to the sender by providing an email address to be added to a list.

**Opt-out:** See unsubscribe.

**Permission:** Approval given by a reader to receive email.

**Personalization:** Method of making email messages more targeted by adding information, such as a first name, to each outgoing message to make it more relevant to the reader.

**Phishing:** A type of spam where the person sending it attempts to extract personal (often financial) information from the recipient by sending emails that seem to be authentic. This type of spam usually results in identity theft.

**Preference center:** The place on a website where subscribers can control how they want an email sender to communicate with them. (This includes frequency, type of message, and so on.)

**Preview pane:** A window in some email programs like Microsoft Outlook, ThunderBird that allows users to see part of an email message without clicking or opening the entire message.

**Privacy policy:** Your company's legal policy on how you will use the emails addresses provided to you by your readers.

**Relevancy:** Describes how pertinent, useful, or applicable the content of an email message is to a recipient.

**Renderability:** HTML email gets displayed slightly differently in various email programs. Renderability is the ability of an email message to display as the sender intended.

**RFC:** Request for Comments (RFC) is a memorandum published by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) describing methods, behaviors, research, or innovations applicable to the working of the Internet and Internet-connected systems. It is the official publication channel for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and—to some extent—the global community of computer network researchers in general.

**RFC-Compliant Email:** Emails that are consistent with the internet standards for such documents. The standards are established through a request for comments resulting in a general and open discussion. Email RFCs include RFC 1939 -- Post Office Protocol, and RFC 2821; Simple Mail Transfer Protocol. Compliance to these protocols ensures that the email can be processed accurately.

**Segmentation:** Dividing a list into smaller lists (segments), where each segment shares one or more common characteristics, such as "lives in Mumbai" or "bought from us in the past 30 days." Emails sent to each segment can thus be adjusted to account for these characteristics.

**Sender ID:** Verifying that the source IP address of the email is authorized to send email on behalf of the domain alleged to be the sender.

**SMTP:** Simple Mail Transfer Protocol, also known as the protocol for sending email messages between servers.

**Snippet:** First few characters of email message that get displayed in Gmail after the subject line.

**Soft bounce:** Is a temporary setback (that is, due to a server problem on the recipient's end like if the mailbox is full) to the inbox of an active email address.

**Spam:** Unsolicited commercial / bulk email. In other words, email that the recipient did not ask to receive or no longer wants to receive.

**SPF:** Stands for Sender Policy Framework. This is a system to identify that you authorize the server to send the email on your behalf.

**Subject line:** A key part of an email message that is prominently featured in all email readers/clients. Marketers use the Subject line to gain attention and interest.

**Suppression list:** A list of email addresses that have been removed from one or more mailing lists because the person has unsubscribed or the email address was inactive.

**Test:** An action taken to ensure an email will perform properly before it is sent. A test message is sent to several “testing” accounts and allows marketers to identify problems such as broken links or images and rectify them before sending the email to an entire list as well as a means of comparing the results of different versions of an email.

**Transactional email:** An email message that is sent with the primary purpose of completing or relaying information about a transaction. An example would be an order confirmation email.

**Unsubscribe:** When a recipient requests to have his or her name removed from an email list.

**Web Beacon / Bug:** A small 1x1 pixel image that is embedded in the email. When this image gets downloaded from the server it is interpreted as an “open” action of an email.



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