

The Email Marketing Dictionary

51 key definitions you need to know



mailify



This dictionary aims to give you a better understanding of the some key terms in email marketing. From abbreviations, acronyms, and technical jargon, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and forget about some essential terms.

We'll explain some main concepts as well as definitions of the complex terms that are used by digital marketers on a daily basis.

Knowing and understanding these terms will be useful in getting a better understand of the world of email marketing and enable you to apply some best practices. A solid understanding of the marketing industry, and tools that are used, is key to becoming an email marketing expert.

This dictionary functions as a 'email marketing glossary' and a comprehensive resource for all things email marketing.

www.mailify.com

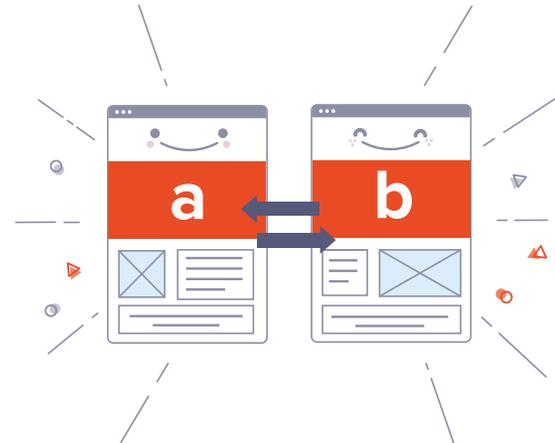
1. A/B TEST

◆ **Definition:** The term 'A/B testing' in email marketing refers **a test conducted to compare the effectiveness of two versions of a newsletter**. This consists of sending two versions of an email (version A, and version B) to two representative samples of the recipient list, in order to compare the results of key metrics such as opening rate, click through rate, reaction rate, etc.

The version with the best results is called the 'winner' and this version is then sent to the remaining recipients on the list.

An A/B test can be performed with regards to the content of the email, the subject line, the name of the sender, or the device.

The main benefit of the A/B testing is the fact that it allows you to test multiple ideas for the same campaign to make sure you make the best choice and maximize the impact of your email marketing campaign.



2. ALT TEXT

◆ **Definition:** The Alt text is one of the most important elements in email marketing. It's the abbreviation for «alternative» and **allows you to add text information to an image. When the image can't be displayed in the recipient's inbox, it's replaced with the Alt text.**

This replacement text should describe the picture with keywords or a short sentence. This allows the same message to be conveyed, even if the image is not displayed.

Most email marketing solutions provide the ability to add an Alt text to any image included in the email.

Technically, this changes the HTML code and will add this attribute within a tag directly in the image.

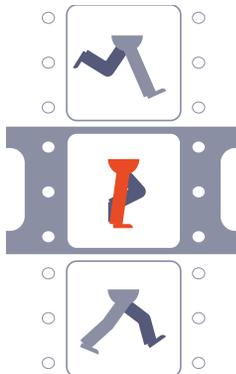
On the other hand, this attribute is often used to optimize the positioning of an image in search engines by choosing specific keywords.

3. ANIMATED GIF

◆ **Definition:** **An animated GIF is made up of several successive images which, pass quickly after each other, to give the impression of an animated image.**

In email marketing, the animated GIF is widely used to present a product in a different, visual way, to highlight part of the email or to scroll a message.

The animated GIF is compatible with the vast majority of webmail and messaging software, except for the 2007 to 2016 versions of Outlook.



4. ANTI-SPAM (FILTER)

◆ **Definition:** The anti-spam filters decide **whether or not an email reaches the inbox.** You have several algorithms that analyze and control the sender of the email, the number of recipients, email addresses, contents, and so on.

The goal is to intercept emails that are considered 'spam' in order to protect the users.

The rules for anti-spam filters change regularly and are not the same for all email providers. Therefore, there is magic ingredient that give you a 100% guarantee of arriving in the inbox.





5. BLACKLIST

◆ *Definition:* The term blacklist refers to **a list of email addresses considered as unsubscribed from a database.**

When a user clicks on the unsubscribe link of an email, they are added to the blacklist.

Therefore, before sending any campaign, the sender must filter the contact list with the blacklist that corresponds to that database, in order to exclude the blacklisted addresses from the campaign. The majority of email marketing solutions offer automatic management of blacklists to facilitate the filtering.

6. BOUNCES

◆ *Definition:* When talking about email marketing, we sometimes use the term 'bounce'. **This means that it was not possible to successfully deliver an email to a recipient due to one or more errors.**

There are two types of bounces: soft bounces and hard bounces.



7. CALL-TO-ACTION

◆ *Meaning:* A call-to-action, or CTA, is a button on which the reader should click in order to access certain content.

◆ *Definition:* In the context of email marketing, the call-to-action **in a message allows reader to leave the email and visit the web page that the CTA directs them to.**

The recipient is often motivated to do this by a verb in the imperative or infinitive.

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8. CAMPAIGN

◆ *Definition:* In email marketing, the term campaign is used **to describe the entire process of preparing and sending email.**

An email campaign therefore refers to the creation and sending of an email with a defined marketing objective and targeted at a specific segmentation of your contact database.

9. CONVERSION RATE

◆ *Definition:* The conversion rate is **the percentage of recipients that who placed an order after an email campaign.** It can be a difficult metric to calculate, but it an interesting one.

This percentage is critical to knowing the true profitability and success of a campaign.

To calculate the conversion rate, you need to just check among the recipients how many customers have become and set the percentage.



10. DATABASE

◆ *Definition:* In email marketing the term 'database' typically **refers to as one or more contact or recipient list(s)**.

This contains at least one email address of a contact and all other information necessary for their qualification (name, place of residence, etc.).

As a rule, the database is displayed in the form of a table and can be imported into a marketing software that recognizes the format. The information contained in the columns can be used to personalize the content of an email.

11. DELIVERABILITY

◆ *Definition:* The concept of deliverability refers to the **ability of an email to arrive in the recipient's inbox**.

The deliverability rate of an email campaign is often confused with the delivery rate. As opposed to delivery rate, which is easy to calculate, deliverability is very difficult to measure.

Indeed, it is almost impossible to know how many emails have arrived in the inbox and how many have arrived in the spam box or SPAM.

There are still several ways to improve its deliverability, which is directly related to the profitability of a campaign. These techniques are the practice of emailing, words used, the use of a shipping address or the quality of the recipient base.

12. DMARC (PROTOCOL)

◆ *Definition:* DMARC (**Domain Based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance**) is an authentication protocol that aims to combat spam and phishing. It informs the email providers of the users if a sender could not be verified.

Apart from the initiators of DMARC (Yahoo !, Gmail, Hotmail and AOL), only a few email providers have implemented the protocol at the moment.

13. DRAG & DROP

◆ *Definição:* This term is used in many applications that are dedicated to design. In email marketing, a drag-and-drop editor is **an intuitive and easy-to-use email editing tool that lets you design HTML emails by assembling text and image blocks**.

This allows anyone to create fully customized emails and newsletters in minutes, even without technical knowledge.



14. DUPLICATES

◆ *Definition:* Remove duplicates simply means **delete duplicate addresses in your recipient list**.

«This step is important because it helps to avoid delivering the same message twice to the same person. This would also have a negative impact on your deliverability and would be an unnecessary cost.»

Most professional email marketing tools make it easy to remove duplicates.

15. DYNAMIC FIELDS

◆ *Definition:* A dynamic field or customizable field is used **when you want to change a word or phrase dynamically depending on the recipient**.

The goal is to tailor the content of the message to the person who will receive the email. For example, the salutation at the beginning of the message can be dynamic.

«Dynamic fields can be used for anything as long as you have the necessary recipient data (name, first name, age, gender, number of orders, date of registration, etc.)»



16. ELIMINATION OF DUPLICATES

◆ *Definición:* The elimination of duplicates consists of **analyzing a database of recipients and deleting duplicate email addresses.**

This is an important step to avoid sending an email several times to the same contact. The advantage is that you won't damage your reputation as a sender and avoid spending unnecessary shipping costs.

Most professional email marketing solutions include a feature for the management of duplicates in contact lists.

17. EMAIL

You probably already know what an email is, but what would a dictionary for email marketing be without this definition?



The term email comes from the word «mail», which means «post», and from the preposition «E», which makes it possible to associate a word with the world of the web. Literally it means «electronic mail».

◆ *Definition:* An email is sent over a computer network from one inbox to another through a delivery server.

18. EMAIL MARKETING

◆ *Definition:* In general, email marketing is **a direct marketing strategy that consists of sending a commercial message using email as a means of communication.**

But we can also use the term 'email marketing' to talk about a type of email with a purely commercial objective, unlike the newsletter, which mostly has an informative purpose.

As a summary, email marketing is the integration of email into your marketing strategy, and marketing email an email with the purpose of selling or promoting a product.

19. EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

◆ *Definition:* Email marketing campaign is a business practice that consists of **sending emails to groups of segmented recipients, with different reasons: prospecting, promotion, sale, loyalty, information, invitation, etc.**

It is an essentially professional practice that allows you to send an email to numerous recipients at the same time.

Nowadays, email marketing campaigns are a widespread practice in companies and tends to replace the sending of classic postal mail, given its low cost.

Indeed, emailing is amply considered the most profitable communication tool, taking into account its cost, speed and simplicity.



20. FALSE NEGATIVE

◆ *Definition:* A false negative is **an email that is not desired by the recipient, but that anti-spam filters have considered legitimate.**

These emails may contain viruses, or they may be intended to sell products illegitimately or illegally.

The false negative can be due to an antispam filter failure that has not automatically detected the unwanted character of the email it receives. If these failures are indicated on a regular basis, the rules can become stronger and, on the other hand, create false positives.

21. FALSE POSITIVE

◆ *Definition:* We talk about false positive in email marketing **when an email is declared as unwanted by filters, but its content is legitimate.**

It is an involuntary error due to the reinforcement of the anti spam rules, which usually analyze emails and distrust their nature. Keep in mind that, to make the mailboxes distrust as little as possible, it is necessary to avoid using certain words used by unwanted emails.

22. FOOTER

◆ *Definition:* The footer is **the part located at the bottom of an email.** As a rule, it contains important or legal information.

This is where the links to the sender's social networks, the legal notices, the unsubscribe link and sometimes the reason the recipient receives this email appear.

These elements are located in the footer by convention, because that is where the reader will look for them instinctively. However, they can be completely moved provided that the unsubscribe link is not intentionally hidden.





23. HARD BOUNCE

◆ *Definition:* This is an **irreversible sending error**. This means that the email could not be sent to the recipient and can never be delivered. Most often, these errors are due to an incorrect recipient address or a syntax error.

Hard bounces like soft bounces can be easily detected by a professional emailing solution. A high hard-bit rate means that the recipient base is of poor quality.

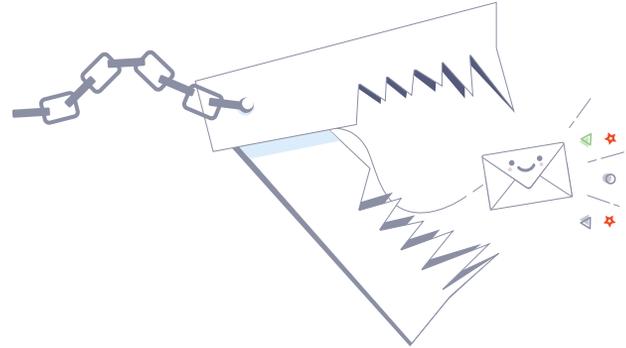
24. HEADER

◆ *Definition:* The header of an email **is all the top, preceding the content**. This part contains several elements to introduce the sender, introduce the message, reassure the reader and make you want to read the entire message. It contains most often:

- ✓ The pre-header
- ✓ The sender's logo
- ✓ The web copy
- ✓ A contact button
- ✓ The subject of email



25. HONEYPOTS



◆ *Meaning:* A honeypot is a spam trap.

◆ *Definition:* This is an **email address specifically created to attract spammers who collect email on the web**.

Instead, they are scattered across the internet, waiting to be collected illegally or automatically by robots searching for email addresses to use or sell for unscrupulous purposes.

Once sucked by a spambot, the honeypot begins to receive emails from senders, who in turn are recognized and reported as spammers and unwanted.

26. HTML (FORMAT)

◆ *Definition:* An **HTML email allows you to use HTML encoding possibilities to create custom layouts, to integrate images, buttons, use colors, format text...**

The vast majority of marketing emails and newsletters are coded in HTML because it facilitates their readability in all inboxes.



27. INBOX

◆ *Definition:* The 'inbox' is to the email, what the mailbox is to postal mail. **It is the platform on which emails can be received.**

The inbox can be accessed from a webmail provider (for example, www.gmail.com for Gmail email accounts) or from a mail application (Like Outlook 2017).



28. ISP (PROVIDER OF INTERNET ACCESS)

◆ *Definition:* ISPs are **companies that provide access to an internet connection, usually by subscription.** Most of them also offer a mailbox to their customers.



29. LANDING PAGE

◆ *Definition:* A landing page **is a web page which serves as an entry point to a website or a particular section of a website.**

In email marketing, landing pages are web pages that serve the purpose of capturing leads. Typically a landing page is accessed via a call-to-action button in a marketing email and contains additional information about the email's promotional content.

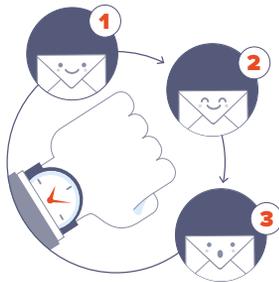


30. MARKETING AUTOMATION (TRIGGERS)

◆ *Definition:* Marketing automation is **a set of techniques to automate the sending of messages and the triggering of marketing actions or campaigns under certain conditions.**

The possibilities of automated workflows are manifold and make it possible to combine several marketing tools such as email and SMS.

The marketing 'trigger' also makes it possible to send an email or a personalized and customized SMS depending on the behavior of a customer, the recipient of a campaign, a prospective customer, etc.



31. MASS MAILING

◆ *Definition:* Mass mailing is a business practice. **It involves sending emails to groups of targeted recipients for a variety of reasons:** prospecting, advertising, sales, loyalty, information, invitation, etc.

This is a basically professional approach that can send a message to many recipients at the same time.

Today, such a mailing is a widespread business practice and tends to replace traditional mailing given the very low cost.

Indeed, email delivery is considered the most cost-effective communication tool because of its cost, speed and simplicity of execution.



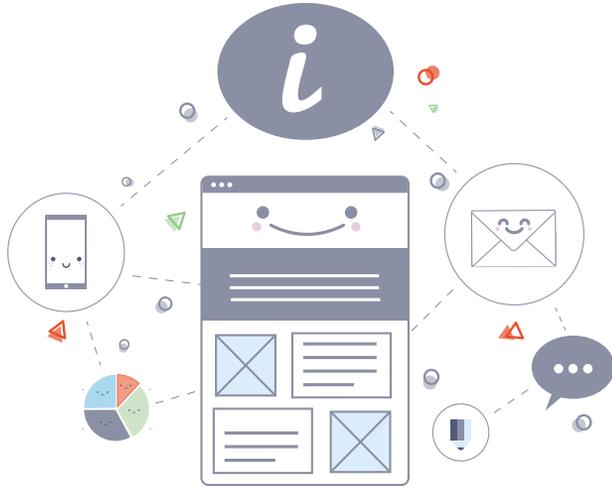
32. NAME OF THE SENDER DOMAIN

◆ *Definition:* **This is the domain used to send an email campaign.**

Most email providers provide a default sender domain that lets you use the provider's servers to send email.

However, it is usually highly recommended to use a custom and valid shipping domain for several reasons:

- ✓ **Avoid using a shared domain:** In fact, shared domains have the main problem of being affected by the behavior of those who use them. In other words, if domain users send a lot of spam, the sending server can be blacklisted and more emails can end up in the spam folder.
- ✓ **Reassure recipient:** This name appears under the subject in the recipient's inbox. However, using a shared domain may cause an unreadable sender address consisting of random characters to be displayed. It is more reassuring for the recipients to receive an email from `service@company.com` than `contact@company.com@br.34.net`. This seems more trustworthy.
- ✓ **Use a functional address:** The sender's domain mostly uses the domain of the sender's website. And that for the obvious reasons of consistency and credibility.



33. NEWSLETTER

Although the term newsletter appears to be adopted by everyone, it is often used for the wrong reasons.

◆ *Definition:* A newsletter is **an email with a purely informative purpose**. It is often confused with an email marketing that aims to promote a product and sell.

As a result, the expectations of the recipients are not the same. By subscribing to your newsletter, they expect to receive news from you, tips, tricks, tutorials, etc.

Selling is the secondary goal of the newsletter, which is intended primarily to create traffic to your website.

The frequency of sending a newsletter may vary depending on the type of business and the amount of information to share.



34. OPENING RATE

◆ *Definition:* The opening rate of an email campaign is **the number of times an email has been opened in relation to the total number of recipients**.

The single or cumulative opening rate can be calculated.

The single opening rate indicates the number of unique recipients who have opened the email at least once.

The cumulative opening rate is based on the total number of openings, counting the possible multiple openings of the same receiver.

This is the most analyzed statistics in marketing after an email has been sent because it gives a good overview of the campaign's success.



35. OPT-IN AND DOUBLE OPT-IN

◆ *Definition:* The opt-in designates **the voluntary consent given by a user to receive commercial emails from a company**. This usually consists of a check box or a registration form to complete.

In Europe, without this consent, sending newsletters or marketing emails is prohibited in B2C. In B2B, however, it is possible to send prospecting emails without opt-in provided that the subject of the email is related to the domain of the recipient.

The double opt-in is simply confirmation of consent from the user. It is most often done by sending an email containing a confirmation of registration button or, more rarely, by sending an SMS by sending a validation code to enter a confirmation window.

There are very rare cases of triple opt-in where the user must confirm both his email address and his phone via the sending of confirmation links on these two channels.

36. OPT-OUT

◆ *Definition:* The opt-out is an essential part of an email. Its interpretation can vary and one distinguishes two quite different definitions:

- ✓ The most common definition is that the opt-out is **the process of unsubscribing to an advertising mailing list**. Most often, the opt-out is in the form of a link explicitly placed at the end of an email marketing.
- ✓ The opt-out may also be **a practice of sending a message to a recipient without first asking permission, but allowing the recipient to unsubscribe from the mailing list**.



37. PRE-HEADER

◆ *Definition:* The pre-header is **a text that is placed below or next to the subject in some inboxes**, including mobile and Gmail. Its contents correspond to the first sentence, which is at the top of an email.

Most of the time, it will be used for the phrase «show this email in my browser». Its importance is thereby underestimated. Because you can complete the subject of the email with the pre-header, providing additional information and another chance to «seduce» the recipient.



38. RESPONSE RATE

◆ *Definition:* The response rate is calculated by **comparing the number of clicks and the number of openings in an email campaign.**

At the center of the term response rate is the question: Did the people who opened the email click on a link?

This is interesting data that helps you determine if the recipients of an email have shown a particular interest in your content.

39. RESPONSIVE DESIGN

The term responsive is used to describe **the ability of an email or a website to automatically adapt to reading from different media with different screen sizes:** computer, tablet, smartphone...

It is now essential for an advertiser to send responsive email campaigns to maximize their chances of being read everywhere.

While responsive content creation usually requires special technical skills such as CSS and media queries management, most professional email marketing solutions offer automatic responsive email creation, with no technical expertise required.



41. ROI

◆ *Meaning:* ROI means «Return on Investment».

◆ *Definition:* This is simply **the rate of return of a marketing action.**

In email marketing, the ROI is calculated according to the capacity of a campaign to be profitable considering its initial costs of implementation: cost of the provider email marketing, labour costs.

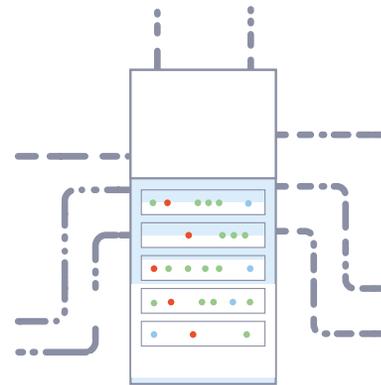
Positive ROI is often presented as one of the main benefits of emailing given its low implementation costs.

42. ROUTING

◆ *Definition:* Routing is a **technical term to refer to the sending emails via a professional platform.**

The passage through a routing platform has the advantage of facilitating the deliverability of emails, especially when they are sent to a large number of recipients.

Professional email marketing solutions typically offer email routing using dedicated mailing servers.





43. SENDER

◆ *Definition:* As with paper mail, the sender of an email is **the one who sends the message**.

The subject of an email is displayed in the inbox of the recipient. It is an introduction to the content and generally aims to encourage the recipient to open it.

When sending an email, the name of the sender can be either the name of the company, a service, or an actual person that is part of that company.



44. SMTP (SERVER)

◆ *Definition:* An SMTP server is **a server that processes the sending of emails to inboxes and to ensure their deliverability**.

The abbreviation SMTP stands for «Simple Mail Transfer Protocol».

45. SOFT BOUNCE

◆ *Definition:* A soft bounce is **a temporary error message**. This may be due to the unavailability of the receiving server or mailbox.

Soft bounces adapt and the message is sent correctly after a certain time (depending on the type of error generated).

46. SPAM

◆ *Definition:* Spam (or junk mail) is **a message that contains content that is considered inappropriate and has not been requested by the recipient**.

It is usually advertising and is sent in bulk to addresses collected or purchased on the internet.

Spam is supposed to account for 55% to 95% of the total number of emails sent worldwide. Even though the vast majority of them are blocked by spam filters, spam affects all email users.

47. SPAM TRAP

◆ *Definition:* A spam trap is **an e-mail address that, unlike a standard address, is not used to communicate and send messages**.

In fact, these are email addresses that have been abandoned by their owner but were retrieved by ISPs or anti spam solutions to create traps. As soon as an email is sent to this address, the sender is considered a spammer because he has not registered.

The email was probably purchased from a vendor that does not verify the quality of its databases and uses broken or outdated addresses.

Spam traps recognize senders and servers that send spam to classify them as unwanted.

48. SPAM WORD

◆ *Definition:* A spam word is a **term that can potentially increase the risk that email from spam email filters will be considered as unwanted.**

In marketing, spam words are therefore considered to be avoidable terms to increase the chances of getting into the inbox.

These are usually keywords or phrases that may indicate that the content of the email has a bad intent or unwanted advertisement.

Although there is no complete list of spam words, it is recommended that you completely avoid the use of a vocabulary on risky topics such as money, medicine, sex, drugs, finances, profits and so on. For a more detailed list, [click here](#).



49. SUBJECT LINE

◆ *Definition:* **The subject line of an email is displayed in the inbox of the recipient. It serves as an introduction to the content and generally seeks to provoke the opening of the email.**

It is said that this is the most important element in an email campaign because it's this part that must make you want to read the message.

Its length is usually between 6 and 10 words and about 50 signs.



50. TEXT/IMAGE RATIO

◆ *Definition:* In email marketing, the text/image ratio **corresponds to the proportion of text and images contained in an email.** Generally, a correct ratio is around 40% of images and 60% of text.

The respect of this ratio makes it possible both to guarantee an ideal readability of the content of the email, and to reduce the risks of being considered as spam.

51. TRANSACTIONNEL EMAIL

◆ *Definition:* Transactional emails are **a type of automatic email that should inform a single user about the actions taken on their account and the status of their orders.**

Transactional emails (or services) are primarily used in e-commerce to track online orders. They are usually sent automatically through dedicated SMTP broadcast platforms.

These emails are expected by the user and must therefore be sent to the inbox. As a result, they also have higher opening and click rates than marketing emails.

Among the transactional emails are the most common:

- ✓ Confirmation of the order
- ✓ Shipping confirmation
- ✓ Payment confirmation
- ✓ Change of the password
- ✓ Various information about an order or the account



52. WEBMAIL

◆ **Definition:** A webmail is **an online messaging service for receiving, sending and managing emails.**

Unlike email software, webmail is accessible through an online URL and therefore requires an internet connection to access it.

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