

CHECKLIST · FREE RESOURCE

COLD EMAIL CHECKLIST

*B2B outreach that lands in the inbox, gets read and gets replies,
GDPR included*

Cold email checklist

Cold email in 2026 is harder than it was and better than its reputation. Google, Microsoft and Yahoo now enforce authentication and complaint limits; one careless campaign can burn a domain for months. At the same time, inboxes are so full of obvious automation that a short, specific, human email stands out more than ever. Reply rates of 5 to 10 % on well-built B2B lists are normal in our own outreach; 1 % is what you get from blasting.

This checklist covers the whole chain: the domain setup that keeps you out of spam, the list that is actually legal to email in the EU, the email itself, the follow-ups and the measurement. It is written for small teams selling to other businesses in Europe. If you sell to consumers, stop here: cold email to private individuals is not allowed under GDPR and the ePrivacy rules, and no checklist changes that.

Work through it in order. The technical part is boring and non-negotiable. The writing part is where most people over-think and under-test.

What is inside

1. Domain and deliverability
2. The list (and the law)
3. The email
4. Follow-ups
5. Measure and improve
6. What to do first

Domain and deliverability

If this section is not done, nothing below it matters. Your emails are being filtered before anyone sees them.

- ☐ **Outreach runs from a separate domain, not your main one**
→ firstname@getmaisonmint.eu style. If it gets burned, the company inbox survives.
- ☐ **SPF, DKIM and DMARC are set up and pass on that domain**
→ Send a test to a free checker such as mail-tester.com and fix anything red. DMARC policy at least p=quarantine.
- ☐ **The domain was warmed for 2 to 4 weeks before any campaign**
→ Low daily volume, real replies, gradual ramp. Most sending tools include a warm-up feature; use it.
- ☐ **Daily volume per mailbox stays under 30 to 50 emails**
→ More mailboxes, not more volume per mailbox.
- ☐ **Spam complaint rate stays below 0.1 % (Google's hard limit is 0.3 %)**
→ Check Google Postmaster Tools weekly. One bad campaign can get a domain blocked.
- ☐ **Every email has a one-click way to say no**
→ A plain line like Reply stop and I will not write again is fine for B2B. It is also what keeps complaint rates near zero.
- ☐ **Emails are plain text or near-plain, no tracking pixels in the first touch, at most one link**
→ Heavy HTML, images and multiple links are the classic spam signals.
- ☐ **Bounces are removed automatically and the list is verified before sending**
→ A hard-bounce rate above 2 % hurts the domain. Verify with a tool; a cheap one is enough.