

The Email Re-engagement Checklist

How You Can Revive Inactive Subscribers

Subscribers going MIA? It happens to the best of us. But when emails go unopened and subscribers drift away, your list isn't just a little lonely—you're missing out on potential connections, sales, and even hurting email deliverability.

This 10-step checklist provides a straightforward, step-by-step way to reawaken inactive subscribers, remind them why they joined, and keep your list active and engaged.

At the end, you'll find bonus tips and guidance for an extra boost of support, plus what to do if you're ready to take your email strategy even further.

Let's get started!

Each step in this guide offers tips on what to avoid ⚠️, best practices to follow ✓, and an extra way to optimize your efforts. ✨



This represents a common mistake, or something to avoid



This provides an email best practice



This is an “extra credit” tip to help get the most from your efforts

□ Step 1: Identify Inactive Subscribers

Determine who needs re-engagement.

Action --> Define inactivity.

- No opens in the last 90 days? or 120 days?
- No opens from the last 10 emails sent? or the last 20 emails?
- How about opens but no clicks in the last 15 emails?

The definition of “inactive” depends on how often you email. For weekly emails, consider anyone with no opens in the last 90 days as inactive. If you send monthly, use the last 12 emails as your benchmark.

Action --> Create a segmented list of these inactive subscribers.



While open rates are a good indicator, they are not everything as privacy updates have become more prevalent.



When segmenting for no opens, use a specified period of time, say last 90 days, or longer depending on sending frequency.



Use other engagement measures, like website visits, or if they filled out a form in the last 3 months.

□ Step 2: Develop a Re-engagement Email Campaign

Plan how many emails you will send and their messages.

Action --> Determine how many emails you will send out.

Try sending 2 to 3 emails for your re-engagement campaign, spaced over a week.

[Note] If an ‘open’ counts as re-engagement for you, set up the campaign to stop further emails once the recipient has opened.

Action --> Choose a goal. What would you consider to be re-engaged? An open or click or reply...?



Send only ONE email to re-engage subscribers.



Send 2 ~ 3 email with different approaches, such as a reminder, an incentive, and final notice.



Include a question in the email that invites a reply, which can also enhance email deliverability.

❑ Step 3: Use Strong Re-engagement Subject Lines

Spark curiosity or convey value to encourage opens.

Action --> Personalize the subject line by adding the subscriber's name or use curiosity-driven phrases.

Some examples could be: "[Name], still interested in [Your Service]?" or "We miss you, [Name]!" also "Lost touch? Here's what you've been missing!"

Action --> Use power words that grab attention and spark curiosity, like "Exclusive," "Update," or "Final Chance." Keep it short and clear so your message can stand out.



Using generic or sales-heavy language that feels impersonal.



Use curiosity or emotional language in the subject line, such as "We Miss You – Ready to Reconnect?"



Try a subject line that acknowledges their inactivity, such as "Still interested in [topic]?"

❑ Step 4: Offer Value in Each Email

An example of a 3-email re-engagement campaign

Email 1: Reminder of Value – share a reminder of what they get from being on your list (e.g., helpful tips, exclusive insights, sneak peeks)

Email 2: Offer an Incentive – include a special offer or free resource to entice them to re-engage.

Email 3: Final Call – emphasize that this may be the last email they receive unless they take action.



Focusing on selling rather than offering value to re-engage subscribers.



Provide a quick-win resource or link to a popular article to spark renewed interest.



Use the first email to offer free access to an exclusive tool, checklist, or download that they haven't seen before.

❑ Step 5: Include an Easy Opt-In Button

Keep it simple to re-engage with one click

Action --> Add a “Stay Subscribed” button to your email to make it easy for subscribers to stay with a single click.

Action --> A clear and simple Unsubscribe option. Make it obvious .

Yes, there's the unsubscribe link in the footer of every email. But for this kind of campaign, you also want to add a clear place for someone to unsubscribe, ideally a button. Don't make them scroll or look for some teeny tiny unsubscribe at the bottom.



Making subscribers click through multiple links to re-engage or confirm their subscription.



Use a one-click “Stay Subscribed” button in the email to simplify the re-engagement process.



Add a secondary CTA, like “Reply ‘yes’ to stay on the list,” which can be a surprisingly effective low-friction method to capture interest.

❑ Step 6: Make It Personal and Relevant

Tailor content to each subscriber's interests for better re-engagement. Look at your existing segments.

Action --> Acknowledge their absence, perhaps mention their time away subtly (e.g., “It’s been a while...” or “Life gets busy...”).

Action --> Content based on interests, such as highlighting topics or resources related to their previous clicks, downloads, or past services they used.



Sending the same re-engagement email to everyone, regardless of their interests or past behavior.



Personalize based on subscriber history (e.g., referencing their last purchase or download).



Mention their name and the date they joined your list, which can create a sense of loyalty and make the email feel tailored.

□ Step 7: Select Timing and Cadence

To the best of your ability, choose engaging times, and space emails to prevent overload.

Action --> Select send times for each of the emails in your campaign. Think about when your audience is most likely checking their email.

Review your regular emails to find the best times and days for opens—there's no one-size-fits-all.

[Note] Avoid sending re-engagement emails on consecutive days; it can feel pushy.

Action --> Be mindful of the cadence. As mentioned earlier, sending out 2 - 4 emails over the course of about a week is reasonable.



Sending re-engagement emails at the same time as your regular campaign emails, which can confuse subscribers



Experiment with different send times, especially in the mid-morning or early afternoon when open rates may be higher.



Try sending on a Sunday or non-business day, when inboxes are often less crowded, which can help your email stand out.

□ Step 8: Track Your Campaign Performance

Measure re-engagement through clicks, replies, and downloads.

Action --> Track open rates and click-through rates to evaluate how each email in the re-engagement series performs.

Action --> Assess conversions by tracking how many subscribers re-engaged through taking an action (clicking, replying, downloading).



Only looking at open rates or click-through rates without considering longer-term re-engagement trends.



Track each email's individual performance to see which approach was most effective for future re-engagement.



Keep track of replies and forwards, which can indicate higher engagement even if traditional measures like clicks aren't strong.

❑ Step 9: Remove or Repurpose Inactive Subscribers

Clean your list or re-engage with occasional updates.

Action --> Send a final “Goodbye” email to politely and graciously inform unresponsive subscribers they have been removed.

Action --> Offer an alternative by suggesting they follow you on social media or join a different list if they still want occasional updates.



Immediately deleting subscribers who don't re-engage, potentially losing future opportunities.



Offer an opt-down option for less frequent emails or a last-chance re-engagement email before removal.



Create a “dormant” segment where you send an annual or quarterly message to stay in touch in case their interest re-ignites later.

❑ Step 10: Continuously Refine Your Strategy

Refine your approach based on results to enhance re-engagement.

Action --> Update this campaign regularly to refresh subject lines, incentives, or the number of emails based on your latest results.

Action --> Apply new insights and use lessons learned to refine future re-engagement efforts and maintain a healthier list.



Sticking to a single re-engagement approach over time, which can become stale.



Refresh the re-engagement email content and design every 6 ~ 12 months.



Vary offers, articles, tools, or incentives to find what resonates, and apply to future campaigns.

To recap...

The Email Re-engagement Checklist

- ☐ Step 1: Identify Inactive Subscribers
- ☐ Step 2: Develop a Re-engagement Email Campaign
- ☐ Step 3: Use Strong Re-engagement Subject Lines
- ☐ Step 4: Offer Value in Each Email
- ☐ Step 5: Include an Easy Opt-In Button
- ☐ Step 6: Make It Personal and Relevant
- ☐ Step 7: Select Timing and Cadence
- ☐ Step 8: Track Your Campaign Performance
- ☐ Step 9: Remove or Repurpose Inactive Subscribers
- ☐ Step 10: Continuously Refine Your Strategy

Final Tips for Effective Re-engagement

- **Temper Your Expectations:** Re-engagement campaigns often yield modest results—expect a small percentage to come back. Think quality over quantity, and celebrate each re-connection.
- **Stay Consistent but Not Pushy:** Space out your re-engagement emails to keep interest alive without overwhelming your audience. A steady, well-timed approach makes all the difference.
- **Be Authentic and Clear:** Transparency is key. Let subscribers know why you're reaching out, and give them a reminder of the value they get from being part of your list.
- **Focus on Value, Not Sales:** Think of this as rekindling an old friendship, not a sales pitch. Provide useful insights or resources that show you're here to help, which encourages re-engagement naturally.
- **Prepare for List Pruning:** A clean list is a happy list! Be ready to part ways with those who don't re-engage—it keeps your deliverability strong and your remaining audience engaged.

A final thought . . .

Email marketing can feel overwhelming. Every business, entrepreneur, and audience is different, so there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Sometimes, a fresh perspective or extra support can make all the difference.

If that sounds like what you need, let's chat. Set up a call with me [here](#), and we'll explore how to make email work for you in a way that feels natural and effective.

You've got this—and I'm here to help.

Cheryl

