AUGUST 2026

*Service guide*

# B2B Email Marketing

## That gets replies

*A field guide for recruitment, search and B2B firms*

Deliverability, segmentation, UK cold email law and sequences that earn replies, not just opens. Everything here is doable in-house with patience. This is how we do it, and how we run it for firms who would rather it were simply done.

**INSIDE**

- Deliverability
- Segmentation
- Cold email sequences
- UK compliance
- How the engagement runs


| Written by | Telephone | Email |
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*What is inside*

# Contents



*Who this is for*

Founders and marketing leads at recruitment, executive search, RPO and staffing firms, and B2B teams selling into a small, senior audience with long buying cycles. If your database is quiet, your cold outreach lands in promotions, or your reporting stops at open rates, start at section 02.

**Read it as a working brief. Each section ends with what we would check first.**

01

*The brief*

# What a B2B email programme has to deliver

Most email marketing agencies sell you sends: opens, clicks and a monthly report that never reaches your pipeline. A B2B email marketing agency has a harder job. Reach a small, senior audience with long buying cycles, land in the primary inbox, and turn a quiet database into booked meetings.

Decision-makers sift through hundreds of messages a day, so a message has to reach them, resonate, and prompt a decision. That is three separate problems: a technical one, an editorial one and a commercial one. Programmes fail when a firm solves only the one it finds easiest.

**Pipeline, not opens**

Measured on replies, meetings and mandates influenced, never on vanity opens. Every sequence is briefed on the outcome it has to produce.

**Inbox, not spam**

Authenticated sending on infrastructure kept separate from your main domain, so cold outreach and newsletters both reach the people who decide.

**One function, not ten tools**

Strategy, copy, automation and reporting inside your wider marketing plan, not bolted on as one more platform to manage.

## Know the audience before you write a line

Build buyer personas that carry the detail you will actually use in copy: industry, job role, the challenges in front of them, the goals they are measured on. LinkedIn, company websites and industry reports give you the raw material. Armed with that, an email can show a recipient you understand their business rather than announcing that you would like to.

Two things move reply rates more than any other edit. First, speaking to a specific pain point in the recipient's sector rather than a general one. Second, referencing something recent and real: a new role brief, a funding round, an office opening, a conference they spoke at. Both signal research. Neither can be faked at volume without it showing.

**WHAT WE WOULD CHECK FIRST**

Whether anyone can name the outcome each live sequence exists to produce. If the answer is a metric rather than a meeting, the brief is the problem, not the copy.

## 02

*The plumbing*

# Deliverability: reaching the inbox

Design counts for nothing if the email lands in spam or the promotions tab. Deliverability decides whether the work ever gets read, and it is where most agencies quietly let their clients down.

- Your own sending infrastructure, kept clear of the shared pools that drag a reputation down.
- Continuous placement testing across the inboxes your buyers actually open.
- Copy a recruitment buyer reads as a real person, with a specialist writer behind every send.

### List hygiene is a deliverability job, not an admin one.

A clean list reduces bounce rates and preserves your sender reputation, which is what stops your mail being flagged. It also concentrates effort on contacts who might reply. If deliverability is where your programme is quietly losing money, this is the first thing we audit.

Treat a contact as inactive when they have not opened or clicked in three to six months, or when they have left the company or changed role. Review the database quarterly or twice a year, and verify addresses with a B2B-focused service such as ZeroBounce, NeverBounce or Hunter.io before a campaign goes out rather than after the bounces arrive.

### Mobile is not an afterthought in B2B

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **35%** of business professionals now open their emails on mobile devices. | **50%** of all emails are viewed on a mobile device. | **65%** higher likelihood that a mobile-optimised email drives traffic to your site. |

So: a clean corporate layout, legible type at 14 to 16 pixels, short paragraphs, headings and bullets a reader can scan in a lift. Then test it. Outlook, Gmail for Business and Apple Mail each render HTML differently, and tools like Litmus, Email on Acid and Mailtrap will show you the damage before your buyers do.

**WHAT WE WOULD CHECK FIRST**

SPF, DKIM and DMARC on the sending domain, whether cold outreach shares a domain with your transactional mail, and inbox placement across the three clients your buyers use.

## 03

*The database*

# Segmentation: turning a database into an asset

Segmentation is what makes relevance affordable. Four cuts do most of the work, and they compound.

### Industry

Group contacts by sector so you can speak to the specific challenges, regulations and trends in front of them. Sector-specific language reads as expertise.

### Company size

A small business prioritises cost-effectiveness; an enterprise cares about scalability and integration. Same service, different first sentence.

### Job function and seniority

A CEO reads for strategic growth. An operations or IT lead reads for efficiency and fit. Write to the priorities of the role, not the company.

### Funnel stage

Early leads want orientation. Live opportunities want proof. Existing clients want a check-in that is worth their time.

None of it holds together without a CRM as the single record: industry, size, function and stage against every contact, with lifecycle triggers so a contact moving stage changes the message they receive next. That is the difference between segmentation as a strategy and segmentation as a spreadsheet somebody maintains until they leave.

The gain is not subtle. Vistaprint segmented on job title, industry and company size, booked more qualified meetings and closed more deals, returning **240% ROI.** Rohde & Schwarz targeted sectors on firmographic data and grew their lead database by **375%.**

*four cuts, one record*

**WHAT WE WOULD CHECK FIRST**

How many of your contacts carry all four attributes. In most firms the answer is under a third, which caps what any sequence can do.

04

*The sequence*

# Anatomy of a cold email sequence

B2B cold email lives or dies on the sequence. Each email earns the next. One opens, one carries an insight, one shows proof, one asks for the call. Each lands at the moment it does the most work.

| Day 0 OPEN | Day 2 INSIGHT | Day 5 PROOF | Day 14 ASK |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Quick thought on your H1 hiring plan** Saw the new role brief, one thing worth flagging before you brief the market. | **What the best search firms do differently** A short read on the three habits that separate the top ten percent of our clients. | **Five minutes on a comparable mandate** A walkthrough of how one of your peers moved from RFP to retainer in eight weeks. | **Worth a 20 minute call this fortnight?** If the previous notes landed, here is a window in my diary that should work for you. |

- Openers built on a real signal about the firm, researched one prospect at a time.
- Behavioural triggers between sends, so a dormant contact comes back into the flow.
- Pace and tone written for senior recruitment buyers: slower, more considered.

04

*The sequence, continued*

# Anatomy of a cold email sequence

## Four things that make each email work

**A subject line** tied to their business. Personalised, and hinting at the value inside. Test industry jargon against plain language, and questions against statements.

**A professional tone** that still sounds human. Not stiff, not chummy. Confident and respectful, because this is a first impression.

**A value proposition** in the first few lines. What is in it for them, framed against a specific challenge, ideally with a comparable result attached.

**One** CTA. A single low-risk request, not a menu. “Schedule a 10-minute call to discuss” beats three options every time.

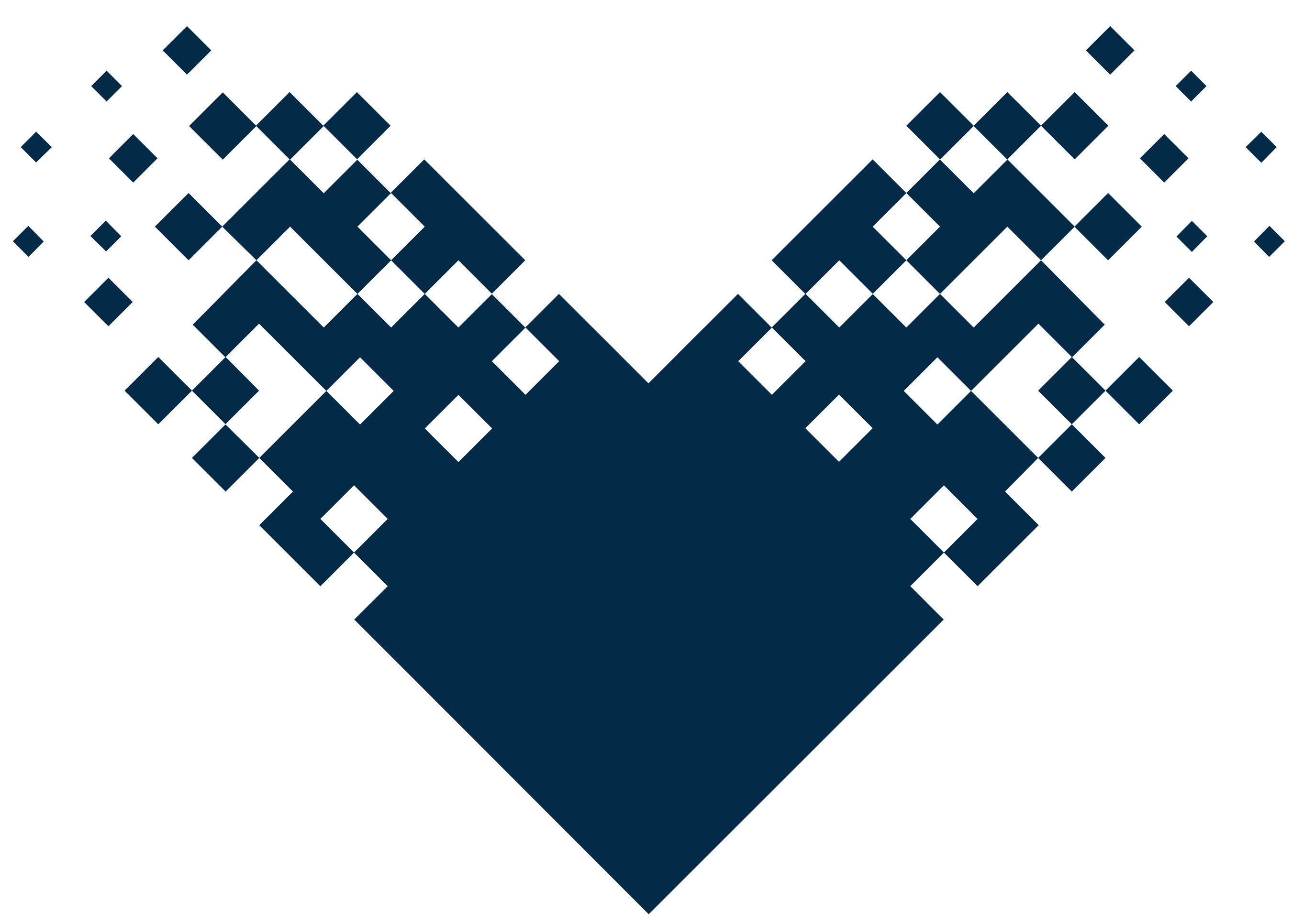
## Timing, follow-ups and the two ways this goes wrong

Send inside business hours, and prefer mid-week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday consistently outperform, with 10am to noon the strongest window. Mondays are spent catching up and Fridays wrapping up. One to two emails a week is a sensible ceiling for a nurture audience. Space cold follow-ups three to five business days apart and widen the gap as the sequence progresses, and if you are emailing internationally, send on their clock, not yours.

The two failure modes are pushing for the meeting before you have earned it, and sending a template that could have gone to anyone. Both get you ignored, and the second gets you marked as spam. Every follow-up should carry something new: an insight, a case study, a different angle on the original message.

#### WHAT WE WOULD CHECK FIRST

Whether every email in the live sequence gives the reader a reason to open the next one. Sequences that repeat the ask in four different tones are the most common thing we replace.



## 05

*The law*

# UK compliance: PECR, UK GDPR and the ICO

Cold email is legal in the UK, with conditions. The rules changed in February 2026, and the financial exposure went up with them.

### The corporate subscriber rule

Under PECR, you may email **corporate subscribers,** meaning limited companies and public limited companies, without prior consent, provided you identify yourself clearly and give an easy opt-out on every message. **Sole traders and most partnerships count as individuals,** where the consent rules are stricter. The UK GDPR still requires a documented lawful basis in either case, usually legitimate interests. Where you do rely on consent, it must be an affirmative action, such as ticking an unticked box, and you must explain exactly what the recipient is signing up to.

Keep records: when and how consent was obtained, what the request said, and any preferences attached. Store them securely and retrievably, because the ICO may ask.

### What the rules cost if you ignore them

| REGIME | APPLIES TO | MAXIMUM PENALTY |
|---|---|---|
| **UK GDPR** | Personal data processed in the UK | £17.5m or 4% of total worldwide annual turnover |
| **PECR, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025** | UK electronic marketing. Most provisions in force from 5 February 2026 | £17.5m or 4% of global annual turnover, up from £500,000 |
| **EU GDPR** | Contacts inside the European Union | €20m or 4% of global turnover |
| **CAN-SPAM** | Commercial email into the United States | Up to $53,088 per email, adjusted annually |
| **CASL** | Marketing email into Canada | Up to CAD $10m for businesses |

Not legal advice. Confirm current thresholds against ICO guidance before you rely on them.

05

*The law, continued*

# UK compliance: PECR, UK GDPR and the ICO

## ICO registration

Most UK organisations processing personal data must register with the Information Commissioner's Office. That includes anyone sending marketing emails or newsletters, holding customer or employee data, or operating CCTV. Registration is tiered by size and turnover: tier 1 costs **£52**, tier 2 **£78** and tier 3 **£3,763**, with a £5 discount for direct debit. The ICO reviews these amounts periodically, so confirm the current rate before you register, and use the ICO's data protection fee self-assessment if you are unsure whether you need to.

Every marketing email needs accurate sender information, a company name, a physical address and contact details, plus an unsubscribe link that is easy to find and simple to use. None of that is only a legal chore. Recipients read it as a signal that you are a real business that respects their inbox, which is worth more in a long B2B cycle than any single send.

**WHAT WE WOULD CHECK FIRST**

Whether your list separates corporate subscribers from sole traders and partnerships, and whether your consent records would survive an ICO enquiry.

06

*The evidence*

# Proof: what this looks like when it works

Published results from firms who fixed segmentation, personalisation or interactivity rather than sending more.

**240%**
**Vistaprint · ROI**

Segmented on job title, industry and company size, tailoring email to each rep's target audience. More qualified meetings booked and better close rates.

**375%**
**Rohde & Schwarz · lead database growth**

Sector targeting built on firmographic data, which lifted both lead quality and data accuracy alongside volume.

**53%**
**PetLab Co · click rate lift**

Precise segmentation plus disciplined A/B testing, which also raised open rates by 24%.

**137%**
**Pixl · conversion lift**

Interactive emails in place of static ones. Interactive content can raise engagement by as much as 50% against a static equivalent.

Sources: Reach Marketing; Code Crew; Mailmodo. Full source list on the Limivex blog.

> *"Limivex now controls our entire sales and marketing activity across Europe and the US, and I'm having calls every week with my ideal clients."*
>
> **Mike Meyrick** · Chief Executive Officer, Meyrick Consulting

| 26+ | 98% | 18 |
|---|---|---|
| Finalised projects | Client satisfaction rate | Brand transformations |

07

*The service*

# What we run: five service pillars

One managed email marketing service, run end to end. Strategy, deliverability, automation and reporting handled by the team, so email stops being the job nobody has time to run and becomes a channel that produces pipeline.

*01*

### Strategic email consultation

We audit your setup, sender reputation, automation gaps and segmentation, then map where revenue is leaking and where the fastest wins sit.

*02*

### Deliverability and technical

Inbox placement, SPF, DKIM, DMARC, sender reputation and IP warming, tuned so your message reaches the primary inbox and stays out of spam and promotions.

*03*

### CRM and automation

Lifecycle flows, behavioural triggers and segmentation logic built inside your CRM, so the right message reaches the right contact at the right moment.

*04*

### Campaign performance

Subject lines, send timing and copy, iterated against the two numbers a recruitment founder watches: replies and pipeline.

*05*

### Data and segmentation

Your database turned into a revenue asset. Cleaned, enriched and segmented so every send earns its place and a dormant contact never gets one.



## Consultants, not a faceless platform

Software sends the email. It will not tell you which segment to build, which mandate to lead with, or why the last sequence stalled. Our consultants do. This is email marketing consulting with delivery attached: a senior consultant and a specialist writer who, between them, own the strategy, the copy and the number, the way an in-house team would, without the headcount or the recruitment bill.

**WHAT YOUR CONSULTANT OWNS**

- A strategy built around your mandates, not a template
- Copy written by a specialist, in the voice of your leaders
- Deliverability and sender reputation actively managed
- One person accountable for replies and pipeline, every month

08

*The engagement*

# How the engagement runs

Five stages. Everything is plumbed before a single email goes out, and volume scales on the data rather than on optimism.

| 01 **Audit** | 02 **Strategise** | 03 **Build** | 04 **Launch** | 05 **Optimise** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inbox placement, sender reputation, automation gaps and revenue leakage benchmarked across your stack. | A written roadmap: lifecycle map, segmentation logic, cadence, deliverability plan and the metrics we report against. | Sending infrastructure, authentication, CRM integration, segmentation rules and the first sequences, live in your platform. | Outreach goes live, flows turn on, and we watch placement, replies and conversations in real time. First volume moves slowly. | Monthly reporting on placement, replies, meetings booked and revenue. Subject lines, cadence and segments tuned. |

**TESTING DISCIPLINE**

One variable at a time, judged on response rates, meetings booked and qualified leads rather than opens and clicks alone.

## Where the sector fit matters

We built our email marketing for the recruitment sales cycle: long courtships, retained mandates, and decisions that sit with several people at once. Mandates take months to land, so the cadence has to keep your firm in front of a client across the gap between first contact and signed terms. A retained brief can touch four to six people on the client side, so segmentation and lifecycle flows speak to each one in their own language. And when a single placement or retainer is worth five or six figures, the writing has to earn it.

The same engineering carries across B2B, where email has to keep a firm credible through a long, multi-touch buying cycle.

09

*The questions*

# Questions we are asked most

### What does a B2B email marketing consultant actually do?

Owns the strategy, the copy and the number. Which segment to build, which mandate to lead with, why the last sequence stalled, and the deliverability work that decides whether any of it is read. Software cannot answer those questions.

### Is cold email legal in the UK?

Yes, within PECR. You may email corporate subscribers, meaning limited companies and PLCs, without prior consent, so long as you identify yourself and offer an easy opt-out every time. Sole traders and most partnerships are treated as individuals, where consent rules are stricter, and the UK GDPR still requires a documented lawful basis in every case.

### How many emails should a B2B sequence include?

Four touches carries most recruitment and search sequences: open, insight, proof, ask, across roughly a fortnight. Space follow-ups three to five business days apart and widen the gap as the sequence runs. Each email has to add something new, or it is just the same request in a different tone.

### When is the best time to send?

Business hours, mid-week. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday consistently outperform, with 10am to noon the strongest window, and Tuesday most often cited as the best day for B2B outreach. Then check your own analytics, because your audience beats the average.

### How often should we email a nurture list?

One to two a week is the usual ceiling, depending on the contact's role in the decision. Quality over quantity: overloading a senior inbox raises unsubscribes and drops engagement faster than any subject line can recover. Timing sends around industry events, product launches or fiscal year-end tends to beat a fixed calendar.

### Which metrics should we hold you to?

Replies, meetings booked, qualified leads and mandates influenced. Open and click rates are diagnostics for deliverability and subject lines, not the outcome. Monthly reporting covers placement alongside the pipeline numbers.

### Do we need to register with the ICO?

Almost certainly, if you send marketing email or hold customer or employee data. Fees are tiered at £52, £78 and £3,763 with a £5 direct debit discount, and the ICO publishes a self-assessment for borderline cases. Charities with limited marketing and sole traders processing data purely for administration may be exempt.

### Can we run this in-house instead?

Everything in this guide is doable in-house with patience. Most firms stall on two things: the technical setup nobody owns, and the weekly research that makes personalisation real. If you would rather it were simply done, that is the engagement.

10

*Ready when you are*

# Turn these ideas into pipeline

We help recruitment and search firms put this thinking to work, from brand and content to the campaigns that fill the diary. Book a discovery call and we will map the fastest path for your firm.

### Start with a deliverability audit

Inbox placement, sender reputation, authentication and database health, benchmarked and written up. It is the fastest way to find out whether your programme has a copy problem or a plumbing problem.

### Or bring us the whole function

Strategy, deliverability, copy, automation and reporting run by a fractional CMO and the specialists behind them. We take on a small number of firms at a time and need to be sure of the fit from the start.

*Now booking*

## Book a discovery call

TELEPHONE
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info@limivex.co.uk

ONLINE
limivex.co.uk/services/email-marketing

This guide condenses Limivex's B2B email marketing research and service methodology. Figures are quoted from published third-party sources and were correct at the time of writing. Nothing here is legal advice.

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