

Email Marketing Strategy: Goals, Choices, and Tradeoffs



- Strategy before tactics separates top performers from average



- Email delivers \$36-\$42 ROI per \$1 spent, highest of any channel



- Flows drive 41% of email revenue from just 5.3% of sends



- Decide and defend audience, program mix, and KPI choices



Why Email Still Wins



- Owned audience: direct, lasting subscriber relationships



- Rented channels: reach limited by algorithms and rising costs



- Email ROI: \$36–\$42 per \$1 spent; top performers exceed \$79



- Flows drive 37% of email revenue from just 2% of sends



- Works across acquisition, retention, and expansion



Strategy Before Tactics



- Align email objectives with revenue, retention, and adoption goals



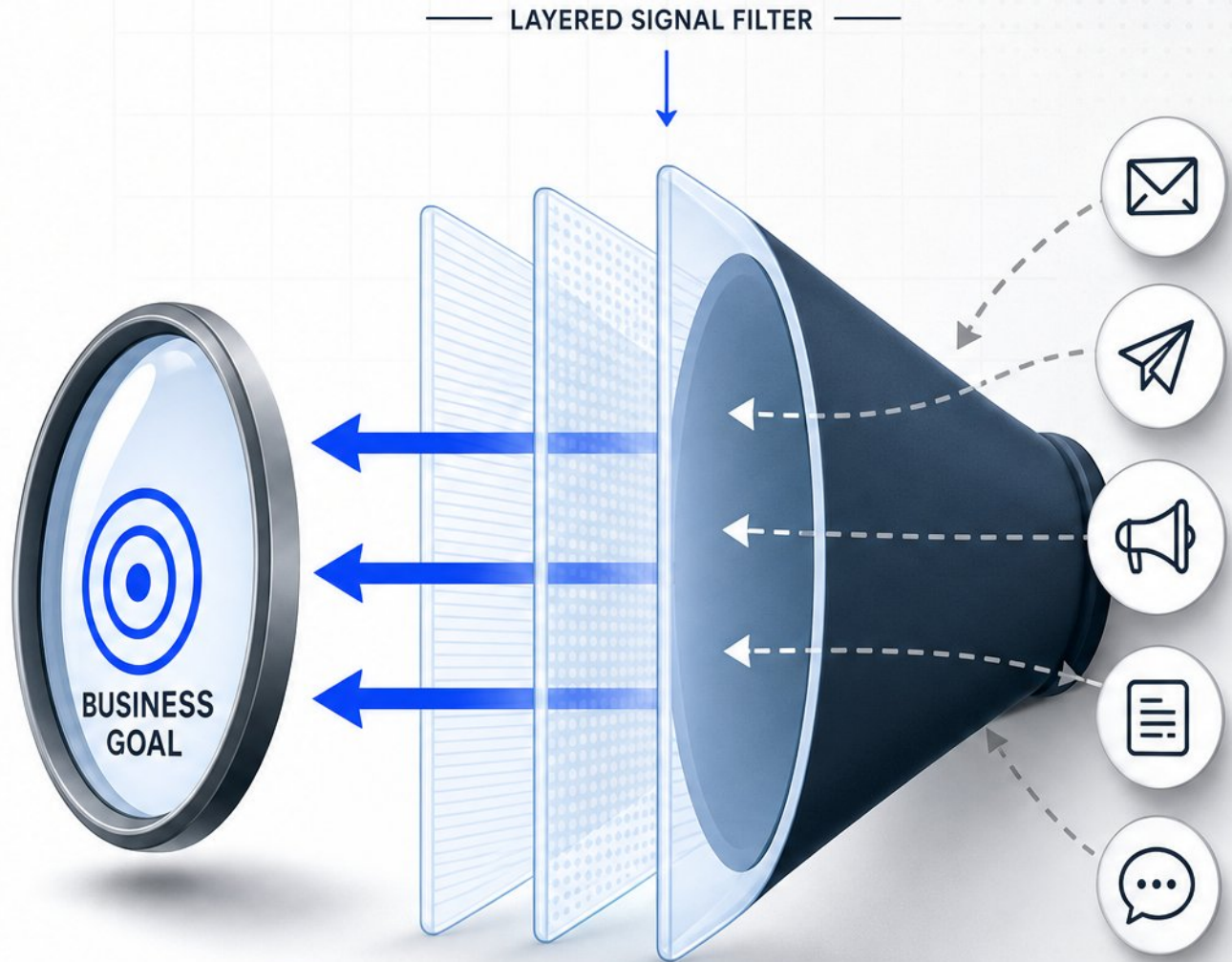
- Set measurable KPIs like RPE, conversion, and customer LTV



- Avoid activity-based sends without clear strategic intent



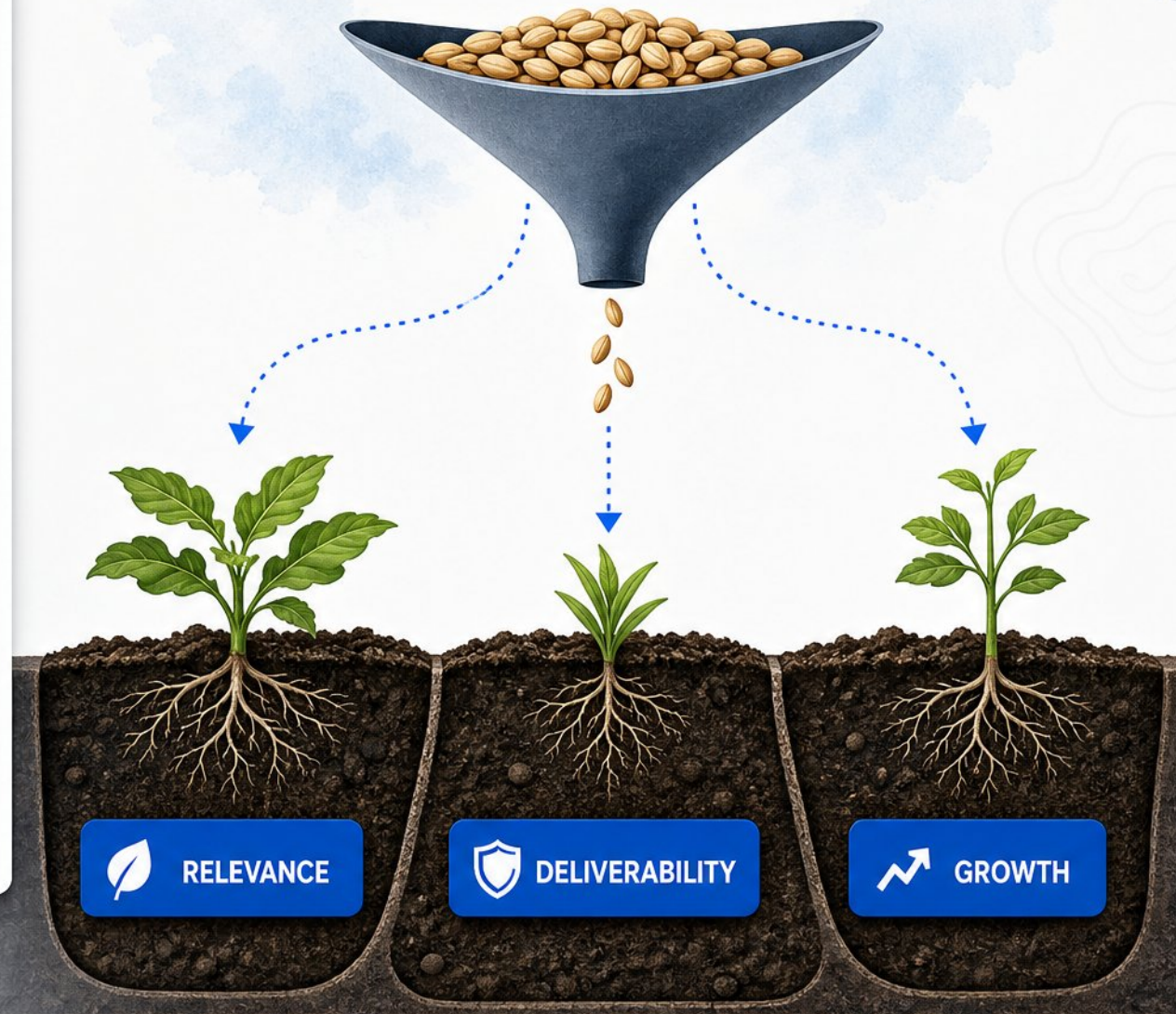
- High performers tie every campaign to a business outcome



Audience and First-Party Data

- First-party data is the foundation of email strategy
- Segment by engagement, behavior, or demographics
- Clean lists protect sender reputation and deliverability
- Tradeoff: list growth speed vs. engagement quality
- Suppress inactive subscribers to protect the sender domain

FIRST-PARTY DATA



List Health and Deliverability



- SPF, DKIM, DMARC authentication is a 2026 baseline requirement



- Keep spam complaints below 0.1%; bounces under 2%



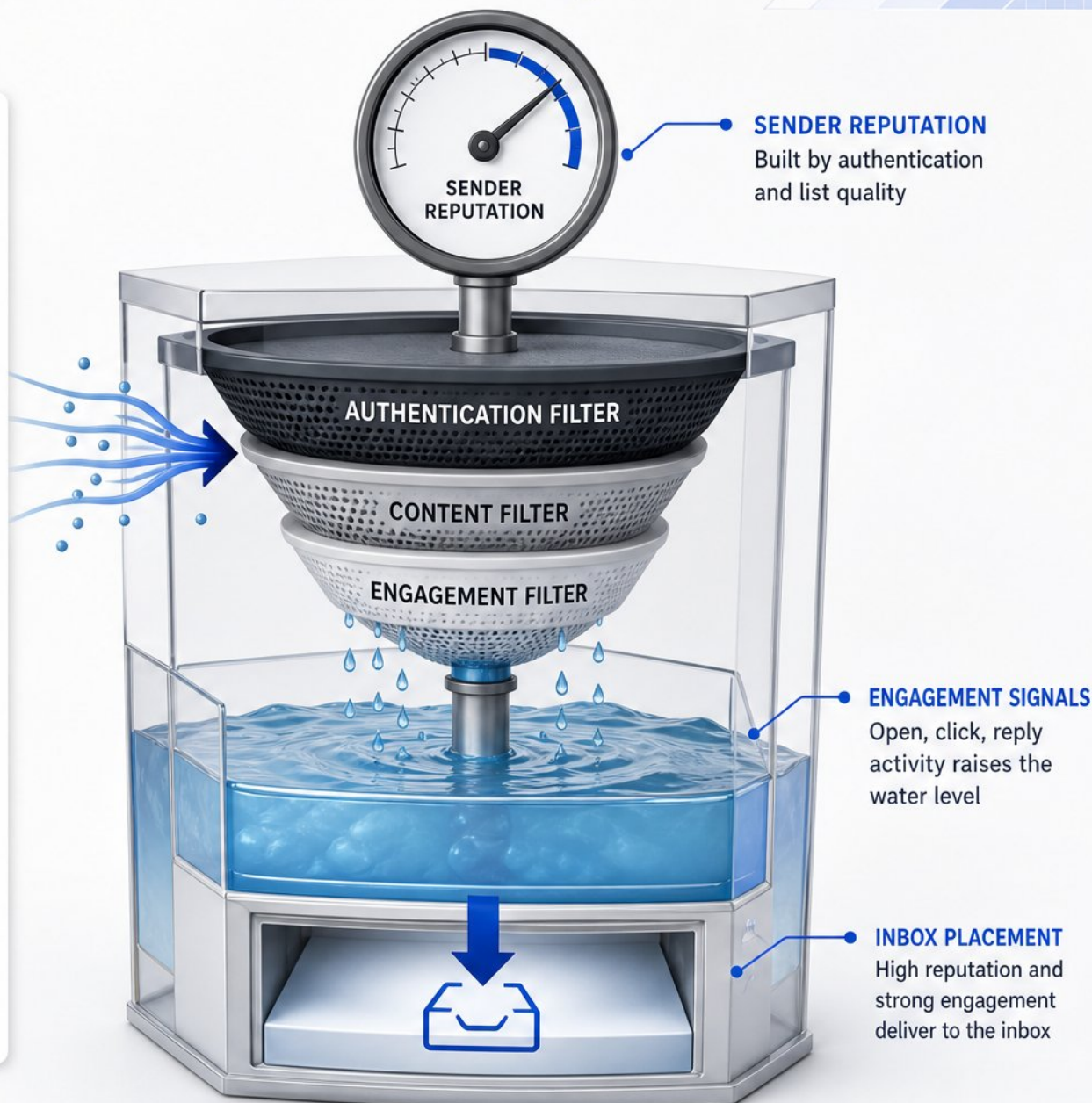
- Engagement signals (opens, clicks, replies) drive inbox placement



- Prune inactive subscribers; run sunset and re-engagement flows



- Authentication protects reputation; engagement decides placement



Email Program Types



- Newsletters, campaigns, lifecycle flows, and transactional email
- Flows drive 41% of email revenue from only 5.3% of sends
- Flows generate 18× higher revenue per recipient than campaigns
- Each type balances frequency, effort, and technical complexity

Lifecycle Email as a Growth System



- Welcome, onboarding, activation, retention, and winback flows drive the full customer journey



- Flows generate ~41% of email revenue from only 5.3% of sends



- Flows deliver 3x higher click rates and 13x higher order rates than campaigns



- Nearly 48% of flow revenue comes from new buyers, driving first-purchase conversion



- Prioritize flows with the highest revenue impact when resources are limited



Content Strategy for Email



- Value-first content builds trust beyond promotions



- Loyalty and curiosity beat constant sales pushes



- Design email as native format, not recycled posts



- Personalization mirrors conversation, not generic blasts



- Consistent tone and brand voice drive recognition



- Quality, relevant content reduces spam complaints



VALUE CONTENT

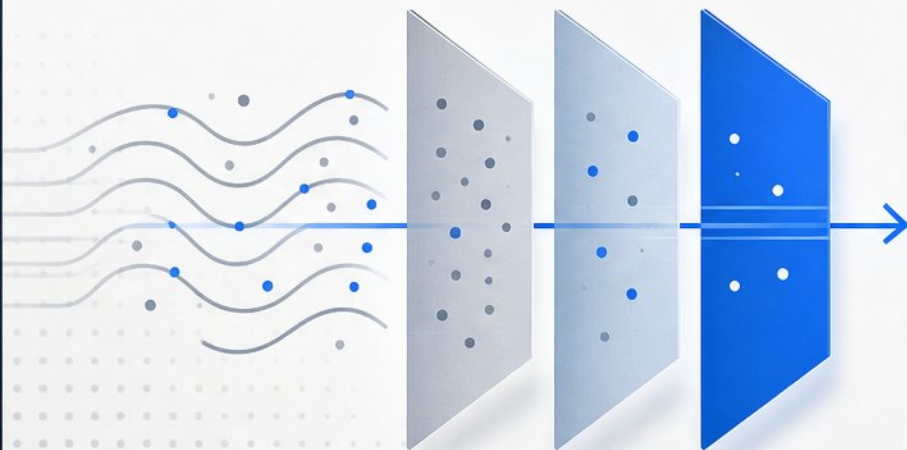
Builds trust. Creates loyalty.

PROMOTIONAL CONTENT

Pushes sales. Erodes trust.

Metrics That Matter

- ▶ Match KPIs to program goals: engagement, revenue, or retention
- ▶ CTOR measures content quality; open rates distort post-MPP
- ▶ Avoid vanity metrics like raw open or list size
- ▶ Track RPE, conversion, and unsubscribe trends
- ▶ Flows outperform campaigns: 5.58% vs. 1.69% click rate



Benchmarks in Context



- Industry benchmarks vary widely: open rates 24.7%–41.4%, click rates 3.4%–5.7%



- Regional differences matter: Europe leads engagement; APAC trails



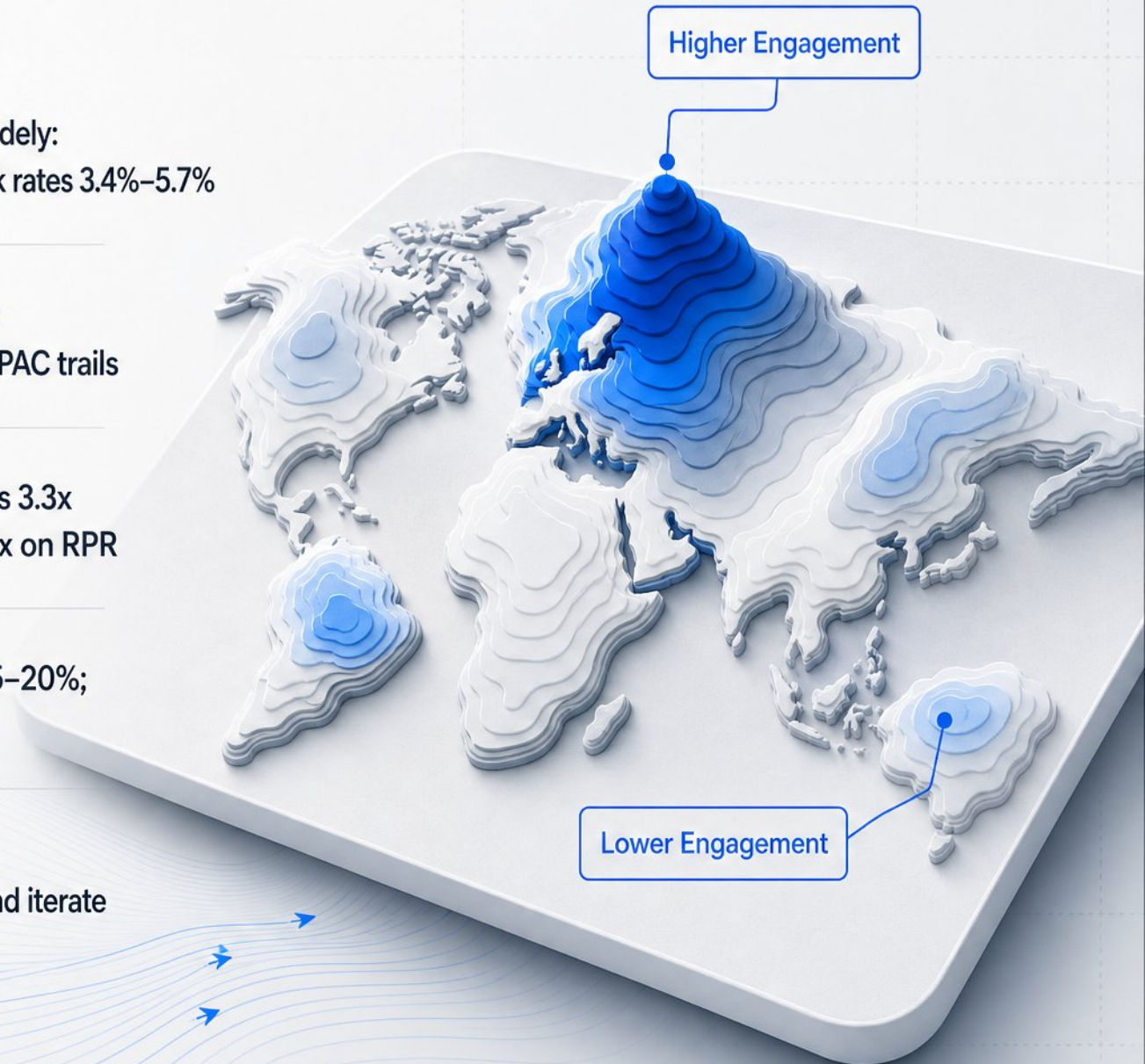
- Flows outperform campaigns 3.3x on clicks, 13x on orders, 17.6x on RPR



- Apple MPP inflates opens: 15–20%; focus on CTOR instead



- Use benchmarks as context, not targets—segment, test, and iterate



Tradeoffs in Frequency, Automation, and Personalization



- Balance send frequency against list fatigue: unsubscribe rates average 0.27%, spikes signal misalignment



- Flows drive revenue: 41% from 5.3% of sends, 18x RPR higher than campaigns



- Automation scales revenue but adds operational complexity and requires ongoing monitoring



- Personalization boosts engagement: AI recommendations lift CTR from 1.69% to 3.75%



- Weigh personalization benefits against privacy constraints and first-party data limits

Privacy and Deliverability Guardrails



One-click unsubscribe:
Gmail/Yahoo, RFC 8058 required



Apple MPP distorts open rates;
focus on clicks, CTOR, replies



SPF, DKIM, DMARC alignment
is baseline, not optional



Keep spam complaints <0.1%;
hard bounces <2%



Balance personalization
with first-party data discipline

MAIL
PERSONALIZATION



FIRST-PARTY
DATA



CONSENT



Prioritizing the Email Roadmap



- Score initiatives by revenue impact, cost, and risk



- Quick wins: authentication, list hygiene, welcome flows



- Long-term: advanced segmentation, AI personalization, full automation



- Sequence quick wins first, then infrastructure builds



- Review strategy quarterly against benchmarks and KPIs



Action Plan and Key Takeaways



- Set goals: revenue, retention, or adoption



- Choose KPIs: RPE, CTOR, conversion rate



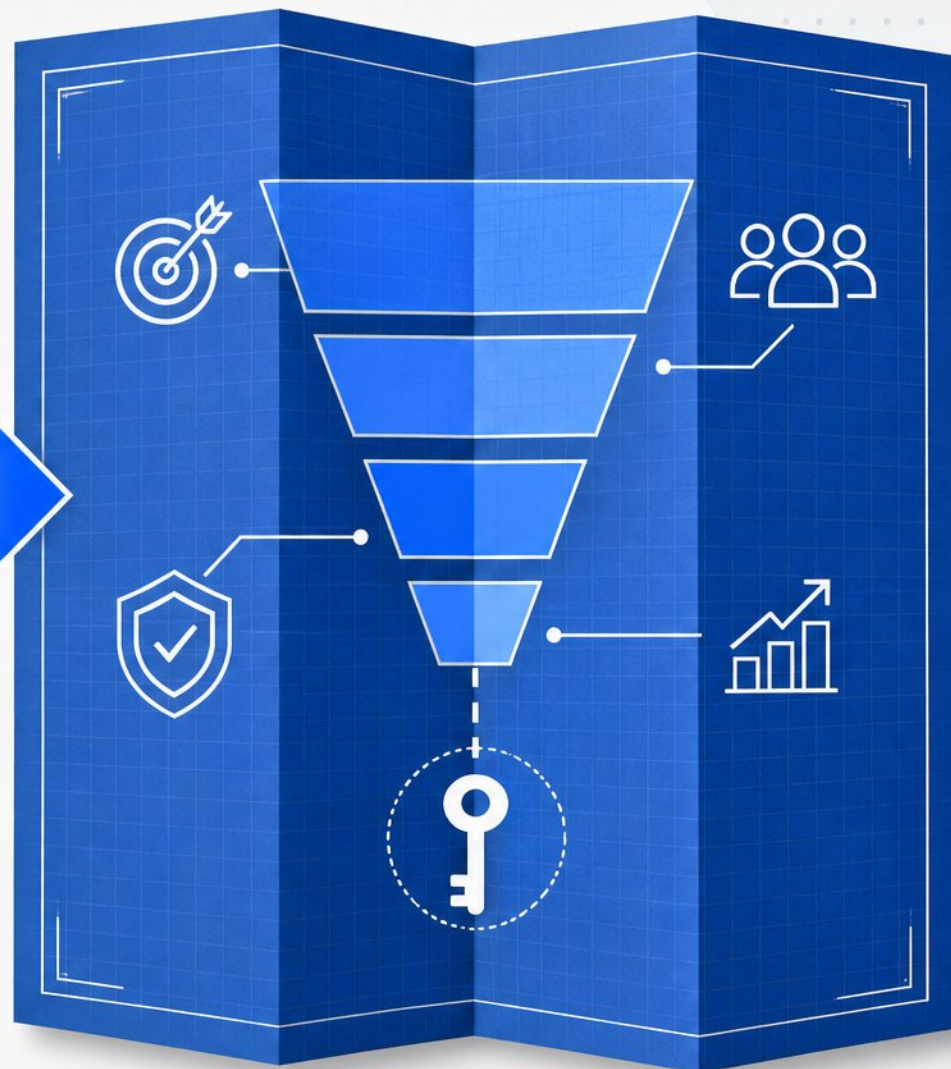
- Audit SPF, DKIM, and DMARC immediately



- Keep spam complaints <0.1%, bounces <2%



- Defend strategy with ROI benchmarks and flow data



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