The 20-Contact Test

Know if your list will bounce before you hit send. This is the 15-minute check I run on every list before a campaign goes out. Pick 20 contacts at random from across the whole list, not the first 20 rows, which are usually the cleanest.

Step 1: Run 5 checks on each contact

1. **Email is valid:** a verifier says "valid". Invalid fails; mark catch-all or unknown.
2. **Still at the company:** LinkedIn shows them in that role there today.
3. **Right role:** their title matches the buyer you actually sell to.
4. **Company still fits:** website live; industry, size and country match.
5. **Not a duplicate:** not already in your CRM, a sequence, a customer or opted out.

Step 2: Count the failures

A contact that misses any check fails. Count it once, even if it misses several.

Failed (of 20)	What it means
0 to 1	Healthy. Send it.
2 to 4 (10–20%)	Clean it first, or expect bounces and wasted touches.
5 or more (25%+)	Don't send yet. You're risking your domain's reputation.

Catch-all or unknown emails: not failures, just unconfirmed. If more than 5 of your 20, send those in a separate, smaller batch.

Want a second opinion?

Send me the same 20 contacts and I'll check every one by hand, free, within 24 hours. DM me "CHECK" on LinkedIn or email safeer@eaglespk.com. Safeer Ali, Eaglespk · 1,000+ projects since 2011 · eaglespk.com