HOW SOFTWARE WORKS · BUILDER · 10 MIN READ

Email from your app: receipts, reminders and newsletters

Transactional vs marketing email, why you need an email provider, how SPF, DKIM and DMARC get you out of spam, and the rules for unsubscribe links.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Inbox Arrival” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/email-from-your-app

Two kinds of email

Transactional emails are triggered by something the user did: sign-up confirmations, password resets, receipts, booking reminders. Marketing emails go to many people at once: newsletters and announcements. They have different rules and are often sent through different tools.

Use an email provider

Don't send app email from your personal inbox. Email services built for apps (for example Resend, Postmark, SendGrid or Amazon SES) send reliably, track bounces and give you an API key that stays on your server. Many auth services, such as Supabase Auth, can send their sign-in emails through the provider you choose.

Get out of the spam folder

- Send from your own domain (hello@yourbusiness.com), not a free address.
- Add the DNS records your provider gives you: SPF and DKIM prove the email really comes from you, and DMARC tells inboxes what to do with fakes.
- Keep messages clear and expected: people should know why they're getting them.
- Test by sending to your own Gmail and Outlook addresses before real users.

Respect the inbox

Only send marketing email to people who agreed to hear from you, include a working unsubscribe link and your contact details, and honour unsubscribes promptly; in the US the FTC's CAN-SPAM rules set the basics, and other places have their own laws. Never put passwords or sensitive personal details in an email, and keep the provider's key in an environment variable.

Key terms

DNS
The internet's address book that turns domain names into server addresses.

Domain
Your site's name, like digitalbuilders757.com, rented from a registrar.

API key
A secret code that identifies your app to a service and is often tied to billing.

Environment variable
A setting or secret the app reads at run time, kept outside the code.

Transactional email
An email triggered by something a user did, like a receipt, reminder or password reset.

SPF, DKIM and DMARC
DNS records that prove email really comes from your domain and tell inboxes what to do with fakes.

Personal data
Information about an identifiable person, like names, emails or grades; follows privacy rules.

Try it: Send your first app email

1. Sign up for an email provider's free tier and verify a domain you own (or use its test sending option).
2. Add the SPF and DKIM records it shows you in your domain's DNS settings.
3. Ask your AI helper for a server route that sends a welcome email, with the key in an environment variable.
4. Send a test to your own inboxes and check it didn't land in spam.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Email from your app: receipts, reminders and newsletters

5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

1. Which is a transactional email?

A. A monthly newsletter
B. A holiday sale announcement
C. A blog digest
D. A password reset link

2. What do SPF and DKIM records do?

A. Prove emails really come from your domain
B. Make emails load faster by compressing images
C. Encrypt every email so only the recipient can read it
D. Add images to emails

3. Where should the email provider's API key live?

A. In the email template, where only the provider can read it
B. In an environment variable on your server
C. In the browser code
D. In a public README

4. What must a marketing email include?

A. A countdown timer
B. The recipient's password
C. A working unsubscribe link and your contact details
D. At least five images

5. Your sign-up emails land in spam. A good first fix?

A. Send them from a free personal address, since people trust Gmail
B. Add 'Not spam!' to the subject line so filters let them through
C. Send each one three times
D. Send from your own domain with SPF and DKIM set up

Official sites

FTC: CAN-SPAM Act compliance guide: https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business
Google: Email sender guidelines: https://support.google.com/a/answer/81126

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

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1. D: A password reset link
Transactional emails are triggered by something the user did.

2. A: Prove emails really come from your domain
They're DNS records inboxes check to trust your messages.

3. B: In an environment variable on your server
Like any secret key, it stays on the server.

4. C: A working unsubscribe link and your contact details
Unsubscribe links and honest sender details are basic legal and trust requirements.

5. D: Send from your own domain with SPF and DKIM set up
Domain authentication is the biggest deliverability win.