OUT+COME | PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

25 Pre-Send Tests for Outbound Messages

Twenty-five quick tests to run before you press send

Free to use and share inside your organisation. outpluscome.com

HOW TO USE THIS

Most weak messages could be caught in a minute

Most poor outreach is not malicious or lazy. It is rushed. A short pause with the right questions would catch much of it. These tests are those questions.

Each test has a question, a reason it matters, and an illustrative passing and failing example. The examples are invented for teaching. Run the tests on every message you write, or every template you approve.

THE FOUR THAT MATTER MOST

Tests 1 (reason), 4 (honesty), 9 (previous contact) and 15 (proof). If a message fails any of these, do not send it until it passes.

REASON

Is there a real reason to write to this person, now?

1. The reason test

Does the message give a real, specific reason to contact this person now?

Without a reason, a message is just noise. A reason is what earns attention.

PASS I saw you have opened a first SDR role. Teams often work out what counts as a good meeting around then, so a checklist we use might help.

FAIL Hope you are well. I wanted to introduce our services.

2. The recency test

Is the event recent enough to still be live?

An old trigger shows you did not look, or looked and stopped.

PASS Last month's announcement of your new region made me wonder how you are handling the first customers there.

FAIL Congratulations on your funding round two years ago.

3. The relevance test

Does the reason connect to a problem you genuinely help with?

A reason that has nothing to do with your offer feels like a trick.

PASS A new sales leader often re-examines how the team qualifies. That is the part we help with.

FAIL You are a growing company, so you must need more leads.

4. The honesty test

Can you say exactly where you learned what you are claiming?

Implying you know more than you do damages trust.

PASS I read the job post, which mentions building outbound from scratch.

FAIL I understand your team is struggling with outbound.

5. The swap test

If you put a competitor's name into the message, would it still make sense?

If it still works, it is about you, not about them.

PASS (Fails the swap test, so rewrite until it only fits this person.)

FAIL We help companies like yours grow revenue.

RECIPIENT

Are you writing to the right person, in the right way?

6. The role test

Does this message matter to their role and their decisions?

People respond to what affects their job.

PASS Since you run onboarding, you may have seen where new reps slow down.

FAIL Sending a pricing message to someone in finance operations.

7. The right-person test

Are they the right person, or could they pass it to someone better?

A good message makes forwarding easy.

PASS If this sits with someone else on your team, I would be grateful for a pointer.

FAIL A message that offers no route to the right person.

8. The context test

Are you avoiding assumptions about priorities you cannot know?

Guessing wrongly feels presumptuous.

PASS I do not know whether this is a priority for you right now.

FAIL I am sure fixing this is your top priority.

9. The previous-contact test

Is this person a customer, an open deal, or someone contacted recently, or who asked not to be?

Contacting the wrong person damages relationships and can breach rules.

PASS Check your lists against customers, open deals and opt-outs before you send.

FAIL Writing to a customer as if they were new.

CLARITY

Will they understand it, quickly?

10. The one-point test

Does the message make a single point about a single problem?

Several points dilute each other.

PASS One problem, one relevant example, one question.

FAIL Three offers and two case studies in one message.

11. The ten-second test

Can someone grasp what you want within ten seconds?

People skim.

PASS The first two lines make the reason and the ask clear.

FAIL A long opening about your company's history.

12. The plain-words test

Is it free of jargon and buzzwords?

Plain words sound human.

PASS We help new sales teams agree what a good meeting is.

FAIL We leverage synergies to optimise pipeline outcomes.

13. The length test

Could it lose a third and still work?

Short messages are easier to answer.

PASS Four short lines.

FAIL Six paragraphs.

14. The outcome test

Can the reader picture what a good result would look like?

Outcomes are easier to say yes to than activities.

PASS So the team stops arguing about meeting quality.

FAIL We provide a world-class platform.

CREDIBILITY

Will they believe you?

15. The proof test

Is every claim true, and can you back it up?

One unprovable claim can undo the whole message.

PASS We have worked with sales teams on exactly this.

FAIL We have doubled revenue for every client.

16. The humility test

Is the tone confident without being arrogant or judging them?

Nobody likes to be told what they are doing wrong.

PASS You may already have this covered. If not, this might help.

FAIL Most companies at your stage are doing this badly.

17. The specificity test

Does it use a specific example instead of adjectives?

Specifics are believable. Adjectives are not.

PASS One team we helped agreed their meeting definition in one session.

FAIL A truly innovative, best-in-class approach.

18. The identity test

Would your profile or signature stand up if they checked it?

People look you up.

PASS A clear profile, a clear role, and a real photo.

FAIL An empty profile and a vague title.

THE ASK

Is it easy to say yes, or no?

19. The easy-yes test

Is the ask small and natural?

A small step is easier to take.

PASS Would it be useful if I sent over the checklist?

FAIL Can I have thirty minutes of your calendar this week to demo our platform?

20. The easy-no test

Does it give them an easy way to say not now?

A respectful exit builds trust and gets more honest replies.

PASS If it is not relevant, just say so, and I will not follow up.

FAIL A message that leaves no room to decline.

21. The no-pressure test

Is it free of false urgency?

Fake deadlines are easy to spot.

PASS No rush at all.

FAIL Only three slots left this week.

TONE

Does it sound like a person?

22. The read-aloud test

Does it sound natural when you read it aloud?

Writing that sounds odd aloud sounds odd on screen.

PASS A message you would be happy to say to someone's face.

FAIL A message that sounds like a brochure.

23. The friend test

Would you send this to a friend of a friend?

It is a good gut check on tone.

PASS Warm, plain and brief.

FAIL Formal, stiff or pushy.

24. The preview test

How does the subject line and first sentence look in the inbox preview?

Many people decide from the preview.

PASS A clear, specific first line.

FAIL Generic opening that tells them nothing.

25. The screenshot test

Would you be comfortable if they showed it to a colleague?

It checks honesty and tone together.

PASS Anything you would happily defend.

FAIL Anything you would quietly rather they did not share.

Scoring a message

Count how many tests the message passes. There is no magic number, but a message that fails several is not ready. Always fix tests 1, 4, 9 and 15 first.

	Passed?		Passed?
1. Reason		14. Outcome	
2. Recency		15. Proof	
3. Relevance		16. Humility	
4. Honesty		17. Specificity	
5. Swap		18. Identity	
6. Role		19. Easy yes	
7. Right person		20. Easy no	
8. Context		21. No pressure	
9. Previous contact		22. Read aloud	
10. One point		23. Friend	
11. Ten seconds		24. Preview	
12. Plain words		25. Screenshot	
13. Length			

A do-not-send list

- There is no real reason for this message.
- You cannot show where a claim came from.
- The person is a customer, an open deal, or asked not to be contacted.
- It would make sense with a competitor's name in it.
- You would be uncomfortable if it were forwarded to their team.
- You have not checked your lawful basis and opt-out handling under UK GDPR and PECR. Check details with your own adviser.

NEXT STEP

A second pair of eyes?

These guides share general ideas. If you would like help applying them to your own team, market and numbers, we would be glad to talk.

Book a pit stop: outpluscome.com

This guide is general information and not legal, employment or professional advice. Examples are illustrative.