

Newsletter advertising buyer's guide & checklist

A practical checklist for a first campaign or an established program.

By Chris Marpo, Founder, FRGMNT / October 2026

01 / Set the objective and learning agenda

- ☐ What business outcome should the program support, and what do we want to learn before the next investment?
- ☐ What comes first: Publisher A vs. B; primary vs. secondary, tertiary or dedicated; Message A vs. B; free trial vs. download vs. ungated content; or two sends/week vs. two/month?
- ☐ Which variables can stay consistent, and which differences will limit interpretation?
- ☐ Does the budget support a useful sequence of tests rather than a one-off verdict on the channel?
- ☐ Who owns the review, and when will early and later outcomes inform a decision?

02 / Establish who we can reach

- ☐ What evidence supports the relevant roles, seniority, industries and company sizes?
- ☐ Is this a CISO audience, practitioner audience or broader technology readership? Which buying-committee members matter?
- ☐ What share is in markets we can serve, and how does buyer value differ by geography?
- ☐ Is targeting available, or are we paying for the full-list audience mix?
- ☐ How was the audience data collected, when was it updated and does it describe this newsletter?

Before your next newsletter buy.

03 / Inspect the actual placement

- ☐ Can we see a recent issue and mark where the sponsor message appears? Is a top logo separate from the copy?
- ☐ What copy, images, CTAs, links and offers are allowed? What approvals and deadlines apply?
- ☐ How many other ads compete for attention?
- ☐ Does the buy include one insertion, multiple positions, a dedicated send or a multi-send bundle?
- ☐ Are dates, quantities, inclusions, cancellation and underdelivery terms confirmed?

04 / Compare economics and supporting evidence

- ☐ Are rates current and formats, quantities, currencies and rate units comparable?
- ☐ What are subscriber CPM and open-based CPM? What delivered count, unique open rate and filtering support the estimate? Open-based CPM does not verify ad exposure.
- ☐ How much of the audience is in priority markets? Do not infer joint role/geography reach from separate percentages.
- ☐ Are clicks total or unique, divided by deliveries or opens, and specific to this placement?
- ☐ What sits behind the estimated click range? Where available, do case studies or creative examples provide useful business context?

Before your next newsletter buy.

05 / Match creative and offer to the reader

- ☐ What would help this reader learn, solve a problem or do better work?
- ☐ Are we asking a cold audience for a commitment that suits its familiarity and intent?
- ☐ What will we learn from a trial, content download or ungated content?
- ☐ Do message, offer, landing page and conversion path support the same objective?
- ☐ Can the program iterate beyond an announcement, event or launch deadline?

06 / Measure beyond the click

- ☐ Can we review a sample report or confirm which information is included?
- ☐ Do company, role, seniority and geography details describe the list, recipients, openers or clickers?
How complete are they?
- ☐ Are tracking links tested, campaign records consistent and downstream review responsibilities assigned?
- ☐ Which audience and website engagement signals fit the objective? Where volume supports it, how will we assess signup quality and business outcomes?
- ☐ What review period fits the sales cycle? Are comparisons fair to a new, cold-audience program?
- ☐ What evidence would support repeating, changing or stopping the buy?

Before you book

Make sure the audience, economics and learning agenda justify the media investment and the time your team will commit.

Questions about your newsletter strategy? Get in touch or email hello@frgmnt.media.