

Re-Engagement Campaign: Practical Guide to Wake Up Your Inactive Subscribers



Introduction

Inactive subscribers are not harmless—they lower your **open rate**, weaken engagement signals to Gmail and Yahoo, and can push your systeme.io account into a **lower sending pool**. Help article **11010** walks you through a practical cycle: **identify** → **re-engage** → **sunset** → **repeat**.

systeme.io explicitly recommends tagging dormant contacts and trying a **re-engagement email campaign** before you delete or suppress them ([139](#)). This guide turns that into a repeatable playbook.

Re-Engagement vs Win-Back vs Sunset

Term	Meaning	On systeme.io
Re-engagement	Ask inactive contacts if they still want your	Newsletter or short campaign to a tagged segment.

	emails.	
Win-back	Stronger offer or “we miss you” message after first nudge fails.	Second email in a 2–3 step sequence with delay.
Sunset	Stop mailing (or delete) contacts who never respond.	Unsubscribe from all marketing or Delete ; optional automatic list cleaning (4216).

Rule of thumb: start re-engagement around **60–90 days** without opens/clicks; plan sunset around **3–6 months** ([157](#), [4472](#)).

Why Inactives Hurt Deliverability

- **Open rate target $\geq 20\%$** —inactives dilute this benchmark (157, 4472).
- Providers infer disinterest → more spam folder placement ([10452](#)).
- Shared pool thresholds tie **open, spam, and bounce** rates to your sending reputation (4472).
- Keeping “dead weight” increases cost, noise, and complaint risk without revenue.

Re-engagement is list hygiene with a last chance to consent—not a desperate discount blast to your whole database.

Step 1 — Build Your Inactive Segment

1. Open **CRM** → **Contacts**.
2. Enable filter **Email activity**.
3. Set **No email opened or clicked since** to your cutoff (e.g. 90 days ago).
4. Optional: add **Contact state = Active** so you exclude unsubscribed and bounced.
5. Optional: exclude buyers with tag customer if you treat purchasers differently.
6. **Save filter** (e.g. inactive-90d) for monthly reviews.
7. Review count—if it is a large share of your list, tighten cadence or content before blaming subscribers.

Do not include **Bounced** contacts in re-engagement—delete them separately ([627](#)).

Step 2 — Tag Before You Mail

From the filtered list:

1. Select all (or bulk-select).

2. **More actions** → **Add tag** → e.g. reengage-pending ([348](#)).

Tagging isolates the experiment: your main newsletters and funnels stay focused on engaged segments, and you can measure who wakes up.

Step 3 — Craft the Win-Back Message

Email 1 (re-engagement):

- Honest subject: “Still want emails from [brand]?”
- One clear CTA link: “Yes, keep me subscribed.”
- Reminder of what they signed up for (value, not guilt).
- Visible unsubscribe—reduces spam complaints.

Email 2 (optional, +5–7 days): short win-back—new resource, case study, or preference update.

Email 3 (sunset warning): “We will remove you in 7 days unless you click below.”

Avoid misleading subject lines and heavy image-only layouts—see [363](#).

Step 4 — Send on systeme.io

Option A — One-shot newsletter (fastest)

1. **Emails** → **Newsletters** → **Create** ([358](#)).
2. Design the email; set subject and preview.
3. Recipients: **Include tag** reengage-pending.
4. Exclude tags like customer or do-not-mail if needed.
5. Send or schedule off-peak; monitor opens in **Email** → **Statistics**.

Option B — Short automated campaign

1. Create a dedicated **Campaign** with 2–3 emails and delays ([367](#)).
2. **Automations** → **Rules**: trigger **Tag added** = reengage-pending → action **Subscribe to campaign** ([284](#)).
3. Re-apply the tag only to new inactive batches each month.

Option C — Workflow with click tracking

Use **Email link clicked** on your “stay subscribed” link to add tag reengaged-active and remove reengage-pending ([2927](#), [1542](#)).

Step 5 — Sunset Non-Responders

After your sequence window (e.g. 14 days):

1. Filter: tag reengage-pending + still no opens/clicks since campaign start.
2. Choose one path:
 - **Unsubscribe from all marketing emails** (keeps record, stops mail)—139.
 - **Delete** if you have no legal need to retain the address ([308](#)).
3. Remove tag reengage-pending from anyone you sunset.

Automatic list cleaning: under **Email settings** → **Automatic list cleaning**, schedule weekly/monthly unsubscribe or delete for contacts with no opens over X weeks—split rules for **never purchased** vs **past buyers** ([4216](#)).

Recommended Cadence

Frequency	Action
Weekly / bi-weekly	Send valuable content to engaged segments; avoid blasting inactives.
Monthly	Review saved filter inactive-90d; tag new batch for re-engagement.
Quarterly	Hard cleanup: bounced, long-term inactives after sunset (157).

Common Mistakes

- Re-engaging **the entire list** instead of a filtered inactive segment.
- Skipping sunset—endless “last chance” loops annoy providers and subscribers.
- Mailing **unsubscribed** or **bounced** contacts again.
- Importing cold lists then wondering why re-engagement fails ([11009](#)).
- Only deleting without a prior consent check—misses recoverable fans.

Measure Success

- **Reactivation rate:** % of reengage-pending who open or click within 14 days.
- **Open rate** on normal broadcasts (target ≥ 20%).
- **Pool label** in Email → Statistics (4472).
- **List size vs engaged size**—shrinking total with stable revenue is healthy.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is inactive?

No **open** or **click** since your chosen date (typically 60–90+ days).

Delete or re-engage first?

Re-engage first, then sunset (139).

How to target them?

Email activity filter + tag + newsletter/campaign.

Minimum open rate?

~20% as a practical floor (157).

Automate cleanup?

Automatic list cleaning + workflows (4216).

Related Resources

- [How to Manually Clean Your Email List](#)
- [How to Automate List Cleaning](#)
- [How to Improve Your Email Deliverability](#)
- [Compliant vs Non-Compliant Lists](#)

On [systeme.io](#), a re-engagement campaign is how you **wake the willing** and **release the rest**—so your active subscribers keep landing in the inbox (11010).

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