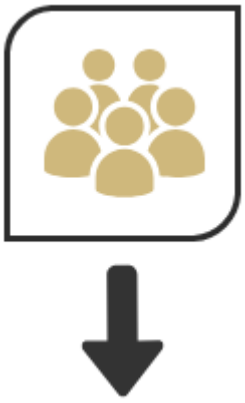
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Campaigns vs. Reports vs. Data Extensions [1]

March 13, 2026 by Melanie Jones [2]

You're ready to send your email, but which audience list should you use? This wiki will help you understand the difference between Reports, Data Extensions, and Campaigns so you can target your audience correctly and remain CAN-SPAM compliant.

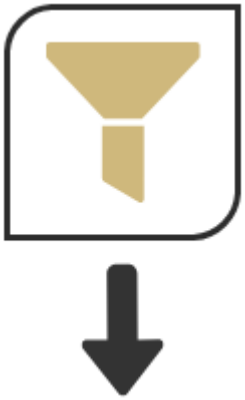
KEY TAKEAWAY When sending your email, you should be sending to Reports or Data Extensions. Never send to a Campaign as doing so can result in a CAN-SPAM violation.



Salesforce Campaign

?Campaigns are groups of individuals uploaded manually, since they can not be queried via a Report. Users typically provide an Excel sheet to their eComm specialist, who can create the Campaign, import Contacts in bulk, and convert it into a Report/Data Extension for the user to send emails from. Once created, users can add or remove individuals [3] or ask their eComm specialist to address bulk changes.

If you want to use a campaign as an exclusion in your send (for example, for a special event reminder in which you want to exclude contacts who have already registered), that is completely acceptable. Work with your eComm Specialist [4] to get additional information.

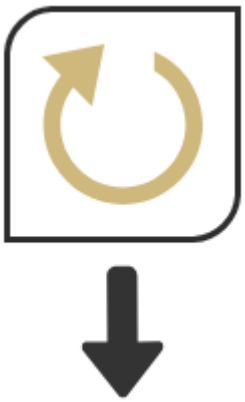


Salesforce Report

Reports in Salesforce are created based on data available in Salesforce from a source system, with filters applied to capture audiences such as faculty/staff, students, alumni, or those in a geographic region, etc. OR a Campaign.

If you're targeting everyone in your audience at their preferred email address (usually alumni/donor/friend audiences), you may send to a Report. Reports **always** target the preferred email field on the Contact. Some campuses convert all Reports to Data Extensions, so if you're not sure what the process is on your campus, contact your eComm Specialist.

When sending, you cannot mix and match Reports with Data Extensions. Your Inclusions and Exclusions must all be the same 'type' (all Reports or all Data Extensions).



Marketing Cloud Data Extension

Every Data Extension is based on a Report. They must be used if you are targeting University Email domains (for employee and Student audiences), but can also target the primary email field (exactly like a Report). Some campuses convert all of their reports to data extensions, so if you're not sure what the process is on your campus, contact your eComm Specialist [4].

Data Extensions must be 'Start'ed before every send [5] to be updated and accurate. Failure to do this means your audience is inaccurate and violates CAN-SPAM.

When sending, you cannot mix and match Data Extensions with Reports. Your Inclusions and Exclusions must all be the same 'type' (all Data Extensions or all Reports).

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