ALLIED BizTech SOLUTIONS

FIELD GUIDE · 2026

Rebuild Klaviyo yourself.

The plan we follow.

For D2C teams with 250K to 5M contacts who want to own their segments, flows, Shopify data and sending reputation, and stop paying for every contact on the list.

- → Is it worth it, at your size
- → What to rebuild and what to drop
- → The architecture, in three layers
- → Migration and go-live checklists
- → The data model
- → A week-by-week build plan
- → Deliverability that holds up
- → Where teams get stuck

Klaviyo charges per contact. *SES charges per send.*

As your list grows, Klaviyo grows with it. Your sending volume stays mostly flat: nobody sends ten times as often because the list got bigger. A rebuild pays AWS SES $0.10 per 1,000 emails, plus Postmark for transactional.

LIST	KLAVIYO A YEAR	REBUILT: YEAR ONE / AFTER	SAVED
10K contacts	~$1,800	~$20,020 / $3,420	Stay on Klaviyo
50K contacts	~$8,400	~$21,200 / $4,600	Stay on Klaviyo
100K contacts	~$14,000	~$21,800 / $5,200	23-month payback
250K contacts · ~3M sends a month	~$28,800	~$22,000 / $5,400	~$53,600 over 3 years
500K contacts	~$60,000	~$35,300 / $5,800	~$24,700 in Y1
1M contacts	~$120,000	~$35,900 / $6,400	~$84,100 in Y1
5M contacts · negotiated	~$420,000+	~$64,000 / $10,500	~$356,000 in Y1

Klaviyo's published rate card, May 2026. "Rebuilt" uses AWS SES at $0.10 per 1,000 emails and Postmark for transactional, $3,000 a year to run it, and our fixed build price: $16,600 up to 250K contacts, $29,500 (the top of the $24,000–$29,500 scale-up tier) to 1M, $53,500 (the top of the $38,700–$53,500 enterprise tier) above 1M. If your own team builds it, put your engineering cost in that place.

THE RULE OF THUMB

Below 100K contacts, stay on Klaviyo: the build does not pay back. At 100K it pays back in 23 months. **At 250K contacts, the rebuild pays back in 9 months and saves ~$53K over three years.** From year two, ~$23K a year comes back. At 1M contacts, year one alone saves ~$84K.

Who you need

- **A senior backend engineer** at home with Postgres, a job queue, AWS SES, DNS and the Shopify API. Our team ships this in 4–6 weeks; one engineer between other priorities should plan for longer.
- **Your email marketer**, two hours a week: the flows and segments that matter, the pilot segment, the cutover call.
- **An owner after launch**: deliverability, bounce and complaint review, on-call.

02 · SCOPE

Rebuild the 12 features in daily use. *Drop the rest.*

Klaviyo has hundreds of features. D2C marketing teams use about 12. Those are the project; the long tail is where rebuilds stall.

REBUILD ONE FOR ONE

- **Segment builder**: if/then rules on behaviour, demographics, revenue; your 5–15 segments
- **Template editor**: blocks, brand styles, mobile preview
- **Flows**: welcome, abandoned cart, browse abandon, post-purchase, win-back; most teams run 4–8
- **Campaigns**: one-off sends to chosen segments
- **A/B testing**: subject line and send time
- **Shopify integration**: orders, customers, carts, products, browse events
- **Revenue attribution** per campaign, flow and segment
- **Suppression and unsubscribe**, CCPA and GDPR compliant
- **Deliverability dashboard**: opens, clicks, bounces, reputation per domain

REBUILD, DIFFERENTLY

- **SMS**: Twilio on your own account
- **CLV and churn risk**: basic models on your data; deep ML in phase two
- **Benchmarks**: from your own analytics

DROP ON PURPOSE

- **Reviews, forms, coupons**: Yotpo, or phase two
- **Push notifications**: OneSignal or Braze
- **Multivariate testing**: basic A/B covers it
- **Academy**: training recorded for your workflow

ADD WHAT PER-CONTACT PRICING DISCOURAGES

- 3 brands, one app, separate domains and IPs
- An audit-grade log of every send
- A new dedicated IP in 24 hours

Three layers. *All standard parts.*

A segment is a query, a flow is a timer per contact, and Shopify is a stream of webhooks. Your marketers keep Klaviyo's workflow; underneath, SES and Postmark run on your accounts.

LAYER 1 · MARKETERS USE

The marketing app

- Visual segment builder
- Drag-drop template editor
- Visual flow builder
- Campaign scheduler and A/B tests
- Analytics: opens, clicks, revenue
- Multi-brand workspace

LAYER 2 · THE ENGINE

Send engine

- Shopify webhooks: orders, customers, browse
- Segments evaluated in Postgres
- Job queue (BullMQ or SQS)
- Bounce and complaint handling
- Suppression lists
- Deliverability monitoring

LAYER 3 · DELIVERY

Direct providers

- **AWS SES** on your account: bulk
- **Postmark** on your account: transactional
- **SPF, DKIM, DMARC** on your domain
- **A dedicated IP**, your AWS, your IP
- Reputation apart from shared pools

Decisions to make in week one

DECISION	OUR DEFAULT	WHY
Where it runs	A $40-a-month VPS, or your AWS account if you have credits	Docker images run on either
Database and queue	Postgres on Supabase or RDS; BullMQ on Redis, or SQS	Throttle, retry and pause a send without losing it
Sign-in	Your existing Shopify or Google SSO	No new passwords for the team
Bulk and transactional	SES for campaigns, Postmark for receipts; Postmark or Mailgun as failover	An SES problem pauses nothing
Sending identity	A subdomain per brand; a dedicated SES IP, warmed 2–4 weeks	Each brand's reputation stands on its own

Compliance: a suppression list with cryptographic deletion, a GDPR data-export endpoint and CCPA "do not sell" support are part of the build. AWS SES is HIPAA-eligible, with a BAA.

Thirteen tables *carry the whole product.*

Model these before writing any screen. Keep Klaviyo's profile ID and Shopify's customer ID on every contact, so the import can run twice and every order finds its person.

TABLE	KEY COLUMNS
`contacts`	id, external_id, shopify_customer_id, email, phone, status, properties (jsonb), total_spent, orders_count, last_order_at, last_clicked_at
`brands`, `consents`	id, name, sending_domain, ip_pool; contact_id, brand_id, channel (email, SMS), method, opted_in_at, withdrawn_at
`customer_events`	id, contact_id, type (viewed product, added to cart, started checkout), properties (jsonb), source, at
`orders`	id, shopify_order_id, contact_id, total, currency, items (jsonb), placed_at, attributed_send_id
`segments`	id, name, rules (jsonb tree: properties, events, revenue), compiled_sql, last_count
`templates`	id, brand_id, name, blocks (jsonb), html, version
`campaigns`	id, brand_id, segment_id, template_id, subject, scheduled_at, status, ab_test (jsonb)
`flows`, `flow_enrollments`	trigger (event, segment entry, date), steps (jsonb: wait, send, split), exit rule (placed order); contact_id, step, next_run_at, status
`sends`	id, campaign_id or flow step, contact_id, provider (SES, Postmark), provider_message_id, ip_pool, sent_at
`message_events`	send_id, type (delivered, open, click, bounce, complaint, unsubscribe), bounce_type (hard, soft), url, at
`suppressions`	email, scope (global, brand), reason (hard bounce, complaint, unsubscribe, erasure, manual), source, at

TWO RULES THAT SAVE A REBUILD

Check suppressions in the send path, not in the segment: every send, from any campaign or flow, checks the table the moment it goes out. **Attribute revenue by one written rule**: an order counts for the last send its customer clicked within a window you choose, stored on the order, so every report shows the same number.

Six weeks, *pilot included.*

This is the order we build in. The IP warms from week two while the rest is built, and the last two weeks are a pilot on a small segment.

WEEK	BUILD	DONE WHEN
1	**Export, model, authenticate.** The thirteen tables. Export from Klaviyo's API: profiles with consent, segments with member counts, flows with timing and conditions, templates, suppressions. Backfill Shopify customers and orders. SPF, DKIM and DMARC; SES production access.	Counts match Klaviyo's; every DNS check passes
2	**Shopify and the sending engine.** Webhooks for orders, customers, carts and browse events. The queue, throttled SES sends, bounce and complaint handling, one-click unsubscribe. Warm-up starts on your most engaged contacts.	A Shopify order shows on its contact in seconds
3	**Segments, flows, templates.** The segment builder, flows with their timing and exit rules, the template editor, A/B tests.	Each segment returns Klaviyo's population on a sample
4	**Attribution and analytics.** Revenue per campaign, flow and segment; the deliverability dashboard; failover to the second provider.	Every attributed dollar traces to a Shopify order
5–6	**Pilot and cutover.** Two weeks on a small segment, a daily fix list, a delta export, then the flows moved one by one and the full list on the warmed IP.	Pilot bounce and complaint rates at or below Klaviyo's

AFTER CUTOVER

Pause Klaviyo's flows but **keep the account until the first full campaign cycle on the new stack is clean**, then export once more and close it. The UI follows Klaviyo's on purpose, so the team's campaign habits carry over; a 30-minute handover and a written runbook do the rest.

Reach the inbox. *Keep the reputation.*

Klaviyo's deliverability edge is its shared IP pool's reputation. At 100K+ contacts you belong on a dedicated IP anyway. Set up correctly, deliverability holds or improves at cutover, because you no longer share a pool with Klaviyo's worst senders.

1. **Authenticate the domain.** SPF and DKIM on a sending subdomain per brand, a custom MAIL FROM, and DMARC aligned with both. Start DMARC at `p=none` with reports, then tighten. Send one-click unsubscribe headers on every campaign; the large mailbox providers require them from bulk senders.
2. **Warm the IP.** For 2–4 weeks before cutover, send from the new IP to your most engaged contacts first, the recent clickers and buyers, and raise the volume a step at a time. Hold the step whenever bounces or complaints rise. Klaviyo sends the rest meanwhile.
3. **Handle bounces and complaints.** Suppress a hard bounce or a spam complaint at once, across every list and brand. Retry a soft bounce; suppress after repeated ones. Watch both rates daily: SES reviews accounts whose rates climb.
4. **Keep the list clean.** Import Klaviyo's suppressed profiles before the first send. Sunset contacts who have not clicked or bought in a set window: they cost nothing on SES, but they still cost reputation. Judge engagement by clicks and orders, since privacy features inflate opens.
5. **Cap the flows.** Abandoned cart, browse abandon and a campaign can all fire on one person in a day. Set a per-contact daily cap across flows and campaigns, and exit a flow the moment its customer orders.
6. **Keep a way out.** Transactional mail goes through Postmark, apart from campaigns. If SES has an outage, the queue fails over to the second provider. If an IP's reputation drops, a new dedicated IP is a day's work in your own AWS account.

Watch it every week

Google Postmaster Tools and Microsoft SNDS for each sending domain, inbox-placement tests before large campaigns, and the dashboard's bounce, complaint and unsubscribe rates by campaign and flow.

Move it, launch it, *run it.*

Migration

- ☐ Export twice: everything in week one, the changes since at cutover
- ☐ Keep Klaviyo's profile ID and Shopify's customer ID on every contact
- ☐ Import suppressed profiles first
- ☐ Carry consent for email and SMS separately
- ☐ Backfill Shopify orders, so revenue segments work on day one
- ☐ Check each segment's population against Klaviyo's on a sample
- ☐ Rebuild flows with their timing, conditions and exit rules
- ☐ Rebuild only the flows that sent in the last 90 days

Go-live

- ☐ SPF, DKIM and DMARC passing; the IP warmed
- ☐ One-click unsubscribe tested in Gmail, Outlook and Apple Mail
- ☐ Shopify webhooks registered and their signatures checked
- ☐ Failover to the second provider tested
- ☐ Backups proven by a restore
- ☐ Alerts on bounce rate, complaint rate and queue depth
- ☐ Rollback ready: Klaviyo flows paused, not deleted

Running it

- ☐ **Always on:** queue and webhook alerts, security patches
- ☐ **Weekly:** revenue by flow, bounce and complaint report to the marketer
- ☐ **Monthly:** reputation check, sunset unengaged contacts, flow review
- ☐ **Quarterly:** cost review, SES and Postmark against the Klaviyo bill you replaced
- ☐ **Yearly:** a restore drill, an access review, DKIM keys rotated

Who owns it

Name one person before launch. The product is small, but it carries a share of your revenue: someone has to answer when the abandoned-cart flow stops or a campaign's complaint rate jumps at 2 a.m.

Six ways a rebuild *stalls.*

1. The cheap build

An $8K freelance build gets you something that sends email. Deliverability monitoring, IP reputation, complaint handling, suppression, multiple brands and revenue attribution stay on you, and those are exactly what Klaviyo charges for.

2. Self-hosting Mautic

Mautic exists. It is a 2014 PHP project with real operational overhead and a UX your marketers will reject; setup, maintenance and support cost more than a rebuild within 12 months.

3. Swapping middlemen

Mailchimp is cheaper below 50K contacts, the gap closes above that, and its Shopify integration is weaker. Omnisend and Sendinblue are 10–25% cheaper at the same list size, with the same wrapper economics; you will run this exercise again in 18 months.

4. Shopify Email

It is free with your plan and works for brands under $1M GMV. It lacks the flows, segmentation and revenue attribution a D2C team needs above that.

5. Cutting over cold

Moving the whole list to a new IP on day one is how inbox placement drops. Warm for 2–4 weeks on your most engaged contacts first.

6. Forgetting the suppressions

Import profiles without Klaviyo's suppressed list and the first campaign mails people who opted out: a legal problem and a reputation problem at once.

And one that is not a mistake: negotiating

Negotiation services typically take 15–25% off a Klaviyo annual commitment. Do it if the rebuild is a year away; it captures about an eighth of what owning the stack does.

RATHER HAVE IT BUILT?

We build this exact plan. *Fixed price.*

The same scope, architecture and six weeks, delivered by a senior team that has shipped 250+ products.

$16,600 fixed for one brand up to 250K contacts, $24,000–$29,500 up to 1M, agreed before we start

Live in 4–6 weeks, with a two-week pilot on a small segment first

Migration of your segments, flows and templates, with SPF, DKIM and DMARC on your sending domain

90-day warranty, bug fixes free; the code in your GitHub from day one, with a written runbook

We can run it for $3,000 a year: the VPS, monitoring, monthly updates and deliverability ops

alliedbiz.tech/rebuild/klaviyo-alternative

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