

Email Marketing - The Basics

There are basically two kinds of email marketing:

- **Unsolicited** – perhaps more commonly known as Spam, which should be avoided at all costs;
- **Solicited** – if done properly this can be highly profitable, and is relatively easy to do, but is dependant upon having an appropriate address list for your email marketing campaign.

Some businesses think that email marketing is simply a matter of buying a list of addresses and sending out a mass message to everyone on the list. The problem with this “cold-calling” approach is that not everyone on the list will be interested in the offer, often resulting in a poor response no matter how good the offer may be. In addition, you generally only get to send emails to these addresses once, before you need to pay for another list - making this approach both ineffective and expensive.

So, how long does it take to build up a reasonably sized “Opt-in” list? That’s like asking “How long is a piece of string?”, but in the case of an email list size doesn't necessarily matter. A small, but highly responsive, list of 50 addresses can be many times more profitable than a poorly responsive list of 500. In terms of email marketing, it really is the quality of your list that counts rather than the quantity.

By far the best method is to build up your own contacts list by asking people their permission for you to send them emails. Frequent customers, clients, or visitors to your website, will have grown to know you over the course of your relationship with them. They will trust you, and your judgement, and in this way they will be very responsive to any offer you might make to them.

Here are a few methods you could use to compile your list:

- Offer a free newsletter. This is a tried and tested method that still works very well for many. People love to read, and if it's something they like to read about, something that informs them, or saves them money, they will read every issue avidly. Then, when you send out that extra email offering your customers a useful product you've discovered, a proportion of them will purchase from your affiliate link. That's your profit.
- Offer a short report in exchange for an email address. People love to get something for free and if the quality of the report is good, and it should be, you might have a customer for life, sold on that first moment of the relationship.

- Adopt someone else's list. First, you need to find someone with a suitable list, and then you will need to persuade them to let you market to "their" list. It can be done, but may not be all that easy and you will need to satisfy yourself that the list is pertinent and receptive to your intended campaign.
- Alternatively, you can advertise in a suitable e-zine. An e-zine is an online newsletter that makes its profit from advertising. The e-zine publisher will usually let you buy advertising space. Your advert will then be the only topic in an email sent to the entire subscriber base of the e-zine. Done properly, this can be highly successful and of course, when someone purchases your offer they then become your customer, and part of your growing list.

The basics of email marketing, and setting up an email campaign, are not all that difficult. It just takes planning and a little bit of patience. It is of course impossible to predict how much you can earn from your email list, as hopefully your list will be constantly evolving. Obviously it will also depend on the type of campaign, products or services you offer, and your margins, but once you have built up a good list of subscribers treat them like gold dust and you should reap handsome benefits.

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