



Building Your Opt-In List
Your Lifeline To Success Online!

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Introduction

In the wide wide world of Internet marketing every guru worth his salt will tell you the building your opt-in list is not only an important part of successful Internet marketing but that it is the one of the most vital parts.

I wish I could tell you that building an opt-in list is quick and easy. Unfortunately, that would be a bald faced lie. The top Internet marketers have lists that number in the 10's of thousands and some have lists that number in the 100's of thousands. They didn't build those lists overnight. They built them one subscriber at the time and that is the same way that you will have to build your own opt-in list.

Internet marketing is a whole different animal than brick and mortar marketing. Some of the same rules apply, of course, but the methods are different. Out in the real world, marketers can rely on foot traffic. Foot traffic never happens on the Internet. A buyer isn't going to just accidentally stumble across your website, come in and buy from you.

Brick and mortar businesses can advertise their products and services in ways that are visible to a great many potential customers. Advertising your business on the Internet doesn't rely on physical visibility of advertising. The best and most effective advertising on the Internet is done on a one-on-one basis (i.e. marketing to your own opt-in list).

Your own opt-in list consists of the names and email addresses of those people who are the most apt to buy the product or service that you are selling.

Several years ago, new marketers could just buy lists of people's names and email addresses and do mass mailings. That all changed when the SPAM laws were passed. You are no longer allowed to mail advertisements about your business to anybody who hasn't specifically said that they want to receive email from you. If you do, it is called SPAMMING and it is illegal. There are substantial fines and penalties for sending unsolicited email. This is where opt-in lists come into play.

You need for visitors to your website to agree to receive e-mail from you so that you will not be accused of sending SPAM. This opt-in list is also a list of the people who are the ones most likely to want to buy what you are selling so it isn't all bad.

In this ebook we will discuss the many aspects of opt-in list building.

Chapter I

Why Opt-In Lists are Vital

Almost a hundred years ago, in 1907, a man by the name of Alfred Williams wrote a song and Billy Murray recorded it named "A Man Without a Woman". The first verse of that old song goes like this:

A man without a woman is like a ship without a sail,
Is like a boat without a rudder, a kite without a tail.
A man without a woman is like a wreck upon the sand,
And if there's one thing worse, in this universe,
It's a woman, I said, a woman, it's a woman without a man!

Right! By today's standards the song is a bit sexist but it was a really big hit back in 1907.

The fact is that Internet marketing can be compared to that song....or the idea anyway. An Internet business without an opt-in list is like a ship without a sail, a boat without a rudder and a kite without a tail, too. The only thing that would be any worse would be a list without a product or service to sell to it....and, believe it or not, that can actually happen, but it doesn't happen very often and the problem can be easily solved.

Internet marketers can no longer just buy lists of names and email addresses that have been harvested without their owners consent and send unsolicited advertising. That is called 'Spamming' and it against the law. But just as important as not wanting to break the law is the desire to send your sales letters and advertising to people who actually want to receive them.

Getting one new customer to buy your product or service is a time consuming effort. Getting people who have already bought one product from you to buy another product from you is much easier and much more cost effective.

Sending advertising to a great many people is a lot harder than sending email to those who want to receive it and are apt to purchase from you. So opt-in lists aren't just the law they can also be a very good thing for Internet entrepreneurs.

There are those who will tell you that building an opt-in list is quick, easy and absolutely painless. Don't you believe one word of it! Building opt-in lists that will actually produce sales take a lot of time, effort and energy. If you don't believe me, go ask one of the top marketers how long it took them to build their massive lists. Every one of them will tell you that they spent years building up those opt-in lists.

Why build an opt-in list?

1. Those who subscribe to your opt-in list are already showing an interest in your product or service
2. Those who show an interest provide a much better conversion rate.
3. You have their permission to market to them until or unless they opt-out so you are not spamming.

How can a list help my business?

1. With an impressive opt-in list you will be better able to attract joint venture partners.
2. An opt-in list gives you the opportunity to target those that are the most apt to purchase from you.
3. You have the names and email addresses of those who have already made a purchase and they are the ones most likely to make a second or third purchase.
4. An opt-in list provides you with additional chances to sell to those who did not make a purchase on their first visit to your website.
5. Reputation is a vital part of Internet marketing and credibility is vital. You have the opportunity to establish a good reputation and your credibility when you market to your own opt-in list.

Building your own opt-in list is vital to your survival and, hopefully, your prosperity in the world of Internet marketing. Those who build solid opt-in lists do thrive and those who do not put forth the time and effort required to build an opt-in list will most likely join the growing ranks of failed Internet businesses.

Many times people have a really good idea and a lot of knowledge about their chosen niche market. They start out with big plans and even bigger dreams only to crash and burn in short order. They spend large sums advertising their businesses and no time at all on building their opt-in lists....and building opt-in lists cost next to nothing. Time and effort are both larger portions of list building than money.

Chapter II

How to Build an Opt-In List

The first thing that you are going to have to have in order to build your opt-in list is an autoresponder. Nothing is going to work without one. You can find free autoresponders on the Internet but if you choose to use one of these free autoresponders be sure that you have the option to upgrade to a paid for version.

It's a really good idea to get the autoresponder that will serve your needs the first time. Moving the names and email addresses on your opt-in list from one autoresponder can be done but it is a time consuming and tedious job that you can avoid.

There are free autoresponders that many companies offer that include an advertisement for the company providing the autoresponder in each email they send. There are autoresponders that only send out a standard reply to emails that are received. There are autoresponders which you can set to sort your emails into categories.

In short, all autoresponders are not created equal. You will need to do your own research and determine which one is the right one for you and for your particular business.

Once you have your autoresponder and have it set up on your site, you will be ready to start building your own opt-in list.

You will without a doubt see thousands of words that have been written about building an opt-in list. Some of that advice is good and some of it isn't very good. The one thing that all of the gurus agree on, however, is that building an opt-in list is vital for the survival of your Internet business.

It's difficult to get three people to agree on where to have lunch much less on something as important as list building. However, there are some standard methods of list building that have been established. They have been established using a lot of trial and error by those who have blazed the trails of Internet marketing.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that it is going to be up to you to make use of the information. There are those who will tell you that list building is easy. It isn't. List building takes time and it takes effort and it takes day in and day out persistence and dedication. Read on to discover some tried and true methods of list building.

Write Articles to Build Your Opt-In List

If you have a website and you have had any experience at all in Internet marketing you know what 'content' is and you are well aware of how important content is. You more than likely understand just how time consuming and difficult it is to keep fresh content on a website. The need for content is ongoing and never-ending and for that very reason it is an open door to list building for you.

Every website owner and every ezine publisher in every niche know to man scrambles to get fresh new material. Many can't possibly supply all of it themselves so they go the article banks to get articles to fill their need for content.

If you can write articles, that is wonderful. You have an opt-in list building talent built in. If you can't write, however, you can still get articles written for you by ghost writers or you can find PLR articles for a small cost on a lot of sites on the Internet.

The best articles are the ones that are between 300 and 400 words long and are rich in keywords that relate to your product or service. The title and the first paragraph are key ingredients of good articles.

The resource box at the bottom of the article is the little key to use for list building. It needs to have your name as the author and your website address included.

You can submit these articles to article directories and they will be picked up and used by other website owners and by ezine publishers. Each and every time anyone reads the article they will see your name and your website address and have the opportunity to visit your website and thus an opportunity for you to get them to sign onto your opt-in box.

Getting the possibility of them signing into your opt-in list is just the tip of the iceberg so to speak. You are also gaining an opportunity to sell your product or service to them and you are building your credibility in the process.

An article that you will submit to article banks in order to build your list will:

- Be 300 to 400 words long
- Have an attention getting headline and first sentence
- Be keyword rich
- Have your name and website address in the resource box.

Using Blogs and Forums to Build Your Opt-In List

People have opinions.....about just about everything. People like to read what other people think about subjects that are important to them. The Internet has provided a platform where anybody with an Internet connection has the ability to state their opinions and/or read the opinions of others.

Every minute of everyday somewhere in the world hundreds, even thousands, of people are posting their thoughts and ideas to blogs and forums. People will post to blogs and forums things that they wouldn't dream of discussing with their families or friends. They give their opinions on every subject you can think of. They help other posters to a blog or forum with their problems or concerns.

Blogs and forums are powerful tools and they have become an important part of the lives of many people. Deep, personal relationships are formed between people who post to blogs and forums. Friendships are formed that are as real and important to individuals as their real world relationships. I even know people who met on a forum (NOT a dating site). The relationship developed. They agreed to meet in person....and they finally married. Blogs and forums are places on the Internet where like minded people gather to discuss a common issue, concern or problem.

People have always gathered to share opinions and exchange ideas. Blogs and forums are the electronic form of a town meeting, the exchange of gossip over a back-yard fence or a coffee klatch.

Posting to blogs and forums can help to build your opt-in list, of course, but getting to know the other posters to blogs and forums can help you in many other ways as well. For example: You'll be very surprised to find that many people who know less than nothing about Internet marketing can give you some insight into how to effectively market your product or service and build your all important opt-in list. Maybe it isn't all that surprising....these are the same people that you are hoping to get to opt-in to your list and who better to tell you what would make them do that?

Using blogs and forums to build your opt-in list isn't rocket science. You simply use the link to your website in your signature tag at the bottom of each post you make. As you get to know the other posters of a blog or forum, they will visit your site and join your opt-in list because they know you and you will have convinced them with your posts that you are an expert in whatever subject is being discussed.

It is a very simple matter to locate the blogs and forums that are related to the product or service you are selling. All you need do is use your favorite search engine, type in your keywords and add the word 'forums' or 'blogs' after the

keywords. Hit search and you will get a lot of hits no matter what your keywords are. Remember, people talk about everything.

After you visit the blogs and forums that you find on your search, visit the sites and pick out three or four of the most active ones. Join them and start posting.

Posting to blogs and forums takes time. You will need to post at least two or three times each week to each blog or forum you join so keep the time factor in mind when you are choosing how many to join.

Some important factors to keep in mind when you join blogs and forums for the purpose of list building are:

- Don't go in like gang busters and start posting blatant advertising. You will get tossed off by the manager forthwith.
- Take the time to get to know the members of the group. There are usually only a few regular posters to each blog or forum. Remember that you build your list and your credibility one soul at the time.
- Be certain that the signature tag that you use on blogs and forums contain your full name, as well as your website address.

You can set up a blog or forum on your own website. Actually setting either up is a fairly simple thing to do.

- You can collect the names and email addresses of anyone who wants the privilege of posting to the blog or forum on your site. Remember, that people do love to give their opinions and ideas on blogs and forums. Each time someone registers so that they can post, they will be adding themselves to your opt-in list.
- You could even charge a fee for people to be given the privilege to post as well as collect their names and email addresses.
- A blog or forum on your site affords you the opportunity to interact with your customers and potential customers. They have opinions but they also have ideas some of which are good ideas and ones that you can use to build your list even larger.

Posting to blogs and forums using a signature tag (sig tag) to build your opt-in list does work. It is a little time consuming but it will be time well spent. While it is true that most blogs and forums don't have a great many posters, they do have a great many readers and everybody knows somebody. Post to blogs owned by others or create a blog or forum on your own site.

Writing and Marketing E-Books to Build Your Opt-In List

Writing e-books (or having them written) and submitting them to e-book banks on the Internet is one of the more effective ways to build your opt-in list.

Other website owners (just like you) and e-zine publishers always have both eyes open looking for good content for their websites and for free gifts that they can offer to their visitors or subscribers.

E-books and 'in-depth-reports' on any given subject are the most common items used as gifts to visitors and subscribers for many different reasons and to serve many different purposes. Sometimes they are used to simply promote good will or they are used as an incentive for another reason. You may even be using an e-book or a 'special report' as an incentive on your own website to entice your visitors to opt-in to your mailing list.

The demand for good e-books and good 'in-depth' or 'special' reports far exceeds the supply. Remember that the Internet gobbles up copy of all kinds at an alarming rate. More demand than supply equals a wide open door for an enterprising entrepreneur that wants to build his or her opt-in list.

An e-book that you write (or have written) that you submit to an e-book bank that can be downloaded and republished by other website owners or ezine publishers affords you many of the same opportunities for list building as does article writing submissions to article banks except that the opportunities are multiplied many times over.

- Each time your ebook is downloaded and read by someone who got it through another website or an ezine, the links to your website that are on every page, of course, remain on the downloader's computer and are seen each time the ebook is referred to.
- Each time the downloader of your e-book sees your link, he has yet another opportunity to click on it and thus an opportunity to join your opt-in list.

The reports that you submit to an e-book bank should be

- No more that 10-15 pages long.
- The report should have an attention getting title.
- The report should be filled with useful information that is elaborated on on your website.

Use Your List to Build Your List

Have you ever heard of the 'six degrees of separation' theory? This theory says that every person on earth is only six degrees away from every other person on earth. Of course, there is the old adage, "Everybody knows somebody" that has been around a lot longer than the six degrees of separation theory. Maybe that old adage is even what the theory is based on. At any rate, the fact is that everybody knows other people who are interested in the same things they are and that is the basis for the idea of using your own list to build your list.

The second part of the 'everybody knows somebody' theory of list building is that we human beings love to be 'in-the-know'. We all love to know something that other people need or want to know and we grasp any opportunity to display that insider knowledge. We share information with friends and neighbors all the time attempting to let them know that we 'KNOW'. Where's the best restaurant? Which lawn service does the best job? Bits of information large and small are given out every day of the week.

Now...if you take the 'everybody knows somebody' fact and combine it with 'everybody loves to be 'in-the-know' fact, you get the formula for using your own list to build your own list.

While it is true that people will share information with their friends and family without any incentive at all, a little incentive to inspire them to share can't hurt and it might help you to use your list to build your list.

Since people do love to share information anyway, the incentives you offer to inspire them to share the information about how valuable belonging to your list is doesn't have to be huge.

You can simply offer a few dollars off of your product or service to the members of your list who give you leads to their contacts who might be interested in your product or service or even just to your list.

You might offer them a few months of free membership in your paid membership site for new subscribers to the site that they bring in.

Brick and mortar businesses use their customers to get them more customers all the time. If you have cable or satellite TV, you most likely get advertisements in your snail mail box everyday telling you that you can get \$50 off your subscription by recommending the service to your friends and families. If your friends or families subscribe then your cost is reduced.

You can use the same tactic to build your opt-in list. Get the members of your list to recommend you to their friends and families and give them a reason to do so.

Using Joint Ventures to Build Your Opt-In List

When you mention the words, 'joint venture', to an Internet marketer, their eyes sparkle and they begin to drool. Even brand new Internet marketers know that a joint venture with top Internet marketers is the shortest route to building a successful Internet business. Joint ventures are what Internet marketers dream about.

Yes, it is true that a successful joint venture can make a new Internet marketer a lot of money but sometimes that part of a joint venture needs to be put on a back burner and he needs to think about list building rather than income building first.

There are those who will advise you to structure your joint venture agreement in two tiers. That is; structure it so that the product being sold (an e-book) can be rebranded and you make a profit off of the second tier of the agreement. That is dangerously close to a pyramid scheme and not advised in most circumstances. You can get yourself into a lot of trouble using anything that resembles this, and Paypal, for example, freezes accounts that they suspect are multi-tiered, since that's specifically against their terms and conditions.

It is a better idea to just mark a joint venture for the purpose of list building down to the cost of doing business on the Internet and forget about making a monetary profit on it.

Use a product that you have such as an e-book and let your joint venture partners take 100% of the profit. That's right...100%. It's no different than submitting an ebook to an ebook bank for republication. You don't make any money on that either.

This e-book will, however, need to be well worth the price that your joint venture partners will charge for it. Don't expect people with strong lists to promote an e-book for you if it's filled with fluff and doesn't really help anyone – be sure it's full of strong, useful content. Also remember this is your first exposure to most of the readers, and the opinion they form of you will be largely based on the content of that e-book. You're trying to impress them enough to get them on your list, remember?

This is a list building exercise that can put hundreds of names and email addresses on your opt-in list in a very short period of time. Your agreement needs to be structured so that each sale is made through an opt-in page where you collect names and e-mail addresses, or where the person must fill in their name and e-mail to get the download.

This list of names and email addresses can be the most valuable ones you ever collect because they are the names and addresses of people who have already purchased YOUR product.

Using Joint Venture Give-a-ways to Build Your Opt-In List

Every budding entrepreneur who has been in Internet marketing for very long knows how much a joint venture with a well established Internet marketer can launch their business overnight. They may also be very aware of how to use a joint venture for the sole purpose of list building by giving their joint venture partners 100% of the profit on a product.

There is another way to use a joint venture to build your own opt-in list and that is to join in a joint venture giveaway event.

Many times well known and well established Internet marketers join together and offer give-a-ways to their list members. These joint venture give-a-ways include a variety of products that are not necessarily related. The list of give-a-ways may include e-books related to a particular business aspect and there may be an offer for a reduced price on pet supplies. There can be offers for CD's and DVD's on topics that are as varied as building bird houses to building opt-in lists.

The point of these joint venture give-a-ways is the ability to contact lists with offers that can benefit the members and thus build good will.

Your offer of a free gift will be included if you join into one of these joint venture give-a-way programs and it, along with your website address, will be mailed to every member of every joint venture partner. That number could be in the hundreds, thousands or even higher depending upon the number of partners there are in the joint venture give-a-way and the size of their lists.

In either case it is one of the best ways to build you list as well as your credibility. Just having your name associated with top Internet marketers can help to make you more visible on the Internet.

The gift that you offer in a joint venture give-a-way needs to be:

- Of significant value
- One that requires a user to visit your website
- One that requires the user to give his name and email address

Just ask yourself 'Would I opt in to someone else's list to get my gift?' and you'll know whether it's the right choice of incentive to use in a giveaway.

Using Press Releases to Build Your Opt-In List

It is easy to get to thinking that all of the news that is news is only on the Internet. It's especially easy when you have an Internet business and all of your attention is focused on the Internet. However, news is still being read in newspapers, in magazines, heard on the radio and seen on television.

Just think! Thousands of people read newspapers, listen to the radio and watch television everyday and you have an opportunity to contact them with a press release.

You know how important and opt-in list is to building your business. You also know how important networking is to building your business. Another aspect of building a business that is often overlooked is building a media list. This list needs to include people who are:

1. Article syndicators
2. Associated with Trade publications
3. Newspaper Reporters
4. Magazine Contributors
5. Associated with radio & TV shows

Make it a priority to meet these people in person if you can. If you can't arrange a face to face meeting, email them and introduce yourself.

DO NOT TELEPHONE THEM. It is a well established fact that most business people and especially those who are in any news media consider their e-mail their most valuable tool. The telephone is considered their main interruption. A telephone call can be forgotten when the call ends but an email can stay around for awhile. It can be filed. It can be read again. It can be referred to. Use email to introduce yourself.

There are a few points to consider when you are building your media list that you will use to build your opt-in list:

- When you first introduce yourself to a media person via email, remember that you want to start building a relationship so don't start it 'Dear Sir'. Use their name in the salutation.
- Use an attention getting subject line. Remember that these people get hundreds of emails everyday and you need them to read yours.

- Never, under any circumstances send an attachment with your introductory email. It WILL be deleted forthwith, unread.
- Format all your emails to media correctly. The correct format is ASCII text file with hard returns at 65 characters or less.
- Follow up your introductory email with a phone call but do not ask if they received the introductory email that you sent. Use this call to help establish a continuing relationship.

Once you have established at least a nodding relationship with the media, you can send press releases concerning your business and have at least a fighting chance of getting them published.

There is a correct form for press releases. This is the correct form:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Your contact information including your telephone number and your website address needs to be listed here.

Here you insert a headline in bold type that summarizes the content of the body of the release.

Name of City, State – Month, day, year—And begin your statement. Continue with your statement for about 3 or 4 paragraphs and make it 600 to 900 words long. At the end you insert this information:

For information: <http://www.yourwebaddress.com> or

Contact: yourname@yourisp.com

Telephone: and insert your telephone number again.

And all press releases end with: # # # centered at the bottom.

Using press releases can help you to build your opt-in list but they need to be sent in the correct form and to media contacts that you work hard at forming.

Using Seminars to Build Your Opt-In List

Every day out in the real brick and mortar world seminars are held that cover almost every phase of Internet marketing. Everybody who is anybody in the world of Internet marketing attends these real world seminars. It is the place to go to meet other marketers, as well as, to learn some essential skills for building successful online businesses from experts.

While it is very true that attending a seminar out in the brick and mortar world can certainly cost more than just a few dollars, they are still dollars that have been well spent if you are serious about building a successful online business and building your all important opt-in lists.

The speakers at these seminars are the real experts in your niche market and in Internet marketing in general. You stand to gain knowledge that you will never have other opportunities to gain.

In the process of learning you will also meet face to face with the top marketers in your chosen niche market. These are the men and women who you want most for joint venture partners. It is much easier to convince someone that you have met face to face that you are a worthy joint venture partner than it is to convince a perfect stranger.

You can use the personal contacts that real world seminars provide to set up future joint ventures or future teleseminars or webinars. If you can present yourself as a good speaker and as knowledgeable on your subject matter, you will have a lot better chance of getting the top marketers in your field to do a joint venture or a teleseminar or webinar with you than you ever can just using email or the telephone to contact them.

It is true that you won't be directly adding names to your opt-in list while you are attending a seminar but you will be adding a lot of names and email addresses in the future because you attend them.

Face to face meetings should never be discounted as a valuable list building tool. The cost of attending seminars, especially ones that are being held in cities that are a great distance away from your home, can be almost prohibitive, however. So if attending the real world variety seminar is just out of the question for you most of the time consider using a teleseminar or a webinar to build your opt-in list. So let's talk about Teleseminars and Webinars for a minute...

Using Teleseminars and Webinars to Build Your Opt-In List

Teleseminars and webinars are very big in Internet marketing today. The reason they are enjoying so much popularity is simply because they work.

- They work to make immediate profits.
- They work to build future profits.
- They work to build opt-in lists.

Putting together a teleseminar or a webinar takes time and a good bit of effort but it isn't really hard to do and it isn't an expensive proposition either.

A webinar and a teleseminar are very much alike but there are notable differences. A webinar is held on personal computers and sometimes on telephones at the same time but teleseminars are held just on a telephone bridge line.

Preparing for a webinar or a teleseminar is not hard to do and good preparation is the secret of a successful event.

The first thing that you need, of course, is a topic. This topic should be more than loosely related to the product or service that you are selling. It is imperative that the information that you will present at your teleseminar or webinar be of great value to the subscribers. You don't want to hype an event and then not deliver as promised.

You will most likely want to get a guest speaker for your teleseminar or your webinar that will be a big attraction for subscribers to the event. Unless you are already a famous (or infamous) person, you need what is called a 'drawing card' for your event.

Take note....those who sign up for your teleseminar or your webinar will be giving you their names and email addresses which will be added to your opt-in list whether you are selling the teleseminar or webinar or you are giving it free of charge.

You can, of course charge for a subscription to the teleseminar or webinar. If you do charge, you will make money up front. If you don't charge, you still have the opportunity to make sales during and after the event. In either case you still enlarge your opt-in list.

If you can set up a teleseminar or a webinar as a joint venture, you will get all of the names and email addresses that your JV partners generate as well as your own.

Getting people to subscribe to your teleseminar or webinar isn't all that difficult as long as you realize why they would subscribe and what they expect to get from attending your event.

Remember the old question, 'what's in it for me?' and you can sell your teleseminar or webinar idea to joint venture partners as well as to subscribers. Neither joint venture partners nor subscribers are going to participate in your teleseminar or webinar because YOU need to build your list. In internet marketing, just like everything else in this world, people are usually looking out for old #1 and they really aren't much concerned about whatever it is that is #2. So you have to put a lot of thought and effort into giving each what they want.

Joint venture partners who you might convince to join you in a teleseminar or webinar want to know what's in it for them and what they want is the opportunity to make sales and build their lists. Isn't that neat? What they want is the same thing you want.

The only difference is that they already have lists (hopefully LARGE lists) and want to add to them and making money probably is the more important of the two elements for them. You, on the other hand, want to make money, of course, but your main goal will likely be building your list. In order to make your offer most attractive to potential partners you will need structure it so that they will make the lion's share of the money but you will get the names and addresses of those who are already on their lists and sign up for your teleseminar or webinar.

The people who sign up for (and maybe even pay money for) your teleseminar or webinar aren't just looking to help you build your list either. They couldn't care less whether you even have a list or not. No, they sign up for such events because they want information.

If you advertise that you will provide information that will be of great value to people who subscribe to the event, you won't have any problem getting people to participate in it. If you advertise that the guest speaker at your event will be a well known person or a well known and successful Internet marketer, people will gladly hand over their names and email addresses to you in exchange for hearing him or her speak.

One thing that is rarely mentioned when list building is being discussed is that every member of an opt-in list has the option to opt-out at any time. It's the law. That option must always be provided.

Hopefully you will not have to find out the hard way that people will opt OUT of your list faster than they opted INTO your list if you fail to deliver what you promised and it's always a much better plan to deliver more than you promised.

The tools needed to produce a teleseminar or webinar are very similar. For either event you will need a bridge line.

- A squeeze page (we will discuss this in depth later in this book)
- An autoresponder (we will discuss this in depth later in this book, as well)
- A bridge line
- A recording of the event
- Probably a transcription of the event. This is especially important if you intend to give away or sell copies of the recording after the event.
- An outline of the event and the orderly way that information will be presented. Copies of the outline should be provided to all active participants.

If you are doing a webinar, you will also need a visual presentation like a PowerPoint demonstration or a slide show since the webinar will be conducted online and in addition, you will need a method for delivering this digital information to your subscribers.

There are many good providers to use if you are planning on using a webinar to build your opt-in list. Just do a search at your favorite search engine to find them. Obviously, the same can be said for teleseminars, and the cost of using their bridge lines has come way down in the last year or so, so don't be afraid to check them out – you'll probably be pleasantly pleased!

Using Link Exchanges to Build Your Opt-In List

A link exchange is an agreement between two related websites whereby a link to the other website is posted on each site. 'A' posts a link to 'B' and 'B' posts a link to 'A'. This arrangement creates additional traffic for both websites and thus more opportunities to enhance their opt-in lists.

A link exchange works well for both sites if the product that each is selling is complimentary to but not in direct competition with the other. For example: a company that sells pet grooming supplies but not dog houses or cat trees might exchange links with a company that sells dog houses and cat trees but not grooming supplies. In this case each company is selling to the same group of people (pet owners) but neither is in competition with each other. Since pet owners buy both products, the link exchange is helpful to the customers of both sites.

The link exchange idea has been a bit maligned of late. Those who disapprove of the practice say that it creates two-way traffic, which is true, and they think that it is a bad idea to ever send visitors to your site to another site. They point out that out in the brick and mortar world, one would never see an advertisement on the wall of a store that doesn't sell electronic equipment for a store that does sell electronic equipment and that is also true.

However, the Internet market place is a whole different animal than the brick and mortar market place. There are differences too numerous to even begin to list but one huge difference between the two is that time and space exists between brick and mortar businesses but on the Internet every business is as close as mouse click to every other business.

Out in the real world, when a customer leaves the premises of a store, they get into their car and really leave. In the online market place all that is required is a mouse click. Customers can come and go easily. A click of the mouse and 'poof' they are gone, another click of the mouse and 'poof' they are back. Because of this, Internet marketers are required to provide a lot better service and a lot more information to their customers than those who have real world businesses.

Those who shop on the Internet expect to be given information about the products they are shopping for, of course, but they expect to be given information about related products as well. While the same customer would be shocked to see advertisements for other businesses on the wall of a real world store, they fully expect to see advertisements for related businesses on websites.

Two-way traffic, in my opinion, is a very good thing. You will get visitors to your site by using a link exchange with a related business that you would never have visit any other way. Your visitors that go to the site that you have exchanged links with will appreciate your helpfulness. That's a win/win situation.

It isn't hard to find sites that you might make a link exchange agreement with but it can be a time consuming activity. It could be time that has been spent wisely if you increase the number of opt-in subscribers, however.

There are two basic ways to find sites to exchange links with; one is manually and the other is by using software that automatically locates websites related to yours. After you visit the sites that this software locates for you and decide which ones you would like to do a link exchange with, this same software will send link exchange requests for you.

Many website owners use software to locate sites that have related content. It certainly does save a great deal of time and, as we all know, time is in short supply for Internet entrepreneurs. After sites have been located, however, most website owners will visit the sites, decide for themselves which ones contain the best related content and then contact the webmasters or contact person listed themselves to discuss a link exchange.

In order to speed this process up a bit, it is a good idea to write your own link exchange proposition yourself and save it so that it can be used again and again rather than starting each request from scratch. You will, in effect, be creating your own template.

Your template might look something like this:

Dear (use the contact person's name if you can find it, if not use Webmaster),

Earlier today I visited your website (insert their URL here) and I was really impressed with what I saw. Your website is very well constructed and easy to navigate. I wanted to congratulate you on a job well done.

Our websites are very closely related. (Here you give your URL and tell how the two websites relate and compliment one another.)

I believe that a link exchange could be mutually beneficial. Please visit my website and if you agree, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Regards,
(Your Name, website address and contact information)

That really is all you need to say. Webmasters are busy folks as you well know. Don't make them have to read through a two page letter to find out that you are interested in a link exchange.

It does sound like a lot more trouble than just letting your software make contact for you but doing so personally will help you get more and better quality link exchanges that will help to build your opt-in list.

Using Affiliate Marketing to Build Your Opt-In List

You have most likely already discovered the ease of making money as an affiliate marketer. Affiliate marketing is the route by which many of today's top Internet marketers got their start so there is absolutely nothing wrong with affiliate marketing. Not at all! It is a method of making money on the Internet that has been tried many times and proven itself to be a viable and operational plan for building a business.

Affiliate marketers do, however, make one very serious mistake. They set up their affiliate marketing business based upon continually making sales one at a time. If they quit advertising, they would have no business at all. They don't keep themselves on the radar of buyers. In other words, they fail to build their own opt-in list and depend solely on selling products that have been produced by others to one time buyers.

That sounds like a lot of hard work and it is a lot of hard work. Affiliate marketing is a good thing but it can be a better thing.

Those who are affiliate marketers need to build their own lists. They don't have a product or service of their own of course, but they can still build an opt-in list by publishing a newsletter or ezine and getting subscribers to it at the same time they make affiliate sales.

Since an affiliate marketer is already paying for advertising to get visitors to his site for the purpose of selling products and services for which he has an affiliate agreement, no other advertising will be necessary for him to start building his own opt-in list.

All an affiliate marketer need do is start publishing a newsletter or e-zine and when a visitor comes to his site looking to buy an affiliate product or service and clicks on the link to buy, he is directed to an opt-in page for the newsletter or e-zine before he is directed to the affiliate link.

Now this opt-in page, or 'Squeeze Page', as it's popularly called, needs to be very short. There shouldn't be any scroll bar and there should be an option under the opt-in box that says something like, "No thanks. Just show me the product."

Go easy on the hype, too. Remember only ONE page and no scroll bar is the formula. Make your squeeze page short, sweet and to the point.

You can and should use as many of the other list-building techniques that have been and will be discussed here to build your own opt-in list. You just don't want to overlook visitors that you are already paying advertising dollars for already.

Using Viral E-Mail to Build Your Opt-In List

Any viral marketing strategy is based on the idea of one person forwarding the information they receive to their friends, families, coworkers and/or contacts. MSN was one of the first to use viral marketing when they launched Hotmail. They took a good idea and promoted it by letting their customers do their advertising for them.

The idea of viral marketing was and is a very successful, profitable and cost-effective method of advertising. It is also one that you can use to build your opt-in list.

Viral email marketing techniques are used to spread a message around the internet in the same way a virus or the flu is spread....from person to person. The message you are wanting to get spread around as quickly as a room full of three year olds spread a cold to one another is that you have a great deal to offer and that being a member of your list has its advantages.

You might not have a long opt-in list with thousands of members but if you only have a very few, you can use viral email marketing techniques. Just think. If you send out 100 emails and each of those 100 people that get your original email send it to 10 of their friends, you have, in effect, potentially sent your email to a 1000 people, haven't you?

It gets better. If those 1000 each send your email to 10 of their friends, 10,000 people could get your email. It spreads just like a virus and that's why we call it viral marketing or viral email.

Getting your email to go viral is not quite as easy as some make it sound. You can find articles and advice on the Internet that tells you that all you need to do is put a postscript at the bottom of your email telling recipients that they can feel free to share your email with their friends. Now it might occasionally happen that they do in fact forward your email to their friends but that little post script isn't going to get very many forwards.

You need to do better. You need to give them a really good reason for forwarding the email they receive from you (one that contains a link to your website). You need to offer something valuable free like an ebook or special report or you need to have something really humorous that will make them laugh and want to share the laugh with friends. Coupons are also good. People like coupons. If you can include a valuable \$\$ off coupon in your email to the members of your list and tell them that the coupon will be honored if they send it to their friends, that might turn your email viral. Put your thinking cap on and think of ways to make the members of your list want to share what you email with others and then be sure to tell them that it's okay for them to share.

Using List Building Services to Build Your Opt-In List

Okay, you have been reading for more than 20 pages now about all the ways to build an opt-in list. List building is sounding more and more like a lot of hard and time consuming work and you are sitting there thinking to yourself, "I've seen sites advertised that guarantee me a list of potential list members. Maybe I should just buy my leads instead of doing all this time consuming work."

Whoa! Back that truckload of leads up and let's take a look at them before you unload (or download) them.

Having a long opt-in list with thousands of names on it might make you feel like that bear in the woods that reaches as high as he can to scratch a tree to convince all of the other bears in the woods that he is the biggest bear but it won't make you the biggest one if the leads don't produce sales.

Think about the purpose of even having a list. A list is supposed to be a list of customers or potential customers that you can establish an on-going relationship with, who will learn to trust you, respect your opinions, consider you to be a guru and who will buy from you in the future, right?

What you are getting when you buy leads is a list of names and e-mail addresses. Most have never heard of you, and NONE of them have asked for commercial information from you. Remember those SPAM laws?

Most opt-in lists that are legitimate have a privacy statement attached to them that plainly says that the information provided will not be sold or shared with others. Not all of them do, however. Unless a privacy statement is included, anyone should know that they are giving permission for their names and email addresses to be shared. Where did you think those names and email addresses on the lists came from?

The odds are that the names on lead lists that you buy are not going to be of much if any value to you. What you will have is a very long list of names and email addresses but not the names and email addresses of potential customers. You will just have a list of mostly useless names and email addresses.

The bottom line here is that buying leads is most often a waste of money as well as time and energy that could be better spent building your own opt-in list.

Yes, building an opt-in list is slow and tedious work but you will have a valuable list after you put in that time and effort, not to mention a little more money in your pocket that you didn't spend on worthless leads lists.

Chapter III

Your Autoresponder

Autoresponders have been mentioned more than once in the ebook so far so you are probably aware of the fact that you need one. Here we will go in to more depth about autoresponders; how to choose an autoresponder, how to set up an autoresponder, and how to use an autoresponder to your greatest advantage.

Choosing an Autoresponder

You are most likely aware of the fact that there are free autoresponders to be had on the Internet. You may even be sorely tempted to use one. After all, there are so many expenses that you have no opportunity to avoid and this looks like a useable freebie that could save you several dollars each and every month.

Don't succumb to the temptation of a free autoresponder. You won't be happy with it. The free autoresponders are only free of a monetary charge....they aren't exactly free. Their advertisements will be placed in every message that you send using the autoresponder. This will not look good to your customers and/or potential customers. You really need to get a paid for autoresponder at the very start. You will find that in time you will want one that will be better than any of the free ones can provide and changing autoresponders isn't all that easy.

When you are doing your research to determine which autoresponder will best serve your needs, remember that like every other Internet business, those that you get your autoresponder through have a reputation that they have earned...whether it is a good reputation or a bad one...it has still be earned. You want to find a company that will provide your business with an autoresponder and has a reputation for good, reliable service and high deliverability.

There are, of course, many Pro Autoresponder companies out there. Do your own research and choose for yourself but remember that you do need high deliverability. One of the easiest ways to research them is to look at the very bottom of e-mails you get from the Internet marketing Big Dogs. Since all have unsubscribe links at the bottom, you'll be able to tell, in most cases, who THEY'RE using to contact you. Just remember not to click that link to get to the web site, or you won't get that e-zine any more!

Setting Up Your Autoresponder

When you subscribe to an autoresponder service you will be given detailed instructions for setting it up on your site as well as instructions on how to set up automatic email responses and how to set up emails to be delivered from you to your list.

The instructions for setting up autoresponders vary somewhat from company to company. You don't need to know how to set up all of them. You only need to know how to set up the one that you're going to use.

When you set up your autoresponder, be sure that you set up a 'fly-in' box on the first page of your site and then that there is a 'static subscribe box' on every page of your website.

Putting only one opt-in box on your site would be a lot like going fishing with only one hook.

Loading Messages into Your Autoresponder

Before you load messages into your autoresponder you need to double and maybe triple check to be certain that you have:

- a) Said exactly what you meant to say. Re-read your message carefully and be certain that the content is clear and accurate. Maybe you said 'free' rather than 'almost free'. That could be a costly mistake. Remember the old double negative rule, too. Too negatives make a positive. And anything that you put in writing (emails are considered 'in writing') you can be required legally to abide by so be sure that you are saying exactly what you think you are saying.
- b) Spelling and grammar are correct. Misspelled words and poor grammar will make you look....there is no other word....DUMB. You don't want to look illiterate to your subscribers so double check spelling and grammar. Remember that 'Spell Check' will not catch using 'there' instead of 'their', for example.
- c) Formatted your message correctly. Autoresponders have formats that they require your messages to conform to. If you don't use the approved format, your message will not look right when it is delivered to the recipients.
- d) You must have an unsubscribe link in every message that you send. It's the law. Fortunately, all reliable autoresponder providers put one there automatically, but be sure to check and add one manually if they don't.

- e) You are required to put the name of your company and your physical location and mailing address at the bottom of every email that your autoresponder sends. Many don't, but they're taking the risk of being shut down or charged if they're in a jurisdiction like North America that requires it. Again, check to see if you're a/R provider does this automatically or not.

Once you are sure that you have everything just right, you only need to follow the instructions provided by the autoresponder company to get your messages loaded.

You will find that you can load messages into your autoresponder that will be delivered immediately or on future dates. For example; you can load whole courses into your autoresponder and schedule each part to be delivered on specified dates or at specified time intervals.

Your Welcoming/Confirming Email

Your very first message will be asking the person to confirm their subscription to your list by clicking the confirmation link in that e-mail. In most cases that confirmation e-mail is sent automatically to protect you and the autoresponder company. This is referred to as double-opt-in, and it's the ONLY way to be sure someone didn't simply enter another person's e-mail address just to get your gift.

You will no doubt have your autoresponder set to send out a welcoming note when anyone confirms after opting-in to your list. Of course you will. It's the prudent thing to do.

Now about that welcoming email....you COULD simply welcome them to your list, community, or ezine subscription list, of course, but if you do that, you will be missing a golden opportunity to get a few advertising strikes in while the iron is hot, so to speak.

The person who has just opted into your list is interested NOW so there is no reason that you shouldn't take full advantage of that immediate interest.

If you offered a gift as an incentive to sign up, be sure they're redirected to the download page after they confirm their subscription, but also include a link to that gift in this first e-mail, since automatic redirects mess up fairly frequently online.

Don't be afraid to introduce yourself and your e-zine in that note, but keep it short and direct. And ALWAYS include a link to a least one more related product, either one you sell yourself or an affiliate product if you don't have one directly related to the topic of the e-zine. We usually use the .P.S. section of the note for this link, as people almost ALWAYS read your PS, even if they simply skim through the e-mail body itself.

Unsubscribe Links

You never ever want a subscriber to unsubscribe – but a great many will over the years, and you have got to always give them the opportunity to do that very thing. Every email that is sent by your autoresponder is required to have an unsubscribe link in order to comply with the CAN-SPAM-ACT.

There are ways that you can misuse your autoresponder that will assure that you get lots of opt-outs. SPAM is a bad thing and the people demanded and got laws that make SPAM illegal but just because you have received permission to email a person because they signed into your opt-in program, it is still possible for you to SPAM them. It might be legal SPAM but you won't get to do it long. They will opt out of your program before you can say 'jack sprat'. Be sure every e-mail you send relates to the topic they've asked for information on – if they signed up for your 'Pets' e-zine, don't send them an e-mail about car racing, for example.

Unlimited Autoresponders

Some autoresponder companies allow you to set up and use as many autoresponders as you want. If you have this option, it is one that you should most assuredly make use of.

If you have more than one joint venture going at the time, you should set up a separate autoresponder for each one of them. If you sell more than one product or service, there should be an autoresponder for each of them.

By using different autoresponders for each campaign you will be better able to track each one and be able to tell which is the most successful and maybe even which ones need to be tweaked or even dropped altogether.

Different autoresponders for different campaigns can be set up so that welcoming/confirming emails can advertise for your other campaigns, as well.

Learn Effective Use of Your Autoresponder

Each autoresponder comes with its own set of directions for use. There is way more information than just how to set the autoresponder up on your site and you need to carefully read all of the information provided. In fact, the better services also post information about what works best in your e-zine, how to get the best deliverability and 'open' rates, and often tips on marketing through e-mail successfully.

Think about it from their end – the better you do, the bigger your lists and the larger your operation grows, the greater the chance you'll keep paying them long-term and buy more services from them.

Learn what all of the features offered are and how to use each and every one of them. Each feature is there because it has proven to be useful to users and not just to make it more complicated. Other than the directions for installing and using your autoresponder, you should also carefully read all of the:

- Tips
- FAQ's Section
- Added Features Instructions

Special Autoresponder Features

Click Tracking

One of the added features that you might find is 'click tracking'. This little feature can prove to be very useful indeed. One advantage you can gain by learning to use the click tracking feature is how to write more effective and better targeted email messages that you will have sent by your autoresponder. Click tracking is simply keeping a record of how many people click on which of the links in your e-zine, thus allowing you to rate the effectiveness of each e-mail – and of the site you're directing your readers to.

For example, if your e-mail gets few clicks, you have to revise your e-mail content to make the offer sound more appealing. If you're getting a good response, a high click-through rate, but sales aren't resulting from it, you know the problem is at the web site – either the sales copy doesn't convert them or the product isn't in demand to that particular audience. Not knowing which of those two areas is the culprit leaves you hanging in the dark, groping around blindly trying to fix something – anything – in the hope things will change.

The Personalization Feature

Another feature that you will find to be very useful is the 'personalization feature' that is included in most of the better autoresponders. You don't want your email messages to be sent to 'Dear Customer' or 'Dear Subscriber', do you? That is as bad as the snail mail that comes to your house that is addressed to 'resident'. It looks just like junk mail, it walks like junk mail, it talks like junk mail...it must BE junk mail and that is what the recipients of your email will think when they get something from you addressed to 'Dear Customer' or 'Dear Subscriber', too.

In fact, many of today's spam filters direct all mail using Dear subscriber or Dear Friend (or the same with Hi, such as Hi Friend) directly to the spam box.

Special codes will be provided by your autoresponder company that will allow you to insert the first name or that and other information into each email that is sent to each subscriber.

There are many ways to use the personalization feature that comes with many of the better autoresponders. You will have to learn how to use the personalization feature so that you get the most advantage from it.

The Tracking Feature

The tracking feature of an autoresponder might just be the most valuable feature on it. You certainly do need to learn how to use this feature. It can help you a great deal

After your autoresponder sends out an email, log onto your autoresponder account and, using the tracking feature, look for such things as the number of opt-outs after a certain e-mail is sent. You will be able to tell if people are clicking on the links in your email. You will also be able to see if those clicks are translating into sales.

You Must Have an Autoresponder

An autoresponder is absolutely essential to have if you are doing any kind of business online. Direct Marketing Associations have long known that it can take 6-12 exposures to an offer to get most people to buy from someone they don't yet know. Also, if a visitor doesn't want what's on your site today they just click off, and you have no way to tell them about your next offer, your other sites or affiliate products they may want. Get them on your list if you want to succeed!

Chapter IV

Opt-In Box Placement

The autoresponder service that you choose to use will provide you with opt-in forms for you to place on your website. Where and how you place these opt-in boxes is going to be up to you.

There are many places and many ways to put opt-in boxes on your website. There are opt-in boxes that pop-up, drop-down or stay in one place. Go take a little tour of the Internet. Look at where and how others have placed their opt-in boxes. Decide for yourself what you think would work best for you.

First think about this. What is it exactly that you want your website visitors to do when they get to your site? In a perfect world, they would get to your site, click through your pages, choose the item or items they want and click on the 'buy now' or 'checkout' button. Problem solved! Right?

The problem is that it isn't a perfect world. It is a proven fact that a visitor will go to a site up to seven times before they actually purchase anything on the site....if the EVER do, in fact, purchase at all.

There is another little problem with this imperfect world of Internet marketing. Surfers have a notoriously short attention span. You have about five seconds to grab them before they surf away. That isn't very many ticks of the clock.

Let's say that you are selling dog houses. A shopper goes in search of businesses that sell dog houses and finds your site along with another few hundred sites that also sell dog houses. How are you going to sell this shopper a dog house and do it in five seconds? The answer is that you aren't. You may well eventually sell him that dog house but you aren't going to do it in five seconds and probably not before he has visited your site several times.

The first thing that that visitor needs to see is an opt-in box that promises to help him find what he is looking for and provide him with enough information about dogs and dog houses to help him make a good decision....that would be your opt-in box. If they're looking for dog houses and your opt-in offers your 5-page report on 'What to look for when buying a dog house' as a free gift for subscribing, many if not most visitors will at least subscribe – then it's up to you from that point on.

The 'opt-in' box needs to be in the upper area of each page, high enough that visitors see it before scrolling down at all. It doesn't need to be at the bottom of the page after the customer has scrolled through a long sales pitch. The most productive opt-in boxes are placed on either the top right or top left, directly

below your header graphic. And be sure it's on every page – while your Index page may be the home page TO YOU, you don't know which page the visitors will initially land on, or whether they'll ever even click through to the home page.

You should have an opt-in box that will persuade the surfer to provide his name and email address. People don't easily part with that information in this day and age of identity thieves and hackers so you are going to have to give them a really good reason for giving their names and email addresses to you.

For example in the case of selling a dog house: Your headline might be, "tell me about your dog, maybe I can help." You might have a form that asks about the breed, the size and the age of the dog and a preprogrammed reply in your autoresponder that will be sent according to the answers given. The surfer gets your recommendations about a dog house and you get the surfer's name and email address. Mission accomplished! You might not sell the dog house right away but the person will eventually buy one and you have the opportunity to make the sale.

I have seen sites where I had to actually go in search of the opt-in box. It would be my guess that these sites aren't adding greatly to their opt-in lists.

- There should be a 'fly-in box' on the home page of your site and there should also be a static subscribe box on every other page of your website.
- These boxes should all have a promise of privacy attached to them.
- Static boxes on all your website pages should either be in the upper left or upper right hand corner above the scroll line.
- There should be a privacy statement below each and every opt-in box on each page of the website.
- There should be an incentive for signing into your opt-in list that is valuable and enticing enough to get visitors to opt-in other wise it won't make much difference where you put it. **BE SURE IT'S DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS' NEEDS!**

Chapter V

Squeeze Pages/Landing Pages

You have heard the term and you may have a fairly good understanding of what a 'squeeze page' is. Squeeze Page is defined as: "In Internet and online advertising vernacular, a squeeze page is a Web page that contains information that would interest the marketer's targeted readers. Squeeze pages are designed to obtain a reader's name and e-mail address information by encouraging users to opt-in to an e-mail list to receive more information about the topic. Marketers will collect the permission-based e-mail and information to follow up at a later date." This definition was supplied by the [webopedia](#).

There is a difference between a real squeeze page and a landing page. The squeeze page is a page that is only designed to capture the names and email addresses of visitors while a landing page may contain an opt-in box and an incentive to sign into an opt-in list but it also contains links to other information and other services, as well. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably, however, so keep that distinction in mind.

If you can build any webpage, you can build a squeeze page yourself. There are some simple and basic principles involved that are really rather obvious when you stop to think about them.

- Keep it short and simple.
- Place your opt-in box where it is easily seen.
- Promise privacy.
- Give them a good reason and enough of an incentive to get them to sign into your mailing list.

Those are the basics. The devil, as they say, is always in the details.

Keeping it short means keeping your sales pitch down to 300 or 400 words and that isn't many words. You have to say only what you need to get the signup.

Your privacy statement should say something like, "We hate SPAM as much as you do and we will never sell, rent, trade or share your information with others."

The incentive that you offer to encourage a visitor to opt-in to your mailing list has to be good enough and have enough value or they will surf away quickly. E-books, special reports and temporary memberships in membership sites are the three most often used incentives.

There is also software available to help you build your squeeze page or landing page. Some of this software is very good and can increase your opt-in sign ups greatly. Like everything else, there are good ones and then there are those that leave a lot to be desired.

You can find a lot of different ones by doing a search. All you need to do is type "Squeeze Page Software" into the search box of your favorite search engines. You will get a great many hits.

Whatever course you choose to take, you must build your squeeze pages well in order to build your opt-in list.

Chapter VI

How to Use Your Opt-In List

We've been talking about building a list for many pages now. If you use the strategies of list building that have been shown here, you will build a good solid list of real prospects in time.

This is not, of course, the only information you can find about list building on the Internet. Bazillions of words have been written on the subject of list building. You can't find any Internet marketing courses or advice that doesn't include how important it is to build a list and how to go about doing so.

What nobody tells you is how best to use your opt-in list. It doesn't matter whether you have a list that has 10 names and email addresses on it or 10,000 names and email addresses on it, the best ways of using an opt-in list remains the same.

Keep It Short and Sweet

In the South there is a term for those who talk too much. They are said to be 'too wordy'. These are people who use 20 words when 3 would have sufficed. Being called 'too wordy' is not a compliment.

Just because you have permission to email the members of your opt-in list, doesn't mean that they gave you permission to 'talk their ears off'.

Write the email that you plan to have your autoresponder send to your list. Now read the email carefully and find where you can convey the same information in a lot fewer words. Rewrite it. Reread it. If you can cut down on words again, do so, and keep repeating this process until you have said all that needs to be said in as few words as possible.

You should use short sentences and short paragraphs. The email needs to be scannable. It has been proven time and time again that people will not read long blocks of text.

It's a good idea to use bullet point to call attention to the most important points that you are making.

An email sent to the members of your opt-in list should seldom be more than 300 to 400 words long.

The Subject Line

Even if your emails are short and sweet, they can still get hit by the deadly delete button before they are read if the subject line is weak and ineffective.

An attention-getting subject line is vital. Think about subject lines of emails that you would read before you deleted them might be.

A subject line is to emails as a 'hook' is to fishing. Without a good one you won't catch anything. Here is the procedure that will serve you well:

- Write your email before you write your subject line.
- Read what you have written.
- Write your subject line to highlight the best point in your e-mail
- Use some imagination but don't get too 'cute'.

Use your subject line like hook to get the recipients to open and read what you have sent.

Put First Things First

Once an email recipient has opened an email because the subject line got their attention, your next objective is to hold their attention long enough for them to find out what your offer is and how they can benefit from it.

The first line of the first paragraph is second in importance only to the subject line. You need to make your strongest point first. Unlike a good joke, an email to your opt-in list starts with the punch line. You don't have time to 'warm up' to your subject and the recipients want to get on with their day so just start with the most important part of what you are offering.

Use the first line of the first paragraph to set the hook and make your most important point.

Use the Correct Form

Use only ASCII characters. There are hundreds of email programs and they don't all work the same. There is, however, one way to be certain that every recipient of your email will be able to read it in whatever email program they use and that is to only use ASCII characters – usually referred to as 'Plain Text'.

The best way to assure that your email is only using ASCII characters is to write it in Notepad and not in Word Pad or a Microsoft Word document. Basically, ASCII characters are the ones that you see on your keyboard. However, there is a difference in the way some characters are displayed when written in a Microsoft Word or Word Pad document and the way they are displayed in a note pad document. The most obvious difference is the quotation marks and the apostrophe characters (“word” and the ‘word’).

You will notice that the quotation marks are slightly curved when you use them in a word document but they are not curved in a word pad document. These characters are called ‘smart quotes’ in word pad documents and will not display correctly in all email reader programs. The curved ones are not displayed in a Notepad document and will display correctly in all email readers.

You should format the email so that there are no more than 60 characters per line. This might leave a lot of white space on the right side in some email readers but the email will be readable in all email applications.

Use the Right ‘Tone’

Think about how you speak to the people in the offline world. You don’t speak to all of them in the same ‘tone’ or use the same words to describe things. You suit your tone and choose your words according to the person that you are speaking to. You also use different tones and choose different words depending upon the topic being discussed.

For example: You would not use the same tone or the same words to apologize to your boss for being late that you would use to your significant other for being late. It’s the same situation (you were late) but it’s a different person (one is your boss and the other is your significant other). Yet, the tone you use and the words you choose for each person are different.

There is a time to use formal speech and there is a time to use formal language in snail mail and there is a time to use formal language in email. You might use a more formal tone to a customer that you were apologizing to than you would use, for example, in your newsletter.

When you write your emails that will be sent to the members of your opt-in list, think about the real human beings who will (hopefully) be reading them. Nobody likes being talked ‘down’ to and most people are seriously turned off by formal wording unless the situation demands it.

Using big words might make you feel smart but if the recipient of your email needs to refer to a dictionary to figure out what you are saying, you’ll be feeling smart and broke.

Effective sales emails that you send to the members of your opt-in list should most often be toned in the same way that you would speak to a friend or a co-worker. They should be casual enough to sound friendly and business-like enough to get the message across.

Don't be afraid to use humor or tell a joke if the recipients of your email would appreciate it. The use of humor and jokes is one of the quickest ways to get your email to go viral. But do it only when it is appropriate. Remember, too, that a tone that is too casual can come across as being disrespectful. And never forget this is your BUSINESS – off-color or any other humor that ANYONE might object to should be left out if you expect to succeed. For the same reason, avoid commenting on politics, religion, etc unless that's the specific topic of your e-zine.

Set the tone and the language of your emails to your opt-in list members at 'friendly business between equals'.

Avoid Shouting

The use of ALL CAPS in email and other written communication is considered 'shouting'. You don't want your opt-in members to feel like you are yelling at them.

Have you seen those super duper salesmen on TV? They are usually the proud owners of a business and have chosen to make their own TV commercials. For some strange reason they seem to think that if they just yell loud enough that what they are saying will be heard better. What is really gets them is a lot of mute buttons being pushed. Nobody likes to be yelled at.

Exclamation points are another way of yelling. An exclamation point is meant to convey importance but multiple exclamation points are akin to shouting. "This is a one-time offer!" is an exclamatory sentence that says it is important and should be taken note of. "**THIS IS A ONE-TIME OFFER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**" is yelling... even screaming. If this kind of advertising were on TV it would get hit with a mute button and if it is in email it will get hit by the delete button.

In the text of your email, use italics, use bullets, use numbering, use asterisks or use underlining for emphasis but....

Don't use all capital letters and don't over-use exclamation points.

Using a Post Script

The post script (PS) line of an email to your list can be used for emphasis or it can be used as a reminder of an event. It is important to remember that people rarely actually read an entire email. Often they only read the subject line, the first line of the first paragraph, the highlighted or bulleted points, and the PS.

Use the post script to your best advantage. It is one thing that most people actually read.

The Unsubscribe Option

Sadly, it is the law that you must offer the unsubscribe option in each email that you send.

Typically readers expect to see this option below the signature and any post script (PS). However, there are no hard and fast rules requiring that the unsubscribe option be placed in any certain place or worded in any particular way. It just has to be included in each email that you sent to your opt-in list.

Most autoresponders have an opt-out statement that you can use. You can either use the one provided or you can write your own.

I'm sorry but it is the law. You must include the unsubscribe option.

In Summary...

Congrats - You now know more about building a list and effectively using that list than most people on the planet – the big question now is what you'll do with that knowledge. If you don't put this information to use, take action, it won't be of a lot of help to you.

But if you use it to help you build a big list and market more effectively to that list, your tiny investment in the e-book will be repaid thousands, tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of times over. Every Big Dog marketer uses their e-mail lists to make 6, 7 and 8 figures a year online – hopefully we'll see you in our midst soon!

To you list-building success...