

12 Ways to Build Your Email List

Building an email mailing list - and mailing to it regularly - is one of the most effective strategies for boosting website traffic and sales. Whether you send your subscribers editorial information about your industry or niche, or send out mailings with information alerting them to new or updated products, discounts, and special offers, your email newsletter can start delivering traffic and sales within minutes of the time you send it. The more names on your mailing list, the more traffic and sales you'll generate.

And, that's the rub. Acquiring email addresses for a mailing list is a challenge for many small businesses. Most don't know how to legally get email addresses to mail to. Others, who have acquired a reasonable sized mailing list over time, find that many of the older email addresses on their list are now undeliverable. Job changes, a move to a new geographical location, change of ISPs, marriages (name changes for women), and other factors cause individuals to abandon email addresses and acquire new ones.

Email acquisition, therefore, needs to be an ongoing effort. Here are several proven strategies you can use to build your email list.

1. Be sure you have an email sign up form on every page on your website. Remember, not every visitor will find their way to your home page.
2. Let visitors know what benefits you'll get by subscribing to your email list.
3. Create a newsletter archive on your website. Post all past newsletters on the site.
4. In addition to the signup boxes on individual pages on your website, create a web page dedicated to acquiring subscriptions. That page should have the signup form, benefits for signing up, testimonials and links to newsletter archives.
5. Include a link to your free newsletter in the author's resource box in articles you submit to article distribution sites. Be sure the link leads to the dedicated newsletter sign up page on your website.
6. Include a link to subscribe to your newsletter in the signature line you use when you participate in email discussion lists.
7. At trade shows, hand out flyers or business cards that direct people to a page on your website where they can subscribe to your newsletter.
8. Consider using a popup to remind people to subscribe to your newsletter. If you use DHTML to generate the popup it won't be blocked by popup blockers. Although you may think a lot of people dislike pop-ups, they do work. In fact, a pop-up advertising your newsletter on your website can double or triple the number of signups.
9. Look for co-registration opportunities. If you can find partners who reach the same audience you reach but aren't direct competitors, cross-promote each other's newsletters with links on the email subscription thank you pages.
10. Include forward to friend links when you mail your newsletter.

11. Add an email list opt-in box in forms visitors have to complete before getting access to white papers or free e-books you publish.
12. Include a link to your email subscription page in press releases you send out.

Janet Attard