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List Building Pitfalls Revealed

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Intro

List Building Mistakes To Avoid

When it comes to making money online, developing a targeted subscriber base of active and repeat customers is an essential ingredient in the recipe to success.

Having a list in your marketing arsenal will instantly maximize your outreach, while making it easier to make money with less work involved.

For example, with a mailing list you can simply create broadcasts that go out to your entire subscriber base that feature a blend of high quality information and content with promotional based offers.

You can then include affiliate promotions for products and services that you are interested in advertising, as well as gaining valuable feedback from your subscribers on the different types of products that they are interested in.

This information will help you develop your own product line of high quality, in demand products with a ready-made customer base waiting to purchase your releases.

It's an exceptionally easy thing to build a list, even if you are a complete newcomer to the world of online marketing and business. The trouble comes with people approach list building in such a way as to hinder their chances of actually being able to fully monetize their mailing list.

Let's take a look at the most common mistakes made by email marketers.

Not using a professional autoresponder

One of the most important steps you'll ever take as an email marketer is in choosing to power your mailing lists by establishing an account with a professional autoresponder provider.

There are many different reasons why setting up a remotely hosted autoresponder account is important, including:

1) Increased Deliverability

There is no sense in spending time crafting a high quality broadcast or email if no one is able to receive it.

By setting up your mailing list with an experience autoresponder service team, you can rest assured that your emails will make it to their destination.

It's their job to maximize deliverability rates and help you connect to your subscriber base quickly and easily.

Professional autoresponder providers typically offer a quick "email check" prior to sending out your email that will analyze your mailing and determine whether it's likely to be filtered by anti-spam tools. This enables you to quickly edit your email so that it is far more likely to be processed into your recipient's inbox.

2) Safeguarding Your Mailing Lists

Professional autoresponder providers offer frequent back-ups of your database, in the event it becomes corrupted or inaccessible.

This is extremely important, because the last thing you would want to do is spend the time and energy developing a massive list of subscribers, only to lose it all.

Your autoresponder service provider will also handle all requests to unsubscribe, helps you comply with CanSpam regulations and provides you with the ability to write as many newsletter messages as you wish, and set up the dates and times when you want them to be published.

This means that you can write all of your messages at once and have them trickle out to your subscribers on specific dates.

3) Important Features

If you are interested in maximizing your open rate and overall response rates, you need to utilize the different features available within your autoresponder account including your average open rate, opt-out rate, response rate and whether any complaints have been sent in regarding your recent mailing.

Keeping a pulse on your subscriber base and how well they response to your broadcasts will help you improve your mailings and tailor your campaigns so that they directly communicate with those who have subscribed to your lists.

You can review detailed statistics for your entire newsletter by logging into your autoresponder administration panel (most autoresponder services should offer enhanced features, some with the option to upgrade for access to advanced tools)

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is quite difficult to switch autoresponder providers once you have established a mailing list as your subscribers will have to re-subscribe to your new list.

Keep this in mind when you begin building your lists and choose to create an account with a reputable autoresponder company right from the start.

Here are two recommendations:

Get Response: www.GetResponse.com

Aweber: www.Aweber.com

Poorly structured squeeze page

One of the most important elements of a successful email marketing campaign begins with a well-constructed squeeze page.

Your squeeze page is the 'doorway' into your email marketing system and if it fails to convert visitors into subscribers, you will struggle to build your lists. Your squeeze page needs to be very clean and simple.

You want people who visit your website to be given ONE option only; to subscribe to your newsletter.

This means that you need to minimize any external links, and really emphasis your opt-in form.

You also want to limit the graphics that you use on your squeeze page, so that it loads quickly and doesn't distract your visitor from your objective; getting them on your mailing list.

In order to create an effective squeeze page that encourages visitors into subscribing to your list, consider the different types of incentives that you can offer. When it comes to listing the benefits you need to be clear and concise.

Make sure they understand 'what is in it for them', and what you are offering that will assist them (remember, solve a problem, address an issue, offer a way to save time, money, relationships, etc).

When creating the body content for your squeeze page, consider underlining, highlighting or colorizing important information so that you can draw attention to the areas of your squeeze page that you want your website visitors to pay special attention to.

Savvy marketers feature a "bribe" on their squeeze pages that provide a special offer in exchange for a visitor subscribing to their lists.

You could offer:

- Free Report
- Free Ebooks
- Free Designs or Templates

- Free Graphic Packages
- Free Video Guides
- Free Tutorials
- Free Sample Chapter (from a paid product)
- Free e-Courses, Newsletter, Magazine

This a very effective method of building your list, however you need to make sure that whatever you decide to offer is directly targeted towards your niche market.

Make sure that your squeeze page looks professional with a clean template and simple layout. If you aren't familiar with HTML and editing code, you will find it easier to purchase a pre-designed squeeze page template that you can easily edit and customize to suit your needs.

Here are a few resources worth checking out:

<http://www.hotvideosqueezetemplates.com/>

<http://www.squeezepages.com>

Failing to split test

Split testing squeeze pages is an important element of a successful email marketing campaign.

Regardless how well you design your site, or how thoroughly you analyze each section of your squeeze page, there is no way that you will be able to accurately predict how well your visitors will respond to your offer, without comparatively testing alternative layouts.

One easy method of testing your pages and evaluating conversion rates is by using Google's Website Optimizer, a free tool that will help you run simple split tests of any websites you own.

You can sign up for a free account at:

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

When split testing, start with only one element at a time.

For example, if you change the headline on your squeeze page, leave everything else in its original state until you determine whether tweaking your headline helps with conversion rates.

Since you are split testing different layouts and overall structure, you don't have to get it right the first time, as long as you consistently work to tweak your copy until you are able to significantly maximize conversion rates.

Once you have determined what headline works best, change another element of your squeeze page, such as the color scheme, opt-in box frame, or summary of your offer.

Always test the original against the variation and give it enough time to accurately determine whether your changes have increased your subscription rate before making any permanent changes.

Google's Website Optimizer tool will provide with enough information to be able to quickly analyze and evaluate your progress.

Failing to build brand awareness

It's important to build brand awareness and develop a relationship with your subscriber base, because the more that your list members trust you and the product recommendations that you make, the easier it will be to convert those subscribers into repeat customers.

Every message and broadcast that you send to your subscriber base should directly represent

You should also register your own domain names and set up professional hosting accounts that can house your squeeze pages and websites. It's important that you establish an online presence and give people clear direction as to how they can reach you or find out more about you.

There are many different providers available online that offer both domain names and hosting accounts including <http://www.hostgator.com>

Promoting irrelevant products

It's important to build brand awareness and develop a relationship with your subscriber base, because the more that your list members trust you and the product recommendations that you make, the easier it will be to convert those subscribers into repeat customers.

Every email you send to your list should directly work towards strengthening your brands recognition for value. This means that you must be extremely careful with the kinds of products you promote as well as the quality of the products you endorse.

Whether you are the developer or not, if you give it your stamp of approval, your subscriber base will hold you accountable should the product or service fail to deliver.

You should therefore always review each product or offer you are planning to promote so that you can not only stand behind it, but can directly answer any questions that your subscribers may have about the offer.

You also need to make sure that the products and services you are advertising are relevant to your newsletters overall theme or topic. If your subscriber originally signed up for your newsletter in order to receive information on “dog training”, they aren’t likely going to be responsive (or impressed) if you begin to send out content relating to “online marketing”.

Keep your emails focused and relevant. If you end up venturing into a new niche or are interested in exploring other markets, you should work towards creating individual segmented lists for each niche.

Failing to deliver quality content

This is perhaps one of the biggest mistakes (and fatal mistakes) that both new and seasoned email marketers make when running their list campaigns.

While the objective of building email lists is to effectively monetize them, you need to earn the right to send out promotional based emails.

This starts with first building a relationship with your list by offering high quality content, free tools and resources and material that is helpful and well received.

Once you have worked towards connecting with your subscriber base, however, you need to maintain that relationship by focusing on a well balance of solid, high quality content with any promotional emails you send out.

In fact, one way of maximizing open rates and response from your subscriber base is to over-deliver on quality content even during times when you don’t have a scheduled launch or affiliate program that you are planning to promote.

People tend to notice habits, and if they discover that the only time you seem interested in contacting them is when you have something to sell or promote, you will quickly lose any trust and credibility that you may have earned from your previous communication.

Keep this in mind whenever you create a new email campaign or broadcast.

Consider whether your email truly offers value and is written so that it genuinely benefits your subscriber base. If you build a solid relationship and brand with your subscribers, you’ll subsequently build a very responsive and loyal customer base.

Letting their lists run cold

You absolutely need to focus on staying in constant communication with your subscriber base. This doesn't mean that you necessarily have to email them every day, but what you want to do is consider creating a posting schedule so that you can get into the habit of connecting with your subscribers regularly, while demonstrating consistency. Your subscribers will then begin to expect your emails on certain days and by doing this, you will begin to see a dramatic increase in your open rates.

The more consistent you are with your broadcasts, the easier it will be to condition your subscribers to accept promotional based emails and advertisements in between mailings containing free content and resources.

Failing to segment

Segmenting your lists does more than maximize your chances of having your emails delivered successfully. List segmenting will also help you effectively communicate and target specific subscribers, increasing response rate and helping you create successful broadcasts.

For example, if you developed a mailing list catering to the "Internet Marketing" crowd, it's likely that your subscribers come from different backgrounds, are currently at different levels of their marketing training or are interested in various areas of the Internet Marketing industry.

By segmenting your lists, you can create content based on each groups interests and skill levels as well as develop products and services around each subscriber category.

With aweber, you can easily segment your lists by creating a custom field for your actual opt-in form. This custom field should help you better identify your subscriber based on their location, skills and interest.

Using our Internet Marketing list as an example, a custom field could include "How long have you been involved in Internet Marketing?" which subscribers would answer at the point of subscription.

You could then log into your aweber account and conduct a search that would pull up people who had provided specific information in the custom field.

You can then save each group into its own individual list, and name it accordingly (New Marketers, 3 Years experience, Seasoned Marketers, etc) so that you can easily remember it for future broadcasts that you send out.

Simply select the group whenever you create a new email and it will be sent only to this group.

Copy & paste fanatics

When it comes to promoting affiliate products to your list, you need to avoid the common “lazy email marketer” tactic of utilizing existing affiliate resources to promote products and services to your list.

Instead, create customized emails that truly connect with your target audience and speak directly to your subscriber base.

Since the majority of affiliate marketers will be busy using the pre-made content offered by the merchant, you will be able to stand apart from the crowd by simply developing your own unique promotional based content.

Besides, you know your subscriber base and what they are likely going to respond to, and by crafting emails that really touch down on the things that are most important to them, you will be able to maximize the results of every broadcast.

Failing to monetize

While it's very important to provide your list with fresh, useful and free content, resources and information, you are in the business of email marketing so that you can build a profitable business and you need to get into the habit of monetizing your list right from the start.

Here are a few ways to quickly monetize your lists:

1) Affiliate Products

You can promote third party products to your list, where you will earn a commission each time one of your subscribers purchases the product using your referral link.

To begin, visit <http://www.ClickBank.com> or <http://www.PayDotCom.com> and review products relating to your market from within their marketplace.

With these two resources alone, you will have an unlimited number of products available to promote, covering dozens of niche markets.

2) Sell Advertising Space

There are many benefits of offering ad space within your newsletter including the fact that you can set your own price structure based on the number of subscribers you currently have the exposure that you are able to offer to potential advertisers and sponsors, increasing your prices as your list grows.

You can also consider solo mailings at a higher price once your list has grown enough to make it worth their while.

With offering ad space within your newsletter, you are in full control of the types of advertisements that you accept, so if you currently have your own product line, you could avoid promoting competing products.

In order to set up a successful advertising program, you will need to be able to provide detailed statistics and demographics regarding your subscriber base.

I recommend building your list to at least 1,000 subscribers prior to offering advertising space so that you are able to offer greater value to potential advertisers who are looking to maximize exposure for their products and services.

Advertising Tip:

When it comes to locating potential advertisers, you can sign up for a free account at <http://www.Text-Ad-Links.com> or <http://www.Adbrite.com> where you will be able to create advertising offers that feature your pricing, statistics and overall website or list theme.

3) Sell Private Label Content

Private label material is pre-created content that is available for resale, either with “transferable” rights (where you are allowed to transfer the right to sell the product to your customers) or with personal rights where only you are allowed to sell or distribute it.

What you want to do is purchase high quality reports, articles, ebooks and other material that is of high quality and relevant to your list.

Then, spend some time re-packaging the content so that it’s an improved version of the original, and customized so that it showcases your personal style and brand.

You should also focus on purchasing private label content developed by writers who are offering only a limited number of licenses, which will dramatically increase the value of the material and minimize the amount of competition who are offering the same content.

Regardless of where you purchase private label material, you should always spend time going over the material, tweaking and improving it and increasing the quality of the information whenever possible.

This doesn't have to be a time consuming process, and if you have purchased quality content you can easily re-package it just by editing the title, adding in a foreword, revising chapter titles, and adding in an introduction and conclusion page.

4) Create Your Own Products

With direct access to potential customers, you already know the types of products or services they are interested in, so the next logical step is to create your very own product or service catering to your existing subscriber base.

Consider surveying your subscribers to determine what types of products or services they would be interested in and create a secondary squeeze page so that subscribers can choose to join your new newsletter to receive information on when your product is ready to launch.

This will help you determine the overall demand for specific products prior to creating them.