

ROOKIE'S GUIDE TO PROFITABLE LIST BUILDING

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**LEARN HOW TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE
OPT-IN LIST FOR PROFITABLE
INTERNET MARKETING**

RICHARD GOLDHAWK



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1. THE ROLE OF BUILDING LISTS IN INTERNET MARKETING

Introduction

One of the most important things in an Internet Marketing business is a list of contacts. Just as in any other business, online businesses also need to build relationships with their customers. Subscribers are the contacts on your lists that are the most valuable asset of your online business. Therefore, list building leads to building relationships, which in turn encourages prospects to visit your website, sign up and get closer to buying your offer.

But people are not just going to flock to a website and leave their contact information! To attract them, they must perceive some value. The first thing they are going to think about is how they will benefit from giving you their contact details.

That's why every business that does online marketing must build its own lists, targeted at specific prospects. It is time consuming. You have to work really hard. But in the end, you will directly enjoy the fruits of your efforts.

Lists - the Online Marketer's Treasure

You have probably been to several websites that have a box that ask you to enter your name and email address. When you fill this box in, you're adding your name and email to somebody's opt-in list. This is one of several ways to build your lists. These lists allow you to then market to your past traffic through email marketing.

Now, if you think that there aren't many people on email – think again. Email marketing is one of the most popular and effect ways to build a list and market to people. In fact, most people have at the very least a free email that they check occasionally. There are even more people who check their email at least every ten minutes. In fact, in this day and age, a person without an email address is like a person who doesn't have a home.

Many people are also afraid of making people angry by sending them newsletters. They are also afraid of being accused of sending spam. Well, this is where the "opt-in" part comes in. You are asking people for permission to market to them by having them fill out the form. If they know that they will be getting a monthly newsletter when they put in their information, then you are free to market and email to them. Now, you do need to be sure to include an unsubscribe option at the bottom of your newsletters in case people decide they don't want to receive it anymore.

The great thing about these lists is that you know these people are interested in what you have to offer. They have been to your site, they have seen what you are all about and they have signed up to receive more information and updates. By utilizing opt-in lists, you are opening yourself up to a world of people who are potential customers, and that is what it's all about.

Everyone talks about his or her 'opt-in' lists. It's their treasure. They are always looking for new and innovative ways to build their lists to keep visitors coming to their sites continuously. They offer various things to the prospective customer like free reports, e-books, software, memberships, services etc. just to get their email address and other identifiable information. It is essential to keep

following up with people who might be interested in what you are offering. Only when you have a growing list can you facilitate your users to visit your site. It grabs their attention and takes them to those areas of the site that are of particular value to them.

Why Have A Growing List?

Is it not sufficient to have a few hundred contacts? In online marketing, not every visitor buys from the site he or she is visiting. Sure you may have built a huge database of contacts, but unless each one is a qualified contact, there is no guarantee that they will take any purchase-related action when they visit. Even in the offline world, you usually cannot get a buying decision out of your prospect right away – it takes not less than 5 visits unless they are desperately in need.

Again, if you deal with more than one product, different visitors may be interested in different products. That is why you have to get your visitor's email id and name as they browse through your site. This will let you plan a frequency at which you can remind them and keep them updated about current offers to keep the sales coming in.

You must use ethical methods to build your lists. The worst thing in Internet marketing is acquiring a bad reputation, because that will ensure that you can never do business again.

2. WHAT YOU NEED TO BUILD LISTS

The people on your list are your target customers. You must convert them into a base that looks forward to what you want to tell them.

You yourself must be easily reachable. When you do this, people slowly begin to have faith in you. When you communicate with your contacts, you must sound approachable and friendly rather than seriously formal.

Let us talk about the basic things you need before you actually experiment with different methods of building lists and stick to the ones that work most profitably for your particular line of activity.

A Website

The first thing you must set up is your website, so that your contacts have a place to come to and find you. They also need a place where they can securely leave their email and name. You must ensure that they do not have any difficulty in the process. Not only that, you want to give them something of value to remember. Your website is practically your main point of contact

with your users. So make sure you build a site that is good to look at. That does not mean graphics rich and jazzy, but something that is designed to be professional and effective. It must attract your users enough for them to want to browse around and check out what you have for them. Use pleasant colors and relevant images, a good layout and useful information.

Your site must provide crisp content. Write it in such a way that it draws their attention – like a magnetic headline, bulleted points, etc. On top of everything else, it should endorse your own image.

Do it in a way that is unique and memorable for your visitor. They are only going to be there for seconds before they move on to browse elsewhere. It must have something special for your prospect to remember and come back. The number of sites on the Internet is growing rapidly and it is up to you to make yours look special.

A point to bear in mind here is that even after you've drawn the visitor to your site, there is no fixed rule that says they must purchase from you the first time they go by your site. Which means we must make sure there is some way by which they can leave their contact information behind before they go? You do need to remind them and follow up, don't you? You can do this by asking them to sign up in exchange for something valuable to them – like a free download or newsletter. In this manner, your list continues to build. You must find a way to follow up with these contacts to that they become your customers.

Autoresponder

The next thing is your autoresponder. (We will talk about this more in detail in a subsequent section). Subscribe to one that suits your needs best. These are a wonderful way to automate your follow up, when you have to keep in touch with your customers regularly. You might find it easy to keep in touch with, say 200 or 300 people, but when the list runs to thousands, just imagine the amount of time you'll spend, time that you can devote

to more creative activities. Instead, a good Auto responder can help you tremendously in keeping up with your reminding and emailing.

Ways to Bring Traffic to Your Site

Coming to the main purpose of this book – unless you bring traffic to your site, how will you build lists? Right. But bear in mind that your traffic must be relevant to your requirement. In Internet marketing, the pay per click advertising campaign method is effective. What you really need to take care about is the keywords you use; they must especially relate to your unique product. Also, writing articles about topics related to your business and posting them on online directories can bring in traffic. You can tie up with an allied business so that together you can offer a range of services and mutually benefit while building those lists.

Relevant Content

It follows from the above that you must be attentive to what you write in your emails. You users will look for information that is useful and relevant to them. If you don't send them messages that are meaningful, they will cease to read them. On top of that, they will unsubscribe. So make sure you provide value, because it will be a worthwhile investment. And, though it seems obvious, each contact must be able to sign up with you easily. Which means, every official communication that goes out of your office, whether online or snail mail, must contain your web URL, and encourage them to get on your list.

You must remember that it is not just for size that you are growing your list. Why you are doing it is so you can convert it into business. You can start with a strong small list and build it as you go along.

If you haven't already decided what you are going to offer and to whom you are going to sell it – your product and your target

market- do it now. Pick something you are interested in and get familiar with it. Some people even select products sold by others, and when they become confident, choose something similar and market it.

3. KINDS OF LISTS

Obviously the best list you can maintain for your email marketing is the one you build from your own customers and visitors who browse your website. But it is not enough to only have a list of those you know. You also want to bring in new customers all the time. Let's talk about different kinds of lists in online marketing.

Opt-in Lists

An opt-in list is your list of subscribers who opted to receive your email, E-zine, newsletter or whatever you offered when they signed up. It means they have allowed you to contact them via email. Here, a targeted opt-in list would be a list of users who have been qualified for your specific market. Your subscriber becomes a part of your email list.

How Does an Opt-In List differ From an E-zine?

Opt-in lists are informal and brief. They are full of tips, etc. and have limited period offers. Invariably opt-in lists are mailed when something new is to be introduced or to tell its users that a

particular offer is available only for the next 48 hours, or something like that. E-zines, on the other hand, are formal. These carry articles and other hints. The periodicity of E-zines can be anything from a daily to once in two weeks or once a month. Actually if you really look at it, you'll find that both opt-in lists and E-zines are quite integrated. E-zines have opt-in lists built into them, in the sense that along with their usual features, they include a section where they announce a new product launch, perhaps offering it to their subscribers at a special price or as a free download in the next 24 hours.

Double Opt-in Lists

Double opt-in is when your subscriber opts in two times. How? First, on the website when he or she clicks and confirms their subscription after giving their email id and name. After this they click on the link sent to them at the email address which they signed up with to confirm their subscription. So it means not only opting to be on the list, but also confirming it by verifying their email ids.

Opt-out Lists

Opt-out is when your subscriber asks for his/her email address to be deleted from your list when they no longer want to receive messages from you. They can do this through the "unsubscribe" link that you include in your emails to them. But did you know that some online marketers provide their users an unsubscribe link that does not work. When the user clicks the link, it sometimes goes into the wrong hands adding the user to some spammer's list under the assumption that the email address is being validated.

These days, reputed companies make sure that they only send email to subscribers when they permit them to. By sending email to those who opted not to receive them will only end up irritating the user and mess up the credibility of the online business. Why

lose all the effort you put in by simply not respecting your customer?

4. LEADS, LEADS AND MORE LEADS

When you are building a list it is all about quality and not quantity. Sure, you can send out a newsletter every day, but soon people are simply going to begin deleting your emails. This is because they are being solicited everyday and they get tired of that very quickly. What you accomplish by doing this is you create a list that is unresponsive and that is not how you are going to make any money. Plus, you will eventually have a list with no emails on it!

The key is responsiveness. It is much better to have a list that has 2,000 responsive customers than a list with 20,000 names and no responses. Once you begin building your list, you will begin making sales if they are responsive and that will begin to earn you money on a weekly basis. Now, you may be wondering how you are supposed to get these responsive people. The answer is leads. No lead is a bad lead, although several Internet marketing gurus will deny that. They do agree, however, that the money is in the list.

Why Do You Need Leads?

You need leads to make money! You need people on your list to buy your products! Now, there are several different types of leads and we will explore those here.

Low Grade Leads

These are leads that you purchase through a company. You can pay \$35 and receive 20,000 names. Now, the chances of those emails being good and those people being interested in your services are pretty slim. Also, even if you are spam compliant, you are probably going to get spam complaints on your emails. What does this mean? This means you need to avoid these companies the same way you avoid a can of spam. They do nothing but spell trouble for your list.

Now, there are good lead companies that you may consider. You may get a few spam complaints, but nothing that is going to put you out of business. Besides, if they're not interested, you do provide them an out. These companies get leads from running networks of free sites and classified sites. In order to place free advertisements, they have to provide their email address. These people are usually interested in some sort of product you have to sell if they are in your niche.

Good Leads

These are leads those that you can get through Free Advertisement Programs, Co-Opt Programs and Giveaway sites. These are better than those that you get from companies because they have signed up through your squeeze page. Usually, you offer some sort of free gift if they sign up. The bad thing is that they usually unsubscribe from your list after they receive the free gift. But, you will still usually retain some interested folk.

The Best Leads

These leads are those that you receive through paid advertising websites. You can use sites such as Google AdWords or Overture to obtain these leads. They are targeted leads and they are usually in response to your advertisements, which means that there is some interest in your products there. These are also the most expensive leads you will get because these services are not cheap and you will need to be prepared to invest in this type of advertising. However, they are the best leads that you can get and worth their weight in gold.

Landing Pages and Squeeze Pages

Now, you have probably heard of these things, but you may not have the slightest idea what they are exactly. These are perhaps some of the most important pages you can have on your website. These are the pages that help to generate your good leads. This where you get the contact information of interested parties and add them to your autoresponder.

These are sales pages, so you have to sell yourself. This is very important and there are two different categories that these fall under.

Gift Pages

These are pages where you offer a gift to sign up on your newsletter or mailing list. You will provide some sort of free item. For example, if you are selling an e-book you may provide them with a free chapter. If you are selling software, you may provide them with a trial version. The key is that they have to sign up for your newsletter in order to receive this free gift. Now, some of these people will only use you for your free gift and then unsubscribe, but if your gift is really good then they are more than likely going to stay on your list. Now, in order to keep people on your list, you need to keep selling yourself in all of your newsletters.

The Benefits Page

With this type of sales page you will sell the benefits of being a subscriber to your newsletter. You will tell your potential customers what exactly they will receive for joining your list. This is also where you will want to sell yourself. You are going to want to tell people two things on this type of sales page:

1. What you can provide the reader
2. Why they should listen to you

On this type of page you have to bring out all the stops and really sell. This is one of the hardest pages to produce because you have to be *salesy*. However, if they are done right they will bring you the best prospects.

Combining the Two

Now, there are some people who are able to successfully combine these two types of pages. You really sell yourself and get people to sign up and for signing up they also receive your free gift.

When you are setting up your pages and sending out your newsletters, don't be afraid to get personal with them. Let them know who you are, what your qualifications are and how you got involved in your business. You can even tell them what your goals are and people are really going to eat it up. The more that you are able to build trust in your list members, the more money you will be able to make. They will feel as though they are buying from a friend rather than just some stranger who owns the list.

5. HOW DO YOU BUILD A LIST?

There are numerous ways in which you can build a credible list. More are evolving through the experience of innovative online marketers all the time. We have discussed the most widely used methods in this book and how they can work for you. Almost all of them are simple to get in place to get you going on your path to profit.

After you have set up a list, you need to begin narrowing it down to targeted subscribers. It is best if you can get these targeted subscribers right off the bat, that way you don't have a list of 20,000 and only about 1,500 who are really interested. In order to do this you need to drive those targeted people to your sales page and talk them into signing up. There are several ways that you can attract your target market, including:

Auto Responders

The online marketing business wouldn't be where it is today without autoresponders. It saves a tremendous amount of time by completely automating the process of communicating with your subscribers. An autoresponder uses software that can be programmed according to your requirements. Once you set the

parameters of how you want things done, it just follows instructions. You can be as creative as you want. You don't even have to make a major investment on one these days – several sites offer them for free.

Why Is An Autoresponder So Important?

Autoresponders save time and time is money while building your lists. If you send promotional emails from your ISP, you will be reported as a spammer. The next thing you know, you might have to close shop. Autoresponders can be exclusively used to send these routine follow up emails to the thousands of contacts on the list. You can plan and keep your emails ready, and set the autoresponder to send it at the specific intervals you want. It can keep track of subscribers signing in and even respond to let them know they have been signed in. Practically every single routine emailing activity can be handled by the autoresponder, which is why no online marketing can do without it.

How It Works

You can use a follow up autoresponder that can keep the follow up work ongoing with your contacts. No subscriber is going to worry about when your next email is coming, and you certainly cannot expect them to remember your particular message among the hundreds they must be getting on a daily basis. That's where an autoresponder comes in. To keep your business information alive in the subscriber's mind.

Program It and It Does the Rest

You only have to keep your messages ready, decide on a sending schedule and your autoresponder takes care of the rest for as long as you have set it. This will mean that you can concentrate on other equally important issues while your sales keep coming in, thanks to your autoresponder's faithful follow up. In fact, it even lets you go on holiday while it keeps your office practically

running! Your autoresponder can help you send out useful information to your contacts. Instead of using the same: dear subscriber: for all your contacts, you can make your autoresponder address each contact by name and send the email. It is always nicer to receive an email addressed to us personally than get the feeling that we are one in a massive group of recipients. The autoresponder can even be programmed to wish your contacts "Happy Holidays" or "Seasons Greetings"

List Tracking

It can track your lists. This means you can make carefully thought out offers to your target audience. They just want to know what is in it for them. So you can structure your message accordingly so that it appeals to them. Experienced online marketers recommend that it is better to use autoresponders that give you an update about contact statistics. This can be split into month/week/day to tell you which of your leads are active and which ones have opted out, helping you in healthy list maintenance.

Keeping In Touch

Autoresponders help you in keeping in touch with your subscribers, giving them relevant information about your business, say, when you get fresh stocks or if you are planning a discount sale. Or you can even make your new subscribers some kind of special offer. This will keep your contact list alive and help you turn them into continuous sales!

You can also get your autoresponder to get activated when a contact signs up at your website. After they write their name and email address, when they send the information, it goes to the autoresponder URL that will send an acknowledgement right away.

Factors to Consider While Buying an Autoresponder

When you decide to use an autoresponder, you want to ensure that it is the one best suited to your needs in terms of performance, customer support, features and cost. These parameters must be balanced and convince you that it is the right one for you.

In terms of performance, the main thing to consider while getting an autoresponder is delivery of email. The higher the ability to deliver emails, the better. The provider of the autoresponder must support you with prompt customer service that knows what it is talking about. Just imagine getting stuck half way through your campaign! So look for one that is accessible easily and responds quickly.

Features are only as useful as you find them for your business. It is possible that you may not use all the features your autoresponder provides. But you can have it working efficiently for you when you are clear about what you want and set it accordingly. Next, you want to check that what you are paying to use your autoresponder does not cut into your profits. After all, you are trying to find ways to build your lists, not incur losses. So check what it will cost you in service, set up, monthly expenditure and other costs that may not have been mentioned. There is no use getting an autoresponder that you can't afford.

Sequential Auto responders

Technology is advancing all the time to make the online marketer's life easier. Many online businesses use what are called sequential autoresponders. These collect and save the names and email addresses of your contacts. This enables it to continue to send messages in sequential intervals, set by you, to your potential contacts. It can also take attached documents.

To summarize, your autoresponder can help you build massive lists depending on what you use it for. It helps in building an impression of your reliability, makes your customers have more

faith in you and keeps them thinking about you. This will lead to more profits through frequent sales.

E-books

A lot of online marketers have tested and tried this strategy to build their lists. The main thing here is to make a good e-book that the user will want to get for free. This is usually offered as a sign up bonus – when the customer leaves his email id and name. As a next step, the user is taken to the website URL to download the e-book from there.

In fact, these days you need not even go through the trouble of writing your own e-book. You can outsource it to writers who then give you the full resale rights of the e-book. After you get your e-book ready, ensure that you add your Opt-in page or autoresponder URL to every page of the e-book, to help the user find you right away.

You can make an e-book that runs to several pages or just a few, there's no standard length. People like to receive free e-books, particularly if they are interested in the information it contains. E-books are inexpensive to give away because you don't have to maintain physical stocks since they are in the digital format. You can send them to your users through your autoresponder, so delivery is quick. You don't incur shipping charges. What's more, you can give away as many copies as you like.

E-books can be given away for free as an incentive to sign up with you, or you could also charge a nominal fee and give away the reprint rights to your subscribers. They, for their part can also give it away for free and make money by doing this. But these tend to be hot for a while and then the excitement wears down. The trick is to keep writing new e-books all the time to keep your audience eager. Your aim here is to increase your list size with more subscribers. By increasing the number of links pointing to your own website, you can also rank high with the search engines.

Ways in Which You Can Use the E-book To Build Your Lists

You can use your e-book to build your lists in different ways. Many people enjoy receiving relevant information that they are interested in.

An e-book that has been given away free draws the visitor to your website. E-books can be used in the following manner:

- Offer the complete e-book in return for referral email ids or testimonials, which you can use.
- Writing your own e-book makes you look like a specialist or professional in your field, and builds credibility.
- You can post your e-book on various free websites, which will ensure an increase in the number of downloads.
- Some marketers offer just the first two chapters of the e-book, giving the visitor the choice to buy the full e-book.
- Make your e-book work for you to build your lists by making it a limited offer for that particular topic. You can inform your visitor this e-book will only be available for the next 24 hours for free download, encouraging them to take advantage of the offer right away by signing up with their email id and name.

E-zines

E-zines are not only useful as great list builders, but are an inexpensive and efficient way to keep in touch with your subscribers and interact with them. You can keep them updated with what is happening in your organization, telling them about new product launches and other innovations you have introduced. Not only that, it's a good publicity tool for your website. E-zines help in following up with the customer on an ongoing basis. Through its content, the subscriber is encouraged to visit your website often. People don't take action on a single message. They need to be reminded constantly before they can consider buying your product. Ensure that you have an online version of your E-zine on