

Opt-In Email Mailings

There are basically two valid sources for opt-in email addresses:

1. Your own list. These are the email addresses you gather on your own website by letting people opt-in to your own mailing list.

You should have a method on your website by which people can sign up for YOUR mailing list. If you don't have a method of getting people to sign up to receive more information through your website, we can help you figure out and implement the best means of doing this.

Various acceptable methods of gathering the email addresses of your visitors:

- Offer a free sample of some kind for joining your mailing list.
- Offer a free newsletter and let them join your mailing list.
- Offer to let them know when your website is updated.
- Offer a discount on a product if they complete a survey. Ask for, but do not require, their email address in the survey. In other words let them opt-in to your mailing list as part of the process. A side benefit is that the results of these surveys are pure gold in subsequent marketing efforts!
- Require them to register (and to receive a password) in order to use some especially valuable resource on your website. Give them the option of joining your mailing list at that time, but don't force them to opt-in to your mailing list to get in.

Many people simply do not want to get any email, period, that they haven't specifically requested. In most parts of the world outside the USA, one has to pay by the minute for ALL telephone service, not just long distance. So when someone is surfing the web through a modem line in Venezuela or the Ukraine, it is costing him money every minute he is online. So your email to him will cost him money when he downloads it. Be considerate and never force anyone to accept email from you as the "exchange" for getting something "free" from your website. It's not really free then, is it?

Make sure there is an easy and clearly marked way to opt-out of your mailing list, too, and take people off promptly when they ask.

2. The opt-in email lists you can rent from the companies that provide such lists (like YesMail).

Note: We do not condone spam!

Having said that, mass email mailings to people who have signed up specifically to receive the kind of information you are sending out--are not spam. If ten thousand people have opted-in to

receive information of general interest to horse owners, and you have a Western Saddle and Tack store and can get this list -- GET IT and USE IT, but use it wisely.

Send a short newsletter to that list with tips and tricks on how to saddle a horse correctly, or on taking care of saddles. Mention your website. You might even make a small, special offer in this newsletter. Make it easy for them to sign up for YOUR opt-in list so you can send more email to them -- without having to rent their names again.

Don't just broadcast a "BUY THIS NOW" type of email. You will get nothing but hate-mail back from such a mailing. People will THINK it is spam, even if they opted in to the list you rented. Complaints will pour in. You won't like it and it won't make sales for you.

For a description of the kinds of opt-in email lists available, we have provided this page of about 50 companies which broker [Opt-In Email Lists](#). These range from generic lists of people interested in dogs or horses to specific lists like accountants, lawyers and doctors. (We make nothing from this if you rent one of these lists--it is just a public service provided by Words in a Row.)

When you rent such a list the email message you prepare is broadcast (sent out) by the list company--so you don't have to do much besides pay them and create the text for your email message. Typical prices range from 15 cents to 25 cents per email sent out. If you pick the right group and send the right message, this can be very effective marketing for your company's products or services. It can get you a surge in traffic and sales.

However: heed the warning about buying these lists (on our [Opt-In Email Lists](#) page). It's really "buyer beware" because all that these companies guarantee is that they will send out the mailing for you - in my experience some of them don't even do that!

The results you get from such a mailing are ultimately up to you; what you say in the email message is profoundly important, as is picking the exact list to which you should promote. For some of our clients this has been very effective.

Note that most of these list companies have a minimum \$1000.00 order.

Also note that if you jump into the arena of direct marketing through email -- you are still doing direct marketing. If you don't know what you are doing in direct marketing, you can lose your shirt. Here are three highly recommended books that will teach you the basics of direct marketing:

- "Scientific Advertising" by Claud C. Hopkins. Written about 80 years ago, it is still valid today. You can get it here from Amazon: [Scientific Advertising](#) - highly recommended; it's a classic.
- "Ogilvy on Advertising" by David Ogilvy. You can get it on our [Books](#) page.
- "Confessions of an Advertising Man" by David Ogilvy. You can get this book at any good used book store. You can usually also find it at [Powells Online](#).

If you want to know how to make your direct marketing offer work for you -- study those three books. You can waste a lot of money through ignorance in this area. You can make a ton of money in direct marketing by knowing and applying what's in those three books.

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Overview

Practical advice about how to gather your own opt-in email list, or how to rent one right for you. What to say (and not say) in mailings to opt-in lists.

We maintain our own opt-in list of people like you, interested in web design, optimizing for the search engines, and marketing online. Subscribe to our Newsletter, [Design Coolness](#)

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<http://www.wordsinarow.com/optin.html>, accessed 2/15/12