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Chapter 3 - Building a Quality Email List

Collecting email addresses + an easy task

But + need to be large list to be effective

Best email list to contain in:

names of loyal repeat customers

referral sources who respect others privacy

+ interested prospects who know you + your bus. well enough to recognize your emails

This chapter summarizes

how + where to collect information

what info to collect +

how to prepare a database

A quality list helps ensure your E messages = received by people most likely to respond with repeat + referral bus.

Remember lessons of Chapter 2 - get permission in addition to collecting contact info

I. Preparing Your Email Database

Sending email to your list requires list data = stored in useful electronic format

Be careful in entering the data!

Building + maintaining electronic database allows you

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1. Organize + view list data easily

2. Sort list data into categories to send

targeted emails. Ex. sort by ZIP codes for events

3. Process + keep track of unsubscribed contacts

4. Query your list to extract useful info + report

Databases with complex features = expensive

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Make sure additional expenses = worth it
 Can always upgrade later, when email strategy
 outgrows your initial functionality
 Start with basic database application or with your
 ESP's built-in database utility.

Ex. Constant Contact has tabs to manage list
 add/import, export, update, remove,
 move to Do Not Mail

lets you view list by all, active, awaiting
 confirmation Do Not Mail + removed
 + search for contacts by x within categories

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If you choose an external database - make sure
 database can easily transfer your data or
 synchronize your data with your ESP

Ask ESP for list of supported formats + verify
 it matches export feature of your database

Do not recommend only storing data in ESP's system
 unless you can access data of unsubscribers

Phone numbers	} becomes even more useful when unsubscribes from email list
Mailing addresses	
Behavioral data	

II. Collecting Contact Information

Quality of list depends greatly on where + how
 you collect info as well as where + how you
 store it + manage data

Best way to ensure quality info = collected:
 obtain info + permission directly from whoever is it

Your challenge - provide multiple opportunities + incentives for prospects + customers to share their info as well as to manage resulting data effectively + efficiently

A. Deciding what information to collect

Many businesses - bought + sold on basis of strength of their contact information

Quality list data stored in useful format

- goldmine for targeting marketing messages + converting prospects + customers into a steady stream of repeat + referral sales

Two things you need to collect

email address +

permission to send them a professional email

Generally enlisting subscribers - easier if you ask for as little info as possible

But - you'll improve your results if you plan to gather 1 amt. of info over time

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Table 3-1 lists types of info you can ask

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Dont have to obtain all info on 1st contact

ask for more info in future emails by

1. Sending short relevant surveys
2. asking for info in context of regular emails
3. Using forms + links on Web site to collect info from people who - browsing or making purchases
4. Asking for more info thru other marketing media as more trust develop

Aside - When is essential info essential?

Depends on how you interact - prospects + customers

People = more comfortable sharing info when they understand how you'll use it

Ex. address ≠ necessary when ready to purchase
address = necessary after purchase = made

B. Getting to know your list members better

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Most of prospects ≠ interested in all you send
consider asking subscribers their interests

Using interest info allows you to
sort email lists into categories +
send info relevant to that category

Create some basic list categories + ask subscribers to self-identify when they signup

Ex. What answer best describes why you dine with us?

money saving offers

new menu items

wine recommendations

live music + special events

Rather than asking open-ended questions - Why do you dine with us?

- (473) Some people tell you their interests only if they'll get preferential treatment as a result
- Try positioning interest info so that the reward = receiving the info! List ideas include
- priority, reserved event tickets
 - members-only discounts
 - first-to-know product announcements
 - early bird access to product-specific sales
- Don't give subscribers too many choices too early!
- Ask them to adjust their interests over time
- Collect info as you interact
- Also - collect interest info by tracking their ^{click} behavior
- see Chapter 6 of Book 4 p. 417 "legally speaking"
- Aside - Getting personal with demographic interests
- Asking for demographic info (age, income)
- = difficult
- People - concerned about privacy
- ≠ as willing to share demographic info unless they know why you need it and how you use it
- Try combining demographics + interest questions so you can make inferences
- E.g.
- Spare no expense travel destinations
 - Singles only event invitations
 - Helping with kids younger than 12
 - Entertaining in limited space
 - Gardening on a budget

- (475) Aside - Creating a media mailing list
 If you're planning to send press releases
 keep media list separate from customer list
 so you can restrict media personnel
 to press releases only

Permission } matter just as much to the media
 Privacy } so - get permission before
 Professionalism } sending

- C. Posting signup links online
 = text box, button, or text that links to a
 signup form or } that allows subscriber to
 confirmation page } enter + submit
 additional info + preferences

476 Means of putting signup requests on a site inc.

1. Text boxes - allow subscribers to enter info
 without clicking thru to additional form.
 Asks for email address
 Can contain several fields
2. Buttons - graphical representations of links
 that take subscriber to form to complete + submit
 Can be images - text, flashing boxes, icons, etc.
3. Text links - short headlines of plain text linked
 to a signup form. Ideal - if want to add
 option to sign up in context of other info or if
 want to put line of text in your email signature

- (476) 4. Check boxes - usu. on multi-use forms to save steps
 Ex. on form where someone purchases something
 - great way to ask permission to use info
 for shipping item + sending future emails
 "Email address - used to confirm shipment. By checking this box you'll also receive monthly..."
 Be sure to leave box unselected (cleared) as the default
- 477 Experiment with diff. placement ideas. Try adding signup link in following locations
- 1) on every pg. of website
 - 2) In your email signature
 Ex. Peter Smith, Owner, La Italia
 Free lunch when you join our email list
 - 3) On your blog or personal Web site
 - 4) In banner ads + online advertising
 - 5) On other Web sites (with permission)
 - 6) In emails your noncompeting colleagues send to their customers (with permission)
 - 7) In online directories
- D. Collecting information in person
 Whenever anyone - within 10 ft. of you -
 ask for their contact info!
 Always ask permission when collecting info in person
1. Swap business cards - ask if preferred email
 = on the card
 2. Place a guest book on the counter in your store or office. Keep one in your car too!

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3. Place a basket for bus. cards on your table at trade shows & events. Have sign that defines intent
4. Train your employees to take down customer info. Ask anyone who answers phone to ask for email addresses + permission when ^{prospects} + customers call

E. Collecting information through print

Adding signup info to direct mail + print advertising = great way to maximize your ad dollars

Use print to drive people to Website or store

Ask them to fill out paper form + return it

Ask them to send you an email to join

Here are some ideas for using print to drive signups

1. Send postcard offering incentive to return card to store (free gift, entry in drawing) with recipient's email address filled in to a space on card. Explain your intended usage + ask for permission.
2. Portion your signup incentive to add value to ^{offer} print ^{mail} Ex. "Free haircut with subscription to preferred cust. list"
3. Add your signup incentive to back of bus. cards Ex. "Our email list members save 10%. Join online, in person, or by phone."
4. Purchase an intuitive domain name + place it in your print ad to promote signups Ex. www.JoinMyEmailList.com

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Offering Incentives to Increase Signups

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Because email list = asset, containing E addresses of loyal customers who spend a lot and referral sources who love to tell others about you. Offering an incentive in exchange for E subscription = least you can do to thank + reward them

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Offering incentives for joining rewards bus. in ways

1. Increased signups
2. Increased loyalty + repeat bus. + referrals

A. Giving subscribers immediate incentives

- inherent with being on list
- begin immediately upon signing up
- 1. Discounts or reward pts. on each purchase
- 2. VIP access to special events front row seats, etc
- 3. Access to members-only info
- 4. Free trials, gifts or additional services

B. Giving subscribers future incentives

If email list subscribers are only customers who bought then incentive ≠ immediate - need to wait for an invitation

Ex. 48 hr. sale held twice/year - save 50% if order within 48 hrs - only email customers notified

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Other sales + imminent incentives include

1. Early shopping hours during holidays
2. Invitations to periodic prize events
3. Random rewards such as prize drawings

If no immediate incentive, be direct about what get

Ex. Signup for our monthly newsletter, or Tech Friday Tips

479 Aside - Not all incentives = all-likes
 After you decide where + when to ask for E addresses
 decide how to ask

Find out what motivates your prospects + customers
 before deciding on an incentive

Ex. some like a discount

some associate discount with cheap
 discontinued, last yr's model out of style

Consider employing a more creative strategy -

Very Important Customer (VIC) club

- 1st to know about latest high-tech products
 at a prestigious price

480 Aside - Permission + privacy as incentives

Adding a privacy + permission policy to your
 data collection forms as well as
 clearly stating your intended usage upfront
 = puts people more at ease in sharing info

Even if don't read privacy policy = reassuring
 Remember - people who share email addresses
 have personal expectations - + sometimes
 = hard to determine!

Make sure your privacy + permission policy
 benefits your subscriber more than the bus.

Keep statements short +

use information in accordance with
 people's expectations at the time of
 information exchange

IV. Building a List with List Brokers

(480) List Broker = marketing companies that collect + sell contact info

If you use their help, recognizing that
= significant differences bet.

obtaining a list of physical addresses ^{phone #} or
+ obtaining email addresses

481 Process = as simple as selecting demographic info
+ paying to receive a data file

Email addresses on a brokered list must,
by law, be permission-based

Process = full of potential pitfalls

Customers get annoyed by unsolicited mail

If brokers + ^{go here to} understand permission laws + trends
your reputation may be damaged +
your future ability to send email destroyed

Remember - customer decides what email + wanted!

Most ESPs discourage or disallow rented lists
+ almost never allow purchased lists

Recommendation - use the collect-where-you-connect
methods described earlier in chapter

A. Sticking to quality

Confirmed Permission lists = only viable option

Can be quite expensive - 10 to 30¢ / E address

Can vary in quality - ask about process used

does person remember opting in

do list members expect an email from you

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Make sure to clarify the following info

1. Where + how email addresses - obtained - make sure online forms asked for explicit permission to share their address and ^{is stated as} part of a separate permission policy

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2. When permission was confirmed - get opt in date
3. How interests - selected: assumption, or asked

B. Renting to own

Because quality confirmed-permission lists - so valuable
be aware of lists for sale as data file
quality lists are always rented!

List rental means broker + give you addresses
you supply content to list broker and
broker formats + sends your email

Include a signup link asking recipients to subscribe
can make it possible for you to grow the info
Make sure links in brokered email lead to
a landing page that includes signup box,
button or link - esp. if broker + allow on email

If you capture sales + info by using rented list,
make sure emails continue to meet or exceed
professional standards -

to keep subscribers interested

+ happy to remain on list after confirmed

More info: Email Sender + Provider Coalition

www.escoalition.org - click Resources