



81 Building an opt-in mailing list

What is an opt-in mailing list?

An opt-in list is a list of contacts that you have built yourself. It will contain the names, addresses and contact details of people that have agreed or asked to be contacted by you. They will be the people who have ticked a box on one of your website forms saying that they would like to receive a free monthly newsletter, a free report, regular product update or special promotion. They may have handed you a business card at a networking event and asked to receive your information.

Why is this important?

Building your own list has several advantages. You will know that every name you have on that list is someone who has demonstrated that they have an interest in what you do. When you communicate with them they are more likely to pay attention to what you send them because they asked for it. You can also be confident that the names, addresses and telephone numbers are up to date.

If a person has put their hand up and said ‘Yes I want to be contacted by you,’ they are one step closer to becoming a customer of yours. It is much more cost effective to communicate with a list of people who are potentially hungry for what you are offering than it is to do the same with those you only suspect might be interested.

Buying or renting direct mailing or email mailing lists can mean that a lot of your mail goes in the bin and your emails become irritating spam. This is a terrible waste of your time, money and effort. Creating your own opt-in list will enable your marketing to be much more targeted.

Your challenge

Your challenge will be to put the right bait in front of the right people to attract them to opt-in to your list. People will only say yes if they think that they are going to get something of value as a result. Firstly you will have to find out where the people are that are likely to be interested in your product or service. Secondly work out what it is that would draw them to you. Thirdly go fishing with your tasty bait. Creating an opt-in list that is full of the right people will require a well thought-out and carefully planned strategy.

How to create your list

- Give people a compelling reason to say ‘I want more’.
- Create a free report, offer a free sample, a free newsletter, a free health check, a free consultation connected with your service that is exactly what people need.

Here are some examples

A nutritionist offers a free report called ‘How to feel super charged’ along with a free health report.

A financial consultant offers a free report called ‘How to raise finance for your business venture’ and a free financial assessment.

A property company offers free monthly property industry update with buying and selling tips and advice.

A professional association offers a free newsletter that contains valuable up-to-date market and business research data.

- Develop a title for your newsletter or free report that promises a benefit and suggests important learning. You can then use this along with your message asking interested people to respond. The title should sell the value and motivate action. Here are two examples of the lead generation messages I use for Marketingco.

Do you need a more consistent flow of new customers?

Get your *free* report now.

Nine steps to create a successful sales and marketing system for your business. Download your copy from our website www.marketingco.biz

Or

Do you want a constant flow of marketing ideas?

Get our *free* monthly newsletter ‘Marketing Success’.

Register on our website www.marketingco.biz

- You will need to put these lead generation messages in places where your ‘hungry crowd’ are most likely to be. Find out all the places your target customer goes, takes part in and reads.
- Make a list of the best places to post your message. This could be professional association newsletters and magazines, networking groups’ websites, business club forums, chat rooms, online discussion groups, newspapers and specialist magazines, Google adverts, classified advertising in targeted complimentary business e-zines.
- Some business clubs or groups will allow members to make special member offers. This is a good opportunity to promote your free offer.
- You can offer a free tip to an e-zine that targets your market in return for promoting your free newsletter or report.
- You can offer free ideas and advice to anyone asking questions about your area of expertise on online discussion forums.
- You can promote your free newsletter and your free reports on your website.

CREATING YOUR OWN LIST – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ What could you offer as bait to attract your own hungry crowd to become part of your list?
- ▶ What do you know that your hungry crowd are interested in?
- ▶ How could you get some feedback and find out?
- ▶ What could you call your free newsletter, report or offer that would sell it to your target customer?
- ▶ Where could you promote it?
- ▶ How many people would you like to get onto your list?

How to use this information

Building a list is the best way to ensure a solid foundation from which to grow your business. Once you have a list you will have created a very warm market for what you do. So it is worth studying this information and considering exactly how you can implement these strategies to build your biggest and best list.

Think list... and build your business