

Five Questions You Must Answer To Build an Effective and Responsive Opt-In List

By Dan B. Cauthron

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If you seriously want to make a living from the Internet, no matter what you intend to market, you simply must develop and cultivate your own mailing list. That list should contain names and addresses of people who have expressed at least a general interest in what you have to offer.

In other words, they have 'exercised their option' to join your list, in return for more information, training, free promotional items, etc. They have chosen to 'opt-in' to your list, effectively giving you permission to contact them regularly into the future.

Whether you have already started building your list, or are just beginning, here are a few questions that you should answer to yourself. We believe the answers you develop will lend focus, and aid you in compiling a much more effective and responsive opt-in mailing list of your own.

1. Who do you want to target?

Your first answer may be 'everyone.' And that may seem reasonable, especially if you intend to market widely used consumer goods like nutritional products, DVDs, gamewares or the like. In reality, your target must be much smaller in order to achieve adequate results from your marketing efforts.

Take a look at your product or service. What can you determine about the people who will be most likely to need, want, and use it?

Let's say you offer a line of exclusive designer baby accessories. Your target market will primarily surround

young mothers (and fathers) in the 20-30 year age bracket who enjoy above average incomes. A secondary target would involve financially stable grandparents. Mailing to a list that includes childless married couples, single adults, or people who have no disposable income will be a waste of your time and resources.

2. How will you attract attention?

You must do something or offer something that will cause your target market to take notice. If you want superlative results, then you must make a superlative offer.

Most Internet users come online seeking one thing . . . information. And you may have already heard that a 'free informational report' will draw new subscribers like bees to honey. Not necessarily so!

The information itself must be of a timely nature, and not yesterday's news. It should be thought provoking, useable, and have value in and of itself. To young mothers, a short report titled '10 Ways To Make Your Baby Smarter' would be of immense interest.

3. What is your plan of action?

In other words, what will you DO to spread the word about the benefits of joining your opt-in list? First you will need to seek out the venues frequented by your target market. Next, develop a regimented marketing plan of daily, weekly or monthly action that you will take to make your market aware of what you have to offer.

Then stick to it! Many would be entrepreneurs will give up when the first efforts seem to produce scant results. This will only leave a larger market share for you. Consistent marketing action and persistent focus will get you what you want.

4. How will you retain subscribers?

What will keep your list members from unsubscribing? What will you consistently offer to keep their attention?

It's important that you develop firm answers to these questions in advance. Lack of a well defined concept in this vein can lead to inconsistencies in your content, and possibly a mass exodus of previously interested prospects.

We do wish to advise against offering a constant flow of 'freebies' in order to retain subscribers. This can critically undermine the responsiveness of your list. Your subscribers should know upfront that while you are

interested in serving their needs, you are also in business to earn a profit.

5. What will be your mode of delivery?

How do you plan to keep in touch with your list? It goes without saying that we are discussing online communication by email. But there is methodology within that form as well.

You may choose to send your list only updates, new product announcements, and bits of useful information from time to time. Yet even this seemingly informal contact mode should be done on a scheduled basis, and not be left to random action.

You may also choose to formally publish your own newsletter. In this case, make a realistic assessment of how much time you have to devote to publishing, and gear your publishing schedule to surround your own ability to follow through. Few things are more detrimental to the effectiveness of your list than haphazard publishing and delivery.

When approached with prior planning and systematic action, your opt-in list can accumulate much quicker than you might expect. With proper care and cultivation, it can literally grow into the proverbial money-tree, and yield fruit for your lifetime.

Dan B. Cauthron offers original marketing insights and a 7-Volume eMarketing Library to all new subscribers. Join his list by visiting <http://www.Revenewer.com> or by sending your name and email address to <mailto:Dan@Revenewer.com> with the words 'subscribe me' in the subject bar.

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