

5 Common Mistakes New E-zine Publishers Make

By Alexandria K. Brown

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Everyone's finally catching onto the idea that publishing an e-mail newsletter (or "e-zine") is a super way to market their businesses. But unfortunately I still see many people making the same mistakes that could lead to losing subscribers, and worse.

To help YOU get off on the right foot, I'm listing the five most common mistakes I see new publishers make. Watch your step!

MISTAKE 1: Sending out their e-zines from their own everyday e-mail programs.

Sure, it seems easy at first, you just create a "group" in your e-mail program and start from there. But once you get over 50 subscribers, you're going to have nothing but problems. Not only will you have to manually handle all sign-ups and removals, but you may get into trouble. Most Internet service providers (ISPs) won't let you send an e-mail to more than 30 people at once. They set limits like this to help prevent spammers from using their networks.

Also, your entire list resides on your computer, so you'll have to be extra meticulous about making backups of your list - imagine instantly losing a list of hundreds or thousands of subscribers that took months to build!

Save yourself some time and headaches NOW, and sign up for a reliable online list service or purchase list management software.

MISTAKE 2. Signing up people without their permission.

Even if you're my best friend, I'll honestly be perturbed if you launch your e-zine and automatically sign me up for it. That's a big no-no on the Net, and it can get you in hot water.

If you're wondering how to get your list started, send out a one-time *invitation* to everyone you know, along with a *sample issue* of your e-zine and clear instructions on how to subscribe. That way they can *see* how great your e-zine is, and they'll realize they should definitely sign up.

MISTAKE 3. Not giving their readers useful content.

Some publishers only use their e-zines to talk about how great they are. "We won this award and

hired this new person and landed this new client... blah blah blah." This gets boring and turns off readers.

Instead, focus on providing information that will be *useful and educational* to your readers. This will make them love you! (Besides, there's plenty of room to tastefully plug yourself at the end of each issue.) Aim for a ration of about 75% helpful information and 25% self promotion.

MISTAKE 4. Not promoting their own businesses.

Here's just the opposite problem: Many people serve up great content to their readers, but don't take the opportunity to toot their own horns!

While your articles and features will be softly selling your expertise, there are several other ways to reinforce the fact that *you* are whom your readers should contact when they need the services you provide. After the article, give your full contact information, and a few sentences about WHAT you can do

for your readers. End it with a call to action -- tell them to call for a free consultation, visit your Web site to read clients testimonials, or write you for a free quote.

MISTAKE 5. Not publishing on a regular basis.

Publishing regularly suggests to your readers that you're organized and can meet deadlines and commitments. But I still see many e-zines published on a random schedule - one colleague of mine even brags at the top of each issue that she basically sends out her e-zine "whenever she feels like it." By doing this, she appears flaky and unprofessional.

Your e-zine should be a steady "pulse" of your business, reminding your readers about your fabulous products and services on a regular basis.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marketing writer and consultant Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," is author of the award-winning manual, "Boost Business With Your Own E-zine." To learn more about this step-by-step Guide, and to sign up for FREE biweekly how-to articles, visit

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