

Sending Commercial Email

By Dawn Gray

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Busy Marketing <http://www.busymarketing.com>

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With more and more court rulings on commercial email, it is becoming difficult to send people information via email without being labelled a spammer. So, how can a small business owner get their message out (via email) without losing their ISP and receiving tons of hate mail (often including malicious programs called "bombs")?

You have two choices: 1. spend a lot of money; or 2. spend a lot of time and effort.

Spend A Lot Of Money

Yes, there are cheap email lists available online. However, chances are those lists are compiled of email addresses collected from websites or directories. It's unlikely that the owner of the list has the recipient's permission to send them anything.

There are also lists out there compiled of people who requested information. Some offer bonuses for receiving, reading or responding to advertisements. That may be a good strategy from the list owner's perspective, but you're likely to receive a lot of responses from people who have no interest in your product. That translates into wasted time and energy on your part, as you try to follow up on those bogus leads.

If you want to send email messages to a lot of people, I highly recommend sticking to dependable lists of people who requested information. YesMail and Postmaster Direct are the two biggest companies which offer opt-in email lists. They offer many ways to target your market, as well as legitimately obtained addresses.

Spend A Lot Of Time And Effort

If you can't afford to work with the big boys, you can compile your own list. See my article, "How to Capture Email Addresses" at <http://www.busymarketing.com/email.shtml>

Compiling your own list will involve first promoting your website by other methods. (I've got a lot of ideas at <http://www.busymarketing.com/marketing.shtml> and in my E-Books - see the newest one, "106 Website Promotion Tips" at <http://www.busymarketing.com/106tips.shtml>) Then you must

convince people to send you their email addresses by offering an announcement list, newsletter, freebie, or contest.

Unfortunately, people are becoming wary of giving out their email addresses. They get too much email as it is. Your offer must be compelling to convince them to hand over contact information. Even then, don't expect the email addresses to pour in unless you already receive a lot of traffic.

"Isn't There An Easier Way?"

I knew you'd ask that. There is another way to send information about your website via email, but you might not be able to get an exclusive ad. You can pay a small amount of money (some are even free!) for an advertisement in a newsletter, like this one. More people read newsletters than stand-alone commercial advertisements, since they generally have useful information. The list is built for you, and you can find one for almost any target audience imaginable.

There are numerous directories of ezines, many of which include information about advertising in email newsletters. My list is located near the bottom of <http://www.busymarketing.com/addurl.shtml> Also, consider the newsletters you already subscribe to. Chances are, many are related to your website's topic and are targeted at the same audience. Just scroll to the bottom for information on advertising opportunities or contact the editor about it.

(For advertising information for this newsletter, send a blank email to <mailto:ads@busymarketing.com>)

There are many types of newsletter advertising, from stand-alone ads which are sent independently of the newsletter to one or two line "classifieds" crowded together at the end. Make sure you know what your options are and what you're getting by subscribing to the newsletter in advance. The things to look for are quality content and little competition (you don't want to be on page 3 of a 5 page advertising section).

Happy Marketing!

Dawn Gray can help you drive more traffic to your website. For other great articles on website promotion and a free email newsletter, visit her website at <http://www.busymarketing.com>

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