

Growing Your List

By Elena Fawkner

Growing Your List

Elena Fawkner
jan@ahbbo.com

A Home-Based Business Online <http://www.ahbbo.com>

Growing Your List

© 2001 Elena Fawkner

So, you're ready to launch your own newsletter. You've heard that a newsletter (or ezine) is a great way to stay in touch with site visitors and to develop an opt-in list of your own to promote your products and services.

OK, so far so good. And you have your first issue ready to go. "Go where?" , I hear you ask. Good question. Who are you going to send it to?

Which leads us to the topic of this article. Subscriber generation. We're going to look at how to get the message out that your newsletter exists and how interested readers can ask to receive it (how subscribers can subscribe).

Fortunately, there are many ways and places to publicize your newsletter.

1. ANNOUNCEMENT LISTS

Announcement lists are, in theory at least, email lists that people subscribe to who want to know about new lists (whether they be discussion lists or newsletters). Why "in theory"? Quite simply because a lot of people wanting to generate new subscribers to THEIR lists subscribe because you have to be a subscriber yourself in order to announce your list. Nonetheless, you will still generate a steady trickle of new subscribers from these lists.

You will find these lists will bring in quite a lot of subscribers initially but gradually the rate of new subscribers from these sources will fall away so you can't rely on them alone. Most of these lists allow repeat postings, usually once per week but check the rules for each list.

Here's the list of announcement lists AHBBO is regularly submitted to. Before being able to submit your newsletter to these lists you'll need to subscribe first. Just go to Yahoo (<http://www.groups.yahoo.com>) or Topica (<http://www.topica.com>) to sign up for the lists you want to be able to submit to. (Onelist and Egroups are now under Yahoo):

1_List_Advertise@onelist.com
a1promo@egroups.com
Aannounce@egroups.com
Announce@topica.com
ezine_announce@egroups.com
freelistresources@topica.com
GetMoreSubs@egroups.com
GetMoreSubs@topica.com
ListAdvertise@egroups.com
List_Builder@topica.com
Lits_Of_Lists@egroups.com
Listpromote@egroups.com
List-Your-Lists@egroups.com
List-Your-Lists@topica.com
Mailman@topica.com
Promote_Your_List@topica.com
WritersZines@egroups.com
ZineDirectory@egroups.com
eAnnounce@egroups.com
compu-list@egroups.com
List_announcements@egroups.com
PromoteList@topica.com
Announce_Lists@egroups.com
Announce-A-List@egroups.com

2. DIRECTORIES

The next place to list your newsletter is in the myriad of directories devoted to exactly that. These will bring in fewer subscribers initially but will be important to the longer-term growth of your subscriber database as they represent a source for a slow but steady subscriber influx.

First, make sure your newsletter is listed with New-List (<http://scout18.cs.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/lwgate/NEW-LIST/>).

This is the famous Internet Scout Project and will commonly generate a major flood of new subscribers. An initial haul of over 200 is not uncommon for some lists. You may only announce your list once to this list but your announcement is archived on the New-List site and you are permitted to announce changes to your newsletter. Purely "business opportunity" list announcements are likely to be rejected but the moderator seems to have a somewhat inconsistent approach to what constitutes a bizopp list

so give it a try anyway.

Next, go to JimWorld's Top 1000 Submission Sites Directory (<http://www.the1000.com>) and submit your newsletter to as many of the places listed there that apply to the subject matter of your newsletter. Although the site refers to site announcements, most are also good places to list your newsletter as well. Obviously it will take you quite a time to get your site listed at all these places but it will pay off over time in the form of a steady stream of subscribers in the longer term.

Then, for good measure, make sure you are listed in the following directories (where applicable). Some of these may already be included in the Top 1000 Submission Sites Directory but are mentioned here again for the sake of completeness. Not all of the sites listed below are "directories" as such. Some are just outstanding resources that will assist you with subscriber generation.

<http://alabanza.com/kabacoff/Inter-Links/listserv.html>

<http://new-list.com/>

<http://tile.net/lists/addlist.html>

<http://www.escribe.com/internet/-aannounce/>

<http://www.escribe.com/internet/lbd/>

<http://www.escribe.com/internet/listbuilder/>

<http://www.goodstuff.prodigy.com/Lists/main.htm>

<http://www.liszt.com/>

<http://www.paml.net>

<http://www.newsletteraccess.com/>

<http://www.promotefree.com>

<http://www.virtualpromote.com>

http://www.wcsu.ctstateu.edu/library/rr_electronic_discussion_groups.html

<http://www.webcom.com/impulse/list.html>

3. ACCEPTING FREE ADS

An often-overlooked method for initial subscriber generation is offering a free ads for new subscribers. You will not start accepting paid advertising until such time as your subscriber numbers support it (certainly not fewer than 1,000 subscribers). There is no reason though why your subscribers should not get used to seeing ads in your newsletter and by offering free ads for new subscribers (for a limited time), you will find you can generate quite a few subscribers this way.

My initial batch of subscribers came from those wanting to place a free ad in AHBBO. I listed my newsletter with Ruth Townsend's Directory of Ezines (<http://www.lifestylespub.com/>) and immediately started receiving free ad requests. By including a free ad reference in your announcements (see Announcement Lists), you may find this helps you generate more initial subscribers.

It is NOT recommended that you make any reference to free ads in the submissions you make to Directories (see Directories) because these are a more permanent listing of your newsletter and you don't want people asking for free ads in six months' time after you have stopped accepting them.

4. OTHER FORMS OF FREE PUBLICITY

In addition to making use of Announcement lists and Directories, there are a few other forms of free publicity that will help you generate subscribers both initially and over the longer term.

= Article submissions

By writing articles and submitting them regularly with a resource box that refers to your newsletter, you will generate subscribers when other publishers run your article in their newsletter.

Each article you submit must contain a resource box that tells the reader who you are, what your newsletter is about and how to subscribe.

On a number of occasions publishers of newsletters with extremely high subscriber numbers (over 250,000 in one case) have run my articles. It is not uncommon to receive over 200 subscribe requests immediately following an article appearing in one of these high volume newsletters. So, the point is, writing and submitting articles for use by other publishers is an excellent way of generating new subscribers.

There are plenty of places to submit your articles. To find them, just pretend you're a publisher looking for content for your newsletter. Use search terms such as "free content" etc. and you'll turn them up.

= Signature files

Another way to generate a steady trickle of new subscribers is to include a blurb about your newsletter and how to subscribe in your signature file and include it at the end of every email you send to anyone about anything. These can be particularly useful if you regularly contribute to discussion lists or newsgroup discussions provided the lists and newsgroups have some general relevance to the subject matter of your newsletter.

= Ad swaps

Swapping newsletter ads with other newsletter publishers is a good way of generating new subscribers provided your target audiences are complementary. You can generate ad swaps by including a notice in your newsletter that you welcome them or by actively seeking out other publishers who accept ad swaps.

There are a number ad swap lists around specifically for this purpose.

= Publicizing Your Newsletter

Once you have an established newsletter with several hundred subscribers you should publicize your newsletter in as many places as you can, whenever you get the opportunity.

One way is to try and get your newsletter reviewed. A good place to get reviewed is at <http://www.list-universe.com> . There are many others too so look around. Many of the directories you list your ezine with have a rating system and if you can get yourself rated highly you will usually merit a higher ranking in the directory. So, invite your subscribers to rate your ezine. Another good way to publicize your newsletter is to submit your original articles to some of the many websites that collect articles available for reprint by other publishers. It seems that there is no shortage of publishers who prefer not to create any original content for their newsletters so, if you do create original content, there's a ready-made market for it! By ensuring that your resource box contains a blurb and subscribe info for your ezine, every time another publisher runs your articles, they are also running an ad for your newsletter. Do this consistently and you will become known in your field of expertise and this in turn will attract subscribers (not to mention advertisers and website visitors).

= Joint Ventures/Co-Ops

Joint ventures or co-ops with other publishers are perhaps THE best way to generate new subscribers over the longer term. The trick is to team up with another publisher who publishes an ezine to a target audience complementary to your own.

Under this type of joint venture arrangement, you provide a mechanism for subscribers to your ezine to subscribe to your joint venture partner's ezine at the same time. And your joint venture partner does the same for you.

This is not the only way to run a joint venture though. For example, you may choose instead to recommend your joint venture partner's ezine in your welcome message to new subscribers. Or to have a link to your joint venture partner's sign-up page at your website. Whatever works for you is fine.

Co-ops can extend beyond a simple reciprocal subscribe arrangement too. Contests are a great way to generate new subscribers. In principle, it works like this. Several ezine publishers get together and put together a package of prizes. One may offer a free copy of an e-book, another may offer free advertising in their ezine, another may offer a free web design consultation.

Each participating publisher lets their subscribers know about the contest in their welcome message as well as publicizing it in their ezines. Interested subscribers can then go off and register for the contest at one of the publisher's websites. It is a condition of entering the contest that the subscriber signs up for the other publishers' newsletters, the other publishers thereby gaining an additional subscriber.

Every month (or whatever frequency is specified in the contest rules), each of the publishers draws one winner. Each subscriber has x number of chances to win each month with x representing the number of publishers participating in the contest.

= Remind Your Subscribers to Recommend You

Once you generate sufficient subscribers, you will find that a lot of new subscribers sign up as a result of a word of mouth recommendation from one of your existing subscribers. Although this kind of traffic will be kind of slow to start with (it's a numbers game, after all), beyond a certain point, say 2-3,000 subscribers, you will find that this becomes an increasingly frequent way for new subscribers to find you. So be sure to remind your existing subscribers to recommend you to their friends, family and associates!

= Pay Per Subscriber Services

There are several excellent pay-per-subscriber services available now. Expect to pay between 10 and 20 cents per subscriber depending on whether it's single or double opt-in. A good service is WorldWideLists (<http://www.worldwidelists.com>).

By implementing these strategies, you will have laid the foundation for a constant and steady flow of subscribers to your newsletter. Once you get to that point, all you have to do is concentrate on keeping them. And that simply means producing a quality newsletter, week in and week out.

** Reprinting of this article is welcome! **

This article may be freely reproduced provided that: (1) you include the following resource box; and (2) you only mail to a 100% opt-in list.

Here's the resource box to use if reprinting this article:

Elena Fawkner is editor of A Home-Based Business Online ...
practical home business ideas for the work-from-home

entrepreneur.

<http://www.ahbbo.com/mmp/sub.cgi?AHBBO=!FLM>

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)