

The Inadvertent Spammer

By Jane Tabachnick

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The Internet and email are still in their youth, and continue to develop before our eyes; along with that some of the “rules of the game” evolve as well. One rule you don’t want to break is are those that apply to Spam. [see my article Spam – An Emotional Issue]

Whether you are an intentional spammer or an inadvertent one is not that relevant. The perception of being a spammer has the same effect as actually being guilty.

How does one inadvertently spam people? Not having their direct permission to send them email sounds straightforward right? Not exactly.

When you meet someone at a networking event, and they hand you their business card, is that permission? Yes and no. It is permission to send them a personal follow up note. It is NOT permission to ad them to your ezine list or to your promotional mailing list. It is permission to send them an invite to be added to your list.

Another example is that of email addresses collected on a website in exchange for the download of a free book or report. The form gives you no indication of what they will do with your email address. It doesn’t ask your permission; it doesn’t give you a chance to select your preferences. By merely accepting the free report, have you given permission to receive emails and promotions from the site owner? No, you haven’t.

Renting an email list and using an email service provider to send out your email, if not done properly, will have you perceived as a spammer. If it is not clear to the recipient who is sending the message, and how they got their name, your campaign is in question, even it is was legitimately sent from an opt in list. The key is the relationship the list owner has with the recipients, as well as the clarity of the message. Is this is well maintained opt in list? Did people know what kind of messages they were opting in to receive? If both answers are yes, and the emails are clearly branded from both the list owner and their partner, the campaign will succeed.

Sending out an email communication to a number of people without using the BCC function is almost inadvertent spamming. By not hiding your recipient’s email addresses, you have laid them vulnerable to collection and use by an actual spammer, or to a novice emailer who utilizes the “reply all” function, inadvertently spamming your entire list. You are then guilty by association.

Here are the top 8 tips to help you maintain a good email reputation

- Have a clear and visible email and privacy policy
- When asking for email addresses let people know what you intend to do with them
- When sending email, make sure your brand is clear and recognizable to recipients

- Make sure the name in the "Sender" line is recognizable
[johnsmith@amazon.com may not be as recognizable as
Customerservice@amazon.com]
- When using a third party provider to send out emails to a
list, make sure that your relationship with the actual
sender is explained
- Be aware of words that trigger spam filters, and avoid them
See list:
http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt8/spamfilter_phrases.htm
- Check your outgoing email here:
<http://ezinecheck.com/check.html>
- Make it easy to unsubscribe or change preferences

To your effective emailing ~ Jane

Stay tuned for the release of my book:
"Are You Sending The Right Message -
Effective Email Communication for Executives and Entrepreneurs.

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