

Understanding the Under Utilized Auto Responder

By Joe Bingham

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Joe Bingham
joe@netplaynewsletters.com

NetPlay Newsletters <http://www.netplaynewsletters.com>

Undoubtedly, one of the most powerful automation and promotional tools we have for our online businesses is the auto responder.

Auto responders work for us when we're not online, they provide instant information for readers, and can follow up with prospects automatically for us over time.

However, I still believe auto responders are often under utilized, and occasionally even used in an improper manner.

HOW TO USE AN AUTO RESPONDER

The most common uses for auto responders are information courses and follow up messages relating to business opportunities.

However, should that be the limit of their use?

Auto responders can be used in a variety of ways, and each gives you the opportunity to have further contact with potential customers or clients. Why not capture as many of those opportunities as possible?

Use them to provide further information on the topic your site, ezine, or sales letter is discussing. Provide links to related articles, testimonials, recommendations, lists of resources or reference materials, detailed product information, or anything else that may be of value.

I used to get many subscribers to an auto responder on my site that simply asked if the visitor was in a hurry and if he or she would rather get the information about my program by email to view later on.

Auto responder links can even be used in advertising instead of

links leading directly to your site.

Of course, you'll need to consider whether or not what you are promoting warrants the use of an auto responder or would be better with a direct site link. For more thoughts on this subject, send for my article "When and When Not To Use an Auto Responder" at: <mailto:whenauto@netplaynewsletters.com>

One other thing to consider is that an auto responder link with information on demand can be valuable for others to use as well.

For instance, say you have an article in an auto responder. Besides direct person to person recommendation by people who've read the article, ezine publishers or webmasters may use your auto responder link along with a short description of the content in their ezines or on their sites -- even if there is not room to run your complete article.

In general, links are easier to pass around than complete content, and so it can be an advantage for you.

OFFER VALUABLE CONTENT

As with the anything else, the content of your auto responder needs to have value for the reader or you will be wasting your time as it won't be read. This should be obvious.

However, there are a couple of other things many overlook in regards to content. I don't know how many times I've clicked on a link to an auto responder, expecting more information related to what I was viewing at the time, only to get something either totally unrelated or that's just a repeat of what I'd already read.

This is not only disappointing to the reader, but a waste of time. As you write the content for your auto responder, make sure you remind your reader not only where the email came from, but why it was he or she requested it in the first place. In other words, rekindle their interest. This will give your auto responder emails a much better chance of being read in case it spends a few days in your reader's inbox before being opened.

From there, provide additional information on the topic of interest, not just a regurgitation of what was already said. Reminding people of what they read previously is fine, of course, but put at least some variety into it.

WRITE WITH PERSONALITY

Another thing to think about is the personality or tone of your messages. To anyone that's been online for a while, it's obvious when an email comes from an auto responder. However, that

doesn't mean your message needs to feel cold and impersonal. Even if it is automatic, it's still coming from you. Let your readers feel who it is that's writing to them, just as if you composed the message explicitly for them.

CALL FOR AN ACTION

Consider also the overall goal you have for each message. What is it you want the reader to do after he or she finishes reading? Do you want them to re-visit your site? Subscribe to your ezine? Get back in touch with you? Define the action you want your reader to take and call them to that action by the end of the message if not sooner.

TIME INTERVALS

Almost exclusively, you'll want the first email from your multi-message auto responder sent out immediately. From there, though, how long do you wait before sending the next one?

In general, if you're providing information, such as in a marketing course, you'll want to send messages daily until finished. If your goal is to follow up on a visit to your business opportunity, though, you may want to spread your messages out a bit.

Your goal in this case is not just to provide information, but to stay in contact over time and remind your reader to look further into what you are offering. Send your messages more frequently in the beginning, perhaps every other day, and less frequently as time goes by. This will give you more opportunities for contact without overstepping your welcome.

RESOURCES

There are many auto responder services available online. Some of the most popular are:

Get Response

<http://www.globalwealthnow.com/getresponse.html>

Aweber

<http://www.globalwealthnow.com/aweber.html>

List Warrior

<http://www.globalwealthnow.com/listwarrior.html>

Quicktell

<http://www.quicktell.com>

Send Free

<http://www.sendfree.com>

As well, there are a multitude of marketing programs that offer auto responders as part of their program.

One more thing to consider, however, is the benefit of having your auto responders reflect your own domain name. Having your messages come directly from your site will only increase the credibility of your business.

To get auto responders on your own domain, you'll need to install a CGI script on your site. Again, some marketing programs provide auto responder scripts as a benefit of membership. One such program is the Internet Marketing Warriors. <http://www.globalwealthnow.com/warriorpro.html>

Searching for 'auto responder scripts' will get you several results to check out as well.

PROMOTING WITH AUTO RESPONDERS

The main thing auto responders can do for you in terms of promotion is offer repeat contact with potential customers. Auto responders carrying good content can recommend products or services, refer to affiliate programs, solicit ezine subscriptions or site visitors, re-emphasize benefits of a product or opportunity, explore further benefits, and even carry related classified advertising along with the message.

Start by providing useful content related to what it is you wish to promote, and then include a call to action in each message that directs people toward what you are offering.

Auto responders are certainly an indispensable tool for online marketers. Consider how they can play a more useful role in your business, and you're bound to increase your profits.

To get MORE "Up To Date" marketing and promotion information, I recommend the FREE e-course "115 Internet Marketing Techniques to Blast Your Competitors Out of the Water!" a href="mailto:115steps@getresponse.com" "115 Internet Marketing Techniques /a Get It Today.

*written by Joe Bingham of the NetPlay Marketer
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