

# Make Your eMail Communications Sell

By Melissa Brewer

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Melissa Brewer  
mysmys@home.com

Web Writing Buzz <http://sites.hsprofessional.com/webbuzz/index.html>

Make Your eMail Communications Sell:  
Drawing the Line Between "Buzz" and "Hype"  
by Melissa Brewer (mysmys@home.com)

Every day, I cringe at the emails that flood my inbox. There is a good chance, in fact, that I deleted YOUR email today. The influx of spam, opt-in newsletters and sales letters overwhelm me on a daily basis. (80 % of my online mail is sales-junk -- and I know I'm not alone.)

Why do so many emails go straight to the Recycle Bin? Besides the fact that hundred of unsolicited emails are sent to me on a daily basis, there's also the often-ignored fact that most small businesses and online vendors ignore; credibility is the key to online success.

How do you establish credibility? Kill the Hype. Get Buzz.

What's the difference between hype and buzz? Hype is something that you create and try to sustain, with little to back it up. Buzz is user and customer-created interest -- and it lasts because there are hundreds or thousands of people backing it up.

Ways to Kill Hype

1. Recognize that EVERY online word you type is both COMMUNICATION and COPY.
2. If you don't have a newsletter, CREATE ONE! It's easy and relatively painless to find an email host such as Yahoogroups.com and there are plenty of ways to use a newsletter establish your expertise and credibility. Some large ecommerce websites simply send out a link to articles relevant to their readers with a short summary of what they contain. There are also plenty of free content websites that contain quality articles for reprint.
3. Recognize that your newsletter is not a catalog. It's NOT about "You". A good newsletter has

valuable content and minimal advertisements -- this gives the reader a reason to read. It also lets your own advertisements and promotions stand out. Remind your readers that the publication is "sponsored by" your business, and place a small advertisement in a semi-conspicuous place. Let the content build your expertise.

4. Admit you don't know everything. Ask your readers or contacts for help when you need it. They'll feel important and "listened to" when you ask for their input, whether you're looking for a specific product, website, or service. You can even ask them to help you with your goals by sincerely asking them to help -- tell them if they enjoy the newsletter, "please forward it to anyone that may be interested."

5. Be consistent. If your publication is weekly, send it weekly. Try to resist the urge to send out a slew of "solo ads".... If you want to email your newsletter list directly, try to limit the solo mailings and make sure that you let them know that you are sending a "one-time" mailing. If you don't, they may unsubscribe and you'll be left without an audience.

6. Learn the delicate art of specificity. When you DO write sales copy for your product or service, learn to write a brief, specific list of benefits. Honestly evaluate what sets you apart from the competition. Even if you are a part of an affiliate program, there IS SOMETHING that makes you different. For example, you may give personal attention to your clients and customers and follow up to make sure they are satisfied. Maybe you have a freebie to go with your sales. Maybe your website has links to free search engines submission services. If you aren't doing anything differently than the competition, it's time to brainstorm a few things that you CAN do differently, starting today.

7. LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, DON'T SHOUT IN YOUR EMAILS!!!! Emails should be written the way you would hold a conversation. If you were a brick-and-mortar business, would you really introduce yourself and your product to customers with "HI! I'M JACK AND I HAVE A GREAT DEAL FOR YOU!" You're not a used car salesman in the seedy part of town. You're a legitimate business. Emulate the type of communication you would expect at a Land Rover Dealership.

### Ways to Build Buzz

1. Create a professional signature line that explains who you are and what you (or your business) do.

2. Spread your expertise around. Join related discussion lists and DISCUSS. Don't spam or incessantly write about how wonderful your product is. For example, I forward relevant writing jobs to the lists I belong to every chance I get. This is where the signature line comes in: I get at least 5 subscribers from each list I forward information to, every time I forward information. Many discussion lists will also allow you to forward a copy of your newsletter if it is on-topic.

3. Find something newsworthy about yourself or your product -- and write a professional press release. Create a list of industry-specific places -- magazines, newsletters, and other publications that you will send it to. (Use a search engine if you are not familiar with them!)

4. Offer to write articles for other publications--and write them well or outsource them to a ghostwriter. Link to your articles in the newsletters you send out and add recent publication links to your signature line.

5. Get reviewed -- no matter what you sell, there's somebody out there who wants it free and is willing to review it if they get it for free.

This method will provide you with some genuine testimonials, specific to your business. You can also get your newsletter reviewed by websites. Send a short query

offering review copies to websites that are aligned with your interests.

6. Make friends and influence people -- "meet" people in your industry online through their websites, sign their guest books, and send them appreciative emails. Give them tips on promotion. Ask them questions about what works for them. Trade secrets and advertisements once you've established an online relationship.

These are just a few tips on killing hype and getting buzz. I hope you use them well -- happy buzzing and many sales to you!

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Melissa Brewer is a freelance writer based in Northern Virginia. She writes articles, manuals, and online content for a plethora of clients.

She is currently looking for affiliates willing to sell her eBook on their website -- if you are an affiliate of eLance.com or other job sites, please email her at [mysmys@home.com](mailto:mysmys@home.com) for details!

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