

A Cost Effective Way to Advertise Online . . . Permission E-Mail

Marketing

By Robin Nobles

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Robin Nobles
RobinN@acws.com

Academy of Web Specialists <http://www.academywebspecialists.com>

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We all hate e-mail spam, right? I even have the coolest software program that will help you combat spam and actually bounces the spam e-mail straight back to the user. (<http://www.mailwasher.net>)

However, one thing that we often fail to admit (except in private) is the importance of permission e-mail marketing, where the members of your mailing list have given you permission to contact them, or where they're past customers of yours. Obviously, these e-mail lists are always opt-out, so if someone chooses not to continue receiving information from you, they can easily get removed from the list.

Many of you know that I write monthly articles for Planet Ocean Publications, which (in my opinion) is one of the best sources for up-to-date information in the search engine industry. Their monthly online publication, Search Engine News, is second to none, and if you don't subscribe to it, you're missing out on tips and strategies that could make an amazing difference in your search engine optimization work. For those of you who aren't familiar with Planet Ocean, here's their URL.
<http://www.searchenginehelp.com/moreinfo/>

Stephen Mahaney is the editor of Planet Ocean, and he's easily one of the top marketing guru's on the Internet. I spent several hours on the phone with him recently, and he told me that Time Magazine wrote an article in their November 3 edition that dealt with the importance and impact of permission e-mail marketing.

There are a couple of quotes straight from the magazine:

"E-mail marketing is fast, effective and dirt cheap -- a godsend for marketers in an economy that has crunched advertising budgets."

". . . the humble medium of e-mail is blossoming while flashier forms of Internet advertising are going the way of the Pets.com sock puppet."

"Little wonder that old-line companies like Ford and Procter & Gamble are joining early users of targeted e-mail pitches like Amazon.com and J. Crew."

Can we trust Time Magazine? I do believe we can! They're a highly trusted magazine and have been for years and years. Time is clearly going on the record of saying that permission e-mail marketing is one of the most valuable means of making sales on the Internet, but only if done properly.

In the words of Stephen Mahaney, "If you have yet to 'correctly' integrate 'permission email marketing' into your online business plan, then you risk being thwarted by your competitors that do. It's just that plain and simple."

So, while spam e-mail should always remain locked tightly in a closet (NEVER to be let out), permission e-mail marketing is a crucial way for you to keep in touch with your customers and those interested in your products or services.

Let's look at five effective permission e-mail marketing strategies, tips that many Webmasters fail to do, and they ultimately lose business because of it.

1. If someone writes for information on your goods or services, save those e-mail addresses! Remember that sales aren't always made the first time someone hears of a service or product. One trusted source told me that you have to hear about a product, service, or company at least twenty times before you begin to trust that company enough to do business with them.

2. Set up an online form where people can sign up with their names and e-mail addresses to receive a copy of your monthly or quarterly newsletter or updates to your site, or to ask you questions. Have the information go straight into a database that contains the e-mail addresses of everyone who has written to you for information. Then, create a newsletter that is not just a sales pitch for your products and services. Offer valuable tips to your potential customers. Give the newsletter true value, and those potential customers will begin to look forward to hearing from you. Then, when it's time for them to purchase the types of goods or services that you offer, who do you think they'll go to? The company they can trust: you!

3. Respond to your e-mail or to the questions asked on the form within 24 hours, if not sooner. When people go online looking for something, they usually send e-mail out to 5-6 companies. If your company is the first to respond, and if you've taken the time to answer the questions professionally and thoughtfully, you'll have a jump over those other companies, many of which won't even answer the e-mail at all.

4. Always provide a way to "opt-out" of your e-mail list. Make it very clear how your subscribers can choose not to receive the newsletter or e-mail any longer, and then immediately unsubscribe them when they write to you. Remember: having permission to send the e-mail in the first place by only adding those who have contacted you and expressed an interest in your product, and giving those people a way to get off your mailing list, will differentiate you from the millions of e-mail spammers that have given e-mail marketing such a bad name.

5. Take time in creating your subject line for your e-mail marketing campaign. Make sure it doesn't sound "spammy" in any way. Including your name or company name is a possibility, as well as describing the focus of the e-mail. With these new e-mail programs that combat spam, if you use a subject line like, "We've got GREAT news for you!" or "Hi, Friend!," you can expect the e-mail to be deleted without ever making it to your potential customer.

How can you learn effective permission e-mail marketing strategies?

Stephen Mahaney attributes much of his online success to effective permission e-mail marketing. He's even gone so far as to write a course on the subject, which I've personally reviewed. It offers a step-by-step approach on how to create an effective permission e-mail marketing list and how to market to that list. The course even comes packaged with a full version software program for merging each message with the people on your list so they'll each get a personalized e-mail.

So, with Time Magazine pushing the importance of e-mail marketing to the forefront of marketing online, here's information about Stephen's "Business Guide to Permission Email Marketing" course and software: <http://www.email-solutions.com/moreinfo/>

How effective is permission e-mail marketing?

Traditionally, permission e-mail marketing campaigns result in a significantly higher response rate than traditional direct marketing or other forms of online advertising, such as banner ads. According to FindMoreBuyers.com, the response rate for a typical permission e-mail marketing campaign is 4-12%, where as the response rate for a banner ad is .5-1%. Quite a difference.
<http://findmorebuyers.com/page.cfm/205>

According to Emarketer.com, DoubleClick projects that e-mail marketing budgets will increase by 17.0% in 2002, which is nearly twice the rate of other types of online marketing, which are expected to gain 9.0%. TV, print and radio budgets are all expected to decrease. Not only that, DoubleClick reports that 61% of marketers plan to increase their e-mail marketing budget in 2002.

Forrester Research estimates that the total spending for e-mail marketing services in the United States will reach \$2 billion by the end of this year. http://www.emarketer.com/products/report.php?email_mktg&PHPSESSID=f564eda06be98116905028b857b834c4

So, hit while the iron is hot, and permission e-mail marketing is certainly "hot" right now! Learn how to use it effectively, and then watch those profits increase! <http://www.email-solutions.com/moreinfo/>

Robin Nobles, Director of Training, Academy of Web Specialists, (<http://www.academywebspecialists.com>) has trained several thousand people in her online search engine marketing courses (<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com>) and is the content provider for (GRSeo) Search Engine Optimizer software (<http://www.se-optimizer.com>). She also teaches 4-day hands on search engine marketing workshops in locations across the globe with Search Engine Workshops (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com>).

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