

Are Announcement Lists Effective?

By Bill Platt

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When you start an ezine, you realize after a few short weeks that you will actually have to promote it in order for it to be successful. But how do we do that? We have all asked ourselves that question. When you begin to seek out solutions, most of us quickly discover Announcement Lists. But, how effective are they?

New List Announcements are great, but you can only use them once!

When you start out with a new list and begin promoting on the announce lists, you are thrilled by each new subscription. But after some time passes, you begin to notice that your new subscriptions are waning. Most list owners will reach this point and start playing with their ads a bit. This is a good exercise, it will help you learn to craft a better ad. Let me give you some of what I learned when I started trying to create a better ad.

You can learn a lot by watching your own methods for looking at announcement posts. If there are certain things in an ad that trigger certain reactions in you, then you can be fairly certain that other people will react the same way.

Take for example white space. White space is wonderful. It is much easier on the eyes than an ad that runs along for miles without a break. It provides a clean appearance and seems more professional.

Subconsciously, we may be equating white space or the lack thereof, to the different subconscious reactions we have towards a clean person versus our reactions towards a bum in an alley way. By paying attention to my own reactions to various ad styles, I have learned that you do need that white space to break things up, or people will skip your ad altogether. My ad efficiency increased by 25% by learning just this one lesson.

You need to try to cycle your ads and try different things. Each week, try a different approach for your ads. By doing this, you will begin to see what works best for your particular ezine.

Different ezines will need a different style of ad, to represent the differentiation of subject materials and the people who read them. Despite the differences of the various genre, some tactics will be effective for all of them. The remainder of this article will continue to address some of those constants.

Some of my early growth explosions came as a result of using testimonials in my ad copy. I know you have heard people talk about that before. I know, because I have read more articles on the subject of using testimonials than for any other subject material.

I highly recommend that you will want to include the single best testimonial you have received from your subscribers. It is not important how many testimonials you have, as long as you have one that is really descriptive and informative. It only took me one ad with one testimonial to understand the importance of using testimonials in my ad copy.

Because my own newsletter appeals to such a wide audience, I wanted to make sure that I was able to include testimonials from folks from every level of computing experience. I have found the four best testimonials from my readers, and the testimonials represent all levels of computer users from the new computer user, to the experienced computer enthusiast, to the computing professional. Two of the four testimonials address the new user, each from a different perspective.

Depending on where I place an ad swap or announcement, I have enough range in my testimonials to provide incentive to anyone to subscribe to my ezine. I have even updated my subscribe page to include all four testimonials, so that anyone contemplating subscription, will discover at least three more reasons to subscribe.

My readers tell my story the best, and the vast majority of folks who will be reading my ad want to know what my readers think of my ezine, before they are willing to consider subscribing. If you would care to see my testimonials in action, please feel free to visit my subscribe page to see for yourself:

<http://topica.com/lists/WindstormComputing>

The point is, you need to try out different ads all the time. In their order of importance, the two ad structures that provided the best returns from my announcement ads have always come from:

1. testimonials, and
2. ads that included tips or materials from my newsletter,

Announcement lists are a great source for testing out your ad structure, and discovering what works and what does not work. But, in time, you will notice that what has worked before, does not seem to have the same pull that it used to. It is at this

time that you need to start exploring the other great avenues available for producing new subscriptions.

The other day I was cruising around, and I realized why, after a time, why we get such a slim return from our postings on announce lists... Between all 20 or so lists that I submit to, there are maybe 2000 subscribers between them, and my bet is, most of those subscribers are people like you and me looking for their own subscribers!

Resource Box:

Bill Platt is the owner of <http://ThePhantomWriters.com> .
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