

Maximum Mailing Lists

By Tatiana Velitchkov

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There used to be a time when a huge mailing list subscriber base automatically meant huge online profits, simply because "advertising" was the biggest name in the Internet revenue game.

But now the rules have changed, and although online advertising is still alive and thriving, most web site owners have come to realize that the only way most people can REALLY PROFIT on the web is to sell a useful product or provide a valuable service --

-- And that they'd be better off doing the ad placing rather than the subscriber-base-building-AND-ad-spot-selling if they wanted to maximize their business budgets.

Still, building your own mailing list remains a must in any Internet marketer's handbook, with the idea that you can use it as your own personal marketing tool.

Because it's a marketing TOOL, it's also supposed to make your job as a business owner EASIER, and there are FOUR THINGS you need to remember to make sure it works (and stays!) that way:

1. Define exactly what you need your mailing list to do.

Is it for attracting the attention of new clients, for keeping old clients interested, or for spotting industry trends and evolving client needs?

Is it for sending more people to visit your website, for getting existing customers to order more products, or for gaining the respect & loyalty of people in your industry

-- which could lead to referrals, partnerships, and other benefits?

No matter how "worry-free" your mailing list seems to be, managing it (and its subscribers) still takes up a certain amount of your online & offline time.

And it really doesn't make sense to waste ANY time on something you don't even need.

2. Decide on the kind of subscribers YOU need.

The old Internet way of thinking was "ANY kind of subscriber is a PROFITABLE subscriber" -- but that just doesn't work on the shaken-out web anymore.

Just like your existing clients, mailing list subscribers (who are also POTENTIAL clients) fall into 3 categories:

- a) the ones who really need what you're offering, and bring you the most amount of profit for the least amount of time & effort
- b) the ones who aren't sure about what they need, and bring you minimum profit in exchange for a lot of coddling & hand-holding, AND
- c) the ones who don't really intend to buy any of your products, but are in for the ride because of all the "free stuff" you can give them.

Many old "free web hosting" companies learned this lesson the hard way, and ended up either charging high service fees to quickly recoup their expenses (and repel their thousands of non-profitable members), or closing shop altogether.

(And that is something you CLEARLY don't want to do.)

3. Define clearly what you expect from potential list

members -- and what THEY can expect from you.

Although at first this sounds rather cold & uninviting, it's actually a rule that's sustained the oldest successful mailing lists and the best of the new ones.

Our most ideal clients are the ones who hold personal

values & business visions similar to our own. This same formula applies to ideal mailing list members.

You created your list for a reason; people sign up for your list also for a reason. If both these reasons are synergetic enough, then you and your list members can enjoy a long and satisfying relationship not just through email, but through actual business interactions as well.

4. Manage smarter, not harder.

A business owner's many responsibilities are taxing enough as it is, so you don't want the role of "mailing list moderator" to be too complicated to get in the way of your other roles. So:

- Combine your website promotion efforts with your mailing list awareness campaigns.
- Automate as many functions as possible, but step in with a personal touch when it really matters to your customer.
- Actively seek your members' input in keeping your list dynamic & useful for everyone.
- And remain true to your list's original purpose & vision, creating a real service for you & your members.

So what if you apply all these principles and you end up with a list of just 200 members?

If you sent them a single announcement for an online sale, and more than 100 of them visited your site & more than 50 made actual purchases, then THAT'S a MAXIMIZED mailing list indeed!

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About the Author:

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