

Handsome Dividends

By Bob Osgoodby

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So you followed our advice and went to all the work to build your own website, and now it's up and running. You put a hit counter on the site, and are dismayed at the number of visitors who visit. Aside from your personal hits when you check the activity, there have been few if any other people stop by.

You notified everyone in your address book, put up a few FFA ads, paid someone to submit your site to a few search engines, and nothing seemed to generate interest. These are things often heard from website owners that are just starting out. A few years back, I wrote an article titled "I Shot An Arrow Into The Air -It Fell To Earth I Know Not Where."

Some people feel the words from this poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow make an appropriate strategy for an advertising campaign for their business. They purchase hundreds of thousands of E-mail addresses, and thinking of each as an "arrow shot into the air", hope that some will fall to earth and hit a prospective client.

The odds of this generating business for you are "slim to none". In fact, this is called spamming, and many ISP's, who have a zero tolerance for this, may discontinue your service. So forget the ads that promise that you will get millions of email addresses for a very low price, and all you have to do is sit back and watch the money roll in. Many of these lists are so old they have "whiskers".

The majority of the email addresses sold are actually harvested from the web. Most of the people who advertise, don't want to compromise their real email address so they get temporary free ones, and this is what they use in their ads.

My experience is that approximately two percent of these email addresses are discontinued for one reason or another every week. Some were trial memberships with AOL that they didn't continue, while others were shut down for spamming. Some people with free email accounts lost interest - their mailboxes filled up (with other spam) and they were discontinued.

If you plan to market by email, you should build your own list. Sure this takes some time, but the rewards will be worth it. This is a responsible approach to the use of business E-mail. I do believe there is a "bottom line" here. If your list is highly targeted, remove requests are immediately honored, and you are providing something of interest, you should not encounter any problems and just may do some business.

There are a number of ways to get people to your web site so you can make the actual sale. One

of the time proven methods is to search out Newsletters or Ezines that match your target market. Don't make the mistake of thinking that a huge subscriber base is best. It is better to advertise in smaller publications that are targeted to the group you wish to contact, then ones with very large subscriber bases that are not. Publications that are not targeted are like shooting that arrow into the air. Sure, you may get a few but realistically you won't get many.

Search Engines are a good bet. Get your web site listed, but don't fall for the pitch that someone can do it for you for a few bucks. To do it right, it is simply too much work to be able to get any type of good listing for a small amount. This is something you should consider doing yourself, and if you do spend the necessary time, the rewards will be worth it.

One of our publications, "Search Engine Tips" is a good starting place to learn the "ins and outs" of getting a favorable position. <mailto:josgoodby-subscribe@topica.com> It is a free publication and is mailed out once a week.

Think about writing some articles in areas of your expertise. Most publications permit an authors credit box following the article. If your articles are well written and timely, the odds are they will be published. Anything that you can do to improve your business exposure, will pay "Handsome Dividends".

Bob publishes the free weekly "Your Business" Newsletter Visit his Web Site at <http://adv-marketing.com> to subscribe. As a bonus, get 40,000 FREE E-Books from Larry Dotson, when you visit <http://www.ldpublishing.com>

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