

Publish or Perish

By Bob Osgoodby

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While the concept of "publish or perish" is certainly true for a college professor, it may not be the case for the fledgling entrepreneur. Many of the pundits say that to get known on the Web, you should publish a newsletter. What you quickly learn however, is that subscribers are not easy to come by, and that many of the startup publications go away as quickly as they began.

Some feel that if you accept free ads in your publication, it will help build your subscriber base. If you do decide to accept free ads with the hope of quickly building your subscriber count or a mailing list, you just might be in for a big surprise.

Realizing that spammers will most likely harvest their email address, many advertisers get a free "throw away" email address. They use this in their ads, so they don't have their permanent email address inundated with offers from other advertisers. When their offer changes, they get a new one and the "beat goes on".

Statistics show that almost 8% of all email addresses submitted by advertisers, are undeliverable each and every week. That means that in about 12 weeks or so, many any of the original addresses you gathered are no longer valid. If you are not getting new subscribers at a higher rate than you are losing them, you will find that the work is not worth the effort required.

The free ad route is a difficult "row to hoe", so why do it? Some people offer free ads with the hope of converting them to a paid advertiser. Many people who rely on free ads as their primary method of advertising however, are just not serious when it comes to their business, When they don't achieve immediate success, they either give up or try something else.

While some publishers may consider an "affiliate arrangement", whereby they provide free advertising in return for a split of the profits, most won't. While it sounds good on the surface, in practice it seldom works out. This also applies to offline advertising such as telemarketing or list services. Most publishers have learned a long time ago that giving away advertising space like this is not cost effective.

It is possible though to earn income on the web. Some will achieve a high level of success, and others are happy to simply supplement their income. The first thing any potential publisher must determine is what level they wish to reach. If this is simply a part-time effort, you can reach the lower levels and supplement your earnings.

If you wish to reach the higher levels however, you must approach your online venture like every

other business, and devote your full time and energy to it.

The collection of email address, from "freebies" however, is a valid method of building a data base. But if you do, remember that there will be undeliverables as time passes. Some ISP's servers will automatically go into a "self protect" mode and shut you down if the bounces reach a certain level. For that reason, you must have an emailing package that automatically removes bad email addresses from your database.

It is simply too much work to attempt to do this manually. Your standard email packages, in addition to having a limit on the number of emails that can be sent at one time, don't have the ability to automatically remove bounces from the database.

Once your mailing list exceeds a thousand or so subscribers, if you are sending out a newsletter or bulk "opt-in" email, your best bet is to use a commercial List Server. To prevent spamming, many of the List Servers however, use a "double opt in" procedure that requires the potential subscriber to verify their subscription request.

If you publish more than one, they make the prospect "jump through hoops" to become subscribed to each one, and many people simply won't do it. We use Topica", and they require the "double opt in" procedure. We found that a very small percentage of people requesting to be subscribed, actually wound up doing so.

To counteract this, we designed a web page that potential subscribers could simply select the publication(s) they wished. This is sent directly to "Topica", and subscribers are sent one confirmation that will add them to multiple lists. Since implementing this, we found that the rate of subscribes is right back where it should be.

If anyone would like to use this form, you can see it at:
<http://adv-marketing.com/business/subscribe2.htm> - feel free to use this for your publication, changing of course, our information to yours.

For smaller lists, consider a software package such as "Aureate" which resides on your computer, and allows you to automatically manage your bounces and unsubscribes.

If you do decide to follow the publishing route in an attempt to build your business, it can be done. If you do it the right way, perhaps the concept of "Publish or Perish" does make some sense.

Did you know that subscribers to Bob Osgoodby's Free Ezine the "Tip of the Day" get a Free Ad for their Business at his Web Site? Great Business and Computer Tips - Monday thru Friday. Instructions on how to place your ad are in the Newsletter. Subscribe at:
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