

How To Market Your Business With Email

By Brett Krkosska

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Brett Krkosska
editor@homebiztools.com

Home Biz Tools <http://www.homebiztools.com>

Email marketing has become a favored method of reaching consumers among U.S. businesses. In a survey by the Direct Marketing Association, two-thirds of companies say their sales increased in 2001 because of email marketing, and sixty-three percent credit email as the most effective way to retain customers.

This isn't so surprising given that email is the most popular activity among Internet users. This popularity, coupled with email's cost-effectiveness as a marketing vehicle, make it an important customer acquisition and retention tool.

Before looking at the various ways you can use email marketing, let's examine how to make your campaigns more effective. Like other marketing methods, when using email you should pay attention to some basic rules of engagement.

1. Target Your Message

Put your messages in front of people who are most likely to have an interest in your product or service. Know who your product or service will benefit and where these people can be found.

2. Offer Value

When people visit you by way of your promotions, create an environment of value which puts your visitors in a buying mode. That is... offer irresistible benefits, make it effortless for people to see the benefits, create an urgency in people to get the benefits from your product, and make it easy to buy the benefits (your product or service).

3. Use Repetition

An integral part of successful marketing is your visibility in front of potential buyers. Therefore, it's important to realize the necessity of putting your message in front of people repeatedly.

4. Track Your Marketing Results

Another important consideration is the performance of your promotions. Tracking allows you to test your promotions and zero in on things that work. Here some ways to evaluate the results of your marketing efforts:

== URL Tracking

One of the easiest ways to track responses to your promotions is to code your URL. Simply add a special code at the end of your link and then look at your log files to view clickthroughs. You can use any code you like following the question mark. The coding will look similar to this:

<http://www.yourdomain.com/?advert1>

== CGI Tracking

Using your CGI directory you can accomplish many tracking tasks. CGI scripts run on your server, so you should be versed in their installation or be prepared to pay for installation from the supplier. You can use a free link counter script such as LnkinLite at dtp-aus.com, or go with a more powerful program as found at Adtrackz.com.

== Tracking Services

If you prefer not to work with scripts, you can hire a third party to track your campaigns from their server. These services charge a monthly fee, but are well worth it in terms of helping you pull the best results from your advertising. Check out HyperTracker.com or ROlbot.com to see the versatility these services offer.

Six Effective Ways To Market With Email

By targeting your market you bring in willing buyers. With an attention to delivering value, you remove barriers that hinder sales. Through repetition you're able to demand recognition, and with performance tracking you are able to market with the greatest impact. Now you can market with gusto! Here are six very effective methods:

1. Start an Opt-In Mailing List

This is a favored method of many email marketers. Those who opt-in to your list have already shown an interest and are ripe to receive your messages. Provide useful and free information people can really use, and at the same time offer services or products which cater to their needs.

To collect email addresses you can use a free cgi script such as the one offered at WorldWideMart.com. Another increasingly popular email collection technique is the "one-click" script from OptInAutoMator.com.

To send out your messages you can use programs that run on your computer or you can use an online service and avoid all the techie stuff. Programs such as GroupMail from Infacta.com and WorldMerge by ColoradoSoft.com are both good choices for personalizing and sending mail from your computer. Topica.com, Dundee.net, and Sparklist.com provide reliable online distribution service.

2. Offer an Email Course

There are a couple of ways this can work. The first is to offer a free email course from your site. Using an autoresponder you can deliver your material in small chunks over the period of a week or two.

Alternately, you could offer a valuable freebie that requires your visitor to leave their email address before claiming it. The delivery of your e-course becomes a condition of claiming the freebie.

You can introduce your products and services within the context of the e-course, but it should be done in a subtle and casual manner. Just make sure you are enhancing the information they first sought.

Overall, the idea is to create a relationship with people, a trusting bond built upon your expert status and ability to deliver truly useful information. This credibility factor can result in sales long after the course is over.

3. Self-Submit Ads to Ezines

You can save some money and place ads in your own hand-picked ezines. There are literally thousands of ezines looking for advertisers, and if you've got the time to browse directories such as EzineAdAuction.com or EzineLocator.com, you're bound to find many ezines that target your market.

Placing classifieds is very cost effective and if you choose well, you can see fantastic results. A few other good ezine directories are EzineHub.com, EzinesPlus.com, WebScoutLists.com, and MarketersMarket.com.

4. Advertise in Email Newsletter Networks

These services let you advertise in newsletters within their network. The amount of time you'll save is worthwhile in itself, but the real value comes from being able to profile your ad for specific target groups. Some reputable networks include Opt-Influence.com, EzineAdHelper.com, PennMedia.com, SodaMail.com, and ShagMail.com.

5. Rent-a-List

You can promote your business with a rented list. Reputable companies providing this service maintain only the email addresses of people who have agreed to receive commercial email. Renting a list can be quite expensive since you'll pay as much as 25 cents per address, however you can get some great results with a highly targeted list. Safe list sources include BulletMail.com, HTMail.com, PostMasterDirect.com, and HipLists.com.

6. Write Articles and Get Published

Many ezine publishers and site developers are hungry for good content. Getting published in just one high-profile ezine can give you exposure in front of thousands of potential buyers.

Some prime spots to promote your articles are IdeaMarketers.com, MakingProfit.com, Marketing-Seek.com, and GoArticles.com. Joining a few article announcement lists from Groups.Yahoo.com is also a great way to get published. Some popular lists include Article_Announce, Free-Content, and ArticlePublisher.

In conclusion, email is without a doubt a very potent marketing tool. It should be an integral component of your marketing plan if your goal is spectacular results. And what business doesn't want that!

Brett Krkosska provides 'how-to' advice on small business and home-based work issues. Get start-up guidance, business ideas and inspiration at: <http://homebiztools.com> For a fresh and original perspective on today's issues subscribe to Brett's ezine: <mailto:enews@homebiztools.com>

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