Simple List Building Strategies

Introduction

You've probably heard it many times:

The money is in the list

While that statement doesn't tell the whole story (you'll find out why shortly) it really is true. There are very few assets in an internet business that are as valuable as your list.

Unfortunately, far too many internet marketers ignore this particular component of their business. They may not know what they should write in their emails, some people are "afraid" of what people might think of them while others would prefer to do stuff that requires zero personal interaction.

While you can get away with ignoring list building, doing so means **you're leaving a lot of money and other opportunities on the table**. In this report we're going to look first of all at why you should be building a list, and then we're going to look at five steps to go from zero to a decent sized list in less time than you might think.

Let's get started...

Why Should You Build A List?

There's one big advantage to building a list of your own - ***control over your business***.

So many of the things we do as internet marketers require us to rely on some other person or company.

- To get traffic to our sites, we rely on Google and other search engines - both for natural and paid search.
- For monetization, we're often at the mercy of affiliate networks and ad networks like Google Adsense.

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If one of those companies changes their terms, or decides that they just don't like the way we are conducting business for some reason, they can shut down our traffic, revenue or both virtually overnight.

When you have a list of your own, and have built a good relationship with them, you take back control.

Notice that I said "built a good relationship with them" - this is the piece that's missing from the old "The money's in the list" statement. In actual fact, **the money's in your relationship with the list**.

If you want traffic to a new site or a new article on one of your existing sites, you can send an email with a link and get clicks almost instantly. Even when you're in Google's good books, it's pretty tough to get *instant traffic* to a brand new page or site.

Or if you want to generate some revenue, you can email your list with a link to one of your own products, an affiliate offer or even an article on your site that's monetized with Adsense or some other type of ads.

You're the one controlling things, not all those other companies.

Plus, when you build a good relationship with the people on your list, you can wind up getting other benefits as well:

- ❑ Potential JV partners
- ❑ Networking opportunities
- ❑ Even new friendships

Hopefully you're beginning to see the value in building a list (assuming you weren't already convinced before) so let's move on to the action plan for doing just that.

Setting Up Your Lead Capture System

Your lead capture system is one of the most important components of this process. If your lead capture isn't working well, it's not going to matter how good your autoresponder series is or how effective you are at writing promotional emails - nobody is ever going to see them. **You need to get them onto your list first**.

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While putting a simple "*Sign up for my free newsletter*" box in the side column of your website will generate some subscribers, chances are it's not going to get a lot.

Instead, you need to make getting the opt-in your **top priority**.

One of the most effective ways to do this is to use what's called a "*namesqueeze*" or "*squeeze*" page.

This is a page that does nothing but "sell" the opt-in to your visitors. It's like a mini sales-letter whose job is to convince the visitor to enter their information and click the "subscribe" button instead of clicking an order button.

As a result, it needs most of the same components as a sales letter:

- ❑ An effective headline
- ❑ Copy that will give the reader a reason why they should subscribe
- ❑ A strong call-to-action

You'll want to use all the same copywriting techniques that you would use when selling something. Even though no money changes hands, it's not truly a "free" offer - the subscriber is paying you by giving you the ability to contact them again in the future. It's important that you make a good case for why they should do so on your squeeze page.

To get people to sign up for your email list, **you'll want to offer them some type of incentive**. This could be as simple as a free subscription to your email newsletter, but this strategy isn't nearly as effective as it once was. Free email newsletters are a dime a dozen, so you'll have much better results if you offer something over and above this.

There are lots of things you can offer:

- ❑ Free report or ebook
- ❑ Webinar or audio recordings
- ❑ Software or other tools
- ❑ Free access to a membership site
- ❑ etc.

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Just make sure you deliver some **serious value** with this freebie. You want your subscribers to think "*Man, if I'm getting this much value for free, imagine what I'll get if I actually buy something from this person!*"

The final component of your lead capture system is an email service, such as Aweber or Getresponse. Actually, this is probably the first step since you need to have a service to collect subscribers in order to set up a squeeze page, but beyond the actual subscription process you also want to have a follow-up autoresponder series in place.

By automating this process, your new subscribers will be sure to get several emails from you right away after subscribing, which is when they're going to be **most receptive** to your emails (and most impressionable about whether or not you're providing value).

Your autoresponder should be written so it is ***"evergreen."*** This means that the content of your messages won't appear dated or inappropriate at certain times of the year.

> eg. You'd want to avoid referencing a particular holiday or date since that will seem out of place to someone who subscribes any other time of the year.

By making the content evergreen, you won't have to worry about going back and changing it often. The autoresponder service will handle all the initial contact with new subscribers so you don't have to.

Generating Traffic

Traffic generation is a huge topic of its own, so there's just no way that we can get into any great detail in this report. But let's look at a few effective ways to get traffic to your squeeze page, and hopefully from there onto your email list.

One of the most popular methods is ***content syndication***. This includes things like article marketing, guest blogging, "web 2.0" sites like Squidoo and Hubpages, and other such places that you can share your own content.

Most of these types of sites let you include links within your content, or in a resource box at the end, that points back to your own website. This is essentially

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the "payment" that you receive for providing these other sites with content they can use.

The key here is to **link back to your squeeze page** - not the home page of your site (unless they're one and the same, of course). By linking back to your squeeze page, and making an offer in your resource box, you'll get a lot higher conversion rate of visitors to subscribers.

> eg. Your resource box could say something like "To receive a free copy of our special report '5 Secrets of Doing XYZ' just visit our site at www.OurSite.com/freereport"

Point the link to your squeeze page, where you'll be able to really convince the visitor to sign up. But because they already know they can get a free report (or whatever incentive you're offering) they're going to be somewhat "pre-sold" before they even get there.

This same technique can be used for other forms of traffic generation as well, such as *video marketing* or *audio syndication*. The difference is how you present the offer for the free incentive.

You can't include a clickable link in a video or an audio recording so you'll need to present them accordingly, depending on the medium. Just be sure you **make a clear call-to-action** to convince the listener/watcher to visit your site and sign up to get their freebie.

Forums are another great way to generate traffic to your squeeze page. If you're active in any market-related forums, you can usually include a link to your own site in your signature. Just make sure that link is pointing at your squeeze page, not the home page of your site.

Building A List Through Joint Ventures

Joint ventures are another effective way to build an email list. They can take many forms, but the basic idea is that you are partnering up with another marketer in your niche and helping one another grow your email lists.

When the term JV is mentioned, most internet marketers think of ad swaps. You send an ad to your list for your JV and they do the same for you. Some of your

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subscribers will join their list and some of theirs will join yours, so you both benefit.

Ad swaps can definitely work well, but one of the biggest drawbacks is that you have to already have a list to make them work. If you have no list, it's going to be pretty tough to do a swap with another marketer.

If this is the case though, there are other ways you can approach a joint venture deal. Maybe you do all the work to create a new product, which your JV partner can then promote to their list. All the buyers get added to your email list after purchasing, so you're building a list of your own in exchange for the work you did.

Or maybe you create some sort of freebie that your JV partner can offer to their list exclusively. This could be a report or ebook, an audio interview or a webinar with your partner, for example.

There are lots of ways to arrange JV deals even if you don't yet have a list of your own. Just be creative and think about what you can offer in place of additional subscribers to your partner's list.

Another thing to consider about joint venture deals is that you don't have to go after the "big guns" in your market right off the bat. In fact, you're probably better not to. Look for smaller marketers who have built somewhat of a following but aren't necessarily well known yet.

These people will usually be more open to smaller JV deals, and you can leverage the results you get with them to go after bigger and bigger fish in the market. Eventually you'll have enough resources to land JV deals with the best-known marketers in your niche if you want to.

Building A List Through Giveaway Events

Giveaway events are a popular way to build email lists, particularly for people who are starting from scratch or have relatively few subscribers. These events are made up of a bunch of marketers working in the same niche, each giving away some type of freebie in exchange for subscribing to their list.

The idea behind these events is that all the marketers involved will promote the event to their own lists, and those people will subscribe to various other marketers' lists to get the freebies being offered.

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If everything goes according to plan, everybody involved will gain subscribers on their own list.

These events don't always work out quite like they sound, however.

For one thing, many participants don't email their lists, or might only email a small portion of them, so you don't get as much exposure as you think.

And because there are so many marketers involved in most of these events, even if people do sign up for a bunch of lists, **they can quickly get overwhelmed** with all the email they start receiving.

Many marketers in these events take the "churn & burn" approach to email marketing.

In other words, they hammer people with emails until they either buy or unsubscribe. When a bunch of marketers take this same approach, it doesn't take long for the subscribers to lose interest and start ignoring the noise.

There are a couple of things you can do to help improve your odds with these giveaway events.

First, look for events that have some clear rules for how the participants have to promote them. If they require all participants to email their lists, or they get removed from the event, it will help ensure everyone promotes it.

It's also a good idea to choose events that review the products being given away. Look for events that require relatively new products and don't allow duplicate products from multiple marketers. This will help ensure a higher quality of offer, which means visitors will be more likely to subscribe.

Finally (and most importantly) **don't take the same churn & burn attitude** that many other participants will.

Treat the people who subscribe to your list with respect, and provide them with some serious value in those all-important first few emails you send via autoresponder. If they're getting a bunch of crap from most of the lists they subscribed to, and you're one of the only ones giving them real value, they're going to be a lot more likely to stay subscribed to your list.

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Using Viral Marketing In Your List Building

Viral marketing is one of the most effective ways to build your list, but it's also one of the hardest to implement. The way viral marketing works is that something you create gets shared by other people, then those people share and so on - creating a self-sustaining source of traffic.

You've probably experienced it with things like funny videos or images. Someone sends you something that's funny or interesting, and you share it with other people on Twitter, Facebook or however you choose. A certain number of those people share it with their contacts, and on it goes.

The problem with viral marketing is that **it's not always easy to come up with something "sharable"** like that. You might think something you create is the funniest, most clever thing ever, only to wonder why nobody else agrees.

There are some things you can do to help kickstart a viral campaign, however.

The first thing is to create something that has a higher chance of going viral in the first place. While useful content is okay, if you can create something that is somewhat *controversial or even mildly offensive*, it's going to have a much better chance of getting some traction.

People are a lot more likely to share things that they either agree or disagree with strongly. If you can create content that really polarizes your audience, it's a much better starting point.

> eg. Take all the "XYZ is Dead" reports that you see in the internet marketing niche. Whether or not the service or technique is actually dead, these types of reports get people all worked up - which makes them share it with other people they know in the market.

Once you have your content created, the next step to helping it go viral is to give the marketing/sharing process a bit of a kickstart. If you already have an email list, **send them an email with a link to it**, asking them to like it, share it, or whatever needs to be done to help it spread.

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You can do the same with any online communities you're a part of:

- Forums
- Blogs
- Membership sites
- etc.

Share the content with those people and ask them to help you kickstart it by sharing it with their circle of friends.

Getting the ball rolling is the hardest part of viral marketing. Once the exposure reaches a "tipping point" you won't need to push it any longer - it's going to keep growing under its own momentum. But without that initial push, it's a lot harder to get that momentum started.

Conclusion

Hopefully this report has given you some insight into list building, both why you should be doing it and how to get started.

And remember, the most important part of the process is to ***just get started***. Don't worry if your first effort isn't a home run. Chances are it won't be. But you'll learn a lot more from actually taking action on these strategies than you ever will by simply reading about them.

And something else you'll probably find is that once you start building your list, and getting responses to your emails, you'll quickly get a feel for what people are really looking for.

No matter how thoroughly you plan ahead of time, you'll probably find that your subscribers get as much or more value out of stuff that you didn't even think about when writing the email as they do from what you intended them to.

And this kind of feedback is invaluable for creating a successful customer-focused business. If you listen to, and respond to your subscribers, it becomes easier and easier to create products, write articles or blog posts, put together helpful videos or any other type of content creation.

It's just a matter of getting started and taking that first step.

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