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Permission Marketing

Roy Everitt



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Preface

No matter how many visitors you get to your premises or website, not one of them can be called a customer until he or she actually buys something from you. Even then, a customer might not bring a profit for your business until they have bought several of your products or services. Persuading people to buy something the first time they have contact with your business isn't always easy, and it can take many such "contacts" before some people are persuaded to buy.

The best way to make these repeated contacts is to get your potential customers' permission, which means Permission Marketing is probably the best way to convert more visitors to customers and more customers to repeat customers. In time, these customers could even become fans and advocates of your business and its products.

Note that Permission marketing doesn't mean "spamming" people with unwanted sales messages. The whole point is that you have their permission to stay in touch. How you get that permission and how you make the maximum use of Permission Marketing for the benefit of your business and its customers, is the subject of this book.

You'll find all this is explained in some detail but in a way that will make it easy to implement, whatever kind of business you have, online or in the real world. I have assumed that Permission Marketing – or at least implementing it in your business – is new to you, so forgive me if any of the explanations seem obvious to you. A lot of the contents are based on questions I or we (Cinnamon Edge) have been asked in the past.

With very best wishes for a successful Permission Marketing campaign

Roy Everitt

Cinnamon Edge

I'm a partner in Cinnamon Edge and we provide cross-platform strategies to help promote UK and world-wide businesses to the people who want to buy their services or products. Cinnamon Edge's services include:

- Permission Marketing, including email marketing
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- Website analysis (to see how your site and your competitors' sites are faring in terms of SEO, amount of competition, visitors' perception, etc)
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1 Introduction

Permission marketing might be an unfamiliar term to many people and it's certainly not what most people would think of when the word "marketing" comes up in conversation.

Unlike a lot of marketing, permission marketing is invited or at least permitted by the people who receive it, and the majority of them will be part of the company's target audience or market.

Let's look at permission marketing more closely and it will quickly become clear why that is.

1.1 What is Permission Marketing?

Permission marketing is where you have the recipient's express permission to communicate with them and this means you can legitimately send them your marketing messages as well.

Permission can be obtained in a number of ways, but it usually involves some kind of incentive that encourages people to actively "sign up" to your database or "list". We'll look at those incentives in a moment and we'll also clarify what we mean by database or list.

Once people have agreed to receive your messages you can send them marketing messages, offers and news about your business, as well as the incentive they were promised. You will be communicating with them with their permission (which they can easily withdraw at any time by "unsubscribing" from your list).

1.2 The Benefits of Permission Marketing

The major feature of permission marketing is that people expect to hear from you, and this brings direct benefits to your company and its customers. The benefits to your company include:

- More targeted marketing, bringing higher sales
- Ability to use lower-cost methods (eg, emails) effectively
- Easy testing and tracking
- Less wasted advertising
- Increased customer lifetime value
- More opportunities for additional sales, referrals and promotions
- Converting more qualified leads into customers

Around 50% of qualified leads won't buy right away but may buy later as a result of a permission marketing campaign. This means you can literally double your sales with permission marketing.

Around 50% of qualified leads won't buy right away but may buy later as a result of a permission marketing campaign. You can literally double your sales with permission marketing.

Benefits to your customers include:

- Receiving useful or interesting information
- Receiving news of other products or services relevant to them
- Saving money with special offers and deals
- The initial incentive
- The benefits of your products or services

These benefits combined mean that permission marketing is the most cost-effective marketing most companies can use and the least intrusive and most valuable for most of their customers. This means that permission marketing is a must for any company that wants to increase their return on marketing investment, in both the short and the longer term.

1.3 What this book will cover

In this book we will be looking at how you get permission from your customers to contact them, how you can automate the process, what kinds of messages you should send (and how often), and how you can easily make extra revenue from your permission marketing programme.

We will mainly be concentrating on the use of emails for permission marketing campaigns, but we'll also look at new developments in mobile permission marketing and other ways you can obtain and use your customers' permission to promote your products and services.

Armed with this information you will be able to join the many companies already using permission marketing effectively... and very probably steal a march on some of your competitors who are not aware of its effectiveness.

Join the many companies already using permission marketing effectively... and very probably steal a march on some of your competitors who are not aware of its effectiveness.

Permission marketing is popular with the companies that use it well, because it works, but is surprisingly under-used overall. This is probably because most companies don't realise how simple a permission marketing system can be to implement, or how cost-effective it can be.

What's more, the new technology at your disposal, allowing for increased automation and new methods of communication, means that the potential for permission marketing is bigger than ever before.

All that and more will be covered in the following chapters.

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2 Getting Permission

Traditionally, there are two main ways to get permission to contact someone: online, with web forms and squeeze pages; and offline, at the point of sale or through some other form or direct contact. You can also use advertisements, telesales and other marketing methods to seek permission instead of, or as well as, making a sale.

Mobile technology and social media have now added even more opportunities to gain this permission.

Obtaining permission and adding people's contact details to a database is known as "list building".

2.1 Offline List Building

Traditional face to face selling and low-technology marketing can be very effective in building a list of people you can sell to. If anything, real-world contact and permission gained in this way will form a stronger connection with your customers and make them more responsive to your marketing messages.

2.1.1 Point of Sale

Whether someone is already buying from you or just making enquiries, the point of sale is an excellent opportunity to "capture" their details and get their permission to contact them again. Contact information is easily gathered when you make a sale, and offering more information by email or post is a good way to get people's contact details when they just make an enquiry.

2.1.2 Exhibitions and Displays

You can think of exhibitions and displays much the same as you would your point of sale, except here you will be promoting more than selling. This means the focus will be mostly on collecting people's contact details or giving them something to take away that will encourage them to contact you.

Exhibitions and displays are much the same as your point of sale, but with no need to sell anything before you give something away and collect your potential customers' contact details.

You can also run competitions (draws or sweepstakes) from your display or stand, and collect people's details when they enter. Note that people must still give permission for you to contact them with offers, etc, and you can't make entry into a free competition conditional on them doing so. If they say no to joining your mailing list you must still let them enter but NOT add them to your list. Most people will be quite happy to be added, though, so competitions can be a very good way to build your mailing list.

2.1.3 Using Advertisements

You can also add people to your list when they respond to your ads to get more information – which is a lot easier than trying to sell them something right away. People can call a special number (even a recorded message), write to a specific address, or visit a website. To give them this information you will need their contact details so you can call back, post an information pack or send them an email.

2.1.4 Business Cards and Printed Literature

There are two ways you can use business cards, leaflets and flyers:

1. Include a call to action; that is, tell people to call, write, email or visit a website (including a reason to do so)
2. Collect other people's cards, etc, and contact them first

All business literature aimed at potential customers, clients or partners should include a clear and enticing call to action. In this case you want people to contact you so they can be added to your database. They will usually need an incentive to do this, though they might just anyway an interest in hearing more about your products or services.

When you take a business card from someone or pick up some printed literature, always consider adding them to your database. If you're face to face you can ask them if they are happy to receive more information from you. If you're not face to face, you have to consider whether to add them or not.

Consider adding the details of people who give you their business cards. You can ask them first, but it's not usually considered spamming if you send one follow up email.

Sending one speculative email to a potential customer is not usually thought of as spamming, as long as you make it clear how they can easily remove themselves from your mailing list. Most of us receive direct mail with our post and think little of it. A personal phone call can be more welcome or less, but remember the rules are generally stricter on these things for private numbers and addresses than they are for businesses.

The rule is; if people are happy to be added to your list, then add them, and never be afraid to ask.

2.2 Online List Building

By online list building we mean using a website or the Internet in some way to attract and interest people, to collect their contact details, and then to add them to a database.

There are four distinct ways to use the Internet for list building, with an almost endless number of variations and innovations. Four ways to build a list online are using:

- Squeeze Pages
- Web Forms on Other Pages
- Mobile Pages
- Facebook and other Social Media Sites

2.2.1 Squeeze Pages

Squeeze pages are dedicated pages designed to do nothing more than extract people's contact information by means of an online form, with some text or perhaps a video explaining the benefits of completing the form. Usually, there will be an incentive of some kind. In this example, it's a free report:

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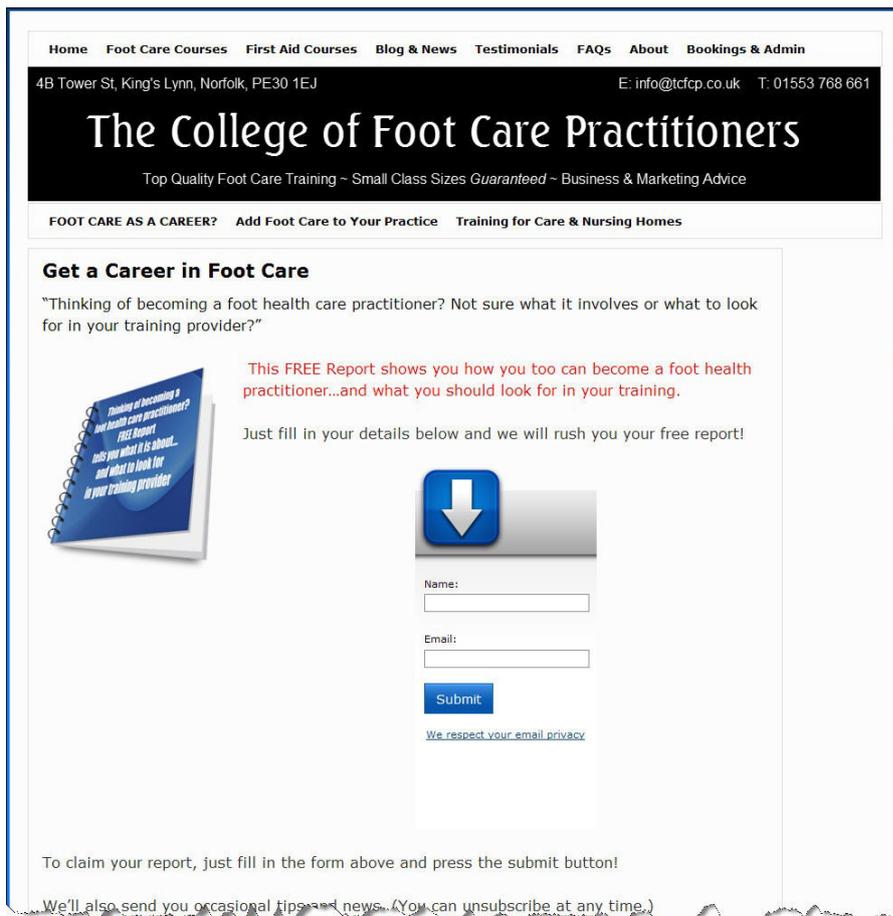


Fig 1 A simple sign up form added to a web page

When people sign up through these forms, they are automatically added to your mailing list. We'll look at how to create this automated list builder later.

2.2.2 Other Website Pages

Forms can be added to every page on a website, either in the side bar or the main part of the page, or they can be added as floating forms, pop-ups, etc. They should include a concise call to action and an incentive on each page or pop up.

2.2.3 Mobile Pages

With as many people accessing websites from their mobile devices as with computers, mobile websites can also be very effective in collecting viewers' contact details. This might just be their mobile number to make it easier than trying to key in email addresses, etc, on a tiny screen or keypad.

2.3 Facebook and Social Media

Forms can be added to Facebook Business Pages, links can be added to tweets and it's likely other social media sites like Google+ will add more functions like this soon.

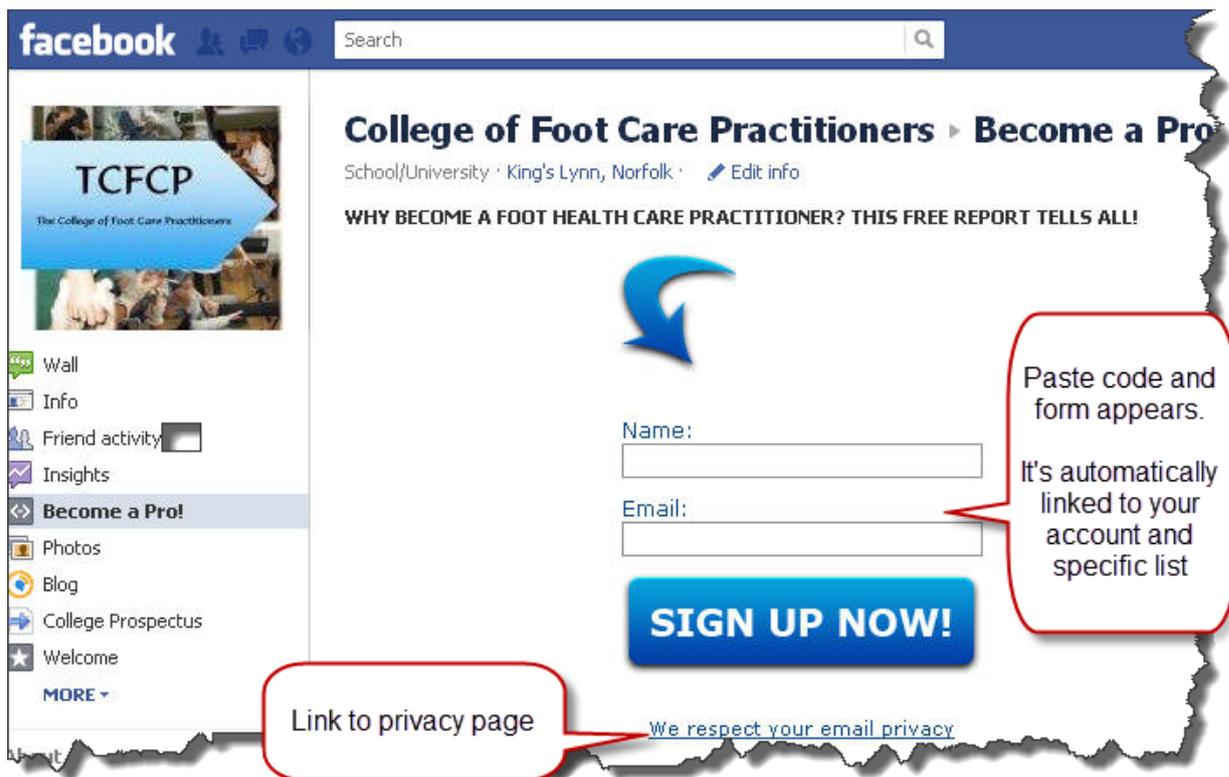


Fig 2 A sign up form can be added to a Facebook Page

Meanwhile, you can also send messages and updates with links to offers, etc, to your followers, fans and “Likers” through the social media sites. In other words, your lists of followers and fans are also databases you can use for permission marketing.

2.3.1 Getting Social Media Contacts onto Your Database

Apart from adding sign up forms to Facebook you can also point people towards your squeeze pages and offer pages and so add some of them to your main database. Twitter is widely used for this, or it can be used to ask people to Like a Facebook Page. Ideally, every tweet and update should include a link and a reason to click it.

2.4 Incentives

People need a good reason to give you their contact details and in most cases this means you need to give them something in return. This is sometimes called an “ethical bribe” and it’s established practise to persuade people in this way.

The most important factor in getting people to sign up for your list is often the incentive or “ethical bribe”. There are many different incentives you can offer people.

Incentives can include:

- Useful Reports
- Courses
- Additional Information
- Club Membership
- Discounts and Offers
- Exclusive Access to Services, Expertise or Training

The purpose of all these incentives is to persuade people to join your mailing list. As a side-benefit you can also demonstrate your expertise, the quality of your products, or your brand.

2.4.1 Reports

Reports are welcome information, often aimed at helping people with a particular issue: saving money; making money; improving their health and so on. A report will usually focus on one aspect or method and when it's done well it can be a useful resource and might well be passed on.

For this reason, it's a good idea to include a link to your squeeze page (in the footer or at least on the last page) to encourage people to sign up for the latest version of the report.

2.4.2 Courses

Courses can be a very good incentive for some types of business, especially those selling training, business opportunities or other information products. They are usually delivered by email or by post and can be delivered:

- All at once
- In a few parts delivered over the course of a few days
- Regular weekly or monthly lessons

Emails are much cheaper than post, of course, and can easily be automated.



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Fig 3 One incentive you can offer is a free course delivered by email

For a free course it's usually best to offer a good amount of content quickly so people feel they will soon be able to put it to use. After this, more information can be sent at longer intervals, keeping people interested and encouraging them to stay on your mailing list.

2.4.3 Additional Information

More information about a subject they're interested in is a good incentive for many people. This can be information about your product or service, more general information about the type of business you're in (eg, property investment methods if you're a property company), or information about a place, occupation, hobby or anything else relevant to your business or area of expertise.

Giving people additional useful information has two benefits: it makes them more likely to stay on your list and it promotes you or your company as expert in your field

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2.4.4 Club Memberships

Giving people access to a club, especially an “exclusive” club can be a good incentive for them to sign up. The club has to offer some benefits, of course, but these can be varied and not too specific.

A membership can be run online, using a membership website, or it can be run by post or could include telephone access or teleseminars. Since it will be free for members to use, choose whatever option gives maximum value at low cost to you. Of course, you can always offer a paid version as an upsell.

2.4.5 Discounts and Offers

If someone is interested in your products and services, or related products and services, they should certainly be interested in your discounts and special offers.

Collecting people’s contact details means you can sell more to these people, which covers the cost of discounts and offers. It’s likely they will stay on your list for as long as you offer them good, exclusive deals and especially when you make ordering from you as simple as possible.

2.4.6 Exclusive Access, Training, Trials and Samples

One thing that no one else can offer is exclusive access to you and your company. Although you need to be careful how much you give away for free, a taste of what you offer can be a good way to sell more of your services.

No one else can offer exclusive access to you and your company. Although you need to be careful how much you give away for free, a taste of what you offer can be a good way to sell more of your services.

Some examples are: a free consultation; a no-strings quote; one month’s free membership or some other trial or sample in exchange for being added to your mailing list.

2.5 Permissions

There are a few factors to consider when you obtain permission to add someone to your database or mailing list. It’s important to comply with regulations and local laws, although these are mostly simple and straightforward, and it’s good practise to be completely open with your prospective customers about the kind of information you will be sending them.

This is especially true with email marketing, where the four main things to consider are:

- Double opt-ins
- Spam Regulations (and perceptions)
- Your Privacy Policy
- Unsubscribe options

2.5.1 Double Opt-ins

While it's not compulsory in the UK to use a double opt-in system, it does reduce the risk of complaints. Sometimes people forget they have joined your mailing list or misunderstand what this means – that is, that you will be emailing them. Ask them to click a link in your first email to confirm they really want to hear from you – opting in for a second time, in effect – and they have no reasonable cause to complain.

The double opt-in isn't compulsory in the UK but it is in some other countries, notably the US. Using a double opt-in will help to protect you from accusations of spamming.

Double opt-ins like this are recommended for most businesses building a mailing list, most of the time. Although the double opt-in isn't mandatory in the UK, it is in some other countries, notably the US. To minimise the risk of complaints from people who don't remember signing up or don't understand what they signed up to, a double opt-in is thus usually wise. Asking people to confirm will mean fewer people joining your list but they will be people who definitely want and expect to hear from you – potential customers, in fact.

2.5.2 Spam

Spam is unwanted and unsolicited email, and spamming is what you might be accused of if you don't use the double opt-in we've just discussed. You will also be spamming people if you send them messages after extracting or "scraping" their contact details from another source, and especially if you do this repeatedly.

Although it might seem quite reasonable to most of us to send a single unsolicited email to a business, just as you might send a letter or make a phone call, many people feel differently, and especially when the email, letter or call is to a private household. Even if sending one email or letter or making a single call still seems reasonable to you, be aware that there are people who will complain if you do.

Many people subscribe to a service that blocks unwanted sales calls and junk mail. Emails are easier to smuggle through but you don't want to be labelled a spammer, since you could find yourself banned by your ISP (Internet Service Provider). Unwanted and unsolicited contact very rarely leads to a sale anyway, so don't bother. If you do send a speculative email to a business, always make it clear to the recipient that they can easily remove themselves from your mailing list and you won't bother them again.

2.5.3 Privacy Policy

Your privacy policy defines and explains how you will use and safeguard contact data, and should be available for anyone to see. Usually, you will have a page on your website that explains it. A privacy policy doesn't have to be complicated or written in "legalese". You simply need to explain clearly what you will use the data for and whether you will sell or rent details to a third party.

You don't even have to create your privacy policy from scratch. Here's an example of a privacy policy you can adapt for your own website. It's from Business Link supply a privacy policy you can adapt for your own use; you'll find it at <http://tinyurl.com/bl-p-policy>. You can find many others available online. Just do a search for "privacy policy". Some autoresponders offer one as well; we'll talk about autoresponders in the next section.

Link to your privacy policy from each page where you have a sign up form and include this link on any printed forms, etc, that you use to collect data.

2.5.4 Unsubscribe Option

Every message you send to your subscribers should include an "unsubscribe" option – a clear message telling people they can unsubscribe and a simple way for them to do so. With automated email systems this will be a simple link in the email that unsubscribes them from the database when they click it.

This link will be added automatically (and you can't delete it) by systems like AWeber, Constant Contact, MailChimp and others, and will usually be found at the bottom of the email. They will look something like this:



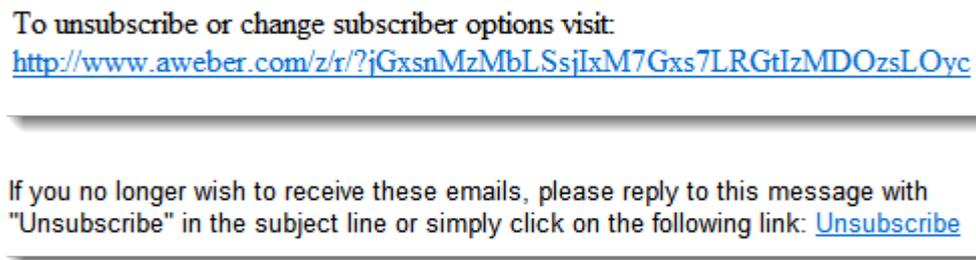


Fig 4 Unsubscribe links added automatically to email messages

If you send messages manually (using Outlook, Windows Mail or others), you must include a statement in every message saying that the recipient will be removed from your list on request. This statement can be as simple as a line in each message that says, "To stop receiving messages from us please reply to this email with the word 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line."

The two most important things are that people CAN unsubscribe and that they know they can. It's obviously very important that subscribers are removed from your list when they ask to be. Sending messages after people have unsubscribed is another form of spamming.

3 Automating the Process

You can automate the sign up (collecting data) process and the sending of messages as much as you want to, using simple and inexpensive software. There are systems:

- You can buy and then run from your computer
- That are hosted elsewhere, and you pay a monthly fee

Systems hosted online are better if you deal in very large lists and don't want to spend a fortune on hosting or buying your own servers. Even if you are just starting your list, if you aren't a techie person, a hosted service is probably your best bet, too! The online services generally offer better training, and bring in regular updates.

3.1 Why Automate?

An automated system has several powerful benefits. It will be:

- Easier
- Faster
- More reliable
- More trackable
- Testable
- Cheaper

3.1.1 Automated Systems are Easier

Keeping track of what you've sent and to whom, recognising and responding to unsubscribe requests and just the simple process of sending messages will be easier with an automated system. Automation means that you can write one message and send it to everyone on your list with one click. Data are collected automatically and stored safely. Almost anything you want to do with your database will be easier with an automated system.

Automated systems are easier, faster and ultimately cheaper.

3.1.2 Automated Systems are Faster

An automated system can send tens, hundreds or thousands – or even hundreds of thousands – of messages in a few minutes, whereas you could take hours or days sending them individually or groups of 10-20. When it comes to speed there is simply no contest.

3.1.3 Automated Systems are More Reliable

Automated systems don't get tired and make mistakes, they don't forget who signed up today and they don't miss that "unsubscribe me" message you can easily overlook. A surprising large percentage of emails don't get delivered, especially if they're promotional in nature. Some will be stopped by your own service provider and others will be blocked en route. This is less of a problem with the better known automated systems, which have a higher delivery rate than conventional emails.

More messages getting through, a more reliable database, fewer mistakes and no spam all mean an automated system will be much more reliable.

3.1.4 Automated Systems are More Trackable

Tracking is an inherent feature of automated email systems. The only question for you is whether you use the information available... and you'd be daft not to. You can often access more detailed information by upgrading your account, but even the information you get with basic accounts will help you to track open rates, click throughs and ultimately sales. (Open rates means how many people have opened your email, and how often. Click throughs means how many people have clicked on the links you've included in your message.)

3.1.5 Automated Systems are More Testable

Testing is the natural accompaniment to tracking. Because automated systems allow you to track results they are perfect for testing variations and comparing open rates, click throughs, and so on. For best results, opt for simple "A-B split testing" whereby you have two versions of one thing (the heading, for example) and leave every other part of the message the same. It's often possible to split test variations simultaneously, and setting these up takes little more time and effort than sending a single message.

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3.1.6 Automated Systems are Cheaper

Some systems are actually free, but even paid systems work out a lot cheaper than paying an assistant to do the work manually. For less than \$20 a month, plus a few hours of an assistant’s time (or your own) you can save several days’ work each month – more if you make full use of the system, your database and the metrics supplied by the system.

Look for deals like this. We’re showing AWeber here as that’s what we use most, but shop around.

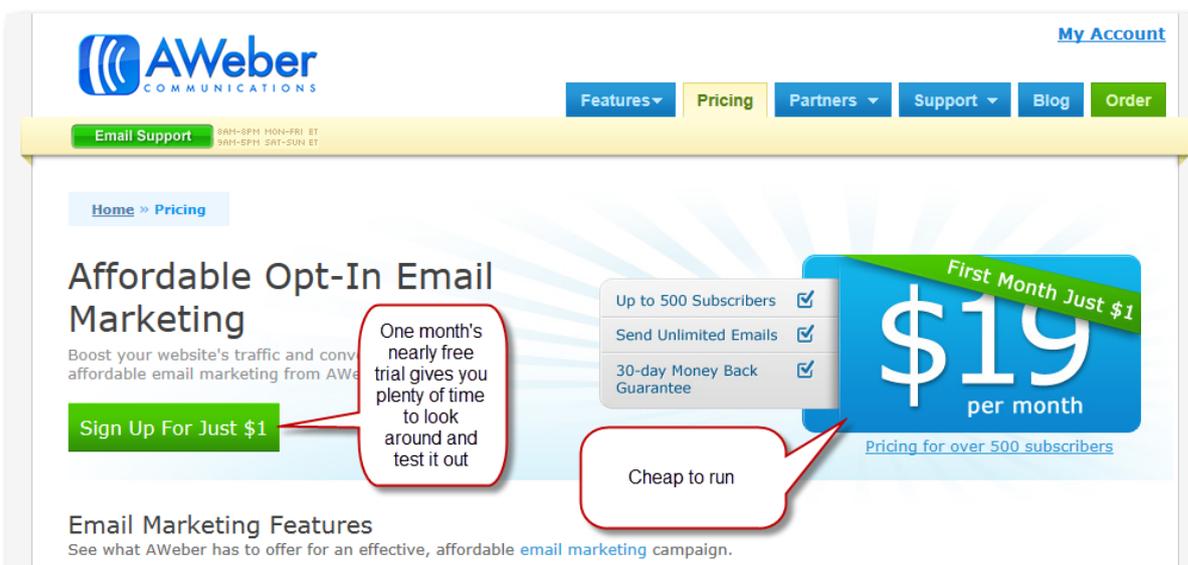


Fig 5 Aweber is one of the most popular systems for email marketing

3.2 Using Autoresponders (Email Marketing Systems)

The automated systems we have been talking about are called “autoresponders”. Autoresponder systems will handle everything for you! They will add people to your database (and to any list(s) within that database), send confirmation messages for double opt-in, send welcome and follow up messages at pre-set intervals, and allow you to schedule broadcasts to all or any part of your database:

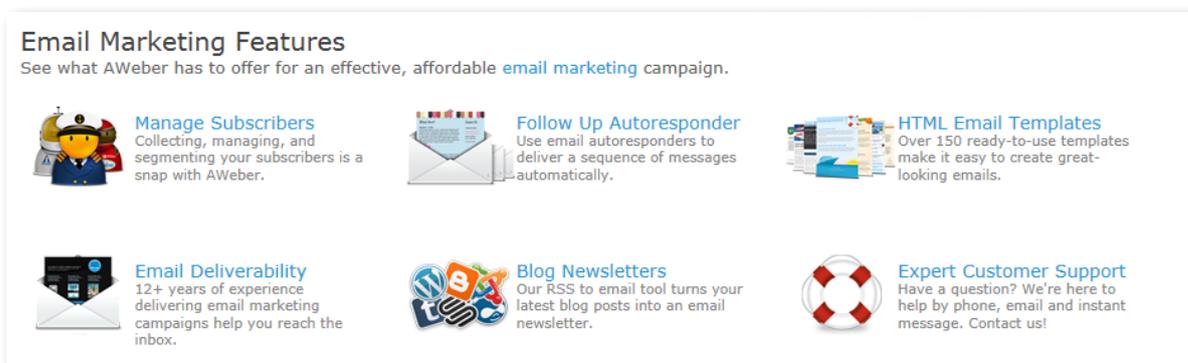


Fig 6 Some of email marketing’s features and benefits, explained by Aweber

You can also send broadcasts in real time, allowing you to react to events or communicate on the spur of the moment.

3.2.1 Adding People to Your Automated Database

All autoresponder systems allow you to create sign up forms that you can add quite easily to your websites to “capture” people’s details:

The details of people who subscribe are then added automatically to your database, on the list associated with that form. This means you can create different lists for different market sectors or of people who responded to a specific offer. You can also automatically add each new sign up to other lists in your database if you wish.

This means you can have two or more lists of people who responded to different offers and combine them into a single main list as well. You can then communicate with any or all of those lists at any time. For example, if Joe Bloggs has signed up for your five part course and buys the video package you’re offering in the course emails, you would move him to another list that now talks to him as a buyer and does not still prompt him to buy the videos.

3.2.1.1 Adding Buyers

People can also be added to your list automatically when they buy from you, when the payment processor “parses” (or forwards data) to your autoresponder service. For example, there is now an “app” that allows you to integrate AWeber list management with PayPal:



Fig 7 Buyers can be added to your database automatically

3.2.1.2 Adding People Manually

You can also add people yourself, at the point of sale or from details gathered in other ways:

Add a Subscriber Add an individual subscriber to your list.

Need to add more than 10 people? Use the [Import page](#) instead.

Only Add People Who Asked You To Add Them

Purchased email lists, coregistration subscribers and any other people who haven't been emailed with AWeber.

[Not sure if you can use this list?](#)

Name:

Email:

Fig 8 You can also add people to your list manually. They will need to confirm

You should always check people are happy with this and use a “double opt in” so they can confirm they really want to hear more from you. In this case you may want to tailor your confirmation message to explain why you want to add them and how you got their details.

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3.2.1.3 Importing Lists

Most services will allow you to import a list from another database, provided they were gathered ethically (in their terms). These may be customers you’ve had on another database before you automated or a list you created using another automated service. You will usually be asked to explain where the list is from and it can take a day or two to verify before they’re added to the database. The process is simple; just click on “import” and follow the instructions from there:

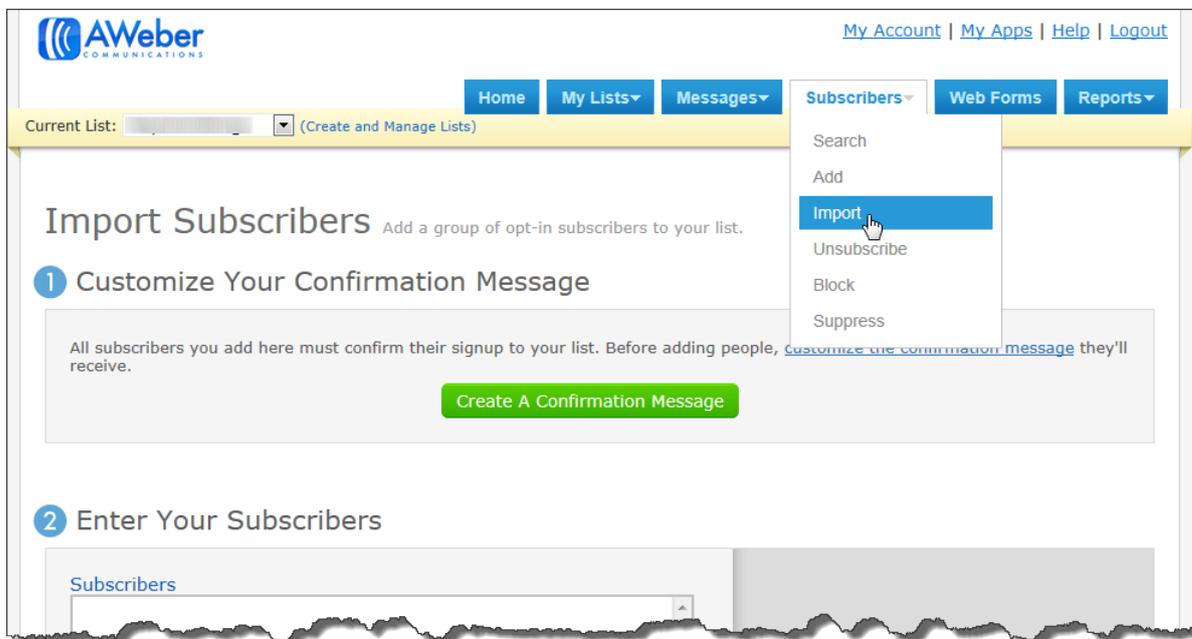


Fig 9 Lists of subscribers can also be imported in one go

The imported list will usually need to be in CSV format, or a Microsoft Excel document or equivalent. You can “export” your database in these formats too.

3.2.2 “Unsubscribes” from Your Database

Anyone who wants to leave your database and opt out of receiving your emails can do so with a single mouse click on a link that’s automatically included in every message you send. The system is just about foolproof and protects you from accusations of “spamming” people who have asked you not to contact them. In practice, those people might stay on your autoresponder system and be “stopped” (meaning the messages are stopped) rather than deleted, and some unscrupulous companies might be tempted to “unstop” them. Needless to say, this is not good practice and should be avoided!

You might be tempted to follow up and ask someone why they unsubscribed but it’s not usually worth your time and energy unless they were a particularly valuable client. There is sometimes an option for people to tell you why they’ve unsubscribed if they want to.

3.3 List Management

Automated systems make list management so much easier – once you’ve set up your lists they hardly need thinking about, but you can change your mind and reorganise them if you need to, and you can always add new lists for specific campaigns and offers.

As we touched on already, you can:

- Create multiple lists within your database
- Add people to one or more lists automatically
- Move people between lists automatically
- Allow them to unsubscribe automatically
- ...and more

All of this is virtually “hands off” once you’ve set it up. Setting up is not difficult either, although there are experts who will help you, and you’ll find excellent tutorials are provided by most autoresponder companies.

3.4 AWeber Example

We’ve used AWeber for most of the examples in this book as it’s a popular and fairly typical autoresponder or email marketing system. There are free systems available as well, but AWeber is one of the most popular services among professional email marketers, and quite user-friendly.

3.4.1 Create an Account

Each company or client should ideally have their own account. Although there is no limit to the number of lists you can have with a single AWeber account, it is best to separate each database so there is no possibility of sending untargeted or inappropriate messages to the wrong list. With the service being so inexpensive it would be a mistake to “piggyback” your list on someone else’s account.

You also don’t want to be tainted (or stopped from doing business) because of someone else’s bad practice (spamming, etc).

To create an account takes a few moments. Go to www.AWeber.com and sign up. You can save money by paying for a year’s subscription in advance but you will see the price is very reasonable. You might even get a one-month \$1 trial. To sign up, go to the Order page:

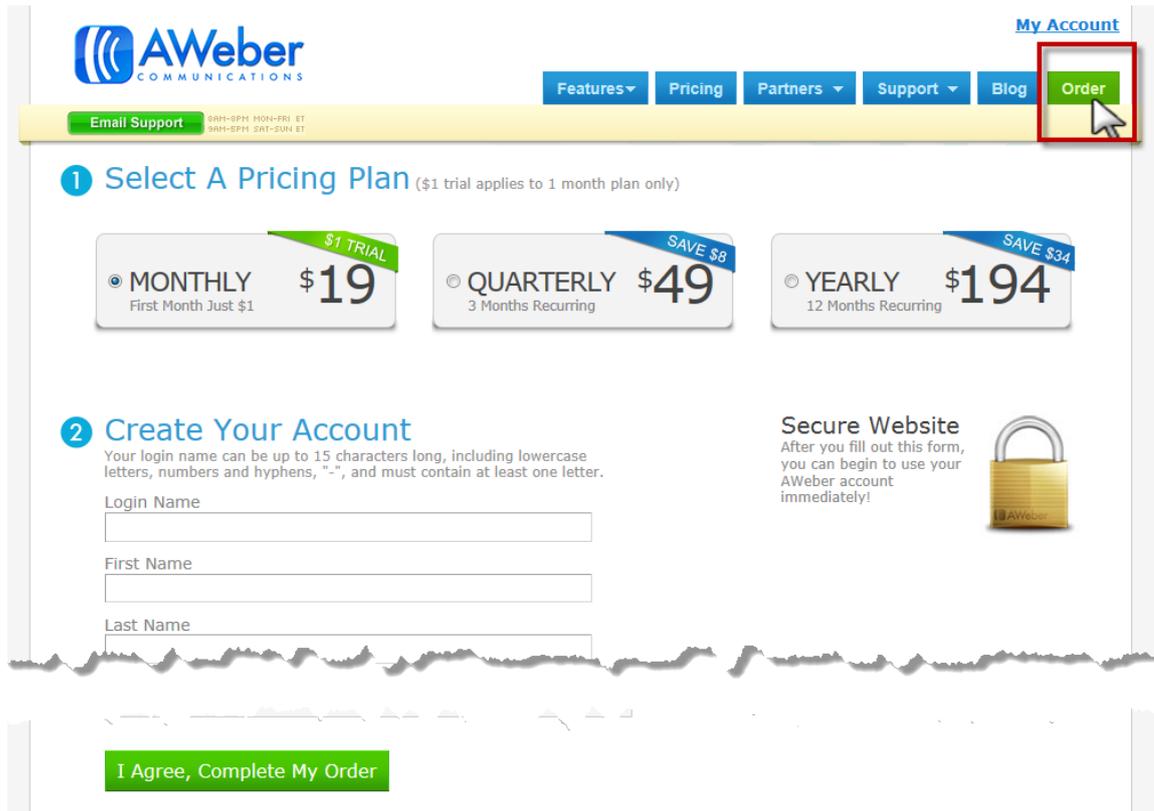


Fig 10 Create an account with Aweber

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3.4.2 Create a List

Now you can create your first list.

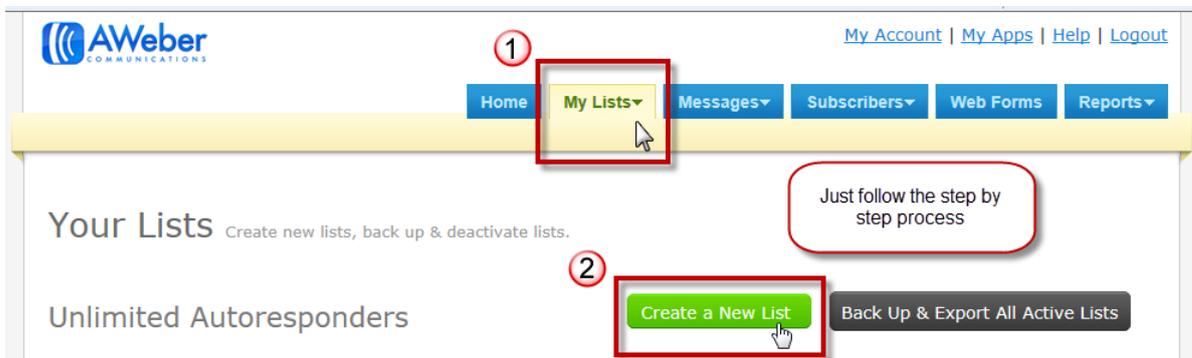


Fig 11 Create a list, or database

It doesn't matter in what order you create your lists, but every list must have a unique list name. With few characters available your options might seem limited, but try to get an appropriate list name that fits your business, if only to make things easier for yourself later. You can change the name of any list later if necessary.

3.4.3 Add List Details

Follow the steps suggested by AWeber and you won't go far wrong. They will prompt you to complete your list details, including things like the signature file that you can add to any email with the shortcut {!signature}. You'll also need a valid contact address for your business, and so on:

Complete all the steps as you go – and don't worry; AWeber will let you know in **bold red** if you miss anything out or do it wrong, and won't let you proceed until it's been rectified.

3.4.4 Edit Your Confirmation Email

The next thing AWeber will ask you to do is to edit your confirmation email. This is the email that gets sent to potential subscribers when you use double opt in. In other words, after they've filled in a form (or you've added them manually), but before they can be sent any other messages, they are asked to confirm they really want to hear from you.

This means choosing from a selection of preset headlines and editing the body text to suit if you want to. You can write your own headline if you wish but this will need to be approved before you get much further.

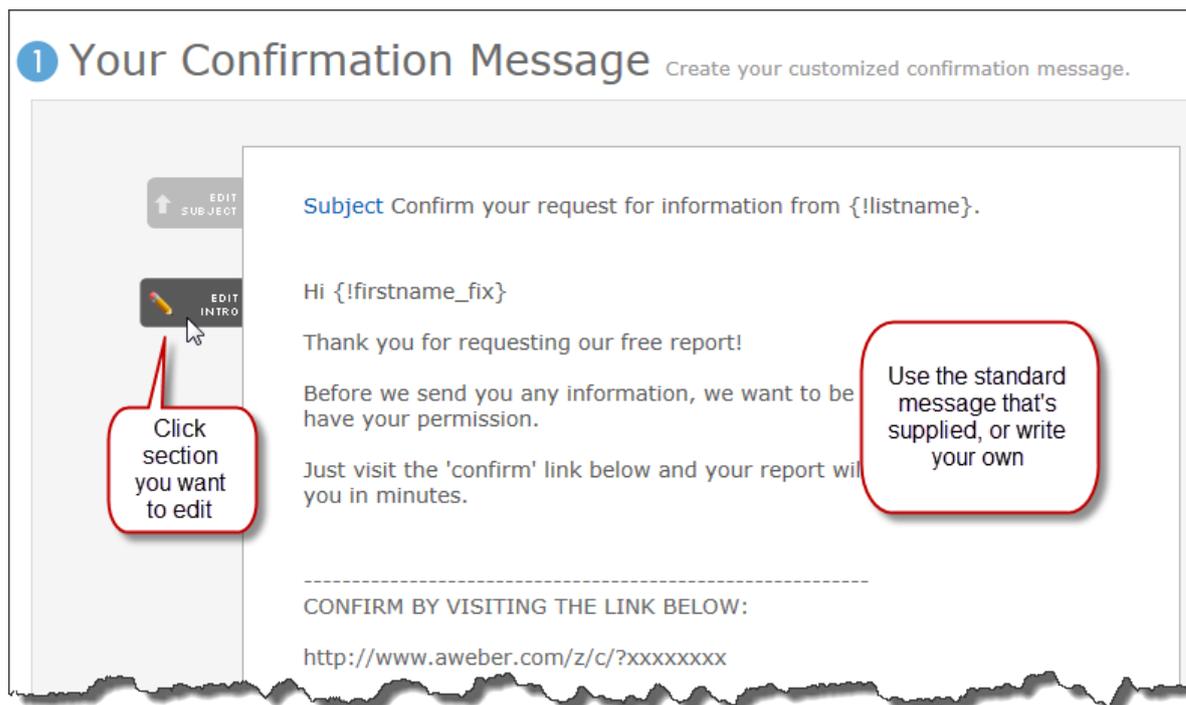


Fig 12 Edit the confirmation email for double opt-in subscribers

For the body text you can go with the pre-entered words if you wish, but you're free to change it and you'll probably want to. Make it as compelling and attractive as you can within the limitations of a few lines. The default message gives you an idea of what you need to say. Remember, if you've added people manually you will want to explain why and how. It's probably worth creating a list just for these manually-added people so you can send them a specific confirmation message, then use automation to add them to your other list(s) as appropriate.

3.4.5 Create a Form (or Several)

Once you've created a list (or several) you'll need to create a sign up form for each. In fact, you can create as many forms as you like. Sign up forms can be used in all kinds of ways. For example, they can be:

- Added to the main area of a webpage
- Added to sidebars and widgets
- Embedded in blog posts
- Embedded in HTML emails
- Made into pop-ups
- Used in pop-overs
- Displayed as "lightbox"
- ...and more.

The results from each form can be tracked separately and you can also create multiple variations of a form and split test them.

There are numerous templates to choose from, and you drag and drop in any fields you want to include. “Field” means any category you want information on such as name, email address, post code, etc.

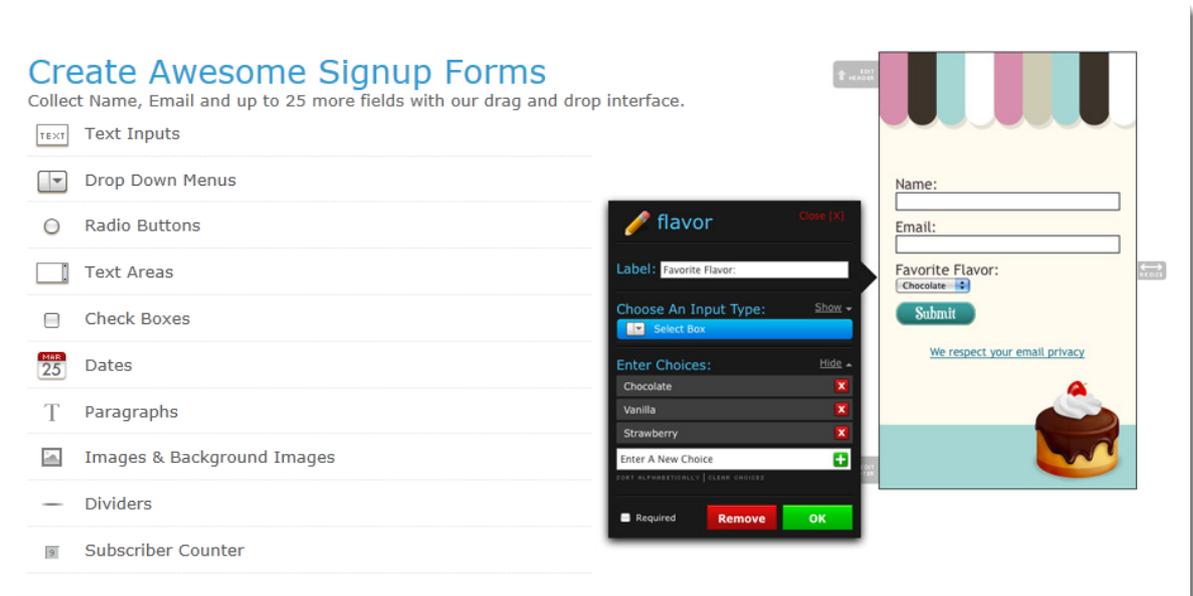


Fig 13 Choose a suitable template and create a sign up form

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There are lots of form options to suit different business types and colour schemes and most of them can be edited. Experiment to find one that suits your purposes, or just use the very basic one that simply adds the data fields on a transparent background.

3.4.6 Add the Form to Your Website

AWeber lets you send the necessary code to your webmaster if you wish or you can copy and paste it into the site's HTML yourself. The code for the form comes in two formats: JavaScript and HTML. They look like this:

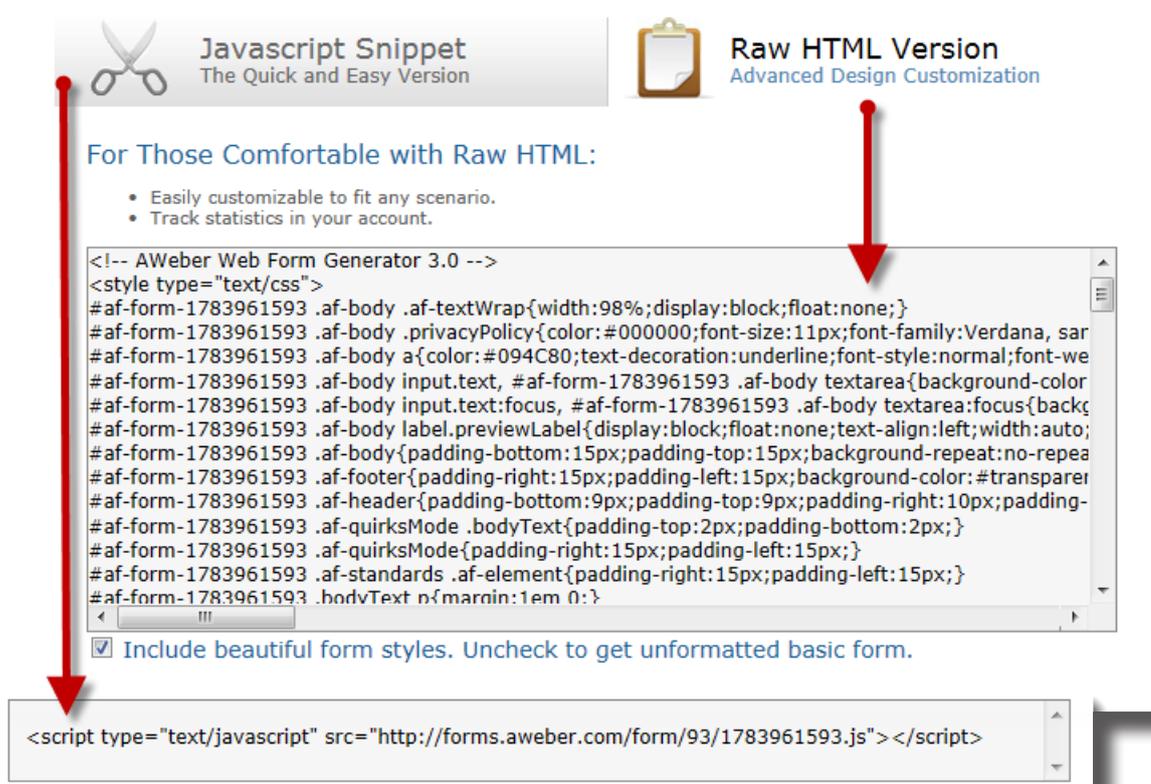


Fig 14 The two types of code for your form – HTML and Javascript

If you'd rather not fiddle with your website, you do have the option to send the code to your webmaster!

3.4.6.1 JavaScript Forms

A JavaScript form *should* display on your site exactly the same as it looks in AWeber, because it is effectively hosted in your AWeber account. It doesn't always do so, though, especially with some blogging platforms. The code is short and sweet and you'll be able to see in moments whether your form looks as you expected. If all is well JavaScript has three main advantages:

- Any edits you do to the form inside AWeber are instantly effective in the website, without you needing to edit your site at all; this also means if you have the same form on several pages or sites, they all update at once

- You'll easily be able to find the JavaScript code among the source code of your site and replace or delete it if you want to. Because the code snippet is short it will be easy to identify
- AWeber will track displays (views) and completions automatically and allow you to compare results, including split tests:

3.4.6.2 HTML Forms

Using HTML allows you to edit the form within your website source code. This can make it easier to change the appearance, integrate colours and fonts, modify the form size and so on. You will need to know more about how HTML works to take full advantage of this.

The form code can also be hard to pick out amongst all the similar language in your website's source code, should you want to delete or replace it. However, for more slightly more experienced coders HTML is a more versatile way to display your form. This example has been edited slightly to match the colour scheme of the page:



Fig 15 A form slightly modified to match the web page colour scheme

If you want to find the code easily, you can add a comment tag; this is for your use only and won't show on the web page. Place it just above the form code. The format is like this; you can go over more than one line so long as you use the - - > at the end of the whole comment and not at the end of each line:

```
<!--This is my comment. It won't show on the web page. -->
```

Alternatively, make a copy of the code into a document. When you need to find the form code in the website page's HTML, press the Ctrl+F keys, and a search box will open. Paste in a portion of your copy; the bit you need to find will be highlighted.

3.4.6.3 Instant Forms

Some website building software lets you create a form without opening up AWeber at all. The form design comes from the website software and all it needs is the identity of the list to send data to your AWeber database. This method means the form is likely to be a good “fit” with the website design.

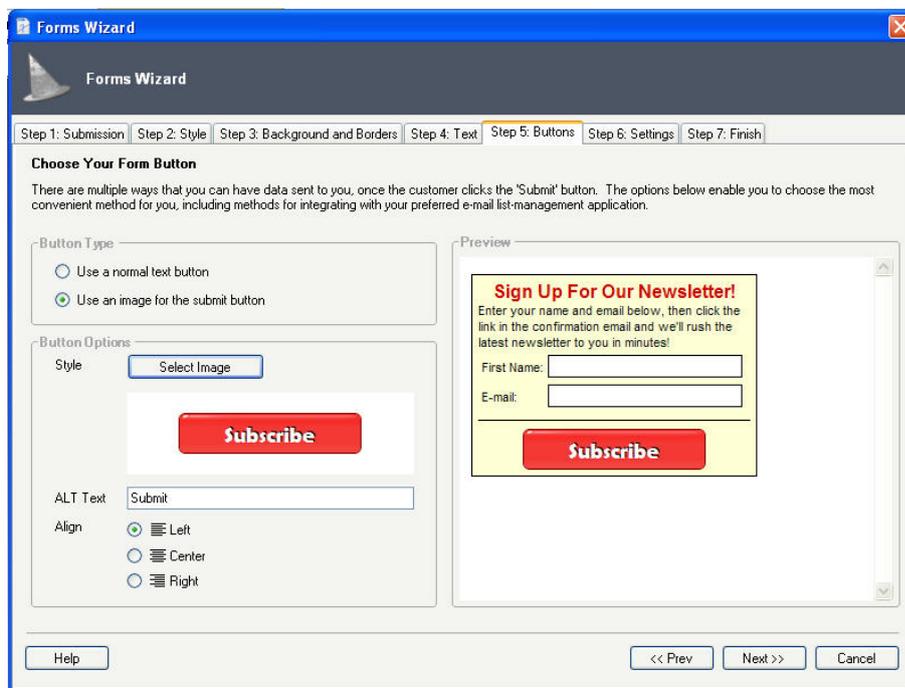


Fig 16 Some website software will create the form for you. This is XSite Pro

Now you have your form on your website you can ask people to complete it, which most people will only do if you offer an incentive, as explained in Chapter 1.

3.5 Tracking

These automated systems make tracking (and testing variations and changes) simple. You can track sign ups, open rates or your emails’ click-throughs and sales.

3.5.1 Tracking Sign Ups

As long as you use the JavaScript version you will be able to see how many “displays” or views each form gets, which equates to page visits. Track is the conversion rate – how many people complete the form and what percentage this represents of the total number of views and unique views.

Test to see if you have more signups when you:

- Ask for their first and last name and email address
- Ask for their first name and email address
- for their email address only

If you're sending something in the post you can test, for example, between:

- Asking for their full name and address
- Asking for their full name and address and telephone number
- Asking for their full name and address and supply a comment box
- Or any other variation

When you take notice of the performance of each form you can progressively improve your results by continually improving the less effective version. This is easier to do if you use a JavaScript version of the form, not least because you can split test:

- Make two or more otherwise identical website pages
- Click on your list name in AWeber, and open it
- Make two or more forms for that list
- Put a different form on each page
- Ask your webmaster to set the site so Test Page A shows to visitors 1, 3, 5, 7, etc, and Test Page B to visitors 2, 4, 6, 8, etc
- See which form gets the most sign ups
- Keep the best performing form, and test a new one against it

You can do the split testing on squeeze pages or normal web pages.

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3.5.2 Tracking Opens, Clicks and Sales

You can track how many opens an email has had, and how many click throughs there were from the emails. In this screen shot, you'll see part of an email series test we ran with a small list. A broadcast is when you send out an email to the whole list at once (rather than one that's sent out in sequence starting when someone signs up).

Don't expect huge open rates: what you see here is well above average. Notice, however, the click-throughs; while still above average, we decided to rejig the content in order to get more click throughs. The takeaway here is, read your stats as they can be very helpful:

Sent Broadcasts

Sent Date	Subject	Segment	Type	Spam?	Sent	Bounces	Complaints	Opens	Clicks	Copy
07:36 AM		All Subscribers	Text/HTML	0	56	0	0.00 %	21 (37.5%)	2 (3.6%)	COPY
09:29 AM		All Subscribers	Text/HTML	0	56	1 (1.8%)	0.00 %	27 (48.2%)	3 (5.4%)	COPY

Fig 17 Tracking the open rates and click-throughs is easy

You can also track open rates, click-throughs and sales from every message you send!

Most systems allow you to see your open rate for each message and you can usually segment your list according to whether they open your emails or not. "Segmenting" means dividing a list by the way they respond. So, those who opened your last email will be one segment, or those who open most of your emails could be another.

You can also see how many people clicked on any links in your email, and usually which link they clicked if there was more than one. Again, your list can be segmented into those who click and those who don't, and so on. Segmenting means you can send more relevant messages to specific segments of groups on your list.

Testing and tracking will help you optimise your messages and fine-tune things like subject lines, time of sending, opening paragraph, font style or design, and so on. Every detail can be tested.

Testing and tracking in this way will help you optimise your messages and fine-tune things like subject lines, time of sending, opening paragraph, font style or design, and so on. Every detail can be tested, at least in theory.

When it comes to open rate, it's the subject line that usually has the most effect. This is like the headline you might see on a news stand. If it catches people's eyes they are more likely to open the email and read on.

Click-throughs are then dependent on the email copy, readability, attractiveness of the offer and so on. Every message you send should have some kind of marketing content, even if it's a very gentle one encouraging people to visit your website or contact you for more information; we'll look at what to say in your messages in the next chapter.

4 What to Say in Your Messages

Your emails can carry a variety of messages and information including:

- More information
- Courses and training
- News and general “chat”
- Teasers to articles on your website or blog
- Offers and deals

Now we'll look at each of those in a little more detail.

4.1 Sending More Information

Many people visit a website looking for information, rather than with the intention to buy something. It's important you try to engage them in some kind of conversation rather than just answering their questions and sending them on their way. This is the start of a relationship with your potential client or customer.

Engage visitors to your website in a conversation rather than sending them on their way. This is the start of a relationship with your potential client.

One of the best ways to keep a potential customer engaged is to send them more information on the subject they're interested in – whether that's your products, their hobby or their own business. When you do this by email your prospect will often opt to stay on your database because you are giving them something of value that is of interest to them.

4.2 Courses and Training

A very good way to get people to commit to getting your emails is to enrol them on a short *free* course, delivered by email. This should be something that has perceived value; the sort of thing they would be prepared to pay for. Make sure the content is relevant to them, their interests or their business!



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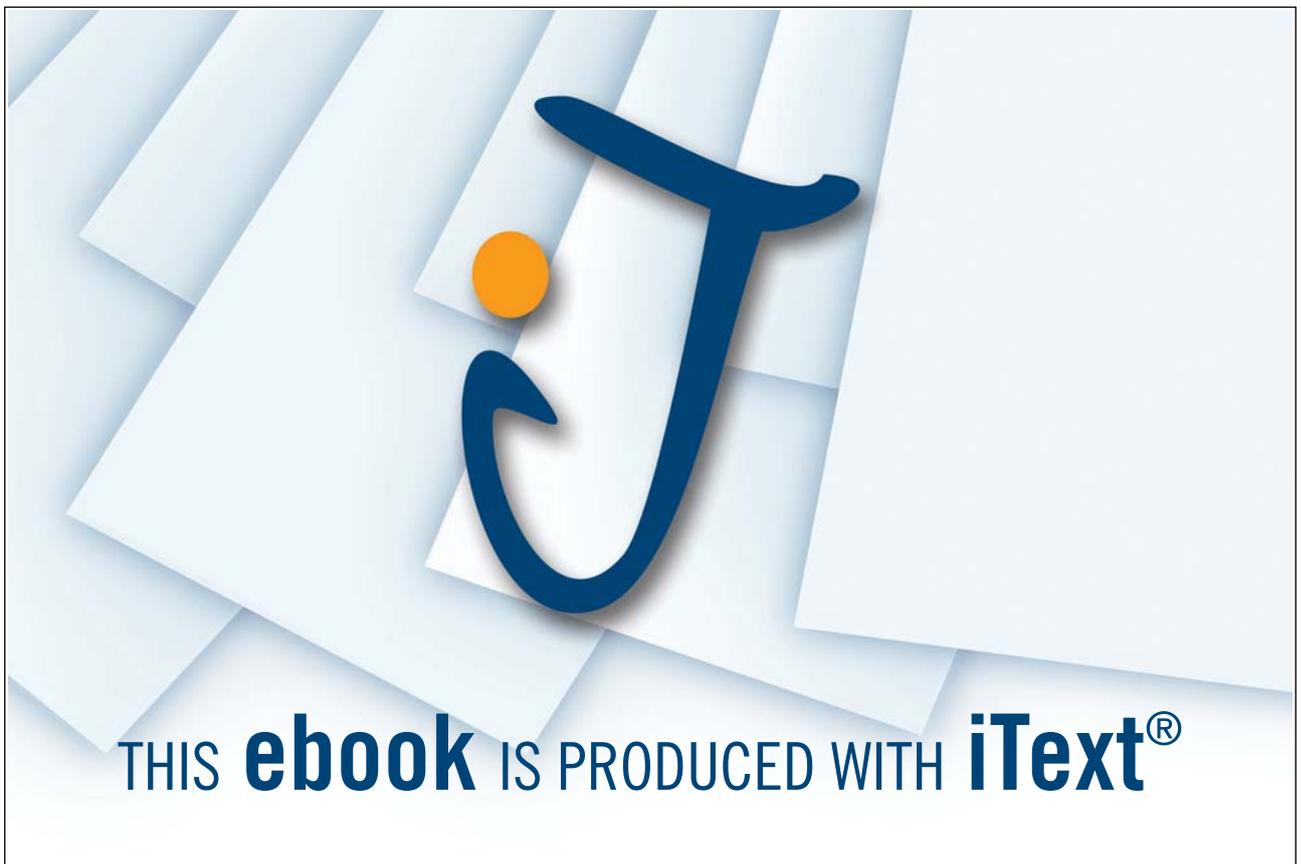
Take control of your market, step by step!

Simply complete the form below, press 'Submit' and you will receive our Search Engine Domination Course by email, in seven simple parts.

Fig 18 Your email “newsletters” could be an email course instead

An alternative is an ongoing course or training, with weekly or monthly tips your readers can use in their own lives or businesses. When you deliver real value to customers, not only do they value your emails and stay subscribed, they also come to see you as an expert in your field, making your products, services and perhaps coaching or further training even more valuable.

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4.3 Newsletters

This is what most people think of when they discuss email marketing. A “newsletter” in this context is not always specifically delivering news as such. The contents can include advice, examples, lessons learned from recent events, and so on. Incidentally, if you can use news events to demonstrate how useful or essential your products or services are, it will make your newsletters that much more interesting to readers and valuable for your marketing.

From	Subject	Received
Dr. Mercola	Proven: Kids Get Smarter Just from Doing This One Simple Thing	20/01/2012 07:23
Dr. Mercola	Study: Dropped 28 Pounds in 10 Weeks - Using 150mg of This*	19/01/2012 08:14
Dr. Mercola	No Matter What the FDA Says - Clear This Out of Your Fridge	18/01/2012 05:20
Dr. Mercola	Never Do This with Your Teeth - No Matter How "Safe" They Say It Is	17/01/2012 08:31
Dr. Mercola	New Warning About Manicures, Piercings and Tattoos	16/01/2012 05:20

Fig 19 Regular daily newsletters with tips and information from Dr. Mercola

Your newsletters can look like Dr Mercola’s (sign up at www.drmercola.com):

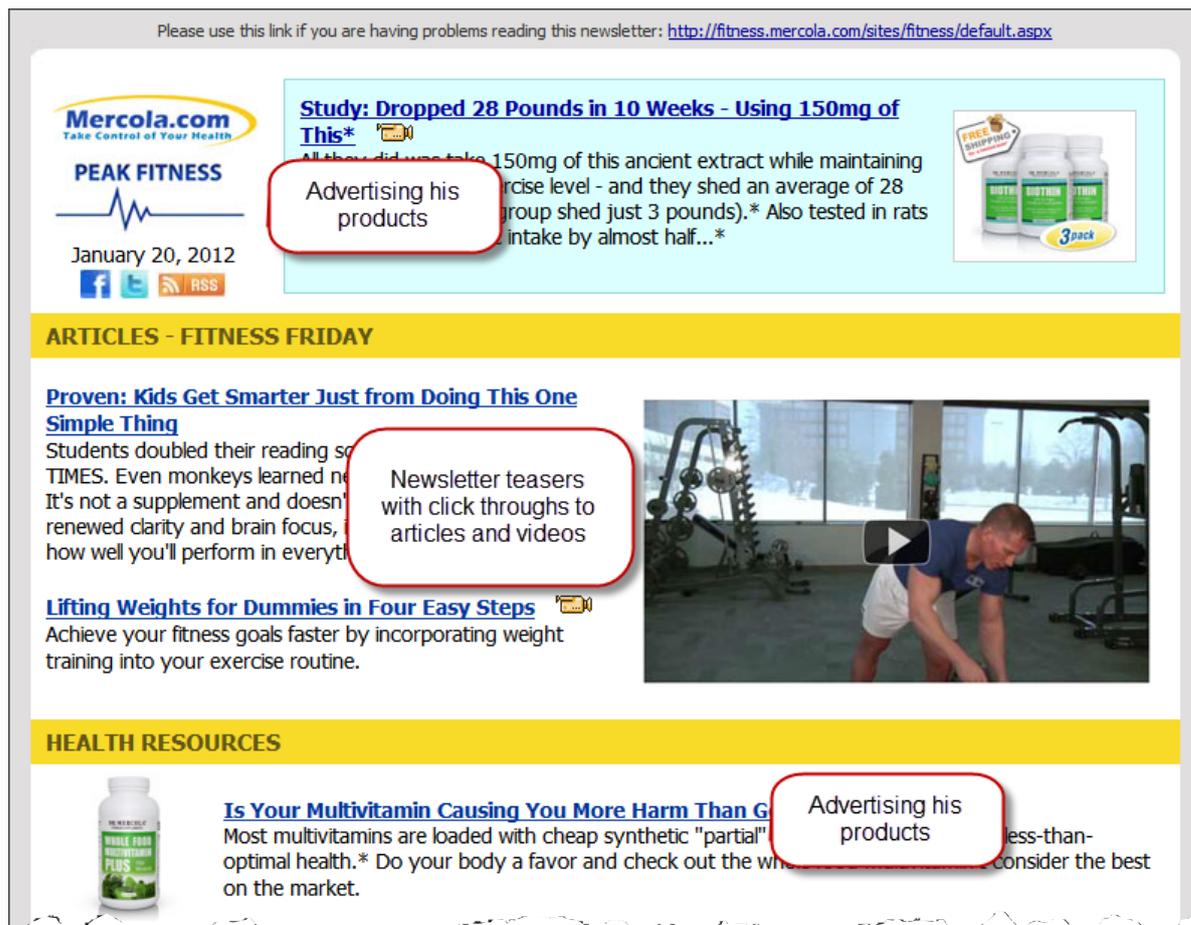


Fig 20 A smart-looking HTML newsletter from Dr. Mercola

Or they can be delivered in plain text, designed for readers who don't have HTML enabled in their email browsers; here's an example from chiropractor Dr Matthew Loop (www.dcincome.com).



Fig 21 A plain text newsletter looks like a standard email but note the short lines

Newsletters can also contain news about your industry, your readers' interests or your own business. As long as it's interesting or useful and new, it will be suitable for your newsletter. Your newsletters can be daily, weekly or fortnightly. They can also be monthly or even annual events, but you run the risk of people forgetting who you are (and you'll miss a lot of potential sales in the interim), so make sure your branding is very good if your newsletters are spread out in this way.

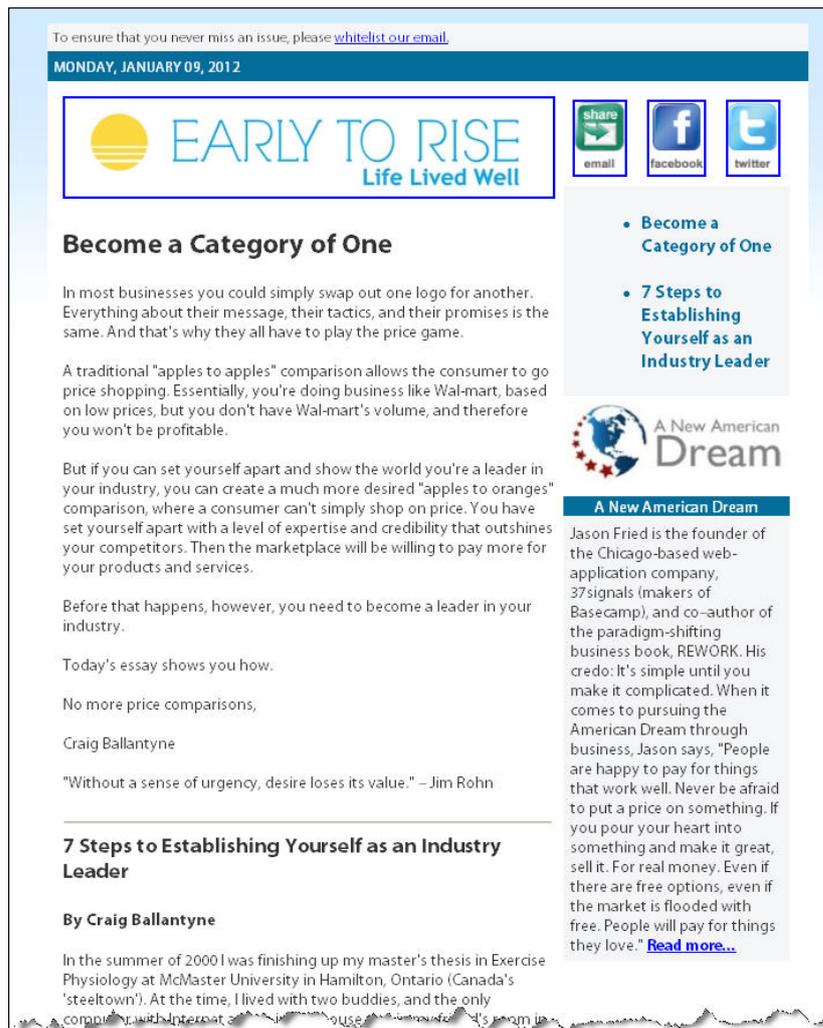


Fig 22 Another HTML newsletter, from Early to Rise, with clear branding

4.4 Teasers

One thing you should always do with any written content is get the maximum mileage from it, by using it in multiple formats. For example, when you add a new post to your blog or an article to your website you can also use it in your email marketing.

The best way to do this, especially if it's a lengthy article or post, is to send your subscribers a "teaser" (just a few lines) with a link to the full article on your website. This has three main benefits:

- Your content is seen by more people
- You stay in contact with your subscribers
- Your website or blog gets more visitors

Use the first sentence or two in your email; enough to entice people to read on and perhaps edit it a little to make it snappier and more tempting.

Blogging software often allows you to automate this.

4.5 Offers and Deals

If it's not newsletters, it's offers and deals that people will think of when you talk about email marketing or permission marketing. After all, marketing is all about presenting your offers to prospects. As we've seen, there are other ways to promote your company and its products, but getting people to consider your offers is the ultimate aim.

Offers can be presented at the end of a structured email sequence, aimed at warming people and making them hungry for what you offer, but there are plenty of successful marketers who say you should include an offer in just about every message you send, even if the bulk of the content is informative, educational or entertaining.

In fact, it's the free information, presented in a readable and entertaining way that will persuade people to keep reading your messages. Sending out pure sales copy will put some of them off straight away.

Offers can be timely, though. For example, you can offer special deals relating to holidays, news events, or the weather or just a new season or the arrival of new stock. Any excuse to move your products quickly or at a lower price can be used to justify an email promotion.

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If you're not using your newsletters with marketing in mind you are missing a big opportunity. Offers and deals can be presented in a number of ways and a timely offer can give a useful boost to your company's cash flow.

A timely offer can give your company a quick cash flow boost, shift aging stock and give your customers a very good reason to stay with you.

Some companies only send sales messages. Because their products are essentials or consumables the messages are still useful to the recipients who do need to buy stationery, equipment, printing services or whatever.

5 Getting Your Emails Opened

There are many factors that contribute to the open rate for your emails. Among these are:

- Subject line
- “From” address
- Opening sentence or paragraph
- Design
- Good quality and relevant content
- Previous content
- Topicality
- Exclusiveness
- Time and day sent
- Timeliness
- Frequency

5.1 Subject Line

This is usually thought to be the main deciding factor in open rates and, all other things being equal, it probably is, but especially if your emails are infrequent or vary a lot in content or quality. In other words, if you need to “sell” your email to its recipients, a good subject line works much the same way as an eye-catching headline on a news stand – it attracts the casual reader.

Even if you email daily, many people will only read the ones whose subject line intrigues or interests them.

5.2 From Address

We’re all more inclined to open letters from friends and family than those from people we don’t know, and emails are exactly the same. The “from” address tells people who you are, but it can also add interest and intrigue (though this is easily overdone).

If you change the from address you can expect some people to unsubscribe because they didn’t sign up to receive emails from this stranger. On the other hand, a really relevant from address can combine with the subject line to make an email – even a speculative one – appeal to its target audience.

For example, if you wanted to appeal to anglers you might make your from address “Top Fishing Tips” and your first subject line something like “From the World’s Most Successful Angler”.

5.3 The Opening Few Lines

In most email clients, the first few lines of an email are visible with one mouse click, whereas it takes two clicks to open it fully. This means the opening lines can act as a teaser for the rest of the contents, and the first sentence or two needs to make the recipient want to read on.

Even after opening, you need to grab your reader's attention, or they will soon close your message or delete it. Like any marketing copy, engaging the reader is crucial.

5.4 Design

Even a plain text email can be made to look interesting and readable or dense and off-putting. An HTML email can be very attractive to the eye but difficult to read, or it can be a masterpiece of design and accessibility.

If you want people to read your messages you should make it as easy and enjoyable as possible for people to do so (and the appearance will be more important to some people than to others).

Plain text emails are easier to read and more enticing if the lines are short and each paragraph is no more than two or three lines. Even if this means breaking up the text more than you were taught to do at school, results are what matter.

This one is from Rich Schefren (www.strategicprofits.com). Note the clickable link is shown a few times; do this for two reasons:

- To act as a prompt/reminder to get people clicking through, especially if they're scrolling a lot to see the message
- To see which link they *did* click on; that is, which bit of text prompted them to click through

Note also there is a PS – an essential part of any sales letter and, although informative, this email is essentially a sales letter because its purpose is to get you to click through to watch the (free) replay of the webinar.

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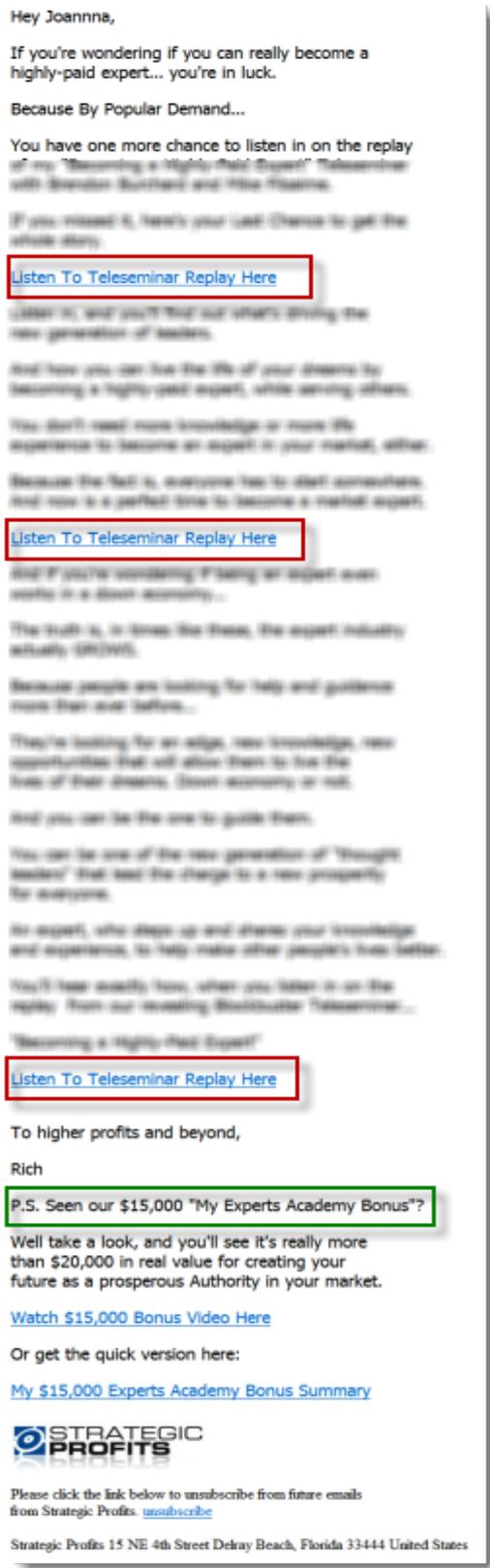


Fig 23 Repeat the clickable link for maximum click-throughs and add a "PS"

A simple and clean design works best in HTML, with a good contrast between text and background. Note the top right link to an online version of the newsletter; I've highlighted it with a red box. Really you would aim for more contrast here. The top left area (orange box) is where you would put a summary of what the letter is about – make it enticing, or they might not read on!

Note the easy to see text with headlines and subheads easily seen. Notice also the social media links:

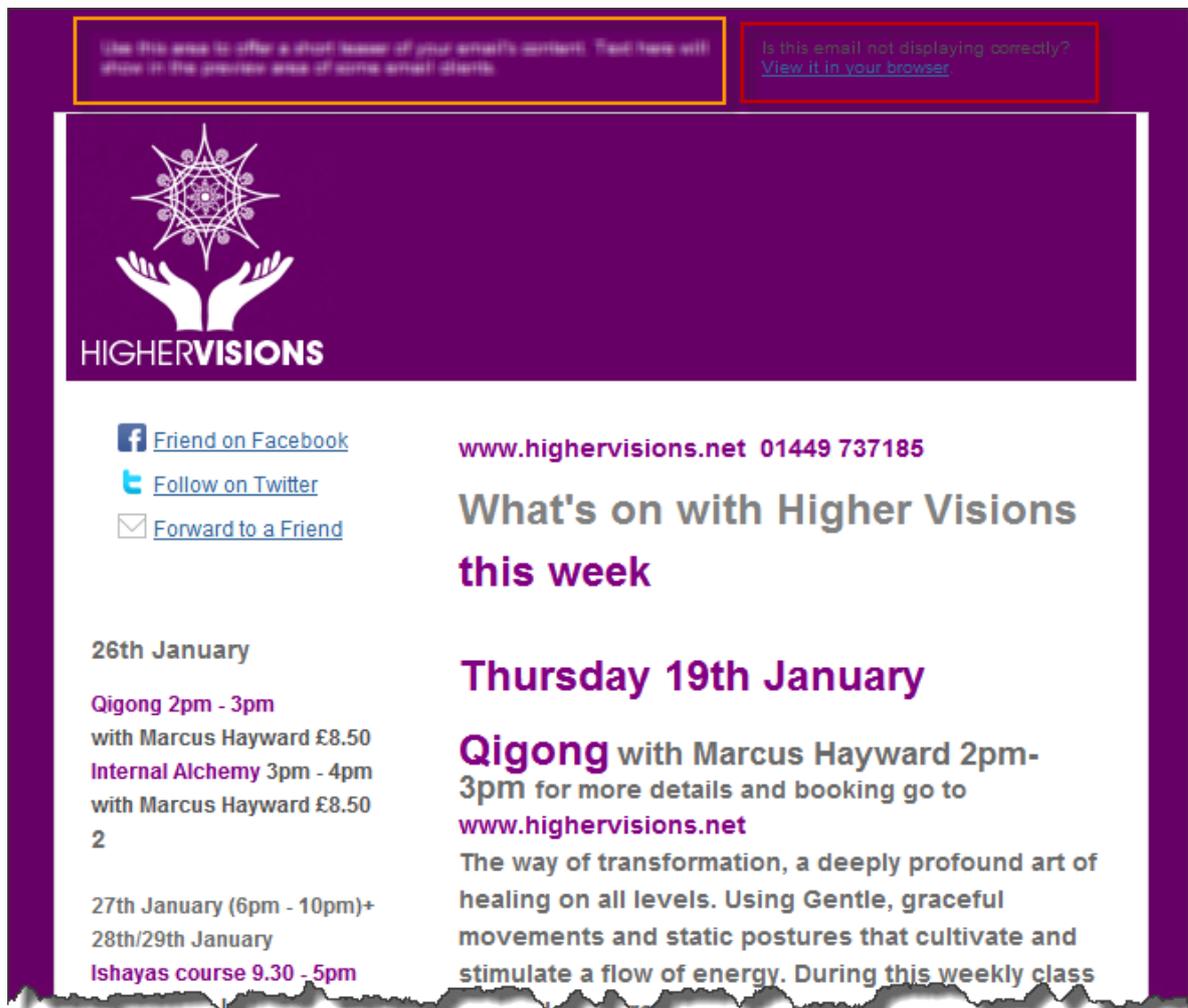


Fig 24 Clean and clear design is important. This one ticks most boxes

Autoresponders let you do both, so if you want to send out an HTML newsletter, people who opt only to receive text emails can receive the text version. Whatever your version, with more emails being read on mobile devices, it's a good idea to use a larger font – say 14pt – to make your messages more readable.

5.5 Content

Newsletters can range from a small paragraph teaser with a click through to your site so they can read the rest (this is a good way of increasing traffic to your site or blog) to a long letter. It should go without saying that your email content has to appeal to your readers. This means it needs to be well-written, relevant and useful. Whatever the subject matter and type, your message won't get read if it doesn't appeal to the reader. Most people are too busy to waste time on something that seems irrelevant or unhelpful, unless it's very entertaining.

If your emails are entertaining as well as being relevant, readable and useful, people more will read them.

5.6 Previous Content

An occasional gem from you won't get the attention and response it deserves if people are used to your emails being dull or irrelevant. Consistent quality means that your readers will be more likely to open and read your messages, even if the subject of the latest one doesn't have immediate appeal.

Email marketing is very largely about building a rapport or relationship with your readers and that can only happen if they open and read your messages fairly regularly.

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5.7 Topicality

A topical subject or theme for your email can have a big effect on open rates and readership. Obviously, this requires you to either send seasonal messages or respond to events in the news. News events are more immediate and if you can put a unique slant on the news or perhaps explain something that's confusing or alarming people, they will be more inclined to open your email and read on.

People will get weary of yet another comment on a royal wedding or the New Year, but you can still boost your open rate if you have something original to say. These messages can be sent in addition to your routine newsletter or "tricks and tips" messages.

5.8 Exclusiveness

The best thing you can offer customers is something they definitely want and which they can't get anywhere else, and the same applies to your email contents. Putting a time limit on helps to get people clicking through:

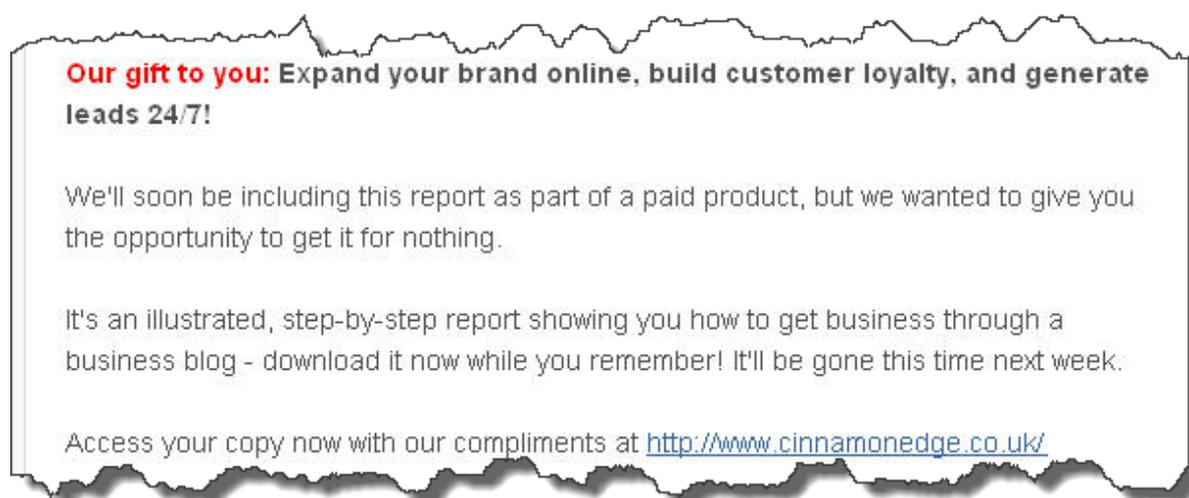


Fig 25 Exclusive offers with a time limit will get better response

Exclusive contents could be information that to which only you have access, or that you have access to before anyone else. For example, if you had "insider information" (legally!) on a really good investment opportunity, that would be worth a lot to an audience of investors.

Special offers from third-party companies might also be exclusive, or you could be the first to test and review a new car or smart phone. Obviously, information about your company and its products can be exclusive to you and you can present almost any content as unique simply because you've created it and no one else has access to it.

Letting your readers be the first to hear about something or helping them to feel privileged in some way will make them value you more.

5.9 Time and Day of Sending

Unless you're trading globally, the time and day an email is sent will greatly affect its open rate. Most emails are opened and read within an hour of being sent, after which the "opens" gradually tail off. Some will be read days later but for best results you should aim for the messages to arrive when people are available to read them.

For leisure-based businesses, evenings and weekends are often the best delivery time, especially as most of your subscribers will have used their private email addresses to sign up. You will get some people opening these during working hours, lunch breaks and so on, but the working day is better for business-related lists.

Experiment with the day and time you deliver your messages. The best time for you to send yours will depend on a range of factors that are difficult to predict.

Monday mornings are usually reckoned to be too busy for business-related messages – a lot of emails get deleted or ignored as busy office workers clear the weekend backlog. Tuesday mornings are said to be good, while some swear by Thursday afternoons or Friday mornings. Really, the only way to know what's best for your list is to test.

If open rates are low, repeat messages at least once (and maybe with a different subject line), although some people will unsubscribe when you do – again, the only way to find out about your list is to test it. For example, I sent out an email with a link in it....only to find it wasn't working. I sent another email the next day with the subject line "Sorry, here's the proper link!" and the open rate increased.

5.10 Timeliness

If you have a regular email schedule, your messages should ideally arrive when people expect them. Because your readers are conditioned to read your message at that time they will very often have set aside a few minutes to do so. If your message doesn't arrive, you will have missed that slot.

A regular schedule also means people know where to look for your email amongst all the other messages they receive that day or that week.

5.11 Frequency

This is another thing that has to be tested but the results might surprise you. Most companies send too few messages to their lists. For many, a daily email proves to be worthwhile (balancing extra business against unsubscribes), while anything less than monthly is probably a waste of a company's database.

Results suggest that the most successful users of email marketing are those who send messages daily – as long as those messages are of high quality and filled with useful content.

To build a database and then not use it for marketing is foolish. Unless your product or service has a very long renewal cycle, not promoting it doesn't make sense. Even if you can't sell more of your products you can certainly promote other related products and services.

You might actually have a better open rate for very occasional emails but the total number of opens will be lower than if you send them regularly.

Meanwhile, your relationship with your customers will be non-existent if you don't communicate with them regularly and some people might even forget who you are and not open your emails at all.

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6 Mobile Marketing

Emails are by no means the only form of permission marketing and while it would be beyond the scope of this book to go into great detail about the alternatives, we can't ignore mobile marketing which will very likely overtake computer-based emails in 2012.

As we've already noted, even emails are now as likely to be read on a mobile device as on a laptop or desktop computer.

6.1 Why Mobile Matters

Mobile sales and usage is quickly overtaking laptop and desktop sales, and mobile phone ownership is now counted in the billions, with the devices getting more powerful with every generation.

Mobile marketing is potentially even more effective than email. Mobile devices get more powerful all the time, and already have functions that give you even more opportunities to communicate, share and embed marketing messages.

This makes mobile marketing potentially more powerful than email marketing. Although there are limitations in terms of what can be displayed on a tiny screen, the actual amount of information can be just as much. Mobile devices also have functions that give you even more opportunities to communicate, share and embed your marketing messages.

6.2 Mobile Functions

Mobile devices get more sophisticated and capable all the time, so the list of functions gets longer all the time, but here are some you could use:

- Text (SMS) messages
- Emails
- Mobile websites
- Applications (apps)
- Mobile advertisements
- Proximity marketing (Bluetooth)
- Location-based marketing
- Check ins (Facebook, Google+ etc)

Not all these are strictly permission marketing in the sense we're using it here, but texts, emails, apps and check ins are all things your prospective customers will opt into and which you can use to communicate with them in future.

6.2.1 Text (SMS) Messages

All mobile phones can receive your text messages. To send text messages all you need is the recipient's mobile phone number. The open rate for texts is much higher than for emails, too, although each text costs you money to send.

The easiest legitimate way to get people's mobile number is to have them enter a competition or draw, or offer them a freebie. For example, your ad might read:

Text PARTY to 20207 to receive your 2-for-1 ticket offer to Spark's night club!

As with emails you have to tell people you will use their number to contact them and give them the opportunity to opt out initially and in every message you send them.

There are many texting services which help you automate the process, and we strongly recommend you use them.

6.2.2 Emails

A lot of people access their emails using mobile Internet devices and some will sign up using them as well, but most of your email list will be acquired through your website or other means.

The thing to remember is that the tiny screens on mobile devices make it important to use a clear font and a simple design for clarity. Short and sweet messages will usually get a better response from mobile users and bear in mind that most won't see attachments.

6.2.3 Applications

Applications can also be used to carry your company's name and marketing message. Although people will happily pay for some apps, many are given away and the cost of developing an app for free distribution is often worthwhile.

The possibilities for apps are almost limitless and the relatively small sum to develop an app for your business is likely to be worth the investment. Useful free gifts are always good PR.

Your app should be relevant to your business and useful or fun. The possibilities are almost endless and predicting which apps will catch on is impossible. However, the relatively small investment in developing a simple but useful app is worth it for most companies, and free gifts are always good PR.

6.2.4 Check-ins

Check-ins are a kind of temporary opt-in, where customers are prompted to claim offers and discounts when they visit a business' premises. Customers can also check in their friends and spread the word about a business on social networks like Facebook.

Details vary and new systems are being introduced and changed all the time. The important thing is to know that these options exist and to consider how they might work for your business.

7 Monetising Your List

The ultimate aim of having an opt in subscriber list or database is to help your business make more money without the expense of continually advertising to find more customers. This means that whatever your subscribers originally signed up for – the incentive, more information, more education, and so on – you must eventually deliver some kind of marketing message to make it worthwhile for your business.

You can make this message subtle or very plain, and preferably prefaced with a testimonial, but if your messages don't encourage people to buy more from you, your "Permission Marketing" will be all permission and no marketing.

7.1 How Often to Promote Your Services

As we've already seen, some companies send a message every day and every one of those has a marketing message in it. This might not be the main content of the email but it could be the most important part. Some Internet marketers will send several emails every day...

Other companies are wary of selling at all, and some will hardly ever (and possibly never) communicate with the people on their database in any way. This is not a good idea for two reasons: one, you aren't getting any sales/upsells from your list and two, if you do suddenly start marketing, some people will complain. Market from the start and don't be afraid of people unsubscribing; you want to nurture a list of customers and prospects, and that's what you'll be left with when those who aren't interested, leave.

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The optimum frequency for emails for your business is probably nearer daily than monthly or less. You don't have to include a sales message every time but do so at least every three or four emails.

The optimum for a typical business, if there is such a thing as a typical business, is probably nearer the first example than the second. Here are some examples of how you might do things:

- Daily emails could include a line or two of sales copy and a link at the end of the main body of text or in a PS or signature
- Weekly emails could also have a few lines and maybe an advertisement separate from the main body of text, always with a link
- Monthly emails should always have sales messages included with offers and deals, and always with links to online sales pages or “Buy Now” links in HTML newsletters
- Or, if you don't want to include sales copy in regular emails, make one message in every three or four primarily a sales letter and keep the others for content

You can include a sales message in every email if the content is informative and entertaining as well. The best examples of this will include a useful tip or piece of advice that leads nicely into why you should look at the latest offer or deal. Not surprisingly, people selling marketing services and training are likely to do this better than most, but plumbers, car mechanics and cleaning companies can all do the same with a bit of lateral thinking.

7.2 Sponsorship and Advertising

Your database is a valuable resource to which other companies would be pleased to have access. Although you shouldn't hand over your list to another company, especially if you've promised not to share people's details, there's nothing to stop you advertising other people's products to your list, and being paid for it.

Your database is a valuable resource to which other companies would love to have access. There's nothing to stop you advertising other people's products without compromising your privacy policy.

There are a few ways you can make money with your list, including promoting other people's products and services:

- **Paid advertisements**, where you simply rent space in your emails to a company selling a complementary product
- **Cross-selling**, where you promote someone else's product yourself within your message
- **Back end promotions**, where you promote additional products and services to people who have just bought from you

- **Upselling**, where you promote higher value goods and services to people who have just bought from you
- **Guest posts**, where you allow someone else to talk about their business or products, but you still send the message and they don't get direct access to the database; you can make money by charging them up front, or by sharing the profits from the sales they make from that email
- **Sponsorship**, where someone pays to have their name added to the newsletter name, so it becomes something like "XYZ Newsletter, Sponsored by ABC Ltd". It still comes from you but another company gets some of the kudos and recognition as well

Naturally, you get paid for promoting other people's business or products, either directly or as a share of the extra profit they make.

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8 Monetising Your List 2

Here are some more ways you can make additional revenue from your database, or from other companies' databases.

8.1 Joint Ventures

Joint ventures are an excellent way to maximise the value of your database and to profit from other companies' databases.

There are three main ways to use joint ventures:

- Promoting other companies' products to your list and sharing the proceeds
- Promoting your products or services to another company's database and sharing the proceeds
- Joining forces with another company to build a database and promoting both companies' products

The main benefit to you of joint ventures of this nature is the increased revenue, but it's also a real benefit to your customers when you give them easy access to reliable and cost-effective products and services.

Joint venture offers are beneficial to your company and your customers when you give them access to good quality products and services at excellent prices.

The more complementary your products and services are the better results you can expect from joint ventures.

8.2 Strategic Partnerships

By cooperating a little more with other companies you can form a strategic alliance, with each company promoting and recommending the other as naturally as if they were promoting themselves.

Strategic partnerships can be carried across all your marketing, but work especially well with database marketing. As with joint ventures, a strategic partnership increases the reach of each business and offers a wider range of goods and services to each company's subscribers.

A strategic partnership can still be quite informal but with database marketing you should agree a schedule for your joint messages and share results. This helps to focus both partners' efforts. Having both interests at heart also means you're more likely to have a planned and coordinated marketing strategy in the first place.

8.3 Affiliate Links

Promoting other companies' goods can be done as affiliates rather than in a joint venture. There are a lot of affiliate networks you can join to get a few percent commission per sale but there are also schemes that pay you a minimum of fifty percent – which is much more attractive! One such is Clickbank, where digital products (information products, software, etc) are available for anyone to sell as affiliates and where the minimum commission is 50 percent of the net profit from each sale.

Digital products are very cheap to send – basically free – so your profit will be 50 percent or more of the retail price, minus a few percent for fees.

There are three main ways to promote affiliate links in your emails and other communication:

- Embedded links
- Advertisements
- Recommendations

One big plus about affiliate sales is that you don't have to stock any extra products – you just promote them for other people and they deliver, whether digitally or physically. Neither do you have to write and build a sales page for the item.

8.3.1 Embedded Links

You can include embedded links in your emails and websites in articles, reviews and other content. Let's say you choose electrical goods. You could write a review of the latest vacuum cleaners. Each time you mention a model by name you would include a hyperlink to a page where people can buy that cleaner.

Promoting affiliate products is an excellent way to make additional revenue from your list without the expense of developing new products, with advertisements recommendations or reviews.

Reviews don't have to be in very detailed and all the information you need about performance, capacity, motor power, or whatever will be available on the manufacturer's website or in their advertisements.

You can send an email message to your database telling people about the latest review and add it to your site, or simply send the review as an email, with the links embedded.

8.3.2 Advertisements

Instead of someone else paying you to advertise in your emails, you can simply insert one yourself, promoting your affiliate product. Naturally, include a link to the webpage where the product is for sale.

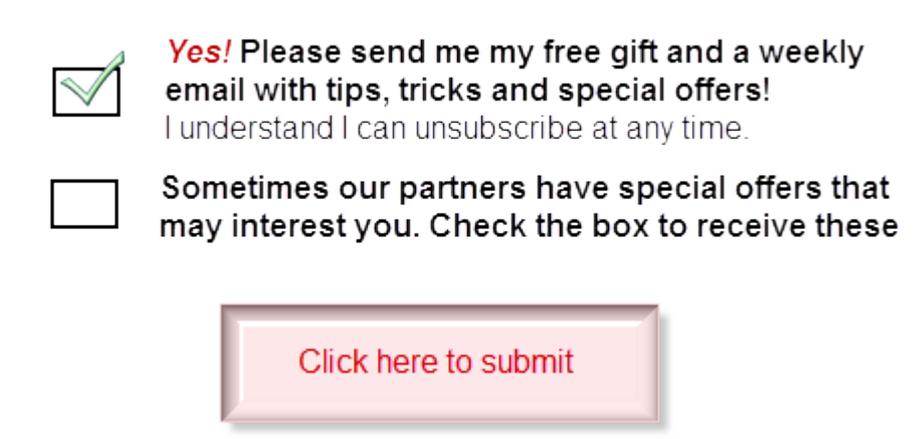
8.3.3 Recommendations

As well as embedding links in a standard article or review, you can also recommend products directly in your regular messages or even send extra ones to your database. A recommendation from you will carry more weight with your subscribers than an advertisement, especially once they've grown to respect your opinion and advice about your area of expertise.

Your subscribers may well guess that you're making extra revenue from the products you recommend but this won't matter if what you recommend gives them good value and quality. In fact, sound advice and well-justified recommendations will only enhance your reputation with your subscribers.

8.4 List Brokerage

List brokerage is a bit of a departure but a useful bonus for a business that's comfortable diversifying into a potential new revenue source. Your company could well start off in list brokerage by simply renting out your own list. You should not do this if you have promised not to (see "Privacy Policy"), and the potential value of your list is something to consider when you decide whether to offer that guarantee at the start. One way around this, that a lot of companies employ, is to offer new subscribers the choice of whether or not to receive offers from "partners", by asking them to "check" or "uncheck" a box on the sign up form.



Yes! Please send me my free gift and a weekly email with tips, tricks and special offers!
I understand I can unsubscribe at any time.

Sometimes our partners have special offers that may interest you. Check the box to receive these

[Click here to submit](#)

Fig 26 You can include the option to receive offers from partner companies

There are three ways, then, to make extra revenue with list brokerage:

- Rent out your own list
- Trade in other people's lists
- Arrange joint ventures between list owners and companies in need of a database

8.4.1 Rent Out Your List

You can rent out your own list to complementary businesses, provided you have permission to do so. List brokers will charge £150 or more per 1000 names for a single use and you can easily charge a lot more for a current and well-targeted list that hasn't been exhausted by over-promotion. You should be able to find companies who will be eager to promote their products to your database, especially if you've nurtured and cultivated that list so they are known to be responsive to your own emails.

8.4.2 Trade in Other People's Lists

With the experience of brokering your own database, you might want to diversify into brokering other people's lists. What sort of scale you do this on could vary from an occasional or one-off deal to a whole new business, attracting many list owners and companies looking for a database to which they can promote their goods.

Now you're an expert in database marketing you will be able to explain the value of it to potential joint venture partners and brokerage clients.

Databases can be built by all kinds of companies and organisations, including magazine publishers, television producers, retail shops and so on. Lists of buyers are more valuable than lists of enquirers, especially if they've bought something recently of high value.

You might well have started your own database marketing by approaching this kind of list broker, in which case you will know how it works.

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8.4.3 Arranging Joint Ventures

A one-off brokerage deal, like other joint ventures you might help to arrange, can be extremely valuable. What usually happens is that Company A has a large and responsive list that they use for themselves but they've never considered allowing someone else to use it. Meanwhile, Company B has a new or re-launched product, of high value, but no database. When the two companies and their products are complementary to each other, this is a match made in heaven!

Your job is to introduce them, with the proviso that you take a cut of the proceeds from the joint venture, or perhaps a flat fee for making the introduction.

As an expert (by now) in database marketing, you will easily be able to explain the value of the deal to both parties and claim your reward.

9 Conclusion and Summary

There is no doubt at all that existing customers are the easiest people to sell to, something that is demonstrated time after time. It's also true that people buy more from people and companies they know and like (and therefore trust).

Keeping the names and contact details of customers and contacts, therefore, is simple common sense, and communicating regularly with the people on this database is a logical extension of that. The only way to build trust with people who haven't yet bought from you is to keep giving them evidence of what you can do and how well you do it.

When you also give people good reason to join and stay on your database by giving them free information, lower prices, gifts and sound advice, they will be likely to stick with you long enough to become a customer, even if that takes some time.

Building and managing a database and sending messages to the people on it are so straightforward and inexpensive that it makes no sense at all not to put in the small amount of effort and investment needed.

Managing a database and communicating with the people on it is so straightforward and inexpensive that it makes no sense to not put in the small amount of effort and investment needed.

Database marketing is quicker, easier and cheaper than any other method of increasing sales and profits for your company. If you haven't started yet, now's the time!