EMAIL
MARKETING EXCELLENCE

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CHAPTER 1

WHY EMAIL MARKETING IS KING

Why Email Marketing is King

For any business looking to build an audience, develop relationships, increase trust and authority, and ultimately sell products; email marketing is an absolutely essential activity.

Email marketing often takes a backseat to other forms of marketing, such as SEO and social media marketing. That's a shame, as it does in fact have even more potential than either of those when it comes to building and reaching a massive number of people.

Not convinced? Then just take a look at the blog of any big e-mail marketer. Almost *all* of them will describe their email marketing and list building activities as the single most important aspects of their business.

One such blogger is Michael Hyatt. He had the following to say about email marketing and list building:

"I have literally built a multi-million dollar business on the strength of my email list. Ninety percent of my income comes from it. Even today, my email list is still my number one business priority and asset."

Meanwhile, Douglas Karr from Marketing Tech Blog said:

"Without a doubt, our email list is the best investment we've ever made."

And Michael Stelzner of Social Media Examiner says:

"Email is the most important channel for you to cultivate."

That's from a site *about* social media; and yet the owner is recommending email marketing above that very tool!

The list of big names who claim email marketing is their most important tool goes on.

And the statistics back this up too.

For instance, did you know that 91% of all consumers check their e-mail daily? Or that surveyed companies rate their email campaigns as more profitable than PPC advertising, social media marketing or content marketing?

Did you know that 66% of US customers over 15 have purchased at least one product via an email campaign?

Or how about the fact that email marketing has a ROI of 4,300%? That's an absolutely *gigantic* figure!

Why Email Marketing is the Bee's Knees

So what is it that makes email marketing such a powerful option for bloggers, businesses and marketers? How does it offer such incredible ROI and lead to so many sales?

Well the ROI of course is due to the simple fact that email marketing doesn't cost anything. This requires very little work on your part while still yielding incredible results. You'll only need to send an email once a week or once a month, while your mailing list will build itself once you've set everything up properly.

From there though, you can reach your audience directly in their inboxes – which is something you can't achieve through Facebook or even through SEO. People carry mobile phones on them 24/7 these days, which means you can reach them right in their

pockets any time of day and when they're likely to be most receptive to your marketing message.

This also means that you aren't going through a 'middle man' or a 'gatekeeper'. Building a massive Facebook Page following is great, but ultimately you are always going to be beholden to Facebook. If Facebook decides to delete your page (which isn't unheard of) then you can lose all that hard work and investment with no explanation. And recently, Facebook changed their policies so that a post to your Facebook page would only reach about 10% of your audience.

You see why it's worth having your *own* audience and direct access to said audience?

Email marketing also lets you send multiple messages and time those messages perfectly. This means that you can build anticipation for a product launch, you can generate interest in a new project and you can discuss matters with your audience. You have complete control over your marketing message and that's *incredibly*powerful.

Essentially what this all means, is that you can use email marketing in order to create and manage a sales funnel. We'll talk about this more later, but essentially a sales funnel is a series of communications that gradually draws in a reader. This is what leads someone from being a cold contact, to being interested in your product, to being invested in your brand – to making a purchase.

It's also why most marketers agree that it takes five 'touches' with any audience to yield one sale. With email marketing, you can manage all of those 'touches' and time them to perfection for the very best results. *That's* why it's such an incredible tool.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHALLENGES OF EMAIL MARKETING

The Challenges of Email Marketing

In the introduction, we looked at a lot of the things that make email marketing a great and powerful tool. That's important, because more people need to get on board and really invest in this area of marketing.

But it would be remiss of us to overlook the obstacles and challenges. This is the part where we see what is going wrong with email marketing campaigns the web over, and it's also where we start introducing some solutions and better strategies so you can make sure you're *not* making those same mistakes.

And likely you're already familiar with some of the challenges of email marketing. No doubt you already know why you haven't yet invested lots of time and money into this strategy.

Just take a look at your inbox.

How many emails do you get on a daily basis? For many of us the answer is in the hundreds. And how many of those do you actually open? No I thought not…

Probably a large amount of your email correspondence goes straight to your junk mail/spam. Then a fair amount of it will be filtered by Gmail or Hotmail into the 'social' or 'promotional' labels. Half the time we don't even look at what's in there!

And then we have our own 'in-built' spam filter. This is what we use to scan our eyes over a selection of emails and to pick out the *very few* that we're actually interested in. And for most of us, there's just too much here for us to pay much attention to anything that isn't from a friend.

A typical inbox might have messages from Pinterest, Facebook, Amazon, Vistaprint, Lulu.com, Success Resources, Groupon and then countless bloggers and marketers…

How are you supposed to stand out? How are you supposed to get past the spam filter? How are you meant to build a relationship with anyone under those circumstances?

This is what we'll be addressing in the rest of this book. By the end, you'll come away with incredible skills you can use to build a massive list of people who are actually *excited* to receive your messages and who actually *engage* with your messages.

We'll go over the basics, but then we'll look at some more advanced techniques, tips and tools that will ensure your messages are getting opened and your list is highly targeted.

CHAPTER 3

THE BASICS OF BUILDING
A MAILING LIST

The Basics of Building a Mailing List

First of all, let's recap on the basics. How does one go about building a mailing list? And what are the best marketing techniques to ensure that it keeps growing?

The Autoresponder

Of course to begin with, you need the most important tool for building and managing a mailing list: an autoresponder.

An autoresponder is essentially a piece of software that manages a mailing list on your behalf. It saves you a ton of time in the long run and really it's not an option to go without.

Specifically, an autoresponder is what you will use to create your opt-in form. This is where your visitors will enter their names and their email addresses in order to subscribe. From there, the autoresponder will then be where the database of users is stored and it's where you will send your messages. These tools allow you to message huge lists without using the BCC function of your email.

What's more, autoresponders also give you lots of information regarding your emails – for instance they can tell you what percentage of them are actually getting opened. They also provide you with other powerful features, such as the ability to include the

recipient's name inside the messages. This way, your email can say 'Hey John!' instead of being generic and the same for each subscriber.

Autoresponders also allow you to implement a 'double opt-in', meaning that subscribers need to respond to a confirmation email to confirm their interest. This protects you from spam and from people who aren't really interested in reading your messages. More important, autoresponders allow people to automatically unsubscribe, rather than requiring you to manage it manually.

For all these reasons, an autoresponder is an absolutely essential tool and not something you can do without.

Three of the bigger autoresponders out there are MailChimp, GetResponse and AWeber. Unfortunately, these tools aren't free so you *will* need to pay.

Also unfortunate, is that the prices are not set fees – which makes it quite hard to directly compare the value on offer.

You can refer to this table though in order to get a good idea as to which offers the most value:

MailChimp:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
500	$10
1,000	$15
10,000	$75
20,000	$150
30,000	$215
40,000	$240
50,000	$240

AWeber:

Subscription Plan	Fee
Monthly	$19
Quarterly	$49
Yearly	$194

This is then on top of the following monthly fee:

Subscribers	Additional Monthly Fee
< 500	N/A
501-2,500	$10
2,501-5,000	$30
5,001-10,000	$50
10,001-25,000	$130
25,001+	Not Listed

Get Response:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
1,000	$15
2,500	$25
5,000	$45

10,000	$65
25,000	$145
50,000	$250
100,000	$450

As you can see, the right choice for you will likely depend on how big you expect your mailing list to grow and how quickly. The good news is that you should be able to export your list and easily move to another provider if you find that your current option is no longer cost effective.

Landing Pages and Embedding Your Opt-In Form

Once you have your autoresponder, the first thing you'll do is to build your opt-in form. This will then give you a piece of code that you can paste into your HTML to embed into your website.

So what do you do with this form and where do you put it?

One place to use an opt-in form is on a landing page, which in this case will be a 'squeeze page'. A squeeze page' is a single page on a website that is entirely dedicated to getting people to sign up for your list. This will use a very minimal design with no

external links and no adverts for other products or pages. At the same time, all of the text is going to be in service of promoting your mailing list and selling its benefits.

If you're unsure of how to build a squeeze page, then you can do it easily by using a WordPress site and installing the 'Optimize Press' theme.

The idea is that you can then use PPC advertising (pay per click) and other forms of marketing in order to ensure that you're driving traffic to that page.

Likewise though, you can also use your opt-in forms on your blog or on your website. This way, you can surround your form with your regular content and that's where the power of content marketing really comes in.

Of course you can add your opt-in form to your home page. Here it should be front and center. One thing you should always ask yourself when designing a website, is what you want the *first thing* your visitors do to be. What is the purpose of the website? What is the ultimate objective? The smart marketer knows that their mailing list is their most valuable asset and as such, this should take front and center stage on the homepage and every element should be in service of that. Think of your homepage as a funnel that leads to the opt-in form.

At the same time, you can also use your mailing list in your sidebar as a widget. This way it will be site-wide and a constant reminder of its existence. Thereby, anyone browsing your site will be likely to sign up whenever they see the form there if they're sufficiently impressed with your content.

Pop-Overs

And one more tool to make sure that your audience *definitely* sees your opt-in form and engages with it, is to use a 'pop-over'.

A pop-over is like a pop-up, except it doesn't open in a separate window. Instead, it pops up *within* the browser and sits on top of the content of the website. Your visitors will then need to either enter their e-mail or click 'close' in order to continue browsing.

Many bloggers say that pop-overs increase their subscriptions by several *hundred* percent, so this is a very worthwhile technique.

But do keep in mind that pop-overs also rub people up the wrong way. You don't want to over-do this because it ultimately prevents your visitors from seeing the content they came to enjoy. It takes up their time, it's invasive and that can really damage your brand if you're not careful.

This is why you should use a pop-over plugin that gives you advanced functionality. There's no point showing your mailing list *as soon* as someone lands on your site anyway – why would they be interested in signing up when they've never heard of you and haven't read one bit of text yet?

Instead then, use smart algorithms to create pop-overs that show *only*when the visitor has spent a significant amount of time on your site, or when they have scrolled down the page a certain amount. Likewise, make sure that your pop-overs don't show when people return to your site a second time and make sure that they are easy to close – even on mobiles.

A great tool for making pop-overs is 'Buzz Sumo'. There are plenty of good ones out there to choose form though.

Content Marketing

But finally, you'll also be able to embed the opt-in forms directly into your content.

This way, the objective is to make your articles and blog posts serve as 'free tasters' for your mailing list. The idea is to show your audience that you know your stuff, that you're capable of writing engaging content and that you're focussed on delivering value. If they read lots of your content and they're consistently impressed with the quality and value you offer, then they'll want more and they'll want to know about the new content and projects you're working on. And *that's* when they'll be likely to sign up for your mailing list.

Think of the way Starbucks will sell their new coffees – by standing outside with free samples and offering them to passers-by. Your website visitors are people who are just stopping by on the information super-highway. You need to use your content to lure them in, and that means you need to keep offering amazing value.

And don't shy away from actively *encouraging* people to sign up. Don't paste your opt-in form into the corner of your website and just hope your fans find it. Instead, blow their minds with some incredible, high quality content and *then* remind them about your mailing list where they can get much more similar information.

This way, you are already building a relationship with your audience at the same time as you're getting them to sign up.

CHAPTER 4

MARKETING BASICS FOR GROWING YOUR LIST – THE IMPORTANCE OF TARGETING

Marketing Basics for Growing Your List – The Importance of Targeting

Now you have all these elements in place, your website should be a veritable 'sign-up machine'. The next trick is to get people to your website. If your content is great, your opt-in form is prominent and you're sending lots of people to your site every day, your list will grow.

But here's where things get a bit more tricky. Because it's actually not *about* building a massive list. Far more important than that is to build a *highly targeted* list. You need to make sure that your mailing list is filled with people who actually want to be there, who enjoy your content, and who might want to buy your products.

This means you need to market your site, but you also need to market to the right people. Later, we'll look at how to build your squeeze page and content in such a way that it also *filters* the kinds of people you don't want on your list (people who won't open your emails).

PPC

PPC is 'Pay Per Click' advertising. This means you're paying only when someone clicks on your ads, which in turn means that a completely unsuccessful ad campaign doesn't cost you anything.

The two main platforms for PPC advertising are Google AdWords (adverts which appear alongside Google searches) and Facebook Ads (adverts that are shown to specific Facebook users). The most important benefit of these though, is probably that they allow you to target your visitors very specifically.

On Google, you do this by carefully selecting your keywords. If you sell information about fitness, then you want people who are actively looking to get fit. The best way to find those people, is to place adds on SERPs (search engine results pages) pertaining to topics like 'lose belly fat' or 'ebook on building muscle'. If you do this, then you'll only be promoting yourself to people actively looking for information similar to that which you supply.

On Facebook meanwhile, you can do the same thing by targeting your viewers based on their hobbies, interests, gender, location etc. If your website is about wedding planning for instance, then you can ensure that your ads are only being shown to people who are engaged.

That will make sure your ads are targeted, but is it enough? You're still paying several cents for each of your visitors and even more for each subscriber. Is a subscriber worth that much?

While estimates vary, it's generally agreed that a subscriber is broadly worth about $1. As long as you're paying less than $1 per subscriber then, you should expect to see some ROI. But this will *only happen* if the list is targeted – it will only happen if the people who subscribe are likely to buy your products down the line.

That's why you might choose to go even further in targeting your list. For instance, you could state outright in your advert that the list is to receive information about exciting new products. Now only people who are potentially interested in buying your products will sign up.

Likewise, if you have a squeeze page, you can focus this on a project that you're currently working on – something you intend to sell in future. Then you can invite people to sign up if they'd like to learn more about the product. Again, you're now paying for

people who are actually *interested* in buying something – not just in reading your mailing. And that means ROI.

Thankfully, Facebook provides a tool that you can use alongside such a method called 'CPA'. This is 'cost per action' and essentially means that you're no longer paying per click, but paying per *action*. And in this case, that action is signing up to a mailing list.

Now you'll only pay if someone actually subscribes and they will hopefully only subscribe if they're interested in buying your product. This is why targeting is *so* important – it's what ensures maximum ROI. You really shouldn't even consider paying for your subscribers or you're marketing unless you're going to be using this level of targeting alongside your list building.

SEO and Social Media Marketing

Meanwhile, you can keep driving people to your site using SEO and social media marketing. Of course SEO is search engine optimization and revolves around adding lots of relevant content to your website, as well as generating lots of links on external websites. Social media marketing means that you're going to be posting comments, links, pictures etc. that your audience can appreciate – and this in turn will drive them to your website.

Getting someone to follow you on social media is a great step toward getting them to sign up to your mailing list. This way they are already subscribing to your content in one

sense, so it's a small push to encourage them to join your mailing list. Again, that step is going to be motivated by the high quality content that you'll keep adding to your site.

Make sure you post content to your website regularly and that you do the same with your social media. Likewise, maintain a consistent branding across social media *and* your website, and be sure to link your website to your social media and vice versa. You want to create as many 'in roads' as possible to help people discover your site, and thus your list.

CHAPTER 5

USING INCENTIVES

Using Incentives

If you have lots of people visiting your squeeze page and your content pages but no one is signing up, then you may need to give a little extra push to get them to make the decision.

This is where using incentives comes in. An incentive is essentially something that you'll use like a 'bribe' to make your list more appealing – and normally that takes the form of a free gift.

Of course if you're a small business then you can't afford a big loss-leader. Thus, the gift you give away should be something free that won't cost you any money per download. A great example of this is an eBook and these tend to be one of the most popular types of incentive. Similar options include free 'reports' (mini eBooks), email courses, mind maps etc.

Doing Incentives Right

Doing Incentives Right

Incentives can be an excellent tool for generating more subscribers but unfortunately, they can also be damaging to your list for a number of reasons.

Some marketers advise against using eBooks for instance. Why? Because there is a danger than an eBook can be seen as taking up too much time for the reader. How

many people are actually likely to read all the way through an eBook? And by the end of that, are they going to want *more* of your content or will they be all burned out?

Another risk when giving away free eBooks, is that you can end up with a lot of subscribers who are hunting for freebies. This is bad news, because it means that you can end up with people grabbing the book and then unsubscribing or never reading your message again.

For this reason, the smaller option of the report might actually be a better strategy. Whereas an eBook takes time, a report should *save* time for your readers.

But you'll still find that this creates some of the same problems – especially if you're paying for advertising or SEO.

And that's why you can consider getting a little more creative with your incentives.

Ideally, you want to make your e-mail *itself* the incentive.

We already described how you can drive people to a mailing list by talking about an upcoming project or product. Discuss how life changing it's going to be and get people excited for it, *then* at the end tell them they need to sign up for more information. People always want what they can't have and as such, an unfinished product is something that will always drive a lot of subscriptions. At the same time though, your audience is now very likely to keep their eyes peeled on their inbox for more information and also more likely to potentially *buy* your product when it does release. You see how this is a more effective strategy?

Another way to make the mailing list itself the incentive is to describe it as a newsletter, filled with breaking industry news and exclusive advice and tips. Or how about making it into an *e-zine* with some glossy pictures?

You can even run a contest regularly for your subscribers. This way, there's the promise of winning something big, but you will only have to pay out once. Better yet, people will need to keep checking the e-mails you send in order to find out whether or not they won.

Finally, you can sell your mailing list on the strength of the special offers and deals you're going to be offering. This is a great way to attract people with money to burn and it also means they'll want to open your messages to see if the deals apply to them.

Using the right language also helps a lot. Refer to your subscribers as your 'VIP members' and make sure to keep offering them extra bonuses and benefits that your other readers can see. Make it sound exciting, exclusive and important to be a subscriber and therefore a member!

CHAPTER 6

HOW TO DELIVER VALUE THROUGH YOUR EMAILS

How to Deliver Value Through Your Emails

If you've done all this correctly, then the people signing up to your mailing list should be fans of your content who trust your authority and who are interested in the value you're providing via your emails. That means they'll be more likely to open them and read them.

But this is where the really important stuff comes into play. You don't want your subscribers to read your emails just once you see: you need them to *keep* reading them and to *keep* opening them.

This is why you need to make sure that you're consistently delivering value and making sure that people are *glad* they opened your messages. If you do this well, then people might even share your emails and you may find that you start attracting new members organically.

A fantastic example of this is Brain Pickings. Brain Pickings is a massive blog run by Mario Popova. The blog is huge today and has millions of readers – and it's regularly featured by the likes of Wired and The Times.

How did it get to this point? Well it actually started out as a mailing list that Maria made for her friends and some colleagues. She would simply put a few things she was interested in into an email and send it to a select few members along with some comments of her own (this is *aggregate content*). People on her list found the content so fascinating and entertaining, that they started recommending their friends to sign up and passing them around. Gradually, more and more people signed up and her e-mails became more and more in-depth. Eventually, she launched the site in response to demand and the rest is history.

In this case, Maria did no marketing and started out very small. What made her emails success was the pure value she was delivering. You need to make sure you do the same.

How do you do that?

The answer is simple: you focus on delivering unique, fascinating and valuable content.

Here's the problem with 99% of content marketing: it's incredibly dull.

How often do you see articles on fitness with titles like '10 Pec Exercises You Can Do At Home!'? How many SEO articles are there on '10 Mistakes in SEO'. These topics just sound incredibly dull and they're highly derivative and overdone – you'll struggle to stand out with subjects like that.

On the other hand though, an example of something from Brain Pickings would be:

'Adam Gopnik on Darwin's Brilliant Strategy for Preempting Criticism and the True Mark of Genius'

Or how about:

'Nicoel Krauss' Beautiful Letter to Van Gogh on Fear, Bravery, and How to Break the Loop of Our Destructive Patterns'

Now that is some content with real *meat*. That's content that has you imaging the potential implications as soon as you read the title and you just know it's going to be thoughtful, in-depth and something you can enjoy over a nice warm mug of tea.

This is where the *value* comes in.

Of course you need to make sure you're remaining on topic and staying within your niche or your industry, but while doing that, you need to come up with topics, information and discussion that isn't anywhere else. You need to convey that information in an entirely new way and you need to put as much effort into creating stunning content as possible.

Then people will read your emails and they will look *forward* to the next ones!

What's more, this will help you to build trust in your brand and in *you* as a marketer and ultimately that will make your audience much more likely to buy products you subsequently recommend.

And to reiterate, this is *also* what you need to be doing on your website, so that people *want* to subscribe in the first place. Look at studies, be inspired by historical texts, find interesting people – explore your subject and bring something new to the table!

Email Marketing Standards

As well as offering excellent value, you also need to think about conforming to some of the standards and the expectations inherent in content marketing.

For starters, while the 'recommended length' for a blog post is roughly 1,800 words, the average email should be much shorter. When people read blog posts, they're doing it through their favorite browser at a time when they've set out to read something interesting. Reading in the inbox when they're checking their emails in the morning though is something quite different. Aim for roughly 400-700 words, depending on the format of your email.

And this is another point: the format of your email. What is your email going to be? What purpose does it serve?

Some emails effectively work as blog posts, just like Maria's did. A newsletter though is something slightly different again. This will be a roundup of news that will pertain both to your website or blog *and* to your industry or niche. This can be a little longer.

Other options are to create an e-course which will be slightly different again, or to promote special offers. Most likely, your email will be a bit of an amalgamation with an introduction from you, followed by a feature and some highlights from your site and maybe a bit about your latest deals and offers. This is what can be considered a newsletter.

Another consideration is frequency. How often are you going to send your emails? The key here is to avoid sending emails too regularly, thereby frustrating and irritating your subscribers. At the same time though, you also don't want to go long stretches with no correspondence at all as this will make your list seem 'abandoned' – which isn't great for your brand visibility or for demonstrating your commitment to your site and your business.

A good rough guide then is to send an email about once a week. You can make this a little less (about once a month) or you can increase the frequency as you begin selling.

As for timing, this is another area where there is some debate but the main thing you want to avoid is your email being one of several in your audience's inbox. That means avoiding sending your email when they'll be sleeping, as that's when emails will get the chance to stockpile. Fortunately, you can use your autoresponder to send emails at different times to different time zones.

Striking the Right Tone

Also important with your mailing list is to write with the right tone and the write 'voice'. Partly, this is going to depend on your industry and niche, which will determine the 'persona' that you're targeting. Are these young people reading about a hobby and interest? Or are these professionals?

Regardless of the specific target though, your emails will likely be a little more 'friendly' in tone than your blog posts and articles. The difference here is that you're speaking

directly to your audience and as such you should use plenty of 'I' and 'you' throughout the message.

If you can open up and be a little vulnerable in these messages, it will help you to avoid coming across as simply trying to sell a product and it will make your audience feel as though they're getting more privileged access to your brand. Feeling worried about writing your first email? Great! Tell your audience that and ask for their feedback, it's endearing and it encourages engagement.

More Ways to Create Value

There are other ways you can create value through your mailing list though and this is where you can really set yourself apart from all the other email marketers.

For instance, consider sending out free gifts to your mailing list occasionally that you *aren't* advertising. In other words, don't *just* send the free eBook as the incentive when they sign up – use the strategy later as well in order to provide even *more* value.

In other words, why not just send your subscribers a free eBook or report occasionally on top of the one they already received?

Think about how this might come across to your readers. If they've forgotten about you and are currently ignoring your messages, then seeing a message in their inbox from you with an attachment and a subject heading saying they've got a free gift – then how likely are they to open that? And how likely are they to subsequently start looking out for your messages again?

This not only draws attention to your messages again, but it also makes people feel good and they'll associate that good feeling with your business. This is a great way to gain good will because it's unexpected. This strategy is known in business as 'over delivering' – it means that people will be even more impressed with a freebie that wasn't advertised because it means they're getting *more* value than they were promised in the original deal. And if your ebook or report is great quality, it will encourage them further to consider buying products you subsequently promote.

And don't just give away books. How about giving away a free mobile app? Or what about doing a deal with another product creator to offer a heavy discount?

CHAPTER 7

SUBJECT HEADINGS AND FIGHTING
THE SPAM FILTERS

Subject Headings and Fighting the Spam Filters

You might be offering the very best value in the world, but if your subject headings aren't conveying this then it won't matter. Without the right subject heading, no one will open your emails and what's more, they'll likely just end up in the spam box!

Did you know that 1/3rd of consumers will open emails or delete them based on the subject heading alone? As you can see then, this is a pretty important area to consider.
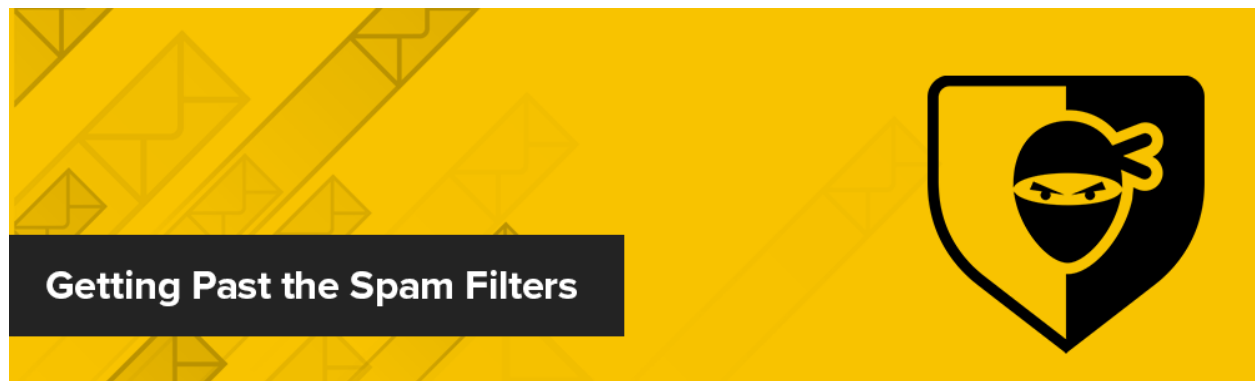
Getting Past the Spam Filters

Most important of all is that your subjects and the emails themselves are able to get past the spam filters. If you don't do this, then people will never even get the *chance* to open your emails!

To do this, you need to understand how spam filters work. And basically, this is in a manner similar to Google. Spam filters have scripts that will sift through the content in each new email, looking for keywords. When they find a keyword that is associated with a message being spam, then it will get sent to that folder.

What are these keywords? Well they're different for every email client so you're not going to be able to find a complete list anywhere. Some common ones though include:

- Download

- Store

- Shop

- Money Back

- Gambling

- Viagra

- Handbags

Take a look through your own spam box and try and see what kind of content is in there. Look for words that occur regularly and then avoid them!

Likewise though, spam filters also go beyond this and will look at a wide range of factors to decide whether the content is valuable or not. Again, this works very similarly to Google.

For instance, spam filters look at the ratio of images to text. If this is too high or too low, then that will be flagged up. Likewise, the length of the content is also taken into account. If you have too many words then this will be considered a warning sign but the same also goes for *very* short emails.

Designing high quality content will help you to automatically side-step many of these problems. If you're delivering great quality information that people *want* to read, then the spam filter will have no reason to block you. And the more advanced the spam filter becomes, the less likely you'll be to get blocked. This is the best strategy because it's future proof. The same goes for SEO too – keep delivering great content for your website and you'll find that Google will *want* to help people find you. The more Google develops their algorithm, the better your chance of being found.

Something else you can do though is simply to ask your readers to white list you and to ask them to put you in their 'main inbox'. This might seem simplistic but it really works – if you have followed all the advice in this book up to this point then your readers should be excited to hear from you and they should be loving what they've seen so far. If you then ask them to make sure they get to see your emails, why wouldn't they? And this will help you to develop a good reputation among spam filters.

That's right – you can actually develop a 'sender reputation' over time that might get considered by spam filters across the board. Another important reason to play by the rules!

If you want to find out what your current sender reputation is, then you can do so by checking out DNStuff.com. This way, you'll be able to see if you're blacklisted by many email clients.

Another tip is to get email sender accreditation from a third party ISP. This will help you to ensure you develop your reputation for the better.

Finally, avoid using huge images and implement alt-tags so that the spam filters know what they are.

If you do all this, then it will help you to avoid the spam filters and as we'll see, it will also help with the 'human spam filters'.
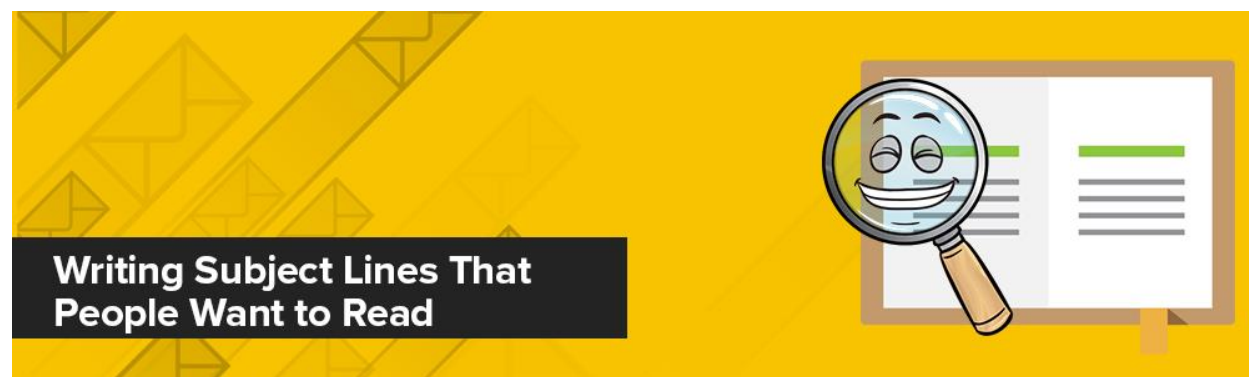
Writing Subject Lines That People Want to Read

Because in fact, humans work in a very similar way when they're looking through their emails and filtering out spam. Most of us are in a rush whenever we're checking email so what we tend to do is just run our eyes down the list of subjects and senders and look out for 'keywords' that tell us if something is worth opening.

And you know what *always* puts us off? Anything that sounds like marketing. As we mentioned at the start of this ebook, people are currently bombarded with marketing

messages and most of us are sick of it. What's more, it's highly unlikely that what essentially boils down to an *advert* is going to be at all interesting or worth our time reading. It's transparent, it's irritating and it offers no value.

Your job then is once again to *not* sound like a marketer. That means you need to sound like a great article, or you need to sound almost like a friend or contact. That is one of the reasons that using the subscribers' names in your subjects can be very effective. This is a keyword we look for when trying to find the messages we *do*want to open.

Similarly, using 're:' (which means 'regarding') at the start of your email can make it look like part of an email thread, which gets more clicks. Another good strategy is to ask a question, or to invite a comment – by seeming more conversational like this, you can set yourself apart from all the marketing talk. And what's more, is that people absolutely love giving their opinion and feeling important. Ask for feedback, or ask if people would be interested in helping. Just make sure that you aren't tricking your audience – always ensure that the content inside the email reflects the subject heading.

Meanwhile, you also want to display the value in your subject and you want to make sure that your emails sound interest. Better yet, try to leverage some of the curiosity of your audience.

This is something that the much-maligned 'click bait' articles do very well. Clickbait is any title that is designed just to get people to click on it: and normally to accomplish this it will use emotionally manipulative strategies.

These are the articles on Facebook with titles like: "You'll never guess what this terrible mother does to her kid next!" or "Amazing super food that's more powerful than steroids… but should it be illegal?".

These articles *get us to click* because they use titles that stand out and that make us highly curious. If we leave the page without clicking on them, we're left wondering what they possibly could have been about.

But while these topics might be very effective at getting clicks, they're also terrible for building trust and authority. That's because the emails can never deliver on their promise. The result is that the reader feels tricked and as though they wasted their time.

Your job, is to use titles that are just as eye grabbing and as interesting – but that you actually have something meaty to write about on. That might mean talking about a new study, a little known technique, or the psychological implications of your line of work. If you use the advice we discussed earlier on writing high quality content, then this should come easily.

At the same time though, remember that most email clients only show 50 characters for their subject line. That means you can't make your subject too long or it will get clipped and no one will see the whole thing!

CHAPTER 8

KEEPING YOUR MAILING LIST CLEAN

Keeping Your Mailing List Clean

Now you've done a ton of work to make sure that your mailing list is highly targeted and that the subscribers will only become *more* engaged and committed as a result of receiving all your high quality correspondence.

But this doesn't protect you from invalid emails. This is where the subject of 'email hygiene' comes into play, and it's very important if you want to keep a good sender reputation and if you want to make sure that your list retains its value. This is *especially* crucial if you ever plan on selling your email.

Invalid Emails

The first thing to get rid of are the invalid emails. These are emails that simply aren't real addresses, or that have been abandoned. Of course sending lovingly crafted emails to an email that's made up – or that belongs someone who died a long time ago – is not a particularly smart business move.

Most autoresponders fortunately contain email hygiene tools specifically to help solve this issue. The first thing many of these will do is to check over the data for common typos. One reason you can collect invalid emails is simply that people make typos when they sign up. Look for emails like 'Bob@gmailcom' and you can avoid this problem. If you don't have the necessary tools with your autoresponder, then you can just go

through the database manually. It's a lengthy process but you can always outsource this to a

Another way to do this to a virtual assistant and it shouldn't cost too much.

To more quickly flag up potential problem emails, you can also look for bounces. A bounced email is an email that fails to deliver and there are two types of these. 'Soft bounces' are temporary bounces that can be due to a range of factors (including a full inbox), whereas 'hard bounces' are delivery failures that are unlikely to change or be resolved. These are cases of emails never existing in the first place, or of the email account being deleted for instance.

At either rate, you want to delete emails that are consistently failing to get through to the recipient.

Double Opt-In

As they say, prevention is better than cure! If you want to avoid the number of invalid emails being too high *in the first place* then you should always use a double opt-in on your forms. Double opt-in you may recall, means that the subscriber needs to confirm their interest via an email with an embedded link. To the inexperienced email marketer this might seem like a big problem, as it means they'll be making it *harder* for their subscribers to join up.

But in reality, this is an important tool for blocking fake emails and for blocking spam. Spam of course is caused by robots and scripts that automatically fill in forms – but which won't be capable of responding to a confirmation email.

At the same time, spam filters *also* block people from signing up who aren't really interested in your product or your messages. Some people sign up on a whim but then never check their inboxes. Fortunately, these types of subscribers are also highly unlikely to interact with a confirmation email, simply because it takes too much time and effort. So this way, you aren't only filtering out the invalid email addresses, but also the disinterested subscribers.

Inactive Subscribers

Other subscribers will become inactive. These are the people who sign up but then later lose interest in your messages. Alternatively, these people may have changed their email address, or sadly may have passed on.

Whatever the case, it's no use sending emails to someone who never opens them and it will save you *and* them time and money if you just remove them from your list. Thankfully, most autoresponders can automatically show you which emails aren't getting opened, so after a while it's worth deleting them from your list. Don't be tempted to keep them around just to artificially inflate your numbers – a targeted list beats a big list *every time*.

CHAPTER 9

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR GROWING YOUR LIST

Additional Strategies For Growing You List

Before we get on with monetize the list and actually profiting for all our hard work, let's look at a few extra ways you can increase your income and grow your list… These are 'growth hacks' and ways you can spend money to promote your list very quickly, as opposed to long-term marketing strategies. They can be just as effective though!

Using Your Existing Contacts

A great place to start is with your existing contacts! Don't make the mistake of being too shy to show your business to your friends and family – if you can't promote yourself to them, how do you expect to promote yourself to complete strangers?

The great thing about existing contacts is that they're more likely to be friends or colleagues who know you and who want to help. This means they'll be more likely to forward emails or to encourage their friends to sign up too!

Ask Your Mailing List

Another tip is to ask your mailing list to help you promote and grow the list. Ask people to forward your messages if they enjoy them and make sure you show people how they can sign up if they've been passed on the message. Likewise, just request that your subscribers put in a good word for you if they enjoy your content. If you've built a strong community, then this can be much more effective than you might expect.

Alternatively, if you'd like to add a little incentive, why not invite your subscribers to pass on your mailing list and turn it into a contest of some sort? For every 100 subscribers you get, you could send a free gift to everyone on the list for example. This way, everyone wins!

Meeting People in the Real World

Another unexpected place to find subscribers is in the 'real world'. In other words, when you're networking you should make an effort to collect emails and ask if they'd mind

being added to your list. This is not only a great way to get some key influencers onto that list, but also to develop a relationship with people who will be becoming subscribers.

For businesses you can even invite your customers to join your mailing list. Why not give them that option when they pay at the till? You can even give them a discount in exchange for doing so (which is also an incentive that ecommerce stores can use FYI).

Guest Posting

Guest posting is a type of 'influencer marketing'. This means that you're finding someone who already has a big audience and a lot of influence and you're that way reaching many more people than you otherwise could. This can be very effective as it allows you to communicate with an audience of thousands on *day one*.

Guest posting specifically involves writing unique content for websites and giving it to bloggers for free. This provides them with value they can offer their audience and saves them writing the content themselves and in exchange, they will hopefully agree to let you put your opt-in form at the bottom of the message. Not only do you get the exposure this way, but if the audience of that blog is very loyal then you'll also get the benefit of association with that brand.

Ad Swaps and Solo Ads

Ad Swaps and Solo Ads

An ad swap is another form of influencer marketing. In the case of an ad swap, you benefit from the influencer by offering to do the same in return.

So you get to send a message to everyone on your list, and in return they do the same through your list. That way, you both get a recommendation to each others' lists and hopefully a lot of new direct subscribers. Don't do this too often though, or your subscribers will get fed up of receiving lots of messages from people they never agreed to hear from.

A solo ad is the exact same thing, except here you're paying for your message so that you don't have to have someone mail your list.

Are these good strategies? That all depends on mailing list! Just make sure you do your research first and ensure that the list is highly targeted and that it is relevant to your topic. You also need to make sure that the blogger is treating their list well and that they're getting good engagement as a result.

The best way to make sure of this is to join the list yourself and to see what it's like to be a subscriber. This can also be a great way to get inspiration and ideas for your own messages.

Another tip is to ask to see the stats from that marketer's autoresponder. This way you can make sure their emails are valid and their subscribers are active and engaged. If they won't show you this data, then be suspicious!

Buying Emails

Another option is to outright buy your emails. Is this a good strategy? The short answer is *no.*

When you buy a mailing list, you'll find that it immediately loses all of its value. The reason for this is that it's no longer at all targeted when you do this and something very key is missing – permission.

While the subscriber will likely have said it's okay for their email to be sold or passed on, what they *haven't* done is to explicitly give permission for *you* to email them. Likewise, they won't have any idea who you are and they won't have seen the value you offer. They haven't tried your 'free samples'. This makes it *very* hard for you not to get ignored – and that's why emails are often sold in bulk loads of 1,000 or more on Fiverr for just $5. Don't waste your money!

CHAPTER 10

HOW TO SELL THROUGH YOUR MAILING LIST

How to Sell Through Your Mailing List

You've done a ton of work at this point, but as yet you still haven't earned any money!

Don't worry: this is where the selling comes in and that's how you're going to monetize your list and make a profit from it.

But you haven't been wasting your time with all of that targeting and value – this is exactly how you'll have built up the trust and the authority for your brand so that you can be effective in your selling going forward.

AIDA

Providing value is what makes people want to keep reading your emails and you need to *keep* doing this to keep them interested and on board.

So when it comes to selling time, you don't want to just suddenly change tact and hit them with the hard sell. Instead, you need to gently introduce them to your products and you need to get them interested in buying. All the while, you'll *still* be providing value via your emails.

This is where 'AIDA' comes in. AIDA is an acronym that stands for:

- Awareness
- Interest

- Desire
- Action

Were you to create a 'sales page' to sell a product, you would attempt to fit all of these stages into your persuasive writing. For an email list though, you have the space and flexibility to handle each step in a different email.

So you've been sending lots of emails, providing great value and building your relationship with your readers.

Now you want them to be AWARE of an exciting new product coming up, so the next step is to mention casually at the end of your message, that you've got something new and exciting in the works that you'll talk about more in future. This won't put any one off or have them clamouring for the unsubscribe button, but it will warm them up to the next stage.

Next comes interest. In this email the ratio of value to marketing will move a little further towards the marketing, so you'll give yourself a bit more space to talk about what this new product does and why people should care. Keep things a little vague but at the same time, make sure they get enough information to be interested and to look forward to the next message.

Then comes desire. This is where you start going in for the slightly harder sale – and focussing on your value proposition. A value proposition basically means that you're going to focus on how your product will make life better and how it really provides value. You don't sell hats – you sell *warm heads*. What does your product do that will get people to really want it and to imagine themselves owning it?

This is the great part because they still can't buy the product at this point but they really want it. The -time between your 'desire' and 'action' emails will work to increase anticipation and gradually ramp up the excitement. Then, when the action email comes through providing a quick and easy way to buy the product, you'll see a rush of people who want to buy the product.

That's the idea anyway…

Autoresponder Sequences

Autoresponder Sequences

The other great thing is that you can do all this through an autoresponder sequence. This essentially means that your autoresponder is going to automatically send out your messages on your behalf, with just the right amount of time in between them.

That means you could send out a sequence of five emails to build trust and provide value and then follow this up immediately with your AIDA sales funnel that will convince them to buy. This not only means that you can leave your website up and earn money from it without needing to create anything new (which is what we call passive income) but it also means that you can avoid the scenario where someone joins your mailing list at the 'desire stage' and is thereby put off by being sold a product they've never heard of as the first email they receive.

You can combine autoresponder sequences with 'regular' emails, or you can use just one technique or the other. Of course autoresponder sequences also lend themselves well to email courses where you provide a different piece of information each week.

(Note: Another benefit of using an autoresponder is that you can manage more than one list. This means you can have a 'main' mailing list *and* an e-course or some other kind of sequence).

At the very least, you want to auto-generate one message for everyone who signs up to your list, welcoming them to it and thanking them for getting involved. This also happens to be a great way to get them more psyched and excited for your mailing list – and this is an excellent opportunity for you to ask them to whitelist you.

Upselling

Upselling is a strategy you can use to increase the amount of money you make from a successful sale. Essentially, it involves 'striking while the iron is hot' and promoting an additional offer to someone who has already just made a purchase.

The logic behind this is that it's much easier to sell to someone who has just bought a product or who is going through the process of buying one, than it is to sell to someone 'cold' who has shown no previous interest in buying from you. The key thing to consider here are the 'barriers to sale'. These are anything that put someone off of buying and that make them less likely to want to make a purchase. A typical selection of barriers to sale in your case would include:

- Lack of trust, not knowing the seller
- Concern over the quality of your products/recommendations
- Not wanting to make the effort to get out a credit card
- Not wanting to spend money

Someone who is just now buying a product though, is going to have already *overcome* many of these options. Send them a follow up email and invite them to add to their order

or buy something extra! You can also often upsell as soon as someone subscribes as they're clearly taking time out to engage with your brand at this point.

More Ways to Monetize a Mailing List

Keep in mind of course that there are more ways you can monetize your mailing list besides selling products and promoting affiliate products. And there are also many other *uses* you can get from mailing lists as well.

One way to earn money is of course to sell solo ads, and likewise you can get paid by sponsors to promote certain goods. These are good ways to make some money but not as lucrative as selling your own items and you should avoid selling out too much for fear of driving subscribers away.

Another option is to sell your mailing list. We've already discussed that mailing lists will lose their value when you sell them and as a rule, you can earn much more from a list than you stand to gain from selling them.

But the exception to this rule is when you sell your whole business. Especially if your brand is not a 'personal brand' – then selling your mailing list along with your business will increase its value and is a great 'exit strategy'.

Remember too that you can survey your audience and use them to get feedback and to crowdsource ideas. Why not ask your list the products they'd like to buy and then make that exact product? It's pretty much a fool proof strategy!

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

So there you have it: tons of tips and strategies that will give you absolute mastery over email marketing and list building. There's a lot to sink your teeth into there, but if you only take a few things away from all this, let it be these things:

Targeting is Crucial

It's much more important to have a highly targeted list than it is to have a massive list. In fact, if you're paying for subscribers then you want to actively *discourage* people from signing up unless they are: interested in your niche, willing to spend money online, engaged and committed to your brand.

Make sure that everything from your marketing to your use of incentives keeps this objective in mind.

Value is Even More Crucial

Even more important than targeting your audience, is to ensure that you are providing great value. That your emails should be filled with great content that people can't wait to read. Ideally, the emails will *be* the incentives!

Likewise, your website should be filled with amazing high value content because this is what will get people interested in subscribing in the first place. Make sure your content is *unique* and offers something new.

Promote Your List!

Finally, make sure you are promoting your list! That means you should feature it prominently on your home page, it means you should mention it regularly in your content and it means you should talk about it when you meet people in person. Don't just leave your opt-in form there and hope people find it – really *push* it!

If you do all those things, then you'll quickly learn why a highly targeted mailing list is one of the most valuable things that any business can invest in. You'll have directly

contact with a highly engaged and relevant audience and from there the possibilities are endless!