



## Strategies On Growing Your List Without Compromising Your Opt-In Principles!

Of the many topics on the mind of email marketers these days, growing a company's email list is undoubtedly one of the hottest. After all, isn't that one of the main goals of your email marketing campaigns: to keep your customers and subscribers updated about your company and to increase the number of people who you reach with your email campaigns?

Because having a large and ever-growing list is such a paramount goal, it can be tempting for some marketers to think about fudging the rules a bit around "permission-based" email. They know that any new subscribers should be opt-in subscribers, but they're not sure how to go about increasing their list while keeping to that important standard.

Here's some tips for how to grow your list without compromising your commitment to your opt-in, permission based email subscription process.

### 1. Leverage your touchpoints

One good strategy to start with: take an inventory of your customer and prospect touchpoints: the ways you already make contact with potential readers. You may be surprised by the number of potential "touches" you have. Consider whether some of the following would be suitable vehicles for promoting your newsletter:

- » Email signatures, especially those used by customer service and sales representatives
- » "Contact us" information listed in brochures, print newsletters, etc.
- » Retail or office lobby display
- » Invoices, statements, and receipts
- » Tradeshow giveaways
- » Package inserts

### 2. Evaluate your Web site

In many of your touchpoints, you may be promoting your Web site address rather than the email newsletter itself.

So how easy is to find out about your e-newsletter by visiting your Web site? Is there a prominent graphic invitation to subscribe, easy to find from most pages of your site? Or is it just a small link in the footer of the home page? Do you provide a clear description of the newsletter, including its frequency and the benefits of subscribing?

Here is an example of how one emailer, WestJet, promotes its email newsletter, called "JetMail."

Notice the graphic of the paper airplane in the lower left corner—it appears on multiple pages throughout the site. Advertising & New Media Manager Margaret Glover-Campbell notes that she matches the look and feel of WestJet's national newspaper ads for a consistent brand message.



Use your email application's signup forms to allow readers to subscribe easily.

### 3. Consider list rentals

Growing your base through list rental can be a risky proposition.

Renting lists from questionable sources who claim (but can't prove) that list members have opted in only builds your list in the short term. In the longer term, it's actually a great way to get flagged as a spammer, so that ISPs and corporate mail systems will block your e-mail before it reaches the folks who actually want to hear from you.

Of course, there are responsible list brokers, and if your publication is aimed at a highly targeted audience, then renting a list that comes from a legitimate publisher or professional organization may be a reasonable strategy.

Let's say you run a school that offers continuing education credits for accountants, and your target market is Certified Public Accountants in Cleveland.

If the CPA Club of Cleveland does have an opt-in list of members available for rental, make sure that your email to these prospective list members advises them how and why they are receiving your message:

"As a member of the Cleveland CPA Club, you indicated that you would like to receive information about Continuing Education Opportunities in the Cleveland area."

The chances that readers will be receptive to this initial mailing and eventually choose to subscribe to your publication will increase if you can offer something of value right away—perhaps a discount on your services or useful information on average hourly fees for CPAs in Ohio.

### 4. Convert offline prospects to online readers

You might also consider reaching the members of the Cleveland CPA Club without sending them an email directly:

- » Advertise in the organization's Web site, email newsletter or print publication
- » Sponsor an event
- » Send a hard copy postcard

Again, the response to any of these promotions will probably be highest if you can offer something of value. Whether your promotion invites people to visit your home page or links directly to a special promotional page, make sure that page also includes a clear and appealing invitation to subscribe to your newsletter.

### 5. Buddy up

Perhaps the Cleveland CPA Club has its own email newsletter. Consider setting up a co-marketing arrangement: on the same Web page where Cleveland CPAs subscribe to the Cleveland CPA news, they will be offered the opportunity to sign up for your newsletter as well. Sometimes, co-marketing opportunities are essentially advertising agreements (you pay to have your newsletter promoted on the other Web site), but they may also be available on a reciprocal basis (you promote their newsletter on your site and vice versa).

### 6. Let your readers take charge

Of course, the most effective marketing strategy ever is word of mouth. Make it easy for your loyal readers to become evangelists for your publication by:

- » **Inviting readers to help**  
For example, some emailers include the words "Please Forward Newsletter" in the subject lines of their newsletters.
- » **Providing instructions (!)**  
Every ethical email publisher includes unsubscribe instructions in their emails, but make sure you also include instructions on how to subscribe. If your newsletter gets forwarded, you want to make sure interested recipients can easily sign up for their own subscription!
- » **Taking advantage of the technology**  
If your email application has a "Refer-a-friend" feature, you can track the success of an individual referral all the way to the friend's resulting open, clickthrough, and subscription request.  
Another advantage: Refer-a-Friend features safeguards your list's opt-in integrity—the friend receives the newsletter only after accepting your listmember's invitation to join.

These are some easy ways to help grow one of your most valuable business assets: your house email list.

Sparklist provides companies worldwide with affordable hosted email marketing software. For over ten years, Sparklist has been known for our longstanding commitment to our customers' email marketing needs.

#### **sparklist**

Sparklist  
5858 Horton Street, Suite 270  
Emeryville, CA 94608

USA and Canada: 800-485-9994  
International: +1-510-844-1600  
Fax: +1-510-844-1598

email: [sales@sparklist.com](mailto:sales@sparklist.com)  
[www.sparklist.com](http://www.sparklist.com)