



How to Build an Opt In Email List

Developing a cost-effective email list poses a challenge for all email marketers. Because email addresses change at a rate of 30 percent or more on most lists, marketers must adopt an aggressive approach to expand their list and yield a significant return on investment.

As you browse the list below please keep these helpful tips in mind:

- **Consider All Touch Points:** Use every point of contact with customers and prospects.
- **Obtain Permission:** You have to obtain permission. As part of the CAN-Spam Act you must have permission to send email communication to anyone. Make sure you indicate in your email marketing how the recipient knows you. If you met them at a networking event or they signed up at a speaking engagement you gave.
- **Required Information:** Obtain email address, name.
- **Focus Equal Attention on Existing Lists:** Implement strategies and incentives to transform inactive subscribers into active ones.
- **Provide Valuable Benefits:** Convince potential subscribers of the valuable benefits they'll receive.
- **Convey Trust:** Clearly state your privacy/email policies.

Here is a list of great tips that you can easily do to build a list:

1. **Feature a Sign-Up Form on Each Page of Your Site** - Be sure to remember this basic concept. Sign-up opportunities should be ubiquitous throughout your site.
2. **Promote Benefits on the Sign-Up Page** - Enhance subscription value with sample emails, testimonials and strong call to action copy.
3. **Offer Opt-In Incentives** - Incentives like white papers, discounts and special reports significantly increase conversion rates.
4. **Send a regular e-newsletter to your list** - Even if it is simply a short update that you send once a month, get in the habit of regularly sending mail to your list. An active list is much more likely to grow.
5. **Include "Send to a Friend" Options** - Generate new subscribers with minimal effort if bundled with promotional campaigns.
6. **Use Direct Mail and Catalogs** - Encourage email subscriptions on all print ads.
7. **Direct Employees to Include Messages and Links in Email Signature Lines** - Add "Subscribe to the Company X Email Newsletter" to employee email signatures.
8. **Direct Call Center and Sales Employees to Obtain Permission and Capture Email Addresses Over the Phone** - Instruct call center and sales staff to ask customers and prospects if they'd like to receive newsletters or promotional email.

9. ***Send Post Cards to Customers Encouraging Them to Subscribe to Email*** - If you have postal contact information for customers but not email addresses, send a post card with opt-in sign-up offer and URL.
11. ***Hand Out Sign-Up Forms at Public Speaking Engagements and Seminars*** - Promote your newsletter in presentations and handouts.
12. ***Add Sign-Up Message to Invoices.***
13. ***Display Opt-in Forms at the Cash Register*** - An approach used by restaurants and retailers to advertise weekday discounts, catering services etc.
14. ***Promote Your Email/Newsletter in Articles and Article Attribution*** - Include a reference and link to your newsletter after the byline on articles in trade and consumer publications.
15. ***Promote Your Email/Newsletter in Other Company Publications*** - Promote online newsletters in print newsletters, magazines and brochures. Add "Sign up for our monthly newsletter at www.companyX.com/subscribe.html" after "Visit www.companyX.com for more information."
16. ***Include Newsletter Subscriptions in Trade Show Lead Generation Forms*** - Obtain permission to send your monthly newsletter to booth visitors.
17. ***Promote Your Newsletter/Promotional Emails in Industry Directories and Sites.***
18. ***Distribute Press Releases Based on Newsletter Articles*** - Newsletters with topical articles may warrant a press release. Make sure the press release includes links and information on how to subscribe.
19. ***Include Information and a Link to Your Newsletter in Press Releases*** - A good option for smaller companies. Include your company newsletter and other resources in press release copy.
20. ***Include Opt-in Information on Customer Satisfaction Surveys*** - Ask permission to communicate valuable information via email newsletters and promotions.
21. ***Sponsor a contest or drawing*** - Encourage people to sign-up by providing their email addresses.
22. ***Bring a paper sign-up sheet to all of your face-to-face events and include one at your reception desk if you get a lot of in-office foot traffic*** - Get in the habit of regularly entering those hand-collected addresses into your system.
23. ***The most important tip of all*** - Offer great content! If people really like your newsletter, they won't unsubscribe and they'll make an effort to stay on your list when their email addresses change.

No matter which tactics you use to build your list, you should always make it clear that unsubscribing will be painless and that you will not sell their address to anyone else. That's the best way to establish the trust you'll need to succeed with your email marketing campaigns.