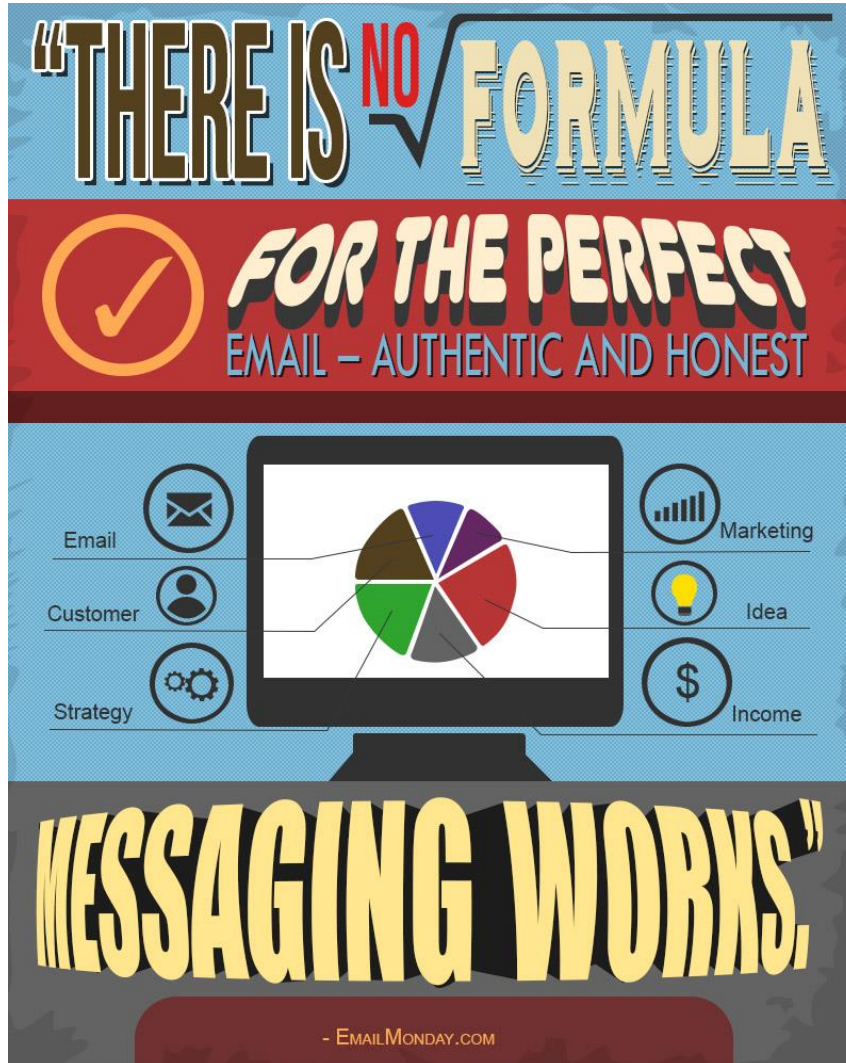


# List Builder



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# How to Get People to Sign Up for Your Mailing List – Powerful Advice for Bloggers

If you run a blog, then having a mailing list is a very important part of your strategy and can go a long way towards helping turn your visitors into true fans – and better yet, customers. Think about it: if you ever want to sell an e-book, how much more likely is someone to be interested in that if they have previously given you their e-mail address in order to sign up to a mailing list?

Mailing lists are important then, but if you have simply dumped your sign-up form on the right hand side of your page with the hope that people will enter their names and e-mails in droves you're likely to be disappointed.

Instead, you need to follow these tips...

## **Build Trust Through Great Content**

The first thing to ensure you are doing is updating your site regularly with great quality content. Your objective is to a) give your visitors a taster of the kind of content they'll get if they sign up and b) get them to trust you and to respect what you have to say. Giving out an e-mail is quite a personal thing, so if your site seems spammy they *won't* touch that form with a bargepole. Instead, show that you know what you're talking about and that you're respectful by letting your content speak for itself.

## **Talk About Your Mailing List**

Many bloggers are a little shy to be asking for e-mails and so they avoid mentioning their list directly. This is a mistake though, as actually talking about your mailing list can do a great deal to get people aware of it and interested in it. Directly *ask* people to sign up, talk about your aspirations and explain the exciting content that will *only* be coming to your newsletters. Get people excited about your mailing list as though it were a product you were selling itself.

## **Show Snippets**

A great strategy you can use to encourage more people to sign up to your list is to actually share snippets of content from your mailing lists. You can even use a mailing list to expand on content you've written on the site – to discuss an article in more detail for instance or to go into the second half. This way you can give people a taster and if it's good, they'll hopefully want more!

# Important Tools for List Building

List building is an incredibly powerful tool for marketing your business and can also be used in a range of other ways to build trust, to collect data and to crowdsource ideas. Thus e-mail collection has increasingly come to the fore lately as more and more bloggers see it as a critical part of their strategy.

And this is great news for you, because it means there are now more tools than ever before to help you grow and manage your list! Read on to learn some of the best out there...

## **LeadPages**

Landing pages are a great way to gather e-mails because they are designed in a manner that ensures everything leads to your ultimate goal. LeadPages is the most popular tool among many bloggers for quickly developing professional looking and effective landing pages, so give it a go!

## **WP Tactical Popup/ Sumo Me List Builder**

Alternatively, you might just want a subtle box to pop up on your page to nudge your users to giving you their e-mail addresses. If you offer a free ebook or something this can be a very effective tool. WP Tactical Popup is a WordPress plugin that makes this feature very easy to add and that has great reviews from users. Sumo Me is another option for a popup 'lightbox' that has more features compared with WP Tactical Popup.

## **Mail Chimp**

Mail Chimp is a tool for sending bulk e-mails to your mailing list. Once you've got all your e-mails, you need to actually do something with them!

The great thing about Mail Chimp is that it doesn't just help you *send* your e-mails but also helps you to design them ensuring that they make the right impression and have the desired effect.

## **AWeber**

AWeber doesn't have the fancy design features of Mail Chimp but it's another useful tool for sending out bulk e-mails that is packed with features. It also provides tools for managing your contacts and for creating attractive opt-in forms.

### **Google Analytics**

Google Analytics is something that every webmaster and blogger should be using already but if you're looking to build an email list then it can be even *more* powerful. That's because you can use it to set up a 'goal' and then track how successful your site is in accomplishing said goal. This way you can perform tests on your site to see whether your changes really are increasing your sign-up rate or not.

## Building E-Mail Lists: Why You Mustn't Feel Shy

Despite everyone knowing just how important e-mail lists are for an effective digital marketing strategy and knowing just what a big difference they can make, there are still countless blogs out there that *don't* have any kind of mailing list.

Why is that?

Partly it's because it's a lot of work and the idea of having to send out an e-mail every week or month can seem daunting. At the same time though, it's also down to the fact that many people feel almost *embarrassed* to create a mailing list and are even very apologetic about it. What's going on? Read on and let's find out...

### **Why People Are Shy to Ask for E-mails**

There are many reasons that people often shy away from mailing lists. For one, people often feel like this is personal information and that asking for it might be 'over stepping' the mark. At the same time, it's easy to feel like a spammer when you send out e-mails to your members. Most of us are on the receiving end of a *lot* of e-mail spam and in 99% of cases... we hate it. So why would we want to be responsible for putting anyone *else* through that?

### **Why You Shouldn't be Shy**

In fact though, you really *shouldn't* be shy to ask for e-mails and there are a number of reasons for this.

For starters, when you ask someone for their e-mail you're getting permission from them. They're under no obligation to give you their address and if they don't want to... they won't. No harm done! Remember that the vast majority of the really successful bloggers *do* ask for e-mails and this means that it's largely expected of you. You won't look unprofessional for not having one there... you may in fact look *more* professional.

You also *won't be spamming* once you have the addresses. As long as you send great quality e-mails that contain real value and you don't do it too often, then no-one is going to begrudge you finding your way to their inbox.

At the same time, you mustn't feel shy because this is after all a business. If you feel shy to push yourself forward, then you aren't going to get very far in the world of marketing and you're going to undermine your potential success as a result. If you don't take yourself seriously, how can you expect anyone else to?

## Incentives You Can Use to Encourage Sign Up for Your Lists

Building a mailing list is a very important and potentially highly effective way to increase your reach and possibly your sales from a website. By having a mailing list on your site, you can gain direct access to your very most loyal fans and this will then mean you can promote your products to them, keep them informed regarding updates to your site or even just remind them you exist and keep your brand awareness up.

But how do you go about getting people to sign up? One option is to use some form of incentive – and there are many options for doing this. For instance ...

### **E-book**

Giving away a free informational product is often a good way to get people to hand over their details. People love the idea of getting something for nothing and if you can make your e-book sound genuinely compelling then you will likely get a lot more subscribers. Remember: people will regularly spend hundreds of dollars on e-books and similar products so giving away an e-mail address is nothing really! You can get someone to write you a 10,000 word e-book relatively cheaply.

### **Discounts**

Another common bonus that site owners offer for members of their mailing list is discounts off of their products. If you let them know that your newsletters are going to contain vouchers and codes that give them money off then you'll again find that this encourages a lot more signups. As with free things, people love getting a bargain!

### **Information**

Of course anyone who signs up for a mailing list will essentially be getting information but you can make your form more enticing by pointing out specific information that they will get. A common one is to get someone to sign up to 'be informed when X happens'. This can be useful if you have something upcoming that you know people will want.

### **Membership**

You can also combine a mailing list with a subscription to a service or access to a VIP area of your site. If you have an online service, then you can simply have this as an 'opt-out' or 'opt-in' option and that way gain even more from finding new members.

### **Access to You**

Finally, why not point out that you will answer any questions sent in response to your newsletters? This is only really viable for small blogs and businesses to begin with but it's a great option if you have knowledge or skills that others can benefit from!

## Other Uses for Mailing Lists

Mostly it is assumed that list building will be used with marketing in mind. E-mail marketing is a highly effective way to reach people right in their inboxes and to market directly to an audience that have already shown an interest in your business. Really it's the 'perfect storm' as far as marketing goes.

But that's far from all a mailing list can be useful for. If all you're doing is using your mailing list to sell things, then you're also *selling yourself* short.

Here we will look at some of the other great things you can do with a mailing list.

### **Data**



Getting e-mails is a great way to get data. While we're tracking all sorts of information through Google Analytics and other tools a lot of the time, this often doesn't really tell us anything regarding how engaged our audience is or how genuinely interested they are in what we're selling.

But when someone signs up for a mailing list, it generally tells us that they must have a real interest in our content – enough to actually invite people into our site. This is a fantastic measure of engagement then and could be seen as a rough estimate of the number of 'actual fans' your site has. It's great for testing the effectiveness of your content marketing too.

Better yet, if you make your email form a little more detailed then you can collect additional information at the same time – including things like gender, age and even income. This then gives you a much better idea as to your demographic and all this data can only be used to improve the effectiveness of your site and your marketing.

### **Crowdsourcing**

The other great thing about mailing lists is that you can use them to encourage communication. Rather than just writing a 'newsletter' in a corporate fashion, you can instead make it personal and actually ask for responses. This then makes it a very useful tool for getting feedback from your members who can help you to come up with names for your products, ideas for your articles and a range of other things. If you're wondering how to please your audience... wouldn't it be great to just ask them?

### **Building Good Will**

But most important of all, you can use a mailing list to give your users a 'VIP' experience, to share information with them and to build trust and good will that will serve you *very* well going forward.

## What is List Building?

List building is pretty much exactly what it sounds like: the process of building lists! Generally though, the term is used to describe a specific kind of list in particular – that being e-mail lists.

Here the term list building refers to the construction of a list of e-mails or other contact details that can then be used as part of a marketing campaign. This is a big aspect of

digital marketing and one of the more effective ways for a business to reach a large audience online.

### **Things to Consider**

The thing to be wary of though when building lists, is that the lists need to consist of e-mails for people who have happily shared them and who are granting you permission to contact them. Obviously it would be very easy to create an e-mail list a million e-mails long if you did not discriminate in any way and just took every e-mail address you could find online, but this would do more harm than good.

If you send out e-mails to people who haven't given you permission then not only will you potentially face some legal issues but you will also likely damage your reputation and not get any sales or new readers anyway.

Effective marketing of any kind should be targeted so that the correct demographic are receiving your message. Otherwise, you will only likely be wasting the time and effort you put into collecting the contact details.

### **Methods**

With that in mind, how do you go about building your list?

The most popular method online is usually to have a sign up box on your website. This can go in your side bar, on the front page or sometimes in a 'pop-up' that will appear when you land on the site. This then gives the visitor the opportunity to 'opt-in' to your messages and to receive communication from you.

Some blogs and websites also use added incentives to try and encourage more people to add themselves to the mailing list – either providing discounts and deals through their e-mails, or offering free e-books or other digital products just for signing up.

There are of course many more ways to build a list – you can do it through face-to-face interactions for example or through social media. In any case though, list building is an important aspect of any good online strategy and is *definitely* something you need to invest time in.

## **Why List Building is Such an Important Part of Your Digital Marketing Strategy**

List building is one of those things that many digital marketers shy away from. Unfortunately, building lists will often just seem like too much work and can even feel a little 'spammy' (it isn't as long as you go about it in the right way).

In reality, list building is an incredibly important aspect of any digital marketing campaign though and if you aren't doing it, then you're seriously missing out on your full potential. Here are some reasons why you should reconsider...

### **It's Secure**

One of the great things about having a list is that it's forever. Of course people can unsubscribe but they won't tend to unless you really upset them. Of course they might change their contact details, but again this isn't that common.

As such, you can forget about your mailing list for years and come back to it and it will *still be there*. Search engine optimization is increasingly unreliable these days as Google are constantly changing their algorithms to update the way they choose which sites to show and thus it's *crucial* to have other means of reaching people. If you have a mailing list, then that's a guaranteed audience with no upkeep.

Who knows if Facebook will even be around in five years? You can almost guarantee that e-mail will be!

### **It Stands Out**

Getting noticed online is increasingly difficult these days with so many different sites and companies vying for our attention at all times. For this reason, the ability to reach someone directly in their inbox is a very useful ability.

And there are other reasons that an e-mail stands out too. For starters, it is an active form of marketing that can reach people anywhere and at any time. At the same time it can be highly timed so that your list receives your marketing messages at specific times of day so that it has the very maximum impact.

### **It's Personal**

E-mails are also very personal and they allow you to approach your fans in an entirely new way. If you send an e-mail to someone you can be colloquial and you can talk to them as though you were messaging them personally. This is great for building trust and familiarity with your audience and ultimately it can help you to be more persuasive when you try to sell something.

## **They're Valuable**

Even if you don't want your mailing list, you can use them for paid promotions or even sell them on (as long as you have the permission of your members). If you have a successful site or business and you *don't* have a mailing list then you're literally throwing money away!

# Want to Grow Your Mailing List to New Heights? Try These Smart Techniques

When it comes to digital marketing it is not true that you simply have to 'build it and they will come'. With the best will in the world, people won't just hand over their e-mail for no reason, but instead need to be convinced that doing so will benefit them.

Partly this is about building a relationship with those visitors through the content on your site and gradually establishing trust over time. At the same time though, it is also about using smart promotions and techniques to increase the visibility of your sign up form and to make it more enticing. Read on for some of the best tricks you can use to start getting more people to sign up.

## **Use a Pop-Up**

Many big bloggers, including the likes of Tim Ferriss, now use pop-up windows on their site to capture e-mails. If you stay on their site reading for long enough, the window will appear in front of you and will encourage you to sign up.

You need to be careful with these pop-up windows as they can be very frustrating for users if they get in the way of their surfing. At the same time though, the fact that such big names use them should tell you something about their effectiveness.

## **Give a Teaser**

Many bloggers that are trying to get people to sign up to their mailing lists will only ever do so *via* the box on the side of their page. A bland box without any information around it doesn't exactly beg you to hand over your e-mail address, so instead why not publish one of your e-mails on the site? If you publish the first part of a ten part e-mail 'series' for example, then this will give your users much more incentive to sign up as well as showing a taste of the kind of content they'll receive.

## **Run a Promotion**

There are all kinds of promotions you can use to encourage your visitors to hand over their e-mails. One example might be to give away a free e-book, or alternatively you could run a competition. These promotions can be ongoing *or* they can be temporary, though the latter is often a good way to build some hype and buzz.

## **Use Other Venues**

You don't just have to promote your mailing list on your site – likewise you could do a deal and promote it on someone else's site, you could promote it on social media, or you could even go round collecting e-mails in person at networking events!

# Why You Don't Want Everyone on Your Mailing List

Many businesses, bloggers and webmasters when going through the process of building their mailing lists will make the mistake of thinking the objective is to get as many names and e-mails on there as possible – *regardless* of who those people are. The more people you can market to the better right?

Well actually... no. While it's good to have a long list, it's only really going to be useful if the people on that list are genuinely interested in your niche and likely to be interested in your future products.

## **The Status of Mailing Lists**

Think about the e-mails you receive in your inbox and how many of them you actually read. In terms of newsletters, the chances are that you'll read about... none of them right? And that's because the people who got your e-mails likely did so by getting you to sign up to something you had no choice in, or through means you're not even really sure you can remember...

It's actually quite rare for people to actively give out their e-mails, precisely because we're so inundated with nonsense. As such, if your email collection form is just sitting in the corner of your page with nothing to make it stand out it's not all that likely that many people are going to add their names. And you know what? That's a *good* thing.

## **The Benefits of Keeping it Small**

The reason that this is actually positive, is that it means the people who *do* sign up are going to be people who are really genuinely interested in what you're offering. They'll have looked around your site and decided they were so interested in what you were talking about/selling that they just had to go ahead and give you their e-mail.

This in turn means that when you write to them with an e-book you're selling they're actually *quite likely* to want to buy it. These are your die-hard fans... and you can treat them as such.

If you are tricking all and sundry to give you their e-mails, then the number of people on your mailing list is going to be misrepresentative of the reality. You'll believe you're doing better than you are and you'll have no idea 'who's listening'. Keep your list a little harder to find though and you'll only get the hardcore followers... which will give you an accurate measure of your site's success.

And an added benefit? You won't be wasting everyone's time by selling to people who have no interest in what you're offering. All this does is to damage your reputation anyway!

So go big, sure. But keep it targeted!

## Pop Up Windows for E-Mail Collection – Good or Terrible Idea?

Nobody likes pop-ups, that much is a given. And fortunately we've come a long way from the internet of yesteryear which used to open about fifty windows no matter which website you went on.

But in some circumstances, they seem to be making a comeback. And actually? You might want to join them.

### **Pop-Ups for E-Mail Collection**

The context in which pop-ups seem to be making something of a comeback is in their use as a list building method. Go onto many relatively big blogs on subjects such as self-

development or fitness and within a few minutes of being there, you'll often be greeted by a pop-up window inviting to hand over your e-mail address.

This includes the websites of some rather big names in the blogosphere (does anyone say that anymore?) including the likes of Tim Ferris who *also* has an e-mail form at the top of the page. And with most of these pop-ups you won't be able to continue reading until you comply or hit cancel. Okay, so it's not a separate window but it definitely has the potential to annoy. What do we take from this?

### **In Favor of Pop-Ups for List Building**

Well for starters, this should tell you just *how* important these highly successful bloggers think it is to collect e-mails. At the very least this should be a clue that you need to double your efforts with regards to finding and adding contacts.

Many of these bloggers have gone on record as saying that they're aware these pop-ups have potential to annoy and even feel guilty in some cases for using them. Nevertheless, they say that the benefits of having them drastically outweigh the cons. So is this something you should consider as well?

### **Against Pop-Ups**

The answer to this question might well depend on how you personally feel when your own reading is interrupted by such a pop-up. The key point to remember is that someone like Tim Ferriss has millions of regular readers who aren't going to be put off by such tactics, but pop-ups *can* cause ill-will and if you aren't careful you may in fact drive away future visitors or put them off of revisiting your site.

### **An Important Tip**

The most important tip? If you do decide to use pop-ups, then don't be obnoxious. Make sure they don't *keep* popping up, make them easy to close and make them generally as unobtrusive as possible.