100% Spam-Free Email Marketing Strategies That Work!

Email Marketing Power Guide

by John Vorwerk

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Author's Comment

Dear friend,

Thank you very much for your interest in email marketing. There are thousands of books about Internet marketing in general, but only a few cover the special topic of email marketing.

Email marketing is a difficult topic: One the one hand, it is one of the most cost efficient marketing vehicles available today. On the other hand, email marketing has been abused quite often, and many people react very emotionally—very negatively—to email marketing.

This guide will show you how to succeed with email marketing to your benefit, and how to avoid the most common pitfalls.

It covers different email marketing techniques, as simple as improving your existing customer relationships…and as sophisticated as running your own newsletter or discussion list.

 Since you have probably heard a lot about email marketing, but still have a lot of questions about how to use it and what to expect, this eBook is designed in a FAQ format

If you have any questions that are not covered in this eBook, please do not hesitate to email me your question to the following address: john@emailmarketingpowerguide.com, as we continue to constantly improve this eBook.

All the best,

Introduction to Email Marketing

What is email marketing?

Generally speaking, email marketing includes all forms of marketing that involve email. Email marketing can be as sophisticated as running a newsletter or email discussion list, or as simple as adding signatures to the emails that you already send every day.

Every single email you send is part of your email marketing. No matter if it is a sales letter, a newsletter, a support or follow-up message, or maybe even an inquiry: whenever you are in contact with people regarding your business, you're representing your business. And every representation of your business is marketing.

What makes email marketing such an effective marketing tool?

There are several aspects that make email marketing a highly efficient tool.

First of all, almost anybody can use email marketing. There's no need to invest a lot of money to get started; all you need is a list of contacts and an email program. In this eBook, I will show you how to build a list without spending a dime. Once you have built a list of email contacts, you can contact them again and again, at zero cost.

Secondly, email marketing is push technology - you push your message to your customers, instead of waiting for them to find your site through a directory or search engine. It is an active approach. You decide the time and content of your message. Furthermore, because it is easy to personalize email, you can truly market your products on a one-to-one basis.

Last but not least, email is an excellent tool to follow-up on a direct mail or telemarketing campaign, and thus increase response rates and return on your marketing investment. For example, you could send a direct mail and then follow-up via email a week later. Or you could ask telemarketing contacts for their email address to send them additional information and add them to a follow-up auto responder.

Improving Everyday Email Communications

When you do business on the Internet, email is your main communication tool. This chapter is about getting the most out of all those little emails you send to people every day.

When sending email, what tone should I use?

This one is relatively simple: Ask yourself…who is your target market? What are their characteristics? Are they affluent or middle-income earners? What is their average age? Do they share common occupations? Geographic similarities? Gender? Are they more professional or more relaxed? The answers determine how you should talk to your audience. Speak their language! Obviously, if you're selling sneakers to teenagers, your approach will be different than if you're selling denture adhesive to senior citizens.

Is spelling important? Every day, I receive so many emails from people who do not seem to care about spelling and grammar.

It is extremely important to make sure that your spelling is correct, even when the emails you receive only consist of mistakes.

Your job is to represent your business professionally—and that requires accurate spelling. There is nothing more embarrassing than delivering a message to a customer that's full of spelling mistakes.

Fortunately, this trap is very easy to avoid: Use your spell checker before you send the message. If your email client does not support spell checking, copy the text into your word processor and check it there.

If possible, have your email checked by someone else before you push the Send button, especially when you plan to send it to multiple recipients.

How can I answer my everyday emails in less time?

If you frequently receive standard inquiries and questions about your products, reselling opportunities etc., you'll save enormous time by developing and reusing standard text components

You'll find many paragraphs and sentences that you use again and again, e.g. "Thanks for your inquiry", "Please excuse the delayed reply" or "Great to hear from you again." Create a document in your favorite email program or word processor (turn off non-standard characters like curly quotes and long dashes) that includes all those standard phrases. When answering emails, open the document and simply copy and paste a sentence or paragraph whenever you need it. Some email programs, like Eudora, make it easy to set up template documents, which you can easily modify to quickly answer an individual query.

Microsoft Outlook allows a user to set up any number of signatures. When you edit a message, a menu lets you insert the signature of your choice at the current cursor position. I have set up all my standard phrases as Outlook signatures and use this feature every day; it saves me hours every day.

There are also applications available that provide a list of text components to drag and drop into your documents, such as ReplyAssistant, which you can find at
http://www.4OfficeAutomation.com

Any of these methods will save a lot of time. If you're not doing this already, start today. You will be amazed!

How do I react when people are upset and send complaints about my business?

Whenever you receive an aggressive email, always keep polite, even when it is hard for you. If you are aggravated by an aggressive inquiry or stupid question; wait two hours to calm down—and then offer a friendly reply.

When customers are upset, it is best to give them what they want as long as it is reasonable. If they don't state what they want, try to calm them down and find out how you can help. It is most important that you satisfy your customer, even if it sometimes means giving a refund.

Staying calm and friendly may help convert those people into satisfied customers—because you actually listen to their complaints and try to resolve problems

When angry customers tell others how badly they were treated by companies like yours, thousands of people can hear about it over the Internet. And if you turn your critic into a loyal supporter, thousands may learn how wonderful and considerate you are.

What do I do when somebody sends an inquiry about a product or service that I do not offer?

In some cases, you won't be able to provide your customers what they want.

If that's the case, why not send them to your competitors?

If you want to be "sneaky," join your competitors' affiliate programs and refer them your dissatisfied customers, as well as prospects you cannot help otherwise. Because there are not many companies that do this, people will believe you are honest and competent—and when they search for something else, they might come back to you (or refer others to you).

By the way, this is one of the most important rules for Internet success: be helpful whenever you can, even if providing help might look at first as if it puts you at a disadvantage.

In the long run it will pay. Give—and you will receive. It's just common sense—and it works better on the Internet than just about anywhere else.

If you want to improve your customer relationships, imagine how you would like to be treated by your company if you were the customer. Then treat your customers just that way!

Is it a good idea to include a P.S. in my everyday messages?

Definitely! Always use the P.S. in your email replies. It's a well-known marketing truism that almost everyone reads the P.S. Every time you reply to an email inquiry, include a P.S. that offers a related product or service. It's a personal reply designed to sell a solution without being a blatant sales pitch.

Here's a sample PS:

PS: We currently have a special offer for XYZ Widgets. If you order by xx/xx/xxxx [date], we will ship it to you for free, no matter where you live!

What is an email signature?

Think of an email signature as an "online business card" —a piece of text that is displayed at the end of an email message you send.

There are two different types of signatures: promotional and functional email signatures.

A promotional email signature is great for telling people who you are, how to reach you, and what you do.

Many free email providers use email signatures as their most important viral marketing tool. If you have ever received an email from a Yahoo! Mail account, you know what I am talking about: At the bottom of each message, there is always the following line:

   Try FREE Yahoo! Mail - the world's greatest free email!

Using this simple technique, Yahoo! Mail gets millions of free ad impressions every day. Hotmail used the same strategy and became one of the largest free email providers. They were finally bought by Microsoft.

You can use the same strategy for to promote your own business. Of course, you won't have millions of impressions, but at least you can use it as an unintrusive way to tell people about your web site.

It is especially efficient when sending posts to online discussion lists, as your email signature can be seen by thousands of readers.

A functional signature, in contrast, is used to ease communication with customers and co-workers who already know who you are and what your business is. It may include phone numbers and general instructions, e.g. to ask people who exchange email with your customer support to include all further emails for reference.

How do I create my own promotional signature?

When creating your own promotional email signature, first you have to figure out how you want the reader to react. Do you want her to visit your web site, to purchase your products, or to join your newsletter?

Maybe you even want to create several signatures for different occasions: One to promote your newsletter, one that links to your web site, one that fits the signature rules of your favorite discussion list, and so on.

Once you have decided on the goal of your signature, you can go on and create your email signature. It is best to use a real simple text editor to create your first signature, such as Notepad. I recommend creating a text file that contains all your signatures. Then it is easy to find a specific signature when you need it, and when you create a new one, you do not have to start from the scratch but modify an existing signature.

Your signature always starts with a greeting and your own name. Depending on the audience, you can also include your title and company name. However, I do not recommend including your phone and faxing numbers, at least not in promotional signatures.

Sample:

Best regards,

John Vorwerk

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.

Next, you have to create the promotional part of your signature.

This part is like creating a short e-zine ad. You have to mention your offer, your URL and a call to action. It is not enough to only mention your URL; you have to give the reader a compelling reason to go to your site and join your newsletter or buy your product.

Sample:

Send rich HTML email to your customers with EmailUnlimited.
Go to http://www.emailunlimited.info to download your free trial!

Here are some additional tips to make your signature line more efficient:

Although your signature is a promotional item, it should be as unobtrusive as possible, just like the Yahoo! Mail signature.

Do not use exclamation marks excessively. It is enough to use one in your call to action. The same goes for upper-case letters:

USING UPPER-CASE LETTERS AND EXCLAMATION MARKS MAKES READERS FEEL LIKE YOU ARE SCREAMING AT THEM!!!

See what I mean?

It is really important that you keep your signature as short as possible. People are annoyed when they see signatures that look like full-blown ads and tend to ignore them. As a rule of thumb, I suggest that the promotional part of your signature should be one to three lines of text, including the URL. Each line should not be longer than 65 characters, otherwise some email clients may have trouble displaying your signature correctly.

How can I create and use signatures in Microsoft Outlook?

Start Outlook and click on 'Tools' and select 'Options…' to open the Options dialog. It contains several tabs. Select 'Mail format', and click on the button labeled 'Signature Picker…'.

This opens the Signature Picker, as shown above. Here you can define as many email signatures as you need. Click on 'New…' to add a new signature. You may even use one of your existing signatures as a template and build your new signature upon it.

When you are finished with creating your signatures, click Ok to get back to the Options dialog. Outlook will automatically select the last signature you have edited as your default signature. It will be added to every email you create. Of course, you can select any of other signatures to be the default one, or you can select <None> if you do not want Outlook to use a default signature.

Click Ok again to close the Options dialog and save changes.

Next, create a new email. In case you have selected a default signature, it will already be shown in your message. If you want to insert a different signature, click on the 'Insert' menu, choose 'Signature' and select the signature you want to use.

Sending Your Sales Letters Via Email

What are the steps to send a successful sales email?

Like any other marketing document a successful email sales letter requires you to:

1. Define your target audience
2. Get the right mailing list
3. Create an appealing offer and a landing page
4. Write the copy
5. Make sure that your order page works reliably
6. Send it

How effective are direct email campaigns?

The quality of your list makes a huge difference: If your list is extremely targeted and the audience knows and trusts you, you can get results as high as 25%.

Otherwise, the number of responses can be significantly lower. Rented opt-in lists that are targeted normally get about 0.5 - 5%, sometimes more. Untargeted bulk email (Spam) may not even draw responses of 1/1000 of a percent (we'll explain later why you should never Spam).

How can I determine my target market?

Your target market is the group of people who benefit most from your products, and thus are most likely to buy from you. Once you are able to contact this group directly, you have a highly-efficient sales channel you can use again and again.

If you are new to the market and do not have a lot of customers yet, you have to brainstorm what target markets might be most interested in your products and do a couple of test campaigns to find which group is most interested. Then concentrate your efforts to that group.

If you already have a list of customers, try to gather more information about them. Do a survey asking them for information about their position and industry, look at their website, and create customer

profiles. Then you can find other people who fit your profile and offer your products, e.g. by renting an opt-in list or advertising in related email publications.

What is a landing page?

Whenever you send a mailing to your list of addresses, you will probably want to receive a response, such as ordering your product, signing-up to your newsletter, download a free trial or join your affiliate program.

In email marketing, you usually provide a link that people can use in order to respond to your call to action. As each person who clicks through is supposed to be interested in your offerings, you have to make sure that you fulfill your readers' expectations and make responding as easy as possible. For that reason, you should not simply link to your corporate home page, but instead offer a unique landing page that directly follows-up on your offer.

Depending on your call to action, this landing page can be

- A page that contains additional information about your offering a long with link to your order page.
- Your order page
- A form for collecting data
- A free trial download

When you have high open and click-through rates, your landing page can have a major influence on lead conversion rates and sales.

When designing your landing page, keep in mind that it has to follow-up on your offer. Repeat your offer, keep the same style of copywriting, and maybe even include the same heading. If your newsletter is in HTML format, try to use a similar design for your landing page.

Furthermore, you should limit the number of options. A 'Submit' or 'Order now' button should be enough, maybe you can add one link to your corporate page, but no other links. You want the visitor to take action, and not be distracted by other unrelated links.

Last but not least, a unique landing page also has the advantage that you can track how many people have visited it, so you learn a lot about the efficiency of your email campaign.

How do I make sure that people will open and read my email?

The key to a successful email marketing campaign is the subject line:

When an email arrives in an Inbox, all you can see is the sender name and the subject line, and in some programs, the first two lines of the message text. If the recipient recognizes you, your message will be opened and read, however, the first time you send a message, this will not be the case.

Let me show you how your email is going to look like in the recipients' inbox:

This is what most users see:

✉	Datek	Datek Investor's Insite		Fri 12/14/200...

And that is what Microsoft Outlook users see in expanded view:

✉	I-Helpdesk	I-HelpDesk_WebReview Digest, Issue 978: Led ...	Fri 1/11/2002 9:15 AM

I-HelpDesk_WebReview Discussion List
"Data - Information - Knowledge - Wisdom"

✉	Datek	Datek Investor's Insite	Fri 1/11/2002 12:43 ...

The Datek Difference
The new Wireless Streamer ECN(R) lets you stay on top of Nasdaq price developments on four
ECNs--without even being close to a PC. Learn more about the latest streaming-quote innovation from built

Not much either. In fact, in both cases, there is less ad space than you have in a classified ad.

Consequently, your only chance is to use a catchy subject line.

Today, it is very difficult to find a good subject line. Many people have abused email marketing for a long time, so you really have to be creative to find a successful subject line.

Avoid words like "'free", "chance", or "'win." There are still many marketing manuals out there that recommend using these words, which is one of the reasons why they do not work anymore. Many people have installed filters that will automatically delete messages with subject lines that contain these keywords. And that's not what you want.

In my opinion, the best technique is to stay honest and tell people what's really in for them. Briefly state the strongest benefit your product provides. It is very important that your subject line is believable; otherwise, people think it is Spam.

Consider personalizing the subject line by including the recipient's name—although this has been overused.

Remember: If you trick people into opening your message, not only will they throw it away, they may get angry—and take action against you.

Should I include a random number in the subject line?

Some email servers – especially those from large ISPs, such as AOL and Yahoo! – are designed to block identical email messages that go to a large number of people on the same server. For that reason, some people - mainly spammers – include a random string or number in the subject line in order to make their emails look different and fool spam filters.

In reality, this does not work, because firstly there are spam filters that recognize unrelated strings and numbers, and secondly recipients can see it in the subject line, immediately regard your email as spam and reach for the delete button.

How important is the "From" line?

The FROM line of your message is also extremely important, as the recipient sees it first. It is best to display a name that the recipient recognizes, such as your product name, company name, or your own name. Most email programs allow you to select the name that will appear; use something more recognizable than your email address. **Avoid** a From name that describes your offer; it will be dismissed as Spam.

How long should my email sales letter be? Is it better to send a long message or a short one?

Because reading text on screens is harder that reading text on paper keep your message as short as possible; make your offer concise and compelling.

The recipients of your email should be able to know what's in for them immediately without scrolling. Use short paragraphs that encourage people to read your email directly on their screens.

All in all, your message should not be much longer than one page of text. If people want additional information about your products, provide a link to your website. Another advantage: Both you and your recipient benefit from shorter delivery and download times.

Can I include pictures in my email sales letter?

Yes, you can, at least when you use HTML format. However, keep in mind that pictures significantly enlarge the size of your email and increase the time it takes to download and view your message. Also, many users turn HTML off—and they'll see an ugly series of "missing graphic" icons. So always lead with text, not pictures.

Furthermore, if your pictures contain links to your order page, always include plain text back-up links in case the images are not displayed.

You have two other options for picture display: put the pictures on a website and link from your e-mail, or—if you have advance permission—enclose them as attachments.

What else can I do to make sure that readers react to my offers?

Simple as it sounds, you have to move your readers to action.

If you want them to visit your web page or obtain more details through an autoresponder, give them a link at the end of your message.

If you want them to buy from you, tell them how to order.

And don't just show them a link—tell them to click on it!

Another key factor in doing a successful campaign is to target your message. It is very important to address your sales letters to certain target groups. A lawyer thinks differently from a doctor, or a secretary.

If you want to sell, you have to point out the pains of that special target group and then present the solution. And that's another reason why subject lines containing the word 'free' do not work: People who

are attracted by those keywords are not necessarily YOUR target group. You want to SELL, right? But those people who come to your web site to get something for free in most cases are tire kickers who will never buy anything from you.

How can I make my marketing campaign more efficient?

In order to improve the efficiency of your campaign, you have to measure success and test, test, and test.

You need to try what works best. Split your mailing list into groups of 1,000 contacts. You need at least 1,000; otherwise the results are statistically irrelevant. Test the wording of the subject line, the copy or the color of the link. Try a different target group.

However, make sure that you only test one variable at a time. If you test two variables at the same time, you don't know which of them had influence on the results.

How can I track the success of my mailing?

As in direct response marketing, tracking the success of your mailing usually means measuring conversion rates. Your conversion rate is the number of people who react to your email.

There are different points where you can measure conversion rates:

- Open rate – the sent mail count compared to the number of email messages opened.

- Click-through rate (CTR) – the number of people who read your message and click on one of the links

- Conversion – the number of people who click and purchase.

The open rate tells you something about the effectiveness of your from and subject line. It show how open your audience is to receiving your email, and this makes it a good tool for measuring the quality when comparing email lists. In case your open rate is low, you can try to improve it by testing different from names and subject lines.

CTR is your most important measurement tool. It tells you how many people are actually interested enough to react on your offer and click through to your web site. If people are not clicking, you may have to improve your email copy to include more benefits. It may also be an indicator that shows that you are targeting the wrong audience.

The conversion rate highly depends on your call to action – are you requesting information, a newsletter subscription or a purchase? Maybe you are going to request information and try to make a sale later?

In order to calculate your conversion rate, take a look at the number of completed actions (completed form or sale) vs. the number of unique click-throughs. You can also calculate the percentage of completed actions vs. the number of emails sent.

All in all, when measuring success and comparing the effectiveness of email address lists and offers, make sure that you either use the same tracking method or that you completely understand the differences between the tracking methods used.

How can I track the number of people who open my message?

You can track the number of people who open your email by sending an HTML message that show a picture that is linked on your web server, so whenever somebody opens your email, the picture is loaded from your server.

When you examine your web site statistics, the number of times the file has displayed will approximately equal the number of times your message has been viewed.

Unfortunately, this method is not very accurate. There are many email clients that show a preview pane below the inbox, so that your message will be tracked as 'opened' even when the recipient selected it and immediately clicked on the delete button.

Another drawback is that you can only track how many times HTML messages have been displayed, it does not for plain text emails.

Furthermore, using this simple method, you cannot tell how often somebody has opened your message. If your picture has been requested a hundred times, you don't know if 100 people have opened your message or if one person has opened your message a hundred times. Tracking opening rates for each single recipient

requires extensive script and database mechanism that are only offered by a few email marketing services.

Anyway, having an inaccurate number is better than having no number, and if you compare the statistics of your current mailing with other mailings, you should at least be able to measure whether your email marketing has improved or not.

How can I track the number of click-throughs and conversion rates?

In order to track the number of click-throughs, you have to rely on your web statistics again. Create one HTML for each link in your email. This way you can measure how often people click on each link in your email.

When measuring click-through rates, it is important to make a difference between the total number of clicks and the number of unique visitors, because otherwise you might count somebody who has clicked on your link ten times as ten visitors.

If you have your own affiliate program on your web site, you can also use it to measure click-through rates: Simply create a new affiliate, and use the ID for all links in your email. This is also a great way to measure conversion rates.

How can I measure conversion rates?

Measuring conversion rates is similar to measure click-through rates. You can either create a dedicated order page, or use your own affiliate program. Alternatively, you could also provide discount codes to your readers, and have them enter it on your form upon making a purchase.

Email Publications, Part I: Email Newsletters

What is an email newsletter?

An email newsletter, or e-zine, is a newsletter delivered electronically via email. Many email newsletters are like magazines; they contain useful articles, as well as ads from sponsors, and they are published regularly.

Other newsletters, especially those that come from companies with a large inventory (such as computer manufacturers) only contain promotional materials and special offers. Quite often, these newsletters come in HTML format, featuring an advanced design and high-resolution pictures.

In what format should I publish my newsletter?

Currently, email can be delivered in two different formats: Plain text and HTML. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of each format:

Plain text

Advantages

- Easy to create

- Easy to read

- Small size equals fast delivery and short download times

- More personal than HTML newsletters

Disadvantages

- Few formatting options

- Newsletter may appear different to different users, depending on the email client, font choices, and margin settings

HTML Text

Advantages

- Complete formatting options; your newsletter may look like web pages or a printed magazine, with colorful pictures and rich formatting.

- May provide better tracking options; you can see how many people have opened your message.

Disadvantages

- Many people use email clients that do not support HTML properly, or deliberately turn off HTML—or filter HTML mails from unfamiliar senders into the trash.

- HTML messages are significantly larger than plain text messages, and take more time to deliver.

- When you include pictures, you either have to embed them into your email, which adds to the size, or link them to files on the Internet, which requires the recipient to stay connected to the Internet while reading your message.

Which format you finally use really depends on the contents of your newsletter. When you need colorful pictures, HTML might be the better choice.

What content shall I put into my newsletter?

The answer to this question depends a little on your business and the goal of your email publication. Here are a couple of categories of newsletter formats:

Sales Newsletters

Sales newsletters are newsletters that just focus on selling products. They are similar to direct email marketing sales letters, and contain nothing but a sales letter and a link to the order page. They often have a surprisingly large number of subscribers, but are skipped away by many recipients without being read.

Sales Newsletters usually do not have a regular publishing schedule. They are delivered whenever a new product or service is offered.

Corporate newsletters

Corporate newsletters provide articles and information related to your company's products and services. They are often published in HTML format, and contain new product announcements as well as articles on how to use the product.

Corporate newsletters are read by people who know your products and want to be kept posted on new developments. They are usually published monthly or quarterly.

You can find a sample corporate newsletter from Handspring in [Appendix C](#) at the end of this eBook.

Must-have newsletters

Must-have newsletters regularly provide a lot of extremely valuable information to their subscriber base. In contrast to Sales and Corporate newsletters, this kind of newsletter is a product itself, and not just a marketing vehicle for other products.

Since they are regularly and carefully read by a large percentage of subscribers, they have a very loyal customer base, and may be an extremely powerful marketing tool.

Must-have newsletters can be very influential. The author/publisher is usually recognized as one of the leading authorities in the industry. The audience of a must-have newsletter may be very large and read by many important people.

If you are planning to create a must-have newsletter, you will have to put a lot of emphasis on providing quality content. You may not be trying to sell products directly, but instead provide articles that match the interest of your target audience and solve as many of your readers' worries as possible.

Must-have newsletters easily get many new subscribers (paid or free) by word of mouth.

How often shall I publish my email newsletter?

As often as possible, but not so often that your subscribers get annoyed. It is very important that you publish your newsletter

regularly, so that your readers know you're a reliable business partner.

It is better to choose a longer interval at first. If you think you can publish a newsletter once a week, start with every two weeks. However, to maintain "mindshare," it's probably best to publish at least once a month.

How can I make sure that I have always enough news items and articles to publish?

When you run your own newsletter, you will soon discover that it can be a real challenge to keep up with the publishing schedule. Depending on the nature of your publication, preparing and sending a newsletter may take a lot of time.

For that reason, it is important to plan ahead. At the beginning, you are probably full of great ideas for news items and articles. After the third or fourth issue, however, many publishers run out of ideas, or they are simply to busy to write.

If you have more content than you can publish at the moment, do not increase the size of your newsletter or number of issues you send, but rather save your news items for the next edition.

You can also hire a professional writer to supply articles. Alternatively, you can also pull articles from a service such as http://www.ideamarketers.com, or encourage your readers to contribute.

How do I structure my newsletter?

Create a fixed, consistent format for your newsletter, similar to the structure of a newspaper or a magazine. Our own EmailUnlimited Newsletter always has the following structure:

- Editor's comment
- Table of contents
- News items (e.g., announcement of a new product or upgrade)
- Survey (e.g., about customer satisfaction)
- Article related to email marketing
- Subscribe/Remove instructions

Invent a similar template for your own newsletter. Some parts, such as the header or the subscribe section, are always very similar, so you can reuse them.

Create a text or HTML file (depending on the format of your newsletter) that contains the template, and when you create your next issue, all you need to do is copy the file and fill the gaps.

Should I be personal in my e-zine?

Yes! Definitely! Most of my favorite e-zines are in a very personal style. Write your e-zine as if you're talking to your subscribers one-to-one. Just be yourself. Your readers want to get to know you, and once they get to know you, they are going to trust you.

Don't hide behind a corporation! Your personal voice and style is much more effective than some corporate-style piece of writing.

What else do I need to take care of when sending my e-zine?

For your convenience, use this 12-point checklist before sending your e-zine:

- ✓ When using plain text, keep the length of the lines in your newsletter below 65 characters; otherwise, your message may display poorly for some recipients.

- ✓ Separate all sections clearly

- ✓ Make sure that all web addresses begin with http:// , so that they are clickable in the recipients' email clients.

- ✓ For the same reason, make sure that all email addresses begin with mailto:

- ✓ Test all links and email addresses

- ✓ Remind readers that it is a "subscription" publication. Sometimes people forget which publications they have subscribed to.

- ✓ Include a table of contents that lets readers know what's in for them.

- ✓ Always include a copyright to protect your intellectual property. Sample: Copyright (c) 2002 by YourName. All rights reserved.

- ✓ If your publication shows advertisements, make sure that all ads are in the correct place

- ✓ Give clear subscribe and unsubscribe instructions at the bottom of your publication

- ✓ Enter a subject line that includes the name of your publication, the issue number and the topic of the current issue.

- ✓ Send a test message to several of your own email accounts to ensure that it arrives properly.

How can I make sure that no line in my plain text e-zine is longer than 65 characters?

That is very simple: Using a monospaced font such as Courier, create a line of characters that is 65 characters long, such as

----

Next, write the text (or paste it) below that
line. Always hit return when you reach the
end of that line. Do you get the idea?

How can I automate handling subscription and removal requests?

The easiest way to automatically handle subscription and removal requests is to use professional email marketing software. These packages cost around $150 - $300, but will save you a lot of valuable time, so that you can concentrate on your business and writing your newsletter. Have a look at the chapter on "Recommended Email Marketing Tools" for additional information.

Email Publications, Part II: Email Discussion Lists

What is an email discussion list?

An email discussion list is made up of email messages from many participants. There are several types of email discussion lists, but not all are suitable for your business:

1. Unmoderated discussion lists. These are often hosted by services such as Yahoo groups. Every member can send posts to those lists, and they are immediately sent to all members. For marketing purposes, owning or sponsoring an unmoderated discussion list may not offer much benefit, because you have almost zero influence on the appearance and content. However, you may gain significant marketing benefit by participating in a carefully chosen list,, whether or not it's moderated.

2. Moderated discussion lists are similar to unmoderated discussion lists, except that each post has to be approved by the list moderator.

3. Moderated Digests – This is the kind of discussion list that you will want to implement for your business. A moderated discussion list digest consists of several posts that are carefully compiled by the list moderator, and sent to the subscribers on a regular basis, in a format similar to a newsletter. This way, you can fully influence the appearance and content of your publication. Examples of successful moderated digests are my own discussion list "The Email Marketing Digest," or I-Sales from John Audette.

''Throughout the rest of this eBook, whenever I say 'discussion list, I'm referring to type #3. If you want to see a sample digest, have a look at Appendix A —the first issue of "The Email Marketing Digest."

What are the advantages of running a discussion list vs. running a newsletter?

There are several advantages of running a discussion list, but also some points you will have to take care of.

The biggest advantage of discussion lists is that you do not have to write most of the content yourself; instead, content is brought to you by active participants—at no cost to you.

Furthermore, a discussion list is a two-way communication channel. You get to know your audience, and your audience gets to know you and builds trust in you.

Running a discussion list is a great way to make business contacts and sometimes even friends all around the world. As John Audette, moderator of I-Sales, once said: "The biggest advantage of moderating a discussions list is that wherever I travel there will always be someone who invites me to a Guinness."

However, you also bear some responsibility: You have to keep the bar high and do everything to meet your participants' expectations; otherwise they will leave you with your reputation highly damaged.

Furthermore, getting enough posts can be a real struggle. When starting a discussion list digest, I strongly suggest using a hybrid format that includes editorial content until your subscription base is large enough to maintain a steady discussion.

What do I need to start a discussion list?

When starting your own discussion list, the first thing you need to get started is an initial list of subscribers. Without subscribers who send posts to your list, you do not have a lot of content to offer, and discussions do not take off.

Next, you will need to create a welcome message that tells people how to subscribe, unsubscribe, and send posts. Set it up as an autoresponder that you send whenever you receive a subscription request.

Last but not least, create a template for your discussion list. A template is a simple text file that contains a header, a table of contents, space for the posts, subscribe/unsubscribe instructions and copyright information. You'll find a sample template in Appendix B at the end of the book.

How do I develop an initial list of active subscribers?

When you are starting from the scratch, it is best to announce your new discussion list in a related discussion list. When I started "The Email Marketing Digest," I placed a post in the bulletin board of the I-Sales discussion list, and immediately received more than 80 new subscribers. Many of them are active members of I-Sales who regularly send posts, so they are very likely to send posts to my publication as well.

Another good source for your initial list of subscribers is your existing list of customers, because these are people who already know you and are definitely interested in the topic of your list (as long as the topic relates to the products you sell).

Of course, put a sign-up form throughout your website, too!

How many subscribers do I need to get started?

In order to get a discussion started, you need to have at least 30 people; 50 or 80 are much better. You also need a core group who become active participants and regular contributors right from the start.

How do I get posts for my first issue?

Once you have enough subscribers for your first issue, simply send a message to that list and ask for posts. If you get at least three to four responses, compile them as your first issue. You might also include a post of your own; however, keep in mind that your job is to moderate, not to send posts.

What topic shall I choose for my discussion list?

Your topic should be related to the products and services you sell. Don't specialize too much, it is better to offer a broader range of topics that offer a lot of interesting items to discuss. Here are some ideas:

- If you sell automotive tuning equipment, run a discussion list about cars

- If you offer tax advice, run a discussion list about taxes

- If your business is real estate, start a list about fixing properties

How do I encourage people to send posts?

Posts are the blood of your discussion list. Without posts, your discussion list cannot exist. Encourage people to send posts to your list:

- Ask a question.

- After each post that is published in your discussion list, add a line that invites other subscribers to send their comment (e.g. Comment? Send your post to postaddress@yourhost.com).

- Allow people to include some contact information and a short marketing message.

- Keep posts that you have not been able to include in the previous issue, and include them when you are short of posts, e.g., during the holidays.

- Include a short PS in your moderator comments that asks people to send posts.

Last but not least, you should always have a list of "hot" topics available that you can use to trigger a new discussion.

How often should I publish my discussion list?

In order to maintain an ongoing discussion, publish at least once a week. People who send posts have a burning desire to see their post published and get responses; in order to keep that fire burning, you have to publish frequently.

Is it ok to add my comments to posts?

Yes, of course! Your fellow subscribers want to get to know you as much as you want to get to know them. However, don't add your two cents to each post you receive. Save your comments to honor a really good post, so that active participants are motivated to write high-quality posts.

Can I use a discussion list to promote my own products and increase sales?

A discussion list is a forum for people to exchange experiences, thoughts and ideas. It is not a place to constantly promote your own products. Running a discussion list is about building relationships rather than blatantly promoting products.

Of course, it is ok to include an ad for your own site and products. And once people get to know you and trust you, they will automatically be interested in doing business with you.

Running a discussion list is a long-term investment. In the long run, it will pay off in many new business relationships that result in additional revenue—but it will take some time to get to that point, so you have to be patient.

How much time does it take to maintain a discussion list?

Once everything is set up and running, you will probably need two or three hours to read all posts and compile and send each new issue.

Email Publications, Part III: Getting Subscribers and Managing Your List

What is an opt-in list?

An opt-in list is a list of people who have asked to be added to your list of recipients. As an email marketer, you definitely need to create an opt-in list, because anything else is SPAM and will get you into trouble.

Running an opt-in list also means that you provide a way for people to opt-out (see below).

And what is a double opt-in list?

In a double opt-in list, once you get a subscription request, you send a message to the new subscriber and ask to confirm the subscription. Only when you have that confirmation do you add the new contact to your list.

Why should I use a double opt-in list?

The biggest advantage of a double opt-in list is that the quality of your audience is much higher.

Furthermore, you have even more protection from Spam complaints. Sometimes people enter somebody else's email address, you add it to your list, send your email, and get a complaint.

I recommend using normal opt-in in the beginning, and once you have a subscriber base or 1,000 or more, switch to double opt-in.

What is the #1 source for getting subscribers?

The best source for getting subscribers is your own web site. Set up a sign-up form to collect names and email addresses and put it at a prominent place on your web site (many publishers include a sign-up option on every page). Such a form might look like the following:

If you offer a download or a free trial of your product on your site, ask for an email address in exchange for your trial. Tell visitors to double-check their address and then send a link to your trial via email. This way, you'll receive a higher percentage of valid addresses.

How can I create a sign-up form in Microsoft Front Page?

Using Microsoft Front Page, it is very easy to create a sign-up form:

1. Open the page where you want to add the sign-up form. Put the cursor where you want the form. Then select 'Insert/Form/Textbox' from the menu bar. FrontPage will insert the following form:

2. All the Reset button does is clear the entry field—so if you want to, you can remove it
3. Right-click on the entry field to open the context menu and choose 'Form field properties...' The 'Text Box Properties' dialog will appear. Enter the term "Email" in the name field, and click on 'Ok' to close the dialog.
4. Right-click again on the entry field, but this time chose the item 'Form Properties...' to open the form properties dialog. This dialog allows you to ''control the data. Here is a screenshot of the dialog:
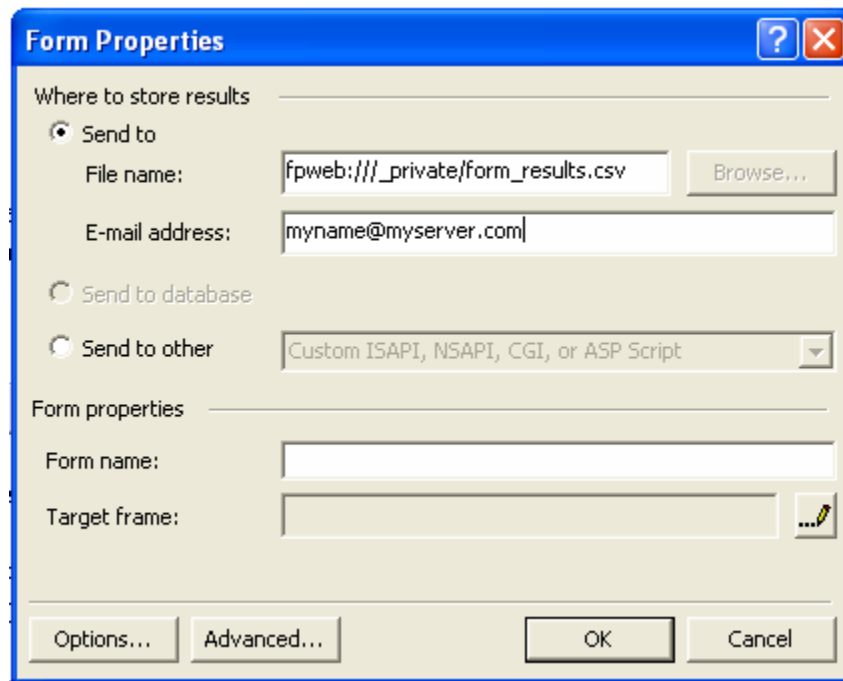
5. Enable the radio button 'Send to,' as shown in the screenshot. The field, 'File name,' specifies a text file on your server that will receive all entered information.

   Enter your own email address into the field, 'E-mail address,' so that you receive a receipt whenever a visitor submits the form.

6. Next, click on the button labeled 'Options…' The following dialog appears:
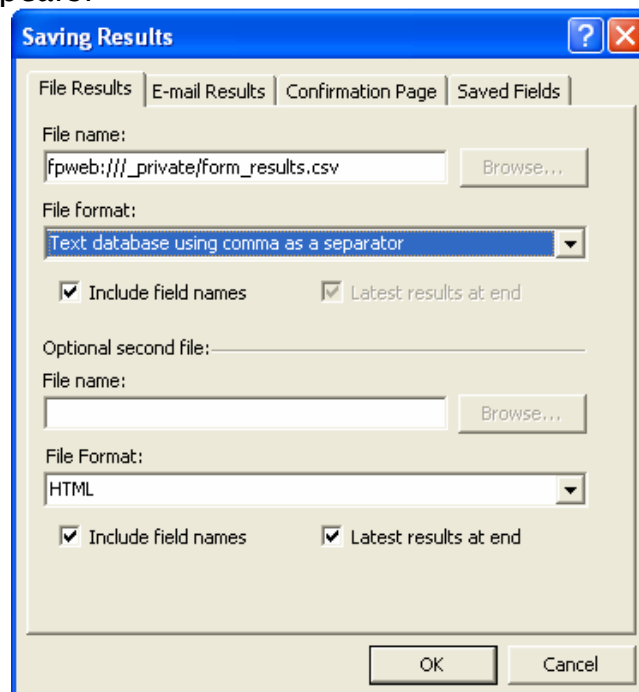
7. The first tab, 'File Results,' allows you to specify how the data will be written to the file on your web server. The default setting writes it to a text database, using comma as a separator. This setting is fine with us, as almost all databases and email marketing applications can handle it.

8. Click on the tab 'E-mail Results,' as shown below:
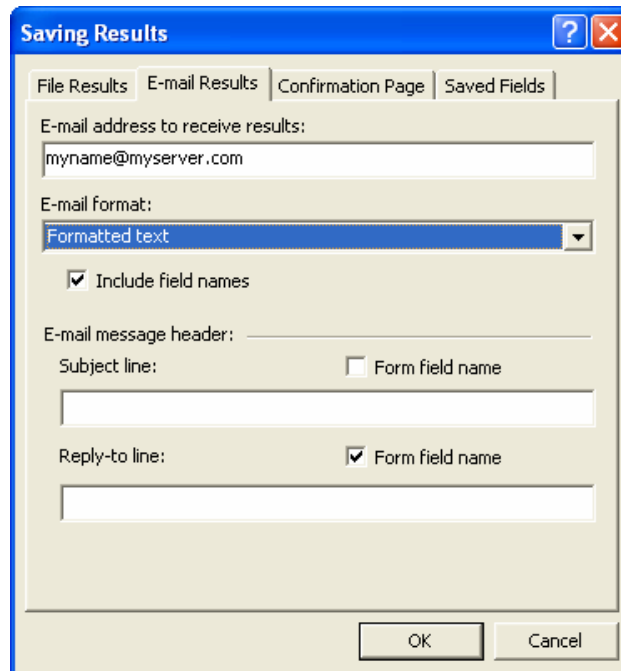
As you see, your email address is already entered, and the selected format is formatted text, which means that the emails you receive will contain the data in a format such as

Email: visitoremail@visitorserver.com

You will want to specify a subject line, so that you know which form generated the receipt. Furthermore, you will need it later when you start using software that automatically retrieves the data from those receipt emails.

When you are done with this step, click OK to close the dialog.

9. Congratulations! Your first form is finished! All you need to do now is save the HTML file and publish it on your web server.

How can I convince people to submit their correct email address?

Many times, visitors do not enter their correct email addresses, but some rubbish. The best way to convince people to submit their correct email addresses is to give them a reward via email. Here are a few ideas for easy rewards:

- Get a free report via email

- Receive a download link via email

- Enter a sweepstakes or contest

- Obtain a free newsletter subscription

If you run a contest, offer a prize that is related to your web site, e.g. a free copy of your software. If you offer cash, you only receive a lot of addresses from people who are not really interested in your products and offerings. Caution: There are many laws governing sweepstakes and contests. Read up on them before you set one up.

Is it a good idea to offer freebies to attract additional subscribers?

In the past, Internet was a free for all community. Almost anything was – and is - given away for free in order to build customer awareness and market share.

The problem is that people get used to getting things for free, and thus you will have a hard time selling them your products. Your email publication should be your only freebie, no other freebies are necessary.

What other information could I collect in my forms?

When using forms to get subscriptions, it is a good idea to collect some additional data as well. This way, you learn more about your subscribers and thus enhance the value of your list. Furthermore, it helps you target your offerings.

The minimum information you should ask for is the name and email address. Some businesses also collect phone numbers and snail mail

addresses, however, I do not recommend doing this. Many visitors will get suspicious about why you want to get so much information from them, and resentful of the time it takes to fill in the form.

Instead, I would add a couple of multiple-choice questions that define your target audience, such as age or primary business role. It really depends on your business.

How effective are pop-up ads for getting subscribers?

More and more often, you see sites that display pop-up ads to get new subscribers to their list. They often get a high click-through rate, as pop-ups contain a form combined with a concise offer and are displayed in a new window that the visitor can't ignore.

For that reason, many people do not like pop-up ads that much. They are annoying, especially when they show up even after you have acted on their offer.

If you use pop-up ads on your site, make sure that they are only displayed once per visit and that they are not displayed to visitors who have already taken action on your offer. Otherwise, you will drive your visitors crazy and move them out of your site quickly.

Other than that, pop-ups are a great tool for getting additional subscribers to your list!

How do I create a pop-up ad?

That's very easy: Firstly, you create the HTML page that shall be popped-up. Make sure that it is not so large that it blocks the view on your web page.

Then paste the Java Script code on the following page into the HTML page that initiates the pop-up:

```
<script>

//Popup Window Script

function openpopup()
{
var popurl="popupwindow.htm"
winpops=window.open(popurl,"","width=260,height=350,")
}

function get_cookie(Name)
{
  var search = Name + "="
  var returnvalue = "";
  if (document.cookie.length > 0)
  {
    offset = document.cookie.indexOf(search)
    if (offset != -1)
    { // if cookie exists
      offset += search.length
      // set index of beginning of value
      end = document.cookie.indexOf(";", offset);
      // set index of end of cookie value
      if (end == -1)
          end = document.cookie.length;
      returnvalue=unescape(document.cookie.substring(offset, end))
    }
  }
  return returnvalue;
}

function loadornot(){
if (get_cookie('poppedup')=='')
{
   openpopup()
   document.cookie="poppedup=yes"
}
}

loadornot()
</script>
```

This script makes the windows pop-up only once per user session, so that it will not annoy visitors too much.

Replace "popupwindow.htm" with the URL of your own pop-up page, and adjust the "width" and "height" properties in a way that they fit the size of your pop-up window.

How can I turn my efforts to find new subscribers into a profit center?

Turning your efforts to find new subscribers into a profit center is the best strategy for building your list. It is fairly easy:

1. Create an ebook that is related to the theme of your email publication. There are a lot of techniques how you can create an ebook quickly, such as taking articles of back issues of your publication and compiling them into a commented ebook. You can also interview some of the leaders of your industry, and compile these into an ebook. Creating ebooks is a large topic, so I can't cover it in this ebook, but there are a lot of great books about ebook creation. Have a look at the "Recommended Reading" for additional information

2. Sell your ebook for a low price, and add an affiliate program that pays commissions that are as high as possible.

3. Add a subscription to your email publication as a special bonus. People who buy your ebook want to get the most of their investment, so they will eagerly subscribe and READ your e-zine.

The best aspect, next to getting paid for the ebook, is that your subscribers are used to paying for the value you deliver, so they are likely to become loyal lift-time customers!

How do I use discussion groups for getting new subscribers?

Discussion groups are also a great way to get attention. Subscribe to as many discussion groups that are related to the topic of your email publication as possible.

Once a discussion is started about a topic you know well and that is related to your web site and email publication, send your posts and get into the mid of the discussion.

But please keep in mind: don't send a blatant sales pitch, but an informative post directly related to the topic that is discussed. Mention your company in the post if you solve a problem being discussed. Other than that, stick to promoting your site using your signature.

Are e-zine directories a good source for getting new subscribers?

It depends on your type of newsletter. If you have a sales newsletter or corporate newsletter, e-zine directories are not worth the effort.

If you are planning to offer a must-have newsletter, however, e-zine directories may be a good source for new subscribers. Visitors to e-zine directories are often looking for newsletters with quality content, and will certainly be interested in your must-have newsletter. For that reason, these subscribers are among the most qualified you can win.

Unfortunately, those e-zine directories often contain thousands of e-zines, and it is hard to get noticed in the crowd.

All in all, I'd say that you should consider e-zine directories as an additional source of subscribers. Expect to receive 1-3 new subscribers per day, however, this figure highly depends on the quality of the directories to which you have submitted your publication and the quality of your ad. This makes roughly 1,000 new subscribers per year.

You should not rely on e-zine directories as the only source for getting subscribers. E-zine directories also have another problem: many of them fail after a short time, or do not add your submission their directory, whatever the reason may be. .

You can find a list of recommended e-zine directories in a dedicated chapter at the end of this ebook.

What are e-zine announcement lists?

E-zine announcement lists are e-zines that announce new e-zines. In most cases, these e-zines do not have a very high circulation, maybe 500 subscribers if you are lucky. Who wants to regularly read an e-zine that only contains promotions for other e-zines?

For that reason, most e-zine announcement lists are not worth the effort. The only exception is New-List.com (http://www.New-list.com) which has around 10,000 subscribers split into 21 different categories.

What are list building services?

List building services promote your email publications and charge between $0.15 and $0.30 per subscriber.

Some of those services work similar to pay-per-click search engines, meaning they run a directory of e-zines and your ranking gets higher when you are willing to pay a larger fee per subscriber.

Other list building services have a large network of affiliates whose sites show pop-up windows offering a form for visitors to subscribe to your newsletter.

When choosing a list building provider, also take care that they do not incentive subscribers to sign-up for you e-zine. If they do, you are likely to get a bunch up worthless addresses of people who are not really interested in your publication.

The problem with most list building services is that the user is presented with ten, twenty or more subscribe options at the same time. It shows a list of e-zines with a check-box on the left, and a field to enter the email address on the bottom. Few information is displayed about each publication, so in the end, the user ends up to subscribing to all lists that have an interesting title, in most cases using a freemail account that will be neglected after a short time.

Conclusion: list building services are nice to quickly build impressing subscriber numbers, however, it is definitely not a way to buy a high-quality readership.

Have a look at the chapter "Recommended Sites & Resources" for recommendations.

How fast can you expect a list building service to generate subscribers?

It depends on the type of your list, ad copy, and position of your ad. The higher the position, the more subscribers you will get, but depending on the service, you may end up paying higher fees per subscriber for building a list on the fast track.

Normally, you can expect to get 50-200 new subscribers per day.

You have to figure out how much a new subscriber is worth for your business, and then decide if paying more for faster list building is worth the premium.

How efficient are list building services?

It depends. When using an opt-in service, expect to receive 5-15% undeliverable addresses, however, many services compensate for that loss by providing additional addresses.

Unsubscribe rates may be around 5% during the first 60 days. Of course, this figure depends on the quality of your publication.

When subscribing to newsletters, many people specify their Yahoo and Hotmail addresses in order to avoid receiving spam in their main mailboxes. The problem is that these accounts are often neglected by their owners. Using an opt-in service, expect about 30% secondary addresses, using a double-opt-in service, however, this figure may drop, as people have to verify their subscription.

Furthermore, expect 10-20% AOL addresses. Though they have a certain value, AOL addresses can also be quite a challenge for email marketers. AOL hardly accepts HTML messages. Furthermore, they have a complicated filtering system that is likely to treat your email message as Spam.

Unfortunately, I do not have numbers for sales conversion rates. They are very hard to track, as people who subscribe using a free address often use a different email address when making a purchase.

Compared to renting opt-in lists, who also charge 15-50 cents per address, you own the addresses you gain using a list building service, meaning you can present your offer more often (but keep in mind you are running a newsletter, not a sales email :-)).

For that reason, list building is a much better option than renting opt-in lists.

I sometimes get emails that offer me millions of opt-in addresses on CD-ROM. Is it a good idea to buy and use such a list for getting new leads?

No, it is a terrible idea! In most cases, these addresses are harvested from web pages, meaning that people have not opted-in to receive

email. When you send them your newsletter or a sales message, you Spam.

Furthermore, it takes a lot of time to send that many messages. The list is not targeted, and many addresses are invalid as well. A friend of mine once bought such a CD and found that 70% of the addresses are junk.

Using such a CD-ROM is a waste of time, and may hurt your reputation beyond repair.

What is Spam?

Spam, also known as unsolicited commercial email (UCE), is sending advertisements via email to people who did not request this information. It is the opposite of using opt-in mailing lists, and not considered a legitimate way to market your business.

What is the problem sending Spam?

The problem is that Spam is usually sent to millions of addresses, causing a huge amount of traffic. Imagine: more than 30% of all email being sent today is Spam. If everybody used Spam, the whole system would shut down from overload. Spam also forces the recipient to spend time, and in some cases, money—and makes it harder to find and respond to legitimate, important email.

Why does spamming hurt my reputation?

How do you feel when you receive Spam messages? If you are like most other Internet users, you probably feel annoyed when receiving unsolicited messages from hideous entities that offer stuff that is completely unrelated to your interests. Unsolicited messages that waste your time and mailbox space.

Many people even get so aggravated each time they receive Spam messages that they reply with flames—or, worse, send complaints to the sender's ISP and organizations such as Spamcop.

If they report you, you are in real trouble, because many ISPs will shut down your web site immediately after receiving a Spam complaint.

And when your website is down, people will think that you are out of business.

Last but not least, Spam is often sent by businesses that keep moving, changing ISPs and hiding their true identity. Imagine a potential customer who thinks about using your product, but then receives an unsolicited message from your company, showing them that you are not a legitimate company.

What is email harvesting software?

Email harvesting software searches thousands of web pages for email addresses and adds them to a database. It is a spammers' tool, nothing for serious business people like you.

What is Spamcop?

Spamcop is an organization whose goal is to stop spamming. Spamcop fines people who send unsolicited email. The group forces ISPs to cooperate with them using questionable (in my opinion, even criminal) methods, such as threatening to blacklist their IP addresses. If you want to use email marketing, Spamcop is likely to be your enemy.

Be advised: Spamcop shoots first, and asks questions later. Spamcop does not mind killing your business if you've been reported as a spammer. It does not hurt, however, to have a look at their site www.spamcop.net to see their opinions and guidelines.

Is spamming illegal?

It depends. Federal law says that unsolicited commercial email (UCE) is not illegal, as long as you provide a method to unsubscribe. State law, however, may be stricter. In many cases, it makes it illegal to send unsolicited bulk e-mail containing falsified routing information. You can find more information about this issue at http://www.spamlaws.com

What are the hidden costs of spamming?

On first view, spamming seems to be cheap, as you can reach millions of addresses at a ridiculously low price.

You can buy millions of addresses for less than a hundred bucks. However, beware of the hidden costs: first of all, the loss of reputation and lost revenue due to a closed web site.

Second, if you provide a 1-800 number or fax number for taking orders, Spam-haters will call that number and complain, blocking your phone-line and costing thousands of dollars in connection charges.

Third, your ISP may charge you for handling abuse complaints. There once was a spammer who used an Excite.com return address on his UCE message. Excite sued and got a $250,000 judgment.

Fourth, it doesn't work. People who monitored the results of Spam consistently report absurdly low results, measured in thousandths of a percent.

How do I handle Spam complaints?

When people complain to you that your email message is Spam, ask politely if you should remove them from your list.

It is also very effective to keep all subscribe requests; because sometimes, people forget that they have subscribed to you list and complain about being spammed. In this case, you can show them their subscription request.

This is also very helpful if people complain to your ISP or hosting provider, so that you can prove that your email was requested.

Can I get into difficulties with my hosting provider when people complain about Spam?

Yes, complaints to your hosting provider may bring you into a difficult situation. Most hosting providers have strict anti-Spam policies, and some of them will cancel your account as soon as they receive the first complaint.

This has happened to us in June 2001: One person used the Trial version of EmailUnlimited, our email marketing software, to send Spam. Unfortunately, at that time, each email sent with the trial version contained an ad for the software. A single person complained using an anonymous Yahoo! address, and two hours later, our web account at halfpricehosting.com was shut down. They did not even give us a chance to defend ourselves.

For that reason, make sure that your hosting contract contains a policy that the hosting provider sends you a warning message when such an incident happens, instead of shutting down your web site immediately.

Why should I have a privacy agreement on my web site?

When you collect email addresses and other information on your web site, you should always have a privacy statement. A privacy agreement explains what you intend do to with the data that a visitor submits from your site. This way, visitors know why they should give you their address information, and what exactly you will do with it. Furthermore, it increases trust, and people are much more likely to sign-up.

What is an opt-out list?

An opt-out list is a fake opt-in list: You collect thousands of addresses from web sites and discussion forums. Then you send a message asking them to opt-out in case they do not want to receive any further messages. Very few people will opt-out, as most of the recipients simply delete the email or treat it as Spam.

Thus, opt-out lists are not very effective, as everybody just throws them away instead of reading them. Like any other kind of Spam, they are regarded as unethical by many people. For that reason, using opt-out lists may badly hurt your reputation.

In some cases, these opt-out lists are sold by email address brokers as opt-in lists. For that reason, you should be very careful when purchasing addresses, and only do business with reputable list brokers. Always ask how they compile their address lists.

Why should I provide a remove option on my newsletter?

Your newsletter is an opt-in publication, which means, people are free to join and to leave as they like.

If you do not provide a way to unsubscribe, people will complain and try everything to get off your list. This may even include submitting you to a Spam complaint service such as Spamcop, and when they do that, you're in real trouble.

Furthermore, providing a remove option may be required by law.

Is there a way to automate list management?

Yes, almost all professional email marketing packages (such as our own software. EmailUnlimited) offer functions for automatically handling subscription and removal requests. The best ones will even sort out invalid and duplicate addresses. For more details about email marketing software, have a look at the chapter, "[Technical Aspects of Email Marketing.](#)"

Email Publications, Part IV: Getting Paid

How do I profit from running an email publication?

Your highest profit in running an email publication will be enhanced customer relationships. People tend to build trust in you when they regularly receive interesting articles from you. You will be regarded as an expert, and this automatically means new business for you. Of course, your sales numbers won't increase immediately, but in the long run, it is a win-win situation for both you and your customers. Maybe you will even receive invitations to speak, giving you an opportunity to promote your business for free.

Last but not least, you can also profit from the feedback that your readers provide. You can run contests and questionnaires to collect information about your subscribers. Furthermore, you could let them vote on new features for your products, and gain valuable market research, for free.

Can I charge people a fee for receiving my email publication?

It is very difficult to make people pay just to receive your newsletter or discussion list, because they are used to getting high-quality content for free.

Even Adventive (http://www.adventive.com) which publishes I-Sales among a dozen other discussion lists, with more than 55,000 unique subscribers (combined total circulation of 170,000), had difficulties introducing a membership fee. Of the 55,000, only about 1,000 signed up for a paid membership, even though the publisher offered several significant members-only benefits.

People are simply not willing to pay for content that are used to getting for free.

In order to convert free subscribers to fee subscribers, you need to offer additional value. Here is a list of things you can offer:

- Access to back issues of your email publication, either using a restricted web site or an ebook.

- A "lab pass" that provides access to restricted areas of your web site that offer in-depth information about topics you mention in your newsletters. MarketingExperiments.com does this quite successfully. They offer a free newsletter that describes their experiments and some of the findings, but in order to get the final results and conclusions, you have to buy their lab pass.

- A directory of members

- An additional paper publication. People are more willing to give you their credit card if you offer a paper publication. It does not have to be long, it only has to consist of a few pages with valuable information.

- Personal consultations

- A limited number of free ads

Maybe you also have a couple of ideas on your own. Let me know how you succeed :-).

Can I use my publication as a bonus to add value to my other products?

Yes, this is an excellent way to get new subscribers. Offer an eBook or something similar, and add a free subscription to your publication as a bonus. These customers are very likely to regularly read your newsletter, as they have paid for it. Even better, as customers already have a business relationship with you, they trust you even more.

Furthermore, this technique allows you to make money and get new subscribers at the same time. As long the customer acquisition cost is lower than the price of your eBook, you get paid for getting subscribers!

You could even add an affiliate program, and let the affiliates drive traffic to your site—at no risk to you, except the time you spend to create your eBook.

Can I expect to make money by selling ads?

Making real money by selling ads is difficult as well. It worked during the hype economy phase, when stock prices went through the roof and companies had tons of money to burn. These days, however, companies only advertise when they expect an acceptable return of investment.

Of course, you can try to sell ads. However, you won't be able to charge much more than $10-30 CPM (=per thousand subscribers), depending on the quality of your list and publication.

Another way to get paid is to run ads for the relevant affiliate programs that you've joined. This way, you also learn what works for your audience—and, as almost all affiliate programs provide click-through statistics, you also see how effective your publication really is for its advertisers.

Can I make money by selling my contact list to a list broker?

No matter what happens, you should never sell your list of contacts to anyone. When people subscribe to your publication, they want to receive information from you, and not promotional email from third parties.

Your contact list is the heart of your business, these people are the ones who buy your products and generate income. When you sell your list, you betray those people who trust you. Very soon you will find that your list is almost worthless and your reputation seriously damaged.

Using Autoresponders

What is an autoresponder?

An autoresponder is a special email address that is programmed to instantly send back a pre-formatted email reply any time it receives an incoming message.

The ways you can use autoresponders are limited only by your imagination!

Successful companies are using autoresponders to send:

- Automated support messages

- "Welcome to our newsletter"

- "Sorry, on vacation" replies

- "About our company"

- Advertising information

- All of your sales letters

- Free articles on your area of expertise

- "Welcome to our reseller program"

And what is a follow-up autoresponder?

A follow-up autoresponder sends a sequence of messages to a contact. This makes it a great tool to build strong relationships with your customers (or, if used poorly, to annoy them). Here are some examples

- **Create a course about a subject related to your products.**
Develop a series of messages delivered in sequence by a follow-up autoresponder; everyone who signs up will receive a new lesson per day (or week, etc.). This all works automatically, without requiring your interaction.

- **Add a form to your web site for visitors who want to receive additional information via email.** The follow-up autoresponder will automatically send the requested information, and, a couple of days later, ask for their input.

- **Automate your thank-yous and/or product delivery.** If you ship products electronically, such as software or e-books, you can easily set up EmailUnlimited to send a thank you note, automatically ship your products via email, and follow up a few days later to ask if he or she is satisfied with your product, and offer support if necessary. Your customers will love you for being so attentive!

- **Send post-purchase follow-up messages.** This is the best way to sell additional products, because your existing customers are most likely to buy from you again.

Why is it so important to follow-up with prospective customers?

Customers always need time to make a buying decision. In contrast to the world of department stores, on the Internet, impulse purchases are the exception. Recent surveys show that it may easily take more than three months to make a decision to buy a relatively low-priced $70.00 product.

That means, a person who visits your site today has to remember your URL in three months. Can you remember what URLs you have visited three months ago?

Of course not. For that reason, it is important to follow up with people who have shown interest in your offerings. They may have subscribed to your newsletter, or requested additional information via email.

Can you give me a case study on how you are using follow-up auto responders?

Here at 4OfficeAutomation, Inc we sell software related to email automation, and we have been using follow-up auto responding since 1999. It turned out to be our single most successful marketing tool. First, we started by simply sending a thank-you message to people who download our trial software. Two days later, we sent another email asking how they are getting along.

Surprisingly, we got a lot of responses to this second email. We learned about problems with our programs and what customers really wanted.

Furthermore, it gave us the opportunity to fix problems and make a sale, instead of having the customer move over to the competition.

Today, of course, our follow-up system is a little more complex. Here is the sequence that we send to people who download a trial version of EmailUnlimited (available at http://www.emailunlimited.info):

Day 0: Thank-you message that includes download links
Day 4: How are you getting along?
Day 7: Tips for using follow-up autoresponders
Day 12: Survey about the trial software
Day 30: Notice that the trial version is about to expire

Here is a screenshot that shows the sequence of messages in EmailUnlimited:
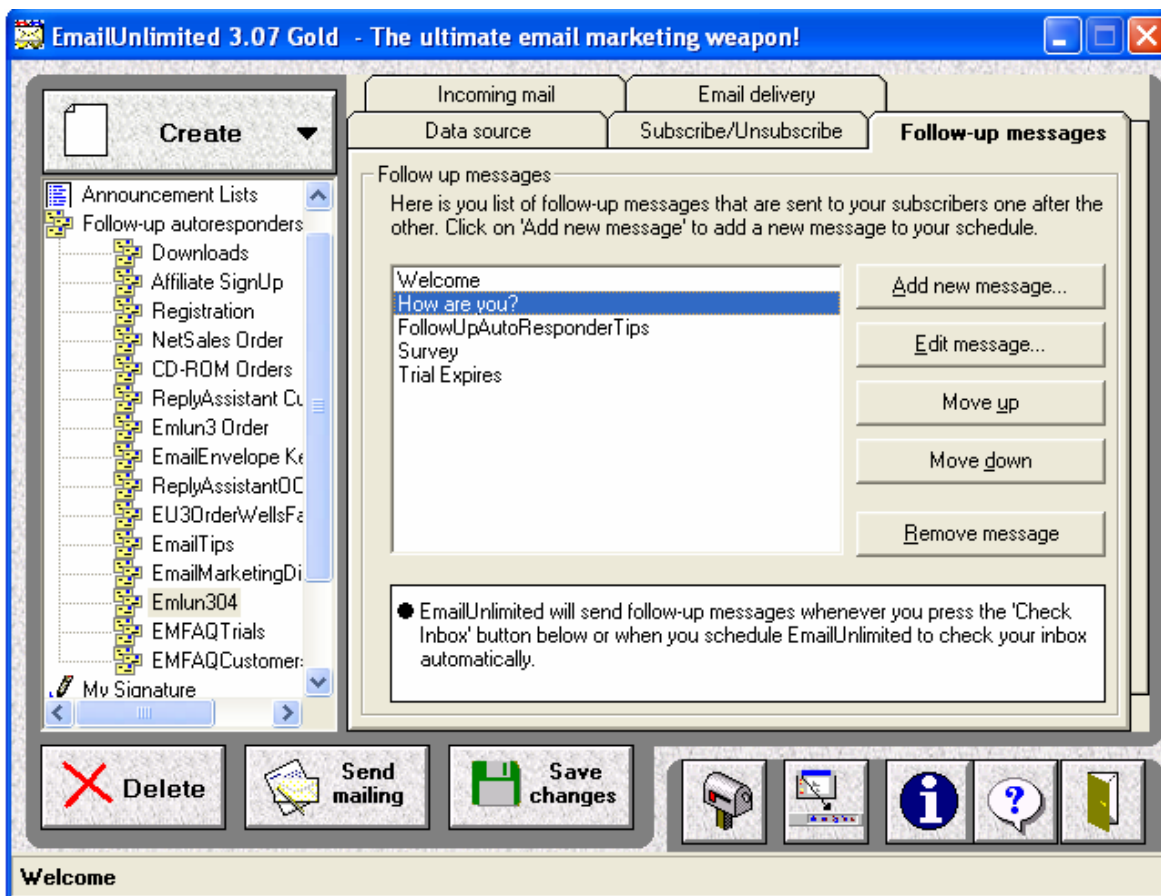
Here you can see the follow-up messages one by one:

Message1: Welcome to Email Unlimited!

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.
1802 N. Carson St.
Suite 212-2190

Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: (530) 658-8419
Fax: (530) 658-8419

4OfficeAutomation

Dear Chris Sanders,

Thank you very much for your interest in EmailUnlimited 3.0, one of the most advanced desktop solutions for email marketing. It provides you with powerful features for sending rich HTML messages to your list of contacts, managing your contacts and collecting new subscribers. It also contains a very advanced auto responding system that allows you to automatically follow up with customers and products.

This message has been brought to you by the EmailUnlimited 3.0 follow-up auto responder. It handles all download information submitted by you, writes personalized thank-you letters like this one for us and delivers our newsletters and product announcements in no time! This is just a sample how EmailUnlimited can be used. It saves us hours every day while providing highly effective marketing at zero cost.

Download

We hope that you have been able to properly download the complete program. If for some reasons it did not work, you can download the EmailUnlimited 3.0 Trial Edition directly at the following URL

http://www.4officeautomation.com/Downloads/EmailUnlimited3.exe

Getting support

If you have questions or suggestions about EmailUnlimited, please do not hesitate to send a message to contact me at mailto:john@4officeautomation.com . Your feedback is always appreciated.

There is also additional information available on the FAQ page, available at http://www.4officeautomation.com/EmailUnlimited/ (click on FAQ). Furthermore, we have introduced a bugfix & upgrades page, on which you can always find the newest versions and fixes of EmailUnlimited available for download.

If you would like to talk to me, please send your phone number to
mailto:support@4officeautomation.com , and I will call you back as soon as possible.

Stay Tuned

For your convenience, we have included you in our list of subscribers of the monthly

4OfficeAutomation Newsletter, which informs you about new products and shows you how to get the most of our programs.

If you do not want to receive our newsletter or hear from us again, please click here to be removed from our mailing list . Then you will automatically be removed from our mailing list by EmailUnlimited. However, keep in mind that might introduce a product that saves you many hours and a lot of money, and you certainly wouldn't want to miss it.

I hope EmailUnlimited will be useful for you, saving a lot of your precious time - as it already does for a great number of businesses all around the world.

Always my best,

John Vorwerk

4OfficeAutomation, Inc

We automate your business!

Message2: How are you getting along with EmailUnlimited?

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.
1802 N. Carson St.
Suite 212-2190

Carson City, NV 89701

Phone: (530) 658-8419
Fax: (530) 658-8419

4OfficeAutomation

Dear Chris Sanders,

You have downloaded EmailUnlimited a couple of days ago, and I just wanted to touch base with you.

How do you like EmailUnlimited? Does it work well, or do you encounter any problems using it? Are there any features you are missing? Please let me know by sending an email to john@4officeautomation.com.

We appreciate all your comments, and we will try to implement as many of your suggestions as possible in the next release. Answers to common questions are also available at the EmailUnlimited FAQ page at

http://www.4OfficeAutomation.com/EmailUnlimited/

All the best,

John Vorwerk

4OfficeAutomation, Inc

We automate your business!

Please visit our web site www.4OfficeAutomation.com for more information and to get free trial versions of our greatest software applications.

PS: Please click here if you wish to be removed from our mailing list

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Email number two produces the most responses. Some people simply write us to say thanks for the follow-up, while the majority of emails contain questions about the program.
If you want to send a similar message to your customer, I suggest sending it in plain text format rather than HTML. Plain text still seems to be more personal, and people are more likely to respond to personal messages.

Message 3: Use Auto Reponders to Add Additional Value to Your Customer Relationships

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.

1802 N. Carson St.
Suite 212-2190

Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: (530) 658-8419
Fax: (530) 658-8419

4OfficeAutomation

Use Auto Reponders to Add Additional Value to Your Customer Relationships

Dear Chris Sanders,

I hope you don't mind if I send you some more ideas for getting the most of EmailUnlimited. This time, I would like to provide you some ideas for using follow-up auto responders.

A follow-up auto responder is a program that sends a sequence of email messages in certain intervals to people who are added to your list. This makes it a great tool for building a strong relationship with your customers. Here are some examples:

- **Create a course about a subject related to your products.** Put the messages as a sequence to a follow-up auto responder, and everyone who attends will receive a new lesson per day (or any other interval you prefer, e.g. once a week). This all works automatically, without requiring your interaction.

- **Add a form to your web site for visitors who want to receive additional information via email.** The follow-up auto responder will automatically send the requested information, and a couple of days later ask for their input.

- **Automate your product delivery.** If you ship products electronically, such as software or e-books, you can easily set up EmailUnlimited to automatically ship your products via email.

- **Send thank you notes.** Whenever somebody submits an order, send your new customer a thank you message. A few days later, you will ask if he or she is satisfied with your product, and offer support if necessary. Your customers will love you for being so attentive!

- **Send post-purchase follow-up messages.** This is the best way of selling additional products, because your existing customers are those people who are most likely to buy from you again.

In contrast to most other solutions, EmailUnlimited even collects the addresses of people who sign-up for your auto responder, and thus adds additional value to your customer lists.

This all makes EmailUnlimited a fantastic tool for adding additional value to your

customer relationship management!

All the best,

John Vorwerk

4OfficeAutomation, Inc

We automate your business!

Please visit our web site www.4OfficeAutomation.com for more information and to get free trial versions of our greatest software applications.

PS: Please click here if you wish to be removed from our mailing list

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Do be honest: I don't know exactly how many responses email three draws, however, it is a good reminder to people who have downloaded EmailUnlimited and forgot about it. Business people are always so busy – including me :-).

Message 4: EmailUnlimited Survey - your chance to win a free license

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.

1802 N. Carson St.
Suite 212-2190

Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: (530) 658-8419
Fax: (530) 658-8419

4OfficeAutomation

Dear Chris Sanders,

you downloaded EmailUnlimited a couple of days ago, and we are really wondering how you are getting along with it. In order to be able to improve our products and services, we invite you to quickly submit the following form.

Win a free copy of EmailUnlimited 3.0 Gold!

Just for submitting this survey, you will automatically enter to our monthly draft to win a free license of EmailUnlimited 3.0 Gold, which is a $269.00 value!

Filling this survey only takes a minute, and it really helps a lot to improve EmailUnlimited.

All the best,

John Vorwerk

Here are the questions

1. Your business is...

2. What was your reason for trying EmailUnlimited?

3. Are you still evaluating EmailUnlimited?   ○ Yes   ○ No

4. Please rate the following features:

	Good	Average	Poor
Email Editor	○	○	○
Email delivery speed	○	○	○
Ease of use	○	○	○
Data editor	○	○	○
Database compatibility	○	○	○

5. Do you have any further comments?

6. Are there any features you are missing in EmailUnlimited? How can we improve the product?

7. Did you encounter difficulties downloading EmailUnlimited?

○ No, the download was no problem

○ I had difficulties downloading EmailUnlimited

○ I have not been able to EmailUnlimited

8. Where have you learned about EmailUnlimited?

Please select ▼

If other, please specify:

9. What do you think about pricing?

○ It's a bargain

○ It is fairly priced

○ It is expensive

10. Do you plan to purchase EmailUnlimited?

○ Yes   ○ No

I have already decided for the following product:

Submit survey

Please click here if you wish to be removed from our mailing list

We have created the survey using Microsoft Front Page. It links to an ASP script on our web site that processes the form data and sends it to us via email. The percentage of people who fill the survey is not so large. In some cases users who had a trouble using EmailUnlimited used this survey to mention their difficulties, allowing us to provide assistance – and finally make the sale :-)

I also have to mention that most responses are rather positive and bring a lot of valuable feedback that helps us improve EmailUnlimited.

Message 5: Your EmailUnlimited Trial is Soon Going to Expire

4OfficeAutomation, Inc.
1802 N. Carson St.
Suite 212-2190

Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: (530) 658-8419
Fax: (530) 658-8419

4OfficeAutomation

Dear Chris Sanders,

you downloaded EmailUnlimited almost one month ago, and now the trial period is ending soon. I hope that you have taken the opportunity to thoroughly test EmailUnlimited, and realize how much value it adds to your business operations and client relations.

Now is the time to decide whether you would like to permanently harvest the benefits EmailUnlimited brings to your business.

EmailUnlimited - The Best Marketing Investment for Your Business

Remember: you only have to purchase EmailUnlimited once, and then you can use it as much as you like. You can contact your customers on a regular basis, without having to pay a monthly subscription fee or hefty postage fees.

So the decision to buy EmailUnlimited is not a hard one: It is one of the best and most efficient marketing and communication tools you can buy, actually the only one that has a positive return on investment.

Which is the best Edition for You?

You know, there are two editions of EmailUnlimited: Standard and Gold Edition. Both are very powerful, and offer the best value for your money in the whole industry.

The difference is that EmailUnlimited Gold Edition has a couple of additional features, such as EmailServer Plus, which is a complete SMTP server for your desktop that puts an end to provider limitations.

Other features, that are only available in the Gold version, are:

- The capability of using multiple email accounts, which is great for people who run several newsletters.
- A Remove Duplicates wizard that removes duplicate entries and keeps your mailing list clean.
- Support of ODBC and SQL compliant databases that provide access to databases in corporate networks.

Though these features are available for evaluation in the trial edition, you will not be able to

use them anymore when you purchase the Standard Edition.

30-Day Money-Back Guarantee!

And if you are still undecided: there is a 30-day money-back guarantee. If you purchase EmailUnlimited and are not fully satisfied, you can return your license and get a full refund.

<div align="center">

Ye<u>s</u>, I want to invest in EmailUnlimited

</div>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send a message to john@4officeautomation.com .

I am looking forward to your business!

All the best,

John Vorwerk

PS: With our 30-day money-back guarantee, there is no risk involved! Go right to our secure order page using the following link:

<div align="center">

http://www.4officeautomation.com/EmailUnlimited/register.asp

</div>

This is the last message we send to people who evaluate EmailUnlimited. A lot of marketers recommend sending at least seven emails, however, I don't want to be getting on nerves.

I once signed-up to the trial of a competitor, and guess what? He bombed me with promotional messages on a daily basis, mostly unrelated to his own products, but instead promoting ebooks I am not interested in.

How can I use follow-up auto responding for after-sales customer care?

It depends on the nature of your product, but with a little phantasie, you can create useful follow-up sequences for almost any product. Especially for sophisticated products that have a lot of functions, sequential email may be great tool to add value to your product.

Let's do some examples:

My first car, e.g., was a used Volkswagen Polo. Just two months before I sold it, I discovered it had a feature for cleaning the rear window! Of course, I did not read the manual thoroughly. Firstly I hate reading manuals, secondly it was frustrating because it covered a lot of options that I did not have in my car.

If they had sent a sequence of messages explaining all feature of MY car, I would have not only been a happier customer, but would also have saved a lot of time cleaning this stupid rear window.

And when you think about the 700+ plus functions of the i-Drive system of the new BMW 7 Series, it would make one message per day explaining one feature for the next two years. Uh-oh.

Let's try something different:

Hotels. A hotel could send a survey a week after the guest has visited the location, asking how he or she liked the service.

A mountain-bike shop could send articles and maps about beautiful biking routes in your area on a weekly basis.

Make sewing-machine customers happy be sending them tips for getting the most of their machine via email. The same goes for TVs, PDAs, computers, radios, MP3 players, and so on.

In fact, a lot of products contain a number of hidden features that can only be discovered by ready the manual – but who reads the manual? For those people, sequence emails may be a great tool to learn all details. Furthermore, it increases confidence to your product and your company.

This all makes follow-up auto responding a great tool for improving customer relationships and ensuring repeat purchases.

Email and the Press

What is the easiest way to deliver my press release to journalists via email?

Email is a very powerful way to send your newest press release to journalists, because you can deliver it to all major outlets with the click of a mouse.

Of course, you can purchase or rent a list of journalists' email addresses, or collecting addresses from newspaper and magazine websites.

An easier option is to rely on one of the well-known opt-in release services, such as http://www.internetnewsbureau.com/

Distributing your release this way usually costs ~$200-$400 per release. Add $100-200 if you want the service to write the actual release for you.

However, because many people create lists and send press releases this way, those poor journalists receive a lot of (junk) releases every day. We have tried this approach several times, but it did not work too well for us.

Conclusion: the easiest way surely is not the most promising way to get your news into the papers.

How do I generate a hand-picked list of journalists to whom I can send my press release?

The best way to use email marketing for public relations—of course, you have already guessed it :)—is to create an opt-in list of journalists who are interested in your company. It costs a little more effort, but 'it's really worth it (unless you can afford to hire a PR agency). Here's the way to go:

1. Find the addresses of journalists who may be interested in your company or products. Examine newspapers, magazines, web sites and other media that serve the industries of your target group. You can also search the Internet.

2. Try to collect at least the following information:

   - Name

   - Publication

   - Area of interest

   - Email address

   - Lead time (how far ahead of publication they work)

3. Make the initial contact. One very successful technique is to send compliments on a recent article they've written. Ask for permission to submit items that might be of interest for them.

4. Once you get permission, send your press release or news item. The journalist will either print your submission, use it to research a story, file it for the future, or throw it away.

   If it is rejected, accept the rejection, do not try to change the journalist's attitude—and do not try to force them to publish your item. If you do not receive a reply, don't follow up. There is nothing that annoys journalists more than email like "have you received my message?"

   Once a journalist has shown interest in your story, however, things are different: do follow-up, ask if you can be of help while the journalist creates an article.

Technical Aspects of Email Marketing

I have decided to implement email marketing for my business. What tools do I need to get started?

If you plan to regularly send emails to a group larger than 20 or so, I highly recommend that you spend $150 - $300 to purchase good email marketing software. You will amortize this cost very quickly, as it saves you a lot of time managing your list of contacts and increases the effectiveness of your campaign by allowing personalization.

Alternatively, you can use one of those many list management services that charge you from $20.00 up to several hundred bucks per month, depending on the size of your mailing list.

Have a look at the chapter [Recommended Email Marketing Tools](#) for a list of recommended tools.

What is better, using an email marketing software or using an online service?

Personally, I prefer using email marketing software that runs on my own computer.

Surely, using an online service has advantages: it is available 24/7, without requiring you to have your computer running. It may be faster to deliver emails this way, as they probably have a faster connection than the one you have—and you only have to upload one message, once—instead of tying up your computer for several hours.

However, there are certain disadvantages: Most online services charge a monthly fee, while you can purchase software once and run it forever. Services can also be problematic when their servers are down, which is not very frequent, but does happens sometimes, especially on holidays when everyone sends special offers. Furthermore, when using a service, you have to provide your list of email addresses to a third party, and this may cause problems.

I am not saying that reputable email marketing services sell their customers lists to third parties in order to make profit. However, what happens when your list hosting provider comes in a debt situation and potential bankruptcy is around the corner? I have seen companies ordered by the courts to sell their assets to pay back investors and account payables, and a database of emails is considered an asset.

Furthermore, most privacy agreements state that addresses will not be given to a third party, so giving your addresses to a list hosting provider may be seen as a violation of your privacy agreement.

All in all, if you are serious about using email marketing as a strategic business tool, I recommend using email marketing software that runs on your on computer. It gives you much more control, and it is often easier to integrate a software package to your office environment, as the software can cooperate directly with your corporate databases.

Which one you choose really depends on your business and your personality. If you are more technically oriented and have a good Internet connection, a software package will suit you well. If you are an executive who only uses the computer to check email and browse the web, using a may be the better choice.

Can't I simply put the email addresses in the CC line and send it with my email client?

No! Never put your contact list in the CC line. First of all, your complete mailing list can be stolen by anyone who receives your mailing. Recipients will complain, and your reputation will be damaged. Secondly, your ISP will only allow you to put a limited number of addresses in the CC line, and otherwise simply ignores your message.

My ISP only allows me to send about 1,000 emails per month. How can I overcome this limitation?

This problem can easily be solved by purchasing a so-called desktop email server. A desktop email server delivers email directly to your customers' email accounts, bypassing your SMTP account. Many good email marketing software packages, such as EmailUnlimited Gold, contain a desktop email server.

What is MIME?

MIME stands for Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions. It is an official standard that defines how email programs have to structure email in order to be relayed and shown to the recipient. Almost every email program and web service you can find supports MIME, because otherwise you would not be able to read your email.

What is multi-part MIME?

Multi-part MIME is an extension of the MIME standard. It allows you to send email not only in plain text format, but also in rich RTF or HTML format. Furthermore multi-part MIME is necessary to send emails with file attachments. When you shop for email marketing software, make sure that it is multi-part MIME compliant, because otherwise you won't be able to send state-of-the-art HTML emails.

What is the best way to send files to a list of recipients?

When you need to deliver files - such as updates, pictures or product brochures – to your list of recipients, you have two choices:

You can either attach those files to your email, or you can upload the file to your web server and email the link to your file.

Generally, I recommend uploading the file. When you send a file to a large list of recipients, it may take a lot of time, as your email program and SMTP server have to deliver one email to each recipient, and thus have to upload your file once for each recipient.

Furthermore, many email clients do not allow users to open files directly due to virus protection. For the same reason, many people refuse to open emails that contain attachments and simply delete your email.

I really like Flash Animations. Is it possible to send them via email?

As far as I know, it is not possible to send Flash animations directly via email; you can only send a link to a web page that shows Flash animations. The reason is that most email clients simply will not execute Flash animations, so all the user sees is an empty frame.

How about adding multimedia content to emails, such as sound and video?

There are a lot of companies offering multimedia enhancements for emails, however, I recommend staying away from them.

Multimedia emails may be successful when sending them to techies because of the novelty effect.

For most other users, multimedia may be more difficult to use, and thus create a barrier to people who are not so fond of new technology toys. Furthermore, keep in mind that they may not be displayed properly on many email clients. And these messages are very large, and thus slow to download. Also, many people find Internet ads with a lot of bells and whistles annoying. Thus, multimedia emails are a waste of time for both, you and the customer.

Last but not least: creating multimedia content costs a lot of time and money. Better invest your marketing budget in an excellent copywriter who makes your sales message as efficient as possible.

What is an NDR or bounced email, and how do I handle it?

NDRs (non-deliverable-receipts) and bounced emails are email notifications you receive every time an email from you could not be delivered to the recipient.

There are several types of NDRs: Some are just warning messages telling you that your email server had difficulties delivering your email to a certain address. Most NDRs, however, tell you that it is not possible to deliver your email. There are many reasons for delivery failures, such as:

- The user does not exist anymore
- The domain name is invalid
- The recipient's mail box is full (indicating that the mailbox probably is abandoned)

The best way to handle NDRs is to remove the corresponding addresses from your list. You can either do this manually, or use an email marketing program such as EmailUnlimited to clean-up your list.

Other reasons for non-delivery may be that your email originates from an untraceable source. This may be the case when you do not have a fixed IP address and use a desktop email server for delivering your email. In this case, you should use an external SMTP server for sending your mailing.

Last but not least, it may be that you cannot send email because your account is blacklisted

What do I do when my account, domain or IP address gets black-listed?

When you domain is black-listed, it means that some organization has put your email address, domain name or IP address to a list of addresses that are blocked by many ISPs, and thus your emails will not be delivered anymore.

Normally, getting blacklisted is the punishment for spamming and shall prevent further spamming. However, sometimes, you can find your own email address being blacklisted although you definitely did not spam. This may be the case when a spammer abuses your address, when a spam message links to your domain or when someone who has subscribed to your newsletter years ago, forgot about it, does not find your unsubscribe instructions and submits your address to the black lists.

In such a case, you have to contact the organization that hosts the black list. Although you may be very upset, you need to stay cool. Do not threaten them with lawsuits, but explain your situation and ask politely what do. Normally, you should be removed from the black list. If they refuse, however, you have no other choice than switch the ISP and send a complaint to the government and your local business organizations.

Why are most hosting providers against spam?

Hosting providers are against spam because it put a lot of load on their server. It takes a lot of compute power and bandwidth to deliver a large number of emails, and when people complain, they are the ones who have to process the complaints. Furthermore, they risk their IP addresses to be blacklisted, and so they often simply shutdown the accounts of spam suspects.

What do I do when my hosting account gets canceled?

When your hosting account gets cancelt, you will have to find a new one with more email-friendly policies. Email-friendly policies means

- You can send as many emails as you like as long as you do not send spam.

- If they receive a spamming or email abuse complaint they notify you and give you a chance to resolve the issue, opposed to simply terminating your account.

Furthermore, I highly recommend choosing one of the smaller hosting provider. They need your business and offer superior support, without leaving you in the waiting line when you call.

Of course, you can try to fight your account cancellation, but this only takes a lot of time and energy. And be honest: do you really want to do business with that company anymore?

Recommended Email Marketing Tools

EmailUnlimited

EmailUnlimited is one of the most sophisticated email marketing applications that are available today, and I have written many parts of it myself. It lets you automate almost all aspects of email marketing in your business. Among many other functions, it lets you

- Automatically add new subscribers

- Send a welcome message to new subscribers

- Process forms and removal requests

- Send personalized HTML emails to your list

- Clean up your mailing lists automatically

- Send follow-up autoresponses

EmailUnlimited has an easy-to-use interface, so that even novice users will be able to use it without training.

A powerful email editor lets you create and send rich HTML mailings to make your message even more convincing.

EmailUnlimited comes in two editions: Standard and Gold.

The Gold Edition contains all features of the Standard version, plus a desktop email server, support for multiple email accounts and a wizard to remove duplicate entries from your database.

Learn more about EmailUnlimited at http://www.emailunlimited.info

AWeber

AWeber is a very affordable online solution for email marketing. Though they have specialized on follow-up autoresponding, AWeber also offers features for list hosting and sending HTML newsletters.

Take a look at their free test-drive!

Click here to go to AWeber

ProAutoResponder

ProAutoResponder is very similar to AWeber. Their unique sales point is the capability to send audio emails by recording your voice message on the phone and sending it via email. Furthermore, they offer follow-up auto responders and click-through tracking. HTML is supported as well as message personalization.

Click here to go to ProAutoResponder.com

Yahoo Groups

If you want to run a hobby or non-profit newsletter or discussion list, have a look at Yahoo! Groups. They offer a free ad-sponsored service that hosts your contact list, manages subscriptions and lets you choose between running an announcement list, a moderated discussion list or a unmoderated discussion forum.

I do not recommend using Yahoo! Groups for business, as it is obvious to the recipients that you use Yahoo! and thus leaves an unprofessional impression.

Click here to go to Yahoo! Groups

Recommended Reading

If you are serious about Internet marketing, I highly recommend the following books:

MYWS - Make Your Words Sell!

This is one of my favorite Internet marketing books! Written by Joe Robson and Ken Evoy, Make Your Words Sell teaches you how to write sales copy that really sells!

Get into the mind of your customer, find out what she wants, and write the copy that gets the sale – this is what MYWS is all about.

Whether you need text for your website or your next direct email campaign, MYWS shows you how to create a customer oriented sales letter using a proven step-by-step approach.

Click here to get to the MYWS site

MYKS – Make Your Knowledge Sell!

If you want to create an ebook in order to turn your subscription efforts into a profit center, MYKS is required reading. It shows you a lot of proven techniques for creating successful ebooks. Furthermore, there is a large section about marketing your ebook, and a list of more than a hundred places where you can promote it.

Click here to get to the MYKS site

Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World

A comprehensive one-volume reference covering all aspects of marketing, including not only email and other Internet strategies, but also writing sales copy, public relations, in-person marketing, and much more. Shel Horowitz continually focuses on how you can be the most effective for the lowest cost,

This reasonably priced 320-page oversize book is crammed with wonderful information.

The nine chapters on Internet marketing are also available as an e-book.

Click here to go to Shel's Grassroots Marketing site

How to Create The Ultimate, Automated Web Business

This is a great guide about automating your office, written by Internet marketing guru Marlon Sanders. It shows you step-by-step how you can automate many of your business operations!

In fact, you do not have to be a computer freak to turn the dream of having a completely automated Internet-based money machine into reality. Many procedures can be automated using easy-to-use standard software that you already have installed on your computer!

Hey, even I have done it this way! And Marlon will show you step-by-step, using tons of screenshot, how you can do it as well. You will be surprised how much time you will save once you have set your business on auto-pilot.

Click here to go to Marlon's Automate site

Recommended Sites & Resources

ProfitSpider

ProfitSpider is the ultimate software for finding new business for your business. Using ProfitSpider, you can analyze your competition, discover their secret traffic networks and turn them into your own stream of visitors.

It is today's the most powerful marketing tool for acquiring new business on the Internet

Click here to get ProfitSpider

AssociatePrograms.com

Need a sponsor for your email publications? Have a look at AssociatePrograms.com. Allan Gardyne's site it full of tips and recommendations, and offers a great selection of affiliate programs. You are almost guaranteed to find one that fits the theme of your e-zine or discussion list.

Click here to go to AssociatePrograms.com

IdeaMarketers.com

Searching for content? Look no further than IdeaMarketers.com! On that site, you will find thousands of articles that you can use in your e-zine. If you are a writer, you can also offer your own articles for publishing.

Click here to go to Idea Marketers

Recommended Discussion Lists and Newsletters

Here is a list of online publications that you simply have to read! They are great resources, full of new ideas, interesting articles and extremely helpful people!

The Email Marketing Digest

The Email Marketing Digest is a high-quality discussion list for serious marketing professionals.

In The Email Marketing Digest, you will be able to exchange your own email marketing experiences and receive the newest information about email marketing tactics and strategies. The discussion will cover issues such as

- Creating and running a newsletter

- Building a strong subscriber base

- Using EmailUnlimited most efficiently

- Follow-up auto responding strategies

- Writing efficient sales copy

- Ethical aspects of email marketing

- Enhancing other marketing activities with email marketing

- ...and everything else that relates to email marketing!

The Email Marketing Digest is published every Wednesday. For your free subscription, please go to

http://www.4officeautomation.com/emdigest/

Adventive Media

Adventive is publisher of some of today's best Internet discussion lists. My favorite ones are

- **I-Sales**, a discussion list about selling on the Internet in general – a must-read for every serious business person.
- **I-Copywriting**, a discussion list about writing great sales letters, and also a great place to find copywriters and editors who will help you with your online publication.

- **I-Help**, a discussion list about creating and maintaining web pages and general Internet advice.

- **I-PR**, a discussion list about public relations.

Adventive charges an optional fee for subscribing to their discussion lists, and it is definitely worth it. I highly recommend getting a professional subscription, so that you can post bulletins and free ads to more than 15,000 readers!

Go to http://www.adventive.com/ and subscribe today!

The Write Market

The Write Market is a site that provides web design resources and services. They have a great monthly newsletter about copywriting named "The Write Market Report." It also covers more general marketing topics, such as public relations. You can subscribe for free at

http://www.thewritemarket.com

Recommended E-zine Directories

Though e-zine directories do not bring as many new subscribers as one might expect, here are some of the larger e-zine directories you should definitely be listed in:

http://www.SparkList.net
http://www.WebScoutLists.com
http://www.ezine-dir.com/
http://www.fun-lists.com/
http://ezine-universe.com/
http://www.e-zinez.com

http://www.marketingseek.com
http://www.ezinesearch.com
http://www.ezinesplus.com
http://www.ezinehub.com/
http://www.netterweb.com
http://www.newsletter-directory.com

Tip: use a clipboard tool such as ReplyAssistant to collect all the data about your e-zine – name, publisher, URL, description, and so on. Enter them once into ReplyAssisant and afterwards you can simply drag & drop them into the directory submission forms.

For your convenience, here is a short tutorial:

Before submitting your pages, launch Reply-Assistant, and create a new category (or folder), named "E-Zine Submissions" (or enter the name of your e-zine). Select it, and create a new text item named "URL" that contains the URL that points to the homepage of your e-zine. Do the same steps for all the other items, such as keywords and description. Afterwards, your ReplyAssistant item list might look similar to the illustration on the right.

Once you have created all items, you can simply drag & drop (or copy&paste) them directly into the corresponding fields of the directories' submission forms.

You agree that this is much faster than typing everything again and again, isn't it?

You can download a free evaluation copy of ReplyAssistant at http://www.4officeautomation.com/ReplyAssistant
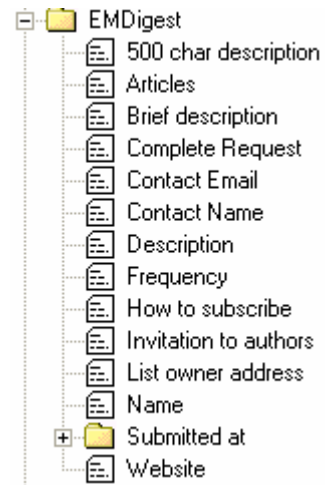
Appendix A: The Email Marketing Digest Issue 0001

For your inspiration, here is a copy of the first issue of The Email Marketing Digest:

```
Nov 14, 2001                                             Issue 0001
******************************************************************

     T H E   E M A I L   M A R K E T I N G   D I G E S T

******************************************************************


                     f i r s t   i s s u e

------------------------------------------------------------------
Moderated by                                         Published by

John Vorwerk                                      4OfficeAutomation
john@4officeautomation.com       http://www.4officeautomation.com
------------------------------------------------------------------
SEND POSTS: mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com
------------------------------------------------------------------


In this digest....

   //-- Moderator comment --//

           "Welcome to the first issue!"

   // -- New discussions -- //

           "Permission to Rethink!!!"
               ~ Gerry Manning
                    ~Moderator comment

           "Increase in "Marketing" E-Mail"
               ~ Ronni Rhodes

           "Starting an Email Newsletter"
               ~ Kyle F. Tobin
                    ~Moderator comment


------------------------------------------------------------------

// -- Moderator comment -- //

Hello Email Marketers,

Welcome to the very first issue of "The Email Marketing Digest".
I am pretty excited, even more excited than I was when I sent my
very first newsletter two years ago.

Though we consist of "only" 127 subscribers right now, I have
already received a lot of very interesting posts for this first
issue. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this first
issue of EMDigest.
```

I'm really looking forward to many great discussions!

Last but not least, special thanks to John Audette, moderator of
the legendary I-Sales discussion list. He provided a lot of
inspiration, and set the bar for high-quality discussion lists.

All the best,

John Vorwerk

// -- New discussions -- //

---["Permission to Rethink!!!"]--->

From: Gerry Manning <gmanning@eastclear.ie>

John, Congratulations on getting the new list up and running. I
hope it will be a great success. I am interested in the field of
email marketing but wondering whether it's a cul de sac rather than
a useful route. I've made a few efforts trying, as I thought, to do
everything just right. Following the gospel according to Seth Godin,
clean, up to date 'permission' lists were used. A neat and relevant
message - which included an attractive promotional offer - was sent
to a well defined and targeted group of over 1200 marketing managers
in our local area, the very people who would normally buy what we
sell. I know the market was right and I know the offer was good - it
worked when we tried direct contact by phone and letter.

And the result of the email campaign...well, that's the problem,
there was no result! Just a lot of unsuscribes from those who even
bothered to unsuscribe (personally I never unsuscribe...it's easier
to simply hit the delete button. How many of you also do this?
Unsuscribing often signals to unscrupulous marketers that your email
address is active and it only serves to make the problem worse). Like
everyone, I get a lot of Spam. It's getting more annoying because it's
taking longer to download now that so many marketers are going for
the attractive and colourful html mails with images etc. Anything I
haven't specifically asked for (and that includes things that I may
have 'asked for' because of some permission I may have given in a past
moment of weakness) gets the same treatment.

In short, despite the well rehearsed distinctions made by legitimate
email marketers, the average Joe or Josephine makes no distinction
between Spam and non-Spam. We don't care whether an advertising
message arises from a nasty bulk emailing or the most ethical list
around. We just dump the lot, don't we?   So when I consider how I
deal with *all* unsolicited email - just clean out the junk and then
read my business and personal correspondence, I can well understand
why others might respond to my marketing messages in the same way. I
want email marketing to work, because I could use it...but I dunno!
I'll be most interested to hear the views of the list.

Gerry Manning - www.artefact.ie

Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

       ~ Moderator comment
            Interesting point. Does email marketing work at all? Is there
            anything that makes you open a promotional message, or do you
            simply delete all of them?
<--

---["Increase in "Marketing" E-Mail"]--->

From: Ronni Rhodes [Ronni@wbcimaging.com]

I've already noticed an increase in the number of e-mails disguised
as marketing messages since the anthrax scare. I'm not necessarily
talking about bulk Spam - these are coming with what appear to be
genuine list information from sources to which I've supposedly "opted
in."

Is this trend going to continue? I would think that legitimate e-mail
marketers are shuddering at this activity. Is e-mail marketing going
to lose its' effectiveness?

Good luck with this new list, John! I hope to learn much from this
group and benefit from the members' collective wisdom....

Best regards,

Ronni Rhodes
mailto:Ronni@wbcimaging.com

Ignite Your Site with Streaming Media!
URL: http://www.wbcimaging.com Phone: (520) 742-5780

Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

<---

---["Starting an Email Newsletter"]--->

From: Kyle F. Tobin [kyletobin@home.com]

You wanted a posting, here's why I signed up- and I'm anxious to
get started. We're a small lawn care company trying to compete with
the big guys by doing things different, as long as it's better.

I finally got a passable website up and we're contributing new
information to it as often as possible. We've made a point of collecting

email addresses from our customers who we increasingly correspond with
through email. I'm pretty sure they like it better that way!

My problem is that I want to implement a regular newsletter and
increase our email correspondence as it seems like an opportunity to
be more informative and timely with changes in service, for marketing
new services, as well as managing and guiding customer's expectations
- hopefully resulting in a better service experience.

So, I need advice on how to do it right, from the ground up!

I'm mindful of the many services that would do this for me, but I'm
excited about doing as much as possible myself as long as I don't have
to quit my existing job responsibilities.

Thanks for any help and advice offered.

Kyle F. Tobin
kyle@lawnsavers.com

President, LawnSavers Inc.

Visit: http://www.lawnsavers.com -
Your Source for Complete Lawn & Tree Care Information!

Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

    ~ Moderator comment
        Thanks for your post, Kyle. I think the most difficult
        point is to regularly find newsworthy items. What do
        you think?

<---

Subscribe instructions:

To subscribe, send a message to the following address:

mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com?subject=subscribe

Unsubscribe instructions:

To unsubscribe, please send a message to the following address:

mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com?subject=unsubscribe

If you encounter problems with subscribing or unsubscribing, please contact our listmaster at

mailto:info@4officeautomation.com

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Appendix B: Sample Discussion List Template

```
Nov 14, 2001                                         Issue 0001
****************************************************************

      T H E   E M A I L   M A R K E T I N G   D I G E S T

****************************************************************

         information -> contacts -> communication -> success

----------------------------------------------------------------


Moderated by                                       Published by
John Vorwerk                                    4OfficeAutomation
john@4officeautomation.com      http://www.4officeautomation.com


----------------------------------------------------------------
SEND POSTS: mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com
----------------------------------------------------------------


In this digest....

   //-- Moderator comment --//

          "Comment Subject"

   // -- New discussions -- //

          "Topic 1"
              ~ Author
                   ~Moderator comment

          "Topic 2"
              ~ Author

          "Topic 3"
              ~ Author
                   ~Moderator comment

----------------------------------------------------------------

// -- Moderator comment -- //

Hello Email Marketers,

[My comment


]

Your list moderator

John Vorwerk

----------------------------------------------------------------
```

```
// -- New discussions -- //

---[ "Topic" ]--->

From: Name [Address@Server.com]

[Post

Signature]

Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

      ~ Moderator comment

          [Write moderator comment here]
<---

-----------------------------------------------------------------

---[ "Topic2" ]--->

From: Name [Address@Server.com]

[Post

Signature]
Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

      ~ Moderator comment

          [Write moderator comment here]

<---

-----------------------------------------------------------------

---[ "Topic3" ]--->

From: Name [Address@Server.com]

[Post

Signature]

Comment? - mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com

      ~ Moderator comment

          [Write moderator comment here]

<---

-----------------------------------------------------------------

Submitting Posts

Please send all messages intended for posting to:
```

em-digest@4officeautomation.com

For more details about posting, please visit our FAQ page

http://www.4officeautomation.com/emdigest/faq.htm

You are subscribed as [EmailAddress]

If you have questions, please visit our FAQ page

http://www.4officeautomation.com/emdigest/faq.htm,

or send an email to mailto:info@4officeautomation.com

Subscribe instructions:

To subscribe, send a message to the following address:

mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com?subject=subscribe

Unsubscribe instructions:

To unsubscribe, please send a message to the following address:

mailto:emdigest@4officeautomation.com?subject=unsubscribe

If you encounter problems with subscribing or unsubscribing,
please contact our listmaster at

mailto:info@4officeautomation.com

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Appendix C: Sample Newsletter from Handspring

Here is a sample issue of the Handspring e-newsletter, which is sent once a month and in my opinion has an excellent design. Though I do not own a Handspring palm computer (I prefer my old Psion 5mx which has a keyboard), I read it quite frequently, simple because I enjoy the excellent design.

Handspring e-newsletter

Five Great Reasons to Shop Early at Handspring.com

Think holiday shopping is for the birds? Not when you shop online at Handspring.com. Starting this week, we're offering a ton of spectacular deals on all Visor handhelds. So read on, and tell a friend to spread the good cheer!

#5 Choose a FREE Holiday Gift

What FREE gift will you choose?

Now, for a limited time, when you buy a select Visor handheld at Handspring.com you'll also get a FREE holiday gift of your choice. Choose from a grab bag of cool cases, convenient travel chargers, versatile styli and more. Whether you're buying for yourself or for someone special, this fantastic Holiday special gives you two gifts in one! Check out all the free gifts!

]

#4 FREE Shipping During the Holidays

Who says the day after Thanksgiving has to be spent searching for parking spaces at the mall? Save gas and sleep in! Your Visor handheld purchase at Handspring.com comes with FREE standard shipping, so you can do all your Holiday shopping from the comfort of home—without standing in a single line.
Celebrate with Free Shipping

#3 Visor Deluxe—Was $169, Now Only $129!

The fun and flexible Visor Deluxe handheld is now only $129—that's $40 less than before! With 8 MB of memory and infinite expandability, this is one fantastic starter handheld that won't break your budget.
Check out Visor Deluxe

Plus, when you add optional Springboard™ modules, you can do even more. Like listen to MP3s, take digital pictures or de-stress with a game or two.
Learn more about Springboard expansion with our new interactive demo

Our best-seller
is now $40 less

#2 Our Handy Gift Guide

Not sure which handheld to get? Looking for some gifts for everyone? Check our Gift Guide at Handspring.com for great gift-giving ideas that fit into every budget. So whether you're shopping for a student, a newbie, a total gadget guru, or even yourself—you'll know exactly which Visor handhelds and accessories are the perfect fit.
Let our Gift Guide help you

Are you a
"Gadget Guru"?

#1 Extended Return Policy For Early Shoppers

If you want to shop early for the holidays, we're giving you one less thing to worry about. Any item you purchase from Handspring.com between now and December 6 can be returned to us for full credit through January 7 of next year, as long as it's in good condition. That means if you shop early, you'll get more than our normal 30-day return policy. It's just one more way we've made holiday shopping at Handspring.com worry-free. (Purchases made after December 6 will be subject to the normal 30-day return period.)

Start saving on your holiday gifts now at Handspring.com!

To Change Your Email Address

To change the email address where you receive your Handspring e-newsletter please click here.
http://h.4at1.com/c/e/h2/hag/coa/puf/0001/profile.jsp

Customer Support

If you have any questions relating to Customer Support, please visit our Customer Support site.

International Subscribers

Please note that all special offers presented in the e-newsletter apply to the US and Canada only. If you live in Europe and would like to subscribe to our European Handspring e-newsletter, please click here.

Online Privacy Policy

We encourage you to visit our website if you'd like to learn about Handspring.com's online privacy policy.

To Unsubscribe

If you no longer wish to receive additional Handspring e-newsletters, please click here.
http://h.4at1.com/c/e/u/unsub.jsp?uid=141.1619.6863.233.1.33862927

Appendix D: Table of Questions

Appendix E: Index