

Building a Mailing List from Scratch

Without doubt, email is one of the strongest ways to reach an audience and market your brand or product. An email list should be one of your top priorities if you're looking to grow your business.

Email marketing is a cost-effective way to reach your target audience and drive traffic to your website. It also provides you with a user database that you can use for other marketing activities in the future.

Creating your own email list from scratch can seem overwhelming at first, but once you know the basics, it's not as scary as it sounds. In this Insider's Guide to Building a Mailing List from Scratch, we'll show you how to build an email list from the beginning so you can leverage its power for future marketing activities such as getting more signups for your blog, launching a loyalty program, selling more products or services, and more.

Choosing Your Email Service Provider

An email service provider (ESP) is the tool for steadily sending out email communications. An ESP allows you to customize your email format, track clicks and open rates, integrate it with your website or app, and segment your subscriber list into multiple groups. It is an all-in-one shop for managing and sending marketing or business emails.

There are many types of email service providers in the market arena. Each one offers various features and tools. Choosing a trustworthy one is important. You want them to keep your subscribers' information private. And you want them to have dependable deliverability.

Questions to ask as you look for and test out different ESPs.

1. How effectively can you manage a growing subscriber list? Choose an email service provider that can handle your growth. For example, you may only be sending a hundred emails right now, but can they manage sending thousands of emails in a day as your list grows?
2. How easy is it to use the email service provider? It should be simple enough for you to learn to use and create campaigns. Do they have a healthy help section on their website with tutorials or information? What kind of support do they offer if you need it?
3. What is the domain score or the deliverability and backend infrastructure? Are the emails going to the main inbox or into spam folders? A delivery rate of 98% is a good goal.

4. Does it have automation features to reduce manual work? You want to send the most relevant messages to the right people at the right time. With automation you set up campaigns that are scheduled and automatically sent.
5. What templates are included? Look for a provider with a multitude of designs, flexible layouts, and with mobile-friendly templates that look great on any device.
6. Does it include some form of tracking? Make sure the ESP has an enhanced dashboard where you can track statistics like your bounces, unsubscribes, social sharing, open rates and clicks.
7. If you sell products or services, can the ESP be tied into the sales program so those who buy your products are automatically added to a specific mailing list campaign in you ESP system?

Choosing your email service provider is the first step in owning your list. Look for security and reliability as well as features that are easy to understand. It should have automation and templates that help make sending emails less hands on. Whichever one you choose needs to work seamlessly with your landing pages and website.

There are two main options when it comes to choosing an ESP - you can use a freemium service, or you can pay for a premium email marketing solution. Both have their positives and negatives. Once you've decided on an ESP, it's time to build your list, set up your first campaign and begin building a relationship with them.

Make the Signup Process Easy

Now that you've chosen your email service provider, you need a way to get people to sign up. And you want that to be as easy as possible for them.

When creating your email signup process, you want to keep it as easy as possible for the subscriber. There are a few things to keep in mind when building your sign-up form. First, you need some type of signup form. You can put it on your website or include it in your content, or both. It can be an embedded form, a landing page, or a pop-up.

There are tools like LeadPages or Click Funnels that allow you to create landing page sign up forms. Or most email service providers like Constant Contact, HubSpot, Aweber, ConvertKit, or Mailchimp have the tools to build and integrate a form with your website, WordPress site or blog.

An embedded form is one that is placed in a static position on your website. Your potential subscriber sees it as they scroll to that point on your page. You can add multiple forms on a page to increase your chances of converting visitors to subscribers. For instance, you might have a form in your sidebar, one within the content and one at the end of the page or in the footer.

A pop-up form appears in the website window while the visitor is reading your content. These types of forms can be considered intrusive because they stop the reader from interacting with your page, however they are beneficial because the form is more visible and often leads to more signups. Just make sure you don't add it too close to the top of the page before the reader has a chance to look at the content on the page.

Tips:

- Be sure to implement a double opt-in email. What this does is automatically sends out an email to new subscribers with a link to confirm their email address. This proves subscriber consent (important for GDPR) and ensures the email address is entered correctly.
- Keep your signup form simple. The number of fields asking for information should be minimal and your color schemes should be straightforward - not boring, but not too flashy. The goal of the form is to get the email address.
- Get the setting right. That means placing the signup form in the upper part of your website where it is easy to find. It needs to have a clear call-to-action and not be too intrusive to your content.
- Tell your visitor why they should subscribe. And deliver on your promise. Transparency is key to building respect. Clearly state what information you'll be sending out and how often they should expect to hear from you.
- Offer them a reason to sign up. Give them an incentive such as free stuff, discounts, or a gift. It can be anything from ebooks to checklists, guides to printables, or a percentage off coupon in exchange for their email address. Don't forget to follow up with a strong nurture program to keep your subscribers engaged and loyal readers.
- Include social proof that others found value by joining your list or buying the product or service.
- Use a teasing call-to-action to intrigue people or make them laugh. You want to stand out from the crowd by using something catchy that draws visitors' attention and makes them curious enough to give you their email address.
- Respect user privacy. It's one of the biggest concerns in our digital world. It's also key to building trust and following the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. Let the user know exactly how you plan to use their information and why you need it.

Once you have the signup form created remember to place it in strategic locations. This could be adding the form to your website and social media profiles. Place a link in any freebies you give away. Have your affiliates share it. Share the link when you are a guest on other people's webinars, podcasts, or blog posts.

Once you have your form set up be sure to create a welcome email. You want to greet your new subscribers and begin building a relationship with a good start. This is key to a

positive customer journey. Use the automation features in your ESP so you don't have to do anything but create the initial email itself.

Let's talk about pop-ups.

Pop-up forms help increase the visibility of your signup forms. They are just what they sound like - a form that pops into your viewers page at a set time. The pop up is impossible for your reader to miss because it is right in front of them. They either have to sign up or click the exit to continue reading.

There are different types of pop-ups and ways to integrate them. Using automated triggers will define when the pop-up shows on the screen.

The first type of pop-up is set to come in during the first few seconds a person lands on your page. Or it can be set to pop-up after they move to the certain point on your page. To determine the right time, you should do an A-B testing until you find the right one for your reader sign-ups.

For example, you may get more email sign ups if your form pops in after 5 -10 seconds but have better conversion rates if you wait longer for the form to appear.

Another option for pop-ups is the exit-intent pop-up. This form shows up when the visitor starts to leave your page. Exit intent pop-ups are triggered by the upward movement of a reader's mouse. This is a great place to offer a special offer to get them to subscribe.

You can leverage your pop-ups by:

1. Establishing relationships for later sales
2. Boosting your sales through attractive offers and copy that drives them to revisit your product pages
3. Prevent abandoned carts by overcoming their objections and sending them back to the shopping cart
4. Present seasonal promotions to persuade them to buy
5. Encourage visitors to get on your email list so they receive information about upcoming sales
6. Ask them to take a survey to help you improve your products, website, or business

Pop-ups can be annoying so make sure you configure yours to show at a point after the reader has already received value from your page. They will be more likely to sign up then.

Create Targeted Landing Pages

When creating an email list, you need multiple ways to grab your readers interest and email address. Creating multiple targeted and personalized landing pages based on your visitor's concerns (so the page speaks directly to their worries), is necessary.

Landing pages are the first step to building your email list. A landing page is designed to get your visitors to take a specific action. With a well-crafted, targeted landing page you can hyper target your message for any demographic or audience. This lets you easily segment the subscribers and reach more people with different interests to your website.

Each landing page is set up for a specific targeted audience for a specific product or service. This gives you multiple opportunities to get different people to see your services or products. If you simply put one landing page out, you are limited to only those who are in that demographic.

Having multiple landing pages allows you to tailor your offers based on what and where you want them to land at your website. For example, if you have a landing page offer for real estate accountant services, but also offer investment services you need a landing page for each one.

Another reason to have multiple targeted landing pages is to improve your SEO. This is because you are creating more opportunities to add keywords and use them effectively to draw in potential subscribers and customers.

Finally, multiple landing pages means you have more offers for your marketing. Having more offers means you have more opportunities to sell or share with new customers.

Your landing page should include specific things.

- **Captivating Headline:** Make sure the headline and title of your landing page show your potential customer how your product or service will improve their life or replace something they already have with something much better.

The headline as well as the title needs to be immediately clear to the audience what your product will do for them.

- **Benefits:** Focus on the benefits of your offer. Not only in your headline. The content within needs compelling, clear and concise copy that showcases the benefits of your product or service.

It should speak directly to the visitor by using "you" or "your" to make them feel like you are talking to them. Use words that make them feel ready to take whatever action you want them to take, like signing up for your email list.

- **Give them a clear call to action.** What is it you want them to do? Sign up for your list, go to a specific page on your website or something else. Create solid, compelling call-to-actions that clearly define what you want them to do. Your call

to action needs to tell the visitor exactly what to do next “enter your name and email address below”, “click here to sign up” and so forth.

Use color that contrasts with the other elements on the landing page. Be specific in your wording, like “submit,” “get it now,” “download instantly”. Make the button large enough to stand out with some negative or white space around it.

Creating multiple targeted landing pages is one of the best ways to get new subscribers for your email list. This variety of options gives different demographics the opportunity to see what you offer.

Create High-Quality Lead Magnets

Now that you understand why and what to put on your landing page, you don't want to forget offering something of immediate value to the subscriber. This is called your lead magnet.

Your lead magnet should:

- Solve a real problem your target customer has.
- Promise a single quick win.
- Be super specific about the benefit of the lead magnet.
- Be easy to digest and implement.
- Offer high value.
- Is instantly downloadable.
- Shows your expertise.

There are various options when it comes to creating an opt-in offer. Here are twelve options.

1. Subscriber-only discounts such as a percentage off coupon or a discounted rate on a membership make good opt-in offers. Everyone loves a discount.
2. Free shipping. The cost of shipping can be expensive, and many people will gladly trade their email address to get it for free.
3. Free webinar access. Ask the viewer to sign up with their email address to get free access to an upcoming webinar.
4. Access to private FB group or other type of private conversation location makes the subscriber feel like they are getting into an exclusive club.

5. Checklists or worksheets are easily consumed and actionable. Create one that solves your customer's specific needs.
6. Quizzes are fun opt-in material. After answering a few questions, the visitor enters their email address to view their results.
7. Prompts such as journal prompts, give the subscriber ideas to think about.
8. Printables are especially great for many niches. It can be something like a grocery list or a planner or calendar page.
9. A popular lead magnet is the toolkit. Everyone wants to know what the pros use. So, create a resource list of the tools you use in your business.
10. Another popular opt-in lead magnet is the template. It can be anything that gives the subscriber an outline with fill in the blanks.
11. Host giveaways and contests. Ask for email signatures within the contest entry form.
12. Use surveys. Set up a survey around a specific topic, having participants give you their email address in exchange for the results.

Whatever type of opt-in lead magnet you choose, it needs to provide value but not give away everything. Keep it to one solution to their concern.

Getting Traffic to Your Email Sign-up

Now that you have your opt-in created and your landing page set-up it's time to begin getting traffic to your email sign-up. There are many ways to do this. Here are some of our favorites.

- Participate in relevant group events where you donate something. Require people to sign up for your list to download the product or get the service.
- Be a guest on a webinar. This is a great way to get people to your sign-up page. People love to learn, and webinars are excellent ways to share your
- Set up a referral or sharing program where your readers share your content with their friends. In exchange offer them an incentive for their recommendation.
- Host your own, or be a part of, a summit, bundle, contest, or challenge. In order for the viewer to get the content they must give you their email address.
- Start a YouTube channel and post informative videos. Include a compelling call to action overlay to get people to your email sign up form.

Getting traffic to your email sign up form is like most other marketing techniques online. Spend a little time brainstorming, creating a plan and taking action and you'll begin to see traffic.

Tips for Keeping Subscribers

Once you get traffic, you need to keep those subscribers not only on your list but actively reading and clicking. Here are some tips to help.

Start creating amazing content.

The best way to build your email list and keep them coming back is to start creating content that people want to read. Focus on creating evergreen content (content that doesn't go out of fashion) that solves problems and is easy to share.

Create a newsletter

Once you have some content written, you can continue building your email list by creating a newsletter that people can subscribe to. Include links to your best posts that people can share. Or create an email campaign.

Create an email campaign

An email campaign is a collection of emails that you send to your subscribers on a regular (often weekly or bi-weekly) basis. This is the best way to start engaging with your audience and driving more traffic to your website. These emails can link to your latest blog posts or function as an announcement service for new products or services you're launching.

Don't Spam

It's important to remember that you can't spam your subscribers. Don't email more than once a day. Even that may be too much, depending on your audience.

Stay Relevant

Select topics that are related to your business and that your audience would find interesting. If you're running a blog about dogs, you can send a weekly email that links to your latest blog posts on dog training. This is a good way to get more readers on your blog and have them share with their followers.

Each of these tips will help you build your email list from scratch. Creating content that is relevant, sharable and doesn't spam your subscriber should be one of your top goals.

Templates and Tools Included

We've included a set of checklists, templates, and worksheets to help you quickly get started setting up your mailing list. These include:

- A checklist for getting traffic to your sign-up pages
- A short comparison chart for email service providers
- A short opt-in or landing page template
- A handy worksheet for planning out your landing page
- A checklist to keep you on track as you set up your opt-in form
- A lead magnet ideas worksheet

Use these to keep you on track as you get your mailing list set up from scratch.

What to Do Next

Building your email list from scratch is a great way to drive more traffic to your website and convert leads into customers. It's also a good way to get your name out there and establish yourself as an authority in your niche.

It's important to remember that email marketing isn't spammy. It's all about engaging with your subscribers and providing value. Once you have a few subscribers on your list, make sure to send emails on a regular basis and keep your emails short and to the point.

Use A/B testing to optimize your emails and make sure to test different subject lines and times of day when your subscribers are more likely to open your emails.

Create multiple landing pages that will appeal to different demographics within your niche or topic. You want several, for many reasons including getting more targeted subscribers.

Take the tips found within this insider's guide to begin building your email list from scratch.