PROSPECTS

LEADS &

SUBSCRIBERS

How to start, grow, and maintain your client list.

YOU SHOULD READ THIS eBOOK IF:

- ✓ You are looking for ideas on finding leads.
- ✓ You are looking for ideas on converting leads to subscribers.
- ✓ You want to improve your deliverability.
- ✓ You want to better maintain your lists.
- ✓ You want to minimize your list attrition.

Spider Trainers can help

Marketing automation has been shown to increase qualified leads for businesses by as much as 451%. As experts in drip and nurture marketing, Spider Trainers is chosen by companies to amplify lead and demand generation while setting standards for design, development, and deployment.

Our publications are designed to help you get started, and while we may be guilty of giving too much information, we know that the empowered and informed client is the successful client. We hope this white paper does that for you.

We look forward to learning more about your needs. Please contact us at 651 702 3793 or cmeyer@spidertrainers.com.

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INTRODUCTION

With email such an important part of doing business today, we are all in need of acquiring a list, growing our list, understanding our list, improving our list, or all of the above. There is no shortcut to all of the above — or even to any of the above. Developing a marketing list, be that for use online or offline, requires a great deal of effort. As you consider which of these efforts is best for you, you also need to understand what will and will not get your company name on the radar of one or more spam monitors.

This eBook will give you a good foundation for developing prospects, leads, and subscribers. We've included best practices and a host of ideas to spark your creative thinking as you tackle list acquisition, growth, and management. With most efforts you will experience wins — some small and some really huge — and somewhere along the way you will realize that you've gotten pretty good at it all.

46% of B2B email marketers use third-party lists, but only 11% score the tactic at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale of effectiveness (with 5 as the most effective). 57% score the tactic at 1 or 2.

— *MarketingSherpa*
B2B Marketing Benchmark Report, 2011

40% of B2B marketers rated the leads generated by email marketing (house list) as high quality.

— *Software Advice Survey*

8 in 10 people say the marketing emails they receive go mainly into their primary personal email account, displayed alongside their personal emails. Just 8% have a separate account specifically for receiving marketing emails.

— *Blue Kangaroo*
Survey on Marketing Emails, 2012

CHAPTER 1

HOW TO CAPTURE SUBSCRIBERS

To build an email contact list, you will work to gain permission to send emails from each contact in the list before sending them emails. These rules of engagement are outlined in the *CAN-SPAM act*. Developing a list where the person has explicitly subscribed is a process called opt-in or permission-based list acquisition.

Direct-mail list development is a much less regulated process and while it's not required that you have the recipient's permission, spending money for postage to send to people who are not interested in your offers can put a sizable dent in your marketing budget with no appreciable return on investment.

TIPPING POINT

If permission-based efforts create the only legitimate lists and the tipping point is not when they are added to the list, then when is it? Moreover, if you cannot send an email to ask permission, how can you gain it? The tipping point is the point of acceptance (or

Unconfirmed opt-in. A categorization of an email address submitted to a web form and when no subsequent steps were taken to confirm that the address belongs to the person submitting it. This process results in a poorer quality list because typos may exist or spammers may submit false addresses.

Closed-loop opt-in. Double opt-in. Confirmed opt-in (COI). A process in which a visitor completes and submits an online subscription form that then automatically deploys a confirmation email to the provided address. If the email is successfully delivered (does not bounce) and the recipient clicks the verify link, the address is added to the subscriber list.

Opt-out. The act of removing or requesting removal of a subscriber's email address from a client list.

engagement) — when you have met the potential lead on their turf, invited them to your turf, and they have clicked the submit button in order check out your turf. They have subscribed.

77% of marketers feel that a purchase does constitute marketing permission.

— *RegReady*
Perceptions of Marketing Permission, 2013

70% of consumers feel very strongly or somewhat strongly that they give permission before they can be marketed via email.

— *RegReady*
Perceptions of Marketing Permission, 2013

$20 billion annually. The cost of spam to American firms and consumers.

— *American Economics Association*
The Economics of Spam, 2012

CREATE EMAIL LISTS

A web form is the primary vehicle that enables you to capture permission-based email addresses and to create a closed-loop list. This form should be placed on a *squeeze page*; a page specially designed to solicit subscribers, as well as other prominent areas of your website, such as the about us page, contact page, sidebar, and footer.

For a squeeze page to be successful, you'll need to drive visitors to the page where they can subscribe. That means spreading the word and being engaging as you describe the real value and benefit to leads and why they should subscribe to your list.

Your page should be designed to solicit opt-in email addresses and contain no exit hyperlinks. The omission of links ensures that your visitor is focused on the one and only purpose of the page, to click the submit button. To this end, try including success stories, testimonials, related blog articles, product descriptions, and other content to build trust with the prospect. You should also pay close attention to the use of your company's keywords and keyphrases since, if done correctly, these pages can contribute appreciably to your SEO.

Historically, squeeze pages have contained minimal content, but some search algorithms have made adjustments to more accurately rank and sometimes exclude squeeze pages with too little content. As a

best practice, it is wise to have adequate content, which includes a fairly even text-to-image ratio. Other great engagement tools include images of past newsletter issues or previous emails, or *social proof*.

Aside from your squeeze page and form, there are other ways to gather new subscribers, such as:

- Include forms on your home page and within sidebars, headers, or footers. Use short forms. The most important information is the email address. Over time and with follow-up campaigns or appending services, you can collect additional data, so don't be greedy and try to get it all at once.
- Gather email addresses with a fishbowl, printed form, or a tablet at the checkout counter.
- Include an opt-in checkbox at the checkout process for online stores.

Figure 1.1 A squeeze page should entice the visitor to submit the form and set their expectations about what they will receive as a subscriber.

Figure 1.2 Use social proof to help potential subscribers feel more confident about joining your list.

- Post sign-up links in all of your social-media accounts and detail the benefits of subscribing.
- Offer a sweepstakes for booth visitors who drop off a card or swipe their badge.
- Provide a URL and/or QR code for your squeeze page on product packaging, brochures, point-of-sale posters, and other print materials.
- Have your customer-service, technical-support, and sales teams ask for email addresses during their conversations. Be clear to the caller that when they provide their email address they will be subscribed.
- Include links in your marketing emails so that recipients can easily forward to others.
- Include social sharing links in your emails so that recipients can post the content to their own social accounts.

If you have other forms at your website, these can be prime real estate for soliciting subscribers; as is your shopping cart. While automatically opting-in a site visitor when they make a purchase or transaction is not considered permission-based, providing a clearly labeled checkbox or link does. If you couple this with an auto-responder email asking for verification, you've taken all steps possible to ensure intent.

POP-UP FORMS

There is much debate about whether or not you should interrupt your site visitor with a pop-up form (lightbox),

but regardless of which side of the argument you favor, there is no denying that the pop-up increases subscriber rates, and in most cases by a lot.

If you are concerned that you are missing opportunities to capture visitors as subscribers, you may wish to give this effort a spin. Test also the number of seconds someone should be on your site before the pop-up appears (somewhere between 15 and 45 seconds) and make sure it only displays once per session.

NEGATIVE CONSENT

While short subscriber forms should be prominently placed within your website, be sure to take a look at all of your web forms and see if you are missing other opportunities to solicit subscribers. For other
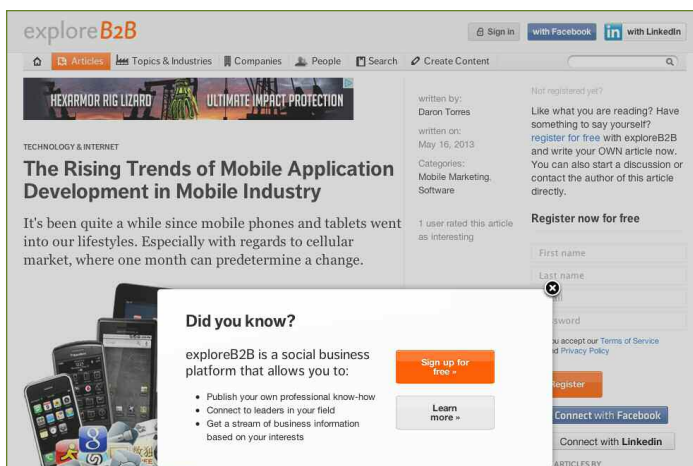

Figure 1.3 exploreB2B does a good job of presenting a lightbox subscribe invitation. While it does interrupt the reader, it is designed well and easy to skip. It might perform even better if the time delay before pop-up was increased to give the reader even more time to read the article and see that the site offers high-value content.

forms, add a single checkbox that permits you to add their name to your list, regardless of the main intent of the form.

There are two types of subscriber checkboxes that you can add: *negative consent* and *positive consent.* When you add a checkbox with the default state ticked to opt-in, this is called negative consent. If you add a checkbox with the default state that is not yet ticked for opt-in, this is called positive consent.

With positive consent, the visitor must actively tick the checkbox in order to subscribe. The label for the checkbox might be something like, "Tick this box to receive special offers and deals." If you use a negative consent version, the checkbox label might read, "Un-tick this checkbox if you do not wish to receive future correspondence."

Negative consent typically results in higher subscriber rates, but also in higher spam complaints since the visitor may not have noticed the pre-ticked check box. Just as users are unlikely to actively tick a checkbox in order to subscribe, they are also unlikely to think to un-tick the checkbox. Only through the careful review of your analytics will you know if the negative consent process is effective for your company. You will need to weigh the number of spam complaints against the value of the growth of your list.

While negative consent is permitted in the U.S., this is not the case in Canada. Depending upon where you're

located, negative consent may not be an option for you. Be sure to check your country or region's rules regarding this practice.

CONVERSION RATES
Web forms are not something you should just throw out there and hope for the best. You should work to influence the number of submissions, or conversion rate. Encourage your visitors to complete the form by working to build a trusting relationship. Conversion rates can be affected by a number of factors, including not understanding the value, privacy concerns, design, and more. Let's look more closely at how you can improve conversions (subscribes).

VALUE PROPOSITION (WIIFM)
Give your form visitors a compelling reason to join your subscriber list, in other words, "what's in it for me?". Even when someone has a relationship with your company, brand, or product, it doesn't mean that they necessarily want to receive messages from you. Inboxes are noisy places and most people are reluctant to add to the din. By stating a clear value proposition, such as exclusive offers and discounts, downloadable resources, exclusive access to new

Figure 1.4
In this example, the subscribe checkbox is already ticked. This is a negative consent and means that the page visitor did not specifically tick the box to opt-in.

75.4% of consumers do not believe that it's OK for a company to start sending you promotional emails if you have purchased something from them, but you didn't specifically sign up to receive emails from them.

— BlueHornet
2013 Consumer Views of Email Marketing

features and products, or periodic contests — telling them clearly what's in it for them — you will help to sway the decision about subscribing.

ASSURE PRIVACY

Most visitors want to know exactly how you will use their information. They want to know that only you have access and that you will not share, sell, rent, or otherwise make your list available to other companies. Include a clear link to your privacy policy and be sure that it's one that is favorable to your visitors. Depending upon the type of company you represent, you may wish to gain accreditation from an online trust and privacy monitoring organization such as Truste.

WELCOME (CONFIRMATION) EMAIL

Every web-form submission should automatically be met with an auto-responder, confirmation email sent to the address provided. This is a welcome-to-the-neighborhood message, if you will, and helps with retention and reduces future unsubscribes that occur when subscribers forget that they have joined your list.

If you find that you have a high bounce rate with your welcome email, try offering high-value content (videos, white papers, and the like) along with an email-verification field. Use language that makes it clear to the person completing the form that the link to the online content will be sent to the email address they have just provided.
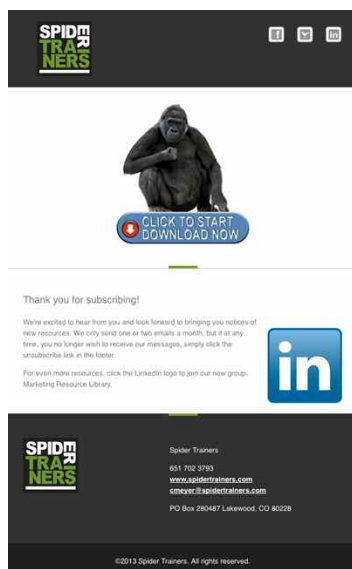
Figure 1.5 Confirmation emails give you the opportunity to provide links to your social accounts, downloads, and other high-value content. If you're confirming a purchase, it's a good time to offer other products in which they may be interested. Use personalization for best results.

BEST PRACTICE

Write your privacy policy in plain, casual English. Avoid legalese. The easier to understand, the more comfortable your prospective subscribers will feel..

BEST PRACTICE

Automatically send a welcome email (auto-responder) to every subscriber, regardless of how they subscribed.

BEST PRACTICE

Include social sharing and social follow links in your confirmation email. Enable your new subscriber to interact with your company in whatever way they prefer.

BEST PRACTICE

Follow the analytics of links in your auto-responder emails. This data will provide real insight into your new subscriber's behavior, which will help internal teams to evaluate sales readiness. This is called lead scoring.

This welcome email should also be used to explicitly set the new subscriber's expectations: list for them what they will receive and on what schedule. If you have a page for managing email preferences, provide this link too. Resist the urge to include too much

74.4% of consumers expect to receive a welcome email when they sign up.

— BlueHornet
2013 Consumer Views of Email Marketing

information in this first email or you run the risk of overwhelming the recipient.

DIRECT-MAIL LISTS

Without the strict guidelines of the CAN-SPAM act to set the rules for offline engagement, adding to your direct-mail list is much more lax. The restraint you'll want to voluntarily show lays in the expense of sending messages to uninterested parties rather than the rules of engagement.

Rather than opt-in, this is an *optimized list* and means that you are sending only to those who have either expressed an interest in receiving your mail or that they have a profile that identifies them as a member of your target audience. For instance, if you have a lawn-care service, it's a safe bet that most homeowners fall within your target audience, whether or not they have self-identified an interest in your service. Adding all homeowners' names in a region can still mean an optimized list.

Having a direct-mail list is valuable, but you should attempt to engage these leads online as well. This will give you more opportunities and vehicle options for contacting them. To engage online, try:

- Inviting your store's visitors to a subscribe page and offer a gift for enrolling.
- Ask them to subscribe during a phone order.
- Provide an offer or coupon with a subscribe checkbox in printed materials.

When you engage offline leads online, this is simple but effective data appending. The more information you can gather through forms, the more data you will have for creating targeted mail and email. We will cover that topic more thoroughly later in this eBook.

FOLLOW-UP

Web forms should not be a single-engagement point; you need follow-up. At a minimum, this should take the form of a response that welcomes customers to the subscriber list that they have just joined including, perhaps, a subscriber-only discount or coupon to help elevate the engagement. In this email, you might also include a link that they must click in order to confirm their desire to join your subscriber list. Once clicked, it is considered a double opt-in because they have 1) submitted a form and 2) confirmed that they submitted the form.

If you are providing a gift for having subscribed, such as a white paper, infographic, or other content, the confirmation email authenticates that they have provided you with a valid email address to which to send the online content.

Depending upon your software options, this follow-up email could be automated. Auto-responder emails should focus on trust — deliver on their requests and be as personalized as you can. This is a great opportunity for you to offer additional information designed to advance the lead's sales readiness, such

85% of consumers feel very strongly or somewhat strongly that companies should not track their online behavior.

— RegReady
Perceptions of Marketing Permission, 2013

83.5% of consumers (up from 72.6% in 2012), say the most important reason for signing up to receive emails from companies is to receive discounts.

— BlueHornet
2013 Consumer Views of Email Marketing

as links to relevant articles on your site, social-media accounts, downloads, testimonials, and the like.

For some, follow-up will come in the form of a call from the CSR or sales team. Along with an auto-responder email welcoming the subscriber to the list, you can also fire off an automatic email to the CSR or salesperson responsible for that territory reminding them to follow up with an email, call, or visit.

Follow-up should not be limited to a single touch. In fact, reaching out across multiple vehicles not only reminds your new subscriber who you are, but goes a long way in convincing them that you truly care about earning their business.

Having a light touch with regard to personalized follow-ups — rather than a heavy hand — can make all the difference. Many people are not even aware of the level of information that marketers can collect about their actions and are shocked when a follow-up phone call occurs within minutes of a visit to your website. This shock or surprise may hurt your opportunities for future sales depending upon how unwelcomed your call is. Your follow-up should not take away from your goals as a marketer in establishing you as a trusted source.

As an alternative to phone follow-up, consider following new subscribers socially and sending a private welcome or thank you through that medium. While some may still find this a bit invasive, depending

upon the social platform, it is a passive approach to interacting that offers the benefit of immediacy.

Regardless of your follow-up, be sure your message is relevant. Sending a canned note, whether emailed, handwritten, or posted online, is fine but straying off topic or sending something so generic that it doesn't further the trusted relationship is bad.

If your recipient has filled out a form and provided you with information about him or herself, be sure that your follow-up message specifically calls out their responses. This confirms to the lead that you are listening and that you are grateful they took the time to provide you with that information.

Be polite, be relevant, and say thank you.

41% of brands did not send any messages within the first 48 hours of subscribing.

— *Ciceron*
The First Impressions Email Marketing Study, 2013

48% of sales people never follow up with a prospect. 25% of sales people make a second contact and stop. 12% of sales people make more than three contacts. 2% of sales are made on the first contact. 3% of sales are made on the second contact. 5% of sales are made on the third contact. 10% of sales are made on the fourth contact. 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact

— *FollowUpSuccess.com*

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO USE ORGANIC PROGRAMS TO GAIN SUBSCRIBERS

As a creative services provider, the question we are asked most is, "How do I get more leads?". There are probably hundreds of ways, but there are some standards and when those standards are coupled with your creative thinking, the possibilities become endless. In this section, we'll talk about the organic approaches and in chapter three, we will discuss paid approaches. Some of these you may know and use, but we hope others will be new ideas for you.

Choosing which methods to use to grow your list, means considering a number of factors, such as:

- What type of company you have
- Who is in your target audience
- What type of audience you have (B2B, B2C, or B2E)
- What types of messages you will send
- What type of engagement you are seeking
- How much budget you have
- Available skill sets or expertise

BEST PRACTICE

Build your email lists by promoting your marketing content on as many online platforms as possible.

Even if you have a narrowly focused target audience, you still get much better results by breaking down your audience into micro-targets and engaging them with vehicles appropriate to their profile.

As you choose vehicles for growing your list, keep these considerations in mind:

- **Why**. What is the benefit to the subscriber (WIIFM)? Will it help them build their business, save money, or influence others? State the benefit very clearly on subscriber forms; for example, *tick this checkbox to receive weekly special offers*.
- **Be timely**. Ask people to subscribe when they are mostly likely to agree, such as immediately after a purchase or after downloading a resource. If you're

RATING

While organically building your list means it's not a paid program, it doesn't mean that there are no costs involved. You still have HR costs, software costs, and more. For this reason, we have included a rate scale for each effort in the next two chapters to indicate the degree of difficulty, the cost of the activity, and the time commitment required to execute; assuming that you already have the skill set required to complete the project.

57% of B2B organizations identify converting qualified leads into paying customers as a top funnel priority.

— *MarketingSherpa*

79% of marketing leads never convert into sales. Lack of lead nurturing is the common cause of this poor performance.

— *MarketingSherpa*

engaging offline, try to sign them up when they are at the register or completing an order form.

- **Be brief**. Shorter forms are more likely to be completed. Limit your form to only that information that you must have. Over time, you will be able to append your data by using other short forms with different fields or by purchasing an append service.
- **Gift them**. Everyone loves gifts. Consider rewarding subscribers with coupons, downloadable content, entry into contests, or exclusive access.

These best practices are relevant whether you are using organic or paid approaches, but for the moment, let's focus on organic.

OFFER INBOUND CONTENT

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

If you've been in marketing for more than a minute, you know that inbound or content marketing is the hottest entry on anyone's marketing calendar. To grow your list organically, content marketing presents the most opportunities. We are also choosing to list it first because many of the other efforts you will use to grow your list require that you have something to promote and in most cases, this will be content that you have

created, licensed, or purchased. Content can be white papers, videos, podcasts, webcasts, eBooks, online calculators, and more — so much more.

Content marketing builds trust, validates your authority, improves search-engine optimization, drives traffic, converts leads, and delivers visitors to your subscriber page. You can use it to influence visitors who are researching online before their purchase and while they are still in the decision-making phase. With your buyers choosing to talk with the sales team later in the buying cycle, marketers must fill the gap — and this is most effectively done with content marketing. In your content-marketing efforts, you will develop, purchase, or license educational and nurturing materials designed to shuttle leads through the nurturing process and qualify them as sales ready.

Unlike social media and your website, which are delivery platforms, marketing content requires a great deal of effort toward promotional efforts in order to garner widespread attention and interaction. The offer of high-value content will bring new visitors to your site, but the number of visitors will depend primarily

90% of B2B marketers do some form of content marketing. 26% of B2B marketing budgets are invested in content, and 60% of B2B marketers say they plan to spend more on content marketing in the coming year.

— *Smart Insights*

79% of B2B marketers use article posting, 74% use social media excluding blogs, 65% use blogs, 65% use eNewsletters, and just 10% use virtual conferences.

— *Smart Insights*

on how well you can get the message out there about your content offering. Your ability to then convert those prospects into sales-qualified leads and subscribers will be affected by the topics we have already covered in this white paper.

There are a number of ways to promote your content, but with the promotional efforts listed below, you should always encourage sharing between members:

- Email (forward to a friend, social-sharing links).
- Newsletter article (forward to a friend, social-sharing links).
- Link to the content on appropriate pages within your website.
- Create a Facebook page.
- Make social postings to Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and other networks of which you are a member.
- Purchase search-engine marketing campaigns (PPC).
- Post articles at your blog and Tumblr site.
- Include a download link in email signatures.
- Create and post to a LinkedIn group.
- Distribute on a jump drive for distribution at events and trade shows.
- Create a white label version for distribution by partners and clients.
- Publish a press release or news announcement.
- Repurpose a slide deck or video for posting to SlideShare and YouTube.

Don't forget to include a link to your subscriber form in all marketing content you create. If your content is shared by your recipients with their network, you want to make it very easy for downstream recipients to subscribe directly.

POST CONTENT TO DIRECTORY SITES

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Resource directory websites are a platform from which a visitor can download digital content such as white papers, newsletters, ezines, videos, podcasts, templates, demos, and more. If you are creating content for your own site, you might also consider listing the product at a directory site as well. When you post with a directory, you may pay a membership fee, a flat fee to sponsor the posting, or pay for the contact information of those accessing the content. The benefit to the posting company is the extended reach that has already been established by the directory site, which typically is larger than their own, and access to an audience to which they would not have had otherwise. Some directory sites require that the content be exclusive to their site, but not all.

Leads from sponsored content are high value as they have very specifically requested content that is about your company, products, or industry and should be considered opt-in leads but also tagged with source.
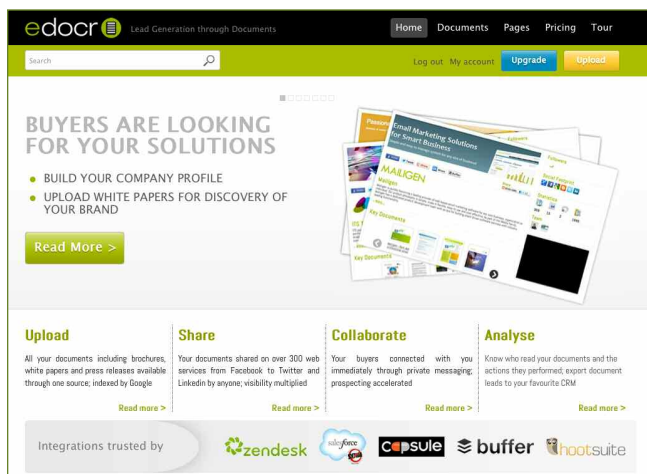

Figure 2.1 edocr.com is a directory site for marketing content. As a paid member, you can upload your content and it is made available for free to their (approximately) 100,000 users.

USE CONTENT FOR CROWD SOURCING

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Similar to directory sites, crowd-sourced content includes sites such as exploreB2B.com, ProjectEve.com, and About.com. These sites allow you to post actual articles for free and are beneficial to you for search-engine optimization, establishing authority, company validation, and the ability to provide links to your site in your author profile.

Crowd-sourced sites contain articles written by authors that do not work for the company, but who have registered with the site and been approved as an author before providing content to the site. Submitted articles are typically signed by the author and in some cases include links to the author's website. It stands to reason that if a visitor has just read an article you've written about a topic that is relevant to your company that they may wish to subscribe to other content you have authored as well.

Crowd-sourced content is a two-way street. Some crowd-sourced content is available for licensing for you to use at your site, and this can be especially beneficial if you have limited resources available for creating your own content. Some content (written, audio, and video alike) is published under a *Creative Commons* license and is free to use for your own self-

promotional activities as long as you include appropriate attribution.

POST TO SOCIAL-MEDIA SITES

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

People who follow you socially are great candidates for your subscriber list. Offer your followers and fans special gifts when they subscribe. Remember that people don't typically visit their social accounts every day, so they can easily miss your post if they have a large network. Post your message regularly so that you are more likely to appear in each members' recent discussion thread.

TWITTER

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

While Twitter posts are a bit impersonal, you do have the option of direct messaging your followers. To increase the value of using Twitter to grow your marketing lists, consider these options:

- **Gift them**. Create, purchase, or license some sort of electronic content, such as a game, a white paper, an eBook, or a subscription to an online service. Use this gift in your social accounts to entice fans and followers to subscribe. Coupled

Crowd sourcing. The practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a crowd of related or unrelated contributors; especially from an online community, rather than from traditional employees or suppliers.

with targeted landing pages, you will be able to measure the effectiveness of the content within the various social-media accounts. (For more information on targeted landing pages, download Spider Trainers' white paper, Targeted Landing Pages.)

- **Use automation**: Sign up for a social-media posting aggregator (such as Sendible or Social Oomph) to provide auto-responder direct messages for new followers. "Thanks for the follow! Subscribe to receive free Android game."

- **Bio sign-up**: You have 160 characters in which to describe your business, but you can also use this space to solicit subscribers. For instance, Spider Trainers is a network of freelancers providing creative services to marketing departments of 0 – 100. Subscribe & get free resources http://spdr.at/13RCDtV.

- **Tweet offers**. Post offers and contests often and open only to new subscribers. If you prefer, engage current followers too as a reward for continuing to follow.

- **Add followers.** These processes work best if you have a large number of followers and the best way to grow your followers is to follow others. Many people and companies automatically follow those that follow them, but even if it's not automatic, when you follow like-minded people and companies, there is a good chance they will

BEST PRACTICE

Choose a relevant prize and, if appropriate, define your rules and regulations to prohibit the transfer or sale of the prize. In that way, you can curtail the propagation of the contest on link-farm sites.

BEST PRACTICE

Take the time to customize the wallpaper of all of your social media accounts. Your brand is important and should be promoted across your network.

return the favor. The bigger your following, the more people your message will reach.

- **Website link.** In the Twitter settings, rather than send Twitter visitors to your home page, create a targeted landing page that specifically welcomes the Twitter follower and provides the subscriber form. This targeted landing page is much more likely to convert than your home page.

- **Tweet pay**. *Pay with a Tweet* is the first social payment system. Using this service, you can provide content for free to anyone who is willing to share it with their network. This service enables you to extend the reach well beyond that of your own followers.

33% of global B2B buyers use social media to engage with their vendors, and 75% expect to use social media in future purchases processes.

— *Social Media B2B*

47% of B2B marketers say they are actively using LinkedIn vs. 90% on Facebook. LinkedIn generates more leads for B2B companies than Facebook, Twitter, or blogs.

— *Social Media B2B*

99designs @99designs   1h
Win $447! Create the next logo for Deeter Mazda - logo design contest 99d.me/g/1yzda
Followed by DistributorX and 3 others
Expand

Figure 2.2 This is a contest posted by 99designs on Twitter.

LINKEDIN GROUPS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	☆	☆

LinkedIn groups offer a great platform for soliciting subscribers, but it's a process that takes time and cultivation. Any person can start a LinkedIn group as a gathering ground for professionals who share interests. With a group established and membership developed, use the LinkedIn group announcements feature to create a weekly offer for your members. The announcement is a standard email sent from LinkedIn, replete with LinkedIn branding that adds credibility to the message.

Using the same careful approach to the subject line and body of this email as you would use for your other business emails, draft an offer that rewards the group's members for subscribing. Some weeks you may want this to be the focus of the announcement, but other times, make it the secondary offer. It's wise to be careful with this powerful medium since it's easy for people to feel spammed and turn it off — even if the email comes from LinkedIn. Here are a few other considerations that will help you to get the most of your announcement.

- **Subject lines**. Like any email you send, the subject line is the grabber. You only have a second or two to convince your member to read this

message, especially if they belong to lots of groups and get many announcements each week. Make your subject line compelling. For other tips on writing subject lines, see our video on the topic at the Spiders in a Box YouTube channel.

- **Read more**. Provide a great opening. HubSpot recommends a "mind-blowing statistic," and they're right. Statistics are great attention grabbers and the more astounding the number, the more likely they are to keep reading.

- **Compel them to act**. In the context of this white paper's topic, the goal here is to get your group member to come to your web form and subscribe to your messaging. Tell your members how they will benefit if they subscribe as well as detailing the gift they will get for doing so.

- **Test and track**. Send these members to a dedicated, targeted landing page. If you're not using Google Analytics or something similar, use Bit.ly or another URL shortener so that you can track the number of page visitors compared to the number of completions. If the abandonment

1,000,000 groups on LinkedIn.

— LinkedIn

81% of users belong to at least one LinkedIn group.

— Creotivo

67% of B2B marketers say LinkedIn is the most effective social network for acquiring a customer, followed by company blogs at 60%, Facebook at 43%, and Twitter at 40%.

77% of B2C marketers say they have acquired a customer through Facebook compared to 60% for a company blog.

— Marketing Charts

is high, try changing the design of the landing page or try increasing the value of the gift you are awarding. For more information on targeted landing pages, download Spider Trainers' white paper on the topic.

- **Ask a question**. Announcements are sent as an email, posted to your discussion thread, and displayed as a discussion on the group page. Encourage members to engage with the content of the email announcement by asking a question within the text.

- **Monitor comments**. Once you start the discussion, don't forget to stay involved by monitoring the comments posted by your members. If you see the discussion wandering off topic, jump in and redirect.

- **Promote the post**. As a standard post, you have the option of promoting it to manager's choice as well. This makes it a featured post, which lists at the top of the discussion thread and at the top of the daily and weekly digest, for those members who have opted to receive them.

- **Tweet**. Once the announcement appears in the discussion thread, share it on Twitter as well. Tick the tweet check box and post.

In addition to the weekly announcement, your LinkedIn group also features templates for auto-responder messages. Take the time to modify these templates, especially the one sent to new members upon joining, and include a link to your subscribe page.

FACEBOOK

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

When acquiring leads and converting those leads to subscribers and customers, don't overlook Facebook just because it's more of a social network than a

Figure 2.3 On the top-left you can see our post in the timeline of my personal account and below that, the same post on the Spider Trainers' company page.

Figure 2.4 Use the Facebook highlight feature (left) to boost the visibility of a post (right).

professional network (as is LinkedIn). Facebook provides a number of paths to self-promotion, including posted promotions for your content, providing a subscriber form, and running contests.

We'll talk about advertising later in this eBook, so let's first talk about your timeline, which is the backbone of the Facebook structure.

Every Facebook member has a timeline, whether that member is a person or a company (with a company page). You can promote your company or product as a posting that will appear in your network's timeline. If someone likes your post, the message is then propagated across their network as well, thus extending your reach well beyond the bounds of just the people with whom you are connected.

You can provide additional boost to your post by using the highlight feature on your admin page. For best results, highlight a new post every few days and consider creating an ad from the post in order to offer the high-value content to a wider audience. Be sure to mix it up. It's important to have a wide variety of content and that you include all types of information that is beneficial to your audience. If you only talk about your company, it will become very boring, very quickly. Throw in a contest every now and then, but be sure the prize is relevant. It will help to target those interested in entering the contest. If you give away an iPad, you're likely to have entrants from all walks of

life, but if you're a web-development company and you offer a free site launch, you're more likely to draw the right type of contestants.

The more Facebook fans you have, the more opportunities you have for converting them into subscribers. Make it easy for people to become a fan by adding like and follow buttons to your targeted landing pages, generic website pages, and emails.

To encourage fans within the network, run a contest and encourage your current fans to spread the word, but again, use a relevant prize.

One way you can improve your subscriber conversions is to make it even simpler. *JotForm* and other Facebook apps enable you to embed subscriber forms directly into your Facebook page. Visitors to your page can complete the form without having to click away from Facebook and this makes it simpler to engage and convert them.

BUYING FOLLOWERS AND FANS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

With very few exceptions, sites that sell fans are generating this network with fake Facebook accounts and thus, fake names. These names are visible to other companies that are considering following you and this is detrimental to your credibility. Most fan-selling

56% of consumers say that they are more likely to recommend a brand after becoming a fan.

— AdAge, 2012

16% of the average business posts reach their fans.

— Facebook

services collect your payment information and then engage with offshore companies for the service of setting up the fans, and I'm sure that you agree that this is exactly the type of company that should not have your credit card information.

Fake fans or fake Twitter followers are not likely to ever engage with your company or buy your products. The importance of having a large network pales in comparison to the value of a small following that is interested in your offers. You're far better off to spend the effort at developing a following that is important.

GOOGLE+

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Since Google+ is new to the social scene, many companies are unsure if they should include this network in their promotional efforts, but this network is a Google property and that means its potential is likely limitless. You should participate.

You can use Google+ circles to create targeted groups that LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook do not offer. Like with list segmentation (discussed later in this eBook), your messaging can be very targeted, and the more targeted, the higher your conversion rate will be.

BEST PRACTICE

If you are calculating ROI and have a network of 500,000 fake followers, your calculations will always be skewed and incorrect.

BEST PRACTICE

Take the time to fully complete your Google profile and keep the information up to date. It helps to validate you in search-engine results when people are making a decision about adding you to their circles.

Make Google+ engagement and sharing within the network simpler for site visitors by adding a Google +1 button alongside your other social follow buttons.

Google+ *hangouts* enables you to hold free video chats with others in your circles and to post the content directly to YouTube (also owned by Google). Using hangouts, you can generate leads as you host product demos and sales presentations, network with your target audience, and poll your attendees' opinions. This conversational and personalized interaction is a capture of an interactive environment and is often preferable to a posted webcast.

Given that YouTube is also owned by Google, the company that sets the standards for search-engine optimization, it makes sense to participate in these networks and use them to generously pepper the

400,000,000
Google+ users were expected by the end of 2012. 63% of who are males in their mid-20s.

— *Jeff Bullas*

platforms with keywords in association with your company name and service.

YOUTUBE

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

YouTube released a unified channel design layout earlier this year and with that, the new *channel trailer*. This is a featured video that describes your channel and should tell visitors what they will learn from the videos on your channel. The trailer is an ideal vehicle for inviting viewers to subscribe. You can make it simpler by embedding a link directly to your squeeze page.

Using the same embedding trick, create a short trailer to add to your other videos as well.

If you choose Vimeo (or other video hosting applications), you also have the ability to make private some videos and require an account in order to view. In that way, high-value videos can be the resource that you offer to those who subscribe.

SLIDESHARE

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

SlideShare (owned by LinkedIn) is a social-media community with more than 60 million monthly visitors. As such, it can be an important component of your lead-generation strategy. This is a multi-media platform to which you can upload slide decks and other multi-page documents as PDFs.

SlideShare is one of the easiest networks to populate with content because your company likely already has a library of suitable documents; simply look to your sales, marketing, product, and customer-engagement presentations and repurpose them with this new audience in mind. As you polish up these presentations, pay close attention to your initial slide, as this will become your headline. Make sure it includes one or more of your keywords or keyphrases. The first slide also becomes your thumbnail and may be deserving of another pass across a designer's desk to optimize the visual appeal.

1,000,000,000 unique users visit YouTube
each month and 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.

— *YouTube*

Figure 2.5 At the end of each of our new videos, we have included a link directly to our squeeze page. It is a live link that the viewer can click.

Your corporate slide decks are great content for supporting your search-engine optimization strategies as well since they are loaded with keyword and keyphrase references. SlideShare also embeds easily within web pages and other social-media platforms, making sharing of the content that much easier, and provides analytics for tracking views and shares.

If you sign up for the SlideShare Pro account, you can also present a lead-capture form to those who download the original PowerPoint or PDF, those who browse the presentation, and those who view the presentation when it has been embedded elsewhere.

POST TO BLOGS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Using your blog for lead generation is one of the most powerful of the content-marketing options. As long as you stick to topics that are about your business, industry, pundits, tips, and the like, blogs, by their very nature, build and foster an especially targeted audience.

Some blogs inject lead-capture pop-up forms or lightboxes that either interrupt the visitor reading the article or prevent the display of the article until the form is completed. For some sites, and depending

upon your approach, this practice can increase your site's abandonment rate.

Another approach, is to present the pop-up at the end of the article (when the visitor clicks to go elsewhere on the site), with a message such as, "If you found our article useful, consider subscribing."

Your blog will only continue to draw an audience and grow subscribers if you commit to regular contributions. Blog articles do not have to be hundreds of words, regular postings of a paragraph or two — as long as it's a relevant topic — are just as effective. Remember that your blog followers are as busy as you are and in the same way you don't have copious time for writing long blogs, they may not have time to read them. Try giving them quality information in short bursts.

SEND SMS INVITATIONS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

67% more leads per month, on average, are generated by B2B companies with blogs compared to non-blogging firms.

— *Social Media B2B*

2 trillion SMS messages were sent in the US in 2011, which equates to more than 6 billion SMS messages sent per day.

— *Social Media B2B*

Using text messaging to engage your audience is a great option, but it's not as simple as hitting the light switch. Unlike most new technology, governmental regulations are already in place that set the guidelines for how you may use this medium for collecting or connecting with customers. You may only send your current SMS subscribers the types of messages to which they have specifically subscribed. If you have the option, send a message to your SMS subscribers and invite them to join you online and join your email subscribers' list.

As mentioned, it's important to gain explicit consent for each individual campaign or the specific campaign type to ensure compliance. It's also wise to encourage your SMS subscribers to subscribe to your email and direct mails lists as well.

ENGAGE IN PARTNER CO-OP MARKETING

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Most companies have formed partnering relationships with vendors and other companies that share a common target audience. Partnership marketing parlays these relationships into joint-marketing opportunities and it makes sense because both parties can enhance their marketing or client-acquisition goals by leveraging their respective strengths.

Partnerships take many forms. Your company's partners might include vendors, distributors, resellers, licensed trainers or support individuals, evangelists, authors, and others. The opportunities for co-marketing within these partnerships take even more forms and with creative approaches can open doors for you more quickly than other methods.

When your partner introduces you to their clients (and you introduce them to your clients), whether in a newsletter, as a joint presenter, or with bundled offers, you gain instant credibility because of your association with a company with whom they already enjoy an existing relationship. This expedited trusted status makes those clients much more willing to do business with you, more quickly.

START A LOYALTY PROGRAM

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Loyalty programs come in may forms such as recognition for birthdays, frequent buyers, frequent

Figure 2.6 The Spider Trainers website features partners in three ways: a landing page with partner logos, a summary page about the partner, and a detail page with additional information that may also include a specific offer from the partner to our visitors.

fliers, frequent visitors, high rollers, and so much more. The premise is that a lead will enroll in the program and you recognize milestones with some sort of a reward. Typically the reward is something produced by your company (such as a free dinner, if you are a restaurant), but not always. Some programs allow you to collect reward points and then shop on their site for all sorts of gifts and from all sorts of retailers.

Loyalty programs aren't suitable for every business, but you may be able to apply the principles of this approach to lead generation. Given that the program benefits the member with some type of reward, you might have concerns about financial exposure. Impose strict time limits and guidelines to keep your loyalty program reigned in. With proper guardrails, you can still benefit from the brand awareness and building of a trusting relationship that have made loyalty programs so popular.

HOLD A CONTEST OR SWEEPSTAKES

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Contests and sweepstakes provide an ideal path to growing your list as you collect entries into the drawing. With social media you can promote your contest more easily and less expensively than ever before. If you are considering the launch of a contest, clearly define your goals (collect email addresses, gain

BEST PRACTICE

Use a loyalty program as the basis for a well-received nurturing campaign. Send messages to remind members of milestones and as the member reaches milestones.

BEST PRACTICE

Sponsor content not just to gain access to leads who have accessed the content, design or choose content that will promote your brand, establish you as an authority, and validate your level of knowledge.

BEST PRACTICE

Choose a relevant prize for any contest or sweepstakes and, when possible, define your rules and regulations to prohibit the transfer or sale of the prize. In that way, you can curtail the propagation of the contest on link-farm sites that do not target your ideal audience.

Facebook fans or Twitter followers, and so on), how you will market the contest, and how you will engage the leads beyond the contest.

For a successful campaign, your contest form, like other forms we've talked about in this eBook, should be short and sweet. Only ask for the information you must have in order to accept their entry. Be careful

$50 billion a year is spent by U.S. companies on loyalty programs alone; and if done correctly, can generate as much as 20% of a company's profits.

— *McKinsey & Company*

80% of all internet users have entered at least one sweepstakes within the past year — and more than half participate in contests at least once per month.

— *Jupiter Research (part of Forrester)*

about the prize you choose to offer. If your prize is too high value and generic, you will find yourself with thousands of entries from people with great interest in your prize, but no interest in your company or products.

After running a $25,000 software sweepstakes, we found that our contest had been promoted on sites that list links of contests all over the world and cater to people who enter contests as a career choice. Of the 50,000 entries, we ended up with only a few thousand relevant contacts.

ADD AN ENROLLMENT OPTION TO EVENT REGISTRATION

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
TIME COMMITMENT	★	☆	☆	☆	☆

Event registrations are one of the best ways to generate quality leads that you can then convert into subscribers. In event promotion — whether a webcast, training, or live show — and during the event, drive registrants and attendees to your squeeze page. Include a checkbox for subscribing at the bottom of the registration form and send confirmation emails separately for event registration and subscription. Follow best practices outlined elsewhere in this eBook.

91% of attendees say that trade shows impact their buying decisions because the competition is in one place, which allows for comparison shopping in real time.

— The Center for Exhibition Industry Research

BEST PRACTICE

Require an appropriate amount of information during registration. Asking for the mailing address is appropriate; asking for the email addresses of their top three customers is not. Once they have opted-in as a subscriber, you will be able to append data with future forms.

HOLD A TRADE SHOW OR EVENT

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Despite the bevy of online options for building marketing lists, many marketers know the value of and continue to depend upon offline practices for lead generation.

As an exhibitor or presenter at an event or trade show, you have the opportunity to meet face to face the people you would like to convert to subscribers. Presumably, they are already looking for the type of product or service you offer. While it would be wonderful to have that prospect make a purchase right then and there, it doesn't happen nearly as often as we would like. The next best thing is to enroll that prospect in the marketing or automated-marketing program so that you can deliver a steady stream of information that will make the prospect sales ready over time.

$276 per face-to-face meeting was spent by companies to attend trade shows in 2011 and $189 was spent per person who entered the exhibit.

— Exhibit Surveys Inc.

As we discussed earlier, regardless of how you collect this new lead's information — whether it's via a fish bowl, business card, registration form, kiosk, badge scan, or any other method — it is very important that you confirm immediately and set their expectations. In-person events and trade shows are an especially effective method for building up your marketing list, but it is not without risk. Follow these best practices for optimizing and maintaining your new leads:

- **Tag them**. Add tags or a description field to each lead with the name of the originating event, how you collected the name, and other information that will help you to segment and personalize messages.

- **Fish bowls**. If you are holding a drawing from business cards dropped into a fish bowl, know that the majority of these leads are interested solely in winning the prize and not so much in hearing from you — ever again. Tag these names and keep them separate from your marketing list. If possible, send out emails during the show reminding them that they have dropped a card into your fish bowl and provide a link to subscribe to your marketing list.

- **Process quickly**. If possible, use your smartphone or kiosk to send a welcome email the moment their name is added. At the very least, add these leads to your marketing list within two days of the event and send your first welcome message

BEST PRACTICE

Don't incentivize your team for scanning the most badges; you'll only end up with a large number of disinterested names that complain of spam and unsubscribe immediately. Instead offer your team rewards for high-quality scans. Use analytics and your own company evaluation process for lead scoring in order to choose the best-value leads.

to remind them that they have subscribed. Show visitors meet dozens, if not hundreds of vendors, so a quick reminder will help you to retain these subscribers.

- **Opt-in**. If detailing your marketing program is too burdensome for the show floor, send a prompt welcome email and provide a link to a targeted landing page that promotes a high-value content piece if they subscribe. Include a benefits list that will encourage the leads rather than make them cautious of subscribing.

- **Omit rentals**. If you are a vendor at the event and have access to all attendees, this is considered a rented list, not an opt-in list and should not be imported into your marketing list. To process these names, divvy them up to the regional sales reps or CSR so that those teams can send out one-to-one emails and attempt to engage on that level. If it is an option, have the show host

81% of trade show attendees at a recent show agreed that trade shows help

— CEIR

78% of attendees are interested in products and up to 60% are part of a buying team visiting the show.

— CEIR

send a message on your behalf that specifically introduces you as a valued partner.

- **Exhibitor opt-in**. Some event hosts have gone so far as to include opt-in checkboxes that attendees can use to request emails from specific exhibitors. This list is an opt-in list and can be added to your marketing list, but with appropriate tags. Process and send the welcome email within two days and remind them of the event name and that they specifically requested to receive information from you during the registration process. Your tags will enable tracking of the source if someone in this group reports you for spamming.

BECOME AN ASSOCIATION PARTNER

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Associations are formal groups of members who share a common interest of some sort. There is likely an association that shares a target audience with you and as such, creates an opportunity for co-marketing or promotion. Most associations seek partnerships with companies that have a common interest and that can offer benefits to their membership. By becoming a preferred vendor or sponsor of an association, you will gain access to some or many lead-generation vehicles and events, such as feature stories in the association

newsletter, online and offline ads, co-participation in trade shows, and much more.

In most cases, the association will charge you a fee for marketing your company as a preferred vendor or partner, and this cost when measured against the number of leads generated will determine your ROI.

In addition to becoming a preferred vendor, there are benefits to becoming a member. A good example of this is your local chamber of commerce, where members are often given the opportunity to speak at meetings, hand out promotional material, mail to other members, or advertise at discounted rates.

1,451,101 companies are listed under Manta's database for Associations/Non-profits in the United States.

— *Manta*

200 million Americans have registered on the FTC's Do Not Call list, which gives rise to the question of the viability of telemarketing today.

ENROLL DURING TELEMARKETING

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Using an external or internal call center to generate leads can be a viable option for businesses of all sizes, whether you are B2B, B2C, or B2E. Telemarketers follow a pre-defined script (that you produce) and are trained to be assertive, yet professional, as they press the offer with the prospect. When you use outbound calls, you have a captive audience; one free of competition from other companies, offers, or messages. These leads are fully qualified to the interest or sales readiness level you specify. Outbound telemarketing can create a warm hand-off directly to your sales team, but that's no reason to skip the opportunity to add them to your subscriber list. Your telemarketing script can be such that the caller asks for the email address during the qualification process as they describe the subscription benefits.

ENROLL DURING OUTSIDE & INSIDE SALES EFFORTS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Your sales teams should collect email addresses promptly, whether their first interaction is by phone or in person. This is usually quiet easy given that for most

BEST PRACTICE

If you're having difficulties getting your staff to contribute to the subscriber list, consider incentives to get them on board. Set a standard for the type of leads you want or you may find that you've just acquired 10,000 names all located in Zimbabwe.

of us the bulk of our interaction with prospects, leads, and customers is via email, and your customers are eager to have the sales team forward additional information or just stay in touch. For interactions that are already email based, add a subscribe link in the body of the email with an offer of high-value content.

ADD A LINK IN BUSINESS EMAILS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

As we just discussed, email interactions with clients are prime real estate for including links to your subscriber page. Make sure you're taking advantage with every email by putting the link in the corporate signature lines. Ideally, you can offer high-value content along with a link to create a more compelling reason to click.

ADD A LINK IN AUTO-RESPONDER EMAILS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Get a free copy of our white paper, *When Marketing Becomes the 800 lb. Gorilla*, when you click to subscribe to Spider Trainers' list and receive priority notification of newly posted resources for marketers.

Spider Trainers | PO Box 280487 | Lakewood CO 80228

Figure 2.7 Use your corporate signature to engage new subscribers. Offer them something of value.

As your leads and subscribers interact with your company, and depending upon the software you are using for CRM, email automation, and site tracking, you could and should automatically send emails to confirm the various types of engagement that they have with you. For instance, if a lead from your list visits your website and stays for six minutes on the page that describes the features of a just-released product, your email-automation system could fire off an email with links to other pages about the same or similar products or perhaps invite them to an upcoming webcast of the same focus.

Confirmation emails sent promptly after specific interactions, such as after a purchase, download, or video view, have some of the highest open rates in email marketing, so don't miss out on this prime opportunity to promote other content at your site in which they may be interested.

For new customers, though it is not appropriate to automatically subscribe that buyer into your database, it is okay to provide a checkbox that allows them to subscribe and to add a link in the order-confirmation email as well. If the checkbox on the checkout page didn't reel them in, make sure the link in the auto-responder emails up the ante and with an even better offer.

BEST PRACTICE

Test the conversion rate of subscriber offers that you include in your auto-responders. Find your best performers and then try different messaging to present the offer. Over time, you will be able to hone in on the best content and the best presentation of the content offer.

BEST PRACTICE

The most widely distributed print collateral is the business card. Add a QR code that links to a mobile-friendly subscriber form to make it super easy for your contacts to become new subscribers.

ADD A QR CODE OR LINK TO PRINTED COLLATERAL

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
TIME COMMITMENT	★	☆	☆	☆	☆

Including a URL on all of your corporate printed material is not nearly as convenient as clicking a link, but with the right offer, your collateral can exponentially increase the opportunities you have for asking for subscriptions. Using URL shorteners (such as Bit.ly) or QR codes, you can make it easy for people to visit the online subscription page or you can enable them to sign up traditionally by providing a return-mail response card or number to call.

60% of those scanning QR codes are male. 37% are aged 18 to 34 years old, followed by 20% who are 35 to 44 and 17% who are 18 to 24. 36% of those scanning QR code have an annual household income of more than $100,000.

— *Pitney Bowes*

60% of people scanned a QR code from home, and the most popular hours of scanning seem to fall midday and early evening between the hours of 3 and 7 P.M.

— *comScore*

When you ask people to subscribe, add a reminder about the greenness of choosing email along with an enticement of special or exclusive offers, and more people will take the time to subscribe.

Don't leave out collateral that goes to customers. This group is not only the most likely to join your subscriber list, but most studies show that they are also the most likely to respond to offers and information that you send. If you follow the best practices that we've included in this eBook, you'll be able to increase the number of customers that choose email contact in addition to or in lieu of your printed materials.

PROVIDE A SIGN-UP FORM IN KEY AREAS OF YOUR STORE

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Point-of-sale sign-up sheets can function as a reminder to walk-in customers to join your subscriber list. Tell them about exclusive coupons or offer to email them when their order is ready. If you're all set for or planning for SMS, ask for their mobile number too and include text messaging in your marketing efforts.

OFFER eRECEIPTS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

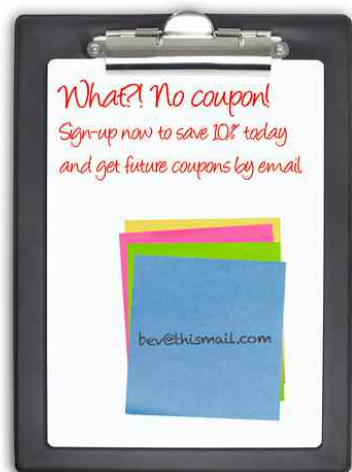*Figure 2.8 Sign-up forms at the cash register encourage your walk-in customers to join your subscriber list.*

According to Experian, 66% of marketers are currently offering or state that they intend to or would like to offer eReceipt options to in-store shoppers. This is a great way of capturing the lead's email address, but in order to use that email address for any purpose other than the delivery of the receipt, be sure to spell it out either verbally or onscreen if they can view their receipt before acceptance. As always, a prompt welcome email sent separately from the receipt will go far in retaining this lead as a subscriber.

ADD A SIGN-UP OPTION TO WARRANTY AND REGISTRATION CARDS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

If you use warranty or registration cards, add a subscription checkbox to the form (turn back to the section on negative vs. positive response boxes). Make it worth their while with a discount or special offer. Respond to the requests promptly so that they do not forget that they have subscribed. If you sell products and don't use product-registration cards, isn't today a great day to start?

Figure 2.9 Compare the results of negative against positive consent checkboxes in your warranty and registration forms.

MARKET TO EXISTING CUSTOMERS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

As marketers, we know that the expense of gaining a new customer far surpasses the cost of maintaining a current customer and making them a repeat customer. This is why your customer list is such rich soil for cultivating subscribers. What's more, using past engagement or purchase history, you can build highly targeted segments that enable you to send appropriate material that encourages repeat purchases by profiling similar or related products.

Customers can be segmented into six different categories:

- **Essential shoppers**. Those who primarily purchase necessities. This shoppers knows what they want before they go shopping. They are not impulsive shoppers.
- **Striving for status**. A group for which shopping is fun and recreational. This shopper enjoys browsing as much as buying. [S]he is willing to travel to the store and spend the money and time necessary to keep up with trends.
- **Mall maniacs**. This customer classification is made up of *try-sumers*, shoppers who enjoy shopping and who enjoy trying new products, stores, and

styles. They will seek out, connect, and interact with the brands they prefer.
- **Upscale clicks and bricks**. Knowledgeable shoppers who buy in-store or online. They research online, shop around, and compare prices before buying.
- **Virtual shoppers**. This group is looking for a deal. They do not pay full price and use the internet to find discounts before purchasing.
- **Original traditionalists**. The most brand-loyal of the six classifications, these shoppers are knowledgeable and also the most environmentally responsible — they embrace and promote green practices.

Understanding the types of consumers or businesses in your customer list is the first step to developing targeted and personalized messaging. Studies show that personalization, especially past purchase history, is the root of higher engagement and more spending.

75% of the 175 million internet users in the U.S. are online shoppers.

— *Sandy Carter, V.P. of Websphere Marketing, Strategy, and Channels, IBM*

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO USE PAID PROGRAMS TO FIND SUBSCRIBERS

For many companies, paid programs are the best way to find prospects and develop leads, for others, it's a quick trip to an empty wallet. Paid programs present a higher risk for the company if the program fails, but successful paid programs can be responsible for major revenue within the organization.

We believe that the best practice is to start first with organic efforts and use them to test keywords, ads, offers, designs, contests, and the like. With these analytics under your belt, you will be able to make the most of the paid campaigns and reduce failure rates.

BUY LISTS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Acquiring an email list in any method other than opt-in is risky business. When you send a bulk mail to a list of leads that has not specifically subscribed to your

BEST PRACTICE

No matter how enticing the offer, only buy or rent lists from reputable list brokers. They are much less likely to trigger a spam trap.

BEST PRACTICE

Ask your vendors and partners for referrals when you are vetting list brokers. It's easy to be suckered in by the promise of thousands of names for hundreds of dollars, but it's extremely unlikely it will work out in your favor.

BEST PRACTICE

Use data selects to choose your target audience and for segmentation and personalization. The more you can connect with the recipient the less likely they will be to discard or delete your message.

58% of marketers feel very strongly or strongly that purchasing an opt-in email list is an acceptable practice, while 51% feel very strongly or strongly that purchasing any type of opt-in list is an acceptable marketing practice.

— *RegReady*
Perceptions of Marketing Permission, 2013

Explicit data. Demographics such as company size, industry segment, job title, and geographic location.

Implicit data. Recipient's actions or interactions, such as those who opened, clicked, downloaded a resource, watched a video, visited a website, and/or shared content.

Data select: Explicit or implicit information identified within a group of leads and used by companies in order to choose specific records for use, rental, or purchase.

publications, you are very likely to accumulate some percentage of spam complaints from the recipients. The higher the percentage, the more likely you are to be blocked by both the recipient's email provider and the ESP you use to send your emails. (See the section on spam later in this eBook.)

The reason that opt-outs and spam complaints are so high with a purchased list is that even if the list's members did give the list owner (or list developer) specific permission to contact them, that permission did not extend specifically to your company. Given that the recipients don't know your company and have no existing relationship, they are much more likely to report your messages as spam. Also, because the email list is for sale or rent, you are probably not the only one to have accessed the list and the more often this list has been contacted, the more likely you are to get spam complaints.

With such dire consequences, it's a wonder that any company would consider renting or purchasing names under any condition; but those conditions do exist. Despite the risk, it's simply far more cost-effective and time-effective to purchase email addresses than to grow the list organically.

Before engaging a list broker, give consideration to how effective you can be with an offer to a group of people who have no prior knowledge or interaction with your company. To maximize your efforts, specially

design a campaign for this engagement rather than repurpose existing content.

Any reputable list dealer will be willing to spend ample time with you to help you choose a list with data selects such as a specific vertical market, job title, company size, or myriad other options that will enable you to design appropriately and personalize. Be sure that you also include:

- A from name that includes a person's name and your company name.
- A subject line that includes the product/service and what it does.
- A call to action that targets the unknown user.
- Content that explains WIIFM

It will be key that you contact this group steadily over a period of time and that you do so with a trickle send. Purchasing a list of 50,000 names and sending them out all at once is begging for a *spam slap*. Instead, break the list into much smaller groups and trickle the message out over several to many days. Hitting a single spam trap in one day is far preferable to hitting a handful (refer to the spam trap section of this eBook).

If you are monitoring your marketing analytics, you can count on your purchased list to generate lower response rates than your house list. (For more information on marketing metrics, download our eBook of the same name.) Many purchased or rented lists include only a name and email address, but with

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Decide on lists strictly based on the final expected ROI of your campaign. Many marketers make the mistake of basing their choices on initial rental cost instead — this is one reason why so many rent bad lists.

— *Josh Perlstein*
executive VP, Response Media

71% cited receiving unsolicited messages as a reason to become resentful.

— *Emailvision*
Survey Reveals Bombarding Consumers with Marketing
Results in Brand Resentment, 2013

the inclusion of a mailing address you could first subject the list to an inexpensive NCOA process to verify the existence of the business or consumer. This additional data will also enable you to create and send explicitly targeted messages based on company name, mailing address, general region, and the like. There are also email list-hygiene services that can validate the domain name and email address without actually sending to the list. While this is a good idea, it is not failsafe. Spam traps are valid addresses at valid domains. These efforts will help you to improve deliverability and response.

RENT LISTS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Many marketers rent lists and it's a big business; one with the good, the bad, and the ugly. When you work with a reputable list vendor, they will help you to choose a targeted list that is most likely to be receptive to your message, but the term opt-in in the case of list rentals is simply wrong. Opt-in, when it comes to rental, means that people in the list signed up for an offer somewhere that probably contained a negative consent checkbox allowing the form's host to share the subscribers' names with their *partners*. The term, *partners,* is being applied loosely and at the time of

subscription almost assuredly did not specifically reference your company name or your offer.

With my own rental experiences behind me, this misleading definition of opt-in means that you will need to show great care as you develop content for emailing. I discourage you from a single-event email and instead would recommend that you create a multi-event campaign to be sent to the list at least three times and spaced about a week or more apart. Most brokers will recommend this multi-touch approach as well, so plan to spend your budget on fewer names with multiple sends.

When you send to a rented list, you do not actually take possession of the names; the list broker or list owner will send your email on your behalf. If it's a list broker, instead of two parties and domain names being involved, there are now three. This further complicates the process, and can be very confusing to the recipient and usually results in more opt-outs and spam complaints.

LEAD CLONING

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Of late, a number of list brokers have begun to offer a service called *lead cloning* (or some variation on that). In this process, you provide the broker with one or

86% of the marketing decision-makers surveyed believe successfully integrating multiple channels under a single integrated marketing strategy is critical to long-term success.

— *Forrester*
The Value of Integrated Marketing Strategy, 2012

59% of consumers and 61% of marketers are in agreement that explicit permission is required for direct marketing on mobile devices.

— *RegReady,*
Perceptions of Marketing Permission, 2013

more contacts from your best customers' list and they will search their databases for other companies or individuals with the same profile. This service can be very beneficial if you've never acquired a list before and really don't know what type of selects to choose.

BULK RATE EMAIL

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

A bulk email rental is a one-time, blind send to an entire list without the benefit of select criteria. The cost for bulk rental is less since you are not able to choose selects. The best way to benefit from a bulk rental is to choose a list with a vertical market that closely matches your own. As an example, if you have a hunting website, you could rent a bulk list from a hunting magazine. The likelihood is actually quite high that the names on the list will be receptive to your message. Add to that message a drawing for a $25,000 all-expenses paid, safari hunting trip, and not only will your emails get opened, but you're also more likely to have a high click-thru rate.

CO-BRANDED

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

BEST PRACTICE

Your offer or message will be better received if the partner shares your target audience.

BEST PRACTICE

Once you have a defined referral program, distribute an internal document that describes the process to your team. Be sure to list contact information for each member of the follow-up team and for the program manager.

A co-branded email is your message sent by the list owner and one where the from address is that of the list owner. This approach removes the third-party list broker and the confusion that comes with the email being sent from an unfamiliar domain, but it does still create questions in the recipient's mind. In this case, they open an email they believe will contain information from a company with whom they do business, but the content of the message is from another company (yours). The list owner runs the risk of a higher than normal unsubscribe rate as their recipients feel duped.

INTRODUCTORY SENDS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

27.4%
is the average open rate, 4.5% the average click-thru rate, 96% the average delivery rate.

— Epsilon
Q4 2012 Email Trends and Benchmark
March 2013

An introductory send is a much better approach in that the list owner provides an introduction or recommendation along with a bit of information about you embedded in one of their campaigns. This is far less confusing to the recipient and one that let's you benefit from the credibility of the sender. It's easy to miss the mark with this approach so carefully plan the introduction so that it is appropriate for your target audience. Also give prior thought to and agree with the list owner on your process for following up with these leads.

In some cases, you will be able to trade exposure with this type of partner for like exposure in your events. In other cases, the partner will charge you a fee for this introduction. Depending upon the brand recognition of the partner, the fee to appear in their messaging could be substantial, but it could also be very effective at extending your reach into new territories.

START A REFERRAL PROGRAM

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Most business owners, executives, and marketing managers will agree that referrals are one of their company's top lead generators, yet very few have developed a marketing plan to develop, encourage, and capitalize on this very important vehicle.

If you approach your referral program in the same manner as you approach other marketing vehicles, you can not only increase your referrals, you will have a ready-made plan to deploy the instant you identify a new candidate company as a referral source.

Get started with your program by defining the personas of a *referral partner*. (Turn to the personas section in this eBook for more information.) These personas are your target audience and they will represent persons and companies who you believe can be motivated to refer. With referral partner personas defined, list next what type of tools you have or that you can create in order to cultivate this relationship and incentivize referrals.

Once you have identified a partner, work with them to identify the *ideal client personas*. This will make it easier for your partner to identify key opportunities. Create an internal-use handout for the partner that will

- Profile the ideal client
- Profile the ideal opportunity
- Describe the offer
- Detail the value proposition and WIIFM.
- Detail the benefits to the partner for referrals (spiffs, recognition, kudos, and contests)
- Detail how your team will follow up
- List contact information at your company if they have questions

66% of new business comes from referrals and you are 400% more likely to buy when referred by a friend.

— *Nielsen*

16% higher lifetime values are attained from referred customers.

— *The Wharton School of Business*

Internally, you must create a referral-conversion strategy, one that both marketing and sales can agree is the best way to warm this lead and advance their sales readiness. In many cases, these leads will have both marketing and sales follow up. Due to the partner's referral, these new clients may well be expecting a personal interaction from the sales team, but getting them enlisted as a subscriber too means that if they do not go directly to purchase, they will still be a part of marketing's nurturing campaigns.

BUY DAILY COUPON ADVERTISEMENT

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Daily deals and coupons are among the crop of new vehicles for generater leads. With the ever-increasing popularity of these daily deal apps and websites, your offer can be a great source of new leads. Not all sites are the same and the fee for participation varies widely. Also, some sites require you to discount your product just to list and others do not. Ideally you should choose a vendor with a low-commission structure in order to lower your cost of acquisition.

BEST PRACTICE

For many ESPs, email permissions cannot be transferred or shared, no matter how close the partner or how up-front the effort. If you are set on rental, purchase, or co-reg you may need to send your first email to that list through an ESP that permits this type of list acquisition. Your other option is to send it yourself using software such as DirectMail or MaxBulk Mailer.

BEST PRACTICE

Sign up for multiple co-reg sites and test different landing page designs. What works with one, may not work for all of them. Ask about their target audience and create appropriate messaging.

SPONSOR CONTENT

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Many companies accept sponsors for content published at their site. For example, Target Marketing has a library of downloads that contain branding, advertising, or promotional content of the sponsor. Sponsored content might be created by the sponsoring company or by the host site. The sponsoring company pays a fee and receives the

7 in 10 people say they had made use of a coupon or discount they had learned about through a marketing email in the prior week (35%) or month (33%).

— Blue Kangaroo
Survey on Marketing Emails, 2012

contact information for each person accessing the sponsored content, be that a white paper, video, webcast, or the like.

This arrangement is beneficial to the host, who receives revenue from the sponsor for hosting and promoting the content, and to the sponsor who gains access to the host's extended network.

BUY CO-REGISTRATION LEADS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Generally, co-registration providers host coupon and offer websites that collect visitor contact information through special web forms, but there are other approaches used by co-registration companies too. Some use pop-up forms (lightboxes) and some offer sign-up in the confirmation or thank you page.

As an advertiser on a co-registration website, you pay only for the names of the visitors who submit their name on your offer page or select your offer. You set the budget or pre-request the number of names you hope to collect. The process can take days or weeks to accumulate your goal leads, depending upon the amount of traffic of that particular site.

Many ESPs prohibit the importing of names generated by co-reg efforts. If you choose a co-registration site that displays a landing page for your specific offer, you

will net very targeted names that have specifically opted-in to receive your offer. Most co-reg sites also send a confirmation email to ensure they understand that they have subscribed to your offer. This approach is considered a double opt-in and if questioned by your ESP, it should suffice to direct them to your page on the co-reg site so that they may verify the process. If you are still blocked from importing, click here for a list of other email-automation providers, many of which do allow co-reg list imports.

We have two B2C clients using co-registration and both are experiencing fantastic results. One is collecting about 3,000 new names a day for their offer of a free photo of the day delivered to their inbox.

PURCHASE SEARCH-ENGINE ADS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Search-engine marketing (SEM or pay per click [PPC]) is the process of displaying your text (or text and images) advertisement alongside and in response to a search-engine query. The most-popular SEM is Google AdWords, but most search engines offer PPC ads.

Though SEM *can* deliver you highly qualified and relevant leads, learning exactly how to word your ads to garner these leads is a learning curve that can
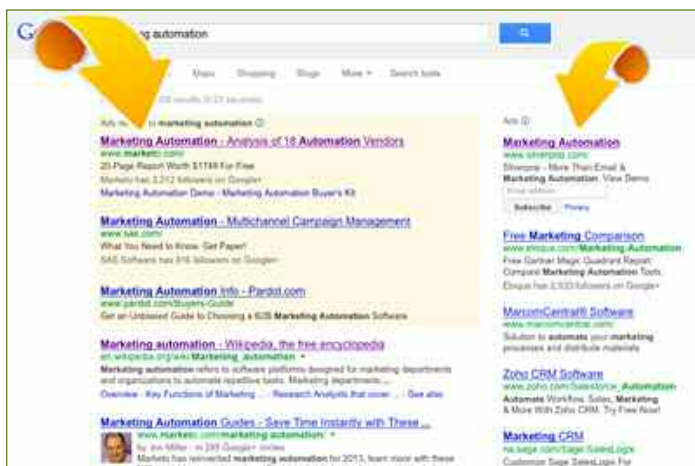

Figure 3.1 Search-engine marketing enables you to display your company name at the top of search-engine results or in sponsored sidebars as is shown in here in a Google page.

quickly drain the pocketbook of a small company if you do not master the bidding process in short order.

Like affiliate marketing and social-media marketing, with SEM you will set a budget, cost per click (bid) or cost per impression (CPM), and schedule. How much you are willing to spend determines how prominently your ad can be featured (higher CPC/CPM bidders are placed higher in the list) and the length of time that your campaign will run. You are able, however, to choose the day and days of the week that your ad is displayed. Google AdWords and other SEM vendors provide in-depth analytics reports to help you to improve copy writing, offers, and bidding.

PURCHASE SOCIAL-MEDIA ADS

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

LinkedIn and Facebook both offer PPC advertising. It works it essentially the same manner as SEM. You set a budget, bid, schedule, and audience and the ads will be displayed in the sidebar of the platform. Facebook has also recently enabled advertising (promoted posts) in the Facebook timeline as well.

Twitter has recently joined the social advertising foray with promoted tweets, accounts, and trends and many companies have found great success with this vehicle. Promoted tweets are indicated as such along the

BEST PRACTICE

If you are interested in SEM, we strongly recommend that you enlist the help of a professional. Spider Trainers would be happy to refer you to one of our partners with proven success in this area.

BEST PRACTICE

Affiliate marketing requires close monitoring of analytics in order to improve ad performance. Like SEM, you will design ads that entice the click and yet set the expectations appropriately. If you do not, you will suffer from high bounce rates when the leads get to your site and do not find what they were expecting.

bottom edge of the tweet and come in two sub-formats: tweets that appear in the user's Twitter feed (even if they do not follow the brand); and tweets that are paid to appear in response to search requests on Twitter (much like SEM). Promoted tweets are sold on a cost-per-engagement basis, meaning that as an advertiser, you only pay when a user replies to, clicks, or favorites the tweet.

In addition to promoting your own tweet, as an advertiser you can purchase trends (hashtag topics that are listed as *trending* on Twitter because advertisers have paid to do so).
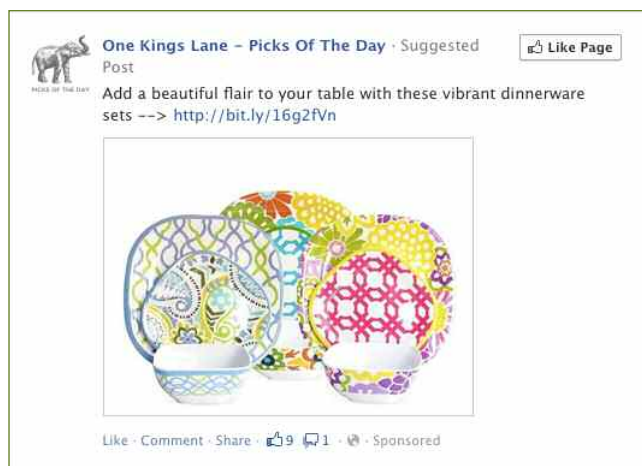

Figure 3.2 Though I have not liked this vendor or ever visited their website, their advertisement appears in my Facebook timeline. When the vendor chose their target audience, I apparently met the criteria.

Figure 3.3 Twitter indicates a promoted tweet with a customized footer.

SIGN UP FOR AFFILIATE MARKETING

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	★	★	★	★	★
COST OF ACTIVITY	★	★	★	★	★
TIME COMMITMENT	★	★	★	★	★

Affiliate marketing enlists third-party websites to promote your business through an ad broker or aggregator. When the third-party website displays your ad at their site, you pay the broker a fee for clicks on that ad (cost per lead) or for a sale that results from that click (cost per sale).

Affiliate leads tend to be of higher quality since the visitor first clicked on an ad or link at the third-party website that promoted your company. The affiliate model works very much like PPC search-engine marketing.

When you use an affiliate-marketing service, you will create a selection of text and/or display ads in the sizes specified by the marketing service. Your company profile and ads will be added to a directory from which affiliate partners (the third-party website) will choose.

You will also set the budget for the campaign and the price you are willing to pay for clicks on these ads, but the more you are willing to pay for the clicks or sale, the more affiliates will choose to display your ads. Fees are collected by the broker and split with the affiliate as a commission.

symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Twitter tweet. This indicator was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages.

— Twitter

Figure 3.4 On your Twitter home page, you will find a list of trending topics.

Figure 3.5 HuntingInsider.com uses affiliate marketing and chooses ads that target their site's typical visitor, the hunter.

CHAPTER 4

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR SUBSCRIBERS

Exercising best practices in mailing or emailing to your list is of the utmost importance. As we covered in the previous sections, creating and building a list is a helluva lot of work and the less care you show in using this list, the more likely it is that you will have to repeat all those processes — again and again. In this section, we will cover the how-tos of sending messages that get opened and clicked, kicking to the curb disengaged recipients, and keeping your eye on the ever-important sender-reputation score.

SEGMENTATION

When you treat new and current subscribers in the same manner and send them the same messages, you are missing one of the most important ways to nurture your lead to purchase. Studies have shown that relevant messages are more engaging and return better results from open to sale. Using information that may already be in your list, or appending your list organically or through a service, you can create

BEST PRACTICE

If your customer list does not have enough depth for segmentation, add one or two fields at a time to your gated-content forms. For instance, offer a white paper and require the number of employees. In a following campaign, offer an infographic and require annual revenue.

BEST PRACTICE

When creating a personas spreadsheet, add pictures. You'll be surprised how much it helps to have a face to represent the recipient when choosing copy and images.

messages with very specific appeal all the way down to their unique and individual needs, desires, and demands. This categorization is called segmenting your list, or segmentation, and it can be performed with either explicit or implicit data.

39% of marketers who segmented their email lists experienced higher open rates, 28% experienced lower unsubscribe rates, and 24% experienced better deliverability and greater revenue.

— *Lyris*
Annual Email Optimizer Report

32% of marketers say segmenting their email database is one of their organization's top objectives in the next 12 months. 52% of marketers say they have a great need to improve email database segmentation.

— *MarketingSherpa*
2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

Segmentation coupled with email automation will nudge individuals from one stage in your funnel to the next, whether they are new subscribers, recent buyers, or repeat customers.

With segmentation, you have the ability to identify your highest-value customers: the return customer and those with the highest value order. These two groups are generally the most valuable to your company. With the help of your email automation system or website analytics, you can track these groups back to the origination source to determine which of the types of efforts in chapter two were most effective at creating a new customer and turning that customer into a repeat or high order-value customer.

Segmentation, therefore, is key to improving your engagement and though you may start out with only the email address when you invite subscribers or gather leads, subsequent messaging can enable recipients to complete other short forms that fill in the blanks over time. If you need more data than you can quickly acquire through forms, consider using an append service, which we talk about later in this eBook.

With segmentation, you can greatly improve message relevance, set up better A/B and multivariate testing, target your audience with subject lines, designs, and images that resonate with the individual, and acquire higher click-thru and sales rates. You can segment on

any data in your list or any data that you can append, but some ideas include:

- Age
- Marital status
- Occupation
- Presence of children
- Length of residence
- Past purchase
- Website pages visited

- Gender
- Income
- Education
- Owner vs. renter
- Lifestyle segmentation
- Last visit to website
- Resources downloaded

Segments can even be divided further into sub-segments, and those sub-segments divided again, and so on. Just remember, creating your email versions is not without effort, so be sure you leave enough names in the sub-segments to justify the work required.

PERSONAS

In order to appropriately develop email messages or content at your website, you must know who are your recipients and visitors. *Personas* are the profiles of your ideal customers. In order to better understand, you can go through the exercise of building a spreadsheet in which you list the attributes of each of your ideal customer types. You can use explicit and implicit data

Figure 4.1 Use a spreadsheet to define the characteristics of each of your ideal customer and ideal visitor personas.

— whatever will help you to better define the needs of each of the personas.

REENGAGEMENT/REACTIVATION

If your current list is carrying around dead weight — recipients who have not interacted with any message for an extended period of time — it's time for you to launch a reengagement, or reactivation, campaign. This type of campaign is designed to jump start the idle relationship and will be most effective with segmentation that categorizes the various types of disengaged subscribers and personalization in a manner most likely to prompt a response.

Have a close look at the inactive names in your list and see what you can identify in the way of a common thread. Use that as a starting point for choosing a message. Contests are a good trigger, as are big-discount coupons. As noted earlier, it costs more to find a new subscriber than to revitalize the ones you already have.

If you think that these inactive addresses are benign, think again. Having large numbers of inactive contacts in your list will have a negative impact on your sender reputation since many ISPs now track more than just whether or not they click the spam button, they track engagement. This activity — or inactivity, as the case may be — helps the ESP to gauge and set your sender reputation. (See the sender reputation section later in this eBook.)

BEST PRACTICE

If you are concerned about your list, call the deliverability manager at your ESP. They can offer suggestions for testing and improving your list to ensure they don't have to give you the pink slip.

BEST PRACTICE

Keep your emails going out at a steady pace. Long periods of time in between sends gives people time to forget about you and forget they subscribed.

Most email-automation software will provide you with analytics about what happens with your emails once you hit send, and if you find that many are landing in the dead zone, turn to surveys and then segmentation based on the responses to the surveys to deliver more-relevant content.

If, for myriad of reasons, your subscribers are no longer interested in your message and you are unable to re-engage, then there is no point in continuing to email them and allow their inactivity to influence or affect your ability to continue to send bulk emails.

DELIVERABILITY

From where you get your list and how you maintain and use that list directly affects your deliverability. The more care you show in the processes we have covered thus far, the more success you will have in making it to the inbox or mailbox. If your target audience does not

55%
of permission-based, promotional messages sent to subscribers are deleted without ever have been opened.

— Merkle Interactive Services

64%
said the biggest factors in improving deliverability are clean up-to-date lists, with relevance at 52%, and sender reputation at 42%.

— Econsultancy
Email Marketing Census, 2011

actually receive your message, nothing you do beyond that point will matter. In this section, we will focus on the deliverability of email to inboxes and direct mail to mailboxes, but deliverability is not limited to these two vehicles. Deliverability issues can affect everything from a billboard to a TV commercial, from a magazine print ad to a direct-mail postcard, and from a brochure handout to a business card. Therefore, reaching your target audience is the first step.
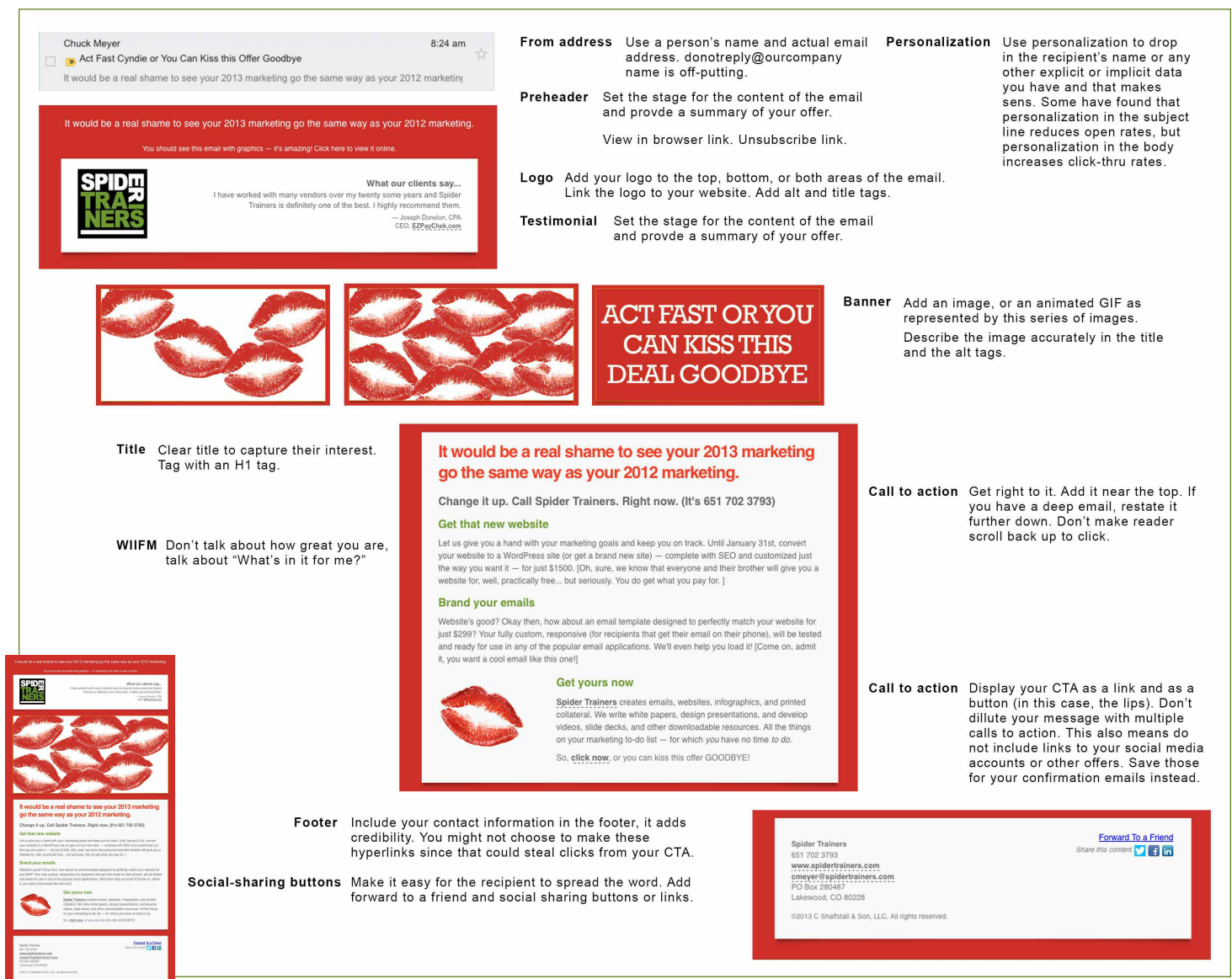
ONLINE DELIVERABILITY

There are more entities that you might imagine with a voice in the decision to deliver your email to your intended recipient, including organizations dedicated to combatting spam, your internet service provider (ISP), your email service provider (ESP), and the recipient's IT department; to name the major players.

DIAGRAM OF AN EMAIL

Chuck Meyer   8:24 am
Act Fast Cyndie or You Can Kiss this Offer Goodbye
It would be a real shame to see your 2013 marketing go the same way as your 2012 marketing

From address Use a person's name and actual email address. donotreply@ourcompany name is off-putting.

Preheader Set the stage for the content of the email and provde a summary of your offer.

View in browser link. Unsubscribe link.

Logo Add your logo to the top, bottom, or both areas of the email. Link the logo to your website. Add alt and title tags.

Testimonial Set the stage for the content of the email and provde a summary of your offer.

Personalization Use personalization to drop in the recipient's name or any other explicit or implicit data you have and that makes sens. Some have found that personalization in the subject line reduces open rates, but personalization in the body increases click-thru rates.

Banner Add an image, or an animated GIF as represented by this series of images.
Describe the image accurately in the title and the alt tags.

Title Clear title to capture their interest. Tag with an H1 tag.

WIIFM Don't talk about how great you are, talk about "What's in it for me?"

Call to action Get right to it. Add it near the top. If you have a deep email, restate it further down. Don't make reader scroll back up to click.

Call to action Display your CTA as a link and as a button (in this case, the lips). Don't dillute your message with multiple calls to action. This also means do not include links to your social media accounts or other offers. Save those for your confirmation emails instead.

Footer Include your contact information in the footer, it adds credibility. You might not choose to make these hyperlinks since that could steal clicks from your CTA.

Social-sharing buttons Make it easy for the recipient to spread the word. Add forward to a friend and social sharing buttons or links.

MINIMIZING ATTRITION

Many marketers experience high opt-out rates and struggle to figure out why. A/B testing will help you determine if it's your content, but there are other tricks that have been found to reduce opt-outs as well. Privacy policies, for instance, can help by assuring your recipient that you are on their side and care about their desires. Recipients today are more and more wary about the type of information you have, what you are collecting, and most importantly, how you share it. By including a link to your privacy policy and having a policy that favors them, you may well be able to convince recipients that you are a trusted vendor and that even if this particular message is not interesting to them, that on the whole they would rather receive your messages than not.

In order to ensure your customers receive the types of communication in which they are interested, e.g., newsletters, offers, announcements, you should provide them an opportunity to select the type of publication when they subscribe and to change their preferences in every email you send. Customers who receive targeted emails based upon their preferences are more receptive to the message. If your ESP does not offer an automatic preferences interface, create a form with check boxes representing your various publication types and include a link to the form in all emails. Once a user has set their preferences, ideally

they will be automatically moved into a list to receive that publication as is it published.

HONOR OPT-OUT AND PRIVACY

Aside from the CAN-SPAM rules on the topic of unsubscribing upon request, most ESPs immediately, automatically, and permanently remove unsubscribers from your list whether you want them to or not. What's more, some ESPs will not allow you to add them back in and others won't even tell you who unsubscribed. It's a mixed bag for sure. The faster you get people out of your list that don't want to be there, the better it is for you. If you do not have an ESP that manages this, or you send everything with local software, keep your list clean and deliverable by honoring all opt-out requests as quickly as possible. It doesn't have to be a daily task, but at least remove all opt-outs before each new send.

SPAMTRAP

Spam-combatting organizations have created what we marketers would call a seed name, but what this group calls a honeypot — a planted (yet unpublished) email address that, when harvested and emailed, identifies

25% of the average email list is deprecated annually.
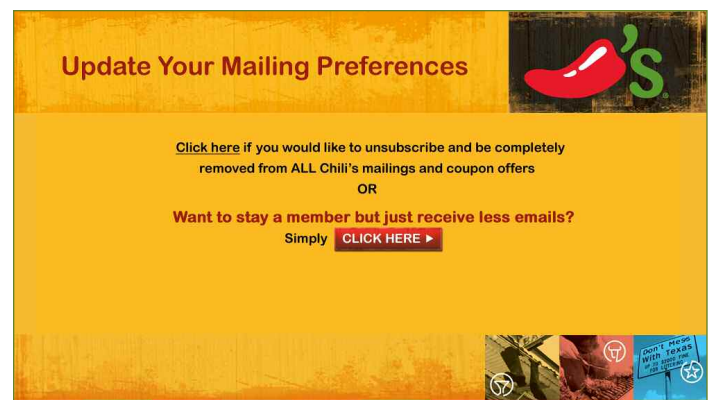
— *MarketingSherpa*

Figure 4.2 Chili's is doing a good job of giving options beyond just leaving the list entirely. Image is ©Chili's

the sender as a spammer. These email addresses only exist in the deep dredges of code accessible only by companies using nefarious methods for collecting email addresses for the purpose of sending spam email. These addresses, or spamtraps, do not bounce; instead they are delivered to the monitoring company in order to identify the sender.

Since the spamtrap addresses are unpublished, lists developed through standard and respected business practices are not at risk of accidentally acquiring one. When you purchase or rent lists, there is a fairly high risk of acquiring one and if you then send an email to the spamtrap, your company will be identified as a spammer and it is likely that your ESP and ISP will initiate a very stern conversation with you. They might also bypass the conversation and simply sever your business relationship.

SPAM COMPLAINTS

It has become easier than ever to report spam from a sender. Most email software includes a one-click spam button. This click logs a complaint at the ISP level or relays it back to the sender.

Unfortunately, spam complaints do not track why a recipient makes a spam complaint. People forget about opting-in to lists or they forget about an existing, but aged relationship they may have had with the sender. Spam complaints can also come if you send too often or if you send irrelevant messages. No

matter the reason, these spam complaints can contribute to a poor sender's reputation.

Spam complaints are frustrating, especially when they come from people in your list with whom you believe you have had a long-term business relationship. If you're experiencing high spam complaints, try adding an unsubscribe link to the top of your email so that they come across that before they have time to think about marking you as spam.

Another way is to introduce yourself at the beginning of the email and remind them of the business relationship you have. Personalize the message for an added kick. Try something along the lines of:

Hello, Greg,

We met last year at Graph Expo and discussed your marketing needs. We're eager to tell you about a new special that we are running.

Or in the preheader, something such as this:

You are receiving this email from Spider Trainers because you subscribed to our mailing list. To un-subscribe, click here.

SENDER REPUTATION

Sending to spamtraps or sending email that results in a large percentage of bounces or spam complaints from recipients all contribute to your sender reputation, but reputation is not yours alone to bear. Sender reputation

70% of "this is spam" complaints from recipients are actually legitimate newsletters, offers, or notifications that people are no longer interested in receiving.

*— Return Path
Email Intelligence Report, 2012*

70% of "this is spam complaints" and 60% of all spamtraps come from marketers.

*— Return Path
Email Intelligence Report, 2012*

is associated with the IP address of the mail server you are using. An ISP or ESP will score your reputation by assigning different values to your email activity. The total of these values provides a ranking for your company as a sender. If you have a low score, your ESP may end your ability to send since they do not want to inherit your reputation as a spammer — regardless of how you have gained that reputation.

In addition to scoring your activity, you can also have a low score because you have no history and therefore are unknown. It may be easier to understand if you think about the similarities to your credit score. People with no credit history have low credit scores, but not because they have a bad history; it's simply because they have no history.

Since bounces and spam complaints by recipients can affect your sender reputation, you don't have to rent or buy a list to damage your reputation. Many companies have suffered because they tried to reactivate a list that had lain dormant for so long recipients had forgotten that a business relationship existed between themselves and the sender. If you do choose to reactivate an old list, proceed slowly and cautiously. Send emails in small groups over an extended span of time so that you don't have thousands of complaints in a single day. A bounce rate of more than 10% is outside the normal range and will alert your ESP or ISP.

Spammers often purchase (and rent and sell) lists that have been computer generated and thus contain a large percentage of fake email addresses. When you send to this type of list, these hard bounces (invalid email addresses) can be nearly as damaging as a spam complaint. Hard bounces are also a risk of old email lists, even if you have acquired them through respected business practices.

SENDER AUTHENTICATION

Sender policy framework (SPF) is an email validation system designed to prevent spam by detecting email spoofing through the process of verifying the sender's IP addresses. Spoofing is when the sender's address and other parts of the email header are modified in order to appear as though the email is being sent from a different source (usually a more reputable source). You may have seen examples of this if you have received email sent from what seemed to be a Facebook domain and asking you to log in to your Facebook account and reset your password, or some other effort to collect or intercept your private

80% of email delivery problems are directly attributable to a poor sender reputation.

— DMA
Email Deliverability Review, 2012

77% of blocked emails are due to poor sender reputation.

— DMA
Take outs from the Email Deliverability Masterclass, 2012

For the first time Sender Policy Framework (SPF) email authentication checks are on the top ten list of content triggers for different ISPs.

— Lyris
Q2 Email Advisory Report Card, 2007

information. Asking for the password is phishing, but sending from Facebook.com is spoofing.

An SPF record is created with your ISP that allows specification of which hosts are allowed to send mail from your domain. Mail exchangers use this information to check that mail from your domain is being sent by a host that you have sanctioned. This authentication also notifies and allows other ISPs to monitor mail sent from the IP address. If abuses occur, they will know who the sender is and the sender's reputation suffer as well as their ability to send email.

Many experts agree that there are six elements to your sender reputation:

- **Volume**. Keep your traffic to an even keel. Large spikes will create concern and draw attention.
- **Number of unknown recipients**. Send to people with whom you have developed a relationship. Sending to people who don't know you will often result in spam complaints.
- **Complaint rates**. Most ESPs agree that spam complaints should not exceed more than 1 per thousand. Higher numbers will alert your ESP.
- **Spamtrap hits**. If you stick to the high road when building your list, you run no risk of including one of these damaging addresses.
- **Consistency**. Find an ESP and stick with it. Changing ESPs frequently can cause concern.

- **Management**. Be responsible for the acquisition and ongoing maintenance of your list. Collect it responsibly and be quick to manage opt-outs and bounces. Take care to set up a reputable infrastructure by creating an SPF and staying relevant with your messages.

MOBILE DESIGN

As we become more mobile, so must our marketing and that means we need to adapt our email designs for the devices on which they are being opened, and less and less frequently that is a desktop. Today, it's much more likely to be a smartphone or tablet. The easier it is to interact with your email on these devices, the more positive numbers you will see in open, click, and submits. Have a look at the analytics of your previous campaigns to determine the percentage of your audience using a mobile device. If it's more than a few percent, it's time to consider a responsive design.

TRICKLE SEND

Our own experience has been that when using an old list for a re-engagement campaign or testing a partner list or acquired list, that slow is best. We use a desktop application such as DirectMail or MaxBulk Mailer to send no more than 250 emails a day through one or more email accounts. If you have a large list, this effort could take weeks, but you are far less likely to hit a large number of bad email addresses or receive

78% of U.S. email users will also access their emails via mobile by 2017.
— *Forrester Research*
Email Marketing Forecast 2012 – 2017

38% of email is now opened on a mobile device, with 33% for desktop and 29% for web mail.
— *Litmus*
Email Analytics, 2012

multiple spam complaints — and damage your sender reputation in the process — with a trickle send.

LIST FATIGUE

This is a condition where your list produces diminishing returns because you have sent too many offers, or too many of the same offers, in too short a period of time. By following the best practices in this eBook, such as segmenting your list and creating much more relevant messages, you can reduce fatigue, but not eliminate it entirely. The best cure for fatigue is to survey your recipients and ask them how often they wish to hear from you and then do that.

OFFLINE DELIVERABILITY

While sender reputation is not as critical with direct mail as with email, there's no doubt that getting a message from a reputable company will be far more interesting to you than receiving something from a company with whom you have a poor perception. Having said that, with direct mail, it's more often than not about the presentation — does the piece catch the reader's eye in time to keep it from being discarded? Since direct mail comes in all sorts of formats, choosing what is best for your project might not be about the design, but instead about the vehicle. As you ponder the best piece to promote your campaign, and ensure delivery, don't forget the handwritten letter, it often out-performs many other message types.

As unfortunate as it is, the equivalent to unsubscribe in direct mail is often to throw it in the trash. Recipients rarely take the time to phone a company and ask to have their name removed, so there's no opportunity to analyze why exactly the recipient did not take advantage of the offer. Our best shot is to ensure we deliver an appropriate vehicle, beautiful design, and to the right person at the right address.

NCOA

The United States Postal Service provides a service known as National Change of Address (NCOA), which will update your mailing list using their registry of people who have moved or otherwise changed their U.S. address. The NCOA database is licensed to companies that provide direct-mail services. This process will improve delivery and reduce your postage costs; sometimes substantially.

What's important and what has been missing with direct mail, is the tracking of the success rate of your direct mail. As we discussed earlier, you can use your online tools to track offline efforts and combined with NCOA, appropriate vehicles, and good design, improve not just the number of pieces that are delivered and read, but also the engagement rate. When working to engage offline visitors online, you do sometimes have to choose between your offer and the method to engage them online.

10% to 15% of the national population change

location every year — information found in the National Change of Address database.

— USPS

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR SUBSCRIBER LISTS

Your leads and subscribers lists are some of the most important assets of your company, and given the amount of effort it takes to develop a subscriber list, it is short sighted to show too little concern for the maintenance. Some percentage of maintenance occurs naturally as you send emails and recipients manage their subscription or your ESP manages opt-outs and bounces, but more in-depth maintenance requires forethought and effort on your part.

CHURN RATE

Churn is the natural attrition that occurs with any list, be that through spam complaints, unsubscribes, or closed email accounts. The industry average is 30% annually, so that means that in order to keep your list from getting smaller, you need to add at least 30% in new names throughout the year.

If you want (like most of us do), to grow your list by 20% annually and your current attrition rate is 30%, you need to acquire 50% more subscribers. In this scenario,

it makes sense to put just as much focus on lowering the attrition rate as it does to focus on your growth. With the best practices of this eBook, including address validation, regular and frequent list hygiene, segmentation, email preferences, and other efforts, you will not only gain subscribers but you will keep them engaged and naturally reduce your churn rate.

LIST HYGIENE

You can go a long way in preventing list churn and list decay when you employ proper email hygiene routines as part of your list-maintenance program. Email-hygiene services that include email validation, correction, and email change of address (ECOA), will help you to reduce your bounce rate due to those type of errors and lower your attrition by recovering valid email addresses that may have been classified as dead, repairing email syntax in misspelled or invalid email addresses, and in some cases, updating out-of-date addresses with current, working ones.

62% of companies provide an easy unsubscribe process. 51% measure and remove hard bounces, 41% clean their lists regularly, 39% remove inactive subscribers, and only 7% send re-permission campaigns.

— *MarketingSherpa*

Some experts recommend giving your house list a thorough cleansing as well and that it be considered an ongoing task. Running your list, or a third-party list, through a hygiene process will result in:

- Reduced email-marketing costs
- A positive ISP/domain reputation
- Improved data quality
- Increased accuracy of marketing metrics

The average email list has a 13% bounce rate attributed primarily due to misspellings, typos, and about 30% annually changing email addresses. If you're somewhere near average, removal of these names means a reduction in your email list of 30% right off the top. Using a list-hygiene service you can attempt to salvage these names first and what they cannot recover can then be relegated to a suppression list.

During the list-hygiene process, tools and software are used to clean the list by appending, refreshing, and de-duping information. This process is even more important when you have rented or purchased a list. The process should include some, most, or all of the following:

- Verify the email syntax
- Confirm that the domain exists
- Confirm that the domain can receive email
- Verify that the mailbox exists at that domain
- Identify each address as deliverable or undeliverable

- Remove out-of-date records
- Remove complainers, spam traps, and honeypots
- Remove duplicates
- Remove duplicate names, titles, and companies repeated in inconsistent ways, including spelling, abbreviations and initials
- Append select data (add mailing addresses when you have only the email address)

As nice as it is to have such a clean list, the emphasis must be placed on the protection of your sender reputation. Sending out just one email to a list with one or more spam traps could cause your ESP to block your emails and sever your relationship.

APPEND DATA

If your list contains mailing address but not email addresses, a data-append service can fill in the blanks. Depending upon the provider's services, you may also be able to append additional demographic data that can be used for segmentation and personalization. Email append is affordable and reliable and will help to revitalize a list that you might have thought has limited on-going usefulness.

With email addresses appended, you will then have the option of deploying multi-touch campaigns that include both direct mail and email along with other channels, such as press releases, social media, blogging, and so on. For more information on multi-

touch marketing, download our eBook, The Power of Print (in Marketing).

To affect the email-append process, you will provide your direct-mail subscribers list to the service provider who will then match those names to names that exist in an opt-in email database. (Not all providers have the same opt-in database for appending, so you might choose to append using more than one provider.) Once appended, the provider sends an introductory email message to the matched customers requesting permission to send them email from your company. On average, a match is found for about 25% of the names in your list.

Once the email responses have been received, the opt-in matches and unsubscribes are provided to you so that you may add matches to the subscribers list and unsubscribes to your suppression list.

REVERSE-APPEND DATA

For companies that have collected email addresses without the matching mailing address, a reverse append can provide you with both names and physical addresses in order to give you a more complete database. With this information, you will be able to geo-target emails and direct mail alike and as we discussed in the previous section, deploy multi-touch campaigns that include both email and direct mail. The typical match rate for a reverse append is about 35 – 50%.

CONCLUSION

This eBook is another in the Spider Trainers' series designed to arm marketers with tools and ideas for developing, reaching, and maintaining their leads, prospects, subscribers, and customers. All of our eBooks have multiple contributors from our network of experts, each an expert in their own specialty.

We welcome your feedback at spidertrainer@spidertrainers.com.

TAGS

affiliate marketing

append data

auto-responder

blog

buy email lists

churn rate

co-branding email

co-registration

confirmation email

contacts

crowd sourcing

deliverability

demandgen, demand gen

email list

inbound content

introductory send

lead cloning

leadgen, lead gen

leads

leads

lightbox

list attrition

list fatigue

list hygiene

loyalty program

marketing

marketing lists

NCOA

negative consent

partner co-op marketing

personas

pop-up form

privacy

prospects

QR code

reactivation marketing

reengagement marketing

rent email lists

reverse-append data

search engine marketing

segmentation

SEM

sender authentication

sender reputation

SMM

social media

social media marketing

spamtrap

sponsored content

subscribers

value proposition

what's in it for me

WIIFM

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IBM

Jeff Bullas

LinkedIn

Litmus

Lyris

Manta

MarketingCharts

MarketingProfs

MarketingSherpa

McKinsey & Company

Merkle Interactive Services

Mindjumpers

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