



How to Build a List of Responsive and Loyal Email Subscribers

LESSON 3

Getting People to Sign-Up for Your List

By now, if you've been keeping up with this course, you should have figured out why you want to use email marketing to grow your business and how you are going use it to make more sales, and you know the things you must consider before choosing your email service provider.

You may have already chosen your email service provider. If so, congratulations. You are probably anxious to start sending something to your list.

But before we get into the details of what to send to your list and how to use your ESP, let's discuss how you get people to sign up to your list — since you can't build a relationship if you don't have any subscribers in the first place!

Back in the heady days when email was new, people were signing up for any list they could get on. Everyone loved getting email back in the day, salivating like Pavlov's dogs every time they heard the famous "You've got mail" announcement from AOL.

Heck, they even made a movie about it!

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But today, your subscribers inbox is filled to overflowing, and they have become what I call, *inbox weary*: too much email, feelings of overwhelm, not enough time, and most emails wind up in the trash.

The problem today is that most people really don't want to sign up for any more lists. They still want easy, free online content but don't want to put in much effort to get it, even if it all it takes is just entering their name and email address.

Even more worrisome for many are privacy concerns. With even just a name and email address, people are afraid they're going to get an inbox overwhelmed with spam, or that their information will be passed on to a third party.

This is why it is vital to give people a compelling reason to sign up for your list. This reason has to outweigh their hesitance and concern over their privacy.

Once you get set up with an email service provider — your ESP — you're going to want to start collecting those valuable email addresses. I call them valuable because that's just what they are.

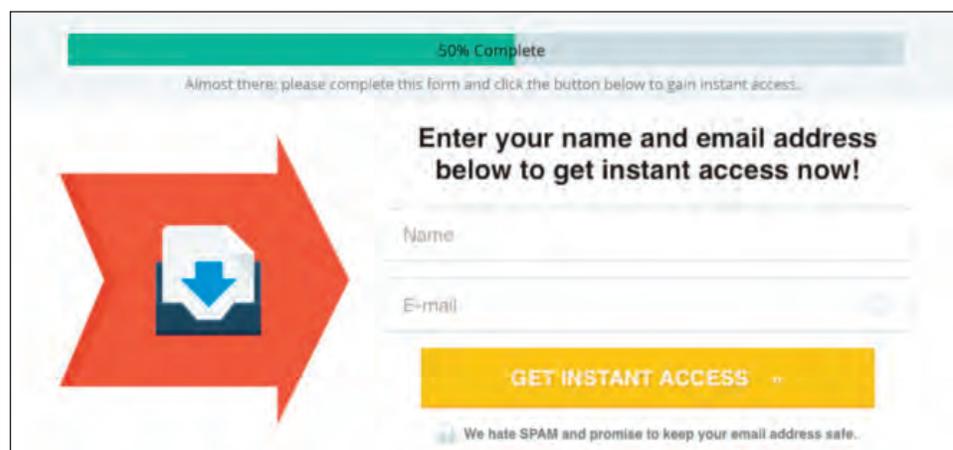
You've heard the saying "the money is in the list" and that is quite true. It is the people on your list that will be stepping up to the plate to give you their money. Hopefully, again and again and again.

So once you've got your ESP lined up, you're going to want to put a sign-up form — more aptly called an opt-in form — on your website. And you're going to want it to show up on every page of your website.

All you need in this form are...

Two Simple Fields

Their name and their email address.



The image shows a screenshot of a web form. At the top, there is a green progress bar labeled "50% Complete". Below it, a message says "Almost there: please complete this form and click the button below to gain instant access." The main heading of the form is "Enter your name and email address below to get instant access now!". There are two input fields: "Name" and "E-mail". Below the fields is a prominent yellow button that says "GET INSTANT ACCESS". At the bottom of the form, there is a small icon of a person and the text "We hate SPAM and promise to keep your email address safe." A large red arrow with a white envelope icon and a blue downward arrow points towards the input fields.

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On your opt-in form, don't ask for anything more than their name and email address. And these days, more and more marketers are not even asking for their name, asking only for their email address.

As I mentioned earlier, it's hard enough to get people to fill out those two simple fields. If you ask for other information — like phone numbers, or mailing address or even profession or location — you're making it that much harder for them to sign up.

Some marketers *do* put optional fields on their sign up forms, and this is largely a matter of preference, but I'd recommend not doing it, especially if you're just starting to build a list, unless the information is critical to you or you want to target specific people who are willing to fill in those answers. Even if the fields clearly say 'optional,' people usually mistake it for required information and they may run away.

The logic behind adding more fields is that you can gain more information about subscribers as they sign up, but if you pay close attention to your stats and get to know your list, you can learn this information later.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you want only highly qualified people on your list, you may want to use the additional information to weed out the proverbial “tire kickers” assuming that only those genuinely interested in you and what you offer will complete all the fields to get on your list. It is really a judgment call that only you can make.

A Valuable Offer a.k.a. The Ethical Bribe

The best way to get people to sign up to your list is to offer something that is of great value to them. This free gift should be something so irresistible to your prospects that they cannot help but sign up for you list. These sign-up gifts are often referred to as an “ethical bribe” because they are used to entice, or bribe, people to get on your list.

The gift doesn't need to be expensive — and we aren't really talking about value in dollars and cents here anyway — but it *does* need to be seen as valuable enough for someone to trade in their name and email address for.

It's easiest to give away a digital product because it virtually doesn't cost you anything and there is no shipping involved and the subscriber can download it immediately. (Something that is almost imperative in this instant gratification world we live in.)

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A digital product could be a report, an e-book, a list of resources, a short online course, access to exclusive content, a free membership, an educational video series, a free app or software program, etc. It should be something useful geared toward solving a common problem your audience faces.

NOTE: Be sure to download your BONUS report, *50 Freebies to Give Away for The Opt-In*. It's 50 quick ideas for what to give away to entice people to sign up for your list. You'll find it on the Lessons page for this course.

Create Pages Exclusively for Sign-Ups

You should put your opt-in sign-up form anywhere online where your target market will see it, such as on a sidebar of your site or blog, and you also need to create standalone pages for the sole purpose of getting visitors to sign up.



This type of standalone page, or landing page, shown above, is called a 'squeeze page' or an 'opt-in page'. It has nothing on it except for powerful sales copy to entice the visitor to sign up, as well as the sign-up form itself.

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It's called a "squeeze page" because in the not too distant past, someone got the idea that you should extract an email address from anyone who wanted to view your website. The potential site visitor would first have to complete the form in order to be granted access to the site.

What marketers learned rather quickly was that this kind of "website viewing extortion" was not going to work. People would leave rather than be forced to enter their email address. At this point, a first time visitor to your site knew nothing about you and it was just too risky to enter the information just to get access to your site. There are lots of other fish in the sea and they would simply move on.

But the idea of having a standalone page solely for the purpose of enticing people to sign up for your list has stuck around and has become a necessary way for growing a list.

Since the page's sole purpose is to get email sign-ups, other design elements will only distract the visitor from entering their name and email address. That's why you never want to add any kind of navigation to a "squeeze page" or any other links that would take the visitor somewhere else.

You will also want to create multiple opt-in pages for your list in order to take advantage of different demographics and traffic sources. If, for example, you are part of the green home improvement niche and you're offering a report on how to make your own solar panels, you may want to create two squeeze pages: one that appeals to homeowners that stresses the economic benefits of solar panels and going green, and another to environmentally-minded folks to whom the ecological benefits are more important.

Promote Your Sign-Up Pages

Once you have your sign-up pages built, you're going to want to drive as much traffic to them as possible by promoting your list wherever you find your target market online.

Put links to these sign-up pages on your site, in all of your social media profiles, in forum signature files, at the bottom of blog posts, at the end of your business emails, etc.

You should also take advantage of offline methods such as:

- ▶ **QR Codes.** Put these codes on offline marketing materials. When a customer scans the code with their phone, they're automatically directed to your sign-up page or, even better, they automatically get signed up to your list.

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- ▶ **Raffles or contests.** Put on a raffle or contest at your store or at an offline event. In order to enter the raffle or contest, a person needs to submit their name and email address (Make sure they understand that they're also signing up to your email marketing list).
- ▶ **Networking Events.** Bring along sign-up sheets and practice a quick sales pitch when you attend networking events. You could have a physical gift at events that you give to people who sign up.

You may also consider launching a content marketing campaign just to drive traffic to your sign-up page, in the same way as you use other content marketing, i.e. blog posts, to drive people to your site. Create content to post in various places online with a tagline or a bio-box offering more when potential readers sign up to your list.

Other Ways to Entice Prospects

Create a series

- Instead of just offering membership to your email list, offer an email course.

Make messages shareable

- Make your email messages easy to share on social media and elsewhere.

Offer an online archive

- Create an online archive of past email messages to give prospects a taste of what they'll get as part of your list.

Social proof

- Use social proof in the form of testimonials and reviews from current list members.

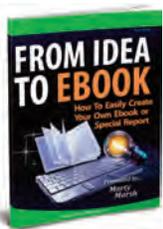
Your Irresistible Giveaway

Create an eBook or Special Report. The most popular giveaway is still the special report or eBook. It can be downloaded immediately in the Universal PDF format, it is familiar to most people, and it can lead to direct sales if you choose to make an offer.

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Many people, to their detriment, have the notion that it's hard to write an eBook or that it has to be long and involved to have appeal, but the opposite is true these days. People want short and sweet because they just don't have the time to slog through page after page of an eBook. Shorter is much better and will more likely be consumed by the subscriber.

Your eBook is often the first introduction you have to someone new to your world and you want to impress them, AND get them to read what you have written. If they can find the answer to their problem, and discover how valuable you are to them, they will likely continue to engage with you until they become your paying customer or client.



If you're one of those who think that writing and creating an eBook or special report to use as a giveaway for building your email list is a difficult process, then you will find the best and fastest way to write one in my own eBook, ***From Idea to eBook***. It details how you can write and post an eBook or special report in a week or less. Get your copy here: <http://ideatoebook.com>

Create a Series. Instead of just offering membership to your email list, offer an email course. You can create email messages that follow in a logical sequence. In your prospect's mind, a course based around a common theme or problem is likely to be more valuable than regular content.

The eCourse is fast becoming a popular way to grow your email marketing list. eCourses can be delivered in a variety of ways including regular text messages or as a series of educational videos.

One caution though about using videos: many people do not have the patience nor the time to watch videos unless they are funny and/or otherwise very engaging. Even if they like you a lot, they may not sit still for even a short, 2- or 3-minute video. With the proliferation of mobile devices, however, and their improved capability for handling video, many people now will tell you they don't have time to read something but they'll happily watch a short video.

To be safe, and make sure you've got everyone covered, always include a text translation of the video content so that those who still prefer to read can also consume your content or course.

Make Messages Sharable. Make your email messages easy to share on social media and elsewhere. When a subscriber shares your message, others will see it and want to sign up.

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If social media is a big part of your overall marketing strategy, be sure to check with your email service provider to make sure that you can automatically share on social media. Most offer this capability today but, be sure you ask.

Offer an Online Archive. Create an online archive of past email messages to give prospects a taste of what they'll get as part of your list, then direct potential subscribers there that might be on the fence. Your ESP should provide a way to create an archive automatically every time you send an email. Some of them require that you actively check a box to include the email in the archive so make sure you know how your service handles that.

Social Proof. Use social proof in the form of testimonials and reviews from current list members. Prospects are more likely to listen to and pay attention to a third party than to you, the marketer. Whenever posting testimonials, if you can use a photo of the person giving it to you, that's all the better. People tend to believe a testimonial more if it is attached to a real human being that they can see.

Privacy Considerations

You should always obtain a person's name and email by consent only. Never buy, rent or trade for subscribers. This is not only shady, but will get you a list of people who did NOT opt-in to your list. In other words, they're not interested in what you have to offer. Sending messages to people who didn't give consent is considered spamming. And they will be quick to report you as such.

Also, make it clear that you will respect your subscribers' privacy. Post a privacy policy that guarantees you will not give out their names or email addresses, and remind them that they can unsubscribe at any time. It is as easy as posting a disclaimer saying that you protect their privacy 100%.

Action Assignment:

- List at least 3 actions you will take to start building your list or ramp up your current efforts.
- Brainstorm 5 ideas for an opt-in gift, then choose the best one for your list.

Next Week: The Importance of a Good Introduction (Your Welcome Email)