



B2B Marketing Impact Report

7

Rock Solid Ways to Grow Your eNewsletter List *Fast*

Discover how to double, triple and quadruple your send list to attract new prospects, improve close ratios and make an eNewsletter your most profitable marketing tool.

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Abstract

Email newsletters (eNewsletters) are practical, powerful tools for educating current customers and for catching the interest of prospective clients. When eNewsletters are well written, keep customers' needs in mind and are distributed to a growing, targeted list, the power of the eNewsletter grows exponentially, along with your client base and revenue.

After years of backlash from customers who were overwhelmed by unsolicited commercial email (UCE, or spam), many companies have become timid about growing their email-marketing lists. However, today's email-marketing atmosphere and customers' hunger for fast, reliable information makes now the perfect time to grow your email lists.

How can you supercharge your eNewsletter-marketing campaign? Whether you already have an eNewsletter or are struggling to launch one, this white paper offers insights and information to help your marketing efforts achieve the desired results.

Emerging out of the ashes of an over-cluttered email-marketing world, new opportunity is springing forth. Like new growth after a forest fire, new email-marketing practices are replacing the old, and the energy and potential of this new growth are greater than before the fire.

The rise of spam in the early part of this decade created angry email recipients, fearful corporate marketers and a sense of doom that paralyzed industry leaders. But today, a calming sense of reason prevails in the world of legitimate email marketing.

The email marketing world isn't the scorched landscape that most marketers expected.

Remember the heady early days of the email revolution? Building a business-to-consumer (B2C) email-marketing list was a snap. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), sweepstakes, consumer Web sites and online giveaways easily captured prospects. Just having a Web site and a sign up for anything could grow your list of recipients quickly.

Soon, consumers were overwhelmed by unsolicited commercial email (UCE, aka spam). Concern over viruses and other email-based security threats further reduced click rates. Business-to-business (B2B) marketers waited patiently, held back by concerns about negative backlash from customers. In those days, most lists were grown internally because developed, targeted lists were nearly impossible to find.

Meanwhile, information technology (IT) departments began battering down the hatches in an attempt to combat security risks and block spam. Things came to a head when the U.S. Congress passed the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. Many marketers doubted the future of even the most legitimate email marketing.

Let's compare that with today. The email-marketing world has changed, but it's not the scorched landscape that most marketers expected – or mistakenly believe it to be.

Instead, it's a world of tremendous opportunity for you, the professional B2B marketer.

Companies are rediscovering the value of eNewsletters. Clicks are starting to increase.

Today, improved technology and a wider adoption and understanding of email means that today's email users have efficient methods in place to avoid spam without missing out on legitimate business communications. CAN-SPAM has turned out to be much less restrictive than most B2B marketers feared.

And information-hungry employees now turn to online resources – including eNewsletters – to educate themselves for success in their careers and lives. The anger, the fear and the uncertainty have passed.



Companies are quickly rediscovering the value of email marketing and eNewsletters. More customers, both existing and potential, are interested in hearing what your company has to say. Clicks are starting to increase, and those responses are more valuable than ever. Naturally, with this opportunity comes the potential for loss if you fail to take advantage of the available tools and methods before your competitors do.

So, in today's new environment, the real question B2B marketers should be asking themselves is: How do we grow our B2B eNewsletter list faster than our competition?

The 7 Fastest Ways to Grow Your eNewsletter List

If your eNewsletter is the rocket, then think of your list as the fuel. The amount of fuel determines how high the rocket will fly. As recently as three years ago, few companies had large or high-quality marketing lists. Many had no list at all. If your company is faced with the daunting task of growing (or starting) a list, where do you begin? Don't worry: The answers aren't rocket science. The following seven ideas will help you grow your lists and your eNewsletter presence – fast.

1. The newsletter comes first

Which comes first, the newsletter or the list? You wouldn't believe how many savvy marketers and businesspeople get hung up on this question, even before they take the first step.

The thinking goes like this: If I don't have a list, why should I waste my time creating and sending an eNewsletter? The answer: Because your eNewsletter is your most powerful ally in building a targeted marketing list. If you already have even a small list, that's a bonus, but rest assured: Put out a quality eNewsletter, and a bigger and better list will follow.

What makes a quality eNewsletter? A strong design, name and concept are musts. To garner strong support from inside your organization and external reader interest, the eNewsletter should be visually pleasing, well written and full of value-added content.

Your company may have in-house staff capable of producing an excellent eNewsletter. However, many organizations are understaffed and overworked (especially in the current challenging economic environment). Even if you have the talent at your fingertips, creating, producing and maintaining an eNewsletter may seem a daunting task and a never-ending time drain. Consider hiring a quality vendor that can handle the production process.



After all, savvy marketing directors simply find the best vendors. Look for a vendor who can handle the whole process, start to finish, as well as provide content and readership statistics. Tying up your staff with these tasks will only create delays – unless, of course, your staff members do not have other job responsibilities and do have excess time on their hands.

2. Offer a white paper

When combined with an eNewsletter, a white paper is a great way to add value for customers and thereby grow your list. Whereas an eNewsletter is designed to keep customers informed over time, a white paper solves an immediate problem or educates readers about a particular topic. When used hand in hand, these two marketing products can create a powerful impact on your audience. When developing a white paper as part of your marketing plan, be sure that the information is accurate, straightforward and written to educate readers so that they are encouraged to register for the content.

“A new study by KnowledgeStorm and Marketing overwhelmingly ranked white papers as the content they are most willing to register for. Nearly 2,400 readers responded as follows: White paper 79%, Case Study 62%, Analysis Report 56%, Product Literature 45%, Demo 38%.”

— White paper expert Michael Stelzner
www.writingwhitepapers.com/blog

3. Use your Web site

Work with your Web site design team to promote your eNewsletter sign-up and white paper giveaways prominently on your Web site. You may have to beg and plead with your designers, but don't let aesthetics deter you from posting sign-up forms prominently and, if possible, on multiple pages. Looks are important and a user-friendly site is a must, but the last thing you want is to get prospects to your site only to have them leave without signing up.

Not convinced that Web site signups work? Read "Is My Website Lazy?"

<http://www.provensystems.com/eAdvisor/0402/tip.html>

4. Purchase lists

For years, companies had to rely on building lists in-house or renting lists from a third-party vendor. Neither approach is efficient, but until recently, most email lists were available only to rent, not to buy. List publishers retained control of the information, meaning that companies were limited to a one-time use per purchase and could communicate only with individuals who responded to initial mailings.

Everything has changed. Now you can send and resend your eNewsletter to purchased-list recipients and track the results over time.

Contrary to popular belief, the federal CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 does not prohibit B2B non-opt-in list sends; it prohibits business-to-consumer (B2C) non-opt-in list sends. When you send B2B messages, none of the email addresses should be electronically harvested. In addition, all B2B email messages must meet the following requirements:

- A viable opt-out mechanism must be available.
- Unsubscribe requests must be completed within 10 days.

- Your company's physical address must be displayed within the email message.
- The content or subject line must offer a clear indication that the message is marketing related.

IMPORTANT TIP

For years, B2B marketers have been timid about marketing to purchased lists. This attitude is changing FAST. Don't let yourself be left in the dust. Picture your competitor reaching out farther and wider through an eNewsletter, building relationships with your customers and future prospects while you try to build your list the old-fashioned way ... slowly.



5. Bribe your salespeople

Salespeople may not want to provide client contact information to the marketing department, especially if they are unsure what will be sent to their prospects. If your salespeople assume that their prospects will be blasted with junk mail or if they aren't familiar (or comfortable) with the quality of your eNewsletter, you'll likely have a difficult time convincing them to participate in your list-growing efforts. After all, most salespeople work on some form of commission. You can't blame them for being careful with their prospects – they like to eat, too.

Fortunately, this challenge is easy to overcome.

- First, make sure your eNewsletter graphics and content are excellent.
- Second, show the sales team how back-end statistics can reveal which prospects are spending time on the newsletter.
- Third, put the icing on the cake by creating a contest. Offer a solid prize to the winner who brings in the most list names.

Voila! You'll get more email addresses than you ever thought possible. Be grateful for the information in whatever form it is offered. Be willing to transfer client information from old bar napkins, crinkled-up business cards or personal databases that you never knew existed.

6. Bring customer service in on the act

Have you ever wished you had a dollar for every time the phone rang at your company? Well, you can! Customer contact information can quickly become outdated. A vigilant effort is necessary to maintain an accurate database. Train your receptionist and customer-service specialists to collect email addresses during the course of every call. And be sure to offer every caller the opportunity to sign up for your eNewsletter.

7. Integrate your eNewsletter with other marketing initiatives

You know the saying: United we stand, divided we fall. The adage applies to your marketing efforts as well, and that includes your eNewsletter. Don't miss out on the opportunity to integrate all your strategies and watch your list grow.

Trade shows and networking events

Attending, presenting or exhibiting at trade shows, conferences and networking events intended for your target audience is an excellent way to expand your email list. When speaking with interested parties, ask permission to add them to your list. Be prepared to offer examples of the kinds of information, special events and promotions they can enjoy by being on your list. This allows your company to multiply the return on the original trade-show investment.

Seminars and webcasts

Seminars and webcasts are great ways to build credibility – and your email list – with a qualified audience. Further develop these budding relationships by asking permission to add attendees to your eNewsletter list.

IMPORTANT TIP

During the registration process, ask Webcast attendees whether you can add them to your list. That way, those who need to cancel at the last minute can still receive information. Be sure to keep the registration process short and sweet. You could lose valuable contacts if your registration form becomes overly lengthy or invasive.

Strategic partnering

Sponsoring content or placing ads in third-party eNewsletters can be a particularly effective way to build your email list with new customers. Attract attention with a special offer or incentive, and drive interested parties back to your Web site by providing a hyperlink that leads to a registration form.

For example, an IT security-hardware vendor might offer its eNewsletter to the readers of an IT service vendor's eNewsletter. The service vendor is interested in the arrangement because new product introductions are a value add for its clients.

Consider the partners, vendors, trade associations and other clients you regularly contact as possible strategic partners. As other businesses support your list growth, be willing to give them a nod in your own eNewsletter.

Regardless of the economy, an eNewsletter is potentially the best tool available in your marketing arsenal. eNewsletters are powerful in and of themselves, and they can drastically improve the results of your other marketing efforts.

By incorporating your eNewsletter into existing marketing strategies such as your Web site, Webcasts and trade shows, you can exponentially grow your email list. Work with clients and partner companies to cross-promote your eNewsletter when you clearly offer content that is a value add for their clients. Do the same thing for your own prospects by offering white papers (and gather more names for your list). Get buy-in from customer service and salespeople to spread the word and add to list growth. And last – but definitely not least – find and purchase targeted lists before your competitors catch on.

The number-one way to grow your eNewsletter list is to have a quality eNewsletter.

Proven Systems – A Proven Resource

As you can tell from this paper, I am bullish on B2B eNewsletter marketing. However, I also know that there are some natural barriers to launching a quality, sustainable product. Your company may or may not have in-house staff members who are capable of getting the job done. Either way, the project is going to take someone's time. In today's companies, we all are so understaffed and overworked that, even if you have the staff at your fingertips, an email newsletter may seem like a daunting and never-ending time drain.

What you need is a quality vendor that can take all, most or some of the work off of your back in the production process. After all, the most successful marketing directors don't attempt to do everything on their own; they know their time and resource limitations and simply find the best vendors.

Proven Systems, Corp. has been providing quality, customized eNewsletters for its corporate clients for seven years. Companies with large and small marketing departments turn to us to take the time and burden of the email-newsletter process off of their staffs. Proven Systems is not only set up to produce your eNewsletter, but also to ensure that it is successful. You can turn to Proven Systems' professionals for targeted email lists and a very stealthy software that will track your prospects as they click through to your Web site and read your newsletter articles. We are proud of our clients' eNewsletter success stories:

<http://www.provensystems.com/endorsements.asp>

*"Communicating your expertise to your market is simply the right thing to do.
Doing the right thing is simply good for business."*

- Marc Dube, President, Proven Systems, Corp.

Additional resources

- Sample client newsletters: http://www.provensystems.com/enewsletter_samples.asp
- Sample programs to fit your needs: <http://www.provensystems.com/production.asp>
- Email list brokerage info: <http://www.provensystems.com/listbrokerage.asp>
- Proven Systems, Corp. marketing library: <http://www.provensystems.com/library.asp>
- White paper expert Michael Stelzner: <http://www.writingwhitepapers.com/blog>
- CAN-SPAM Act of 2003: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.shtm>

About the author

After consulting with over 200 organizations on marketing concepts, Mr. Dube realized a pressing need for companies to effectively communicate with their customers and prospects. Mr. Dube founded Proven Systems, which focuses on the single most effective communication concept used to help organizations grow their revenues – eNewsletters. With clients across the United States, Proven Systems has experienced continued positive growth since March of 2001. Mr. Dube's credentials include marketing and sales consultation for RE/MAX International, Fidelis LLC Buyer Brokerage, United National Real Estate Network, Primark International IVR Technology, Audio Adventures, Books on Tape and Record Stockman Publications.