

Whitepaper

Your Guide to List Building



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Executive Summary

Having a well-constructed contact list is essential for your business to take advantage of all email marketing has to offer. Growing your contact list may seem difficult, whether you are a new business attempting to build a customer base or an experienced entity trying to gain new prospects. Gathering contacts who are interested in your product or service is essential to an effective email marketing strategy. We have good news, we are here to help! This whitepaper contains all of the necessary information you will need to create and grow your list.

In this whitepaper about list building you will find advice on the preliminary steps to gather contacts for your email list. In part two, you will learn different ways to further grow your email list including subscriber only content, growth from within emails, on social media sites, offline sources, and more. Finally, parts three and four will provide you with assistance on different list building techniques to utilize and others to avoid.

Explore the whitepaper and educate yourself on the different ways to successfully grow your list.

Part One: Who Can I Email?

Gather Existing Contacts


The first step to creating an email list is right at your fingertips. Peruse through the contacts within your current email service provider such as Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail, etc. and begin to gather a list of contacts that you know or suspect to be interested in receiving information from you. These may include but are not limited to:

- existing customers
- vendors
- partners
- Website or other leads

Another preliminary step in building an email list is gathering contacts from the CRM or other business software that you currently use to manage your contacts and business activities such as Sage ACT, Sage SalesLogix, or Sales Force. Finally, collect contacts from all sales records and business cards you have gathered from events and other activities.

Permission-Based Communications

With email marketing, you must gain permission from any contacts you have gathered **before** sending them emails in order to avoid being flagged as Spam. Exceptions to this rule are contacts who have made a purchase from you in the last year and provided you with their email address during the purchase. While some of the contacts you have gathered may not have given you permission yet, try sending them direct mail encouraging them to sign up to receive emails. Direct mail, and other ways of gaining permission are covered in Part Three.



With email marketing, you must gain permission from any contacts you have gathered **before** sending them emails in

List Building Techniques to Avoid

Purchasing an email list is very tempting as it seems like an easy and quick way to grow your list. However, the problem of first gaining permission to email these contacts still exists. If you have already purchased a list, you can follow some of the techniques listed in part three such as using direct mail and a call center to gain permission before adding those contacts to your email list. Below are some reasons we strongly discourage you from purchasing an email list, as well as a couple of other list building techniques to avoid.

- **Purchasing an opt-in list:**
 - Without gaining permission first, you could be labeled as a spammer for sending unsolicited emails.
 - Companies that sell email lists may guarantee accurate and active emails, however a considerable amount may be inactive.
 - There is a high probability that the contacts may not have any interest and therefore, your messages will not be relevant.
 - These lists will not be as qualified as contacts you collect on your own.
 - Lists can be costly. Typically \$100-\$400 per 1,000 contacts.

- **Taking email addresses off websites:** Once again you do not have permission to email these addresses.
- **Taking email address from colleagues:** While these recipients may have given permission to your colleagues to email them, if they do not recognize where the email is being sent from, they may mark you as Spam.

Part Two: Growing Your List

Subscription (opt-in) Form

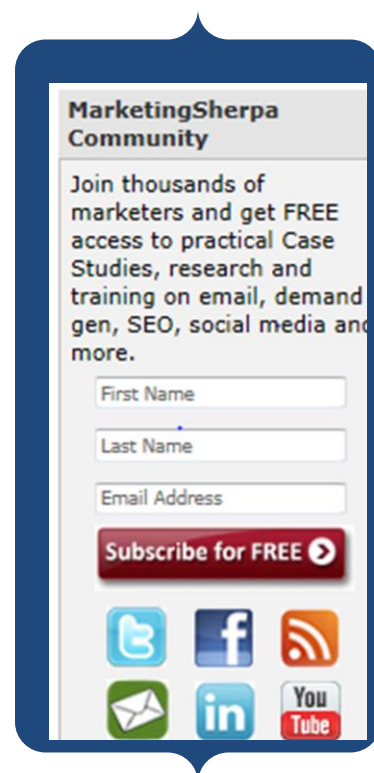
Quite possibly the most important page to include an opt-in form or button is on your websites purchase page.

The subscription or opt-in form is extremely important to growing your email list. When visiting a website, there is nothing more frustrating than having to search for what you are trying to accomplish. The same goes for individuals who are interested in signing up to receive emails. To make it easy for people to subscribe, include an opt-in form or link on every page of your website.

Also, consider the best place to insert a form or link on each page. Don't just throw opt-in links in some obscure spot on your webpage where viewers are unlikely to see them. Instead, place the links near your most important and valuable content. This way, viewers of your website will be attracted to your content and will want to receive more information in the form of newsletters, updates, deals, promotions, etc.

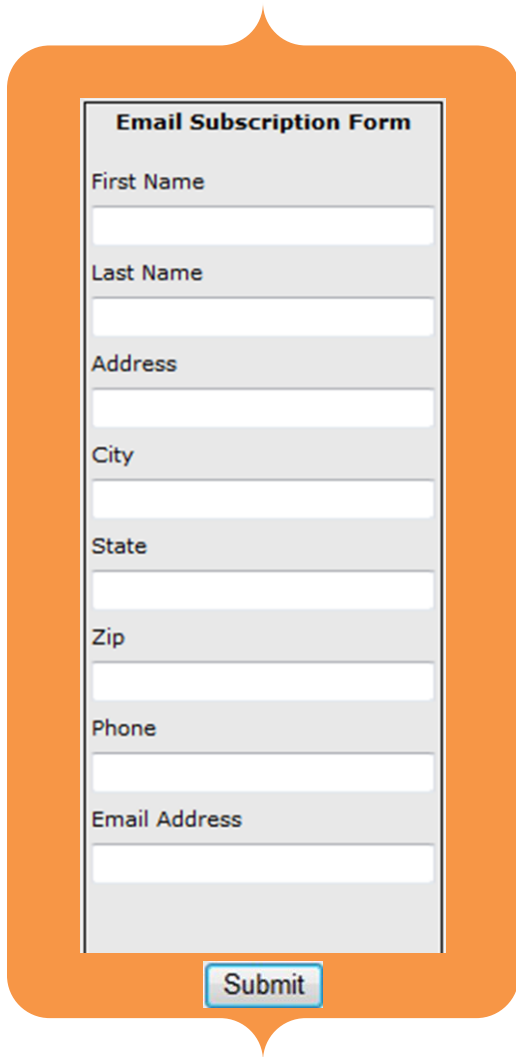
The best place for an opt-in link is a place where the viewer's eyes are naturally guided. Test out different link locations on your pages; the easier it is to subscribe the faster you will see your list develop. Quite possibly the most important page to include an opt-in form or button is on your website's purchase page. People arriving at this page have already shown interest in what you are offering and are the most likely candidates to sign up for your emails.

The layout and design of your form is also a factor in growing your email list. First and foremost, keep forms short and to the point. You don't want to overwhelm subscribers by asking too many questions right off the bat. Make it as easy and painless as possible by making questions clear and easy to answer. In the beginning, it may be a good idea to just ask for first and last name along with their email address. Any information you wish to gather for purposes of further segmenting your list, such as location, gender, company or industry, etc., can be obtained *after* you have built a relationship and gained their trust. The subscription form to the right from Marketing Sherpa is an example of a well-done subscription form. It is easy to fill out and provides information about what recipients will receive. On the other hand the form below asks for too much information at this point and may discourage some people from signing up.

A screenshot of a subscription form for the MarketingSherpa Community. The form is titled "MarketingSherpa Community" and includes a description: "Join thousands of marketers and get FREE access to practical Case Studies, research and training on email, demand gen, SEO, social media and more." Below the text are three input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email Address". A prominent red button with white text says "Subscribe for FREE" with a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom of the form are six social media icons arranged in a 2x3 grid: Twitter, Facebook, RSS, Email, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Upon signing up, give subscribers information about what they can expect from your email communication. This is a much better time to ask recipients for further information. One way to ensure subscribers are getting what they desire is to include a form on your welcome email requesting information about what type of content they wish to receive and how often.

Finally, as the above example showed, highlight the benefits they will receive by signing up. Some incentive may be required in exchange for their contact information (more on that in the next section).

An orange-bordered form titled "Email Subscription Form". It contains input fields for First Name, Last Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, and Email Address. A "Submit" button is at the bottom.

Email Subscription Form	
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>
Zip	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	

Give a Reason

Sometimes offering valuable content is not enough for people to agree to hand over their email information. In addition to highlighting the benefits recipients will receive after subscribing, the following are different incentives you could offer to encourage contacts to sign up.

- **On-going incentives:** An on-going incentive is something a subscriber will continue to see the benefits of as long as they are a subscriber. These include loyalty programs, exclusive discounts and useful tips.
- **On-the-spot incentives:** An on-the-spot incentive is a one-time benefit subscribers will receive upon signing up. Some on-the-spot incentives include a free PDF, whitepaper or eBook, a onetime discount such as 20% off first purchase, free consultation, or buy one get one.



- **Promotional incentives:** A promotional incentive gives subscribers the chance to be included in an exclusive promotion you are currently offering. For example, you could enter new subscribers into a drawing to win an exclusive prize.

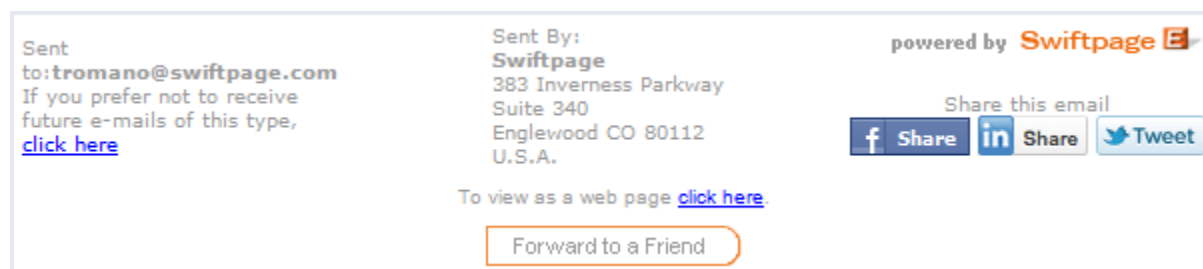
Part Three: List Building Techniques

Develop Relevant Email Content

The emails you are already sending to current subscribers can also be a tool for building your list. Providing your recipients with relevant, interesting, engaging and up-to-date content give them a reason to anticipate future emails.

First of all, subscribers are more likely to read information that is valuable to them. Email content that contains recently released, lesser known information and tips addressing the particular needs of subscribers is content that will be rewarding the recipients.

Second, the more engaging and beneficial your content is; the more likely recipients are to forward your emails to friends, family and colleagues. One of the most useful tools in marketing is word of mouth. Word of mouth from trusted sources (i.e. friends, family, and colleagues) goes a long way in helping you to build your contact list. Encourage recipients to share your emails by including forward to friend buttons and social sharing icons directly within your emails. For an example of an email footer, see below.



Social Media Referrals

Social Media is one of the most powerful marketing tools. Social media offers many opportunities to grow your list. However, social media should not be used solely as a promotional tool. Be sure to vary the content you are posting by providing content that is interesting and engaging so followers look forward to reading your posts and desire more. Within your posts, include links to your website and blog or to a landing page where interested parties can subscribe for emails. Also, let followers know about your exclusive subscriber only content available to them by signing up. Again, an incentive will encourage followers to sign up.

Offline Sources

Many times businesses have a large contact list of customers they know are interested in their product or service but do not yet have permission to email them. The following are some ways to build your list through offline sources:

- **Direct mail:** If you have the physical addresses of prospective customers, send them some direct mail encouraging them to sign up for your email communications. For example, create a postcard that directs recipients to a landing page. The landing page could then offer something of value in exchange for their contact information. See the postcard below for an example of a direct mail piece that could direct recipients to a landing page where they will then be able to sign up to receive emails.

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Q-GPS

Management and Decision Support Tools

- Sales Department Dashboard – lead, manage and coach your sales reps based on facts, not hearsay.
- Global Task Viewer – hold your sales reps accountable for lead follow-up.
- Advertising Reports – what advertising is most effective.
- Geographic Reports – areas to focus advertising on.
- Customer Preference Reports – make better inventory purchase decisions.
- MatchMaker – put together buyers and sellers in ways you never dreamed possible.

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 **QUANTECH**

- **Point of sale:** Point of sale data can be one of the best ways to collect contact information. You already know they are interested in what you have to offer to take the customer experience a step further. Collecting contact information and gaining permission to send emails will give you the opportunity to send follow up messages as well as encourage repeat business. At the point of sale, whether it is online during the purchase process or in-store on customer receipts, include a link to a page where they can sign up to receive emails. You may also want to have a clipboard or tablet in your establishment for easy data collection.
- **Call center:** If you are operating a call center or have any interaction with customers over the phone, this is a great way to ask people to sign up to receive email. No matter what the reason for a call with an existing or potential customer, take the time to encourage them to subscribe to your email list if they have not already done so.

Additional Ways to Grow Your List

- **Create a newsletter archive page:** A newsletter archive page will give prospective recipients the ability to see the content that you have sent in past emails as well as the exclusive content that is only available to subscribers. By showing that you offer beneficial content to subscribers, you can entice them to sign up. Be sure that you delay posting content on your archive page so recipients know that they will be receiving exclusive content before anyone else.
- **Comment on blogs:** The idea here is that you will be getting as much coverage as possible within your specific marketing niche. Commenting on other blogs shows that you are an important, educated and active thought leader within your industry. Additionally, you can ask other bloggers to guest blog on your site. Blogging will allow you to reach a wider audience, giving you more opportunities to further grow your list.
- **Subscriber only content:** People want to know that they will be getting something of value that they would otherwise not have access to in return for their email information. Some subscriber only content

that can be provided includes whitepapers like this one, industry reports and other insider information, as well as instructional, informative, or strategic webinars. Subscriber only content will accomplish three things:

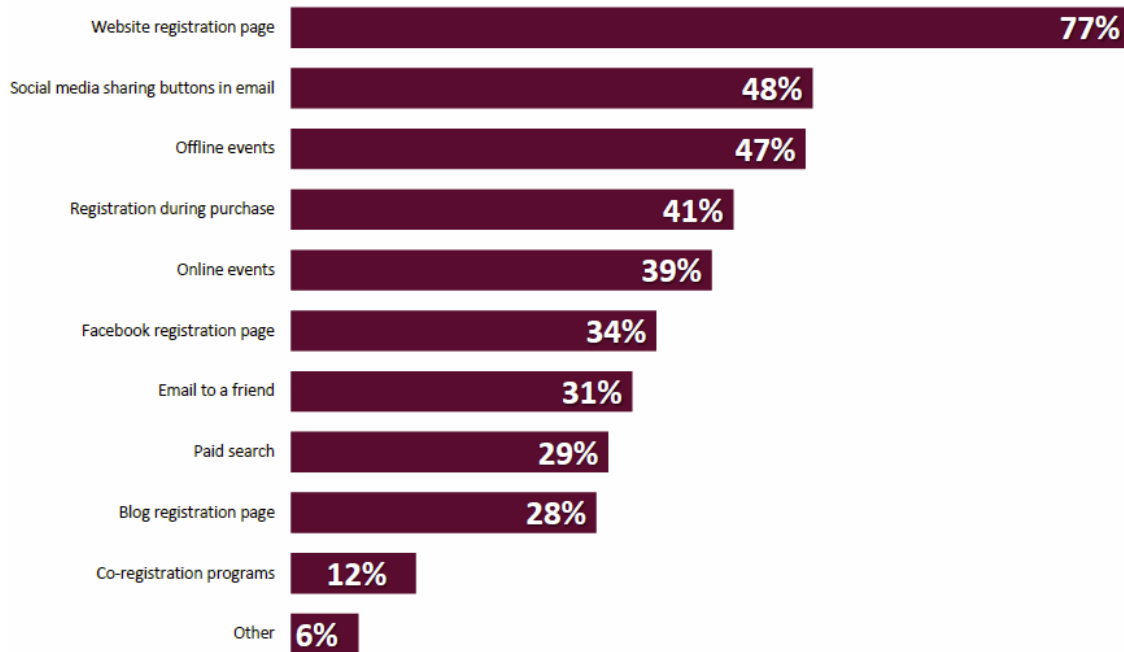
1. It will help you to grow your list
 2. It will provide useful information and continuously deliver valuable resources to subscribers
 3. It will give you information on the subscribers that are most interested and engaged with your product or service.
- **Webinars:** Webinars are live online educational presentations where viewers can learn more about your product or service and submit questions and comments. To view your webinars, require participants to provide their contact information including their email address. Beyond growing your email list, webinars are a popular tool for a few reasons.
 1. You will be able to see who is interested in your offering. People signing up for your webinars must have some interest in learning more before purchasing or already have purchased and want to know how to make the most out of your product or service. You can then segment your emails based on this information.
 2. Participants will get a personalized one-on-one feel since they can ask specific questions to a live person. This will help to show your expertise as well as build a relationship with the customer.
 3. Educated viewers are more likely to either make a purchase or become repeat customers.
 - **SEO and pay-per-click advertising:** Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and pay-per-click advertising are two ways of driving more traffic to your website. In short, these two techniques make it so your website is ranked higher in search results. Much of the time viewers only look at the first page of search results and normally only click on the top few selections. By using these techniques you will see more traffic on your website which should translate into more subscribers.

In a recently released study by Marketing Sherpa, marketers were asked what tactics their organization is using to build their email list with the highest response rate belonging to website registration page (77%). The graph below shows the findings:

Chart 3.7 Email list growth tactics



Which of the following tactics is your organization using to drive email list growth? Please select all that apply.



Source: ©2013 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded December 2012, N=451

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About Swiftpage Connect

Swiftpage Connect is a subsidiary of Summit 5, a software development company, whose founders have a passion for changing the way people communicate. Swiftpage Connect was designed to make email marketing one of the most cost-effective tools in a company's arsenal, simple and accessible to individuals and organizations of all types and sizes. Since its inception, Swiftpage Connect has helped thousands of for-profit and non-profit organizations create, send and track the performance of email campaigns. In addition to its stand alone on-line email service Swiftpage Connect is the first server-based email management system to be fully integrated into ACT!, the leading contact management system in the world.

Swiftpage Connect takes performance, security and reliability very seriously so that our customers will have the highest possible up time. Our servers are hosted by Viawest, a co-location company in Denver, Colorado. Internet connectivity is provided by separate backbones from separate carriers assuring that your Swiftpage Connect system is always online.

In addition to the state-of-the-art technology infrastructure, Swiftpage Connect prides itself on the highest level of customer support.