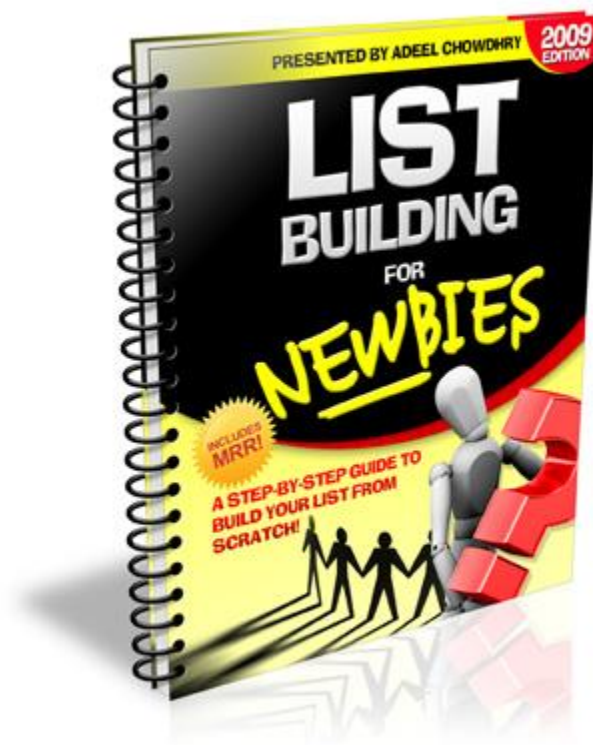




What is a List?

Unlike grocery lists or spare parts lists, in the marketing sense of the term, a 'list' refers to a list of customers. More specifically, in regards to internet marketing, it refers to a list of emails through which potential customers can be contacted.

If you've ever faced a situation where you needed to enter your details (especially your email) before you download something, then chances are that you are, or have been, part of a someone else's list.

Even large companies that are already very established use email lists of their own to keep track of their customers, and alert them to new developments, offers, and so forth. Of course, this ties in to yet another question at hand...

Why Build and Use a List?

Commonly, not having a list is said to be 'leaving money on the table', and that much is certainly true.

Take the example of a conventional clothes store. Customers come, browse around, maybe buy something, and then leave. Once they've left, the store has no way of getting in touch with them, and maybe convincing them to come back again.

On the other hand, if the store had their contact details, they could notify them when they have a new stock of clothes on the rack, or special discounts, and so on. By doing so, the customer would then feel compelled to perhaps come back, or at very least would *consider* doing so.

Similarly, in whatever niche that you're into, if you had a list of previous customers then whenever you have a new product, or some other offer, you'd just be able to shoot out emails and see if anyone is interested. Simple as it sounds, this is amazingly effective.

Think about it in terms of figures, if that helps. Let's say you have an 8,000 strong list, and you send out an email regarding your latest product that costs \$20. Even if only 10% of your list buys your product, that is 800 instant customers and you would have made \$16,000.

To sum it up, the reason to build and use a list is to establish a firm base of regular customers to which you can market your products and offers too with great ease.

How to Get Started Building a List

Merely inserting someplace where email addresses can be gathered and collected is already a first step towards building a list. In general, there are two choices that you'll be faced with when deciding exactly how and where you're going to be gathering emails:

1. Creating an Opt-in Page

Amongst those who are honestly going all-out to build up a list, this is the most commonly employed method, simply because of its effectiveness. By creating a separate opt-in page, all the attention on that page can be focused completely on the singular goal of getting a customer to subscribe to the list.

Essentially, the best opt-in pages are those that have no 'extras' that may distract from the goal, and so normal advertisements and other links (except at least one leading back to the main website) are removed.

Really, it is sort of like plugging up all the 'leaks' so that everything just flows towards gathering up emails.

Also, having a distinct opt-in page would allow traffic to be channeled directly to it, maybe even bypassing the main website entirely. By doing so, the possibility that visitors will be distracted on the way to the opt-in page is removed as well.

Thus, the opt-in page gives the customer a two-way decision: to subscribe or not to subscribe (with everything possible being done to ensure that the former option is picked!).

Remember: With an opt-in page, your form should always be ‘above the fold’ (so that visitors will not need to scroll down to see it).

2. Adding an Opt-in Form to the Main Website

Definitely less effective under normal circumstances, it is still an option that could be considered. In more some websites, especially blogs, which may not want to have their traffic leaving the main website to go off to a separate opt-in page, having the form as part of an easily located sidebar could even work just as well.

Of course, doing so does not have the added benefits of removing all other distractions from the equation, but it is still better than nothing.

Regardless of which option is chosen in order to build up a list, there’s one other key ingredient that should not be overlooked:

Autoresponders

Firstly, it is actually *possible* to build and maintain a list without using autoresponders at all. That said, it would be monumentally difficult, inconveniencing, and get close to being downright impossible when the list reached a large size.

Today’s generation of top-of-the-line autoresponders deal with a variety of functions. Not only do they store email addresses, but they also have the ability to send out scheduled automated emails.

Most autoresponders track a variety of statistics based not only on sign-up rates, but also on the click-through rates and open rates of emails. In short, they can do pretty much everything that you’d ever need done to help manage your list.

Just to get you started, here are the two best autoresponder services that are currently available:

1. [Aweber](#) – By far the most established autoresponder; it has a huge list of features, and also claims to be able to avoid junk mail filters the best.
2. [GetResponse](#) – Aweber’s main rival, it is almost as good in terms of the number of features on offer, and a lot cheaper, especially for large lists.

Of course, seeing as you’re just starting out with list building, you may not want to invest too much money right from the start. If this is the case, then go ahead and try [AutoBot](#). Unlike

other free autoresponders, it does not include its own advertisements to emails that you may send out, making it a decent option.

Eventually though, you're definitely going to want to go with a paid option such as Aweber or GetResponse, just because they have so many additional features that will end up saving you a lot of time.

How to Get More Opt-Ins

Once you have your opt-in page (or box) sorted, and an autoresponder ready to go, there is still more that you can do in order to actually encourage a higher opt-in rate.

To put it simply: If you want more people to join your list, give them a *good* reason to *want* to join your list.

Incentives are the name of the game, and they can come in many shapes or sizes. Give your visitors something of value, and something that could even possibly assert your authority in the niche. For instance, a free report regarding some issue that is faced by many of your visitors would no doubt be of value to them, and at the same time, by writing one and helping them out, you'd be establishing your reputation as a trusted source of help and information.

If you don't just want to hand out reports, there are other ways to go about this too. Free newsletters, free one-month memberships (if you run a membership website), free PLR articles or software... the possibilities are pretty much endless.

As long as it is something that pertains to the niche that you're marketing to, then you're on the right track.

Another equally good way to build up lists is to make an affiliate program out of one of your products. If you are willing to give out a large proportion of the profits, and the product is one that is known to sell well, then you'll easily get tons of affiliate marketers to promote it for you. That way, all these affiliates will be sending you traffic and subscribing to your list as they buy your product.

Interesting Note: Building a list in this way is actually a very attractive option because it creates a list of already 'proven buyers', as opposed to people just opting in to get a free report.

Ways to Make a List More Responsive

In that note just above this, it was mentioned how a list of proven buyers is more valuable than just a list of people who want to get something 'free'. This is largely due to the fact that for

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