

Email Marketing for Solo & Micro Business: Getting Your Message Straight to Your Client's & Prospect's Inbox

Email marketing involves sending email messages to a list of subscribers that contain information, offers, discounts, and promotions. It's one of the most common and effective types of marketing used online today. There's a popular saying among internet marketers that states, 'The money is in the list.'

The Basics of Email Marketing

The first step in email marketing is to build a list. You can do this by either creating a website or using offline materials to collect names and email addresses. This is what's called an 'opt-in' list and it's very important that people have chosen to be on the list. If they haven't opted in, they won't be responsive to your offers.

The best way to get people to sign up is to offer an exclusive freebie or discount. Once they've signed up, you send them an email to confirm, and they receive the free offer or discount. A software program called an autoresponder is used to manage your list and automatically send messages to your subscribers.

Getting names and email addresses is just the beginning. You then have to nurture your list and build a relationship with them. You can do this by providing helpful information and high-quality content. They see you as an expert and friend, and this builds trust so that you can then start making offers.

Email marketing is useful for any kind of business, whether online or off. In fact, it's an easy method for offline businesses to increase engagement with customers. Email is also a great way to market to cell phones and mobile devices. You can send coupons they can use at your bricks-and-mortar business.

The Benefits of Email Marketing

Email marketing is wonderful because it's cheaper and faster than direct mail. Instead of spending money publishing brochures and other print materials, you only have to compose email messages. Unlike direct marketing, you also get global reach.

It's easy to monitor and track the response of your prospects to your emails. The autoresponder service that you use to manage your list will handle your tracking for you, giving you detailed analytics. You can easily see which messages are getting opened and acted upon and which aren't.

The only real disadvantage of email marketing is that people might ignore your emails. With all of the spam people get, your messages may end up in their spam folder. Government regulations have also gotten stricter about how you do your email marketing.

How to Make Email Marketing Work for You

The first guideline for success with email marketing is that you should never buy or trade for a list. Subscribers need to opt-in and confirm their subscription. When you buy a list, not only are you getting untargeted prospects who are probably not interested, you're also spamming them when you send unsolicited messages. With new anti-spam laws like the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, you could pay dearly for this.

When you do start making offers, be careful about the products and services you promote. Don't pass off anything on your list that's less than the best quality. Nurturing your list is about building trust, and one bad product can destroy that trust quickly. Remember that people can unsubscribe by simply clicking on the link at the bottom of the message.

Always be responsive to your list and treat them like gold. When they have comments or questions, listen and communicate with them. Pay attention to your analytics so that you know what works and what doesn't. Marketers who take care of their list keep their subscribers for the long-term.