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Hi, Robin. Here is your e-newsletter for July 26, 2011.

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Spin E-Mail Addresses Into Gold

Hunting, Gathering, And Maintaining

The Internet is one of the best devices your company has to target new customers and keep your existing clientele happy. But before you begin reaping the benefits of e-marketing, you must collect and manage a database of e-mail addresses.

This might seem easy at first glance, but the task can be overwhelming if it's not handled correctly.

You start by collecting the e-mail addresses of every customer, prospective buyer, referral source and anyone else you want to be able to contact electronically. As you start entering the data, however, you'll discover the list doesn't stay current for long because people change their addresses by switching from one service provider or e-mail service to another.

But you can't afford not to keep your lists up to date. The success of e-marketing and sales promotions depends on your database of addresses.

Here are ten pointers to help you build a solid list of e-mail contacts:

1. **Centralize.** Assign a specific person in your office to procure e-mail addresses and maintain the database.
2. **Prioritize.** Based on the number of current and potential customers, establish the number of addresses your business would like to obtain.
3. **Solicit Ideas.** Send a memo to staff members seeking ways to build the list. Have your e-mail manager



Opportunity and Responsibility

If your business has no formal system of gathering and maintaining e-mail addresses you're missing a tremendous opportunity. However, when sending out messages, be sure you comply with the anti-spam law.

The *Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography Act* (or "Can-Spam") bans some junk e-mail and imposes heavy fines on violators. Here are a

get as many customer addresses as possible from your employees. These can be culled from their own e-mail programs, as well as business cards and letterheads.

4. Expand the search. Send a letter to customers, prospects and referral sources explaining what your firm is doing. Ask them to send their current e-mail addresses to you. Include instructions on how to e-mail the information or use a simple form they can fax or mail back. Be sure to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. In all your mailings, brochures, newsletters and other means of communication, include a response card to request e-mail addresses and any other pertinent information.

5. Fill in any gaps. During slow periods, telephone contacts whose addresses are still missing or out of date. Follow a simple script and try to obtain many addresses from one company at a time. Remember, there's no additional cost for sending more e-mails. Get more traction by sending to as many people as possible.

6. Turn to the pros. Consider hiring an outside telemarketing company to gather addresses.

However, one drawback to these services is some of them have a minimum order of, say, 5,000 names.

7. Surf the net. Research Web sites to obtain addresses -- especially from referral sources. Consider purchasing extraction software that automatically searches Web site pages for e-mail addresses.

8. Bolster procedures. Require staff members to routinely obtain e-mail addresses from prospects and new customers.

9. Add links to your site. If your company operates a Web site, include a collection system for gathering e-mail addresses and sending newsletters and announcements.

few of the major provisions of the Can-Spam Act.

Legal spam. Businesses can send messages to customers, as long as they clearly identify themselves, provide a valid reply address and respect a consumer's wish not to get e-mails. CAN-SPAM also prohibits hiring someone else to send e-mails or reselling an opted-out address.

Opt-Out. A business must allow individuals to unsubscribe from a specific e-mail list. In other words, e-mail recipients must manually opt-out of every message they receive and don't want to get in the future.

Labeling. Under the law, a commercial e-mail must be labeled as an advertisement but e-mailers aren't required to follow any specific labeling procedures. This provision supersedes several state laws requiring unsolicited ads to carry the note "ADV:" or "ADV: Adult Advertisement" in the subject line.

The key is restraint: It makes good business sense to limit bulk, unwanted e-mail ads. Consumers who aren't bogged down with spam are more likely to respond favorably when they do get a useful message.

10. Head off trouble. Consider a piece of software that checks addresses before you send mass mailings. This is important since you don't want your ISP thinking you're sending spam if a lot of e-mails start bouncing. And when gathering addresses, keep in mind that e-mail going to free e-mail services is often caught in spam filters and never reaches the recipient. Whenever possible, it's better to get another e-mail address from contacts.

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1215 Superior Avenue, Suite 400 Cleveland, OH 44114