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Permission Email Marketing Tips For Offline Small Business Owners

By Robert Burko

Unless your small business is situated under a rock, you've probably heard something about email marketing by now, and you may have even wondered if it's time for your small business to get into it.

In its simplest terms, email marketing means communicating with consumers through email. But there's a big difference between trying to talk to consumers who never asked to be talked to in the first place, and talking to your own customers, who at some point have said, "Yes, I'd love to hear from you."

That's where permission email marketing comes in. Permission email marketing means giving valuable information to consumers who have requested to receive it. It is the ONLY legitimate way to send an email marketing campaign, and it is the only way your small business can benefit from email marketing.

But how do you get your customers to say "I do"?

If you have an online business, or if your offline business has a website that receives many visitors, compiling subscribers can be as easy as adding a subscription box to your website. You would offer users something valuable, like a periodical newsletter or emails with discount coupons and, in return, your users would subscribe to your mailing list.

Sounds great. But what if your business is primarily offline, and what if you don't even have a website?

Many businesses think that's reason enough to step out of email marketing altogether. But what they're missing here is that compiling a permission email marketing list offline can be as easy, if not easier in some instances, as building a list online.

We have advised many clients on tips to collect email addresses at the point of purchase. Here are some of our favorite tactics:

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– Collect business cards, Offer a prize. This is one of the oldest, most proven methods of collecting customer information in–store. Your prize doesn't even have to be huge. If you own a restaurant, it can be as simple as a free dinner for two. If you own a hair dresser, it can be as easy a 50% off coupon towards their next cut. The beauty here is that customers who submit their business cards have expressed genuine interest in your products or services. So when you contact them by email with further offers, you know you're talking to people who want to buy what you're selling.

The one thing to keep in mind here is that you **MUST** inform users that by submitting their business cards, they are agreeing to receive email communication from you. This can be as simple as adding a sign to the business card drop–off box saying: "We will send you an email to notify you if you have won. We may also send you periodical emails with special offers and announcements. If you do not wish to receive emails from us, please write 'No Email' on your business card."

– Start a V.I.P. Club Many consumers like the idea of belonging to something exclusive, and receiving

offers that are extended only to a select group of people. The labor on your part is minimal. It's as easy as keeping a notebook by the cashier. As a customer comes up to complete a purchase, casually tell them about your businesses' V.I.P. Club and ask them if they would like to join. Customers will appreciate this if you position it as a rewards club, or a way to say "Thank you, we love to have you around" to your most loyal customers. Of course, you should offer V.I.P. Club membership to any of your consumers, as you may find, once you start emailing them offers, that's a great way to build your most loyal customers. Make sure the offers you send them are, in fact, exclusive, and that you email V.I.P. Club members often enough, but not too often to become annoying (once or twice a month is usually a good interval).

Again, when you're collecting customer emails for the V.I.P. Club, make sure your customers know they're signing up to receive email offers from you.

These are just some ideas to get your permission email marketing subscriber list started. The best news here is that compiling a list is actually the toughest part of managing an email marketing campaign. As long as you're using an email marketing manager program that's specifically designed for small businesses like yours, the rest of the process is a breeze.

Creating a campaign involves little more than selecting a professionally–designed template, typing text and choosing a few good images. Your campaigns will be scheduled and sent automatically, so you'll never have to worry about being involved in that part.

What you will get to do (and this is probably the most exciting and most rewarding part of email marketing), is analyze your campaign after it's been sent. You'll be able to see how many people opened your email message, how many people clicked on each link within the message and, best of all, exactly who did what. Now that's what we call accurate, detailed, and immediate consumer research (you actually get to track your consumers' actions from the exact moment they happen). And while you would previously pay a fortune just to get this research data, today your small business can send professional email marketing campaigns and track detailed consumer behavior for less than it would cost you to print store flyers.

It's the new age of marketing, and there's never been a better time for your offline small business to get into the game.

Robert Burko is president and founder of Eliteweb.cc (

<http://www.eliteweb.cc>

), an Internet portal and

suite of Fortune 500 tools for the specific needs of small businesses. Eliteweb's permission email marketing manager is perfect for online or offline small businesses. For a no-commitment 30-day Free trial, visit

<http://emailmarketing.eliteweb.cc>

Customers DO Exist Outside of Cyberspace!

By Angela Wu

Customers DO Exist Outside of Cyberspace! by Angela Wu

This one statement might not mean much -- if anything -- to you until you actually try promoting your business in the 'real world'. I know it didn't mean anything to me; for years I heard 'experts' repeatedly say that the one thing online marketers neglected was the offline market.

It wasn't until I opened up a new website where most of the audience preferred good old postal mail that I had my first taste of offline marketing. My worst campaign barely broke even; my best earned me back my costs by a margin of 7-to-1!

It's easy to become comfortable just marketing online; after all, it's relatively cheap, a big advantage for those just getting started. Still, it's by no means 'perfect'. Some of the problems include:

* Email marketing, one of the most prevalent and popular ways to market online, is getting harder. With the vast amounts of spam (unsolicited email) we receive every day in our email boxes, legitimate email can easily be overlooked. Many people simply press the 'delete' key if the email isn't from someone they immediately recognize.

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* Anyone can put up a web page. There's no easy way to differentiate legitimate businesses from the 'scammers', and there seems to be an huge proliferation of scams online.

* It's difficult to get the *right* people to see your website. With billions upon billions of web pages, how do you attract people to your little corner on the web? And once they're there, how do you keep them? Another website is just a 'click' away!

These problems make offline marketing much more attractive! Offline marketing has many advantages that cyberspace can't offer. Consider this:

* You are not limited to a web page or online ad. For

instance, you can use texture and taste (ie. product samples); or enclose stickers in your mailings to help engage the customer in your message.

* It's something tangible that your prospect can hold in his hands... and with things like brochures, postcards, and business cards, although they might initially be tossed aside, the recipient can 'rediscover' them lying on a counter, on the fridge, etc -- or he may hand it to someone else he knows.

* You can reach a whole new segment of the population that would never see your ads online. Some people don't use the Internet at all (or rarely)... while some of those who do, don't necessarily know how to search for specific information.

* People can more easily focus on your message. For example, let's say you're stuck in traffic behind some guy with his URL on his car. There isn't much for you to do or to look at, so you read his decal. Similarly, a brightly colored postcard in someone's mailbox is more likely to stand out (and get read!) than an email that appears alongside dozens of others, most of which are spam.

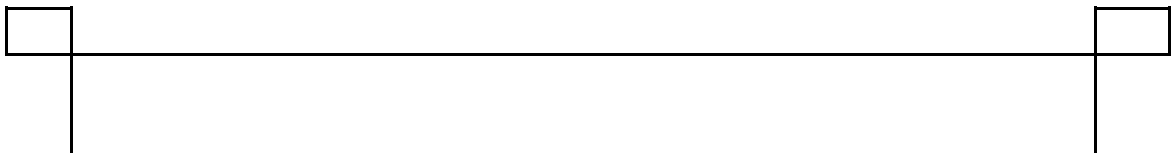
Granted, offline marketing isn't always cheap when you consider the cost of paper, envelopes, ink, postage,

and much more that can go into an offline campaign. But not all offline marketing has to be expensive; for instance, one of the easiest and most affordable methods I've used is a simple decal on my car (I got mine at Web Decals, <http://buildyourhomebiz.com/rd/webdecal.html>). The decal displays my tagline and URL, and everytime I drive, get stuck in traffic, or park at the mall, my business gets exposure. I keep a few brochures in my glove compartment to give out to people who ask about my site.

Online marketing is a wonderfully affordable way to reach an audience. However, a combination of online and offline marketing can help your business thrive! More ideas on how to market your business offline can be found in the article, 'A Beginner's Checklist to Promoting an Online Business': <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/articles/checklist3.html>



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