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Sending Commercial Email

By Dawn Gray

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With more and more court rulings on commercial email, it is becoming difficult to send people information via email without being labelled a spammer. So, how can a small business owner get their message out (via email) without losing their ISP and receiving tons of hate mail (often including malicious programs called "bombs")?

You have two choices: 1. spend a lot of money; or 2. spend a lot of time and effort.

Spend A Lot Of Money

Yes, there are cheap email lists available online. However, chances are those lists are compiled of email addresses collected from websites or directories. It's unlikely that the owner of the list has the recipient's permission to send them anything.

There are also lists out there compiled of people who requested information. Some offer bonuses for receiving, reading or responding to advertisements. That may be a good strategy from the list owner's perspective, but you're likely to receive a lot of responses from people who have no interest in your product. That translates into wasted time and energy on your part, as you try to follow up on those bogus leads.

If you want to send email messages to a lot of people, I highly recommend sticking to dependable lists of people who

requested information. YesMail and Postmaster Direct are the two biggest companies which offer opt-in email lists. They offer many ways to target your market, as well as legitimately obtained addresses.

Spend A Lot Of Time And Effort

If you can't afford to work with the big boys, you can compile your own list. See my article, "How to Capture Email Addresses" at <http://www.busymarketing.com/email.shtml>

Compiling your own list will involve first promoting your

website by other methods. (I've got a lot of ideas at <http://www.busymarketing.com/marketing.shtml> and in my E-Books – see the newest one, "106 Website Promotion Tips" at <http://www.busymarketing.com/106tips.shtml>) Then you must convince people to send you their email addresses by offering an announcement list, newsletter, freebie, or contest.

Unfortunately, people are becoming wary of giving out their email addresses. They get too much email as it is. Your offer must be compelling to convince them to hand over contact information. Even then, don't expect the email addresses to pour in unless you already receive a lot of traffic.

"Isn't There An Easier Way?"

I knew you'd ask that. There is another way to send information about your website via email, but you might not be able to get an exclusive ad. You can pay a small amount of money (some are even free!) for an advertisement in a newsletter, like this one. More people read newsletters than stand-alone commercial advertisements, since they generally have useful information. The list is built for you, and you can find one for almost any target audience imaginable.

There are numerous directories of ezines, many of which include information about advertising in email newsletters. My list is located near the bottom of <http://www.busymarketing.com/addurl.shtml> Also, consider the newsletters you already subscribe to. Chances are, many are related to your website's topic and are targeted at the

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same audience. Just scroll to the bottom for information on advertising opportunities or contact the editor about it.

(For advertising information for this newsletter, send a blank email to

)

There are many types of newsletter advertising, from stand-alone ads which are sent independently of the newsletter to one or two line "classifieds" crowded together at the end. Make sure you know what your options are and what you're getting by subscribing to the newsletter in advance. The things to look for are quality content and little competition (you don't want to be on page 3 of a 5 page advertising section).

Dawn Gray can help you drive more traffic to your website. For other great articles on website promotion and a free email newsletter, visit her website at <http://www.busymarketing.com>

Are You Compliant With The Law? Take The CAN-SPAM QUIZ!

By Jim Symonds

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Test Your Knowledge of The Law – 22 Questions You Should Know.

ANSWER THESE STATEMENTS: TRUE OR FALSE?

The Can Spam Act went into effect Jan. 1st, but marketers have 90 days to become compliant with the new law.

The Can Spam Act Pre-empts many tougher state anti-spam laws.

You may send commercial email with falsified headers.

You must include your phone number in all commercial emails.

You may send UCE as long as the message contains an opt-out mechanism, a functioning return email address, a valid subject line indicating the email is an advertisement, and the legitimate

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physical address of the sender.

You must include a privacy policy when you collect subscribers.

You may harvest email addresses as long as the messages you send contain an opt-out mechanism, a functioning return email address, a valid subject line indicating the email is an advertisement, and the legitimate physical address of the sender.

You must have a process for handling unsubscribes within a 15 day window.

Referencing or including a link to a commercial entity in an email message is sufficient to make it a commercial email message.

You must add your postal address to all your marketing emails.

The Can Spam Act is enforced by the Attorney General in the state wherein the alleged spam originated.

You must not share the address of a person who unsubscribed with any other entity seeking to send that party email.

It's O.K. to use a misleading subject in your marketing email, as long as you identify the email as an advertisement or solicitation somewhere within the body of the email.

The FTC is required to report back to Congress within two years on the effectiveness of the law and the need, if any, for modifications.

Wireless spam is not covered by the law.

The new law allows for a \$250 fine per non compliant email, and possible jail time, for intentionally sending UCE with falsified header information.

All persons in charge of running web servers that relay email must close all open relays within 90 days of enacted of the law (Jan. 1st).

Sending commercial email through an open relay is prohibited by the Can Spam Act.

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You must include an unsubscribe mechanism in every commercial email.

Under the law, businesses knowingly promoted in UCE with false or misleading header information are also subject to FTC penalties and enforcement remedies, regardless of whether the FTC is able to identify the spammer who initiated the email.

All commercial email (except those sent to opt in lists) must contain ADV in the subject line, to indicate the email is an advertisement.

All commercial email (except those sent to opt in lists) must be identified as an advertisement or solicitation.

For answers to these questions, take the quiz online at:
<http://www.EmailMarketingSurvey.com/CAN-SPAM-Quiz.html>

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