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July 22, 2005

10 Ways to Boost E-Zine Subscriptions

July 20, 2005

By: Peter J. Fogel

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Online or off, no one has to tell you the money is in your list. But as you know, we're all drowning in spam so you might have to work harder these days to get readers to sign up for your company's e-zine. Here are 10 ways to boost your subscriber list:

Give them a taste of what you've got. Just like that woman in the supermarket who offers you a free sample of some tasty morsel, you should do the same with your e-zine. Give proof to potential subscribers. Show them a sample issue of "what you got." Don't want to give out too much info? Well, black out some of the important info; this will make them more curious. You might include back issues of your e-zine in an archive. That way you can inspire folks to keep returning to your Web site.

Give away a follow-up auto-responder course. Prospects want information. They want to know how you're going to improve their life or business. Folks love courses. Promote your e-zine ad in each lesson. The more people see it, the more likely they'll subscribe, especially after all the cool info you gave them in the e-course. Promote, promote, promote.

Offer a shameless bribe. Tell potential subscribers that they will get a discount on a particular product you sell if they subscribe to your free e-zine. Or your bribe could include an e-book or report. For a higher response, your e-book (or report) should be targeted to giving them specific information that will solve a problem for them. Sell garden nursery supplies? Then you might try: "Six Failsafe Steps to Having a More Bountiful Garden."

Cross promote with other businesses. Contact other businesses and give them permission to give a free subscription to your e-zine as a bonus for a product they sell. Tell them that you will return the favor with your list. If you sell a meat product, don't contact a business that promotes a vegetarian lifestyle. You want a business that is not in direct competition with you, but has the same audience. You also could ask the marketer to give you a testimonial about your business, either as a blurb or an endorsed e-mail, which is even more powerful.

Ask potential subscribers important questions that persuade them to subscribe. Again, you want to solve your prospect's problem with your product or service. If

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you're a financial adviser and your targets are young baby boomers, perhaps you can say, "Would You Like to Be Able to Retire Before You're 50? Now you can with a top financial adviser's guide to 'Ten Tips You Can Use Right Now That Can Put You on the Road to a Profitable Retirement!'"

Write your e-zine's ad to sound like it is common sense to subscribe. In your copy, you always want a one-on-one conversation with your subscriber. You want to feel like you're talking to them across a table, and you want to give them a strong reason to sign up. People want to feel they're part of a club or that they have important knowledge. You can lead with your copy by saying, "Everyone knows you have to ..."

Assume that your prospect wants to sign up. Position yourself as a guru who has the answers they need. You have great info to give prospects, and so you should assume that they want to sign up for your e-zine. Remember, specificity sells. Instead of saying, "Dear Friend," address them like "Dear Healthy Subscriber." Your prospect will want to subscribe in order to feel healthy.

Let subscribers collect stuff from each issue of your e-zine. The most powerful word in direct response advertising is "free." Folks online are programmed to get freebies. So blatantly tell them in each issue that they can collect free e-books or software. Once they do, they'll tell others and those people will subscribe. Don't have enough freebies to give away? Contact other marketers and tell them that you'd like to offer some freebies from their business. This is another form of joint venture marketing.

Post articles in other e-zines and chat rooms. You want to position yourself and your business as a leader in your industry. Go to other e-zine subscribers or Internet chat rooms and offer them your articles to post. Include a disclaimer at the bottom of your article that tells them they can post it, but that the content cannot be changed and that your byline must be included.

Make people think it's their idea to subscribe. In any type of marketing, you always tell prospects why they need to make the "right" decision by buying your product or service. Tell them the same thing about your e-zine. Once they realize it's going to benefit them, they'll be less hesitant.

You've used the above techniques, and now you have subscribers. Want to stop them from opting out? Pull back on the times you send your blast. Your market will tell you when they're being overwhelmed.

Peter J. Fogel is a high-response copywriter from Richmond Hill, NY, who specializes in direct mail, Web and radio copy and is author of the new book, "If Not Now ... Then When? Stories and Strategies of People Over 40 Who Have Successfully Re-invented Themselves," available at Amazon.com. His e-mail address is compellingcopy2005@yahoo.com.



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