

## Sign up for Value: How to Leverage Your Site to Grow Your List

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BY Regina Brady (published in Target Marketing Magazine, October 2008)

Marketers who want to exploit the full potential of e-mail should develop plans to consistently grow their permission-based e-mail lists of customers and prospects. This allows them to build loyalty and promote cross-sell and up-sell opportunities. A housefile represents names the marketer "owns" and has permission to use. While marketers use many tactics to grow their lists, those individuals who enroll in programs on a marketer's site should be the cornerstone of any program. In most cases, these individuals have taken an action to positively sign up. They should be one of the best-performing sources.

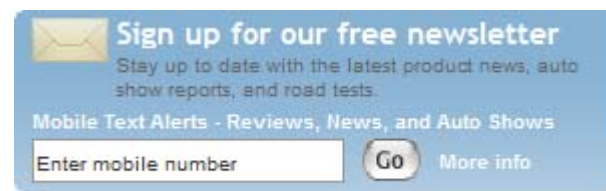
It is important to have a plan to encourage customers and site visitors to sign up for email promotions and newsletters. Here are some ideas to give your email program a boost.

### Leverage the Home Page

It is likely that half of your site traffic comes to the home page. This is valuable real estate and a great place to promote sign-up. Make sure your email program is visible and "above the fold" on the homepage. If visitors have to scroll down to find your email program, they will be less likely to sign up.

And remember to market your program! Space on the home page is at a premium, but it's a good idea to have a short benefits statement to explain the value of your program.

- The automotive magazine web site CarandDriver.com includes their sign-up box in the site header above content. The headline is: "Sign up for our free newsletter" followed by "Stay up to date with the latest product news, auto show reports, and road tests." This forward-thinking site also promotes their mobile text alerts in the same area.



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- TravelSmith, the marketer of travel clothes and gear, has a simple box in their top navigation that says "receive email offers."
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## Promote Sign-up on Interior Pages

Not everyone who comes to your site will enter through your homepage. So, it's important to promote your email program on other pages of your site. Make your email program part of the site navigation template. Many sites employ this technique.

- Chadwick's, the women's apparel marketer, uses two ways to capture email information. It uses persistent navigation, and in the site header there are links to "Email & Catalog Request" and "Your Special Offers." While each link has a special purpose, both present the option to sign up for emails. This innovative marketer also has set the special offers area to expand. The message box is set to open for a short period of time and it provides benefits-oriented copy to convince the site visitor to register at the site and receive emails.
- My all-time favorite technique is used by Wine Enthusiast, purveyor of wine accessories. They employ a banner ad that is at the bottom of every page on its site to promote their email program. It offers a premium for signing up, provides a link to a sample and to their privacy policy. along with a box where people can enter their email addresses.



## Promote on Landing Pages

Marketers who are running pay-per-click campaigns, ad banners or email prospecting campaigns will often create special landing pages to coincide with the offer. You can leverage your marketing investment by also including an email sign-up offer on these pages.

## Include in Your Site Search Dictionary

I've visited many sites where I found it difficult to find their email program. The first place I turn is to the site search box that is usually prominently featured. I'll enter "email," "email newsletter" or "email promotions." Nine times out of ten I will get a message that says: "Your search for email did not match any of the products we carry. Please try browsing our store to find what you want."

It's easy to add these and other terms to your site search dictionary.

## Ask During Checkout

When someone is transacting on a site, this is the perfect opportunity to capture email addresses along with permission. The shopper is likely to want an order confirmation and shipping notifications via email and will willingly volunteer his or her email address. Some marketers have found that between 30 and 40 percent of all email addresses are collected during the checkout process.

To ensure the success of capturing the email address, be sure to include a notice either at the top of the checkout area or at the point that the individual is entering their email address that explains he or she will receive special offers and discounts.

## Optimize the Site for the Email Program

Take advantage of the power of search engines to grow your list. While most marketers have not done this, it's another tactic that is easy to do and should pay dividends.

Consumer Reports does a good job at this. I searched on "email + Consumer Reports" on Google and was returned this result.

### [ConsumerReports.org - E-mail newsletters](#)

Register to receive **e-mail** notices when new information becomes available online.

[www.consumerreports.org/cro/customer-service/email-service/e-mail-newsletters/](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/customer-service/email-service/e-mail-newsletters/) - 48k -

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The link brought me to a page with all of their email newsletter programs, a brief description of each, and an easy way to opt-in. What's more, they had optimized the page for search engines. The page title was "ConsumerReports.org – E-mail newsletters."

The page source description was: "'Register to receive e-mail notices when new information becomes available online," which is exactly what Google displayed. And, the company used the following keywords in the source code for the page: "monthly updates, monthly notices, e-mail notices, email notices, opt-in, new issue, next issue."

There are many other ways to grow your list of email addresses including the use of offline channels to gain permission. Your website is your online personification of your company, and marketers should maximize the chance to use best practices in permission to expand their email lists. To quote a famous line from "Casablanca," Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) says to Captain Renault (Claude Rains) "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." And, may this also be true for your email programs!

*Regina Brady is president of Reggie Brady Marketing Solutions, a direct and email marketing consultancy. She can be reached at (203) 838-8138 or [reginabrady@att.net](mailto:reginabrady@att.net).*