

What Kind of System Do I Need To Generate Lead on Autopilot

Part One

How to Use Your Blog to Generate Leads

WHY A BLOG CAN GENERATE LEADS

A blog is a fantastic tool. Think of it as a tool, a tool you can use to get leads to any type of business you may have. Blogs are tools that need to be in use regularly to keep them working for you. They do not do the work for you, but they do help you to accomplish some of the hardest aspects of your job: getting leads and getting sales from them.

No matter what you may be selling or promoting, a blog is a tool to enable you to get those leads. Since there are millions of potential customers available to you online, you likely want to attract as many of them as possible to your website, where you can promote your product or service and get sales.

Websites can be difficult to manage and they often leave the customer with an impersonal feel. Here are a few problems with websites, in general:

- **Most websites are not changing**

The home page gives great information and the rest of the pages help to sell the item. This is usually a good

thing, but can keep search engines at bay and limit the personality of the website.

- **Websites make it difficult for you to communicate with your readers**

You can only communicate through email, rather than the easy and helpful communication of comments.

- **Websites can only be bookmarked so many times**

One time on each page is not enough to help with most social ranking.

- **Websites are expensive**

Yes, expensive to manage - especially if you plan to have many pages of content available to the consumer.

- **For many, blogs are more enjoyable and even easier to manage than a standard website**

Even if you do not know any HTML, you can run your own blog.

For all of these reasons, it is often a good decision to incorporate the use of a blog to help you with lead generation. Any type of business can use a blog. You can

even start out with a free blog, one that you do not have to invest any money in whatsoever.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you have never used a blog in the past, it may be best to start a free blog from one of the popular blogging resources available online. The two more popular options are Blogger.com and WordPress.com Both of these are very easy to use and they allow you to get started literally in minutes. Later, you can invest in paid blogging programs once you learn a bit about how to use them and how to personalize them for your business.

The benefits of blogging are many. Keep these things in mind when you set out to establish your blog.

- Blogging gives you constant new pages that search engines like Google love. This is a fantastic reason to incorporate a blog into your business because it is an easy way to get regular search engine ranking benefits that websites often keep limiting.

- While blogging is easy enough to do, keep in mind that it does take a regular commitment. If you do not have the ability or time to manage your blog, there is help available. Many professional bloggers ghost write blogs for individuals. You can hire someone to do this type of work rather inexpensively.
- Communicating through a blog is essential. It is a much less formal way of speaking to others, and it does require a lot of commitment on your part. Not only do you need to keep posts going, but you also have to keep the dialogue going too! This can be rather difficult to do in some respects. Getting to chat with consumers is not something many people like to do.

Now that you know a few of the important aspects of blogging, it is time to get it in place. Once you have registered your blog and you have established a web presence for it (depending on the method you will be blogging on, you may need to have hosting set up) it is time to start posting.

What will you talk about? To generate leads to your website, you will want to create blog posts that somehow, even

indirectly, relate back to your website's topic and overall goals. For example, let us say you have a website selling dog products. Your blog should be dog (or at least pet) related.

When you do this, you display your skills in this way and you establish yourself as an expert in the field. Do you need to be an expert to get sales and traffic? In most cases, the answer to this is yes simply because people look for people they can count on to buy from. If you are not an expert, why would they want to buy from you?

Start planning a few posts!

HOW TO DRIVE TRAFFIC WITH A BLOG

With your blog in place, the next step in the process is simple: get traffic to the blog so that you can move the traffic to your website. If people get to your blog, they are already highly targeted leads. When they get to your website, they are often times ready to buy. This is, of

course, only if you can get traffic to the blog. Here are some of the most important ways to increase traffic to your blog, and in exchange, get traffic to your website where you are selling or promoting items.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Throughout your blog, you will need to invest in search engine optimization. This does not have to be labor intensive, hard to do or something you have to research extensively to get right. Like any other website, a blog needs to have the most appropriate keywords placed throughout it, so that search engines can find the site and rank it appropriately.

Keywords are the words you (and those interested in your topic) are most likely to type into a search engine to get to your website. These words most accurately describe your website's topic. To learn which words are most appropriate, use a free keyword research tool to help you. These are available throughout the web, including at Google's website and WordTracker.com.

Type in a few words associated with your website. In our earlier example of dog products, your may have keywords

like: dog accessories, dog clothing, dog training, dog collars, pet clothing, house training dogs, and so on. You will receive words that people most often punch into the search engine when they are looking at this information. It is essential to have appropriate keywords throughout your website since this helps Google and other search engines to find your website and to rank it well.

HOW TO USE KEYWORDS

Once you know what these keywords are, what do you do with them? Here are some ways you will want to include keywords in your blog to attract search engines appropriately.

- Use keywords in each of the blog posts you put up. Keywords should not have overuse in any post. Try to keep keywords under 2 or 3 percent of any post.
- Use a keyword in the title of each blog post: this is key to search engine ranking!
- Try to incorporate a keyword in the first 90 characters of the blog post you are writing.

- Use keywords in the "tags" and "keyword" functions of the blog. These are often asked for when you are posting the blog
- Use keywords in your tags, when creating pages in your website, too or in the blog's set up
- Pick two to four keywords to use per blog post. Too many keywords make each post sound strange and limit your overall ability to communicate a message.

In addition to these items, there are other aspects of search engine optimization. For example, did you know that the search engines like to see short paragraphs? It is often best to include at least one set of bullet points in your posts, even if it just lists a few items at a time.

POSTING OFTEN

From the beginning, you will need to post regularly to your blog. One of the key benefits of using a blog to get leads is that you can get many of those leads directly from search engines, if you show the search engines your blog is active.

Giving the search engine spiders, as they are often called, regular "food" to eat will allow them to come back to your page time and time again. Your blog will see great growth in traffic if you just post often.

How often is often, at first, you may not have the time to post every day, but this is what you want to work towards. Your posts do not have to be very long, but they should be unique. Here are some additional tips to help you with setting up a blog that ranks well.

- **Post basic information**

Information to help educate readers who are looking for something to learn. They are often looking for answers to their questions above anything else.

- **Blog posts can be short, as short as 300 to 250 words**

Keep your keywords in line with the length of each post, going for under 3 percent. Too many keywords can cause the search engines to notice this and negatively rank you because of it.

- **Do some research to find unique items to talk about in your posts**

What are people really looking for? Do they want to know what options they have for potty training their dog? Are they looking at the wide assortment of invisible fences and are unable to make a choice? Use blog posts to identify questions your consumers may have, as a learning tool for them.

- **Enable comments, with approval**

Most blog posts do allow for individuals to post comments. You should have these monitored so that you can avoid spam comments, or even worse, profane ones. But, allowing others to post comments can give you many benefits. It may give you ideas for new blog posts. It may help you to answer their questions and therefore gain their respect. It may even help you to get the sale!

- **Keep blog posts engaging!**

Make them interesting, as this will attract a range of different people who may be more willing to book your blog to come back to repeatedly. You want this regular readership to be possible!

Now that you have an idea of what to speak about in your blog posts, and you know that you need to post at least most days of the week, what is next? There is more to do to get your blog posts to translate into leads. Again, to get the leads, you have to ensure that your blog is attracting the right type of visitors who want to head over to your website to make a purchase.

GET SOCIAL

One of the keys to getting traffic to your website is to be social. Get out there and talk to others. Encourage them to come and visit your site, but in an indirect manner. What you won't want to do is to spam people or otherwise push them to visit you. Rather, you want to position yourself as:

- Interesting
- An expert in the field
- Someone that is fun and cool to talk to

When you do this, chances are good people will want to follow you back to your blog to learn more about whom you are. You want them to click on that link that will bring them

to your blog and eventually on to your website. However, how do you create this type of attraction? The first thing you need to do is to get social!

Social bookmarking and social networking has become one of the easiest, most enjoyable parts of the Internet marketer's business. All you need to do is to help others to learn about you, about your blog and even about your website, by putting it all out there.

Social bookmarking is a good place to get the process started. Many fantastic websites you can visit for this. Here is the rundown of how to get social active with your blog through bookmarking websites.

STEP 1: WRITE NEWSWORTHY POSTS

These posts should have writing in such a way as to allow you to book mark them. Most of the social booking sites are interested in something that is newsworthy, interesting and unique. You may have to think a bit harder on this to make it happen, but it is worthwhile. Going back to the bed products, you may wish to write a blog post about a new product or a discount that's offered. Be sure to keep it from being too promotional though.

STEP 2: SIGN UP FOR A VARIETY OF THE SOCIAL BOOKMARKING WEBSITES

There are many of these, but the following are some of the most important to join:

- **Digg.com**

Here, you can just "Digg" posts that you find are interesting. Other members of the website can also "digg" them and this ends up helping more people to read the post. Over time, you can develop a good base of friends on these websites to help push your posts farther.

- **MySpace.com**

Do you have a MySpace.com page? If not, you may wish to do so. Get friends there and anytime you publish a new blog post, send out a message to everyone to let them know about it. These hits from MySpace.com to your blog post will help with search engine ranking, too.

- **StumbleUpon**

Here is a great website. All you need to do is to

"stumble" any article that you find is interesting and unique. Those who use StumbleUpon are then able to read your post, too, as they stumble their way through sites.

- **Facebook**

Facebook can serve as a fantastic tool for building your clientele. If you are selling those dog accessories, you can use Facebook to help you to network and find other people who may be interested in buying them. Create a relationship with them and be sure to send them links to your new blog posts.

You can do this with many of their social bookmarking and networking websites as well. Twitter.com, YouTube, and plenty of others are very easy to use websites. The goal there is the same. Meet other people that you may know and new people you do not. Develop a relationship with them by just chatting. Then, when you do post a new blog post, you can promote the link to it using these websites. People get back to your blog, read your post and then head over to purchase items from your website.

STEP 3: USE THESE WEBSITES

In order for any type of social networking to work, you do have to use them and use them frequently. No one likes a person that shows up to do nothing more than to push their product or sell their link. Rather, they work best if you develop a relationship with people and then network with them regularly.

Once you get the hang of using these websites, it becomes far easier to do. It only takes a few minutes to drum up quality traffic to your website just through these resources.

PROMOTING YOUR BLOG

The goal of getting people to your blog is to have them head over to your website or buy from you directly through the blog. In order to get this to happen, you need to have enough people coming to your website on a regular basis. You can do this by simply networking with others, as described, but there are other ways to get results, too.

Networking is essential throughout the blogging world. Therefore, your first order of business is to find those

businesses that work close to your own, but may not be direct competition. With the example used here, you may want to collaborate with someone who is promoting healthy dog food, or perhaps even cat accessories. This way, you can both work together to cross promote the blogs. Often times, you just need to email the other individual and you will have plenty of good response since most blogs need this type of promotion.

What can you do with other bloggers? There are several things to do:

1. **Write a guest post**

You write a post on their blog, they write a post for your blog. In turn, your readers get something new and interesting to read (which you will socially promote of course). In addition to this, you gain some readership from the other blogger's readers. The same works for the other blogger as well.

2. **Comment on posts**

You will want to be active in these individual's blogs. To do this, all you need to do is to leave a few positive, yet informational comments on their blog posts. When you do so, you will be able to leave your website's link.

This does several things for you. You are likely to get some added traffic from individuals who read your comments and want to learn more about you. Another benefit is the back link.

3. **Benefit from back links**

Your link on other websites is crucial to the well being of your website and blog. This is why your website's link should be on your blog, too. Google loves to see links to various websites on their pages. If five other websites have a link to your blog (and hopefully it grows even higher than this), it shows Google that your website is useful, interesting or something good. They rank you higher for this.

PULLING IT TOGETHER

Now that you have done all of this work, what now? The results will start to happen. Here is an example of what is likely to happen once you start to get traffic coming into your website.

You put up great, information and well designed website. You want to market this blog as a tool to getting customers to buy from you. You set up and manage your blog. The blog includes direct links to the website and may even be sharing the same space.

The blog is something you manage on a daily basis. You put up great posts that are informational, interesting and newsworthy. You Digg your posts, you Stumble them and eventually you are Tweeting them to all those you have come to know on Twitter.

You keep promoting your blog and posts in this way. Your readership grows. More people are coming to your website. Since you have done a good job with search engine ranking, you also see great improvements in terms of search engine ranking. All of those visitors are finding you, just like they should be.

Since the tools you are using here are all tools to help you to get only qualified leads, people who are interested in what you have to offer to them, chances are good that they will continue to come to your website and buy from you. Since they like what you are offering, they are likely to click on your website link and learn more about the products and purchase them. It does not matter if you are selling your own products or those through an affiliate program. You have done all of the hard convincing already. These leads are qualified.

MAKING LEADS WORK FOR YOU

Now that you have people coming to your website through all of your hard work managing your blog, you may think you can just sit back and relax. This is not always the case. You may need to do a bit more to get the most you can get out of those leads. After all, you want and need sales to happen.

Several ways you can get leads to buy from you; traffic coming in that is high quality, is a good start. What you do with them when they arrive is another story, though.

SIGN THEM UP

One thing you will want to do is to have an opt-in list for any and all of your website visitors to sign. This list is crucial to the overall well being of your business for several reasons. First off, it allows you to collect the email addresses, and potentially the names, of those people who have visited you. This information is then use to regularly promote your website or business to them.

To accomplish this, you will want to set up an email marketing campaign. This simple process allows you to send regular messages to those who visit your website and sign up for you opt in list. You can use this email marketing campaign in various ways:

- Use it to help promote your business sales and new products by sending an email to your visitors letting them know about these changes.

- Share knowledge and tips with your subscribers. For example, you may want to send an email newsletter about the best ways to accessorize your dog for the winter months, in the fall, so that you can draw people back to your website to purchase these items.
- Use these email marketing campaigns to encourage individuals to visit your blog, to read the latest messages and posts that you have there. Keep them updated!

When you have and use an email marketing campaign, the result is that you have yet another way to pull leads that once came to your website back to your website. Prior to setting up and using this type of marketing campaign, you will want to invest some time in learning how to do so appropriately, to avoid any spam violations and to help you to get the best results overall.

LANDING PAGES

Landing pages, or sales pages, are another way you can take advantage of the leads that come to your blog. Often times, Internet marketers will use landing pages to help them to sell their products and services. You likely know what these are. They are long, sales like pitches that convince individuals that they need to purchase from you.

Landing pages can be an ideal investment if you do not have many products to sell. If your website does not have a catalog full of items to sell and promote, chances are good that you will do well using a landing page. These are great for those who sell promotional items or who will use their blog to promote affiliate links and programs.

If you are planning to use landing pages, one of the most important elements is getting the layout and overall tone right. Professionals who have experience with copywriting often do these. The reason for this is simple: those without this experience are likely to write a sales page that does not get results.

The job of the sales page is to get results. Results are nothing more than sales. Invest in a professional to have

these pages written for you. Be sure they are accurate, detailed and convincing.

Once you have them up and running, you can then use your blog to promote your landing page. Again, your blog should not be one large sales pitch, but a variety of enjoyable and interesting blog posts, items that get the reader involved to help convince them to click on your link to find out what you have to offer to them.

SUM IT UP

In order to ensure you are using your blog to get the most leads you can, be sure you are incorporating each of the following items.

- **Have you set up a blog that is information based and original?**

You want to ensure that individuals come to your blog are interested enough to stick around and read what you have to write so that they click on your link to get to your website where your products are.

- **Is your blog conversational and personal?**

Blogs do not intend to be rigid or boring. They should not just be one sided, either. You will need to communicate with your readers through comments and through your blog posts. In addition, most blog owners receive a good amount of email from readers.

- **Post frequently or hire someone to do the work for you**

You need this for search engine optimization, which will drive more traffic to your website and in turn gets you more sales.

- **Create blog posts that are teasers for what your website or landing page has to offer**

For example, review a product sold at your website, honestly. This is a great way to show you are being thorough and fair, and that you have the backs of your readers!

- **Offer a contest or otherwise encourage participation in your blog posts**

One of the keys to a successful blog is encouraging individuals to get active in it. You may want to give

away a product every now and then or you may wish to talk to your readers about their needs.

Using a blog to promote your business is a goal you should have. It does not have to cost a great deal, but it can be one of the best marketing tools.

You may want to consider your blog a banner ad for your website. It is just enough information to draw readers into what your website has to offer.

Part Two: How to build A Responsive Mailing List

Secrets To Responsive Lists

Every online marketer understands that the best way to generate sales is to have a large email list of subscribers. After they build that list, however, many marketers begin to recognize that the list is large, but it doesn't function to create sales. That's because it wasn't built with the idea of creating a *responsive* list, and instead focused on quantity instead of quality.

The time to start building the right type of list is just as you get started, but even if you've already got a list, you can still tweak your business processes to get a better response after the fact.

PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU CREATE THAT LIST

The biggest secret isn't that you need a huge number of people on the list, but that you want a better conversion of subscribers to customers. You can do this by paying attention to how you are creating the list, how you are marketing it, and what is actually happening when you send out an offer. Here are some basic things you should know about a responsive mailing list.

- **Buying email addresses doesn't work**

For the most part, you can buy thousands of emails on another person's contact list and still generate very poor sales. The secret to creating a good list is to build one up naturally and organically so that people have a good relationship with you and your business.

- **Single opt-ins can be fooled**

You may put out an opt-in list and be congratulating yourself on the number of sign-ups, that is, until you find out many are fakes or generated by online bots. Learn how to use a double opt-in strategy to build a better list.

- **Targeted demographics are better than niches**

Demographics tell you the reasons *why* people buy, while niches just assume everyone on your list is interested. You will have better luck by understanding the psychology of your list, rather than just relying on categoric niches, for email marketing.

- **Automate what you can**

There are plenty of products and services to help streamline your online business. There's no reason why

you should be struggling with responding to each and every email, unless there is some reason for personally responding. Learning about the technologies and tools available can save you valuable time and increase your bottom line.

- **People do have a price**

It's up to you to figure out what that price is. It may be that they are willing to subscribe if you give them a free short report. It might be that they will do it to enter a contest. It might be that they will reply to an email when they see a savings in a product they like or when they get your personal attention. Pay attention and do what works for you.

ORGANIC IS BETTER

Organic, or naturally occurring lists, generally are quite a bit more responsive than lists created by buying email addresses from other marketers. The reasons for this are that bought lists can contain a number of bad email addresses or contain people on them who are getting so much email from other marketers, that they ignore

everything as spam. One last reason, and the biggest reason, to use organic lists is that you can be liable for sending email to an address that hasn't opted in to having their email published.

When you build your own organic lists, you know that the person has specifically requested to subscribe to your list and are genuinely interested in either you or your business.

WAYS TO CREATE ORGANIC LISTS

In this age of social networking, you will find that it isn't as hard as it used to be to create an organic list. People are networking more and more online, and all you need to figure out is how to put the power of the Internet at your fingertips. Don't just put an opt-in form on your website and expect that using that simple action will generate a large organic list for you. People will still have to find your site, and if your traffic is low, this can be a major stumbling block. The solution is to not just advertise your opt-in on your site, but to do it elsewhere where traffic that is interested in your niche congregates. That's where social networking comes into play.

Get in the habit of building an online presence on various social networking sites. You will have to post a profile and start networking with people on these sites to hook into potential customers. Once you have them interested in either who you are or some common interests (related to what you market), you can start posting updates or links to things that you want to promote to get traffic from these sites back to your opt-in offers.

PLACES TO NETWORK ONLINE

- www.facebook.com
Facebook has a very crisp, business-like interface that helps you to maintain a more professional image for your profile. Join groups, network with like-minded people, or even advertise within Facebook. It's a great way to find demographics very quickly.
- www.twitter.com
For people who don't have enough time to put up a full profile, just hop onto Twitter. Using 140 characters in each update, you can build up a quick following without too much time involved.

- www.linkedin.com

This is more of a business directory, but also a great place to network.

DEMOGRAPHICS ARE KEY

Internet marketers will tell you that when you go to set up a website or online business, you have to pick a hot niche. That is completely true, as without a hot niche, you have less chance of generating enough traffic to make good sales.

However, when you go to market that niche via email lists, you will find that you will need to market to demographics more than to a niche. In other words, you will want to focus on getting up close and personal with your prospective buyers, instead of just assuming that they want to buy your products because they signed up to your list.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Demographics are typically segregated into a few marketing categories: gender, age, income bracket, ethnicity, and

education level. Of course, you can set up any number of demographic variables to help you market to your niche, but these are pretty standard. Just knowing several of these demographics about who is visiting your site can substantially help you to increase the responsiveness of your list. How? The trick is to send emails that talk personally to a specific group's needs and provides that demographic with solutions to the problems that they see day to day.

For instance, say you are marketing laptops. You want a demographic of college-aged students or business professionals who require this piece of equipment. You may also find that they need to be within a specific income bracket. You can put up surveys on your site and reward people for identifying who they are and what demographic they fall into. After that, you take that information and you set up different lists.

The one with college-aged students gets emails on how laptops can help them to complete assignments in between class or to take their studies with them anywhere. The email that goes to business people may target people who are in their cars (like real estate agents) or who spend a lot of time travelling for business. In that case, the biggest benefit is

that it will increase their work productivity as they get the essentials of their business travel done.

SPLIT YOUR MAILING LISTS INTO DEMOGRAPHICS

Once you start to figure out why people are buying, you can start to separate people into different mailing lists, according to their demographics. You can set up one list for 18- to 25-year olds and another for those over 30. Next time you want to send out a promotion for a particular product or service, you will have a good idea what psychological triggers work best with either list.

TECHNOLOGY TO TRACK RESPONSIVENESS

Once you start building mailing lists for marketing purposes, you will find that there are tools and services out there to help simplify the process. There's no reason why you have to learn how to build a responsive mailing list from scratch when you can use the tools and services provided by others. Just make sure that they are simplifying your life and not complicating it. Here are some tools or services that can

help you do just that, while encouraging your subscribers to be more responsive.

TOOLS

- **The Double Opt-In List**

Instead of a single opt-in, you can choose to implement a double opt-in where the subscriber must confirm his/her email address via a response link that gets sent there. This is a great way to keep out spammers and fake email addresses from ruining the quality of your list.

- **Check Open Rates**

You should be able to set an embedded image (sometimes it's even a blank) that pings a server to download the image when a person opens your emails. This gives you a good idea of how many people are opening your emails and whether you are getting a good response to the subject headlines.

- **Autoresponders**

Set up automatic responders to certain types of actions people take, like registration or ordering. They can be for thank-yous, for back-end offers, and for

confirmation of the action. The point is to make sure that customers feel they are being interacted with, even if you know it's on automatic.

SERVICES

To get the types of tools above, many Internet marketers go to a service like AWeber.com that will provide email marketing support using some of these tools and more. They will help people set up email campaigns using double opt-in lists and autoresponders and will give you a good idea of who and how many are opening your emails.

They charge by the number of people on your list with an initial 0 to 500 subscribers being just \$19 per month. They even offer newsletter creation and email templates to help simplify your campaigns. They are a recognized quality subscriber of email marketing services and can easily scale to any number of people on your list.

BASIC EMAIL TIPS

How you write your email is just as important as the tools and services you use to run your email marketing campaigns. You want to implement good practices to tempt people to respond to the email and avoid practices that turn people off.

GOOD PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT

- **Strong, Attention-Grabbing, Subject Headlines**

Sometimes, this is all anyone bothers to read, simply because they can't avoid it as they hit the delete key. You want a headline that pulls the reader in enough to get him/her to open the email when it lands in his/her inbox.

- **Use A Personal Name, If Possible**

If you know the name of the person to whom you are sending the email from your list details, be sure to use that within the text. It adds a personal touch and makes the email more customized. There is coding you can use to pick up a first name in a database to add to the content of your emails so that it can be automated.

- **Keep It Short**

There just isn't enough time in the day to read long

messages anymore. People will tend to skip large messages or skim them for the salient points. One way to get past the resistance to reading the email is just to keep it somewhat short.

- **Highlight Salient Points**

Use white space, bolding, subheadings, noticeable fonts, and bulleted lists to get your message across. If a person can open your email and quickly determine what you want without too much fuss, you have a better chance of getting them to click your link offers.

- **Add Your Links/Offers**

Make sure your link is easy to spot and available to click. Tell the reader what you are offering them if they click on the link. Make sure to sell benefits.

- **Unsubscribe Information**

As a matter of courtesy, you should have unsubscribe information in every email you send. It's not because you actually want people to unsubscribe, but because you don't want to be accused of spamming them.

AVOID THIS

Do not spam people. This practice isn't just annoying; it can get you in trouble with Federal regulators.

HOW TO TEMPT THEM TO RESPOND

There are some offer strategies that can significantly increase the odds that people will click the link you provide in your emails and reply to your offer. Giving out some sort of reward or bonus for taking the action you requested is a good way to motivate people to respond. It can also be a great way to introduce people to your products and services if you do it right.

The minute someone responds to an offer, they get entered into your sales funnel and you can market to them further down the line for a sale. While you do want to try to have regular sales emails, some emails to prospective customers are better set up to generate leads and introduce yourself to the potential customer. Keeping that in mind, here are a few strategies to get closer to people who may be seeing your emails, but haven't overcome their resistance to buy from you yet.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Writing up special reports that inform people about your niche or about different ways to solve their problems is a great way to introduce yourself to a prospective client. They are easy to send via an instant download and you can make subscribing to your email list a prerequisite for getting the free report. It costs nothing and it generates good rapport with your prospective clients.

QUIZZES AND POLLS

People love to give out their opinions or to test their knowledge with online quizzes. Setting a link to a poll or quiz in an email is easy, and if the subject is interesting enough, you may find your email gets forwarded to others. Make it a condition to submit an email address to see the results of the poll or quiz, and this will also provide you with leads.

FREE 15-MINUTE CONSULTATIONS

If you are selling coaching services, a free 15-minute consultation can be the open door you need to get a larger contract. Whether you choose to do it via a phone number, chat, or show call-in, you can use this format to not only introduce yourself, but to sell your services too. It sets you up as the expert in a particular topic and is a way to get people to trust you enough to buy from you, someone they now know.

KNOW WHEN TO SEND

Responsive customers aren't just a function of technology and slick marketing offers. They can also be a function of availability. Let's face it; most people are NOT available during holidays. That's the time they are spending face-to-face time with their families and relatives and are generally not online. If you create a stunning email marketing campaign and roll it out during a holiday, it is bound to flop. Therefore, knowing when to send and what times are best for what type of mailing action is crucial to getting better response rates.

THINK WORK WEEK

As an Internet marketer, you may not follow a standard workweek, but more than likely, your customers do. That's why it's important to understand the psychology of why some days are better than others for different actions, and mostly it's because people are following a standard workweek. Research has shown some clear trend on specific days for open rates.

FRIDAY IS FUN DAY

Friday rolls around and people are ready to relax and take in the weekend. They may hop online to see what's going on and what their friends are doing. That's why Friday has the highest open rates of any other day of the week. If you want to have a better chance of people opening your emails, make sure you send them out before Friday.

TUESDAY

It seems Tuesday is the day Internet marketers send out most of their emails as it has the highest send rates. Realistically, Wednesday may be a better choice if you want

to stand out from the crowd and get your emails in line for Friday. However, by Thursday, you will probably start to experience some drop-off in response rates.

WHEN SHOULD YOU SEND IT OUT?

Does this tell you when to send out your own email marketing campaigns. Yes and no. It's a good idea to try to use the standard workweek to make sure to avoid days when it definitely is not a good idea to send a campaign out, like Sunday. Other than that, you can pay attention to the open rates for your particular subscribers to be sure they follow similar trends. It may be that their business doesn't work on a standard workweek and that the general model won't be well suited for you. So, do some testing of your own.

GETTING MORE REFERRALS

Have you seen the “forward to a friend” request at the bottom of some emails? That's an attempt to get you to refer the offer to one of your friends. It's generally well known that referrals make the best lead-in to a sale because

you are more likely to buy or trust something a friend has recommended than you are to just believe the marketer. In that view, referrals are really good for business, but are they good for email campaigns? They can contribute to helping you reach more people, but they shouldn't be your only email marketing strategy. Here is how to properly implement a referral-getting email program.

ASK FOR THE REFERRAL

Your reader won't know that you even want a referral if you don't ask for it. Make it a point to ask for a referral at the end of your email if you want to use this strategy. Try to offer some benefit for getting the word out about you or your products.

OFFER DISCOUNTS AND COUPONS

Offering discounts and coupons for sign-ups can also increase the probability that someone is going to take you up on your offer to forward the same thing to a friend. Friends know what other friends are shopping for and are

always willing to forward discounts and coupons that can save their friends money. Some reward programs are specific to people who sign up, but when you offer the discount or coupon, you can tell them to forward to a friend who, when registering, will also get an additional coupon or bonus.

SWEEPSTAKES & CONTESTS

Everyone loves a sweepstakes and word-of-mouths on contests and sweepstakes rank right up there with coupons and discounts. With sweepstakes, the more chance people have to win, the more often people will enter. In order to increase their odds of winning or having someone they know win, people will forward sweepstakes to friends and family to sign up. Sweepstakes don't usually involve buying anything, just registering for the prize.

Contests, on the other hand, may require that you produce something to compete in a contest. The winner of the competition gets the prize. These are still forwarded to people who may be uniquely suited to compete, but they are not as open to every person unless the contest is not skill-specific, but more game-oriented.

TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE THE ODDS

What's better than sending out mailings to one email list? Sending out mailings to two email lists. This can definitely increase the odds that people will respond, just because there are more people seeing your offers. Where can you find more email lists without organically building them yourself or buying them? The answer may surprise you, but your competitors have lists that you can market to if you can convince them that doing so will benefit them also.

AD SWAPS

Ad swaps are a technique to offer a one-time promotion to another list as well as your own, typically a competitor's list. You offer to do the same for them and expose them to your list for a one-time offer in exchange. If you both have similar-sized lists, it can be a reasonable way to generate more subscribers, even if you are giving your competitor some advertising exposure. There's no guarantee they can capture your subscribers; you are only allowing them an advertising spot to swap and it's up to them to convince

people to sign up to their site or offers. The same goes for you too.

The advantage of an advertising swap is that it costs no upfront cash. If you have similar-sized lists and similar niches, you will instantly be exposed to just the target market you want and stand a good chance of gaining new subscribers. You pay by doing the same for your competitor, instead of fronting cash to advertise. In a tight economy, doing an ad swap can be a smart thing for your mailing list and for your budget.

PUT SIGN-UP INFORMATION EVERYWHERE

Even though you may be trying to market online, the fact is that you can offer your sign-up information in many different places. You can use the signature line in your emails to add a link to sign up for information for free offers, quizzes, or polls that entice people to register. If you have a retail storefront, you can also add a sign-up sheet by the register to increase the odds that people will find out about your online services.

KEEP IN CONSTANT CONTACT

Research has shown that people have to see an advertisement several times before they actually make the decision to buy. In an email marketing campaign, that means that perseverance pays off. You may think that because you didn't get a good number of bites the first time you sent out an offer that it's not a good offer. It may simply need a bit more repetition to get the message across.

People tend to cozy up to things that they get more and more familiar with, so try to continue to market something a few more times before giving up on it. Also, try to keep in constant contact with the people on your mailing list. If you let many days go by without a word, you really do lose the attention of the people on your list. In the worst case, they may already be wooed by your competitors. To keep this from happening, follow some easy rules.

BE FREQUENT

You don't want to deluge people with emails that are just sales promotions; however, you do want to be in constant

contact with your mailing list. If you send out an email on Monday about some hot tips you discovered that can help make your subscriber's life easier, they may be more willing to open the next one you send, which might be a product promotion. Be frequent, but don't overwhelm your readers with emails that are only to your own benefit. That's a sure way for them to unsubscribe from your list.

BE CONSISTENT

If you say you will send out a newsletter every first Tuesday of the month, try to keep to that schedule. The more your subscribers understand the schedule, the more they will anticipate your next email and be looking forward to what you have to offer. In a way, by being frequent and consistent and giving your customers things that appeal to them, you generate an enthusiasm for being on your email list.

BE RESPONSIVE TOO

Finally, the best way to generate a responsive email list is to also be responsive to your list's needs. When problems arise, if you are there to provide solutions and generate

good will, they will be there for you when you knock on their inbox to send them a marketing offer. Try to respond to people personally when they first contact you so that they have some human relationship with you before you start to market to them.

SEEK ALTERNATIVE METHODS

Email is not the only way to keep in contact with your mailing list. Offer them alternative ways to reach you and the other people participating on your site. This can be done through social networking sites, through online forums, and through informational seminars or courses offered online.

This can also be a great way to generate word-of-mouth for your business via referrals as friends tell other friends when some online event or interesting discussion is taking place online. If you host these areas for discussion and networking on your own site, your list can grow astronomically bigger overnight with very little effort on your part. The nicest benefit of all is that it won't just be a big list; it will also be a very responsive list that participates in the discussions and networking that are happening on your website. It is a

captive audience to which you can market your products and services.