

# Secrets to Acquiring More Email Subscribers

By Joe Keenan

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In a session he led at last week's All About eMail Virtual Conference & Expo, presented by eM+C, Arthur Middleton Hughes, senior strategist for email marketing services provider e-Dialog, served up several techniques marketers can use to acquire more email subscribers. Here are Hughes' tips:

**1. Find out what your subscribers are worth.** Without this information, it's impossible to get the management approval and budget necessary to acquire more email subscribers, Hughes said. Set up a flowchart tracking such areas as:

- *the value of online and offline orders generated from email;*
- *the costs of your email program — e.g., goods and orders, acquisition, and delivery;*
- *gross profit generated from email subscribers; and*
- *individual subscriber lifetime value.*

**2. Use subscriber lifetime value to create an acquisition plan and email marketing budget.** When developing this plan, Hughes said, think like a subscriber: "Why would I want to receive emails from this company?"

**3. Be creative and resourceful in your acquisition plan.** Hughes doled out 12 tactics to optimize the number of email subscribers your company acquires.

- *Boost registration on your website.* Promote email registration prominently throughout your site, including the checkout page, Hughes said.
- *Explain why consumers should subscribe.* Hughes cited Nike's website as a good example of this: There consumers are told they receive the following when signing up for email — free shipping on their next orders, free return shipping on all orders, express checkout the next time they shop and more.
- *Send triggered, personalized welcome messages as soon as consumers sign up for your email program.*
- *Train your employees on how and why to sign up consumers for email.* Hughes advised providing the following reasons why employees would want to acquire customers' email addresses: confirmation of purchase; early notice of discounts, sales and events; way of returning products; means of buying more when you run out of a product; customer service help; upgrades when available; and access to loyalty programs.
- *Reward your employees for email addresses collected.* Give, say, \$5 for every new email address captured by your employees. If you've determined that an email address has a lifetime value of \$50/subscriber, this is still a bargain.
- *Reward your subscribers.* Offer subscribers incentives such as special prices for them only, discount coupons, premiums, whitepapers and continuing benefits such as free shipping.
- *Upgrade your point-of-sale (POS) system to capture email addresses.* Hughes cited Borders UK, which installed a POS system to collect email addresses at the book retailer's cash registers. Those addresses were then sent welcome messages, which included discount vouchers to prompt second visits. The company saw 38 percent higher transaction values for email subscribers versus other members, a 13 percent voucher redemption rate and its email subscriber base increase by 630,000 names in 17 months.
- *Sign up birthday subscribers.* Birthday emails traditionally have higher open rates, Hughes said.
- *Use email append.* Vendors such as FreshAddress can add significant numbers to your email database. But be careful to ask customers to opt in before mailing to those addresses, Hughes warned.

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- *Use banner ads, direct mail and catalogs to promote email registration.*
- *Use surveys to solicit email addresses.* The surveys can be about any subject — e.g., politics, economics, products, etc. — and are a good way to get email addresses in return for survey results.
- *Ask gift returners for their email addresses.* These consumers, who may be new to your brand, represent an untapped audience.

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