

Carefully cultivated Marketing Lists are the backbone of every great Email Marketing campaign. But what separates a good marketing list from a bad one? Below we've provided an abbreviated version of the best practices discussed in our eBook, *Your Passport to the World of Email Marketing*, to help ensure that your lists make the cut!

## Getting (and Keeping!) Subscribers

There are many strategies for acquiring subscribers; most involve offering something of value to the individual in exchange for their contact information. No matter how you entice them to provide you with their email address, the key is to ensure that your lists are permission-based.

**Permission-based marketing** means that your prospects, leads, and customers have directly granted your organization permission to market to them. In email marketing, this means that they have "opted in" to be on your mailing list. This opt-in can be in the form of a subscription sign-up form on your website or a paper form at your place of business.

**Should you purchase marketing lists?** It may be tempting to purchase a list of email addresses from a third-party; however, most of these lists are not reliable, often include "spam traps," and the recipients on the list have not opted-in to receiving your emails. In fact, ClickDimensions *does not permit* the use of third-party lists at all, whether purchased, rented, or borrowed.

## Subscription Management

As a best practice (and often required by law), you should always provide a method for your recipients to **opt-out** of your marketing lists. An "unsubscribe" link and instructions for removing an email address from your list should be included in the footer of your bulk emails.

When you maintain multiple marketing lists – for example, a Newsletter mailing list, an Event Announcement list, and a list for your Loyalty Club Members – an individual may wish to receive emails from one of those subscription lists, but not another. **Subscription Management** is a way to allow customers to choose which emails they would like to receive by giving them the ability to opt-in to some topics and opt-out of others. Instead of a single "unsubscribe" link, the person is directed to a web page where they can select types of emails they wish to receive.

## Maintaining Good Marketing Lists

For an email marketer, few things are as frustrating as when a carefully designed email returns a high number of bounces and spam complaints. One of the most important steps you can take toward achieving and maintaining low bounce and spam rates is to keep clean marketing lists. Here are some tips and suggestions for growing and keeping your marketing lists clean.

- **Build your list up from scratch.** As described earlier, include only email addresses that have been freely given for the purpose of receiving marketing communications. If someone has taken the initiative to give you an email address because they are interested in what your business has to offer, it is unlikely that they will provide an invalid address or view your messages as spam.
- **Audit your data regularly.** Every time you send a bulk email, be sure to take a look at the excluded emails and email events, particularly the bounce events. If the email address has been excluded, the recipient was not sent the email. It is good to periodically remove these people from your marketing list so that the number of people you think will receive the email will be much closer to the number of people that actually receive the email. Additionally, keep an eye out for “Spam trap,” fake or invalid email addresses the need to be removed as well.
- **Prompt customers to update information and give subscription options.** It is a good idea to encourage your customers to update their personal information and subscription preferences as often as possible. If customers are aware that they have the option to stop receiving your messages and are consistently presented with the opportunity to provide a new email address, it is likely that each person on your marketing list has given you a current email address and is on that list because they have chosen to be.

Maintaining a clean marketing list is an ongoing process, but with the above steps you should be able to increase your delivery rate by weeding out harmful and unnecessary list members.

**Congratulations! You now have an idea of some of the best practices that will make your marketing lists and campaigns successful. Check out the entire eBook, [Your Passport to the World of Email Marketing](#), for a deeper dive into Marketing Lists and much more.**