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9 Essential Tactics to Grow Your Email Subscriber List

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9 Essential Tactics to Growing your Subscriber List

Email: **The Best Customer Communication Channel**

Business to customer communication has become more personal than ever. After a huge growth of social media over the last decade, people are able to reach their favorite brands with a few clicks on Facebook or Twitter.

However, email has been shown to be by far the best communication channel with up to **246% ROI** compared to other digital channels. Why?

Email is even more personal than social media. By subscribing to your updates, people invite you to their inboxes. They trust you. Through email, you can engage, **retain** and build relationships with your customers.

Naturally, in order to utilize its benefits, you need to have people interested in receiving email updates from you.

We'll focus on **9** tactics you can use now to start growing your subscriber list.

TACTIC 1: **Double Up On Content Marketing & Thought Leadership**

People are keen to learn. The cumulative knowledge of thought leaders have been spreading through LinkedIn, company blogs and self-published books. Kissmetrics and HubSpot have become widely known in the marketing world for offering high- quality articles and webinars. TrackDuck has grown from zero to 50 inbound leads per day by investing heavily into their blog.

Smart focus on content marketing helped these companies improve SEO rankings and increase the traffic to their website **dramatically.** That's the first essential step towards growing a subscriber base.

How do you do this?

Start by analyzing your audience and competition and see what they are looking for. Try to master the art of addressing customer pain-points. As well as customer 'love' stories. Focus on becoming a great storyteller rather than developing straight-up, in-your-face content.
Here is an examples of a basic plan that you can use to implement content marketing targeted towards your reader.

- **Create audience personas and content maps**
  This is the part where you classify your customers on the basis of what they are looking for, what pieces of content they are interacting the most, and what problem they are trying to solve. Using all this information, it can become fairly easy to know what sort of content marketing direction your organization should be taking.

- **Channel Plan**
  This should include all the channels that you are going to use to push content to your readers, and also how you are going to use the channels. Some examples of channels are email lists, social media, in-site publications (blogs, ebooks, case-studies), Public relations, syndication, blog partnerships, and so on.

- ## Brand Storytelling

  This is where you share your own stories. This part covers the way you break down your own customer attraction and engagement stories. You have to engage users and readers by telling them things like -

  a. What drives your customer communication and engagement?
  b. How is your implementation and drive different from others?
  c. Why are you doing it?
  d. What results have you seen from your experiments and campaigns and what are the channels that you use the most?
  e. Conclude by letting the reader know how your brand storytelling has evolved overtime and re-enforce what made it worth all the effort.

- ## Return of Investment (ROI)

  This is where it all comes together. Every plan should have a clear motive and target. You and your organization should come up with clear cut goals. Before you begin, set a benchmark for your expected ROI and at frequent intervals, measure your efforts to get to the benchmark. This will help you optimize your efforts as well as understand what is working and what is not.

TACTIC 2: **Ask Visitors To Sign Up Using Smart Widgets**

I know, it might seem like common sense to ask someone to sign up, but often there isn't a clear, easily found mechanism for a reader to take action.

Someone who has already signed up shouldn't be asked to sign up and this is where Smart Sign-Up Widgets come into play.

If used improperly, these popups can be annoying. So annoying that they may drive readers away. However, when used intelligently and at the right time, they can do wonders. In fact, companies such as **Thrillist, HowDoesShe and Gamerant** grew their subscribers' lists by leveraging the power of smart widgets on their landing pages.

Get started by checking out **Unbounce, LeadPages and Boomtrain Lightbox** all of which can do a great job of turning your visitors into subscribers.

Products like **Boomtrain Lightbox, Leadpages** can target users with lightbox subscription offer based on their behaviors and on-site journey. This makes the experience more relevant to the customers. This is called hyper-relevant targeting by marketers.

> Believe it or not, even a simple signup box can increase your number of subscribers significantly. For example, Gamerant increased their subscribers' base by **4X in just three months** by using a Boomtrain Lightbox on their website. Note that these tools have inherent testing capabilities, which will also help to optimize for conversions. That brings me to the next point.

TACTIC 3: **Optimize For Conversions**

If you convert **2%** of your website visitors into subscribers and improve your website traffic **10x**, congratulations. You'll have ten times more subscribers. However, if you improve your conversion rate to **4%** at the same time, your subscriber base will grow **20x.**

Where should your CTA buttons be? What's the best wording?

If you have a blog, CTAs on your most popular posts are a good place to start optimizing. You can also build landing pages that lead from your more popular posts to product pages.

Testing user behavior on your site is a great way to **optimize for conversions.** A few great tools that help you display different versions of your website and track user behavior are Optimizely and VWO.

These kinds of tests are called **A/B tests**. They are one of the holy grails in the modern era of digital marketing. Most of the aspects of A/B testing can be devised before deployment, like the traffic between the original and the test version, types of devices where the changes should reflect, the time period for the A/B test, etc.

The other kind of tests that you can run are called **multivariate tests**. The alternate version of the original page is extensively revamped and almost feels different from the original, therefore the name, multi-variate testing. It works by hosting 2 pages for the same URL with a temporary redirect to the original and experimental web page. These tests are a must if you're completely revamping your original landing page and measuring how a newer version would fare when compared to your current landing page.

The creators of Optimizely helped President Obama optimize his election campaigns in 2008 and 2012 by running simple experiments on his website. This helped him save **$60 million** and, arguably, prevented him from running out of cash too soon.

You don't need a fortune to apply the same principles to your business. Here are a few ideas **to get you started.**

TACTIC 4: **Create Lead Magnets**

Collecting someone's email is a transaction. People treat their private information seriously, so you must provide something of equivocal value for the amount of information you ask. While most of us are used to exchanging emails for great content, the rules are different if you want to ask for more information than just an email address.

Whitepapers, guides, case studies and other research related to your field may be offered in exchange for someone's full name and/or company. At Boomtrain, we published **a guide to behavioral personalization** to help marketers use data-driven approach to communicate with their customers. "A bunch of guys" (sarcasm) recently published **the whole book about Data Science.** No matter in what shape or size it comes, the essential rule is the same: always provide value. People want to learn.

TACTIC 5: **Take a Course (or Start One Yourself!)**

AppSumo is a 7-figure business that generates 90% of revenue from its email list using influencer marketing. Their course in collaboration with Intellifluence promises to show you how to double your email subscriber list in 30 days.

The course is not as time consuming as you may think - you simply sign up and receive easy-to-read emails with actionable tips. Among other things, you'll find out how to best use contests and promotions, how to create a sense of urgency, and how to drive people to take action within your emails. The **course landing page** itself is a great example of providing value in a trustworthy way while creating a sense of urgency. A good way to equip yourself to meet growing digital demands.

Websites like Udemy, Udacity, Team Treehouse and more offer quality email marketing courses to get started with.

Pro Tip: If you're great at a particular skill and you feel others could benefit from it, offer a course yourself. This is a great way to build an email subscriber list filled with enthusiastic participants, keen to interact with you.

> You can also try a full inbound marketing course offered by the guys from NinjaOutreach. 12 months of the business is distilled into a 12-week crash course, and you will be guided how to navigate your business through 4 phases: creation, growth, optimization, and scale.

TACTIC 6: **Expand Your Subscription Types**

As you grow your subscription list, you may reach a point where you have great content across themes and topics (remember we talked about A/B and multivariate testing, yes that's the point here too). Sadly, not all of them will interest your entire subscriber list. This may be a good time to start expanding the number of lists you send to and **creating a preference center.**

If you offer a few topics or themes as preferences to your audience, you give them the ability to choose what they would like to receive in their inboxes from you. Most marketing campaigns work better when segmented, so why shouldn't your outreach and newsletters follow suit?

Giving your users this option means that you can offer them content that they are interested in, and also build unique customer journeys with the different subscriber lists.

Some ideas of offerings that you could separate your lists by

- Ask audiences if they would like to receive blog posts, white papers, ebooks or webinar and event invites.

- Give audiences themes that you write on (In our case, Artificial Intelligence in Digital Marketing, Personalization, eCommerce, Online Publishing)

- Ask audiences if they would like to receive all your content or only your most popular.

TACTIC 7: **Run An Opt-In Campaign**

The average email list decays at the rate of 22.5% per year. This means that if you have a thousand contacts, you will lose 225 of them every year. As almost one third of your contact list, it's kind of a big deal.

Sending campaigns without checking list hygiene can result in a number of invalid or abandoned email addresses on the list. If this number grows too high, you could damage your email sending reputation. The lower your sending reputation, the lower the chances that your emails will end up in your customer's inboxes. That is something you definitely do not want to deal with.

One way to make sure your email address list is up to date is to run an opt-in campaign every few months to make sure you are only reaching out to the most engaged newsletter subscribers.

Opt-in campaigns can also help you re-engage old subscribers who haven't interacted with your emails for a while and to eliminate subscribers are completely unengaged. The premise is simple, you ask if they are open to keep receiving emails from you. If they aren't, you take them off your list.

If they are, you've just got a better idea of your subscribers, and also placed your brand at the top of their minds.

> Hubspot's handy **email database decay calculator** helps you understand how your list will grow or decay depending on the number of contacts you currently have, the visitors you receive on your website every month and your current conversion rate.

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TACTIC 8: **Use YouTube**

Do you have a YouTube channel for your product or service? If not, it's time to consider getting one. Since YouTube is under the Google banner, using it gives you a big advantage in terms of SEO and brand recall. You can use YouTube to put up product explainer videos, share videos on how key features of your product work, put up thought leadership content such as interviews with industry experts, and a whole lot more.

If you host webinars, you can also put up recorded webinars on YouTube. This is a great way to keep your customers and larger audience in the loop about the larger context of your product and industry.

Once customers begin to engage with your brand content on YouTube, you have the chance to engage them while they watch your videos. You can position ads on your channel that show up at the right times: when a user is getting value out of your content. A viewer or customer at this stage is more likely to be curious about who you are as a brand and to learn more from you. Perfect time to ask them if they'd like to sign up for your email subscription list.

Viewbix' article on **creative ways to use YouTube annotations** breaks down the various ways to get the best out of YouTube's annotation feature to create calls to action and signup options. You can adapt these to grow your subscriber list

TACTIC 9: **Get Your Event Game On**

In spite of more businesses today moving online everyday, collaborating with other brands online and offline is an essential part of the larger picture to grow your brand and bring revenue into the pipeline. Hosting an event online or offline is an ideal space to attract an engaged audience, answer their questions, share knowledge, and of course - build your subscriber list.

At events, if visitors share information because you are offering to send them product updates, then you shouldn't be sending them more than product updates without running an opt-in campaign first.

You can also offer different options to visitors and tell them you will only send them emails about what they are interested in and want to learn more about. This is the first step to providing value in a potential customer journey. Segmentation at source can help you send better planned, contextual emails to anyone genuinely interested in interacting with your brand and who took the time to do so in person.

Use an iPad App like **On Spot Social** to capture your leads. It is easy to use, portable, and customizable in a way that gets visitors and potential customers more excited about DIY-ing their email information into your subscriber list.

All things considered, email has been and still is one of the best ways to engage and retain users.

The nine tactics mentioned above are essential to building your email list.

What tactic have you found the most useful? Get in touch to let us know.

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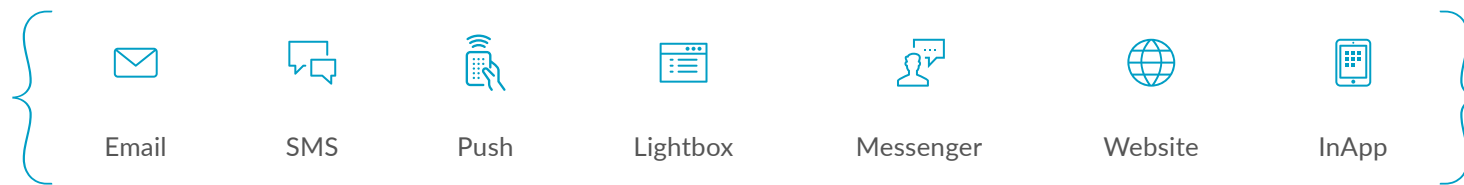
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