



Factsheet:

Online List Building

The Wired-Up guide to online list building

It is now relatively easy to build a list for marketing purposes. But if your marketing is to be effective list building is not simply a question of gathering data. You need to:

- ensure you reach appropriate prospects
- attain permission to market to them
- collect exactly the right information for your marketing purposes

Here Wired-Up looks at what you need to consider before you build a list and the methods available.

Before you start

If you were using a list broker you would provide them with a brief and even when you take the decision to do the job yourself you need to start in the same place and consider:

- The client you're representing
- The product/service you're promoting
- The objectives of the marketing campaign
- The creative appeal you are planning to use
- What data categories you need
- The profile of your target prospects
- The budget and time allowable
- The number of prospects you aim to attract

Once all the above are known it should be easier to identify which method of data collection is most appropriate and also whether you need to start from scratch.

Getting started

There are plenty of readily available starting points in the B2B sphere. Online directories, BT's Business Pages the ads in trade magazines or a simple online search all provide a good starting point, but building lists direct from these sources is illegal. And in the B2C, unless you buy or rent a list in the first place you will have to think more creatively about how you access prospects that match the profile you're seeking.

Wherever you begin, you must ensure you acquire permission to market to every prospect on your list. Aside from keeping within the law this is an excellent way to identify the positively disposed prospects, which means lower marketing costs and also usually results in higher response rates.

It is also advisable to test your list-building technique for effectiveness. Not every method lends itself to testing, but if possible research a small portion of the list and analyse:

- How long it takes you
- The accuracy of the initial list you're using (where appropriate)
- The willingness of prospects to give the information you seek
- The proportion of prospects willing to be marketed to – through which channels

You can then calculate the likely cost per acquisition for the full list and adapt your data collection method if necessary.



Keep it clean

List building may have a start-point, but it never really has an end. As well as adding to the list over time it is prudent to go back to your older data on a regular basis to ensure it remains accurate.

Online list-building techniques

On-site Registration

Probably the most established of all the online list-building techniques is on-site registration. But as most web visitors expect online content to be free, few will part with personal information unless there is something in it for them – a discount at the site, a regular newsletter or e-zine or exclusive access to certain information.

If you do use online registration:

- Keep the registration process quick and simple
- Use the information gathered to tailor site content and other marketing messages
- Allow registered users to update their records
- Allow registered users to remove themselves from the list

Banner ads and pop-ups

Banners and pop-ups on your own web site or those visited by your target market can be an effective list-building tool. As every digital marketer knows the click through rates are not what they once were but if the position and incentive are right impressive numbers can still result.

When considering banners or pop ups

- Review the traffic stats on the site you're using
- Request campaign results from other banners/pop-ups run on the site
- Devise the creative to have an immediate appeal to your target prospect

Once people click through, ensure they do not simply land on a bog-standard registration page, particularly if the registration process is long. Keep reminding your prospects of the incentive that got them there in the first place to assure them that you'll keep your side of the bargain.

Viral campaigns

Not every viral campaign is a list-builder, but by setting up an interactive element on a viral campaign you can gather information at an incredibly low cost, often reaching communities that are otherwise very hard to penetrate.

When running a viral campaign

- Test it out on a focus group and refine if necessary
- Promote it through appropriate online communities as a community member
- Support it with other on and offline promotions – banners, email, PR etc

Competitions

Competitions are excellent list-builders as they motivate people to give up personal information in exchange for a chance to win a prize. However, if the prize is too desirable, the quantity of responses may be both hard to manage and off-target in terms of the profile you initially determined.

So if you're going to run a competition

- Select a prize that will appeal to your ideal prospects
- Limit the promotion of the competition to the media your target prospects consumer



Give-aways

As well as being a list-builder, a give-away should also be used as a marketing tool in its own right, be it a product sample, a gimmick or a guide.

Again the more tailored the give-away the more focused the list that results. For example a guide to data storage aimed at IT directors will help build a niche list.

When using a give-away:

- Make sure you have enough in stock for the anticipated demand
- Build in an interactive element to sustain dialogue/ encourage retrieval
- Follow-up with the recipient to get their feedback

About Frontwire

Frontwire helps organisations acquire and retain customers in more cost effective ways using digital marketing solutions (with e-mail, SMS and streaming video). Frontwire's core services include: Strategy & Planning, List Building and Rental, Data Management, Design & Editorial, Message Dispatch & Tracking, Response Management, Research & Analysis.

To find out more about our solutions, clients and case studies please visit our web site www.frontwire.com or call Jason Meads on 020 7368 9700.