



SPECIAL REPORT: What You Must Know Before You Buy A Marketing List

When you or anyone makes an online purchase, there's a fleeting moment of hesitation. Am I going to get what I'm about to pay for? Will it be of good quality? What if I want my money back?

These are just some of the thoughts that run through people's minds.

These same thoughts come up when people make a decision to buy a marketing list. People have different reasons for wanting a list but the bottom line reason is that they want to quickly expand their marketing reach for their products and services.

Permission-Based Marketing

Email Marketing experts insist that permission-based marketing is the only acceptable way to market goods and services using email. Anti-spam advocates agree and, in fact, you may feel the same way when you open your email box every day and find it loaded with a bunch of stuff that you didn't ask for.

In today's mass-media, smart-phone saturated world we are besieged by unsolicited, unwanted marketing information. It comes from everywhere. It comes over the radio, billboards, in newspapers, magazines, email, postal mail, blimps flying overhead, cars & trucks—in other words, everywhere.

While permission-based email marketing may be the best standard to apply, how does a business expand its market reach without email? There is no doubt that permission-based marketing is the best way to go. When you have permission from someone, they *want* to hear from you. But how do you get that permission?

The most common method to obtain permission is to put an opt-in form on your website and offer free information in exchange for an opt-in email. This

approach can be very slow. There are hundreds of millions of websites all vying for the attention of customers and you have to find ways to drive traffic to your website. There are almost innumerable ways to drive traffic to your website. Many cost money, although guerrilla marketers know that there are low and no-cost methods available. What are some traffic driving methods?

SEO

Meta tags & meta descriptions

Article marketing

Pay-per-click

Blogging

Squidoo

Banner advertising

Reciprocal link building

Twitter

Facebook

YouTube

Search engine registration

And so on and so on. These methods are all great and as an online marketer, you must pay attention to these. But there is a reason why people make a living off of SEO consulting and PPC management. It's time-consuming and the landscape is ever changing.

Writing articles is fine, too but it probably takes most people an hour or more to crank out a decent article. Sure, there are gurus out there who claim that you can do a 500 word article in 20 minutes but this is a pipe dream for most people.

- YouTube videos are great but time-consuming.
- You can use tools like Hootsuite to [manage your tweets](#).
- You can set up RSS feeds from your blog to your Facebook pages or Squidoo lenses.

It goes on and on and on.

Most of these approaches still require people to find you. You must still take steps to make it easier to be found.

What about email?

Then there is email. Email reaches out and touches your prospect quickly and efficiently. It allows you to craft a message that can help you develop your marketing relationship and ultimately make you the only logical solution to their problem.

But some people just don't like receiving marketing emails. And unlike the Do Not Call list, there is no Do Not Email list. So what is a marketer to do?

Companies like iContact and ConstantContact don't allow you to use a purchased list with their services. You [can't buy an opt-in list](#) but InfoUSA will "rent" you access to their opt-in list. The InfoUSA option is expensive but it's one of the better list products that you can access.

So this begs the question: "Is buying a marketing list a waste of money?"

Let's re-frame the question: Is a marketing list a good investment for your business? Is it the right investment for your business?

Many businesses think that marketing is a waste of money. In fact, one of the critical mistakes that many businesses make is that they cut back on their marketing during difficult times. They do not recognize marketing as an investment in their business.

A marketing list is simply one weapon potential in a guerrilla marketer's arsenal. Whether a marketing list is right for your business depends on many considerations such as your risk tolerance, and the maturity of your marketing program and its materials.

It is interesting to see how many people purchase marketing programs or business education programs and even marketing lists and then never use them.

For any marketing program to be effective, you must deploy only those marketing weapons that you can commit to. It will do you no good to deploy numerous marketing weapons if you have no intention of following through with them.

Marketing is a process. It is a process used to develop a long-term business relationship with your target market. A once-and-done marketer is doomed to disappointment. When was the last time you bought based upon a one-time contact from a business?

Let's assume you think that you're ready for a marketing list. Let's look at some facts before you jump in.

Facts About Marketing Lists

Here are some basic facts about purchased marketing lists that other marketing list companies will never tell you.

Fact #1: There is no effective, commercial way to validate email addresses. Period. There is no National Change of Email Address database. There is no Do Not Email database. In other words, marketing list companies cannot sell you a list of validated email addresses because the technology does not exist to validate email addresses. If there were an effective way to do this, wouldn't you think everyone would do it?

Fact #2: Most list data comes from publicly available resources. State agencies such as licensing boards and the Secretary of State typically have rosters available either for sale or free for the asking. You can get lists from chambers of commerce and industry associations. If you had the time and resources, you could produce the same list.

Fact #3: Many list companies have methods to pull marketing list data from public websites. Most people do not have access to this technology and many websites have deployed mechanisms to detect and prevent this type of activity.

Fact #4: Subscribing to services such as Hoovers or Leads411 will give you access to company contact information including, in some cases, email. However, when you decide to use this data, you have permission from the service provider to use the data. Permission is not expressed or implied from the person or company whose information is provided to you by these services. In other words, you still need to solicit permission to market to these contacts.

Fact #5: The reason that most list companies will not guarantee deliverability of emails is that there are simply too many variables that affect email deliverability. Some of these include:

- Outbound Email Server settings such as DNS, SPF, DKIM and IP addressing
- Inbound email server spam filters
- Inbound email server settings that cause time-outs or email box size settings
- Email message issues such as oversized HTML content, spam triggers

Fact #6: iContact, Constant Contact, InfusionSoft, Aweber, etc. do not allow use or importing of purchased lists because doing so exposes their services to the risk of being blacklisted. If something happens and they get a blacklist notice,

these companies are within their right to suspend your service.

Fact #7: Purchased lists may include “Honey Pots” which are email addresses planted by blacklisters to identify spammers (See fact #6). Another way for Honey Pots to be created is by individuals providing their email addresses to blacklisters, The blacklister will then monitor their inbound email for spam activity.

Should You Buy A Marketing List?

Is buying a marketing list a waste of money? The only answer is that it depends.

It is important to understand that the CAN-SPAM ACT does not prohibit commercial email. It does, however, place certain conditions and restrictions on commercial email (See Quick Tip #7 below). So, you can send unsolicited commercial emails (See Fact #6 and Fact #7).

Whether you are planning a postal mail marketing program or an email marketing program, the decision about whether or not to buy a marketing list depends on if you are ready. What does it mean to be ready for direct mail marketing? Here are 7 Quick Tips:

Quick Tip #1: Optimize your website's opt-in form. Your first objective in marketing to any purchased list—whether from us or anyone else—should be to obtain the recipient's permission (a.k.a. opt-in) to continue marketing. Today, many marketers offer give-aways to entice opt-ins. These give-aways can be free reports, product samples, etc. [BusinessListPro](#) and [BizGrowthPro](#) offer an email checklist, 145 Guerrilla Marketing Weapons, a free 8 week marketing course, etc.

Be sure that your website is optimized. Be sure that your [opt-in form](#) is located above the fold. Ideally, the form itself is on your site and not a link to a form. Also, ask only for the information that you need and will use. There are studies that show that long forms are just as likely to be completed as short forms. I'm not sure that I agree. I have better success with short forms.

Quick Tip #2: Make sure that you have a compelling offer in exchange for the opt-in from your visitors. Offering a free report or white paper that [addresses fears, concerns, issues and problems of your customers](#) is a good place to start.

Quick Tip # 3: Have your follow-up ready to go. If you're using an [autoresponder](#) (and you should be), make sure that you have a [strong direct marketing sequence](#) built. At a minimum, you should be reaching out to your customers at least once a month. If you don't have a lot of content, this is better than nothing. But if you have good content, reaching out to your list every week is better.

One of the [Marketing Absolutes](#) is that it can take 20 or more contacts before your customer decides to buy. You will be wasting your marketing dollars by purchasing a list and mailing to it only once. You need a direct marketing sequence that is deliberate and purposeful.

A quick [word about content](#) here: You don't need a 500 word article for your weekly email blasts. In fact, shorter is better. Work on addressing a single issue or concern in each article. Provide 2-3 bullets worth of solutions and a soft-close/call-to-action.

Quick Tip #4: Deploy a multi-dimensional marketing program. Email is great but its effectiveness can be greatly enhanced when used in conjunction with other media such as video, Twitter, Facebook and even a postal mail piece.

Quick Tip #5. Make sure that your email technology is sound. There are lots of things that can cause an email to bounce and it's important for you to be sure that you've taken care of the email basics such as reverse DNS and SPF records. I also encourage you to read the article on our blog about [improving email deliverability](#).

Quick Tip #6: Eliminate common spam triggers from your email content. You probably already know that you can say things like FREE in your subject line or in the body of your email. [E-Filtrate](#) offers an affordable browser-based app that you can use to help you clean up potential spam triggers. You should consider using a tool.

Quick Tip #7: Follow [CAN-SPAM requirements](#) for commercial email. BusinessListPro and BizGrowthPro offer a [free Email Checklist](#) to help you ensure that all of your email blasts have the basics covered.

And Finally. . .

Successful business people are people of action. Intent without action is worthless. Every-day business is fraught with risks and danger which is why the world of business is not for the meek.

This report is provided by BusinessListPro and BizGrowthPro to help you make an informed decision about your marketing program. Marketing is as much an art as it is a science. It requires diligence and dedication. It requires that you develop a message and deliver that message with frequency and consistency.

Frequency & consistency create familiarity.

Familiarity develops trust.

People buy more readily from people they trust, so

Trust generates sales.