Fast Track: Growing Your Email List

Fast Track Guide 3: Growing Your List

Now that you've created and made multiple freebies and gave your audience multiple entry points to your list, you can focus on growing your list. When growing your list, remember that gaining more traffic is not the only goal.

Attracting highly targeted traffic, full of people who want and need what you're offering, is the goal. Therefore, you need to develop a list-growing strategy that uses tactics that focus on your goal: Building and Growing a Responsive List.

The following tactics will ensure that when someone joins your list they really do want the information you're providing, and will likely turning into a paying customer if you've matched your freebie opt-in offers to the right audience and with the idea of promoting specific products and or services to them. So, let's build that traffic.

Create a User-Friendly Site

First and foremost, everything begins and ends with your website. If your website doesn't look great, work fast, and doesn't work on all devices you are likely missing out on numerous opportunities to connect with potential customers.

- **Develop a Responsive Website** – Using a responsive template is simple today but if you add images, always double check to make sure they resize and are positioned correctly on the screen. You can check by using Browserling.com, as well as your own mobile device, and other tools.

- **Brand Your Website** – You don't want your audience to be confused when they visit your website. Keep your branding the same throughout your online real estate, from social media to your website, and everything in between. You can do this by using logos, fonts, colors, etc., to develop your branding so everything matches.

- **Make it Easy to Contact You** – You don't want someone to have to dig around your website to find a way to contact you. Make it very easy by placing the contact info at the top and bottom of your site, as well as in the sidebar (if you have one). Visitors should be able to contact you easily, when needed.

- **Create Simple Navigation** – The rule of thumb with navigation is that less is more. Plan your navigation in advance to help create the right setup. Use labels on the navigation links that adequately identify what they'll find there. Make

sure your primary navigation stands out. This menu is usually at the top of every page of your website. Always link the logo to the home page so no one gets lost.

- **Ensure it Loads Fast** – A slow loading site is a traffic killer. In most cases, if your site takes longer than .8 seconds to load people will leave. Consider using a content delivery network (CDN). Use the right image formats and sizes, browser caching, fewer plugins, enable compression, the right web host, and more.

When you create the website, it's important to consider your audience because that's who is going to use it most. Are they tech challenged? What colors do they like? What do they expect when they come to your site? Making their wants and needs top priority helps to ensure you build a user-friendly website that people want to visit.

Know Your Audience & Your Competition

Before you start building or changing your site, get to know your target audience and your competition. You can only make informed decisions if you are well informed. It's hard to create products, services, or content for your target market, if you don't know what they want and need. The same is true about your competition. It's hard to compete if you don't know who your competition is, as well as what they're doing right and wrong.

- **Conduct Research** – There are many ways to do research. You can look at the analytics you already have, but you can also do research using government databases such as the [United States Census Bureau](#) to compile information about your audience. Not only should you study your audience, study your competitors too.

- **Develop Customer Personas** – This involves creating a profile of your ideal customer. Find an image of how your imagined customer looks. In the profile, include personality traits, education, family life, career, income, and other details needed to develop content, products, and services.

- **Monitor Social Comments** – Whether a comment is on a blog or on social media networks, finding comments from your audience can help you learn more about them. Engagement on social media within groups is usually more trustworthy because they tend to ask honest, straight forward, questions.

- **Conduct a Survey** – When you know your competition well, you can develop a survey, which targets that audience. This helps you discover what they want and

need. You can use Facebook Ads to market the survey, which lives on your website. Learning about your competitor's audience can help you, if you have the same or a similar target market.

- **Engage Often** – The more you engage with your audience the better. Keep your email open to replies, invite questions, and answer questions, as they come. The more open you are the more open they will be. This is especially true if they feel you truly listen and appreciate their input.

Your audience can teach you a lot about your business. You may think you know something, but even if you are part of your audience's demographics, what you experience is subjective. That's why you need to look at the data, pay attention to what your competition is doing, and keep your ear to the ground, regarding your entire industry to stay on top of what's coming next.

Use Paid Advertising

One way to get more traffic for your opt-ins is to use paid ads. Don't worry, most paid advertisements are budget-friendly, automated, and provide very fast results. Once you get an acceptable ROI in your testing phase, you can predict your list-growth.

There are many types of paid ads available. Website ads, Google AdWords, social media ads, newsletter ads, sponsored email broadcasts, directory listings, sponsored reviews, sponsored articles, press releases, and retargeted ads. To ensure your ads are effective, follow these tips.

- **Follow the Rules** – Anywhere you place your ads, there will be rules, terms of service, and tips to ensure that your ad gets the best results. Read through that information carefully. It will be specific to that platform and will be more helpful to you.

- **Use Stand Out Graphics** – Ad graphics need to attract your audience to the advertisement. Again, make sure you understand the specs and rules. For example, Facebook doesn't like it if your image has too many words on the image and instead wants you to focus the wording in the text area of the advertisement. However, the rules vary depending on where you place your ad. No matter where you place your ad, the graphic should be high quality, legally usable for an advertisement, and laser targeted.

- **Develop Compelling Ad Copy** – Creating ad copy is a different skill than writing content for a blog. It requires you know your audience and understand opt-in benefits. In addition, you should know what words get your audience's attention and motivate them.

- **Ensure Ad Relevance** – When you create an ad, consider your overall goals. The ad should be relevant to the freebie you promote, as well as the goals you have after they sign up to your email list. Show them that you're the right person to guide them by making the ad relevant.

- **Set Realistic Budget** – When you run paid ads to push traffic toward your opt-ins, it's important that you set a realistic budget. Start low while you test and improve the ad. When you receive the right ROI on the advertisement, increase your budget. If the advertisement is performing well, technically, it costs nothing because of your ROI.

- **Choose Adequate Run Time** – Don't expect to run an advertisement for one day and get good results. Run the ad long enough to ensure that you have some data to analyze what is working. Try running the advertisement and using different targeting or changing one small thing on each version, to find out which works best. Usually, you can get some idea of results after about seven days.

- **Analyze Data** – Every few days look at the data. Try to assess what is working and what is not working. Throw out what is not working and do more of what is working. Eventually, you'll hit the sweet spot, receiving enough ROI to increase your budget. However, keep an eye on the data because eventually that will drop off and you'll need to create a different promotion.

- **Refine Advertisement** – When you see the results of the data, refine your ads, as needed. When refining, keep notes of what works with your audience. The next time you run an advertisement you don't have to start from scratch, in terms of targeting and the type of ads that work.

Paid advertising works very well for anyone that is willing to take the time to get to know their audience, understand their products, services, and goals. This works great even for people who are just starting out and haven't established a reputation yet. Always make sure that you totally understand who your audience is, what you're promoting, and what your goals are before you start. Also, work to understand the platform you're using. It may take some time and experimentation, but it will work.

Participate on Social Media

Social media can be very beneficial, as you build your opt-in traffic and mailing list. Since you need to be "social" and build relationships anyway, you may as well get the most out of your efforts. Let's look at how you can use social media to drive traffic and grow your mailing list.

- **Build a Facebook Group** – Social media is the perfect place to build a community. Create a niche group, where you can promote your freebies, content, and products. Link your business page and your related group. In your profiles, include a link to your website and/or your main opt-in page.

  In your group, get the group's thoughts on your "new" website content and discuss the nuances. You'll also want to do live events. Weekly live events can really boost traffic to your business page, the group, your website, and your mailing list.

- **Monitor Comments** – Don't allow comments to go unnoticed. Sometimes you only need to acknowledge that you read it. Other times, you should respond in more depth. Try to keep everything positive and be yourself. Being authentic on social media is important to building trust. Answering questions and linking to your "helpful resource" allows you to establish your expertise and build trust.

- **Share Your Freebies** – Share your freebies directly or indirectly in your group. Indirect sharing might be done via sharing blog posts, where the opt-in is. Members only items may be added directly to the group area. Every page of your website should offer a way to share the content blurb and link.

- **Engage Your Audience** – Post questions and information that makes your audience think. On Facebook or YouTube, use Live Q & A events to engage with your audience. Post polls, quizzes, and other interactive information help to encourage engagement.

- **Use Amazing Visuals** – Social media posts with visuals get more response than social media posts without images. Use the right type of visual to get your audience's attention and make the post more interesting to your target market.

- **Make Content Shareable** – Everything you post needs to be easy to share. Don't restrict sharing. In fact, ask people to share your content and thank them when they do. Sometimes a little reminder is all that's needed to get people involved.

The more active you are on social media the more you'll see the traffic to your website, but the action needs to be purposeful. That means you need to plan the content you put on social media just as you plan the content that goes into your blog, email messages, and newsletters.

Develop a Content Publishing Calendar

Creating a content calendar that includes matching promos, helps ensure that you meet business goals, such as list building. When you plan your written content, match it to an existing or new opt-in freebie. This will help grow your list and create multiple points of entry. You can also match written content to other types of promos, according to your goals. Write it all on your content calendar so you can remember what purpose each item serves.

- **Set Your Goals** – A few goals you might set are to expand brand awareness, promote thought leadership, increase word of mouth, get more leads, or make sales. Determine what tactics work best for your audience. For example, sharing an informative article you published on "Huffington Post" can help spread thought leadership. A funny meme can help you get more likes, shares, retweets, and spread brand awareness.

- **Product & Freebie Benefits** – The best way to ensure that your content works with your products and freebies is to get familiar with them. Whether it's your product, an affiliate product, or an opt-in, you must know how it will benefit your people. In other words, you must know "what's in it for them" and what problem it solves.

- **Plan Publishing Frequency** – Always publish to your website first and foremost. It will serve as the hub of your business and support content will lead visitors back to the site. Begin by planning to add three to five new pieces of website content per week. Then, decide where you want to publish related content that drives traffic back to your "new" website content. If you add "supporting content" on social sites, you can safely plan on adding something several times per day. Make sure each addition is "fresh"; otherwise, you will lose followers, instead of gaining opt-in subscribers.

- **Create, Curate, or Contract** – You'll want to create some of the content yourself, but content can also be easily be curated or contracted out. There are a lot of places where you can buy private label rights (PLR) content. You can also hire a writer through a company like [All Custom Content](#). Another option is to collect related bits of information from multiple places to create something new.

- **Write it Down** – Once you have created your plan, write it down. You can use a spreadsheet or even a Google Calendar. The WordPress [Editorial Calendar plugin](#) can also help you pre-schedule and keep track of your website's content.

Begin planning your content at least three months before you intend to use it. This includes your written content (website posts, articles, reports, tweets, etc.) and any items that support or promote it, such as opt-in freebies, memes, info graphics, videos, etc. All of this is content so it makes sense to plan a week or more at the same time. Planning this way helps to ensure that you have every piece of content needed to meet your goals. In this case, the main goal focuses on growing your mailing list.

Post Content Regularly

Posting content on a regular basis is important. When you post unique content in a variety of places, it gives your audience more opportunities to see what you're publishing and promoting. Doing it once or inconsistently won't get you the exposure you want. Forgetting to update your blog is not going to encourage more traffic to your opt-ins and build your list. Therefore, stick to your plan and ensure that you add new, relevant content on a regular basis.

- **Website/Blog** – Content comes in many forms. Add a variety to keep readers' interest and meet their needs. Inform and educate your audience with relevant audio, video, memes, infographics, charts, interviews, how-tos, statistics, and more. You can curate, create, or contract the content you need that matches with the information that is important to your audience. What's important is that you post something regularly, at least three times a week, to drive traffic to the content and the related opt-in offer.

- **Social Media** – Each social media platform has a different "personality" so it's important to post regularly. It's also important to look at your analytics so you can identify when your audience is most active and reading. On most platforms, posting three times a day is a good rule of thumb. However, check the rules and "best practices" at each platform to get recommendations specific to that site.

- **Email** – Don't neglect to email your subscribers regularly about new content on the website or provide them with exclusive info related to that content. Ask subscribers to "share" the website content with their friends, associates, and even customers/clients, when appropriate. The bottom line is that if you want to make profits regularly, you need to write content regularly, and regularly ask for it to be shared. Enlist the help of your subscribers and reward them for that assistance with a special offer just for them.

- **Guest Posting** – To get more traffic and opt-in subscribers from your guest posts, link to an opt-in that is relevant to the audience in your author profile or byline. This gives you a huge incentive to guest post exceptional content frequently. Guest posting provides multiple benefits to all parties. So, consider accepting guest blog posts from trusted, experts and associates in your niche. It's an effective way to get more content on your site. This is a win-win-win opportunity when you post on a regular basis.

Providing content for a variety of locations helps to increase targeted traffic and targeted traffic increases opt-in rates. The more you publish, the more people read your quality content and see your opt-in offer...unless your headlines aren't persuading viewers to click to read more.

Write Enticing Headlines

When creating content to get more traffic, it's important to make sure that people are interested in the topic. Interest begins with appealing headlines that make people curious enough to click on them. So what makes them curious? Many things in a headline can make the reader mentally ask a question when they see the wording and phrasing. Let's look at a few strategies and techniques you can use in your content headlines.

Some tips for writing effective headlines include:

- **Use Numbers** – Using a number implies a certain amount of information will be given to the reader and it makes them curious. Compare these two headlines. "How to Build Your List" or "7 Free or Low-Cost List Building Strategies". Which one would you be more likely to click, if you were interested in building your list?

- **Use the Right Keywords** – It's essential that you know what words your audience uses when they talk or think about their needs, pain points, and the

solutions. This is because knowing the exact phrases and concepts will help you choose the words, phrases, and feelings that will persuade them to take action. You can also research keywords using tools like [SemRush's Magic Keyword Tool](#).

- **Make Readers Think and Question** – Using the right words can challenge your audiences perception about something, just by reading the title. It can make them think, "How can that be?" or "Have I missed something?" This works well if you craft a title that mentions their problem and hints at the solution using an unexpected word or phrase.

- **Mention the Benefits** – People always care more about their results rather than how fancy the features are. A good way to develop a click-worthy headline is to focus on the benefits or the ultimate result of the solution provides. For example, "Save $50 Per Week Using These 3 Tools."

- **Offer Realistic Hope/Promise** – Another tactic you can use to create headlines is to offer realistic hope and solutions. "How Single Mother Quits Waitress Job and Earns Six Figures with Part-Time Home Business" is a good headline that offers readers hope and encouragement for changing their status quo. The headline promises to tell you how to earn six figures from home, using the single mother as their case study or example. However, the hope must be realistically do-able for most people. Avoid unbelievable, sensationalized, exaggerated, or click-bait headlines at all cost.

Taking the time to create the right headline for your target audience ensures that you reach and connect with them in a more personal way – through their needs, thoughts, and feelings. Once they feel connected with you and want the benefits offered, they are compelled to sign up for your opt-in freebie or other item.

Make On-Page SEO a Top Priority

Another way to get more traffic to your opt-ins is to rank higher on SERPs. On-page SEO can help you accomplish this. Your audience usually finds you via search engine result pages (SERPs). A search engine's job is to provide their audience with a list of relevant, useful information and content, based on the words they used in the search.

Your job is to ensure that your target market can find your content using the specific words and phrases that are natural to them. Here are a few SEO strategies and tips to help you rank higher on search results pages.

- Titles – Use keywords in the first three words of page URLs and titles. Try not to use more than 50 characters per title. Be sure to clean up the URL by taking out the stop words unless it makes the URL misrepresent what the content is about.

- **Make Content Long Enough** – Long content of 2000+ words isn't a must. However, when it comes to getting more traffic, Google and other search engines tend to rank longer content (2,250 to 2,500 words) higher on the results pages. [Snap reported](#) that some readers prefer to read content that contains 700 to 1500 words. So, the take-away here is to incorporate both types of content on your site. Depending on your goal, your "ideal" word count likely needs to be greater than in previous years.

  Keep in mind that you are writing for your readers and they don't count words. They want accurate, detailed information that fully answers their questions and solutions that help them fix their problems. Give them what they want/need and a little more.

- **Avoid Duplicate Content** – This is important whether the content is on your site or off your site. If you have duplicate content on your site due to sales pages, set the site to skip indexing the duplicate content. Also, avoid plagiarizing by double checking content using a service like Grammarly.com or Copyscape.com.

- **Include Meta Descriptions** – These are necessary to ensure that your audience can find you. Include the keywords that help your audience find the content. If you use software like [Yoast SEO,](#) it will help you optimize your content.

- **Create Title and Alt Image Text** – Don't just upload an image to your site without filling out this information. This is helpful to search engines and readers, in case the images don't load. A side benefit is that it helps people with visual impairments to read your site more easily.

- **Use Header Tags** – You have H1, H2, and H3 header tags that you can use to organize and make your content look better and make certain words stand out. In addition, it helps search engines determine what information is important. Make these tags logical with the most important words using H1 tags.

- **Edit Well** – Spelling and grammar do matter. If you spell things wrong, the search engines may not send the traffic your way. If people find the content, they won't trust you as much if you have these issues. You don't have to be perfect, but you do need to use grammar that is appropriate for your audience.

Finally, be sure to add internal linking under the articles and blog posts with relevant content. This helps your audience find related information on your site. In addition, it also helps search engines to properly map your site and send the traffic to you.

Leverage Referral Traffic

Referrals from trusted people and sites can generate a great deal of traffic to your website. To encourage this type of traffic, with the goal of growing your mailing list, you can provide links to the opt-in landing pages you create. These are especially helpful to your affiliates, customers, clients, and anyone who wants to mention you or your item as a good resource. You can also get referral traffic through social media, paid traffic, directories, guest postings, affiliates, clients, customers, and more.

Regardless of how you get traffic to your opt-in offers, it's important to be ready. Test your signup and delivery process several times. Enlist the help of others who use different devices, operating systems, browsers, etc. Don't forget to set up an autoresponder follow up series to help convert the subscribers to customers.

Get Ready for Traffic to Your Site

Now that you are more familiar with list building strategies, you can begin to implement them in your growth plan. While you may be tempted to do everything as fast as possible, it's important to tackle one strategy at a time. You don't want to overload yourself and get frustrated. Allow yourself time to learn and practice the associated skills before moving on to the next step.

Here's a recap of what you learned in this report:

- **Create a User-Friendly Site**
- **Know Your Audience & Your Competition**
- **Use Paid Advertising**
- **Participate on Social Media**
- **Develop a Content Publishing Calendar**
- **Post Content Regularly**
- **Write Enticing Headlines**
- **Make On-Page SEO a Top Priority**
- **Leverage Referral Traffic**

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Start with the first step, your website, and work your way through the rest. You'll be surprised at how much traffic your opt-in receives. Remember to look at your analytics to find out what is working and what is not working for your audience. What are you waiting for? 😁