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MINUTE MARKETER

Growing Your Email List

8 tactics to boost your registrations

30-Minute Marketer

Growing Your Email List: 8 tactics to boost your registrations

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30-Minute Marketer – Growing Your Email List: 8 tactics to boost your registrations

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to *30-Minute Marketer* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we will share some ways to quickly grow your email list.

A vibrant and targeted email database is one of a company's biggest competitive advantages. The ability to instantly send meaningful messages to its core audience can tip the scales of success in the company's favor during important moments such as product launches. This is also a primary method of keeping your target audience informed and engaged.

And no matter how healthy an organization's list, finding new opt-ins is a constant priority for most marketers, so it is essential to keep focusing on ways to grow your email list.

In this report, we'll show you:

- Why incentives can be a great list-building tool
- How to use a Facebook tab to make registrations simple
- Tips for getting maximum benefits from sweepstakes
- Why you shouldn't overlook the importance of offline tactics

We know you're in a hurry, so let's get started. We're eager to share these tips on how you can grow your email list!

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *30-Minute Marketer*

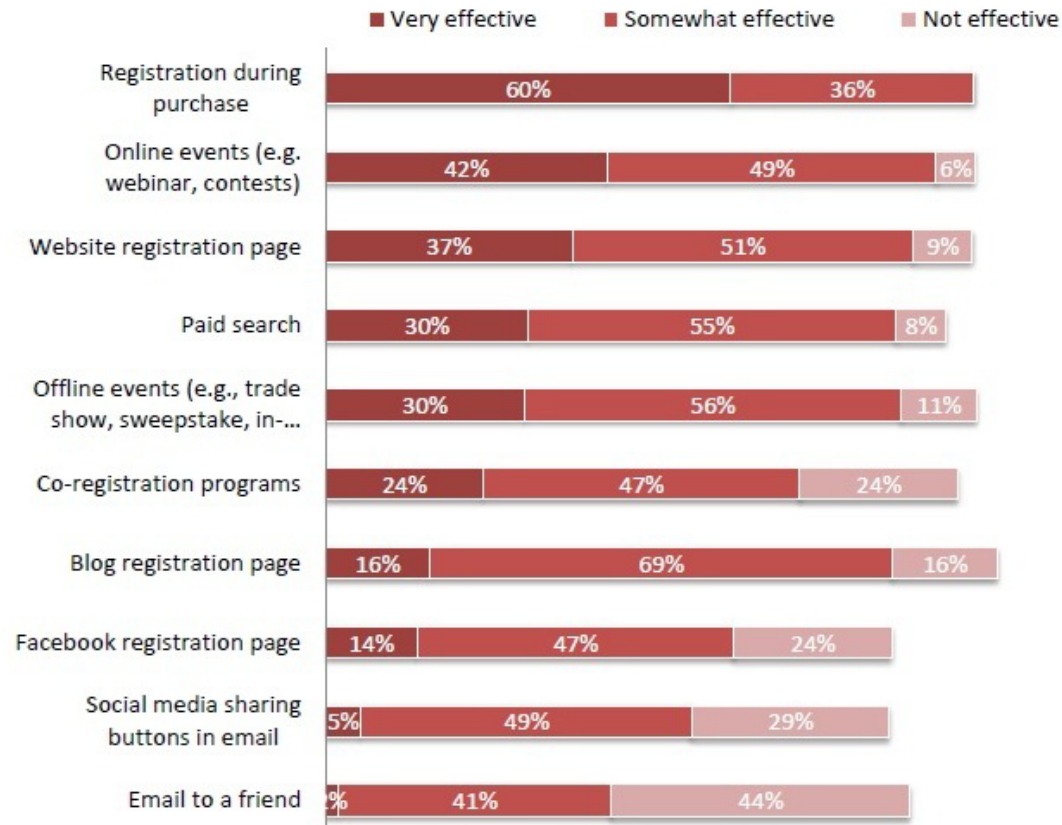
About *30-Minute Marketer*

MarketingSherpa's *30-Minute Marketer* is designed with you, the busy marketer, in mind. We provide quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each *30-Minute Marketer*, we scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies and benchmark reports, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests and analysis. We highlight tips to help improve your marketing performance right now...or, at least, by the time you're done with lunch.

Q. Please indicate the level of effectiveness for each of the email list growth tactics your organization employs.

Chart: Effectiveness of list building tactics



Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded July 2011, N=2,735

As the chart above from the [MarketingSherpa 2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report](#) (free excerpt at this link) shows, marketers use a variety of tactics to grow their email lists, but the tactics viewed as most effective include registration during purchase, online events and website registration pages. In the MarketingSherpa blog post, [“Email Research: Top 3 tactics to grow your list,”](#) Adam T. Sutton discusses each of these.

Registration during purchase: More than 90% of email marketers say adding an opt-in request to the purchase process is at least “somewhat effective” at growing email lists. This tactic is also the only one to have more than half of email marketers (61%) saying it is “very effective.”

Online events (webinars, etc.): Offering content or something else of value is a common way to build an email list. We’re seeing online events prove to be effective incentives. More than 90% of email marketers say they are at least “somewhat effective” at building lists and 41% say they are “very effective.”

Website registration page: Website registration pages are, by far, the most popular tactic for growing email lists, with 75% of email marketers using them. Their popularity remains above 70% across email marketers who target consumers, businesses, or a mix of both.

Tactic #1: Offer incentives

Probably one of the easiest and most effective ways to get people to sign up for your list is to offer them a freebie or special deal. In the MarketingSherpa article, [“How to Grow Your Email List With Incentives and Ease Blacklist Concerns,”](#) the team at Paradise Pen Co. found that offering incentives to both employees and customers can be an effective list-building strategy.

To begin the list-building process, the marketing team reached out to store managers and explained the advantages – to both the individual shops and the company – of collecting email addresses.

Set employee goals

They incorporated goals to reward individual sales staffers and entire store teams. Some managers offered \$0.25 in store credit for every registration. Individual brick-and-mortar stores set goals ranging from 250 to 800 addresses per month. Teams that met their goals were rewarded with dinner outings and in-store parties.

Incentivize customer

Each brick-and-mortar customer who provided an email address would receive a \$10 paper gift certificate that could be redeemed at the retail store. Still, Paradise wasn't satisfied with the early showings, so they tested plastic gift cards that could be redeemed online as well as offline against the paper ones.

Next, they tested 30-day, 60-day, 90-day, six-month and one-year expiration dates. They then ordered eight-panel full-color gift card arrangements, not only to build the email list but also to get the customers back to the site's shopping cart or stores' cash registers.

It's worth noting they decided to snail-mail the gift cards, so customers had a reason to return to the store or website, and also to gain their physical addresses for the annual catalog.

Boost current incentives

In the MarketingSherpa article, [“10 Proven Low-Cost Tactics for Boosting Email Opt-In Lists,”](#) Matt Lindenberg, Assistant Director, Marketing, Diapers.com, saw a boost when his team doubled the incentive they offered for referrals.

The team's standard welcome email for new opt-ins offered a \$5.00 discount on the first purchase by any new customer referred by that member. In addition, the existing subscriber would receive a \$1.00 discount on a purchase each time a referred customer made a purchase.

In 2008, they increased the first-time purchase discount to \$10.00. Existing opt-ins still received their own \$1.00 discount on each order from their referrals. Result: Percentage of new customers tripled to 11%.

Tactic #2: Make offline signups easy

As discussed in the chart at the beginning of this report, marketers cite offline events as one of the easiest and most effective routes for growing your list. The key is to make the process as easy and convenient as possible.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[10 Proven Low-Cost Tactics for Boosting Email Opt-In Lists](#)," Bubble Car Wash used a self-service model that lets customers enter their own information through a custom URL on a sales receipt. By making the process easy—and eliminating the typos and database headaches that can result from soliciting handwritten entries or asking cashiers to enter information at the point-of-sale, the team grew its house list by 71%. Here's how they did it:

- The team modified their cash register software to check whether a customer's name was already in the database.
- Customers who had not opted in received a printed sales receipt with a URL to register for email communications.
- The URL asked customers for:
 - First and last name
 - Email address (with a confirmation slot to help ensure the address is correct)
 - Physical address
 - Phone number
 - Make, model, year and color of vehicle
- The request included an offer for a free premium car wash as an incentive for registration.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Boost Foot Traffic, Grow Lists, and More: 5 Tactics for Generating Offline Actions from Email](#)," Eric Groves, SVP, Global Market Development, Constant Contact, shares some tips for getting better results when building lists offline:

Provide examples of email messages

When customers sign up for your email program offline, it's often an act of faith. Groves suggests printing a copy of a recent newsletter or campaign, and displaying it where customers sign up. The printed example will show them what to expect from your email communications.

"We've seen that increase open rates because people know what they're going to get and they're looking forward to it."

Verify written email addresses

Pocock tells horror stories of marketers who received hundreds of handwritten email addresses, only to throw

them away after they turned out to be illegible, or even fake. Make sure team members read handwritten addresses and verify them with customers. A few seconds can save headaches later in the process.

Tactic #3: Use a Facebook registration form

In the article, "[Growing Email Lists with Social Media: KFC's Facebook tool adds subscribers](#)," KFC decided to add an email registration form to its Facebook profile to help grow its list.

The company's marketers had noticed that compared to KFC's other subscribers, its social influencers engage far more often with the company's emails. Their overall response metrics – such as open rate and clickthrough rate – are much higher. Hoping to capitalize on this opportunity, the team tested adding an email sign-up widget directly to KFC's Facebook profile.

Adding a registration form to your Facebook page makes it easy for fans to sign up for your emails without having to visit your website. Also, it could help add subscribers who are more willing to share your messages or interact in other ways.

KFC's registration form rests on a tab in its Facebook profile. Creating a new tab on your company's profile is easier than it sounds—the KFC team was able to create theirs and include the email form in less than half a day. KFC used a canned solution to create the form, but whoever builds or maintains your website should be able to handle the task.

- *Double-check the Rules:* Be sure to read Facebook's terms of use with your attorney. Make sure you're handling fans' information responsibly and within the network's guidelines.
- *Warn International Audience:* Facebook is a worldwide phenomenon, and some of your fans likely live in other countries. KFC's Facebook signup form mentions that the program was intended for U.S. residents only.

Request very little info

Facebook users only need to provide the following information to subscribe:

- First name
- Last name
- Email address
- ZIP code

This is far less information than KFC requested when generating sign-ups through other channels. The intent was to avoid overwhelming or intimidating fans by asking for too much information, and to quickly give them another way to connect with KFC.

Avoid pushing fans to the tab

The team avoided pushing KFC's fans to this tab, whether through Facebook or any other channel. This helped ensure that consumers who registered were *truly* interested in receiving the emails, which helped KFC maintain its high email response rates.

Tactic 4: Use your blog's visibility

The popularity of blogs with search engines, social networks and readers can transfer benefits to your email marketing efforts, if you integrate the channels. The article, "[Boost Email Efforts with Your Blog: 3 Quick Tips](#)," offers three simple ways to start using your blog to increase opt-ins and generate email content.

Tip #1. Promote email subscriptions and content offers on blog pages

A well-written, frequently updated blog can drive significant amounts of traffic to your website. With the impact of search indexing and social sharing, it's likely that many potential readers are first landing on your blog pages—not your home page or product pages.

Make sure you have a way to capture email addresses from blog visitors who might not take time to explore other parts of your site:

- Place email newsletter or promotional alert opt-in offers on every page of your blog. This way, visitors who land on a specific blog post—and like what they read—will easily see other ways to receive content and information from your company.
- B2B marketers should also create space on their blog templates for content or event offers that require registration. Providing links to a related whitepaper, upcoming webinar, demonstration, or other piece of content that requires registration is another way to turn a blog-generated visit into an opportunity for capturing an email address.

Tip #2. Offer an email subscription to your blog posts

Though it's standard practice to use RSS syndication to provide automatic updates of blog content, RSS readers remain a niche technology. But many feed management systems, such as Feedblitz and Google's Feedburner, allow subscribers to receive updates by email.

Promoting an email update service can help you attract a lot more subscribers for your blog content. You'll also capture a vital piece of information that you don't get from RSS subscribers — an email address.

Also consider creating a blog "digest" newsletter. This could be a weekly, biweekly or monthly publication that consolidates blog headlines from that time period. This option may appeal to visitors who want to follow your blog

but don't want a lot of new messages in their inbox. You also can use space within these sends to promote relevant offers to subscribers.

Tip #3. Repurpose blog content for email newsletters

Get the most from the content your team produces by repurposing and re-using blog posts for your email newsletters. Consider dedicating a specific section of your newsletter as a "blog corner," highlighting the newest and/or most popular articles (based on volume of clicks or comments), or a post by an industry thought leader.

Tactic #5: Use mobile elements to enhance offline promotions

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Mobile Drives Email List Growth: How to use SMS and relevant content to add opt-ins](#)," the team at Scotts Miracle-Gro combined print pamphlets and SMS short codes as part of a campaign to add more subscribers.

By texting a keyword such as "baseball" or "guide" to the pamphlet's provided short code, fans could request an additional hard copy of the pamphlet be mailed to them. The SMS message they received in response:

"Thx 4 requesting ur free groundskeeper's guide! Reply ball space email address (ex:ball mlb@mlb.com) & b emailed a link.Txt H 4 help. Std rates apply"

After responding, fans received an email with a link to a landing page. The email's subject line was, "Your Groundskeeper's Guide Request is Here"

EXAMPLE: SCOTTS EMAIL LANDING PAGE



The screenshot shows a landing page for Scotts. At the top is the Scotts logo. Below it is a green banner with the text "Request Your Free Groundskeeper's Guide* with exclusive coupons, offers, helpful tips and more!". To the left is an image of the Groundskeeper's Guide pamphlet. To the right is a registration form with the following fields: First Name, Last Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip, and Email Address. Below the form is a checkbox labeled "Would you like to receive promotional offers and tips sent right to your inbox monthly through the Scotts Lawn Care Update?" with a "YES" button. At the bottom right is a "Submit" button. At the bottom left is the copyright notice: "© 2009 The Scotts Company LLC, Worldwide Rights Reserved. ® or ®, ™ indicates a trademark of The Scotts Company LLC or its affiliates. Privacy | Terms & Conditions | FAQ | About Us | Careers | Contact Us".

Getting an SMS Short Code

Short codes, also called Common Short Codes (CSCs), are typically five to six digits long, which makes them easier for consumers to remember and dial than standard telephone numbers.

You can obtain a short code from an SMS service provider, or you can lease them directly from the Common Short Code Administration (CSCA). The CSCA leases codes on a three-, six-, or 12-month basis. The fee is a non-refundable \$1,000 per month for “select” codes, and \$500 per month for random codes.

Tactic #6: Analyze your email capture and opt-in pages

You may not necessarily need to start from scratch in order to boost your email list numbers. Chances are, there are tweaks you can make to your existing tools that can make a big difference. In the MarketingSherpa article, [“List Growth Tactics: How Kodak added 33% more email subscribers and 53% more YouTube followers,”](#) a B2B team at Kodak overhauled its capture page, added more calls-to-action, and updated its welcome series to grab 33% more email subscribers.

Alyson Shurtliff, the Internet marketing manager for Entertainment Imaging at Eastman Kodak, needed to boost audiences for her team’s email and social media marketing programs, but did not want to rent lists or spend a fortune on advertising.

After spending two weeks auditing its email capture forms and opt-in requests, the team identified how current pages could be improved and where opt-in requests could be added.

Step #1. Update email capture page

The team first improved its email registration page. The [older registration page](#) was a blank slate, allowing the team to build a stronger performer. The team used the following best practices to build the [new page](#):

- *Clear value proposition* – the page’s headline, “Stay connected,” and sub-headline emphasized that subscribers would receive information on the latest industry opinions, news and events by signing up.
- *Set clear expectations* – the page displayed three examples of emails subscribers would receive and mentioned the emails arrived “every month or two.” This information told subscribers what they would receive rather than making them guess (which can lead to poor engagement rates).
- *Beneficial button* – rather than the typical “submit” button, the team used a word that emphasized the benefit of filling out the form: “subscribe.”
- *Remove unnecessary fields* – the team stopped requesting the cities and addresses of subscribers, because it never used the information in the email program, nor were there plans to do so. Requesting these items slowed visitors and likely undermined conversion rates.
- *Provide privacy policy* – the team linked to its privacy policy on the new page within the following text: “We take your privacy seriously. When you share your information, we do not share it with others.” This statement was designed to ease any concerns subscribers may have had about providing their information for another email program.

Step #2. Add more opt-in requests

With the form now improved, the team needed to get it in front of a relevant audience and encourage registrations. Here are several places the team called attention to its email program to encourage visitor sign-ups:

[“Follow Us” page](#) – The team created this page to list its email programs and social media profiles, including its Twitter feed and YouTube channel. The team links to this page from the site's “About Us” page and several other areas described below.

[Homepage and Navigation](#) – The Kodak Cinema and Television homepage includes small buttons to follow the company in social networks, contact it via telephone, and sign up for its email programs. A link to the “Follow Us” page is also included under the “about us” tab in the site's top navigation. A link to “Find us on Facebook” is included in the site's footer.

[Education Section](#) – Students are a key group, so the site provides ample opportunities in its “education” section for visitors to join the database. Links to the “Follow Us” page are included in the main page of this section, as well as on sub-pages.

[Blog](#) – Kodak's “The Storyboard” blog includes an opt-in request on its homepage, as well as widgets displaying the team's latest Facebook fans and Twitter updates.

Step #3. Add email capture form to Facebook

Kodak created a customized Facebook tab to offer visitors a chance to join its email program. The tab is comparable to a small landing page. It mentions the email program's value proposition and requests visitors' information. Visitors do not have to leave Facebook to sign up; they can register directly on this page.

EXAMPLE: KODAK FACEBOOK TAB

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'Kodak Motion Picture Film'. The page header includes the Facebook logo and a search bar. The main content area features a banner with the text 'Stay connected...' and a background image of film reels and a camera. Below the banner is a registration form with the following fields:

- Contact Information:**
 - First name *
 - Last name *
 - Email address *
 - ZIP/Postal Code
 - Country (Please select an option) *
- Industry Information:**
 - To send you worthwhile content, we'll need to know your role in the industry:
 - Which of the following areas do you consider your primary area of responsibility? (Please select an option) *
 - What job title closely represents your position? (Please select an option) *

A prominent yellow 'Subscribe' button is located at the bottom of the form. The left sidebar contains navigation links (Wall, Info, Friend Activity, Join E-Mail List, Photos, Twitter, YouTube, Questions, Discussions) and a list of users who have liked the page, including Montclair State University, SUNY Purchase, IMAX, American Horror Story, and NFL Films.

Step #4. Overhaul triggered welcome emails

The team depended on its older triggered welcome email for too long, Alyson felt. “It did not reflect current branding, and we didn't have our social networks when that version had been created. We really wanted to freshen it up,” she says. The team scrapped the older email in place of a two-message series:

[Welcome email #1](#) – New subscribers immediately receive this message after signing up. It includes the same header and logo as the team's website, which helps remind subscribers that they signed up. The message also emphasizes that subscribers will “continue to stay on top of the world of film and never miss a beat,” which reiterates the program's value.

The email includes a button to visit a page for Kodak's mobile apps, as well as links to connect with the brand on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

[Welcome email #2](#) – This second message is delivered 14 days after the first and emphasizes “why film remains the gold standard for motion capture.” The email links to a film clip on YouTube, additional information, and a form to contact a Kodak sales rep. Links are also included to share the content on Facebook or connect with the brand on the network.

Step #5. Send “email invitations” to connect

The welcome emails encouraged new subscribers to connect with the brand on a social network, but they did not reach the team's older subscribers. Not wanting to leave them out, the team launched two email campaigns that encouraged this group to connect.

For example, one [email encouraged list members to subscribe](#) to Kodak's “Shoot Film” YouTube channel, as well. The email included:

- Headline: “Keep up with the world of film today”
- Three video screenshots and descriptions
- Calls-to-action to visit the channel and subscribe

These calls-to-action were not placed at the end of a newsletter, or added to another message. They were the focus of a dedicated email, which gave them considerably more impact.

Tactic #7: Use a contest or sweepstakes

Many people will happily submit their contact information for a chance to win something, so contests are a great way to grow your list quickly. Plus, if the prize is enticing enough (or the contest premise is creative enough) people will also share it with their friends. If you are lucky, your contest will go viral and soon you will be flooded with entries.

That's what happened to Expedia CruiseShipCenters, which added more than 100,000 subscribers to its email list and got nearly twice as many to update their profiles. In the MarketingSherpa article, "[List Growth: Viral sweepstakes boosts large email list more than 8%](#)," Dave Mossop, Manager, Interactive Marketing, Expedia CruiseShipCenters, tells how his team launched a sweepstakes to build the email list and entice current subscribers to update their profiles. The sweepstakes gave away one cruise vacation each day for 25 days.

Here are the steps they took:

Step #1. Set the sweepstakes' rules and prizes

The rules, and starting/ending dates, were clearly outlined on entry pages. People entered by using one of two online forms that also invited them to sign up for email newsletters. Participants could earn more chances to win by encouraging friends to enter the campaign (more on the team's forms and viral tactics in a minute).

Tip #1: Target your coveted demographic – Focus your efforts on promoting the contest to those you most want to add to your list. Expedia CruiseShipCenters' core audience consists of North American consumers ages 55 and older who are interested in travel. While anyone could enter the sweepstakes, the team focused its promotional efforts on this group.

Tip #2: Get a sponsor – Cruise line Royal Caribbean International sponsored the sweepstakes, which enabled the marketing team to focus a larger budget on promoting the campaign.

Step #2. Design customized landing pages

Expedia CruiseShipCenters strives to customize much of its marketing to appear as if coming directly from a sales agent. The team applied this principle throughout the campaign, including on its two landing pages:

[Existing subscriber page](#) – Current subscribers visited this page after clicking a link in an Expedia CruiseShipCenters email. The page described the sweepstakes, asked visitors to “confirm your profile to win,” and showed a “click here for French” link to any Canadian visitors. A form on the page preloaded the subscriber's information from the team's database. It listed:

- First and last name
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Preferred language

Descriptions of the team's five email newsletters and opt-in checkboxes sat beneath this form. The newsletters to which visitors were already subscribed were pre-checked. Lastly, the page had a big, blue button: “Enter to Win!”

[New subscriber page](#) – The team promoted this page in channels that reached new audiences, such as in display advertising for the campaign. This page was similar to the existing subscriber page, with the following key differences:

- Emphasized “enter to win” instead of “confirm your profile”

- Pre-checked two of the newsletter opt-in checkboxes
- Requested seven fields of information instead of 10

“Someone brand new in our system doesn’t necessarily want to give all that information,” Mossop says. “Over the last year, we found when we simplified the form for new people, we saw about a 50% lift in conversion.”

Step #3. Add multiple layers of viral tactics

After entering the sweepstakes, visitors saw a “thank you” confirmation page with similar branding and layout. The page explained visitors could increase their chances to win by using a [viral sharing tool](#) to refer friends. Any entries generated by the referrals earned the sender another entry in the sweepstakes.

The page listed space for visitors to enter names and email addresses for up to 10 contacts. Entering the information and clicking the “tell my friends” button sent a simple email to each person. The [referral email](#) included:

- Personalized first-name greeting
- Quick description of the sweepstakes
- Two links to enter (used custom URLs for tracking)
- Personalized first-name signature

After clicking the button, another confirmation page thanked visitors and told them they could further increase their chances by referring more friends. This looping page made it easier for visitors to reach a large number of contacts.

Through years of testing similar forms, the team found the number of referrals sent by visitors increased with the number of names requested. For example, when providing five spaces to enter names, visitors sent referrals in multiples of five. In this case, by requesting 10 contacts, many visitors sent referrals in multiples of 10, Mossop says.

Another viral email – Referral tools like the one mentioned above are growing in popularity. Expedia CruiseShipCenters went a step further than the standard by sending a [referral confirmation email](#). Referrers received this triggered message after a friend entered the sweepstakes using their referral link. The message explained they received an additional entry and encouraged them to refer more friends.

Facebook referral tool – The confirmation page also included a button for visitors to refer Facebook contacts. Clicking the button loaded a page that requested visitors to log in to Facebook. A [default message](#) was offered, which included an image of a cruise ship, a quick description of the sweepstakes and a link to the entry page. These links were also customized to track the entries they generated.

Step #4. Email campaign to house file

The team launched the campaign by sending a dedicated [promotional email](#) to its subscriber base. The message included:

- Personal first-name greeting
- Picture and contact information for the subscriber's sales agent
- Description of sweepstakes
- Call to update or verify subscriber profile
- Buttons and links to the campaign landing page
- Exclusive offer from Royal Caribbean

Launching the campaign this way gave the team a quick start on getting subscribers to update their profiles. More importantly, it also jump-started list growth since many entrants referred friends to the campaign.

“Emailing our existing members means we're getting their friends, who are a very similar demographic,” Mossop says.

Step #5. Promote online

After setting up the sweepstakes and promoting it to the house file, the team spread the word through the following online channels:

- *Banner advertising* - the team placed ads on its website, as well as travel-related third-party sites and banner ad networks. The ads pointed to the campaign landing page.
- *Facebook and Google* - in addition to posting regular updates about the sweepstakes on Facebook, the team purchased advertising on the network that targeted North American consumers ages 55 and over who were interested in travel. The team also ran pay-per-click ads on Google for searches related to cruise vacations.
- *Email* - during the campaign, every promotional email the team sent in its regular program included an ad for the sweepstakes. The ad was not shown to anyone who already entered, which helped avoid confusing or irritating subscribers. The team also worked with a travel company in Canada to promote the sweepstakes to the company's email audience.

Step #6. Continually test and improve tactics

Expedia CruiseShipCenters has run list-building sweepstakes for years and built an in-house platform to manage them, Mossop says. “It took a couple of years to really get our platform perfect. Then we got to the point that we started testing everything more in-depth.”

By running similar campaigns each year, analyzing them and making tweaks, the team gradually improved their tactics and results. This would not be possible if each campaign was handled as an isolated one-off. Instead, each was part of a larger, steadily-improving program that the team revisited each year.

The campaign grew the team's database by more than 8% in 50 days, which translated into well over 100,000 new subscribers.

Few post-campaign unsubs

Marketers can see a drop in their subscribers at the end of a list-building sweepstakes, as many people sign up to win and unsubscribe afterward. Mossop's team did not find this to be true in this case.

“Our contest is very well targeted, so we’re getting the right audience participating who are interested in travel, so our unsubscribe rate stays low. We average at far less than 1% unsubscribe rate, typically from 0.01% to 0.03%,” he says.

In the MarketingSherpa article, “[List Growth: 11% increase from sweepstakes for current subscribers](#),” Waterford Crystal used some similar tactics when holding a sweepstakes geared toward getting current subscribers to help grow its email list. The team's email tactics also included resending to current subscribers, sending automated and personalized referrals, and providing a promo code to get new subscribers shopping. The tactics have helped Waterford attract not just subscribers but high-quality subscribers.

“It’s all about getting your database interested and referring people, turning your own list into your own little marketing team,” says Joe Schmidt, Director of eCommerce in North America, WWRD. WWRD brands include Waterford, Wedgewood and Royal Doulton.

Pick a good prize and a good audience

Your campaign needs to attract attention from the right people and invite them onto your list. It does this by offering a good prize. The wrong prize will attract attention from the wrong people, bring them onto your list, and undermine your program.

Send personalized emails to referrals

Waterford sends an [automated email](#) to the referrals. The email is very similar to the campaign's launch email, with these three changes:

- Subject line: “Your Friend says 'ENTER the Waterford Summer Sweepstakes!’”
- Personalized greeting: “Dear [firstname],”
- An additional sentence: “Please note: By receiving this email, you are not subscribed to receive Waterford.com communications, unless you have previously subscribed at our site.”

The added line of copy is intended to prevent readers from thinking they have been added to Waterford's email list without opting-in, which could cause them to mark the email as “spam.”

Minimize spend on advertising

The team avoids spending the bulk of its money for these campaigns on advertising. This helps maintain the brand's credibility, and keeps costs down, Schmidt says.

However, in addition to its email marketing, the team supports its sweepstakes in the following channels:

- **Homepage:** the team includes promotional images in the rotation of “hero shots” on Waterford's homepage.
- **Social media:** the team periodically promotes its sweepstakes to Waterford's more than 2,600 followers on Twitter, and nearly 7,000 fans on Facebook.

- **PPC ads:** WWRD maintains a paid search program to drive traffic to its websites. Some ads are used to promote the company's sweepstakes, but they play a minimal role in the campaigns and represent a small investment, Schmidt says.

The team does not send its sweepstakes to websites that aggregate giveaways and contests because many of the sites provide low-quality subscribers, Schmidt says. “They are not the best avenues because they don't necessarily bring qualified leads. They bring people who spend all day signing up on sites.”

Give a quick incentive to purchase

The goal of the sweepstakes is to add subscribers to WWRD's email program, but the ultimate goal is to earn new customers.

The team encourages subscribers to make a purchase immediately after they enter the sweepstakes. This is done in an [entry-confirmation email](#), which includes the following:

- Subject line: “Entry Confirmation & Promotion Code for the Waterford Summer Sweepstakes”
- Promo code for free ground shipping
- Single call-to-action: “Shop now” button

This helps Schmidt's team quickly start earning a return on its investment into the campaign. “I can track directly from the confirmation email,” Schmidt says. “If I take the profit on those sales and then subtract that from the cost, then that's really the true cost of the campaign.”

Tactic 8: Run a blog contest

If blogs and contests are both effective tools to grow your list, it only makes sense that combining the two would be likely to offer great rewards. By hosting contests that involve or incorporate other blogs, you can connect with a large untapped group of potential new subscribers.

In the MarketingExperiments blog post, [“Email Marketing: Building Valuable Subscriber Lists on the Cheap,”](#) Daniel Burstein shares quick tips for making the most of blog contests to rapidly grow your list:

Bullseye

There are highly relevant audiences for blogs on almost every interest under the sun and, likely, an audience with interests very similar to your best customers.

Lay down the law

Make sure you clearly define a set of rules to keep everything running smoothly. For example, you could give extra entries to readers who refer friends. Or even host a second, private contest for the blogger who generates the most entries. And remember, the more compelling the prize, the more motivated your audience will be.

After you set up a [landing page](#) to explain the contest and capture entrant's information and referrals, contact referred prospects via email, and invite them to join the contest, as well. With luck (and a compelling contest), you may reach the Holy Grail of cost-effective online promotion – going viral.

Seek the source

To understand which channels deliver best, create coded links to track traffic originating from blogs (with unique links for each blog), referrals, newsletter emails to current subscribers, social networks, etc. If you also hold a separate blogger contest, you could create an anonymized tracking page to show bloggers how many entries they've generated compared to competitors, which may encourage them to step up efforts.

Release the hounds

Once you have the mechanics of the contest in place, finding the right bloggers will take a bit of hunting on your part. Here's one simple strategy. Use basic Web searches to find applicable blogs. When you spot a likely target, use its "blog roll," or links section, to find similar sites. Look at the sites' number of RSS subscribers (if publicized) as well as the freshness of its content. Then, you can reach out to the bloggers (using info found on the site or a "Contact Us" form) with an email that includes a description of the contest, a coded link to the landing page, a link to the stats page, and a link to a promo ad.

Remember your members

While these bloggers will hopefully drive new subscribers, don't forget to let current members of your virtual fan club enter as well. The contest deserves at least a mention in your email newsletter, Twitter feed, Facebook group, social networks, and any other place you regularly communicate with your most loyal customers. Not only are you deepening your relationship with existing customers, making it easy for them to pass the contest on to friends is another cost-effective, viral way to grow your list.

Rinse, wash, repeat

If you do not prevent multiple signups, you will have to scrub your list of duplicates. You may also want to remind new subscribers why they are receiving your email newsletter ("Thank you for entering our contest and signing up for...")

Include an easy way to unsubscribe, a must for the CAN-SPAM Act, since some may have focused more on your prize than the fact that they were also signing up for an email newsletter. This is also a way for your least-motivated list members to self-select and get removed before too many of them hit the "SPAM" button and hinder your deliverability.

After you've counted all your new subscribers, look at your metrics to see what you could have done better. And then, start another contest with your newfound knowledge pushing you to even greater success.

Useful Links and Resources:

[Maximizing Email List Growth: How the New York Public Library Drove a 52.8% Lift in Newsletter Subscriptions](#)

[Marketer Builds Email List with 20% Conversion Rate](#)

[How to Grow an Email List from Nothing to 2 Million](#)

[Monthly Contest Doubles Email List Size](#)

About MarketingSherpa LLC

MarketingSherpa is a primary research facility, wholly-owned by MECLABS, dedicated to determining **what works in marketing** via exclusive case studies, surveys, and results data analysis. Then we publish what we learn so our community of marketers and weekly readers can improve their results and train their teams.

Praised by *The Economist*, Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge Site and Entrepreneur.com, MarketingSherpa is distinguished by offering **practical, results-based marketing** information researched and written by a staff of in-house reporters.

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The screenshot shows the MarketingSherpa website interface. At the top right, there are links for "View with Images" and "View Mobile Version". The main header features the "Email Marketing" title and the subtitle "Case studies and how-to articles", along with the MarketingSherpa logo. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "New Case Studies", "Members' Library", "Research", "Events", and "Training". The main content area displays an article titled "Growing Email Lists with Social Media: KFC's Facebook tool adds subscribers". The article includes a summary, a paragraph of text, and a "Click to continue" button. To the right of the article is a sidebar with social media links (LinkedIn, Twitter, RSS, Facebook, YouTube) and a "Research:" section featuring a "Live" event titled "marketing sherpa Social Training" with a photo of a seminar and dates for Los Angeles (3/15) and Toronto (4/19).

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