CONFESSIONS OF A FOLLOW UP MARKETING GEEK

How To START Making More Money From The Traffic You're Already Getting And STOP Leaving 80% Of Your Sales On The Table!

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FOREWORD

Autoresponder systems are the workhorses of email marketing.

Some online marketing "experts" are saying that email marketing is dead - that it's no longer profitable. I beg to differ with them - ***strongly.***

Perhaps email marketing is no longer profitable for them, but they are either doing something wrong, or they never knew how to do it right in the first place. (Remember that not every self-appointed "guru" really knows what he's talking about.)

While it's true that spam filters are at work on every level, and delivery rates for commercial email are down as a result, a properly worded message delivered by autoresponder to a permission based (opt-in) mailing list is still one of the most dependable ways to drive targeted visitors and make immediate sales.

No matter what other marketing methods you choose to use, one of your most profitable ones will be follow up marketing by email - if you do it right.

If you know how to market effectively using email autoresponders, you will find your business turning a profit rather quickly. Then you can reinvest those profits toward testing other proven marketing methods like pay per click search engine campaigns, ezine advertising, and so on.

Later on in this guide, we will lay out a complete system for follow up marketing that is proven to work. to maximizing your use of autoresponders in your marketing efforts, and maximizing your profits at the same time.

But first, let's put things into context. And here's a big chunk of truth for you to digest ....

There Are No Profit Secrets - Only Profitable Systems

SO STOP IT RIGHT NOW!

Excuse me for being blunt and to the point - but I want you to **STOP** expecting the "instant success fairy" to come along and sprinkle you with gold dust.

I want you to **STOP** searching for magical marketing secrets, or that "one big thing."

They don't exist.

STOP sending next week's grocery money to each and every "guru of the month" who comes out of the woodwork claiming he's discovered some little know formula that will make you rich overnight.

Long term business success just doesn't happen that way. If you're looking for instant riches with no work involved, I suggest you start buying lottery tickets. Heck .... even professional gamblers have *systems* that they work!

And even this proven follow up marketing system will not do a thing for you unless you put some work into it.

While the function of this follow up marketing system is automated, setting it up and tweaking it for efficiency and effectiveness is an intensive exercise - it's work!

That's why most online marketers only make half-hearted attempts .... and why they end up with half-baked results. They never make it past the "wanna-be" stage. They "wanna-be" rich but they "don't wanna" do the **work.**

Many people fail to realize that what might appear on the surface to be an "instant Internet success" story was actually 2 to 5 years in the making - with a lot of work, study, and even a few failures along the way.

Now realistically, no one gets excited about the idea of keeping their "nose to the grindstone" until it becomes a bloody stump. That's why we're talking about **automation.**

And the correct and proper use of autoresponder systems will keep you from becoming a slave to your business. At the same time, it will consistently maximize your bottom line profit .... week after week and month after month .... like no one shot guru marketing gimmick ever will.

Remember the word *system.*

For example, let's look at a guy whose business is earning $100,000 per year, and compare him to another guy who is running the same type of business yet earning $1,000,000 a year.

What's the difference?

Right away, most people would say the million dollar a year guy is probably working harder and longer than the one earning a measely $100K. He probably doesn't take vacations, seldom takes his wife to dinner and a show, and hasn't seen his kid play soccer in two years.

But more than likely, he's learned the difference between working "hard" and working "smart."

Instead of working harder, the million dollar guy has simply created a "system" that allows him to free up a lot of time and energy, usually to a point where he doesn't have to physically be there in order for the business to run and make money.

Here's a good example.

We have one guy who owns a muffler shop and works a 60 hour week, 52 weeks a year, to maintain a profit margin. He may be one of those control freaks, who believes that no one but himself can do anything right - but this guide isn't about personality disorders   **;~0**

Then there is another guy across town who owns a chain of muffler shops, hangs out at the coffee bar til 10 am every morning, takes long lunches with his friends, and makes money even while he's on the golf course.

Which guy would you rather be?

You see, the first guy has done little more than create another JOB for himself. In terms of the quality of his life, he may as well be someone else's paid slave.

On the other hand, the second guy has created a "profit system" that doesn't require his physical presence or his own constant effort to make money. He has then taken it even one step further and duplicated the system many times over. (NOTE: You can do the same with websites!)

Sure, he has to keep a watch on the business stats, manage the money and do the oversight. But he still has more time to enjoy his life, and makes a truckload more money than the poor shmuck who has simply chained himself to his own time clock with no hope of release.

This concept is called "time leverage" - and it can be applied to any business .... even online. When you learn to set up and use automated systems, you can run as many profit making websites as you want and still play golf, go to your kid's soccer games, or just relax .... because you won't need to glue yourself to your computer to run those businesses.

Autoresponders are one of the tools that will give you the power of leverage. Whatever you do, don't overlook that powerful truth.

The Tool and the User

A hammer is only as good as the carpenter who uses it.

That may seem simplistic, but it's a very important concept to understand. Especially since it applies to just about everything we do, in every area of our lives. Design issues aside, the performance and effectiveness of any tool depends entirely on the skills of the user.

So the purpose of this guide is to improve your autoresponder skills, and leverage your own time to the max.

What Is An Autoresponder And What Can It Do For You?

An autoresponder is any software system that automatically delivers a pre-written email message or sequence of messages after being triggered by an incoming email inquiry.

There are three basic types of autoresponder systems. Each one has its own pros and cons. It's up to you to do the homework and decide which type best suits your own needs.

1 - WEBHOST BASED AUTORESPONDER

Most of the better webhosting services offer an unlimited amount of autoresponders that can be easily configured from the domain control panel. These are an essentially cost-free feature of your hosting service, and can be put to good use in some areas of business.

Advantages involve your ability to configure an unlimited number (typical with most webhosts) of autoresponse addresses that come direct from your domain. Set up usually takes five minutes or less, and can be a life-saver when it comes to answering FAQs or any otherwise time consuming email chore.

Disadvantages surround the (again typical) inability to deliver more than a single message. For the most part, webhost based autoresponders are "one-shooters" - with no follow up capability to deliver a pre-written promotional sequence. In addition, none that we have seen allow for recipient personalization tags (!fname - !firstname! etc.) within the headline and message body. (This capability is VERY IMPORTANT if you want your subscribers to pay attention to your emails.)

2 - ONLINE BASED AUTORESPONDER SERVICES

These are typically presented as a subscription service, where you are required to pay a monthly fee for ongoing use of the system. Costs can vary, and have of late begun to vary greatly. By all means, do your comparison shopping before you sign anything.

Advantages include ease of accessibility and absence of maintenance requirements on your part. Typically, you will have full customizing capability of outgoing messages, and will be able to pre-program a sequence of up to 52 follow-up messages. In addition, you'll have the advantage of automatic unsubscribe/removal functions, meaning less work for you.

The big disadvantage is, of course, that you pay through the nose each month for the service. That makes it all the more critical that you get the fullest possible advantage from this type of service.

I suggest you investigate **AWeber Communications** - a top-shelf online autoresponder service.

3 - DOMAIN BASED AUTOREPONDER SOFTWARES

These are free standing autoresponse software systems that actually "live" on your own domain. In other words, you own and operate the autoresponder from your website.

The big advantage here is obvious . . . you have no monthly subscription payments. You'll also have the capability for unlimited numbers of addresses/message sequences and typically an unlimited number of follow-up messages. In actuality, you'd be able to pre-program, in advance, any number of message sequences to run for literally several years.

Disadvantages surround the fact that you are responsible for maintenance and breakdowns. With a well written program, this shouldn't happen. Rocks shouldn't fall from the sky either, but they do. Additionally, some domain based autoresponder systems are configured only for form-box sign ups, meaning you would not have an actual mailto: address to plug into your advertising. Do your homework before you buy.

I've used **ListMail Pro software** the past several years to automate and manage all my list mailing functions. It's a true workhorse for about 1/3 the cost of the nearest comparable system I know of. There are no limits to the number of lists I can run or the number of messages I can configure to each list - and it's been years since I've had to pay a monthly fee for autoresponder service.

No matter how you choose to approach the issue of autoresponder usage, one thing is a sure bet. If you're not using at least some sort of autoresponse system in your daily business online, you're not only working too hard, you're missing out on a majority of the potential for

growth and development of your business.

Autoresponder Common Uses

An autoresponder is used for delivering specific information out to individuals quickly, sometimes just seconds after they request it. It allows us to automate the repetitive task of sending that same information out individually to each requester.

Most marketers use autoresponders to: send out special reports/articles upon request, and/or send out a "welcome" message to new subscribers of a newsletter/ezine.

And sadly, that's about it.

Those who use 'follow-up' autoresponders are usually not much different. Most of their follow-up messages usually include more reports, articles and maybe some resources and product promotions.

There's nothing wrong with that, but it's like walking away from a banquet while you're still hungry. I want you to realize that there's a lot more you can accomplish with autoresponders.

What Autoresponders Can Be Used For

Here's a list of some tasks you could automate using autoresponders:

- format and schedule mailings days, weeks, even months in advance

- send out 'welcome' messages to new subscribers

- send out newsletters, updates, alerts, etc.

- circulate viral articles and reports

- automate list compilation and databasing activities

- promote front-end and back-end products

- deliver instant product details when the prospect is hot

- deliver product specific emails until the prospect buys

- deliver product user's guides before or after the sale

- add new buyers to a verified paying customer list

- deliver product download info (links, passwords, etc.) to buyers

- promote upgrades and upsells for products already purchased

- dramatically reduce manual email answering

- follow up to minimize refunds/returns and chargebacks

- send out surveys, polls, questionaires, etc.

- automatically add new affiliates and increase your sales

- administer affiliate training and motivation

- solicit product testimonials from buyers

- get hot, new, marketable product ideas quickly and easily

- get feedback on your customer service and products

- answer FAQs instantly

- and so on…

This list is just what came off the top of my head. With a little imagination applied to your own business needs, you'll find plenty more to add.

Keep in mind that if you use autoresponders to perform even some of the tasks above, your physical action will no longer required for those tasks to be accomplished. Not only will your workload decrease, you'll have more time to do the really productive stuff - like promote your business - find or develop new products - set up joint ventures with other marketers - watch Oprah.

Even though autoresponders can relieve you from a lot of repetitive tasks, I want to make it clear at this point that my autoresponders have **one overriding and primary purpose.**

And that is to groom potential customers, maintain their interest, and gently remind them of my products and services until they are ready to make a buying decision.

So the first priority is to get new subscribers hooked into my autoresponder loop. Toward that end, I've actually reached back to my old mail order days and adapted one of the most powerful promotional methods that has ever been devised.

Two Step Marketing - An Old Idea Come Full Circle

Here's how to gather new subscribers and prospects without breaking your bank.

Whether out of necessity or perhaps wisdom, cost conscious mail order direct marketers of past decades did manage to develop and perfect a unique promotional method that, if applied correctly, still cuts a wide swath in today's market.

Using a two-step approach toward market contact, employing small classified advertisements as the vehicle, they learned to validate prospect interest at the front end, increase bottom line profit, and cut cost of sale to the bone by eliminating cold broadcast mailings and other fruitless marketing actions.

To this day, one can scan magazines, tabloids, and even local newpapers to see countless offers that are still being promoted with **small classified ads**. Many of those tiny ads have been running without stop for years on end, while the foundation of the entire system lies with

the ad itself.

A great two-step ad is carefully worded, with only two reasons to exist:

- to create interest or curiosity in the reader

- to prompt her toward taking an action.

That is the essence of step one in a two-step mail order promotion. The reader was typically promised "further details" or a "free report" in exchange for her postcard or letter sent to a designated postal address.

In his turn, the direct marketer would then exercise step two by returning an appropriate reply, again by postal mail. While it proved immensely profitable, the process was labor intensive and time consuming at its best.

Even with the advent of Internet marketing technology, the underlying concept of two-step marketing has changed little. The singular difference is that the prospect is no longer required to mail a letter, or wait days or weeks to get the information she desires.

Instead, she can acquire that information immediately by sending a simple email to an autoresponder system, by visiting a website, or by calling a toll free telephone number. Her action in step one still qualifies her as a highly targeted prospect, but there is no cooling off period while she waits for the postal mail to arrive. The opportunity for further action on her part (ie. making a purchase) is presented immediately, while her interest is at peak level.

So it goes without saying, this current evolution of the two-step **classified ad** coupled with modern methods of instant information delivery, has forged one of the most powerful marketing strategies available to today's direct sellers.

Still, to achieve maximum effectiveness with two-step marketing, there are a few rules to be observed.

Rule 1 - Don't Try to Sell From a Small Ad

Once again, a two-step advertisement has a limited purpose - to create interest or curiosity in the reader, and prompt her to take a desired action. That action is, of course, to contact the marketer for further information. Selling is not the issue at this point - the selling will be done in the follow up process.

Rule 2 - Advertise Benefits and Solutions

Many experienced two-step marketers say the product or service itself should never be directly mentioned in the text of the ad. Instead, the ad should only convey benefits the reader can gain, or possibly a solution to a defined problem.

Rule 3 - Convenient Contact

Make it as easy as possible for the reader/prospect to get the information she wants. It's best to include at least two contact methods within the ad text (ie. email autoresponder, website URL, toll free telephone number.)

Rule 4 - Follow Up for the Sale

Depending on the statistics one reads, as little as 20% of all sales are made on the first contact. That means as much as 80% of potential profits hang in the balance, depending on multiple follow up contacts to close sales and render a profitable campaign. Email marketing by autoresponder has infinitely streamlined the multiple follow up process, without adding any appreciable amount to cost of sale.

Rule 5 - Test Several Ads and Track the Results

Two-step ads are traditionally small, often comprised of only three to five lines of text. Since each single word should be weighed and measured for effect, it's important to develop several different ads for any promotion, and to track the results from each ad. The pulling power of one ad will frequently outweigh all others by virtue of a few simple word changes.

Rule 6 - Consistent Placement of Ads

Small classified type ads do not carry the immediate credibility of a larger display ad, a webpage, or even an email solo advertisement. A typical reader may need to see the ad more than once in the same venue, before she feels comfortable in making a response. This writer's own campaign tracking has revealed the majority of response from two-step ads often comes after the second or third ad run in any particular venue. On the other hand, one time insertions have, more often that not, proved a financial loss.

The decades old concept of two-step marketing has evolved and meshed perfectly with today's electronic marketing technology. When used properly, it can pre-qualify prospects, generate high value emailing lists, dramatically reduce cost per sale, and improve bottom line profit for small and large direct marketing companies alike.

Okay - it's time to **move on** with ....

THE 14-STEP RECIPE FOR EFFECTIVE AUTOMATED EMAIL FOLLOW UP

Step 1: Get The Prospect's Name And Email Address

This is obviously the first, and most important step. But it might also be important at this point to mention that we are talking here exclusively about opt-in (or permission-based) email marketing, and **not** about any form of spam, email address harvesting, or other unethical (and illegal!) rubbish.

A true "opt-in" subscriber has volunteered her address and given you "permission" to send emails to her address - usually in exchange for something of value that you offer free of charge on your website.

And at the risk of redundancy, I'll say it again - in this guide we're talking **only** about opt-in subcribers that you gather from **your** website .... the only kind you should want to begin with.

Still, Step 1 - **getting individuals to give a stranger their email address** - is probably the most difficult to accomplish of all the steps involved. To help that process along, I always add a "privacy" statement below my sign up forms that looks something like this one:

First Name

Email Address

SUBMIT

Your information will be kept confidential and you can always unsubscribe at anytime.

Note also that I'm asking only for a first name and email address. Asking for too much information on the first contact can seriously reduce the response to your offer. Remember that the trust factor, while critical to your long term success, must be earned and developed over time. Don't take it for granted.

There are several ways you can entice visitors to submit your form. You can offer them a free subscription to your newsletter, a mini email course, a special report, an ebook, and so on; basically anything that doesn't cost you much to deliver, but will still be of high perceived value to the prospect.

But that may not be as easy as it seems. At least, not anymore.

A few years back we could gather new subscribers in droves with the simplest of offers. Internet users were hungry for new knowledge, and they responded well to practically any offer for free information or a free download.

Later, as always seems to happen, the water became muddied by crooks, scammers, and the grossly untalented who caught on to this tactic as well.

They burned a lot of people (and still do) by providing trashy products and information - cramming inboxes with junk mail - selling subscriber addresses to spammers. It's no wonder that many Internet users are now gun-shy, even toward a legitimate free offer.

Sure, they are just as hungry for new knowledge as ever - but don't expect to throw out just any old free stuff and instantly have crowds of new subscribers standing in line to sign up.

Not much different than making sales, where your offer must be better than your competition, even your free offers must be so good the new subscriber just can't resist. This will require a bit of work and imagination on your part, and probably a bit of research to see what your competitors are doing.

In fact, your free offer should be so good that it could command a price.

But at the same time, be careful that you don't reveal everything on the first rattle. The free material you offer should provide only a small taste - a sample - just enough to whet the prospect's appetite and make them want more.

Think for a minute about the sample servers you see in your local supermarket. They will gladly tweak your taste buds with a small tidbit of some new delicacy impaled on a toothpick.

Their only purpose however, is to arouse your desire for the product - to make you want more. But you're not allowed to stand there and eat the entire plate for free! If you want to eat more - you must buy it.

And of course, they have stacks of that delicious product conveniently within arm's reach, ready for you to buy. Then, if you don't buy immediately, they will at least keep you "on the hook" by **offering you a coupon** toward a later purchase.

Brilliant marketing!

So to keep new subscribers "on the hook" - I also tell them that I will send out an additional bonus within the next few days, and to watch their email for the announcement.

I'm doing this for two reasons:

1 - I don't want them to immediately unsubscribe after they receive the first free offer

2 - I want to create a sense of anticipation in their minds (Very important!)

------- SIDEBAR -------

One issue you should consider at this point is whether to use a **"single opt-in"** or a **"double opt-in"** sign up process for your new subscribers.

Single opt-in means that once they complete and submit your form, your new subscriber will immediately be added to your list.

Double opt-in requires the new subscriber to complete a two-part process.

    1. complete and submit your form.

2. click a confirmation link in the first email that is sent to them.

In a double opt-in process, the new subscriber will not be added to your list until s/he receives the first email and clicks the confirmation link.

It is generally acknowledged by experienced email marketers that the double opt-in process provides better protection (for you) against false spam complaints, and will often produce a more responsive list.

However, when using the double opt-in process a percentage of new subscribers will (for whatever reason) never click the confirmation link in the first email, and will not be added to your mailing list. Therefore, the number of new subscribers you actually get over any period of time will be at least somewhat reduced.

This is just my opinion, so take it or leave it as you see fit. But I would prefer to have a smaller yet more responsive (and safer to work) double opt-in list as opposed to a larger list of lazy or uncommitted people who will not follow through with a simple double opt-in process.

Of course, the method you use is yours to choose.

Most good **autoresponder softwares** provide double opt-in capability, and some online **autoresponder services** now require all new subscribers to confirm their subscription through a double opt-in process before they will be added to your mailing list.

------- END SIDEBAR -------

Step 2: Turn Visitors Into Subscribers

The next autoresponder message in the sequence thanks them for downloading the special report and asks if everything went okay. "Were there any problems downloading or viewing the file?"

With this email, I also include a very short report containing answers to some common downloading/viewing questions that I would usually get from people. A small troubleshooting article, if you will.

I then inform them about the additional bonus they will receive from me, a free subscription to my popular 'marketing newsletter' which they will start receiving within the next few days. I also tell them that they can unsubscribe at any time, if they choose to do so.

If they liked the 'special report' I sent to them in Step 1, there's a pretty good chance that they will want to check out my newsletter. In this note, I also list a "summary of benefits" of my newsletter. In other words, I give them lots of reasons to want to try out my newsletter.

Now...why am I not offering them a newsletter subscription to begin with instead of starting with a special report first?

Because, I've found that it's much easier to get them to try a one-time deal (an article) than to have them subscribe to a regular (weekly/monthly) publication. This is why I offer the newsletter in Step 2, after they've gotten a taste of my work through the article requested in Step 1.

See, I am getting them to take "baby-steps" towards my desired outcome instead of asking them to jump in with both feet. The latter gets much more resistance.

(Mini email courses seem to work well for Step 1 as well, which is basically an ebook or a large article, broken up and mailed out in sections.)

NOTE: You'll want the reader to become accustomed to receiving emails from you. So the subject line of all your emails (within each particular autoresponder sequence) should start with the same words.

For example, if the name of your newsletter is "Cheap Magic Tricks" - the subject line of all your emails should start with the words "Cheap Magic Tricks."

This is very important because it lets the reader know right away who the email is from, and what it probably contains. If you've done a good job of creating anticipation in the reader's mind, she will always be responsive when your emails arrive. And that is exactly what you want.

NOW - WATCH THESE VIDEOS!

Click Here - "Starting A Newsletter From Scratch"

Click Here - "Formatting and Delivering Your Newsletter"

Step 3: Send Out The Newsletter

The next email sends out a sample issue of the newsletter, which is basically another useful special report in a newsletter format. Again, something of value to them.

Most of the newsletters/reports that go out will have a small product endorsement toward the end.

This is essentially my front-end product. They may or may not buy the product immediately, but remember the "coupon hook" from the supermarket. So each email that goes out after this

point will ensure that they see that same ad multiple times.

Note: Sales from any given group of people are not maximized until that group of potential buyers has been exposed to the product at least 3 to 5 times - most email marketers agree that 7 times is better.

See, most people are not leaders. They are followers. They will wait and see if others are buying the product first before they act. Others will just wait around to see if they see the same offer again. It's a "trust" thing. A repeated offer tends to appear more real, more authentic, more legitimate.

Some folks may need to wait until payday before they buy. And sometimes, they just get distracted and forget about your product.

Whatever the reasons are for them not ordering the first time, your solution is to remind them of your product or service multiple times. As the old mail order gurus used to say, "Stay in the front of their minds."

Remember to end each newsletter by reminding them of what's to come next. Continue to create anticipation so they will look forward to another email from you.

Now if the thought of writing all these email messages sounds like too much work, then here's an easy solution to your problem .... a whole year's worth of weekly private label autoresponder letters - pre-written and ready to add your own signature and links.

Click Here To Grab Them Now

Step 4: Promote a Front-End Product

The next email will solely promote my front-end product. The email is basically a sales letter or "solo ad" highlighting the benefits of the showcased product.

I will usually send out at least 3 reports/articles/newsletters before I do a solo mailing of this type, for a product endorsement. You can do more or less. Test it out and see what works best for you and your list.

Again, I'm having them take baby steps instead of saying "Buy now, buy now!" and turning them off.

Note: Since this is a solo mailing for my front-end product, I will also give the reader more reasons to act now! I do this by offering them a "special" bonus only if they order through this particular message! And I tell them that the offer is only good for the next 7 days.

I'm giving them reasons to act now by:

1 - offering a "special bonus" they can't get elsewhere

2 - creating a sense of urgency by putting a deadline on the offer.

Step 5: Upgrade Subscribers To The "Proven Customer" List

This is where it gets interesting...

Those who don't order my product through the solo mailing will continue to receive my newsletters/reports/articles, etc. (with small ads at the bottom), as well as other solo ads from time to time.

Those who **do order** my product at this point get added on to a new autoresponder sequence. This is the autoresponder I have created specifically for the customers of my front end product. (By the way, you should have a separate sequential autoresponder set up for each product that you promote. You'll see why in a moment...)

NOTE: The previous autoresponder sequence is still functional and continues to send them newsletters, reports, etc. They can unsubscribe from it at any time. However, I'm careful that I don't repeat an article in the second autoresponder that gets published in the first one, and vice versa.)

Here's how new customers are automatically added to a new autoresponder sequence .... with no effort on my part.

After a customer orders the product, they are directed to an owner "registration" page that carries a message similar to this ....

Thank you for your order! Please complete and submit the form below to register your ["product name"] ownership. This will allow us to send you product updates and other important information from time to time. After you submit the form you will be taken immediately to our ["product name"] download page.

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Area Code + Phone Number

SUBMIT

**Your information will be kept confidential
and you can always unsubscribe at anytime.**

You set the URL of your download page as the "return" page in your sign up form code. This automates the entire process - but let's not get into techie stuff. You autoresponder's help manual can handle those issues for you.

Instead, notice that this sign up box asks for a bit more information than the one we used for our initial contact. At this point the customer has demonstrated at least some degree of trust in making a purchase from your site - so it is appropriate to ask for a few more personal details.

Still, you will want to respect your customer's privacy, and use your own judgement regarding the information you request from them. And yes - you may receive a great deal of your customer's personal data on the sale notification sent you by your payment processor. But remember, that customer **has not** given you permission to database that information.

Okay - let's move on.

When the buyer submits the "owner's registration" form, they are automatically added to a new autoresponder sequence, and then are directed to the download page, or to a "thank you" page where (for physical products) your shipping details and contact information will be confirmed.

Over time, this process will result in a mailing list made up exclusively of **proven buyers.**

That is absolutely the best kind of list you can possibly wish for - and you will want to have a totally different series of autoresponder messages in place that will continue over time to market additional (and related) products to those proven buyers. We'll talk more about that in a bit.

Step 6: Cut Down On Email Volume Dramatically

Remember when I said earlier that I was getting a lot of the same types of email questions and concerns from a lot of people?

Well, one of the biggest groups sending these questions were "new" customers who had just made a purchase. And were either having problems downloading the product, had lost their passwords, couldn't find the downloaded file on their computers, didn't know how to open/view PDF files, or something else along those lines.

So, I created another troubleshooting/FAQ type of report and plugged it into the new autoresponder sequence as "Message 1", along with a "Thank you for your order" statement, and their download links & passwords, or whatever other information might be pertinent.

I came up with this idea by asking the same question... "What's repetitive and can be automated?" And I decided, why not answer most of the questions my new customers usually ask me after they place an order, put that into a mini report, and send that to them along with the thank you email before they even ask the questions.

I also noticed that **Jim Daniels** is using a similar system for his products. Jim probably has the best example of this FAQ-type email that I've seen in use so far. I picked up a few things from his system that I hadn't thought of, to add to this step.

For example, I noticed that he had inserted information about his "affiliate program" for the product into that first FAQ/thankyou email. Not a bad idea. I usually promote the affiliate program in a future email message, but may consider doing it in the first email instead. I haven't decided yet.

This initial "troubleshooting/FAQ" type email also cuts down on refunds and chargebacks since most of the product download and viewing problems are taken care of immediately. The customers don't have to email you regarding a 'new order' problem, and then wait for you to respond to their email. They have all the answers before their questions ever come up.

NOTE: I make it very clear in my email that customers should read the entire email before they contact me regarding problems with their orders since most of their questions will probably be answered in that first email.

This one step alone cut down my email volume by at least 50%!

Step 7: Minimize Refunds/Returns

This step further minimizes refunds and returns after customers have ordered your product.

In this message, I send them information about an "unadvertised bonus" that they're receiving from me, as my way of saying "thanks again for the order." It is an unadvertised bonus because I don't mention anything about it in the sales message. This bonus is an "extra" - added on top of the bonuses they were promised in the sales letter.

This is a nice surprise for the customer. You're also "over-delivering" on your promise, which is always a good call, as it adds to the overall value of the product they ordered! (Your initial "product and bonuses" package should already be a great value - before you ever send the

unadvertised bonus.)

The bonus can be anything: an ebook, a special report, an interview etc. (anything that holds high-perceived value.)

I've also noticed some marketers using another tactic to minimize refunds: In their sales message, they will mention bonuses that are to be delivered X number of days after the order. For example, they would have one bonus delivered 10 days after the order, the next one delivered 30 days after the order, and so on.

I personally don't use this method but it seems to work for those who are using it. It's your choice whether you want to use this strategy or not.]

This is also a good time to tell your customers about an added bonus they will receive from time to time: special articles, reports, and resources that you feel would be of value to them. In a nutshell, you're telling them that they should expect occasional emails from you (which is standard practice these days.)

Or you can tell them that you're subscribing them to a "members only" newsletter, available only to paid customers, which is an added bonus for the purchase they just made.

If you provide them with quality information, they will be open to receiving all your messages.

Step 8: Get Testimonials and Feedback

I've found that the best time to get testimonials from customers is immediately after they have read/used your product and the impact of the great ideas and new strategies in your product is fresh in their minds. This is when they are most impressed with your product.

The longer you wait to ask for a testimonial, the less enthusiastic the customer becomes about the product. This has nothing to do with the quality of the product. It's just human

nature. It's similar to what happens on the first day a kid gets a new toy compared to a month later when he's not as excited about it as before.

As the old saying goes, "strike while the iron is hot."

You can offer them another free ebook, report, etc. for their troubles. It will be an added incentive for them to take a few minutes out to do a testimonial for you.

I ask them to give me their honest opinion about the product. I don't want them to give me a false testimonial. They get the free ebook/report regardless, whether they send me a testimonial or a criticism.

I'm fine with either one: A good testimonial can go up on my web site. A bad one or a constructive criticism will help me improve on the product. I don't usually get too many bad reviews though.

Step 9: Just Checking In

At this point, I send them a note asking them how things are going. I'm just checking up on things, making sure everything is going smoothly.

I ask them if there has been any problems or concerns so far that haven't been addressed. This could include download problems, unlocated bonuses, lost passwords, whatever.

If they do have any problems, I ask them to contact me (at a different email address so I can give their concerns special attention.)

Again, this will further minimize problems, questions, refunds, etc. and also show the customer that you aren't someone who forgets about them after they have made a purchase - a situation that is very common on the Internet these days.

Step 10: Build on the Relationship and Good Feelings

The next message in the sequence sends them another "unadvertised bonus."

Just creating more good feelings, giving them more value for the purchase, and building rapport. Essentially, I'm working on strengthening the ongoing relationship.

NOTE: Each additional bonus report or ebook I send them is viral in nature. That means, while it provides good solid information and value to the customer, it also has some links to additional resources and products they can purchase, either from me or from one of the marketers I've affiliated with.

Step 11: Grow Your Business At Zero Cost

This next message informs the customer about my affiliate program for the product they have recently purchased. And who better to promote your product than a satisfied customer?

This email lays out all the benefits of becoming an affiliate for my product(s). Whenever possible, I try to pay at least 50% commission on my affiliate programs.

It's an easy way to get others to sell your product, pull in some extra cash, and most importantly, build that mailing list.

Again, if your product has created value for them, they will gladly endorse it to others, especially if it means some quick cash in their pockets in the process. A win-win situation.

Step 12: Get Hot, New Product Ideas

This next email contains a short survey asking the customer a few questions like: how can I improve on my product; which marketing subject/area would they most like to see a product about; which marketing step are they still having difficulty with and would like more help with, and so on.

This short survey gives me some really powerful information. I can usually tell which type of product I should promote to my list in the future. (Large corporations pay millions of dollars to get this kind of focused survey results. You can get it for free!)

And of course, if I don't have time to create such a product, I will find someone who already has a quality product of this type and affiliate with that individual.

Sending simple, short surveys to your list is probably the best, and the cheapest way to get some really great, marketable product ideas.

NOW - WATCH THIS VIDEO!

Click Here - "Writing Ad Copy That Sells"

Step 13: Promote/Endorse A Backend Product

This next email will basically be a solo mailing for a specific product endorsement. So it's important that you watch the video (above) if you haven't already.

It's always a good idea to endorse a product that is related to the first product you sold to these customers.

And, as mentioned in the previous step, you can also plug in a product here based on the results of your recent survey. You can either quickly create a product that's in demand, or just find an existing product and endorse it.

You can also send out resources and affiliate links to them for products that you enjoyed and feel that they would enjoy as well.

As I'm sure you already know, the real money is usually made on back-end sales.

Backend products can also be much higher ticket items because you're not selling to a cold list at this point. You're selling to people who have bought from you before and were happy with the experience. People you are having a positive ongoing relationship with.

Step 14: Keep The Ball Rolling

From this point on, all you have to do is continue to inform and educate your customers. Send them special reports, newsletters, etc. that will be of value to them. And...continue to sell to them.

It may also give you some new ideas and/or edit opportunities sometimes, when you read your own email messages.

As long as you provide them with quality products and good service, they will continue to buy from you.

Many marketers don't realize is that constantly finding new customers is not the only way to earn more profits, or that it's the MOST EXPENSIVE way to do business. Selling more often to your existing customers is also a way to earn more profits without constant expenditure for advertising. Besides, it's much easier to sell to someone who has bought from you before.

Most marketers stop selling to their lists way too soon. Long before the list stops buying from them. Don't make that mistake. Continue to sell to your list as long as they will buy from you.

If you really think about it, there are only three areas you need to focus on in order to grow your business:

1 - Continuously build your opt-in (permission based) mailing list

2 - Contact your subscribers regularly with their needs in mind

3 - Create and maintain an ongoing positive relationship with those subscribers.

After you have this system up and running, producing consistent profit, you can reinvest those profits into pay per click campaigns, ezine advertising, or other proven marketing methods.

------- SIDEBAR -------

A Simple Way To Create 7 Effective Autoresponder Messages

By Kevin Nunley © 2005

Email is the Net's most powerful marketing tool. And autoresponders are the best idea yet for marketing with email.

There is an old saying that the first ad rarely sells. You have to put your product, service, or idea in front of a prospect several times before she buys.

Autoresponders are designed specifically to get your message back to the same prospect over and over. That's why most autoresponder packages come in groups of 7 messages-- from the 7 message marketing rule that has been the rule in advertising since our grandparents were in diapers.

But what do you say in your 7 messages? We've written autoresponder series for hundreds of customers. Here is one method that always works.

This method is called REMIND 'EM. People don't read your sales letter as carefully as you think. They tend to skim. They read the first message, but miss the second and third message. The prospect may not tune in again until message five. It's so easy for people to completely miss your main points intended to lead to a sale.

It's important to *repeat* your main message over and over. Say it once, twice, three times in your first message. Say your main message in a different way in the second message. Re-cap your main point again in the third message. That way, people who aren't paying attention still get your important ideas.

Here's an example of how the "remind 'em" formula works for a 7 letter series promoting personal security products.

Message (1) The world is a dangerous place. You need new innovative security products to insure your protection.

Message (2) More details on how and why the world is a dangerous place. List places or situations that are especially threatening.

Message (3) Recap how the world is a dangerous place. Give more details on the key new security products that have come out.

Now start the middle section of messages. Note how they become more instructional telling people how to use the products.

Message (4) Protect yourself from the dangerous world with Product A. Here's how to use Product A. Here's why you would use it. Here's where to use it.

Message (5) Protect yourself with Product B. Here's how to use it. Here's what happy customers say about it. Tell a hair raising story of how Product B saved a customer's life.

Now comes the wrap-up and reminder, especially important for people who never got around to reading your earlier messages.

Message (6) Go back to your main sales letter used in numbers 1 and 2. Start all over reviewing your main points and highlighting your most popular products.

Message (7) This is the final follow-up email. I usually have it come two weeks to one month after message 6. It's designed to scoop up all the people who weren't ready to buy in the beginning, but may be ready to buy now.

It can start with "For the past few weeks I've been sending you important information about how to protect yourself in threatening situations. I know you are busy and may not have had time to consider how these products could improve your life and confidence." At that point, you again review your main points.

Repetition is the key to advertising success. Find creative ways to keep the main message going week after week and you will have as many customers as you can handle. Busy prospects simply need time for your message to sink in. As we used to say when I worked in media, it's just when you and your staff are sick to death of a commercial that the audience is just beginning to notice it.

About the Author:

Kevin Nunley writes autoresponder messages that get results. See his quality, affordable writing packages at http://DrNunley.com

Reach Kevin at kevin@drnunley.com

------- END SIDEBAR -------

Moving On Into The Future

Every few months (sometimes sooner), I review my entire autoresponder system, as well as my entire marketing system, to see if I can find ways to improve the system.

My goal is always to get more leverage - in other words to do less and get more!

And, I look for tasks and patterns that can be automated.

More often than not, I find more things I can automate. As you can imagine, my autoresponder system wasn't built in a day. It took some time to fill in the pieces. It took a few reviews before I was able to automate so much of it.

And your system may end up being different than mine. The important thing is to tweak the system until it perfectly suits the unique needs of your own business operations.

One Final Note About Getting the Right Autoresponder .....

Be very, very selective about the autoresponder service provider you decide to go with. There are autoresponder services available online that are absolutely free.

But when you're delivering vital information to paying customers, or to those whom you hope will buy, you want an autoresponder service that will not choke halfway through your message sequence, or that will send other people's ads along with your messages.

That's why I don't rely on free autoresponders, and hope that you won't either.

Doing so will only make your business appear amateurish, and lead your customers and prospects to see you as someone who is not serious enough about doing business to invest in professional tools.

For several years now I've relied on **ListMail Pro** to automate and manage all my mailing list functions.

ListMail Pro software is a .php/MySQL application that installs on your website, and it's yours for life. You get unlimited autoresponders and list management from now on and are never required to pay a monthly fee. Plus ongoing upgrades are always free of charge from the developer, Dean Wiebe.

On the other hand, online autoresponder services have come a long way in just the past couple of years. If you're not yet up to investing in and managing ListMail Pro - I suggest that you investigate **AWeber Communications.**
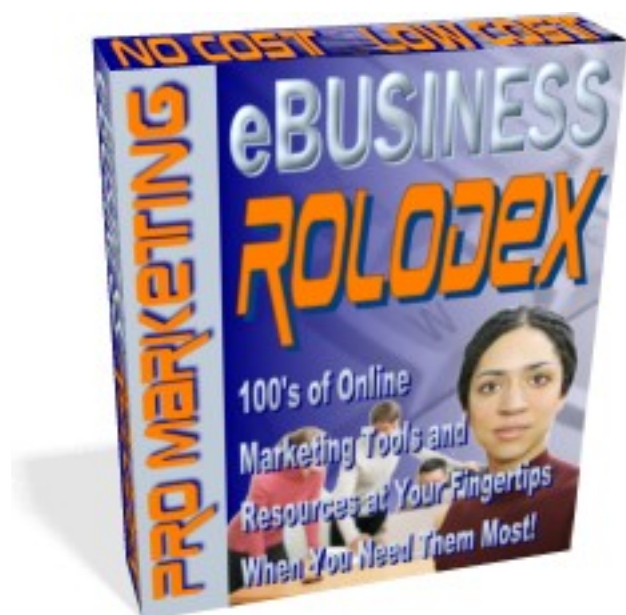
Of course, **AWeber** does charge a monthly fee (about $19.95 US as of this writing) but if you use the system properly, as we've talked about in this guide, it will end up being a wise investment that will more than pay for itself each month in terms of added profits to your business.

Now the ball is in your court. You can either take the system outlined here and run with it, or not. You can search the rest of your life for the "next big thing" and all the magic fairy dust that goes along with it, or you can start taking some positive action right now.

So the question is .... what are you going to **DO?**

After all, it's **your success** I've been talking about!

Dan B. Cauthron

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