

A SOUL PROPRIETOR GUIDEBOOK

Hot Response EMAILS

How to Get Your InBox Weary
Subscribers to Open, Read, and Take
Action On Your Marketing Emails



Brought to you by...

**Marty
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HOT RESPONSE EMAILS

Welcome!

By now, if you've been doing any email marketing at all, you've probably done everything you've been told to do when it comes to emailing your subscribers and building your list.

You've likely:

- ✓ **Identified your USP** (your unique selling position) and created a “profile” of your unique target subscriber
- ✓ **Offered free e-courses or free gifts** via your emails
- ✓ **Sent curiosity-piquing emails** driving them to your blog
- ✓ **Optimized your subject lines**
- ✓ **Filled your emails with a healthy mix** of valuable information, irresistible free gifts and paid offers

So you may be wondering, why aren't you getting a better response? And if your emails are doing okay in generating sales, then why can't they go into hyperdrive and turn into *your* personal cash machine — like it seems to happen for so many other people?

Well, I'm not going to pretend that this report will turn your list into a cash machine — but if you're willing to take action on the steps I've outlined here, I'd be willing

to bet that you'll see a noticeable difference in not only your response rates but your sales as well. How big this difference is, of course, depends on you.

Ever notice how some email marketers are wildly successful, and others — even those that their subscribers actually like — get skipped regularly, often with a guilty “I’ll read it later” and are quickly forgotten?

If this is happening to you, or if you just want to get more out of your list, then let’s see what we can do to change all that.

In this report, we’ll be taking a look at 4 crucial areas to turn up your email heat and create the “hot response” emails you want.

In the first section, I’m going to help you analyze your email business model and strategize how you’re going to custom-streamline and align your email marketing to your unique subscriber.

In the second section, we’ll take a long, hard look at where your “leaks” are — and how to plug them — and eliminate future “cracks”.

In the third section, we’ll look at the strategies that are capable of boosting your response rate.

Finally, we’ll take a look at 5 overlooked hot response secrets — and really, they shouldn’t be secrets, but so many people overlook these 5 powerful assets that they’re virtually buried amid a frenzy of strategies — and, as it turns out, they’re the “heart” of your email success, the little “extras” that put your efforts into the “muy caliente” range.

Are you ready? Let’s get to it!



Part 1: Streamline and Align

Time to answer some quick questions to determine if your email response expectations are realistic:

1. Are you getting any response at all? (i.e. sales, feedback)
2. Are you getting unsubscribes?
3. Do your unsubscribes exceed your sales?

No matter what you answered to any of these three questions, the first thing to do is... **relax.**

Unsubscribes are not a bad thing at all: It simply means that your subscribers are self-qualifying themselves, so that who you're left with are the more highly-responsive people who are more likely to buy from you. You won't be spending your time with what car salesmen call "tire kickers" — those who make noises like they're going to buy, demand concessions, ask endless questions... but then, never, ever close the deal.

Car salesmen hate these kind of people because they waste valuable time while keeping the salesmen from real, potential purchasers, who wind up likely being serviced by a competing car dealer. So you don't want any "tire kickers" on your list. Be glad when they take themselves off. (Do a little happy dance.)

However, if you're getting more unsubscribes than sales, it may be a tip-off that you don't know your subscribers as well as you should... or that you've been taking "facts" for granted that don't actually apply to your unique list.

Let's run a quick checklist on the basics...

Have you recently surveyed your target market to find out:

1. What they need
2. What they're missing
3. What they associate you with, when they think of you

4. If they remember who you are
5. If they read your emails — and why
6. If they don't read your emails — and why
7. What they wish you'd provide
8. Whether or not they'd be interested in helping you serve them by answering a more focused survey

Strategy One: Hot Response Survey

When you survey your readers, first ask them to participate by sending an email and see what response you actually do get. This is a great way to find out if your subscribers are actually paying attention.

Then write a short post about your survey on your blog, with a link to it. (You can set up and host it on a free survey creation site such as www.SurveyMonkey.com.)

Send people to your survey through your social networks and any forums you belong to, for additional input.

To take it up a notch, you could use one of the Facebook poll apps and repeat your survey on Facebook.

There are some key points you'll need to remember in order to make this an exercise that **connects** you with your readers, rather than annoying them or leaving them indifferent:

- 1. Keep the focus entirely on your subscriber** — with every single word. This survey isn't about "how you, subscriber, can help me, me, me", it's all about "what can I do to make *your* life easier? I'm really listening to you!"
- 2. Don't ask more than 10 questions** in your first survey. 10 should be your absolute maximum. (5 questions would be better.)
- 3. Make it as easy as possible for your subscriber or respondent to answer.** (You can include a list opt-in box, especially if you're sending this to the general public — but make getting on your list optional.)

And, to cement that strong connection you're trying to achieve, this last, upcoming point is the most important one of all...

- 4. Send them a “thank you” email** (if they're already a member of your list or have provided a contact email; be sure to ask them to *optionally* join your list if they aren't already on it)... containing an unannounced, high-value bonus.

This doesn't have to be a 50-page eBook or a complete set of CD's — it can be as simple as:

- A handy template
- A useful checklist
- A list of 10 invaluable resource links not commonly known

Resist the temptation to invite people to participate in your survey (or join your list) just to get your bonus — keep it as a genuine “thank you” surprise for those who are genuinely interested, and you'll gain a much tighter group of pre-qualified, loyal, potential buyers... who will certainly not forget your name in a hurry!

This does seem to fly in the face of conventional practice, where the “freebie” is the carrot, but your focus here is far different than merely adding numbers to your autoresponder list. It's narrowing your reach in order to expand your ROI (return on investment). It's about creating gratitude, instilling loyalty... and making sure people really remember you!

I've done this several ways when doing a survey. I've promised an “ethical bribe” right up front when asking my subscribers to respond to a survey, and I've offered a gift at the end of the survey, and I've not offered anything at all. I got about the same response no matter which one I tried.

What made the biggest difference in the responses I did get was the day I chose to send the survey out. Some days got more response than other days, and you don't want to be shy about sending out your invitation to participate in your survey more than once. Try different days and see what results you get on each day.

Strategy # 2: Splitting Your List

If your subscriber base is approaching or past three digits — 100 or more — consider creating more than one list. The more subscribers you gain, the more you're liable to pick up ones interested in slightly different areas of your services or products. Splitting your lists into more tightly-focused ones allows you to:

1. Not annoy, bore or distract subscribers interested in “group X” issues with information better suited to “group Y”
2. Up the chances that your emails will actually be opened

It's worth noting one other quirk of human behavior: People who decide not to open two or three of your emails are **creating a habit** — the habit of ignoring your emails!

And all it takes is the memory of one annoying or boring email, before they start doing this. Putting them on a more focused list can help decrease or eliminate that potential “gap”.

Q: “How do I get people moved over to my new sub-list?”

A: That depends on your autoresponder service. Some Autoresponders allow you to manually move them; with others, you're forced to ask your list members to re-opt-in on the new list.

This latter maneuver is risky in that you may actually lose some subscribers in the process... but again, you'll only be losing those who are not really interested in you and your products or services; those who falsely inflate your stats and waste your resources.

If you send out an email letting your subscribers know you're “updating” your list and giving them a chance to stay on board by re-opting-in to your new list, the pay-off is that — again — what you're left with are truly interested subscribers: Ones who are **psychologically impelled to pay more attention** to your emails because they made a conscious choice to stay on board with you.

Two things to note:

- ▶ It's only work in the beginning, when you're setting up your multiple lists (and if your virtual assistant does that for you, it's a non-issue).
- ▶ You can still send out emails to all members of your multiple lists (providing, of course, that the subject is relevant to all).

In other words, you don't have to jump through hoops always sending out separate emails to each list. Sometimes you will — but sometimes, one size really will fit all. Your email service provider will prevent duplicate emails going out to someone on more than one of your lists.

Also, use a **graduated list system**. That is, once your freebie seeker has actually bought one of your paid offers, don't keep them forever cruising in a circular holding pattern, seeing the same offers repeated over and over, even after they've bought!

This annoys people: It seems impersonal and sends a strong message that you likely didn't notice the sale.

Instead, advance your subscriber up your sales funnel, by removing them from the list they are on and moving them to a customer-only list, so that your offers and emails flow naturally, responding to your subscriber's growth.

If you use a shopping cart, like Easy Web Automation or 1 Shopping Cart to manage your emails and your sales, you can automatically have a subscriber removed from one list, or more, and moved to another.

You can do the same with lists in Aweber automatically, too. Plus, Aweber ties in to your 1 Shopping Cart account if you so desire. Check with these providers and they will explain how to do this.

Of course, if you're using a service that does not do this automatically, then you or your VA will need to do this manually. While this can be time consuming — especially if you make a lot of sales at once — it is worth the time and effort to do it as it makes your operation look far more professional.

Strategy #3: Use Joint Venture Partners

Approach a **super-affiliate** (not necessarily yours, yet). A super-affiliate is a person who tends to heavily promote your stuff and therefore sells a lot of it for you. Offer them a higher-than-normal commission rate in exchange for reviewing and promoting your product or service to their list.

Make it easy for them by providing them with their own ready-to-use affiliate resources including a personal, direct download page, so they can access and review your product at their own pace.

Often, if you demonstrate that you know what you're doing and make it easy to check out your product (plus offering your flattering, higher-than-normal-conversion payout) the super-affiliate will capture you many more leads and sales by sending out their own power-packing emails, while you're busy working on your next set of autoresponder messages.

And of course, to make it even better for them, you're also doing everything else you can to boost your visibility, credibility and response rates, including:

- ▶ **PPL (pay per lead) or PPC (pay per click) advertising campaigns**
based around a single, long-tailed keyword
- ▶ **Low-cost ezine advertising** — if you choose the right ezine, this can be a particularly powerful tool, making use of someone else's list
- ▶ **Social networking buzz creation** (Facebook, Twitter)
- ▶ **Social bookmarking** (StumbleUpon, Digg, Reddit, Delicious)
- ▶ **YouTube video creation** — this can be another great buzz-maker.
- ▶ **SEO** (it still counts!)
- ▶ **Forum Special Offers**
- ▶ **Article Marketing**
- ▶ **Press Releases**

So what's the major reason you're doing all of this, instead of relying solely on your own emails (however hot you can mix the sauce)?

It's simple. You are using the goodwill that your Joint Venture Partner has garnered with his own list to bring attention to yours. And remember, the emails must be sent on your behalf BY your partner, to HIS list.

Have you ever received an email in your inbox from someone who's acting like they know you... usually saying something along the lines of: "Tara, It's Your Turn to Grab my System!" from Joe Q. Weeble?

You stare at the email, look at the name of the sender and mutter: "Who in tarnation is Joe Q. Weeble?"

Then you hit delete, half-convinced it must be spam, because you'd remember a guy with a name like Weeble if you'd signed up for his list... and you *don't* remember him.

So if you've partnered with Joe Q. Weeble you don't want him emailing to YOUR list — nobody would recognize who he is and that's bad for you. Rather, you want him emailing to HIS list recommending you.

Remember, too, that you can target your emails as perfectly as pie... but if you don't have some social proof and relationship behind you — if your subscribers don't remember your name, or (worse) get you mixed up with that other guy who "shouts" in caps all the time and tries to sell outdated Re-Sale material... your hot response emails are never going to be read.

It's not enough to just streamline your targeting: **Make sure you also streamline and coordinate your promotion, too.**

Part 2: Plugging the Leaks

This is going to be the largest and most extensive section of our Hot Response Email creation: Unfortunately, there are many invisible leaks that can prevent your response rate from helping your business grow.

No one ever deliberately sets out to sabotage their own email campaigns. In fact, most people do their best to include every strategy and tip they can find.

The trouble is, you can overdo the “tactics” to the point of taking the humanity and individuality out of your emails. You can also get over-familiar with your own work.

You may take it for granted that people know things about you — like who you are! — or that they’ll remember your last offer. You may think you’ve adequately covered something, when you haven’t. Or you’ve done everything you need to, when you’ve got some “holes” in your process, right, left and center.

So let’s dive right in at the deep end...

If you focus solely on getting your reader to open your email, you’re creating the biggest roadblock to creating “hot response” emails.

The fact is... there are **three components** to having a fantastic response rate, and you need to pay *equal* attention to each one:

1. Simply getting your email into your reader’s actual inbox
2. Motivating your reader to open your email
3. Compelling your reader to take action

If you concentrate only on #2 — or even on #2 and #3 — you may be missing your biggest source of email “leaks” —

Making sure your reader actually receives what you send!

Step One: Getting your Emails Safely Delivered

You may have written the most amazing email in the world — even chosen a great subject line — but if it contains any word that is “flagged” as spam, it’s going straight to your reader’s junk folder, sent there by their spam filter, before they ever see it... No matter how innocent your motive was in using that word!

Likewise, if you use HTML in your email creation, there are all sorts of pitfalls you’ll need to avoid.

Here are 6 common fatal email creation and subject line mistakes:

1. Triggering the spam filters. Two sure-fire ways to do this: Writing subject lines in ALL CAPS... and using exclamation points!!!!!! Combine the two, and you're doomed — at least as far as spam filters are concerned. All that's missing is the loud jacket and shady used-car lot!

Make sure you avoid spam filter “trigger” words such as:

- Hottest
- Limited time only!
- You're already approved
- FREE
- Best
- New
- On Sale
- Gigantic Sale!
- Trial offer
- Per Day [month, week]
- Deal
- You win
- You're a winner!
- Claim your
- For only \$
- Remove
- Why wait
- Biggest

And, of course, any word that has to do with gambling or adult content will get your email sent straight to the junk folder.

As you can see, words that are quite innocent — or words that are, in fact,

relevant and appropriate — can be victims of email client spam filters... and there's not one, definitive “words to avoid” list available, unfortunately. (The one above is just a sampling; and that's just the tip of the iceberg! Use your Spam Checker when sending out emails.)

Here are the other five delivery mistakes...

2. Trying to fool the spam filters by mixing visually similar characters into forbidden words.

In recent years, the spam filter algorithms have been adjusted to catch onto this typical spammer's trick --- Example: F*R*E*E*, De4l --- but not just spammer's use this trick. You'll see it in emails from legitimate marketers, too, thinking that they are doing something that will get their message through, when just the opposite is true.

3. Sending only graphic images.

Another common spammer's trick is to put 'forbidden' words into visual graphic form, so the reader sees and reads the words displayed in the graphic, but these words are “invisible” to spam filters, which only read text. If your email contains only graphic images, you can be assured that it will go straight to the junk folder.

4. Using Java scripting, attachments, Flash or ActiveX

is a “red flag” to email spam filters that a potentially dangerous virus might be hidden in your email. Some will warn the reader and ask you if you want to open the email anyway; others will simply send it straight to your junk folder. Even if readers are given the option to open such an email, unless they know you really well and trust you completely, most will still “err” on the side of caution — and delete.

5. Using Outlook Express with HTML.

It won't provide a “plain text” alternative if your subscriber isn't set up for HTML-based emails or ezines. But, you never want to send from your own email account anyway, so hopefully this point is moot by now.

6. Not testing your email messages in different email clients. It's a good idea to create email addresses with major email clients strictly for testing delivery, (@yahoo.com, @live.com, @gmail.com, etc. so you can always see what your email is going to look like on the other end. People use a variety of email clients for reading their emails and you want yours to look their best AND avoid the spam filters.)

Once you've plugged or prevented these heartbreakingly unnecessary delivery leaks, it's time to move on to the second stage...

...Inspiring your reader to open your mail.

Step Two: Motivating your reader to open your email

You've heard all the traditional tips for getting readers to open your emails: Creating a catchy subject line, keep the subject line short, trigger their curiosity.

But there are two other components that beat out all the traditional methods when it comes to getting readers to open your emails and they are:

**Knowing exactly who you're speaking to...
and actually speaking to them.**

Think about it: If you're writing to your best friend, Karen, chances are, the subject line won't say "You'll Be Sorry You Opened This!" or "Why I'm Not Going to Vermont This Year". Instead, you're going to write in a much more conversational style; something along the lines of: "Well, Vermont's out this summer". That might not seem exciting — and it's certainly neither catchy nor grammatically complete — but you know that your friend Karen will instantly realize, from the word "Vermont", that you're telling her the annual camping trip, where your two families meet up in the White Mountains, is not possible for you this year.

And because it affects her, and she cares why you can't go, she'll open up your email immediately.

The challenge is to translate this same immediacy and unspoken relevance over to “business” email subject lines.

Unfortunately, there are more factors that affect whether or not subscribers open their email, and you may not be aware of them.

Let’s take a look at 7 common mistakes that can decrease your email marketing responses faster than any other:

Mistake # 1: Pacing — getting it wrong.

This is one of the more difficult areas to master because there are really no black-and-white rules for how many emails to send out per month, and what sort of interval to insert between each.

There are some general guidelines, but mostly it involves being sensitive to “the conversation”, stopping to “listen” and getting to know your readers and their own, natural, organic rhythms.

These tips will help you fine-tune your pacing without having to rely on “rules” that don’t really work that well, anyway...

- ▶ **Give your readers time to process information.** Yes, it’s important to keep the relationship going immediately after sign-up or purchase... but the worst thing you can do is bombard your new subscriber with multiple emails before she’s had time to even think about the *first* piece of information you sent.

Remember it is a *conversation*; and people who consistently talk over the top of others quickly lose any favorable first impressions they’ve made.

- ▶ **Put yourself in your reader’s shoes:** If you’d just received a lesson requiring you to learn new information that throws you a steep learning curve, how would you feel if someone wrote and said “time to take step two” before you’d even been able to set aside time to implement step one. (And they did that repeatedly!)

- ▶ **Don't add to Information overload.** Most times, people *want* to read your emails — they just never seem to find the time!

You need to email:

- **Regularly.** A “Friday Freebie” or “Tuesday Tip” that always provides a simple, juicy, single tip gives them a lot more to look forward to than six versions, all crammed together, of: “Did you get my message, Sandi?” (guaranteed to make Sandi feel harassed and hurried)
- **Not more than twice a week.** (Unless there's something really special or truly urgent you need to let them know about.)
- **Not less than once a week, if you can possibly help it!** You want them to remember who you are — but never, ever email just for that reason alone! Make sure you really do have something worthwhile, interesting or plain old entertaining to say. (It helps if you make a plan, then you'll be certain to always have something worthwhile to share.)
- ✓ **There is one rule that's usually good to observe:**
The more frequently you email, the shorter your emails should be.

And if you have difficulty coming up with ideas, use a quality PLR pack of autoresponder messages tailored to your niche to spark ideas.

Pick out the “gems” among these messages — even if it's just one paragraph in one message, a single sentence in another — and rewrite these into your own, original messages, paying attention to the sequence. (In fact, doing this can help you “learn” proper Autoresponder sequencing.)

- **Maybe Daily (but with caution).** If you're sensitive to your audience and you've created the right dynamic and “conversation”, you can write daily, as one successful copywriter does — but if that's your choice, keep those daily letters far more casual, short, chatty, and entertaining than conventional guides would suggest.

You can even include a download link and call to action in these daily emails (or a link to your blog)... just remember to also match your casual and straightforward tone in your call-to-action.

Download links like these work well in a P. S. (P. S. “By the way, I teach a whole course in “Oil Painting for Beginners”. If taking a course like that online appeals to you, here’s my link — feel free to check it out...” — it’s as simple as that!

- ▶ **Pay attention to — and actively seek — feedback from your paying subscribers.** These are the golden eggs in your basket — those hallowed “loyal, repeat customers” who come back time and time again to see what you’ve got to offer. Don’t overlook the chance to further refine your offerings to their budget, taste — and progression through your sales funnel.
- ▶ **Make sure you have an exit or retention offer ready for unsubscribers.** Think of their needs right up until the last second (and beyond)... And if you can’t help them, point them to someone who can!

If you’re an affiliate of the person you’re sending them to, you’ll still make money on future sales.

And if they’re leaving because they’re not ready for you right now, they may — like Arnold — be back!

- ▶ **Don’t ignore the power of signature lines.** Doing so can turn the heat of your email response down to “barely lukewarm” — yet making use of the email signature line is one of the most common sins of omission by email marketers!

Treat your signature like an article-marketing resource box: Make it as powerful as your subject line, if not more so. Put your “reader-relevant” links under your name, along with whatever contact information you wish to share. And remember, making contact information (like your phone) freely available boosts trust.

By “reader-relevant links”, you might include links for:

- Your main site (one which holds a “directory” to all your offerings like my martymarsh.com site.
- Specific sales or squeeze pages you think they might be excited about visiting.

- More detailed information on your blog.
- A standard “freebie” you supply (in case they need to quickly download it again, to refresh their memories about your area of expertise).

- **Don't bombard people with your offer.** There are some marketers who take the attitude: “Alright. I've given you my freebie — now give me my sale. Gimme my sale. Gimme my sale...” At least, that's the feeling their emails soon create. (And you'll usually find these marketers have a very poor opinion of their average subscriber and a correspondingly high one of themselves!)
- **Don't continually ask for feedback.** Especially don't use it as leverage or a ploy to create interaction! I've unsubscribed from more than one marketer (initially impressive) whose emails have all become requests for feedback or to leave comments on their blog.

While asking for the comments is great (if it's an issue really timely to your niche), don't pester people. And don't do what these marketers did — forget to make it about your reader. (These were all: “You owe me. Now give!”).

Of course, anytime you've published an article in an email that invites dialog or participation, by all means ask your readers to leave comments. The point here is that you should not be sending an email that just says, “hey, go make comments at my blog.”

- **Take into account the experience level of your subscriber.** A new marketer who is also having to learn the basics of running a small business is going to take far more time to assimilate information, plus they'll need a lot more step-by-step hand-holding and prompting.

On the other hand, a wealthy client with 30 years business background behind her is just going to be irritated by too much information. The sort of tips she'll want you to share with her will all be short ones, focusing on saving her time or giving her links and resources she needs right at that second.

Pacing is truly more of an art than a science, but observe the best practices above and you'll soon find yourself in harmony with your subscriber's rhythms. And that's *true* “listening” and dialogue!

Mistake # 2: Being afraid to send reminders.

Many marketers either forget to send a reminder about an expiring offer... or are afraid to “bug” their subscriber.

Sending a really short, friendly, simple reminder that your offer is about to expire tomorrow isn't rushing them: *It's being helpful.*

It's far different from hounding them to buy your new traffic course after you've only just sent them their first tip about traffic.

If you've targeted your subscribers correctly, they may actually be planning to buy — even eager — but are simply waiting for money to clear or come in. Life gets busy, and people forget dates (and sometimes product offers) so assume you are doing them a service by sending a short, friendly day-before reminder as well as a short, friendly one on the morning the offer expires.

If you're up-front about it and don't try to mystify or intrigue them with your subject line (this is not the place to do that), they'll skip your reminder without rancor if they don't need your offer... and be really grateful to receive it, if they do.

TIP: When sending reminders, remember not to give your subject line titles like “Final Notice!” — It will make you sound like a bill collector or spammer. (In fact, some email filters may actually send your message straight to the spam or junk folder when they encounter that particular phrase.)

And never, ever, ever include the word “URGENT!” in your email subject lines unless:

- a) You want to notify your subscriber that her car is being towed away **As You Speak!**
- b) You've discovered she's holding the winning lottery ticket and it's blowing out her window.
- c) Her pet hamster has gotten himself trapped in a plastic bag, and is about to suffocate.

In other words, it has to be about your subscriber — it has to be **urgent to her.**

You don't know what's going on in her personal life. Your email subject may be "urgent" to you — but someone who's scrambling to pay the mortgage and hang onto her home while looking after a dying mother is not going to appreciate being told that if she doesn't claim your latest freebie now it will be the worst thing that ever happens to her.

She already knows what "urgent" truly means.

Mistake # 3: Assuming your reader knows who you are and what your latest offer was.

Even if she remembers who you are, you need to remember that even your biggest fan can get confused and forget who was offering what, and when that offer expires — another reason to send that reminder!

Which brings us to our next potential hazard...

Mistake # 4: Confusing your reader.

This most often happens when you try to present, say, more than three offers in a week, with a separate email series promoting each one. It also happens when you wear more than one "hat" and your reader isn't sure which one you're wearing (another reason for splitting your lists into focused-interest groups).

Not only can multiple emails for different sites or offers cause confusion, but too many emails will annoy anyone.

Creating reader confusion by having more than one list crossing over can also be caused by "autoresponder blindness" — something that occurs when you aren't aware of the emails your subscriber is receiving.

Just one more reason why contracting out to that highly-organized VA who will keep track of all that stuff!

Mistake # 5: Over-using old strategies.

One marketer I'm subscribed to regularly uses the "Oops — my mistake!" ploy.

Newsflash: Almost no one believes this particular gambit any more, so even if you have made a genuine mistake, don't think it's the greatest marketing opportunity since sliced bread.

Instead, if you do make a legitimate mistake, repeat your previous subject line, adding something straightforward like “- Link correction”.

Mistake # 6: Forgetting that it's not about creating the “perfect opportunity” to email.

It's about keeping the conversation going and chatting with your subscriber the way you might with your favorite sister or best friend.

It's about helping them.

Mistake # 7: Not emailing consistently.

This is the true hallmark of the amateur. The typical pattern (if one can call it a “pattern”) is to send a flurry of emails for a week or two... then disappear off the face of the earth for six weeks.

It's easy enough to do. We have it all planned, then life throws a curveball at us. Sometimes, not even a very hard curveball... but it's enough to de-rail us on our course towards email supremacy. This is where your:

- ▶ Business Plan/Sales Funnel
- ▶ Autoresponder
- ▶ VA

...can help you.

The best way to make sure you never get caught out in the “feast or famine” cycle is to plan and implement. Make sure your autoresponder is pre-programmed with short mini courses, tips and offers for your list members.

If you find that confusing and a VA is beyond your means right now, purchase a quality pack of email autoresponder PLR — it will have a good “sequence” pro-

grammed for you; one that will keep your readers going for a few weeks to months, depending at what frequency you pre-program them.

Just be sure to re-write them in your own words, in a tone and style your readers can totally relate to.

Step Three: Compelling your reader to take action

There are two main areas to be aware of, here:

1. Giving them a strong, overwhelming reason to click through on your link
2. Not providing that link or call-to-action!

Most people remember to include both links and calls to action... and then forget the “strong, overwhelming reason”.

Not only do you want your reader to feel she has no choice but to click through, but that she has to do it now.

Two particularly effective strategies to start with:

- 1. Provide a limited-time coupon.** It's important to make sure your shopping cart and payment processor allow you to do this!

Providing a coupon does two things:

- It makes your reader feel privileged — they're being rewarded for being a member of your “inner circle”
- It provides that incentive to buy now, if it expires within a short time period.

- 2. Trigger an emotional response.** If you can set off that gut-level, intense, emotional reaction, they'll be clicking as soon as they've hurriedly checked their PayPal balances. Emotions that trigger action are:

- Fear (insecurity)
- Anxiety

- Eagerness
- Excitement

Not very positive, I know — but that’s human nature for you. Anxiety can produce other powerful feelings such as greed or need. Eagerness can override the logical control center of the brain to trigger the “buy now” instinct. And fear can have people scrambling to purchase faster than a street rod on a greased track.

We’re not talking about deliberately fear-mongering here: We’re talking about tapping into what she’s already afraid of — and showing her you have the solution.

And that all goes back to... really knowing your subscriber, right?

In our next section, we’ll get away from the nasty negatives and power up to go straight for those “hot responses”...

Part 3: Boosting Your Response Rates

While you can do miracles with emails alone if you’re finely tuned to your subscriber, make sure you maximize your subscriber response with other strategies designed to boost recognition, trust and interaction.

Strategy # 1: Promotion

Once you’ve narrowed your focus and either confirmed that your targeting is sound, or adjusted to fit your subscribers’ interests more closely, don’t waste all that good work. Boost it with extra streams of promotion — an investment that’s worth every second!

The first and most often overlooked way to boost your email campaign:

1. Use your affiliates!

Get your affiliates excited about boosting your email efforts with their own, by

convincing them that the rewards of focusing on your business are well worth their time invested.

In addition to the more commonly-talked-about “contest” strategy, three drop-dead, simple tactics work even better in this scenario:

- a) Create a high conversion freebie item or special offer *targeted to your affiliate’s list* — one that will make them look like a hero to *their* subscribers as well as providing them with a choice incentive (e.g. 100% commission rate — well worth it if you gain new, targeted subscribers from their list, and the two of you can look forward to a beneficially symbiotic, “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours” relationship
- b) Rewarding your affiliate for leads as well as sales, whenever they send a new subscriber over your way
- c) Thanking your highest-producing affiliates and acknowledging their sales and importance to your team.

Taking care of and appreciating your affiliates with as much thought and enthusiasm as you bestow upon your subscribers creates a win-win situation for everyone... except your true competitors!

You see, while your delighted affiliates are throwing 110% into promoting your offers and sending out support emails... they’re not promoting your competitor.

2. Pay attention to what works.

This involves tracking your emails, and seeing which emails pull in the greatest response rates.

Once you’ve determined that, ask and analyze:

- What made these particular emails so effective?
- What was the common denominator?
- Did they solve a problem? Teach? Entertain?
- If they solved a problem, what sort did they solve?

Asking yourself qualitative questions like these helps you start to see the patterns in your readers' preferences and behavior. It helps you determine what your "hot" sellers are.

Then, analyze what brings in revenue out of these offers. Make the best use of your experience, judgment and resources — both for yourself, and for your subscribers.

3. Make sure your name and "hat" appear in the "From" section of your email.

Not only does this eliminate confusion if you market from several different businesses, it also reassures filters that your emails are not spam.

Example: If your name was Berna Frumly and you sell pom-pom kits on your "Kids Kraft" site and antique lace patterns from your "Victorian Vintage" site, make sure your email "From" lines read like this (with subject lines):

Berna Frumly: Vintage Lace (New Lace Pattern)

Berna Frumly: Kids Krafts (3 Rainy Day Suggestions)

Sure, you're dealing with the generic "crafts" market — but the two niches are *completely different* in clientele.

If your reader happens to be on both lists but recently she's given up lace making in favor of the simpler hobby, she'll pre-qualify herself by only clicking on the "3 Rainy day suggestions" from your "Kids Kraft" email... whereas if your email was just from "Berna Frumly", she might not click on either because she has no way of knowing which site you're mailing from. (And you can pretty much bet she's suffering from typical marketer's overload — she's inbox weary!)

Which brings us, at last, to...

Part 4: 5 Overlooked Hot Response Secrets

Secret # 1: Use social networking to boost your email response rates

Take a page from social networking, which has been hailed as the hottest trend of the 21st century (thanks to the fact that 75% of the planet has a mobile device, according to multiple surveys). It's all about the dialogue. It's not you sending out an email and practicing "set it and forget it" — it's about you being in touch with your friends (the people on your list), ready to listen to them — and to help.

It would be unrealistic for you to just sit there waiting for questions and comments to flood in after you've hit the "send" button, especially when your subscriber list has grown into three digits or more — but make sure there's always some way they can reach someone for help, even if its from a virtual assistant or (at the absolute least) interactive software such as a help desk.

Here's a big secret, so you don't have to spend hours a day writing responses to emails...

- ▶ Use social networking as an email response aid: Interacting with a follower on Facebook and Twitter cuts down on them sending you actual email questions while reassuring your follower that he is a valued part of your circle and that you and he are engaged in conversation and a relationship.

The beauty of these two social networks? You not only can, but are expected to, respond with the shortest of one-line answers. And it really does constitute "connection" with people's emotions — and emotions are more important than logic — when it comes to building trust, whereas the funny thing is, psychologically, if you answer a question via an email with only a one-line answer, you risk them thinking you're being cavalier or uncaring.

So create that Facebook page with the "Discussion" tab, where your other subscribers will bond together in a community and help you answer their peers' problems — all in

your name. Get into the habit of taking extra time to make quick comments on your subscribers' posts, when checking out your social networks — and make sure they're genuine comments from your heart and experience.

These don't have to be “deep” or show off your knowledge: Even as simple a phrase as “Layla, that works for me!” will please your fans if you're already a niche authority figure (and engender friendly connection if you're still at an “equal” footing with your peers).

If your subscribers comment on one of your posts, respond. Comment back — take the time to acknowledge them in some way (even if it's just to press Facebook's “Like” button).

Use their names: It just feels friendlier if you happen to be “Layla”, and you see: “Layla, that works for me!” rather than just a curt: “Works for me.” People like to hear their names (and even more when they know their name wasn't generated by an autoresponder).

Whatever you do, however, make sure it's not contrived: Always put the people first, ahead of the strategy or results you want. The only calculated ingredient you should be consciously adding is the extra few minutes it takes to make those Facebook or Twitter comments.

Secret # 2: Repetition

Another fascinating psychological fact — people are reassured by repetition. It creates a feeling of:

- professionalism
- organization
- security
- ease

We're not talking about the sort of repetition where they get a repeat of the same offer they bought only two weeks previously (that's called “badly needing a good

VA to handle your subscriber lists”). We’re talking about:

- Sending emails on the same day of the week or month
- Alternating tips, freebies, offers and courses so that they seem random (but are in fact regularly rotated)
- Keeping the “flow” going, so they neither forget you nor feel under siege with a barrage of messages

Consider also repeating your opt-in or download links just as a reminder that if they didn’t get your freebie, or forgot about it, here’s another chance.

And, if your subscribers like and trust you, they won’t hold it against you if your latest freebie download link (or blog post link; or paid product link) always appears in your third paragraph and is always repeated under your signature and in your P.S.

And one less-common repetition tip: Repeat your opening again at the end, if that works naturally.

Remember: “Repetition = Reassurance”

Secret # 3: Include an extra call to action.

Give your subscriber an option to forward your e-mail on to friends, relatives or peers they think might be interested.

Be careful not to contravene the CAN-SPAM act, however, by hinting at or directly asking them to sign others up: Your request should be couched more along the lines of: “Feel free to forward this offer to your fellow glass bottle ship enthusiasts, if you think they’d enjoy it.”

Taking that simple, extra step may sound obvious... but it’s amazing how many people don’t do it; and how much you can sometimes increase your conversion and opt-in rates, when you do.

Secret # 4: Trust

That ought to be no secret — but it's the key to whether or not your emails will:

- Annoy
- Please
- Be opened
- Be deleted, or unread

Trust occurs when you focus on your subscriber and her fears, needs and — above all — dreams. When you act the way a friend would.

But there's one more step you need to take, to build trust you can bank on...

... **Be accessible.**

This doesn't mean you need to provide unpaid personal coaching: nor that you have to open your home, day or night.

They just have to **feel you care.**

Acknowledge their communications; respond promptly (don't put it off for "later"). If your business is too big to respond personally, have your trusted VA — one who identifies strongly with your business — take care of them for you.

If their problem is too complex for an unpaid response, answer one single, key point in their (probably long) email... then refer them to a paid product (either yours or someone else's) to cover the subject in more depth. (If you're an affiliate of the "someone else", so much the better — but that shouldn't be your main criteria for choosing that particular expert!

Secret # 5: The Extra Twist

Always be looking for ways to jack your responses and emails up a notch. What "third alternative" can you offer? What extra twist can you provide that makes your emails the most prized ones that enter into your subscriber's inbox?

- What added value can you share that will surprise her with delight?
- What extra bonus can you offer your subscriber that no one else has thought up?
- How can you make your emails more useful?
- What are you missing?
- What extra can you give that competitors simply can't?

One sure-fire way to give it that extra juicy twist: Pay it forward. Be the person who provided the extra morsel of generosity when everyone else was being prudent and “professional.” Help your subscribers on their way up... and a small but crucial percentage will help you in the future, when you need it. Or pass on your legacy of strong core values.

It's a strange truth: The more tightly you hold on, the less reward you get.

Do generous things like referring your subscriber to a coach more suited to his needs than you may be.

Do it without hope of reward, and reward will most likely find you when you least expect it... from your former subscriber; from your competitor to whom you referred that client; from brand new subscribers that either your former subscriber or his new coach refer back to you, in a spirit of true reciprocity.

Let go of your fears. Be yourself. That's the greatest gift you can give everyone (including you) when you throw yourself into your email marketing. It's not the manipulators or the imitators who get to the top: It's those few unique, shining stars who dare to be themselves.

Believe in your subscribers... and they'll believe in you. (In fact, that trust and liking easily helps overcome any email marketing “mistake” you might ever make.)

Believe in your subscribers... and watch your response rates soar.

Put these email marketing best practices into practice and you'll see your response rates soar — even from people who are inbox weary.

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