

Introduction

Email Marketing—The Only Bailout Your Business Needs was originally published as a series of posts beginning in June of 2009 on SalesNexus founder, Craig Klein's, blog [Sell, Sell, Sell!](#) This e-Book combines all 5 posts.

The theme for the "Email Marketing—The Only Bailout Your Business Needs" series came from years of work with small and medium sized businesses in developing sales and marketing processes and automation systems around those processes.

In our work with thousands of businesses small and large, we've found that many companies want to leverage the power of email marketing but, are held up by two common obstacles:

- **This should not take 6 months or bust your budget!**
- **You don't have to spend any more money.**
- **You don't have to fire anyone.**
- **You don't have to hire anyone.**

- They're afraid of being perceived as a spammer by their customers
- They just know how to write and create the emails

The good news is that both of these obstacles are very easy to overcome. It just takes a bit of knowledge and the desire to grow your business and deepen relationships with prospects and customers.

There is much to be gained from starting simple with a very basic campaign of emails to nurture existing clients or leads.

This ebook will help you see the road more clearly and hopefully make the obstacles seem less daunting. The process is outlined in the chapters included here. A huge increase in sales is attainable in the next few months. We hope you'll try. Of course, we're here to help. Reach out to us as described in

the final section if you'd like to discuss you're unique challenges and opportunities.

Won't They Think I'm Spamming? What are the requirements under current regulations when sending out emails to lists of customers? How can I be sure I'm doing things correctly? How can I make sure my customers are not annoyed by my emails and make them a valued resource to customers?

If At First You Don't Succeed, Email, Email, Email Again! Create ongoing campaigns that touch prospects and customers repeatedly to increase brand awareness and establish yourself as an expert in your field and a trusted resource for your customers.

Lead Nurturing—Automate It and Sell More. You and your sales team are focused on customers who are buying right now. Stay focused on business you can close now while staying in touch with leads that aren't quite ready just yet through automation.

Client Touches—Post Sell, Up Sell and Retain. Email Marketing is not just for generating new business, its also a powerful tool to engage and retain existing customers. Create campaigns that keep customers loyal and increase revenues from existing customers.

Getting Started—Put Your List Together and Launch Your Campaign. How to collect your list of email recipients and get your first campaign underway quickly and easily.

About the Author and SalesNexus.com

Email Marketing is probably the least expensive marketing initiative you'll invest in this year.



Won't They Think I'm Spamming?

If you run a small business or run marketing or sales within a medium sized business, you're going to remember this year. 2009 will go down in the history books as one of the most financially tumultuous years ever. There seems to be a never ending parade of businesses going out of business! And whoever is left standing, including many prominent corporations, institutions—even state and local governments—are asking for bailouts.

With the sort of numbers the politicians are throwing around, you've surely found yourself wondering, "How can my business get some of that money or at least benefit from all these bailouts?" The trouble is that most small and medium sized businesses aren't on any politician's radar. If you wait for help... you won't be around long enough to find out you're not going to get any.

If you're an entrepreneur, be entrepreneurial. Sometimes you have to create something out of nothing! Or at least take what you do have and make the most of it. Today that means squeezing the most sales out of the fewest marketing dollars. It's crucial to structure your business so that every contact, prospect and lead is properly positioned to become a customer.

The good news is that all businesses have a gold mine right under their noses. Done right, mining that gold does not require a huge budget. In fact, Email Marketing is probably the least expensive marketing initiative you'll invest in this year. But the rewards can be massive!

To fully comprehend the raw power of Email Marketing in your business, it helps to understand that the way we all buy things has changed radically with the growth of the Internet and the availability of information.

When you decide to buy a car, you've probably always done a bit of research, test driving, visiting various dealerships. Basically you shop around until you are ready to buy.

Traditionally, salespeople at car dealers pounce on every new customer that walks on the lot and try to close. They've got mouths to feed and quotas to meet. We all know the top car salespeople get your phone number and call you every few weeks to update you with information so that when you are ready to buy, you will turn to them.

And that's how things work in most businesses. Leads come in and sales people pounce on them to try and close them immediately. Even the simple follow up sales call a few weeks later is a rare occurrence. In fact, you really do WANT your sales focus to be on closing business in the here and now. But every single prospect that has contact with your business could be a customer someday. Unfortunately, most don't become customers quickly. In most B2B sales organizations, a close rate of 20% is darn good. That's 80% that don't buy... but might, someday. And the undeniable fact is, the great majority of sales are made after multiple contacts.

So, how can you create an effective and affordable way to make multiple contacts with that 80% of non buyers on a consistent basis—in a way that will create more sales and increase the growth of your business? If you can create a "hopper" that we can throw all the leads you don't close on the

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first try into—and “nurture” them so that even 5% of them eventually come back to your business to buy, that’s a 25% increase in sales! And this hopper can be created easily and cost effectively.

We’ve created “Email Marketing—The Only Bailout Your Business Needs” because email marketing is such a POWERFUL lever tool and is so UNDER UTILIZED. Most business people are overly concerned about the perception their prospects may have of them and legal compliance. They just aren’t sure how to create effective email campaigns. And so they get stuck and do nothing. We all can guarantee the results of doing nothing.

WARNING

If you are interested in learning how you can send purely promotional email messages to a list of people that have never heard of you, these messages are not geared to help you.

Your bailout answer has just arrived in the form of simple, inexpensive steps you can begin today to create an email marketing campaign that will get results, enhance your reputation in your industry and stay on the right side of the law. Just follow the guidelines outlined here, you will find email marketing to be far more powerful and easy than you ever imagined.

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Here, we are focusing on how to build the proper long term relationship with the suspects, prospects, contacts and leads you already have but are not maximizing. If you would like to build relationships with people who have an interest in your products and services or the realistic potential to be interested in them in the future and establish yourself as a trusted expert, then please read on!

OK. Let's get started! First and foremost, let's clear the air about what is and isn't spam and what the law does and doesn't require.

Of course, you don't want to be perceived as a spammer by your customers and prospects and you don't want to get yourself into any legal trouble either.

The good news is that the legal requirements are not too stringent or difficult to understand. Please understand, following the law and avoiding being perceived as a spammer by your customers are two entirely different things. We'll talk about the perception issue later in this article.

In the U.S., the "CAN-SPAM Act" defines what is and isn't legal in the email marketing world. You can find a simple summary of this legislation on the [FTC's website here](#).

The "highlights" of the CAN-SPAM Act:

- Bans false or misleading header info—you can't make your emails appear to have been sent by someone else.
- Prohibits deceptive subject lines—your subject line has to clearly indicate what the reader can expect to find in the email
- Requires you to give recipients an opt-out method—yes, it's OK to let them just reply with "remove" in the subject but, you must clearly explain how they can be removed from your list.
- Commercial email must be identified as an advertisement—if you're selling something, say so.
- Requires that the email include your physical address.

Following the law and avoiding being perceived as a spammer by your customers are two entirely different things.



That's it. Really not too big a deal. Of course, this is not a legal opinion so, read [the FTC's website](#) and other resources to be sure you have a solid understanding. In addition, there are plenty of very affordable services available that allow you to create your own campaigns and let them send the email and act as your "compliance" cop.

And if you violate the law, you're subject to up to an \$11,000 fine per violation. There are additional fines for egregious infractions.

So, it's worth while to be sure you're in compliance. And to do so, you just have to follow the simple guidelines above.

No worries right? Again, legal compliance is the easy part. Ensuring your emails are read and valued by your customers is a bit more challenging. We're going to walk you through the key ingredients here.

First, a few interesting facts. Studies (1) have shown that more than 50% of recipients equate clicking the "Report as spam" button in their email software as the same as "unsubscribing" or "opting out". It's not. When a recipient opts out, you're required to remove them from the list for future emails. If they block your emails within their email program or anti-spam filter, you may never know about it.

Plus, 40% of recipients defined "spam" as meaning "any email I don't want to receive". Here's what Yahoo says about how they look at your emails—"Operationally, we define spam as whatever consumers do not want in their inbox."



So essentially, from your customers' perspective and that of the major ISPs (companies hosting email for users), spam is anything the recipient would rather not receive.

And that's the magic ingredient in email marketing... making your customers want to receive your emails. Of course, you'll know if they do. They'll let you know by unsubscribing or sending you comments by reply if they're not appreciating your emails. Most email marketing services even provide statistics that let you see how many folks are opting out. It shouldn't be too many. If the rule of thumb in direct snail mail marketing is that you should receive a 1% response rate, then a 1% opt out rate for your emails should be your upper limit. That means that 99% of recipients valued your email enough to allow you to send more.

Engage Your Audience

You may be pleasantly surprised to learn that creating emails that serve your purpose of increasing the return on all your suspects, prospects and customers is easier than you think. Many marketers and business owners get a sort of "writer's block". They don't feel comfortable or confident in writing the emails. That's often because they're trying to create an email that will motivate the prospect to pick up the phone and call or visit their website. That's a tall order! If you're selling to businesses, then the odds that your email will arrive at the moment that the prospect is shopping for what you sell are very low indeed. In fact, this kind of email will be more likely to annoy your prospect than anything else you could do.

We're not trying to drive your prospects to do business with your company directly. They're not cattle. They're real people

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who are busy and whose inboxes are flooded with email they don't need, just like yours.

Of course, our goal IS to cause more prospects to buy from you. However, the purpose of your emails should be to engage the prospect by offering something interesting or of value to them. Imagine you're at a cocktail party that just happens to be populated by folks that will probably need your product or service one day. If you walked into the room with a huge sign and started yelling about the great deal you're offering "tonight only", you'd probably get kicked out in short order. I'm sure you would never even consider something so crass.

Well, it's the same with email. Your customer's inbox is the cocktail party. You don't want to be another loud obnoxious huckster. Your objective is to be credible, interesting and even entertaining. You know how to walk into a social gathering and network right? You'd introduce yourself and ask about the person you're meeting. You might have a funny story to tell about your business. You'd probably have some questions to ask each person you meet so that you can understand how interested they might be in your products or services. Based on their answers, you might offer to help them somehow. Maybe you'd get their card and send them a link to a useful website, etc.

If you approach creating your emails in this same way, you are on your way to success! It makes it much simpler. You don't have to write the most amazing sales copy in the world. You just have to be interesting and informative. In fact, the less you talk about your products or services, the better. You'd be better served to talk about challenges faced by your customers.

The fact is that if you take this approach, your audience will appreciate and value your emails and when things change in their world such that they have an immediate need for what you're selling, they'll contact you first. Because they trust you.

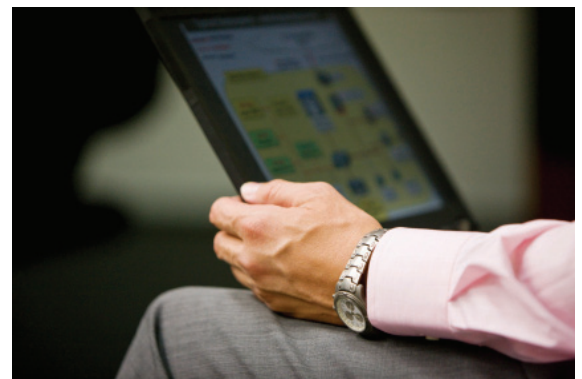
We all get emails and postcards from insurance agents in our neighborhood. Which ones do you appreciate the most? The ones offering discounts and promotions?

You appreciate the insurance agents that provide you with interesting information—statistics about your area or your industry; stories about people who suffered a loss and did or did not have the appropriate insurance in place; etc.

Ask yourself what those things are for your customers. What do they need to know in order to be better at what they do? A simple monthly update of market statistics can be easy and effective. Upcoming Events of trade associations, the chamber of commerce, political interests that are relevant to your industry. You'll need to put some thought into what these things should be but, give it a couple of days and just jot down ideas that run through your head. You'll have more than you need in no time.

Of course, a great place to get creative ideas is from customers. Ask some what they'd like to see in their inbox.

Sources: 1) **Epsilon 2007**



You can become recognized as a knowledgeable industry insider and trusted advisor by giving away industry information and useful tips and tools that are of value to all people doing business today.

If At First You Don't Succeed, Email, Email, Email Again!

You must be saying... these guys are crazy. If I keep on e-mailing to my contacts, my e-mails will just be so much more "junk" coming into their inbox. That can't help me or my business.

The simple answer is... don't send junk ! Send something of value. If you send something of value, you can e-mail often.

The leads and prospects you are mailing have two common characteristics.

- 1) They are all in business and are looking for specific kinds of information that can make their business more efficient and profitable.
- 2) At one time they touched your business or service because they were interested in what you have to offer.

These leads and prospects are your e-mail market. They may not be ready to buy from you today but one day they will be ready. You can magnetize this market by using e-mail to reintroduce your product in a consistent and automated way. In addition, you can become recognized as a knowledgeable industry insider and trusted advisor by giving away industry information and useful tips and tools that are of value to all people doing business today.

By following this simple plan, most of your leads and prospects will look forward to seeing an e-mail from you or your company in their in-box. They may not open every one you send—that's ok. You just want them to come to trust that your emails will

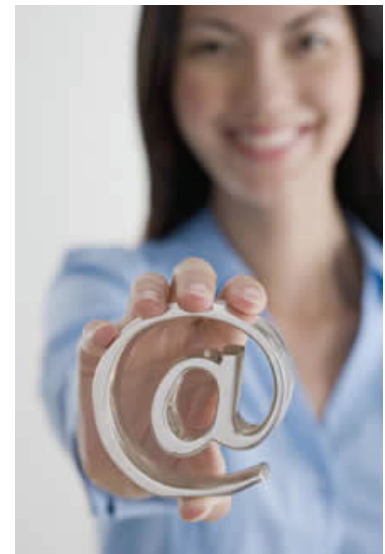
offer something valuable in exchange for a few minutes of their time. **Then when they are ready to buy the type of product or service you offer from some vendor, you will be “top of mind”.**

Of course, there are a few of your contacts that won't like what you send and they will opt out. That doesn't matter. The fact is, it's good news! The people who stay on your list and accept your e-mails are interested in what you have to say.

When building a sequence of e-mails to send to your list of contacts, remember this is not going to be a series of sales pitches. Don't slam folks with the features and benefits of your product or service. That's a guaranteed way to make them look at the From: field and start groaning, and then cut you off.

The sequence (e-mail campaign) should contain industry updates, links to white papers or reports, links to relevant social networks, new articles, links to interesting software, and any tips and techniques that you have perfected to help your customers or even your own business. The last sentence or two and the signature line should be the only reference to your company and/or product. All this free content for your e-mails is relatively easy to find. A few hours of internet research can provide enough detail for an entire campaign.

Now, as you are sending this campaign, you should be using the same From Field in the e-mail address and a Subject Line that reflects what you are sending. That establishes consistency and credibility. The recipient knows when they get an e-mail with your Name or Company Name in the From Field, it is going to be worth the time to open and read.



In addition, while a “cleaver” Subject Line like “there she was without all her clothes” or “I am so very sad” will get a lot of opens one time—you are going to make a lot of folks very angry (also not CAN-SPAM compliant). They will not be looking forward to your next e-mail and will opt out. It is better to be accurate with Subject Lines even if they are not funny or exciting. Again, you are establishing a pattern and creating credibility.

Here are some simple ground rules to follow when creating your email campaign:

DON'T...

- Send out last year's corporate brochure
- Go on and on for several pages
- Talk about your “unbelievably low prices”
- Talk about yourself or your company
- Expect to close the sale in a single message

DO...

- Keep it short
- Get to the point
- Talk about your customer and their challenges and objectives
- Include a “call to action”

So where do you find valuable information to send to your customers? It can seem like a tall order. The answers will be different for every business and every industry. A good way to get an idea of what information your customers value is to get involved in the trade associations your customers are members of. Check out their websites. What “news” are they highlighting? These trade associations may even be willing to let you copy their “news” if you give them credit in your email.

An email linking to a web page with the latest rankings of companies in your industry can be an easy answer.

There are numerous article publishing sites. You can browse their selection, find articles that would be of interest and email your customers a link to an interesting article. Many of these sites are happy to let you “re-publish” their articles as long as you follow a few simple guidelines that they’ll spell out for you. Here’s are a couple of sites to start with:

<http://ezinearticles.com> and <http://clickbank.com>. Of course, the Wall Street Journal, Money Magazine, Forbes and other business publications all have great information on their web sites. Your email just needs to point to an article on these sites that your audience would find interesting.

Here’s the good part, when you do have something to announce about your product or service, the fact that you have established credibility with your list of recipients allows you to go ahead and send it. Again... be honest and straight forward. And don’t do this too often. Now that you’ve given value, you have the right to say something like:

When you do have something to announce about your product or service, the fact that you have established credibility with your list of recipients allows you to go ahead and send it.

Hello Joe,

I'm glad you are enjoying the e-mail series (newsletter) you have been receiving.

We'll (Your Name, Brand, Company Name) want you to know, we have a lot more interesting free (industry information, tools software, whatever) that we'll be sending in the coming months.

But frankly, this e-mail is a shameless attempt to sell you something. It's one of products you may have seen before but we recently released and update.

Very Brief Pitch with Link to your product capture page for a demo or whateve.

Thanks etc

Look for our next e-mail about _____ (not your product)



That's all there is to it. It's not very hard. The only other piece to get this e-mail process moving is an effective way to stay on top of your campaign schedule and keep the emails going out. Of course, a good CRM/Contact Management System that will automate, schedule, send, and follow up easily is a good idea.

Remember, delivering value means you can send e-mail often.

Lead Nurturing—Automate It and Sell More

In the previous two chapters, we've discussed the blocking and tackling of email marketing. How to stay on the right side of the law, how to create emails that won't annoy your customers, how to provide valuable information to your contacts via on-going emails. Click here to read the [1st](#) and [2nd](#) chapters.

Now comes the big pay off! In this chapter, we're going to show you how to create an automatic cash machine with a mind blowing ROI. That's because you really already have all the pieces you need! We're going to show you how to leverage the assets you have and increase sales and the bottom line!

Let's take inventory of what we have:

1. Leads, Prospects and Customers

The ones that have already had contact with your customers and the ones that will in coming weeks and months. Whether you advertise on TV and Radio, send direct snail mail, advertise online or cold call, you've got months and years worth of names and email addresses of prospects and customers that you've had contact with in the past. Some bought something, some did not. In most businesses, just the fact that they came into the top of your marketing or sales funnel and gave you their email address indicates that they have a general interest in the kinds of things you sell.

2. Valuable Information

As discussed in detail in our previous chapter, you have information that these people need to know in order to be more effective at their job, happy at home, healthier, etc.



All you need to do is to connect the people on your list with the valuable information you have and you will ignite more sales. No additional spending on advertising necessary!

So, all you need to do is to connect the people on your list with the valuable information you have and you will ignite more sales. No additional spending on advertising necessary!

The Payoff

Let's calculate a typical example to see what sort of impact on sales this could have in your business. Imagine that you have 100 new prospects or leads every month. These are people filling out a form on your website, people you're qualifying via a cold call, responses to direct mail or TV/Radio ads, etc. In most businesses, if you're able to close 20% of these leads then you're doing well. That's 20 new customers each month. But what about the 80 leads that didn't buy anything? What's happening to them today? Unfortunately, most sales people stay focused on the "hot" new leads coming in and neglect following up with leads that came in last month.

If we stay in touch and engage them with information they find valuable, when things change in their world and they're ready to buy something like what you sell, they will call on you. To be very conservative, let's assume that 2% of the non-buyers will come back into your sales pipeline again each month because you're staying in touch with them and they're ready. After only 6 months of collecting and nurturing these leads, you'll have 480 of them and you should see at least 9 of them coming back into the sales process each month. Your close rate will be higher with these "repeat leads" normally but, let's keep it conservative and use the 20% close rate we assumed for new leads. That means each month, you've got 1.8 new sales that you didn't have before. **That's a 10% increase in sales!** And what did it cost you? Well, you already have the leads coming in so there's no cost there. You'll have to sit down and follow the guidelines in our previous chapter to create your emails so, let's say you've got 20 hours of labor to invest



there. The only thing you don't have is a way to get these emails out to the right leads at the right time, automatically. And that's the good news! There are many email marketing systems available today and you shouldn't need to spend more than \$50 to \$100 per month for a one user account. So let's say you've got \$1,000 in up front costs to create your campaign and \$50/month to subscribe to an automated email marketing system to achieve a 10% increase in sales! Is that worth it? I think so!

Are you skeptical? Let me help assure you, this really will work. Its almost fool proof. And as we've just seen, the risk is minimal. You see, prospects engage with vendors for many reasons but, often their initial contact with your business is an emotional reaction to something that just happened to them. Once they learn more about your solutions and the costs, their rational mind will kick in and they often decide not to do anything about the challenge, problem or "pain" that drove them to your company. They're going to wait to save up the money or wait until the problem gets worse, etc. Basically, they're not going to part with their hard earned cash until they're sure the investment will be worth it. So, we're waiting for their rational mind to catch up to their emotions. That may never happen. But for some, it will. It may be next month or 12 months from now.

The magic lever that you have is that they've already gotten to know you. They understand your products and services and how you prices them, the terms, etc. If you now stay engaged with them and establish yourself as a resource for valuable information, then when that switch clicks in their mind that tells them its time to get serious, they'd be crazy not to reach out to you. Its the path of least resistance for them. They have

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your contact information in the emails you've been sending, they know and trust you. Its easy for them.

So why is it so important to automate the email marketing process? Why can't you just put the list into Outlook once a month and send out your email? Well, the first question is why haven't you done it so far? You can do it on you own but, you probably don't have the time to figure out how to maintain compliance with the CAN-SPAM regulations and set up and maintain all the technology involved. In short, you're too busy to add another series of responsibilities to your list of things to do. If you try, you'll probably find you have more urgent matters to attend to each day and your resulting email campaign will be irregular and inconsistent and so will the results.

By using an automated email marketing system, you're making it simple for yourself and your staff. All you have to do is create the emails, load in your list of leads and ensure you have a process to load in new leads every week or month. Your sales people stay focused on selling to the leads who are likely to buy now while the system nurtures the ones who aren't, automatically. Again, the cost is negligible compared to the 10% or more increase in sales you're going to see!



Client Touches—Post-Sell, Up-Sell and Retain

In the previous three chapters, we've discussed the blocking and tackling of email marketing. How to stay on the right side of the law, how to create emails that won't annoy your customers, how to provide valuable information to your contacts via on-going emails and how to engage prospects so that you're the one they buy from when the time is right. Click here to read the [1st](#), the [2nd](#) and the [3rd](#) chapters.

We've all heard how much more profitable it is to sell to your existing customers compared with acquiring new customers. Its true of course. And if it makes sense to engage and nurture prospects with email, then doesn't it make even more sense to strengthen your relationships with existing customers?

Best of all, if creating a campaign that's truly engaging to prospects can seem daunting, providing useful information for your customers can be downright easy. After all, you're an expert at doing what you do. There are countless tips and tricks that can help your customers get more value out of what they're buying from you. These are a great place to start. You probably have documentation that you've spent lots of time and money preparing to guide your customers through the use of your products and services. Of course, your customers probably don't read it all. They wait to need a specific piece of information, then go looking for it. A well timed email campaign can highlight crucial tips at just the right time.

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First Post-Sell

The art of the “post-sell” could be a book unto itself. In short the idea is to help your customer avoid “buyer’s remorse”. The natural human process of questioning one’s decision can be an opening for canceled orders. The most important objective in post selling is to express your gratitude for your customer’s business by reconfirming your commitment to deliver on your promises to them. A simple thank you email is a good start. However, you can assure the customer that they’ve made the right decision best by reminding them why they bought. Detail out how they should expect to benefit from their purchase and ensure them that you’re going to be there to guide them through the process of realizing these objectives.



While you may have focused on the intrinsic qualities of your product during the sales process, it makes sense now to highlight the services you offer to help customers use your product. Let them know what challenges are most common for new customers and how you can help with those challenges. Tell them how to reach customer service and when they’re available. Direct them to set up guides, training programs, etc. Help them see the road forward more clearly.

Up-Sell

Of course, selling more to existing customers IS very profitable. There are surely additional options or upgrades to what has been purchased. You may feel that you reviewed these options with the customer thoroughly during the sales process but, don’t assume that their decision not to purchase those options at the time meant they don’t want and need

them. Very often, it just means that the initial purchase was enough of a leap for them. They don't know what they don't know. Now that they've purchased the basic product and are beginning to implement or use it, they're seeing more clearly how your additional products and services could benefit them.

You can weave your up-sale into your post-sell if you stay focused on the objectives the customer has. What are they trying to accomplish with your product or service? If there are additional products and services that will help them get there, its completely appropriate to bring them up. Of course, some of these things will be installation, implementation or training services. These can all be highlighted in the "we're here to help" spirit.

In your business, you may have supplies and replacement parts that customers will need. Start letting them know when they should expect to need their first new supply or replacement and how to get it. Customers may frequently out grow entry level models or services and need an "upgrade". Help them understand the things they should look for to recognize its time to upgrade.

Another opportunity is to identify additional needs for things you sell within the same organization. Find ways to let your first customer in a large organization connect you with their colleagues. At a minimum, give the customer an easy way to "invite" others to receive your emails. These may simply be the actual users of the product. More points of contact are extremely valuable. You may want to evolve to having different campaigns for different roles with in the customer organization.

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Retain

Of course, whether you sell your customer anything else or not, you want to keep their business and ensure they're pleased with their purchase. A great way to strengthen a customer's bond with your company is to let them have some input. A simple survey can be very valuable in showing the customer you care about their opinions and experience with your company and helping you improve your company's offerings.

In addition, just as it makes sense during the initial sales process, providing useful information that helps your customers do their jobs establishes your expertise and causes them to look forward to your communications. Continue to keep customers engaged using industry news and educational content even after the sale. You can be more specific now because you know they are the proud owner or user of a certain type of product or service. Safety tips are easy and appreciated.

News about your company should be part of the mix. They depend on you now and they want to know where you're heading. Upcoming developments in your business should be of genuine interest. Planned improvements to your products or services—new models, expanded service hours, etc.—are all things that customers want and need to know about.

If you have subscriptions or contracts that renew periodically, create a sequence of emails that alerts them to the upcoming renewal early, so they can plan for it, then walk them through their options step by step.

One of the most valuable ways to strengthen your customer's relationship with your company is to ask for referrals. Again, they have come to depend on your company and therefore, it's in their best interest to help you grow and remain strong. However, asking for referrals is a great "gut check" on the relationship. If there are hidden frustrations, asking the customer to recommend you to a friend or colleague will generally bring those frustrations to the surface. Better to know now while there is still time to address the problems. Take any negative feedback very seriously and take aggressive action to remedy the situation to the customer's satisfaction. By doing so, you can turn a minor frustration into a major bonding moment between your customer and your company. More often though, you'll be surprised at how willingly customers will provide you with referrals. Be clear and specific about the kind of contact you're looking for. Help them help you.

Overall, building a series of emails to nurture, retain and up-sell your existing customers may be a great place to start your email marketing efforts. It's often more familiar subject matter and you can ask your customers what they'd like to see. In any case, it should not be overlooked. Nurturing clients should be on-going throughout the customer life cycle.

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Getting Started with Email Marketing

In the previous four chapters, we've discussed the blocking and tackling of email marketing. How to stay on the right side of the law, how to create emails that won't annoy your customers, how to provide valuable information to your contacts via on-going emails and how to engage prospects so that you're the one they buy from when the time is right and how to nurture relationships with existing clients. Click here to read the [1st](#), the [2nd](#), the [3rd](#) and the [4th](#) chapters.

The hardest part after participating in a seminar or webinar, taking a course, or just reading an e-book is distilling everything down to an actionable agenda and applying the information to your business.

It always seems that the examples given in the material don't directly apply to your particular situation, that somehow while you may believe in what you have experienced... turning that experience into action is too tough, and too time consuming. We all have these thoughts whether we are the CEO of a large company, a solo entrepreneur with a business run out of the den, or one of many sales persons in any sized organization.

Its easy to put aside what we have learned. There are always other things going on, a deadline for revising quarterly projections, or some good reason that gets us to wisely conclude the best course of action is "Let's Wait and See". This is the phrase that kills innovation, progress, and potential in our businesses and our lives ...

Don't wait! Do something. Even if you don't do it 100% correctly. You will get started on a new path that leads to positive results.

At this point, you have the right to ask the question.

“OK, I read all this stuff. I know e-mail marketing makes good sense. What do I do tomorrow morning?” How do I start in a way that will help me and doesn’t consume me?

The first piece of this puzzle is to gather the people who have touched your business in some way. These are the people who touch your business by calling, requesting information, responses to advertising or mailers, visiting a physical location or hitting one of your web pages.

We have already discussed putting a system in place where you manage prospects’ contact information in an automated fashion (CRM System). These systems are easy to use and very cost effective. We have also discussed going back to your existing system of holding your contacts (even if it is file cards) and migrating the data to a CRM or contact management system. In this way anything you create can be sent out in an automatic, sequenced way. This works for every contact you add to the system, whether the contact is old or new.

However, no matter how elegant the system, it still only software. The system is only as good as what we put in it. So even if you don’t have a contact management system in place yet... can’t find all the contacts from the last couple of years... or don’t have contact capture pages (squeeze pages) built for your web site yet, you can still begin the process.

The first piece of this puzzle is to gather the people who have touched your business in some way.



The important thing to remember is that this is a relationship building endeavor. Nothing else. You should start right now with the contacts you have under your control.... whether it is five... or five thousand.

Good places to start:

- Accounting records—as we’ve discussed, your existing customers can be a great place to begin email marketing
- Sales Contacts—you should be able to gather together the contacts your sales team has accumulated in their personal email program, address book software or PDA.
- Business Cards—buy a “CardScan” system at the local office supply store. It scans your business cards and converts the image into an excel file of names, phone numbers and email addresses

The important thing to remember is that this is a relationship building endeavor. Nothing else. You should start right now with the contacts you have under your control.... whether it is five... or five thousand.

If your target audience can be identified by industry, size of business or some other demographic criteria, then you should be able to purchase a list of contacts. A relevant trade association can be a good source for lists or you can contact a list broker. Obtaining lists including email addresses can be difficult and expensive. You may want to consider sending an initial direct mail piece out inviting contacts to visit a web page and provide up to date contact info, including email address, in order to access some valuable information. You can also advertise your “offer” on other web sites that may target a similar market. Start simple and small and keep your budget as low as possible. The point is to get started as quickly and simply as possible. Once you’ve gotten things underway and have seen some results, you’ll be able to make smart decisions about how much to invest.

The plan is easy. Create a simple sequence of e-mails. Start with between three and five. Don't sell hard in these e-mails. You are creating a relationship. You are attempting to become the person who gives something of value—so when people see your e-mails in their inbox—they open them. So giving value becomes very important. This value can be information about your specific category of business, a few paragraphs about business in general, or recommended sites and information that you feel prospects will find useful.

It's really easy to find information that gives value. For example, many people who write e-books will allow you to give them away, as long as you don't change anything in them and give the author appropriate credit. Sites like ezinearticles.com allow you to republish articles written by others often at no charge.

You can also make your first email an invitation to participate in future emailings. Let them know what you're planning to offer in future emails and ask if they'd like to receive these offers. Basically, this is your "opt-in" email.

So grab your contacts. Send out your first e-mail with an offer for valuable information. Note who responds, fulfill the promise you made in the offer and then send more e-mails... one campaign to the responders and another set to the non-responders. One of the benefits of this methodology is that it shows you the hierarchy of your prospects. Responders should be better candidates for products and services. As folks respond, you can move them from one campaign to another.

Eventually, you can run many such campaigns simultaneously with hundreds or thousands of contacts. Your CRM system will



We can not stress enough that you can start with just a few contacts and a few e-mails because you are building relationships through creative content.

allow you to do that in a completely automated, very cost effective way. And as more contacts are introduced to your business, you add them to your list. You will soon discover that by giving useful free information away, your contacts will refer more contacts to you.

We can not stress enough that you can start with just a few contacts and a few e-mails because you are building relationships through creative content. The important part is to start... get the process going. The payoff is a truly dramatic increase in added sales and new sales with a decreased cost for those sales.

Remember, you don't have to worry about building a system. The systems are already built. You are building and leveraging relationships. That is what you have to work on.



About the Authors – Craig Klein and Steven Greene

Craig Klein brings his engineering training and his sales management experience together to build measurable, consistent sales processes for his clients. As CEO of www.SalesNexus.com, Craig works with small start ups and Fortune 500's to create systems that give sales people more time to sell and more leads to sell to while giving management the accountability that is so elusive in sales.

Craig spent 10 years selling multi-million dollar, multi-year contracts to energy companies such as ExxonMobil, BP, Shell and Chevron. The long, complex selling environment within these energy behemoths gives Craig a keen sense of the risk of mis-allocated sales time.

Craig has written many articles on sales, lead acquisition and nurturing and entrepreneurship. His blog, <http://sellsellsell.salesnexus.com> has provided advice and insight to thousands of readers.

Steven Greene brings a unique perspective and style to marketing and sales. Steven has been a Senior Executive at Warner Bros. as well as starting and running his own companies where he used innovative marketing techniques such as infomercials, phone cards, and fortune cookies to sell everything from Software to Skin Care.

Steven has created sales and marketing methodology for hi-tech communication licenses, run a nationwide home entertainment company and created a new way of marketing Fantasy Sports. He is an owner of social networking companies, creates, markets and sells proprietary informational products and is the copywriter many large organizations turn to when they need written material that converts prospects into closed deals.

Steven is a published novelist, produced screenwriter, award winning commercial producer and the resident marketing expert at SalesNexus.

About SalesNexus

www.SalesNexus.com offers hosted, web based contact management and CRM solutions to small and medium sized businesses in all industries, around the world. SalesNexus' focus is on helping customers affordably tailor their solution to each business' unique processes and needs.

To learn more about <http://www.SalesNexus.com>.