



Simple Email Marketing for Nonprofits

Why email marketing? Heather Mansfield writes in “Five Things Your Nonprofit Needs to Know About Web 2.0 Donors” “I believe, despite much talk lately of e-mail “dying”, that in fact the opposite is true. Your nonprofit needs to focus more on your e-mail newsletter than ever before because e-mail may be the only way you can contact and nurture your Web 2.0 donors outside of social networking sites.”

I concur! I suspect that the talk about “email dying” has more to do with the fact that nonprofits have not, for the most part, mastered it!

After all, what better method does the small, grassroots organization have of regularly cultivating donor relationships than via email?

Following you’ll find simple steps for quickly establishing your organization’s email system:

1. Locate an email service provider. Nancy Schwartz of Getting Attention recently posted this [terrific article](#). Keep in mind: cost is not your only factor. Ease of use, deliverability rates and customer service play major roles in the selection of an ESP. I recommend [iContact](#) for all three qualities.
2. Create an e-news sign-up on your homepage. It should be prominent and located “above the fold” - meaning that viewers should not have to scroll to locate it.
3. Offer a compelling reason to sign up. “Subscribe to our e-news” is not a compelling reason.
4. If your organization has access to a tech wizard, consider an attention-getting floating opt-in box like that featured on my new (yet to be launched) [website](#). (*I know, I know. “Nonprofits don’t do that!!” Remember, now is not the time to emulate your unsuccessful peers - now is the time for boldness.*)
5. Your sign-up box should appear on every page of your site.
6. Consider how much information you want to collect when designing your sign-up box. Too much information (address, DOB, even phone) might scare away a potential subscriber. An email address and first (and last) name is enough to begin the cultivation process.

7. Thank people for subscribing. Your sign-in box should redirect to a thank you page AND your new subscribers should receive a welcome email. If you cannot figure out how to do this, contact the customer service department of your ESP (ohhhh, *that's* why you made the decision not to go with a free provider!). Better yet? Create a three to five-part autoresponder series of welcoming emails, spaced over a period of weeks, introducing your new subscribers to your work.
8. Make sure that you display your organization's privacy policy.
9. Establish a regular schedule of communicating with subscribers - and stick to it. I recommend twice a month - or monthly at the very minimum.
10. Study headlines. Headlines? Yes, headlines. You want your email opened don't you? Your email's subject header can be more important than your copy. [Words That Sell](#) is a great little reference source that should be on your bookshelf.
11. Truly engage subscribers. Survey them, request feedback, share your organization's triumphs (and challenges) - but always with the thought "what is in this for them?" When sending a survey consider offering a \$100 amazon gift card to one lucky winner. Naming a new program or creating a new organization logo? Get their opinions!
12. Think integration and cultivation. Every direct mail piece, every social media outlook (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) should link to your home page featuring your opt-in.

Further Reading

[99 Nonprofits](#)

[Five Things Your Nonprofit Needs to Know About Web 2.0 Donors](#)

[Nonprofit email marketing tip #1 – think relationship building](#)

[What's Paula Deen Got To Do With Your Nonprofit Marketing?](#)

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