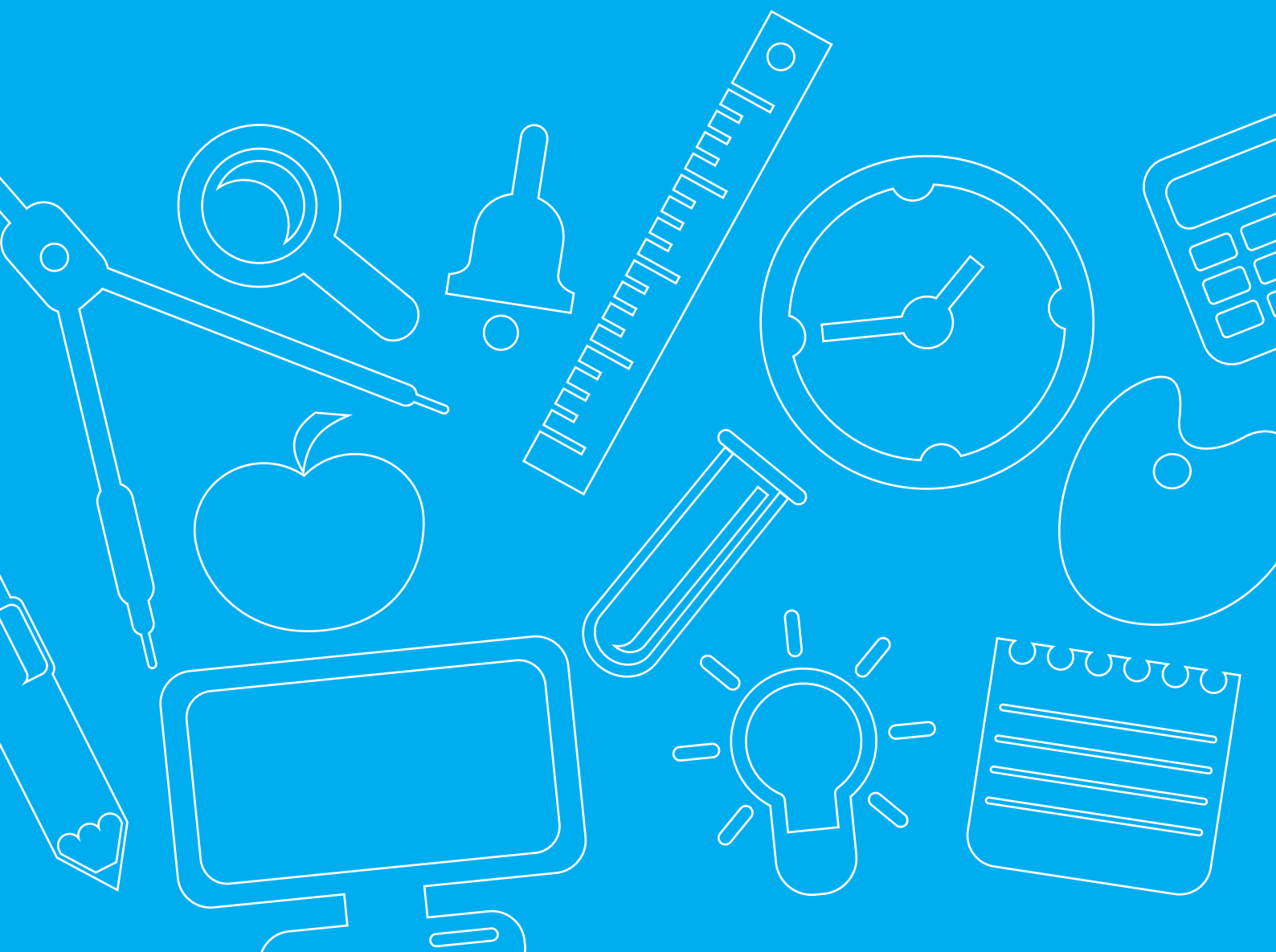# Introduction to Email List Building

Email Marketing is effective and profitable, with an average ROI of 2850% — that's a return of $28.5 for each $1 spent. This applies to any type of business, industry, product or service.

Email campaigns are useful in every stage of the customer lifecycle: building brand awareness, extending brand knowledge, building interest in an offer, generating action and conversions, fostering relationships, and turning existing clients into loyal brand advocates.

You can start with simple campaigns: creating and sending emails to existing subscribers. But armed with a little knowledge, you'll soon be testing, analyzing results, segmenting email lists, and optimizing campaigns to generate better results.

The single most important element of your program is email list building. For consistent success, you'll need to attract new leads and turn them into subscribers.

Why? You may have the most amazing product or service (such as a perpetual motion machine!) but until you capture the attention of your market and develop relationships, you'll achieve only mediocre results. To generate better results and a thriving business, you'll need an audience you can contact frequently through newsletters, autoresponders, transactional messages and social media channels.

This guide teaches you all about building a profitable email list. At the end, you'll have a solid knowledge of the methods, tactics and factors involved in acquiring new email list subscribers to skyrocket your business.

You'll get answers to these questions:

- What is email list building?
- What's the difference between permission-based email marketing and spam?
- How do you add your subscribers into GetResponse?
- How do you build an email list using online methods?
- How do you build an email list using offline techniques?

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Table of Contents

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1. What is email list building?

Email list building is the core of email marketing. It is the process of accumulating a database of subscribers — prospects, clients, fans and influencers — who have agreed to accept your emails. When you persuade prospects and clients to give you their email address, you open the door to ongoing communication, which can improve relationships, sales and brand loyalty.

With GetResponse, you can create or import an email address database of any size. It can store additional information about each subscriber, such as the subscriber name, so you can identify individual clients. You may decide to collect phone number and address also.

Over time, your database accumulates useful data, such as past purchasing behavior, survey answers, and history of email opens and clicks.

2. Permission-based email marketing vs. spam

Email marketing is sometimes mistaken for the practice of sending out unsolicited bulk email, commonly known as spamming. Permission-based email marketing means communicating with audiences that have expressed willingness to receive promotional newsletters and updates from brands they wish to follow and stay in touch with.

Regulations vary by country, but the principle is the same: you must get express permission to communicate via electronic mail. In some countries, it's strictly required by the law; in others it's simply a best practice. Email marketing providers such as GetResponse have joined together to fight against spam, putting great emphasis on data protection. They have formed organizations to **support only companies** that have received permission to contact their subscribers.

Typically, subscribers grant permission by entering their email address and indicating (often with a checkbox) that they wish to receive promotional and commercial communication from the brand. Permission can be granted in other ways, such as by phone, with a contest entry form, or in social media channels. Nevertheless, permission is required and cannot be implied only.

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3. How to build an email list

Building an email list is an important task regardless of the size and type of business. Whether you're launching your first product or have been on the market for some time, it's equally important to convert leads and prospects into subscribers. Although it may sound like a difficult project, the techniques are quite easy.

You can collect subscribers offline and online. Depending on your type of business, product or service, some methods may or may not apply. But the concept remains the same.

To get started, imagine all the times and places where prospects may come across your brand. Those are your best opportunities for converting them from prospects into loyal, engaged subscribers.

4. Methods of building an email list online

4.1 Web forms

There are many places to build an email list online, including your website and sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and discussion boards. The most common method is to create a sign-up form (web form) and place it on your website.
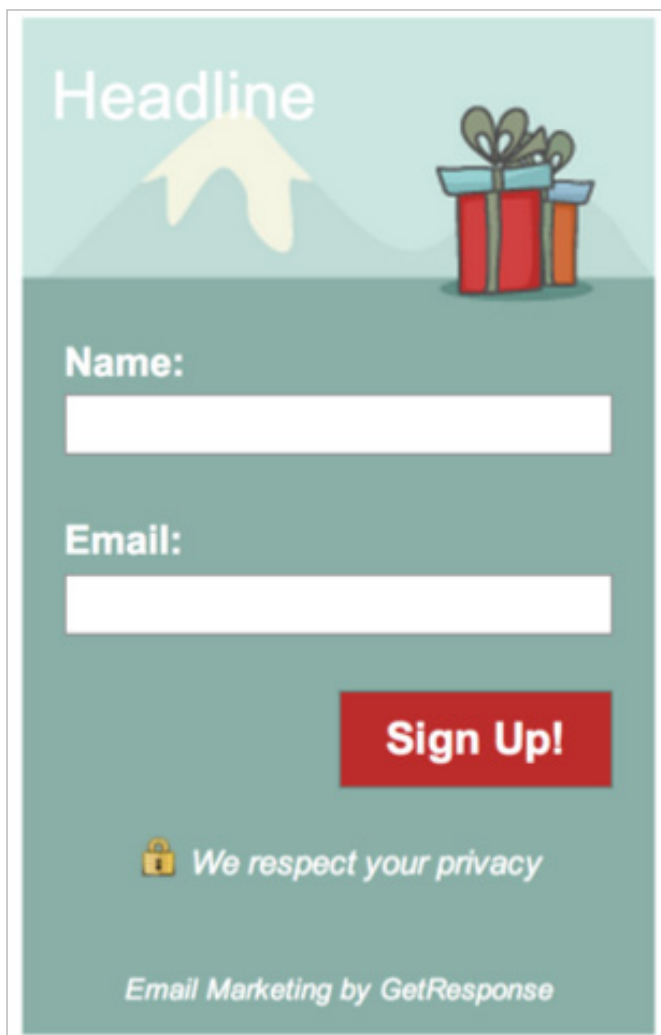
Sign-up form types include:

- Inline
- Lightbox
- Popover
- Exit-intent
- Bar

The last two types are more advanced, so we'll focus only on the first three. The idea is the same: to provide a field where the subscriber can enter an email address and, optionally, other data.

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4.1.1 How to create a sign up form

GetResponse includes an advanced sign-up form builder for creating inline, lightbox, and popover web forms for your website, social media profile, or blog.

The GetResponse web form generator makes it quick and easy to create a sign-up form, even if you have no HTML skills.

Just log in to your account, choose a campaign, and select Web Forms > Create New.

To see the process in action, view this video tutorial or download our user manual.

You'll discover how easy it is to create a form like this.

4.1.2 What to include in a sign-up form

A typical sign-up form consists of 2-3 fields, where the new subscriber enters their email address and other information, such as name or hometown.

The number of fields is up to you. But numerous studies have shown that the more fields users have to fill in, the less likely they are to complete the form.

So double-check whether all the fields are necessary. Perhaps you could ask for the information in a survey after they've signed up.

The form should include a headline stating the benefits of joining the email list and a strong call to action (CTA) on the action button. To improve your chances of capturing new subscribers, offer a sign-up bonus, such as a free handbook, report or a discount.

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You can also include a checkbox to confirm their willingness to join the list, information about the terms and conditions, and reassurance of data protection.

Below is a sign-up form with these elements highlighted.

4.1.3 How to add a web form to your website

Once you've created your sign-up form inside GetResponse and adjusted the settings (such as linking it to a campaign and redirecting to a thank-you page) you can choose who will install it.

There are four options:

Install it manually - You'll receive HTML code or JavaScript to place on your website.
Send it to my web designer - Enter an email address, and we'll forward the appropriate code.
GetResponse will host my web form - Your web form will be hosted on the GetResponse domain.
Place it on Facebook - You'll be redirected to an app page for GetResponse Facebook Web Forms.

To install the sign-up form manually, copy the source code and place it on your website.

The GetResponse WordPress plugin makes it easy to connect your GetResponse account with your WordPress website. Just follow the steps on the plugin website, and you'll be ready to build your email marketing list.

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If your website isn't WordPress-based, look through the integrations section to find one that fits your needs. If your service isn't supported yet, copy the source code of your sign-up form and place it in the <body> of your website, wherever you want it to appear. It may take a few tries, so be sure to preview the results before you publish it live.

4.1.4 How to add a web form to your Facebook fanpage

After designing your web form, you can place it on your Facebook fanpage using one of these methods:

Log in to your GetResponse account, edit the web form, and choose Go To Application in the Publishing settings of your form.
Go to the Facebook integration page and click the app link.

You'll be redirected to the GetResponse Facebook Web Forms app page. After you install the form on your fanpage, you'll find it at Fanpage > Settings > Apps.

There you can edit how your app is displayed (such as tab icon and name).
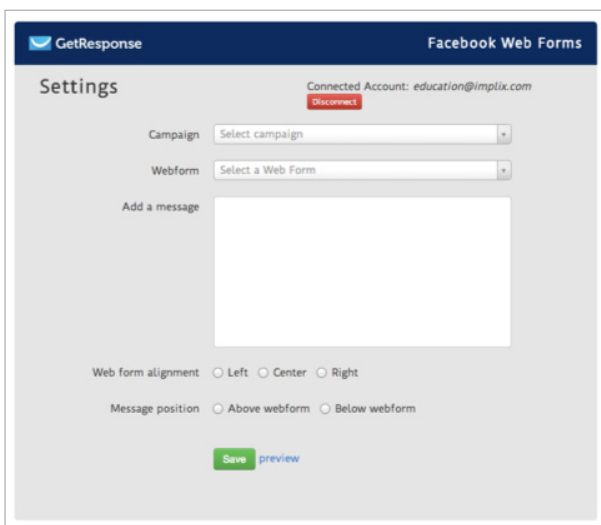
To integrate it with your GetResponse account, go to your fanpage wall, find the GetResponse app, and click it. You'll be asked to enter the API key, found in your GetResponse account at My Account > Account Details > GetResponse API.

Then choose a web form, set the alignment, and indicate any additional message to display.

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4.1.5 How to add a sign-up form to other social media channels

Unfortunately, other social media channels, such as Google+, Twitter and LinkedIn, don't support apps. But if you have a web form on your website or landing page, you can provide the URL in your bio. Then you can direct prospects to your website, where they can sign up for your email list.
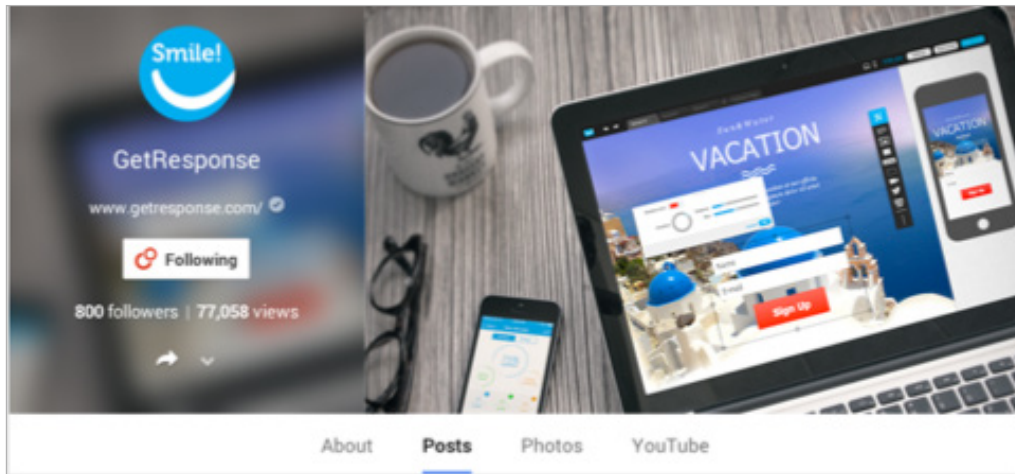
4.2 Other methods of building an email list online

Methods built into your GetResponse account include surveys, social media sharing buttons and newsletter archive.

Once you've mastered the basics, feel free to explore advanced techniques. Some may require additional financial and human resources.

4.2.1 Discussion boards

Discussion boards, forums and social media groups on channels such as LinkedIn can be a great source of new potential clients. Identify boards where members discuss topics your company deals with and has expertise in.

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When you find your target audience, focus on the topics they are interested in and the questions they ask. Since your company provides a product or a service that helps them, you can get their attention by providing answers and clearing doubts. If you're an expert in your field, you can distinguish yourself as knowledgable and trustworthy.

Others will seek your advice and check your public profile and bio. Include a URL to your website, so if someone likes your posts and views your profile, they can click to your site, landing page or personal blog. Make sure you have a sign-up form ready to collect new subscribers.

4.2.2 Landing pages

Landing pages are like regular web pages but usually contain focused information about one specific offer. Typically they exclude the menus and links usually found on websites and blogs. They include a powerful headline, detailed information about a specific offer, perhaps a YouTube Video or other visual aid to help the reader imagine the product, and a sign-up form for visitors who are interested in the offer.

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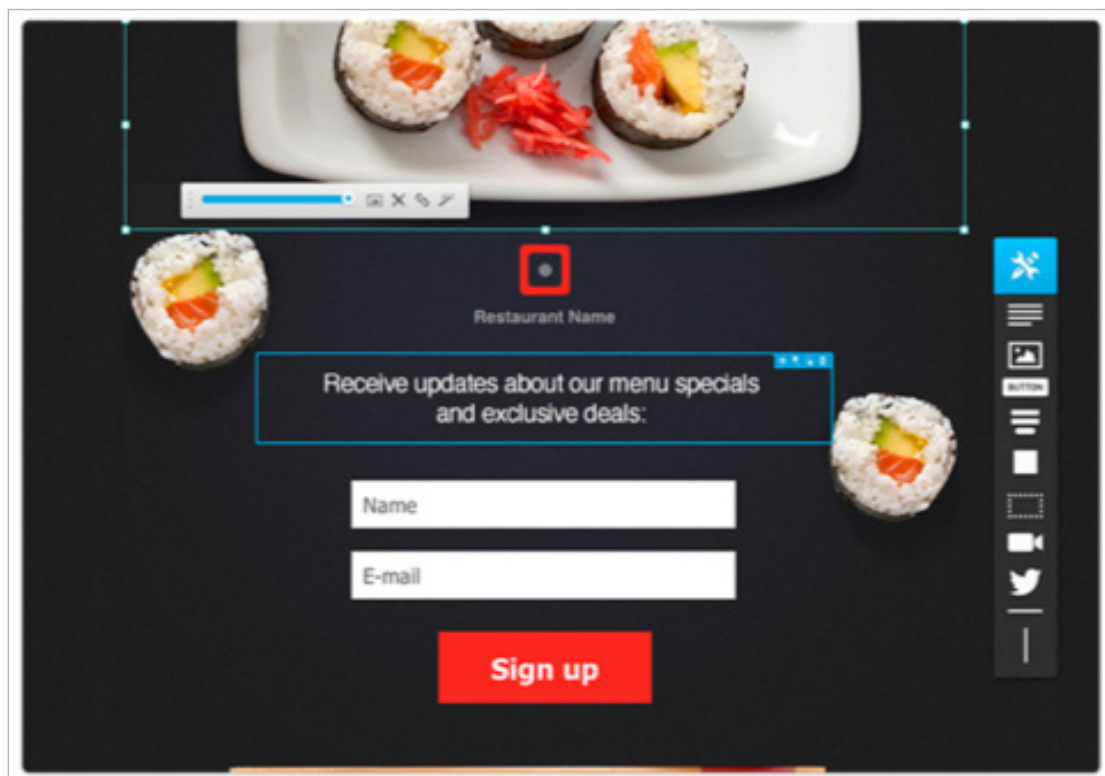
Landing pages are used to promote individual offers and have one clear goal: to attract new leads. So avoid information clutter and unnecessary elements that distract readers. Include only elements designed to get them to convert (make a purchase or submit a form).

If you build a landing page (using a tool such as GetResponse Landing Page Creator) add a web form and promote it through marketing channels such as email marketing campaigns, social media profiles and your website. The more traffic, the higher the chances of building a quality email list quickly. For more information on landing pages, check out this guide.

4.2.3 Webinars

Webinars, online workshops and consultations can help your business succeed. Although people like self-service solutions that save time, they sometimes have questions and prefer human contact before making a decision.

Why is this method so effective?

First, by reaching out to your audience and answering their questions, you remove doubts and obstacles that prevent them from subscribing or doing business with you. It's always easier to ask questions in person than to perform research.

Second, you establish your expertise. You and your brand become more visible for users who may be experiencing the same problems.

If you decide to organize a webinar (using a service such as ClickMeeting) add a checkbox or option for signing up for the webinar or other upcoming events, promotional videos, materials or newsletters. You can do all that through Landing Page Creator. Or if you prefer to place the information on your website, use the GetResponse sign-up form generator.

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4.2.4 Partnerships

Webinars and email marketing campaigns can be effective. But sometimes the challenge isn't in your offer but your limited reach. Co-promotion and partnerships can extend the reach of your promotional campaigns and attract new audiences.

Partnerships can include sponsored articles, guest blogging, joint webinars and offline events such as forums and conferences. By combining the audiences, both parties can expect more visibility and a growing client base.

Consider partnering with companies or authors whose target audience is similar to yours. If you work out a deal, you should have no problem expanding your business.

When organizing such projects, direct your new audience to a website or landing page with a sign-up form designed to convert them into newsletter subscribers. Then keep them updated and informed with well-planned email marketing campaigns.

4.2.5 Promotional campaigns

If you have the resources, consider investing in paid solutions to extend your reach, get new subscribers, and improve search engine rankings.

Popular methods include promoted posts on social media channels, search engine marketing (SEM), and video ads.

Contextual advertising is gaining popularity. It's an effective way to present ads and build brand awareness among visitors to other websites.

Contextual ads are available through services such as Google Adwords and Microsoft adCenter and are presented as sponsored URLs or banners. Their biggest advantage is that your ad is matched with the content of the website, which increases the likelihood of generating good quality responses. The ad is visible only on websites or search engine results that are related to the content. And you have full control over duration and costs.

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5. Methods for building an email list offline

Offline activities can also generate online traffic and sales. So evaluate offline activities and places where your audience sees your brand. Use these touch points to boost your online efforts and generate higher conversions. We'll briefly cover some best practices and places where you can generate new leads.
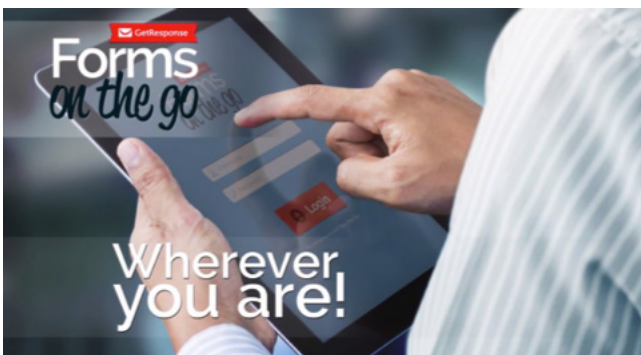
5.1 Printed material & promotional items

Your printed materials (business cards, packaging, receipts, catalogues) and promotional items (pens, usb drives, mascots) can be another great source of traffic for your website.

Place the URL of your site on these products. If people like your freebies, they can visit your website to learn about your business. Include a sign up-form to convert visitors into subscribers.

5.2 Offline meetings

As with webinars and consultations, you can organize offline events for local clients. This could be trade shows, one-on-one client meetings, book signings for your new publication, open discussions about upcoming projects, or a conference discussing the topics relevant to your industry.

These work especially well if you promote them in several marketing channels and partner with other brands with similar target audiences. This can improve your credibility and earn the trust of potential clients.

When organizing such events, think of ways to attract new leads. Distribute free promotional items and printed materials. Or collect business cards in a fishbowl contest. State clearly that their email address will be added to a newsletter list or perhaps a good ol' paper mailing list.

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If you want to automate this process, try Forms on the Go by GetResponse. It captures information from in-person contacts, places them in the campaign of your choice, and sends a cycle of automated messages you've prepared in advance.

5.3 Snail mail and customer service

If you have customer mailing addresses, you can send printed materials such as catalogues and offer a special discount for joining your email list. Just ask them to fill out the form and mail it back or visit your website to sign up.

Don't forget your customer service team, the front line of your company. They interact with your audience every day. Train them to ask every caller to join the email list. Make it a policy to add an email footer with a link to a sign-up form, so every correspondence is an opportunity to attract new subscribers and grow your email marketing list.

6. How to import your email list into GetResponse

It's easy to transfer your email list from an existing service or database to GetResponse. Just prepare a file (such as an Excel spreadsheet) and import it into the appropriate campaign. To see this process watch this video.

This isn't necessary for those who subscribe using sign-up forms created with GetResponse Form Builder, Landing Page Creator or the **Forms on the Go App**. They will be added to your account automatically.

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7. Summary

Building an email list is by far the most important and fundamental part of any email marketing program. Email marketing works well with other promotional techniques and generates strong returns. If you want to extend your reach and expand your business, consider email marketing campaigns.

Email marketing helps build brand awareness, extend brand knowledge, build interest in your offers, generate actions and conversions, foster relationships, and turn existing clients into loyal brand advocates. So it's worth the time and effort required.

There are many methods of building a mailing list to stay in touch with your audiences. We've covered the most popular and effective online and offline methods to help you jump-start your marketing program .

To explore these topics and find other ways to expand your business with online marketing, please visit our Learning Center and the GetResponse blog.

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