

HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR LIST

In every email-marketing guide you read it says that you have to build a relationship with your list. Okay, that sounds great... but what does that really mean? It's email, after all, not an in-person meeting. Is it even possible to develop real relationships with those who join your email lists or is it a lost cause?

First, it's not a lost cause at all. I consider many of the people on my lists and that I communicate with in other places to be great friends. I care a great deal about the people on my list and many have told me that they open my emails even if they don't tend to open emails from other email marketers. That makes me feel great.

Part of me isn't surprised by that because I work very hard to build relationships, treat people right, and give a lot of value. And those things are a huge part of the secret.

One thing that I do, and you might not feel as comfortable about it as I do, is to let people what's going on in my life. I share my past struggles as well as what I hope to accomplish in the future, just like I would with a close friend. I even share some very personal moments in my life, like a couple times when I had health issues that required visits to the hospital.

Of course, those issues had nothing to do with business, but I was talking to them much like I would to a friend that I would send an email or make a phone call to, and I know that many people on my list appreciated it.

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I can't count the number of times that people have contacted me to tell me that they feel as if I'm talking directly to them.

GET TO KNOW PEOPLE

Before you can build relationships with the people on your list, you have to get to know the people of your niche in general. Do some market research. What are their passions and deepest needs and desires?

What else is out there? Figure out what you can offer that no one else in the space is offering. There are things that are unique about you, your knowledge, and your presentation that can really hit home with people in a way that nothing else can.

Relationships are about people, right? So put the people first. You can do niche and market research on social media, sites like Quantcast.com, niche forums, blogs, and other spots on the web that either collect data or have groups of people who 'hang out' together on the web.

Pay attention to the most common topics and questions. Pay attention to emotions, wants, and needs. You can and should take notes on these things, especially if you're just starting out in the niche.

If you do this, you'll know what to present to the people who join your list. You'll know how to interact with them and best serve them.

You'll also get to know people over time just by nature of having a list. That's one of the great benefits of email marketing. It gives you insight into real people in a way that nothing else can.

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How is that, you say? Well, if the tone of your emails makes it seem as if you don't mind hearing from them, people on your list will sometimes contact you and give you a glimpse into what they're struggling with. I try to let them know that doing that isn't an intrusion, and always personally respond to those people.

OFFER VALUE

It's always important to offer a lot of value to the people of your niche. They will join your list for a reason. They have certain expectations and needs that have lead them to hand over their email address.

And that's not nothing, by the way. It takes a lot for some people to feel confident enough in a list marketer that they'll sign up for a list. People are tired of being scammed and used by certain marketers, which has made many of them shy. So, know it's really something when someone does trust you enough right from the start and signs up for your list.

You might think that you're giving something away to people for free, but I advise you to lose that thought. People signing up are paying you with their personal information (name and email list), so don't ever think that they're indebted to you just because you allow them to download a report or whatever it is that you're giving them.

Treasure that and the start of the relationship. Offer value that's evident right from the start. I recommend you send a welcome email that's personable and friendly. Maybe give them an unexpected bonus just for signing up.

You'll send out marketing emails because you're a marketer—and people will expect that. But what you should also do is send out emails that are

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informative or helpful in some way. You can even be informative and helpful right in marketing and sales emails, by the way.

With everything you do, make sure you're providing value to your list members. Put them and their needs first. Ask yourself if what you're mailing out truly serves in their best interest. This is a huge part of building relationships because the people on your list will come to really trust you and even value the emails that land in their inbox.

BECOME A HERO

You're an authority in your niche or you're working hard to become one. You want the people on your list to view you as someone to really pay attention to. You can achieve this by sharing great information and looking for ways you can help members of your audience.

Don't be afraid to share your story and your journey. That will mean a lot to people. Give people unexpected bits of advice and tips that they won't hear anywhere else... because it comes from your experience.

Do things that are generous just because. I'm a huge believer in the fact that if you focus on giving, you'll be richly rewarded. Giving, being generous, and really caring about the success of others is what will turn you into a hero in the eyes of your audience. They'll want to have a relationship with you because they'll want to connect with someone who's a hero of theirs.

They'll even (often silently, so you won't know the extent of it) be cheerleaders for you. Many times people tell me that they purchased a product on my recommendation, even though they received emails from other marketers promoting the same product, just because they know, like

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and trust me more than the other marketers. That's the relationship you want to be building.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO PROMOTE

With all this talk of giving and being generous, I don't mean to make it sound like you shouldn't promote. You are a marketer and you do have to promote or you won't get very far in business.

Besides that, the people of your niche are ready to buy. I'll assume you've made sure you're in a buyer's niche with an active buying audience. These people are ready and willing to buy low-ticket items and high-ticket items. And, if they don't buy from you, they'll buy from someone else.

You want them to buy from you. That means you have to be on top of the products that are released in your niche. You have to know what's going on around you and what you want to promote. Review products for your list and be honest about the pros and cons of what you're promoting.

Promote your own stuff as well. Your audience will want products you come out with because they really trust you. I release products on a very consistent schedule because I strongly believe that's most helpful to my audience. I don't release the \$2,000 products... I release products that are affordable for everyone and helpful to everyone.

WRITE CONSISTENTLY

You can't have a relationship with the members of your list if you never email them. It might sound silly or obvious for me to even mention that, but you'd be surprised how many people spend time, money, and effort building a list but then forget to mail or aren't comfortable mailing.

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I'll say it again—people have signed up to your list for a reason. They want and expect to hear from you. You're actually doing them a service when you write them, especially since you have a high focus on value.

Write on a consistent schedule. Train your readers to expect to hear from you. Invite them to write you back. They should know that you're a real person who really cares.

If they unsubscribe from your list after reading some of your emails, don't take it personally, and don't stop sending emails. I used to stress out over a few unsubscribes until I realized that the number of people unsubscribing from my lists was very small in relation to the number who stayed on my lists.

BE PERSONAL

Don't be afraid to share things about your life. People will connect with you more and the relationship will be a lot stronger if they know that you have your ups and downs like everyone else.

You can share things about your family and health. You can share things about your vacations and struggles. You can share what is and isn't working in your business.

People want to connect with you. And when they do, they'll be a lot more likely to open your emails and to go ahead and buy from you when you promote something.

MAKE THE PEOPLE A PRIORITY

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Relationships have to be two sided. Email marketing isn't just about promotion after promotion. Don't 'churn and burn' your list by mistreating people for a buck. You have to care about people and make them and their needs a priority. Let that shine through in your email marketing and you'll do just fine with building a relationship with your list.

ENJOY!

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