

Improve Email Marketing With Co-registration

GETTING GOOD PARTNERS IS KEY TO SUCCESS

BY DAVE YOUNG

••• Email marketing can be a powerful means to boost your company's revenues. However, before you can enjoy the many benefits of email marketing, it's necessary to build a solid email list. One way to do this involves using someone else's newsletter registration to acquire your own new members through a process known as co-registration. The arrangement is simple to set up and integrate into your existing registration process.

Co-registration takes place when two websites partner to build their respective email lists. For example, when a visitor to your website registers for your newsletter, you can offer him/her a chance to sign up for newsletters from the partnering website. According to Jeanne Jennings, an email marketing and website strategy consultant, "for an online or ecommerce merchant, the offer [to sign up] may be more focused on a promotion, such as 'Get additional news on our products, sales and special offers.'"

You don't want to enter into a co-registration deal with just anyone, Jennings said: "Work with someone who targets the same customers as you and doesn't offer a product mix that's directly competitive to yours." If you sell career clothing to professional women, a co-registration deal with a company that sells shoes to professional women would be a good fit. Partnering with a company that sells men's shoes would not make sense.

Setting up a co-registration partnership is easy once you have the right pieces in place. Jennings said that, in many instances, "one site collects registrations for its partner by adding a second form to the registration process, and then provides the information gathered to the partner on a set schedule," perhaps weekly or monthly, depending on volume.

Compensating partners

There are two ways to land co-registration space on partner sites. The best method, especially for small organizations, is to barter, because this approach is so affordable. To set up the trade, establish a cross co-registration deal in which each partner includes the option to sign up for the other partner's list.

Another method is to purchase co-registration space by setting up a pay-per-registration deal. This means the person "piggy-backing" pays a set fee (\$1, \$10, etc.) for each

email address he/she receives.

"Pay-per-registration can be expensive; barter is always the preferred method and should be attractive if both parties target the same audience," added Jennings.

Reggie Brady, an emarketing and direct marketing consultant, said co-registration is "typically done on a pay-for-performance basis or cost-per-action model." She explained one of the pros of using a pay-for-performance model is the high volume of leads that can be generated. She also said that while it's possible to generate thousands of leads, those leads are often not as strong as those captured on your own site or through your own marketing activities. As a marketer, you must segregate and track the subsequent performance of the leads you receive through a co-registration program.

Tracking Performance

Whatever partnership structure you choose, you need to track the performance of your list if co-registration is to be a success. It's not about how many email addresses you receive. You want to know how well the customers perform over time.

If 90 percent of the names you co-registered unsubscribe within six months, your list does not have much value. However, if your co-registered customers purchase more than those who signed up using other methods, you have a gold mine.

"The key is to keep them separate for tracking and to know what the average cost of a co-registration name is compared to what you pay for acquisitions through other sources," Jennings said.

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Though co-registration can be an effective tool to boost the quantity of names in your email-marketing list, it's not without its pitfalls. Three common errors include:

1. **OVERSPENDING FOR LEADS.** If you are paying for co-registration leads, email solution provider ExactTarget recommends that each name acquired should cost around 5 cents in order to be a profitable investment because: Open and click-through rates are consistently less than half those for house lists, co-reg people unsubscribe from the email programs faster and co-reg conversion rates are much lower than house lists.
2. **FAILING TO TRACK RESULTS.** It's important you keep the list of leads from your co-registration partners separate so you can track the conversion and click-through success of those new leads. If a particular partner is delivering high-quantity, low-quality customers, the co-registration relationship may not be worthwhile.
3. **WRITING POOR COPY.** It's common that you'll be able to put your logo and 100-250 words of text on your partners' offer pages. That's not much space to write a convincing, compelling message about your business. Effective copy often requires testing to ensure it attracts quality leads.

— PeC Staff

Finding partners

You can find co-registration partnerships by using list brokers.

"You have the option to work with companies such as CoregMedia," Brady said, "and if you are a business-to-business marketer, you might try SynapseConnect's FreeBizMag.com as a way to start building co-registration partnerships."

Sites generally look for long-term relationships and not a quick test program. As long as you look for potential partners with offers and content aimed at your target market and demographics, you can build a successful lead list. If the sites you're considering have a newsletter registration in place, contact them and explain the co-registration process. Describe how both of you can boost revenues through this powerful email marketing technique. ■