

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

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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-quality, 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. ■

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.