

In email marketing, you must have a list of email addresses to receive your message or newsletter. There are essentially three ways to go about obtaining an email list – buying, renting, or building.

### **Buying an Email List**

Buying a bulk email list sounds like a promising start to an email marketing campaign. Presumably someone else has done the work to gather email addresses and now, for a simple one-time fee, you can reap the rewards of their labor. Unfortunately, in 99% of list buying situations, this couldn't be further from the truth.

An email list is a precious thing. It contains a ready source of consumers who can drive up profits, increase downloads and give weight to your online reputation. But, the list is valuable only if the email recipients accept and take action with an email. When an email list is built, time and care is put into gathering names legitimately, with permission, so that they can be used from time to time to boost revenues.

The fastest way to kill a quality email list is to open it up to unmonitored emails from others. If a list builder created his list with precision and care, he is not going to sell it to others. It is valuable to him because he can control the amount of emails that his list receives. If multiple people by and start sending countless emails to his list, he's no longer in control, and his recipients will most likely call, "spam!" and quit responding. Then all of his hard work is lost. The bottom line – if an email list is for sale, it had no value to its owner, and will have no value to you.

### **Renting an Email List**

The alternative to buying a list with no value is to rent a high-value list from its owner. To rent a list, which is a common and respected practice in email marketing, you create your email marketing message then have the list owner deliver it to his list for you. You don't obtain the list, nor do you even get to see the addresses on it. This way the list is protected by the builder and your message reaches a presumably interested audience. Of course, every time you want to send an email, you must pay a rental fee.

### **Building Your Own List**

The third option is to simply build your own email list. There are many ways to build a quality email list, but the primary issue is that your readers subscribe to your emails or give you permission to send related advertisements and offers via email. If you don't have permission, you're playing with fire.

Lists take time to build, and to be effective, you must monitor and clean your list on an ongoing basis. Your list should be protected, and as it grows, your reputation and potential revenue stream grows along with it.