

TEN-STEP EMAIL LEAD GENERATION CHECKLIST

1 Have You Clearly Defined Your Strategy?

The most important question of all. Like any marketing activity, your email lead generation effort is doomed to fail if you haven't first clarified your overall marketing strategy. What are the key benefits of your product or service? Where does your company position itself in its market? Why are you investing in email lead generation-what specific results do you hope to achieve from it? And so on.

2 Have You Identified All Applicable Audiences?

Rental lists are often segmented into multiple audiences (C-Level executives, product managers, engineers...). You might think, "Great! I can just send a message to the C-Level executives, because they're the ones who make the decisions." But remember: Executives don't make these decisions in a vacuum. They base their choices on the feedback of others. So you need to ask yourself: In the case of your specific product, which categories of people influence the purchase decision?

3 Have You Enlisted a Reputable List Broker?

If you're going to invest your time and resources in email-based lead generation, you're taking a big risk if you don't have an expert list broker at your side. There's a sea of lists out there, with widely varying quality. And the landscape changes constantly. A good list broker understands your business and is deeply familiar with the lists that would best suit you. He or she is also accustomed to asking the list managers the hard questions-and getting you the answers you need to make the best decisions.

4 Have You Checked Out the Lists You're Considering Renting?

Yes, you've got a trusty list broker helping you. But ultimately, the best way to understand the dynamics of a particular list is to join it yourself. This will give you a firsthand look at what kinds of messages list members receive, how frequently they receive promotional messages, how they join and unsubscribe, etc.

5 Do You Have a Compelling (and Appropriate) Offer?

If you want to convince a prospective lead to qualify himself and establish a relationship with you, you have to give her something valuable in return. Maybe a white paper. An industry report. Or an invitation to an exclusive educational event, like a Webinar. And your offer has to be a qualifier in itself, something that would specifically appeal to a person in your target audience.

6 Have You Customized Your Message to Every Audience?

Businesspeople don't join email lists because they want more email. They join lists because they want value. And any messages that don't speak their language will be promptly discarded. So know what each of your audiences considers important and tailor your messages accordingly.

7 Have You Carefully Formulated Your Landing Page?

The email you send out to your prospective leads may get them to your Web site. But your investment in email lead generation is all for naught unless the page they reach (your landing page) convinces them to complete the process.

8 Are You Tracking Every Meaningful Detail?

If you're going to invest in email lead generation, you want to know what works and what doesn't, every step of the way. For example, you want to know how many people opened your messages, and, if you've sent your message to different segments of a list, what the response rate was for each one. As part of price you pay to rent a list, the list's manager may provide tracking. But perhaps not at the level you need. Know what details you want to track and ensure there's a mechanism in place to track them.

9 Are You Willing to Commit?

Email-based lead generation is just like advertising: It must be an investment over time. Once you've sent out your blasts to a particular list, you need to study the results and use that knowledge to further hone your message for the next time you rent the list. A prospective lead who's not interested in your company may be down the line.

10 Do You Have Realistic Expectations?

No matter how well you prepare, you must remember: When it comes to email-based lead generation, there are no guarantees. The key is, as we say in #9, keep honing your message and over time you'll increase your odds of success.