

LESSON 10: LIST SEGMENTATION

EMAIL LIST SECRETS



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SEGMENTATION

In the first report, we discussed the importance of email marketing and what made it so powerful even when compared to other effective forms of marketing. What we learned is that email marketing is not only more direct and more personal, but also a method that gives you a lot more control over the nature of your messages and the way you interact with your readers.

And one of the single most important aspects of that is list segmentation. List segmentation allows you to group the contacts that you are messaging into useful groups that can help you to better target your messaging going forward. In this post, we'll take a look at the different strategies this can include and how you should go about executing them.

Targeting by Demographics

The first and most obvious way that you might segment your list is the same as you might consider focusing on specific targets for any other form of marketing – by demographic.

This is simple: you find out the names, the ages, the locations and the genders of your different subscribers and using that information, you then make sure that you are sending the right messages to the right people. The objective is to avoid ever

sending anyone an email that they are completely unlikely to be interested in – so no trying to sell wedding dresses to young men.

Targeting is incredibly important when it comes to any form of marketing for this very reason – it allows you to decide precisely who sees each message and thereby to greatly enhance the chances of getting a conversion – convincing that person that they should follow the links and maybe buy the products you’re discussing.

This actually goes even *further* when it’s email marketing you’re talking about though. One reason for this is that in email marketing, you need to ensure that you are consistently delivering quality and value and that means ensuring that the messages are relevant to the people receiving them.

If you *keep* receiving messages that have nothing to do with you, chances are that you’re eventually going to completely unsubscribe. By making sure this doesn’t happen, you ensure that people aren’t as likely to leave your mailing list.

How to Segment Your Audience

The next question is how you go about segmenting your audience in the first place. How do you collect all this information?

The answer is through your opt-in form, but there is a very delicate balance you need to walk here. If your opt-in form contains too many questions and asks for too much data, this can end up forming an unnecessary barrier between your potential subscribers and you. Either this is going to seem like a little bit too much work for the sake of signing up to a mailing list (which many people are dubious to do at the best of times) or it is going to seem like an invasion of privacy.

What you can likely get away with is just one or two questions such as gender, or perhaps age. The key then is to think about which questions are the most important for the sake of your particular campaign. Consider that your demographic information is on a tight budget... what is the most valuable to you?

Note as well that you can always get more information from specific users at a later date. You could do this by inviting your subscribers to take part in a survey (possibly in exchange for some kind of reward), or you could wait until they buy and then get information from there (such as their delivery address). You can also work out information through extrapolation. For instance, someone called Gary is probably male! Just make sure that whichever autoresponder you choose to use allows you to add this additional information later on as you go.

Finally, consider using multiple mailing lists. This is a very straightforward way to segment your contacts lists and means

that you can keep your messages more niche. Instead of having a single messaging list on your site, why not have several? Or perhaps have multiple different websites, each with their own mailing lists.

So be careful about how you go about collecting data, but definitely look into doing it as it can be incredibly valuable going forward.

But while this is a very effective method, it is only one of several strategies that you can use involving segmentation.

The Way to Think About Your Subscribers and Leads

First, let's take a look at what a lead is and so what a landing page really is and how you need to think about it. Essentially, your landing page is a vehicle through which you are going to be converting 'cold leads' into 'warm leads' and 'hot leads'.

A cold lead is someone that you've never contacted before and that is discovering your brand for the first time. This is why it's called 'cold calling' – you are literally calling your cold leads. A warm lead is someone who has shown an interest in your brand and who has potentially given you the permission to contact them.

Finally, a hot lead is a lead that is ready to convert. A hot lead might also be someone that has bought in the past, or that has asked for more information about a product.

The thing to keep in mind, is that you *cannot* convert someone directly from being a cold lead to being a hot lead. That is why email marketing is so important because it is what gives us the opportunity to trigger that next step where you warm our cold leads up. This is what preps a lead to be able to buy from us and where we start to convert them into buyers.

If we try and sell to them as soon as they land on our web page, then they will get frustrated at our lack of interest in providing value and look at the site as spam. Wouldn't you, after all?

But if we don't attempt to hook the reader in at all, then they will likely simply leave the site and not come back! This is even worse in many ways.

The best way to think about this is to compare it to dating. Imagine that you see a woman/man that you're attracted to in a bar. This person is your cold lead.

Now if you were to walk up to them and ask if they'd like to go on a date with you, or if they'd like to sleep with you, they would probably slap you. That's because you're trying to convert them into a hot lead directly.

And if you talk to them but don't ask them for their number, then they'll leave and you'll never see them again. That's because you never made the transition – they stayed cold.

But if you ask for their number, then you can contact them, build up a relationship and get them interested in you as a person. Now they're a warm lead and now they'll be much more susceptible to any requests for a date in future.

This is the exact same thing as collecting an email address before you try to sell to someone. It lets you build that all important relationship, it lets them learn about who you are and it lets them see why they should be interested in what you have to offer – and that they can trust you.

Why would a woman (or man) accept an offer for the date if they know nothing at all about you?

And why would someone buy from you if they've never heard of you before and they have zero reason to trust that you're selling great products?

So, your landing page is *crucial* because it is what will allow you to build on your initial impressions and to create a relationship to the point where you can try and sell something.

Using This to Your Advantage

So, this is why the notion of ‘types of leads’ is such an important one. But how do you use that to your advantage in your campaign? And what does it have to do with list segmentation?

Well, the exciting part is that most autoresponders actually allow you to segment your list based on what kind of lead they are. This means that you can automatically sort your readers into cold, warm and hot leads and then only attempt to sell to the leads that are most likely to want to buy from you.

How can you know this? Simple: the autoresponder will calculate it on the basis of behaviour. Using cookies stored on users’ computers, it is possible for your autoresponder to see who is most engaged in your content. For example, you might create a separate category for those users that read every single one of your messages and linger there for a long time, and then another for those users that never open any of your messages at all.

Likewise, you might be able to see which of your users have actually visited your site and looked at certain items in your store. These users that have lingered over items have likely considered buying them and thus might be ready for just that extra little ‘push’.

And then there are the leads that have actually purchased from you in the past. These are particularly useful to separate from the pack because they have demonstrated an interest in what you sell and a willingness to pay. They've also already gone through the rigmarole of having entered their details and they know they can trust you (assuming you fulfilled their order on time and in good condition).

In other words, these readers are considerably more likely to be willing to buy from you *again*. But at the same time, it's also important to make sure that you have a note of what it is that they bought – because of course they are unlikely to want to purchase the same thing off of you twice and you need to ensure that you aren't constantly try to push the same item on them.

By using this information, you can then use segmentation in order to gradually move readers from cold to warm to hot. You can try using every trick up your sleeve (all of which will have been learned from these reports!) and then eventually you can get them more and more interested in what you have to say. Once they begin actively reading every message that you send them and once they start visiting your site to look at your products *then* you know that they're likely to be interested in buying from you and it's okay to go ahead and try to convert.

Oh and of course there are many more uses for this powerful feature too. For one, you can use this same data in order to look

at which types of users are the most engaged and which types of emails are the most effective at increasing engagement.

In other words, which leads are the warmest? The women or the men? Which convert most often? Knowing this can help you to target your future marketing activities better.

Likewise, you can use this information in order to create entirely automated autoresponder sequences. These are sequences of emails that will be sent out automatically and in a set order as soon as someone signs up. When used correctly, these can allow you to take a list of contacts from being cold to hot all without lifting a finger and by combining it with useful information and segmentation, you can ensure that your autoresponder sequence only tries to sell at the point when your individual readers are most convinced by your value and therefore most interested in potentially buying from you.

So, there you have it: segmentation is another incredibly powerful tool for your email marketing campaign and one that can make a huge difference to your success. Make sure you are targeting your messages for the right audience members!