

Email Marketing Simplified

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INTRODUCTION

What's an autoresponder?

If you've ever asked for information online about a product or service, or signed up for an e-list or group membership on the Internet, and received a nearly instantaneous response in your e-mail inbox, an autoresponder program was responsible for delivering the reply.

Simply put, autoresponders are e-mail programs that send out a preset message in response to every incoming e-mail received. Some autoresponders, like sign-up services for e-groups and forums, are one-shot deals: a single response for every message received. Just about every Internet-based company uses autoresponders for a variety of purposes, from automating tasks that would otherwise take up hundreds of man-hours to building lists and tracking prospective leads.

Multiple autoresponders send a series of messages to received e-mail addresses on a predetermined, timed basis. For instance, a multiple autoresponder can be used to send an instant response, then a follow-up message three days later, then another five days after that, and so on. It can be programmed to send a message a day, one per week, twice monthly, or any interval that satisfies the purpose of the message series.

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Autoresponders are the most powerful Internet marketing tools available. They are easy to use, and once they're set up the entire marketing process is automated and instant.

When you use autoresponders, your Internet business runs itself 24 hours a day.

Launching an effective autoresponder campaign can mean the difference between a struggling business and a wildly successful one.

How can I make money with autoresponders?

Just about any online business can benefit by using autoresponders. In fact, with a properly arranged campaign, your as-yet-unfounded business can be built around an autoresponder program. All you need is a product and an effective series of autoresponder messages, and you can start carving your piece of the Internet pie.

Your autoresponder is your golden goose: the marketing tool that will sell your well-developed product far more effectively than any other form of advertising. Few sales are made by impulse buyers, particularly on the internet. But if you are able to get your message out repeatedly to people who are already interested in what you have to offer, you will see an explosive sales response.

This book will give you all the information you need to begin profiting with autoresponders. You'll learn how to choose a topic that works best for you and your situation; research your market and find or develop great content that people want to

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buy; start you own automated storefront web site; tailor your autoresponder messages for maximum effectiveness; and build a powerful opt-in autoresponder list that will make money even while you sleep.

Let's start making autoresponder magic!

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PICK A TOPIC

To make money with autoresponders, you need a product. Most of the time, the product you're selling is information: an e-book, print book, e-course, e-zine or newsletter, CD, or downloadable audio program. Your topic must be something that appeals to a wide audience—you could have the world's best book on raising Amazon boa constrictors at home, but the only people interested in it would be people who already own an Amazon boa constrictor, or have thought about buying one. In this case, your sales base would be limited (to put it nicely). On the other hand, if your book or product tells people how to make five hundred dollars a minute—well, you might have quite a few potential buyers.

Also, your topic must be an area in which you have personal interest or expertise. If you can put your passion into your marketing material, people will be able to tell that you believe in what you're selling. This builds trust *and* sales.

In this chapter we'll talk about how to choose a topic that covers both these areas: widespread appeal, and your personal interest or expertise to back it up.

Your personal interests and areas of expertise

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People who like their jobs are happier. Their enthusiasm spills over into their work, and they often find themselves receiving promotions or raises and attracting customers without even trying.

If you're comfortable talking about your product, and you are passionate about the subject, your confidence will permeate every area of your autoresponder program. You will receive unsolicited comments from buyers who are pleased with your service. You'll be able to build consumer trust because people will know that you endorse your product 100 percent.

One aspect of developing your personal interest in a topic is to actually use the information you're offering yourself. That way, when you discuss the benefits of buying your product, you'll be able to get personal about the experience.

Another important part of choosing your topic is identifying your area of expertise. This doesn't mean you have to be an "expert." It just means that it will be far easier for you to sell a product you know a lot about—and far easier for buyers to part with their hard-earned money when they know they are purchasing from a knowledgeable source. Think you don't have an area of expertise? You may know more than you think you know. The topics you're familiar with don't have to come from a job or college courses.

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Take the following quiz to help you determine your hidden interests and expertise, or develop and hone in on the areas you already know you're interested in.

QUIZ: What Do You Know?

Answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible to discover the topic best suited to you that will help you succeed in your autoresponder campaign.

1. Who are you? This sounds too simple to be useful, but you'd be surprised how seeing your personal demographics laid out in black-and-white can provide insight into what topics are best for you. Write down the following information about yourself:

- Your name, age, and gender
- Where you live: House or apartment? City or suburb? New or old neighborhood? What area of the country?
- The rest: Blue collar or white collar? Religious or not? Any other identifying statistics you can think of?

2. What have you done? List every single job you've ever held. Leave some space between them, then go back and detail all of your job duties. Be creative—give yourself the best-sounding titles you can think of. For example: if you once worked at a fast food restaurant, you might have been a customer service specialist, a food service

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technician, or a sanitation facilitator. These might sound extreme or over-the-top, but no one will see them but you. This is just to help build your self-confidence.

3. What *else* have you done? Brainstorm any hobbies you have been into, groups you've joined, topics you researched for school or work, or any subject you might have taken a personal interest in and acted on.

4. Where do you go? Are you more likely to spend time at the park or the mall? Do you travel a lot, or do you prefer to stick close to home? Where have you gone on vacations, and where would you like to go?

5. Who do you hang out with? Your choice of friends can tell you a lot about you and the way you relate to others. Are most of your friends the same gender as you, or opposite? Older, younger, or about the same age? Where do they live and work? Think about the activities you and your friends enjoy together. You can even include online friends – people you might have met in chat rooms, groups, or forums with whom you exchange regular correspondence. Any common interests you share with your friends can help point you toward a topic you'll be comfortable promoting.

NOTE: Building Credibility—When What You Have Isn't Enough

Most of the time when working with autoresponders, you won't have to worry about credibility. Your well-developed product will speak for itself. However, if you don't have

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background experience that relates to your chosen topic and you would feel more confident with credentials, there are several simple ways to position yourself as an expert in your field.

Testimonials. Testimonials are statements from customers about their satisfaction with your product. These can range from short blurbs to full-page letters, and can be used for a variety of purposes, including establishing credibility. A full discussion on getting and using testimonials can be found later in this book.

Articles. If you choose a topic that you're interested in but haven't had much experience working with, you will have to do some research. As you find out more, you can write short, informative articles on your subject and publish them on the internet to establish yourself as knowledgeable in your field. There are hundreds of thousands of web sites looking for content that will be happy to publish articles with your byline and a link to your web site. Look for sites relating to your topic, or try these general article submission sites to spread your name around the internet (no, really; that's a *good* thing):

- iSnare.com: Maintains a database of over 200,000 free articles. Add your own, and get great content for your web site while you're there.
- ArticleBeach: A search engine directory of articles. Submit your article for inclusion in their expert database.
- EzineArticles: Allows e-zine or e-mail list publishers to post informative articles free for use on other people's sites or in their e-zine or newsletter.

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- IdeaMarketers.com: Free articles and web content for web site owners. Submit your article and showcase your work, and get more content for your site.
- ArticleCity.com: Another database of articles for free use by the online public.

Marketability: Will they buy?

We've mentioned that the topic you choose has to not only be of interest to you, but also have widespread appeal. This is the marketability factor. You will have to be able to make your product interesting and attractive to buyers. So you'll need a subject that a broad audience can relate to.

How can you tell if your topic will interest enough buyers to make your autoresponder campaign successful? The following quiz will help you determine the marketability factor for your product.

QUIZ: The Marketability Factor

Answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible to help figure out whether your topic has mass-market appeal.

1. How often do you hear your topic mentioned in the news? If the news media considers your subject important enough to report on with regularity, it's probably

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something quite a few people are interested in. Televisions, magazines and newspapers are looking for ratings, and they get them by drawing large audiences with the information they present. The broader the audience they feel can be reached with a topic, the more often they will seek to cover it.

2. How many products are available on the market relating to your topic?

Finding out you have a lot of competition is not necessarily a bad thing. It simply means there is a large enough consumer base to support products that deal with the topic—and that will include your product.

3. What is the approximate age range of people who would find your topic

interesting? The best topics have broad demographical appeal. If your subject can interest anyone from teens to retirees, you have a great shot at creating and selling a successful product.

4. How fast would you act on a great deal for a product relating to your

topic? How about your friends? Would you jump at a bargain if it related to the topic you've chosen? And how about the people you hang out with—your easy-to-reach target market? The sooner you can hook people into a sale during the buying process, the more likely your autoresponder campaign will be profitable.

5. What are the benefits of knowing more about your topic that customers

would gain by buying your product? People want to know they're getting what they

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pay for. Your topic should be able to provide buyers with some tangible knowledge or skill they would not otherwise have if they hadn't purchased your product. Being able to list the benefits of your product will also help in your marketing, which will be discussed further in this book.

The Marketability Factor Quiz: The Quickie Version

Ready? Answer yes or no:

1. Is your topic in the news a lot?
2. Do you have existing competition?
3. Does your topic appeal to several age groups?
4. Would you or your friends buy a bargain product related to your topic?
5. Does your topic have useful benefits?

If you answered "yes" to at least four of these, congratulations! Your topic is marketable! Proceed with confidence; you're on the right track.

JUMPSTART YOUR TOPIC DECISION

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Still have no clue where to start? Here's a partial list of topics to choose from that have high marketability factors:

- Making money
- Investing money
- Saving money (on consumer purchases)
- Starting a business (online or offline)
- Running a profitable web site
- Dieting and weight loss
- Time management
- Relationships and dating
- Finding a dream job
- Working from home

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RESEARCH YOUR MARKET

Now that you've chosen a topic, it's time to research your market. If the word "research" makes you break out in a sweat and experience flashbacks to all that time you spent in high school poring over books, scribbling out notes and wondering why teachers delight in torturing their students, don't worry—it's easier than you think. There are no card catalogues involved in this type of research. In fact, you might find it fun!

The purpose of market research is an important one: you are going to determine who will buy your product, where they hang out both on and offline, and how you can best reach them through advertising your autoresponder program. The more you can pinpoint your target market, the better success (and profits) you will see.

There are many methods of performing market research. We'll cover the most effective ones here. All of the following examples are fast, easy, and best of all...free. For best results, use each one of them and arm yourself with as much information as possible. This way, when you launch your autoresponder campaign, your earnings will truly be automatic.

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