

Email For Advocacy and Community Organizing: Basics, Essentials, and Best Practices

Email Signup Best Practices

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs and ScoutSeven

Funded by the Community Technology Foundation of California

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Learning Goals

- ▶ Best Practices for Building Email lists
 - Online and Offline
- ▶ Essential Information to Collect
 - Know what to ask for and what you don't need
- ▶ “Opt In” versus “Double Opt-In”
- ▶ Proper Etiquette for Engaging List Members
- ▶ Privacy Best Practices

Email Signup

► Ways to Build Your List

- Online

- Your web site
- Make your email messages easy to forward

- Offline

- Always have sign-up sheets at live events
- Promote your email list in print publications

Email Signup

- ▶ Use your web site as a primary conduit
 - Make it easy for supporters to sign up for emails on your website
 - Include links or a sign up box “above the fold” on every page
 - Make sure that your sign up forms verify the basic syntax of addresses in case of typos

Email Signup

► Know What to Ask For

- Do not require too much information about your supporters
 - Do you really need their name?
- Don't offer a complex form
 - They may not follow through with submitting it
- Consider sending them an email in a week
 - Give them a link to login and update their profile
 - Get extra information then, rather than all at once

Email Signup

- ▶ Collect geographical information
 - Geographical data lets you customize and target emails to segments of your list
 - Especially useful when trying to promote an event or target an elected official
 - Using just a zip code, many tools can lookup the city, state, and representatives of that person based on the postal code

Email Signup

- ▶ Tell supporters when they are going to be added to your list
 - Any form or tool on your website that collects user info should give an option to join your list
 - Online action center, store, donation tool, event registration, online petitions, etc
 - Make sure supporters know that by submitting the form they will be added to your list
 - Include a pre-checked box that supporters can opt out with

Email Signup

- ▶ Two methods to add addresses to your list:
 - “Opt-in” method
 - Users ask to be added to your list and you add them
 - “Double opt-in” method
 - Users request to be added to your list
 - You send an email that includes a confirmation link
 - Double opt in
 - Allows you to verify the validity of the email address
 - Cuts down on spam complaints and bouncing emails
 - Will limit your list growth

Email Signup

► Welcome New Subscribers

- Send welcome message
 - Thank the supporter for joining the list
 - Give directions for removing themselves in case they were added by someone else
 - Set expectations about the content and frequency of messages to the list

Email Signup

► Welcome New Subscribers

- Send welcome message
 - Tell them about the organization, inspire them
 - Make them look forward to your emails
 - Provide options to join other lists that you offer

Email Signup

- ▶ Give supporters options
 - Allow supporters to choose the topics about which they wish to receive emails
 - Offer lists that have different levels of traffic
 - “News” or “Announce” vs. “Talk” or “Discussion”
 - Always offer digest or archive
 - The more your supporters can customize their email experience, the longer they will stay on your lists

Email Signup

- ▶ Be serious about privacy
 - Let your supporters know when they sign up that you take their privacy seriously
 - State that you will not share or sell their personal information
 - “Swapping lists” is never a good tactic
 - May not be legal
 - Link to your privacy policy on your website
 - Follow the policy!

Summary

- ▶ Remember Best Practices for Building Email lists
 - Online and Offline
- ▶ Know the Essential Information to Collect
 - Know what to ask for and what you don't need
- ▶ Consider “Opt In” versus “Double Opt-In”
- ▶ Be Thoughtful When Engaging List Members
- ▶ Know and Follow Privacy Best Practices

End Of Section

- ▶ Questions?
- ▶ Comments?

Thank You!

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