Article Side

The Three Things to Look for when You Buy an Email List by Glenn Farrier

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There are lots of things to consider when you buy an email list, but letâ€™s start with the top three things to ask about a list before you buy.

One â€“ Is this a list that people opted in to, or is this a list of unsolicited prospects?

An opt-in list means that the people on the list have requested or agreed to be on the list. This is an important question to ask because if the individuals on the list did not request placement on the list, then bulk emails to them are technically nothing more than unsolicited spam. One might call this the email version of cold-calling. One way of identifying if the list is opt-in or unsolicited is to ask the list compiler how they compiled the list. If they are unwilling to divulge that information, another way you might be able to determine the opt-in status of the list is to examine it for completion. If there are fields that are incomplete, this is likely an unsolicited list. If the list were opt-in, individuals would have provided that information to the compiler of the list.

Two â€“ How old is the list?

Old marketing lists are problematic for a variety of reasons. Aside from the information potentially being outdated, inaccurate, or incomplete, using an old email list has other negative implications. For one, even if the list was an opt-in list, if the list was compiled years ago, the individuals on the list may not even remember that they opted-in. On that last point, general consensus is that permission has an expiration date â€“ meaning that if someone gives you permission to contact them, that permission does not last a lifetime. Industry standard is around ten months. Thereafter, email recipients are more likely to make complaints about spam often because after that amount of time passes they have simply forgotten that they ever opted in.

Three â€“ What is the deliverability percentage of the list?

What good is buying an email marketing list if the data is so inaccurate that your emails are returned undeliverable? Itâ€™s not enough to just assume that because the list is described as â€œopt-inâ€• or â€œ that the email addresses are reliable and currently in-use. Companies that are reputable in their email list sales will be able to quote you a rough deliverability percentage rate. Rates of acceptable deliverability vary according to the industry. A respectable deliverable rate for email data is normally 75% or better.

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The author of this article works for a a bulk email software superstore and is very knowledgeable about a email lists.

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