

**How To Start YOUR OWN**

**Successful  
Online  
Newsletter  
or Ezine**



**Ezine  
Marketing  
Magic**

## **Ezine Marketing Magic**

<b>1. Introduction to Successful Ezine Marketing</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Why Offer Your Own Ezine Newsletter? .....	4
1.1.1 Getting Started .....	8
1.2 Creating and publishing your own Ezine.....	10
1.3 The Roadmap to Ezine success.....	11
1.4 Best practices for publishing the ideal Ezine.....	16
1.5 Formatting your Ezine .....	19
1.6 Designing an eye catching Ezine .....	23
1.7 Shape up the content for your Ezine.....	30
1.8 Finding Free Ezine Content and Articles.....	43
1.9 Hiring professional writers to write for your Ezine.....	44
1.10 Formulating those great new ideas .....	45
1.11 Avoiding a few common pitfalls.....	48
<b>2. How to build and manage your Email Newsletter</b> .....	<b>53</b>
2.1 Formatting content for compatibility with popular Email programs.....	53
2.2 Frequency of your Ezine.....	54
2.3 Intelligent strategies to develop your customer base .....	56
2.4 Managing subscriber lists .....	62
2.4.1 Paid Servers vs. Free Servers.....	63
2.4.2 Dealing with unsubscribe requests.....	65
2.4.3 Handling Bounced Emails .....	67
2.5 Double Opt in.....	68
2.6 The Ezine ISSN.....	70
2.7 Creating a website for your Ezines.....	71
2.7.1 A few basics of Website designing.....	73
2.7.2 Domain Name registration for the website .....	79
2.7.3 Web Hosting .....	81
2.8 Ezine as a Viral Marketing tool .....	85
2.9 Making use of Ezine Software – Automating the Ezine process.....	87
2.10 Acquiring useful subscriber data .....	92
2.11 Using testimonials to improve credibility.....	94
<b>3. Making Money from Your Ezine</b> .....	<b>96</b>
3.1 Paid Ezines – Do they work? .....	96
3.1.1 Developing a fee-based Ezine.....	97
3.1.2 Provide extra-ordinary content .....	97
3.1.3 Employ ‘direct response marketing’ for your Ezine.....	98
3.1.4 Built-in product strategy .....	98
3.1.5 Put it all together effectively! .....	99
3.1.6 Encouraging free subscribers to become paid subscribers .....	100
3.3 Selling Ad Space in Your Ezine .....	106
3.4 How to place ads in your Ezine .....	109
3.5 How to get advertisers’ attention for your Ezine? .....	110
<b>4. Advertising your own Ezine</b> .....	<b>115</b>

4.1 The Advertising Campaign .....	115
4.1.1 Setting up your advertising campaign.....	115
4.1.2 Places to advertise your Ezines.....	119
4.1.3 Testing with Ad tracking programs .....	122
4.2 Advertising in other Ezines.....	123
4.2.1 Targeting Ezines that cater to your kind of audience .....	124
4.2.2 Distinguishing between the good and the not-so-good ezines.....	125
4.2.3 The Ezine Ad Copy.....	129
4.2.4 Swapping Ads with other Ezine publishers .....	133
4.2.5 Submitting articles to other Ezines .....	134
4.3 Distributing Ezines yourself .....	136
<b>5. Final Thoughts .....</b>	<b>140</b>
5.1 The Next Level .....	140
5.2 Conclusion .....	141
<b>6. Sample Templates.....</b>	<b>142</b>
6.1 Sample Ezine Template .....	142
6.2 Sample Welcome Letter.....	146

# **1. Introduction to Successful Ezine Marketing**

## **1.1 Why Offer Your Own Ezine Newsletter?**

Ezine Newsletters are one of the fastest and most effective ways of delivering relevant information to your audience. A good ezine will have many benefits for the publisher. It can target its audience, learn its preferences, and provide subscribers with what they need. An ezine can be a free (or low cost) method of increasing your revenues, and helping you reach the right customers for your products. You can use your ezine to establish your credibility, and earn free publicity. Besides, you can also sell advertising space in your Ezine and earn additional profits.

An Ezine offers what everyone needs – free useful information! You have the liberty of writing and publishing anything under the sun, anything that you feel passionate about, anything that you firmly believe in. You not only get others to listen to you, you also get them to click on the ads published within your Ezine and earn a part of your advertisers' profit in return.

There are innumerable benefits of starting your own Ezine. You can increase your business to multifold proportions if you utilize your options effectively. One major advantage is that you communicate directly with your potential customers without the help of any mediator. This makes it easier for you to enhance your subscriber base. A

large subscriber base implies that your publication and advertisements will reach more customers. This also means that you can increase your sales with the click of a button.

### **A few other benefits**

An Ezine is more widely read and easily accessible compared to a web page. Sometimes, web page navigation, if not well designed, can become monotonous. Plus, the convenience of having an Ezine delivered straight in subscribers' inbox, which they can read whenever they want to, is a one-up for Ezines. Besides, you don't need to beat around the bush when you want your readers to get your point. You can convey your message directly and go straight to the point without going through any clutter.

The key to improving your subscriber base is great content. The number of active readers would multiply if you deliver quality content. You have to establish your reputation in the minds of your readers and prove incessantly that you know what you are writing about. The more credible your content, the easier it would be for your readers to appreciate your work.

Ezines, like I said earlier are great marketing tools for other products. However, to be successful at it, you need to carefully plan each of your strategies. First, you should do some research and find out what should be your target clientele. Once that is done, you need to find information like names and email addresses of targeted readers and feed it in to your Ezine database. All you have to do is simply write a few interesting and effective

articles about the product. For example, if your product is a vacuum cleaner, search for customers interested in this and write articles that will arrest their attention.

You can write about ‘effective cleaning techniques’, ‘why vacuum cleaners are the best and most efficient cleaning gadget’, ‘what are the newest gadgets available in the market’ and so on. Your readers would surely appreciate interesting, unique as well as useful information; and, just when you know that you have convinced your clients to invest in a new vacuum cleaner, you can place your ad for the vacuum cleaner strategically in your Ezine.

Through effective Ezine marketing techniques you can achieve phenomenal increase in sales. You can not only minimize your total cost but also earn huge return on investments through Ezine publishing. Compare it with other ways of advertising and you will realize how easy it is to save money when you employ these tactics. If you use postal mail to send flyers, information brochures, etc. to your potential customers, your message might not reach the right person and besides, it can cost you a lot of money.

Similarly, billboards, hoardings, sticking up flyers on public places and other offline marketing gimmicks cannot ensure that your ad will be noticed by the right people. Ezine Marketing is probably one of the smartest marketing techniques, especially when you are just starting out.

Another advantage of ezines is that you could also place ads from external parties and can earn additional income through the revenues generated by these ads. Besides earning revenues generated by ads, you could also increase traffic on your website as people who receive your Ezine will probably want to check it out. By adding feedback forms and asking for inputs from your readers, you can even make changes to your website, thus benefiting even more.

You should also make it a point to regularly seek feedback about your ezines as well. Feedback generates a sense of credibility amongst most people. They start thinking of you as a real person. It instills a feeling of security in their mind that your Ezine is not spamming their system, but is operated by a real human being who makes an effort to improve the quality of the information provided.

As time goes on and you get well acquainted with the market trend and consumer behavior, you can introduce surveys, bulletin boards, questionnaires, and contests to encourage more reader participation. This is not just an interesting pastime for your readers, but it also helps in developing community spirit among them.

An Ezine can gain you a lot of insight into your target audience. Like I said earlier, the data that can be collected about your readers through ezines is crucial. However, you have to understand that any unauthorized use of the information you collect from your subscriber's is considered felony and you can be prosecuted by law. Hence, you should judiciously use all that information.

### **1.1.1 Getting Started**

You may have multiple reasons for starting an Ezine, but you cannot focus on all aspects at the same time. Keep all your reasons at the back of your mind, but focus on that one reason, which motivated you to create your own Ezine. Throughout your campaign, you must stick to that singular reason, come up with ways to be resourceful, and devise a plan that ultimately helps you reach your goal. Sounds easy doesn't it? Most successful publishers would disagree.

Ezine publishing requires considerable dedication and careful planning. There are numerous strategies, tips, and guidelines out there on how to be successful in this business – some really good and some really dire! This is where you would find this eBook so useful! It presents a number of proven tactics based on successful models. It goes beyond the haze and claims of many experts and tries to put before you a plan that actually works. So let's get started!

When you have your goal in mind, the first thing you need to work out is determine your target customers and their demographics. I can't lay enough stress on this phase. Most publishers tend to ignore this absolutely vital aspect and eventually suffer. See if your ezine is for young people, middle-aged or old people. People of a variety of age groups use Internet so don't restrict your mindset. Will your Ezine be read by those who are experts or just plain amateurs? Are your readers going to be active shoppers? Bored



housewives? Students looking for information that can be used in school projects? Freelancers? The range is almost boundless. Make sure that you are targeting the right age group and right type of readers, so that your Ezine reaches where it should reach.

Once you have enough information with you, you need to at least have a name for your Ezine! The name for your Ezine must not be misleading or excessively flashy. It should give a clear idea to your readers about what to expect when they start reading the Ezine.

An ezine that gives information about the stock market should not be titled 'Tips and tricks on how to make big bucks!' Although, you might feel that you are giving them valuable tips about the stock market, it does not mean that they will make big bucks! The key is to have a title that justifies its claim. Simply put, your Ezine can be titled 'Tips and tricks of stock market investments'.

When you send your Ezine to various subscribers it is important to identify whom your Ezine will be from. This helps your readers relate more to your Ezine since it will appeal to them on a more humane level. Even if your Ezine is from a company and not specifically from you, it still makes more sense to set the tone of your Ezine very interpersonal as if you are talking directly with the readers.

These are just a few pointers to help you get into the ezine mode. We will be discussing each of these and many more in detail as we progress through the eBook.

## **1.2 Creating and publishing your own Ezine**

Ezine is 'Electronic Magazine' in abbreviated form. It does what it says; it is a magazine in electronic format. Just like a standard magazine subscription through postal mail, readers can opt to receive the Ezine regularly in their email inbox. With Ezines, spam is not acceptable. Readers can cancel their subscription at any time with the Ezine publisher.

You can publish an Ezine on any topic you fancy. Generally, an Ezine consists of two or three articles on the subject of the Ezine, a few relevant advertisements or classifieds, some information on the website that publishes the Ezine and information on how to cancel a subscription.

Most of the Ezines are free, but in order to pay the Internet writers, web space providers, Internet Service providers, and other expenses, you need to find out a way to balance out your expenses and earn desirable income to keep your Ezine publishing business afloat.

There are plenty of Ezine publishers all over the Internet. An Ezine acts as a platform for communicating with your readers, and how you utilize this platform depends on your foresight and the quality of information you provide.

The purpose of your Ezine is to establish your credibility as a reputed writer/publisher over the Internet. Hence, it is advisable that you stick to writing effective articles that interest and amaze your readers. You can also occasionally publish articles from guest

writers, freelancers or articles that you can borrow from the Internet and publish them for free.

One good strategy is to give a little bit of information about the author or article just before the article begins. You may give your opinion about the article which gives an impression to your readers that you are extremely thorough and professional.

You need to develop a reputation in the market, you need to establish in the minds of your readers that your Ezine has good content and they will be able to enrich themselves if they subscribe to their Ezine. Flooding them with too much information too soon, in fact, flooding them with too much information is a no-no.

### **1.3 The Roadmap to Ezine success**

There are so many Ezines written about any topic imaginable. What can you possibly do to stand apart? Well, for starters, you can start thinking positive. Start believing that you will create a unique, extraordinary and highly informative Ezine which will be one of its kind – an ezine that will rise above the ordinary run-of-the-mill Ezines.

To create a successful Ezine, you should always feel confident and optimistic and never sway from your determination. A successful ezine is an ezine that is profitable to you - the costs of creating it, publishing it and sending it across to hundreds of thousands of readers should not exceed what you earn from it.

Study your competition and how they market their Ezine. Take a tip or two from them. You must figure out your niche market and your USP that sets it apart from the rest of the competition.

Do understand that no matter what industry you are in, you can produce and promote your ezine as well as other products successfully.

For instance, if you consider publishing an Ezine on the wine industry, do your market research and narrow down the topic by choosing the right demographics, industry, country, and so on. In this case, think about the language you want your Ezine in, French, Italian, English; wine from what country/region are you thinking to write on – France, Australia, Chile, California, Italy, etc. Sure, you want to write on wine, but what exactly? Wine making, wine storing, selling wine barrels, cork making, wine glasses, the choice is unlimited. You can be creative and choose a new topic for every issue of your Ezine and make it an all-encompassing Ezine exclusively on wine! This only establishes you as an expert on wines in the minds of your readers.

There may be plenty of Ezine publishers writing on the same topic as you are. From a reader's point of view, if I am interested in a topic, I might subscribe for lets say 10 Ezines, however I might not read them all. I might just skim through them, and read only those articles that really arrest my attention. Why would I want to read a very similar article in all the Ezines that I am receiving? If you want me to really read and appreciate

the content of your Ezine, you have to make your Ezine extra special. You should aim at making me unsubscribe from all the other Ezines ensure that I subscribe only to your Ezine.

The road plan to success of your Ezine has 3 basic steps, first step is find out your strengths and weaknesses and determine your area of expertise, second step is find out your target readers and the third and final step is to figure out your purpose behind creating an Ezine. Once you find out the answers to these questions, you are halfway through.

Let us discuss these 3 steps in some detail:

1. Determine your area of expertise and find out your strengths and weaknesses.

Everyone has at least one thing that they really, truly like. It can be something technical and professional like stock market, computers, real estate, and so on. It can also be recreational or some kind of hobby like sports, wine, video games, etc. You may feel strongly about issues like law, women's rights, emotional and social issues like raising children. Then there are mysterious topics like artificial intelligence, and extra-terrestrial communication.

Weave your Ezine around the topic that you feel strongly about. You will be able to pour your heart and soul only when you truly enjoy the topic. Use your

imagination, but don't go overboard. Make sure that you are not creating any run-of-the-mill type of Ezine that will be lost among the many similar Ezines available on the same topic.

You have to be outstanding in order to shine among the rest. Even though you choose a topic that has been already chosen by many and competitors have squeezed every last drop out of it, if you still have something unique to say about it, go ahead, challenge your imagination and turn the product.

Do not choose the topic that is completely alien to you. I like to read fiction on and off, and there are plenty of Ezines on fiction, and there is still more to write based on your individuality. But I don't have enough material to write on it, I just like to read a novel every now and then. Unless I do enough research on it, and figure out that I really find fiction incredibly interesting and I can write an interesting Ezine on that topic, then it is worth delving into that field.

## 2. Figure out your target readers

This is a very important aspect of your ezine campaign. You must understand that it is very essential for you to define your target readers. People are different and they need to be tackled differently. When you identify your readers, you will be able to decide on the content of your Ezine. You may also decide what products or services you intend to market through your Ezine.

The first thing you need to find out is how old is your target readership! That can help you set a tone for your Ezine. It will be helpful if you have additional information like their location, education, income and expenditure information, basic family information, that way you can target specific advertisements.

You also need to determine your target market. Let's say your business is about online shopping; but that is a very broad market as shopping can mean anything. You can narrow it down to 'book shopping'. To narrow it down further, you can focus on 'used books shopping'.

If you would like to really target a niche market, you can go for 'rare and used books shopping and collecting'. That way, you are right on the niche market without any ambiguity. Your website and Ezine should be unique, lesser the competition you have, better are your chances of achieving success.

### 3. What is your purpose behind creating an Ezine?

Do not underestimate your readership. If they dislike your Ezine and form a negative opinion about your Ezine, it could ruin your chances of succeeding. You need to find out what your readers expect from your Ezine. Do they want tips and tricks, constant and timely information and updates, recipes, data and reports,

technical information, and so on? Work out a proper strategy to determine the behavior of your readers. Undertake sample surveys and tests and research over the Internet to see what would you do if you were the reader and wanted to subscribe to an Ezine like yours? Study your competitors and see what they have to offer. Determine the USP of your Ezine and stick to it. This will help you stay focused and not get swayed from your goal.

#### **1.4 Best practices for publishing the ideal Ezine**

Ezines are primarily free information delivered in the inbox of subscribers. However, you can still make money out of publishing and delivering free information. This is best done by generating advertising revenue. An ideal Ezine should have great content, have a phenomenal reader base, generate advertising income and have credibility over the Internet.

One policy to stick to is ‘if you have it, flaunt it’! If you have any article published in any reputed magazine elsewhere, either in paper or in the electronic medium, do say so in your Ezine. Let’s say you are planning to write an article on 10 best summer foods. You may have written an article on the benefits of fresh fruits which was published on the Food Network website. You can put a link to that article on your Ezine with a line saying ‘want more info-check out my article about the benefits of fresh fruits on the Food Network’.



Your readers will be impressed that your articles are being published on such a reputed website, enhancing your credibility enormously. They will trust you more, and look at your suggestions differently.

However, before you publish your first issue, you should decide whether or not you want to run advertisements in your Ezine. There are some pros and cons of running ads in your Ezine, especially initially.

#### Advantages:

- You generate revenue, which helps you recover the costs for publishing and delivering your Ezine.
- You can market your products by placing ads in your Ezine, which is an added benefit.
- You can provide additional service to your readers, which will be greatly appreciated by them, by providing them valuable information about the related products and services that are featured in various articles of your Ezine.

#### Disadvantages:

- If you misuse your relationship with your readers, by offering them lot of unnecessary ads, they might get offended and consider your mail as one of the spam marketing emails that they receive and eventually unsubscribe.
- Your readers might question your sincerity and wonder if you really have some content in your Ezine if you focus on marketing your product by placing too many of your ads and not on writing creative and resourceful articles that enrich the quality of your Ezine.
- Also, you are risking your trustworthiness and standing in the Internet community if the ads you run are of poor taste or the products the ads claim to market turn out to be of bad quality.

Ezine ads on the whole can be extremely beneficial. They can attract more readers as well as publishers and boost your campaign. However, you may be better off by keeping away from ads for at least the first few issues of your ezine. Once you get the hang of publishing newsletters and establish some sort of credibility you should start advertising. I have dedicated a whole section on advertising later on in this eBook.

Moving on, another good practice to follow is to respect your readers' time and not flood them with plenty of emails and exceedingly long articles. Keep them short and snappy, which will be appreciated. Pre-determine how often you should publish your Ezine and study the behavior of your readers and how your competitors deal with it.

Timeliness is of great significance. You must be consistent with the frequency of your Ezine. If your Ezine is published every fortnight, it should be published so without fail. No exceptions to that rule. You must understand that your readers will be pleased about your regularity and consistency. If you miss an issue, you lose your standing! Out of sight, out of mind is a maxim you should plaster on the walls of your workplace.

Don't forget to assess your progress on a regular interval. You should evaluate the number of subscribers to your Ezine and find out how many people have opted to discontinue their membership and how many are actual recipients of your Ezine. If you have an interactive Ezine or an Ezine that encourages participation from its readers, you can also determine how many of your readers are active members of your Ezine community.

Do understand that frequent changes to your Ezine will look unprofessional. Do not go overboard in changing the look, tone and content of your Ezine constantly.

## **1.5 Formatting your Ezine**

Getting a great idea to start an Ezine is one thing; to actually create one and format it is totally different. You have to strictly follow the norms and not deter from your pre-set format, otherwise you risk your consistency in the eyes of your readers.

The following are some of the important features you need to keep in mind while formatting your Ezine:

### **Subject Line**

The subject line is very important as this is the first thing that will catch your reader's eyes when your Ezine is delivered in their inbox. If a reader subscribes for your Ezine it does not necessarily mean that he/she will read all the issues of it without fail. Your subject of choice should be catchy, brief and relevant.

It should not be flashy or misleading; otherwise it may be deemed as a cheap marketing gimmick. Let's say that your Ezine is targeted at contemporary young urban women between the age group of 25-40. Don't use a juvenile subject line such as 'Funky tips for funky babes'! A better option is 'For today's woman of substance'.

### **Cc/Bcc**

It is generally advisable to make up a distribution list of the subscribers and send your Ezine directly to the list. That way you don't have to type up the email addresses of your subscribers repeatedly. However, if you ever have to type in manually the email addresses, don't ever put the addresses of your readers in the cc (carbon copy) section, because that is open for all to see. If you must, use the bcc or blind carbon copy section, as that will hide the email addresses of all the contacts you put under that field.

One more reason not to use the 'cc' section is to avoid unsolicited mails to other readers. In case any of your readers click on 'reply all' button, all the contacts mentioned in the 'to' and 'cc' field will receive that email. Some might even 'steal' the contact info of your subscribers and send them 'spam'. Hence, be considerate and don't misuse the information that you have with you.

Also, you can format the reply-to section of the email header in such a way that if a user clicks on 'reply' in his/her email, the reply reaches the address pre-specified by you. This can come in handy if you want to use a specific address to send the Ezine and another to receive the replies of your readers. Moreover, some editors choose to take the benefit of having an automatic service that sends your Ezines at regular intervals.

This service is such that if the reader replies on the email address generated by that service, the message would bounce back, as it is just a gibberish address generated by the system. In order to avoid that, you can format the reply-to field. That way the chain of communication is not lost in transition.

### **Characters and Fonts**

Some email programs accept HTML, some don't, some have images turned off, and some don't run JavaScript. Preferably use plain text in your Ezine as your readers have a variety of email programs and they have set up those programs differently. However,

HTML content with graphics has also gained popularity in the recent past. The best solution is to create the ezine using both – text and HTML.

Also, don't use **Bold** and *italics* unless your content demands it, otherwise they will appear gibberish. If you do want to emphasize your idea, you can use asterisks or quotation marks.

Don't use CAPITAL LETTERS in your text as it is considered as yelling in Internet lingo. You can use capital letters in headings, subtitles, etc. to divide your Ezine in to different sections. Use standard fonts like courier, courier new or times new roman.

Divide your sections clearly so that each section can stand on its own. Use characters such as asterisks (\*), equal to (=), hyphen (-) or straight-line. You can also use special characters like &, @, and so on but only in moderation.

A few more tips to help you format your Ezine:

- Your Ezine should be professional looking, proofread thoroughly, rich in content as well as pleasing to the eye in order for it to be successful.
- It should not be too garish and too heavy on the graphics; this is a major turn off. If your Ezine takes forever to load, your readers will get exasperated and might decide to unsubscribe! Your loss after all.

- Certain email providers even turn very large files into attachments, which don't always get to see the light of the day. Don't force your Ezine into being a 'mere' attachment. Be easy on the size.
- Some email programs don't display long text lines correctly; they wrap your lines and show it in a format, which is not exactly 'fun' to read. Hence, use a desirable length for your Ezine, which will be accepted and displayed properly, lets say 65 characters and stick to it.
- When providing additional URLs or links to other websites, verify the correct address. Also use the prefix 'http://' so that your readers can directly click on it and go to the website. For sending email directly from your Ezine, attach the 'mailto:' prefix.
- Before you send the first copy out, test the formatting of your Ezine by sending a copy of your Ezine to yourself. If it works well and there are no formatting errors, then you are all set.

## **1.6 Designing an eye catching Ezine**

As we discussed earlier, you need to come up with a catchy name for your Ezine. The title of your Ezine should be appealing and memorable. It should also be relevant to the

content that you are planning to provide in your Ezine. Do not mislead your readers, as doing so would surely backfire. Bad publicity will only ruin your reputation, especially at a time when you need to build your credibility.

Also, since it is generally advisable to have a related website to support your Ezine, do find out if you have a related domain name available. For example, if you want your Ezine titled as 'Food Facts', try to find out if [www.foodfacts.com](http://www.foodfacts.com) is available or not. Don't delay, if it is available, reserve it immediately. If it is not available, try a variation. See if you can reserve .net or .org if it is relevant. Also, see if you can tweak the name of your Ezine if a variation is available in the domain name. For example, if foodfacts.com is not available, but [www.foodtruths.com](http://www.foodtruths.com) is available, maybe you can title your Ezine accordingly.

While naming your Ezine, take into consideration how it will rank in the Ezine directories. Most directories list Ezines in alphabetical order. Try to take advantage of this fact and if possible name it higher up in the alphabetical order. However, don't mess around too much and name your Ezine AAA Food Facts. Maybe you can use ABCs of Food. Be creative, and not amateurish.

It will not be an easy task to come up with a good, creative and unique title for your Ezine, giving you all the more reason to spend enough time and research on formulating a title. A lot of thought has to go into this process. Your Ezine title will be your brand and that is how you will be able to build your credibility. Hence, don't ignore this step, think



outside the box, mix and match a lot of keywords and involve a lot of brainstorming before finally deciding upon your Ezine title.

Let us now talk about the planning and layout of your Ezine. Outwardly speaking, an Ezine has five aspects, namely, header, table of contents, subject matter, footer and advertisements.

### **Header**

The Header is the first thing your reader will see when your Ezine is loaded in his/her inbox. It should be equipped with all important information that the reader needs to know, but at the same time should not be cluttered. Ideally, it should have the title of your Ezine along with the catchphrase you'd like to use, issue number, date and your website URL.

Here's a sample header.

<b>Food Facts</b>
For people who love food.
25th November, 2003      Issue # 20 <a href="http://www.foodfacts.com">http://www.foodfacts.com</a>

This is just a sample; you can modify and improvise it. Instead of issue number, you can use words like volume number, digest number and so on. You can also use Roman

alphabets. When using date, always use the most commonly accepted date conventions, for instance mm/dd/yyyy in the U.S. Double check the spelling of your website URL, so that when anyone clicks on it, they are directed to your website, instead of getting stuck on a link that does not work.

## **Table of Contents**

The TOC for your Ezine need not be elaborate like an E-book. Don't panic if you have only 2 articles to offer in your first Ezine. Arrange whatever you have to offer in your Ezine tastefully. No matter how many articles you publish in a single ezine, you should always have a TOC at the beginning. This saves your readers time and effort by eliminating unnecessary browsing.

If you find your TOC too tiny, buff it up a bit, add a few interesting tidbits such as editorial, thought of the day, joke of the day, reviews of books/articles/movies, cartoon of the day, and so on. You can also add a one to two line description of each section.

You can also put up subscription info, or information about you – the author, at the end of the table of contents to make it seem more interesting.

## **Content**

The main component of a successful Ezine is the content. This is the singular most important factor determining the quality of your Ezine and establishing your standing as

an expert in a particular field. We will discuss some key factors you need to keep in mind when writing a great article for your Ezine in some of the later chapters of this e-book.

## **Footer**

This is the area at the end of your Ezine where you may mention any additional information. When the reader reaches the footer, it means that he/she has reached the end of your Ezine and is about to close that window and move on. At this juncture, what you would want is to remind your readers about a few things pertaining to your Ezine before they shift their focus to something else.

You might give them a link to archives of old issues of your Ezine, subscription info, link to your website, a link that enables them to send the article to their friend (refer it to your friend/tell your friend how to get a free copy of this Ezine), feedback request and so on. It may also be a good place to remind your readers of any promotions or contests that you may be running.

Besides these, you can also provide legal, privacy and copyright related information. Mention copyright information clearly and precisely. You can either use the word 'Copyright' or the symbol © or just (c). Also include everything that is copyrighted, such as author, editor, company name, titles, and so on. If other rights such as reprinting, reproduction, etc. are reserved by you, it is probably safer to use the phrase 'All rights reserved'.

You may give some information about the author of the article (if you haven't already done so in the beginning) and if the author is a guest contributor, do include a note of thanks to the author along with the contact information about the author. If you have any announcements to make, for instance you may be soon coming up with a bumper issue for Christmas, do so!

Clear instructions on how to subscribe or unsubscribe to your Ezine may be given in the footer. It may be a good idea to directly provide a link for un-subscription. Readers can click on the link and can automatically unsubscribe, which means that within a stipulated time, usually 48 hours, the request shall be processed and the reader shall no longer receive any more issues of the Ezine.

It is also advisable to put a link that leads to archive or older issues of your Ezine, again if you have not already done so at some other place in the ezine. This enables your readers to access back issues conveniently.

A Disclaimer is also generally provided towards the end. It is a fairly legal document that details the consequences if anyone uses any part of your article or Ezine without your permission. It can also be worded informally, but you can always consult your lawyer about specific terminology to use.

## **Other Information**

Don't forget to include your own contact information in your Ezine! Unsolicited email or even Ezine is considered as spam. If you have unspecified contact information, your Ezine will appear shady. You will not be able to garner trust of your readers unless you openly disclose your contact information. At the very least, do mention your full name, email address and website URL.

You can also try to bridge the gap between you and your readers by providing more personal information if you are comfortable with that. This can be your street address, phone number, fax number and so on. But do that only if you are comfortable with the idea of sharing such information. You don't want to risk your own privacy after all!

### **A Word on Advertising**

Let's talk some more about running advertisements in your Ezine and how to make sure that they are effective. Like I said earlier, do not run plenty of ads in your Ezine, you will lose your credibility. They don't want to see only ads; they have subscribed to your Ezine because they like the articles and the content in your Ezine, not because of the ads published. Hence, it is desirable and advisable that your ads are not more than 30% of the total content of your Ezine and that too only after you have established your ezine.

The placement of your ads is also crucial. Earlier, ads were placed under a classified section of the Ezine, just like the classified section of newspaper; however, they were not

quite efficient. It is recommended that you scatter the ads evenly throughout the Ezine. More on this is given later on. I have also provided a sample Ezine template for your reference in the chapter titled “Resources”.

Clearly mention that it is an ad so that your readers don't confuse it with the content of your Ezine. You can use specific words and phrases like ‘Paid Advertisement’, ‘Sponsored by’, ‘Please support our sponsors’, etc. to visibly set it apart. Study the behavior of your readers so that you are able to provide them with ads that interest them. Do not bombard them with irrelevant ads that constantly bother them. As a rule, do not publish adult ads unless your Ezine contains adult or mature content.

If majority of your readers are teenagers, then you are better off if you place ads related to teen magazines, cosmetics, music and movies, higher education, etc. If your readers are the techno-geeks, give them ads that market technical products or services. Determine your target readers, and place ads that will eventually interest them.

Also, as mentioned earlier, consistency is very important. Do not change the number of ads that you specifically run, unless there is an unavoidable need for it.

## **1.7 Shape up the content for your Ezine**

Your readers will constantly critique your Ezine and the articles published therein. Starting with the first issue, all the editions of your Ezine will be under constant scrutiny.

Readers would judge all your articles and if they don't like any aspect of the ezine, it may severely affect your reader base. If you provide consistent and effective content in your Ezine, it would be a roaring success.

There are many types of content you can use for your Ezine. Let's discuss them in some detail.

### **Editorials**

When you are the editor of your Ezine, it is your responsibility to deliver an effective editorial for the benefit of your readers. Your readers will think of you as an expert in your field and will begin to trust your opinion and suggestions. You must take this responsibility maturely and diligently. You are given the freedom to express your opinion on any topic, even if it is a controversial topic. This would also encourage participation from your readers. They may respond to your editorial, either by agreeing with you or staunchly disagreeing with some of the views expressed in the editorial. Their feedback is extremely valuable for improving the quality of your Ezine.

If you use your editorial space to relate to your readers, with time they would look forward to what you have to write. Don't use your editorial space to write an entire article. You can probably give a little background info about the new guest author, a new product you are endorsing, an idea about the articles in the current issue, and so on. You

can write it in such a way that it feels very personal. Set the flow and tone of your editorial as if you are communicating directly to your readers.

### **Articles featured in your Ezine**

Without a doubt, your articles are the highlight of your Ezine. They constitute a major chunk of your Ezine and hence are to be written very tactfully. Your readers will eventually form an opinion about your Ezine based on these. Make sure that you don't write really lengthy articles. Most readers would probably find long articles a drag and subsequently lose their interest mid-way. Feature only those articles that are relevant to your Ezine. For instance, if your Ezine focuses on cuisines of the world, you should not feature an article on how to solve ordinary computer hardware problems. If you write an article that has 10 tips to keep in mind while going to a beach, do not elaborate the tips unnecessarily. Your readers would appreciate it if you give them a concise and direct article that does not deter from its path.

Always, always, always write original articles. Do not use someone else's article and claim it as yours. Also, don't rework someone else's article you have read somewhere and dish it out to your readers. You can write an opinion on it, or borrow ideas from that article, but don't write the same article all over again.

If there is an article you feel will greatly benefit your readers you can choose to publish the entire article, however, you have to get the author's explicit permission to do that. It



is not possible always to get the entire article for your Ezine as the authors might not be willing to let you reproduce their original work anywhere else. But, always make sure that you do not 'steal' articles, you can borrow them after seeking permission.

You also need to give the required credit to the author and publish any additional information as required by the author of the article. It depends on every author's discretion, so consult the author well in advance.

Finally, you can either write the features yourselves, or get someone else to do it for you. If you do get someone's help on it, make sure that you own all copyrights and avoid unnecessary complications.

### **Invite guest writers to write in your Ezine**

Many publishers invite guest writers to contribute to their Ezine. You could do the same. Also, it is a good practice to ask your readers to contribute content to your ezine by devoting an entire section such as "The Readers' Corner". This will not only encourage reader involvement but also build a small Internet community with your Ezine at the center of it. You also get good inputs from your readers that way and motivate them to contribute more and more. It is a smart trick to get good information for your Ezine as well as to obtain some variety.

How do you get people to contribute articles in your Ezine? It is not a difficult task; in fact, it is quite simple. Most people like their names in print, just for name and fame and the sheer excitement of getting other people read their work. All you have to do is give your readers a topic and invite them to write a 500 words article on it. Skim through the entries you receive, and you will surely get at least one article that can be featured in your Ezine.

Now, some people have great ideas, but not great writing skills. Do consider their idea and you can do some research and weave your own article around that article. Be courteous and give appropriate credit to the person who has given that basic idea, for example....'Thanks to Ms. Jenny Simmons of Santa Monica, California for the premise of this article'.

You can also have collaboration with freelancers who write mainly on the Internet and are in constant need of marketing their own website. In exchange of their service, that is, by writing an article for your Ezine, they get their own name and contact information and website URL published in your Ezine. Its free publicity for them, and it is good for you as well.

You can research for a variety of Ezines that relate to your target market in the Ezine directories. Then you can subscribe for them and get ideas for your articles. Some Ezines let you borrow their articles and also provide information about freelancers and how to find them.

Negotiate with the freelancers, you can offer that you will provide them with a platform to voice their opinion and also give a link to their website at the end of their article for free.

### **News stories**

You may also publish daily news headlines on your Ezine, which offer dual benefits to your readers. They get news headlines along with their choice of articles on a topic they truly enjoy. You may provide local news headlines as well as international stories. Also, you may offer specialized news stories, such as industry news about the subject of your Ezine. For instance, if your Ezine is about textile industry, you may provide information on what's new in textile industry, new laws, breakthroughs, latest trends and so on.

Besides, you can go to various news websites and feature their ads or even links on your Ezine. There are different ways to present news stories in your ezine. You may give short one line news headlines and then provide a link that directs the reader to the news website to get the full story. Similarly, you can also publish a short news story along with the headlines. Moreover, you can bring a little variation by adding your own style in it, sprinkling it with some wit. You may write your own opinion on the news stories – very similar to an editorial.

The bottom line is that you must provide relevant and timely news to you readers, stale news have no value in this world of constant change.

## **Reviews**

You may add variety to your ezine by reviewing some of the products available in the market and provide your own opinion on these. Writing a review is relatively a simple task. No matter what the subject of your Ezine is, you can always write a review on something related and enrich the content and quality of the Ezine by benefiting your readers. For instance, in your Ezine about the best eating places in New York City, you may feature a restaurant review every so often. You can rate the restaurant, ambience, food quality, service, location, variety of the menu, cuisine type and so on.

Similarly, if your Ezine is about parenting, you can review schools, toys, educational games, parenting or children's books, websites and so on.

Just ensure that whatever review you present should be relevant to the content of your Ezine. You cannot review a recent pop album in an Ezine about horticulture!

Here are a few useful tips on how to write a good review:

- Be brief and precise. Don't write a story instead of a short review.
- Don't sway from the topic and confuse your readers.

- Be relevant and choose your topic carefully so that it becomes a part of your Ezine.
- Set your standards high, and select only the choicest products for reviewing in your Ezine.
- Don't patronize. Give an honest opinion; your readers will greatly appreciate that.
- However, don't be overly critical, be tactful and write your reviews in good taste.
- View both sides of the coin and present an evenhanded review that reflects both the positives and negatives of the product under scrutiny.
- Advise your readers frankly about whether you recommend the product or not.

## **Links**

Website links or URLs that direct your readers to relevant information is one great way to polish your Ezine and make it educational for your readers. Many Internet surfers find it difficult and often tedious to regularly update themselves with latest websites and even the usual websites related to their topic of interest. When they are presented with a list of

most websites that are of interest to them at one place, it saves their time and energy. Now all they have to do is click on the websites one after another and there is an uninterrupted stream of information right on their desktop.

One thing to note here is that not all links should be relevant to the topic of your Ezine. If there are additional links that you think will be useful to your readers, you can include them. For example, web-based email services, news websites, search engine URLs and so on.

### **Search Engine search box**

Many websites and even Ezines feature this service. Ezine publishers establish an association with the search engine of their choice. Consequently, publishers are allowed to place a search engine textbox within the ezine. Readers of the ezine can thus enjoy all benefits a search engine provides right from the ezine itself. They don't have to open another browser and go to the search engine website and then search for their query.

The Ezine will still be displayed in the background even though readers may have searched directly through it. The search engine script opens a new web page for every search generated so that the window that displays your Ezine does not vanish.

This is an added service that you can provide to your readers, which may also benefit you.

## **Updates to your website**

Your Ezine is the perfect vehicle to launch your website and proclaim it to the Internet community. You can also regularly announce new changes or updates to your website. All you have to do is remind your readers to visit your website. You will be amazed at the clicks you can get on your website!

If you get more clicks to your website, you might also be able to generate more advertising revenue.

Additionally you can also announce launch of a new product, recent happenings, latest industry trends and so on.

## **Interviews**

Another addition to the content of your ezine could be interviews of experts in your field. The interview need not be face-to-face interview or even phone interview. You can have the interview over the Internet also known as an electronic interview. All you have to do is contact your guests and find out a time suitable to them. Once you have their approval you can email them a short list of questions, which they may answer in brief. Remember devise the questions from your reader's point of view.

Do not ask too many questions to put off the expert. Respect the time that your interviewee is setting aside for you and ask only relevant and to-the-point questions. Don't hesitate to ask for clarifications if your interpretation is slightly unclear. When the interview is emailed back to you, you don't have to publish it as it is.

As the editor of the ezine, you can select what part of the interview should be published in the Ezine. However, you cannot 'edit' the interview and twist the language, tone or idea presented in the interview. For instance, you may have asked the expert about his opinion on the new suburban restaurant that specializes in Lebanese cuisine. If the expert gives biased or derogatory opinions using foul or unacceptable words to describe the cuisine, you may choose to completely eliminate the question. You may include biased opinions – after all these are not your views, but you are much better off eliminating foul language in the ezine. That said, it is highly unlikely that a respected professional would use foul language to describe his opinions.

This way you get to maintain the expert's opinion as well as be diplomatic so as to offend no one. However, it is a good practice to get an approval from the expert on the final version of the interview.

When introducing your expert, be precise and thoughtful. An introduction would highlight the expert's credentials, current profession, interests and operations. The tone of the interview should not be bookish or prose-like. It should feel that the interview has been carried out in person and should be interspersed with expressions and statements



commonly used in conversations. Hence, instead of ‘the recent practice of co-habitation amongst young urban individuals is contemptible’; choose ‘I don’t really care about the living-in scene that the yuppies go for nowadays’.

### **Interactive features that initiate reader involvement**

There are plenty of ways through which you can motivate your readers to participate in some of the activities of your Ezine. You can set up polls and surveys that entice and amuse your readers. Even simple polls like ‘what is your favorite pizza topping’ will be welcomed! Some of these polls and surveys are for fun, some for getting an idea about the consumer behavior and some just to increase reader participation. The key is to encourage reader involvement. This can only help you in improving your ezine.

You can have bulletin boards and encourage your readers to post their opinions about the articles, reviews, etc. published in the Ezine. You can have a section such as ‘letters/emails to the editor’, like the kind magazines have, in which you can publish a few, if not all letters. You can also publish a few comments or quotes from the email; you don’t have to put the entire email. However, don’t go on printing only the good stuff about you and the Ezine!

Be sure to include some brickbats or criticism from your readers, your modesty and willingness to accept negative comments will not go unnoticed.

People love to see their name in print. You could have small perks like ‘reader of the day’ or ‘opinion of the week’ or something similar. Of course, ask your readers explicitly if you can publish their name and email address on your Ezine, as some people are fiercely protective about their online identity. If your reader wants to be anonymous let it be so. Always publish a privacy policy for your readers to access and understand. Convince your readers that your company adheres to such a policy.

Ask your readers for feedback and you can have a whole section dedicated to it. However, don’t make it lengthy. When you implement your reader’s suggestion, it won’t hurt you to say ‘Thanks to the suggestion made by Mr. Andrew Sutton of Dallas, Texas that you are getting a whole new ‘Downloads’ section’.

To sum up, most people just ‘skim’ through Ezines. Don’t make skimming through your Ezine a daunting task for them. They don’t want to read lengthy articles or really long sentences that use words lifted from the thesaurus. Make your paragraphs short and your sentences brief. Use a lot of white space, as it will make your Ezine appear neat and less cluttered.

Personalize your Ezine. This makes your Ezine more approachable. For example, ‘John, here is today’s thought of the day’. You can also personalize ads that appear in your Ezine.

## **1.8 Finding Free Ezine Content and Articles**

You don't have to write lengthy articles to have a successful ezine. In fact, like we discussed earlier, lengthy articles can only have a negative impact on the quality of your ezine. Your article should have words ranging from 500 to 750, not more than that. There are various resources available on the Internet that provide free articles, which can be used for your Ezine.

Before you use any article described as free, make sure that you have asked for the author's permission. Do not assume that just because the article is mentioned as free, you can use it conveniently. Carefully read the disclaimer mentioned on all these websites, just to get an idea of what kind of procedures do you need to follow. Usually, you may have to mention the author name by giving him/her due credit and provide a formal introduction.

### **Free resources on writing skills**

- If you do decide to write the articles yourself, it is advisable that before starting out you brush up your grammar and language skills. High school grammar will be long forgotten. You would need to get a grip on professional communication and how to write crisp and concise articles. Innumerable websites provide help with this aspect.

## **1.9 Hiring professional writers to write for your Ezine**

You might be overwhelmed by the thought of writing all articles by yourself for every issue of your ezine. This is where professional writers can be so useful. The best way to find such writers is by subscribing to various ezines that are pretty similar to yours or at least cater to the same kind of audience. There is every possibility that you may find a couple of great writers from these ezines. You may contact these writers and ask them to write for your ezine as well.

You can also hire ghostwriters for your Ezine articles. All you have to do is give them a fee for the articles they write. You can then pass off the final article as your own creation. Besides, you would also own all copyrights to the article. The point you should keep in mind here is that the ghostwriters should be totally trustworthy and your wavelengths should match completely.

The writer should understand what you expect of him and how exactly he or she should word the article and set its tone so as to suit your Ezine. Too much trust can backfire, unless you are absolutely confident about the quality of the articles. It is a safe practice to proofread the articles written by your writer and double-check the content, grammar and quality of the articles.

You don't have to stick to writing articles or expecting articles from the professionals you hire. One interesting option is writing a column of questions and answers or tips. Hence, instead of writing something in article format, question and answer technique is also very

appealing. For example, hire a pediatrician/child specialist who has some spare time every fortnight to write an informative column in the form of a questionnaire that tackles common issues that affect young children's health in your Ezine about parenting.

Instead of asking the professional to write a dreary article, you can make it interesting by changing the format to a question-answer session. You may also invite your readers to participate by encouraging them to ask a question to the expert.

### **1.10 Formulating those great new ideas**

The beauty of Ezines and eBooks is that they can be written about anything and everything. There are innumerable subjects worth writing about. The key is to have an open mind and be aware of the situation around you. If you regularly study various ezines that are being published you would have a fairly good idea on what to write about. The more you research and analyze the easier it is for you to inspect a typical reader's mind. All you need is one ray of light and you can find your way out. Following are some great ideas that you can use to add effective content in your Ezine:

- Write a book or product review related to the topic of your Ezine. Don't limit your review to only tangible books and products. Review internet-based services, websites, e-books, the choice is limitless.
- Set up interviews of experts and professionals in your field.

- Write a troubleshooting article or a 'How to' article. For example, in your Ezine all about food, write an article 'How to whip up quick lunches in 10 minutes'.
- Write a short real life incident that happened with you which taught you a thing or two. You come across as a 'real' person with real mishaps and real problems in life. And how you dealt with such a real situation shows your strength of character. Your readers will be able to relate to you more and will trust your opinions.
- Go to news groups and discussion forums on the Internet and see what people are talking about nowadays. Most of these groups have archives that go way back. That way you also learn how people and their thought process evolved and guess their next step.
- One thing that you must understand and firmly believe that your Ezine is all about a topic you love and know a lot about. Your first idea will shoot from your knowledge bank. Run through your head and you will be able to write quite a few articles.
- Finally, research for new topics. You will be amazed at how many new topics you will find!

Earlier, when you needed to do some research on any topic, you needed to hit the local library. Go through big books with tiny letters and dig up old newspapers to find out the content relevant to your article. That would take hours, even days and it used to be a demanding task and only those who are persistent and patient would make it through.

Thankfully, with the advent of Internet, you can get as much information you need through the click of a button. One link leads to another, one website takes you to another website, one page is connected to another and that way you have unlimited information at your disposal that can be used the way you want.

Whenever you are on the internet, browsing, researching or just plain surfing, make sure that whenever you find any web page or any link relevant to the article you are contemplating to write or that can be useful for your Ezine, save it on your hard disk. That way you can look up the information at some other time.

Even if you find some information on an article you have already written and published or about some article you are considering writing in future, do save it anyway. That way in case you need to update your existing article you can do that easily. Also, saved information can be used at any time, so even in future if you are planning on writing about a particular topic, you can do so immediately without having to go through the bothering task of searching on it all over again.

Even if the topics you have researched are constantly updated, the basic premise remains the same and you can use that as the platform of your article. For example, technical articles change as per the innovations that take place in the industry, but old information can be used to reflect on how the product has evolved. Also, historical information don't change, the harrowing stories of World War II stays the same.

So, when your Ezine has such articles, it always helps when you save all the information that you have, so that you can sprinkle it tastefully in your articles.

### **1.11 Avoiding a few common pitfalls**

These are some of the mistakes that most publishers make while starting out their campaign. Be tactful and you will be able to avoid them.

- Don't start an Ezine about a topic you are not very familiar with. Make yourself an 'expert' in that field before you think of publishing an Ezine. Being an expert does not suggest knowing 'everything'. In this sense, it merely means someone who knows a lot about a particular topic, and in fact more about it than most people.
- Don't even think of starting an Ezine if you don't plan it before hand. Good and sound planning is a must and you must set your goals right from the onset and then you can focus on how to achieve your goals. Don't dive right it while



hoping to make it through midway, it doesn't work that way. You have to carefully study your market, competition, resources and what you want to achieve out of your Ezine (brand/product awareness, advertising revenue, exchanging information, etc.)

- Don't be inconsistent in publishing your Ezine. If you have started a fortnightly edition, stick to it. Don't get over-enthusiast and start a weekly Ezine and then cut down drastically to monthly or even bi-monthly issues. Make a reasonable estimate of the time and effort you want to put in your Ezine. Assess your capabilities and don't be over confident. If you think you can publish weekly, start with fortnightly or monthly first and then see how it goes.
- Don't change the format of your Ezine constantly, it shows that you are not steady and coherent.
- Decide before hand if you want ads published in your Ezine. Don't throw in surprises at your readers.
- Don't write lengthy, stretchy and repetitive articles in your Ezine.
- Don't pile up your Ezine with too much information. Even if you have a lot of information to share, be patient and share it in bits and pieces, so that you don't bombard your readers.

- Follow the tone of your Ezine. Be politically correct and reasonable. For example, don't throw in a 'joke of the day' in your Ezine about AIDS awareness.
- Maintain the quality of your Ezine. Give quality information, otherwise your readership will dwindle.
- Give proper credit to contributing and guest authors. You can also provide a service of giving a link to their website from your Ezine.
- Send out your Ezine in plain text format only. Your program can also offer options to your readers like plain text, html, rich text, graphics on or off, etc. And please don't publish only in HTML-only format. If you would like to publish an HTML Ezine, do publish a text-only Ezine along with it. Give your readers an option to choose between the two types.
- Avoid using animated graphics, flashing or blinking text, frames, advanced scripts like JavaScript, etc.
- Do take advantage of the technology and automate the services of your Ezine if and when possible. Like using auto-responder for sending automated messages and so on.

- Ask your readers twice if you must if they really do want to subscribe for your Ezine so as to make sure that you are not spamming them. Insist on this process commonly known as ‘double opt-in’, which is ethically followed by most Ezine publishers. In this procedure, when you get a request to add an email address for your Ezine issues, you can send an automatic email to that particular address.

Following a link provided in that email, your reader can click on it and that click will be registered by you so that you can add that email address in your mailing list. That way you can ensure that your readers are not unnecessarily spammed and unauthorized programs or persons are not signing up for your Ezine on their behalf.

- Be courteous and polite to your readers, even if they are not. And please do honor their request to unsubscribe if they want to discontinue their membership. Don’t forget that unsolicited mails are considered spam. Don’t push or force your readers to continue their subscription.
- Do plan ahead for growth and development of your Ezine. That way you will not be caught napping if your subscribers’ ratio suddenly rises. There are a lot of dynamics involved when your Ezine gains popularity and you have plenty of subscribers like planning for advanced advertising, collaboration with other services, getting more web-space and so on.

- Lastly, don't get stuck in the grid and do take advantage of new ideas and profitable options. Expand and develop your Ezine and make changes as per the new trends and demands of your readers.

We have looked at most of the issues that you need to take care of while starting out as an ezine publisher. In the next chapters, we look at how each of the objectives behind starting an ezine can be achieved. The next chapter talks in detail about various strategies to build a subscription base for your ezine.

## **2. How to build and manage your Email Newsletter**

### **2.1 Formatting content for compatibility with popular Email programs**

Most Email programs allow all kinds of different formats these days. Email programs in the old days displayed only plain text messages. However, this has changed greatly and users can now send and receive mails in their full glory that includes special font, colors, messages, pictures, sounds, and animation.

An ezine written in HTML should be compatible with most email clients. The good news is that these clients do not have any special formatting requirements. A newsletter would be displayed as is in your subscriber's email program. However, it is always a good idea to have every newsletter in two formats – one HTML and the other Plain Text, incase some subscribers have problems opening HTML mails.

You may want to keep the level of graphics down as it may take much longer for subscribers to open your ezine with a load of graphics. Prior to sending your ezine to subscribers ensure that you test your formatting for compatibility with all kinds of Email clients, especially Outlook Express, Microsoft Outlook, Eudora, and a few web clients such as hotmail and yahoo.

## **2.2 Frequency of your Ezine**

One of the main dilemmas of ezine publishers is how often should they publish and send out their ezines. When you plan your ezine, especially initially, it is very much possible that you may get so excited that you would want to publish your ezine as frequently as possible. Although, this is a good sign it would not work well with your subscribers. The best thing to do is to start off with a monthly ezine and then increase the frequency with time.

During the first few publications you would also get an idea of how well are you able to manage your ezine and your subscribers. This may be harder than you think. If you feel comfortable with the process you can then think of an ezine published every fortnight. Please note that it is not necessary for you to increase the frequency of your ezine to more than one per month. You should only do that if you feel comfortable. I have seen many cases of publishers hurrying up into publishing ezines every two weeks only to revert back to the monthly cycle.

Do not publish your ezine less than once a month unless your ezine is such that it can only be published once in two or three months. This would greatly increase the risk of your subscribers forgetting who you are. Conversely, do not go overboard by publishing every two to three days. Even if your content is timely or fabulous enough to warrant a daily publication, it is very likely that your subscribers may not be able to keep up with them and eventually unsubscribe out of frustration. The maximum frequency should be once a week.

Determine how much information you have which you can share with your readers. Daily Ezine like I said earlier, is not advisable unless you have timely updated information like news or stock market. Let's say you are hoping to start a great Ezine that gives valuable tips on how to effectively use the MS Office products. You think that you have too much information to share and you start a daily Ezine that gives lengthy information on the subject matter.

Your reader enjoys the first couple of Ezines, and then he gets overwhelmed by all that information, and probably prints out the copies of your Ezine so that he can read it later when he has time. Eventually the copies pile up on his desk and his secretary is tired of cleaning up the clutter. He gets frustrated and even though he finds the Ezine highly informative, he has no option but to unsubscribe it. Whose loss is it? More than his, it is your loss. Weekly, bi-weekly or monthly Ezine is your best bet as the beginner.

Now if you publish your Ezine not very often, then your readers might just forget you! They might forget ever having subscribed to your Ezine. Or they will disregard your Ezine as one of the many spam messages that they receive and put you in their junk mail folder. Unless you have a super-special Ezine like an Ezine detailing some musical concert that happens only 4 times a year or about some festival that comes only once a year, then you can publish infrequent Ezines. However, it is not the very best strategy. Do start with a balanced frequency, not too often and not too sporadic.

The key is to work out a schedule and stick to it. Publishing on a regular basis would establish your credibility and suggest to your readers that you are organized and can meet deadlines.

Finally, although you may avoid sending out your ezine during holidays or just before them, you should not worry about the day of the week to send it out. Although, some experts would suggest that the best days to send out ezines are Tuesday and Wednesday this might not make a difference. Just pick the day that feels right to you and stick to it.

### **2.3 Intelligent strategies to develop your customer base**

Ezines are aimed at developing a customer base for your other products. One of the first things you need to work out once you have a completed ezine is to devise strategies to increase your customer base as much as possible and as quickly as possible.

#### **Write attractive descriptions**

Most ezine directories, forums, discussion boards, and websites allow you to advertise your ezine by listing them on their site and providing a short description along with it. This is crucial – the first thing readers would look at is your subscription offer. Thus, it may be a good strategy to have at least 3 or 4 descriptions about your ezine catering to different kinds of audiences. You also need an eye catching heading.



While writing the description, address the reader. Do not just describe your ezine or your company; explain how the ezine would be helpful to your readers – I know I have mentioned this many times earlier and would probably keep on accentuating this point many more times through the course of this book. It only goes to show the importance of addressing the needs of your prospective customer. The key is to tell the reader what he/she will get by subscribing to your ezine.

### **List your ezines in directories and forums**

Once you have the descriptions written, you should make an all out effort to list your ezine with as many directories, websites, forums, and discussion boards as possible. A list of such directories and forums is given later on in this eBook. You will start building a subscription base after listing your ezine with directories.

### **Use your competition to your advantage**

Each of your ezine must be targeted to the right kind of audience. You cannot market your ezine to a very broad audience and expect huge success. This would not only reduce your success chances but also cost you considerable time, money and effort. How do you list your ezines in the right directories? The simple answer to this is by studying your competition.

Your aim should be to list your ezines in places that list your competitor ezines. Of course, you need to make your subscription offer far more attractive than your competitor's to have a higher subscription rate. Finding places that list your competitor ezines requires significant research. Start with finding ezines that are related to yours by surfing the various directories, forums and boards mentioned later on in this eBook. Once you have the ezines listed you should

- make a list of your competitors' subscription URL's and
- your competitors' subscription email addresses

Having a list of URLs would make it easier for you to search for places that list these ezines. Doing a simple search on various search engines can get you the desired results. Ensure that you list your ezine in all directories that list your competitor's ezine.

There are other advantages of reviewing your competitor ezines. You'll find many great resources and articles in these ezines which you can use not only for your personal benefit, but also for the benefit of your future subscribers. These ezines can be a great source for improving the content of your own ezines.

### **Use your website well**

The easiest way to build a subscriber base is to invite people to subscribe on your website. That's pretty much a must and is probably where you'll get most of your

readers. You could do that by devoting a little space on your home page or by adding a little pop-up when a user logs in, or logs out.

But you could go further. There's no reason why you couldn't devote an entire site to recruiting readers which you could then promote in all the usual ways. You'd just need a homepage with good call-to-action copy, a free sample, and perhaps a secure area for subscribers to read back-copies. Very little effort and potentially large rewards.

In fact, whenever you collect someone's e-mail, for whatever reason, ask them if they want to take your newsletter.

### **Cross Market your ezine**

Cross marketing is a very effective way of marketing your ezines and building your subscription base. We will only touch on some of the strategies to cross market your ezine. These are explained in more detail in the chapter on Advertising.

Cross market as the name suggests involves forming alliances with your competitors so that both parties can benefit. Some of the forms of cross marketing are providing endorsements, exchanging content or articles, and exchanging ads.

One way to form an alliance is by having an agreement with your competitor that you would endorse his/her ezine in yours and he/she reciprocates by doing the same thing.

However, ensure that you endorse an ezine that you think is worth it. Do not ever endorse something just for the sake of building relationships. This can have dire effects on your campaign later on.

Secondly, you could swap your ads with other ezines. For instance, you could publish your ad in a competitor's ezine allowing him to do the same in yours. Besides, by doing so you wouldn't have to pay for the ad.

Thirdly, you could exchange content with your competitor ezine. For instance, you may request your competitor to publish one of your articles in every issue of their ezine. To reciprocate you could publish one of their's in your own ezine. Content exchange can yield great results for your campaign. However, you need to make sure that the article you submit is compelling and includes a signature at the end.

### **Word of mouth**

“Word of mouth” advertising can be very effective. Besides, it is completely free. The Internet takes this ancient form of "buzz" and promotion and amplifies it with a global network of people connected digitally. "Word of mouth" now has an Internet version called "word of mouse" (computer mouse). With greatly increased speeds, people refer things to their friends and families spreading the word through the Internet and to the far-reaching corners of the world. This can be done for your ezines as well.

Many smart marketers and publicity people have learned to harness the power of viral publicity with Internet "Tell-A-Friend" promotional techniques and tools.

Providing incentives as part of the "Tell-A-Friend" technique ensures higher success rate. For instance, the website [www.wz.com](http://www.wz.com) conducted a giveaway contest where they gave away 4 Sony PS2's before Christmas as a website promotion. They also gave people who had entered the Giveaway the opportunity to get additional entries and additional chances to win by telling a few of their friends on the "Thank You" page.

On the "Thank You" page, every giveaway entrant received the following message: "Tell your friends about WZ.com, and get an additional entry for each friend you email." In return for the favor, they received an additional chance to win for every friend they refer. This simple addition increased Tell-a-Friend results by 96 times.

So how do you use this technique to leverage and increase your subscription rate, and "word of mouse" publicity? It's simple, just "Tell-A-Friend" or "Tell-A-Friend about everything"! You can add Viral "Tell-A-Friend" forms to all of your web pages just below the subscription offer. This technique is simple and very effective.

Offer your ezines to all your customers, friends, relatives, and colleagues. Let them spread the word. Offer your ezine as a promotional tool to your affiliates if you have an affiliate program. These can drastically improve the subscriptions to your ezine.

## **2.4 Managing subscriber lists**

Building a subscriber list requires some effort – managing it requires even more effort. You have to ensure that the whole process of adding new subscribers and administering your list should be quick and efficient. I would highly recommend automating this process with the help of ezine software discussed later in this chapter. Apart from this, there are a few other recommendations that may help you manage your subscribers well.

- Always acknowledge all requests sent by existing subscribers as well as prospective ones. This includes any queries a subscriber may have as well as unsubscribe requests.
  
- Greet new subscribers with a Thank You/Welcome message that once again lists all the benefits of your newsletter. This would build confidence amongst your readers that they chose the right newsletter.
  
- Offer multiple options to sign up. Two of the most popular ones are through a sign up page on your website and through Email.
  
- Update subscriber email addresses as often as possible. Many a times publishers are faced with bad email addresses that bounce back your ezine. You should try and keep such addresses to a minimum.

- Keep in mind that subscriber management is a never ending process.
- Always provide excellent and prompt customer service to your readers. Be polite even if the other person is rude.
- Automate most, if not all the processes.

#### **2.4.1 Paid Servers vs. Free Servers**

As you build up your subscriber list, you're going to find yourself with a problem. Whichever mail program you're using, whether it's Outlook or Eudora or something else, it's just not going to be set up to deal with the kind of mass mailing involved with newsletters.

If you have more than 50 people on your list—and that will probably take you less than a week—you'll need to use a listserv. Don't even *try* to do this by yourself!

My hosting company organizes this for me. They have a mail server that handles all the mail. I just sent them the newsletter and they send it out. Alternatively, you can use a professional list server such as Microsoft's List Builder. There are a number of paid list servers found on the Internet. Some of these are listed below.

## **Listbox**

Prices start at as little as \$5, but this is for a list of less than 500 subscribers. For a reasonably sized list of between 1,000 and 10,000 the price rises to \$30, allowing you to post out once per week.

## **Sparklist**

Sparklist has a seemingly attractive rate of just \$1 per 1,000. However, there is a one-off set-up fee of \$25 (for a list of less than 2,000) and a minimum monthly fee of \$50.

## **Biglist**

Biglist has a set-up fee of \$50 and a monthly starting rate of \$40 for a list of less than 500 subscribers. This monthly fee rises to \$120 for a list of between 5,000 and 10,000 subscribers.

## **Dundee Internet Services**

Dundee Internet Services provide a number of choices. For a basic mailing service the set-up fee is \$40. There is an additional monthly maintenance fee of \$25 and charge for mailings at a rate of \$0.45 per 1,000 based upon a message size not exceeding 8kb.



There are free list servers available too. While you can use these if you're on a really tight budget, I don't recommend it. First, they stuff their own advertisements onto your newsletter. This doesn't just reduce the effectiveness of your brand, but it draws attention away from your own ads—provided you can persuade people to advertise on a newsletter like this. Their privacy policies have also come under a lot of criticism lately and even some of the biggest companies have been found to have used their clients' lists to market their own goods.

#### **2.4.2 Dealing with unsubscribe requests**

Handling unsubscribe requests is as important as handling requests for new subscribers. At times it can be a time-consuming and tiring process. However, you must handle it regularly and attend to it without fail, as it is a part of your duty as Ezine publisher. The choice to join or leave your Ezine is entirely your readers'; hence if they choose to discontinue receiving your Ezine in their inbox, you must honor that request. You can also automate this process of unsubscribe, but it also helps if you provide different options to your readers.

The following options can be utilized for handling unsubscribe requests:

1. Through website

Your readers can directly visit your website and click on the link which probably says 'unsubscribe from our Ezine/newsletter'. Then you can provide a box where

they can enter their email address or there are 'login' and 'password' boxes and after entering this information, your readers can choose to unsubscribe from your Ezine. It is a good practice to send an email on the address the reader has provided to double check that the user has indeed opted to unsubscribe. Some publishers choose to keep the email address active on their mailing list and only if the user confirms that he or she has indeed decided to opt out, only then they will be unsubscribed. This is done to avoid any misuse of automatic programs to unsubscribe as well as to make sure that only the actual reader has decided to unsubscribe and not anyone else posing as the reader.

## 2. Providing a link

You can also provide a link at the footer of your Ezine which directs your reader to your website. And then you can follow the procedure mentioned above to unsubscribe your readers.

## 3. Through email

Your readers can email you their unsubscribe requests on a specific email address you have allotted for handling unsubscribe requests. You can make the task easier for you and them by suggesting that they type the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject line so that you can direct their email in the appropriate folder. You can automate this process by using the auto-responder and send an immediate reply to

your reader that you have put their request under consideration. And the second time when you have actually removed their contact from the mailing list.

### **2.4.3 Handling Bounced Emails**

Bounced or undeliverable Emails are one of the main concerns of most publishers. Rarely would you find that out of all the email addresses that subscribed for your ezine, all work properly. Some of them are bound to be either temporarily unavailable or permanently discontinued.

Bounced Emails can be divided into two categories – soft bounce and hard bounce. Soft bounce is when the email is not working temporarily. This could be due to network slow down or congestion or other similar reasons. Hard Bounce is perhaps more of a concern due to the fact that it deals with permanent issues such as wrong email address, inactive or closed email address or other similar cases.

You would think that whenever you face such a problem all you would need to do is to remove the email addresses that are wrong or closed. However, the actual difficulty lies in differentiating between soft and hard bounces. How do you know which email address is down temporarily and which one permanently? The solution to this is to make use of Ezine distribution softwares or services discussed later on in this section. These would automatically delete hard bounced email addresses from your database. Manual handling of bounced emails can be extremely time consuming and difficult.

## **2.5 Double Opt in**

Ezines can be a great way to build a customer base. However, Ezines can also get you a bad name if they are not created and distributed right. There have been many instances where Ezines have only caused frustration with more customers ending up hitting the unsubscribe button. You wouldn't want this for your Ezine. The sole purpose of Ezines is to increase customers not to decrease them.

Unforgiving customers are extremely less tolerant about poor design and administration of ezines. Besides, the subscription process is absolutely crucial when it comes to new customers. It is imperative that you adopt the safest and the most credible subscription option. How many times have you found yourself being subscribed to unwanted newsletters only because you clicked a single button? Marketers of such a strategy may boast of a rapid increase in the number of subscribers – but only temporarily. Such an approach may backfire easily and I would not be surprised if the number of un-subscriptions is far greater than the number of subscriptions over a period of time.

This is where the Double Opt in subscription method comes in. As compared to Single Opt in wherein users are subscribed to a newsletter with a single click, double opt in is far more credible and effective. With Double Opt in subscribers are not enrolled until they confirm the subscription by means of a reply to a confirmation Email or message. Thus, only genuine readers would subscribe to your Ezine.

Like every marketing tactic, Double Opt-in also has a few critics. Some say that readers may not confirm the subscription request and eventually you would end up losing prospective customers. However, the chances of something like this happening are far remote compared to the number of un-subscription requests with a Single Opt in strategy.

The bottom line is that with Double Opt in, you have a better chance of roping in targeted readers who are truly interested in your products. It gives you a high number of potential customers. Isn't this exactly what you expect from your Ezine campaign? And if you are still not convinced, here are some more reasons to have a Double Opt-in subscription process.

- Double Opt-in may reduce the number of subscriptions; however, it certainly increases the prospect of targeting only receptive and interested readers
- Double Opt-in increases the credibility and trustworthiness of your Ezine. It portrays professionalism and reliability
- Higher credibility ensures long term relationship with potential customers
- It opens up other avenues such as marketing your Ezine to other publishers and advertisers

- Provides documented proof of subscription, thus eliminating false claims by readers that they were illegitimately subscribed to your ezine
- Save yourself time and money otherwise spent handling complaints and even legal claims from angry subscribers

## **2.6 The Ezine ISSN**

ISSN as most of you would have guessed by now is similar to the ISBN for books. ISSN or International Standard Serial Number is an 8 digit unique number given to Ezines. This number is especially useful if you wish to submit your Ezines to reputed libraries (online or offline) worldwide.

Like the ISBN, having an ISSN would unique identify your Ezine. However, there are certain guidelines that have to be followed in order to apply and subsequently get an ISSN. Firstly, you should depict an intention of continuing with your ezine publication regularly and indefinitely. You may not get an ISSN if your Ezine is only going to be published for a short period.

Secondly, each issue of an Ezine must be uniquely identified by a number in addition to the ISSN. For instance, the Ezine for the month of October in 2003 could be identified as 102003 or something of this sort. You could also associate a unique number considering some other factor. The key is to have a unique designation for each issue of the Ezine.

The advantages of having an ISSN are very similar to having an ISBN for an eBook. One of the biggest advantages is that ISSN would boost the credibility of your Ezine. An Ezine with an ISSN would be seen as much more professional when compared to an Ezine without one. Besides, you only get an ISSN if you have been publishing one for long and intend to do so even in the future. This also augments to the credibility factor. Another advantage is that copyright violations can be addressed easily if you have an ISSN.

Applying for an ISSN is quick, simple and above all free of cost. The following sites can be accessed to apply for an ISSN. They also provide a load of other information related to ISSN.

- The US Library of Congress - <http://lcweb.loc.gov/issn/> (For North America Residents)
- The ISSN organization – <http://www.issn.org/> (For all other countries)

## **2.7 Creating a website for your Ezines**

It is very likely that your Ezines are created with an objective of promoting some of your products. It makes sense then to have a user friendly website that provides all information about your ezines as well as other products. Your website must take a very unique

approach. Although, you may not design a very elaborate site, it still has to be designed for success. First and foremost, it has to be functional. It should at least have a separate page that houses all your ezines along with a listing of all benefits that a potential customer might incur by signing up for these ezines.

This section discusses in brief some of the basics of website designing and hosting. These basics hold true for all kinds of websites. Thus, you could follow these even if you intend to create a website to promote other products and not necessarily newsletters. However, I would strongly recommend that you have a separate web page for your ezines on your website that can serve as a convenient place to get information as well as sign up for them.

Every time a reader succeeds in executing a task on the web site, your reputation is enhanced. Every time a reader is frustrated by the site, your reputation is diminished.

Tools and approaches that make marketers and advertisers succeed offline are often drawbacks on the web. The compelling image is slow to download and frustrates the impatient scan reader. The catch phrase is of little use to a reader hungry for information, which is especially true in the case of newsletters.

The conception about flashy homepages has changed. When you arrive on a home page and are met with a fancy Flash intro, you are no longer impressed. Waiting for a large image to download, your frustration would grow. Your potential customers visit your



website looking for something unique and important. Anything that slows them down is an annoyance. You should portray your Ezines and other products that are promoted through these ezines with accurate, well-written, up-to-date content. Many marketers and advertisers still don't understand the web. The key is to make your website as content rich as possible. Make it as simple as possible.

If I were to list out 2 things that are an absolute requirement for your website, they would be

- Simple, clean, a very user-friendly design
- Reliable host and domain name

Let us first look at some of the aspects of designing a website.

### **2.7.1 A few basics of Website designing**

#### **Build It for Speed**

It's a fact of modern life - people are in a hurry. This means that you have between 10 and 30 seconds to capture your potential customer's attention. To minimize your load time, keep graphics small. Compress them where possible. Use flashy technology (JavaScript, Flash, Streaming Audio/Video, animation) sparingly and only if it is important to your presentation.

## **Target Your Market**

Know who your market is and make certain that your site caters to their needs. It is critical that your site reflect the values of your potential customers. You could have a separate page for each Ezine if the subject varies. Is your market for a particular type of audience that comprises mostly business professionals? If so, the page must be clean and professional. Are your newsletters and products aimed mostly at teenagers and young adults? Then your page could be more informal and relaxed. The key here is to know your market and build the site to their preferences.

## **Content is King**

Good content markets any product. Ask yourself the following questions. Does your copy convey the message you wish to get across to your visitors? Is it compelling? Does it lead your visitor through the Ezine sign up process? Have others review, critique and edit your copy to ensure it is delivering the intended message. Relevant content is crucial. If your web copy is contradictory to what your newsletters portray there is a good chance that prospective customers might leave without signing up. Always double-check your spelling and grammar.

## **Website Layout and Site Map**

When starting to design the layout of a site, it is often a good plan to step away from the computer and sketch a layout using good old paper and pencil.

Pages should be based on a grid, with space allocated for navigation, headers and footers, body text and whatever other elements that will be repeated throughout the site. This sketch will serve as a pattern for the site's appearance and should not change very much, if at all, from page to page.

Taking this approach means you can essentially have your site designed by creating a single page that can be reused, with perhaps minor modifications, as a template for all the other pages in your site. You need to consider how the various content types of different parts of the site will be accommodated within the design and be sure that it meets the needs of all sections.

Consistency is at the heart of good web site design and this applies not just to layout but also to every aspect of a site. If there are major shifts in the appearance or color of any part of a site it will be assumed by the user to have a meaning. This is fine if you are using it to highlight information or to indicate that the user is in a different part of the site; it can be very confusing otherwise.

Besides consistency in color, positional consistency is important. Navigation bars, navigation text, location indicators, logos, footer information and so on should be in the same place on each page. The width of margins, the positioning of images, the amount of

space around text and images, the positioning and style of captions for images and so on should also be consistent. All pages should be well connected and navigation should be quick and simple.

The best websites today use a single template for all the pages of a section on the website or for the entire website, if the number of pages is few. The use of 'Frames', however, is passé. Using a template offers the consistency to your site and helps to build a brand image of your site. The template includes the graphic design and header of your page including the main menu bars. Content is thus positioned separately from the template. Besides, it will make your work much easier if you plan on having a separate page for each Ezine. Ideally, if you promote different products through different ezines, you could have a page for each product along with information about the relevant ezine at the bottom of the page.

Use of a cascading style-sheet for displaying the content is another useful mechanism to ensure consistency on all pages. The style-sheet stipulates the content layout, use of font and spaces, presentation of paragraph titles, margins on the page and other parameters.

### **Increase Response Rates**

In the majority of cases your visitors want information and they want it now. How beautiful your site is will not be as relevant to them as long as it loads fast, has consistent layout and makes it easy to the user to evaluate its usefulness to them. Besides, the site

should contain relevant information and a clear and well defined action plan. For instance, instructions on how to sign up for newsletters should be clearly mentioned on each page. This will improve response rates. Moreover, the page should have a strong call to action theme that induces more people to sign up for your newsletters.

### **Design for Search Engine Optimization**

When you are designing the layout always ask yourself what impact anything you plan to add to your site will have on the experience of your visitors and the capacity of search engines to efficiently index your pages. Add pages in order so that navigation through the website is consistent and progressive. Make your pages easily visible to Search Engines.

### **Always add a Site Map**

A site map is just a simple list of web pages on your site. It gives your visitors a quick guide to what can be found there plus it's very useful to the search engine spiders. You can also use it to keep track of all the Ezines and products on your site and see its structure and content all in one place. If your website is without a Site Map, there is every possibility that some of your visitors might leave your website within 10 seconds failing to find what they were looking for.

### **Navigation Structure**

The aim of a web site's navigation is simply to allow users to get to the Ezine they require. For sites that have a large number of Ezines and products and web pages the navigation plan has to be properly researched and designed. You have to consider different types of visitors and simulate the most common steps they would take to find what they want on your site and the navigation plan has to optimize this movement.

### **Site Usability and Convenience**

There is no mystery to usability. It simply involves creating a site, which is accessible to the majority of people, is easy to use and get around and delivers on its promises. You can have a site that meets the most important standards of usability by planning it well and always keeping the end user in mind. Remember that web sites should not be designed for their owners - they should be designed for their users.

Problems with usability could be said to stem from just two sources: the site itself and the user. In fact the site is always at fault; if a user, however experienced or inexperienced, has problems navigating, getting information or understanding the site.

While websites have become far more complex, web users have become less rather than more experienced as more and more people go online. It is a mistake to think that the majority of users will be web or even computer savvy and will understand subtle clues about content. Most will not.

### **Building Interactivity and Personalization**

Make your website interactive. Add feedback forms as well as email forms that allow your prospective customers to ask you any questions they might have pertaining to a specific newsletter or product. Personalization of your website is another key element that can lead to customer delight and can increase response from visitors.

A consumer survey from the Personalization Consortium found that 56 percent of respondents say they are more likely to purchase from a site that allows personalization, and 63 percent are more likely to register at a site that allows it.

Personalization can lead to customer delight, increase a customer base for your newsletters and can ultimately increase your sales.

### **2.7.2 Domain Name registration for the website**

In the physical world, you can distinguish a business because of its structure, window displays, or signs. You can tell that a bank is a bank, or a book store is indeed a book store.

On the Internet, however, it is an entirely different story altogether. Your domain name is the only clue to your online business. You do not have visual clues: no location, no look, and no store design. Instead, users have to type in a word or a set of words to reach your site. Your prospective visitor has no way of knowing what your site is all about until

he/she finds it and reads its contents. Who can ever tell that Amazon.com sells books? Or that Excite is a search engine?

Your domain name can spell your success on the Internet. A good domain name is the best asset you can ever have. It can make your business stand out in the crowd, or just float aimlessly in space.

For better branding results, your domain name should be memorable and easy to remember. Remember the following tips when creating a domain name.

- The domain name should be short
- The domain name should be simple
- It should be suggestive of your business category
- It should be unique
- It should be easy to interpret and pronounce
- It should be personalized
- It should not be difficult to spell
- It should not be difficult to remember

Domain names can be registered through many different companies (known as "registrars") - a listing of these companies is available at ICANN: <http://www.icann.org>.

You can register for 1 to 10 years - prices can vary anywhere from \$10 to \$20 per year.

Most web hosting companies, will handle the registration process for you, but make sure



that you are properly listed as the owner of the domain when it is registered. If you have registered a domain name for a specific period, make sure you renew it in time. You can be surprised at the number of cases, where site owners have let a domain name slip by if they have not renewed in time.

Finally, whatever you do, do not go for cheap or free domain names, even if the only thing your website does is to promote free ezines. There are many sites that offer free domain names. These are generally long domain names. Besides, a surfer would instantly know whether you have your own domain name or a free one, and this can spell doom. Some investment is always essential for any business. Most people would not trust your website if you have a free domain name.

### **2.7.3 Web Hosting**

There are thousands of web hosting companies that claim to be the best. Choosing a web host for your website requires a lot of research. Your aim should be to select a host that offers you good value for your money – a host that is secure, reliable, and provides a range of tools for managing and maintaining your website.

The Web Hosting industry is incredibly competitive today, and they know that users are becoming increasingly sophisticated, so they have no choice but to provide their clients with better and better service, or else risk losing them to any one of the waiting pack of others.

The best way to proceed, then, is to make a list of what you require. This will most likely include the following: platform, speed, accessibility, reliability, support and service, and of course, price. Before you approach any web hosting company, you need to decide on what kind of services would you require.

### **Free Hosts – a definite No-No**

Most people that only promote newsletters through their websites opt for free web hosting services. This is probably the greatest mistake you would make. Although, your sole purpose is only to promote a free product in the form of newsletters, it is still imperative that you do not pick a free hosting service. Like free domain names, this would give a bad impression to your customers. Besides, free hosts are not reliable. This can cost you dearly later. Free accounts are not for anyone even half serious about doing business on the Web. Not when you can get a perfectly acceptable commercial host for as little as \$10 / month.

### **Cost of Hosting**

The cost of Web Hosting ranges anywhere from free to thousands of dollars a month for a dedicated server. However, the vast majority of people fall into the category of needing an account that will run in the ballpark of \$10 to \$50 per month, depending on the features you need and the options available on the particular package you choose. You

could go for a \$10 host if you only promote ezines. However, you may want a much more elaborate hosting service if your sell a range of products and newsletters are just a means of advertising these products.

Whatever the cost, check if there is a money back guarantee and what their refund policies are; whether there is a requirement to sign up for a minimum period; and if your package is scalable, meaning that upgrades will not be a problem or burden for you when the time comes.

### **Web Space**

Space and traffic are often the basis for many Web Hosts rates, whether or not this has any basis in reality. If you have a basic site that is not several hundred pages in size, and is not going to be visited by thousands of people a day, these would not be a major worry. However, be aware of the Web Hosts' fees and penalties for exceeding basic allocations. Check out all packages offered by various hosts and figure out which provides you with maximum benefit.

### **Email Accounts**

This is an often underrated feature of Web Hosting Packages, since emails are essentially the lifeblood of an online business. Be sure that your package contains enough emails and aliases for your business, preferably an unlimited number of both. This is one way hosts

make their money, that is, by charging a few dollars for each additional account once you realize you need more than say 5 accounts.

## **Customer Support**

One of the most frequent, and justified, complaints that many people have with their Web Host is lack of customer and technical support.

Many Web Hosts offer both email and phone support while others are available only via email. In most cases, email support is fine, but you should be wary if a potential Web Host has no telephone number available in case of an emergency, or in the event you need to speak with someone directly.

Response times to support questions vary widely from Host to Host. Some may take only a few minutes to get back to you while others take days or longer. It is important to find out what type of support any potential Web Host offers. Ask around. References are always a good way to judge a host's performance. And send a test email asking them unresolved questions you may still have.

If at all possible, only choose a host that provides prompt and knowledgeable customer service. A competent host should offer 24/7 toll-free technical support provided by experienced, professionally trained technicians.

## **Statistics and Tracking**

Several hosts offer some type of statistics package. It is much easier to use the package they provide rather than trying to install one yourself - not to mention it's usually less expensive as well. Statistics show you the number of visitors that have accessed your site, showing where they came from (IP address), when, what pages they visited, duration of their stay at any page and so on. These are extremely important in analyzing the success of your marketing campaigns. It is highly recommended that you chose a host that offers a comprehensive statistics package.

Set aside a good block of time to invest in choosing the right Web Host for your site. It will be time well-spent. In the end, choosing the right Web Host really depends on your individual needs.

## **2.8 Ezine as a Viral Marketing tool**

A very popular method of marketing ezines and newsletters is by making them viral. If your newsletter contains information of value, such as tips, hints, news or tutorials, you'll find that subscribers will forward it on to others.

Ezine Advertising is one of the most powerful ways to market and promote your other products and or services. There are literally thousands of electronic newsletters on the Internet with millions of people who subscribe to them. Placing ads in online newsletters

is an inexpensive way to reach your target market quickly -- especially when you compare it with other forms of advertising.

In 2002, ezine publishing took a quantum leap, as its status evolved from "amateur's hobby" into becoming the most powerful marketing tool for business online. Email newsletters have come of age, and increasingly, more ezines will take this route, as subscribers prefer them to drab, lack-luster text-only ezines. In the coming year we'll see more ezines published.

There are tens of thousands of Ezines being published every month, with a collective audience of millions. And the editors of most of those Ezines are all looking for quality content for their newsletters.

If you master this technique of making the Ezine viral you can get your name and your website URL in front of 100,000 or even a million readers.

Tips for making the ezine viral

- Pick a topic that you know something about and then go to the Search Engines and find as many websites as you can that deal with that subject.

- As well as collecting information for your article, make a note of any URLs that offer free resources dealing with the topic of your article. Include those URLs in your article.
- You should choose a topic very carefully. Once the topic is selected, doing enough research on the subject is vital. Organize the material and write in an interesting style. Make sure that you provide links to free resources.
- The content in your Ezine should not be pure sales copy. There has to be valuable and genuine information. Promotion of your product or service should be subtle. Viral marketing using Ezine is different than running an E Mail marketing campaign that blasts millions of mail messages to unsuspecting readers.
- At the end of your article, attach a 5 or 6-line 'Resource Box' that includes your website URL and/or your email address.
- When you have finished your article, do NOT send it off straight away. Let it lie fallow for 2 or 3 days and then come back and read it again. You'll be amazed at the improvements you can make. Those final improvements are what make the difference between an article that gets published and one that doesn't.

## **2.9 Making use of Ezine Software – Automating the Ezine process**

The process of creating and distributing ezines involves a number of phases right from developing content and format to marketing and advertising to delivery and distribution. Most Ezine publishers, especially smaller companies and individuals deal with content creation and ezine marketing themselves. However, as many have found out hiring third party Ezine software vendors may be a good idea.

These vendors would take care of distributing and delivering your Ezine to your customers at nominal rates. Doing so would save much of your time and effort – something that should be directed at creating informative content and developing marketing strategies.

You can do your distribution yourself as well. More on this is discussed in the chapter on advertising in this eBook. However, if you do decide to outsource this process to a third party, there are some considerations to keep in mind in order to determine the best solution provider.

The beauty of hiring firms that provide Ezine software is that many of the other aspects such as formatting, managing, administering, and tracking are also automated by these.

At the outset, let me also mention that you could also buy such software and manage the whole process yourself. However, I would recommend that you outsource the delivery process to a credible and reliable software vendor.



Here are some of the features to look for in Ezine software and the service providers.

## **Content Management**

Most ezine software offer tools to manage the content of your Ezine. This includes content formatting functionality enabling content to be published with different kinds of pre defined templates, and formats such as text, HTML or a combination of both. This is an extremely handy tool.

### *Personalization*

This tool allows ezines to be personalized for every reader. For instance, before sending an ezine to a particular reader this tool would fetch the name of the reader from the database and address the ezine directly to that reader. Thus, instead of a “Dear Member ...” you could have a “Dear John” or “Dear Samantha”. We discussed earlier the importance of personalizing newsletters. This tool does just that.

Moreover, you could also personalize on the basis of interests, age groups and so on. For instance, you could have pre defined content from the same ezine for teenagers and different pre defined content for senior citizens.

### *Scheduling and Administration*

Scheduling allows you to automatically send out the ezines at a particular frequency. You could automate when and how many times to send the ezine within every month. Apart from this a content management system would also empower you with all kinds of administrative tools such as managing the look and feel of the ezine to managing subscriber lists and the works.

### **Managing Subscriptions**

Ezine software include tools that enable creating and managing subscriber lists for each ezine, automatically handling subscription as well as un-subscription requests, edit and update customer database, handling non existent email addresses, and providing confirmation as well as welcome messages to new subscribers with the help of autoresponders.

Moreover, some software also provide tools to break up and analyze customer lists, which can be very useful.

### **Tracking**

This is probably one of the most important aspects of any ezine software. You should always seek a software or service that provides a very reliable and comprehensive tracking and reporting package. Ensure that detailed statistics about your readers,

delivery, and circulation are provided. The more the statistics the better it is for you to analyze the performance of your Ezine campaign.

### **Reliable method of delivery**

Before hiring a service provider or installing a software test the delivery process to ensure that it is timely and reliable. Do you want your email newsletter to go out at by specific time of the day or be delivered within a certain time period? If so, you'll need to determine the speed at which your email newsletter vendor can send out emails.

Most email newsletter software systems are set up so that once you click send, your email is out the door. However, if this is important to you, look for a vendor that allows you to stop mailings in mid-stream to prevent any errors.

### **Other features to look for**

Apart from the above mentioned, there are a few other things to keep in mind before you decide on a vendor. For instance, does the vendor implement very strict policies against spam? Do they have any mechanism to solve spam complaints? I would highly recommend a vendor that prevents spam as this is one of the most common complaints that readers lodge against ezine publishers.

Another thing to look for is the customer support provided by the vendor. You should ideally have a vendor that offers at 24/7 customer support and is quick to respond to any of your queries or problems.

Always ask the vendor to provide a demo of how the software works. Do not hire anyone who is not willing to offer a free trial. There may be limitations in the software that could only be seen once you test the software.

Lastly, do the required research to compare the prices of different vendors. You would be amazed to see the difference in costs. Besides, ask the vendor for any discount they may provide.

It makes sense to negotiate with the email newsletter software vendors as you have significant negotiating leverage given how many competitors and alternatives exist. Read the agreement terms carefully to chalk out any hidden costs and expenses.

## **2.10 Acquiring useful subscriber data**

We discussed the importance of tracking your campaign. Along with tracking your campaign it is equally important that you track your subscribers as well. Acquiring demographic data from existing as well as prospective subscribers can immensely improve the popularity of your ezines.

Demographic data can be used to tailor your ezine content to suit a specific audience. This can help improve your content. The most popular ways to gather such data is through a feedback form or a survey on your website. You may also post these forms through Email to existing subscribers.

However, most subscribers may deem such information as private. Thus, you should proceed with great care ensuring that you do not ruin the trust of your customers.

Here are some guidelines that might help:

- Clearly mention the purpose of gathering such data
- Have a strict privacy policy pertaining to subscriber data and convince subscribers that you would be abiding by the policy.
- Do not collect any data that is not required; collect only the most essential data.
- Do not provide your subscribers with lengthy surveys. Keep them as short as possible.
- Provide a strong guarantee that all data collected will be kept safe and confidential, especially from spammers.

- Do not force anyone to fill up the survey. Do not keep it as a pre-condition to signing up. Keep this process optional.
- Lastly, automate the feedback process. This will save you a lot of time and effort and would be easier for you to collect data in the future.

### **2.11 Using testimonials to improve credibility**

Testimonials improve credibility of your Ezines. They improve the feeling of trustworthiness amongst prospective subscribers. In fact, testimonials have been known to increase the number of subscribers greatly!

The Internet is a very impersonal medium. People trust people! The more you can do to “humanize” your Ezine the more likely potential subscribers will want to do enroll with you. Testimonials “speak” to potential subscribers in an honest, believable way.

Write a personalized email to every existing subscriber and request them to provide a review of your Ezines. Ask them what they liked best about your Ezine. Most readers would be happy to assist you. Here are some tips on how to approach subscribers for testimonials.

- Give a sample issue of the Ezine to a group of users in your target market. Ask them: - if they found it useful - how they would improve the product.
  
- Give a sample issue to an industry expert - Someone with a complete knowledge of your field is well suited to judge how your Ezine works.
  
- Always get permission to use the testimonial. Have them sign a release form granting their permission to publish their testimonial in the Ezine as well as the website.
  
- Fully identify the person while quoting the testimonial. This includes the full name, occupation, and company name. You could also include city and age if you have permission from the person to do so.
  
- Testimonials can be used on a testimonials page on your website; they could be scattered throughout your website; they could be used in marketing and sales letters; in autoresponder messages; and in brochures.

The words of a satisfied reader are powerful tools for building trust, promoting your reputation, and increasing subscribers.

### **3. Making Money from Your Ezine**

#### **3.1 Paid Ezines – Do they work?**

Information is freely available on the Internet. Do paid ezines work? The answer is in most cases they don't. The magic word here is most cases – there are exceptions where paid ezines have been highly successful.

If you are just starting out with your ezine forget about asking your subscribers to pay for your ezine. Paid ezines can only work when you have established a name for yourself. Besides, if your main aim behind running an ezine campaign is to promote your other products avoid having paid subscriptions. You may charge for ezines if you have been able to regularly publish them for a period of time constantly increasing your subscriber base.

What can make the transition from free to paid ezine successful is out of the ordinary content. Your ezine should have extremely unique and informative content that would otherwise not be available freely on the Internet. People are only going to pay if they find that your ezines actually help readers. For instance you could have an ezine about Search Engine Optimization wherein you provide tips and guidelines that are proven and not available elsewhere.



Another aspect of paid ezines is the ability to accept credit card payments. There is no use having a paid ezine and only accepting the payment in terms of checks and money orders. Having a payment gateway such as ClickBank or PayPal would certainly help.

Paid ezines may work when administered and marketed in the right way. The key is to convince your readers that they would be getting their money's worth by paying for your ezine.

### **3.1.1 Developing a fee-based Ezine**

As soon as you start charging for your Ezine, your readers will start expecting a higher standard from your Ezine as well as a good value for their money. You need a well-thought out and balanced strategy so that you can convince your readers that they are definitely getting valuable information. You also need to provide unique and exclusive information that your competitors do not provide. If you churn out the same type of information in your fee-based Ezine, which is also provided by another free Ezine or website, your fee-based model will never work.

Here are a few strategies you need to keep in mind if you want your fee-based model to be successful:

### **3.1.2 Provide extra-ordinary content**

You need to make sure that you provide exclusive content for your fee-based Ezine. The information that you provide must be of great value and must intrigue your readers. Your readers must be compelled to actually pay and obtain the content. Such information can be exclusive industry news, insider information on the stock market, top-class tips, question-answer sets for competitive exams like GMAT, SAT, etc., high-quality reliable medical information and so on.

Whenever you provide targeted information for such a niche market, make sure that you hire an expert to write the articles or provide information so that you can attach credibility to your Ezine.

### **3.1.3 Employ ‘direct response marketing’ for your Ezine**

Just like regular print newsletters, you need to employ direct response marketing to market your Ezine effectively. This means that you have to spend all your advertising money on media where you can measure the response that you receive. You can use tele-marketing, Internet marketing, paper/electronic media and so on to advertise your Ezine. Use these strategies on trial and error methods to find out the right combination of marketing for your Ezine that can help you build your subscribers’ base for paid ezines.

### **3.1.4 Built-in product strategy**

When you try and market your paid Ezine just as an informative newsletter, it does not really attract the attention of your readers. Not many people want to spend money on just 'information'. But when you guise your Ezine as a part of the full package, then it clicks. For example, you can offer your readers premium package where in with a few dollars every month, they can get the entire Ezine, special reports and the opportunity to ask questions to the experts. This will catch their fancy as you are giving them something extra apart from the basic 'information'.

You can divide your Ezine into different sections and access to a particular section such as archives or back issues, articles written by experts can be offered to premium members to choose to pay for that. You can also create different packages or you can have different fees set-up for different reports or articles. It may very well be that your paid Ezine will probably not get a lot of new customers, but your existing customers will chose to renew or upgrade their membership and hence you can get profits.

### **3.1.5 Put it all together effectively!**

When you move from publishing free Ezine to creating and selling paid Ezine newsletters, you have to realize that you are changing your entire operational structure. There are so many new additions to your system namely managing paid customers, charging their credit cards, generating invoices and billing issues, refunds and cancellations, providing discounts and incentives, and so on.

Make sure that there are no hitches in this part of your operation as you are dealing with people's money and things can get dirty if you make even one mistake. For instance, you would have to set up an extremely safe and secure payment system. You will need to ensure that you integrate this with your existing system so that you can ensure effective customer service. All the technical and creative aspects should work in harmony with each other.

### **3.1.6 Encouraging free subscribers to become paid subscribers**

It will be hard for your subscribers to pay for your Ezine if you have been publishing a free Ezine all along. The obvious question in their minds would be “What is so special about your Ezine now that you are charging a fee to read it, and what was it lacking in the past?”. You need to come up with a plan to make this transition as smooth as possible for you as well as for your readers. Your readers should not unsubscribe from your Ezine but instead continue as paid members. It is not going to be easy to convince existing as well as new readers to enroll for a paid subscription. That said, it is not impossible as well to do so.

Here are some tips that might help you convert free subscribers to paid subscribers.

#### **Suggest the change subtly to your readers**

Don't just drop a bomb on your readers one fine day and announce that from next issue on you would want your readers to pay a subscription fee and if they don't pay up then

you won't deliver Ezine to them. This is not only rude; it is also a bad move on your part. Your readers need to be motivated in order to pay for your Ezine. Hence, suggest it as delicately as possible to your readers, by giving many reasons that have forced you to take this step. For example, you can't meet the production costs, the expert fees are too high, the web space provider has hiked the price as your subscription base has increased in past one month and so on. I would recommend that instead of focusing too much on reasons, you should always try to highlight the 'many' benefits of your paid ezine. Justify the transition!

### **Don't scrape down your free Ezine completely**

You can't just take away the free Ezine from your existing members. If you want to get your readers to pay for your Ezine, give them something to hold on to. Continue some sections of your Ezine as free sections and charge fees for exclusive interviews, reports, archives and so on.

### **Offer them freebies**

'Free' is one word that everyone loves. You can provide some incentives to your existing readers by offering them free customized reports, exclusive tips by an expert, free one month membership, discount, even tangible free gifts such as coffee mugs, tee-shirts, posters, etc. You can also collaborate with other websites that offers cash that can be used on the merchandize sold on that particular website, conjoined trial membership to

some other website, gift vouchers, and so on. You can also come up with a scheme where in if your existing members become members before a stipulated time, they get heavy discount or another such 'freebie'. The choice is limitless; you just have to think it through.

### **Revamp your website/Ezine**

Give your website or Ezine a face-lift and show a glimpse of it to your readers. Present before them what is in store for them if they choose to be paid members. If your readers see that your Ezine and website looks just the same and has no apparent changes done to them, they might not find it promising enough. Hence, before you get ready to launch your Ezine as a paid Ezine make sure that you have redone your website so that it looks and feels updated and informative.

### **3.2 Automating your Ezines with Autoresponders**

When you are a beginner, you have very limited subscribers. So, tasks such as adding new contact info, welcoming new reader, sending him/her regular issues, emailing him/her official notices, answering feedback and responding to reader comments, unsubscribing clients, etc. can be boring if not difficult.

It becomes increasingly difficult once you start growing your readers' base. Thankfully, you can automate this process, which makes life a lot easier for you. If you are using

your own email program to send out regular Ezine to your readers, you can tweak the options features in it so that it enables you to send out multiple emails, automatic replies to every email you receive, forwarding emails to respective folders so as to organize the clutter in your inbox and so on.

An automatic email responder is a program that can set pre-formatted responses that can be sent automatically once it receives any email. There are simple auto-responders that merely send a specific reply to any email received by it and there are complex auto-responders that require complicated programming and are programmed to do multiple tasks. Complex auto-responders also send specific emails at regular intervals in response to that one email it receives.

The following are the uses of auto-responders:

- You can use it to send out information about your Ezine and how to sign up to receive regular copies of your Ezine.
- You can send out official notices or announcements about changes in your Ezine, a preview of the next issue, if you are planning on publishing a special article on some topic or an exclusive interview of an expert and so on.

- This program can be used to send out replies to user feedback. For example, the standard ‘thanks for sending your valuable feedback’. Later you can personally send out responses to specific comments or queries.
- You can send out automatic ‘thank you and goodbye’ messages to the readers who are choosing to unsubscribe.
- You can also send out sample issues to new and potential subscribers
- You can distribute news and notifications of archives on your website.
- You can also send promotional offers using this program.
- This program can help you distribute your advertising rate information and other media related info that can bring about more business for your Ezine.

How can you go about signing for auto-responders? The following are the basic steps that cover this process:

- Your first step is to sign up for an auto-responding service. There are various web-hosting services that also offer this service as a part of the package. However, if you are to explicitly choose for this type of service, then it is a good idea to select it. One advantage of this is that since you have the same domain



name for your website and for your auto-responder owing to the common web-space provider, there will be apparent consistency and your auto-replies will look more professional.

However, if your web-hosting service does not provide this additional service, then you can sign up for auto-responders through various commercial websites that are on the Internet. Most of these services are free, while others charge a small fee.

- Secondly, choose a simple and easy to remember name for your auto-responding service. You can also choose different names that target different types of emails that you receive. For example, your Ezine is 'All about Mexico'; for new subscribers you can have 'welcome@allaboutmexico.com', for unsubscribe requests, you have 'goodbye@allaboutmexico.com', for news and notices you have 'news@allaboutmexico.com' and so on. Always choose short and descriptive names.
- Next, decide upon the text you are planning to use in your auto-responder messages. Choose appropriate messages for appropriate responses.
- Now, configure the auto-responder so that it fits in your requirement. Choose how often you want the auto-responder to send messages. You can also select if you want each copy of the message forwarded to you. You can also choose if you

want only specific messages forwarded to you, for example every feedback message received by your auto-responder or every complaint received by it should be forwarded to you on your email address specified by you.

- Lastly, test the auto-responder to make sure that it is fully functional and you can put it into practice. Send test emails to each address you have created using auto-responder and check the replies you receive. See to it that you have not received garbled text or there are no missing words or data in your reply. Check how long it takes for you to receive the automatic message; it should not take more than a few minutes. Check the message format and if you have provided any links in the message, see if they are functioning properly or not.

### **3.3 Selling Ad Space in Your Ezine**

We discussed paid ezines as one way to generate an income from your campaign. One of the most popular ways of generating income with Ezines, however, is through advertisements.

If you are a reputed and established Ezine publisher with millions of readers, chances are that the advertisers will come running after you, trying to push you to publish their ads in your Ezine. However, that is when you are an expert Ezine publisher and have spent your time and effort in building your Ezine to the state where it is today. Let's talk about

how to deal with selling ad space in your Ezine when you are just starting out in the Ezine publishing sector.

The number one thing to keep in mind is that the amount of money you charge per advertisement depends on the kind of publication you have. If you have an Ezine catering to a niche market, going out only to a specific group of readers, who are focused and who know what they want, you might want to charge higher for the ads you publish in your Ezine. This is because your advertisers know that their ads are going to reach the right strata of consumers and the people who will read their ads are actually potential purchasers of their products.

Similarly, if your Ezine is about a common market or provides information that reaches a wide variety of people, like news stories, etc., then you might want to charge less per ad. This is done as the competition is too high in the field that you are and there are many Ezine publications dealing with the same product as you are dealing. For that reason, you might want to start with charging less per ad.

However, there are no fixed rules on how you should charge for the ads that are published in your Ezine. You have to determine the worth of your Ezine, as in how valuable it is to your readers. Will they miss your Ezine if you stop publishing? Do they enjoy reading every issue that you publish? When you determine the importance of your Ezine in the lives of your readers, you can determine the value of ads you want to publish

in your Ezine. Simply said, the more popular your Ezine is, the higher revenue can be earned through selling ad space in your Ezine.

Another thing you need to consider is the frequency of your publication, that is do you publish weekly, biweekly, monthly and so on. If you publish a weekly Ezine, your advertisers are divided into four slots per month; that is they can get their published as often as four times a month if they want. This does not mean that the value of their advertising is decreased as they are published more often, it actually means that the more active their ads are, the higher chances they have of getting their ads noticed by readers.

Do not fall in the trap of providing as many as ads as you can in your Ezine just so that you can earn more advertising revenue. It is true that you might earn more revenue from your advertisers, but you will fall down in the eyes of your readers, as they will not appreciate getting bombarded with so many ads. No one likes having to wade through plenty of advertisements in order to actually find the information they want. It is exasperating and frustrating, and they might decide to unsubscribe rather having to go through this ordeal.

A typical Ezine ad should be approximately 6 lines in length, 65 characters per line and it should have an accompanying URL linking to the advertiser's website or have the email address specified by the advertiser. You can also have ads as long as 8 lines and you can charge more for every line you add. The longer the ad is, the better the promotion for the advertiser. Subsequently, you can charge more for that.

You don't want to run ads and simply hope to get your readers to click on them when you just start out. Wait till you get a fairly decent number of subscribers, before you can expect to get good response rates. Till that point, you can run your own ads or public service advertisements in your Ezine. Make sure that you run at least a couple of these 'not for profit' ads, so that when you do decide to run ads for profit, you do not take your readers by surprise. If your readers are used to see an ads-free Ezine, they are not going to like the idea of seeing ads suddenly. So, do keep this point in mind when deciding your advertising strategy.

### **3.4 How to place ads in your Ezine**

As far as advertisers are concerned, if you want to please them, get good response rates for them. That is the fundamental rule for having a congenial relationship with your advertisers. If they like the response rate that their ads are generating, they are likely to place repeat ads in your Ezine. If that is the case, you can be assured of the advertising revenue that you will generate as your repeat customers are going to give you unflinching business. The key here is how to strategically place your ads so that your readers notice them and are motivated to click on the ads and generate potential income for your advertisers.

You can place the ads in the 'most read' or 'most popular' section of your Ezine. Doing reader survey and getting feedback from them can find this out. That way you can

determine the most read section of your Ezine and place the ads in or around that section which can draw potential customers for your advertisers. Another good strategy is to place ads right at the top of your Ezine, just where it has begun or right near the end of it.

Your readers are more likely to click ads before the content has begun or after the reading content has ended. They will not be bothered by unsightly ads that spring on them while they are reading an interesting section or article in your Ezine. And they will actually have the time to read the ads and possibly click on them once they are done with the reading or have not yet started reading your Ezine.

You have to strategically place ads in your Ezine and not just scatter them randomly in your Ezine. This policy of yours will be significant in deciding whether your advertisers will go to you or your competitors for placing their ads. I have provided a recommended ezine template, including suggested ad locations in the “resources” section at the end of this eBook.

### **3.5 How to get advertisers’ attention for your Ezine?**

You can get advertisers’ attention for your Ezine by creating a comprehensive online media kit for them that has all the information they need to place an ad in your Ezine. You would be boosting up your chances of catching the advertisers’ fancy by creating a catchy one-line link on your Ezine. For instance, if you have an Ezine on Real Estate you could place a link titled ‘Are you looking to reach ‘x’ number of prospective home-

buyers?’ that directs them to your website, which gives complete advertising information to real estate developers who are interested in placing ads in your realty Ezine.

Your one-line revelation will tell them that the niche market they are looking for is the one that you are targeting.

Your advertisers will love to know all there is to know about your Ezine and whether they should place their ads in your Ezine or not. They would want to know the subscribers rate, the click through rates of ads placed in your Ezine, testimonials from other advertisers, etc.

A good idea is to create a website or an email template which has an all-inclusive information which can be of benefit to your advertisers. This is known as a media kit. Your media kit is like your portfolio, which has all the data and statistics about your previous works and what you have to offer.

The following pointers can help you come up with a great media kit.

- You can write about why is it a good idea to advertise with you. You can mention the perks and benefits and the competitive rates that you offer. It is basically a sales letter and you have to be professional and precise in writing it. Don’t over-use marketing lingo and give practical information to the advertisers.

- Also provide demographic information about your subscribers, as in their age groups, profession, locality, and so on. Use percentages, charts and figures effectively to describe your subscribers.
- Provide them with a rate card, which has all the information about different rates that you have for ads. You might want to have different rates for different sections, different dates, etc. For example, you might have different rates for ads that are placed in your Ezine around Thanksgiving Day to new years day. Mention it clearly so that it is easy for anyone to go through it and make their decision.
- Some of the most effective items you can place in your media kit are testimonials from other advertisers or subscribers that vouch for the effectiveness of the ads placed in your Ezine. For example, real life experiences of an advertiser earning considerable revenue from placing ads in your Ezine and getting benefit of your vast reader base. Or if a reader has emailed you about how the ads have helped him or her in discovering a great product, publish it here. This is highly effective as your potential advertisers will immediately relate to the experiences and it is way better if others talk about you rather than you blowing your own trumpet. You can get the advertisers and readers to comment about the ads by specifically asking them for their feedback. You can encourage the readers to comment generously and you can email the advertisers and ask them to email you about the response they receive.



- Provide all the necessary contact information that can be utilized to contact the appropriate person for placing ads in your Ezine. Give out email address, phone number, fax number, postal address, whatever you can and want to use for this purpose.
- You can also have an online inquiry form, which can be used for advertisers if they seek more information. This form can ask for information like name, email address, other relevant information, phone number and a suitable time to contact them. You can also have an online order form which has fields like name, contact details, ad text/ad copy, credit card details and so on.

If you want to process advertising orders online, you must accept credit cards and you must have a very trustworthy web page secured by the acceptable security standards.

Contact your existing advertisers regularly via email and inform them of the offers and deals in your advertising rates. The words and phrases that your advertisers will love are ‘improved’, ‘competitive’, ‘slashed down’, ‘discounted’, and of course ‘free’.

If you have a weekly Ezine, offer them one out of the four ads for free or at 50% off rates. This is something that can be done when you have an established Ezine and have a

loyal readers as well as advertiser base for your Ezine. But this is a strategy you can keep in mind for later.

## **4. Advertising your own Ezine**

### **4.1 The Advertising Campaign**

#### **4.1.1 Setting up your advertising campaign**

Newsletters are generally used as tools to market other products or services. You would hardly have a newsletter which itself is an end-product. For this reason, advertising is an integral part of building and publishing any newsletter or ezine.

Before you start your advertising campaign, you need to carefully plan it. Start by asking yourself what is the purpose of the campaign – what product would you be advertising through your ezine? There are many key aspects of a successful campaign. Let us discuss each one separately.

#### **The Timeframe**

One of the first things you need to decide is how much time would you give your campaign. You cannot have an indefinite campaign. It is always advisable to fix a start date and an end date to your advertising campaign. The reason for this is that within a specific timeframe it is easier to track the performance of your campaign as well as set up a budget. Besides, if at the end of period you find your campaign to be successful, you could always continue with the same strategies.

#### **Budget**

Setting up a budget for your campaign is not as easy as it sounds. You may have a specific amount in mind but simply using up the whole amount at least initially may not be the wisest idea. Online advertising comes in many forms. You could run a series of 5 campaigns as well as a series of 50 campaigns. The key is to spend your money right.

Some campaigns are obviously more expensive than others. Some may even be free. This means that it is not simply a case of saying that you are going to run a series of five different campaigns covering a range of advertising media and so you will split your budget equally between the five campaigns. You do not know what campaigns yield better results by simply knowing the costs.

Any successful campaign is formed of the right ingredients. The hardest part of your advertising campaign is not to set it up or maintain it but to find the right ingredients. This can only be done with time. I would suggest that you do not stretch your budget initially. Start with a few campaigns well within your budget and track their performance over a period of time. This will give you a better idea of what strategies work for you and what don't. In fact, it may not be a bad idea to spend less than half of your budget initially. This way even if you lose all your money you would still have money left for other campaigns.

On the other hand, if your initial campaign works, you could continue with them and also jack it up a notch.

## **Tracking your campaign**

Tracking your advertisements, as discussed above, is essential for the success of the campaign. By employing some sort of a tracking system you would be able to figure out which advertisements bring you the highest number of responses. This is so very important, especially initially. It not only focuses your efforts on the right advertising strategies but also helps in achieving maximum ROI.

More information on Ad Tracking systems is given later on in this chapter.

## **Analyzing your visitors**

There are two phases involved in measuring the performance of your ads. One is tracking which ads get you good responses. The second is to identify those visitors who actually go on to sign up for your newsletter from your website. You would probably have a text box to allow visitors to enter their email address and sign up for your ezine. In the section on websites, I recommended that you have a separate page for each ezine. Apart from other benefits already discussed, this would also enable you to identify visitors who sign up for your ezine. This can be done by simply studying the traffic logs to track the hits on the sign up page.

You could also ask your web host to set up specific CGI scripts that can make tracking and analyzing visitors easier and less complicated.

### **Documenting tracking results**

Tracking the performance of your advertising campaign means nothing if you do not have all results documented for later analysis. Results could be documented in an excel spreadsheet, a database, or any other system you are comfortable with. Given below is some of the data that you should record.

- Advertising medium
- Website address
- Email Address
- Number of Visitors per day/week/month
- Date of advertisement
- Cost of advertisement
- Tracking tool
- Inquiries per Ad
- Sales per Ad

These are some of the guidelines that can help make your campaign successful. The next phase is to figure out where to advertise your ezines.

### **4.1.2 Places to advertise your Ezines**

Just like advertising options, the net offers a range of advertising locations as well. There are many places where you could advertise your Ezines successfully. Some locations can be expensive, whereas some are free of cost. The key is to figure out the right balance of places to advertise your ezines.

Given here are some of the popular avenues for advertising ezines.

#### **Advertising in Search Engines**

Listing your newsletters in popular Search Engines is probably the best way to spread your message to a wide as well as focused audience. Most marketers use Search Engines as their primary marketing tool.

There are innumerable search engines on the Internet – some list your ad for free, whereas some are quite expensive. Some of the most popular search engines are:

- Google
- Yahoo
- AltaVista
- Overture
- Lycos
- Excite

- Northern Light
- Infoseek
- Hotbot
- Ask Jeeves

Every Search Engine has its own set of rules on how to submit ads. Apart from these, rankings in the Search Engine Listing play a major role in reaching targeted audience. There are many guidelines to follow to improve your rankings without having to increase the cost of submission to various search engines. Apart from these, there are also paid programs such as Google AdWords that can get you a wide base of subscribers.

My book on Search Engine Marketing would give you excellent detailed insights on how to attain great results through Search Engines.

### **Setting up Joint Ventures**

We saw earlier how you could earn money by selling ad spaces in your Ezine. While earning income out of advertisements is a good option it may not hurt you to be a bit creative in your advertising. Instead of asking for cash in return for advertising space, you can ask for a reciprocal promotion on a partner's newsletter. As long as you're not competing, setting up joint ventures with complementary businesses is a great way to increase your customer base—and boost your sales.



For example, you could trade articles or interview other 'experts.' Or offer special deals on your partner's goods.

In its simplest form you would select a complimentary product, take a good look at it and, if you are happy with it, make it the subject of a feature article in your newsletter, recommending it to your readers. Your joint venture partner would do the same thing with one of your products or services. Giving a product an 'independent' third party recommendation is an excellent way to increase sales with both parties benefiting.

### **Advertising in Newsgroups, discussion forums, and announcement lists**

Newsgroups are great sources to target your ezines to focused audiences. There are numerous free newsgroups catering to all kinds of subjects. You should start by listing out a few newsgroups that address your industry or subject. However, whenever submitting messages and ads to newsgroups ensure that you follow the rules.

Responding to any messages that you may receive from readers is essential. It is imperative that you post a clear response to a message from all readers who show interest in your ad. This will add to your time and effort but it is certainly worth it.

Similarly, you could also post ads in discussion forums. Discussion forums are very similar to newsgroups. Like newsgroups you could find numerous forums on particular subjects.

Lastly, there are also lists known as announcement lists, which are a great way to announce your ezine to targeted audience.

### **Submitting your ezine to directories**

This is one of the most popular forms of advertisement for ezines. There are many Ezine directories that list several Ezines by type and category. For instance Ezines are listed by Subject, Industry, and so on.

All directories would ask you to provide a description of your Ezine. This is where you can score above your competitors. Write an eye catching description highlighting most benefits of your Ezine and your product. Write in brief how your ezine could help a reader. Detail any offers or incentives that you may provide to your subscribers.

I would recommend that you study similar ezine descriptions before you submit your own description.

### **4.1.3 Testing with Ad tracking programs**

There are two main factors that make an Ad effective – Content of the Ad and the sites where it is advertised. Most experts would agree that constant testing and experimenting is the only way to ensure that you get the right combination. However, the question arises – How do you test your Ads? An integral part of any advertising campaign is, knowing

which ads bring you the most visitors. After all, you may have banner ads, newsgroups ads, ads in other newsletters and articles, ads in autoresponders, or a simple classified ad on a website.

Every marketer can only benefit by knowing:

- which of the ads received the best response
- whether free classified sites are worth the effort
- what other ezines are the most profitable
- how a sponsored newsletter ad compares to the standard one
- whether animated banners are better than static ones
- how effective are your email ads
- does the ad at the start of an newsletter or article outperform the one at the end

Ad Tracking programs would answer all of these questions. They can help you analyze the effectiveness of every single ad and hence they should be an integral part of every marketing campaign. There are many comprehensive Ezine Ad Tracking programs available on the net for reasonable costs.

## **4.2 Advertising in other Ezines**

Just as you can sell advertising space in your ezines, you can also advertise your ezine in other newsletters. You can use those ads to promote your business or to invite people who read newsletters to read your own.

The key is to pick your partners carefully. There's no point just picking a newsletter with the cheapest rates; you want to make sure you choose an outlet that appeals to the same buyers as you. You also need to think about where your ad is going to be placed. In general, the higher the position the better.

Besides, the more the merrier too. Don't expect a huge response from a single ad. It's always best to think of advertising in terms of a campaign. You'll get a better deal—and better results—if you reserve an advertising slot for four or five issues than if you buy them one at a time.

Let us look at some of the aspects of advertising in other ezines a little more closely.

#### **4.2.1 Targeting Ezines that cater to your kind of audience**

I touched on this point earlier. Unless you advertise in ezines that are read by your target audience, your advertising efforts would hardly yield any benefits. Think about it – wouldn't it be crazy to advertise in an Ezines that cater to the business audience when your ezine talks about something completely unrelated, say horses.

The best way to go about finding ezines that are similar to yours or even compliment yours is to analyze some of the most popular listing directories, forums, and discussion boards. A huge list of resources is provided in the last chapter of this eBook. List out all the ezines that seem similar, and if possible, get subscribed to receive a few issues of the newsletters to check out if they are worth advertising in.

Finally, remember you should look for ezines that are similar but certainly not your direct competitors. Your competitors would firstly be very reluctant to advertise a competitor in their ezine. Besides, you would not want two different ads for the same product in the same newsletter, especially when the newsletter is your competitor's. This will certainly reduce your prospects of getting subscribers vastly.

With similar ezines you would ensure that your ad would be read by the right audience, thus, immensely improving its success rate. To make it a little easier for you, I have provided a list of ezines in the 'resources' section that sell advertising space to other publishers. These are some of the well known ezines.

#### **4.2.2 Distinguishing between the good and the not-so-good ezines**

With thousands of ezines being published on the Internet it is very likely that you would find innumerable ezines that cater to the right audience. You can surely not advertise in each and every ezine, unless you have an exorbitant budget. Besides, how do you know which ones are good and which ones are junk? After all, you would not want to spend

money on advertising in ezines that have an ill repute. Here are some guidelines that might help.

Let us first look at some of the qualities you should look for in an ezine:

### **Always look for Opt-in Ezines**

Ezines gain popularity if they are credible. The most important aspect of credibility is the process of subscription. We discussed earlier the difference between opt-in and opt-out and how important it is for your ezine to be an opt-in list. Other ezines that you look for should also be 100% opt-in.

An Opt-out strategy would suggest that the ezine is published on an unsolicited basis. Readers are subscribed without their knowledge. This can very well result in a spam claim later.

If you advertise in such an ezine, you would become a part of spam as well. Your ISP could shut down your account, your website could be terminated, and it is likely that you could even see yourself in the middle of a legal battle. Avoid Opt-out ezines at all costs.

### **Seek ezines that target a related audience**

We discussed this in the earlier section. Let me say it again – all your advertising efforts would be negated if you advertise in ezines that are completely unrelated to yours. There have been many publishers who advertise in all kinds of ezines only to have their time, money and efforts absolutely wasted!

### **Look for ezines that have fewer ads**

You should avoid ezines that have a cluster of ads. This would reduce the impact of your ad vastly. Always look for ezines that only have a few ads. Besides, ensure that other advertisers are professional and have a credible image.

### **Look for ezines that deliver good content**

Content is probably the most important ingredient of your ezine. Similar is the case for all ezines. Thus, you should look for ezines that have great content. Unique and quality content will only attract more people, generating a higher response rate for your ad. In fact, it may be a better idea to advertise in a quality ezine that has only a couple thousand subscribers as compared to an ezine that has common content with more than 20,000 subscribers.

The key is to look out for similar qualities in other ezines that you would want in yours. You may check out if the ezine has a website, if the host and domain name is free or paid,

is the mail list provider free? How good is the layout and formatting of the ezine? And so on.

Apart from these, there are a few pitfalls to watch out for. These are some of the cheap tactics ezine publishers follow to get a higher subscriber base. However, you would be much better off avoiding ezines with questionable tactics such as these:

- Many publishers collect email addresses of various readers from sources such as FFA (Free-for-all) lists. These may not be termed as spam or Opt-out but they are certainly not 100% Opt-in. Chances are that many of the readers who are listed in such lists would not want to be subscribed to the ezine. Avoid all ezines that seek subscribers using such strategies.
  
- Like I said earlier, avoid ads that have a cluster of ads. Some publishers try to incorporate as many ads as possible with the sole aim of earning more money. Avoid such ezines.
  
- Avoid ezines that advertise your competitor's ad as well. Besides, if the publisher himself has a very similar ad it wouldn't make sense to advertise in that ezine.

These guidelines should help you in selecting great ezines for your advertising campaign.

Follow your instincts; if you find something suspicious stay away from the ezine.



### **4.2.3 The Ezine Ad Copy**

The basic purpose of any Ad is not to sell your product but to attract potential subscribers. Your ezine and website are responsible for making sales of the product you may be promoting. The key is to have an eye-catching Ad. This is where the Ad headline is so crucial. Most people only look at the headline of the Ad.

Your headline should be attractive enough to make a potential subscriber read through the ad and eventually click on the link provided to go on and subscribe to your ezine.

List out all unique features of your product or service. Think how these would benefit your subscribers. Examine each of the benefits and figure out which ones would be most effective. The potential subscriber should know what he/she will gain from your ezine. A very good strategy for doing this exercise is to write the Ad in a paragraph form.

Keep on reading the ad numerous times, gradually reducing and refining the content. Eventually, you will get a one line heading that is both eye-catching and highlights the uniqueness of your ezine very well. You may also provide an incentive to encourage readers to sign up for your ezine. Make sure you mention your incentive within your ad.

Another important aspect is the size of the description. Every publisher or directory would have their own specifications. Some may allow a 10 to 15 word description, some

30 – 40 and some even 80 to 100. The best thing to do is have different versions of your ad with different lengths of description. Save each of these to a file for later use.

A few other tips:

- Study ads from your competitors. Look for unique features in these ads and employ them in your ad.
- Space is at a premium. Do not waste characters by using duplicates or other words that may be unnecessary. Some words that should be avoided are “the”, “a”, and “an”. Use very common abbreviations where possible.
- Do not ridicule your competitor. Depict how your ezine is superior from others.
- Your aim is to have a maximum conversion ratio of successful subscribers. After all, you wouldn't want to pay for visitors who are unwilling to subscribe to your ezine. A very specific ad would target only those surfers who are actually interested in your ezine.
- Use language that is personalized and motivational. The purpose of the ad is to elicit desire in people.

- Use strong call to action words and phrases. These will generate a response from potential subscribers. Examples include “Sign up today and get a free eBook”, “Register Now and Win”, and so on.

Ezine Ads should include what most people refer to as “power” words. These are words that many advertisers use in order to pull subscribers. A list of some of the most useful power words is given below:

- Fast
- Simple
- Secrets
- Stop
- Breakthrough
- Sale
- Act Now
- Superior
- Successful
- Valuable
- Limited
- Wealth
- Latest
- Delivers
- Win

- Announcing
- Discover
- Free Gift
- Incredible
- Amazing
- Exclusive
- Remarkable
- Boosts
- Don't Delay
- Effective
- Fast-Acting
- Affordable
- Bonus
- Increases
- Members-Only
- 100% Guaranteed
- Proven
- How to
- Timeless
- Top Ranking
- Exclusive
- Select
- Hurry

Your work is only half done once you finalize the ad copy. Testing your ad is as vital as designing it. Experimenting with different Ads can immensely improve the success rate of your campaign. Design a set of ads containing different headlines and description. The basic message of each ad should be the same. A detailed analysis of each of these ads will ascertain which ad gets the highest response rate. This way you can pinpoint successful ads and persist with them.

Ads can be tested and analyzed using ad tracking programs and scripts. These have been explained earlier. The “Resources” section at the end also contains a list of useful ad tracking tools.

#### **4.2.4 Swapping Ads with other Ezine publishers**

Swapping ads with other ezine publishers is a neat way to avoid paying for advertising. This strategy can work wonders for your ezine campaign. You could form an alliance with other ezine publishers wherein you could request them to let you advertise in their ezines for free. Of course you would then have to return the favor by letting them advertise in your ezine for free.

This eliminates the cost of advertising in other ezines. However, you may also have to part with any income you would be generating by selling advertising space in your own

ezone. The choice is yours. If you opt for ad swapping, ensure that you reciprocate with a publisher who is credible and professional. You wouldn't want ill repute publishers to advertise in your ezines.

#### **4.2.5 Submitting articles to other Ezines**

Publishers of ezines are always on the lookout for additional informative articles for their ezines. You should always take benefit of this.

Write a simple information packed article (about 500 words in length) on a subject that you are knowledgeable about and submit it to other editors with a suggestion that they might like to use it in their next edition.

These articles could be about anything. Of course, they have to be related to the topic of the ezine. If your article is informative and content rich you stand a good chance of having it published in other ezines. There are some great advantages of having your articles published in other ezines.

- Such a strategy introduces you to a large audience, which may very well be your target audience. Good articles can build your credibility and reputation as a source of great information. This would help you market your ezine much better.
  
- It also allows you to use your signature file to advertise your business.

Submitting articles to other ezines can be a great source of prospective readers for your own ezine. However, there are a few things that you should keep in mind when you write the article.

While your article may not be an effort to promote your business, your 4 to 6 line resource box should be an outright ad for you and your business. You are free to advertise your web site, your products, your services, or any affiliate program that you are a member of.

One of the most important ingredients of the article is the title itself. The title is what readers would look at and if that doesn't seem appealing, most readers would not give your article a second glance. The key is to have an attention grabbing title, much like the heading of an ad. It may be a good idea to have a few titles in mind before selecting the final title.

Organize your article so that it flows perfectly. Divide it into four or five main sub topics instead of having a continuous flow of text. Once you have the sub sections divide the article equally amongst them. For instance if you have 5 sub sections and decide to write an article of 500 words, allot around 100 words for each section. You may not follow this strictly but the idea is to have proportionate sections.

At the end of the article do not forget to insert a resource box. This is what will fetch you subscribers for your own ezine. Include your name, website address, and ezine name.

Along with this include a few benefits of your ezine. Bear in mind that your best chance of getting subscribers is when the article you write is similar to your ezine subject. There is no point in writing an article about sports when your ezine caters to the business audience.

Finally, proof read your article numerous times and spruce it up as you progress. Do not forget to check for grammar and spelling. Such mistakes can cost you dearly. When you submit your article to the ezine publisher, write a short personalized cover paragraph at the top.

Personalization is a major key since most ezine publishers receive hundreds of these emails every day. You need to make your emails stand out of the crowd.

### **4.3 Distributing Ezines yourself**

We discussed various strategies for creating, designing, marketing, and advertising ezines. We also discussed automated tools and services for distributing and delivering your ezine. However, there are a few tactics for delivering ezines yourself, which are worth mentioning. Although, I would recommend using a list server or a ezine distribution service for this purpose, you may distribute the ezine yourself.

Before we discuss some of the ways to deliver ezines yourself, here's what you would have to do manually:



For all new subscribers send out a welcome email and add them to your subscriber database. For every unsubscribe request you would have to send an acknowledgement email and manually remove the email address from your database. And finally, you would have to manually send out a copy of your ezine to each and every subscriber from your database.

This sounds easy doesn't it! But wait till the time your list grows into hundreds and thousands. Handling such a massive amount would surely become a nightmare. Thus, I would absolutely recommend letting a list server or distribution service deal with these hassles. However, until the time your list grows you may handle these tasks yourself. Here are a few pointers that might help in carrying out the entire process efficiently.

Some people use a plain text editor for storing all addresses. However, you are much better off using a tool such as MS Excel or MS Access. This would make managing your subscriber list much easier. It would be easier to locate, edit and delete addresses compared to a text file.

Store your ezine in both text and HTML format in a good word processor such as MS Word. Whenever you need to send out the ezine just copy and paste it onto your email client. Next, you need to enter all the email addresses into the email address rows of the email client.

Please note that it is always advisable to paste all of the email addresses into the “bcc” row. Most email programs will have 3 outgoing fields, the 'To' field (more about this in a minute), the 'cc' or 'carbon copy' field and the 'bcc' or 'blind carbon copy' field. If you paste your list into the 'bcc' field then each address on the list will receive a copy of the newsletter but they will not be aware of the other addresses to which it has been sent.

If, however, you mistakenly paste it into the 'cc' field, each address will again receive a copy of the newsletter but they will also see a full listing of all the other addresses to which it has been sent! The most professional ezines never let out email addresses of other subscribers. This can be done by pasting all email addresses into the “bcc” row.

You cannot send out the mail unless you enter a valid email address in the “To” field. This problem can be solved by having your own email address in the “To” field. Make sure that this email address is different than the one you use to send out the ezines, otherwise your ezine would again look unprofessional. The reader doesn't have to know that the email address in the “To” field is your own. You could sign up for a free email at hotmail or yahoo for this purpose.

Once you follow these procedures you can send out your ezine. Managing a huge list can be a major problem. However, your worries don't end here. There are many other problems you are likely to face if you go the manual way.

- Your email program may not support 'bcc'. In this case each newsletter would have to be sent individually.
- Your ISP, or your own modem, may be slow, resulting in a posting which takes a very long time to complete.
- Your ISP connection may be unstable, resulting in a loss of your connection part way through the mailing.
- Your mailing will result in a number of 'undeliverable' messages. Some of these will result from email addresses that no longer exist, while others will simply have been returned because of a temporary connection problem somewhere along the line. How do you know which to delete from your mailing list and which to send again a day or so later?
- Your ISP may have an email policy which restricts the number of 'bcc' recipients that can appear on an email message - a policy which is being adopted by an increasing number of ISPs.

Thus, you are best served by letting a professional service handle the distribution of your ezines.

## **5. Final Thoughts**

### **5.1 The Next Level**

Throughout this book we have discussed most of the proven strategies that should help you in succeeding with Ezines. After experiencing a certain level of success with your ezine you can think of adopting newer tactics and consequently increase your budget. With time you would surely realize the potential of ezines. This is when you should take your ezine campaign to the next level.

One thing you should look to have is automating all or at least most of your procedures. Initially, you may not spend a lot of money on sophisticated tools but with success you should definitely aim to do so. Once you have the hang of ezines, you would find that most of your time should be ideally spent on marketing and advertising. Administrative functions should be completely automated.

Next, you should adopt more sophisticated and comprehensive tracking packages. All marketing effort should be tracked and analyzed. This is where you should be spending your time – and not for managing subscriber lists!

Finally, after publishing at least 15 to 20 issues of your ezine, you can contemplate compiling these issues into a single eBook. Such an eBook can be a great source of content and can be easily sold to existing as well as new customers with a high rate of success.

There are many other innovative ways of profiting from your ezines. With proper planning your ezine can be a great success.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

All tactics, strategies, tips, and guidelines provided in this eBook may seem a bit overwhelming initially, but believe me once you go through the process of setting up an ezine campaign step by step it you would actually start enjoying your new venture.

One thing you should always bear in mind that running an ezine campaign, like any other business, can only be successful with considerable persistence and dedication. You are mistaken if you expect substantial results immediately. It might be days before you start reaping your rewards – patience will pay off!

Ezines are all about building credibility and trust amongst your subscribers. Most publishers lose patience only after a couple of months. You should give it more time – at least 10 to 12 months. I'm sure by then you would start achieving desired results.

## 6. Sample Templates

### 6.1 Sample Ezine Template

Given below is a sample ezine template. This could be used for both Text as well as HTML ezines. Please note that this is not a guideline – just a recommended template for your convenience.

---

**Ezine Title**

**Sub Title**

**Issue# 00      Date**

Dear **Name of the Subscriber,**

This publication is 100% opt-in. Please be assured that your privacy will be maintained and all records are kept confidential. No information would be given out.

-----  
**Subscription Management**

-----  
*Subscribe info*

*unsubscribe info*







Your ad headline here

Your ad body here

Your [http://](#) link here

>>>>>>>END SPONSOR MESSAGE<<<<<<<<<<

*Place the remaining part of the article here.*

## **Resources**

*Place your resources here*

>>>>>>>SPONSOR MESSAGE<<<<<<<<<<

Your ad headline here

Your ad body here

Your [http://](#) link here

>>>>>>END SPONSOR MESSAGE<<<<<<<<

*Place any other information such as questionnaires, surveys, contests here.*

## **Subscription Management**

*Subscribe info*

*unsubscribe info*

*contact list owner*

---

Publication name is a weekly publication of **your** business name <http://yourdomain.com/>.

Copyright © 2003 **Your Company Name**, All rights reserved worldwide.

---

## **6.2 Sample Welcome Letter**

Given below is a sample welcome letter that you may send to every new subscriber.

Please note that this is just a recommended template that you could use.

Dear **Name of the Subscriber**,

Thank you for subscribing to "**EZINE NAME**". "**EZINE NAME**" will provide you with a wealth of information to assist you in "**EZINE FOCUS**". It will be delivered to your email address every "**EZINE PUBLISHING DAY**".

You will also receive an occasional "Special" mailing should some important information arise that just can't wait for the next publication.

Rest assured that we respect your privacy and will NEVER share your email address with anyone.

*(Include this if you are running such a promotion)*

We appreciate your subscription and to show our appreciation, we'd like to give you a free exclusive gift just for subscribers of "**EZINE NAME**".

*Place details of the free gift here.*

Thank you for subscribing to **EZINE NAME**. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at **YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**.

Regards,

**YOUR NAME**