

15 Proven Rainmaker Strategies To Build Your E-Mail Database

By Dan Gooder Richard

E-mail is not free, but it is cheap.

As many top real estate professionals cut back on budgets they still need serious buyers and sellers to stay in the game. That's why one of today's hottest and most economical solutions is e-mail marketing.

Yet, let's face it. The single biggest roadblock to launching – or ramping up – a profitable e-mail marketing campaign is collecting e-mail addresses. Without crisscross directories and phone books for e-mail addresses, building an eDatabase – especially a geographically based list -- is like picking up small pieces of gold. Over time it really adds up. But how do you find the mother lode?

Here are 15 proven “Do’s” for today’s e-mail prospectors.

Golden E-mail Collecting Do’s

1. **Start with your database.**

Enhance your postal contacts with e-mail. Contact them, say “We’re going green and want to send our free newsletter by e-mail. May we have your e-mail address?” Another script: “Join our e-Newsletter Club and help us be more earth friendly. Simply send us an e-mail with subject: e-Newsletter. We will send you our newsletter by e-mail.” Tip: Be sure to keep their postal address. If their e-mail goes bad, you’ll need their street address or phone to contact them for an update. After you have as many client e-mails as possible, move on to your sphere and farm and networks.

2. **Ask for their e-mail.** Practice a script with every new contact: “What’s your name, phone, street address, e-mail?” The other day I signed up for a loyalty program at a men’s clothing store. The only items they asked for were my zip

code and e-mail. They said, “To confirm membership and send you future discount coupons.” Every time a customer or prospect phones you, walks in or is introduced it’s an opportunity to

capture their e-mail address. Practice offering to e-mail them your contact information on a vCard – to do that you’ll need their e-mail.

3. **Put your e-mail address on everything.** Make it easy to send you an e-mail from your business card, ads, signs, flyers, newsletters, postcards, all your marketing materials. Remember, by using different e-mail accounts (the name to the left of the @ symbol), and setting the parameters to route those e-mails to specific mailboxes, you can also track what marketing works best (i.e., for “Gazette” newspaper ads use Gazette@mydomain.com; for blog responses use Blog@mydomain.com). If you haven’t learned how to do this yet, check your e-mail program’s “Help” file. There are lots of uses for mailboxes.

4. **Use forms on your website.** The more forms you use on your website (always ask for e-mail) the more e-mail addresses you will capture. In fact, name, e-mail and phone (optional) are all you need to add to your eDatabase – and make follow-up easy. Forms are much quicker and easier to complete than sending an actual e-mail message.

That’s one reason forms are one of the leading e-mail capture techniques. After all, most web visitors found your site because they have a need or interest in your services, right now -- making them great potential clients!

5. **Use website pop-ups.** One of the most common and still most effective ways to capture e-mails is to create a pop-up window on your website with a simple form and compelling offer. A pop-up can be on page entry or exit, although entry is most successful. What makes pop-up forms effective is the offer – not the technology. Experiment with offers that serious buyers and sellers value. From experience we know a “free” offer is most successful. Another effective place for a “Please sign in” pop-up is the 4th or 5th click for “more details” on property IDX listings. Tip: Use pop-ups judiciously, not in multiple layers. Effectiveness will depend on the value of the offer.

6. **Capture e-mails with offline marketing.** Harvest the e-mail address from every info request that lands in your inbox (drag & drop into Outlook or cut & paste into eDatabase). Offer a



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7. **RSVP.** When you invite anybody to an event or open house, send a postal invitation but ask for an e-mail RSVP. Works great for events and other outreach that prompts a “Thank You” in reply (client gifts, client events, seminars, etc.). Ask for the reply by e-mail. Example: “Open House Invitation. To be invited to upcoming open houses, RSVP and I’ll send a personal invitation for future opens.”

8. **Use an auto-responder.** Write a Special Report (“10 Things You Must Know About Selling In Today’s Market”). Then paste that report into your “Out of Office Assistant” function (i.e., FreeReport@mydomain.com). That function will send the free report by return auto response. You won’t have to lift a finger – but you will capture the prospect’s e-mail address to be added to your eDatabase.

9. **Get more sign-ups with your signature.** Rotate links to different offers and sign-up forms on your e-mail signatures. You’ll be surprised how often recipients forward e-mails to others who are new contacts not already in your eDatabase (marketers call this “viral list building”). Special offers and free reports are great links for signatures.

10. **Turn open houses into e-mail events.** Place a guest book and stand-up sign that asks open house visitors to enter their e-mail address and check off any of three incentive offers: Latest Listing Updates, What Your Home Is Worth, Get Pre-Approved. Use tent cards or place signs throughout the house with your “e-Card” and incentives in return for e-mail addresses. Another technique is a fishbowl drawing where

visitors enter with their e-mail and name – “notification of winner by e-mail only.” Train your sellers to encourage friends and family to send you “their honest home-showing feedback” by e-mail.

11. **Make duty desk a true opportunity.** When prospects call from a sign or ad or mailing or Internet listing, ask if they would like to receive special notices of “Latest New Listings” by e-mail. You may be surprised how many say, “yes.”

12. **Leave a voice mail.** During your phone prospecting hour-of-power be sure to ask your contacts to respond via e-mail “for fastest service.” Give them your e-mail address in your message and tell them you will be alerted as soon as your e-mail comes into your inbox. Repeat your e-mail again at the end of your voice mail.

13. **Include e-mail in your answering message.** By putting your e-mail (and your website) in your announcement message on your voice mail you will stimulate more e-mail contact – and reinforce your eBrand at the same time.

14. **Think beyond consumers.** Make it gospel to collect e-mails from “influencers” who become your e-mail referral network. Include, business contacts who are local and related to the transaction – lenders, title reps, inspectors, closing officers, attorneys, contractors – everyone who could forward you a referral. Don’t forget broker-to-broker referrals nationwide. Collect e-mails from everyone you meet at tradeshow, conferences, seminars, and social networking sites too. And stay in touch by e-mail.

15. **Go for the gold.** Set a goal to acquire new e-mail addresses constantly. If you add one a day, you’ll have 365 more e-mails after the first year alone. Give your staffer who brings in the most e-mail addresses a full day off. Don’t stop there. Set a goal – and a deadline – and do what it takes to collect the gold.

Because gathering opt-in permission based e-mail addresses takes time, trust, and true effort, your e-mail database will

become an extremely valuable asset to your practice. A real estate practice with 1,000 e-mail addresses commands a higher value than one with 100 e-mails -- or none.

Because the value of your businesses is ultimately based on your customer base, more e-mail addresses (and postal addresses) means your business is worth more money to a buyer. A powerful eDatabase also means your practice has a significant advantage over your competitors right now – especially the pound foolish ones that have stopped marketing to save an ounce of gold.





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