50 Ways to Grow Your Email List
What’s the most frequently asked question at VerticalResponse? You probably guessed already, but it’s “How do I grow my mailing list?”

Good news! We have heaps of ideas on our blog to make it easier for you to grow your list and we have compiled them all for you (and even thrown in a few extras as well). Paul Simon may have had “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,” but at VerticalResponse we have 50 Ways to Grow Your Email List. We sorted the ideas by content, but the tips in this guide are helpful for any business to grow their list.

B2C (Business to Consumer)

1. Business Cards
   Put an offer on the back of your business cards to get people to sign up for your email.

2. Tradeshows
   Bring a clipboard or sign-up book with you to tradeshows and ask for permission to send email to those who sign up.

3. Host Your Own Event
   Art galleries, software companies (one here has a party every quarter & invites the neighboring businesses), retail shops and consultants (lunch & learn) can all host an event and request attendees to sign up.
4 Special Clubs
Create a birthday or anniversary club where you give something special to people that sign up.

5 Incentivize Your Employees
Your employees can be your biggest assets. Give them money for collecting valid email addresses.

6 Use Groupon
If you’re in retail or in a local service business give a Groupon discount. The way it works is that you give your discount ONLY if a certain number of people take you up on it in a given amount of time. Then make sure you ask for their email address in exchange for their discount.

7 Referrals
Ask your customers to refer you, and give them a discount in exchange.

8 Bounce Backs
Get them back! Send a postcard or call for an updated email address for any that may have bounced.
9 Newsletter Space
Trade newsletter space with a neighboring business, include a link for their opt-in form and ask them to include yours in their newsletter.

10 SEO
Make sure you optimize your site for your keywords. You need to be at the top of the organic search when people are looking for your products or services.

11 Giveaways
Send people something in the mail and ask for their email address in return.

12 Direct Mail
Do you have a postal list without emails? Send them a direct mail offer they can only get if they sign up to your email list.

13 Opt-in Forms on Your Website
Include opt-in forms on every page on your site, preferably above the fold so it’s easy to get sign ups.

14 Popup Windows
When someone is leaving your site, pop up a window and ask for their email address.
15 **Forward To A Friend**
Include a forward-to-a-friend link in your emails just in case your recipient wants to forward your content to someone they think will find it interesting.

16 **Archive Newsletters**
Use the archive link from your sent emails to save your newsletters on your website to boost interest in signing up.

17 **Offer A Community**
Use Ning as your easy-to-set-up community and have your visitors interact and sign up for your newsletter.

18 **Email Only Specials**
Offer “Email only” specials and don’t use those offers anywhere but email.

19 **Telemarketing**
If you’ve got people on the phone, don’t hang up until you ask if you can add them to your newsletter.

20 **FishBowl**
Put a fishbowl on your counter and hold a weekly prize giveaway - then announce it in your newsletter. Add everyone who put their card in to your newsletter list. Just make sure you have a sign that tells them they will be added to your email list.
21 Opt-in Form in Your Email
Include a link to an opt-in form inside your emails for those people who get your email forwarded to them.

22 TradeShows
Collect business cards and scan them into a spreadsheet. Make sure you ask permission to send email to the first.

23 Sandwich Board
If you’ve got a retail location, why not use that valuable sidewalk to advertise your newsletter? Create an offer to get customers in the store to join your list and you might make a sale along the way.

24 Receipts
While someone is signing their credit card receipt, simply ask them to include their email address on the receipt. Then at the end of the day, enter them into your account, and send them an email thanking them for their purchase and welcome them to your list.

25 Street Fairs
If you participate in a local street fair, collect email addresses right at the fair. You can sweeten the deal by offering a discount on the first or next purchase.
26 Use a Video Contest
Host a contest where you have customers create a one-minute video about why they like your non-profit, your company or products. Ask your customers to send you the videos and post them on your Facebook page. Then have your visitors vote on which should win cash or prizes that you offer. Your contestants will email their lists, and post to Twitter and Facebook asking their friends to vote for them and you’ll get more exposure. Count up the “likes” or comments on each video to determine the winner. Make sure you include an email opt-in form on your Facebook page to capture any email addresses.

27 Handheld Devices
If you’re at a tradeshow, at your store, spa, salon or restaurant, you can use handheld devices. With an iPhone or an Android you can use Bump Technologies’ free app. You simply bump your phones together and instantly swap contact information. Sterizon has a specialized handheld device and application where your customers can type in their email address and it goes right into your VerticalResponse account. There is a monthly fee for that one, but it sounds cool!

28 Retail Packages
If you’re shipping products, you’ve got some valuable real estate you’re playing with - the box! Include an in box request on a piece of paper and tout that you’ve got “email only” offers. Direct them to your websites opt-in form, and then after they join your list, direct them to a page where you give them their first promotional offer.
29 Non-Profits
Include an email address line in all donation envelopes.

30 In Store Parties
Have an in-store party around your products or services. If you sell hats, have a quarterly “hat party” where you encourage people to wear crazy hats and offer discounts on yours. Then get email addresses while people are in the store.

31 Use What You’ve Got
Export your list of personal friends and business colleagues who know you from your accounts at Outlook, Gmail, AOL, or Yahoo! Then send everyone an email from you personally asking him or her to join your list. Include a link to a hosted version of an opt-in form so you can track them. Don’t forget to include the value they’ll be getting from you, like discounts, coupons or information that is exclusive. And, since you know them, chances are they’ll join pretty quickly.

32 iPad... or iPad2
People are loving to get their hands on an iPad these days so capitalize on it while the going is good. Offer a newsletter sign up at your location or event and use an opt-in form to gather the email addresses right on your iPad.
B2B (Business to Business)

33 Signature
Include a newsletter sign-up link in the signature of all of your personal emails.

34 Chamber Members
Join your local Chamber of Commerce; email the member list (if it’s opt-in) about your services with a link to sign up to your newsletter.

35 Downloads
Giving out something for free like a PDF? Have visitors sign up to your opt-in form before you let them download it.

36 Speaking Events
During your speech weave into your message that people can always get more information about you at your website. Then tell them if they sign up for your newsletter you’ll give them free consultations. You also might try bringing something tangible that you can give away that includes your email messaging.

37 Networking
Set a goal for your networking events. Go to events and get 10-20 business cards and send them an email right away telling them it was a pleasure to meet them.
38. **Give Away An iPod**

Each month give away a valuable and fun item that may or may not relate to your business to those who join your list. If you’re not on the list, you don’t have a shot.

39. **Give Privileged Access**

Privileged access doesn’t have to only be “offer related” when it comes to giving something to your email newsletter subscribers. If you’ve got something that they want to see, then give them “subscriber only” access. If you’ve got a video feed, a white paper, or something special you can give access to, you can use that tactic to get more subscribers.

40. **Surveys**

If you are conducting a survey include email sign up info.

41. **Invoices**

Include an option to sign up for email communications on invoices you are sending out.
Social Media

42 Twitter/Facebook
Post the hosted link from your newsletter to spread the word. Not sure how to do this? Use the Social Sharing feature in your VR Account.

43 Facebook
Include an opt-in form on your Facebook page.

44 Social Icons
Include links to share your email or articles on Twitter or Facebook. Your recipients will be able to share your emails with their network, just remember to include an opt-in form link in your email.

45 WordPress Bloggers
You can easily include an opt-in form on your WordPress blog by downloading the WordPress Plug-In. Then you can easily start collecting email addresses right from your blog.

46 Use Foursquare
Give a discount each time a customer buys something from you and shows you they mentioned your business on foursquare on their phone. This means that they’re telling everyone in their network that they’ve just visited you or talked about you. Give a BIG discount to your “mayor” each month and ask them for their email addresses.
47 Comment on Blogs & Forums

Offer insightful comments on blogs or forums that your prospects or customers would visit. Then include a link to your site where your opt-in form is hosted.

48 Email Your Facebook Followers

Each week send an email through Facebook to your Facebook followers and friends asking them to join your list. Direct them to the website address where you have your opt-in form hosted and entice them to sign up by giving them a discount or special offer. After they opt-in to your list, direct them to a coupon page with a code or offer a print out, or send them a separate email-only discount as a follow up email.

49 Tweet

Each week Tweet to your followers that you’ll give something of value to those that join your list. Use a bit.ly link or shortened URL link to send them to your hosted opt-in form and track it.

50 Facebook

Create your own group and invite people to it, then post new links often. From time to time, post a link to sign up for your newsletter.

There you have it, lots of great ideas to help get your list growing! Remember that any contact with your potential customers is a chance to get them to sign up for your list. And always keep in mind that permission based lists will give you the best results; these are the people who are engaged and interested in what you are sending.