

# **Joe's Digital Marketing Tips**

**by Joseph Abraham**

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*If something is important enough, you do it.  
Even if the odds are not in your favor.*  
-Elon Musk

# 10 Ways to Grow Your Email List

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Email marketing is the most effective form of marketing. However, the unique challenge for the email marketer is building a quality email list. I do not recommend buying email contacts from outside sources. It is best to build your email list through your events, website, mobile application, etc. To build a quality email list from your website you will need both website traffic and incentives. Incentives will motivate your site visitors to freely give their email address. Below are ten of my tried and true methods to retrieve those valuable email leads.

## **1. OFFER CONTENT THAT WILL BE RELEASED IN THE FUTURE**

This is a method I have used to capture email addresses. My friends often teased me because I have been threatening to write a book for years. The deal was, if you go to my website and submit your email address, you will receive a free copy of my book in digital form once the book is finally released. The advantage of this method is that you do not need a finished product to give away. You can start building your list right away. This is a great strategy for newer businesses. As a side benefit, you can also test the market's demand for whatever product you plan on releasing.

## **2. COUPONS/DEALS/SALES**

If you have a physical storefront and/or an e-commerce store, you can offer newsletter exclusive coupons and sales. One of my clients offers a deal where their customers can mention that they have a newsletter subscription and they are given a limited-time discount. Often other customers, who happen to be in the store, will overhear about the discount. Thus the store's staff will have inquiring customers sign up for their newsletter on the spot.

## **3. EXCLUSIVE AND SMALL CAPACITY EVENTS**

If your business is appropriate for small physical venues (bands, stand-up comics, etc), you can offer exclusive access to the events in exchange for email addresses. "Enter your email address for a chance to appear as an extra in our next music video (or comedy skit)."

"We have a house concert coming up exclusively for people who are subscribed to our Newsletter." This practice also fosters an exclusive community and is great for keeping in touch with the immediate concerns of your core market.

## **4. GIVEAWAYS AND/OR SWEEPSTAKES**

A "raffle" practice allows email sign-ups to feel like they have a chance at a reward they want! "If you enter your email address, your name will be entered to win a new car." Rewards can be as small as a monthly coffee giveaway or as large as your budget allows. A friend of mine organized an email raffle where prizes included things like houses and cars. Needless to say, he acquired hundreds of thousands of email addresses. You can create raffles both online and in person. Another of my clients, It's Raw Poke Shop, obtained hundreds of email addresses through a raffle which took place in their San Diego Store.

## **5. SENDING FREE STUFF IN THE MAIL**

Sometimes all it takes to trade for an email address is free merchandise. As an example, a company called Funnel Hacker sends you a free t-shirt if you sign up and try their service (no questions asked!). I signed up for it myself, tried their service, and though it did not work out for me, I kept the shirt and advertise for them all the time. Your business may not have the budget for t-shirts, but there are plenty of options to choose from; many potential customers would be happy with a free sticker or button! As an additional benefit, you get to obtain your core customer's geographical location, which will be very useful if you are deciding where to organize future promotional events. Sidenote: I recommend Funnel Hacker for non-developer marketers.

## **6. OPPORTUNITIES TO BE FEATURED**

If you are a Youtuber or Instagrammer, you can create an opportunity for those who have signed for your newsletter to appear in your social media content with you. In my case, I offer my Instagram and Facebook followers the opportunity to have their website critiqued for technical and design improvements. In order to be eligible, they have to join my Facebook group. I realize a Facebook group is not an email list, but the method of acquisition is interchangeable. For me, this allows me to make promotion and create content in one project: two birds with one stone. If you would like your site critiqued, please join my Facebook group: Web Design Critique.

## **7. TIME-SENSITIVE CONTENT**

Although at first glance this method may seem to intersect with number one, the difference is that the offer for free merchandise or content is set within a given time-frame. It has a "time-sensitive appeal." This method suits e-course instructors very well, who sell online classes. For example, instructors may offer the first quarter of their lessons for free for those who sign up on the email list within the first 24 hours.

## **8. WORKBOOKS OR QUESTIONNAIRES**

Businesses that offer workbooks or helpful questionnaires frequently find success when trading for email addresses. Example: a workbook that helps users identify their personal brand. Another example: questionnaires that help identify one's body type and make appropriate dietary suggestions for a nutrition plan. Give these items away in exchange for email information. If you would like to see an additional example of this type of marketing, I use a popup with a workbook offer on Chrissy Power's blogs and it has increased email capture by about 5 times.

## **9. TRIAL OR LIGHT VERSION OF YOUR SERVICE OR PRODUCT**

Giving a sneak peek to your trial or service is a great way to build your email list. Right now I am building a business that offers content, security, maintenance, and hosting to websites. If anyone would like to test the effectiveness of any of these services, I just go ahead and offer trials free of charge. When they see the results, they usually will come back for more. If they don't, they will be reminded when I email them later since they have been added to my email list.

## **10. RETAIN EMAILS THROUGH EXISTING SALES**

Lastly, make sure that you utilize your sales system properly if you have an online store. Once a customer makes that initial purchase their information is captured and you can keep contacting them in order to re-sell. Confirm that you are retaining these emails that are captured from already existing sales. These customers tend to be sought after, and it would benefit you to maintain rapport with them, as they are likely to buy again and remain loyal.

*Side note: I would like to emphasize that it's important to stay aligned with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) standards, especially if you are based in Europe. If you solicit by email and the user feels they are being spammed, consequences may follow.*

# Process, Process, Process for Making a Website

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## WHY IS A PROCESS SO IMPORTANT?

One of the most notable differences between successful and unsuccessful designers has little to do with the quality of their final product. Of course, creative work must be “good.” However, a clumsy creative process often leads to a negative experience for the client. The half-baked process, its presentation to the client, and their negative experience could then greatly reduce the chance that clients re-hire you or hand you referrals. A negative experience will even affect the way a customer perceives the overall value of your work.

I have been asked by novice entrepreneurs, “How I can create a positive experience for the customer?” My response: fruitful projects need a clear and repeatable process. A clear process helps reassure the client that the quality of your past work is highly repeatable.

## **PROCESS STRUCTURE**

Have you ever written a persuasive essay? The process I created for website projects works much in the same way. Persuasive essays typically have an introduction, three main points with supporting content, and a conclusion. The first step in writing a persuasive essay is writing a thesis statement. The thesis statement is the anchor of your essay and informs the reader of essays objective, the essays position on its subject, and supporting evidence for having a particular stance. Your essay's body is made up of three main points which support and discuss your thesis. Sometimes it is easiest to write the introduction and conclusion after the three body paragraphs. In the introduction, I make sure to first inform the reader what I am trying to do, and then later remind the reader of my initial intention in my conclusion

## **FOUR D'S**

Like a persuasive essay and its structure, my website project includes phases of execution. I call these four phases "The Four D's". It stands for Discovery, Design, Development, and Deliverables. My four phases of website creation are linear, even if there is a bit of overlap between them.

## **DEADLINES AND PAYMENT**

After I have laid out a clear creative process, I can then make a fairly accurate estimate of how many hours the project will require, and if I need to hire people to assist the execution of the project. These are some of the initial questions I ask myself: how much will I have to spend if I hire people? Can I finish the project efficiently to meet the client's goals? Does the overall payment turn enough of a profit to fulfill my minimum hourly rate? The list goes on. From here I create a proposal based on judgments from past client meetings.

If the client agrees to the proposal, I promptly send a contract requiring an initial deposit of 25% to 50% the total fee. I will then accept the remaining fees over the course of the production process. I generally divide fees into three payments. Though depending on the schedule and conditions, I have taken up to six payments on contracted work. Typically I try to set up one payment per month.

In the contract, milestones are defined to outline the phases of completion in the process (deadlines). I will normally require payment prior to beginning the work. Depending on the origin of a lead, I may require payment during the initial consultation. The remaining payments are expected after my phases: Discovery, Design, Development, and Deliverables. Upon handing over the deliverables and completion of the contract, I usually send a bill for the last payment as a "net 30." A net 30 means that the final payment must be received within 30 days. Expect the client to take their time on the last payment and maybe even be a bit late. You may consider setting up penalties for late payments in the original contract.

### **NEED AN EXAMPLE?**

The following is an example schedule outline from a recent project. Feel free to use it as a reference and make adaptations. I have omitted some items due to non-disclosure agreements. Omitted items include actual costs, and which team members will be assigned to each item.

## PROCESS EXAMPLE

### Pre-production:

- Consulting / Communication throughout the project (10hrs in-person)
- Contracts
- Proposal
- Pitch
- Temporary Splash Page + launch (5 hrs)
- Receive first payment

### 1st Month, Discovery:

- Customer Personals
- Stylescapes
- Identity Guide (include writing style and photographic style)
- Identify technical functionality (1 hr)
- Receive second payment

### Second Month, Design:

- Sitemap
- Wireframes
- Mockup in Illustrator
- Assets (deliver font files, animations, images, passwords/logins etc.)
- Audit technical functionality (1 hr)
- Receive third payment

### Third Month, Development:

- Staging site
- Email setup for custom email domains (2 hrs)
- ECommerce functionality and products (10hrs) / Research best option

### Fourth Month, Deliverables:

- Launch site and debug (2 hrs)
- Hand over passwords (if applicable)
- Training (2 hrs in-person)
- Maintenance:
- Hosting fees
- Technical maintenance
- Bill for final payment via net 30

# Web Design 10 Commandments

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Web Designers are as diverse as websites. However, the purpose of this article is to attempt to nail down what consistently breeds success. While I use the term 'commandments,' I recommend looking at the following more as guidelines.

## **THOU SHALT DESIGN FOR MOBILE**

Google is set to prioritize mobile websites over desktop in their search results listings. While this is not an SEO article, every designer needs to know the fundamentals of digital marketing. For the web developer and anyone interested in the design, this means that the mobile device experience is more important than ever. Prioritize mobile design first and desktop design second.

## **THOU SHALT MAKE ALL TEXT LEGIBLE**

Be thoughtful and careful when overlaying text in front of photos. Text that is not readable is not only impractical in a technical sense, but an unfashionable choice. If you insist on using photos or renders with a text overlay, darken or lighten the photo/render so that text is legible.

Another potential danger with text overlay on photos is the exclusion of access for color-blind users. While it is unavoidable that people will have a different experience due to vision impairment, as designers, it is our responsibility to make the information on our sites as accessible as possible, prioritizing users with disabilities over personal style. The purpose of design is communication, not self-expression.

## **THOU SHALT SVG**

Scalable vector graphics (SVG) have taken the internet by storm. Nearly 98% of browser users can see SVG. With the functionality of SVG, the short-lived portable network graphic (PNG) will be left in the dust. SVGs work great for logos or any vector-based art.

## **THOU SHALT USE FLEXBOX OR GRID, NOT FLOAT**

Floating elements in CSS to create columns and rows is obsolete. Use Flexbox for one-off (HTML/CSS) operations, and Grid for larger projects (XML/SASS). Flexbox works for 95% of users. On the other hand, grid has a much higher incompatibility rate. Though the grid still functions in a usable way even if it is not "compatible" with some of the older browsers that are still in use.

Flexbox is an element display hierarchy for responsive design. Grid is a column and margin based hierarchy for responsive design.

# THOU SHALT STUDY TYPOGRAPHY

Typography is the art of arranging font in a way that 'works.' I have always felt that Typography should be called Type Theory (like music theory).

My suggestions to new designers are to pick from a smaller pool of fonts. Helvetica is awesome! When in doubt, use Helvetica. No font is more versatile and timeless. Also, when in doubt, align left! Always try to build on an axis. If you are using different font weights, always skip a weight. For headings, double your font size. If you place words together it conveys that words are connected. So be mindful of text placement. I also recommend avoiding the corners of the screen, giving yourself healthy margins in all your designs. Never use forced justified type!

Here is a list of great potential fonts to choose from: *Akzidenz Grotesque, Avenir, Avant Garde, Bell Gothic, Bodoni, Bembo, Caslon, Clarendon, Courier, Din Mittelschrift, Franklin Gothic, Frutiger, Futura, Garamond, Gill Sans, Gotham, Helvetica, Letter Gothic, Memphis, Meta, OCRB, Rockwell, Sabon, Trade Gothic, Trajan, and Univers.*

# THOU SHALT THINK PROCESS, PROCESS, PROCESS

Know your process so you can reproduce it. Clients will be more confident employing your services if they see a clear path to achieve their objectives. Use case studies to ensure the client that you can predictably achieve the desired results. When a designer is less of a risk they charge more for their services. Prepare templates for every step of the process, from pitch to hand-off.

## **THOU SHALT KEEP UP WITH DESIGN TRENDS**

What was once fashionable in web design may be the next red carpet blunder tomorrow. For instance, take drop shadows. I want to be careful when counseling that drop shadows work great in some contexts. I recently spoke to a woman who was creating a site for a flower arrangement competition. The site was covered with drop shadows.

Drop shadows convey the project has depth, but they also make the project seem heavier. On a smaller screen, a drop shadow can seem noisy because it is difficult to quickly visually process a drop shadow. Generally speaking, drop shadows are considered unfashionable.

## **THOU SHALT USE A COLOR PALETTE**

Consider using a distinct and consistent color palette across all mediums. I recommend using fewer colors rather than more. Colorful design is great, but if you are relatively new to web design, the danger is that you could harm yourself more than help. Like with font choices, minimalism is more achievable for a beginner.

*Adobe offers free color pallets.*

## **THOU SHALT SPEND TIME IN A DISCOVERY PHASE**

The words “design” and “art” are not synonymous. Art is an expression. While design can be subjectively expressive, the goal of the design discipline is to communicate. Therefore a dialogue between the designer and the business representative is essential. Your job as a designer is to help organizations realize their brand in the form of a website.

A brand exists before you had ever met the client. Your role is merely to uncover and establish a brand. Usually, I schedule multiple discovery sessions. Discovery can take upwards of a third the scope of an entire project with a new client.

## **THOU SHALT PLAN WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SITE IN MIND**

This is connected to discovery. First off, you need to take a good hard look at the business you are prospectively working with. If they are looking to sell online, you design the site so that the user is driven towards that goal. If you would like to do email capture, then create a site that will capture emails. The possible objective of a website has no limit. Know that objective upfront and stay focused on it. Some businesses need vast libraries of information and hundreds of pages for their site. Other businesses would only need a single page site, allowing the business to free up resources for other business demands.

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*Thank you for taking the time to read my ebook. After years of threatening to release an ebook, it's so satisfying to finally be finished. I hope you found something that will be beneficial to your entrepreneurship journey. Feel free to reach out to me. I would be happy to hear from you.*



Joseph Abraham  
josephdevelops@gmail.com  
<https://josephdevelops.com>



