

May I?

You don't want to be a SPAMMER do you? I didn't think so.

Sending email to someone without asking will put you smack in the middle of that mucky pool. Instead, always ask "May I?" first. This is what is known as permission based marketing.

The first step in setting up your permission based marketing program is to choose a contact management tool. I recommend choosing a program that will allow you to send email newsletters and autoresponders, as both are part of a winning web marketing strategy.

When choosing your contact manager, ask a few questions like:

- What kind of relationship does it have with the major mail providers, i.e. AOL, MSN, Yahoo, and Google. After all, if the sending ISP is blacklisted by one of these big players, your email will not have a prayer of a chance to get to its final destination.
- You also want to be sure your reader can easily manage subscription settings, and that you have the choice to send HTML or text emails.
- Extras like cool-looking templates and forward-to-a-friend are also handy.

For more on the latest email design strategies, read this excellent summary by David Greiner of Campaign Monitor,

http://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/archives/2005/11/html_email_desi.html .

Most tools are browser based and give you a free trial period so you can sit in the driver's seat.

Here are some options to consider.

- www.expressomail.com No monthly fee, great for building your list.
- www.aweber.com . AWeber is a popular and respected contact manager. It integrates well with many other webmarketing tools. I have not personally used it, but it comes highly recommended.
- www.intellicontact.com . Intellicontact is stylish, easy to use and adds surveys to the email and autoresponder offer. It's low cost. I have used it and I say "yes."

After you choose your contact manager, you will want to place an opt-in form on your website. Normally the form will ask for a name and email address and will have a privacy statement such as "your privacy is insured, we don't share email addresses," or something to that effect.

The next step is to place the code for the opt-in form on your website. I recommend combining it with the offer of a free article or free mini-course or audio series as an incentive.

Your opt-in form shouldn't compete with other offers on the main page of your site. Don't confuse your reader by giving too many choices.

Instead, invite your reader to become part of your circle. You don't have to have a full-blown email campaign in place to have an opt-in form. You can call it your update list or not-so-monthly email list, whatever, be creative.

"May I?" is one of the most important questions you will ever ask your prospect. Check out your website now. Are you asking this important question?

Beth Cole owns The WebServant, www.theweb servant.com, where she helps coaches and consultants prosper online.



You're invited to our FREE 20 minute consultation with no obligation.

**FREE 20 MINUTE
CONSULTATION**

**Visit my website
CONTACT page
thewebservant.com**