



# Email Planner

NEVER AVOID  
EMAILING YOUR  
LIST AGAIN



Ask any successful business owner and she'll tell you, the faster you can move a potential client from the "prospect" side of the ledger to the "buyer" side, the higher your profit margins will be. That's why millions of dollars have been spent studying marketing strategies, client onboarding methods, follow-up contact techniques, and more.

Please start thinking of yourself as an entrepreneur, not only an author. You are both! As an online entrepreneur, you have the same powerful tools at your disposal that much larger companies enjoy, but if you're not taking advantage of them, you're leaving money on the table.



The most powerful of your tools? Your email follow-up sequence. While the “know, like and trust” factor is important when it comes to making sales, it’s also worth remembering that new subscribers are highly likely to take action. Even if they’ve only just met you, a well-designed follow-up sequence can quickly:

- establish you as the leader in your market
- provide proof of concept
- solidify that “know, like and trust” element
- turn browsers into buyers

The key is to present an irresistible flow that leads naturally from one step to the next, making each offer along the way—whether free or paid—a “no brainer” your reader would never consider rejecting. In fact, she’ll anxiously await your next email (and the next, and the next) and happily fill her virtual cart with your latest products and services . . . and all because you’ve designed an email follow-up she’d be foolish to ignore.

# #1 - Define the Audience

Before you can design a follow-up sequence that compels readers to take action, you have to know exactly who those readers are.

You no doubt have a clear idea who your dream reader is. But are your initial offer and subsequent follow-up messages in line with who that is? Many times they're not, and that can cause your marketing plan to fall apart before you even get a chance to know your subscribers better—or them you.

Your initial offer should flow naturally into your first email follow-up, which presents the next logical step for readers to take.

At each step (or email) along the way, the next logical move—whether to download a whitepaper, join a private Facebook group, or purchase your book—is a clear “no brainer.” And this entire sequence needs to be designed to appeal to the person who most needs and wants the information you have to offer.

When you think about your dream reader, there are key pieces to consider:

- Is she looking to be entertained or does she want to learn something?
- Why did she engage with you in the first place?
- Is she so busy that too many emails will annoy her? (One email a week is not too many, but you may want to do one every two weeks to start.)
- Will she want something informal or do you need to write using a more professional tone?

You need to know, and write to, your reader avatar.



## #2 - What's the Goal?

Each email should have a goal. When it is time to start selling your book, you may want to build an entire anticipation series.

Ultimately you want to keep subscribers subscribers on your list. That's why you want to constantly revisit the "why" of why they subscribed.

How do you know why?

You can ask a handful of people on your list, or you could run a survey. If you take the approach of running a large survey, you may want to offer a small, easily downloadable gift as a reward for filling out the survey. It's a good idea to check in with subscribers once a year.

## #3 - Incentives

Give your dream subscriber what she wants or needs.

Asking readers to allow you into their inbox requires an incentive worthy of their trust. Gone are the days when you could simply say, "Get our weekly newsletter," and have a flood of subscribers. Today's customers are much more discerning, and with overflowing inboxes—a problem for everyone—it's more important than ever to create an offer that readers simply cannot refuse.

But don't think you have to go all out and write a 300-page eBook or provide a 6-module course as your opt-in incentive. Quite the contrary, today's subscribers are in a hurry, and are often much more likely to need (and use) a simple checklist, worksheet, or resource guide. While that 300-page eBook might sit unread and unused on her hard drive, a checklist your subscriber can turn to again and again will often be seen as much more valuable.

You probably already know exactly what your dream subscriber wants and needs—even if you don't recognize it quite yet. Think about:

- Frequent thread topics in your Facebook groups or niche forums. Chances are you'll see the same questions pop up again and again.
- Surveys you've conducted. Take the opportunity to read through the responses and see:
  - What is the most pressing problem your market faces?
  - What language do they use to describe the issues they face?

Competitor's offers. Take a look at what other writers offer, but rather than aiming to duplicate their efforts, ask yourself where the gaps are in information and how you can fill those holes.

You don't have to create something from scratch either. You can design a new opt-in incentive quickly by repurposing other content.



## #4 - Create a Funnel

A funnel is a step-by-step process that will effortlessly lead your subscriber down the path to the goal.

Each email in your sequence will build on the previous one, providing another piece of information and more resources your reader can use.

This can serve several purposes, depending of course on your genre and whether or not you're selling something other than your book. You might:

- focus on helping your subscriber to achieve one of her goals
- be clearly establishing your expertise in the niche (so you become the go-to expert)
- be "training" your subscribers to open your emails (because the information is so valuable to them)

Think of your email sequence like teaching a middle-school math class. You cannot expect your class members to easily grasp algebra if they don't yet know how to add and subtract. You must give them the prerequisites before asking them to move to higher-level subjects.

Figure out what those prerequisites are, and in what order they should be learned, and you'll be well on your way to creating a well-planned and highly profitable follow-up sequence.



## #5 - Achieve Balance

Striking the right balance between information and offers is critical.

Whether you want to be known as the go-to expert in your niche, or an author whose books are irresistible, you must provide value to your subscribers.

But if all you offer is information or entertainment, your first email containing an offer will be met with incredulous glares and an astounding unsubscribe rate.

The fact is, you must “train” your subscribers to expect—and even appreciate—periodic offers. Savvy readers understand that the best information comes with a price tag, but if you establish a pattern of all information, all the time, they’ll begin to think this is the norm for your list, and will vehemently oppose any offer.

With that said, though, you must be careful not to go too far in the other direction, either. Offer after offer after offer will quickly burn out your list, and result in a higher than usual unsubscribe rate.

The secret? Striking the perfect balance for your subscriber base between offers and information. Some people will happily accept a higher percentage of offers when compared to information, while others will resist every attempt to “sell them” something.

You very likely have a good feel for what the balance needs to be for your list, but if not, this is something you can test along the way (see step 10).



**For nonfiction:** Brainstorm tips, strategies and stats your readers need to have throughout your follow-up sequence. Start with the questions they're likely to have as they read each email, then determine if the answer can be conveyed in an email, or if it requires something larger—such as your paid product or service. (Hint: If every question requires a paid product to answer, chances are your follow-up sequence is too broad. Consider narrowing your topic before continuing.)

**For fiction:** Brainstorm to come up with ideas that relate to the theme of your book or create a list of books in the same genre that you think your readers might enjoy.

## #6 - Open Up

Getting your emails opened is the biggest hurdle you'll face with your follow-up sequence. Our email inboxes are filled to overflowing, with some studies claiming that the average adult received 147 emails per day! And truthfully, that number is probably even higher for those in business or those who want to be.

Not only that, but email systems such as Gmail now helpfully filter incoming mail into buckets or folders, so users can quickly see which emails are promotional and which (presumably) they really want to read. As you can imagine, this type of auto-filtering can make it super tough to get the attention of your subscribers.

Even though they've asked to receive your emails, the combination of filtering, over-zealous spam controls, and an overflowing inbox means your subscriber won't always see your email . . . and if she does, there's no guarantee she'll open it.

But you can tip the odds in your favor by:

- avoiding spammy words and phrases such as “free” or “\$\$\$” and excessive exclamation points
- using a reputable email management system with good deliverability rates
- keeping it short. Ideal subject lines have fewer than 60 characters.
- Beyond that, though, you have to actually create intriguing headlines that your reader simply cannot resist. Here are some ideas you can use:
  - Personalize your subject with a first name (“Hey Susie, did you grab this yet?”)
  - Leave them hanging (“This is my best tip for XYZ”)
  - Make it time-sensitive (“Ends Thursday: 20% off my book”)
  - Use multi-media (“How I organized my office in an afternoon – before and after pics inside!”)
  - Make it a list (“3 ways to XYZ this week”)
  - Use a direct call to action (“Register today”)

Creating great subject lines takes practice, but for now, keeping these tips in mind, and creating a swipe file will help get you in the habit of crafting click-worthy subject lines.

### **Exercise: Create a Swipe File**

A swipe file is simply a collection of content—in this case, email subject lines—that inspire you in some way. Copywriters and others have used this technique for decades to avoid writers block and to create better sales copy, calls to action, and yes, even subject lines.

So while you’re reading your email every day, don’t just hit delete. Read the subjects. Which ones work for you? Which ones make you want to click? Start a list, and turn to that when you’re writing your own subject lines.

# #7 - Calls to Action

While we've already established that not every email should contain an offer, each email definitely must have a call to action. Never leave your readers without something to do next.

## **Calls to action should be:**

- **Clear.** This is not the time to be subtle. Tell your reader exactly what she should do.
  - Watch the video.
  - Download the checklist.
  - Join the Facebook group.
  - Register for the training.
- **Benefit driven.** Why should she do this thing? What's in it for her?
  - Watch the video to learn XYZ.
  - Download the checklist to learn the exact strategy I'm using.
  - Join the Facebook group and get your questions answered.
  - Register for the training for easy-to-follow, step-by-step advice.
- **Limited.** Too many calls to action will confuse your reader, and a confused reader will do nothing. Ideally, you should have a single call to action per email. Two calls to action are acceptable if they are both free offers. If you're presenting a paid offer, it should be the only call to action.

## #8 - Autopilot

Put your email campaigns on autopilot.

The beauty of a follow-up email sequence is that it works even when you aren't. Unlike sending broadcast emails (which you have to log in and send) a follow-up sequence goes out on a schedule that you've pre-determined.

Not only that, but while a broadcast email only goes out to those who are on your subscriber list at the time you send the email, your follow-ups go to everyone who subscribes. That means that more people are seeing your best emails and offers over a longer period of time. That gives you the opportunity to:

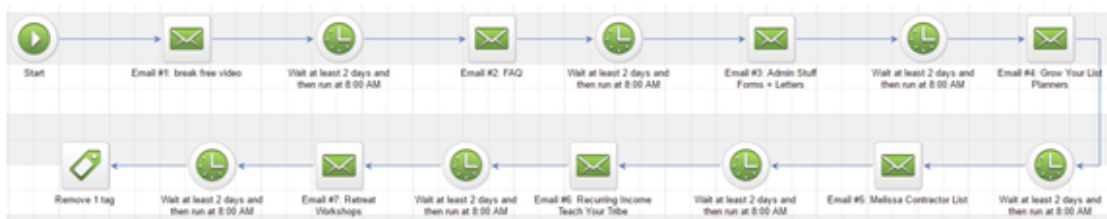
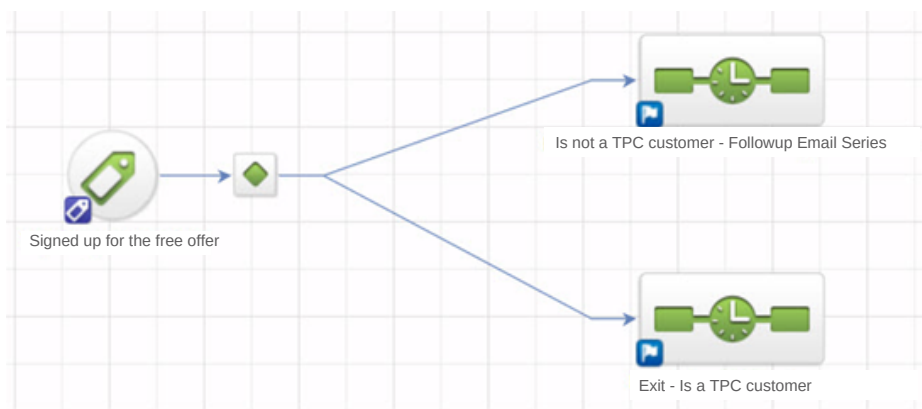
- Create a recurring stream of income by offering products, services, and even affiliate programs consistently, and to everyone who subscribes to your list.
- Offer better support to your potential and future readers/clients by providing them with exactly what they need at the right point in their journey with you.

The key to this lies in smart automation. You want to be sure you're offering the next logical product based on where your customer is in the funnel, and you need to ensure you're not continuing to offer a product she's already purchased.

Most email systems today allow you to tag and move subscribers from one campaign to another based on their behavior. However, it takes a bit of forethought and planning to ensure the flow is natural and that your subscribers don't accidentally receive random, unexpected messages.

# #9 - Create a Funnel

Here's an example. You can see that once a new subscriber signs up, they're immediately funneled into one of two sequences. Existing customers are sent down a different path than those who are new.



## Exercise: Plan Out Your Automation

Whichever email system you're using, spend some time mapping out exactly what will happen to subscribers as they move through your funnel.

The system we use is ConvertKit. It makes it simple to automate emails, set up landing pages, deliver opt-ins, and even sell products. <https://thepublishingcircle.com/ConvertKit>



## #10 - Test-Track-Tweak

Completing your follow-up emails is not the end of this project. Instead, it's really just the beginning.

Savvy marketers know that consistent growth (and the higher profits that come with it) requires continual testing, tracking and tweaking. Virtually everything can be tested, but some of the most common are:

- Squeeze page headlines
- Calls to action
- Email subject lines
- Email send days/times
- Email offers/calls to action

You can set up split testing of your opt-in page using your page builder or using Google Webmaster Tools. You can split test subject lines and other email elements directly from most email management systems.

# Planning Template

Copy this format and write out your sequence, then put them in your autoresponder.

Topic (what is the email about?):

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Subject Line:

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## Email Outline:

[illegible]

### Call to Action:

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# Summary

The more you do now, the better your chance to have a bestselling book.

Mastering email writing is one of the skills you want to acquire and build on for your successful author career.

*You can do  
this!*



# Want More?

**Inside Author Camp, we teach writers:**

- The Three Key Things You Must Do To Create Reader Engagement
- How To Avoid Mistakes That Cost Thousands
- Keyword Traffic Domination To Help Your Book Rank
- Back Cover Secrets That Every Bestselling Writer Knows
- Pricing Strategies
- Marketing Mastery That's Made Cheat-Sheet Easy
- Four Things Every #1 Bestselling Author Does
- How to Put a Booster Rocket Under Your Book Launch
- How to Target Market Like a Shark

**And we provide:**

- Templates A Ten-Year-Old Could Follow
- A Marketability Assessment To Make Sure You Don't Bomb
- Cutting-Edge Tactics for Selling More Books

You'll be welcome with open arms!

<https://thepublishingcircle.com/AuthorCamp>





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