



The Guerrilla Internet Marketing Institute

Build a Cult Like Following With Your Subscribers

...not just a list.

by Ernest O'Dell - Guerrilla Internet Marketing Institute

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"Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing." - John D. Rockefeller

Don't build a list! Build a community! Build a cult following!

I know it goes against conventional wisdom, and you hear the gurus tell you, "The list, the list, THE LIST!" But, let's face it: no matter how big your list is, if the ROI is minuscule, then it's not worth a dime.

Yes, build your list: but, don't let that be the final analysis. The list is only the beginning: not the end.

You hear it all the time:

- "List Building on Steroids"
- "Massive List Growth"
- "Mega List Building"
- "Build a List of 100,000 Names While You Sleep"



Yeah, right! Baloney-Salami! Or as my Yiddish babushka would say, "Baba-mieses!"

Bigger Is not always better!

You hear statements like this all the time in the Internet Marketing world, but the gurus who go about bandying those statements conveniently forget to tell you that the number of names you have in your subscriber list(s) shouldn't be your top priority. The fact is, you can have 500 million names in your list... but if they aren't responding to your offers, they are worth nothing to you.

This is sort of the problem one runs into on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks. They think, all of a sudden, because they have access to half a billion people, all they need to do is make a buck off of each one.

Well... don't quit your day job, dude!

So how do you get your list to be responsive?

I like some of the suggestions that J.K. Ellis makes in his article "*10 Ways to Build a Cult-Like Following*" where he outlines the tactics used by cult leaders. Now, I'm not advocating that you go out and build a cult then spike their Kool-Aid... no. If you do that, you'll be back to "Square One." Just ask Jim Jones and David Koresh. They're not doing so well right now.

First of all, you need to stop seeing your list members as e-mail addresses... and realize that behind each name is a real live person. Then you must focus your attention on engaging, ENLIGHTENING, entertaining, and educating them. It's more like INITIATING them, rather than INSTRUCTING them. Most people who give instruction are really not doing much more than stating facts, figures and history. Any good teacher can do that as well as a bad one.

So, what's the difference?

Learning by initiation is about creating the experience that makes the learning personal and visceral to your students, your subscribers. A good example of that is showing someone by example, like in the movie "The Last Samurai" where Tom Cruise's character was learning how to be a samurai warrior from other warriors. Once his instructor made it clear to him that he needed to get beyond "head knowledge" and let it become "One" with his body and psyche, then, and only then, did he learn the art of fighting. The same concepts are taught in Sun Tzu's "The Art of War."

People learn "in the doing" of things when they are taught "by the example" of things.

Does this make sense?

When you manage to become the sensei, the Master Teacher, you'll have the makings of a "community" that you can effectively market to—a group of like-minded people with similar challenges, wants, needs, likes, and dislikes. In effect, you will become the guru (teacher) and you will have developed a cult like following.

Until you understand this and master its implementation, all the Facebook ads, joint ventures, search engine marketing, direct-mail messages, banner ads, and dedicated e-mails in the world will not do you one bit of good. You've got to get people's "ear" where they will listen to you. You've got to become like E.F. Hutton, where... when you speak, people listen.

There are a ton of concepts and strategies that you could simply "tell" someone and they would intellectually understand but they wouldn't "get it" as an insight. They would only see it as information. The result is that they may use it... and they might not. I run into this all the time with real estate professionals. It seems that they are just too busy to "slow down" and absorb the information.

But, they're not the only ones: I also find people in the insurance industry doing the same thing... and just about every other industry you can think of...

Teaching by initiation means holding back on simply telling the student what he or she wants to know and instead providing them an experience where they "get it" on their own. The subjective part of the experience is where the lesson will become clear. And when the "lights come on" it will have more value than if you had drawn it out for them on a drawing board.

The 10 Core Principles of Building a Cult Like Following

1. Decide on Your Distribution Channel(s). Personally, I have over 31,000 of them. That's right: I said thirty-one thousand.

Wanna know how I did that?

Stick with me...

Before anyone can join your "community," they need to hear from you, and they need to hear from you on a regular basis. You can't be haphazard about this. If you ran a coffee shop like some people run their newsletters, they would be out of business faster than they got into business.

You can create a fan page or group on Facebook, a blog, newsletter, or a series of newsletters in different genres. You need to diversify and not limit yourself to only one niche market. You also need to be proficient with videos, webinars, teleconferences, and/or membership websites to get your message out to the people you are trying to connect with... and with those who are trying to connect with you.

At the same time, you must be accessible. There are no long lines at the bottom of the hill waiting to see the guru who lives in a cave. Making yourself scarce doesn't really add to your perceived value: it alienates you from the masses.

If you want a cult-like following you need access to your fan base, and they need access to you. I realize that there are limits, and that you might have a family life and need to sleep like everybody else...

...but during normal "business hours" you need to make yourself as available as possible.

Otherwise, the masses will perceive you as just another ivory tower wannabe. This applies to ANY industry you may be working in.

Be accessible as a person but present your knowledge and wisdom as being rare, expensive, mysterious, and only for those who are truly ready for it. Hold your cards close to your chest like a good poker player. Even I don't give up ALL my secrets. :))

This compromise allows you to build deep personal bonds with people yet have them want more of your presence...

...as well as be willing to pay for it.

You can add to this compromise by having "special times" when you are not accessible to anyone. You can tell people that you need some space, and that will only serve to make you more "in demand." It's the mystery of why you are absent that you want to cultivate.

2. Give real Value to your subscribers. Sometimes that will require you to literally GIVE AWAY a free report or something. Too many Internet Marketers are afraid to give away valuable information. Instead, they give away useless crap that's been rehashed from some other loser who blipped the Internet radar for a year or two. Those of us who have been around a while, like 10 or 15 years, can tell you who is still in business, and who is not.

Those who have dropped off the radar just don't understand why "their community" will not buy their products! Show that you are a "giver" first and the sales will follow.

3. Say It Loud and Say It Often: When you communicate with your subscribers, take a stand. Don't vacillate on issues. Make your heroes and enemies well-known.

Be consistent. Any change in your emotional state of mind, with the exception of joy and laughter, should be minimized. Any time you go off on an angry rant will only show your lack of control, and that will cause you to lose your following. If you have control it should be demonstrated by an unshakable calm as if everything is happening just as you knew it would. The scariest person I ever met was a veteran Marine sniper from the Viet Nam war. He didn't talk much, nor did he ever threaten...

...but you always knew by the cold "steely" look in his eyes that he could "ice" someone and calmly walk away, and not lose any sleep over it.

He still teaches to this day, and is now an Army instructor in psychological warfare and covert operations in the Afghanistan and Iraq war.

When he does talk—which is rare—people listen to him.

4. Be Authentic: I know you hear that a lot, but if you're not "authentic" people will pick up on it. Just be who you are: don't try to be someone else. Don't try to be your competitor, your best friend, or Donald Trump.

If you're a down-to-earth person, don't try to pass yourself off as aloof and elitist. If you create a false persona, as if you're some sort of "yogi" sitting in a "higher plane" a—people will think you're nuts. They won't stand in awe of your mere physical presence: trust me... people are NOT stupid.

5. Create Disciples: A little extra attention goes a long way. If you're in a Network Marketing business, or a MLM, and you see someone struggling in your downline, don't you give them the extra attention necessary to achieve success? I mean, you don't do everything for them, but at least you give them the initial time they need before you let them fly out of the nest.

You have to connect deeply with your community: not only on a corporate level, but also on an individual basis. Rapport is vital: When people leave a reply on your blog post, or on your Facebook status, comment and reply to their statements. That doesn't mean that you always have to agree with them, but it does mean that you need to be timely in your responses. It's all part of the relationship building process.

When you're in a seminar situation with people you need to put aside all of your distractions, obligations and problems and focus completely on the person or people you to whom you are speaking. That person, or group of people, needs to feel like they're the only one in your Universe. If you're married, you'll know what I'm talking about: if you don't treat your spouse like they're Numero Uno, they'll let you know about it. While you may be given "guru" status from your admirers, you won't get that from your spouse. Just don't let the "guru" worship go to your head.

6. Don't send promotions or content that you don't believe in: PERIOD. Before you recommend a product or service to your followers, make sure you have checked out every product and service BEFORE you introduce them to your community. As a matter of fact, before you recommend a person to your followers, you want to make sure you've checked them out, too. There's a couple of self styled gurus I wouldn't send my enemies to. And there's a handful of other people who I know and trust, that I would send you to.

This might be difficult to understand, but it's extremely important to creating a "Personality Appeal" because it forces people to think in bigger terms. When you do this consistently it gives your followers the impression that you're looking out for their best interests by thinking of "The Big Picture."

7. Repetition, Continuity and Consistency: I've already stated the obvious about being consistent, but let it never be said too much...

Communicating with your community once every four months just won't cut it. I'm not saying you have to send them a newsletter every day, but keep in mind that the more value you give your community, the more committed to you they will be. You can communicate with your peeps once a week or once a month, whichever you choose. But, be repetitive, continuous and consistent.

8. Walk the Walk: Don't just "talk the talk." Talk is cheap: so is fertilizer. Your commitment to your community and your message should show with every step you take. Don't say one thing and do another. If you can't do it on a consistent basis (*see above Number 7*) then get an autoresponder and automate it. Every now and then, when you feel a burst of inspiration, or you find something special that your subscribers can use, you can send out a broadcast message to them.

9. Perfection is overrated, and in most cases unobtainable. If your perfection approaches anal retentive levels, it won't matter anyway, because, by then, everybody will be annoyed with you.

Don't be afraid to let people see the REAL YOU, with all your flaws and imperfections. Sure, you'll have some super great traits, but you'll also have some hair in your ears (or in your nose) that needs trimming. And, like me, you might have a warped sense of humor, along with bad timing. (*It's something I got from my dad...*)

Hey! It happens. You're only human. You have the same 24 hours in a day that I, or anyone else, has. Sometimes things don't get done because you didn't plan for contingencies. Sometimes things just fall through the cracks. Sometimes we make mistakes. When "stuff" happens, don't try to hide it, and don't beat yourself up for it. Explain... and move on.

10. Connect with others freely and frequently: Two heads are better than one, and three are better than two. If you realize that one of your connections can make a huge difference in someone else's life, make the introduction without expecting anything in return.

It's called "networking" in case you haven't heard! It's also called Master-Minding with peers, mentors and students.

Stick to these principles and you won't just have a list of faceless "names" to market to. You'll have hordes of fans screaming to get their hands on everything you have to offer. They'll want to do the Vulcan Mind Meld and get a "brain dump" from you.

Seth Godin calls this mentality a "tribe." Dan Kennedy calls it a "herd." Dan Williams calls it appropriately: a community. I like the good old-fashioned term "community" or "Circle of Friends." Call it Whatever you want, just realize how powerful it is to have this collective of "like-minded" people all devoted to YOU and YOUR message.

Never forget that your peeps are investing their time, money, and faith in you. Don't let them down! A "list" of "e-mail addresses" can't do that. But real live people can.

If you're ready to start building your community and you're looking for specific, actionable advice from someone who has been successfully building communities for more than thirty years (hint: me!)... just leave a comment on this blog article, or get back with me.

I could give you a lot more than what I've written here, but sometimes you just have to call or email me to get everything in my head. Even then, you'll have to take notes. I don't have a "GOD complex" —but when it comes to building a community, I know what I'm doing. And I have peeps all over the world in 182 countries.

If I can do it, so can you. All you have to do is call.

[Ed. Note: Ernest O'Dell is publisher and CEO of the Guerrilla Internet Marketing Institute, the Guerrilla Real Estate Marketing Institute, and Director of DMS Group Publishing, a holding company for QuestarTeleCommunications.com, and QuestarPC.com. He has won international recognition in 182 countries and is published in over 20 different languages.

His publications cover marketing in small, medium and large businesses, telecommunications, real estate, insurance and government related industries.]

To your success,

Ernest O'Dell

[Guerrilla Internet Marketing blog](#)

Facebook Fan Page: [Guerrilla Internet Marketing](#)

Bonus Section:

Have you ever wondered how people get lots of traffic to their websites? Well, I put together a bonus report about "[Weapons of Massive Downlines](#)" that you can read and use if you have a network marketing business. Let me know if it helps you.

See? This is one of those "free" things I was telling you about... :))

What's an Autoresponder you say?

For a Limited Time, Get Mailloop at a Full 50% OFF... Plus Receive \$827 in FREE Bonuses!

Learn 5 simple ways to AUTOMATE your business—and increase your sales by 242%!

Want to learn how one guy made \$3.5 Million last year with email marketing?

Want to read CASE STUDIES of real people who increased their incomes by 242%... \$80,000... even \$200,000? Visit: [Mailloop 7](#)

Recommended Reading:

If you would like to sharpen your communication and writing skills, and improve on your marketing and advertising, invest in some good books and read them. Keep them as a ready reference on your desk, or in your library within easy reach.

You can get a degree in journalism, marketing and advertising at a major university anywhere from \$50,000 to a quarter million dollars—depending on where you go. Or, you can “*fast track*” your learning with a couple hundred dollars worth of books and have something to show for it in your library.

If you want to learn the *insider secrets* to good copy writing skills, ad copy, marketing and advertising, then I strongly suggest ***anything*** written by Joe Vitale when it comes to marketing, advertising, copy writing and learning the right “equation” for your business. You can check out some of his books by [clicking here on this resource page...](#)

If you have any questions, or need some direction, don't hesitate to call or write. I'll be here if you need me.

To your success,

Ernest O'Dell

P.S. Here are those extra bonuses for you again: [Auto Responder Magic](#) and [Million Dollar Emails](#). Both of these books are still in use today and all concepts are still applicable.

Ernest O'Dell is the President and CEO of **Questar TeleCommunications** and **Guerrilla Internet Marketing**. His company, founded in 1982, is a leading provider in research and implementation of **Unified Communications** and Messaging for the real estate and **insurance** industries. Many of his web sites and blogs continue to get millions of visitors each month. He has recruited over 500,000 affiliates into two businesses alone and can show you how to run with **The Big Dogs!**



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