

Starting an Email List, Getting Subscribers, and More (Part 1: Email Hot Seat Series)

Introduction:

Welcome to the School of Sellers podcast, a teacher business show that is short on time but big on action. Full-time, part-time, or just getting started? No matter where you are in your teacher seller journey, there's something here for everyone, making your online teacher business feel doable every step of the way. Here's your host, Erin Waters.

Erin Waters:

Well, hello there and welcome to School of Sellers. I am Erin Waters and I am your host. And today I have something really special for you. I'll explain more in a moment but all I'm going to say for now is that if you are someone who has been putting off getting an email list or maybe you are a teacher seller who has an email list but you're not quite sure what to do with it, then this episode is for you. So without further ado, welcome to our very first hotseat episode.

Okay. So we are here today with a podcast episode like we've never done before. And I think, I don't know, it feels like the theme of this year so far is just trying all of the new things. So I just wanted to give you guys an overview of what to expect on today's episode. And I'm super excited before we have a member of Team SOS here with us on the podcast episode of if you're watching on YouTube. Ashley, you have been a very active role or been playing a very active role in School of Sellers probably over the past like half of a year almost. Right?

Ashley:

Almost. I think we just passed the six-month mark.

Erin Waters:

Yeah. So but you guys are used to hearing from Ashley more behind the scenes. She answers a lot of questions in our Facebook group, you might have interacted with her on DMs or Instagram or anywhere in the School of Sellers world really. So today is Ashley's first time on the podcast and she's going to be kind of grilling me. That sounds, Ashley's not the type of person to grill people. But she—

Ashley:

I think it's going to be fun.

Erin Waters:

I know she's excited for this. So if you guys have been a member of School of Sellers over the past few months, you've probably heard bits and pieces of information about an email course that we have recently released out into the teacher seller world. And I think that probably, gosh, I don't want to say the majority of questions we get in School of Sellers but a large number of questions we get in the School of Sellers groups are often email related because that seems to be a pretty common like next step in your teacher seller journey. So today we wanted to answer some common questions that we are getting about email, how to start an email list, how to grow the email list, just all of these questions that we have been getting. So Ashley, do you want to explain the format, like what you'll be doing today on the show.

Ashley:

Yeah. So I thought it would be fun, I actually took a whole bunch of random email questions that were pretty common and I cut them up. And I'm just going to take my little bowl here and grab some for you. And I'm just going to start ask questions. So you have to answer them off the cuff.

Erin Waters:

Okay. All right.

Ashley:

How can I get my subscribers to buy? I think they only signed up for free items.

Erin Waters:

Ooh, that's a good question. So when you have an email list, the first step in getting someone on that list is to attract them through some sort of freebie. Right? But I think that question really speaks a very common problem amongst a lot of teacher sellers. Because here we have these amazing freebies and we are giving them to people in exchange for their email address. And we feel really good about it. And then all of a sudden, it's like now what? Because now we have this list of subscribers which we know we're supposed to have. But the next steps are kind of unclear I feel like a lot of times. So I think obviously when you start an email list, the end game is to turn those subscribers into paying customers. But it can be frustrating because that's definitely not something that happens overnight. So there's actually a couple of different answers to that question. I would say right off the bat to make sure that you have some sort of welcome email going to that person as soon as they sign up for your list. You want them to get a pretty good idea of who you are and what you're going to be offering them and making that connection right away rather than just sending them this random freebie and then letting them kind of forget about you. Right? Because if they're forgetting about you, they're definitely not going to remember much about the freebie or what value you were offering them in the first place. So that's where I would start.

And then once you really get comfortable with your list and really feel like you understand the in's and out's of everything, that's when you can get more advanced and start setting up what we call sales funnels or nurture sequences. And these are just additional emails that you can send to your list that is going to hopefully eventually lead to a sale. And I just wanted to point out to that, when I say more advanced, these are definitely things you can do as soon as you have an email list. But if you are looking to start small, I would definitely start with that welcome email or welcome sequence of emails.

Ashley:

Agreed. And can I just throw in my two cents?

Erin Waters:

Yes.

Ashley:

I think it helps going in knowing that they really are only signing up to get that freebie at first. They don't know what you're going to offer. So you kind of have to put in the work after the fact to nurture your audience and let them know what you're there to support them with.

Erin Waters:

Right. That's a really point. And I think a lot of times like as teacher sellers, we feel like we're doing all of this work on the back end. So once we put something out there, we're like surely someone's going, like everyone's going to see this. Right? Because you put all this time and effort into it. And then if someone signs up for it, you're like this is—I'm a shoe end. But then it's like, oh gosh, no, I definitely, I mean think about how many freebies they're getting from other sellers and I mean that alone creates a need to really stand out.

Ashley:

Right. It also, we kind of hear that email's where it's at and you can gain a lot of revenue from email. But it's kind of like how we put our products on TPT and expect them all to come flocking. No, you have to put some effort to get them to see your products. It's the same with email. We can't just give them a freebie and expect them to start buying. You also have to do the work to get them to your store and promote your products and nurture your audience and all that stuff.

Erin Waters:

Absolutely. And you just keep making me think of other things. That's an excellent—

Ashley:

Sorry.

Erin Waters:

No, that's a good thing. I think that a lot of times too, like we have to kind of reverse our situation and put ourselves in the seat of the buyer. Because it's like when I buy something from a company or I get one email from a company, I'm not like an automatic lifetime fan. They have to really work to impress me in order for me to spend my money with them again and again. So I think we kind of need to put ourselves in the buyer's shoes too.

Ashley:

Absolutely.

Erin Waters:

Yeah.

Ashley:

Okay. You ready for your next one?

Erin Waters:

Yes. That was like a good starting one. I'm a little nervous.

Ashley:

Yeah. Okay. What email service provider do you use?

Erin Waters:

Ooh. I use ConvertKit but it's important to note that there are lots of different options. In fact, if you are just starting out, should I give some recommendations you think for people who are just starting?

Ashley:

I think so.

Erin Waters:

This is actually one that Ashley can chime in on too. But I know that an email provider that was not available when I first started my list is Flodesk And Flodesk is amazing because it has a low, low, low price compared to most email service providers. So if you're just starting out, that's a good option. And then, Ashley, do you want to just share about Flodesk? And then I'll share about ConvertKit in a little bit.

Ashley:

Yeah. So actually I started with ConvertKit and I did some moving around. Went to MailerLite. And then I ended up back at Flodesk because the beauty of their emails and price point be beat in my opinion. So they're still in beta which why you can get them at such a good deal. I think they're \$38 regularly per month. But if you sign up with an affiliate link, you get it for half off, and that price is locked in. Whereas with most email providers, you're on a tiered system based on how many subscribers you have. So with that, that's kind of why I went with Flodesk. But everything from my opinion, it's very simple but they make your emails look really good. So that's kind of where I'm right now. Their customer service has been great. They have a Facebook. So since they're still in beta, they're super open about hearing what features you'd like and they try to incorporate that before they fully get out of beta and be a tiered system.

Erin Waters:

Interesting. And I feel like you just listed all of the things that I don't love about ConvertKit. Like I do, I mean like ConvertKit because it makes sense to me. I get very open rates and deliverability. Now who's to say if that's attributed, I might get that same sort of action if I go elsewhere. So I have nothing to compare it to. But I'm very happy with the performance of ConvertKit. But I will say that for the price because it is pricey, and like Ashley said, ConvertKit, like most providers, will charge by the number of subscribers you have. So the more successful, the more expensive your list becomes which if you're making money off your list, great. But if you grow your list rather quickly at the beginning, it can be kind of a hard pill to swallow seeing the price jump so quickly. So I will say that I also don't love ConvertKit's customer service. I think they were really good back in the day. But now that they're growing, it's been a little more of a challenge. So yeah, that's who I use. I wouldn't say that I would like shout from the rooftops that I love them, but I haven't switched so that has to say something.

Ashley:

I can chime in on that. So the reason why I left ConvertKit was I at the beginning was just putting a freebie out and trying to get people on my list. And I had a pin go viral. And I had thousands of subscribers and it got very expensive. And back to our last question about nurturing audience, I wasn't aware of that back then. I was just getting subscribers. So it was really hard to be paying the amount that I was paying and not really have a result. So that's kind of why I bounced back. So that would be, when you're first starting out, definitely look at what the tiers are and be prepared to pay that. That's not something I thought about at all, and I think that's super important.

Erin Waters:

Absolutely. And with that being said, it's also not exactly the easiest thing in the world to switch providers once you have a list that you have established. So I mean you can pick whoever want and then switch later down the road. But if you can avoid switching, it would be really nice to do your research up front and figure out which provider is best for you. Now I will say that ConvertKit does offer, this was not offered when I started, they now offer your first 1,000 subscribers for free. So you can still use them up until 1,000 subscribers which I wish would have been the case when I started.

Ashley:

I agree. That was not an option when I started. Okay. Ready for our next question?

Erin Waters:

Yes. Let's do it.

Ashley:

Okay. Ready? Did email increase your revenue or only bring more followers?

Erin Waters:

Ooh. Okay. So we kind of already touched on this. But it's such a good question because like I mentioned earlier, I think that a lot of times when we start a list, we get super excited because we think it's going to be like this magical automatic way of getting increased sales which can be case. But I would say that it's a pretty slow game when you're first starting out in the email marketing world. I feel like a lot of our early experience with our email list is more learning about like just what everything means and how to make sense of everything. So to make money right away is probably not very likely. And that was my case certainly. Like for my first year or two, I probably saw like, I mean I would get like random sales here and there from links that I put in emails. But I didn't really have like a plan and a strategy behind what I was doing. So I would say that I didn't start to see what I would even consider revenue until I really got a solid understand of how to set up my email, what happens beyond that initial freebie. Because I think a lot of us tend to stop for good reason because we're like that's a totally unknown world and we just simply don't have time or energy to like even begin learning that world. And I mean I don't know about you. But like when I first started my list, and I haven't had my list for that long, I mean for several years. But I feel like it was so hard to find easy to understand information about how to start everything. So I would say short answer, yes, I make money now off of my email list but at the beginning, absolutely not. It was all about the subscriber numbers and growing at the beginning.

Ashley:

I would say my answer would probably be pretty much the same. I was just putting stuff out there to try to see what would stick. And it took a while to understand email and come up with a plan behind it.

Erin Waters:

Okay. Okay. Yes. Next question.

Ashley:

Okay. I'm embarrassed to ask but what is a lead magnet and an opt-in? It all sounds the same to me.

Erin Waters:

My goodness. Okay. Well, first of all, you definitely don't have to be embarrassed if you are someone who wonders about all of these words that are thrown out at us every time we hear about anything email. And like I know that was super intimidating for me at the beginning. Like I heard all of these words like segments and funnels and sequences. And like that alone was enough to make me shut my computer and try again a few months later. Because I mean it's just so much coming at you. So if you are someone who is intimidated by the email lingo, you are not alone. It's very common. And in fact, this is one of the first things that we address in the email lab for teacher sellers which the School of Sellers course on email marketing. And we even, you know what? Should we—I just had an idea. Should we leave the link on this video or on this podcast to the ABC's of Email Marketing?

Ashley:

Yeah. That would be really good.

Erin Waters:

Okay. So we have a resource that we created for the email lab course but we are going to be giving it to you today. And it is a workbook, not even a workbook, kind of like a little mini dictionary of all of these terms that you hear all the time surrounding email and it breaks them down in a way that helps them make more sense and are in teacher seller language, not email expert language. So but to answer the original question about a lead magnet versus an opt-in, when we are building our subscriber list, we always start by giving our potential audience something for free. And once we give them that freebie, they get us their email address and their first name. And it's kind of like a deal that we're making. You get this freebie, I get your contact information and can email you now. So when we use terms like lead magnet, we are referring to that freebie. So that free piece of whatever that you are giving them. It could be a free product. It could be a free sample of a product. It could be a free workbook or whatever, any sort of tool that they're getting for free. And when they give you their email address and first name, they are opting into your email. So by giving them that lead magnet, they are opting in, saying yes, it is okay if you email me. Here's my email. Now because of that whole process, a lot of times we'll use the term lead magnet and opt-in interchangeably. So instead of saying my workbook is a lead magnet, I could say my workbook, this free workbook is my opt-in. Right? So they essentially mean the same thing but can be used in different ways. That's a really good question, and I think again, something that's such an unnecessary roadblock. You know? Because it's like looking back, it's like I wish wouldn't have let that stop me. But it did.

Ashley:

But it's hard. We're all made to be teachers and we're in this business world now. So that's where a lot of resources are based off of business stuff and it's not really making sense to us. So that ABC booklet's going to be super helpful. So make sure you download it.

Erin Waters:

Yes. Wow. I think that is the perfect place to stop for today. Guys, believe or not, we have a lot more where those questions and answers came from. So I hope you will join us again next week for part 2 of our email hotseat series. Thank you so much to Ashley for being on the show today and also thank you to everyone who has been submitting questions. And thank you so much for listening to the School of Sellers podcast. If you would like to download the ABC's of Email Marketing, you can head on over to ErinMWaters.com/EmailABCs. And if you are interested in either starting your email list with us or growing your email list with us, then you can also check out ErinMWaters.com/EmailLab to check out our very brand-new email marketing course just for teacher sellers like you. Thanks again, friends, and I'll see you next week.

Welcome to the School of Sellers

What is the School of Sellers?

We are a group that is committed to helping teacher sellers in all stages of their business. We like to provide tips, tools, and resources that aid in building your business while making it feel doable every step of the way.

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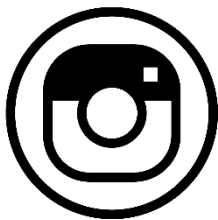
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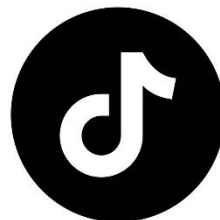
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