



Permission Marketing: Opt-In/Opt-Out! **Managing Your Direct Marketing For the Future** A White Paper for GoldMine Users

The following is a practical discussion covering current issues of direct marketing, especially using e-mail communication, a most effective way to communicate quickly to your target audience. Recent legislation regarding telemarketing which is discussed in a companion White Paper, "Managing the Do Not Call list", has brought to the front burner the issue of SPAM and e-mail. Already the State of California has passed laws regulating e-mail with further restrictions than contained in the federal rules covering SPAM. While the Opt-Out techniques employed by sincere business to business e-mail marketers should suffice, unethical SPAM producers have caused everyone to rethink their approach. Here is one that is affordable and provides the best of 'opting in' as well as continuing traditional 'opting out' practices. As a GoldMine user you already own the archiving database that will track your strategy and compliance for governmental agencies. All you need to implement are some easy to use tools and good common sense to launch an effective e-mail marketing campaign that is fully compliant.

Getting Permission to Market

There has been an enormous response to the national Do Not Call list. In some three months, more than 50,000,000 private phone numbers were registered, a cause for reflection by everyone who does direct marketing, not just those targeting retail customers by phone. It has become clear that more restrictions may be placed on direct marketers to manage their marketing in a more acceptable manner. Does all this 'buzz' mean the end is near for telemarketing or other forms of direct marketing? No, indeed! In fact, this wake up call (pardon the pun) is a great opportunity to step back and take another look at your approach to direct marketing and how to transform it into a more powerful marketing machine. This discussion does not direct itself to the subject of 'interrupt' versus 'permission' marketing as that is more on the level of strategy and consulting, something that we are in the business of assisting our clients to develop, for a fee. This paper directs itself to the good common sense that all direct marketers no matter their medium; mail, fax, phone or e-mail need to reconsider the effectiveness of the dollars they are spending. Consider obtaining permission from your prospective customers and, for that matter, your own customer base, before plunging heavy money into marketing campaigns that are, from the start, doomed to poor response due to the changing tides of consumer tolerance. In this real world, that includes B2B as well as B2C efforts.

If you are a telemarketer, then you have a number of available avenues to consider in revising your approach to 'cold calling' campaigns. There are ways in which you can obtain 'permission' to call in compliance with the current rules. Check out the DoNotCall_Business_Alert white paper on the rules published by the agency handling the DNC list. It can be downloaded from www.salesautomationgroup.com, along with other white papers on the subject of Permission Marketing.

This discussion is about Opt-In/Opt-Out marketing and the virtues of obtaining permission to market and some pointers about doing that, successfully, with some tools we note to assist you. While we touch on all communication methods, within this document we are

*Note: This author has already presented a discussion on Managing the E-mail Blast Nightmare! covering the many issues of bounces and returns. While included in this discussion in summary, the reader may want to refer to that paper as an additional resource.
Contact: Clayton Pitts cpitts@salesautomationgroup.com for a copy of this discussion..*



emphasizing using a web site for obtaining permission, no matter what medium of communication is involved, once the permission is granted.

First off, it is a good thing to begin e-mail marketing with an informative newsletter that tells a little about your company or organization, its services and products in order to get people to come to your web site. As long as it is not lengthy, has some solid relative bullet point information that can be easily digested, and does not appear to be intrusive, it will probably pass muster, be opened and read. Some studies have indicated that e-mail rates with comparatively high percentages in being opened, if not entirely read. So since this is a highly personal direct form of communication, e-mail is a very effective means of marketing. Direct mail costs a lot, and has the problematic issues of not being read at all when it appears to be 'junk mail'. Nevertheless, a number of people will open and at least glance at all of their postal mail. One cannot really compare studies of direct mail response to e-mail, as direct mail can only be measured in response, whereas one can track email generated in HTML as to whether it has been opened. It is not improbable that you will generate more than 25% of people opening your e-mail, received without advance permission. Just think how that percentage will increase when permission is granted in advance.

Many businesses have areas such as loading docks that are still and will probably remain in the domain of faxing as the only form of effective communication. The most personal impact of marketing technology remains telemarketing, which the DNC lists are restricting heavily now, for consumers. Businesses for some time have trained their receptionists to screen out telemarketing calls. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that one can, and will still be able to market using this most effective traditional form of communication for some time to come, as long as one is in compliance.

Consider this: won't it be something, when you actually have the permission of your target to market to them using the method they prefer. That permission can easily be obtained today, either actively and passively, from your web site. Either way, it is known as 'Opt-In' marketing. Many businesses, aware of the sensitivity of their target market, are not comfortable marketing by e-mail under any circumstance other than 'opting in', or as it is now known, 'with permission'. 'Permission Marketing', as a concept, is much deeper in scope and intent than merely the action of 'opting-in'. But, it all starts there.

Giving permission for someone to market to you really is not anything new. That direct mail piece that you return checking off several boxes that say 'send me information', or 'have someone call me' or even 'yes, I would like someone to visit me' is an example of permission marketing that has been in place for many years in the insurance business. What we now have is the opportunity for our web site to invite someone to tell us a little about themselves in return for some information, or a demo download, or some other incentive. Retail sites often offer a free gift for a small shipping charge and the right to market to you in the future.

Getting permission to market to your target; prospect or customer, is not at all a difficult task. It takes some planning to fit this new piece into your overall strategy to gain the most out of your marketing dollar. What we are talking about, here, is getting your target to say, "Yes, you can market to me." If you are a small to medium business then the following paragraphs are important to you.



Implementing an Opt-In Plan

For the small to medium business that is not out-sourcing their marketing activities, what we are covering is how to do what is optimum in marketing for your business operation, at the least cost; to be effective and still maintain control of your database. Obviously, we want to use as much automation as possible. For the GoldMine user, we utilize several specific functions already present in the system. The GoldMine Web-Import has for some years allowed us to import new leads directly from a form on our web page into GoldMine. Last year, GoldMine 6.0 introduced the ability for the web-import function to determine whether the contact was a duplicate, and update information directly into our GoldMine database without having to add a duplicate record and then purge those duplicate records as a database administrator (DBA). This was an important step forward in expanding the web integration built into GoldMine.

The most basic element of an opt-in plan is to state clearly what kind of marketing you intend to provide; a newsletter, news about new products and services, and news about limited time specials are all potential segments of an opt-in marketing strategy. The next important point is how the target prefers to be contacted. Strange as it may seem, some people will want you to mail them. It may be that they have a commute on a train with time to spend reading hard copy, and would like to use that time wisely. Some folks feel that they can absorb a huge amount of information quickly by phone, plus have the opportunity to ask questions right then and there if they are interested about a special offer. There are still some niche instances where faxing can be the best way of grabbing someone's attention for a few precious minutes. And in the preceding sentence was the fundamental key word to all marketing: 'attention'. That attention is guaranteed when someone opens your e-mail.

Decide what you want to market and what method you wish to use to communicate that particular marketing initiative, then put it all into the pro-active web form that will update your GoldMine appropriately. The idea is to use user-defined fields in GoldMine that serve as receptacles for the specific permission you were granted. Formal documented Best Practices in how you populate your database will substantiate that permission. The simplest illustration is to have a user-defined field, for instance, 'Uemail' that can have an answer 'Yes' or 'No'. In this example, a blank or nothing in the field indicates no permission action, a 'No' means that the person has 'opted out', and a 'Yes' means 'opted-in', that you have been given permission. All three are valid stages in a permission marketing strategy. There are four kinds of communication that can be used in business communications and therefore be involved in permission marketing: mail, phone, fax and e-mail (listed in the sequence the technologies came into being).

Using User-defined Fields or Detail Records with Details Plus™

Once we have determined a basic plan, additional considerations come into play. As we know, user-defined fields apply to a primary record and its contact.

If you use secondary contacts in GoldMine and you are marketing to both primary record contacts and secondary contacts, you will need to implement multiple detail records in a primary record for your permission marketing, identifying which contact is attached to the permission detail record. To practically implement and maintain such a plan you will need to use the most recent release of Details Plus™ 2.1.1 or higher by Solica Consulting, a third party application, which includes a new 'Global Editing' function for managing and updating fields in detail records (not available in the GoldMine user interface, except as a SQL Query requiring a skilled programmer). This new feature along with the strong Query Organizer of Details Plus provides the ability for end users to easily track and manipulate



demographic data for all contacts; to support a full permission marketing strategy on databases containing both primary and secondary contacts.

Implementing an Opt-Out Marketing Plan

Most readers of this document will already be aware of 'opt-out' e-mail marketing. Even if you have an 'Opt-In' strategy, there must always be the opportunity to 'Opt-Out' at any time; that is a USA Federal Law. To summarize, you must always have in every e-mail that is part of a marketing campaign or e-mail blast, a disclaimer that explains why it is not SPAM and the opportunity to be removed from your generating list. A simple method that displays your sincerity and integrity is to have them send a return e-mail with the subject 'Remove' or 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line, back to you. Those who know realize that this means that you have the responsibility to manage that return and archive their response request. (Many of those SPAM e-mails that offer to remove by clicking on a link are actually verifying your e-mail address in preparation for selling their list to other spammers.)

Using BounceLinker™ 3.2 to Handle All of It

This author wrote a White Paper on handling bounces and returns, comparing the process of doing it manually to using the then just released BounceLinker™ 3.0, several months ago. Now, the publishers of BounceLinker have greatly expanded on its usefulness by including everything you need for Permission Marketing into the new BounceLinker™ 3.2. This discussion focuses on using BounceLinker for Opt-In marketing strategies as an integral part of a complete marketing machine using GoldMine and its E-mail Rules Center, integrated with BounceLinker managing bounces, returns for opting out, and now with version 3.2, the ability to separate out e-mails that indicate someone has joined a marketing campaign or subscribed to a newsletter or any number of variations on the theme of Opt-In scenarios. Simply put, when someone checks a box saying 'yes' or 'no' to any specific marketing campaign, or particular form of communication, your web server sends an e-mail to you formatted in a particular way. This is entirely independent of GoldMine's Web Import and has nothing to do with that function. This BounceLinker feature is dedicated to managing specific information about your marketing activities generated by your web server. Once received into your GoldMine E-mail Center, it will be filed into a folder that you have custom configured according to your marketing plans. BounceLinker automatically handles it for you, with all the features and functions it is known for handling bounces and returns. And you can have as many of them as is practical. If it sounds like BounceLinker will now do just about anything you configure it to do, as far as marketing goes, then you've got the point. That is exactly it. No longer limited to returns with 'Remove' or 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line, BounceLinker™ 3.2 has been 'opened up' to deal with any custom named folder you want to include. Within the parameters of its standard list of responding functions, BounceLinker is the key to managing your Opt-In marketing program automatically, when combined with a properly configured GoldMine E-Mail Rules Center. You will also do well to include BounceLinker in a complete program for managing the new Do Not Call lists implemented this fall by the USA Federal Government and by many state lists, as they are beginning to follow suit. That is the subject of another White Paper, but the same expanded features of the new BounceLinker are utilized there.

Demographics You Want from Your Target

Getting just a name, company, phone number and e-mail address is not enough to do 'personal' marketing, the goal of many well planned marketing strategies. You will want to get some additional information where possible. This may include such things as the industry of the company, size of the company, number of employees, and other pertinent



information that can be more valuable to your specific business operations and/or affiliates of your primary business. No matter the size of your operation, there is probably the opportunity for you to share leads you gather in a limited and very controlled way, reciprocally, with other operations in a manner that will not be competitive to you, and not invade the privacy of your targets who have given you permission to market to them. This is becoming a standard and acceptable practice in e-mail marketing, as it has been in other marketing endeavors for some time, as long as you make it clear in advance in your 'privacy statement' that you may share this information with other close affiliates. Some people will deny you permission if you include this in your privacy statement. Most have little issue with those vendors who make it clear that this sharing will only be done within the parameters of their stated demographics. You are spending good money for this marketing initiative. By extending the permission in this manner, you are making your list that much more valuable.

In the GoldMine community of third party program vendors, for example, sharing information within the community with non-competitors is keeping within the limited spectrum of GoldMine users, an approach most GoldMine users would not find offensive (as long as it was clearly stated in advance). As a GoldMine user, I would never mind a GoldMine third party vendor marketing directly to me via e-mail about their new product. In fact, in today's busy world, I would be pleased. In this case, the demographic, of course, is: "GoldMine User".

You decide what is appropriate for your operation and marketing strategy. Just don't leave additional future business 'laying on the table' because you did not ask more questions. One software vendor comes to mind who began asking, long before GoldMine released the Enterprise 4.0 version of GoldMine, whether their prospects and clients were using SQL Server in any area of their business, even though they had no product or service available at the time. Several years later, when they released a product that ran on SQL Server, they already had a database with quite a few GoldMine users and hundreds of prospects, many of whom were on GoldMine dBASE but still had SQL Server in-house. All it took was the question on a web form, implemented way before they actually took advantage of it. Part of gathering useful demographics on the web is thinking ahead.

Following Up – Mining Your Database

The most valuable asset of any business operation is its database of customers and prospective customers. The more information you have about your contacts that affect the relationship of your business to theirs, the more valuable it is. Unfortunately, most sales and marketing teams are dedicated to increasing the size of their company's database with little attention to the value it already contains. Your marketing efforts should include two important considerations: 1) Following Up with continual 'touches' to your prospects and 2) Following up with your established customers to cross or up sell. If you are reading this paper you already know the basics: selling more products and services to your customer base is less costly than getting new customers.

Let's expand that to: getting in touch with your contacts often, keeps you in mind, and when they're ready to buy, you will get the opportunity to sell. It really is that simple.

The tools are available to you at reasonable cost in the GoldMine family of products. There are many professionals, in the USA and internationally, who know what to do and how to do it, that are available to assist you at reasonable cost. PC based hardware products have been reduced to a 'consumer level' of cost in recent years; they are not



expensive. Finally, the Internet is the marketplace that 'levels the playing field' in such a manner that you can competently compete with much larger sales organizations.

The economy in the USA has already jump-started beyond anyone's expectations in the last quarter. The stage is set for you to achieve growing your business operation, once again, with confidence. Now is the time to make the move to expand your marketing activities with intelligent planning and the use of these new methodologies and reasonable cost products and services.

Permission Marketing is here, now, as the new marketing approach of the next decade. Now is the time for you to create a pro-active 'personal marketing' approach to growing your business. Opt-In Marketing is one of the keys.

October, 2003 - Clayton Pitts

For more information on e-mail marketing and about [BounceLinker](#), [Details Plus](#) or the [DNC Manager](#), e-mail Clayton at: cpitts@salesautomationgroup.com