

30-Day List Building Plan for an author

Time requirement: An hour a day

Budget: Less than \$100 per month

Technical ability: can install and configure a medium-complexity WordPress plugin

Current website traffic: 50 unique visitors per day, 1500 uniques per month

New subscribers per week: 7 (2% opt-in rate)

Day	What to do	How to do it (More info at PamNeely.com)	Time to do it	Why do it	Done
1	<p>If you have been using FeedBurner, switch to an email service provider.</p> <p>If you have been using nothing, choose an email provider.</p>	<p>To MailChimp: http://blog.mailchimp.com/moving-your-subscriber-list-from-feedburner-to-mailchimp/</p> <p>To AWeber: http://www.aweber.com/blog/switch-from-feedburner-to-aweber</p> <p>To GetResponse: http://blog.getresponse.com/life-after-feedburner-the-getresponse-alternative.html</p> <p>Need to know which email provider is right for you? See my email provider comparison page: http://pamneely.com/compare-email-marketing-services/</p> <p>If you already have an email provider, do you have opt-in forms on every page of your site? Not links to a page with the forms, but the forms embedded on each page so people can sign up without having to leave the page they're on.</p>	<p>1 hour to research and ponder which email service provider is best for you.</p> <p>Just research this for today – don't pull the trigger yet.</p>	<p>You need the functionality that a real email service provider gives.</p> <p>Switching from FeedBurner to any of these three services is like going from an old handheld calculator to a smart phone.</p>	
2	Set up your email provider account	<p>Basic setup for your new email provider account would include opening and paying for your account (if a free account won't do), importing your email list, uploading your logo and other customizations for your account.</p> <p>If you already had an email provider, add social sharing buttons to your emails. At the end of every email, ask "Do you know someone who would benefit from what you just read? Please forward this to them."</p>	1 hour to dismantle FeedBurner and do very basic set up with your new email service provider.	<p>So you can actually start using the account, and it will save you time later.</p> <p>Take a day between doing your research and opening an account. It gives you more time to think about which provider you want to go with.</p>	
3	Set up automated email updates	Set up the RSS-to-Email feature if your account has that (most email service providers offer RSS to email), then create a simple template for your email messages	1 hour to finish setting up your shiny new email account	Using RSS to email will save you hours of work.	
4	Add an opt-in form to the top and bottom of every page	Create the opt-in form for the top of your page first. Get it to look just right, then copy it, edit it a wee bit, and put the revised version into the footer of your site. This saves time.	40 minutes for the first form, 20 minutes for the second form	<p>You can't get more subscribers if they don't have a way to sign up.</p> <p>A form to the footer will get you about 20% more subscribers than you otherwise would have gotten.</p>	

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5	Offer an incentive to signup	Also known as a "freebie", "freemium", "lead magnet", or a "free report". Offer something so good it hurts. Something they really ought to pay for. A video series is OK. So is an ecourse. Consider offering the first chapter of one of your books, or even a few pages of your book that never made it into the published version (the outtakes, if you will).	30 mins to pick a topic, 30 mins to begin writing (or posting a listing to have someone write it for you).	You'll get about 100% more subscribers if you offer an incentive. It's wildly effective, especially with a GREAT incentive.	
6	Offer an incentive continued	If you're getting at least 10 subscribers a week, consider a book giveaway contest. Every week you give away a copy of one of your books to a new subscriber. Bonus: you let them pick which one of your books you want.	This could be a 10-20 hour project, but let's keep it short. Think of a checklist here, not a 50-page ebook.	This costs you only 55 books a year, gives you a great incentive, and gives you something to announce on your site, in your emails and on social media.	
7	Offer an incentive to signup continued	If you've got 2,000 or more visitors to your site a month, run a test. If you've got AWeber, maximize your time & create an A/B test of your opt-in form. It may have to run for a while if you don't have a lot of traffic, but at least start now. If you don't have AWeber, consider Visual Website Optimizer or Optimizely. Test your incentive's headline, or the copy on your opt-in button. If you've got less than 2000 visitors a month, just keep working on that signup incentive.	1 hour to edit your opt-in form and sign up process so they get the free report/freemium	Testing is the difference between success and failure.	
8	Create a full-width email opt-in form at the top of your home page.	Examples include http://jjvirgin.com/ , http://startaconsignmentstore.com/ . Look into the WordPress plugin MagicAction box to create a space for your opt-in box on your home page.	1 hour (maybe more) to get your blog to accommodate a full-width home page opt-in. Maybe an hour to hire someone to do it.	Full-width opt-in forms on home pages often get 10-15% opt-in rates. Most of the people who go to your site will never come back. But if you can get their email address, you can continue the conversation.	
9	Set up a goal in Google Analytics so you know where your subscribers are coming from	See my tutorial here: http://pamneely.com/email-subscriber-value-2/ (scroll about half-way down the page)	10 minutes if you know Google Analytics. An hour if you don't. Got extra time? Make your opt-in incentive better.	It's critical to know what works for you. Honestly, you're probably going to find that only about 20% of what you try actually generates results FOR YOU. This will show you what really works.	
10	Add a pop-up with an opt-in form	Use the pop-up your email service provider offers, or use the plugin Pippity, or Opt-in Monster, or any of the other pop-up/lightbox options. Set the pop-up to show after someone has been on your site for at least 30 seconds, and only show the pop-up once per visit or less.	1 hour to learn how the pop-up works & to get it to work.	Reason #1: Pop-ups don't have to be annoying and sleazy. Reason #2: Pop-ups can increase opt-ins by 200-1000% (that is not an exaggeration).	
11	Add a prompt to join your email list (or to sign up for your emailed course) to your books & other publications	If you have Kindle books, you can upload a new version fairly easily. Consider creating stickers for any books that are already printed. If you have a press kit or media kit, include a prompt to join your email list there, too. Even add email list opt-in prompts to invoices.	1 hour to edit and upload a new Kindle version, and/or 1 hour to create email opt-in stickers for your already-printed works.	If they were interested enough to buy your book, they might well be interested enough to get on your email list.	

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12	Add a sign up tab to your Facebook page	Almost every email service provider now has a Facebook app that makes it really easy to do this.	1 hour (you'll probably have extra time).	If you want to build your list, it's critical to get that opt-in form out where the world can see it.	
13	Add a sign up prompt to your Twitter profile	Edit the text of your profile description. Use a URL shortener like Bit.ly to save space. Include a compelling call to action.	15 mins to edit the text in your profile, 45 more mins for a landing page for Twitter visitors to your site.	You'll get a reasonable trickle of new subscribers from this link.	
14	Add a testimonial near your opt-in box/es	If you don't have any testimonials on hand, look through some emails from readers to see if anything pops. It is also OK to directly ask a few of your most enthusiastic readers for a testimonial, or to look through blog comments	Less than an hour	Ideally, the testimonial would be specifically for your email messages, but any testimonial that supports your work will also help people trust you enough to sign up for your newsletter or email course.	
15	Add 2 opt-in forms on your "About" page	Add these forms between the paragraphs or sections of your About page.	20 minutes to create the opt-in forms. 30 minutes to place them and test them.	About pages are usually the 2 nd most visited page on a site. They often have the highest opt-in rate.	
16	Ask people who just commented on your blog to sign up	Use the free plugin Comment Redirect. Bonus idea: You could also add an opt-in form at the end of all your posts. Some bloggers/writers do very well with this.	15 minutes to install plugin. 45 minutes to create the page for opt-ins.	If they care enough to comment, they may want to hear what else you have to say.	
17	Add annotations to your YouTube videos	Want to include a prompt to join your email list into your videos? You can. Here's how: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/92710 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojP8Coo2tEM Bonus: Post your videos on your website & include an email gate like Wistia to get access to the videos.	30 minutes to learn how to do it. Less than 20 to actually do it.	There are many software plugins & apps that let you add embeds to YouTube videos, but they only work on your website, not on YouTube. But Annotations actually work on YouTube.	
18	Test the Opt-In Content Locker plugin to gate content on your site	Gated content is content people can't see unless they give you something for it – like their email address. This \$12 plugin will let you, say, show people the first chapter of your book if they give you their email address.	15 minutes to buy and install. 30-45 minutes to set it up for the first time. 10 minutes after that.	It's easier for the website visitor than going through an opt-in process, & it will get you a more subscribers. It's the easiest content gating system I've found.	
19	Promote your emails on Pinterest	You can add links to pins, which means you can drive people to an opt-in page. Create pins of sentences from your books, dressed up with nice backgrounds. Canva is a free tool to create beautiful images fast.	20-30 minutes per Pin to create an enticing image, and write a great description.	If your audience fits the Pinterest audience, it's a way to get more eyeballs to your opt-in forms.	
20	Put a sign-up promo in your email signature	Just edit the email signature line in your email client.	15 minutes or less.	If you're swapping emails with someone, they're most likely interested in your work.	
21	Add a sign up promo to your business card	Add a line of text or a QR code. Bonus: send people to a landing page designed to get them to sign up for your emails, not to your home page.	30 mins to redesign the card; 30 mins to reorder. 30-60 mins for a landing page.	If you'd give them your card, they're probably interested in your work. They might be interested in your emails, too.	

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22	Set up text to join or Forms to Go to get subscribers at readings & events	Some email providers offer text to join. If you've got GetResponse use their Forms on the Go app.	About an hour to install the app, figure it out & set it up.	So you can get new subscribers at in-person events. It's WAY better than using a sign-up sheet.	
23	Add some piece of content to your weekly email message (or as a solo email to your ecourse subscribers) that isn't available anywhere else	Make a big deal about it on social media. An idea for this: What there a possible alternate ending for your novel? Was there a chapter that just never fit into your book?	1 hour to plan the content & begin writing/creating it	Lets people know you've got great content that's only available in your emails. Lets them know that visiting your website is just the beginning. They've got to be on your list to get that content.	
24	Add exclusive content to your email continued	Bonus: Put this content up on your Facebook page too, but behind an email gate (ie, people have to give their email to see the content).	Another hour to work on the content		
25	Land a guest post on a fairly big site	Look for a site with at least 5-10,000 Twitter followers, or more than 1,000 unique visitors per day. You need significant traffic to make this worthwhile.	1 hour getting the guest post gig	Guest posting gives you free, pre-selected traffic to your opt-in box. Many writers use this as their primary list-building technique.	
26	Guest post continued	Your guest post needs to be great. Put the time into it to make it great. Don't want to guest blog? Get yourself interviewed instead.	1 st hour writing the post		
27	Guest post continued	Use your author bio space to sell (soft sell, not hard sell) these readers on why they should sign up for your email list (ie, what's in it for them) and why your sign-up incentive is so awesome.	2 nd hour writing post		
28	Guest post continued	Create a landing page to send your guest post traffic to. Bonus tip: You can create a blog on GoodReads and attract people there, too. That's a great place to build an audience (just be sure to send them to your personal website to sign up for your list).	3 rd hour writing post		
29	Guest post continued	Tweet it. Pin it. Update your Facebook page & your Google+ page. Even tell your existing subscribers about it. You want this post to be super-popular.	Promote that post everywhere you can	The most popular your post, the more traffic you'll get, and the more guest posting opportunities will be available to you.	
30	Calculate how much a subscriber is worth to you	See my post on calculating subscriber value , and the email subscriber value calculators . Bonus: go check Google analytics and see where your new subscribers came from	30 mins to do the calculation, 30 more to consider what it means to your business.	This will inform your list-building efforts going forward... like if you choose to advertise	

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Want to get this as an emailed course, so you get daily reminders of what to do? Sign up here:
<http://pamneely.com/30day-list-ecourse-authors/>

Want to continue building your list after Day 30?

Sign up for my list building coaching, a private membership site where you'll get extensive, customized support to build your list and your business. Go to <http://pamneely.com/list-building-coaching/> to learn more.

Was this 30-day plan helpful? I hope so, but if there's any way I could make it more helpful, please let me know.

Send an email to pam@pamneely.com.