List Building for Authors
Setting Up Your Auto-Responder System

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A Note from D'vorah

Welcome to module two of List Building for Authors! In this module you are going to learn how to set up your email auto-responder system. The term "auto-responder" refers to you being able to automate the "auto response" of your emails. When someone subscribes to your email list, they will automatically receive your first email response. From there, you can program your emails to go out, in a time frame that you establish.

For example, you may want them to receive the second email three days later, and then the following email seven days later, and so on. You will of course need to create the content for these emails, but once you do, you can automate their delivery.

In this module I will be demonstrating how to set up your auto-responder system and get things in place. While there are many auto-responder email companies to choose from, I will be demonstrating the service that I use and recommend. Even though you may use a different service than the one I do, you'll still gain quite a bit of value from the following tutorial. It is quite likely that your email service allows for similar functionality.

Get ready to dive in, update, or put your systems in place so you can begin connecting with more readers!

Here's to your continued success,

Dvorah Lansky

About D'vorah

D'vorah Lanksy, M.Ed., is the bestselling author *of Book Marketing Made Easy: Simple Strategies for Selling Your Nonfiction Book Online* and *21 Ways to Launch a Successful Virtual Book Tour*. She is also the founder of the Book Marketing Made Easy community, and the producer of the Annual Book Marketing Conference Online.

D'vorah has been marketing online since 1994 and has trained thousands of authors and virtual professionals in online book marketing practices since 2007. She is passionate about online marketing as well as helping authors grow their business and their brand as they achieve their dreams.
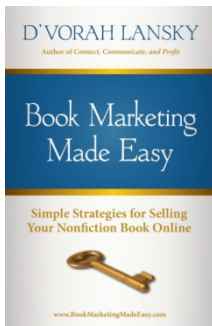
You can connect with D'vorah at:

- www.BooksByDvorah.com
- www.ReachMoreReaders.com
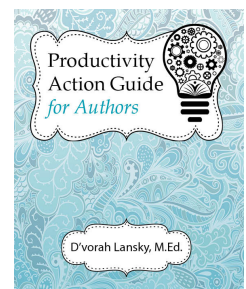
Introduction

The most effective way to get your messages delivered to your list is to register with a reputable auto-responder company such as [AWeber](#). An auto-responder allows you to automate your email sending and provides you with a way of making content available to subscribers on an ongoing basis. To subscribe to your list, people enter their name and email address into an opt-in form on your site.

To grow your list, you will want to offer a compelling giveaway that encourages people to share their name and email address in exchange for your giveaway. Your giveaway, or gift, should be something that your target audience would love to have, such as a special report, checklist, or eCourse on a topic of interest to them. This creates a win-win situation and gives people the opportunity to experience your content.

The process of setting up your list and providing a sign up form on your site is simple. Here is an overview of the process, which we will cover:

- Create a compelling giveaway and upload your gift to a hidden page on your site
- Register for an auto-responder service
- Set up a list, in your auto-responder service, for your compelling giveaway
- Create a welcome email and compose a follow up email sequence
- Add a signup form to your website
- Promote your giveaway through social media posts, guest blogging and guest speaking

When people subscribe to your list, they're giving you permission to communicate with them. You want to treat that with respect and make the most of the opportunity. While in time you'll be able to invite them to enroll in your programs for a fee, you want to begin by providing them with pertinent and informative free content, on topics of interest to them.

Setting Up Your Auto-Responder System

As you prepare to grow your list you'll want to make sure your auto-responder service is one that can grow with you. In choosing an auto-responder company, make sure they offer exceptional customer support and training videos or tutorials, so you can easily get up and running.

Since AWeber is what I use and recommend, that is what I'll be demonstrating for you in the following tutorial. Even though this tutorial is geared towards AWeber, you'll get an overview of what an auto-responder system is capable of.

The process of setting up your email marketing campaign in AWeber is fairly straightforward. After you've registered for the service you'll be provided with login information.

Here's an overview of the steps you'll want to take to get your auto-responder system up and running.

- Register for an auto-responder service
- Create a list for people who register to receive your giveaway
- Customize your opt-in email
- Compose a follow up thank you message and include a link to your giveaway
- Add your opt-in form to your site and create a test subscriber

Step One: Register for an Auto-Responder Account

The first step in setting up your auto-responder system is to register for an account. AWeber is considered to be the industry favorite, however there are other companies to choose from such as iContact, Constant Contact, Infusionsoft, and Mail Chimp. If you do not yet have an auto-responder service, you may want to consider taking AWeber's $1 trial. Here is my link to their special offer: www.WebmailConnections.com. Once you've registered for a service, login to your account. In the following tutorial I'll be demonstrating how to set up your list in AWeber.
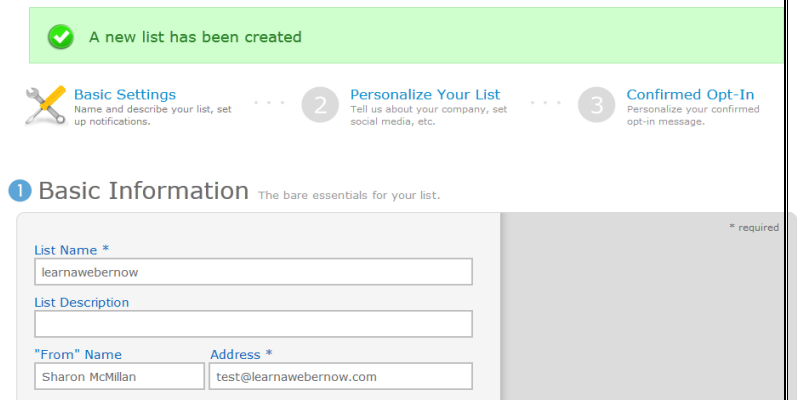
Step Two: Create a New List

Login to your account and at the top left hand side of the page look for a link that reads: "Create and Manage Lists." After clicking on this link, you'll come to a page that will list any and all lists that you currently have. To create your new list, click on the button on the screen that says "Create New List". You'll then see a screen that provides fields where you can give your list a name and a description.
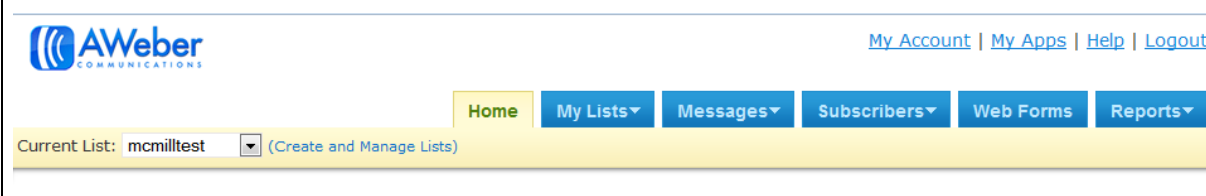
In AWeber you can have unlimited lists. You can have a list for your subscriber giveaway, and you can have another list for people who register for one of your paid programs, etc. You can even automate

your lists so that when someone subscribes to your paid course list, they are automatically removed from your marketing list.

Next, choose a name that is unique and not currently used by any other AWeber customer. The system will let you know whether or not the list name you've chosen is available. The name can be 15 characters or less. The description you add will be a description that your subscribers will see if they ever click to edit their subscription details.

AWeber also allows you to add the name and email address you want subscribers to see in the "from" field of the emails that you'll be sending to them.

Under the "Contact Address" section you are required to put an address for your business or organization. This must be a valid address and is a requirement of the CAN-SPAM Act. The CAN-SPAM Act applies to all commercial messages and it is a law that spells out the rules for commercial email. It also establishes requirements for commercial messages and gives recipients the right to unsubscribe from your emails.
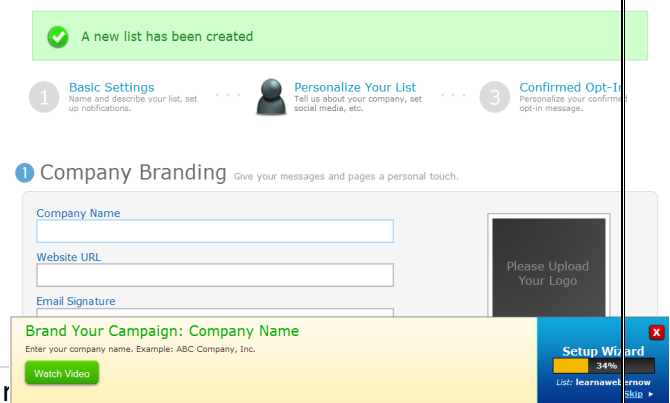
Since you are required to list a physical mailing address, you might want to consider using a commercial P.O. Box, and not your personal address, in order to protect your privacy.

You'll then be given the option of choosing whether or not you'd like AWeber to email you each time you receive a new subscriber. This is a nice feature, especially as you are growing your list, as it's inspiring to see all of those new names coming through! This will also inspire you to continue to keep in touch and nurture your list. To set up this feature, enter your name and email address in the fields provided and then save your settings.

Step Three: Add Your Company Branding to Your Account

You'll then be automatically taken to a section that allows you to apply your company branding.

AWeber allows you to customize the pages that will be shown to your subscribers using your own logo/branding artwork. When you click on the dark box

with the text "Please Upload Your Logo" a dialogue box will open up that will allow you to upload your image.

Step Four: Customizing Your Opt-In Message

One of the benefits of a using AWeber to facilitate your email communication is that it enables you to require your subscribers to "double opt-in" to your list. This is where your subscribers have to indicate twice that they are interested in joining your list; first when they submit their information through your Web form and second when they receive your confirmation message. This is important as you will know that the people on your list are interested in your content and this will protect you from any spam complaints since AWeber can prove that the person filing the spam complaint, subscribed to your list via the double opt-in method.
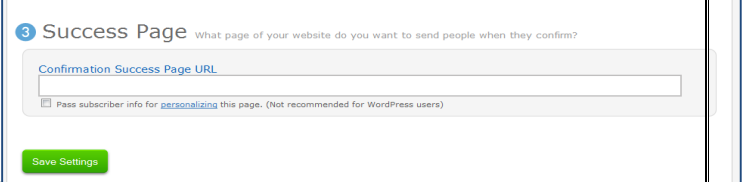
Once people enter their name and email address to your Web form they will receive a confirmation email, which they will need to open and click to confirm their subscription. Carefully crafting your confirmation email subject line and email body are key to getting people to take notice and take action.

To compose your confirmation message go to the settings tab. At the top of the page you'll see "Your Confirmation Message." This is the screen that allows you to create the email that will be sent to your subscribers after they complete a Web form.

Your subscribers will receive an email from you, in their inbox, that says something along the lines of "Confirm your Subscription." You can edit that subject heading to something more creative or enticing if you'd like. To edit the subject line, click on the "Edit Subject" box. I like to include the person's name, by clicking on the "personalize" link to the right of the screen, and selecting the "first name" option. You can then say something like, "Hi [Jane] – Please confirm your request for…" AWeber requires that you have something in the subject line that indicates that the person requested something from you as they don't want people to be tricked into opening emails. This is a company with high values and clear rules to help you grow a responsive list of people who want to hear from you.

Next, you'll want to personalize the body of the confirmation email so it sounds personal and not automated. Currently the default text in the body of this email reads; "We received your request for information from the [your list name] group. Before we begin sending you the information you requested, we want to be certain we have your permission."

You could personalize this by saying something like, "Thank you for requesting a copy of our special report on…. Please scroll down and click on the confirmation link and you'll receive immediate access to your gift." Below this opening paragraph AWeber will provide the link that must be clicked in order for the subscriber to be confirmed. At the end of this email you can insert a signature that might include your name, your company name, and the URL to your website.

AWeber also gives you the option of having your subscribers directed to the Web address of your choice in the *Success Page* URL field. For example, you can provide a link to a page on your site where they can download their gift.

Step Five: Creating a Follow Up Message

A follow up message is the first message that goes out once your subscriber confirms their subscription. To create a follow up message, hover your mouse over the word *messages* on AWeber's top navigation bar. Click on *Follow Up* and then click to create a new message.

It's a good idea to make your first follow up message the welcome email you want every new subscriber to your list to receive. You'll want to choose an appropriate subject line for your email so your subscribers will open the email. You can even add a special code, via the *personalize* button, to add your subscriber's first name to the subject line and body of the email.

AWeber then gives you the option of using ready-made design templates or you can choose the blank template. With the blank template, you can either send a plain text email, or you can add design elements, which are available at the top of that screen. To select a template, click on the *Templates* button and select the template of your choice. You may want to view the video tutorials for examples. (http://www.AWeber.com/blog/videos.)

Once the email message is complete you'll need to save it. After it is saved AWeber will ask you to determine at what interval you would like this message to be sent to subscribers. For the first follow up message, you'll typically want it to go out immediately. For subsequent email messages, you can decide if you'd like them to go out weekly, or in the case of an eCourse, more frequently. These follow up messages will be sent out with this exact timing whenever a new subscriber signs up.

For more information on follow up emails scroll to section three of this guide.
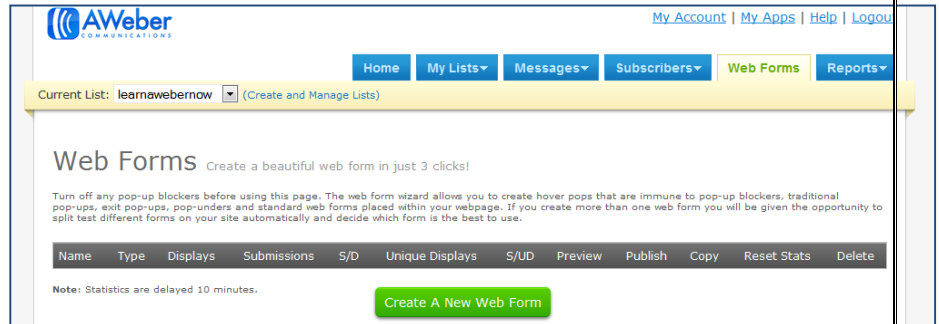
At this point your list has been set-up in AWeber. Your next step is to create a Web form that will allow visitors to your website to easily give you their name and email address in exchange for your giveaway.

Adding Your Opt-In Form to Your Blog's Sidebar

Step Six: Creating Your Web Form

Now that your list is set up, you can go to your AWeber navigation bar at the top of the page and click on the *Web Form* menu to create the form. This provides your site visitors with a way to give you their name and email address.

After clicking on the large green "Create New Web Form" button, a new screen will open that features various Web form templates to help you design your Web form. There are many categories and templates to choose from, and many of these forms have multiple color options. Select a form that matches the branding on your site.

Even though these designs are pre-made, AWeber gives you some flexibility in the appearance of each template. In many instances you can even customize the text that appears on the "submit" button.

As you can see in the image to the right, the colors used in the "For Sale Get Home Listings" form can be changed using the options provided.
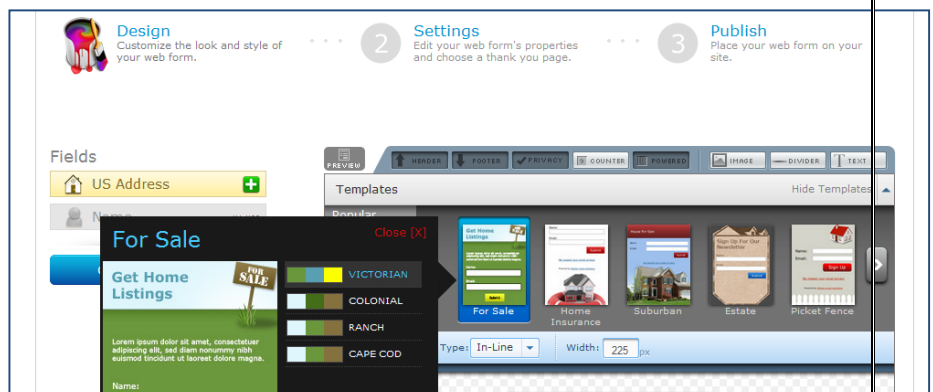
Once you are happy with the edits you have made, click "Save Web Form." Next click on the blue "Go to Step 2" button, which you'll find below your form.

Step Seven: Basic Settings for Your Web Form

In the *Basic Settings* screen you can name your Web form so you can identify it in your AWeber dashboard. You can also select where you'd like your subscribers to be automatically redirected to, once they submit their name and email address. You can choose from the text or video options from AWeber, or you can set up a thank you page on your site and have your visitors redirected there. The easiest and most effective method is the AWeber video option. This shows the subscriber exactly what to look for in their inbox and politely lets them know to head over there to confirm their subscription (if you've selected the recommended double opt-in option.)
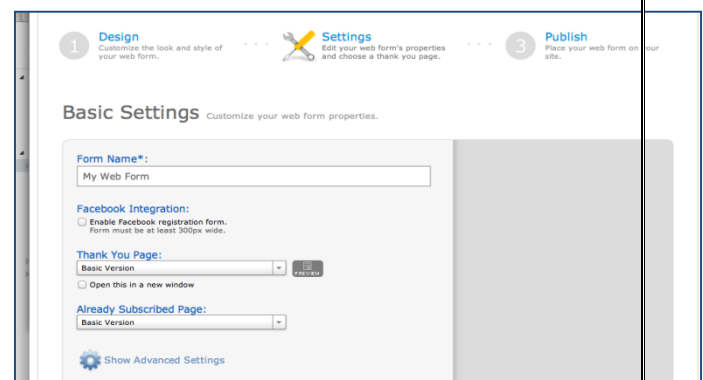
You'll also be asked to choose a page that will be shown to those individuals who are already subscribed to that list. The template version AWeber provides is adequate but again if you wish to provide your own custom page for existing subscribers you may do so but you will have to provide AWeber with the URL to your custom page. You'll have a chance to see what this all looks like when you test your system by subscribing to your own list. This is a great way to make sure everything is set and all systems are go!

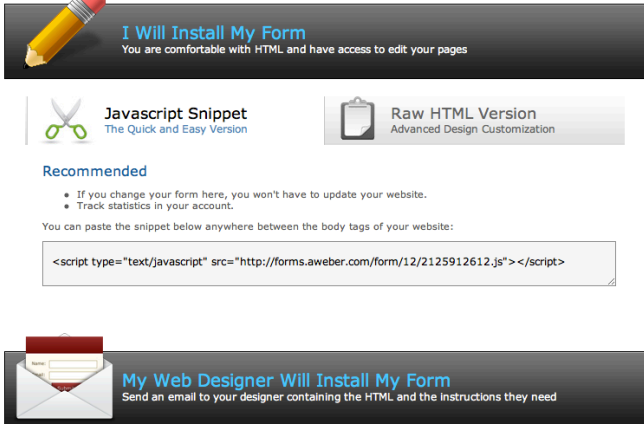**Step Eight: Publishing Your Web Form**

Now it's time to publish your Web form. AWeber provides you with three options for publishing your form to your website. You can:

1. Install the form yourself
2. Have your Web designer install the form
3. Have your form hosted by AWeber

If you would like for AWeber to host your form (option #3) click on that option to receive a link that will take you to your Web form at a location that is hosted by AWeber (instead of your website.) You'll have to provide this link on your website.

An effective method is to host your form on your own site. If you would like your Web designer (or virtual assistant) to install the form (option #2) you will be asked to provide their name and email address. AWeber will then send the HTML code for your form to that email address.

If you would like to install the Web form yourself, it really is rather straightforward, choose that option and highlight and copy the java code snippet for your form (see above image.) You also have the option of copying the HTML code if you prefer. The reason the java script code is recommended, is your form will be automatically updated when you save your form updates. There may be occasions however when you'll want to use the HTML code. For example, if you use the Optimize Press theme opt-in boxes, they require the full HTML code rather than the java script option.

You'll need to copy your form code and paste onto your website at the location where you would like to place your Web form. See the next page for details.
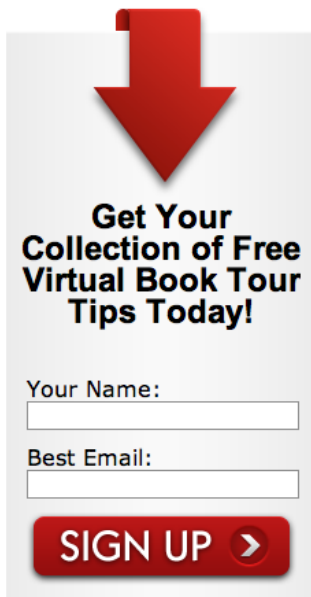
Examples of Branded Opt-in Forms

Following you'll find examples of two opt-in form designs that I've used. I selected these from the dozens of templates available in AWeber. When selected your form's colors, choose one that matches the colors on your site. Typically there are several different color options available for each form template, so be sure to click to view and example, for templates that catch your eye.
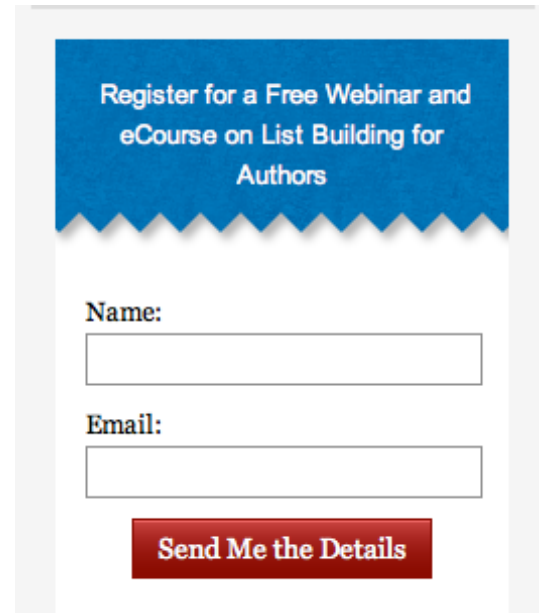
Include a Strong Call to Action in the Text Above Your Opt-in Form

When you set up your auto-responder form, you have the opportunity to add custom text to the top of the form. You want to use a minimum number of words and you want the text to be warm and inviting.

Rather than saying "subscribe for our newsletter," you may want to say something like, "Claim Your Free eCourse on …" We are all inundated with too much email so being clear about your offering and carefully crafting your call to action, will increase subscriptions.

Adding Your Form to Your Site

Now that you've created your form, it's time to add it to your blog. The most effective place to add your form is to your blog's sidebar.

Following are simple instructions for accomplishing this.

Step One: Login to your WordPress site and go into your dashboard.

Step Two: To access the widgets section of your dashboard, on the left side of your dashboard, click on "appearance" and then on "widgets."

Step Three: From that screen, click on your sidebar or primary sidebar tab, on the right side of that page. This will open that tab and make room for you to add a widget. (See illustration.)

Step Four: Drag the "*Text*" widget over to your primary sidebar tab and paste in the SCRIPT version of the opt-in form. The script version is best, because when you make any changes to your form over in AWeber, the changes to your form are immediately reflected on your site, automatically.

Step Five: Click to save your widget and head over to your home page to view your form. You may need to make adjustments to the few words of text at the top of the form, as you ideally want this section to be 2-3 lines maximum. The other area you may need to edit is the form's width. You accomplish this by editing your form in AWeber. You can simply click on your form, when in edit mode, and pull the sides in or out to make your form wider or narrower.

Step Six: It's time to publish your Form **-** Here you will select how/where you would like to publish your signup form. Most people self-install the code so click the "*I will install my form*" banner. Highlight the java code, making sure to include from "<script" to "</script>" and paste onto your webpage or into a text widget on your blog's sidebar. Once your form is in place, create a test subscriber by signing up to make sure all systems are go. This will also provide you with the opportunity to make adjustments where needed.

One of the most common adjustments is the form width. If your form is too wide, or too narrow, for your sidebar, you can go back to AWeber and drag the edge of the form in or out. If you've used the java script option you will see the change reflected on your site, by refreshing your browser.
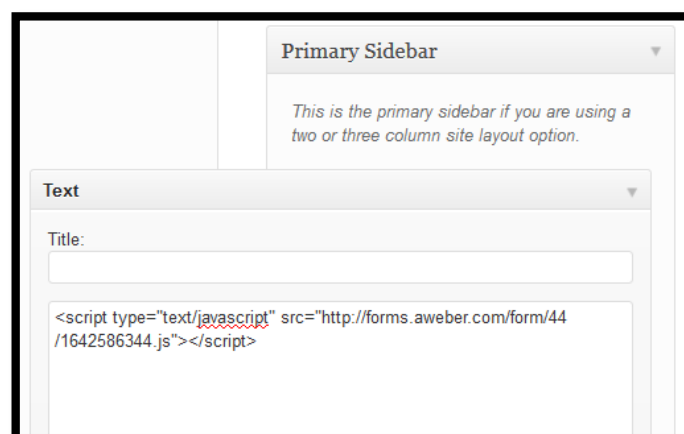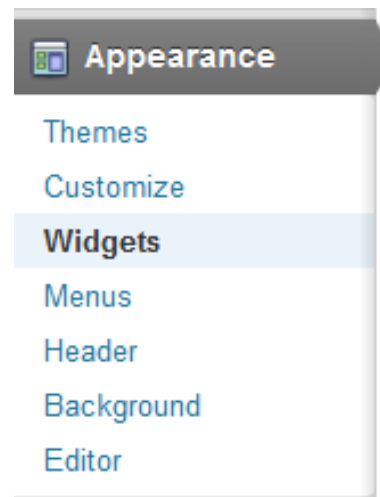
Getting Your First or Next 100 Subscribers

Once you've registered for an auto-responder service, have your list set up, have your giveaway in place and have your opt-in registration form on your site, it's time to start building your list. Begin by setting yourself a goal to get your first, or next, 100 subscribers. Once you've learned how to do this, you can repeat the process and continue to grow your list.

Use your auto-responder service, as a tool to build relationships with your audience; don't **just** focus on trying to "sell stuff". By taking the time to share valuable information and appreciation, you will create a loyal following of raving fans.

Now that you have an understanding of auto-responders and have taken a guided tour of the AWeber auto-responder service, spend some time setting up a series of auto-responder messages for your subscribers and grow your list as you grow your relationships.

Time to Take Action

Step One: Register for an auto-responder service

- ☐ Register for an account and create a list for your giveaway subscribers.
- ☐ Create a subscriber list for your free gift or eCourse and customize your opt-in message.
- ☐ Craft your confirmation email and compose your first and next few follow up messages.

Step Three: Add Your Opt-in Form to Your Site

- ☐ Create an opt-in form.
- ☐ Add your opt-in form to your site by registering your name and email address, in the opt-in box on your site.
- ☐ Be sure to confirm your subscription and look for your first follow up message.

For additional training check out video and written tutorials provided by your auto-responder company. For AWeber tutorials head over to: http://www.AWeber.com/blog/videos

Recommended Resources

AWeber Auto-Responder System
www.WebmailConnections.com

Contact Buddy Contact Form
www.BookMarketingMadeEasy.com/contactbuddy

Optimize Press Landing and Sales Page Plugin
www.BookMarketingMadeEasy.com/optimizepress