
Introduction to Autoresponders

If you've reached the point of exhaustion trying to keep up with answering the mountain of emails that threatens to bury you alive every single day, you're ready to learn about autoresponders.

The bad news is that people expect prompt replies to their email inquiries. However, unless you can figure out how to work continual twenty-four hour shifts, or hire enough people to constantly monitor incoming emails (while they're eating up your revenue), you have a problem. The good news is an autoresponder is an inexpensive - or even free - method of quickly responding to emails. What these programs do is automatically respond to incoming emails as soon as they are received.

Emails are essential to your business for many different reasons. Most importantly, these invisible email voices give you their feedback about your website - for free! However, if you spend all your working hours answering these emails, how are you supposed to run your business? The answer is simple: use autoresponders. Autoresponders are programs that automatically respond to your emails without you so much as having to click on your mouse.

There are a number of good reasons why you need an autoresponder besides just answering your email. For example, autoresponders can be used if you need a way to send information about your services or products, price lists, or if there are repeated questions asked across large numbers of emails. Maybe you want to offer your site visitors a special bonus of some kind, such as advice or relevant articles. All of this can be handled by an autoresponder. Additionally, you can advertise your business and then build stable relationships with your customers by using autoresponders.

Autoresponder programs vary from software that runs with your email program to a specialized script that runs on your web hosting company's server. This kind of script may use a web page form or simply operate with your email account. This kind of script is programmed to send out a standardized message whenever an email is received. The message is sent to a particular script or email address.

Some autoresponders can do more than simply send out standardized messages. They can send out an unlimited number of follow-up messages sent at predetermined interval of time. For example, you can set your autoresponder to send out a new message every day for as long a period as you desire.

There are numerous companies who offer autoresponders free of charge. Your website hosting company often provides

autoresponders as a free service. If this is not the case with your web hosting company, there are numerous companies who offer this service for a small fee, or free of charge, providing you attach an advertisement for their company to your emails.

To personalize your autoresponder messages, you can attach a signature. Signatures in this case are much like business cards. You can include your name, company, all your contact numbers and addresses, and a brief message.

It's a good idea to attach a signature to every email that is sent out. This works as a repeated reminder of your business identity every time a customer sees it. The more they look at your signature, the more likely your company will spring to mind when your particular service or product is needed.

You can create a standardized signature that every employee in your business uses, or you can go wild, and let every staff member create their own personal signature. Of course, like everything in life, there are some rules and guidelines to creating a personal signature.

Keep the length of your signature between four to six lines of text, with no more than 70 characters in a single line. Make sure that your email program does not cut off your text! The content should include your name, your company name, your email address, fax number, and any other contact details, such as 800 numbers. Lastly, always include a short personal message about your company. It should be a subtle sell of your services or your products, and possibly your company's reliability and longevity.

Another specialized use of autoresponders is to create courses that you can then offer your site visitors for free. You must choose a topic in which you are an expert and that precisely targets your potential customers.

Once you have carefully chosen your subject, divide it into a number of different sub-topics. Then offer your site visitor a free 10 or 15 day course, each day offering a different sub-topic. The first topic should always be a welcome message to your site visitor and an explanation about what is to follow. Your explanation should be enticing, getting the point across that you are offering free, quality information that your target audience will find of great value.

With every lesson, include the number of the lesson, the topic title, information about your company and its services or products. At the end, include a few blurbs about the next lesson to entice the subscriber to continue on.

Make sure each topic is packed with essential and valuable information, and leaves the visitor lusting to know more.

Otherwise, you may lose them in the very beginning.

Of course, you have to write up your course before you can offer it. Once you have done this, and gone over the material carefully, employing a professional writer or editor if necessary, you must transfer your text to your autoresponder.

There are a number of free autoresponders you can use. Try <http://www.getresponse.com>, or <http://www.fastfacts.net>. Or go onto Google and you will find a long list of free autoresponder companies. Then sign-up for your chosen autoresponder. Once you do, you will receive instructions as to how to set it up and transfer your text.

Email is an excellent marketing tool; it is inexpensive and it is fast. Use it to advertise your business by choosing your email address carefully. Your website should contain different email addresses for different contact requests. For example, use info@yourdomain.com for information requests, or sales@yourdomain.com for questions about sales. It's a good idea to set up one for the owner, such as president@yourdomain.com. This presents your company in a personal, approachable light and insures that direct contact is provided.

Autoresponders are an effective and powerful marketing tool, allowing you to make contact with thousands of potential customers. This is an invaluable asset considering how many potential customers you usually have contact with before you make an actual sale. Essentially, an autoresponser allows you to automate part of your marketing campaign.