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**"How To Build a **WUGE**, Profitable Opt-in List  
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**Panel of experts:**



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[EzineAnnouncer](#)



**Frank Garon**  
[Hypnotic Blueprint](#)



**Joel Christopher**  
[MasterListBuilder](#)



**Diane Hughes**  
[List Surge](#)



**Paul Myers**  
[Amazing List Machine](#)



**Kris Stringham**  
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**Note:** The following transcript is an excerpt taken from a live 2 hour and 15 minute panel discussion. For details on the complete audio recording and transcript, [click here](#).

**Jason Potash:** Some great advice as always, Paul. I know that just reading the chat room here, I feel like a puppet on a string! I have like a few hundred commanders who are telling me what to do, and that's good, though! I don't mind taking instructions here. And I know that people are just dying to understand. Let's get into the substance here. Let's really talk about some list building tactics. I think it's critical that we spent some time talking about defining your market, setting your objectives, and talking about how to bond with your subscribers. I think that without doing that, you can have a list of sixty thousand people, but without those fundamental components you have a list that might be unresponsive, or may not make you a full time income to get you out of the rat race and to get you online full time. So let's get rolling here, and let's jump in and go through some list building tactics.

Now, one thing is for sure, I'm sure that most people listening today don't have two, three, five, ten thousand dollars to spend on their lists, and obviously if you have some money there are ways you can attract subscribers fairly quickly and easily, and we'll talk about that later on. But the reality is that most people don't want to spend a dime and I was the same way when I started my e-zine three years ago, and I'm sure many people today are in much the same position. So I'd like to discuss some low cost, no cost list building strategies that anybody can apply listening today, and Kris, I know that you have a unique story to tell. I mean you managed to build up a large list rather quickly at no cost, and also, you've managed to form relationships with some of the top players in your industry. I'd like to get a bit more insider information on exactly what you did and go through the process. I received a question from Anton (and I hope I'm pronouncing this right) Gillitsky. Anton is basically just getting on the 'net and he asked a very simple question which came in multiple times throughout the past two days. He asks, "Where do I start in building my list? Give me some low cost tactics I can use to get started." Kris, can you share your story and go through some of the crafty JV work you've done, and that reference that I just talked about? How did you go through that process and put it together?

**Kris Stringham:** You bet I can. I told you this story the other day and it applies really well right here. One of the first interactions I had with [Terry Dean](#) and [Jim Daniels](#) was about four or five years ago, and I was just getting up the courage to start an e-zine. I basically emailed them and I told them, "I'll give you twenty five new subscribers for your e-zine if you'll give me a free classified ad in your e-zine." And I just basically paid for a low cost classified ad in another e-zine and also had the offer on my website. And we offered some freebies and a free report if the prospect subscribed to all three of our e-

zines. So we made the starting of co-registrations there and that way I really received three ads for the price of one and that was the first way I was able to get it. I remember being terrified to even hit the Send button the first few times, but the number one thing is just to get started somewhere. Really, from that first initial contact with Terry and Jim, I built such a great relationship with them, and it actually led to [www.ezinehits.com](http://www.ezinehits.com), which I started in 1998, I believe. Basically I came up with the idea for the 100,000 e-zine ad contest, and I contacted Terry Dean first and I was afraid to do it. I thought that he might say no. But basically the answer is “no” if you don’t ask, so you’ve just got to ask. I asked Terry if he’d like to join, and he said it sounded like a great idea, and then when I emailed the other guys I said, “Well, Terry’s in...” to kinda nudge ‘em a little bit. So no one turned me down on that. It was [Mark Joyner](#), Jim Daniels, and Terry Dean among others. So basically, not only did it help me build thousands of subscribers to my list, and like Frank was talking about, it was pulling from other e-zines. So they were quality subscribers. It helped me to get a name out there on the ‘net with these other guys...respected guys, and it helped me to get more successful in other areas with the e-zine publishing, because I think one of the number one things you need is a good name. Someone that people trust and that people will rely on, and they will go to you with their business. Basically, you need to be creative. Do a contest. Pool your resources with other marketers. Decrease your expenses when you start any way that you can so you’re not getting in debt, so you’re making profit sooner. That has led to really unlimited possibilities for joint ventures.

One of the other things I’d like to mention is maybe how to go about joint ventures. You know, I get offers every single day. People say, “I’ll give you 50% of the sale if you market my product.” That really doesn’t catch my attention very well. You know, you really have to make a great offer to someone, and lots of people are going to turn you down, so make a great offer and keep going. People will say no, but keep going until they say yes. I think you can be a lot more powerful if you team up with other marketers. Maybe they’re only a week or two ahead of you, but you can learn a lot from each other.

**Jason:** And that little JV obviously launched you into the limelight, and took relatively, somebody who was not well known on the Internet and really got you to rub shoulders with some of the best of the best in the industry. What’s your list hovering at now, in terms of subscribers?

**Kris:** Twenty one thousand.

**Jason:** Twenty one thousand, which is nothing to sneeze about. That’s a good sized list and obviously you’ve done very well as a result of that.

I’m going to shift gears here for a second. I know that a couple people, just from looking at the chat room here, were asking for some more specific examples. I mean, bear in mind that the example that Kris just gave us, that can apply to any niche vertical market that you can think of—if it’s gardening, if it’s small business owners, what have you. I’ll give you an example that [Alex Sampson](#), who is actually monitoring the chat

room now, did last year, and what he did basically is he approached other e-zine publishers who were in a similar market that he was, and again, he wanted to find that synergy, find that harmony, tap into the subscribers that were much like his subscribers—had the same needs, same wants, and the same interests in a certain topic, mainly being Internet marketing. What he did was he approached about six people, and he got them all to donate a prize and he had a big contest. Basically, how it worked was that everyone involved in the contest, all six e-zine publishers promoted the contest to their lists, and it was very simple. They had to go to a certain landing page. They had to sign up for all the e-zines within the contest. As a result of doing that, at the end of the month, they had basically a draw, and one person would win all the products. There was probably, easily \$800 worth of good products, you know, audio ebooks and that kind of thing. It was pretty simple to put together, much like what Kris did. What Alex did is, when he got buy-in from one person, he used that as leverage to contact the other people. If you're contacting somebody and they don't know who you are or what you do, or even if they should believe you, if you can say to them, "Well, guess what. I've got people like Terry Dean, I've got people like Frank Garon already involved in this thing, so why wouldn't you want to get involved with people like I have already?" Using those psychological triggers, it's quite easy to push people into a corner and get them involved because you've gained that momentum. Getting the first person on board is the most difficult. Once you've done that, I think it becomes much easier to get more people involved in a contest like that. Any other examples that you guys and girls can throw out that relate to this?

**Paul:** I've got one that I think a lot of people can use that will cost nothing, and will actually make you a lot of money in the process of getting a lot of subscribers. There are a lot of people that are afraid to be opinionated. For those people, being in the middle of the road can actually be a real strong benefit, provided you're willing to quote other people's opinions, who have strong opinions, and quote both sides. So, for example, you might do Business Opinion Today, or eBusiness Opinion Today...something like that. And you might do a survey. "How do you feel about popups?" You're going to get a lot of people banging that page.

You ask a couple of quick questions, you put a little thing at the bottom that says, "Also, would you like to sign up for our newsletter? The results will be published in the next issue..." Blah blah blah. If you're using confirmations, you tell them right there, "You're going to have to confirm your subscription. Here's what you've got to do. If you don't want this, just click here, leave your email address out and you won't be subscribed." Now, you're going to be able to drive a lot of traffic to that. It's a very emotional subject for a lot of people. Depending on what their answer is—if they like popups, if they've done well with business, you bring up a page with an affiliate program for Popup Response, or [Jonathan Mizel's course on popups](#), etc. If they hate 'em, you bring up an ad for one of the popup killers, also on an affiliate program. So you're giving them what they want, getting subscribers in the process, and you are making money. You may say, "I don't want to express strong opinions, I don't want to get into arguments with people." All you're doing is giving the answers that other people gave who have those strong opinions. You can be completely fair and impartial, and turn your subscription process

into a profit center. Next week, or next two weeks, or next month, you come up with another controversial topic. How about “Switching newsletters from free to paid”? How do you feel about that? There’s another big one. How do you feel about driving down the cost of electronic products by people who have never done these processes writing books on them? Be creative, folks. One of the best things you can do is ask people for their opinions, and you can actually turn that simple thing into a business model. And it’ll work in any market. Controversy sells everywhere.

**Jason:** Any other examples from the rest of the panel members? Contests, JVs, creative ways to work together? Joel, co-opetition? You’re the master of this phrase! Working together with other people to cross pollenate a list to benefit each other, yet also be competitors. I mean, you can be friends with your competitors and still be quite successful in forming joint ventures. Any examples you can think of that you’ve come across in the past with your consulting clients, or anything else?

**Joel:** In terms of co-opetition? One example I can come up with is, I have this client that worked on the investor real estate market. And I had another person who is actually working on the realtor or real estate agent market. So I put them together because somehow they cross pollenate. They’re really aiming at similar markets, not totally the same. But they’re offering different product lines. That’s an example that can work well because it’s sub-niching, meaning it’s one big market called real estate, but there’s a sub-niche. And because they’re sub-niching, they can actually cross pollenate from each other’s marketing campaigns. In turn they help each other by referring people that may be realtors from the real estate agent market, referred to the people who are interested in becoming real estate investors, and vice-versa. So that’s one example that I can name right now off the top of my head, Jason.

**Jason:** Great example. I’ll add one more thing, because I know that I’ve received a comment from Heidi in the chat room here, and I’m reading and listening at the same time, which we all know Paul and Frank can’t seem to do. (laughter) So if I seem like I zone out for a second, I’m still with you, I’m just trying to read and talk at the same time and listen. So just to close up the whole conversation on joint ventures, I think that Kris mentioned it. It’s all about creativity. There’s a million things you can do. I would say keep your eyes open and see what other people are doing. Try to do things differently and try to raise the bar. A very simple example is that a real easy way to get a handful of subscribers to your e-zine on a daily basis is to pick three or four e-zine publishers, send them a JV proposal saying, “Hey, I’ve got an e-zine that also covers the same topic and category as your e-zine. Here’s what I’d like to do ...

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