

# HOW A SCRAPBOOKER QUIT HER DAY JOB



# The Digidesignresort Story

Monja Wessel launched the [Digidesignresort](#) site on August 1, 2008. The site teaches digital scrapbooking and provides plenty of resources. It started as a forum, but now includes free kits and templates, plus advanced kits and DVDs for purchase. Monja also has classes and tutorials online.

Before devoting all of her time to her online businesses, Monja had a private lessons agency where she taught lessons from 2 p.m to 8 p.m. She worked on Digidesignresort in the mornings and occasionally after teaching.

Monja's mother lost her job in September 2008 and began working as an assistant to Monja. Monja says this helped a lot: "Since I had someone loving the site as much as I do I could dedicate my time no longer to maintenance tasks but could get some new stuff started. For example we developed some own products such as the Artist Studio DVD series where we do not just include digital scrapbooking kits but also lots and lots of videos so our beginning customers could easily start scrapbooking - with a minor investment."

The DVD sales are what made Monja realize she could run her online business full time. Monja and her mother worked on the site and improved keywords, implemented new areas and set up new features. She knew she needed to pull in at least 2,000 euros per month to live comfortably.

By July 1, 2011, Monja was able to focus on her online business full time: "It was one of the best days ever - at 2 p.m. I was the happiest woman - I could just sit here and keep working! Of course, since then, nothing was easy. I had let go a well-going business (my private lessons agency) and the small digital scrapbooking site had to provide 2 full-time incomes!"

Digidesignresort isn't Monja's only online business now. "We realized quickly that it is not a good idea to throw all eggs in one basket and started to expand," says Monja. They created a German version of Digidesignresort and later in 2010 launched [webbusinesstoolbox.com](#) and [themacsmania.com](#). They were able to devote more time to these sites in 2011 when Monja switched her focus to their online businesses.

Their newest project is a [site dedicated to training others](#) to run a profitable business online. "Do we need another training site about affiliate marketing and blogging? Well, ours will be different," said Monja.

"Not only will it be created by two women who have learned everything from scratch the hard way (my mum has to try out every video there to see if someone with no experience can understand it) but it will also be in 2 languages - our mother language, German, and in English.

“Right now we dedicate most of our time to that project. As always, starting something like that comes with a huge frustration, a lot of challenges and even more hours you have to work - but once it is launched you are as proud as when you just got a new baby.”

So how does one go about making their online business their full-time business? Based on Monja’s story, you’ll need to carve out time to grow your business, which means very long days at first. If you can, find someone to help out. And don’t forget to calculate how much you’ll need to make in order to live off your website.

In order for your business to grow, you’re going to have to build an audience online and find a way to keep that audience engaged with your business. That’s where email marketing steps into the picture.

Digidesignresort started email marketing in 2009. We analyzed their campaign and identified three components that were major contributors to their success and allowed her and her mother to focus on what they loved full time.

The following pages share Digidesignresort’s campaign strategy in three steps, and at the end you’ll find resources that can help you follow their lead.



# 1. Get Your Site Visitors Onto An Email List

One of the best places to collect subscribers for an email list is your website. If they're on your site, you know they are interested in your business and may want to receive more information from you. To make that possible, you can easily [create a sign up form](#) and place it on your site - the question is, what do you put in the form?

To the right is Digidesign's form, and here's what makes it work:

1. There's a bonus for subscribing - subscribers get a gift for signing up. There are [pros and cons to using incentives](#), but done right, they can be a huge asset.
2. The newsletter is mentioned - A common mistake is to tout the incentive, but not mention they'll be added to an email list. It should be clear that they're giving you their information to get your emails, otherwise, they may just unsubscribe or mark you as spam.
3. The call to action is compelling - Instead of the standard "Click Here" or "Submit," Digidesignresort has a unique button that grabs visitors' attention and compels them to click.

The average rate for getting visitors to become subscribers, customers, etc. is [just about 2% for websites worldwide](#). Meanwhile, the Digidesignresort form has a conversion rate above 25%.

Two months ago, Monja added a new landing page that visitors see before going to the Digidesignresort home page. Here's what the new landing page looked like...

The screenshot shows a landing page for Digidesignresort. At the top, a large headline in red and black text asks, "Want to make such an amazing layout FREE?". Below this, a sub-headline in black text says, "Start preserving your memories today! Sign up here for our newsletter and free digital scrapbooking kit 'Natural Breeze' instantly." A red arrow labeled '1' points to the word "FREE" in the headline. Below the sub-headline, there is a large, colorful image of a scrapbook layout. A red arrow labeled '2' points to the text "Sign up here" in the sub-headline. Below the image, there is a text box that says "FREE to make this and more amazing Layouts". At the bottom, there is a form with the heading "Enter your Name and Email Now!". The form has two input fields: "Name:" and "Email:". Below the "Email:" field, there is a button that says "Please give me the free kit!". A red arrow labeled '3' points to this button.

**Want to make such an amazing layout FREE?**

Start preserving your memories today!

Sign up here for our newsletter and free digital scrapbooking kit "Natural Breeze" instantly.

I believe the key to happiness is:  
**SOMEONE**  
to love  
something to do,  
and something to  
look forward to.

**FREE to make  
this and more amazing  
Layouts**

**Enter your Name and Email Now!**

Name:

Email:

Please give me the free kit!

## We Have A Present For You!



**Sign Up Now!**

Sign up for our Newsletter and you get:

- \*The digital scrapbooking kit "Natural Breeze" free immediately
- \* 3 Freebies per Week delivered to your Mailbox
- \* Coupons, Tips, and Tricks, Videos, newsletter-reader only offers

...and so much more!

... Be Prepared For The Best Digital Scrapbooking Newsletter In The Community

**Name \***

**Email \***

**YES, Please Give Me The Free Kit Now!**

[No, Thanks. I don't want the FREE Digital Scrapbooking Megakit Now!](#)

*This landing page brings in 20 more subscribers per day than a traditional home page.*

This page has all the elements of the sign up form, plus more detail about the newsletter. Monja decided to add this page into her site to see if it would increase sign ups, and that's exactly what it did.

Since its launch, it has brought in 20 more new subscribers per day. From September 2011 to September 2012, the Digidesignresort list has grown over 45% utilizing both the regular sign up form and this landing page.

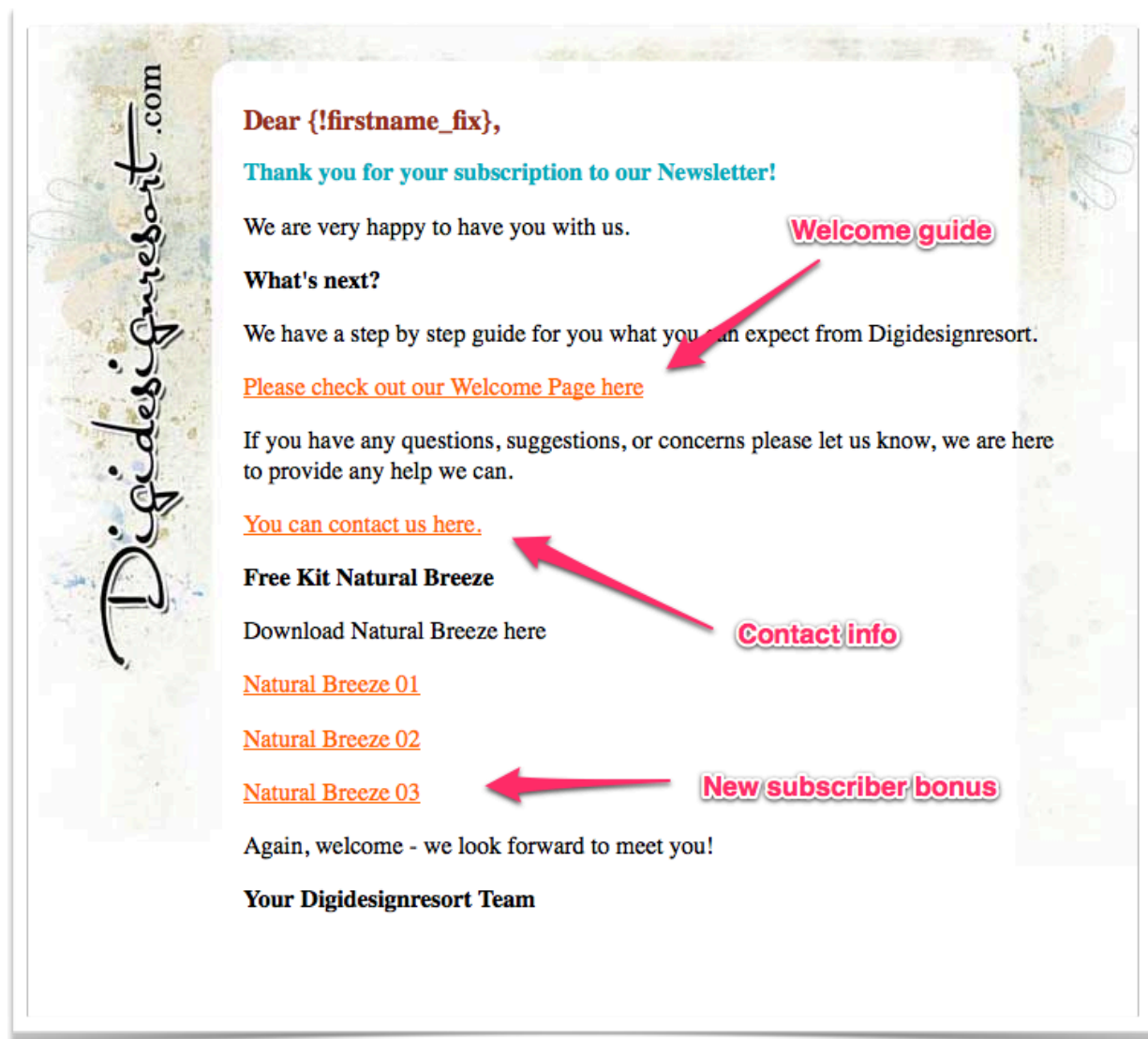
More subscribers mean more potential customers. So now let's look at what Monja set up for these prospects after they subscribed.

## 2. Set Up A Series of Follow Ups

[Follow up messages](#) are emails you set up to automatically send to your new subscribers. You set them up once and you're done, no matter when a new subscriber joins they will be able to receive these emails in the order you specified. They are a great tool for businesses because:

1. Your new subscribers will be most engaged with your business when they first sign up and these messages can ensure they get content from you.
2. They allow you to automate most of your email marketing so you can concentrate on other aspects of your business.

Digidesignresort sends out 22 follow up messages over a three-month period. The series starts off with a welcome message:





The purpose of this welcome message is to let the subscriber know they have successfully subscribed and provide helpful resources. The series continues to provide helpful resources, as seen by another early message:



**Dear {firstname\_fix},**

**Have you checked out the resources we sent you the other day but you still don't know how it all comes together?**

**Then it's time for our Digidesignresort Artist Studio DVDs!**

We have many different Artist Studio DVDs - each comes with 5 different digital scrapbooking Megakits, additional Quickpages, Clusters, and Video Tutorials.

But we also have included some bonuses!

Each DVD will provide you with all you need to create your digital scrapbooking layouts, photobooks, greeting cards, and much more.

[Please find all our Artist Studio DVDs here](#)

**"We'll teach you" tone**

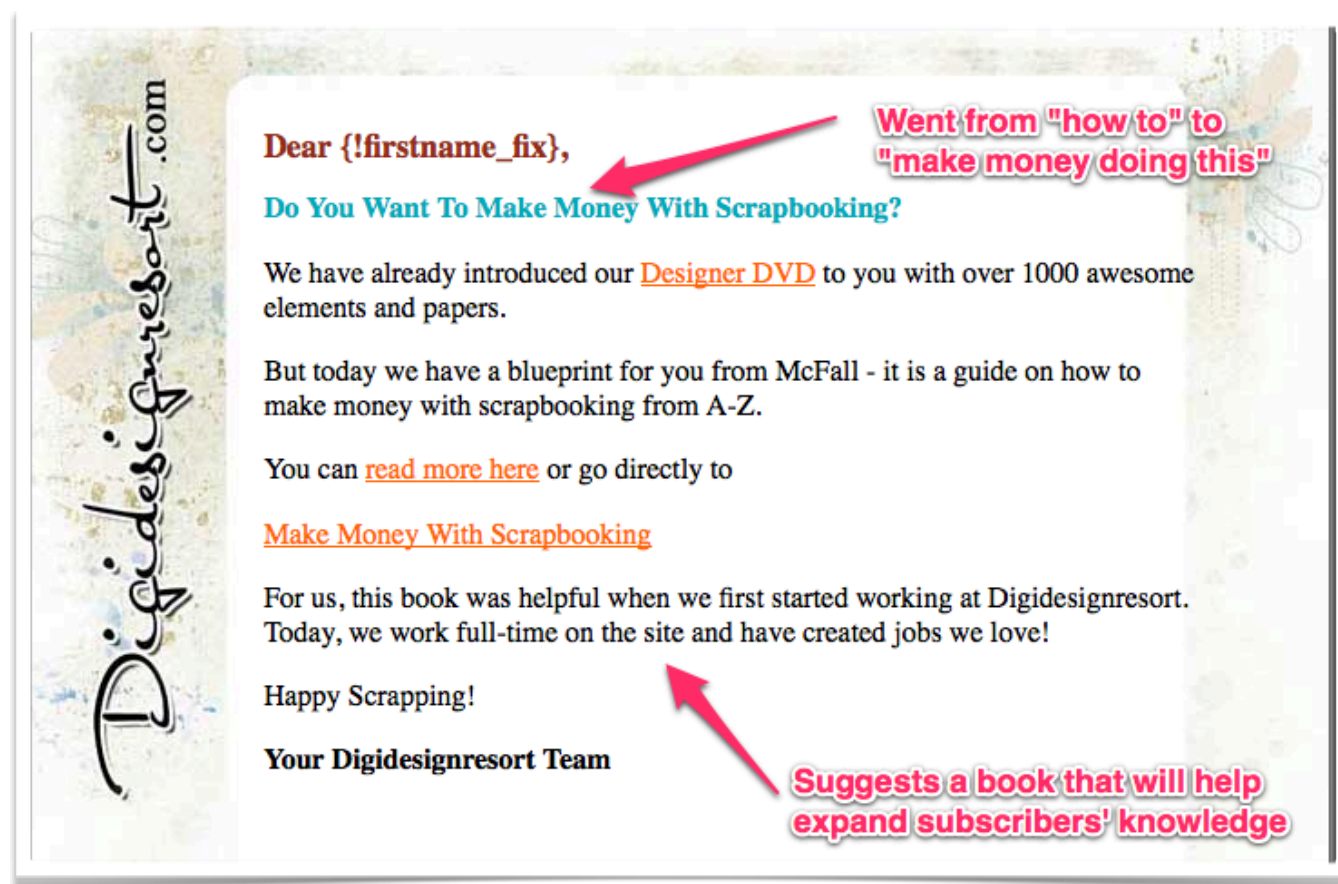
**Extra resources**



**Happy Scrapping!**

**Your Digidesignresort Team**

And towards the end of the series, the messages start to focus on more advanced topics:



**These messages average a 22% click through rate.** All messages are set to [send on either a Sunday or Friday](#), so they don't clash with the schedule of the other type of message that gets sent, which we'll look at next.



### 3. Give Frequent Freebies

In between the helpful follow up messages, Digidesignresort also sends [broadcast messages](#) that contain a “freebies” section:

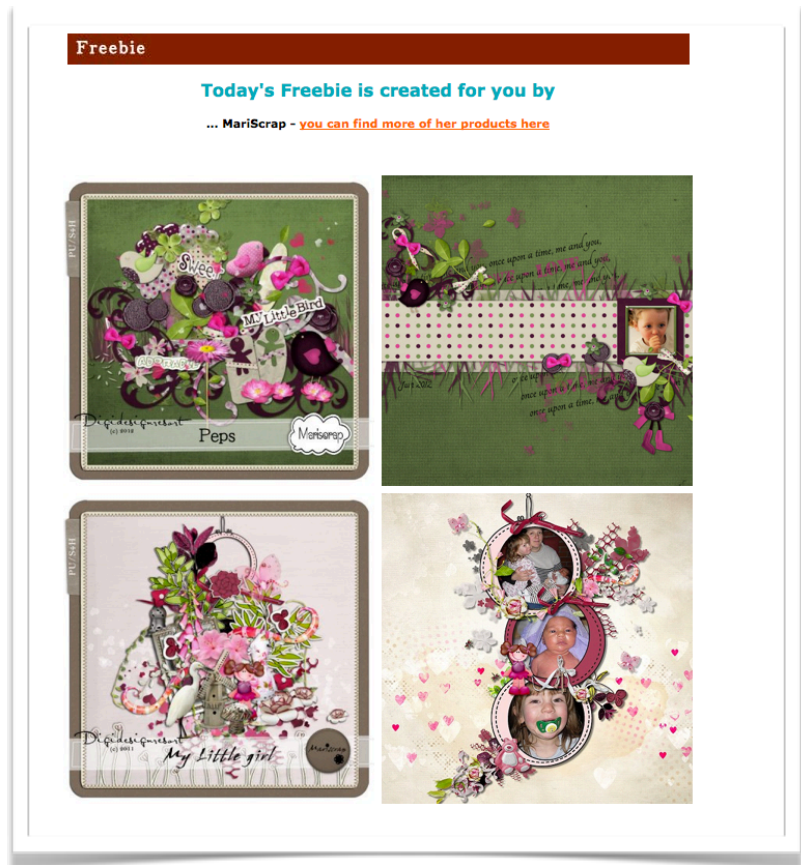
These freebies keep subscribers engaged with the company; the broadcasts typically bring in the same consistent results the follow ups have.

These broadcasts also introduce new projects and classes.

When people are finished with the initial follow up series, they will be motivated to stay on the list thanks to all the good stuff packed into the broadcasts.

Several broadcasts are sent per week, though never on a day when follow ups are scheduled.

At this point, we’ve looked at what Digidesignresort has done to reach the level of success they’re at.



You can do the same by encouraging your website visitors to become subscribers, setting up a series of messages and providing freebies and other cool resources.

On that note, here are some resources to help you out with your email campaign...

# Resources

## For Testing Improvements To Your Sign Up Page

If you're not sure what your audience will respond most to, you can test landing pages and sign up form to find out.

[Unbounce](#) - Easily create, publish and A/B test landing pages for your email marketing campaigns without an IT expert. Check out the [AWeber app](#).

[Web Form Split Tests Guide](#) - What web form will appeal to your audience most? What text? What call to action? To find the answers, you need to split test. And to split test, you need this guide.

## For Writing And Designing Your Messages

[Guide to User Friendly Emails](#) - Have you ever opened an email and found no way to contact the sender or even get to the company's site? Follow this guide to make your emails as user-friendly as possible!

[Call To Action Guide](#) - Your calls to action are the point of decision for your subscribers – to click or not to click? You want to encourage clicks, but how? Use this guide to find out.

[The Keys to Killer Content](#) - Have you ever felt the frustration of staring at a blank template hours (or minutes!) before your next email needs to go out? Plotting out your content strategy can be a challenge. So how do you start creating and get over your content roadblocks?

## For Optimizing Your Email Campaign

[Optimize Your Email Campaign](#) - Your AWeber account holds an awful lot of marketing power. Find out easy ways to use it.

With these tools, you'll be on your way to making your online business your full-time job.

But Monja reminds everyone it's not easy: "Working at home (more or less at home) isn't always easy. You need a lot of discipline to do so and you often need to motivate each other."

Monja says she gets up at 6 am every day to begin work... so set your alarm clocks and get crackin'!

# About AWeber

What do leading sites such as Social Media Examiner, Copyblogger, Which Test Won, ProBlogger and Harvard Business Review all have in common?

They rely on AWeber for easy-to-use email and social media tools to cultivate relationships with their readers. Since 1998, AWeber has been the email engine powering the growth of organizations around the world.

Today, more than 110,000 small- and midsize-businesses, entrepreneurs, agencies and nonprofits are making the most of AWeber's sophisticated segmentation and analytics capabilities, social media and testing applications, extensive template libraries, and industry-leading deliverability and live support.

