

WHAT EMAIL MARKETING CAN DO FOR YOUR BAND

LEARN FROM THE SUPERSTARS



What Email Marketing Can Do For Your Band: Learn From the Superstars

Trent Reznor, frontman for industrial rock band Nine Inch Nails, has earned a reputation as a marketing maverick. He engages fans, building loyalty and watching sales naturally follow.

In the Nine Inch Nails [online forum](#), Reznor tells musicians they can be their own best marketers:

“If you are young and use the Internet, you know more about your audience than [labels] do – for sure. This is a revolution and you can be a part of it. The old guard is dying; if you have good ideas – try them.”

Email marketing is the perfect medium to try out these new ideas.

In 2007, Nine Inch Nails began marketing independently when its contract with Interscope Records ended. Reznor organized an online scavenger hunt to entertain fans. He even scattered free, shareable USB keys loaded with their music at a few concerts.

“If you have nothing in common with American Idol and you don’t want to be the Pussycat Dolls, then you don’t really want to be on a label.”

To a label, Reznor points out, your vision and your longevity won’t be important. He suggests using new media and modern communication – such as email marketing – instead.

“Give your music away as high-quality DRM-free MP3s. Collect people’s email info in exchange (which means having the infrastructure to do so) and start building your database of potential customers.”

In 2008, Reznor gave away NIN’s album The Slip in exchange for fans’ email addresses. Coldplay did the same with their album Left Right Left Right Left in 2009.

A new full-length album costs about \$14.99, and bands never see the full amount. Considering that Music City Networks found that the average fan email address brings in [\\$111 yearly](#), that’s no small deal.

These groups scored not only a higher return on their investment, but also invitations into their fans’ inboxes, which are priceless.

“Offer a variety of premium packages for sale and make them limited editions/scarce goods. Base the price and amount available on what you think you can sell. Make the packages special – make them by hand, sign them, make them unique, make them something YOU would want to have as a fan.”

Ghosts I – IV, a 36-track Nine Inch Nails album, was offered in a variety of packages. Although the attribution license let fans digitally share the album for free without penalty, the packages grossed \$1.6 million within one week of their release.

“There are a lot more bands today, a lot more clutter. Try to identify what it is you’re trying to do. Play up your strengths and present them.”

Your look, your sound, your attitude – what makes you stand out? What resonates with your fans? What kind of an impact are you making with them?

If your band *doesn't* use email to communicate with fans, you're missing a valuable tool that could extend your reach and cut costs, as over 80% of respondents polled by evocos, a British event management company, have learned.

Whether you're playing at a coffee shop or a concert hall, email is a logical choice for spreading the word about upcoming shows.

Building Your List

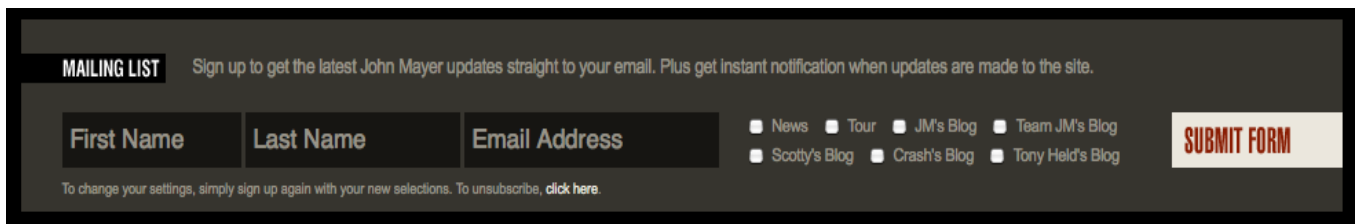
If you already have a mailing list for fans, you have the perfect audience. They will be receptive and feel privileged to be the first to hear about your next tour.

If you don't have a group of subscribers yet, ensure that you have adequate information about your shows on your website, and include a web form on the page so that interested website visitors can sign up for details about your band, buy merchandise and get the dates of upcoming concerts.

These are the best places/ways to build your list:

- On Your Website
- Through Bandcamp or Another Social Networking Music Site
- Offline at Concerts
- Through Existing Merchandise and Albums

On Your Website



The screenshot shows a dark-themed mailing list sign-up form. At the top left, it says "MAILING LIST" followed by the text "Sign up to get the latest John Mayer updates straight to your email. Plus get instant notification when updates are made to the site." Below this, there are three input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email Address". To the right of these fields are several checkboxes for selecting content: "News", "Tour", "JM's Blog", "Team JM's Blog", "Scotty's Blog", "Crash's Blog", and "Tony Held's Blog". A "SUBMIT FORM" button is located on the far right. At the bottom of the form, there is a small link: "To change your settings, simply sign up again with your new selections. To unsubscribe, [click here](#)."

The first place fans will go to learn more about your music is your band's website.

To make it easy for them to sign up for your newsletter, you should place a web form on every page on your website. Many email providers even provide predesigned templates for the music industry – AWeber does.

Through Bandcamp

Many independent bands are already using a tool with phenomenal potential to kick-off an email campaign. It's called [Bandcamp](#), and with it, bands can amass subscribers without any extra effort at all.

(AWeber isn't affiliated with Bandcamp, but some of our employees use their service for their own music projects and love it.)

What is Bandcamp?



Bandcamp is a publishing platform that helps bands create their own web sites, hosts their music and makes sure they're findable in online searches.

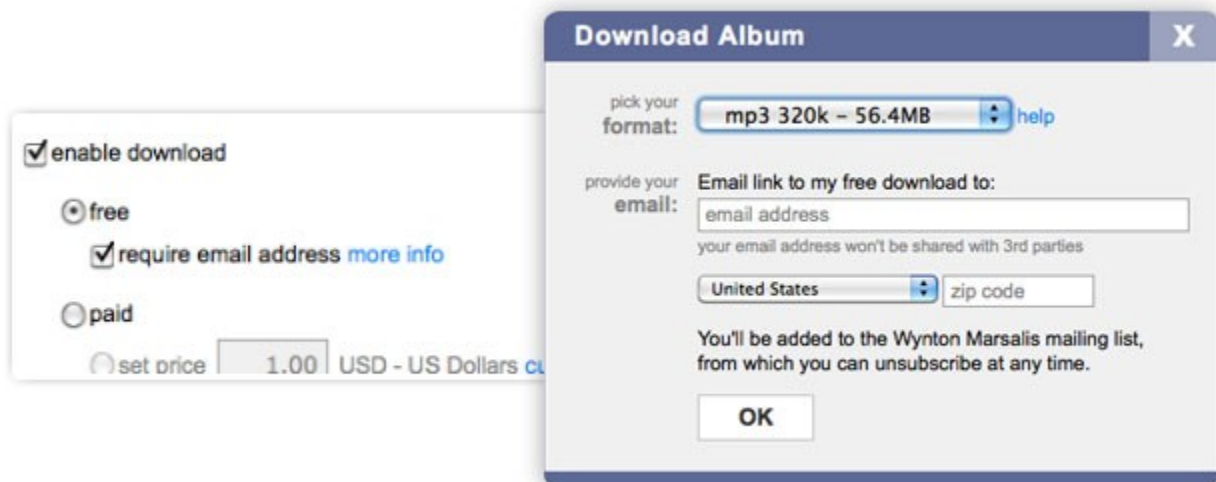
Over 36,000 bands use it to distribute their music. They upload their songs and albums, then set the price to download each file. It's working – some are even making it [to the Billboard charts](#).

It's an easy way to get music to fans and to find subscribers.

How Does Bandcamp Help Me Find Subscribers?

When you set the price for your songs, you can choose to charge nothing for them. If you do, you'll have the option to select a checkbox that requires fans to input their email address before downloading. (You can also require this if you allow fans to set their own price, and they choose to pay \$0.00.)

Follow Bandcamp's instructions [here](#).



In essence, you're making a trade – they get your music; you get permission to email them. You're also promising, according to Bandcamp's policy, that you'll keep their information sacred and spam-free.

Of course, if someone who downloads your music doesn't want your emails for any reason, they need to be able to unsubscribe, so make sure that option is always available (it's automatically included if you're using AWeber).



How Do I Start Sending These People Emails?

When people enter their email addresses and download, their information goes into a CSV (comma separated values) file stored in your Bandcamp account.

Moving the addresses from this file to your list of subscribers is easy. You start by downloading the file (make sure to choose "export new addresses only"). Save the shortened file, then upload it straight into the [import page at your ESP](#).



You'll want to repeat this process often, since your new subscribers won't get your emails until you import them to your list.

(There's no need to worry about adding someone twice – Bandcamp will only add someone to your CSV once no matter how many times they download, and when you export it, you'll have the option to "export new addresses only.")

Other Ways to Build Your Fan List

Using Bandcamp and adding a form to your site are great ways to grow a list, but there are many other ways to find new subscribers, too.

Offline at Concerts

Depending on the size of the shows that you play, you probably have several opportunities to collect information from attendees.

- Place sign up sheets around the venue (at the bar or merchandise table, for example) with instructions for signing up to your mailing list. Also, explain what they will receive for subscribing so that subscribers know what to expect when they receive your emails.
- Instead of charging for admission to your shows, try using email as an “alternative cover charge.” Let people in for free if they give their email addresses, then sell them CDs and merchandise once they're inside.

On Promotional Materials

When you promote big concerts, chances are that you create printed materials with all of the event details. Whether it's posters or flyers, make sure you include your autoresponder email address on each and every printed material.

In Album Liner Notes

Get fans to interact with your brand by posting your autoresponder email address on your cd cover. Instruct them to “register” the album to join your exclusive mailing list.

On Your Facebook Fan Page

Encourage visitors to your Facebook fan page to sign up to receive emails from you by [adding a web form](#) to your page.

Let them know that the events, photos and specials you include on your Facebook page are only a small taste of what's to coming in your emails.

Interacting With Fans

There are lots of ways to interact with your fans. These are the most effective ways to do so using email:

- Send Exclusive Messages
- Make Your Email List Your Official Fan Club
- Share Your Songs
- Share Your Videos
- Connect Using Social Media
- Solicit Feedback

Send Exclusive Emails

Be certain that your subscribers are the first to hear about new releases and tour information. Announce beforehand that your subscribers will get first dibs on any premium or limited edition tracks or merchandise.

Testimonials also add tremendous value; when someone sees firsthand what a great time your attendees had at your last concert, they certainly won't want to miss out.

They can alleviate tension during the sign up process and can potentially increase album and ticket sales once subscribers are on your email list. But how do you collect worthwhile feedback when you have none to begin with?

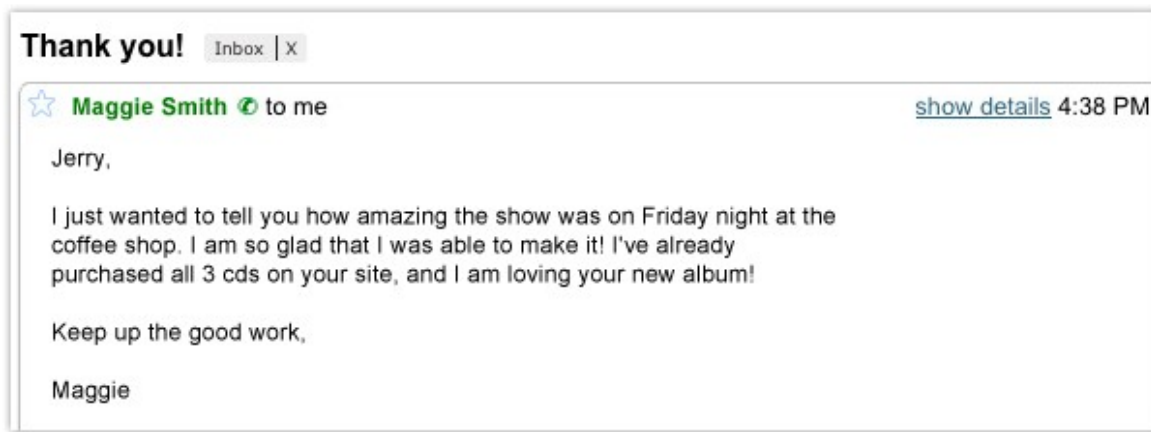
What Are People Saying About You?

Without even picking up the phone or sending an email, you have an incredible arsenal of research tools available to you via the internet.

Your Inbox

The first place to start digging? Your inbox. Chances are that you've received a few emails from adoring fans. If you haven't deleted them, they're still frozen in time in your inbox.

Hunt through old messages and look for any positive feedback you can find. If you come across a nugget of praise, send a quick email back to the sender asking if they would mind if you used their comment in your marketing materials. Since the feedback is good they shouldn't mind, but it's always best to ask.



Twitter

Next, head over to [Twitter Search](#) to find out if fans are tweeting about your band. Search for your band name, albums, songs and any other terms relevant to your business.

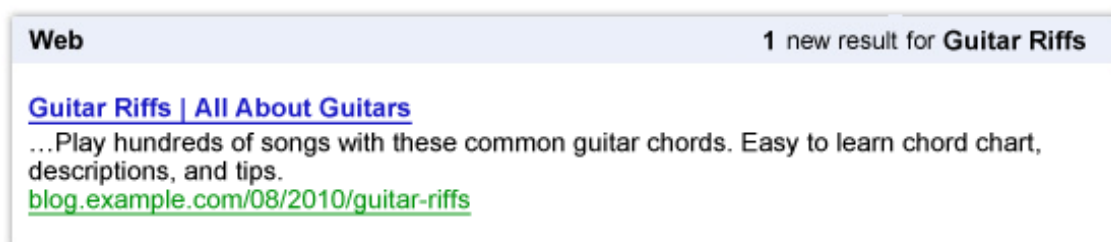
If the search produces results, send users a quick private message to ask if they mind if you use their tweets. You should also mark favorable comments about your band as [favorites](#) so that you don't lose any of them. This way you can always access your favorites page from your home page, and other users can view your favorites page to see which tweets you like best.



Your Blog

Have a blog? Read back over your older blog comments – there are bound to be testimonials you can use in your marketing materials.

Again, simply check with the person who so kindly gave you praise via email to make sure that it's ok for you to republish their comment.



Facebook

Take a look at what people are saying about your band on your Facebook fan page. You might find the best testimonials without even having to ask for them.

Just make sure to send a quick Facebook Message or email to the user to give them a heads up that you would like to use their testimonial.



Google Alerts

This [Google service](#) lets you set up search terms that you'd like to monitor (such as your band name). It then notifies you when your search terms appear in new online content such as blog posts, news articles or web pages.

You can choose to be notified by email, through a web feed or on your iGoogle page. Scan your alerts periodically to see what the Web is saying about you.



Make Your Email List Your Official Fan Club

Include exclusive content: slice-of-life video clips, backstage passes, presale concert tickets.

No matter what, when you share this content, remember: be transparent. Stay relevant to your fans' interests. Be yourself, and have fun building relationships with your followers.

Pearl Jam's official fan group, Ten Club (a paid-for membership club), rewards their fans with ticket upgrades, member giveaways and a community forum. To top things off, they send members a vinyl single of a live or unreleased track every spring.

Share Your Songs

Post offers with web forms on your website, to your Facebook profile, in your blog – and link to them everywhere. Deliver the MP3s upon confirmation by including the link on a web page or in a follow-up message.

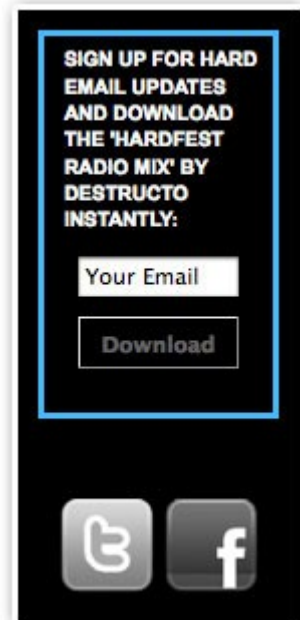
Much like [Nine Inch Nails](#), HARD, a music festival promotions company, offers free music in exchange for subscribing to their emails.

"We started the free download incentive in 2008," Tom says, "and instantly our numbers went up a dozen-fold. We would never go back now."

The incentive is well-chosen: free music for music fans. But it's the order of presentation that stands out.

Mentioning email first weeds out people who are only interested in freebies. If they'll unsubscribe immediately or report spam, the sign-up would be worthless.

For those on the fence, though, the download might [tip the balance](#) in favor of subscription. And people who sign up for the sake of the emails receive an instant thank-you gift.



Share Your Videos

Video technologies are generally blocked by ISPs and email clients, so videos that are embedded directly into an email may not be playable when your fans open them.

As a result, it is not advisable to embed a video directly within an email message.

You *can* however include something in your email that looks like a playable video, but leads the subscriber to a page containing the actual playable video.

Load the Video Page and Take a Screenshot

In your web browser, open the page containing the video you'd like to include in your email.

The screenshot shows the AWeber website interface. At the top left is the AWeber logo. To the right is a 'My Account' link. Below the logo is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Features', 'Pricing', 'Partners', 'Support', 'Blog', and 'Order'. A 'Live Chat - Online' indicator is visible. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: '> Home > Support > Videos > Getting Started Guide'. The title of the page is 'Get Started With Email Marketing in Four Minutes'. Below the title is a video player thumbnail with the text 'Setting Up Your First Email Marketing Campaign' and a play button icon. To the right of the video player is a 'Support' sidebar with links for 'Contact Us', 'Knowledge Base', 'Videos', and 'Webinars'. Below the sidebar is a 'Live Webinars' section with a link to a 'free, live webinar' and a description of the webinar content. At the bottom of the page is a 'Contact a Real, Live Person' section with a 'Contact Us' link.

Scroll to a point on the page where you can clearly see your video. Then, take a screenshot of the page.

How to Take a Screenshot

A screenshot is simply a freeze-frame of whatever is on your screen at the point where you hit specified keys on your keyboard.

Using Windows? Hit the "Print Screen" button.

Using a Mac? Hold the "Command" and "Shift" buttons and hit "3"

Crop the Screenshot in an Image Editing Program

After taking your screenshot, open a new file in your preferred image editing program. If you do not have image editing software on your computer, you can also make use of a free image editing website called [Picnik](#). This is completely free to use, and requires no registration or installation.

Once you've opened the site and the application has loaded, click Upload a Photo. Choose your screenshot to start editing it.

Once it appears, click the Crop button and select the video:



The screenshot shows the AWeber website interface. At the top left is the AWeber logo. To the right are navigation links: Features, Pricing, Partners, Support, Blog, and Order. Below these is a live chat indicator. The main content area features a video player with a play button and the title "Setting Up Your First Email Marketing Campaign". Below the video player, there is text explaining that email marketing is a high ROI method and that the video provides a walk-through of setting up an effective campaign. A list of topics covered in the video is provided below the text. On the right side of the page, there is a "Support" section with links to Contact Us, Knowledge Base, Videos, and Webinars. Below that is a "Live Webinars" section with a link to a free live webinar. At the bottom right is a "Contact a Real, Live Person" section with a link to Contact Us.

My Account

Features Pricing Partners Support Blog Order

Live Chat - Online 9AM-5PM M-F ET, 9AM-5PM EST ET

> Home - Support - Videos - Getting Started Guide

Get Started With Email Marketing in Four Minutes

Setting Up Your
First Email Marketing Campaign

Email marketing is a high ROI ("return on investment") marketing method - not just on your investment of money - but also your investment of time.

This **five minute video** contains a walk through of all of the basics of setting up an effective email marketing campaign, including how to:

- Setup the welcome message sent to your subscribers when they sign up

Support

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Knowledge Base](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Webinars](#)

Live Webinars

Join our Education Team for a [free, live webinar](#).

Learn what you need to know about topics like getting started with email marketing, sending effective email newsletters, and building better sign up forms.

Contact a Real, Live Person

Can't find something you're looking for? Our expert team is standing by to provide you with answers to your questions.

[Contact Us](#)

Hit Ok when you've selected it - your image should now consist of just a capture of the video itself:



Under the "Save and Share" tab, click Save Photo. Save the file somewhere on your hard drive you'll be able to find easily in just a few minutes.

Upload the Image to Your Website and Add to Email

As you would any image you'd like to include in your email messages, upload the image file somewhere on your website or image hosting service and get its URL address.

Turn the Image into a Link

The last thing you need to do is transform the image so that when it is clicked on, subscribers are sent to the page containing the video.

Use the [link tool](#) to accomplish this. In the "Title" box enter some text like "Click to Play the Video" so that subscribers with images turned off by default still see an option to play the video.

Use Social Media

Use [social media networks](#) to spread the word about your concerts, and link to a [hosted web form](#) so that interested parties can add themselves to your email list.

To attract subscribers, HARD Festival, posts their newsletter on Facebook and MySpace. Then, they encourage their street teams to do the same.

At the bottom of that newsletter is an invitation. The words of that invitation are chosen carefully. Rather than clamoring for sign-ups, HARD presents subscription as an exclusive privilege, then generously offers the opportunity to join.

This newsletter is designed for HARD's VIP email subscribers and will look best in that format. Please click [here](#) to jump on.

"Our tests prove it works," says Tom of the members-only vibe. "The heyday of charging money for a 'fan club' may have passed, but the idea that a membership has inherent value remains true."

Solicit Feedback

Could we do things better? How would you rate the content of this message?

Not Useful [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) Very Useful

It's always helpful to know what fans are saying about you.

You could even solicit feedback using a [rating scale](#) – a few links inserted in a logical order in your message that allow your readers to rate their experience at your show.

Rating scales are also helpful for bands in the studio. If you release a sneak-peek of new music to your email list, ask readers to tell you how they like the music by rating the song 1-5.

Before a Show: Announce the Date and Sell, Sell, Sell

Charging for Tickets?

You'll want to include ticket prices in your email, what the concert entails and a link to a website or venue where those who are interested can buy tickets. Once tickets are purchased, you can have guests added to a different list within an AWeber account via [email parser](#).

If Your Concert is Free

You'll want to share all pertinent information about the show, and a link to a [hosted web form](#) where they can RSVP for the event so that they are added to a separate list within your account.

When the date of the big day draws closer, send concert-goers a message that addresses frequently asked questions and include directions to the venue. Even though the different venues that you play may be in charge of security and other concerns, nothing shows that you are more accommodating than including maps and parking information.

The more informed your fans are, the more willing they will be to come to another show in the future.

After the Show: Follow Up

After your event is over, of course you'll want to maintain a relationship with your fans. Find out what they really thought of the show and ask for feedback.

To do this, [survey your list](#) and ask questions about how they heard about the event, what their favorite songs were and where they would like to see you play soon.

It's not easy to get your foot in the door in the music industry, but email can certainly help. If we do say so ourselves, we know a thing or two about email marketing.

AWeber is the perfect tool for setting up your band's email campaign. These are the resources you'll need to get started:

Watch a Video:

<http://www.aweber.com/faq/questions/512>

Join Us For a Free, Live How To Session:

<http://www.aweber.com/webinars/>

Read the Getting Started Guide:

https://www.aweber.com/users/getting_started

Set up is easy and there's plenty of online documentation, but everyone's plan is different so questions may naturally come up at some point.

When they do, just get in touch with our Customer Solutions team however it's convenient for you:

- **Hours:** Monday through Friday, 4AM - 8PM ET & Saturdays, 9AM - 5PM ET
- **Toll Free Phone (US):** 1-877-AWEBER-1
- **International Phone:** +1 215-825-2196
- **Live text chat** at the top of every page on our site
- [Submit a ticket](#) and receive a prompt response by email

Email Marketing To Go

With these tips and ideas, you hopefully have a crystal clear picture of what you need to do to get your email campaign started.

When you're ready for a snapshot of the next step, come find one on our site or social pages!



Stop by [Inbox Ideas](#), our blog.



Follow our [Twitter feed](#) for the latest marketing links.



Watch our [YouTube videos](#) for helpful how-to's.



Become a fan on [Facebook](#) to interact with other marketers.

We have lots of helpful tips and advice ready for you. Can't wait to see you there!