



Julie Zaloba, founder of Julie Zaloba Consulting, LLC.

SIC codes, city, state, and so on. Moreover, the information can be customized before it is exported." The only limitation to this service is that the user can export only 50 contacts per download. However, the download process can be repeated multiple times. "The data extracted from Referenceusa.com has allowed me develop a list of contacts that resulted in many of them being converted into clients without incurring expenses," adds Harris.

Julie Zaloba runs a small business consulting practice and also uses free databases available through the library. She develops leads not only from these databases but also uses them as tools to work with her clients. "As a business research consultant, I need to access various industry resources that I can reference in my reports to clients. Instead of paying hundreds of dollars in subscription fees to access these online databases, I go to the university library or public library. At the library, I have free access to a wide variety of online databases in which I can research relevant information for my projects. Since I do not have to incur the cost of utilizing these resources, I can offer my consulting services at a more affordable rate."

Jake Jorgovan is the cofounder of an event design company operating in the entertainment industry that he and his partner launched while they were in college. "When we were looking to do market research and grow our sales pipeline, I was faced with the problem that I had little experience in the industry and did not know who all of the players were," said Jorgovan. "We couldn't afford a sales rep, so the only choice was to learn the industry myself." Jorgovan subscribed to variety of industry trade magazines. He carefully read through every article to identify

all the names of the key players involved in each production. He then would research these people further using Google. "I started seeing trends in the industry, who the big players were and who worked with whom," explained Jorgovan. "My document ended up growing to more than 60 pages long! It covered profiles of nearly every company and key individual in the event production industry." Jorgovan found that developing his database yielded two important outcomes. First, it gave him a contact list for the company's marketing efforts. It also helped him to be more credible when he made contacts from this list because when he talked to someone else in the industry, he knew whom they were talking about. "That created the perception that I had been in the industry for years," said Jorgovan.

In addition to actively seeking lists of contacts from free or low-cost sources, entrepreneurs can add to their database by making it easy for interested people to give them their contact information. This can be something as simple as a guest visitor book on the counter of a store or as high tech as embedding e-mail sign-up through a quick-response code. Because e-mail is fast becoming the preferred method of direct contact for many people, building an e-mail database can be a highly effective tool for attracting new customers and for retaining existing customers. Experts recommend that any direct contact with customers be as personal as possible. People tend to ignore messages that appear to be part of a large e-mail blast. Many effective marketers are using their databases to send customized messages to customers. Because social media are growing in their marketing applications, small companies can develop strategies to tie traditional e-mail and direct mail promotions into their social media marketing strategies, allowing the customers they contact to sign up for their companies' Facebook and Twitter accounts. Although direct-mail and e-mail marketing may seem a bit "old school," effective bootstrap marketers know that a list of potential customers can still be a gold mine for growing a business.

1. Are direct-mail and e-mail marketing still effective marketing tools? How can a small business owner with a limited budget develop a database when he or she is on a limited budget?
2. How can a small business owner use a database of potential and existing customers to help grow his or her business? In what ways can entrepreneurs tie e-mail marketing into their social media marketing strategies?
3. Develop a specific plan to develop a database of prospective customers for a small business you have already started or a business you hope to start in the near future. How would you go about gathering data? What type of data would you need? How would you target your data collection to ensure it is most effective for your business?

Sources: Based on Hollis Thomases, "Email Marketing Isn't Dead (Yet)," *Inc.*, August 28, 2012, www.inc.com/hollis-thomases/email-marketing-strategies.html; Brian Halligan, "Segments of One: Smarter Targeting for Your Customers," *Inc.*, January 26, 2012, www.inc.com/brian-halligan/audience-segmenting-targeting-your-customers.html.

Plotting a Bootstrap Marketing Strategy: Building a Competitive Edge

Small companies simply do not have the resources to devote to marketing that their larger rivals do. Marketing a small company effectively requires entrepreneurs to rely on bootstrap marketing

5. Describe the bootstrap