



VerticalResponse – Free eNewsletter Service

Question: I recently heard that a service called VerticalResponse actually offers eNewsletter functionality like Constant Contact free of charge. Is that true?

Answer:

Yes, VerticalResponse (<http://www.verticalresponse.com/>) is a tool that offers a variety of services for communicating with your constituents, including eNewsletter, eSurvey, and postcard distribution services. Their eNewsletter service, which is similar to Constant Contact and MailChimp, offers up to 10,000 free emails per month to qualified nonprofits. They define an email as any communication via their service to an individual email address. So, if you have 5,000 email addresses in your database, you can send them all two eNewsletters each month from VerticalResponse for free.

You can sign up for a free trial before you even apply as a nonprofit to try out the service. We found that the application was fairly easy to use. It offers many nice starter templates to get your eNewsletter started, although we found it slightly harder to customize the templates than in Constant Contact. However, the interface is basically like using MS Word, so it is not very difficult to master. It offers many of the same statistical features as Constant Contact as well, allowing you to view who has opened your eNewsletter and which links they are clicking on. Unlike in Constant Contact, however, you have to download the statistics to MS Excel to view (Constant Contact allows you to drill-down on these stats right in the application). Finally, Constant Contact is the proven leader in ensuring your emails get through spam filters and reach their destination. VerticalResponse has less of a track record in this area. The vast majority of emails will get through, but they have slightly less success in this area.

This blog post (<http://community.contractwebdevelopment.com/constant-contact-vs-icontact-vs-vertical-response>) compares VerticalResponse, Constant Contact, and a variety of other eNewsletter services. Take a look if you are in the market for a new service.

In summary, VerticalResponse is a viable alternative. It's worth applying for the free account and testing it out. In addition, the other integrated services may offer some value for your nonprofit.

Are you using VerticalResponse for your eNewsletter? Do you have any additional comments about the service? If you are using VerticalResponse (or have used it in the past), please let us know!