



## ALPACA ADVANTAGE August 2008 Issue

*Actionable ideas on growing your alpaca business*

August Topics: (Fun with Promotional Products/ Starting Your eNewsletter- Part 1)

To read this in PDF version, download issue at:  
[www.wisteriasuriranch.com/newsletters.htm](http://www.wisteriasuriranch.com/newsletters.htm)

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**\*Quick update\*: We moved in July and have a new address. We're at 875 County Road 454, Taylor, TX 76574. New tel # is (512) 856-0295.**

### Fun with Promotional Products

I shop around quite a bit looking for value- not necessarily the least expensive since cheapest isn't always best. But there are always companies that offer irresistible value- 4imprint is at the top of my list. ([www.4imprint.com](http://www.4imprint.com))

#### Best Features

4imprint offers a variety of promotional products backed by great customer service.

They give you actual samples upon request so you know exactly what you will get. They will ship it to you for free and allow you to keep most of the lower cost items.

Their art team is fantastic! They did a beautiful job with my request at no additional charge.

They have clearance items which you can get for very attractive prices- samples are not provided for these though.

Their customer service is exceptional- and their website is very easy to use.

## **Bonus Tips for Selecting Promotional Products**

1. Make sure your promo item matches or ties into your overall business goals/themes/marketing
  - a. Example: If your focus is on alpacas as investments, calculators are appropriate promo products.
  - b. Example: Alpaca fleece as a natural alternative- how about organic shopping bags with your logo?
  - c. Example: Big on herdsires? How about a calendar so your clients can book in advance and know who to call?
2. Select colors based on your branding and keep it consistent
3. Make sure you have contact info- as many ways to reach you as possible since everyone has a preferred method

Let me know if you'd like our promo item! It's a nice large denim bag with our logo. I use it for shopping and carrying fleece, etc. around. keitaki@gmail.com.

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## **Starting Your eNewsletter- Part 1**

First of all- why would you want to start your own newsletter?

The short answer is: Newsletters are relationship building tools and help businesses stay in touch with potential customers. For most people, purchasing an alpaca takes time. People want information first- and will end up doing business with farms that give useful information and have alpacas they are looking for.

### **So how do you get started?**

1. You need a title/ main topic for your newsletter.
2. You need to write your first issue (or have someone else write it for you).
3. You need a list of subscribers.
4. You need a delivery system to get your newsletters to your list of subscribers.

Collecting subscribers at your website and selecting a delivery system can go hand in hand.

## Collecting subscribers for your newsletter

To get your subscribers, you need your web visitors to sign up for your newsletter using a form. Several services which automatically send emails/newsletters to your list also have easy customizable forms you can create to put on your website.

There are two main styles in collecting subscribers:

1. A button links to another page which collects information (Constant Contact uses this style- example: "Subscribe to My Newsletter" button on your website leads to a new page where visitors can give you their name and email)
2. A form which can be created and embedded into your website, so visitors fill in the name and email on your website. The information still gets sent to the service you selected (iContact, MailChimp uses this method)

I personally prefer to embed the form on my website because the less clicks the visitor has, the better.

## Selecting the Delivery System

The three services I tested include: iContact, Constant Contact, and MailChimp. I was shopping for price, an embeddable form, decent template and reliable delivery. I didn't test Aweber since their trial was not free.

Let me give you a quick run down to save you some time.

### **iContact**    <http://www.icontact.com>

**Pros:** Sign up form is intuitive and nice, price ok

**Cons:** 15 day trial, templates

### **Constant Contact**    <http://www.constantcontact.com>

**Pros:** 30 day trial, customer service seemed good, professional templates

**Cons:** Couldn't find forms to embed, had buttons instead, pricey

### **MailChimp**    <http://www.mailchimp.com>

**Pros:** Pay as you go choice starting with a \$15 credit, intuitive interface, good online videos, excellent templates (not many, but very customizable), easy forms you can embed

**Cons:** Can't think of any

It's always easier to get set up properly at the beginning. The time you spend now will save you much more later. I wish I knew about MailChimp earlier!

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Thank you for reading our newsletter. Feel free to send us comments or questions.

We respect your privacy and will never ever share your email with anyone. We will only send you our monthly newsletter you have subscribed to.

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