



Author Platform Rocket

Email Marketing for Authors: How To Transform Subscribers Into Buyers

Handout for Session 6: How to Setup Your Personal Reader Campaign (MailChimp Demo)

This handout provides the step-by-step instructions and is designed to be used with the webinar taught on 8/16/2016.

UPDATED: As of 11/16/16, this handout has been updated.

Mailing List Services – Arial Burnz’s Personal Evaluation

This list is by no means extensive and I’ll be honest in saying that if any of the features I wanted were not provided, I gave up some of the testing. I had very little time to put each of these services through a grueling evaluation and sometimes the poor/lacking customer service or just the clunky newsletter editor made me abandon the service. The ones I did test, though, fell into the same price range, so some services didn’t get me to try them out if they were too cost prohibitive.

You can also visit this link to explore more options: [The Best Email Marketing Services of 2016](#)

Features I was Looking For

This is in order of importance and if a service didn’t match up to my expectations based on what I’ve heard a lot of authors’ needs as well as abilities, I didn’t continue to was my time evaluating the service. So that’s why the evaluations are incomplete. They are listed in order of importance. Remember, the more automated you can make this whole process, the more time you will have to write. CAN you do without some of these features? Sure, but you’ll end up doing a lot of manual labor to accomplish the same results. So these are not only the things you should consider when evaluating a service, but this list will also help you know what to ask for if you need to contact their customer service.

1. **Pricing** – The only reason I’m listing this here is because it was the first factor I looked at when I did my evaluation. If the service was too pricey, I didn’t even bother testing them out. So there may be other services out there who do better than MailChimp or the other ones I looked at, but they were too expensive to consider. Most services I evaluated fell into the \$40-\$75/mo range for about 5000 subscribers. MadMimi is \$42 for 10k, but grouping and automation features were just not as robust as MailChimp. MailChimp is \$55/mo for 5000-5200 people and \$75 for 5800-10,000. I used to balk at the price, too, but when other services charge about the same amount of money for less features and crappy newsletter editors, MailChimp always came out on top for me because you really do get more bang for your buck. The money is well worth it and if you have to choose only one area of your marketing budget to focus on, your mailing list

is the best investment for the long haul...any email marketer worth their weight in gold will tell you that. Nick Stephenson, Mark Dawson and Tim Grahm – among others – have all said that.

2. **Easy-to-use newsletter/campaign editor** – This was really important because none of us have time to mess around with formatting or trying to get your newsletter to look the way you want. Who wants to wrestle with creating your campaigns? It should be a joy to create them.
MailChimp and Mad Mimi were really easy to use! MailerLite was a dream to use, but they're horrible when it comes to automation and importing lists.
3. **EASY Multi-list management** – Unfortunately, a lot of the services I tested do not allow transferring of subscribers from one list to another without exporting and importing, or they made it very inconvenient to do so. Now if you're going to use a separate service to import all your giveaway subscribers, then this might not mean much to you. But if you'd like to stick with one service, make sure you look at this when evaluating a service. MadMimi doesn't do too bad of job at this, but it's very simplified. MailChimp allows deeper layers and more options.
4. **Drip Campaigns – Autoresponders at a bare minimum** – These are the services that all use true drip campaigns: Aweber, MadMimi, ActiveCampaign, MailChimp and SendinBlue all affordable services that have true Drip Campaigns. HOWEVER, except for MailChimp, they had a lot of other marks against them in the other features mentioned here. Mad Mimi is the only other one I would recommend using.
5. **Ability for subscribers to update their own profiles and information** – this is REALLY important. When you're building your list, email marketing best practices will tell you to keep it to one or two fields – name & email address. As many of you know, the giveaways only collect an email address and we have no control over that. KingSumo won't let us customize the form. So if that is the only thing you're gathering, what an administrative nightmare to have to reach out to your subscribers and ask them to give you their information and then you have to go into their profile and update it for them. I cannot tell you how many services do not offer this feature. MadMimi does!
6. **Reporting** – Most services will have reporting and that's extremely important when you're trying to reward those people who are very active OR you're trying to reach out to those who are inactive so you can encourage them to participate more. Of course reporting will also help you do a little house cleaning when you want to delete subscribers who are completely unresponsive. The problem, though, is even though services have reporting, you might not be able to create segments based on activity. Some services don't do that, so be sure they do when you're shopping around.
7. **Anniversary/Birthday autoresponders** – This may not be an important feature for some people, but is certainly is for me. I have a fun process set up, which we'll talk about later in the course, that sends out a birthday greeting the DAY of their birthday. I have over 120 comments on my website of me and my readers interacting back and forth just because of this feature. In an automated process like we're setting up here, that extra little feature makes a huge difference in getting personal with your audience. MailChimp has this too and they do it beautifully! Mad Mimi has it, but it's difficult to use.

Mailing List Services – In Some Detail

I won't be listing MailChimp here because you'll know extensively why I chose it during the webinars. I'll be talking in detail about the many features while I demonstrate them. As for the other services...

MadMimi - Very affordable for long-term use and recommended if you can't afford MailChimp

- FREE - 100 subscribers, automation & unlimited sends
- \$42/mo – 10k subscribers, speed x2?
- *Evaluation:* MadMimi is probably one of the most affordable options out there and I've heard a lot of good things about them. Their campaign editor is pretty easy to use, but doesn't quite have the design flexibility MailChimp does. They have lots of templates and they have automation (what they call "Drips"). Their multi-list management is a bit limited compared to MailChimp. Your account is basically one big list and their "lists" are actually what MailChimp would use as groups. However, you can't drill down much further than that. You CAN create new lists for segments of people based on activity, but it's a bit clumsy and you might get a little confused at all the new lists you'll be making for certain projects or responses. It is doable, though. If you can't afford MailChimp, this might be a more affordable option with some pretty easy workarounds. I would choose this over the other options below. They're also pretty understanding and flexible about lists coming from giveaways, especially if your giveaway clearly states when the contestants enter, they're also joining a mailing list.

SendinBlue – Charges per email, invasive approval process

- FREE - 9000 emails/mo & MAX 300 emails/day
- \$7.37/mo – 40k emails/mo & no daily max
- *Evaluation:* SendinBlue's pricing model is a bit confusing because they charge per message. If you have a large list and a drip campaign set up, trying to figure out how many messages you may be sending out at any given time can be a mathematical nightmare. They also have a rather intensive approval process for imported lists. As C.K. Brooke shared in the review she sent me, not only did she have to complete an extensive questionnaire just to get her account approved, which included her having to provide links to where she would be posting her signup form, once she was approved to send her first campaign, they delayed it to scrub her contacts and they apparently will do this for every campaign she sends to a new list of contacts – even if you're importing a list from another service or you have a list of people you have manually gathered yourself, like if you go to a convention and have a sign-up sheet. Any imports will be scrutinized.

GetResponse - For the marketing savvy author & presenter, but clumsy

- 30-day free trial, \$15/mo 1000 subscribers, basic automation, invasive approval process
- \$65-\$75/mo – 10k subscribers, lots of marketing features
- *Evaluation:* GetResponse has a lot of robust features, but a lot of what they do probably won't be used by most authors. If you get the pro package, which is \$10 more you get to host webinars and landing pages, but the thing that really turned me off about them was their campaign editor, which kept malfunctioning on me when I wanted to move modules around and it was very confusing. This is good if you're a non-fiction author and you have a ton of webinars or squeeze pages you'd like to accompany your marketing campaigns, but I would not recommend this for the fiction author who is trying to keep things simple.

MailerLite – Also not good for imported lists, horrible automation & customer support...but great newsletter editor

- FREE – 1000 subscribers, unlimited sending
- \$20/mo – 10k subscribers
- *Evaluation:* MailerLite was very affordable and they had, by far, the best newsletter editor I tried. I loved their bouncy interface and ease of adding modules and moving things around. I really wanted these guys to pass the test because composing newsletters was so much fun! The problem with MailerLite is they go overboard with trying to prevent spam and their features and services not only suffer for it, but they make sending out automated messages extremely inconvenient, especially for people who are importing large lists from any giveaway. MailerLite failed miserably in so many other areas, especially in their customer service where their own support desk doesn't even know how to use their own products and even gave very bad advice about email marketing. I DO NOT recommend MailerLite at all, sadly.

ActiveCampaign – Inflexible editor (couldn't alter templates)

- 14-day free trial, \$9/mo for “Lite” - 500 subscribers, some automation & unlimited sends
- \$49/mo – 500 subscribers, full automation & list management
- \$75/mo – 10k subscribers, full automation & list management
- *Evaluation:* ActiveCampaign is similar to GetResponse in that it's more designed for the email marketing client and authors probably won't use all the bells and whistles they offer. To get the full automation you can get with MailChimp, you have to buy their small business account, which is much more expensive. Their newsletter editor is pretty easy to use, but doesn't quite have the design flexibility MailChimp does. They have lots of templates and they have automation. I didn't get to play around with their list management, though, and they were one of the last ones I tried out, so I ran out of time, so the jury is still out on them. If you're running a really robust follow-through drip campaign to funnel people into different messages based on their purchase or click history, then I've heard these guys are pretty great. But you have to pay more and deal with the clunky and inflexible newsletter templates or deal with the learning curve of their newsletter editor.

Aweber – Clunky editor, poor list management, problems modifying templates

- 30-day free trial, \$19/mo – 500 subscribers, automation & unlimited sends
- \$69/mo – 10k subscribers
- *Evaluation:* Aweber is much more forgiving when it comes to importing large lists, which is why Jonny likes them so much. He manages anywhere from 50k to 80k subscribers at any given time as he is very diligent about maintaining an active and responsive list. I wasn't happy with their editor, though. Their templates were nice, but I really couldn't modify or tweak them to suit my taste. They don't have any group management at all, but they are experimenting with a new thing called “tags”, which is still in beta right now. And a couple of drip campaigns I set up with them weren't working and I couldn't figure out why. I wouldn't recommend them because they don't seem to have any real benefits that outweigh the problems, especially since they're supposed to be one of the mailing list services who have been around for a very long time. You'd think they would have figured some of this stuff out by now!

CAN-SPAM Act Statement

For those who are interested in including a CAN-SPAM Act statement in their emails, I've included the one I have in my own messages for my giveaway. Please alter it to suit your needs. But also keep in mind how the CAN-SPAM Act affects us. Basically, the law is stating you can't lure people into giving away their email address and then start sending them a bunch of UNRELATED emails. So if you have a giveaway with us which clearly shows the giveaway is about books and book-related prizes, then you can't follow up with your customers and start selling your Sentsy Candles and Herbalife supplements. That would be violating the CAN-SPAM Act. Your messages need to be about BOOKS!

So here's the message I have included in my messages. You don't have to include this OR you can put something similar in your footer, which I've adopted recently. Here's what I used to put in my messages close to the top after I gave them the link to the free eBook:

Remember...

Joining My Giveaway = Joining My Mailing List

You were added to my mailing list when you entered my giveaway, which was clearly stated on the giveaway description and in the rules. However, you can [unsubscribe](#) at any time. PLEASE do not mark this message as SPAM because the giveaway promoted my books...and so do my messages, so that means I'm sending you relevant content in accordance with the [CAN-SPAM Act](#). Thank you!

Winners will be contacted via the email address they used to enter the contest, so even if you [unsubscribe](#), you'll still be notified if you win.

Note: the “unsubscribe links” above are not links, just meant to look like them, but they’re a reminder you should include the unsubscribe link at these points. I don’t believe MailerLite allows you to insert an unsubscribe link, so you’ll have to instruct people to scroll to the bottom of the message to get to the link. For example: “However, you can unsubscribe at any time – just scroll to the bottom and use the link.” Or similar wording.

Since I conducted the live webinar, I made changes to where and how I present the CAN-SPAM Act. Here's the new content I'm using in my footers for the giveaway emails:

Q. Why am I receiving this email?

A. Because you entered one of Arial's giveaways. Don't worry! When the contest is over, you'll be removed from her list after she's sent the final message of the winners. So stay subscribed if you want to be notified if you won. All messages are in compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act. What that means is the giveaways Arial runs collects your email address AND are always related to her books, so the messages she sends will be about the giveaways and her books. If she starts sending you Viagra ads or asks you to buy Sentsy Candles...then by all means, SPAM dat bitch! But that won't happen, so don't worry about it.

Links in this Document

CAN-SPAM Act reference page:

<https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>

Mad Mimi – <http://www.madmimi.com>

SendInBlue – <https://www.sendinblue.com/>

GetResponse – <https://www.getresponse.com/>

MailerLite – <https://www.mailerlite.com/>

ActiveCampaign – <http://www.activecampaign.com/>

Aweber – <http://www.aweber.com/>

Questions?

Try as I might, I know I can't be 100% effective in my communications. What sounds clear to me might be really confusing to you. No problem! If you have any questions about the ideas I've shared above, just email us at aprgiveaways@gmail.com and either I, Brenda or Jonny can answer your questions.

I hope you found this handout helpful and you're enjoying the webinars.

Thank you!!

Arial Burnz

Author of HOT Scottish Vampires