

LESSON 2: AUTORESPONDER COMPARISON AND REVIEW

EMAIL LIST SECRETS



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COMPARISON & REVIEW

If you're going to build an effective mailing list, then you will absolutely need an autoresponder. There is simply no way that you can run an effective mailing list without this crucial tool, making it one of the most important investments you can make for your business.

This is also actually the *only* investment you'll really need to make as an email marketer. Unless you pay for advertising to bring people to your squeeze page, the only money you'll pay is the monthly fee that it costs to sign up for mailing list.

That makes it rather important that you choose the right one. In this detailed report, we'll be comparing the top autoresponders to see how they're different and which one might be right for you!

What is an Autoresponder?

In case you're completely new to email marketing, an autoresponder is the tool that you will use not only to build your opt-in form, but also to receive incoming new subscribers, to manage their addresses and to generally keep your mailing list ticking over. When you send a message out to your entire list, you will do so *through* your autoresponder. Likewise, if someone clicks 'unsubscribe', then your autoresponder will handle that so

that you don't manually have to remove them from your mailing list.

In short, managing all the contacts that make up a mailing list would be an impossible task once you reached a certain size. An autoresponder is thus able to do this for you so that you can spend less time juggling emails and more time building a massive and highly successful list/sending out compelling messages.

Autoresponders go above and beyond these basic features though and also provide you with powerful functionality to expand your marketing and to make even more of a splash. For instance, an autoresponder can help you to see metrics for your users and your individual messages. This means that you can see things such as how many people have viewed your emails and what the 'open rate' is. Likewise, you'll be able to see which of your subscribers aren't opening *any* of your messages (and thus delete them from your list) and which subscribers are the most highly engaged (so that you can try selling to them).

Then there's the function that gives the autoresponder its name: the ability to send out autoresponder sequences. These are sequences of emails that are designed to be read in order and that will help to increasingly engage your subscribers and/or help to sell to them. A good example of an autoresponder sequence might be an online course that ends with you trying to sell something. With an autoresponder sequence, you can sit back

and relax while your new leads are gradually converted into hot leads that are ready to buy from you!

How to Choose an Autoresponder

With that all in mind, one of the most important considerations when picking an autoresponder is what kind of marketing you intend on doing and what features you'll need as a result.

There are generally four big email autoresponders that many people will consider. These are: **Aweber** (www.aweber.com), **Infusionsoft** (www.infusionsoft.com), **GetResponse** (www.getresponse.com) and **MailChimp** (www.mailchimp.com).

The good news is that all of these big names should provide all of the features that I just subscribed. No matter which of these you choose then, you should be able to accept new subscribers, remove people who want to leave and send out mass messages that everyone will receive.

Where they differ is in the price and in their specialism and their additional features.

For example, Infusionsoft is a mailing list autoresponder that is very much designed in order to work with a sales page. This is for people who want to sell a digital product and who want to promote that product through their email list. That's because the tool

combines a mailing list *with* a sales platform. This means it probably isn't the best choice if you have a business that sells car windows but it might be a good choice if you're a traditional internet marketer looking to sell an ebook. This kind of synergy will mean that you can see which of your subscribers has visited your checkout page before for example and which ones are previous customers – all at a glance.

On the other hand, Aweber, GetResponse and MailChimp are far more designed in order to be used as more 'conventional' autoresponders. Their differences often revolve around the advanced features they might offer and the support that you get from third parties.

In particular, if you are working with WordPress, you will find that there are some widgets and plugins that will only support specific autoresponders. If you want to combine these in order to work together then, you'll need to choose the right autoresponder to ensure compatibility.

As mentioned, the price is also different depending on which of these products you eventually choose.

Unfortunately, it's not a simple matter to compare the prices of your different autoresponders, seeing as they each use a much more complex pricing structure that is based on the number of subscribers you have at any given time.

Looking at the three main *pure* autoresponders, this is a rough break down of how the prices compare:

MailChimp:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
500	\$10
1,000	\$15
10,000	\$75
20,000	\$150
30,000	\$215
40,000	\$240
50,000	\$240

AWeber

Subscription Plan	Fee
Monthly	\$19
Quarterly	\$49
Yearly	\$194

This is then on top of the following monthly fee:

Subscribers	Additional Monthly Fee
< 500	N/A
501-2,500	\$10
2,501 5,000	\$30
5,001 10,000	\$50
10,001-25,000	\$130
25,001+	Not Listed

GetResponse:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
1,000	\$15
2,500	\$25
5,000	\$45
10,000	\$65
25,000	\$145
50,000	\$250
100,000	\$450

As you can see, the prices are a little more complex to work out but really they aren't all that different. For those reasons, you might be best advised to choose the autoresponder you want to use on the basis of its features rather than the price.

With that said, let's take a look at each of these products in a little more detail to see how they're different.

Note: If you really want to engage in some cost cutting and want to pay as little as possible for your autoresponder service, note that you *can* transfer your contacts from one to the other by exporting the list. This means that you can sign up to whichever service is offering the best rates for completely new members and then switch to the one that offers the best rates for bigger and more established marketing once you've grown a bit.

Do keep in mind though that this can sometimes result in an interruption in service for your customers though, as they might be requested to re-confirm their subscription in some cases and some others might get lost along the way. So it's not ideal, but it is an option if you don't want to commit right now!

Comparisons

MailChimp

MailChimp is probably the most affordable for completely new users, which will attract a lot of people to begin with. For a long time, it was offering a deal where you could sign up for free up to the first 2,000 subscribers.

This makes it a popular choice among the smaller, more niche businesses which actually helps to create something of a community around it.

MailChimp has a very cute interface with its little monkey mascot and lots of nice light blue coloring. It's a nice environment to work in and one that feels very much right for a smaller business, rather than a large multinational corporation.

However, MailChimp is also a little slower to use than some of the others. The interface isn't all that fast and unless you're paying more, you'll have to put up with that 'cute' logo on all of your messages. This can detract from your own brand slightly.

It's also a shame that there's no way to import your own template. But other than that, you will get access to all of the essential features that you are probably looking for with your mailing list.

That means you'll be able to create opt-in forms, check in with your subscribers, see how your messages are performing, send your bulk emails and set-up autoresponder sequences. It also has good support thanks to that small community that I mentioned. This means that a lot of WordPress plugins etc. *will* work with MailChimp.

GetResponse

GetResponse is an autoresponder that is a little better suited to the larger or more serious business. It has a ton of high-end features and offers great customer service and an excellent interface. Arranging the order of autoresponders is as simple as dragging and dropping with a nice touch interface for example.

One of the best features of GetResponse is the amount of control it gives you over your automated messages. You'll be able to set up messages that will send automatically on the basis of specific actions taken by your visitors, or based on the time etc. This means you can write lots of emails in advance and then schedule them and it means you can also set up very smart automated systems to help convert more subscribers and to build trust and engagement over time without having to lift a finger.

GetResponse also features another great 'advanced' feature, which is split testing. This means you'll be able to send two slightly different versions of the same message to see which

bounces the most and which gets the best open rates. You can use that then in order to copy the good behaviors that get you more engagement and more conversion and to cut out the strategies that aren't working. The bottom line? More efficient marketing and better profits!

Aweber

Aweber is in many ways the most popular and well-known autoresponder. It's arguably among the more expensive out there but it also gives you a huge amount of control over the look and feel of your messages, the way you handle your contacts and more.

You'll get access to over 600 email templates which you can use to build professional-looking newsletters and info bursts. You'll also get a lot of support from third parties seeing as this is probably the largest autoresponder out there.

Best of all, Aweber has been subjected to extensive testing to ensure that it will be effective at getting into the inboxes of your subscribers whether they're using Outlook, Gmail or something else entirely.

Aweber has powerful reporting tools and gives you some control over when you want to send emails etc. (though perhaps not as much as GetResponse).

InfusionSoft

As mentioned previously, Infusionsoft is a little different from the other autoresponders on this list. That's because its focus is on selling through a sales page and on integrated its email services to that end. This means you'll be able to keep track of cookies to see which of your emails is resulting in the most sales and which of your customers is likely to be ready to buy from you.

This is a fantastic tool for those that are planning on selling a digital product because it will streamline the process considerably. Then again though, if you just want a standard mailing list, then you might find that MailChimp or Aweber are better suited to your purposes.

Infusionsoft is more expensive than the competition because it offers more features and that also makes it a bit more complicated to navigate. Following a recent redesign, some users find that it is no longer as user friendly as it once was.

It is up to you and to your specific marketing strategy whether or not the features that InfusionSoft offers will be worth the minor sacrifices in terms of cost and usability.

Summary

In conclusion then, any of these autoresponders will serve you well and should include all the features you need and plenty of support from the wider community. However, if the precise choice that best suits you will always depend on the nature of your brand and your audience. For smaller startups, MailChimp might be a good choice. For those that want to use advanced autoresponder sequences, then GetReponse might be the best choice. Aweber is the best all-round professional package, while InfusionSoft is really only for those users that are planning on selling digital products and want to make this a big part of their strategy.