



Expert Summit

MASTERCLASS TRANSCRIPT



Namecheap Expert Summit

Choosing an Email Marketing tool for your business | Alice Jennings

Hello, and welcome to this session on choosing an email marketing tool for your business. My name's Alice, and I'll be with you for maybe 25 to 30 minutes.

And we're going to be talking about why we would use email marketing, what it actually is and I'm going to be taking you through three different systems so you can see what the differences are and hopefully, find the right one for you. And by the end of the session, hopefully, you'll know whether email marketing is something you want to do. And if it is, then which system you're going to have a go with.

And the reason I'm here to talk to you about this, is because I am a geek. I help small business owners to choose the best systems and processes to get more stuff done in less time. I used to do this in big businesses as a consultant, helping big businesses to run really efficiently, usually for the purposes of making more money. Now I help small business owners to create more time, using exactly the same techniques and you get to choose what you do with that time.

You might want to grow your business or you might wish to spend more time with your family. Walk your dog, watch the telly. I don't mind, that bit's up to you.

So I live in the UK, right in the middle of the UK, in a little, rural village. And when I'm not sat in front of my computer geeking out on systems, I spend a lot of time with my lovely sheep, who are very cute and you might get to see a few more of them as we go through.

So, first of all, I just want to cover off, what is email marketing? What are we talking about and why would we bother?

So email marketing is the use of emails to try and longer-term, sell people things. It doesn't always have to be a sales email, but the purpose of this email

is over time, to build up a relationship with potential clients or existing customers, so that you can sell them stuff.

And when people first got email addresses, they were very keen to sign up for emails. But now it's a little bit harder, sometimes we need to create a bribe, an ethical bribe, lead magnet, sometimes it's called or a freebie, a reason for people to sign up, and that might be a discount code. It might be a free report or something that will be useful to them and you may need to do that exchange of value. So they give you their email address and you give them something useful.

And the reason why we do this, is because even though we all groan a little bit when we talk about our emails, email marketing still gives us the very best return on investment for our dollar. If we spend \$1 on email marketing, depending on which report you read, you will get back between 15 and \$30, which outstrips ads, social media, content creation, all the other things we could do online. So that's a good reason to give it a go.

I love email marketing because I feel like I can actually have a relationship with my customers. When I send an email, I quite often get replies back. And that's really great, it's a really great way of making those relationships.

Also, you own your email list, if you're using social media and only social media, then there is always the risk of your account being closed down. And then there's nothing you can do about, and you've essentially lost your customer base. So I'd really urge you to think about using email marketing, which hopefully you are because you're watching this.

It's important to use a tool to do your email marketing because sending bulk emails from your regular email address, will probably get you banned as a spammer. And you'll find that even your normal emails won't get delivered very well.

And there are also legal implications around how you manage the data, the privacy protection, et cetera, that varies by where you are in the world. But most countries are covered by some kind of privacy regulation. And it's really important that you stick to that and all the email tools help you to do that more easily. So that's why we would use a tool. Plus they give you loads of great features, which we're going to have a look at in a minute.

So, what are the options? Well, this could be a full day discussing all the different platforms that are out there, but we are going to focus on just three.

The first one is Mailchimp. You may have heard of Mailchimp. It's almost become a verb to send a Mailchimp. I'm doing a Mailchimp. No, that's a noun, now I'm not very good at English. Nevermind, that's not what I'm here for. So Mailchimp has been around for a long time. They were very innovative. They were the first company that made it possible for small businesses to get going for free with email marketing. However, they've recently made some changes to what they offer and I'm not sure they're still the most competitive but they are a great benchmark to measure against.

The second one we're going to look at is MailerLite. So MailerLite is a new kid on the block and it's very cool, very easy to use, reasonably generous free policy, free policy, free package. I'm going to look at that, compare it to Mailchimp.

And the third one is a big gun, It's called ActiveCampaign and ActiveCampaign has loads of features that the other two don't and a really powerful tool. So great if you're planning to be the next Amy Porterfield I was getting my Marie Forleo's and my Amy Porter., so if you really, really want to get into that big online business then you might want to take a look at ActiveCampaign. Also great if you want to integrate with sales, CRMs and things like that. Anyway, we'll come on to that.

So with any competition, we obviously need to set out the rules before we get started. And I could have millions of requirements but again, we're back just with quite a short session.

So I've decided we're going to judge these tools on five criteria, and they are, the ability to send emails that look nice. That's important, we want people to open our email and find it easy to read and pretty.

The ability to divide your subscribers up into groups, so this is something that is really useful if you have people with different interests. So maybe you run a service that is for children but it could be purchased by a parent or it could be purchased by a school. So you'd have different groups.

The third thing is the ability to send automated emails. This is when you can be asleep and someone can sign up for your email list and then over the period of maybe three or four days or a week, depending on your personal preferences

and your business, you send them a series of emails, each one telling them a little bit more about your business, your services, what you offer, so that you get to know them and they get to know you. And they're looking forward to opening your emails.

And the fourth thing is, is it easy for your new subscribers to sign up? Or is it easy for you to add a new form or page so people can sign up to something? So if you have an idea and you want to start collecting people who are interested in it, we do not want the tech to be the thing that's getting in the way here.

So really important, and number five, is it cost-effective? So this doesn't mean it's cheap but are we getting good value for money?

Okay, so we're going to take those five criteria and we're going to look at the three different platforms and work out which one gives us the best value.

Right, so first up, the ability to send a nice looking email, let's go and have a look. So to save a bit of time, I've gone right into the exact screens where you would be making your email template, making it look nice. And we're going to start off in Mailchimp.

This is what a basic template looks like when you just choose to set one up and you can see down this left-hand side, we've got the different areas. So I can add a logo, it's quite easy. Your contents on the left and your options are on the right, so I can choose to put my logo in. Here we go, and then I can edit, quite easily again, in a kind of word style.

I've got options around the styles and the settings. How many columns I want, et cetera. Once I've written my text, I can pop a button in and the different blocks I've got to work with to make my emails look nice. I've got a plain text and a box text. So box text just breaks up the page a little bit. There you go, so you can see it's just got a background.

You could use your own brand colors to make that a little bit more personalized. You've got dividers, images, a group of images, an image card, that's kind of like a newspaper article. So it's got the caption underneath, image and text, a share, social follow button and a few products and actually one of the things Mailchimp does well, is it can integrate into certain stores. So if you're in e-comm, you might find that useful. Also, we can pop a video in. So that's what the Mailchimp offer is.

Next, we're going to have a look at the MailerLite, so similar setup in that our main template sits in the middle of the page. And then when we click on something, then what we see is the editing area popup here. So I'm going to click edit, I don't want to edit the image. All of them I believe, have an integrated editing for the images, if you just want to crop the edge off or this one's even got the ability to make it a bit brighter or darker, et cetera. So you can actually edit the image inside but, again, you can choose from your library of images to allow you to make the email nice and personal.

The really great thing that MailerLite has, is a huge array of options. So we could add a, it's almost like the top of a website. You can see, so you can have links at the top of the page. And then if we go down this left-hand section, we've got images, titles, title and subtitle title and button, we've got links. We've got videos. The video option, if you use a link to a YouTube video, it even gives you the option to create a little GIF from the video. So that, just to make it that little bit more eye catching.

I've got all sorts of layouts for articles and you could create these yourself from scratch but actually, they can save you so much time because you don't have to fuff about getting columns lined up and such, like relatively new feature, the carousel block, where you click, you've got the little thumbnails underneath and then the bigger image showing above. Galleries, buttons, every manner of button under the sun, products, but a couple of things that are really eye catching in here, that I really love.

We've got a countdown timer, pop that in there, and you just click on it and you choose the date that you want to count down to. So if you've got a sale coming up or I don't know, you've got a workshop, something, you can pop that in and then whenever anybody opens the email, it will work out exactly how long you've got left before that date arrives.

And the other thing that's really handy is a survey block. So this is an actual survey that's embedded into the MailerLite product. You can ask people to respond to a question and you can have like this, the little, I don't know what the technical term is, but you know, how happy are you? We can have a like or dislike, which is really easy. So if you're saying, I was thinking of offering this new product or service, give me a thumbs up or thumbs down, and then using the rules option here, you can actually add rules that cause different actions to happen depending on what people respond. So if I said yes to, would you be interested in a particular workshop? I might be sent an email with more details

about it. And if I said, no, I might be sent an email saying, thanks very much. Is there anything that you would like a workshop on? So that is MailerLite.

Finally, we will have a quick look at ActiveCampaign. So ActiveCampaign, this has, down the right-hand side you can see the different options. We've got text blocks, images, we've got buttons, videos, line breaks, spaces and social links. So nowhere near the number of blocks that MailerLite has.

However, one thing that I really liked that they do have, is the ability to save a block. So you can save to a sort of central library, which means that you could use that block in another email somewhere else. So that's a real time saver and a really great tool but generally, it's a fairly basic email product builder. So you can change the colors, you can change the fonts but it's just not got the range of features of MailerLite.

So, time to give some scores I think, let's have a think. Okay, so who's going to win this round? We've had Mailchimp, which did a reasonable job and we had MailerLite, which you may have guessed, I think was brilliant. And we had ActiveCampaign, which was also a reasonable job. So I'm awarding two stars to Mailchimp, three stars to MailerLite, this is out of three and two stars to ActiveCampaign for this particular round. But we're only in the first round, anything could happen.

Now we are going to go and take a look at the second criteria, which is the ability to divide subscribers up, so this is about creating different lists, using tags, using groups and segments, all will be made clear. Let's go and have a look in the system.

Okay, so the reason that we want to be able to divide our lists up, is so we can personalize the way that we market to our subscribers, and all three platforms allow you to do that, but in slightly different ways.

MailChimp, as you can see here. So this is my audience dashboard. So if I go to my audience, I can have on the free plan, I can only have one list, but if I'm paying, I can have multiple lists. So I can have different lists depending on what people have signed up for. So I run a free inbox detox challenge to help you detox your inbox. And people signed up for that. I did some work, Fastershire Ladies, different list of people, my main newsletter, so these are my different lists.

I can also use tags, so I could tag people. If somebody clicked a link, I could tag them as having clicked that link. And then maybe in the future, that tag might be useful to me. And one of the things it could be useful to me in, so I can create tags and tag people according to their behaviors. And you can create tags here, pretty straightforward. You just click create tag. The real key is about how you apply it.

And then segments, all three platforms have segments and segments are dynamically changing groups of people. So a list is something that you would add to or that would change when somebody physically goes and signs up for something. A segment is something that uses rules, and based on those rules, at the point that you call the segment.

So if you were sending out a campaign and you wanted to send something to everybody who has not opened an email within the last six months, this is where a segment can be really useful. So you could send a different kind of email to what we would call a cold subscriber, so someone who's not opening their emails that often, to one that you might send to your warm subscribers who are regular openers. So you could try and re-engage people who have not opened their emails within the last six months. And that segment changes based on when you run it. So at the point that you actually try and use that segment, the platform will recalculate who is meant to be in that group.

So Mailchimp offers us lists, tags and segments.

MailerLite, a little bit simpler, only offers us groups and segments. Actually, I should also mention at this point, that all three platforms allow you to add new fields. So by default, you would have a name and email address. You can also use this to store addresses if you want and the date of signups. Some people like to store birth dates in order that they can send maybe a birthday discount. There are all sorts of innovative ways that you can use extra fields and they'll all let you add them in.

So MailerLite allows you to create a group and you can have as many groups as you want. There's no limit based on your level. And you can also create a segment in here just like you could in MailerLite. So if we create a segment so you can see, they belong to, you have to choose your conditions. One of these things, are they in a group? Do they have this field? Are they in this other segment? Where did they sign up, et cetera. So they belong to, they do not belong to, and you can have multiple rules. So belongs to, I could say, who

belongs to the group clients? And then I can add another condition and this can be an and or or, so they have to do this and this, or it could be then one of these, or one of these. And that allows you to be really creative with how you use your marketing.

Active Campaign takes this to a whole nother level. It has lists, it has tags and it has segments but you can see here, the tags, the way that it works with, I think I already mentioned, you can integrate it with your website so that somebody who clicks on your website gets tagged and that could trigger them to be added to a segment and that segment could get automations. So the way that ActiveCampaign allows you to split up your list and market to them is phenomenal.

So that's the overview of how easy it is to divide up your list. Okay, so after that round, we need to give some points. And before we do that, I just want to show you a picture of one of my sheep, in case you're feeling a little bit of tech overwhelm, just to cheer you up. See, super cute, I promised you they'd be more.

Now, I want to take a look at the scores. Mailchimp, it's a little bit of a tricky one here. Should I give them one or two stars out of three? It is possible to use tags. It is possible to create segments but none of it is very intuitive. And the fact that they count a subscriber more than once. So the same email address on several different lists, in several audiences counts as several people, really makes me cross. So I'm only going to give them one star.

MailerLite, it's a very basic package in terms of how you can greet people but for a lot of people, that stops the overwhelm. So I'm going to give them two, it's all functional, it's all there.

But the winner of this round clearly is ActiveCampaign, they get three stars. Okay, all good.

So now we need to move on to our third criteria, which is the ability to send automated emails. Let's hop over and have a look. So automations are a brilliant way of making your life easier, and I'm going to start off in Mailchimp again and this is what they would call their onboarding series. And if we just start at the top, so I would need to design the email, but basically, these are emails that are going to be sent out automatically.

So the trigger, you can see here, is immediately after a subscribed contact joins my audience. So I can change that. How often do I want this to run? I can choose whether it runs weekdays only. Some people prefer not to send, particularly for business related emails, at the weekend. I can filter by segment or tag, which we talked about in the previous section. So I can be finessing who gets this and whether anything happens at the end. And then we move on to the next email. So one day after the previous email, you send this email, one day after that. So this is a sequence of four emails that I'm sending out. Five actually, with the welcome. And I can add another email at the bottom if I want, by clicking on here.

Now, I don't know how you feel about that but that doesn't really make a great deal of sense in my head, how that all sits together. Mailchimp have just brought out a new feature called customer journeys, which I think is going to change this. But at the moment, the majority of the automations are using this kind of setup.

So let me show you how it differs in MailerLite. Now MailerLite has a very clean and simple interface and it's kind of boxes and arrows, something I'm very fond of. And you can see, we start off here when a client joins a group but I can choose what triggers. So I can use when a form is completed, when someone clicks a link, when a field gets updated on the anniversary of a date or exact match of a date, then I go to send an email. Then I'm going to wait three days. Then I'm going to send another email and then I've got a condition here. So this is a really useful feature, which is looking at whether an earlier email was opened or not. And then I'm able to send a different response depending on whether the email has been opened or not.

And the really snazzy thing is, that once they've finished the automation, I'm able to move them from one group to another. MailChimp does not allow you to move people from one group to another using their automations at the current time. And this combined with the fact that if somebody joins a list, they count as a subscriber. So if you want to send your welcome sequence to someone when they join the list, then you may want to move them to another list. So maybe to your main newsletter list, a little later on, very difficult to do in MailChimp. There's a lot of manual steps and that's all taken care of by MailerLite using this action at the end, I can copy them to a group. I can move them to a group, I can remove them. So I've got lots of things that I can do there. So whilst it's quite simple, it really works.

And ActiveCampaign, I've already mentioned, a real big daddy of automation. And as you would hope, then on that basis, there are a lot of options. So the actions are down this right-hand side. The layout is very similar to the MailerLite layout with the list. So we can see when someone subscribes to my list and the nice thing about MailerLite, is I can have multiple triggers, so I could start an automation when someone subscribes by a form or when someone subscribes via an API, so that's a different way of signing up through a third party. That may be, somebody uses your booking form, and you want to trigger off a welcome sequence, but the same thing would happen if you manually added them.

So you don't have to have two automations, we can send an email, we've got the wait and so on. And then we've got the conditions here. We can subscribe to lists. We can unsubscribe from lists, but honestly, the options. So you can see, on the more expensive packages, you can send text messages, you can send emails to a VA or to yourself, to let you know that somebody has reached a particular point in an automation. You've got all these different conditions for your workflow, so you can split it, you can use like split testing as people go through. So half of the people get one email and half the people get the other emails. You can integrate with Salesforce and other apps if you want to, you can see here. So this is a really, really powerful automation tool, which just blows the other two out the park.

So let's see what the scores are going to be on those. Okay, so more points to be awarded. And now we think again, we have a clear winner with ActiveCampaign, but if we go back to Mailchimp, I'm going to give two because they do a pretty good job of allowing us to send automated emails. The basic system is a bit clunky but I think the newly released customer journeys are going to be okay. MailerLite, nice and straightforward, really intuitive interface, I'm giving them two. But the winner of this round, again, ActiveCampaign, with three points for their super complicated and yet very powerful automations, well done, ActiveCampaign, a worthy winner.

Right, we're up with category four now, and this is looking at how easy is it for new subscribers to sign up. This is looking at whether the forms are easy to make and whether we can use a page, so an actual landing page, let's go and have a look. So all three platforms offer both forms and landing pages. And MailChimp is a little bit annoying because the form builder is buried really deep within the list. And you can only have one signup form per list, which is a

bit annoying 'cause it means you can't use it in different places with different looks. But in terms of being able to edit it, you've got the different fields here and we can make that look pretty good. A little helper there, we can change the design. We can change the build, so we can add all these little boxes.

And I think MailChimp do a pretty reasonable job of their forms. And they've relatively recently introduced landing pages. And they've got a basic offer here of 10 templates for a landing page. So the form, as you can see is quite small. If you click through to the link, you will just get that colored background with the little form sat in the middle or more usually, you would embed that onto your website. Their landing pages take up a whole page, they're more like a webpage. So they've got a basic offer for landing pages.

MailerLite, as you might imagine, will have a nice, simple, clean interface, based on the other things, I'm hoping you're getting the feel for them. We can add to this text, we can add fields as we need them. We could add country, any field that you've got, nice and easy to use. One of the things I particularly like is the settings, which allow you to add a short privacy policy, a tick box, so people have to tick the box in order to be able to submit, which means they're confirming that they agree to you using their data, as well as some other fields like capture and GDPR compliant marketing.

Their range of landing pages is also pretty nice. Got way more than we've got on Mailchimp and they're adding to them all the time. So they're at 38 at the moment, all quite nice to use.

ActiveCampaign, well, I have to say, I'm not enamoured with the forms from ActiveCampaign. Firstly, it's very hard to remove the branding. You have to either code it out or pay for a higher level of plan. The forms themselves are unimaginative. These are the choices, like this or like this, you can add a bit of background color and you can choose from one of their inbuilt fonts but they do not have all the fonts. And if you're thinking about this is going to go on your website, you really want it to be nicely blended.

They've recently also started with these rather snazzy landing pages. So I guess maybe what they're doing is making up for their fairly shocking forms by some nice landing pages. But if you go into the landing page, they don't automatically have the signup box. And even as someone who spends quite a lot of time in tech, I found it a little bit unintuitive to work out, I had to add this

in and then eventually, I worked out how to add the extra fields but it wasn't straightforward. So, come on ActiveCampaign, you can do better.

Okay, so what did you think about those options? In terms of ease of signup, Mailchimp, you're doing pretty well. It's a good, basic offer. I'm going to give you two points, and MailerLite, I love how easy it is to customize the forms, how easy it is to embed, the popups work really well. The landing pages are varied and quick to get up and running.

And it's very easy, if you don't have a website yet, this is not a reason not to get started with email marketing. So get yourself a domain. You'll have to pay a little bit extra, an extra \$10 a month to MailerLite and you can have a simple but functional way of collecting email addresses from people who might be interested in buying from you once you're ready to sell. So this works really early in your business. Don't wait to start collecting email addresses. Anybody who's got going and who's got nice list now, would probably look back and agree that they wish they'd started collecting emails sooner.

Okay, so there's a top tip if you're very new to your business. Start collecting email addresses and start nurturing people and building that relationship. It means that when you've got something to sell, you've got people who were ready to buy from you.

Finally ActiveCampaign, ActiveCampaign, you've let me down. So you did really well in the last couple of rounds but I'm only going to give ActiveCampaign one point. Unless you buy their really expensive tool, you've got these ugly forms that you can't really customize very well. Their landing pages are okay but they're a bit overwhelming and a bit clunky to use. So sorry ActiveCampaign, you're not doing so well on that particular round.

Okay, we are on to our final category, cost effectiveness, and I've made a little table for you to have a look at because that's the easiest way to do it. And let's have a look at these prices.

So it's a little bit difficult to directly compare because the different companies break their prices at different points. But what I've done is taken 1000, 2000 and 5000 subscribers, as you can see.

So Mailchimp, for 1000 subscribers, has two options. You can either be on that free account, which only gives you one audience. And it doesn't give you any of the automated email features. When someone signs up for your one list, you

can send them one email automatically, but you cannot use that free version to send them a nurture sequence of several emails so they can get to know you better. Alternatively, with 1000 subscribers on Mailchimp, for \$21 a month, you can have three audiences and you can have some automations.

MailerLite would be free for up to 1000 subscribers. And that would allow you to use the automations. And the only things you don't get, which you may want to pay the \$10 a month for, would be AB testing, which is split testing. So you could send an email with two different titles and see which one works better. Also, you don't get their live chat support, which is amazing. You would have to use the email support. It's still quite good though. And you can't schedule to send by time zone. So those are the three things you wouldn't get on the free version for MailerLite. And if you were paying, so you wanted the extras, it would be \$10 a month.

ActiveCampaign, for 1000 subscribers, you're looking at \$29 a month. That's on their first level plan which gives you the automations that we've already been through.

When we get to 2000 subscribers, Mailchimp is free actually, up to 2000 subscribers, if you really just want it for that very basic sending, no particular automations apart from that you signed up and you get one welcome email. Otherwise we're looking at \$31 a month and then rising to \$53 a month for 5000 subscribers.

MailerLite, \$15 a month for 2000 subscribers and \$30 a month for 5000 subscribers.

ActiveCampaign, \$55 for the 2000 and \$99 for the 5000. Now, hopefully you've seen that ActiveCampaign is a really powerful tool. And so I'm not saying that they are too expensive by any means. However, you do need to be sure that you're going to be using those features in order that it is worth you paying for them. So it's really about what you feel is good value for you.

But if we do just take it on face value, I am going to say that Mailchimp is a two out of three for cost-effectiveness.

I'm going to give MailerLite three out of three because they give you all their really great functionality for free. They're not holding anything back. And by the time you've got to 1001 subscribers, where you'd be paying, you'd really know whether that was the right system for you.

ActiveCampaign, two out of three. I'm not saying they're charging too much but they are quite expensive compared with the others.

So now we need the totals, we're going to add it all up and find out who our winner is, I bet you've got a hunch already. I've tried not to be biased but honestly, it's difficult.

Right, so out of the total scores, we had five criteria and three points for each, so it was a maximum of 15.

In third place, we have Mailchimp with nine points, second place, we have ActiveCampaign with 11 points, which means our winner is MailerLite, with 13 points. So congratulations MailerLite.

I hope that has been an informative and hopefully slightly entertaining way of looking at these tools. And maybe you have seen some of the capabilities that they have and can see how that would work for your business.

If you need some more help, I've put together a page on my website with some free resources for you that can help you get going with MailerLite, or also there are some recommendations for people who can help you with ActiveCampaign and Mailchimp, if you need it.

I'm really grateful that you've joined me for this session today. I hope you've enjoyed it and go on, get email marketing. You'll have fun, I promise.