Welcome to Easy Email Marketing. I'm your host, Yael Keon, Mum, FIFO wife, MBA, coffee lover, survivor super fan and creator of the email experience. In Easy Email Marketing, you'll benefit from my nearly 20 years experience where I'll be teaching you all the tips, tricks, and insider info on how to create feel-good non-spammy experiences for your subscribers.

Let's get stuck in. Welcome back to Easy Email Marketing. I'm your host, Yael Keon and today's episode is especially for those of you who offer courses, memberships, online programs, and I'm answering one of the biggest questions I get, which is what's the best software for me? So I have done a more general episode about choosing the "best"

email marketing software, way back in episode five, but that was a couple of years ago. Which can you believe? And while really there haven't been major, major changes, I did think it was time for an update and I'm approaching it now by looking at it far from different business types perspectives. So I've done one a while ago on e-commerce businesses and then a few weeks ago I did one for services and now my attention is turning to those program creators,

courses, memberships, digital programs, even just digital products because it is a whole different world and it does have some special considerations. So during this episode, I'm going to look at a few of the most popular email marketing software options. I'll talk about some key things you need to know about each and then how to make the best choice for you. Of course,

the big disclaimer is I can't cover every piece of software out there as there are just too many to choose from and that would be an impossible task. But I will talk about the ones that come up most often in my conversations with clients and email experience students and just generally what I have learned over the past seven, eight years of running this business. Of course,

this is also high level information as I don't want to be talking here for two hours. Hopefully we can keep this to 20 minutes or less. Of course, my quick disclaimer is that I'm doing my best to accurately represent the features and the plans of this software at the time of recording in August, 2023. So of course they can change on a whim so they can change these at any time.

So please do make sure to do your due diligence in reviewing their pricing and planning options when you make your selection. But the core features, the core essence of them should hopefully stay the same. Okay, so when it comes to course creators, and I'm just gonna call you course creators for ease during this episode, otherwise I will just end up,

you know, having to speaking way too much. So even if you're a membership provider, please think of it as you know, course creator still applies to you, or even if you just sell digital downloads, whatever it is, four important considerations for you. Number one,

your cart and or your program delivery software. And do they integrate with the software you are looking at?

So of course sometimes we are putting a lot of different pieces together and we want to make this as seamless as possible with creating as little opportunity for things to drop off. But of course, the number one thing you need to know is who has purchased your offer? So who has purchased your course or your digital product? And if you have multiple offers,

obviously you want to know who's purchased what. Then on the other side you've got your delivery software, your program delivery software. So whether this is like a Thinkific or a searchie or a Member Vault, whatever it is that you are actually delivering your content on, do they integrate? Of course you can absolutely just have something very simple which you deliver via email.

So you just send out like a video that's a hidden YouTube video or a Vimeo or you just have reminders about Live Zoom lessons. So if that's you, obviously that's not relevant, but if you've got some program delivery software, you want to know who has joined, and sometimes your cart and the program delivery software is one and the same,

which is all good, but we just want to know who is part of these programs or offers. So of course you can add them to your list and of also if it's something like a membership or something that expires, like they only have access for a limited time, then we also need to be able to remove them when that access expires or if they cancel their membership.

Okay, the second one is your list size. So if you are into online business, I'm guessing the main focus of this is all about scaling. So the ability to grow your list to a decent size is important for you. You know, with a service-based business, you've only got so much capacity, you can only take on so many clients, so you don't need as many people on your email list.

But once we get to scalability, once we get to being able to leverage that doesn't matter how many people are in your program, that it doesn't change the, you know, the amount of time you invest, not by much, then it's all about scaling. So obviously list size is important and most email marketing software will base their pricing on how many people are on your list.

So the more you are scaling, you need to be, you know, you'll likely be paying more. Of course, you know, in theory they should be converting enough that it pays for itself completely. Obviously that is the goal. So it shouldn't really be a factor in that, but it is something to keep in mind.

And also just to keep in mind, obviously you need to have great list hygiene, you know, cleaning up regularly just to make sure you're only emailing people that are interested. The third consideration is

managing multiple opt-ins. So with e-commerce businesses or service-based businesses, typically they get away with having like one or two opt-in incentives. So here I'm talking about lead magnets,

et cetera. And while you might have like one really signature lead magnet, I'm guessing that if you are doing launching or you're playing with webinars and evergreen funnels and all of these different things, you might have multiple things going on and you need to manage them and send them to different places to get different emails, but also bringing them together back to the same place where they're getting presented with a common offer.

So I say this is a consideration because some of the software I'm going to talk about actually makes this quite difficult because they just consider if someone's on your list, they just get your newsletters and that's kind of it. But we need to think about, okay, managing multiple opt-ins and also managing multiple programs and offers if you've got more than one. So you really need to be thinking smart from the beginning,

how you're going to differentiate between the different people on your list and how you are going to treat them differently based on that. And finally, the fourth consideration is other things you're doing. So are you selling items by e-commerce? You know, do you have just some more things like digital downloads that are very simple, like once off transactions that don't involve ongoing support?

Or do you offer one-on-one services as well? Do you have a hybrid of really high tickets, more group programs and then some, you know, just more general courses. So we've gotta think about these other things we're doing and how email marketing can support those as well. Okay? So just keep those in the back of your mind as we go through our options.

So option one, are your all in one options and this is where your, your sales process, your list building process and your delivery process or your programs, et cetera, are all in one platform. Kartra is one example, but the most popular one is probably Kajabi. So Kajabi starts quite pricey on the basic plan at 149 a month. But,

I would recommend you'd need at least a growth plan to get more than three funnels because as soon as you've got more than one opt-in, you know, or three opt-ins, that's your three funnels, probably even more than two. Or for advanced automations, which I think is essential email marketing. So you probably need at least growth, but then you're capped at 15 funnels which might suit most people.

But if you're like me and over time you've built a ton of different things over time, then you might need pro. And now we're talking $399 a month. So as you can see, it can get quite pricey quite fast. Again though hopefully it pays for itself. Okay. But in terms of these features, there is significant benefit having everything in one place.

Like you don't need to worry about software talking to each other, you know, your lead pages and your sales pages all there with beautiful templates, you have your checkout and you have all your student access, you know, you can do your drip content, all of that stuff. Plus they have an app, which I find really handy when I do purchase something from someone who uses Kajabi that I can just go on the app and I can see all my programs in the one place.

So if that's important to you and then you only need a few simple email automations on top of it and the ability, you know, to send your updates, then Kajabi could be a great choice for you. Or an alternative is of course many course creators actually use both Kajabi and a separate email marketing platform because they just find they hit a limit in what it can do for them in terms of the segmenting or in terms of the automations.

So they end up building their pages, like their lead pages and their programs within Kajabi, but then the emails themselves are done from something else. And if that's the case, the basic plan will do that for you. And you don't need all those advanced ones, but you would have something else separate. So it doesn't have to be a choice between one or the other.

The answer could be both. But just something to keep in mind if you are thinking about using Kajabi. Now of course, if you're already a Kajabi user and you love it and you've got everything set up, then is kind of at this place you think, am I reaching a cap? And if so, do I look at something in addition to,

or if you are just starting out and you just want the easiest everything all in one place, then starting with Kajabi is absolutely a valid choice. Okay? The second option is probably what I would call entry level options. So these give you basic features that you need at a lower price point, but they don't include some of the fancier things. So the most popular one out there and the most heard of is probably MailChimp.

I don't consider it necessarily entry level pricing anymore. You know, in terms of that it doesn't really have a free plan that will be able to achieve much like you really need to be on a paid plan. And even the essentials plan doesn't work well as you only have like four steps in an automation, which is what they call customer journeys. So by the time you add a trigger and a wait time,

there's only space to send like one email per automation. So yes, you could work around trying to use multiple customer journeys to build out one automation, but it can, you know, it's really tedious. So you know, really if you go with MailChimp, you would have to go with the standard plan, which starts at about Australian $30 a month for up to 500 contacts.

And for this you'll get the ability to have a few different audiences, which is what they call lists and create great automations. However, if you wanna have multiple lead magnets or

ways in which people can sign up to your list and different program offerings, this can become a challenge due to the way that lists AKA audiences are managers. So you can't move people across audiences within MailChimp in any of their automation.

Someone has to subscribe to a specific audience or you have to manually add them. And you can't create segments either based on, you know, who's a member of another audience. So I can't just say "exclude people who are already part of my program audience in this campaign where I'm selling the program",

right? So you really end up working within one audience anyway, unless you have really, really distinct businesses. So then you need to start getting really clever about, okay, you can't just say, okay, when someone joins my audience, what email are they going to get? So if I've got lead magnet A and lead magnet B,

how does MailChimp know the difference and which lead magnet to send? And for doing that, you either need to use their lead pages specifically or start finding tools that allow you to add tags when anyone's added to a MailChimp list, which unfortunately most don't. So there's only a few that I have found. So it's just annoying,

you know, you can figure it out, but it's annoying and we want to make sure that people get different experiences about what they have done on what they have purchased or what they have, you know, downloaded, et cetera. On the plus side though, you know, MailChimp integrates with almost everything as it has been the dominant email marketing software for some time.

So that is a help. So sometimes it's the only one that things integrate with. So if you are curious more about MailChimp, do check out episode 26 where I do talk in more detail about it. Personally though, if I were looking at entry-level software, I would instead prefer to go with something like MailerLite, which gives you the same functionality, so all the same functionality and better and for free for up to a thousand subscribers.

And you have these added features of groups, meaning you can easily manage and send emails to different groups of subscribers based on actions they have taken, you know, where they've signed up from, what they've purchased. And throughout your automations you can explore more about MailerLite in episode 29, and I've been playing a lot with this recently as I've created a full new suite of MailerLite tutorials.

Side note, you can now actually find this all as a standalone course called How to MailerLite at yaelkeon.com/mailerlite. So if that interests you, definitely check that out 'cause you don't need to become a full email experience member to access all of that content. But besides that, you know, as I went through this, I found some really cool features and it's changed a lot from the classic now to the new and things like,

you know, the above mentioned groups, which is just a really clean, easy way to manage your subscribers and have things like surveys, which is so great for segmenting and learning from your audience and, and it's just easy. So it integrates with carts and program delivery platforms like ThriveCart, WooCommerce, Shopify, and Teachable, but it doesn't with SamCart, Thinkific, Searchie, MemberVault and the above mentioned Kajabi.

So for those you would need to use Zapier as the middleman between the two. And of course that can change anytime, but it's just something to look at. And one negative I would say is that while it does have landing pages as an option, I find this quite difficult to work with and get looking good. So they can do a good enough job if you just,

if you're just starting and you need to just get something out there. But my preference would be to use your website or third party lead page builder rather than their native lead page builder. Of course you can embed their forms anyway, so it will work pretty much with any website builder or lead page. Okay, so they're the entry level options. Then there's what I would classify as the advanced option.

And this is, you know, if you are looking at doing more than just online programs, so maybe you've got a lot of different things going on, maybe some other physical or digital products. We've got one-on-one services, we have e-commerce, you know, MailerLite can still do that quite effectively and can be a good option, but it just doesn't have all the extra bells and whistles and automation capabilities.

So if you do want that, then ActiveCampaign is the go-to choice. And while you can begin on the lite plan, I do find this incredibly limited and would instead recommend going with Plus it is pricier though starting at $73 Australian a month for up to a thousand contacts. But for that you get fully flexible automations that can do anything, things like goals,

and we can pull people to certain points in automations and you get to take your personalized experiences to a whole new level. You can get landing pages. Again, they're not the nicest, so I would still recommend using a third party, but the best part is, you know, easy management of your lists and tags and segments.

It also just happens, if it interests you, to have its own CRM in its sales package. Now it used to be all built into one package, but now they're separated out the two, the two. But you know, if you did wanna have a sales pipeline process, and email marketing all in one, that is an option. So as a lead moves through your pipeline,

you can create custom actions like tasks for yourself or emails or notifications based on the progress. And you can get this for about 139 a month. And it's a particularly, you know, handy feature if you have some higher ticket offers where personal selling is like a must where you want to have that personal interaction and it kind of

monitors it beyond just what you get in a spreadsheet and it can do some follow ups,

et cetera, all through automations. ActiveCampaign is actually one of those things that's hard to describe without actually seeing it in action. And to open it up initially, it can be overwhelming, particularly if you aren't the most tech savvy person out there. However, if you want that full flexibility and you wanna automate all of the things, I would recommend having a good look at it.

Okay, and now the final one I want to look at is dedicated course creator software. So if your main business focus is online programs, I would look at email marketing software built from the ground up specifically for those business types. And the first one I think of instantly is ConvertKit. I actually used to use ConvertKit many years ago, and it was what I started with when I began my business.

Eventually I made the move to ActiveCampaign because it didn't have as many features as I liked, nor as advanced automations. You know, you know, I'm a tech head, I love all those techy extras. But since then ConvertKit has come a long way with adding things like visual automations, which makes it easy to manage all your funnels. And it also has its own integrated cart now.

So you can actually sell your digital offers straight from the same platform. Its lead pages are also very effective. So unlike all the other ones, this is one where I would say, yeah, go ahead and use their lead pages. They are very easy to use, plus they even have like this amazing feature for double opt-in so that instead of sending a boring confirmation email,

you can send a confirmation email that's actually the delivery email of their lead magnet, and if they click the link, then they're confirmed. And that's a great way to combat that double opt-in process. One key difference to understand between ActiveCampaign and ConvertKit is that ConvertKit does not have lists. So instead it only manages your subscribers via tags,

segments, or products that they've purchased. And it could be either through ConvertKit or whatever they're integrated to. So this means that unless you add your own special preferences line at the bottom of emails, when someone clicks to unsubscribe, they would be unsubscribed from everything, you know, course emails and your normal emails. But of course you can get around this with some smart on clip tagging,

but it's just that added risk. It can also mean you end up with a ton of tags. So it's important you manage this with the smart naming convention and just, you know, having everything really, really logical. The emails are also very simple text-based, which is great for deliverability. And you know, I find those a more letter style

emails work really well, but if you want something with more graphic design and more, you know, tailored elements, it wouldn't suit well

for you. On an integration front though, it connects with most cart and online software, including being the only email marketing software to integrate directly with Searchie as at the time of recording. So that's the one thing, you know,

I use ActiveCampaign and and searchie and I would love if they connected, but unfortunately I need to use Zapier as the middleman. So ConvertKit now has a free plan, but it's only, you know, for up to a thousand contacts, which is great. It didn't have that before, so you can use it to try to see if you like it.

However, that doesn't include any of the automated email sequences. So going with the create option, which is the middle option, is suggested, and that starts at only 15 bucks a month. So it is actually very affordable. Okay, so that is a lot of information and hopefully that's given you a bit of insight into the options and the things you need to think about.

And if there's one I haven't mentioned that you're curious about, you know, just think about with some of these. Just think about it with some of the general considerations that I've talked about throughout this episode. But back to making the choice, here's the bottom line, please just take what I've said here and just go with something or maybe choose two and have a deeper look by signing up to a free plan or having a go or just watching some YouTube videos or going through some of their support articles to see if you like it and make sure that whatever you do choose can integrate with your booking software,

with whatever software you use, and or any future growth options you have. So still a quick Google search of the two softwares together, and if Zapier is the first result or is at least you know the only relevant result on the first page, then it's likely you need that as the middle man. But it's not the end of the world.

You know, you can still connect via Zapier, it's just the added next step. But once you've had a look at a couple, set a deadline and just decide. Having some email marketing set up is a better than none, and you can always change later as you grow. So hopefully that has been a help for you. I thank you so much for joining me today.

I would love to hear from you about what you've enjoyed from this episode or what you wanna know more about in future episodes. Please do let me know over on Instagram. I'm @yaelkeon and I'll see you in the next episode. Thank you for listening to Easy Email Marketing. It's an absolute honor that you chose to listen. If you love this episode,

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