



## What Happens When You Choose the WRONG Email List Management Service!

by Tracey Lawton, Online Business Development Strategist

Over the years I have worked with many solopreneurs helping them to create their online marketing systems and stay in touch with their audience via a regular ezine (or electronic newsletter). Usually they come to me having already started to build their list, and have even subscribed to an email list management service so that they can deliver their ezine on a regular basis.

But what has happened several times is that the email list management service that they're using isn't working as well as they hoped it would, and they're faced with the dilemma of either muddling through with their current provider, or switching over to a different provider and risk losing a large percentage of the list they've worked so hard to build up in the process!

It's a difficult decision, and it's not always clear what you need to do for the best. I too have found myself in this situation, and ended up moving my list across to another provider who I knew would be better for the long-term growth of my business.

So, what happens when you choose the WRONG list management service?

**1. No flexibility.** The service you are using doesn't offer the flexibility you need in order to grow your business. For example, you could be using a list management service that does a great job at sending out broadcasts (your ezine), but doesn't offer autoresponders. So that means you're either left with not having the option of adding autoresponders to your marketing toolkit (which are a solopreneur's secret weapon!) or paying for an additional service that does offer autoresponders and then choosing to either run two different databases, or move your current list across to the new service.

**2. Doesn't grow with your business.** The service you are using only offers one type of package so as your business grows and you add new income streams, products, programs, and services, the list management service that you're using doesn't grow with you and you become stuck!

So, how can you avoid making the wrong decision?

By planning ahead and thinking about where you want your business to go; what products and programs you want to develop; what additional services you want to offer etc. you'll easily be able to avoid making the wrong decision.

You'll also need to do your research into the different email list management services that are available and see what they offer. Create a list of what you're looking for and then make a comparison chart so you can compare each of the different services side-by-side.

So, what should you do instead?

Sit down and really plan out your business! In your planning think at least two years ahead – you don't have to have your plan set in stone, but you do need to be clear in which direction you're headed in order to avoid making the wrong decision.

For example:

**Do you currently just produce a newsletter, but in the future you'll be wanting to host teleclasses?** If so, you'll want a service that allows for multiple custom web forms to be created (for participant signups), and has an autoresponder feature (so that you can automatically send out teleclass details).

**Will you be planning on offering digital products for sale via your website?** If so, it would make the process a whole lot smoother if the service you used also had a shopping cart feature that you could upgrade to at a later date. That way you only need to manage one database.

**Will you be adding additional income streams, such as a membership site or other continuity program?** In addition to being able to upgrade to a shopping cart, the list management service that you use would also need to be able to accept and process recurring payments.

By being clear ahead of time on exactly which direction you are going in your business and what programs, services, products, and other income streams you want to offer within the next two/three years will save you a lot of headaches further down the road. I can vouch for this both from my own experience, and my client's too!

Believe me, it causes more headaches than you need if you choose the WRONG list management service!

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