

# 13 Critical Questions You Must Ask When Choosing Your

## Businesses' Listserver

By Paula Morrow

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Paula Morrow

paula@idealmarketingcorp.com

<http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com> <http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com>

Without a doubt, being able to market through email plays a critical role in how successful you will be on the internet. So, choosing the right listserver to power it will be one of your most important decisions.

So, which one to choose?

There are many worth consideration, so here is a list of 'filter' questions that will help you make your decision. Remember, no listserver has ALL of these features - prioritize their importance based on your business:

**\*Do You Want Your Listserver Located In Your Desktop, Or Hosted By A Third Party?**

A Desktop Listserver (as the name implies) is installed in your own desktop computer. ASP (Application Service Provider) programs are hosted on a separate server.

ASP enables a quicker distribution of email, since outside servers typically have access to faster internet connections. However, if you choose to use a desktop listserver, ask whether it distributes emails using multi-threaded internet connections (instead of sending out emails sequentially, one by one, does it search out different 'threads' and distribute multiple emails simultaneously, through your internet connection)?

**\*Does the Listserver Support Both Text and HTML Messages?**

Most emails are sent in simple 'text' format, though sending graphics, banners, etc., through HTML, is becoming more popular. Consider your current and future needs; many listservers offer both options.

**\*Does The System Support Multiple Languages?**

Group Mail, for example, currently supports 30 international character sets. Remember, the internet is a GLOBAL medium.

**\*Does It Have An Autoresponder Function For Automated Follow-up?**

\*Does The Listserver Offer An Automated Subscription and Removal Support for Newsletters?

At the bottom of newsletter messages, there MUST be a way for the recipient to unsubscribe, if they wish.

\*Can your listserver process and remove 'bounces' (returned emails)?

\*Can new prospects be added to an opt-in list automatically?

[NOTE: Make sure these last three functions can be applied to multiple mailing lists, email accounts and newsletters, if you have more than one site. ]

\*Does The Listserver Protect The Privacy Of Your Customer Data?

Unfortunately, there are some programs out there that expose client details. Make sure yours keeps your list detail confidential.

\*Does The Listserver Limit the Size of Your List?

Some ASP services have a built-in ceiling of around 10,000 names/email addresses per account (if you have multiple lists, all names are included in this total). Many offer expansion options, at additional cost. Again, ask.

\*Does Your Listserver Allow You To Do A Personalized/Customized Email Merge?

Some allow you to isolate the first name for salutations, others personalize using both first and last.

\*Does The Listserver Offer Ways To Filter Your Mailings?

Can you filter your list to send messages, for example, to only those in a certain state or region?

\*Can You Easily Import And Export Your Database?

Does the listserver have restrictions in the way an exterior database can be imported? This is important especially for an offline business coming online, that may have an existing, computerized customer list. Some are more flexible than others.

\*Can You Easily Monitor The Status Of Your List?

Can you monitor list size? Daily sign-ups? Determine the number of recently unsubscribed? Determine the status of an email broadcast?

Here are a few services to start your research - click on the provided links to go to their sites and learn more:

Desktop's:

Corey Rudl's Mailloop

<http://www.marketingtips.com/mailloop/t.x/655541/>

Infacta's GroupMail Plus

<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?B=3937&U=50182&M=1465>

MessageMedia MailKing  
<http://www.mailking.com>

Gammadyne Mailer  
<http://www.gammadyne.com/mmail>

ASP's:

AWeber (also has an autoresponder system)  
<http://www.aweber.com/?67609>

Autopilot Riches (also has an autoresponder system)  
<http://www.autopilotriches.com/app/default.asp?pr=7&id=27041>

SparkList's adaption of Lyris  
<http://www.sparklist.com>

MessageMedia's UnityMail  
<http://www.unitymail.com>

Email Factory  
<http://www.emailfactory.com>

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Paula Morrow is president of <http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com> . She specializes in public relations, information marketing and creating cashflow systems, plus coaches new webpreneurs on innovative ways to promote online. Her newsletter, IDEALProfits, is read in over 12 countries. Subscribe, and receive the co-brandable 'How To Start Your Own Traffic Virus' and 4 other ebooks FREE. <http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com/subscribe.html>  
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