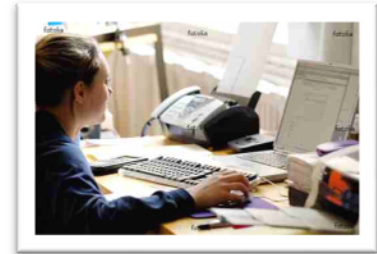


What Every Business Should Know About Newsletters

A promotional newsletter featuring trade news, customer success stories, and information about your company's products and services is an excellent way to establish and grow your relationship with customers.



Whether your newsletter is in e-mail or print format, it represents an important part of your marketing strategy. Your newsletter provides an opportunity to stay in touch with customers, clients, business contacts, and employees. When it is effective, your newsletter will be read, saved, and shared with others.

Here are the top factors to consider when thinking about a newsletter for your business:

- **Audience**
- **Compelling Content**
- **Frequency and Timing**
- **Layout and Design**
- **Social Media**
- **Metrics**
- **The CAN-SPAM Act**
- **Outsourcing**

AUDIENCE

Identifying your target audience influences most of the other decisions you make about your newsletter.

Distribution lists should be targeted to those business or individuals who are either current customers or clients or are likely to have an interest in your products and services.

Gather customer information by using a newsletter sign-up form to ask the reader a few questions about their interests. Analyze viewed or purchased items. Use the data to segment your mailing list and send targeted newsletters to different groups.

COMPELLING CONTENT

Give your chosen audience a reason to read your newsletter. Your newsletter content should support your marketing strategy, help differentiate your business from its competition, and provide topics of interest to the reader.

Insight. Action. Impact.

So what makes content compelling? Compelling content:

- Provides **unique insights or perspectives** about a topic of interest.
- Helps **solve a problem**.
- Provides occasional **special offers or discounts** and **avoids over-selling**.
- **Educates** about important issues or informs about products and services you offer.
- Contains information and topics which are **relevant and timely**.
- Is **easy to read**, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and avoids excessive technical jargon.

How do you get subscribers to open your e-mail newsletter? Use an attention-grabbing subject line like "Ten tips ..." or "The Secret of ..." rather than "April Newsletter."

FREQUENCY AND TIMING



An effective newsletter should be published regularly. Your readers learn to expect and anticipate your newsletters. When planning your newsletter, decide whether you want your newsletter to be released weekly, monthly, quarterly, or some other timeframe. Consider the type of business you are in and the needs of your target market. The balance between communicating too infrequently or being viewed as a spammer varies by industry.

A major challenge to producing an effective newsletter is lack of time and conflicting priorities within a business, particularly when the person charged with this responsibility must balance that responsibility with many other duties.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

The layout and design of your newsletter create eye appeal and increase readability.

While content is crucial to assuring holding your readers' interest, format and design help draw the reader into the newsletter. It is important to design a newsletter in an attractive, easy-to-read manner. The best writing will be wasted with poor design and layout. It is one thing to have a page layout/design software, and quite another to have the creativity to be able to manipulate it to produce a winning design.

Keep it simple. Good design makes your message more easily understood. Meaningless graphics, difficult to read text, or too many fonts and visual elements on a page get between the reader and your message.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Integrate your newsletter with your social media. Whether a print or e-mail newsletter, use the badges and encourage your subscribers to visit your social media sites. Some e-mail marketing services provide tools that let subscribers share your newsletter with their followers.

METRICS

Analyze the effectiveness of your newsletters.

- Review open rates and click-thru's to determine what techniques yield the best results.
- Look for spikes in sales after a newsletter is mailed.
- Conduct tests where two versions are sent at the same time and determine which has the best results.

THE CAN-SPAM ACT

The CAN-SPAM Act establishes requirements for e-mailed commercial messages and penalties for violations. Here's a summary of the rules:

- ***Don't use false or misleading header information.*** Your "From," "To," "Reply-To," and routing information – including the originating domain name and email address – must be accurate and identify the person or business who initiated the message.
- ***Don't use deceptive subject lines.*** The subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message.
- ***Tell recipients where you're located.*** Your message must include your current street address or a post office.
- ***Tell recipients how to opt out of receiving future email from you.*** Your message must include a clear explanation of how the recipient can opt out of getting email from you in the future.
- ***Honor opt-out requests promptly.***

OUTSOURCING



A newsletter represents an excellent way for your business to stay in touch with customers, create awareness, and maintain mindshare. But as we've just seen, it takes skill, time and effort to create a quality product and distribute it with consistent frequency.

Outsourcing your newsletter to a professional helps assure that your newsletter will be produced and delivered in an effective, timely, manner that meets your marketing and deadline requirements.

**For more information about using newsletters as an effective marketing tool,
contact Peggy Morrow at (847) 252-7445
or visit our websites at**

www.newsletterauthority.com and www.insightactionimpact.com