



Practical  
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Business Support



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## Tips on Creating an Email Newsletter

Creating an email newsletter is an effective, low cost way to reach your customers and prospects on an ongoing basis. By establishing a regular newsletter, you will build an ongoing relationship and be “top of mind” when your customers or prospects have a need for your products or services.

Here are some tips on how to put one together:

### Have a Creative Newsletter Name

- Be creative when choosing a name for your newsletter. Most companies create their newsletter with the same name as their company, but there are ways to improve its marketability. For example: if your company's name is Jack's Tree Nursery. "The Treehouse" makes your newsletter sound fun to read.

### Use Subject Lines and Headlines that are Descriptive or Catchy

- Headlines are very important in newsletters because the quality of each headline determines whether or not the corresponding article will be read. Your newsletter may have the most interesting, well-written articles, but readers may skip over them if they have non-descriptive headlines. *Bad headline:* “A message from our CEO;” *Better headline:* “CEO expects company to double its size within three years.”

### Give Free Information, Tips and Ideas

- People love free information and articles that promise to give a certain number of tips. These articles are also easy to write. For example you can easily find 3 tips about any topic and turn it to an article around your industry. Here are some examples: 5 Tips on How to Deal with an Overbearing Co-worker, Top 5 Questions to Ask in an Interview or 9 Low Cost Marketing Ideas.
- The key is to provide relevant, useful information that will assist your customers and prospects as it relates to your industry. For example, if you're an event planner and your market is busy corporate professionals who travel a lot, you could include updates on airport security and parking changes.
- Have consistent “categories” that you use each month - things like: one or two industry related articles, event listings, free industry information sources, quotes, etc. This way you will only need to source content versus deciding each month what the format will be. This will also create a consistent look and brand.

### Stay Away from the Sales Hype

- Your newsletter is supposed to be informative, not full of advertisements and self promotion. If the articles in your newsletter are well-written, readers won't need to be told your products/services are better. They'll see it for themselves. However, you should include a very brief overview of your company (less than 10% of the overall content) to continue to build awareness of what your company does.

### Write in a Conversational Tone

- Talk to your customers, not at them. Don't use big words and avoid technical jargon. Don't assume your readers know what abbreviations stand for.

### Have a Consistent Design

- Use templates - templates help keep elements/content type in the same place from one newsletter issue to the next.
- Don't overload your newsletter with lots of fancy fonts and clip art. Use fonts and artwork only to lead the reader through your newsletter and illustrate your words. Choose fonts for their readability not their “coolness” and use no more than three different fonts.
- By limiting your use of different fonts and keeping your article text uniform, your newsletter will look consistent from one page to the next and your newsletter will establish its own identity in the minds of

readers. You also want to ensure there is a consistent look and feel across your newsletter, other marketing materials and online presence (consistent logos, images and colours, etc.).

- Your newsletter should also be published regularly. It's vital to keep your commitment to your readers. If you tell them they'll receive your newsletter every month, make sure you live up to that promise or your company loses credibility with readers.

#### **Provide some Visual Contrast**

- You need to provide some “contrasts” to catch the attention of your readers. A headline set in the same font as the body text has no contrast. Make it bold, a larger size than of the body text and change the font so you have contrast. Then it looks like a headline and grabs your attention.
- You can achieve contrast through size, font, alignment, color, shape and white space, for example.

#### **Proofread, Proofread, Proofread**

- Your newsletter is a reflection of your company - its quality, service and people. Have several people proofread each newsletter so you can have several perspectives and reviews.

As a general guideline, it usually takes a non-professional writer (like me) about eight hours to write, edit and proof read the content for each page of an 8.5-by-11-inch newsletter. If the writer is also doing the newsletter's design and layout, you can add even more hours to the estimate. However, there are many email campaign management systems available that can help minimize time spent formatting. If your company can make the time commitment, a newsletter is a relatively low cost, effective way to increase the credibility and awareness of your company by providing ongoing useful information and tips.

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