



41 Creating a newsletter

What is a newsletter?

A newsletter is something that you produce and distribute to your customers at regular intervals. Newsletters can be distributed by electronic mail or in a traditional hard copy format by post.

Why are newsletters valuable?

Newsletters are one of the most powerful tools for generating customer traffic and encouraging more sales from existing customers. A newsletter that offers your customers some information that has a high perceived value will maintain an ongoing relationship between you and the people you have been doing business with. This will keep your name in the forefront of their minds until they need your services again. A newsletter can also act as a business stimulator reminding customers of that problem they need solving, or action that they need to take.

Free newsletters that offer useful ideas and information can also act as bait to attract the attention of new customers. Once these potential customers have signed up to your newsletter you will have the opportunity to communicate with them on a continuing basis. Newsletters can be promoted to attract subscribers who ultimately could become customers.

Newsletters enable you to continue to sell your services by offering advice, suggestions, ideas and recommendations.

Your challenge

Your challenge will be to create a newsletter that is of use to your potential and actual customers, is easy to put together and uses a system of delivery that is inexpensive and efficient. Publishing a hard copy newsletter can be time consuming and costly. Using an online system for sending out an e-newsletter is by far the more attractive option.* Once you have developed your own simple creation and delivery system, sending out a regular e-newsletter couldn't be easier. Your only challenge will be to decide on its name and write the content.

*We can recommend a good system to use, email us at admin@marketingco.biz.

What makes a newsletter work?

A name

This will give it an identity and brand of its own and will become memorable to the recipients. The name needs to convey value to the recipient and ideally be snappy and easy to say and spell.

My newsletter is called ‘Marketing Success’.

Useful reader-orientated content

Content can be made up of news, answers to questions, ideas, tips, case studies, articles, recommendations and updates: anything that has perceived value that your customers will look forward to receiving.

Sent regularly

Everybody receives so much these days via email you should consider sending your newsletter out once a month or bimonthly. Choosing the same day of the week is a good idea. Choose a day of the week when the people you are targeting are most likely to read the newsletter. Sunday evenings can be good for some businesses or for others Friday afternoons. Once your customers get used to receiving your newsletter they will expect it, so you need to make sure that they get their copy as promised without fail.

The right length

If it is useful information then people will read it. Most people these days will tell you that they suffer from information overload. So, bearing that in mind, consider how you can make your newsletter both interesting and easy to read. If it passes this test a newsletter that runs to the equivalent of one or two sheets of A4 paper will be perfectly acceptable. You can also have just as much impact with a much shorter newsletter with links that offer customers who are interested an opportunity to explore further.

Make it personal

The newsletters I like reading are the ones where the writer talks from the heart and shares a number of personal experiences in the field of my interest. I

personally like to sense humour and character in the words I am reading. It depends what you want your newsletter to achieve and the style you have chosen to deliver your content. If you are giving ideas or answers to problems, sharing stories from your personal experience is a very good way of doing this. People often relate better to a story than they do to logical facts. Make your newsletter a reflection of you.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN NEWSLETTER – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ Decide who you are targeting with your newsletter.
- ▶ What information would be of value to your readers?
- ▶ Find out about your customers' interests by running a short survey.
- ▶ Ask your customers what some of their burning questions are about subjects related to your business. These questions could be answered in your newsletter content.
- ▶ Look at what else is being written about in newsletters in your industry.
- ▶ Find out where you could access important information on a regular basis that could be of value to your readers.
- ▶ Use a standard format to create the layout. Use the same layout, design, colour and structure for every newsletter. This will promote consistency which will help you to build your brand identity and credibility with your audience.
- ▶ Make sure that you get your newsletter fully proof-read and edited. Silly mistakes can damage your credibility as an expert in your field.
- ▶ Test your newsletter before you send it out to your complete database. Send it to a colleague or two and ask them to give you feedback.
- ▶ Make sure that you ask your customers for feedback about the newsletter's value to them. Ask for suggested improvements and do your best to incorporate the ideas you receive.

How to use this information

The success of your newsletter will be dependent on the number and quality of people that sign up to it. Read the chapters of this book that give you valuable information about building a customer database, opt in email list and driving traffic to your website. This will enable you to create a complete marketing system of which your newsletter will be one important part.

Think newsletter and keep your customers interested in you