



BeWrite

Business Writing & Marketing Group

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Ten Key Points For Powerful Electronic Newsletters



Thinking of setting up an e-newsletter campaign to improve communication with your current and prospective customers, but not sure where to start? Often the amount of information you need to consider when designing and building your e-newsletter seems insurmountable. To help you through this difficult process, we've outlined ten key points for powerful electronic newsletters.

Key Point 1: Content Is King!

An e-newsletter that focuses on the business owner and not on the interests of the customer is likely to be dull and irrelevant to the reader. The aim of the newsletter writer is to create material which will be used as a resource and identify you as an industry expert. Think from the point of view that you are providing important information that your customer's need, not what you want them to read.

Content should be up to date and relevant in today's world. Tips and advice that will help your customer should be easily gleaned from reading the content. If your content is a rambling tale of the latest news from your industry, chances are that you will lose the reader's interest quickly.

Advice that the customer can use will usually be more interesting than just spruiking your latest product or service. That is not to say that advertising does not have its place in newsletters, just keep it to a minimum – or better still, work it into the content to make it relevant and effective.

A good rule to apply here is the 80/20 rule:

80% information, 20% promotion.





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Key Point 2: Avoid Weak Headlines

The headlines in your e-newsletter will determine whether your customer reads the content. Catchy headlines that pack a punch are important. If you've got a weak headline such as "Message From the CEO" you're likely to lose your reader before the first line is read.

A good start for a headline is to create a complete sentence which pulls the most interesting news out of the story. Instead of writing "Message From The CEO", a better headline might be something like "CEO Says Business Services Will Double In Two Years". If "Message From The CEO" is a regular feature of your newsletter, there is nothing wrong in keeping this as a smaller sub-heading, and then using a more-descriptive, complete sentence for the article's main headline.

Key Point 3: A Powerful Lead Sentence

After the headline, the most important part of your article is the lead sentence. If this sentence is boring or convoluted, the reader may not finish the article. Likewise, you should cover the most important element of your story in the first sentence. A well written lead sentence will make a huge difference in keeping your reader engaged.

If the subject of your newsletter is about an innovative new therapy being used in the physiotherapy industry, a writer may start their article with:

"One hundred Physiotherapists met at the Hyatt Hotel last week to learn about a new hip and spine treatment".

Readers won't be so interested in how many Physiotherapists met to learn about the therapy, or where indeed they met. A better lead sentence would be:

"XYZ CEO Jane Smith last week revealed an exciting new exercise therapy that effectively cuts chronic back pain in half."

This lead sentence gets the important information out, and is more likely to grab the attention of the target reader who in this case are physiotherapists and other health care professionals.





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Key Point 4: Include A Call-To-Action

And so we come to the point of your newsletter. It is after all, a marketing tool and should include a call to action. In saying that, avoid making your article a blatant advertisement. Today's consumers aren't interested in the hard sell. They want information that helps them to make good purchase decisions. Your well written content should include a subtle call to action that interests your customer.

If you apply the 80/20 rule – your 20% promotional material should include a call to action. Tell the customer how the product or service you are offering will benefit them, how it will reduce their pain or increase their income. You need to make it clear how they can benefit from your product or service. Then ask them to do something to get that advantage.

Make it obvious to your customer – they need to take another step to reach that great end result.

- **Call this number for more information!**
- **Book here for a place at the next seminar!**
- **Register your details here for a free book!**

Make sure your call to action is clear and prominent and ensure your contact details are easy to find and understand.



Key Point 5: Get Your Layout Right

Incorporating interesting and relevant photos and images in your newsletter breaks up the text and adds visual interest. A photo of the person featured in the article or images that tell the story helps the reader to personalise the anecdote and make the content more credible. However, to avoid going straight to the junk mail folder, don't overdo your use of photos and images.

Try and limit the number of fonts (or typefaces) and sizes you use in your article – too many typefaces can make your newsletter look like a jumbled mess. A generally accepted practice is to limit the number of different typefaces to two or three. Consistency is important. Make sure the body is all the same font style and font size. You can choose a different font and font size for your header, and maybe even your subheads.



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Key Point 6: Avoid Looking Like SPAM

Drill down to the core of a good e-newsletter campaign, and you will learn that at its heart is a trusting relationship between sender and recipient. Add the element of SPAM (unsolicited messages, generally sending advertising or marketing material) and that relationship gets eroded and can potentially be harmful to your company image.

If your e-newsletter looks and feels like SPAM, you can expect your email to be ignored by the reader or rejected by the email system. There are a number of steps you can take to avoid this including:

- Give your customers the opportunity to opt-out of the e-newsletter and make sure the unsubscribe system works
- Use a consistent 'from name' (eg editor@bewrite.com.au), that your customers will recognise
- Always include your name and business contact details within the content of the e-newsletter (this is often accommodated in the newsletter footer).

Key Point 7: Sending E-Newsletters at Regular Intervals

You've released your first e-newsletter to much fanfare, promising your readership more to come. But weeks and even months go by without another edition. That friendly relationship you've established with your customer base through the delivery of an enjoyable and educational newsletter, will quickly evaporate if you fail to follow up with subsequent e-newsletter editions.

This often happens because businesses underestimate how long it takes to create an e-newsletter.

It can take a professional writer anywhere between five and 40 hours to research and compile material, write articles, source images, layout as well as proof read a good newsletter. Businesses who take on this role, often find the task (which may not come naturally to them) sidelined whilst more 'pressing' business matters are taken care of.

**Meanwhile, the readership awaiting the next newsletter are left disappointed,
and the initial valuable marketing investment is wasted.**



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Like any marketing process, the benefits of regular and consistent communications come over time.

Repetition and patience is your key to longer term success from your e-newsletter programme. To make the most of this marketing tool, you need to send your e-newsletters on a regular, consistent basis to stay top-of mind with your customers. Tell your readers when to expect your e-newsletter which may be weekly, biweekly, monthly or quarterly. Stay true to your word and make sure they receive it on time, as advertised. If you're finding the process too onerous or time consuming, you may decide to engage a professional copywriter to undertake the role on behalf of your business.

Key Point 8: Send Your Newsletter on The Right Day

There is a lot of discussion around which is the best day to send your e-newsletter. Some suggest that Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are good days for sending your e-newsletters.

If your e-newsletter targets businesses and their employees, it is likely that Mondays and Fridays are the wrong days. Mondays, it is argued, is a day when most email inboxes have filled up over the weekend. Send on a Monday and there is a risk your newsletters may be deleted with the junk. If sent on a Friday, you risk running up against work fatigue, meaning people who are tired from a week's work won't bother reading their emails – they'll wait until Monday (see Monday's risk!).

However, if you are promoting weekend events or your e-newsletter content relates to family life, hobbies and relaxation, then other research suggests that Fridays and weekends are optimum.

It has also been argued that picking a generic 'day' may not work for your customer list. It may be better to test your 'best' day by sending your e-newsletter on different days, and then analysing the results which a good newsletter delivery platform can provide. You may want to run a number of different campaigns on different days and see if you can see any patterns. Alternatively, you may want to ask your contact list which is their 'preferred day' and then segment your list to match your subscriber's email habits.



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Key Point 9: Review Your Results

Professional cloud based email systems come with reporting tools that allow you to analyse the results of each email campaign you deliver. These tools will tell you not only how many bounces and unsubscribes there are, but they can provide useful information on open rates and click through rates. If your open rates are low, then perhaps you need to work on the strength of your headings or the content you are delivering.



Look out for trends. Are any patterns emerging? Who is clicking through and on which emails? Does this tell you anything about their specific interests? What days and times are your emails being opened? Perhaps you can use this information to further segment your contact list and send out targeted emails in the future. Most professional email systems will give you the right information to help you make informed decisions on your electronic marketing.

Key Point 10: What Are Your Customers Telling You

Monitor the comments from other communication channels such as online forums or social media vehicles that relate to your particular industry, service or product. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media are all valuable resources for understanding your customer's interests, likes and dislikes. Take note of what is being discussed, research the matter further and address it in your next newsletter. Chances are this will interest your readership and address the questions they are yet to ask.



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What's Next?

Ultimately, through regular client communication and analysis, you will begin to learn what best suits your specific customer and prospect database. Clever content that is relevant to your clients combined with a good newsletter system to allow you to track how your communications are received by customers – recording opens rates, bounce rates, click through rates and more, is your key to a successful electronic newsletter client communication strategy.

By following the key points discussed in this paper, adapting and building available solutions and skills to match your particular industry and client base, you can begin to create interesting and informative newsletters and take advantage of this powerful, effective and low-cost marketing tool. Alternatively you can engage a professional copywriter to help you to quickly and easily create an excellent newsletter that is specifically designed for your client database, without adding additional load to yourself.

If you would like to learn more about how to create powerful electronic newsletters, or want to quickly and effectively get electronic newsletters working for your business, visit www.bewrite.com.au, or call us on **02 8213 2383** or email words@bewrite.com.au. We can get you regularly communicating with your customers and prospects without it costing you the earth.

