



WINTER 2008

Buzz words

COPY SERVICES

DIGITAL
COLOR
LEGAL
BLACK & WHITE
NEWSLETTERS
POSTCARDS
REPORTS
FLYERS

PRINTING SERVICES

BROCHURES
FORMS
LABELS
INVITATIONS
BUSINESS CARDS
PRESENTATION FOLDERS

MAILING SERVICES

ADDRESSING
INSERTING
POSTAGE DISCOUNTS

**C&M can
take your
files on disk,
via e-mail
and FTP**

www.cmprintmail.com
818-353-7135

TRYING TO REACH CUSTOMERS? TRY A NEWSLETTER



Many businesses understand the value of direct mail as a marketing tool. But have you ever considered the value of a newsletter as a sales-related publication? A newsletter can help your business or organization generate new business or increase membership; cultivate customer and member loyalty; increase repeat sales or continued giving; and boost referrals.

For most small businesses and community organizations, the best way to sell products and services or to solicit memberships and donations is to publish a newsletter regularly –

monthly if budget allows, and quarterly if not. A newsletter reminds customers and members of why they selected your business or organization to be affiliated with and introduces new products and services. For prospects, a newsletter creates name recognition and provides an alternative to the present service provider or product supplier.

How can a newsletter accomplish all these objectives? By communicating useful information in an easy-to-understand format. And when we say useful information, we mean not only facts, tips and expert advice; but also new product or service information.

So what does it take to launch a customer-focused newsletter? In this issue of **BuzzWords** we'll provide some guidelines and suggestions to help you take advantage of a newsletter as a selling tool.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL NEWSLETTER

All successful newsletters share these common characteristics: they appear on time, they are attractive, they are easy to read; and they provide useful information. Staying on schedule requires both commitment to consistency and an efficient newsletter production process.

CONSISTENCY

One key to consistency is to limit the number of pages in the newsletter. It is better to publish a single-page, two-sided newsletter each month than to publish a 4-page newsletter every other month or an 8-page newsletter quarterly. Remember that one benefit of a newsletter is creating top-of-mind awareness in your customers and name recognition in prospects. This benefit can only be gained by consistency and frequency; an overly ambitious newsletter that doesn't meet its publication deadline sacrifices this benefit.

Regardless of the number of pages, devote 75% of space to providing information that the audience will find useful and valuable. Your aim is to have people look forward to receiving the newsletter and to linger with it long enough to notice the 25% of copy that introduces new products or services, provides testimonials, or invites inquiries.

continued on page 3

EDITING COPY

If the copy for your newsletter is being contributed by more than one writer, you will want to develop the skill of editing copy. A good copy editor can materially improve the writing style of the newsletter without altering the author's content or perspective.

Copy editing is the process of making diverse writing styles consistent by applying style rules that correct common grammar and punctuation errors. It may also include editing language to reduce it from complicated sentence structure to something simpler and easier to understand.

Some writers mistakenly believe that complex sentence structure is a sign of intelligence that will impress the reader. Ironically, high-sounding language often has the opposite effect – it drives away the impatient reader.



Examples of language that will fatigue most readers:

- **Using a verb as a noun:**
His action caused the *terrorization* of his colleagues.
His action *terrorized* his colleagues
- **Using a noun as a verb:**
The liquid was *volumized*.
The volume of the liquid was increased.
- **Using unnecessary prepositional phrases:**
I have *made reference* to this before.
I have referred to this before.
- **Using platitudes:**
If I can be of assistance, do not hesitate to call.
We wish Barbara *the best of luck in the future*.
- **Using passive voice:**
Barbara *was wished* good luck by Donna.
Donna *wished* Barbara good luck.

It can be a tricky situation – editing copy written by others, the job of copy editor requires diplomacy and discipline. The diplomacy is necessary to avoid alienating the writer (and losing your editorship); the discipline is required to impose standards and create consistency.

To help with this delicate balancing act, it is useful to have a writing style sheet – rules for spelling, punctuation and grammar that result in standard usage in all material published by the business. This style sheet can be the editor's best friend – a reference and a way to settle disputes between you and the writer. ■

Tricks
& Tips



Buzzy's Corner

Q. *I'll be doing the writing for our company newsletter. Can you give me some tips to keep my writing fresh?*

A. To write newsworthy copy, you will need to think about your company or organization's products and services in a new way – not from your perspective as a company insider, but from the perspective of your customers, prospects, and public. Temporarily put aside everything you know, and imagine you are a new customer or interested prospect.

- What would cause you to be excited or curious or intrigued?
- What would make you want to learn more?
- What would keep you reading to the end of the newspaper or magazine article?

Newsletter editors and writers have a special challenge to keep copy fresh even when writing the same sort of story repeatedly, sometimes even in the same issue or even on the same page. Here are four traps to avoid:

1. **Avoid the historical beginning.** Good news stories rarely begin at the beginning. While “once upon a time” may be a good way to start a fairy tale, it isn't a very exciting way to begin a news story. Instead, start with the ending – the answer to the question “what happened” or “how do we know”.
2. **Eliminate unnecessary punctuation, especially exclamation points.** Good news writing is inherently exciting and doesn't need punctuation – especially multiple exclamation points!!!!!! – as assistance.
3. **Using etc. to end a series.** When you have said all you can think of, end the series with a period rather than with etc. News writers report all the facts available; if there is more to say, then say it. If not, end the sentence.
4. **Eliminate redundancy.** Twin words like cut and eliminate or happy and content are redundant and add little of value to a sentence other than padding word count.

Think like a customer; think like a journalist; and write convincing copy that truly does double duty – news and information while advertising your services!

Buzzy



we will change the way you think about printing, copying & mailing.

TRY A NEWSLETTER *continued from page 1*

As the newsletter editor, you need to understand that you are writing for the readers of the newsletter, not for your company's staff and management. Limit internal review of newsletter copy to fact checking and conforming to other company marketing or sales collateral material. Resist pressure to include topics of interest to staff members unless they are also of interest to the newsletter audience. We recommend circulating a memo requesting newsletter topics from staff members and managers, then refining the list to provide a topic guide that has internal approval as well as reader interest.

EFFICIENT PRODUCTION

Efficient newsletter production is a key element in publishing consistently. That's why we recommend limiting the page count and including photographs and graphics to cut down on the amount of copy that needs to be written for each issue. Remember that it takes 400-600 words to fill an 8½ x 11 sheet, assuming the page includes some graphic elements as well as the text.

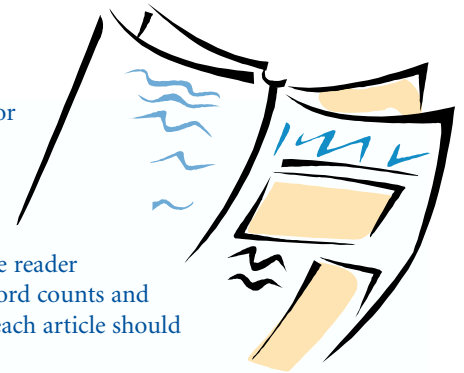
Many newsletters are delayed awaiting copy from a contributor – the president, a committee chairman, or other important individual. To derive maximum benefit from the newsletter, it is more important that the newsletter be published on time than to wait for a contributor. So, be prepared with something you can substitute if a contributor is unable to provide copy on time. Or consider writing the column or article yourself, and presenting it for editing.

For efficient newsletter production, first write and edit copy in a word processing program such as Word without trying to fit copy to the page. Following our guideline of 75% of the newsletter being devoted to copy, you'll be able to develop target word counts for articles in the newsletter. For instance, if you intend to include a president's message in each issue, assign a word count of 100 words to the president and explain it should take only about a half hour to write this many words.

After all the copy is written, edited and an accurate word count is available, you will find it much easier to determine copy placement for page layout. Look at the copy submitted for the issue and

prioritize by importance or interest to the audience.

The most important article should include a photograph, graphic or other illustration for more reader interest. Look at article word counts and determine on what page each article should appear in the newsletter.



NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

The best thing you can do to promote the effectiveness of a newsletter is to publish it on a regular, recurring basis.

To determine the schedule, start by picking the date you want the newsletter distributed and work backwards. For example, a monthly newsletter is to be mailed on the first working day of each month. Subtract five working days for printing and mailing services; subtract one business day for final approval and release to press; subtract two business days for final proofing; subtract three business days for preparation of first proof; subtract five business days for gathering stories, artwork and photographs and writing copy; subtract one business day for planning the month's issue (i.e., determining stories to include and making writing assignments).

Add all this up and you will need 17 business days from the time you begin working on the monthly issue until it is in the mail. Therefore, to mail on the first of each month, you'll need to begin the first step (planning) in the middle of the first week of every month.

CALL C&M FOR A QUOTE

A newsletter can be a very powerful tool to keep current customers buying and interest prospects in becoming customers. Put this advantage to work for your business by calling on us for a quotation on designing, layout, printing, and mailing your newsletter – or any one of the processes. We can also help you with a referral for writing copy. As you can tell from our newsletter, we're the experts! ■

CORNER IDEA

INTERVIEWING FOR ARTICLES

If you have experts on your staff that don't have time to write for your newsletter, then conduct an interview so you can get the benefit of their knowledge. An interviewer who makes short, pleasant comments during the interview will help keep the conversation flowing and put the interviewee at ease. Take notes to accurately capture answers, but don't be so intent on note taking that you avoid eye contact with the interviewee. Your focus should be on the interviewee, not the notes.

- **BE POLITE AND RESPECTFUL** The interview should not be a conversation between best friends, nor should it be an interrogation. Keep the tone at the level of a thoughtful conversation.
- **BE PREPARED** Do some research on both the interviewee and the topic. Formulate questions in advance and select one to be the key question. Know your questions well enough that you don't need to refer to them during the interview, or ask the interviewee's permission to consult your list.
- **BE OBSERVANT** Listen carefully to answers and be prepared to leave your prepared interview questions to probe a response from the interviewee. Remember to remain respectful while probing; don't turn the probe into an inquisition.



Your Copy & Print Center
818-353-7135

www.cmprintmail.com
 TOLL FREE (866) 500-7009
 FAX (818) 353-8135
 TOLL FREE FAX (866) 500-7946

C&M PRINTING COPYING MAILING
 10034 Commerce Ave.
 Tujunga, CA 91042

PRESORT STANDARD
 US POSTAGE
PAID
 PERMIT #7
 PASADENA, CA



Member of the
Adobe Solutions
 Network

Microsoft
Publisher
 Authorized MS Publisher
 Service Provider.

Member of
PIASC

Business and
 Professional
 Women/CA

Cresenta Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Glendale Chamber of Commerce
 Sunland-Tujunga Chamber of Commerce



National Association of Women Business Owners
 LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

Thank you for your loyalty to C&M Printing

Wishing you a HAPPY and PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

Promote your business with Quality Printing, Copying & Mailing

Newsletters Work

Why publish a newsletter? Simple – because newsletters work. They have a proven track record for keeping you and your audience in touch, for establishing and maintaining your credibility, and for publicizing your organization to the community.

Is your business taking advantage of the customer loyalty and increased sales that are generated by this popular sales and marketing tool?

Use a newsletter to...

- Share information
- Increase exposure
- Establish credibility
- Build rapport
- Encourage loyalty
- Develop brand awareness



A newsletter provides your audience with clear, concise, timely and useful information. Properly designed, it becomes a no-nonsense, objective publication providing expert information. Your company, as the content provider, has perceived value to your customers.

The most basic newsletter should have a few lead stories, shorter news items, and a message from your leader. A more developed publication might include features, departments, columns, an editorial, cartoon, in-house news, news tidbits, regional round-ups, etc.

We can help...

Once your copy is written, make it look great with C&M:

- Professional layout and design
- Black and white or full-color printing
- Personalization of your preprinted shells
- Hundreds of ink and paper combinations
- Folding, drilling, and other bindery services
- Addressing, zip sorting and other mailing services

There are hundreds of thousands of newsletters published on every imaginable subject each year. Let us help you create an excellent newsletter for your company. ■

