

## Tips on writing a newsletter

Businesses, organisations and clubs can all find some benefit in writing and distributing a newsletter. Indeed, even internal departments within a large organisation have found that creating a newsletter is a great way of letting others know what you do, how you do it, and why you do it!

One of the main reasons companies and organisations decide to write a newsletter is because it is one of the least expensive marketing tools for drawing attention to the business or club. With current day technology, a newsletter is also something that can be pulled together professionally relatively quickly, and that can be distributed to customers, members or potential customers and clients very quickly over the internet or via email. Sending out a high quality newsletter on a regular basis enabled you to keep customers, potential customers and even the media aware of what is happening within your business. It can also help build familiarity between yourself and your clients, which in turn can lead to repeat business from them.

So, if you have made the decision to start completing and sending out a routine newsletter, how do you get started?

1. Choose a format for your newsletter. Now is the time to decide, (a) Will you print out and post the newsletter, or email it out directly from the PC?, (b) How long will it be – can you create a standard template that can simply be populated or updated each month? (c) Do you have a company logo that can be incorporated? (d) What are the company / organisation style guidelines and how can they be incorporated into the newsletter? (e) Have you thought about the cost of producing the newsletter routinely, and set aside some time or money to ensure the completion?
2. What are you going to name your newsletter?
3. Who is going to be responsible for completing the newsletter and distributing it each month? Are they sufficiently skilled / trained to do this?

Next you need to think about the newsletter content. If you plan to send out a newsletter routinely, think about sections of the newsletter that could remain the same in each edition. For example, a monthly update on the team, or a summary of customer feedback from the month before. Equally you could consider having an industry news section each month, which provides some different yet relevant content to the readers, and is also a relatively easy section of the newsletter to update frequently.

Once you have your content in place, you next need to think about how you are going to display this content within the newsletter. As discussed above, having a standard template that you can just 'drop' stories into is handy as it keeps the structure of the newsletter relatively straight forward and it also enables the newsletter to be recognisable to readers each month. Think about the order in which you want stories to be presented, and play around with them on the page until the newsletter is aesthetically pleasing and has a logical flow. Whilst this might take a bit of time at first, in the long run it will become a speedier element of the newsletter writing process.

Finally, you need to send out your newsletter to your contacts. Keep a record of any email bounce backs or hard copies that are 'returned to sender' to ensure that you don't continue to send the newsletter out to these individuals. It is important to also keep a log of anyone who states that they no longer wish to receive your newsletter, and to duly remove them from your distribution list.