

How to Create an Effective Newsletter

by Carol Dunitz, Ph.D.

A newsletter can be a very effective way to disseminate information. There are a number of things you can do to make sure it accomplishes your goals.

Deliver Useful Information. Newsletter readers want information. If you give them the information they are looking for, they will save and refer to your publication. That is an excellent way to stay uppermost in their minds. Minimize promotional material. Newsletter readers are there for information -- not to be sold.

Attractive Design. This is the twenty-first century . Make sure your newsletter has a contemporary flair. The format should be appealing. And it should remain consistent. Using the same basic design makes your newsletter recognizable. Body copy should be set in 12 point serif type. Serif type is easier to read.

Enticing Headlines. Interesting headlines make or break an article. When you catch your reader's attention with impactful headlines, you insure good readership. It won't matter how incredible your articles are if you lose readers with your headlines. Great headlines are dynamic. They may have a hook. They stimulate curiosity and lure your readers to the first paragraph. Try action verbs in your headlines.

Short Words. Short Sentences. Short Paragraphs. Newsletter readers are not looking for Shakespeare. Don't be too clever. Don't be too flowery. Keep your message simple and back it up with interesting facts and helpful advice. Place a premium on concise writing. Your readers have a limited amount of time. Make it easy for them to review your newsletter and get the information they are looking for.

Snappy Visuals. Use photographs. People are attracted to pictures of other people. Include other photos and illustrations when they provide additional clarity to articles. Take advantage of copyright-free drawings. Free art is available on the web at numerous sites.

Humor. A couple of good jokes or anecdotes can add levity and fun to your publication. Find ones that relate to your subject. Better yet, get your readers involved by asking them to submit humorous and human interest material.

Your newsletter is only as good as the information you provide. Deliver high quality on a consistent schedule. That is how you cultivate a loyal readership.

Carol Dunitz, Ph.D. is president of The Last Word LLC, a communication and creative services company. She is a professional speaker and author of 'Louder Than Thunder,' a parable about

listening and interpersonal communication. Dunitz is the playwright, lyricist and composer of 'Bernhardt on Broadway,' a musical about Sarah Bernhardt. She can be reached at 312.523.4774, cdunitz@lastword.com or www.DrCarolDunitz.com.