

IDEAS FOR FILLING YOUR NEWSLETTER WITH GREAT CONTENT

Introduction

Newsletters are a great way to build relationships with prospects and clients. They can also be the perfect place to share news.

Sent regularly, they build trust and are a reliable, consistent touch-point for your business.

But with so many demands on your time, and so much competition in people's inboxes, how do you craft a newsletter with great content that people want to read?

How do you put your newsletter together again and again without the stress of being faced with a blank page, scratching your head about what to put in it?

Filling your newsletter with great content starts with having a plan that allows you to easily tap into compelling content - every time you need it.

So how do we do that?

In this cheat sheet, we look at what content really is (it's more than the words on the page) and four important content types.

We also give you an effective yet simple newsletter structure that is an easy framework for putting together newsletters with great content.



5 Important Types of Newsletter Content

Content in your newsletter includes more than the articles and images that you'll publish.

1. Your Newsletter Template

The look and feel of your newsletter is content. So start with a solid template that reflects your brand and business.

A great template is reasonably easy to create with most email builders, but it is worth the investment getting your newsletter template professionally designed so that it does a great job of being a salesperson and representative for your business.

Your template should include your branding, colours, header images, footers, copyright notices and your company details.

These items will be standard and appear each time.

Avoid changing up your design from issue to issue. You want the reader to KNOW it's from you and where to look for their favourite content e.g. is the Case Study always the third story? Is the editorial always the first story in the upper left?

2. Your Great Images

Images are an important part of your newsletter and immediately add life and personality.

There are some great stock images available; many are free or at very low prices. Where possible, customise them so that they are unique to you.

Whenever possible, use your own images - of real people (staff, clients, suppliers, etc.)

HINT: Snap photos on your phone as you see things that may be interesting for your newsletter and file them away for when you might need them.

3. The Words and Stories

Most newsletters will consist of quite a bit of copy. Today, some of the more contemporary styles have fewer words and more images - and don't deliver much content at all, instead encouraging the reader to a website to read the content.



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Assuming you DO have copy in your newsletter, be sure to keep the copy clear, to the point and easy to understand. Every sentence should have a purpose.

Regardless who your audience is (and hopefully you ARE writing for a specific type of audience), you want them to feel like you're speaking to them.

Whether your tone is casual or formal, consistency in your voice is really important.

As is grammar. You don't have to have majored in English - you just want to be sure that the writing is clear and easy to understand and that there are no typing errors or misspelled words.

A few tips:

- Keep the sentences and paragraphs short and link to full stories on your website. (You don't have to include the complete article/story in the newsletter.)
- Pay attention to headlines because they really matter.
- Ensure the content is scannable - use headings, subheadings, bold, italics (only use underline if it is a link otherwise you risk confusing the reader).
- Use consistent style e.g. Title case, or upper case or normal case in your headlines
- Create awesome subject lines for your eNewsletters to ensure they get opened.

4. Your Calls to Action

Your call to action is also content.

Great newsletters have very clear calls to action.

So whether you want someone to download a file, call your office, complete a survey, or tell a friend... ensure the calls to action are clear (both in description and visually) and placed where it makes the most sense for people to see them and to act.

Avoid having so many calls to action that your message is watered down and the reader confused.

5. Your Links

How your links look is also content. Do you use buttons, text links or both? Whatever you choose, use them consistently and ensure your link colours are consistent. You want readers to be clear on what is clickable.



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Really think about the words you are using for your links.

For example, if you were publishing an article about 2017 Social Media Trends, rather than having your call to action as:

[Read More](#)

you could say

[Get the 2017 Social Media Trends Report here.](#)

Both lead to the same content but one is more compelling to click on than the other.

A Great Structure For Your Newsletter Content

The fastest and easiest way to always have more than enough content is to structure your newsletter content.

When your newsletter follows a similar structure from one edition to the next, it makes planning the content so much easier.

Once you've filled in the blanks of your newsletter and covered the key pieces of content that you have strategically chosen to share with your audience, you can add additional special content.

A standard newsletter could include the following types of content — every time:

Introduction/Welcome

This is from you (or the editor) and is a personal message and an overview of what's inside that issue of the newsletter. Often it'll include quick links to content on the website, making the newsletter a good traffic generator for your business.

Industry or Business News

Build authority by sharing news. For example, if you specialise in human resource services for small business, then making announcements about legislation or changes to protocol keeps your newsletter relevant and timely for your readers.



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Share Great Tips

The more useful your content, the easier that it can show a customer how to do something, better, faster, cheaper - the more likely they are to keep reading. Include a “Business Tip of the Week” or some content that has a use. This can include a cheat sheet or download.

For example, if you are an accountant, you may have different calculators or checklists to make doing BAS headache-free.

Interviews

This is one of our favourite things to include in a newsletter. Could you interview subject-matter experts from your industry, clients or suppliers to tell their story or to provide some level of education or training for your customers?

Rather than include the whole story in the newsletter, include a couple of compelling paragraphs and put the rest of the copy on a landing page on your website. This drives traffic to your site and saves space in the newsletter, making it more “scannable”.

Offers and Specials

Do you have an upcoming sale or clearance? Launching a new product? Use some space in your newsletter to let customers know what’s new and how to buy.

Case Studies

These are like interviews but specifically with happy clients. These can take the form of written, audio or video case studies. You don’t have to include the whole story IN the newsletter - but you can include a preview (be sure to use photos and great visuals to make clicking through to the actual newsletter easy and compelling).

Just about every issue of your newsletter could include all these elements.



Bonus Content

Occasionally you'll have other news or content available. Because you have the regular content already mapped out, you can include bonus content when you have it.

Competitions, quizzes and surveys

Run competitions, ask questions, conduct surveys and quizzes. If you want people to take action, give them a reason to. Tie your engagement back to clear outcomes and benefits for the customer.

Company News

Been nominated for an award? Received recognition for your new product or service? Be sure to share the love with your customers. Be bold and do a little bragging.

HINT: You can use your awards and logos of any media you've been in as part of your newsletter template - for example in the footer section, acting as a little advertisement for your business every time you send a newsletter. This can build authority and credibility with readers.

Using a consistent structure means that pulling the content together gets easy. You'll be able to file away news, stories, image, article, tips to use in future newsletters.

And when you treat every element in your newsletter as content - the colours, words, images, links, header, footer - you are giving every square inch of the newsletter attention and ensuring that it is doing its job as well as possible for you and your business.

[Here's an example of a recent HerBusiness News Newsletter.](#)



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