

EMAIL NEWSLETTER BASICS

Using Email to Market Your Services

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Many people regard unsolicited and unwanted email as a nuisance. However, if you select your target audience carefully and send out pertinent, timely information, email newsletter marketing can help you grow your business, attract new prospects and inform your clients about trends, promotions and new services. In fact, if you're reading this article, you are a living example of why email newsletter marketing works!

Email Marketing Works!

If you're feeling hesitant about investing the time, money or energy required to produce a quality email newsletter, consider a few rewards you'll reap from utilizing this new form of marketing communication:

- **Save Money:** Email newsletters are created and distributed electronically, eliminating the costs of printing and postage. Even though you'll need to pay a designer or writer to create the newsletter for you, the costs will be substantially lower than traditional direct-mail marketing costs.
- **Attract More Customers:** Email marketing allows you to get your message out to a much larger group of people than is possible with traditional marketing avenues. Also, email messaging is "viral," meaning that existing customers can easily forward an email message to a friend or colleague who may be looking for the service you provide.
- **Target Your Audience:** Because demographic information is available to help you carefully select your target audience, you can ensure your newsletter goes only to those individuals who are interested in what you offer.
- **Track Your Effectiveness:** Email technology can monitor and report the number of people to whom you sent your message, how many viewed it, which content was most frequently read, the number of click-throughs to your website and the amount of times it was forwarded to other people. Using this data, you can refine your message to be even more effective.

While you might not want to abandon proven, traditional marketing tools, email marketing provides a fast, inexpensive, effective way to market your services to an interested audience. *Why wouldn't you try it?*

An Effective Marketing Tool for *Your Business*

Email marketing isn't just for online and brick-and-mortar service companies -- many professionals, even those in traditional businesses, can benefit from using electronic marketing to enhance their service offerings. Email newsletters can contain an abundance of specialized content, including:

- **Introductions:** A well-crafted email newsletter can introduce you, your staff and your services, highlighting the expertise of your firm's principals by showcasing recent awards, affiliations and accomplishments.
- **Interviews:** People love to hear what other people think; why not use an email newsletter to offer up an interview or profile with a key industry spokesperson - perhaps a member of your firm?
- **Information:** Newsletters are a great way to distribute fresh content to a wide range of people. By including articles about market trends, time-sensitive issues and new industry developments, you'll keep your clients well informed.
- **Ideas:** Email newsletters are a great way to share with your clients tips and strategies that will enable them to save money, make more informed decisions and operate more efficiently. You can also help them better understand your area of expertise by sending out articles that explain key concepts ... take this article, for example!

Perhaps the most important advantage of using an email newsletter is the gentle, non-invasive reminder that your services are available. By sending your clients regular messages, you are keeping yourself and your product fresh in their minds, ensuring they turn to you when they next need an insurance broker, tax accountant or attorney.

Appearances Count!

When considering the appearance of your email newsletter, think about the types of messages *you* find effective. Whether you choose to produce an email newsletter in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language, a series of simple commands used to build websites) or simple text, you should remember a few rules of effective email marketing:

- **Keep it Short:** Your readers shouldn't have to scroll past pages of advertisements, graphics and non-essential text to get to the meat of your newsletter.
- **Aim for Visual Simplicity:** While bells and whistles are available, it doesn't mean you should use them! Present your message in a simple manner with minimal changes in font, text size and color, and your prospects will be more apt to hear your message.
- **Offer Fresh Content:** Send out at least one piece of "news you can use" with each newsletter; if you must recycle evergreen content, rotate it over at least six months.

- **Avoid Errors:** Take the time to ensure your newsletter doesn't contain factual or typographical errors. A misplaced apostrophe may seem inconsequential, but every mistake your clients notice is one "brick" removed from your "wall of credibility."

Above all, don't forget to include your contact information, including several hyperlinks to your website. Your object is to get prospects to utilize their services -- don't make it difficult for them to find you!

Benefits Unique to Email Newsletters

Aside from an increased consumer presence, the main reason for any kind of marketing, email newsletters can offer a few unique benefits not found with traditional marketing tools.

- **Customer Communication:** Because it's fast, easy and non-invasive to respond to an email message, prospects often feel more comfortable initiating an email relationship; a ringing telephone is an immediate, often unwanted, call to action, while an email message can be sent on your customer's own timeline.
- **Customer Interaction:** Use electronic surveys and questionnaires to elicit a fast, useful response from your customer on a variety of topics, such as their interests, opinions and demographics, as well as what *doesn't* work for them.
- **Customer Loyalty:** Cultivate customer loyalty by sending out personalized content relevant to your client's specific interests, which will help you develop and nurture strong relationships with your prospects.

If you aren't convinced yet of the effectiveness of email newsletter marketing, then think about your experience with this article. Did you make it to the end, reading or skimming all four sections and the bullet points within each? If you're reading this, the answer must be "yes"!