



E-Mail Newsletter

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"Make sure you don't lose the customers you've spent so much energy to acquire."

Keep these things in mind for a newsletter with impact:

1. Use big headlines.
2. Make your articles short and to the point.
3. All information should be of value to the customer

Staying in touch with customers

Often businesses spend as much time and effort gathering new customers as they do on anything else. It's also one of the most costly functions of doing business. So it's important to make sure you don't lose the customers you've spent so much energy to acquire. The alternative is to continue with the time-consuming process of finding new customers from an ever-shrinking pool of prospects. And since it costs much less to keep existing customers instead of constantly replacing them, it just makes good business sense to do what it takes to keep them coming back.

Regular communication with your customers lets them know how much you value them and their business. Show them that you care by offering valuable information such as tips on how to use your products and services more effectively, event announcements, information on upcoming new products and expanded services, and special discounts on existing ones.

E-mail newsletters—quick, easy

Using an e-mail newsletter can be an effective, low-cost method for staying in touch with your customers. It helps reduce churn and can easily generate more business from customers you've already spent a great deal of effort to win. Since there are no mailing and printing costs involved, it's also very gentle to your bottom-line. Another benefit is the almost instantaneous delivery that e-mail affords. You don't have to worry whether the Post Office will get the newsletter to your customers in time for them to take advantage of a special offer.

Microsoft Office Word makes it simple to create and send e-mail newsletters. Customers will appreciate the regular communication and you could be rewarded with more business from your existing customer base.

Create a customized template



Add your company logo, change the colors to reflect the ones your business uses, put in your business address, phone numbers, and Web site address—in other words, develop a basic template reflecting your company's look that will stay the same for each issue.

It's a good idea to use Web Layout view (on the View menu, click Web Layout) when creating your newsletter. That's the look your customers will be seeing when they receive your e-mail.

Here's an easy way to use text you've already formatted as the basis for a new paragraph, character, or list style:

1. Select the text, on the Format menu, click Styles and Formatting, and then click New Style. You'll see all your style characteristics displayed.
2. Name your new style, check the Add to Template box, and then click OK.

Company Name

Street Address

Address 2

Phone

Fax

E-mail

We're on the Web!

Web Address

Fonts

When choosing the fonts that you'll be using for headlines and body text, a good rule is to never use more than 2-3 fonts in a newsletter. More cause confusion and make your efforts look less professional. Be creative with the ones you do choose, though. Use different sizes and colors, and use bold and italics to add variety without confusing the look of the newsletter. You can add these custom styles to your template's style palette so that they're instantly available.

Finally, delete any features that you won't be using. Once you're done with these general changes, save the result as a Word template.

Add articles and graphics

One distinct difference between a printed newsletter and an e-mail version is the amount of text to include. Unless you know that all your readers will be interested in a longer version, you should keep the amount of information to about 1,000 words or less. Anything more becomes tiresome to read online, and you may lose their interest before they read the items you really want them to see.

What to include

Some items to think about including might be introductions to new employees, recent awards presented to your company, specials and discounts on products or services, announcements of new products, and information on new ways to take advantage of your products or services. Don't include items that might be of interest to only a few customers; you want to capture and hold the interest of as many readers as possible.

Add graphics



Add graphics or pictures with captions to help break up the text and create some visual interest. But make sure that whatever you add relates to the adjacent text. A picture of the company dog might be cute, but if the story surrounding it is about a new product, the picture will only serve to confuse your readers.

Contact information

Be sure to include contact information in more than one place. Not only should it be part of your master template, you should include "For more information..." contacts in every article where it's appropriate.

Web links

Include links to the company Web site wherever you can. Be sure to update the site to include the information you are referring them to. It's easy to include hyperlinks in your newsletter that will take customers right to your Web site or get them started with an e-mail to your sales staff.

Proofread

When you've completed your newsletter, it's time for one of the most important steps of all—proofreading. Take several passes through the material, looking for different things each time.