

## How to use e-newsletters for effective marketing

Marketing is about long term relationship building, and a superb way of keeping your customers informed about your business over a long period of time is through a newsletter.

I have written at length about paper newsletters in the past, but now is the turn of the electronic version or e-newsletter. These are a very effective way of communication with a selection of recipients who should have expressed an interest to receive your publications (these things need to be permission based so not to be classed as spam), with the purpose to inform, educate, publicise and maintain a connection with your customer base so they don't forget you and go off with someone else.

The first thing is to collect your customers' contact details via an autoresponder (see my article 'How to use autoresponders within marketing campaigns'), preferably through a double-opt-in system through a sign up form on your website. Having a secure database coupled with a template system will facilitate the procedure, especially with a large collection of details, and you can divide or create separate lists for particular campaigns or promotions.

Use marketing campaigns to collect customers' details through an incentive system (see my article 'How to effectively combine on-line and leaflet marketing campaigns'). Playing on the customers' greed factor is an appropriate way of gathering contacts. But one thing that is not polite is to assume that after a networking meeting you can take advantage of 'business card dumping', which is uploading these details directly into your database, as not everybody would appreciate receiving your newsletter without their permission.

Newsletters should only be sent with a direct purpose which should be valid and appropriate. Don't be compelled to send something out just because you said your newsletter will be bi-monthly or whatever. You want your readers to look forward to the next issue, and receive it with interest once it pops into their in-box. The last thing you want is for them to unsubscribe (a facility which should be available with every publication).

Using a template to make your newsletter 'look pretty' seems to be a specific requirement, but I would like to add that some businesses do very well without any special effects, as the success of a newsletter should depend mainly on the content. But if you think your readers 'expect' this treatment then there are plenty of templates available.

Don't fall into the trap (myself included) of just sending out newsletters without a proper purpose or call to action. Successful businesses always have an aim or reason for their messages, culminating in signing up for an event, publicising a promotion, highlighting a new concept that has become available, as well as increasing your expertise status. If you don't have a call to action, ask your readers to send this newsletter to someone else who might be interested, which is another way of increasing your database of recipients, or allow them to reprint its content in another publication such as a blog or forum.

My call to action is, as well as passing this on to your friends and colleagues, if you are interested in setting up a newsletter and would like help in creating one, then I am writing a series of packages in 'how to create marketing newsletters' through systems such as ConstantContact.com. This will accompany a similar package called 'how to beautify your blog' of which details are now available on the website below.

Want to know more? Visit [www.designyourmarketing.co.uk](http://www.designyourmarketing.co.uk) and <http://alicedesigns.wordpress.com>