

BUILDING CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS - VIA GREAT NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters are an excellent 'touch point' opportunity with your clients or potential clients, so it's important that you ensure they are engaging and informative.

But how do you write a newsletter to your clients or prospects that won't go straight in the rubbish bin or deleted items box?

Newsletters can be a very cost-effective way to keep your brand front-of-mind with customers, but only if they get opened and absorbed. So what makes people want to read your newsletter?

We are often asked by chamber members how best to engage customers when writing a newsletter. Here's what we have found motivates them:

- **An engaging headline.**

Your headline should be attention grabbing – luring your reader in, to find out more. "August Newsletter" just won't cut it! The headline needs to be engaging enough to get them to read on NOW – not later. 90% of people who think "I'll read that later"...don't. Think about it from your customers perspective – what would they find interesting?

- **Content worth reading.**

It seems obvious, but too many newsletters read like an advert. No matter how entertaining or witty an advert may be - nobody switches on a TV to watch an advert! Their reason to tune in, is for the content of the actual TV programme. Similarly it is important for you to focus on content that your customer will find interesting and engaging...and intersperse your call to action more subtly throughout.

- **Keep it real.**

Steer clear of industry jargon. Write for your audience. You may be an expert in your industry, but chances are your customer is not - so keep your writing style and explanations in words that your customer will understand and relate to.

- **Tone.**

Keep the tone and attitude of your newsletter personal and casual. A newsletter is a great opportunity to "bring your business to life" – to add some personality to it. Obviously the content needs to be knowledgeable and informative, but let your corporate mask drop a little, to reveal the personality behind your brand. By default it will tend to add to the trust

your customer feels for your company, and for you. Similarly, if you engage a professional writer to write your content – ensure you get a writer who's style best portrays your brand. Then try to keep the same writer, so that your tone is consistent.

- **Self-interest.**

There has to be something in it for them. And you've figured out what this is by putting yourself in the customer's shoes and seeing through their eyes. For example, you might want to tell them about a new person who's joined your team... but they'll only be interested if it means a benefit for them. Maybe the new person has special talents or knowledge that will improve the customer service they experience? Let benefits be your focus.

- **Education.**

Share your expert knowledge about your sector with readers, but remember rule number one – self interest. The knowledge must come with benefits attached for that customer.

- **Tips.**

Bullet-pointed tips are irresistible. Think of stuff you know that others would find useful. For example, give them your best tips for stress relief, time management or for staying ahead of the competition. Ideally you need these tips to be usable for the majority of your customers – don't go too niche.

- **Real-life stories.**

People are naturally nosy, so feed their curiosity with problem-solution stories involving other customers. You may be able to use real names (always ask permission), or you can make the stories anonymous.

- **A prize.**

One of the best ways to get your newsletter opened is to run a competition. Ask a couple of questions that have answers buried within the stories and offer a popular prize (wine, book, discount, voucher). "Your chance to win XXX." The easiest mode of entry is email – it's instant and no hassle at all for the customer.

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If you have any questions, please call 0800 CHAMBER (0800 242 623).

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