



# DIY Marketing Email Newsletters



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Appletree



Third Edition

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## 1. What is DIY Marketing?

Marketing is something that every company needs to do, whatever the size of your business, the type of work you do and the sort of clients you have. If you do not market your business, how will your prospective clients know where you are and what you do? If you do not tell them, they will not come and buy from you. If you do not market your business to your existing clients, how will they know to keep coming back to you?

**Really good marketing does not need to be expensive.**

This is why DIY Marketing has been developed. **It is for people who provide services or expensive products** and each part will help you improve a different area of marketing, giving you enough advice and information to allow you to put a different marketing technique into practice. DIY Marketing is for people who cannot afford to hire a marketing consultant to tell them how to improve their marketing, or for businesses that cannot afford to pay a marketing agency to do all the work for them. It is for people who want to do their own marketing and do it well.

**One of the secrets of good, cost effective marketing is to find out what sort of marketing works for your business and then do more of it.**

**The second secret of marketing is that ad hoc marketing does not work.**

This means that if you read this part of DIY Marketing from cover to cover and put into action all the advice and activities that are relevant to your business, you will get some really good results from your marketing. If you make the time to study this part of DIY Marketing and commit to implementing the suggestions consistently, on an ongoing basis, you will get even better results.

### **Who writes DIY Marketing?**

DIY Marketing is written by Chantal Cornelius, a Marketing Consultant who set up Appletree in 2000. The company provides practical marketing advice and services to small and medium sized businesses. Over the years Chantal has gained considerable experience in finding the right marketing solutions for different companies. She is now sharing her knowledge and experience with you, in the form of DIY Marketing.

### **Money Back Guarantee**

If at any time you feel you are not getting your money's worth, email [info@appletreeuk.com](mailto:info@appletreeuk.com) and just ask for a full refund.

## 2. Are Newsletters Right for Your Business?

To find out how useful this part of DIY Marketing will be in helping you market your business, answer the following ten questions:

		Yes	No
1	Are you passionate about your business?		
2	Do you want your business to stand out from the crowd?		
3	Do you use referrals, word of mouth and networking to find new clients?		
4	Do you want to build trust and rapport with your clients and prospects?		
5	Do your clients need to go through a long decision making process before buying from you?		
6	Is your service something that requires a serious investment of time and money from your clients?		
7	Do you sell or deliver your product or service over an extended period of time or on an ongoing basis, rather than just as one hit?		
8	Do you offer a range of products and services, or ones that can be significantly tailored for each client?		
9	Are your clients sometimes uncertain about the benefits of using your product or service, needing proof of your ability to deliver?		
10	Do your clients have other options, as well as your product or service, or think they can do themselves what you can do for them?		
	Totals		

## Your Answers

**If you answered 'yes' to the first question**, then read on, as a secret of a great newsletter is writing with a passion for what you do. Whether you do the actual writing or not, if you are truly passionate about what you do and how it helps your clients, this will come across in whatever you publish and your readers will believe it. This will give you a very powerful marketing tool.

**If you answered 'yes' to questions 2**, a carefully, thoughtfully written newsletter will help your business to stand out. Every day, more and more newsletters are published by people who do not put enough thought and energy into what they publish. Create a fabulous newsletter and people will read it, putting you head and shoulders above the rest.

**If your answers to questions 3 or 4 were 'yes'** then a newsletter is also for you. Good marketing relies on building a lasting relationship with a prospect and then a client. Newsletters are the natural extension of the work you put into networking and generating referrals, helping you build the trust you need.

**Did you answer 'yes' to questions 5 or 6?** The service you provide may be expensive or have a long sales cycle. You may need to make contact with a prospect a number of times, over many months, before they are confident enough to buy from you. A newsletter gives you a way of keeping in touch with people, encouraging prospects to trust you. When people trust you they are more likely to buy from you and keep buying.

The work does not stop once you win a new client. **If you answered 'yes' to question 7**, then a newsletter will give you the opportunity to keep in regular contact with your clients, giving them the support they need.

When you provide many different products or services, you have a lot to explain to people. **If you answered 'yes' to question 8**, then a newsletter is the ideal tool for telling people what you do, a bit at a time. You can also use a newsletter to actually show people what you do, that you understand your subject and that you understand the issues your clients and prospects are facing. **If you answered 'yes' to question 9**, a newsletter is also for you.

Everyone will try to do it themselves. But when they realise that they do not have all the skills they need or they just do not have the time, they will look for someone who can help. If your answer to **question 10 was 'yes'** then you can use a newsletter to show readers that you can help them and keep your name in the forefront of their minds.

**If you answered 'yes' to more than six questions**, then this part of the Programme contains information that will help you promote your business. If 'no' was your answer to more than six questions, chances are there are other marketing tools that would be more appropriate to your business. If you would like a full refund, just contact [info@appletreeuk.com](mailto:info@appletreeuk.com).

### 3. Newsletters as part of your Marketing Strategy

Newsletters are just one of the ways in which you can market your business.

Using a newsletter on its own will not get you the results you need. It should not be the only thing that you do to promote your business. Instead, you should use a newsletter as part of your overall marketing strategy.

There are numerous other different forms of marketing that you can use. Regardless of which of these tools you decide to use alongside a newsletter, they should all be integrated, so that you give your clients and prospects a consistent message about your business. This will make all your marketing activities far more successful, as they will all be working towards the same goal, reinforcing the message that each delivers.

Below is an outline of how your newsletter should be integrated with other marketing tools, however many of them you choose to use.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Integration</b>
Newsletters	Writing a regular newsletter that gives away free advice related to your services.
Research	Finding out which parts of your service people actually want to buy and improving their quality.
PR	Writing 'how to' articles based on your newsletter.
Presentations	Using material from your newsletter and articles to show people how to have a go themselves.
Printed Marketing	Providing printed copies of your articles and presentation materials.
Referrals	Giving referrals where you can, to build up your reputation.
Websites	Putting your articles and presentation materials on your website for people to download for free.
Networking	Meeting people and finding out how you can help them, rather than just selling to them.

As well as having a consistent marketing message, you must also have a consistent approach to your marketing. Putting lots of effort into your marketing one month and doing nothing the next month will not give you such good results as consistent activities. This part of DIY Marketing will help you develop a consistent approach to publishing a newsletter.

#### 4. What are Newsletters and How do they Work?

A newsletter is information that you publish. It is a way of developing regular communication, showing people what you do and that you understand their needs. It is a way of keeping in touch with your clients and prospects, often tying together all your other marketing activities.

A newsletter for marketing purposes is not about introducing readers to your newest recruit, bragging about the big contract you have just won and showing people photographs of your receptionist's new granddaughter.

Newsletters work for a number of reasons:

##### **Are you an Expert?**

Experts are held in higher regard, are more in demand and can usually charge more. Once you have decided to specialise, you can use a newsletter to help you demonstrate your specialist knowledge and establish your reputation as an expert in your field, simply by publishing it regularly.

##### **Understanding the Value**

The concept of value is one of the most underappreciated aspects of marketing. Newsletters let you educate people about the value of your service and the value it will bring to their service, by explaining the detail of your offer. It is easier to demonstrate value by going into detail, without relying on a sales pitch.

No one wants feel that they paid too much for something they bought. A newsletter is an ideal way of reassuring your clients that they made the best decision, by showing them how they can get even more value from your service.

##### **Building your Reputation**

The more free advice you give away, the more people will come back to you when they need to pay for your service. The underlying message that is sent out with every successful newsletter is that the writer is a helpful person, who is interested in other businesses and who is happy to share their advice and ideas. Who would you choose to do business with – the company who charges just for meeting you, or the one who sends you a newsletter full of free advice, before you even arrange a meeting?

## **Demonstrate the Detail**

Newsletters let you demonstrate the detail behind your business. The ability to explore, discuss and dissect every aspect of what you do and how you go about it, is what makes a newsletter such a powerful and hard-working marketing tool for your business. There is no other form of marketing that allows you to do this and so successfully. People need detail to help them make the buying decision and a regular newsletter is the ideal vehicle.

## **Do you Take the Time?**

A newsletter lets you nurture prospects over time. Ad hoc marketing does not work and effective marketing takes a long time, especially when your service is expensive and people need time to think about what they are buying. A newsletter will allow you to build the trusting relationship that prospects need; it helps you keep in touch with people until they are ready to buy from you – however long this may take.

## **Depth and Breadth**

While you might specialise in one area, working for a particular type of client, you may have many different ways of solving their issues. How do you tell people about every different thing you do, without boring them? The ongoing and regular nature of a newsletter makes it the ideal medium to explain the depth and breadth of your business. Each issue can focus on one aspect, giving you time and space in which to explain it fully.

## **Testing, testing!**

Newsletters let you test special offers with a limited audience. One of the secrets of cost-effective marketing is finding out what works and then doing more of it. How do you find out what works (and what does not) without wasting a lot of money? A newsletter allows you to test a new offer within a selected audience, letting you track and measure the results, before you make your offer to the whole world.

## **Spreading the Word**

While a newsletter is a great way of telling people what you do and helping them to remember you and your business, you should be aware that it is not just about focusing on the people on your mailing list. It is also very much about encouraging these people to tell others about what you do, helping you to spread your network even further. Ask them to pass your newsletter on to someone else they know and they will be doing your marketing for you.



## 5. Different Types of Newsletters

There are many different ways you can produce a newsletter, depending on what you want to achieve, who you are contacting and the size of your budget.

As with any form of marketing, you first need to decide what will work best for your newsletter, so that you can do more of it and get even better results from your efforts.

Below are some of the characteristics that make up different types of newsletters. They can be combined in a variety of ways, to give you the best effects. As you read about the different aspects, think about what will work best for you and make a note them, along with any specific considerations you take into account, so that you can start to bring all the elements together.

### **The Long and the Short of it**

How much should you write? It depends on who you are sending your newsletter to and how much time they have. Everyone is busy, but some people have less time to read information that they may not see as a priority, so you need to work out the length that works best.

How much you write also depends on how often you are publishing your newsletter. If you decide to keep in touch with people by contacting them each week, your newsletter should be short enough for them to read inside a few minutes. If you are sending your newsletter monthly, you can afford to write more.

Do not worry about trying to pack everything into one or two issues of your newsletter. The beauty of using a newsletter to keep in touch with people over time is that you can use each issue to give your readers a bit more information about what you do.

Preference: .....

Considerations: .....

### **Expert Tip – How do you decide what to send?**

Regardless of what you really want to write in your newsletter, the final decision will be made by the people who you want to read it. Successful newsletters are the ones that solve problems for their readers or tell them things they don't already know. Find out what issues your readers face and what they know and write a newsletter that provides them with what they need.

## How Often is Enough?

As the length of your newsletter depends on how often you will be sending it, the rate at which you send it depends on how much you are going to write!

For instance, every week, you could send a newsletter that is simply a list of tips or actions for your readers to complete before the next issue.

Alternatively, each month, you could provide some hints and tips for people to use and link this to a case study that illustrates the benefits of what you are talking about.

Preference: .....

Considerations: .....

## Consider the Content

What is the main purpose of your newsletter? Will you be using it to improve your reputation as a person or a business willing to share advice and ideas with others? Will you be using your newsletter to promote your new services and products? Do your readers need to know about your new clients or staff, or would they rather receive something they can actually use?

Once you have decided on the purpose of your newsletter, you can decide what sort of content to use. If you want to share information and advice, you can write articles and provide lists of tips and actions. If your newsletter is a sales tool, you can use case studies and include details of features and prices.

Preference: .....

Considerations: .....

## Take that Tone

Who are you writing to and what sort of people are they? You need to identify exactly who you will send your newsletter to, so that you can select the most appropriate tone to take. Are your contacts expecting a chatty, informal missive, or something more precise and formal? Will they understand and appreciate your humour? How controversial can you be?

The 'voice' that your newsletter takes will depend very much on your business, your contacts and what you want to achieve with the newsletter. You also need to think about whether your newsletter will come directly from one person or represent your company as a whole.

Preference: .....

Considerations: .....

## Finding the Format

When you send an email newsletter, you need to decide on the very best way that you can do this.

The simplest, cheapest way is by writing content directly into your email system. You can make it look more interesting by using colours, pictures and formatting, but you cannot predict exactly how it will look when it arrives in someone else's in box. You should blind carbon copy all the email addresses, so that you do not give your contacts' details to complete strangers – your clients and prospects will certainly not thank you for doing that.

For a slightly more professional look, you could turn each issue into a PDF, so that you can be sure how your newsletter will look to anyone who sees it. You can then attach this to a plain email. The downside of sending an email this way is that some businesses set their systems to block any emails carrying unidentified attachments, for security reasons. This means that your newsletter may never reach some of its final destinations. Even if it does get through the security, some individuals will still not open attachments they do not recognise. In addition, PDFs can become quite large in file size, which means they take a long time to download. Do not assume that everyone on your contact list has broadband or a fast computer.

Possibly the most professional way of sending an email newsletter is by using a system that has been designed to allow you to do exactly that. There are plenty of them out there for you to choose from. You can find the one that suits you best, depending on how much you can afford, how much personal support you want and how many newsletters you will be sending.

Preference: .....

Considerations: .....

.....

## Summary

Long or short? Weekly, fortnightly or monthly? Chatty or controversial? There are many different ways in which you can write and publish a newsletter, depending on what you want to achieve and who will be reading it. Before you start a new newsletter, or before you make improvements to an existing newsletter, think about why you are publishing a newsletter and who will be reading it. When you know why and who, the decisions you have to make will be much easier.

## 6. How to Publish a Newsletter – Step-by-Step Implementation

So you have thought about how, why and who, but what do you do next? Here is a step-by-step guide to help you publish a newsletter or improve one you already publish.

### 6.1 Planning to Publish

Just writing a newsletter and sending it out to everyone you know will not get you the results you need. Like anything you do to promote your business, you need to do some planning first.

#### Have an Objective

Why are you publishing a newsletter? What are its aims? If your newsletter does not have a clear purpose, you will struggle to attract readers and you will find the process of writing each issue much harder than it needs to be. When you have an objective in sight, you can use it to guide everything you do, from writing each issue, to promoting it and attracting more subscribers. This is because an objective will allow you to explain easily why people will benefit from receiving and reading your newsletter.

Here are some suggested objectives, to help decide on the one that is best for you:

- What message do you want to communicate? Is this something that your readers are going to want to receive?
- What do your clients and prospects care about? If you do not know – ask them.
- What do you want to achieve for your clients more than anything else?
- If you could win an award for your business, what would it be for?

Think also about the results you want to see from publishing a newsletter. How are you going to assess its success?

Write down your main objectives for your newsletter and how you will measure each one.

Your Objectives	Measurements
1	
2	
3	

## **Set Your Schedule ...**

You need to decide on your publication schedule early in the planning process, because, as discussed earlier, the frequency dictates the amount of material you can include in each issue.

To help you decide, look at how much time you can reasonably spend preparing your newsletter and base your publication schedule around this. Do not set yourself a target that you cannot reach or a schedule that you cannot maintain, as you will just let your readers down, if you miss an issue or are constantly late.

Set yourself a manageable standard when you start. It is far too easy to launch your newsletter with a huge rush of energy and enthusiasm, only to discover a few months down the track that you cannot maintain the volume or frequency with which you first published. If in doubt, publish less material or less often and reassess your plans after a couple of issues. You will give a much more confident impression by increasing your newsletter than you will by cutting back.

At minimum, you should publish your newsletter on a monthly basis. Any less frequently and you will allow your readers to forget about you and ignore your newsletter. If this sounds like a lot of work, do not be put off, as the results really will be worth it. As you get into a routine, you will develop more and more ideas to write about.

## **... and Stick to It**

When you publish a newsletter, you make a promise to your readers to provide them with a certain amount of information on a regular basis. They are busy people and receiving your newsletter will interrupt them, whether they receive it by post or email. If you can make your interruption predictable and expected, they are more likely to read what you write. Keeping to a schedule means that your readers will recognise your newsletter when it arrives and even anticipate it beforehand.

By failing to keep to a schedule, you allow your readers to forget you. Once they do, it will be much harder to re-establish the relationship. If you are going to spend time and effort producing a newsletter, do not undo all your hard work by publishing intermittently.

Once you have set a date for publishing, go public with it, so your readers know exactly when to expect your newsletter. As well as letting other people know when the newsletter will arrive, the existence of a deadline will actually makes it easier for you to write.

## Does 'When' Matter?

Does the day you publish an email newsletter influence how widely or thoroughly it is read? If so, when should you publish?

If your newsletter has a solid reputation for being interesting, relevant and helpful, it will be widely read no matter which day of the week you choose to publish. However, in some situations, the day you publish can have an impact on your results.

Your first consideration should be about choosing the right day for your readers. Mondays can be a good day for motivational, inspirational newsletters that focus your readers on what they want to achieve for the week. Tuesday and Wednesdays are good days for business-focused newsletters that want to get attention and consideration, to be thought about and acted on. In contrast, Thursdays and Fridays are more reflective days and also good for newsletters based around leisure and entertainment. The only time to avoid is Friday afternoon. Although your newsletter may be read thoroughly by someone looking for an easy afternoon, it is unlikely that they will act on anything you say.

These are general guidelines. If there is a day that is particularly good for your industry then that should be your main consideration.

Your next consideration should be your own time and availability. Do not aim to publish first thing on a Monday morning if it means having to write the material on Sunday evening because you did not get around to doing it the previous week.

For monthly publications, think about when you have time to do the writing. If you decide to publish in the first week of the month, make sure that you do not get to the last week of the previous month and find that you have not even started. You need to give yourself enough time, to make sure that you do a good job of producing a newsletter to the standard that your readers expect. With this in mind, choose a combination of a day and a week, such as the first Tuesday or the last Friday.

When you have decided when to publish your newsletter, put the dates in your diary for the next six months. Then schedule regular reminders. These are particularly effective for monthly newsletters, when you have had three weeks to forget about the last issue.

When are you going to publish your newsletter?

Every .....day

Or on the ..... st/nd/rd/th ..... day of the month.

## Choosing your Structure and Format

What are you going to include in each issue? How many sections will it have? Mapping out the structure will help you design the layout of your newsletter. It will also help your readers get to know their way around your newsletter and will make the writing easier for you.

Make sure the structure you plan is manageable for your publication schedule, being careful not to overload your newsletter at the beginning. It is much more effective to add new sections as you go, than to have to drop them because you cannot think of what to write. Give yourself space for adding special information or news.

Here are some sections you can include in your newsletter:

Section	Example
Personal Message	"In this month's issue, we'll be looking at ..."
Articles	How to ... publish a newsletter
Case Studies	Examples of how your services have helped another business
Quotes	Great for illustrating a point
Checklists	"Answer these questions to find out if an email newsletter is for you"
Hints and Tips	10 things to do to help you publish a newsletter
Special Offers	Details of your new service

There are many other things you can include and your choice will depend on what you want to achieve with your newsletter. Do not forget to include a section for your contact details and details on how readers can unsubscribe.

### Expert Tip – Your Ideal Reader

As with any form of marketing, with a newsletter, you need to identify your ideal client – or reader. In most cases your ideal reader will be your ideal client. The more specific you can be when describing your ideal reader, the more effective your newsletter will be. Developing a profile will help you plan what you write and who you send your newsletter to. The word 'anyone' should not appear in this profile.

## How Will You Send it?

As mentioned earlier, there are many different methods available for sending newsletters and you need to decide which you want to use, before you start.

For an email newsletter, do you publish as text or HTML? Should you send it as an attachment? Here are some of the pros and cons for different ways of sending newsletters.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Email Text</b>	Easy and cheap. Gets through more spam filters. This is the way that most of us write and send emails, so when we receive a text email we are more likely to assume it has come from a real person and read it.	Harder to read when you write large amounts. Not as easy to scan as there is little or no formatting. Harder to break up different sections effectively with text because you cannot use different colours or images.
<b>Email Attachments</b>	Attached files allow you to use formatting, images and colour, using Word or PDFs, but without the cost or complication of HTML.	This requires your readers to have the same computer software as you. Many people are wary of attachments as they may contain viruses and are less likely to open what you send. Some companies actually block attachments from being delivered.
<b>Email HTML</b>	HTML is visual so can look more professional. Can reflect the branding of your business. Easy to read quickly. Can be used to make your newsletter come to life using different fonts, colours, pictures and layout.	More likely to be identified (wrongly or rightly) as spam. Some people turn off HTML settings in their email software so they only receive text emails. Designing HTML email involves more work. It is easier to go wrong and produce a newsletter that is nearly illegible.



## Selecting Your Style

Although it can be hard to identify, every newsletter published has its own style and voice. When you read a newsletter the voice of the author will influence how you react to the information presented – from continuing to read to contacting the author, to buying from them. When it comes to writing your own newsletter, it is important to get the style and voice right. There is no right or wrong style, but it is important that you feel comfortable with the style you adopt and that it reflects your business and way of working. It should also be appropriate for your audience.

What will your style be? Circle the ones most appropriate for you, your business and your newsletter.

Chatty or Serious?  
Informal or Formal?  
Humorous or Advisory?  
Conversational or Controversial?

## How Does it Look?

Once you have worked out the structure of your newsletter, decided how to send it and made some decisions on the tone you want to convey, designing the way your newsletter will look will be much easier. It is worth developing a template for your newsletter, that helps you keep to the same structure for each issue. This allows your readers to get used to the way it looks – they will know where each section is if they want to go straight to it. It also makes it easier for you to write each issue, as you know exactly how much space you have for each section.

Design your newsletter using your existing company image and style. This will help your readers to associate the newsletter with your business. Providing a consistent marketing message and image is much more effective than confusing people with different ones.

### Expert Tip – Professional Design

Unless you happen to be a graphic designer or a web developer by trade, having your newsletter professionally designed will be a very good investment. 'Homemade' newsletters are easy to spot and do not do your reputation any good.

## Summary

As with any form of marketing, planning is essential before you launch into actually producing your newsletter. If you do not plan how you are going to send your newsletter and what you are going to send, you will start with plenty of enthusiasm, creating something you think looks great. You will fill it with all the design elements you can think of. Then you send it out and find that, actually, no one can receive it; or that no one recognises it as coming from your company; or that the tone is completely inappropriate to your readers. Your time will be wasted and you will just have to start again. So do your planning before you go any further.

## 6.2 Writing Your Newsletter

Now that you know how you are going to develop and send your newsletter, you need to think about what you are going to write. As with the way your newsletter looks, you also need plan what it will say, to make sure that it does what you want it to do.

### Why Are You Doing This?

Everything you write in your newsletter must have a purpose. To help you, as you prepare each issue of your newsletter, ask yourself these questions:

- Why is this idea relevant to my readers?
- Why will this information benefit my readers?
- Why would this person want to receive my newsletter?
- Why would a stranger want to subscribe to my newsletter?

The more demanding you are the more successful your newsletter will be. Refer back to these questions every time you start work on your next issue.

### Respect your Readers

You may find that you have two different answers to each of the questions above. The first will relate to what you want to do as a business owner; the second to how you would like to be treated as a person. If you always do what you want, then your newsletter may not hit the mark your readers are looking for. If you do what comes closest to how you would like to be treated, your newsletter will show much more respect for your readers.

How can you make sure you respect your readers? Start by answering the questions below.

		Yes	No
1	Will you send your newsletter to everyone you meet, whether they asked to receive it or not?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Will you buy lists of names and addresses, so that you send your newsletter to hundreds of people you have never even met?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Will you fill your newsletter with details on what you did at the weekend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Will you refuse to ever give away any advice in your newsletter, for fear of readers trying to do it themselves?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hopefully you can see where this is going!

## What do You Write About?

Many people shudder at the thought of having to come up with really good ideas and content, time after time, for every single issue of their newsletters. This can actually stop many people from publishing a newsletter in the first place.

If you are passionate and enthusiastic about your business, you probably enjoying telling people about what you do. So why is it so difficult to turn your thoughts and speech into the written word? Problems arise for two reasons. Firstly, some people look at the whole of their industry, count the number of products or services they provide and realise there is so much information to share. Where do you start? How do you write a newsletter that does not take days to read?

Secondly, at the other end of the scale, are people who think there is nothing to write about in their business or industry. They see it as a 'whole' rather than dividing it into a number of areas.

Which one are you?

Whether you fall into the first category or the second, the secret to good writing is planning what you are going to say. If you are going to publish a monthly newsletter, start with a three month plan. If you have too many ideas, you can easily turn this into a twelve month plan, covering one area of your business each month. Do not try to tell your readers everything in the first issue – because it will be so long that no one reads it all and it will leave you with nothing for the second issue.

If you are struggling for ideas, look at your business and try to list all the areas in which you work, or the type of businesses you work with. An example would be the wine merchant who said he had nothing to write about until he was asked how many countries he imported wine from. His answer was twelve, which translates into twelve months – one country for each month. Having got to grips with that, he then asked what he should write about next May, if he wrote about France this May. The answer was, "How many wine producing regions are there in France?"

Try to fill in the table below, to get you started.

Month	Theme	Specific Issues
<i>Example</i>	<i>Wines of France</i>	<i>Bordeaux</i>
June		
July		
August		

## What Else Can You Write?

Make a list of the most common questions you get asked about your business, your products or your service. Write down your best answers to those questions and use these to develop themes for your newsletter.

Here are some ideas for you:

**Q: What are the three most common ‘how’ questions you get asked about your business?**

A: How do you come up with ideas for newsletters every month?

Your answers:

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

**Q: What are the three most common ‘why’ questions you get asked?**

A: Why is publishing a newsletter good for my business?

Your answers:

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

### Expert Tip – File Your Ideas

If you are still struggling to know what to write about, start an ideas file – somewhere you can store ideas for your newsletter as you come across them. When you are stuck for inspiration, or you are not sure where to start, pick the first one and start writing.

## **Start a Series**

If you are still struggling for ideas, one way of making things easier, for three or four issues at a time, is to develop a series. Choose one aspect of your business and develop a series of issues that discuss this subject in detail. Deal with just one facet of the subject in each issue. This not only helps you with your writing, it also helps your readers who can read, remember and apply what you have said more easily when it comes in small chunks.

## **Stick to Your Structure**

In section 6.1 it was suggested that you plan out the structure of your newsletter – the different sections that each issue will contain. Once you have made this decision, it is important to stick to it, for every issue. When you do, you will find it much easier to turn your ideas into articles. It also makes life easier for your readers, who can go straight to the sections that interest them most.

## **Put in some Personality**

There is a fine line between putting personal touches into your newsletter and becoming irrelevant and introspective. Many newsletters cross that line too often. A successful newsletter can have a strong individual voice and use personal anecdotes to illustrate the points, but try not to fall into the trap of looking inwards and talking about yourself and your problems. If you do, you will not leave enough time to look outwards and help your readers.

Giving your newsletter a sense of personality and identity is an excellent way to make it stand out from the crowd of other information that your readers receive every day. You need to find a way of attracting and retaining the interest of your readers and to ensure that they carry on reading what you send them, week after week and month after month. The challenge is to make sure that your personality does not overshadow the content of your newsletter. Focus on the message you are communicating and make sure your main points are clear and relevant. Ask yourself if what you have written will help your readers to overcome one of the issues they face. If you can, write down why and how each paragraph and each example benefits your readers.

### **Expert Tip – Clients or Prospects?**

Imagine that you are giving some advice to one of your clients. What information would you include? What would you want to highlight? What would you leave out? When you write your newsletter, concentrate on the details that you would emphasise and do not include anything that you would not tell your client.

## Three Golden Rules

To write a successful newsletter, the content must be interesting, relevant and helpful. For everything you write, or plan to write, ask yourself “Is this interesting?” or “Is this relevant?” Then really challenge yourself by asking “Why?” questions: Why is this newsletter relevant? Why is this newsletter interesting? Why is this newsletter helpful?

**Be interesting** – means writing about what is interesting to your readers. Get inside their heads, figure out what they care about and deliver material that they will find so interesting that they complain if your next issue is late.

Once you have written your newsletter, imagine a complete stranger opening it and reading it. Much of what you write may be of interest to a close colleague, but what about the people who do not know you as well and are less likely to forgive you for waffling? As your mailing list grows, the ‘strangers’ will soon outnumber the friends and family, so you should always check what you have written, from this point of view.

**Be relevant** – no matter how interesting your newsletter is, if it does not relate to the objective of your newsletter (that you wrote down at the beginning of section 6.1) then you are going to struggle to succeed. It is vital that you have a specific topic or theme for your newsletter and for each issue. This will help you stay focused and on track. It is also essential that the purpose of your newsletter reflects your business and your approach so that your newsletter gives an accurate picture of how you work.

Remember that your newsletter is a marketing tool; it is not just a space for you to download your random thoughts. Many people on your mailing list will use your newsletter to check you out before taking further steps towards becoming a customer. They will be interested in what you can do for them, not how you spent the weekend.

**Be helpful** – if you want your newsletter to bring you more business, you need to make sure that the information you provide is helpful and valuable to your readers. You have to give away the same quality of ideas and advice that you give to your paying clients. Do not hold back, reserving the ‘good stuff’ for those who pay. This only defeats the purpose of publishing a newsletter in the first place.

Being helpful means putting yourself in your readers’ shoes and providing what is most useful to them, not whatever happens to be easiest for you. Look again at the objective of your newsletter. Think about why your readers have asked to receive your newsletter. What is the most useful advice and information you can provide, to help your readers and achieve your aim? If you are still worried about giving away advice for free, remember that by doing it, you will demonstrate the value of your expertise. You will never get around to giving away all the answers, but once you have proved your worth, your readers will be much more likely to trust you with their specific issues and pay you for the privilege.

## **Is it Right?**

There are two ways in which you can check that what you have written in each issue of your newsletter is interesting, relevant and helpful, before you send it out. First of all, edit your newsletter and then edit it again. Be concise and get to the point. Give yourself enough time to write the first draft and then leave it alone for a couple of hours – or even overnight. When you come back to edit it, you will be much more objective.

Secondly, create a checklist of what you promise to include in each edition. Once you have completed the newsletter go through it and make sure you have delivered all you promised. If you cannot easily identify each of your promises, then there's room for improvement.

## **Write to One Person**

Your newsletter will always sound more personal and be more convincing, more compelling and more effective if you write it as if you are speaking to one person. Think of one specific client or prospect (they do not even have to be on your mailing list). Think of a problem they are struggling with or some advice you know would make a big difference. Write your newsletter with them in mind, concentrating on how you can best help them. Of course, if the person you thought of is not on your mailing list, make sure you forward the newsletter to them afterwards and suggest they subscribe!

## **Write to Readers Who Know Nothing**

If you have an idea for a newsletter topic but do not know where or how to start, set yourself the task of writing to the readers who know nothing. Do not downgrade your expertise by assuming that everyone else knows how to do what you do. By writing as if you were talking to someone who knows nothing about your industry, you can allow yourself to explain the details that you would normally skip over. This will establish and consolidate your reputation and readers who really know 'nothing' will be grateful that you took the time to explain things. One word of caution – make sure your tone does not become patronising or arrogant as you explain the detail, as this will undo all your hard work.

### **Expert Tip – Free Stuff for Free**

Everything you write in your newsletter can be turned into something else that you can either give away for free, or sell. Turn to section 9 to find out how.

## **Use a Checklist**

If you want to make sure your newsletter is consistently helpful, create a checklist which sets out what you want to deliver in each issue. Once you have completed your newsletter draft, go through the checklist and make sure you have delivered all you intended.

The length of your checklist will depend on the length of your newsletter and the different elements that you include.

## **Go into Detail**

Going into detail is one of the most effective strategies for writing newsletters. By doing it you get the chance to really demonstrate what you do and how you work. Your ideas for topics to write about will stretch further and your readers can absorb what you are saying more easily.

To do this effectively you need to tackle one issue, area of your business or service for each issue of your newsletter. When you make a point within your newsletter, do not just give one example and then move on. Find two or three additional examples that each demonstrate your point, but in different ways.

For example you could talk about how your product or service could be used in three different industries; by a new business or an established one; by an expert and a beginner. This will help your product appeal to many more people as it helps your readers understand the different circumstances in which your service can be used.

By dealing with one issue at a time and in detail you make it easier for your readers to remember and even implement your advice.

## **Do Not Forget Your Subject**

For email newsletters, do not forget the words you put in the subject line, as it can have a major influence on whether or not your newsletter is opened and read.

The subject line should be made up of two parts. First, use something that identifies the email as your newsletter and that you use for every issue. This could be your company name or the name of the newsletter. Secondly, add a line which describes the topic you are discussing in that particular issue. It should be interesting and engaging and persuade your readers to open your newsletter and read it.



## **Editing and Proof Reading**

Once you have written your newsletter, you need to edit it and proof read it. This is especially important for HTML newsletters, as once it has been published, the original cannot be changed. That is not to say that your email newsletter should not be perfect before you hit send!

Editing and proof reading are two different tasks. You should edit your newsletter to improve the quality of what you have written, to check that your sentences and paragraphs flow logically and that what you have written makes sense. The first thing to do is write your first draft and then leave it alone – for a couple of hours or even over night. That way you can come back to it with a fresh pair of eyes and edit it. Editing something you have written yourself can be difficult, as you get too close to the copy. The next step is to ask a colleague to read a draft of your newsletter, but make sure they do it objectively. They need to read it from the point of view of your target reader. If you have a client you trust, ask them to read it and give you some feedback.

Proof reading makes sure that you catch and correct any spelling mistakes, typos and grammatical errors. For many people, mistakes are easier to spot on paper than on screen, so print out your newsletter and read it through. Keep an eye out for sentences that go on for too long, any phrasing that is not clear and correctly spelt words being used incorrectly. A spell checker will not pick up 'an' where you meant to type 'and'. Then, as with editing, unless you are a talented proof reader, ask someone else to check what you have written.

A well written, correctly spelt and easy to read newsletter will do your reputation far more good than something that looks as if you have not given it the time, care and attention it and therefore your reader, deserves.

### **Expert Tip – Ask an Expert**

If you really do not feel confident about writing your own newsletter, you can find someone to help you. This person, such as a marketing consultant, copy writer or technical writer, will need to learn about your business and your style of communicating. As you feed them the ideas and they get to know more about both, they will be able to write really great newsletters for you and your readers.

## **Summary**

Writing a newsletter is not everyone's idea of fun. However, if you are passionate about your business and about helping other people, by following all the steps outlined above, you will find that it gets easier with time and subsequent issues. Before you know it, your ideas file will be overflowing and you will actually look forward to starting work on the next issue.

## 6.3 Who To Send Your Newsletter To

Once you have planned your newsletter and got past the challenge of what to write, the next thing you need to consider is who you are going to send it to. It is no longer polite or appropriate to send a newsletter to just anyone you meet, particularly in the case of email newsletters. This section looks at how to create your mailing list and then how to grow it.

### Who Do You Know?

Once you start publishing a newsletter your mailing list will start to grow, as your readers pass your newsletter to other people, who then ask to be added to your mailing list. However, for your first issue, you will need to rely on the people you already know.

If you use some form of database to keep a record of your clients and prospects, go through it and decide who would be interested in receiving your newsletter. Before you add each person to your list, think of at least one reason that they will want to hear from you, on a regular basis.

Good reasons might include:

- I know they are tackling this issue at work.
- She is always interested to read about this topic.
- He has many clients who have to solve this problem.
- She enquired about my service recently.
- He bought a related product last month.
- He is a client I have not seen or spoken to for several months.

Add a few of your own here:

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

Not so good reasons might include:

- We attended the same conference a few months ago.
- Her details were on the attendee list of a networking event I went to.

Only add people to your list if you can think of a very good reason.

### Be Selective

If you cannot think of a good reason why someone would want to read your newsletter, then do not send it to them in the first place. It is more important to start with a good quality list with only a few contacts, than a huge list of people who do not really want to hear from you, who will only end up putting your newsletter in the bin or deleting without even reading it. In the long run, it can do your reputation more harm than good.

It will also do your confidence more good if someone on your list responds by saying, "This is brilliant, and it's lovely to hear from you!" than if they say, "I am tired of receiving junk that I did not ask for."

### **Expert Tip – Who Do You Know?**

You can build and use a database to help you keep in touch with the people who matter to your business. Start by creating a list, such as a spreadsheet, of everyone you know in a business context – colleagues, clients, prospects. Use a number of columns – name, address, email and how you know the person.

### **Send an Invitation**

One of the best ways to start sending a newsletter, especially of the email variety, is to send an 'invitation issue'. This is when you send the first issue of your newsletter to everyone you know, explaining very clearly that you have not added their names to your mailing list. By sending the first issue, you give them an idea of why you are publishing the newsletter and the sort of information you are going to be sending them each time. You can even outline the topics that future issues of your newsletter will be addressing. You then provide clear instructions for what the recipient should do if they want to continue to receive your newsletter. This could be by clicking on a direct subscribe link or by visiting your website to sign up.

This is a very respectful way to create your initial mailing list. Those people who do not want to receive your newsletter do not need to do anything and do not need to worry about offending you by unsubscribing. At the same time, you can be confident that you are building a list of people who really want to hear from you and have made the effort to say so. You will be surprised at how many of your contacts actively ask to continue receiving your newsletter.

You can combine the two approaches and send out your invitation issue to everyone who did not make it through your 'good reason' filtering process, including anyone you have not spoken to in over a year.

## **Sending Spam**

Many people feel that email newsletters are 'spam'. The official definition of spam is "unsolicited commercial email", which means that sending a newsletter which promotes your business to someone who has not asked for it is spam.

While you can get away with sending spam or junk on a small scale and not encounter any official problems, what should matter most to you is the impression you are creating. Your newsletter is a marketing tool; you will not do yourself any favours if you upset or offend people on your mailing list.

By comparison, a newsletter sent to a list of people who have asked to receive it and enjoy receiving every issue, creates a completely different and positive image for your business. This type of newsletter is not spam – your readers have asked to receive it, so it is not unsolicited – and it is therefore not against the law. The key thing to remember when thinking about junk and spam is not whether it is or it is not, but to act in a way that is respectful of your readers at all times.

## **Embrace Rejection**

Not everyone you meet wants to become your client, so hearing 'no thanks' can be tough. However you can use each rejection to learn something about your business and how to improve it. When someone asks to be removed from your mailing list, ask them why. The feedback they provide will help you to write a better, more focused newsletter. Common feedback includes not having enough time to read it, getting too many newsletters, not relevant enough and lack of new content. These comments are symptoms of three problems:

**Do you have the right readers?** The quality of your mailing list is far more important than the size. When someone says your newsletter is not relevant or does not contain anything new, make sure they match the profile of your ideal reader.

**How are you are positioning your newsletter?** If someone says your newsletter is not relevant, it can show readers are not getting what they thought was on offer. Make sure you explain clearly what your newsletter is about.

**What are you saying?** When someone says they do not have enough time to read your newsletter, they are actually saying that they do not find it interesting enough to find the time to read it. If you have checked that you have got the right readers and you have positioned your newsletter appropriately, but you are still losing readers, it may be time to review your content.

## Who Else Can You Send it To?

A newsletter is like a website or a brochure for your business – just writing it is not enough. You need to tell people about it and encourage them to join your mailing list. That way, you can spread the message about your business even further.

There are many (legal) ways of growing your mailing list. In the simplest terms, you first need to tell more of your target audience about your newsletter and then make your newsletter attractive and appealing to them. Every method of getting more readers is a variation of these two principles.

**Promote it on your website** – especially if you publish an email newsletter, your website should act as the hub of your newsletter subscription process. You need to make subscribing easy and inviting, with an obvious sign up form on every page. Do not ask too many unnecessary questions – the basic information you need is a name and an email address. Give people a really good reason to sign up to your newsletter, by describing the benefits they will receive. You can also have a page on your website dedicated to your newsletter, where you can include past issues for people to read, before they commit.

**Promote it when you go networking** – newsletters and networking can be a very powerful combination. If you go to networking meetings, you have the opportunity to tell people what you do. Most people who network are trying to grow their own business and are therefore interested in any free material, such as a newsletter. Ask the people you meet if they would like to receive a copy. When you explain the benefits, you will find that very few people decline your offer. You can do the same thing when you attend or give presentations or seminars.

**Encourage your readers to pass it on** – the easiest way to grow your mailing list is to ask your readers to forward your email newsletter to others who will be interested. Make sure you tell your readers who your ideal reader is (people like them!) so that they pass it on to people who will definitely want it. Every now and then, include some copy that actually asks your readers to recommend your newsletter. Make sure you change the format and phrasing of the request so that it does not become repetitive or stale.

**Create an email signature** – these are a free and easy way to promote any aspect of your business, including your newsletter. You can create different ones and change them, depending on who you are emailing. While an email signature may not persuade someone to sign up to your newsletter, using one is a way of increasing exposure and raising awareness of your newsletter.

**Using telesales** – this is increasing in popularity as a way of growing your list. You need to compile a list of your target readers and call to ask if they would like to subscribe to your newsletter. This strategy works well if you aim your newsletter at employees in medium and larger businesses who are less likely to come across your newsletter.

**Using direct mail** – following on from the success of telesales to generate subscribers, some businesses have started using direct mail to build their mailing lists. The effort required to get it right has the potential to outweigh the benefit of the response you get, so make sure you know what you are doing before you embark on an expensive campaign.

#### **Expert Tip – Spam Safety**

When you record subscribers' details, also record the IP address used to submit the subscription form and the date and time the email address was added. This will help if anyone later complains that you are sending spam, as you can prove that they requested it.

#### **Summary**

When you publish a newsletter, your first consideration should always be to your readers. They are the ones who will read what you write and be influenced by your newsletter. They are the ones you are hoping to turn from prospect to client, or from first time client to life long supporter of your business. However you promote your newsletter, make sure that what you write is still focused on the people who you want to read and benefit from it and, with their help, your mailing list will grow naturally.

## 7. 12-Month Calendar – Plan Your Newsletters

One of the secrets of good marketing is that first you need to find out what works for your business. If you are still reading this part of the Programme, then you will know that a newsletter can help you grow your business. The next stage in your marketing is to keep doing it, to avoid being affected by the 'feast and famine' syndrome. Imagine the situation – you have been sending out a newsletter which has brought you some new clients. You are busy working for them – so busy, in fact, that you decide you do not have time to write your newsletter anymore. After all, why bother keeping in touch with people if you are busy?

**Because when that work finishes, you will suddenly find that you have nothing new to fill the gaps.**

You will find that you now have more time to write endless newsletters, but it will be too late. You start writing again, digging out all the ideas you never got around to using and eventually, you get busy again. But you get so busy that once again you find you do not have time to publish your newsletter this month. So you let it slip a month, or two, or three. Can you see where this is going?

Once you get started on producing a regular newsletter, it will not take up too much of your precious time, but you do need to set that time aside each month. Even if you can only write a short newsletter each time, you need to keep doing it, because ad hoc marketing does not work.

To help you plan your newsletter and publish it consistently, the information on the next few pages gives you some examples of what you can do each month, starting now. There is also space for you to fill in what you are going to do. You can join the plan at any time, to take advantage of seasonal suggestions and information provided in the other parts of DIY Marketing.

### **How often should you publish your newsletter?**

This depends on how much time you have – even when you are really busy – and how you are going to publish. This allows you to keep your business name in front of your contacts, without giving them a chance to forget about you. For email newsletters which are easier to send, monthly is also the absolute minimum.

Do not put off starting a newsletter or improving your existing one – start now, this month. Use the table on the next few pages, inserting the appropriate dates in the spaces.

**12-Month Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_

Month	Suggestions	Your Ideas
	<p>Planning month – decide how to send your newsletter, how it will look, what to say, who to send it to and what help you need. Give yourself enough time to get your newsletter set up, to get it right.</p> <p>If you already have a newsletter, spend this month reviewing it to see where you can make improvements. Is your content good enough? Do you have a plan of what to write?</p>	
	<p>Keep doing your research – what do people want to read about and what advice do they need? Use your first issue to ask for feedback. If you already publish, ask your readers how they think you could improve your newsletter.</p>	
	<p>Keep thinking ahead and plan the next three issues of your newsletter. Can you write a series? What is topical?</p>	



**12-Month Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_

Month	Suggestions	Your Ideas
	<p>Your newsletter is not just for telling people what you do. Give away as much free advice as you can. This will help your readers see you as someone who is happy to help. Can you include links to articles you have read or helpful websites?</p>	
	<p>Encourage your readers to have a go at what you do. Everyone likes to try a bit of DIY, so include practical tips and advice. When your readers are ready to go on to the next stage, they will be prepared to pay for your time and expertise.</p>	
	<p>Now that you have been publishing for a few months, you could include some information in your newsletter about your services or a special offer. Do not be pushy, but link the main topic of your newsletter to one service or product you provide.</p>	

**12-Month Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_

Month	Suggestions	Your Ideas
	Many businesses start to slow down at this time of year, so use this month's newsletter to provide some festive cheer and light relief. Use it to strengthen the relationship you have with people you know, by not sending them a sales pitch on Christmas Eve.	
	Word of mouth marketing does not cost anything, so ask every reader of your newsletter to pass it or email it on to someone else who would like to read it. If that person enjoys it, ask them to subscribe.	
	Keep planning the newsletter issues you are going to publish over the coming year. Look at what worked last year and what did not. Now is a good time to time to make necessary changes to the structure of your newsletter.	

**12-Month Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_

Month	Suggestions	Your Ideas
	Obviously you use your website to publicise your newsletter, but is it working? And how effectively do you use your newsletter to increase traffic to your website? Use this month to make sure the two are fully integrated.	
	If you have not done it for a while, think about your ideal reader. When you can describe them clearly, you can ask your existing readers to recommend others to you.	
	Well done! You have been sending your newsletter regularly for a whole year. But do not stop now. What can you do to help other people use a newsletter to grow their business? Sharing some of your secrets will do wonders for your reputation.	

## 8. Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Once you have learnt how to publish a newsletter, you will find that it gets easier and easier. However, there are plenty of things that can go wrong and affect the results of all your hard work.

In no particular order, on the following pages are some of the common mistakes made with newsletters and what you can do avoid them.

### **Not Having an Objective for Your Newsletter**

If you do not have an objective for your newsletter, how will you ever know if it is a success or not?

### **Not Setting a Schedule ...**

If you do not plan how often you are going to publish your newsletter, you will find it much harder to write and produce it. When you get used to writing on a certain day of the week, or collecting ideas in order to have your next issue ready for a deadline, the whole process becomes easier and less daunting.

### **... or Not Sticking to It**

Ad hoc marketing does not work.

Your readers will get used to receiving your newsletter on a regular basis and when you do not keep to your schedule, they will notice. They will start to wonder if you have forgotten about them. If you usually publish a newsletter every month and suddenly stop, only to send another one after a three month break, many of your readers will have forgotten about you or how good your newsletter is. You will have to start the process of building up your reputation all over again.

## **Is There a Wrong Day?**

The answer is no, but there are better days or times of day to send your newsletter. There is little you can do to predict the day on which a newsletter will be delivered through the post, but you can think about when you send an email newsletter. Is Friday afternoon a good time to ask people to take action? Will your email get lost among hundreds of others, if it arrives before 9am on Monday morning? Are you giving the right impression by sending a business newsletter over the weekend, late at night or early in the morning? Even if you do need to write your newsletter 'out of hours' you do not need to send it straight away – many email newsletter systems allow you to select a date and time in the future when your newsletter will be sent.

## **Choosing your Structure and Format**

The most effective newsletters keep to the same structure for every issue. While they can be added to, successful ones use the same main sections every time. If you keep changing the way you write your newsletter, your readers will find it harder to connect with you. We all like continuity and being able to go straight to our favourite sections. Many people do not like change and will stop reading if there is no continuity.

## **Is There a Wrong Way to Send it?**

The answer to this question is also no. How you decide to send your newsletter depends on who you are sending it to and how they want to receive it. If your ideal readers are all business people with regular access to a computer, you can send them an email newsletter. If they are busy people they might prefer a plain text version. If they have high levels of security an attachment might not go down well.

You also need to think about the resources you have and the impression you want to create. If you can afford to invest in a specialist email newsletter system and want to give out a professional image, then spend the money. Otherwise, a plain text email will not do your business justice.

Do your research before you commit.

## **The Look**

If you do not plan the way your newsletter looks, you will find it harder to write, harder to put together and harder to encourage people to read every issue – and even pass it on to other people. If you do not use your company logo and some of your existing corporate style, your readers will not recognise the newsletter as yours.

## **Why Are You Doing This?**

Everything you write in your newsletter must have a purpose. Answer each of these questions each time you start to write:

- Why is this idea relevant to my readers?
- Why will this information benefit my readers?
- Why would this person want to receive my newsletter?
- Why would a stranger want to subscribe to my newsletter?

## **Put Your Readers First**

If you can answer the above questions honestly and easily, you are putting your readers first. You are in trouble if your answers are:

- It is not relevant
- It will not benefit them
- I do not know
- I do not know this either

Send your newsletter to people who have asked to receive it and make sure it is packed full of advice which is useful to your readers and they will know that you are putting them first. When they know this, they will happily recommend it, and you, to other people they know.

## **A Lack of Direction**

Working out what to write about is never easy, but if you launch into publishing a newsletter with no thought of a plan, after a few issues, you will start to struggle. Your readers will notice and fall by the wayside. While it is not essential to plan every single issue down to the last detail – because for some people, spontaneous writing makes for much better reading – a certain amount of planning can ensure the success of your newsletter. Deciding in advance what you are going to write will make life easier for you.

Also put some thought into how much you are going to write in each issue. While it can be tempting to write everything you know about one subject, this can result in a very long newsletter that may not get read from start to finish. It also makes it difficult for you to revisit this subject in a later issue of your newsletter, if you have already covered the important points.

## **What are You Writing that For?**

Alongside how you send your newsletter and who you send it to, what you write is the other factor that will determine the success of your newsletter. And as mentioned before, the key is always to put your readers first. Do they really want to read, every single month, how you have won yet another contract with a company that is nothing like theirs? Do they want to hear about the new member of the sales team who is going to start trying to sell them something else they do not need? What benefit will they get from reading about the nice afternoon you and the boss spent on the golf course? How will another copy of your extensive price list really help them solve any of their problems?

Think carefully about what you write; when you get it right, you will produce a newsletter that improves your reputation and helps you build solid relationships with your clients. Get it wrong and you can do your business more harm than good.

## **Too Much Personality**

As has been mentioned before, there is a fine line between putting personal touches into your newsletter and becoming irrelevant and introspective. To make your newsletter successful, you need to use an individual voice and personal anecdotes to illustrate the points, without just talking about yourself, what you have been doing this month or your special offers.

Including your own personality in your newsletter is a great way of helping people get to know you, the person and the way you work. But do your readers really need to know that you have been ill? What benefit will they get from your personal observations that have nothing to do with the main theme of your newsletter (it does have a theme, doesn't it?!)

Before sending each issue of your newsletter, ask yourself if what you have written will help your readers to overcome one of the issues they face.

## **Ignoring the Three Golden Rules**

If you write a newsletter that is not **interesting** to your readers, they are not going to continue reading it. An indicator of an uninteresting newsletter is when people tell you that they do not have time to read it. What this really means is that they do not find it interesting enough to find the time to read it. To improve the situation, talk to your ideal readers and your ideal clients – who should be the same group of people – and ask them what issues they face that you help them solve. Ask them what they would find the time to read about.

If you write a newsletter that it not **relevant** to your readers, they will not continue to read it. When readers tell you that your newsletter is not relevant to them, check first to make sure they meet the profile of your ideal reader. If they do, then you need to improve what you are writing. Make sure it relates to the overall objective you set for your newsletter and select a single theme for each issue, as this will make it easier to read and for readers to see the relevance. Keep to the theme to make sure you do not spend too much time telling your readers about how great your holiday was and how depressed you are now that you are back at work.

If you write a newsletter that is not **helpful** to your readers, they will stop reading it. The more help and advice that you give away for free, the more people will come to you when they are ready to pay for your time and expertise. Closely guard all your knowledge and your readers will see you as someone who is not happy to share and as someone they do not want to do business with.

## **Getting Too Technical**

Do you personally know everyone on your mailing list very well and know exactly their level of understanding of your subject? If you do not, you should assume that while a few of them will know a lot about this subject, many of them will have a limited understanding. After all, why should accountants know a vast amount about marketing, when they should be spending their time earning money from doing what they are good at? If you write a newsletter that is full of technical terms relating to what you do, along with complicated steps to follow to make something happen, most of your readers are going to struggle.

Writing to readers who know little or nothing about your subject means that you can go into detail about you do, thereby establishing your reputation as an expert who will take the time to explain the issue.



## **How Many Mistakes?**

When you have written your newsletter and before you publish it, read it through, spell check it, print it out and read it again, ask someone else to read it and then check it again. Below is a list of some off the things you should check for when you edit and proof read your newsletter:

- Check the quality of what you have written for grammar and logical flow
- Make sure the entire newsletter is interesting, relevant and helpful
- Does it make sense? It might to you, but what about to your readers?
- Look for spelling mistakes, typos and grammatical errors. Do not rely on a computer spell checker, which will not tell you when you have written two instead of to.

If you are not happy editing and proof reading your work, always ask someone else to help, to make sure you send out a professional newsletter.

## **Writing to the Wrong People**

When you add someone to your mailing list, you have already asked them for their permission to send them your newsletter, haven't you? You did not add them just because they were at the conference or networking meeting, did you?

Put yourself in their shoes. If you received your newsletter, would you find it interesting, relevant and helpful or would you consider it spam or junk?

## **Lack of Growth**

Growing a mailing list can take a lot of work and can take a long time. However, do it correctly and you will gradually build a quality list of people who really want to read everything that you send them.

If your list is not growing, make sure that you are doing all you can to (legally) grow your list. Are you promoting your newsletter on your website and at networking meetings you go to? Do you encourage your readers to pass your newsletter to other people and make it clear who else might want to read it? Have you got an email signature that makes your contacts aware of your newsletter? Are there any other things you can do to use your other marketing activities to promote your newsletter?

## 9. Getting Started

CONGRATULATIONS! You've reached the end of this part of DIY Marketing for Email Newsletters.

You should now have a really clear idea of why you are going to publish an email newsletter. You know how it is going to look and when you are going to publish. You have lots of great ideas of what to write about and what your readers want to hear about. You even know who you are going to send it to and how you are going to grow your mailing list.

Now you have a plan for your newsletter and how you are going to use it to promote your business, alongside the other marketing tactics you use. And you also know what mistakes to look out for and to avoid, to make sure that you produce a great newsletter that will help you build your business reputation.

What are you waiting for? It is time to get started and start sharing your advice and ideas with hundreds of other people.

Good luck and enjoy producing your newsletter.

If you still have any questions about your newsletter, or need a bit more advice, turn to the next page to see what additional help is available to you.

## 10. How to get more Help with Your Newsletter and Marketing

### **Marketing Mentoring – helping you keep your newsletter going**

Where can you get regular support and advice to help you set marketing goals, keep you on track to achieve those goals and help you grow your business?

Marketing Mentoring is your chance to talk to a marketing expert who can give you the support and advice you need to drive your business forward. **It can be used to help support your email newsletter.**

Hourly telephone conversations will be held at times to suit you, at a frequency that meets your needs. The first session will help you identify marketing objectives and where you want your business to be in three, six or twelve month's time. We will then talk about what you need to do to get there.

Telephone mentoring saves you time, because you can stay in your office for each session and arrange the sessions whenever it suits you. You can choose to have a mentoring conversation every week, every fortnight or every month, depending on the level of support and encouragement that you need. Unlimited email support and advice is also available throughout the mentoring period.

Within each session, you will receive feedback and new ideas on how to improve the marketing you are doing, to help you reach your targets. At the end of each session, you will have an action plan to follow and goals to achieve before your next session, taking you ever closer to your ultimate objective.

**You can use your mentoring sessions to work on your newsletter or any other marketing with which you need help.**

£100 per hour for individual sessions

£450 for 5 sessions paid for in advance (£90 per session)

£800 for 10 sessions paid for in advance (£80 per session)

To arrange a date and time for your first mentoring session, call +44 (0) 1635 578 500 or email [chantal@appletreeuk.com](mailto:chantal@appletreeuk.com).

**GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER!**