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THE ABCs OF E-NEWSLETTERS

IN GENERAL

1. Consider adopting a regular schedule. Your readers will grow to know when they can expect to receive your e-newsletter. Habits create commitment.
2. Make sure your content is valuable and useful to the reader. The content of your e-newsletter must be informative, helpful, and relevant.
3. Your e-newsletter is your chance to educate, inform and engage your reader. And an engaged reader is an ambassador of the merits of your publication.
4. Your publication's brand is fostered by an effective, consistent and useful e-newsletter. Developing and creating a dedicated database of readers generates advertising interest and website traffic.
5. Do you have subscribers? Is there potential to promote subscriptions? Do you have information that can be shared? If you can say "yes" to any of these questions then creating an e-newsletter is not an option...it is something you must do!
6. Go to xrl.us/bikyax as a suggested source of newsletter templates to review for suggestions or to download and use.

CONTENT

1. Your e-newsletter's content should be real and immediate in order to engage readers and foster repeated activity.
2. Some guidelines for content include: case studies, features, articles, surveys and survey results, event recaps, interviews and "how to's."
3. Include relevant links. Don't overdo it, but do include links of use and benefit to the reader whether they are to your website or other locations of value.
4. Describe developments to look for in your website and upcoming issue "must reads."
5. Whether your e-newsletter is short or long overall is determined by what you have to say and your readers' expression of what they expect or have a tolerance for.
6. Indicators of whether you have the content and length right or not include: the size of your database, whether it is trending up or down and the level of your "open" rates.
7. Shorter e-newsletters tend to generate higher click-through rates and serve as stepping stones to take action on the website. They are generally easier to produce on a consistent basis and for a readership who are on the go or want to get directly to the meat of the content.
8. Longer e-newsletters engage more fully with the reader and are of greater value to readers in their own right. They are more likely to be forwarded to others for their content and value.

TIMING

1. As a benchmark, target a schedule of once a week or every other week. Less than every other week has a tendency to lose reader attention and commitment, while sending e-newsletters more than once a week can possibly overwhelm readers and negatively impact open rates.
2. Create a schedule you can commit to regardless of its frequency.

FORMAT

1. Text only: Text newsletters are less likely to be seen as spam, load faster and will be generally accessible across all platforms.
2. HTML: This is the most common e-newsletter format and its benefits include the option to include graphics, images and links. Content, links and open rates are also measurable.
3. PDF: Used less frequently and while it ensures the content is received as intended, it is subject to rejection by firewalls.
4. Decide whether your e-newsletter design is to be "eye catching" or "attention retaining." The former is generally favourable to short e-newsletters and the latter better suited to a longer length.

REMEMBER

1. Newsletters can be archived on your website and serve as a resource library, as well as a traffic generator and a source for search engines across a variety of keywords and phrases.
2. Quality content is content that is timely and useful. Quality trumps frequency and design in reader response and commitment.
3. A consistent "voice" in style and tone of content fosters reader engagement.
4. Match your email subject line to the overall content of the e-newsletter.
5. To create interactivity and engagement include short surveys in every e-newsletter and share the results in subsequent editions. You will learn more about your readers and their core interests, and receive feedback. Ask readers to submit questions they want answered and let them know whether selected ones or all of them will be answered.
6. Include a link to your website's privacy statement. Include contact information. And include an option to unsubscribe.
7. Make sure there are clearly evident links in the e-newsletter to your magazine's subscription or single issue offer page.

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