

How To Publish Your Own Newsletter

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How To Publish Your Own Newsletter

With the expansion and diversion of businesses, manufacturers, and even hobbyists into more and more specialized areas of endeavor, there is an increasing need for information. And newsletters are the high profit way to cash in on the market for specialized information.

You can write and produce your own newsletter from home with a low overhead and potential for high returns. Many newsletter subscriptions range from \$25 to \$100 per year, some much higher. Even a thousands subscribers will bring in huge earnings. There are no tried and true methods of making a newsletter successful, but if you investigate the market thoroughly, and are cautious in your moves, you can make a break-even profit turn into a sound income year after year.

You don't have to be a famous business consultant or an insider on the stock market to produce a newsletter. There are many that cater to all types of sports, crafts, health, housing or money making.

The most important aspect of creating a successful newsletter is the market. You need to research who will buy the subscription and how much they are willing to pay. But there are sound methods of testing the market so you can be sure to come out ahead and establish yourself in the field.

If you have a special interest that has a broad following, you might find that a newsletter will be readily accepted and flourish.

What interests or hobbies have you been involved with that can make a lively income for you? If you follow the steps and carefully consider your market, there is no reason why you can't get into the newsletter business too.. And you can **MAKE IT WORK.**

WHAT IS A NEWSLETTER?

A newsletter is a special timely report on a single subject. It is a personalized, concise statement from an expert or person thoroughly familiar with a specialized field.

Newsletters are maintained solely by subscriptions; there is no advertising. Most are printed within low budget means, typewritten, from two to eight pages.

The specialized information in newsletters is current, and usually cannot be found elsewhere. They are a logical extension to trade journals and magazines.

Aimed at a select group, they often contain the inside information in the field, hot tips or news scoops that become old news in publications of the trade.

Newsletters are not distributed by newsstands, nor are they meant for the mass market. In fact, the average number of potential readers of newsletters in any one field is relatively small.

Because of their specific information,, newsletters can command a high subscriptions fee. Business can afford to spend money to offer executives top-rate information..

There are hundreds of newsletters now being published and distributed in the United States. But there is room for hundreds more. Because of the specialized market, there is often little competition among newsletters, and THERE IS A RISING TREND TOWARDS SUBSCRIBING.

WHY ARE NEWSLETTERS POPULAR?

With all the print media and visual communications in this country, you might think there is a saturated market. And that is true when it comes to general interest mass market publications. However, the need for specific information in specialized fields is constantly increasing. How can I beat the competition? How does the world news affect my industry? Will a union strike on the other side of the world raise our prices??

The focus of the newsletter is success. Success in business, success in hobbies, success in health and happiness. The information contained in the newsletters motivates readers to follow the advice. What are the best investments? Where are the trade shows? How can I get an edge on winning contests?

There is an endless need for specific knowledge in every field of endeavor. Since there is a high standard of competition within every aspect of our modern life, people search for ways to be in the know, and use that information effectively.

One of the reasons subscription prices can stay high is because people are paying for the knowledge and what might be gained by it. If a two hundred dollar newsletter saves a company thousands of dollars in excellent advice, then it is well worth the price.

WHAT IT TAKES

you can start a newsletter by yourself; you don't need a large staff. A desk at home, a typewriter and a telephone are all the basic tools you need to create a newsletter. Even when you get into computerized labels and mass mailings, you still will not need a large space.

You don't need to invest a lot of money to begin a simple newsletter. You may need to put a little out for advertising for subscribers or mailings to introduce your product. And you need to spend some money on getting the first newsletter printed.

But, if your subscription list builds properly, you'll be able to earn back your initial investments quickly-with some left over.

WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

The topic choose has got to be your major interest. You'll be living with it day and day out for years, so you need to be devoted to the subject. Usually, it's not hard. You probably already have a chosen field of endeavor, or have developed a keen interest in a special hobby or sport. Writing a newsletter is only one more way to demonstrate your interest.

Read any newsletter you can find. What do they talk about? How much do they cost? How long have they been in business? You might want to talk to the publishers of a few to find out how they started and what troubles they encountered. Consider paying them a consulting fee to help you get on your way.

Take a look at all the trade magazines of the topic you'd like to work with. Find out if there are any newsletters already existing in that field. But don't worry--there is usually room for more if you keep to another aspect of the business or endeavor.

Keep up with the current trends in health, money, sports, or social events and styles.. What's new with the young people? Or the elderly? There are many retired people actively pursuing hundreds of various interests. How can you tap into that market??

WHO WILL BUY?

The first place to test your newsletter is with associates and colleagues. And, you don't need their subscription, just their input. What do they think about your ideas? How much would they pay for a newsletter delivered to their office or home on the subjects that are vital to them?

The target you're aiming at is simply, anyone who will benefit from the information you have. Not only are people in a specific profession hungry for news,, but there are people in all sorts of related jobs and organizations seeking specialized knowledge. Everyone is interested in making or saving money. Although you don't have to focus on investments--there are many such newsletters already--you can point out the benefits of your inside tips on how to find the easiest, or the least expensive, or direct-to-the-source methods of attaining materials for pursuits or sports.

Generally, you have a small audience target--about thirty to fifty thousand people. But even a small percentage of that target will make your newsletter profitable.

Extremely successful topics are new trends where people can't get enough information. Manufacturers, advertisers and entrepreneurs are all searching for the new to exploit. Depending on the subject you choose, tap into those potential subscribers.

WHAT TO CALL IT?

The title at the top of the newsletter is the most visual aspect of the publication. It reflects the content and it reflects you. What title is best for your newsletter? If you are well-known in your field, you can use your own name. Or, think of a few titles that indicate the topic, or use a catch-phrase that sums up the endeavor. Two-word titles work well.

You might use an action title if you're going after sports, or a title that includes the word "money" if that's a main focus of your subject.

Make up a few titles of your own. How do they compare with the titles of other newsletters? Which rings true for your enterprise?

Check at the library to be sure your title is original and doesn't duplicate other publications currently on the market. The title is your trademark.

Although newsletters require very little graphic design, illustrations, or an art director on staff, you may want to consult a professional designer to help you with the prototype.

Since the title of the newsletter is so important, it would be worthwhile to have it designed.. You'll only need to pay a one-time fee, and you can use it forevermore.

The logo can be very simple. If you have a title that doesn't use your name, you might have a company name under or above the title in small print.. Although most publications don;t place the address under the title,, newsletters often do, so potential subscribers know where to write.

Another aspect of the title at the top of the publication is the date and the issue number. These should be considered in the original design. Since a newsletter has timely information,, the date of the issue should be easy to find.

The newsletter will be typewritten and photo offset, so an elaborate logo may look out of place. Start out with one color

and keep it as homespun and fresh as the news you'll publish. Avoid fancy type styles or those that are hard to read. And don't go overboard with a clever or cute design. Something simple and clear is what you're after.

STYLE AND FORMAT

A low-budget newsletter is usually one column., typewritten copy, with ample but not wide margins. Anything with two or more columns should be typeset, which is an extra expense you don't need.

The most economical way of printing the newsletter is on one or two 11 x 17 inch pages, printed on both sides, and folded. This will give you a small booklet of four to eight pages, each the standard 8 1/2 x 11 inch size.

You might consider having it three-hole punched. It doesn't cost much to have this done at the printers, and it could be an added feature to encourage subscribers to save the valuable information.

Any graphics should be kept simple, but don't be afraid to use subheads to break up the copy.. A few words capitalized or in a larger or darker print help the reader identify the information, and make it easier to read.

Keep enough white space to encourage reading, but fill the pages to make the subscriber feel the newsletter fulfills its promises.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Consider a copy format that is divided by types of information. For example, you can have a section labeled profiles, another on upcoming events. Perhaps you have a calendar of shows, conventions, or seminars that would concern readers.

There might be sections on various industry policies or unwritten rules.. Past events and history are always good fillers. And don't forget humor. Although your newsletter is serious, potent information, no field of endeavor is without its lighter side. Don't lock yourself into a format you can't always fulfill. Rather, have these sections available for you to use as each issue is written.

And always include subscription information. Your own newsletter is the best way to sell more.

FINDING THE FACTS

Your first issues won't lack for information, because you already have pages of information to publish.. But after that, you'll

need renewable sources of copy.

What's new in the industry? Your associates and colleagues are the prime source of undercurrents in the field you write about.. Renew and make new contacts, they'll be invaluable for getting information.

Are there any correspondents you can use in other parts of the country to give you fact? Perhaps you can work out a financial arrangement with an insider for important information you want to include.

Interviews are important ways to get vital information. If you can't contact the people in the high places, such as presidents or directories, their assistants can be just as valuable, if not more, in acquiring information.

New trends are found by talking to the workers, or the participants.. An employee might describe the wonders of a new machine; and athlete may praise some new equipment. And don't have to travel to see these people. A good phone voice can unlock many doors.

Don't overlook the obvious-public relations people have a lot of information to disperse. Creating a good rapport with a P.R. person can get you constant timely advice and specialized information..

Talk to people who have nothing to hide.. Secretaries often know more details than their bosses. And they usually aren't told to keep project secret. What they know can fill pages of newsletters.

Follow up on articles presented in the trade publications. You might be able to use some more in-depth aspects of the same topics they publish. Can you talk to the people they interview? Perhaps you can critique some controversial subject and get someone to present an opposite opinion.

The newsletter is a personal forum. That means that you are welcome to give your personal comments and opinions on anything..

However, they can't be egotistical or narrow minded, or you'll lose subscribers.

Trade shows and conventions are your gold. Every person who displays or attends the show is interested in the subject.. You could virtually interview everyone and get a complete overview of the industry.

If you are working with a sports topic,, meets and events are the place you need to be.... Talk to people who arrange them and the

broadcasters-they have a lot of background knowledge.. You might be able to feature events regularly in the newsletter.

Where are the people who subscribe to the newsletter? What events happen in their towns? If you are writing about industry, where are the main manufacturing plants? Have their local newspapers written about public opinions about those plants, such as pollution or high employment?

If you have a topic that requires a certain environment, how do the local towns cater to the enthusiasts, especially during a main event?

WRITING COPY

In this publication, you are the authority. Use strong, direct statements with an active voice. Although you are often offering opinion, the content should be factual.

Your readers are intelligent, and experts in the same field you are writing about. You'll need to back up statements with research. A rule of thumb is that three concurring sources make fact.

Although you don't need to be a polished writer your copy must be easy to read and understand, It should be exciting, filled with lots of bits of information.

The main thrust of the newsletter is enthusiasm,, Your subscribers are into the subject you are writing about.. Don't be afraid to let them know you love the topic as much as they do.. Go ahead--get excited...

If you have chosen a technical subject, you'll need to be an expert in the field. If you are not,have somebody you can call at any time to confirm fact. After all, your newsletter is geared toward the experts.. so you have to pull through.. You don't have to do all the writing yourself. You can employ free lancers who collect or write material for the newsletter. The financial arrangement is negotiable. But keep in mind that high quality skills and expert knowledge usually cost.

The success of the newsletter lies with the quality of information you have. Not quality of writing-the quality of information.. If a reader can review an entire copy and say, "i know that," you're not coming through with inside information or new trends.

Quality of information is the dozens of little tidbits of information, expert advice, and tips for success. That is the core of the newsletter, and should be the core of your own interests. That is why you have unique knowledge to offer, and

why your newsletter will be successful.

What interests you? You are the best judge of lively topics, and are the best critic of the newsletter. If you subscribed to this publication, would this be what you'd expect? Are you delivering the full potential of the subject matter?

Above all, the information practical? Can a person reading the newsletter gain from having acquired that information? Although you are publishing the newsletter for a select group of people, you should direct it to each individual person.

The personal approach is the best attitude to take in both gathering information and in writing copy. Since the newsletter is an informal publication, the copy should read informally, as though you just heard the hot news and are writing it quickly for your best friend to profit by.

GETTING READY FOR PRINTING

Once you have all your copy finished, you need to have it typed. If you are an expert typist with an excellent typewriter, you're ahead of the game. But if not, spend the money necessary for the final copy to be letter perfect. Any errors will reflect on you—even typographical errors.

The first few newsletters you publish will require a lot of trial and error with copy and layout. You'll need to decide how many spaces to leave between the end of a paragraph and the beginning of a subhead, how many spaces to indent, and how big the margins will be.

Think about what is important to the format. Some newsletters use italics or underlined words to emphasize the importance. And some of these over-use these methods. Always let good taste dictate the layout and style of your publication.

When a whole line is taken up by a few words, or the last half of a hyphenated word, it is called a widow. These look sloppy in any type of publication, you may rewrite the paragraph to extend or shorten that sentence.

Be careful about carry-overs to the next page. It's very awkward to hyphenate at the bottom of a page, or have only one line at the top of the next, then space for a subhead. As you get more adept at preparing copy, you'll be able to write to fit. And that looks good.

The basic standard for a newsletter is clarity. Can you read the type? Are the ideas well presented and easy to understand? Do the subhead interest and motivate readers?

The final typed copy is exactly what will be printed. Since photo offset is the least expensive way to print multiple copies of typewritten material, the pages must be clean. Any second color should be indicated with an overlay. This is a sheet of tracing paper taped to the copy with printers instructions written on it and sections circled that need special attention. For the first year of publication, you won't need to put in any photos-in fact, you may never use photos.. But give yourself a long enough time to get established before you go to more expensive elements.

PRINTING

The least expensive, and most practical, way to print your newsletter is at an instant printer's, using photo offset. These small local businesses can print, collate, fold, and stuff envelopes, all for a reasonable fee.

If you want to use two colors in the newsletter. first have your masthead and perhaps border designs printed in huge quantities. All the clack type can later be printed on those two-color pre-printed sheets.

Don't go to the expense of elaborate printing until your subscription volume is high and you advance into a different format. Almost any publication you read, (newspapers, books, magazines) are printed on large roll presses and require typesetting.

Typesetting is expensive, but it certainly gives a professional finish to publications. Consider, however, if you want your newsletter to be slick. It may detract from its personal approach, and subscribers may drop if it leans towards a magazine.

But, if your subscription list is large and the newsletter is successful, you can find excellent printers who will handle the whole job of typesetting, layout, printing-all the way to mailing.

HOW OFTEN TO PUBLISH

There are a lot of factors to consider when deciding upon a publication schedule. The main one is how fast can you produce a newsletter.

Work backwards, You want a subscriber to receive the newsletter on a certain date. It needs to be in the mail a few days before that. And before that, it will take the printer how many days to deliver the printed materials? How long will it take a typist to finish the copy, and for you to decide on the final layout?

How long will it take you to research and write material for your newsletter? This may be a deciding factor in the size of the publication. Perhaps you'd prefer to get a four page newsletter out every other week rather than an eight page newsletter out every month.

If your topic is filled with today's news, then you'll want to get that out to your subscribers as fast as possible. Other subjects can be done monthly, bimonthly, or even quarterly.. Be careful with infrequent mailings, however, because the subscribers may just forget about it. And what use is a small newsletter only a few times a year?

GETTING SUBSCRIBERS

Think about where the people who would want your newsletter are, and go find them.

Do you have access to mailing lists directly related to your subject matter? Maybe you already have a small business selling information, or have access to a customer list of people who buy similar information.

You can purchase mailing lists that have every demographic breakdown you can imagine. What is the profile of your potential subscribers? Think about those people, and write down their attributes. Write down the age group, sex, education level, income, where they live, perhaps the type of housing accommodation. A good list broker can work out the best lists to give you results.

A sure way to build up a potential subscriber mailing list is with a drawing at a trade show or convention. You can have cards printed up for people to fill in their names and addresses. All attendees would be interested in the subject matter of your newsletter.

You can take out display ads in the trade magazines that cater to the topic you are pursuing. Include the full details of your newsletter, or use a leader to get inquiries, and send the details later. Especially with the prices of newsletter, you may want to prepare and send out literature and samples rather than go for a low response.

Prepare a direct mail piece that describes the benefits and features of your newsletter and pushes for subscription.... You can offer a special free booklet to new subscribers, or a discount. You may include a sample copy in the direct mail piece to show how worthwhile the publication is.

Selling newsletters, like any other direct mail or publishing enterprise, takes a lot of testing. You need to test the initial

response to the idea of the topic;; and the response to the first few newsletters produced.

Pricing is always a tricky of selling information. How high can you price your newsletter and still keep the number of subscribers to make it profitable? You'll find through testing that there's a plateau, and subscriptions will fall off when the price gets too high.

Frequency of publication is also important. Although you may be able to prepare and publish a weekly newsletter, your subscribers may not be able to keep up with the reading, and prefer a monthly subscription.

Any good mailing list should be used over and over. If you know you have a list of prime targets for your newsletter, don't stop with one mailing. Follow through with subsequent offers at certain intervals to catch those who couldn't decide the first time.

MAILING

You can use computer services in your town to have labels printed up, or, if you're only dealing in a small quantity, you can have mailing lists photo copied onto address labels.

After your first success, and after you've paid your initial investment and you've got enough money to expand, make things easy on yourself.. The most sophisticated, and the easiest method of mailing to subscribers is by computer.

Nowadays, computers are so commercially popular that they are within almost anybody's budget. And a computer that would store and print out names and addresses need not be expensive.

If the mail is pre-sorted by zip code, you can use a bulk rate for mailing and save money. If your newsletter can meet the specifications, you might even be able to get a special second class rate permit for educational material. Talk with postal workers to find out what you need to do comply with these special rates.

BOOKKEEPING

You can keep complete and accurate accounts of your newsletter business by yourself. It's basically broken down into two areas: how much you spend, and how much you make.. If you keep track of all your expenses, you'll have an easy time of it at tax time.

Open up a business checking account at your bank. Get to know the bank manager, if you don't already. Although you can start and maintain a newsletter within a low budget, be sure to figure your costs and risks before you invest too much money, and be sure of a back up to be able to fulfill all the subscriptions.

Maintaining your subscription lists is a task that needs diligence and a head for details. Since each subscriber starts at a different issue, you need to create and continue a method of keeping track of expiring subscriptions.

You'll want to write a standard appeal for renewal to be sent out in plenty of time for subscribers to renew. And you'll have to follow up for those who choose not to renew at the end of their present subscriptions.

The best advice is to get the best advice. Who can help you set up a subscription system? Maybe somebody local is expert at that.

Find out who handles subscriptions at a nearby publication, and talk to that person.

WHAT'S LEGAL

Although any business in the United States is subject to the Federal Trade Commission's regulations, a newsletter business is simple.

You don't need a license for this business. However, You should consult with your local Sales Tax office for acquiring a resale tax permit.

The content of the newsletter must be documented by facts if you get into any dispute.. If you don't border on libel, you should have no problem with any law suits for the content of your publication. However, consult your attorney if there are any problems with copyright, confidentially, or access to news. If you write with integrity, independent of any payoffs by companies or individuals, you'll have no trouble with being on the wrong side of the law.

SUCCESS IS YOURS

Writing and publishing a newsletter is a challenging and exciting way to express yourself. And it will give you prestige and acknowledgement in the community.

You can start the business with virtually no overhead and a small amount of capital, and you can build up to making profits in the six-figure bracket.

A newsletter has a market, and the people who subscribe to it will pay high prices for the information you have. Tap into the market and reap those profits.

There's no news you can't find out about, and there's no industry or type of endeavor in this country today that doesn't have a

large group of enthusiasts. How can you find out what they want to know? This is a place to use your resources and use your background.

The actual task of researching, writing, and having a newsletter published is easy. There is no secret or special tricks or skills you need besides a good nose for the best prices. What is important is coming up with an idea for a newsletter that will sell to a select group who has no specialized information presently available in that or in a similar form.

You've probably got your ideas already. Well, go ahead. Make up a sample newsletter and pass it around. Get a good response? A small sampling is only a good indication that the rest will like it too.

SUCCESS IS AROUND THE CORNER.

If you need specialized legal advice or assistances, the services of a pro-fessional person are recommended.