



Advance Your Brand through Online Marketing

E-newsletters can enhance your image and boost sales

By Susan Baka

A recent Ipsos Reid survey of Canadian small and medium-sized business owners revealed that they lack the time, money and expertise to be completely satisfied with their marketing efforts. Further, six out of 10 polled identified branding as a priority for their businesses, but only 45% were “very satisfied with” their company’s current brand.

If, like other business owners, you want to boost your branding, one way to do this without breaking the bank is to publish an e-newsletter. A professionally-presented, content rich e-newsletter to a targeted audience can serve to both market your products or services and reinforce your brand. And with today’s technology tools, you can even measure success.

Here are some tips on how to get the most from an e-newsletter:

- **Content is king.** Be reader-focused. Provide valuable information and tips for your customers and prospects based on your expertise in your market, rather than marketing pitches for your firm. Also, make the content digestible – a quick, interesting read with links to your web site to drive traffic there. If writing is not your forte, setting aside marketing dollars to outsource this task will give you the biggest bang for your buck.
- **Package your content well.** There’s a lot of competition vying for the attention of your customers and prospects. A professionally designed e-newsletter is more likely to be noticed and read than an amateur looking one with link or graphic errors. Good design also makes your brand more memorable. If you’re not technically savvy or visually-oriented, hire a designer who is well-versed in html coding and can present your brand with impact.
- **Use available technology.** There are a number of very affordable e-marketing services you can access online that can make the distribution, list management and tracking process of your e-newsletter relatively pain-free. My favourite is Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com). In addition to making it easy for non-techies to manage their databases and keep track of what went out and when, the service provides valuable metrics like email bounce-backs, reports on who opened your e-newsletter and even which links they clicked on. This is very useful in helping you track the effectiveness of your e-marketing and tweak it as needed. Constant Contact also provides design templates that can be easily customized with your own logo and branding. There is even a free trial period to assess the service. Another bonus: once you subscribe (fee is based on the size of your database), you can use it as often as you like – not only to send e-newsletters to your database, but also regular e-blasts, with the click of a button.
- **Be a smart marketer.** Resist the temptation to send snippets of sales-pitch style information just because it’s so easy to do so with web-based e-marketing services. Although they are excellent time and money savers, use them wisely to send truly valuable content to your database, or your fate will be the delete button. Developing a good e-newsletter requires a certain amount of marketing savvy in terms of how content is written and what design features should be incorporated for maximum effectiveness when e-marketing. This is where a good writer and marketing expert can guide you.



If branding is a priority for you, an e-newsletter should be a key part of your marketing arsenal. Done well, it's an affordable, fast, easy-to-manage and measurable marketing tool that delivers results.

Information specialist and marketing expert Susan Baka, President of Bay Communications & Marketing Inc., has been providing innovative marketing communication strategies and vehicles for clients since 1991. Visit www.baycomm.ca to get free sure-fire tips on how to boost your marketing.

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