



## Marketing PowerBoost

### e-Newsletters – a cost-effective marketing tool

*Strategies for effective e-Communication*

**By Susan Baka**

Could your business use a marketing powerboost? This article focuses on electronic newsletters – a cost-effective way to communicate directly with customers and prospects.

The e-Newsletter is a relatively new marketing tool so there is no single, clear definition of what it is and what it should look like. It can range from a simple one-page text e-mail with a couple of links to a multi-coloured dynamic piece with extensive use of images and links. Whatever style you choose, e-Newsletters are a cost-effective way to ensure you are top of mind with existing clients and to prospect for new ones.

There are some do's and don'ts to launching an e-Newsletter. Here are recommendations that I give clients when I help them launch this communication tool:

1. **Content is key.** Be reader-focused. Provide valuable information and tips for your clients based on your expertise in your market, rather than marketing pitches for your firm. Also, make the content digestible – a quick, interesting read with pushes to your web site.
2. **Hire experts.** If you lack writing skills or time, seek professional help. A good writer will understand what you are trying to achieve and present information in an exciting and interesting way, and a professional designer will create a template that presents the material in an inviting format.
3. **Invite feedback.** Be sure to include a response mechanism – i.e. asking your readers for feedback and ideas on other areas they would like to see covered in future issues.
4. **Maintain frequency.** Regular e-Newsletter distribution ensures that communication with customers doesn't fall through the cracks. It also reinforces your newsletter as a resource for your clients.
5. **Build a good, targeted distribution list.** In addition to your existing customers, be sure to add prospects. For first-time recipients, include an introductory paragraph stating what they are receiving and why. Also, be sure to remove recipients when requested to do so.
6. **Send a regular e-mail broadcast to your clients.** If you don't have the budget to produce a full-fledged e-Newsletter, you can still maintain regular client contact to keep your firm top-of-mind. Some financial advisory firms send their clients a weekly one-page bulletin about national and international developments that could affect financial portfolios. This is an idea you could adapt.

But whatever you do...

1. **Don't be a spammer.** e-Newsletters should be sent on a 'with-permission' basis. E-mail etiquette demands that you offer recipients a way to opt out of receiving future newsletters and an easy way to contact you with any comments they might have.



2. **Don't send mega-attachments.** e-Newsletters with high-resolution graphics can take a long time to download which can risk irritating your customers or prospects. If you want to send a large document that might clog up e-mails, post it on your web site and provide a link instead.
3. **Don't be a nuisance.** While maintaining a standard frequency of distribution is a good idea, sending too often is not. Produce weekly only if you deliver must-have, time-sensitive information. Monthly is fine; however, that, too, can be a big task to maintain. I often recommend to clients to start with a quarterly distribution; frequency can always be increased later, time and budget permitting.

e-Newsletters are a good way to keep your company top-of-mind with clients and, at the same time, you save on print and mailing costs. And if you make e-Newsletters part of your marketing plan, you'll notice a trickle-down effect – the stories and ideas generated for the newsletter will find their way to your web site, brochure and sales pitches.

*Information specialist and marketing expert Susan Baka, President of Bay Communications & Marketing Inc., has been providing innovative marketing communication strategies and vehicles – including content-rich websites - for clients since 1991. Visit [www.baycomm.ca](http://www.baycomm.ca) to get free sure-fire tips on how to boost your marketing.*

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