

# WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER

## 02/01/13

---

### NEWEST TRG LEADERSHIP TOOL

"Practical Means for Dealing with Difficult Times"

This section of our site features business tools and planning considerations designed to assist leaders for whom "just keeping up" is not good enough. These notes focus on sequences of thought and action intended to enhance the positioning of your group, both on a long and short-term basis.

Your input is requested as to which Tools might be of interest to you. Requests will NOT create any form of obligation on the Reader who makes the suggestion, but will help us understand which subjects are of general interest.

Please check back frequently to review the next tool. Visit our [LEADERSHIP TOOLS ARCHIVE](#) for previous tools.

## WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER

By Steve Haraczak

One key aspect of a marketing strategy for any professional/trade association or commercial business is publishing an electronic newsletter to be sent on a regular basis by email to your members/clients in your database.

An electronic newsletter will allow you to stay in touch with your members/clients on a regular basis and provide them with key information on your association/business, such as news announcements, new product/service offerings, upcoming education programs they may want to attend, new members/clients, staff additions or changes, and more.

A well-written electronic newsletter makes your members/clients feel connected to your association/company and builds trust, especially if you encourage feedback and interaction.

Hopefully your association members/business clients will share your messages with their friends and business associates. The more your newsletter readers spread your word about your association/business, the more it will grow.

Your online newsletter should provide your readers/followers with the opportunity to give feedback, both positive and negative, to your association/business.

### IDENTIFY A NEWSLETTER STRATEGY AND GOALS

To have an effective electronic newsletter that is read regularly by your association members/business clients, you will need to determine:

# WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER

## 02/01/13

---

- What is the purpose or premise of your online newsletter?
- What are your goals for this key marketing tool?
- How will you identify and confirm who will be on the newsletter's email distribution list?

A well set electronic newsletter will help get your association/business known better locally, nationally or beyond, as well as generate either more business from old clients or new business from new clients, and become known as the source of informative, timely and reliable information.

A powerful tool is to use the steps to establish your newsletter as a way of identifying yourself to your clients/followers. After you have written a premise for your newsletter, have others in your organization/company and with whom you have the best relations review it and provide feedback on the newsletter's premise.

The key to a successful newsletter is to make it as easy as possible to sign up for the newsletter through an online form on your website and readily available links. It is also important to offer interesting, useful information so prospective readers immediately see the value in signing up for your electronic newsletter.

The content of the newsletter must be relevant to your members/current clients and potential clients.

### **NAMING YOUR NEWSLETTER**

You need to develop a name for your electronic newsletter that is identifiable and ties in with your association/business marketing strategy. The newsletter's name should be short, easily remembered, and relevant to your association/business. At The Regis Group our monthly electronic newsletter is called "The Agenda".

It also is important to decide on a newsletter format that you will follow for every issue so that the readers will know where to find the Leader's / Editor's Message, news announcements, key articles, and other regular features.

Use photos or art where possible to break up the copy and add value to specific articles. Set a publication schedule with internal deadlines for writing/editing in a regular pattern.

Of the highest priority is to always have enough news and interesting articles to make it readable and informative.

### **DETERMINING THE NEWSLETTER FREQUENCY**

You may want to start off with a quarterly online newsletter to be sure your association/business is able to meet that publication schedule. Later you can increase the newsletter's publication, potentially to monthly.

It is much better to start with "Special Editions", than it is to announce it will be a monthly newsletter and fail to publish it on a monthly schedule. It also is important to provide a plain text version of the newsletter for those who may not be able to print out an HTML text version of the electronic newsletter.

### **NEWSLETTER CONTENT**

While it is important to have regular features in each newsletter issue, such as a President's Message, it is also important to have new features from issue to issue to add value to the newsletter.

You would also benefit for customizing your newsletter to fit the brand of your association/business, as well as to serve as an information tool for the products and services provided to your association members/business clients.

# WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER

## 02/01/13

---

Newsletters sent by email typically contain a summary of articles or "teaser articles" to reduce the size of the newsletter, with a link to the full article placed on your website.

There are many email newsletter software programs available on the Internet that you can use for the design and layout of your electronic newsletter.

### **WHEN TO SEND**

The selection of a send date (and circumstance) can be a somewhat complicated strategy. While sending on a predictable date of the month (such as the first or last day), ultimate selection can be influenced on a month to month basis based on day of the week and holidays/events, which can increase the completion for your newsletter readership.

### **WRITING, EDITING AND PROOFING THE NEWSLETTER**

After you decide on those columns or articles that you will have in each newsletter issue, it is best to send a test version of the electronic newsletter to various staff members or allies for their final review before it is sent to your email distribution list. The reviewers can make sure that every link in the newsletter is working, that any personalization appears as expected, that any photos can be seen, and that it can be printed easily. By doing so you can resolve electronic newsletter problems before it is sent to your newsletter distribution list.

### **LEGAL ASPECTS**

**CRITICAL NOTE:** The following sections are NOT being offered as LEGAL advice, but intended to trigger an appropriate internal review to help you establish appropriate policy.

It is critical for you to understand restrictions on sending an electronic newsletter to email addresses that you got from a rented list, obtained off of the Internet, or exported from a personal email account. You must have permission from an individual to send them the electronic newsletter on a regular basis.

Keep in mind that because of the CAN-SPAM Act passed several years ago sets parameters that may mean that your association or business can only send an electronic newsletter to those members/clients who have given you permission to send the electronic newsletter to them via email. This can be done if they agree to receive emails from you, or if you have done business with them in the past 2 years, or if they have completed an online form indicating that they want to receive your electronic newsletter along with their name and email address.

Another good way to build your electronic newsletter distribution list is to solicit an email address from the people you talk to and personally request their permission to add their email address to your newsletter distribution list.

To be on the safe side it is best to confirm their permission by email before adding them to your online newsletter distribution list.

### **OPT-OUT NEWSLETTER OPTION**

In order to stay in compliance with the law and to be courteous to your association members/business clients it is also very important to make it easy for the electronic newsletter recipient to "unsubscribe" or "opt-out" from receiving the newsletter. This "unsubscribe" or "opt-out" link should be at the top of the newsletter and not at the bottom of it to make it easy to find. A newsletter "subscribe" and "unsubscribe" link should be included in all your marketing emails.

Again, a top solution can be to have the people you talk to agree to having their name and email address added to your electronic newsletter distribution list.

### **RELIABILITY**

## WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER

02/01/13

---

Once you start sending an electronic newsletter to your association members/business clients, you should continue to send it on a regular basis so that your association members/business clients come to expect your newsletter and look forward to the electronic communication from your association/company.

### ONGOING VALUE

Of all the reliable features you should strive to achieve is "perceived value" combined with an enjoyment in reading.

Good luck and please let us know what we can do to help make 'The Agenda' a 'must-stop' action for you on your journey through the web.

For additional information regarding WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER, please visit our [Contact Page](#) and send us an Email or simply call us directly during East Coast business hours on our toll free number 1.800.97-REGIS (1.800.977.3447).