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Writing Newsletters Online: How to Get it Right

By Nick Osborne

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A strange thing has been happening to newsletters online.

They have been turning into either a) promotional emails or b) web pages delivered by email.

I'm sure you know what I mean. Go back a couple of years and you could look forward to receiving your favorite newsletter in the knowledge that the newsletter itself would contain some great content...something you could read and enjoy, or learn from.

You could open the newsletter in your email and read it, from beginning to end. There were articles, reviews or just personal rant...well written and interesting.

In short, there was real value, right there in the newsletter.

These newsletters, where significant value lies in the body of the newsletter itself, are becoming harder and harder to find.

Instead, more and more companies and organizations are using their `newsletters' as a promotional ploy to drive you to pages on their sites.

In one way, it's understandable. As anyone with a newsletter knows, if you have one or two links to your site in the newsletter, your site traffic really spikes on the days you send out the newsletter.

When you see that, it's tempting to optimize the entire newsletter - its format and content - as a means to drive additional traffic and generate more sales.

As a result, you now see numerous newsletters where an article is not included in its entirety. You simply get a teaser and a link to a page on their site. Or else you get a `newsletter' that looks just like the site interface, with all the various navigation links and promotional messages included.

This may be great if you want to maximize the traffic to your site each time you send out a newsletter. But there is a catch.

The catch is, if there is less value in your newsletter itself, your subscribers will quickly begin to become bored with it. After all, with a zillion other promotional emails cluttering our inboxes - why pay special attention to a `newsletter' that is simply another sales pitch?

The real value of a newsletter that contains valuable content is long-term. You'll get more word-of-mouth, you'll get higher open-rates, and you'll get long-term readers who look forward to your newsletter, for years ahead.

Is there a compromise? Sure there is. A valuable newsletter doesn't need to be text-only without a single link, or devoid of any promotional elements.

Just make sure that every newsletter contains some valuable content, in its entirety. Give people a real reason to look forward to receiving it, opening it and reading it.

Nick Osborne is a copywriter, author and speaker. You can access all his newsletter articles on writing for the web at his

site. You'll find more articles and resources on how to make money as a freelance writer at

Writing Business Newsletters: Avoid the "Me, Me, Me" Mistake

By Richard Cunningham

Effective customer newsletters find the right mix of promotional and `real' content to maximize readership.

It's that time of year when the old college roommate sends `round his or her annual holiday newsletter. Admit it, you're happy to hear from them, but it's usually too long and it's all "me, me, me."

The same is true about too many customer newsletters - printed or electronic. In the audiobook, "Sound Advice on Publishing E-Newsletters," author Michael Katz says one of the biggest mistakes made by company newsletters is that the focus is mostly on the company doing the writing. It's all right to include announcements of recent awards, new employees, and new customer wins, he says, just don't lead with it.

Instead, lead with and focus on what is useful, interesting, and relevant to the audience - information that helps customers do their jobs successfully or live their lives better. When it comes to writing a customer newsletter, Katz says, "Remember the 80-20 rule. 80% of your newsletter should be focused

on helping the reader; 20% should be about you."

Michael Katz offers advice on how to create, write, and publish e-newsletters each week in the free audio-newsletter from What's Working in Biz,

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Why Subscribing Too Many Newsletters Can Cost You Money

Affiliate Marketing And Promotional Materials

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Tips For Finding More Coupons

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Ezine Filter and Format software

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