

Marketing Link

A quarterly publication of Bells International, Inc.

Welcome to the Jungle

It's a jungle out there, but one that holds some incredible opportunities if you have the right guide. Marketing Link is designed to be a guide to the promises and pitfalls of today's marketing world. We provide information, advice and step-by-step instruction on how to make proven and emerging marketing techniques work for your business. It's news you can use for the rapidly growing commerce jungles of the 21st century. Marketing Link is a free, quarterly publication of Bells International, Inc. delivered as a printed newsletter and accessible online at www.bellsintl.com. We believe in the power of marketing – and believe that information is the key to building successful businesses and a strong economy. We value your feedback. Let us know what you think and tell us how Marketing Link can be a more effective tool for you and your company.

We hope you find this a useful addition to your business resources. It's our pleasure to share an insider's view of the landscape and to serve as your connection to information, your junction to strategic planning and your Marketing Link to a successful future.



INSIDE ►

The Scoop on Newsletters

The Scoop on Newsletters Page 2

Do I Need a Newsletter? Page 2

How to Produce a Newsletter Page 2

Creating a Mailing List Page 3

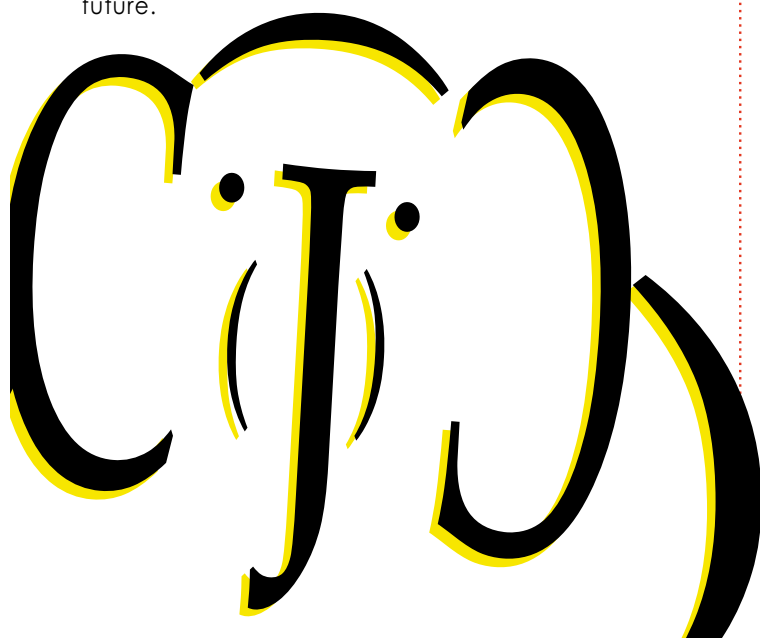
History of Newsletters Page 4

PLUS

Inc. Blotter Page 4

JFK's promotional gifts turn into Washington status symbols.

Can you name Elvis Presley's one and only appearance in a commercial?



Marketing Link is your link to news, information and advice on issues of interest to businesses, organizations and marketing professionals. The quarterly newsletter emphasizes topics related to marketing, advertising, promotions, communications and corporate culture.



The Scoop on Newsletters

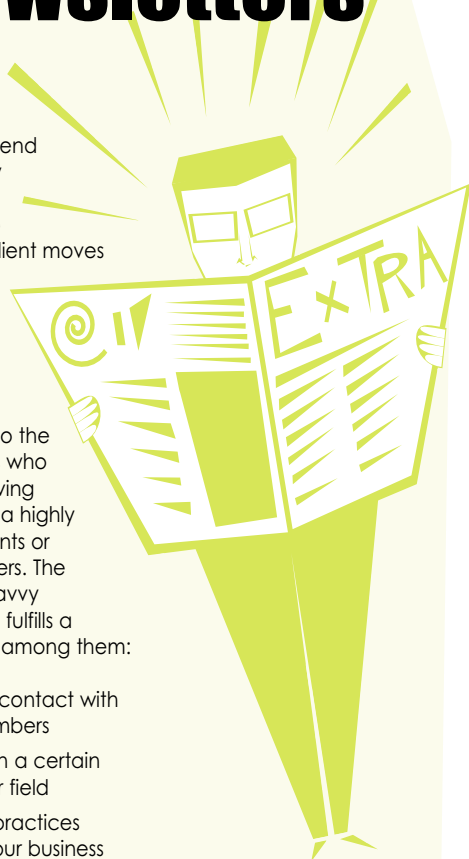
Newsletters – who needs them? It's a long list ranging from professionals who depend on the continuing flow of information to stay current in their field, to marketers who scan client moves and contact information, to association members networking with their colleagues.

It's equally important to the creators of newsletters who see the benefits of having ongoing contact with a highly targeted group of clients or potential new customers. The newsletter can be a savvy marketing device that fulfills a number of objectives, among them:

- Maintaining regular contact with clients, leads or members
- Exhibiting expertise in a certain business category or field
- Promoting ideas or practices advantageous to your business
- Educating a target group
- Establishing yourself as an informational source of news, know-how and advice

Newsletters not only provide you access, they are flexible enough to tailor content specifically to the needs of your audience. Content varies from publication to publication, but they generally include a combination of news articles, features, personality profiles, industry trends, how-to advice, upcoming events, helpful hints, letters or a feedback column, and a bulletin board on happenings of interest to your readers. Depending on the audience, a newsletter can include editorials, new product announcements, a question and answer forum, product reviews or entertainment content (jokes, puzzles, human interest, etc.).

While it can be a valuable tool for the newsletter distributor, its ultimate success depends on whether your target audience finds it a beneficial use of their time. Does your newsletter include new ideas or strategies not being addressed by other means? Does it help build business connections? Is the buyer being informed, involved or entertained? By identifying the special needs of your readership you can improve the chances the newsletter will become part of their routine instead of filler for their wastebasket.



Is a Newsletter Right for You?

A newsletter can be an effective outreach tool if a business is trying to achieve specific results, has the necessary resources for the task and has identified a target audience with a need for information. But if your goal is to sell a specific product or service or to reach a wide, undefined audience, you might find more success with a different promotional option.

Judging from the number of newsletters on the market (thousands are printed and more are online), there are a number of very good reasons for choosing this viable messaging tool. Newsletters are:

- A very low cost way to reach a highly targeted audience
- Viewed as an information source rather than a promotional message

- A reliable way to deliver a valuable and essential service
- Sent on a regular basis to clients or prospects without being seen as a repetitive message
- A means to position your company as an expert and a resource for future use
- Evidence of your commitment to an objective, cause or profession
- A tangible demonstration of your understanding of client needs

If a newsletter meets your personal criteria and you decide it's the right media for you, there still are other factors to consider before you can start the production process. Before you start compiling content or coming up with

See "Right for Me?", Pg. 3

How to Write a Newsletter

Step 1: Format and Design

Determine the size of your newsletter (both number of pages and page size) and whether it will be printed, e-mailed or posted online. If printed, decide if you want a black and white newsletter or if you want colorful graphics and type. If you want color, how many colors? This is important because the more colors you use, the higher your printing costs. If you're looking to cut costs but want to keep a very professional, full-color look, consider less frequent mailings (for example, cut back your frequency from monthly to quarterly.)

Create a name for your publication and, if necessary, design a logo. If you have an artistic side and a graphics program on your computer, you might be able to accomplish layout and design without a graphic artist. But keep in mind that in certain fields (advertising, public relations, printing and high-level corporate professions), the newsletter will be reaching an audience that could evaluate it as a sample of your work – it needs to be

See "How To", Pg. 3

Right for Me?, continued from Pg. 2

catchy column names, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have the time to create a newsletter?
- Do you have the technical expertise necessary to do the job?
- Can you write in a clear, concise and professional manner that will engage your readers?
- Do you have the necessary equipment, design skills and production capabilities to complete the newsletter?
- Are you willing to make a commitment to meeting deadlines on a continuing basis?
- Do you have access to a continuing source of information and content?
- What is your budget? And is it adequate to produce and distribute the product you want?
- Have you identified a target audience and do you have access to a mailing list?

Let's say you've considered these questions and found no obstacle that would prevent

you from taking on the newsletter challenge. But you're not out of the woods yet – you've determined you want to build a newsletter, but you still need to consider whether your audience needs a newsletter. Ask yourself:

- Are interesting or innovative things happening in my selected field?
- Is the target audience connected in such a way that they would have similar needs or interests?
- Is my chosen subject sufficiently broad to maintain continuing interest?
- Do I know something my audience doesn't know?

If a few of these questions have dampened your enthusiasm, don't worry. No one person is an expert in every facet of the process. If you know your subject matter but are unsure about your writing or design skills, consider using an outside marketing firm like Bells to polish your ideas, edit your copy and sharpen the "professional edge" of your publication.

How To, continued from Pg. 2

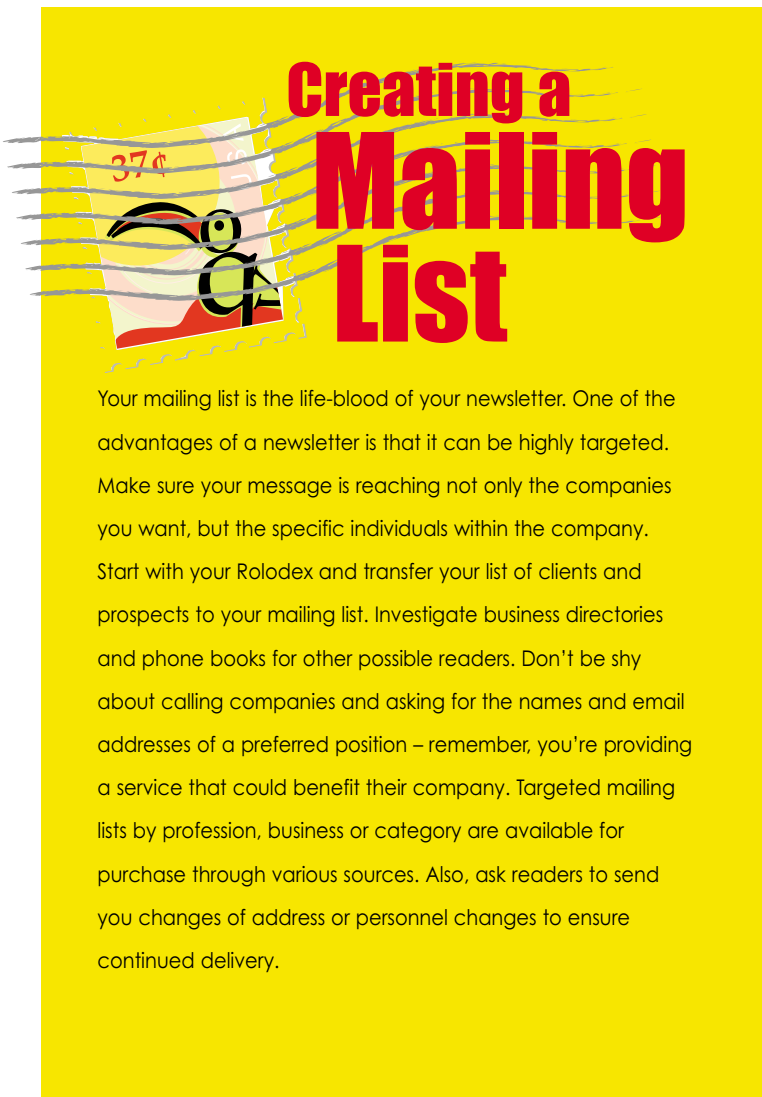
something you're willing to present in that context. That said, if you have access to an artist it's a good idea to use them for at least the more intricate design elements.

Step 2: Getting Started

Do the research. Know the background of your audience and discover their unique needs. Remember, a newsletter is not just another form of advertising – it's not enough that your logo is in view, you have to give the reader a reason to value the information. Create your content menu: lead article, features, columns, profiles, letters, etc. Assign pages for the content and determine the amount needed (including photos and graphics) to fill the space. Set reasonable deadlines for the completion of the various elements, and a final deadline for completion and online posting or mailing.

Step 3: Compiling Information

The one constant in every newsletter is the need for content. Look for sources of information relevant to your audience. Stay in-the-know by subscribing to industry publications related to your subject matter. Call a select group of your readers and conduct interviews to find out what's happening in the field and what people are talking about. Get on mailing lists. If you're trying to reach corporate clients, ask them to send you their sales and marketing materials. Think about what your readers are looking for and contact their suppliers, trade show organizers and client base for information.



Creating a Mailing List

Your mailing list is the life-blood of your newsletter. One of the advantages of a newsletter is that it can be highly targeted. Make sure your message is reaching not only the companies you want, but the specific individuals within the company. Start with your Rolodex and transfer your list of clients and prospects to your mailing list. Investigate business directories and phone books for other possible readers. Don't be shy about calling companies and asking for the names and email addresses of a preferred position – remember, you're providing a service that could benefit their company. Targeted mailing lists by profession, business or category are available for purchase through various sources. Also, ask readers to send you changes of address or personnel changes to ensure continued delivery.

Step 4: Interaction

Develop a system where your readers can interact with tips, letters, comments and information. For an online publication, it's as easy as listing an email address and requesting reader comments. In your printed newsletter, make sure you have a "Contact" section that includes your mailing address, email address (if applicable), FAX and phone number. Set up a "Letters to the Editor" section for reader commentary, and ask for reader contributions for sections that list business briefs, promotions and new hires, coming events, etc.

Step 5: Printing and Distribution

A good spell-check program is a necessity, but it's no substitute for a proofreader. Make sure to pass it by a second set of eyes to catch any errors that might make it into print or – in a worse case scenario – lead to having to make costly corrections and print a second time. Evaluate costs – using a local printer, paper company or mailing house could save time and money. Stick to your deadlines. Leave sufficient time for printing, and determine the most cost-effective postage rate for distributing your newsletter on time. Many printers can print, label and mail from the same location, but weigh the time you save against the costs before choosing this option.

The Newsletter: Old News

The history of the newsletter dates back to the Renaissance period in Europe. It began as a utility publication for merchants of the day who needed a way to communicate about their wares. Though specialized at that time, it demonstrated an ability – with a little ingenuity and ink – to distribute information among the small-but-willing population of readers.

According to historicpages.com, the Germans took the lead in the late 1400s, creating an information tool they called "newsbooks" which were filled with often highly sensationalized news accounts. (Interestingly, one of their favorite targets was Vlad Drakul, the Transylvanian aristocrat who would inspire the fictional "Dracula.") The groundwork established, the English turned the newsletter into a regular periodical with "The Weekly Newes of 1622" and published the first official newspaper, "The London Gazette" in 1666.

The media form came to America in the early 18th century, beginning with Boston's "Publick Occurrences" – which caused such a stir that it was banned and the publisher jailed. It was short-lived, but was quickly followed by "The Boston Newsletter" in 1704, with similar publications emerging in New York and Philadelphia by the 1720s. These early attempts often were forms of advocacy media and targeted people with a common interest. For example, publications in the 18th century were used largely as propaganda tools by parties for and against the Revolutionary War. By 1783, 43 of these new sources existed in the colonies.

Printing being an expensive undertaking, papers of that era were considered the pastime of the wealthy. By the 1830s, however, new printing techniques made publishing more affordable and brought about the introduction of the "penny press" – making news accessible to a much larger readership. The industrial revolution in the US allowed the publications to take on a more modern look, with civil war engravings setting the stage for today's photos and graphics. By 1880, more than 11,000 newspapers were operating across the country.

The emergence of the general circulation newspaper left a void in specific niche markets, a space filled today by the modern newsletter. In many ways, newsletters resemble earlier forms of American publishing in that they tend to be smaller and more personal, focusing on specific groups or topics and uniting parties with a common interest.

Marketing Link

Marketing Link is a publication of Bells International, Inc., an Austin-based corporation offering advertising, promotional products, new media, event fulfillment, online store development and marketing services for clients across the U.S.

Contact Us

Please send news, comments and Letters to the Editor to your contact at Bells or to:

Marketing Advertising Creative Services

Gayle Sheehan
gayle@bellsintl.com
512.454.9663ex258
888.440.4649ex258
Fax 512.454.4397

Promotional Products

Terry Wilt
terry@bells.com
512.454.9663ex201
800.822.0114ex201

Online Stores

Shawna Plumb
shawna@imprintmall.com
512.454.9663ex215
888.440.4649ex215
Fax 512.451.7657

Inc. BLOTTER

Some corporate gifts are trendsetters. For example, in 1960 **President John F. Kennedy** gave each of his aides a PT-109 tie clasp. They became a status symbol in Washington and had repercussions across the country. Even today, cufflinks and tie clasps are the preferred gifts of governors because they remain highly visible in public.

Always factor in your shipping costs. In 1885, it took 214 crates to get the **Statue of Liberty** from France to New York.

Are you getting the most out of your product? Consider alternative uses. Did you know that the skins of **turkeys** are tanned and used to make items like cowboy boots and belts?

Out of every 11 boxes of cereal sold in the US, one of them is Cheerios.

Elvis Presley made only one commercial – a 1954 spot for **Southern Maid Donuts**.

Ways to Save Paper and Eliminate Waste

- Share voicemails and emails rather than writing paper notes and memos.
- Scan documents into the computer and share via disk or email.
- Offer electronic transfer of funds through your payroll department.
- Switch to fax modem and save incoming faxes on-screen rather than on paper.
- Skip fax cover sheets.
- Photocopy on both sides of the page.
- Reuse the blank side of printouts, faxes and copies as scratch pads
- Keep a large plastic bag next to the shredder and use the paper for packing material.

