

LECTURE 9

LEARNING OUTCOME

Upon completion of this chapter the student should be able to:

- a. Understand the purpose of the newsletters.
- b. Able to produce a proper advertisement.

Newsletters

WHAT IS A NEWSLETTER?

A newsletter is a special timely report on a single subject. It is a personalized, concise statement from an expert or person thoroughly familiar with a specialized field.

Newsletters are maintained solely by subscriptions; there is no advertising. Most are printed within low budget means, typewritten, from two to eight pages.

The specialized information in newsletters is current, and usually cannot be found elsewhere. They are a logical extension to trade journals and magazines.

Aimed at a select group, they often contain the inside information in the field, hot tips or news scoops that become old news in publications of the trade.

Newsletters are not distributed by newsstands, nor are they meant for the mass market. In fact, the average number of potential readers of newsletters in any one field is relatively small.

Because of their specific information, newsletters can command a high subscription fee.

Businesses can afford to spend the money to offer executives top-rate inside information.

There are hundreds of newsletters now being published and distributed in the United States. But there is room for hundreds more. Because of the specialized market, there is often little competition among newsletters, and **THERE IS A RISING TREND TOWARDS SUBSCRIBING**

WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

The topic you choose has got to be your major interest. You'll be living with it day in and day out for years, so you need to be devoted to the subject. Usually, it's not hard. You probably already have a chosen field of endeavour, or have developed a keen interest in a special hobby or sport. Writing a newsletter is only one more way to demonstrate your interest.

Read any newsletters you can find. What do they talk about? How much do they cost? How long have they been in business? You might want to talk to the publishers of a few to find out how they started and what troubles they encountered.

Take a look at all the trade magazines of the topic you'd like to work with. Find out if there are any newsletters already existing in that field. But don't worry - there is usually room for more if you keep to another aspect of the business or endeavor.

Keep up with the current trends in health, money, sports, or social events and styles. What's new with the young people? Or the elderly?

STYLE AND FORMAT

A low-budget newsletter is usually one column, typewritten copy, with ample but not wide margins. Anything with two or more columns should be typeset, which is an extra expense you don't need.

The most economical way of printing the newsletter is on one or two 11 x 17 inch pages, printed on both sides, and folded. This will give you a small booklet of four to eight pages, each the standard 8 1/2 x 11 inch size.

You might consider having it three-hole punched. It doesn't cost much to have this done at the printers, and it could be an added feature to encourage subscribers to save the valuable information.

Any graphics should be kept simple, but don't be afraid to use subheads to break up the copy. A few words capitalized or in a larger or darker print help the reader identify the information, and make it easier to read.

Keep enough white space to encourage reading, but fill the pages to make the subscriber feel the newsletter fulfills its promises.

- **WHAT TO INCLUDE**

Consider a copy format that is divided by types of information. For example, you can have a section labelled profiles, another on upcoming events. Perhaps you have a calendar of shows, conventions, or seminars that would concern readers.

There might be sections on various industry policies or unwritten rules. Past events and history are always good fillers. And don't forget humour. Although your newsletter is serious, potent information, no field of endeavour is without its light side.

Don't lock yourself into a format you can't always fulfill. Rather, have these sections available for you to use or not as each issue is written.

And always include subscription information. Your own newsletter is the best way to sell more.

WRITING COPY

In this publication, you are the authority. Use strong, direct statements with an active voice. Although you are often offering opinion, the content should be factual.

Your readers are intelligent, and experts in the same field you are writing about. You'll need to back up your statements with research. A rule of thumb is that three concurring sources make fact.

Although you don't need to be a polished writer, your copy must be easy to read and understand. It should be exciting, filled with lots of bits of information.

The main thrust of the newsletter is enthusiasm. Your subscribers are into the subject you are writing about. Don't be afraid to let them know you love the topic as much as they do. Go ahead - get excited.

If you have chosen a technical subject, you'll need to be an expert in the field. If you are not, have somebody you can call at any time to confirm fact. After all, your newsletter is geared towards the experts, so you have to pull through.

You don't have to do all the writing yourself. You can employ free lancers who collect or write material for the newsletter. The financial arrangement is negotiable. But keep in mind that high

The success of the newsletter lies with the quality of information you have. Not the quality of writing - the quality of information. If a reader can review an entire copy and say, "I know that," you're not coming through with inside information or new trends.

Quality of information is the dozens of little tidbits of information, expert advice, and tips for success. That is the core of the newsletter, and should be the core of your own interests. That is why you have a unique knowledge to offer, and why your newsletter will be successful.

What interests you? You are the best judge of lively topics, and are the best critic of the newsletter. If you subscribed to this publication, would this be what you'd expect? Are you delivering the full potential of the subject matter?

Above all, is the information practical? Can a person reading the newsletter gain from having acquired that information? Although you are publishing the newsletter for a select group of people, you should direct it to each individual person.

The personal approach is the best attitude to take in both gathering information and in writing copy. Since the newsletter is an informal publication, the copy should read informally - as though you just heard the hot news and are writing it quickly for your best friend to profit by.