



**Overview:** An email newsletter serves to provide regular communication with your customers and prospects, as well as to educate them on relevant topics in your industry, and to provide solutions to their business challenges.

## Objectives of Newsletters

**Primary:** Stay top-of-mind with customers and prospects, and increase ongoing brand awareness and preference for your business.

**Secondary:** Generate demand for your products and services by linking news articles to your solutions.

**TIP:** Make the content of your newsletter unique and meaningful. Ask someone, “Would you find this information helpful or useful?”

## Best Practice Guidelines

### Content:

- Define your “voice” and be clear on who you are writing for: e.g., technical professionals or business owners.
- Write in a conversational tone. Talk to your customers, not at them. Don’t use big words when smaller ones will do.
- Focus on issues, or pain points, that you can help solve. Consider regional or timely topics that are top-of-mind. For example, in the winter talk about using remote access to avoid weather impacts, write about security after a new security vulnerability is revealed in the news, or discuss business productivity as a way to fight poor economic conditions.
- Incorporate existing content whenever possible, including videos, your company blog posts and case studies/success stories. Ensure that you have a varied mix of content and content sources.
- Use colorful, engaging imagery to break up the text in your newsletter. If you include video, be sure to insert a

screen shot or video still, including an arrow or “Watch Now” call to action. This will help prompt action.

- Use short, enticing subject lines to encourage prospects to open and read further: e.g., “Five Things You Need to Know About Securing Your Network.”
- Include icons and/or links to your company’s social media properties, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as to your company blog.
- Always include your company phone number and contact information to open up lines of communication.
- Include offers and promotions sparingly. A newsletter is not a sales tool, but it can’t hurt to ensure your readers are aware of the ways in which they can benefit from purchasing your products and solutions. The sidebar is a good place for this type of content.

### Formatting:

- Consider newsletter tools and programs, such as Constant Contact or Emma, that can both securely handle your contact list and provide valuable tracking information.
- Include a physical address in the footer of your email and a way for subscribers to opt out (mandatory under U.S. and Canada spam legislation).
- Test your newsletter format on different types of email platforms for potential formatting issues.
- Offer a way for subscribers to give you feedback (via an email alias).
- Integrate video to help break up content.

**Operation:**

- Include a way for customers and prospects to sign up for your newsletter from your home page. Use banner ads to promote opt-ins on secondary pages.
- When you follow up after an event, call prospecting, or a walk-by with an email, be sure to include a call to action to sign up for your newsletter. Be creative about opportunities to grow your subscriber-base.
- Be clear on the subscriber benefits of your newsletter.
- Encourage your employees to contribute articles based on their area of expertise. Vary your content sources.
- Your newsletter is a reflection of your company—its quality, service, and people. Have several people proofread your newsletter and related content, to avoid publishing false information or typos.

**How to Execute****Preparation:**

- Understand and define your target audience and their key business and/or technical interests.
- Determine the frequency of your newsletter (monthly or quarterly). Plan your editorial calendar three to six months in advance, even if you only have a rough content plan.
- Prepare your distribution list.
- Create and gather content for articles.
- Insert content into the newsletter template.
- Read, review, and edit articles.

**During Execution:**

- Send a test newsletter to several types of email accounts (such as Hotmail, Yahoo mail, Gmail, and Outlook).

**After Execution:**

- Have technicians, sales reps, and other staff mention and reinforce newsletter topics with customers.
- Continually seek new ways to obtain new subscribers.
- Analyze metrics to determine newsletter performance.
- Take note of features that drew particular interest and continue to modify subject lines and content in future issues, for maximum impact.
- Collect feedback from customers on the relevance of your newsletter and steps for improvement.

**Metrics Collection****Evaluate your newsletter in the following way:**

- Size of subscriber list and the number successfully sent to.
- Open rate: number opened/number sent to.
- Total number of articles or links clicked.
- Click rate: number clicked/number of opens.

**Planning Timeline****Startup:**

- Engage email newsletter service
- Determine target audience and frequency (monthly/quarterly)
- Build contact list. Start with existing clients and then add more from various marketing activities
- Build out 3- to 6-month editorial calendar (review every 3 months)

