

Promote Your Biz with an Email Newsletter

By Rachel Goldstein

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Newsletters are one of the most effective forms of marketing for your home business. An email newsletter can:

1. Build loyalty of clients and prospective clients
2. Keep your name in front of clients and prospective clients
3. Spread the word about your services
4. Make a name for yourself as an expert in your field
5. Add value to your company

There is a lot of competition out on the Internet for freelancers. One way to get a gig outside of bidding on jobs is to spread the word about your business thru word of mouth. Newsletters are the very best way to do this. If you have a useful newsletter, about 30% of newsletter subscribers will pass-along your newsletter to family and friends. In other words, good newsletters spread like wild fire. Additionally, a newsletter that is passed onto you by a loved one is more likely to be viewed by you as a trusted source of information.

Do you have a business web site? Well, if you do, this is a perfect place to market your newsletter. Before a visitor leaves your site, it is important to get them onto your list, otherwise you might never see them again. In order to get the most subscribers, place a link to your newsletter on every page of your site. Once you build up a list of names, you can initiate contact ... now you will have plenty of chances to promote your services to potential clients.

Try placing a blurb like this on all of your site's pages:

The Design Info Newsletter
Graphic design tips, tutorials, and reviews
Subscribe to our Newsletter here!

What do you write about in your newsletters?

You, as a freelancer, have an advantage above others ... you are an expert in your field. Write "how to" articles, tips, answer common questions and concerns, newsworthy events, and other

related topics. Research other newsletters related to your topic. Try to find a path less taken. For example, if there are already a hundred graphic design newsletters being published, why not make your newsletter's topic advertising design if this is your specialty? A good article for this type of newsletter would be "How to Design a Black and White Newspaper Ad." Maybe the following month's ad could be, "How to Prepress an Electronic File." You see what I mean? You don't really have to brainstorm very long to find an article that you can write about. When you are an expert in your field, there are multiple tasks that you perform daily ... just write about them.

When you are writing the content, remember to write as if you are talking to a friend. In other words, don't talk in hi-tech jargon. Not only will this confuse some readers, this also might bore them to death. Then who will be on your mailing list? Also, talk one-on-one with each reader ... use "you" not "they" or "we". Personalizing your articles will make for easier reading.

How often should I send out a newsletter?

This all depends on how often you can find the time to write an article. It is better to start out sending your newsletter once a month. Once you get more subscribers, you can increase the rate at which you send them out. Try to send out your newsletter at the same time each month or week. Subscribers will appreciate your professionalism, and since this newsletter is being developed so you can land a gig, this is important. Don't send a newsletter out more than once a week; subscribers tend to get annoyed when newsletters are sent too often.

How long should my newsletter be?

Keep your newsletter relatively short. If you want to include several articles, use a table of contents at the top of the newsletter. An example follows:

1. Design a Black and White Newspaper Ad
2. How to Prepress an Electronic File
3. Illustrator vs. Freehand
4. An Example of a Well Designed Magazine Ad
5. Contact Information

If any of your articles are really long, abbreviate the article and link to a web page where the rest of your newsletter resides. It is better to send a short newsletter every week than to send one long one every month. Subscribers are busy and tend to put off reading long newsletters till later. I know I do.

How do I send a newsletter out?

Probably your best bet is to sign up with a free mailing list service like topica, evite, listbot, or onelist. You should set up your list to be "announce only". This way your subscribers cannot receive responses from other subscribers.

How Should My Newsletter Be Broken Up?

1. The Subject Line - You have several options for this one. Keep it consistent for all of your following newsletters.

- a. The title of your newsletter and the date, for example: Advertising Design Newsletter - 08/10/01
- b. The title of your main article
- c. A catchy phrase to catch the attention of subscribers when they look thru their emails

2. Disclaimer: Remind subscribers that they signed up for this newsletter. Explain how to

unsubscribe from your newsletter here.

3. Table of Contents

4. Contents

5. Contact Information

- a. Your name
- b. Business Name
- c. Your Services
- d. Web Address
- e. Email Address

6. Copyright Information

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