

How To Write Your E-Zine

By Stuart Reid

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Everyone is recommended to create a mail list and provide some sort of newsletter or e-zine to build a rapport with your customers. This serves a number of purposes, the main one being that you can provide offers to readers or keep your name/product/brand in their mind.

Writing an e-zine needn't be difficult. There are many free services to host and supply your e-zine and many, many free articles to provide content. Don't rely on this free content however. Provide at least some of it yourself, to make it unique.

Keep your e-zine to a consistent pattern. Let the reader feel comfortable and develop your own style. This makes it recognisable and helps you develop readers, rather than just subscribers!

What can you include in your e-zine? Here are some suggestions:

Editorial or Introduction

A perfect place for you to write your own piece. Just write whatever interests you or a run down of the issue.

Articles

Available from many web sources. Don't just chose them at random, ensure they fit the theme of the issue.

Tips or advice

Again, either written by you or supplied by third parties. You could also answer readers questions with a Q&A type feature.

Reviews

Products, sites, programs or whatever you wish.

Freebies

Such as e-books, special deals on products, free services or even your own exclusive items.

Offers

Usually a good place for affiliate links or your own products.

Ads

Paid for, free ads, or your own. Some good services for advertising at <http://www.netpreneurnow.com/advertising.shtml>

If you keep a template file then all you need do for each issue is provide some or all of the above. Don't worry about blatant self-advertising as after all it is your own e-zine. Provide your URL and e-mail address everywhere!

The other aspects of e-zine production include promotion to gain subscribers and how you distribute it. Some quick tips for getting people to subscribe include adding a subscribe box to your web pages, advertising your e-zine in other e-zines or websites, offering free items or services to new subscribers or offering free ads in exchange for subscribing. Free ads can fill up an e-zine quickly, so take care. Free bonuses for subscribers needn't cost you anything and can even make you money such as branded e-books or affiliate offers. A subscribe box will have to be written in HTML using the `FORM` command and needs a little knowledge of cgi programming, but most services will provide the code for you.

Distributing your e-zine is either done through a third party service, specialist software, or free services. This e-zine is distributed through Topica which will maintain your list, archive past issues and provide HTML code for a subscriber box. Topica is at <http://www.topica.com> . You can also use Yahoo! Groups.

If you want to pay for distribution you can use software such as Mailloop (<http://www.netpreneurnow.com/mailloop.html>) or Opt-in Lightning (<http://www.optinlightning.com/?hop=essjayar> . lightning) or BambooBizOnline (<http://www.bambobisonline.com/?14352>). You can also use services such as Listserv at <http://www.lsoft.com> or Lyris at <http://www.dundee.net>

Writing an e-zine can be both profitable and exciting. It is true that there are now thousands in competition but you can still carve out your own little niche. Don't put it off - there's no time like the present!

Stuart Reid is the publisher of Netpreneur News and

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