

# Lost Time

By Bob Osgoodby

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Lately, there are a lot of articles about how you must publish your own Newsletter if you wish to succeed in your online business. Bunk! It just isn't the "panacea" it is purported to be.

Publishing a Newsletter is a lot of work. Over the years, a lot of publications have come and gone because of several factors. First and foremost is the lack any meaningful content. Many are simply glorified ads for their product or service. People may get them once, and ask to be removed from your distribution list. If you don't remove them, you face the problems associated with spamming from your ISP.

A Newsletter going out to a couple of hundred folks, just doesn't cut it. In order to be a viable process, it must go out to thousands. It takes a lot of time and effort, to build a subscriber base and can take years. You must identify your target market, and point your ezine toward them.

Some offer free ads in their publications to new subscribers. Sure they might sign up, but how many continue after their ad has run? If your newsletter consists of an article or two, and the rest is ads, don't count on an ongoing audience. One of the best ways to build subscribers is to swap ads with other publications. This is a "win-win" situation for both.

It also takes a lot of research to create meaningful content. While many articles are available for reprint, you must cull through them to find appropriate articles for yours. Just because someone submits an article to you, doesn't necessarily mean they are an authority in what they wrote about.

People like original content. If you publish weekly, it is difficult to come up with fresh content each week. Of course, a higher frequency of publishing makes it that much more difficult.

Maybe you are a pro in your field. If so, you are a viable candidate to become a publisher. But you also have to be literate, and gear your language to your potential subscribers. Spelling errors, punctuation errors and grammatical mistakes have no place in a publication. Sure, you might misuse a word once in awhile, and for example, say site when you meant sight, but you should make every effort to keep them to a minimum. The absolute best way to avoid these types of errors is to have someone else proof your publication, before it is released.

Some advocate the use of "Notepad" or "Wordpad", which in most cases is a mistake. If you are going to do any serious writing, and/or publishing, you must have a decent word processor such as "Microsoft Word" or "Wordperfect", which will not only point out spelling errors, but also grammatical blunders.

Others say you don't have to generate income from your publication. More Bunk! Unless it is a labor of love, in order to keep your interest at the level it must be, you have to have a reason for doing so. The newsletter must either drive people toward becoming a potential customer, or generate income through the sale of ad space - preferably both.

A common mistake is sending two emails per issue. One is purely content, and the other is an ad sheet. While ezine advertising is an extremely effective way for advertisers to get their message out, an ad sheet is not advisable. People may read the content portion, and never even open the ad sheet. Others have an ad section where all ads are displayed in one place, which also gets skipped over. Neither method is a good way to present ads, especially for the advertisers.

An effective way to present your advertisers offers is to intermix them with the content. But remember, if it is a bad ad, it won't be acted on regardless of which method is used, so you must be prepared to help with the content of the ads. If you accept a one time ad, it is a waste of your time and the advertisers dollars. It is a proven fact that it takes 5 to 7 exposures before an advertiser can expect results.

Is publishing a Newsletter or Ezine a good way to help you toward the road to success in your online business? It sure is! But unless you can give it the time and effort required, you should consider other ways to make your business grow. Why not search out established publications that are geared to your target market, and place ads with them. Sure, it might cost a few bucks, but isn't your time worth something? Most people can scrape together the price of an ad, but you can never replace lost time.

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