



SCORE column: Community, loyalty, are benefits of newsletters

Be relevant. That's the advice that Aaron Baer, owner of Baer Performance Marketing in Green Bay, has for businesses that are considering newsletters.

"A newsletter is like any other creative [vehicle](#)," Baer said. "Don't just put out information; recognize who your audience is and make it important to them."

As a full-service marketing [company](#), Baer works with clients ranging from small start-ups to national firms. His clients look at newsletters as part of a comprehensive marketing program and use them for two main audiences — clients or employees.

An employee newsletter should build a sense of community and have a positive impact on morale. It can include information about the company's successes, upcoming events, featured employees, community events, training, new initiatives, or fun facts. The content should have a purpose. "You need to ask what you're trying to accomplish. An internal newsletter doesn't have to be promotionally oriented like a customer newsletter where the ultimate goal is driving the sale, but it should be interesting and written by a person with a background in writing and knowledge of the company," he said.

In contrast, a customer newsletter should contain product information, promotions, contests, information on [services](#), tips, and other relevant news. A customer should feel a benefit. Content should be fun and unique with a hook to get people to tune in again. That might include something like a joke or ongoing feature of the month.

Both types of newsletters should be consistent in design and reflect positively on the [business](#). They should be short and to the point, and sent out at least once a month, but not much more. Baer said that he's seen marketing programs that include different graphics, logos and taglines across the various forms of media. This causes confusion and hurts a company in establishing its brand.

"Everything should cross promote. The Facebook [page](#), texting, print and radio ads, LinkedIn, email, and newsletters should all have the same look and feel," Baer said. "It all builds top-of-mind awareness so that people know you before they need you."

In addition to creating awareness, a good customer newsletter should drive the sale. Offering coupons or discounts can achieve this goal and help establish a mailing list. Contact information should be requested before to giving out the discount so that the name can be added to the list. Data obtained through other marketing such as trade shows or in-store sign-up should also be added. This will help a business grow a loyal customer base.

Baer believes that newsletters are an important part of a total marketing program and recommends consistency. There should be links to the company's website and social media communities, and print advertising and other materials should provide an invitation to connect.

"It's all about brand, brand, brand — all of the time consistently," he said.

Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt is co-owner of DB Commercial Real Estate in Green Bay and assistant district director for SCORE, Wisconsin.