

and prospect's

Newsletters keep you on your customer's mind

Q. True or False. *A business newsletter is an outdated communication form, no longer applicable in today's electronic age.*

(See answer at end of article.)

By definition, a newsletter is "a report which gives news or information of interest to a specific group."

A newsletter may be published by a business, an organization, or an individual (e.g., Aunt Mary's annual *Christmas Family News* ... in fact, you may want to forward these tips to Aunt Mary.)

The audience understands that newsletters have a subjective slant and sales motivation, but they also expect that the newsletter will live up to its name and provide articles written specifically for them, which

will be of interest or use.

Because of this, most recipients will at least skim through headlines, lead paragraphs, and bullet points, and, if they find something of benefit, will read further, or even keep the piece (*with your name and contact info*) for future reference.



SMARTIP: *If your newsletter is electronic, be sure it can be printed well from an inkjet or laser printer. There's something to be said for a piece of paper which can be carried with you—to be read on the airplane, skimmed during a tedious teleconference, or just pulled from a pocket for contact information!*

... oh yeah, the answer:

A. *Microsoft publishes a weekly newsletter. You decide.*

Your website *is* your image

In the United States, nearly 75% of all homes and virtually all businesses in the U.S. having internet access, the world-wide web has become the primary information resource for businesses and consumers.

In the past, a company's website was one form of marketing, now it is often the first—or only—image your prospect sees. The image from which he or she makes the decision to contact you ... or to click on to a competitive site.

To increase from your web investment:

- Define your product or service on the home page. Don't make the reader puzzle over who you are or what you do.
- Make your navigation easy and self-explanatory.
- Keep your site up to date. Outdated information and broken links imply that you don't focus on the details.
- If using a flash intro, always include a "Skip" option, allowing the time-conscious to move on to the meat of the site.
- Include contact information or link on every page, so you are easily accessible.
- Follow the "Top Tips" (*at right*) to polish your site.



SMARTIP: *Keep visitors coming back to your website by including your newsletter or other regularly updated news and tips.*

Top Tips

Whether writing a newsletter article or formatting content for your website, follow these tips to ensure your reader *gets* the information you wish to impart.

- **Know your audience**
Put yourself at their desks. What do they want to know, what peaks their interest? Why should they read your publication?
- **Set an objective**
What do you want the reader to remember most ?
- **Write right**
Errors in spelling and grammar will diminish the authority of your entire publication.
- **Keep it short and smart**
Stick to the topic, focus on facts, and show your expertise. Give just enough information to get your readers thinking—so they call you for more!
- **Use bullets and lists**
Increase visual appeal and stress key points with •, -, or even ♪.
- **Include contact information**
Always be sure your name, phone number and email are easy to access. After all, that's your real objective!



A published writer/editor, I specialize in business communications for trade publications and corporations.

I can assist you with professional and technical articles, newsletters, web content, case studies, proposals and public relations.

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