

# Newsletters That Work

By Dan Moser, Manager News & Publications

June 26, 2003

## Reasons

- ! To educate
- ! To entertain
- ! To announce events
- ! To communicate
- ! To sell something, such as a product or idea
  
- ! NOT “because everyone else is doing one”

## Think Like a Reader

- ! To get readers to pay attention
  - " Tell them what THEY want to know
  - " Not what WE want to tell them
- ! Answer the reader’s question:
  - " What’s In It For Me?

## Laying the Foundation

- ! Who’s your audience?
- ! What’s your newsletter’s purpose?
  - " Inform, educate, inspire
- ! What is your objective?
  - " What am I trying to accomplish?
  - " What will readers do differently?

## Other Considerations

- ! Your budget
- ! How the work gets done
- ! Publication frequency
- ! Set up a process that everyone knows
- ! Decide on simple style guidelines
  - " write them down so all have access

## Let Your Editor Edit

- ! Many may contribute — but one person authorized to make final decisions
- ! Don’t edit by committee

## Content is King

- ! Let content, not design, drive your newsletter

## Sailing the Seven C’s

- ! Correct
- ! Consistent
- ! Clarity
- ! Coherent
- ! Complete
- ! Creative
- ! Concise

## Correct

- ! Get the facts right
  - " Double check them
- ! Watch the spelling and grammar
- ! Proofread, proofread, ...

## Consistent

- ! Write down your content and design rules
  - " and then follow them!
- ! Conveys authority and professionalism

## Clarity

- ! Don’t assume everyone knows as much about a subject as you do
- ! Use active voice in writing

## Concise

- ! Use short, simple words
  - " Tell, not inform
  - " Use, not utilize
- ! Vary length of sentences and paragraphs
- ! Writing concisely takes longer
- ! Saves our readers’ time

## Coherent

- ! Make sure your copy flows in a sensible way
- ! Use good transitions

## Complete

- ! Include the 5 W’s
  - " Who
  - " What
  - " Where
  - " When
  - " Why



## **What's Good Design?**

- ! Serves audience and message
- ! Not "playtime" with your desktop publishing program
- ! Doesn't call attention to itself
  - " Less is more

## **Type-casting**

- ! Fonts should be consistent and readable
- ! Don't use too many varieties
- ! Generally, no more than two fonts on a page
- ! Don't make your type too small
  - " Especially for older audiences
- ! Keep it simple
  - " One point size for headlines
  - " One for subheads
  - " One for body copy
- ! Serif type for body copy
  - " Serif: Times, Times New Roman
- ! Sans serif type for headlines
  - " Sans serif: Arial, Helvetica
- ! Don't underline headlines or subheads
- ! Use bold and italic in moderation
- ! Don't use ALL-CAPITAL TYPE

## **Columns**

- ! Two or three columns of copy per page
- ! One is too few, four usually too many

## **Reproduction Methods**

- ! Reproduction technology affects readability
  - " Copy machine
  - " Quick press
  - " High quality press
- ! Type of paper

## **Artwork**

- ! Bad art is worse than no art
- ! Limit "clip art" use
- ! Make sure your artwork looks contemporary

## **Odds and Ends**

- ! Limit use of boxes, borders and rules
- ! Screens over copy can be OK
  - " Make sure they're not too dark for the copy
- ! Colored paper
  - " Dark colors hard to read

## **Other thoughts**

- ! E-mail/Web newsletters
  - " Make sure your audience can access
- ! Make sure it's clear who is publishing your newsletter
  - " Contact information
  - " Correct logos

## **About those logos**

- ! Three logos authorized for our use
  - " University of Nebraska-Lincoln wordmark
  - " block N/IANR graphic icon
  - " national 4-H clover

## **Wordmark guidelines**

- ! OK on the back page
- ! Not next to anti-discrimination statement
- ! Don't package all the logos together
- ! If space limited, block N/IANR is optional

## **Copyrighted Material**

- ! Doesn't have to display copyright symbol
- ! Assume material from another source is copyrighted
  - " Including another state's extension division

## **Copyright**

- ! "Fair use" for educational purposes doesn't necessarily protect us
- ! Must ask copyright holder for permission to use materials
- ! UNL Copyright Clearance Office: 402-472-4663

## **Copyright Websites**

- ! Copyright Clearance Center
  - " [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)
- ! U.S. Copyright Office General Information and Publications
  - " [lcweb.loc.gov/copyright](http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright)
- ! ADEC links
  - " [www.adec.edu/user/copyright.html](http://www.adec.edu/user/copyright.html)

## **Questions?**

Email Dan at [dmoser3@unl.edu](mailto:dmoser3@unl.edu)

## **More information available on the EXCITE website:**

[www.ianr.unl.edu/excite](http://www.ianr.unl.edu/excite)