

ChrisMarlow.com

(Published in SoftwareCEO online newsletter in 2003)

Electronic Newsletters: A Powerful Marketing Tool

In the last issue of Software CEO, award-winning copywriter Chris Marlow [www.chrismarlow.com] revealed the ways online newsletters can be used as a surprisingly powerful marketing tool. We saw how a content-rich e-newsletter sent on a regular basis can help you:

- Retain and resell valuable customers
- Turn warm leads into hot prospects
- Support online marketing initiatives
- Obtain the benefits of viral marketing
- Quickly build an opt-in database
- Generate revenue

If you are interested in pushing a regular e-newsletter to your customers and prospects, there are some copy and design rules to know about. Here is a short list of some of the most important elements of a successful e-newsletter:

Sell with the subject line. The first thing your recipients see is the subject line. If it doesn't intrigue them, they may not open your e-newsletter. Make it hot. It's also important to personalize your e-newsletter. Adding personalization to the subject line can be powerful, as in "Lori, this newsletter contains your VIP invitation".

Use a good table of contents. Let people know what's in your newsletter instead of making them scroll down for the content. And be sure to make the table of contents the first thing they see. Many online newsletters make the mistake of showing the masthead first (or worse, a banner ad).

Offer excellent original content. The reason online newsletters have become so pervasive is that people crave information they can use. You build value (and brand) among your audience by providing excellent content. Relevant content is the hallmark of the successful online newsletter.

Employ "contextual selling". Want to find out if your recipient is ready to move into your sales stream? Write an intriguing article about your product or service and include a link to a Web-based "landing page" or microsite that offers more information. On that Web page or site you can collect their information and schedule them for follow-up. One study showed that contextual selling generated results that were up to 68 percent stronger than links outside the context of useful information.

Produce versions in HTML and text. From a logistics standpoint, it's important to offer both HTML and text-only because not all servers will accept HTML. When a server

rejects an HTML version, sniffer technology corrects the “bounce back” by immediately sending a text-only version.

Employ viral tactics. You can quickly build a high-quality opt-in database by using viral tactics. By asking current subscribers to “refer a friend,” you can add dramatically to your list of marketable names and e-mail addresses and build an online database quickly.

Provide easy unsubscribe instructions. Always give subscribers the opportunity to “opt out” of further mailings. And always include your contact information. Other things to remember are to send your e-newsletter on a regular basis, so it can do its job of building brand and relationships. Mail on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for B2B online newsletters. And keep articles short. More than anything, focus on content. Fresh, original content that the reader finds useful is the key to retaining and building readership — and to reaping the subsequent benefits of relationship-building and sales.

* * * * *

Award-winning copywriter Chris Marlow has written for the nation’s leading businesses for more than two decades. For information on powerful copywriting, visit:
<http://www.chrismarlow.com>

Chris also offers business and copywriting coaching to new, aspiring, and seasoned copywriters who want to accelerate their success. Check out the benefits of coaching at:
<http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

Chris has also created the world’s only large-scale survey of copywriter pricing and economics. Find out what others charge and earn at:
<http://www.FreelancersBusinessStore.com>

And for free information on how to quickly build a profitable freelance business, sign up for Chris’ **Freelancer’s Business Bulletin** at:
<http://www.FreelancersBusinessBulletin.com>

PO Box 1134, Palm Desert, CA, 92261
P: 760-340-2045/F: 760-406-6200
Email: chris@chrismarlow.com

© Chris Marlow, all rights reserved