

STEPS to Creating an Effective NEWSLETTER



1. Keep It Brief



Guess how long the average person spends reading a newsletter? **51 seconds!**

Don't let that get you down though!

Attention spans are spread thin. The basics of any newsletter design and publishing apply to church newsletters. But as with any specialized newsletter, the design, layout, and content should be tailored to your specific audience.

Graphic design is a powerful ally in your quest for an effective church bulletin. An attractive bulletin will draw readers, but a graphically

poor church bulletin will be a waste of paper. Once you have chosen your size and style, think about the following things:

How does your church worship bulletin look graphically? Is it wall-to-wall typewriter type, or is the print easy to read?

The fewer typefaces (or fonts) you use, the better, so when you begin to add text, choose two or three at most that complement each other. It's best to mix serif type, (those with small lines on the end of letters, like Times Roman), with sans serif type (those with no small lines, such as Helvetica or Arial). Always use the serif type

for body copy, as it is easier to read when there are many words. Save the more elaborate artsy typefaces for short headlines or subheads – and remember, use three at most.

Too much type in any font makes the page look too gray, and people won't want to read very far. Find different ways to break up the text. However, with the millions of clip art images that are available, it's tempting to throw together several images that don't match or to use too many images. Use moderation and choose graphics that create visual harmony and not chaos.

2. Be Informative

Is your church bulletin full of 20 little sheets of paper that fall out everywhere, or do you use moderation in the content? **Put only the most important information in your church bulletin.**

If there's too much, you'll overwhelm today's too-busy-to-read person. Worse, they'll end up reading it during the sermon! Keep it brief, and refer readers to your website for more information.

These considerations make for valuable newsletters:

- ▶ What is the goal of your newsletter?
- ▶ Set deadline for articles to be submitted.
- ▶ Less is more, Keep it simple and brief.
- ▶ Use only good quality photos (300 dpi).
- ▶ Meaningful content, remember you don't need to just fill space.

LAYOUT & DESIGN TIPS

BALANCE - Balance in design is similar to balance in physics. A large shape close to the center can be balanced by a small shape close to the edge. Balance provides stability and structure to a design. It's the weight distributed in the design by the placement of your elements.

PROXIMITY - Proximity creates relationship between elements. It provides a focal point. Proximity doesn't mean that elements have to be placed together, it means they should be visually connected in some way.

ALIGNMENT - Allows us to create order and organization. Aligning elements allows them to create a visual connection with each other.

REPETITION - Repetition strengthens a design by tying together individual elements. It helps to create association and consistency. Repetition can create rhythm (a feeling of organized movement).

CONTRAST - Contrast is the juxtaposition of opposing elements (opposite colors on the color wheel, or value light / dark, or direction - horizontal / vertical). Contrast allows us to emphasize or highlight key elements in your design.

SPACE - Space in art refers to the distance or area between, around, above, below, or within elements. Both positive and negative space are important factors to be considered in every design.

3. Have a Compelling Opening Line & Add a Powerful Image

The accompanying image could be part of an out-reach to raise awareness. Use photos that are taken by a skilled photographer. This could be a member of your congregation.

When crafting up your newsletter subject line, avoid using generic lines like: June Newsletter, Your Monthly Newsletter, This Week's Newsletter, The Insider, etc. and make sure to take advantage of your pre-header, It's like a secondary subject line (and possibly a second chance!).



4. The Balanced Approach

Some established churches include the entire outline of the service in their church bulletins every Sunday. But if you take a carbon-copy approach, you'll bore the reader, and your church bulletin won't get read. This is where the newsy approach will really pay off. Include information that is important for your congregation to get through the week ahead.

You Should Include:

- ▶ Church news.
- ▶ Small group meeting information.
- ▶ Approaching church events and outside events like concerts or trips to local amusement parks.
- ▶ Recap past week's important events, and use names.

People love to see their name in print. Excerpts from books or periodicals that relate to real life issues, such as parenting, relationships, finance and other topics that will provide spiritual growth

Add pictures, if possible. If you have the scanning technology to reproduce a high-quality photo, use it! You'll have more success in this area if you start with a photo that has good contrast and brightness. As much as people like to see their names, they like to see their pictures even more.



5. Extra Tips for an Effective Newsletter:

■ Make Your Brand Shine

Make your image shine by presenting it in a consistent manner. **It would be to your advantage if you present your brand image in your email marketing materials and also on other advertising channels you use.** If you have not included your logo now is the best time to do so.

■ Buff Your Design

To be able to have an effective newsletter keep in mind that it should look professional and at the same time attractive. The following aspects will help you come up with an effective newsletter: The colors of your newsletter should adhere to your logo colors. Make sure that there is still some white space in your newsletter. In our opinion, a newsletter that does not have any space at all looks crowded and unappealing to the eye.

■ Get Inputs From Readers

Coming up with an interesting and valuable content for your newsletter is really good. However, is this what your readers want? **To make an effective newsletter**

you have to involve your readers by asking them what they expect to read from your newsletter.

Therefore, here are a few things that you can use to know what people want to read from you. Conduct surveys from your readers and ask them what they would like to read on the next issue of your newsletter. It would also be helpful if you will include a list of topics that they can choose from. Encourage readers to ask questions about the services that you offer. Then answer the submitted questions in your newsletter's next issue. You can also encourage your readers to contribute their own articles to your newsletter.

■ Frequency and Consistency

Some of your readers might find getting a newsletter every month as something that is frequent. Now, for others they might find a newsletter distributed only once a month as too infrequent and might assume that your newsletter lacks a recognizable punch.

To make an effective newsletter you need to stick to a schedule that is consistent. It does not matter if it is once a week or twice a month; just make sure that you adhere to your schedule.



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