# 10.0 Marketing and Communications

## Newsletters

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## Introduction

### Do you need a newsletter?

There are several questions that you need to consider before deciding to produce a newsletter. The answer to these questions should determine and justify the frequency and purpose of your newsletter. For example, your goal might be to enlarge your membership, to promote and market your community transport scheme or to inform organisations on disability issues etc.



Image: Family engaging with the news through different mediums

- What is the purpose and goal? What information do you need to convey to or about your organisation?
- How will this activity feed back into your SMART objectives?
- What would you like your audience to do as a result of reading the newsletter? What is the call-to-action?
- How will you measure the success of your newsletter?
- How regularly will you send it?
- Will you prepare and distribute the newsletter electronically?

- Do you have an audience large enough to justify the printing costs?
- Is there enough interesting information to convey to the reader?
- How will this blend with the organisation's other communications?

## Who is your audience?

There are two main areas of information that make a good newsletter.

### Common interest

Newsletters work best when working to a single, simple purpose based on a shared common interest between reader and newsletter.

### Current news and topical infromation

The best newsletters convey a touch of urgency. Their content relates to the last few or next few weeks. How current your information can be will often dictate how often you need to produce your newsletters.

## How will you format your newsletter

Nominate an editor who will be responsible for style and content, submission deadlines, themes etc.

It is worth thinking about what typeface and size you use. Each newsletter should be recognisable by its layout, typography and use of graphics. Attention should be given to your headings and subheadings and to the spacing between lines and margins – these are the kind of things that make typed information easier or harder to read.

Images should be used to bring your newsletter to life. People may identify more with what you are saying if you can illustrate it with an image. If sending via email, you can even insert links to videos, or embed videos within the text. These assets will help to break up your paragraphs and make your message easier to digest.

When sending via email, use hyperlinks to direct your audience to a specific webpage to find out more, to fill out a form, to donate money, etc. This is an opportunity to help your audience complete the desired call-to-action.

## How will you send your newsletter?

Once you have decided what you need to communicate, you need to decide how you will convey this information – via email or print?

You may also consider local radio or a column in an existing newspaper or newsletter.

If you decide to email your newsletter, do you have the appropriate software to effectively manage the sending process and to evaluate the results? For example, Mailchimp or Charity Digital Mail. Does your team have the necessary skills to use this software?

If you choose print to communicate with your readers, will this be produced in-house or contracted to external printers? This will largely depend on your available budget.

If you print in-house, costs may include time to collate, write and produce, any training needed, Desk Top Publishing (DTP) software, paper, and printing. Other costs may include folding, inserting, labelling and postage. Your costs will also be affected by how frequently you produce your newsletter.

## How will you evaluate the success of your newsletter?

If sending electronically, use your e-newsletter software to measure:

- How many of the newsletters reached their destination (audience inbox) versus those that bounced back? Use these results to clean your database by updating it
- How many of the newsletters were opened by the recipient? Some software will provide information about how long the recipient spent reading it (how long it was kept open)
- How quickly was the email deleted?
- How many recipients clicked on links or watched the videos?

If printing your newsletter, you can also measure:

- How many recipients clicked on links or watched the videos? (analyse your website analytics to see where visitors were referred from)

In both instances, remember your **SMART objectives** and ensure that you measure:

- How many recipients performed the desired call-to-action? For e.g. If your call-to-action were to grow your social media following, measure the increase immediately after sending the newsletter, and for a week or so after it

## Writing Style

Newsletters generally have a short shelf life and are dipped into for short periods of time. The newsletter is probably competing with a noisy office or home life and continual distraction; so long wordy articles packed with jargon are not the quickest way to convey messages.

Newsletter writing should be informal, informative, and simple. It should reflect the best and most natural spoken language.

- Keep it short and simple
- Be specific
- Use lists and bullet points
- Use familiar language
- Look out for unnecessary words

### What is news?

News can be events, developments, decisions that affect the reader, outcomes of meetings, new policy decisions, changes in government strategy, funding successes or the progress of campaigns.

Use headlines that engage readers and encourage them to read on. Try to get quotes from people involved in the story, to help make the article more alive and current.

If you are writing a news article remember the first paragraph needs to contain the 5 W's: Who, What, Why, When and Where.

## What else can go in a newsletter?

Regular columns, comment pieces, interviews, question and answer and diaries are some of the possibilities.

### Remember

Images are a very important part of attracting the reader's attention, creating better visual format, and selling the story. Use captions to accompany the photo so people know what they are looking at.

Regular columns, comment pieces, interviews, question and answer and diaries are some of the possibilities.

If sending an electronic communication, embed videos or insert links to videos that demonstrate your message.

Most importantly, remember your **SMART objectives** – what do you want the reader to do? Think about your call-to-action. Provide hyperlinks to direct your reader to find out more (education / raising awareness) or to fill in a form or donate money (encourage your audience to take action).

## Remember to make it engaging:

### Keep it relevant

Use it to tell people about things they'll be interested in.

### Attract attention with the subject line

Attract attention with the subject line
Many people will choose whether to read an email by looking at the subject line in their inbox. Make sure the subject line is relevant to the message.

### Get straight to the point

Don't waste people's time with long stories - use succinct language, get them interested and encourage them to click on a link to your website to find out more.

### Use simple language

Write simply and clearly so readers immediately understand what you're offering and the benefit to them.

### Get the frequency right

Only send newsletters when you've got something relevant and interesting to say.

## Welsh Language Standards

The **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** makes Welsh an official language in Wales. This means it must be treated no less favourably than English.

While not all activity has to be translated in its exact context, an equal balance should be aimed for in terms of both English and Welsh speaking audiences being exposed to activity.

**Cefnogi Trydydd Sector Cymru** Third Sector Support Wales

# Further Information

**Charity Commission for England and Wales**
**Tel: 0845 3000 218**
www.charitycommission.gov.uk

**Information for Voluntary and Community Organisations**
**VolResource**
www.volresource.org.uk

**The DIY Guide to Charity Newsletters**
**Directory of Social Change**
**Tel: 08450 777 707**
www.dsc.org.uk

**Creating Effective Charity E-Newsletters**
**NCVO KnowHow**
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications/e-newsletters

**Cefnogi Trydydd Sector Cymru** Third Sector Support Wales

Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact
**https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/**

## Disclaimer

The information comvided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.