

Nine Reasons Why Print Newsletters Trump e-Newsletters

New clients often ask whether they should produce a print newsletter or an e-newsletter. If the goal is to retain customers, gain new ones or communicate most effectively to your audience, the answer is easy: Print newsletters are the best choice, hands-down.

But email is “free”

Remember the old saying, “You get what you pay for?” While e-newsletters can certainly be useful, people have become so inundated with “e-everything,” that the online medium has become saturated. Printing and mailing may be more costly up-front, but a properly produced, printed newsletter is much more likely to be read by people who are overwhelmed by online media. And that translates directly into much better results.

Here are nine reasons why print newsletters are far superior to e-newsletters when it comes to maximizing this powerful communications tool.

1. Deliverability. Print newsletters actually get delivered. According to the Email Marketing Metrics Report¹ by MailerMailer, **only 12.5 percent of unique marketing e-mails were even opened** in the second half of 2008. Even if you double that rate, can you live with only 25 percent of your newsletters ever making it to your intended reader?

2. Less competition. Print newsletters do not have to compete with as much clutter or “noise.” That’s one of the reasons why users spend only 51 seconds reading the average e-newsletter.² Consider how much physical mail you get each day compared to the number of emails you receive each day. Which leads to the next point...

3. Desire to delete. Think about your own mindset when you open up your e-mailbox in the morning. Your goal is to get rid of as much as you can as quickly as you can; the natural inclination is to hit the delete button—even for e-newsletters you have signed up for. How much time are you going to spend reading a newsletter if you delete it without even opening it?

4. People prefer print. The majority of consumers (73 percent) prefer mail for receiving new product announcements or offers from companies they do business with, as compared to 18 percent for e-mail. Mail is also preferred by 7 percent of respondents for receiving unsolicited information on products and services from companies with which they are not currently doing business.³

5. Immediate attention. Mail is invited into a home/business better than any other marketing medium. 98% of consumers bring in their mail on the day it's delivered and 77% of consumers sort through their mail immediately.

6. Readability. Print newsletters offer easy reading and portability—you can read a print newsletter anywhere. People do not like to read large amounts of text by scrolling on a computer screen. Here is what Paul Swift, Editor and Publisher of The Newsletter on Newsletters has to say, “Studies show online readers retain much less of what they read compared to those reading printed matter...People can keep print newsletters for further or future reads during a commute or some other “down time,” whereas online newsletters are usually skimmed and then deleted.”⁵

7. Higher perceived value. Printed material has a higher perceived value than online material. Think about the last time you received a card—what had a higher impact, a physical card or an e-card? People simply prefer the enduring tactile aspect of paper.

8. Email addresses change more often than physical address. This is a big problem, as you generally don’t know when a client’s email address changes. With printed newsletters, it is simple to ensure your addresses are up-to-date (NCOA processing and adding “Address Service Requested” to your mail panel once or twice a year).

9. Pass-along rate. A printed newsletter has a much higher pass-along rate than an e-newsletter. Even if someone forwards it to others, all the above issues come into play.

The bottom line. While print newsletters are generally far superior to e-newsletters, email can be used to supplement the print newsletter—it is particularly great for delivering time-sensitive information. But don’t be fooled by the ease and lowcost of e-newsletters. If you really want to communicate most effectively with the highest number of people in your audience, print newsletters are the way to go.

¹ Email Marketing Metrics Report. MailerMailer, June 2009

² Email Newsletter Usability: 149 Design Guidelines for Newsletter Subscription, Content, and Account Maintenance Based on Usability Studies, Nielsen Norman Group

³ Survey by International Communications Research (ICR) and Pitney-Bowes, 2007

⁴ 2004 USPS Mail Moment Study.

⁵ Paul Swift, Editor and Publisher, The Newsletter on Newsletters