

E-Newsletters: A Valuable Tool to Generate New Business

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Q. Some of our partners think an e-newsletter would be a great idea, while others think no one will read it. Which view is correct?

A. As with other marketing efforts, it doesn't really matter so much what we think as what the market thinks. Some people tend to believe that everyone else thinks the way they do. Just because a partner may not personally read newsletters doesn't mean everyone else is that way. Some newsletter readers will read it in detail, others will scan it, while some will just see who it from and not have the time to read it. All are marketing opportunities in varying degrees.

Q. How can an e-newsletter be beneficial to my firm's marketing efforts?

A. Newsletters can be very beneficial to a firm's success if done correctly. However, due to their visual and textual impact, newsletters can hurt your firm's image if poorly designed and produced (as with a website). Here are some potential benefits:

- *Build name and practice area awareness*
- *Demonstrate expertise*
- *Encourage repeat business*
- *Expand client base*
- *Establish a referral network*
- *Save time and money (vs. some marketing tools)*
- *Build trust*
- *Help position your firm in targeted markets*
- *Introduce new services*
- *Increase website traffic*

Q. What must be done for a newsletter to be successful?

A. There are at least five keys to success for newsletters:

- 1) *Design it around your goals.* It is important to identify your goals so that the newsletter can achieve them.
- 2) *Make it look professional, not home-spun.* Follow "Brown's Rule of Image Building": Always maintain the same high quality in your image materials as is in your firm's rendering of services.
- 3) *Make it informative, not salesy.* Write what your readers want to read, not what you want them to know. They won't read anything else.
- 4) *Build and use a worthwhile database.*
- 5) *Commit to doing it regularly.* Your newsletter should be distributed at least four times a year. Don't make the all-too-often mistake of sending the one-time "quarterly" newsletter.

Outsourcing most of the newsletter details is generally a better way of insuring that it goes out regularly.

Q. How does a newsletter fit into a firm's overall marketing strategy?

A. A newsletter should be part of the marketing plan, not all of it. For client relations, it should complement programs such as an overall client communications program, client surveys, etc. For new business generation, it should complement targeted marketing programs, involvement in organizations, advertising, etc.

Q. We're trying to do the newsletter ourselves but have made very little progress and almost a year has gone by. How can we get help to get it done the right way?

A. Your situation is not unusual. In the interest of thinking they will "save money," some firms will decide they will try to handle the process themselves. When looking outside for help from web designers or ad agencies, all too often the "designer" needs too much direction and the work product is still unsatisfactory. In the meantime, the firm finds out that deciding what to write, writing the text, and finishing the project is all just too difficult. It can take 6 months to get the text for just one issue written.

Obviously there must be a better way. **Kevin Brown Marketing & Consulting** has prepared newsletters for clients since 1991. Our goal is to make the process easy for you. We can help you to decide what to write and research the content, or we can see if the articles can be purchased. We then edit your articles. Once the text is completed, the rest is taken care of for you! We can handle all aspects of design, distribution and internet marketing. For printed versions, we can also arrange for printing, labeling, postage and distribution. Our experience has shown that for many firms this level of service is crucial if you are to publish the newsletter on a frequent basis, while limiting your time involvement.

About the Author

Kevin W. Brown, M.B.A. is president of **Kevin Brown Marketing & Consulting**. Founded in 1991, the firm is known as "*The Specialists in Professional Services Marketing™*". He is recognized nationally expert in the field a frequent speaker, and has published over 100 articles. Contact Mr. Brown with your questions at ph. 714-965-1556 or e-mail: kb@KevinBrownMarketing.com.