

Marketing to the Mature Marketplace

Your Pathways to Success in Unlocking the 50+ Market

Customer Newsletters

Original Publication Date: 06/05



The Industry
Expert on the
50+ Mature
Marketplace

"There's the difficult to follow, then there's the impossible. Don's presentation was amazing..."

Jake Haycock
President, Widex
Canada

One of the least appreciated and perhaps least understood, of all the marketing tools available to a business owner is the lowly Customer Newsletter.

Not retail enough for some, not important enough for others, the Newsletter often occupies one of the lowest positions on the Marketing Food Chain.

But it shouldn't be so.

I've always thought of a Customer Newsletter as something of a "hometown" newspaper, from you to your customers. Designed not to "sell" but to inform, Newsletters keep your customers up to date with news that can impact their lives and above all else, let them know you're thinking of them.

One common mistake I see when asked to review Customer Newsletters is in the attempt to turn them into profit centers, something they simply aren't designed for.

Leave the more retail or sales-oriented marketing efforts to newspaper ads and direct mail. It's OK, however, to include coupons or information about upcoming Special Promotions in your Newsletters.

With that as introduction, here's all the information you'll need to create, print and mail your own Customer Newsletter:

Writing and Designing Your Newsletter

A typical Customer Newsletter is four pages, 8 1/2 x 11" per page.

Here's what each of those four pages should contain:

Page One

Page One of your Newsletter features a "letter" from you as the business owner, a Main Story, and an "In This Issue" box, which shows the reader what other stories are found inside. The main story is usually an announcement of an upcoming special event or an update on new technology.

Note that the masthead includes lifestyle photos. There's a similar masthead design on

Continued

Marketing to the Mature Marketplace

6139 Blue Dawn Trail, San Diego, California 92130

Tel (858) 792-6553 Fax (858) 792-6553

Email: marketingservices@sbcglobal.net / www.MatureMarketplace.com

Marketing to the Mature Marketplace

Your Pathways to Success in Unlocking the 50+ Market

Customer Newsletters

Continued

each of the other pages as well. The added visual of people enjoying better lives through your products and services can be significant in adding a “soft testimonial” to their value.

Page Two

CoPage two begins with a Staff Highlights story. The main article on Page Two can be a consumer education story, or the continuation of the article on Page One. A side-bar, listing where customers can obtain additional information, often completes Page Two.

Page Three

In many respects, Page Three is the most important page of your newsletter. As shown by the sample, it is the Reader’s Page. Good Newsletters are two-way communications. Page three is where you encourage your customers to send in stories - not the typical testimonials used in brochures and advertisements - but anything ranging from time-honored family recipes to a first-person narrative of a dream vacation just spent with the family.

At the bottom of Page Three, use a “Round-Robin”, where you create new customer referrals by encouraging readers to submit contact information for someone they know who may have a need for your products and services.

You can encourage or reward these submissions by having some type of Grand Prize drawing, with the winner(s) to be announced in the next issue.

A word about the Grand Prize: Be sure it conforms to any regulations and DON’T have it tied to your usual products and services. The goodwill generated from a Gift Certificate to a popular restaurant or Mail Order catalogue is likely to earn more goodwill than giving away a few items they’d normally receive by buying them from you in the first place.

The bottom of Page Three backs up to the bottom of Page Four, which is the mailing panel. So if you get a submission with illegible handwriting, you’ll have the mailing label behind it, to refer to.

Page Four

Page Four, the last of the four pages of the Newsletter, is where you can choose to include a calendar, a brief announcement of upcoming events, or even an “In the Next Issue” list of what will be in the next newsletter.

Continued

Marketing to the Mature Marketplace

Your Pathways to Success in Unlocking the 50+ Market

Customer Newsletters

Continued

Printing Your Newsletter

To get an accurate printing estimate for your newsletters, give your print rep these specs:

Customer Newsletter:

Flat Size: 17 x 11"; folds to either 8 1/2 x 11" or 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (The larger folded size makes a better presentation amid that day's mail, but the smaller size saves postage.)

- Paper Stock: 70# or 80# dull or matte book (#1 grade for better opacity)
- Inks: Black and a PMS (Rotate accent colors with the season.)
- Bleeds on four sides: (ink coming off the edge of the page)

Make sure your printer includes proofs, as part of the estimate.

Mailing Your Newsletters

Newsletters to customers and prospects are usually quarterly publications, mailed four times a year.

The mailing list for your Newsletters should be as broad as possible. That should include not only current customers, but prospects as well.

Also consider mailing your Newsletters as part of your Community Outreach efforts, including other professionals with whom you cross-market, media contacts, and other organizations within your community.

Although Newsletters are not usually time-sensitive marketing materials, before mailing, consult with your mailing service on average delivery times.

For Newsletters, 3rd class postage is sufficient.

The typical Newsletter is designed to self-mail, without an envelope.

The Last Word

A well-written, well-designed Newsletter, both informative and informal in its presentation, can be an extremely valuable tool in any successful marketing program.

Try one on for size. I think you'll like it.