

Tips for Producing an Outstanding Newsletter

As you may have noticed, it seems as though everyone is getting into the newsletter publishing business — including libraries. The advent of desktop publishing software and the convenience of laser printers have made in-house newsletter production a seemingly quick task that can boost the visibility of the issuing organization to its target markets, generating goodwill and business at the same time — or so it would appear.

But have you looked at what newsletters look like these days? Narrow margins, uneven type, overuse of shadowed boxes, multiple typefaces on one page, widows and orphans on every paragraph . . . the list goes on with classic layout and design mistakes being made by well-intentioned newsletter publishers. Because your editor has noticed that an increasing number of *Marketing Treasures*' subscribers are publishing library newsletters, she believes the time has come for an in-depth discussion of newsletter production. This issue and the November issue of *Marketing Treasures* will feature insights into what makes a good-looking, easy-to-scan, and interesting-to-read library newsletter.

For starters, newsletters are public relations tools (unless you sell the newsletter as a product, such as *Marketing Treasures*). As such, the contents and articles in a newsletter should focus on the library's positive worth and its contribution to the larger organization. Remember, the purpose of public relations is to "make people feel good about using/buying your services and products." Public relations does not 'sell' a service or product — that is the job of promotion. Public relations activities and vehicles communicate positive messages about and create an awareness of an organization's value to the community it serves.

With that in mind, look at your library newsletter (or plans for a newsletter) and its articles. Lists of recent acquisitions, tables of contents from journals, pleas for missing and overdue materials, and similar library standbys have no place in a newsletter. These items are products, and should be treated as such. Your editor has heard more than one reason as to why the acquisitions list should be in a library's newsletter —

1.) *Saves paper.* Who's kidding whom? It takes the same amount of paper and resources to compile a two-page newsletter with a five-page acquisitions list as it does to create a two-page newsletter *and* a five-page acquisitions list.

2.) *Putting the list in the newsletter means that people will be more likely to review the list.* If your acquisitions list is that boring then do something to it so it can stand on its own merit as a library product. Who knows, maybe the list is deterring people from reading your newsletter!

3.) *Issuing two publications adds to the paper overload on a customer's desk.* Reread the responses to numbers 1 & 2, and add that if you have to choose between the newsletter or acquisitions list, publish the newsletter. Make copies of the acquisitions list available in the information center and mail it to the people who express a desire to know what new materials have been entered into the collection. Treat your lists like products.

Okay, so now that your newsletter is down to a skeleton, let's start rebuilding. First, contents and article topics. One of the primary challenges of publishing a newsletter is getting enough material to print. Of course, you can make it easy on yourself and subscribe to a 'filler-subscription' service like *Assistant Editor* (if this sounds appealing, contact our office for subscription details), or you can make writing assignments, or you can write the whole thing yourself. Producing a newsletter is less stressful when you follow a pre-defined list of topics in each issue. For instance, establishing a base of articles — such as a book review, a journal article synopsis, a Hot Topic of the Month, quotes, customer interviews, a 'Dear Abby' type of column, and a library product spotlight — makes it a lot easier to identify material for each newsletter issue and to make writing assignments. Best of all, consistency builds reader loyalty as they look for their favorite column in each issue. Add variety to each issue of the newsletter by having a 'feature column' that permits topic diversity.

But before you can place your articles in your newsletter, you have to have a standardized layout treatment — a grid — to guide you. What's a grid, and what does it mean to your newsletter?

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Pearls of Wisdom

A "Best of Show" Packet showing winners from this year's Swap & Shop competition at the Annual Conference of the American Library Association (ALA) is available through interlibrary loan from the PR Info Bank in the ALA Headquarters Library. To borrow the packet of outstanding public relations materials, send an ALA-approved interlibrary loan to the ALA Headquarters Library, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

For that special promotion or event commemoration when imprinted pencils just won't make the impact you want, try using engraved items. A free catalog of engraved gifts is available from Things Remembered, offering a wide range of items ranging from personalized clocks to golf bag tags. To receive a catalog, call 800/274-7376 or write to Things Remembered, 271 Alpha Park Drive, Highland Heights, OH 44143.

If you've been daydreaming about starting your own information business, then the recent publication *Insights on Information Brokering* might be worth browsing. Copies can be ordered from the Special Libraries Association (SLA) at \$15 per copy. Send your order to Jane Taylor, SLA Nonserial Publications, SLA, 1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009-2508.

A new release from the American Library Association promises to provide ideas to libraries facing bond issues, library closings, and special reading programs. "Solutions to Your Public Relations Challenges" offers readers a selection of the 'great ideas' found among the 1991 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award Contest entries including ideas from its 40 winners. The book is available for \$9.95 and can be ordered from the ALA Order Department, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

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Back issues and samples are available at \$9.00 for U.S. and Canada. Overseas orders add \$1.50. Additional binders are available at \$4.50 each.

Missing issues must be reported within 3 months of issue date. Requests made after this time will be supplied at the regular back-issue price.

Starting with Volume 5, Number 1, issues reflect the months spanned by the number, i.e., September-October, November-December etc.

The University of Michigan School of Information and Library Studies used a creative approach to achieve a two-color look for their Three-Year Report. The inside text pages are printed on light gray paper. The cover sheet to the text pages is a light gray, textured paper, also printed with black ink. The report is an 8.5" x 11" size, but the outside cover in a cornflower blue paper is only 6.5" x 11." When bound together, the gray textured paper appears next to the blue cover and looks very attractive. This design offers an inexpensive approach to a two-color cover, and the piece can be created on the photocopier. The report is bound with black plastic coil binding, but since this type of binding comes in various colors, there's an opportunity to add yet another color to the piece.

Nola Sterling, Director of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle Library sent us a promotion piece she mailed out to new stockholders and non-library users. The piece uses a headline from a *Marketing Treasures* clip art sheet, To Top Management Concerned with the Bottom Line. Nola reformatted the art to fit her needs, added some great words, including these lines — "Questions there? Answers here." and "Save time. Increase productivity. Get the answers." — short and sweet statements that get the message across. Coupled with brief examples of the types of information the library offers, these headlines helped to position the library in the minds of the targeted markets and brought a good response for research requests to Nola's library.

Here's another good idea: distributing a glossary of acronyms and abbreviations commonly used throughout an organization. Jeannette Glynn, Manager of the Technology Library at the Bank of America's San Francisco location, provided a copy of their glossary that has been compiled over the years by Chris Salocks of the Bank. The glossary, a photocopied booklet of 63 pages, is distributed by the library. On the outside back cover Jeannette took the opportunity to promote her library's services in a simple question and answer format (i.e., What is the library? What does it do? How do you use it?). What a great public relations idea — and someone else did the work! Of course, if you can't find a glossary already compiled, you'll have to do it yourself. You may also want to expand on the concept to include handy terms and phrases unique to your organization or industry — some libraries even publish their industries conference calendars. Regardless of the topic, creating a handy information piece that will be referenced repeatedly offers your library valuable visibility. Make sure your promotion message takes advantage of the exposure; treat it like a display ad in a newspaper with headlines and clip art!

Newsletter *continued from page 1*

Grids are created and used by designers to organize the layout and appearance of printed material. A grid divides the page into units to dictate the visual presentation of text and images. When you make decisions about side, bottom, and top margins, you are establishing a grid. Identifying the number and width of columns, gutter size, placement of page numbers, and of any vertical and horizontal rules builds your basic grid into a system of visual devices that you use to apply a consistent, pleasing appearance to the newsletter. A grid and its supporting system guidelines provide a visual foundation to a layout while permitting design flexibility.

Most library newsletters have adopted a single- or two-column grid for an 8.5" x 11" page. Here are some variations of one- and two-column grids and some ideas on how to make them visually appealing. If your newsletter is more than two pages long, you might think about adopting different grids for treating regular article features — but don't get carried away by using a different grid on every page.

Notice in the following layouts the amount of "white space" each grid defines. You've probably heard about the need for white space — to rest the eye. A grid layout provides guidelines for organizing both text and white space on a page.

Note: To make the rough grid layout sketches shown here, your editor has roughed in lines of justified text. Please do not justify all your newsletter's body copy. Justifying text causes irregular gaps in the word spacing that makes reading a difficult chore. Use justified text only for accent.



In this grid the whole page is used. The page appears to be dark with so much type. It is very difficult to scan. You can get a lot of information on a page, but whether anyone else reads it is another question.



A wide margin is used on the left side. The lines of type are still too long to read comfortably, but it's better than a page of full-length lines.



By narrowing the type column, you make the text easier to read and scan. This one-column grid has a dynamic, off-center look.



By placing the narrower column in the center of the page, a more dignified look is achieved. This a good grid if a balanced, serious appearance is desired.



A lower page head is especially useful when you have a special article attract to which you want to attract attention. If you use more than one lower page head in the same newsletter issue, make sure the white space is the same on each.



This narrow-column grid uses 'hanging indents' and the empty space on the left to bring attention to important headlines and pieces of text.



This narrow column has its extra space on the right, perfect for secondary information such as reminders, quotes, and comments.

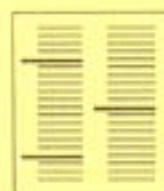


Here is a variation on the centered narrow column. The space on either side has been utilized for both hanging indents and notes. This is a rather busy grid, but it holds the attention of the eye.

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Here is your basic two-column grid. A lot of information is squeezed onto the page, and the result is boring.



Here the two columns are a little narrower in order to accommodate the 'hanging indents.' This variation draws attention to the text that follows each indent.



If you are printing only in one color, boldface the text that is hanging outside the columns. Setting the column text to justified and the hanging text to ragged right also helps distinguish between the two types of body copy.



Here the two columns are narrow and centered in the page. The wider outer margins add elegance to the page. Use a hairline rule line down the center between the two columns to emphasize the page number or title.



Here is a classic treatment of the two-column grid, with the rule lines defining the top and bottom of a full page.



The wider margins on the left and right can be used to hang headlines. To tie the headings to the text, underline them with rules that run the full width of the column.



Two very narrow columns allow for the creative use of the outside margins — for page numbers, notes, quotes. This grid can be visually dramatic.



Two very narrow columns placed off-center leave spaces that encourage creative use of text and elements.

Of course there are other multiple-column grids: four columns, seven columns; some tabloid-size newspapers have 32 columns. However, the one- or two-column format is the easiest to produce using most word processing or desktop publishing packages. The more columns in the grid, the greater the layout flexibility.

Consider what will be going into the newsletter and where it will go. As mentioned earlier in this article, standardizing the contents and position of topics will make your life easier. Decide on a one- or two-page grid for a two-page newsletter, or a mix of grids for newsletters over four pages. Consider which grid variation do you want to use, or, more importantly, which variation you can handle with your software and computer and still produce an attractive and readable publication.

Next, decide on the margin measurements and how you want to handle different newsletter elements. If it's cumbersome to measure in inches, try using picas. (If you don't have a pica ruler, get one; picas are more convenient than 1/16" increments.) You may want to review other newsletters and books on layout design to get a feel for what can be done. Sketch your layout ideas on a piece of paper first. Where will you position regular newsletter columns? What special treatment will each column get? What is the overall look of each page? If you have any facing pages, what is the overall appearance of the pages together? Do both pages use the same grid, or, if different grids are used, do they visually complement each other? Consider laying out two facing pages as one 11" x 17" spread with elements that spill over from one page to the other.

Use the template capability of your software program to build the grid and save the dimensions for the next time. If your program won't save templates, then note every measurement down on a sample printed page so you won't have to go through this exercise again.

The November issue of *Marketing Treasures* will continue to review newsletter production considerations.

Worth Its Weight in Gold

In the last few months several *Marketing Treasures* subscribers have asked your editor for resources that produce library-oriented clip-art that can be integrated into word processing documents.

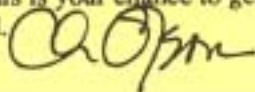
Tough question! There are only a couple of sources for library clip-art that your editor knows about (*Marketing Treasures* being one of them!). Neither are offered in a computer-readable format. Our other publication, *Assistant Editor*, offers clip-art in computer format, but the focus of that subscription is on the 10 pages of articles for library newsletters.

Of course, there's always the booklet of clip-art that your editor and her team of designers are currently putting together. The art will be available on diskettes as well as paper, but not until early 1992. And your editor understands that it doesn't help subscribers NOW. So, in lieu of library clip-art, and until we publish the booklet of art, allow your editor to make a suggestion: use clip-art related to the subject area of your library collection such as business, science, or medicine.

If you peruse the back pages of computer magazines for clip-art packages, you'll find collections of subject-oriented art. The problem with ordering art sight unseen is that many times the quality of the artwork is dismal — but you don't find out until after you've purchased the graphics package. Not to worry, there's a handy book that compiles almost all the clip-art packages currently available on the market. It shows the actual clip-art images (in a reduced size) that come with a company's clip-art collection. *Canned Art: Clip Art for the Macintosh* is real asset when searching for a particular image. IBM/PC owners should not be put off by the title; many clip-art packages are also available for the PC environment or you can perform a conversion. But if you wonder how the conversions transfer from Mac to PC, the book tells you on page 2-7. This book has proven itself be worth its weight in gold in our own everyday graphics work — maybe it will help you too.

Canned Art: Clip Art for the Macintosh, Erfert Fenton & Christine Morrissett. Peachpit Press, Berkeley, CA., 1990
ISBN: 0-938151-16-9 \$29.95 Phone: 415/527-8555

☛ I am seeking ideas for the clip-art booklet. What specific images do you wish you had when creating a newsletter, flyer, poster, bookmark, or sign? Let me know via mail or fax. This is your chance to get the artwork you always wanted.



Promotion Gems

The recent Special Libraries Association conference in San Antonio offered a number of excellent programs aimed at marketing topics. Your editor bought audio cassette tapes of these sessions and is prepared to loan them to *Marketing Treasures'* readers as she finishes listening to the tapes herself. If you would like to borrow any of the following tapes, send to the *Marketing Treasures* office a self-addressed label, along with \$2.00 for postage and the names of the tapes that you want to listen to, and we'll mail them out first class, for two-week loans — on a first-come, first-served basis. Tapes available for loan are described below. They can also be purchased from National Audio Video Transcripts, Inc., 4465 Washington Street, Denver, CO 80216; 303/292-2952.

Choosing and Using Consultants (Tape # 14-67). Helen Burwell, Carol Ginsburg, Susan Rosenstein, and Terri Wilkins are the speakers with Roberta Brody as moderator. Carol and Terri share their experiences as clients and the guidelines they use to select consultants. Helen and Susan share their experiences as consultants and what they like to see in their clients. This is a good session with valuable insights for librarians who may be clients or consultants in the future.

Desktop Publishing in Libraries & Information Centers (Tape # 25-67). Dan Sell, Barbara Coalgate, and Peggy Cathcart are the speakers with Randy Bixby as the moderator. The topic promised to be interesting and informative, but your editor believes this was a session where you had to be there. Dan gives some insights into how he prepares hot topic bibs, Barbara reviews the development of her center's newsletters, and Peggy gives a personal history of typesetting.

Online Technician or Information Professional (Tape #5-67). Susan Mary, Bonnie Burwell, Cynthia Penman, and Deborah Nicholas are speakers with Stephen Abram as moderator. This is a dynamic session featuring a string of 5-minute presentations of highly personalized opinions on the topic of whether online searching is a professional skill or a transactional technique.

Technology: A Tool for Enhancing Customer Service (Tape #3-67). Alan King, Carol Ginsburg, and Barbara Dance are speakers with Jane Dysart as moderator. Alan outlines the development and implementation of an executive information system at his firm. Carol Ginsburg reviews how her information center takes advantage of an office information system, and Barbara talks about her library's electronic news service. This is an excellent session tape.

Sparkling Reviews

Library Development: A Future Imperative. Dwight F. Burlingame, Editor. The Haworth Press, 1990. ISBN: 1-56024-030-8 \$22.95 (Also published as *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1990.)

Subscribers who will soon be involved in fund-raising will find this compilation of essays a valuable starting point. The essays are well written and offer insights into the unique field of library fund-raising.

Readers will recognize the essayists as experienced and successful fund-raisers. Sue Fountaine, Public Relations Director of the Queens Borough Public Library discusses the role of public relations and marketing in fund-raising activities. April Harris from Baylor College of Medicine writes about special events and how they fit into a fund-raising strategy. Bobbie Strand from the

fund-raising consulting firm of Bentz, Whaley, Flessner reviews how to find and research major donor prospects, while Charlene Clark of the Texas A&M University Library development and promotion office touches upon the role of Friends in starting annual giving campaigns for academic libraries. Several other essays, including one that describes an endowment campaign for a public library and a bibliography on fund-raising, round out the book's offerings.

In this age of money shortages and budget crunches, the money brought in through well-organized fund-raising activities is determining whether some libraries stay open. Raising private dollars for library services is becoming big business. This book will give you a basic understanding of how to raise those dollars.

The Crystal Ball

October 20-23 "Services Marketing Conference." Sponsored by the Service Marketing Division of the American Marketing Association in Kissimmee, FL. Contact: 312/648-0536.

October 24-25 "Processing and Analyzing Questionnaire Data." A workshop offered by Anderson, Niebuhr & Associates in Atlanta. Contact: 800/768-5577.

October 25 "Be A S.T.A.A.R." A seminar by Kaycee Hale offered by Broward County Library System in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact: Rosa Miller 305/357-7529.

October 25 "Mainstreaming the Special Library." A one-day seminar by Alice Warner in Ann Arbor, MI. Contact: Joy Lerner 202/234-4700.

October 28-30 "Research for Results." A two-day seminar offered by George Washington University in Crystal City, VA. Contact: 202/994-5200.

October 31 "Your Personal & Professional Image." A seminar by Kaycee Hale offered by San Bernardino County Library. Contact: Barbara Anderson 714/387-5721.

November 7 "The How-To's of Good Customer Service." A workshop offered by Dun & Bradstreet in Annapolis, MD. Contact: 212/312-6880.

November 8 "All the World's a Stage: Speaking and Writing with Excitement." A one-day workshop offered by Lou Williams Seminars in New York City. Contact: 800/323-2897.

November 10 "Information Broker's Seminar." A seminar by Sue Ruge offered by the Online '91 conference in San Francisco. Contact: 415/649-9743.

November 14 "Dynamic Library Leadership: From SELF to SERVICE." A seminar by Kaycee Hale offered by the Roundtable for Ethnic Minority Concerns in Durham, NC. Contact: Renee Stiff 919/848-6672.

November 17-20 "Improving Service Quality." A conference with pre-conference workshops in San Antonio, TX. Contact: 800/328-4329 or 612/333-0471.

November 18-21 "Fundamentals of Marketing: Modern Concepts and Practices." A four-day seminar offered by the American Management Association in Boston; Orlando, FL; Chicago; and Philadelphia. Contact: 212/903-8129.

November 19 "Strategies for Marketing Professional Services." A one-day workshop offered by Lou Williams Seminars in Los Angeles. Contact: 800/323-2897.

November 19 "How to Write, Design and Edit Newsletters." A seminar offered by the Business & Professional Research Institute in Saddle Brook, NJ. Contact: 802/757-3261.

November 20-21 "Creating Excellent Brochures and Pamphlets: Reaching Whom You Want With What You Want To Say." A seminar offered by New York University in NYC. Contact: 212/998-7171.

November 22 "The Basics of Design Using Desktop Publishing." A seminar offered by Padgett-Thompson in Washington, D.C. Contact: 800/255-4141 or 913/451-2900.

December 2-3 "Fundamental Selling Techniques for the New or Prospective Salesperson." A two-day seminar offered by the American Management Association in Chicago. Contact: 212/903-8129.