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What Marketers Often Don't Tell You

About E-Newsletters

by
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More and more companies (and some of our clients) are turning to e-newsletters, versus hard copy newsletters. After all, printing and postage cost money.

Maybe we shouldn't care because we're not printers and we don't sell postage.

But here's the rub. In the majority of cases, e-newsletters don't work.*

Let me repeat that. In the majority of cases, e-newsletters don't work.

Readership of informative, entertaining, and easy to read printed newsletters will generally gain at least twice the readership of the same piece sent via email.

Even when people open an e-newsletter they generally don't read as much of it as they would if given the opportunity to hold a printed version in their hands.

Why? It's simple.

Newsletters are meant to be read at the recipients' *leisure*. Newsletters sit on your desk for awhile until you take some time to relax and are in the mood to ingest some information at a unhurried pace.

Email is not leisurely. Email is a *communications chore*. Email is dealt with at specific times in rapid key strokes and quick scans.

"Delete."

"Delete."

"Delete."

"That looks interesting. Read a little. Delete."

"That's important. Read some of it. Save for later."

"Delete."

"I could use this. Read. Save."

"Read the headlines. Delete."

"From the boss. Better read this. Save"

“ Whew. Done. ”

Many marketing departments that are ever-in-search of ways to cut costs are quick to see the economic advantages of e-newsletters. No printing. No postage.

Lower readership is a casualty that many are willing to trade for good performance reviews based on exceeding budget objectives. They've done their jobs. They've written a newsletter. They've produced a newsletter. They've sent a newsletter. It's not their fault if no one reads the newsletter.

Of course we have formal statistics and national studies to back all of this up. But just to be sure, we did our own little test with the Brown & Martin newsletter.

We sent hardcopies of the newsletters to some, and e-versions to others. Then we called recipients to see what they remembered reading. The results weren't even close. Few of those who received the e-version were able to answer any of our 5 questions about the content. The majority of those who received the printed version answered 3 or more questions correctly.

Funny thing is that many of those who received the e-newsletter had indicated on an earlier survey that they would prefer receiving an e-version, versus a printed version. Yet when we complied with their wishes, readership and effectiveness dropped out of sight.

I guess people don't know what's good for them ... or I should say good for “us.” You see, we actually care about whether or not you read what we write. We want you to remember what we write. We want you to learn from and enjoy what we write. We don't want you to be able to delete what we write.

And to prove that, we chose to put our money (printing and postage) where our newsletter is ... in your hands.

*Yes, there are exceptions. In fact, B&M produces some of those exceptions. But many companies that have never been able to produce effective printed newsletters jump right in to produce even less effective e-newsletters.



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