



20 Tips to Master your Nonprofit Newsletter

Why are Newsletters Important?

Newsletters are some of the most engaging pieces of communication you can send. When you receive an email address, you have obtained a direct line of communication to a potential donor. Even if your donor never reads your newsletter, they are frequently reminded of your organization by simply seeing your organization's name in their inbox.

It is no secret that having a quality newsletter allows your organization to cultivate and retain supporters that are engaged and interested in your mission.

Creating an awesome newsletter is easier said than done. Here are **20 tips** that will help you keep your subscribers engaged and interested!



1. Incorporate user-generated content

Let's be honest, email marketing can be dull. Keep your emails fresh and exciting by incorporating user-generated content. Include positive testimonials from event attendees, tell the story of one of your monthly donors or highlight social media content generated by users (with their permission, of course).

2. Interact with your subscribers. It doesn't have to be a one-way conversation:

- Add a survey or poll
- Include GIFs and hover-over imagery
- Include a quiz or game

3. Optimize for all platforms.

Over half of all emails are being opened on a mobile device, so having a design that adapts to the reader's screen size is simply a must.

4. Make the "call to action" (CTA) clear and obvious.

Your "call to action" (CTA) is something that you are asking the readers to do. Whether that may be to make a donation or visit a certain website, this should be clear and obvious to the reader.

5. Know your audience and make the content relevant to them.

The information in your newsletter should be related directly to the reader's industry, interest, and topics they care about. If a reader would not be interested in your content, consider removing them from your receiving audience.

6. Set reasonable expectations for stats on the newsletter (click rates, open rates, etc.)

Make sure you are tracking the statistics (click rates, open rates, unsubscribes, etc.) for each newsletter sent. Once you have collected data, set goals and targets moving forward.

7. Get creative with email subject lines.

Many organizations use the same subject line for each weekly or monthly newsletter. Try to have a different, creative, engaging subject line for each newsletter you send.

8. Clean up your email list.

A healthy email list is essential if you want your nonprofit newsletters to be effective. Make sure you ask every email subscriber for permission to join your list.

9. Be consistent with content and dates e-blasts are being sent out.

The key to keeping supporters informed is frequency and consistency. It's best to create a schedule and stick to it, so your readers know when they can expect to hear from you.

10. Use powerful imagery. Allow images to tell your story and engage your audience.

Use big and bold imagery in your newsletters to immediately engage subscribers and draw them in.

11. Test the length of your newsletter to ensure it's not too short or too long for your audience.

The best length for your email newsletter is approximately 20 lines of text. We've found 20 lines of text — or about 200 words — results in the highest email click-through rate for most industries.

12. Include a time element. This creates urgency for your audience and further engages them.

Most readers will become engaged with copy if it is for a limited time product or event.

13. Don't confuse your newsletter with an advertisement. The newsletter should impart useful information rather than just selling a product.

To avoid giving the impression that you're out to bleed your subscribers dry, make it a point to include industry news that isn't directly about your company.

14. Search for Inspiration. Do not be afraid to do research of your own that will better improve your newsletter.

This is where your creative side gets to shine!



15. Make the information easy to understand and digest.

Readers will skim through heavy copy, so utilize short and sweet sentences or bullet points.

16. Make links more effective

- Avoid using the generic phrase “click here.” Your email recipients will be less likely to click it because it is unclear where it goes. Instead, make your link text descriptive and concise.
- Increase the odds of someone clicking-through by embedding more links. This is especially important when your email has a single CTA.
- Make sure your links are opening in a new window so that recipients may return to reading your newsletter in the original window.

17. Personalize your emails. Include the name of the recipients in the opening line.

By adding a personal touch to your newsletter, it is a great way to show your readers you really value them as a person rather than a number.

18. Send a test email.

Make sure your links and interactive content are working before publishing the newsletter.

19. The newsletter should reflect your agency's culture and brand.

Use the colour scheme and logo of your company throughout your newsletter.

20. When planning your email newsletter, think about when you're going to send it.

Be sure that you're hitting the send button at the right time of day and on the right day of the week. Research shows that the top times to send emails during the day are 10 am, 8 pm, 2 pm, and 6 am. Try out a few different times and see which ones work for you.

**Looking for support in answering these questions?
Your marketing team at Graf-Martin would love to help.**

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