

A large, leafy green tree stands in a field under a blue sky. The tree is the central focus, with its dense canopy filling much of the left and center of the frame. The background shows a rolling green field and a line of trees in the distance. The sky is a clear, light blue.

# e-Newsletter Best Practices

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# Overview

- Who is our audience and what do they want?
  - How do they read e-newsletters?
  - What do they like and dislike?
- How can we give it to them?
  - Best practices for consistent quality
- What about the technical part?
  - List management
  - In-house or outsource?

# Overview

- Readers have more emotional reactions to newsletters than Web sites
- Newsletter should to simplify readers' lives
- Designed to be easily scanned
- Provide convenient, real-time info
- Be relevant and address specific needs
- Be informative and up to date

# Keep it Simple

- Average user spends 51 sec. reading the average newsletter
- May spend an additional 33 sec. following links
- 19% of potential subscribers lost due to usability difficulties
- Users often stay subscribed due to difficult unsubscribe processes
- Some users reported it was easier to use a spam blocker than to unsubscribe

# Mail Client Diversity

- Outlook
- Entourage
- Apple Mail
- Gmail
- Smart phones



# Platform Diversity

- 67% laptop computer
- 17% desktop computer
- 17% paper



# Awareness of Bar's Newsletter

- 86% are aware
- 14% have no clue

# Frequency

- 67% daily
- 17% 2-3x month
- 17% never



# Satisfaction

- 67% satisfied
- 17% neutral
- 17% unsatisfied

# Readers Like

- Useful information
- White space
- Good use of color
- Reading in an email rather than on the Web site

# Readers Don't Like

- Too much information
- Clutter
- Small print
- Loud colors

# Readers Want More

- Stress management tips
- Practice specific content
- Social networking content
- Photos



# Readers Want Less

- In-depth, academic writing

# Best Practices

Do it right the first time

# Best Practices: Benchmarks

- **Deliverable rate**
- Open rate
- Click through rate
- Conversion rate

How many valid email addresses received the complete newsletter?

# Best Practices: Benchmarks

- Deliverable rate
- **Open rate**
- Click through rate
- Conversion rate

How many times was the newsletter viewed?

# Best Practices: Benchmarks

- Deliverable rate
- Open rate
- **Click through rate**
- Conversion rate

How many times were links in the newsletter clicked on?

# Best Practices: Benchmarks

- Deliverable rate
- Open rate
- Click through rate
- **Conversion rate**

How many registrations, memberships or other actions were generated by this newsletter?

# Best Practices: Goals

- Must have clear and recognizable business goals
- Content should support business goals
- Include multiple calls to action
- Calls to action should be effective and not pushy

# Best Practices: Deliverability

- Newsletter should reach proper recipients
  - Include a prominently placed white list request
  - Send newsletter at regular intervals
  - Send newsletter at an appropriate time
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# Best Practices: “From” Line

- Should be easily recognizable
- Should be consistent from issue to issue
- Sender should be clearly identified
- Contains both a display and an actual “from” address
  - Eg: Generic Bar Association  
<newsletter@gba.org>

# Best Practices: Subject Line

- Engaging and benefit-oriented
  - Features something unique to current issue
  - Most important information goes first
  - Avoid “spammy” words
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# Best Practices: Preview Pane

- Recognizable logo or Bar name in prominent place
- Strong, benefit-oriented headlines
- Link to view newsletter online
- Must be able to engage reader even if images are blocked

# Best Practices: First Screen

- Engaging opening paragraph
  - Table of contents for each issue
  - Links to read newsletter online
  - Comes from a real person or group
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# Best Practices: Look and Feel

- Engaging and attractive design
- Design is consistent with Web site and landing pages
- Images used to enhance content
- Easy to skim: short paragraphs, bullet points and white space

# Best Practices: Content

- Engaging and benefit-oriented
  - Include engagement tools: surveys, polls, ways to provide feedback, discussion forums
  - 60/40 rule for ads: 60% minimum editorial, 40% maximum ads
  - No more than 2-3 printed pages total
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# Best Practices: Footer

- One-click unsubscribe link
  - Link to subscription management page
  - USPS address for sender
  - Sender's copyright notice
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# In-house v. Outsource

- Advantages and disadvantages
- Which option is best?



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# In-house System

- Can be less expensive
- Can be easier to manage
- Can be integrated into existing membership database
- May be harder to check metrics
- May not scale well for large lists



# Outsourced System

- More expensive
- Almost always easier to manage
- Almost always easier to check response rates
- May not be able to integrate into membership database



# Conclusion

- Keep it simple
- Know your audience
- Follow best practices
- Take time to find the best system for your needs



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