Production and Distribution

Appoint one person to be responsible for the newsletter. Set clear goals and establish a budget. Production and distribution of a newsletter will depend largely on the budget.

Advertising revenue can be a means of increasing the budget without increasing dues. This can be done on a small scale with business card advertisements or full newsletter sponsorship. Contacting other community or neighborhood associations regarding their experiences with advertisement sales is recommended.

The cost of the newsletter includes costs relating to preparation, reproduction, and mailing. Mailing costs depend upon the volume of newsletters sent. For large volume mailings, a bulk mail permit may be obtained from the U.S. Postal Service. Bulk mailings should be used cautiously, as they are not always delivered in a timely manner. Some thought should be given as to recipients of the newsletter. Some associations mail only to dues paying members while others mail to non-member neighbors or businesses in an effort to attract new members. Associations also send the newsletter via electronic mail (e-mail), which is quite cost effective. Many associations have newsletters posted on their web sites. This is a great way to save on mailing and reproduction costs and provide instantaneous access to members.

Reproduction costs vary with newsletter quality. This can be done professionally, or on a volunteer basis by a member or a business willing to contribute the time and expense associated with reproduction.

Writing Tips

- Get going! Rule number one is to begin.
- Start with the easiest story first. Get your ideas down on paper.
- Look for things that interest you.
- Pay attention to headlines, sub-heads, and captions.
- K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short and Simple)
- Analyze and emulate successful newsletters.
- Publish stories your reader can not get elsewhere.
- Include advice and information that is useful to your reader.
- Inform, don't sell.
- To achieve the desired result, a newsletter must add value by informing the reader.
- Avoid confusing phraseology; just give the reader quick, readable information.
- To draw your reader in, run headlines that define the problem and then how it was solved.
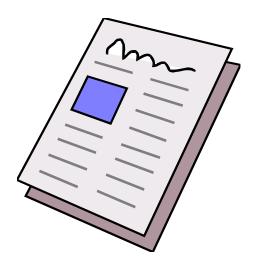
Newsletter Dos & Don'ts

- Avoid run-on sentences they are hard to read.
- Don't use no double negatives.
- Use the semicolon properly, always use it where it is appropriate; and never where it isn't.
- Reserve the apostrophe for it's proper use and omit it when its not needed.
- Do not put statements in the negative form.
- Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
- No sentence fragments.
- Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
- If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
- Steer clear of incorrect verb forms that snuck into the language.
- Take the bull by the hand in leading away from mixed metaphors.
- Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.
- Never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
- Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing.
- I must have told you a million times to resist hyperbole.
- "Avoid overuse of 'quotation "marks" ' ".
- Avoid commas, that are not necessary.
- A writer must not shift your point of view.
- And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
- Don't overuse exclamation points!!!!!

CARROLLTON
TEXAS

COMMUNITY SERVICES

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNICATIONS

NEWSLETTERS

Clear, consistent and regular communications are essential to effective community newsletters. Here are some time-tested ingredients that make a community or neighborhood association newsletter "all it can be":

Goals
Focus on long-term, positive, community-building contact. Convert casual readers into regular readers who are inspired about what is happening in your community with a sincere desire to be a part of it. It's all about community involvement and unity. When you are deciding what topics and articles to write, ask yourself whether it meets this objective.

Publish regular columns
Make sure events, activities, and volunteer opportunities are well publicized. Keep your topic headings consistent with every issue. If you have a "Covenant Corner" which highlights a particular neighborhood rule or regulation, publish that section in every issue.

Story ideas
Story ideas can come from journals, magazines, different publications, and the internet. Editors must continually keep their eyes out for information that would be useful to their readers.

People in your neighborhood are good newsletter subjects. Publish features and/or spotlights on different people in the neighborhood and include them in a problem-solving format. Other readers might be encountering the same issue. Include tips or solutions to resolve common problems.

Design, Layout, & Production

Design
Begin with a newsletter that's attractive, inviting, and distinctive. If you have available funds, a professional graphic designer is a good idea, the cost for a one-time design of a newsletter runs anywhere from $250 to $600.

The "Look"
The "look" of the newsletter can attract and entice readers. The appearance of your newsletter is important but it need not be extravagant. Black on white paper is still the most popular "look." Each issue of your newsletter should look the same. Choose a simple format and stick with it. You can use colors or special paper to enhance the overall "look" of your newsletter.

Newsletter Style
Establish general standards of style and stick to them. For maximum readability use headlines and sub-headings. They make the content easy to read.

Make it easy on the eye
Long lines tire the reader's eyes quickly, use a newspaper column format instead. Use at least one illustration or picture per page. You don't have to fill every last inch of space on a page. Avoid continuing articles on another page, the reader may lose interest.

The cover sets the tone
The cover of your newsletter is most important, it sets the tone and motivates people to read it. Be sure to include information telling the reader what the newsletter is about and who publishes it. Pay special attention to the design of the nameplate, it is important since it is used on each issue. Make the newsletter title bold and/or distinctive so readers identify the newsletter at a glance.

Typefaces
Play it safe. Use standard typefaces like Times, Courier and Helvetica. Avoid unusual looking typefaces. They can be difficult to read.

Italics can slow the reader down
Use Italics only when called for and don't use them for long articles. Too many italicized words slow down the reader. Italic typefaces are read about 30 percent slower than Roman (non-italic) typefaces. Used sensibly, Italics can help communicate a message.

Text size
Body text: serif typefaces are best. Some good serif typefaces are Palatino, Times New Roman, and Garamond. Serif typefaces are easier to read. Text should be no smaller than 10pt. Elder audience appreciates large font type (12pt). Standard sizes for bold headlines are 18pt or 24pt and for sub-headings use 14pt. Use bold letters to pick out people's names and to point out important details.

Illustrations
Use clip art because it's free from copyright restrictions, and modify the clip art to meet your needs. Don't over do the clip art. Too many graphics confuse the reader.