

ARE YOU A HUNTER OR A FARMER?

You want your customers, potential customers, distributors, professional contacts, staff, distributors, the media, and other third parties who might be advocates for you to know as much about your products and services and your business as they possibly can. And you want them to keep you fresh in their minds.

Email newsletters are useful for getting all these audiences excited about you or, at least interested in you.



Email newsletters are one of the most important ways to communicate with these audiences. Email newsletters can help to build relationships; people read them because they think they might find something useful or interesting - not just a blatant sales pitch and that gift from you tends to provoke reciprocal feelings: **"Give and you shall receive."**

So, if you can get people to remember you and be at least interested (excited really is a tall order!!) about your newsletter, they are going to be much more likely to do business with you or write about you or recommend you to others.

This is becoming more and more important as products and services themselves become 'commoditized'.

This is happening in more and more markets; the 'real' differences between products have narrowed to the point of insignificance. So, your ability to build a relationship with these audiences is more critical than ever.

Brand personality and perceived value are just as important as the product or service - why else are brands sometimes worth more than the physical assets that produce their goods or services?

So, if Email newsletters are so great, why doesn't everyone use them?

The main reason is that they don't understand how Email newsletters really work. Email newsletters further a relationship. Email newsletters are farming, not hunting.

Farming is a constant process of seeding, watering, cultivating and replanting and that is how Email newsletters can help turn strangers into friends, leads into clients and clients into referrals.

Although doing a newsletter is a great idea, don't just 'jump on the bandwagon'. An Email newsletter, like all marketing, needs planning.

They are about news or valuable information to position you as the expert and if you're not a born writer, Email newsletters can appear daunting. Gathering and

producing content is a challenge, then there's putting the newsletter together in an attractive format, and mailing or e-mailing it out.

Even though you may have great information to give away, you must also consider the time it takes to put a good newsletter together. Doing a newsletter requires commitment of time and effort. You need to spend an absolute minimum of 3 hours putting it together and editing and polishing.

You have to offer your newsletter in a time frame that will be easy for you to manage and it has to be sent at the right frequency – not too often and not so infrequently that you are forgotten.

You also need to determine what day of the week and time of the day the newsletter will be distributed. Some days and times are better for getting read than others and they vary by business and audience type. Research it to find out when is the best time to deliver and watch your open rate stats.



Once you have decided on a newsletter then make sure you can do more than 3! It's a classic that organizations can be inspired to do 3 but then give up because they "can't think of anything interesting to say" and "it's becoming boring and too much like hard work"!

So, now you have actually decided to go ahead and have an idea of frequency and look and all those other points sit down with a blank piece

of paper and write down as many questions as you can think of about your business.

Write down the things that your customers, prospective customers, colleagues, advisers, sales people, friends, relatives – in fact anyone – ask you every day about your work. What do they want to know?

"How do you . . .?"

"Does it . . .?"

"What do you think about . . .?"

"Can I . . . ?"

"Do we have a budget for . . .?"

"What do you recommend if . . .?"

"Who is in charge of . . .?"

Questions, questions, questions.

Now get in contact with all those customers, prospective customers, colleagues, advisers, sales people, friends, relatives and others and ask them what they find

"Most interesting"

"Most puzzling"

"Most confusing"

"Most amusing"

"Most difficult"

"Most anything"

about your business and why.



Then find out what you can say about them that is likely to answer those questions in an appropriate style as long as it's not boring.

Then go ahead and produce them.

Just remember EMail newsletters can be a mixed blessing. They can be time-consuming and frustrating, but a good newsletter will bring you more business.

Not only that they continue to work for you after they are produced adding content to your website that is relevant and keeps feeding the search engines and widening your relevant profile so that you have greater index visibility and even more chances of people finding your site.