PRINtips

Anatomy of a Newsletter

Publishing an informational newsletter is a wonderful way to keep your name in front of customers or prospects. (In fact, it's one of the reasons we provide **Printips** to you each month.) A newsletter may entertain, educate, inspire, or inform. And a well designed newsletter communicates much about the organization that publishes it.

To achieve a great looking newsletter, adhere to a few basic principles of composition and design. You will produce a publication that will catch the eye of your readers.

Begin with a prototype

Whether you are designing a new publication or refreshing the look of an existing one, begin by developing a prototype – a model of what the finished newsletter will look like. To do this, you will have to decide on *format* (the newsletter's size and shape); *grid* (the underlying organization); *style sheet* (rules for typography); *graphic style* (color palette, graphic elements, photographs); and *nameplate* (title).

Format: popular newsletter formats are based on a standard paper sheet size, either folded or unfolded. For instance, a format using an 11x17 inch sheet of paper folded in half produces a four-page newsletter whose finished size measures 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Other possibilities using a standard sheet size are:

- 8 1/2 x 11 sheet unfolded
- 8 1/2 x 14 sheet unfolded
- 8 1/2 x 14 sheet with a single fold to yield a finished size of 7 x 8 1/2 inches

Though there may be a cost advantage to using a standard sheet size, this is by no means the only possibility. Experiment by folding a standard-size paper in different ways or by trimming the folded or unfolded sheet.

Grid: past issues of *Printips* have explained the importance of a grid to create an underlying organizational structure. The grid scheme determines the number of columns per page and where important design elements will be placed.

When selecting the grid, remember that the human eye is most comfortable taking in 35 to 45 characters in a single line of type. This often rules out using a one-column grid, unless the newsletter page is small (such as an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet folded in half).

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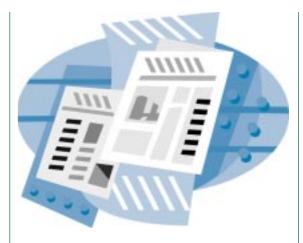ftp.macgra.com

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Would you like more tips?

Try our weekly email newsletter – Tuesday Tips. To be added to the mailing list, send any email message to **tuesdaytips-on@macgra.com**

Style sheet: after the grid, the style sheet has the most influence on how easy or difficult it is to read the newsletter. A well thought out set of rules governing typography can make reading your newsletter both easy and enjoyable. And ease of reading is especially important if text accounts for 75% or more of the newsletter. (The amount of text for a typical newsletter is 60-85% of the overall space; the balance consists of graphic elements such as photographs, rules, borders, drop caps, pull quotes, and similar visual elements.)

> *"A well thought out set of rules governing typography can make reading your newsletter both easy and enjoyable."*

Graphic style: in the same way that typography requires consistent use, graphic elements need to be consistent. This is especially true for any which repeat page to page, such as rules, folios, borders, or drop caps.

Nameplate: this is where the title of the newsletter appears, so design it to be distinctive and to graphically portray the nature of the content to be found within the newsletter. Use a box, screen tint, color band, white space, or other visual element to set the masthead off. Once set in place, the location and size of the nameplate should not change.

When your prototype is complete, you will have a design template that can be used for each issue of the newsletter.

> *"Also remember to link graphics by using the appropriate menu selection in the software program you are using rather than pasting them in the file."*

Layout techniques

Because a newsletter incorporates more elements than text on the page, it is important to use page layout software like Adobe InDesign, Adobe PageMaker, Quark XPress, or Microsoft Publisher rather than a word processing program like Microsoft Word or a drawing program like Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw. Using page layout software will allow you to anchor elements on each page so they will stay in place as you add text, photographs, and graphics.

We also suggest that you use our printer driver as the target printer when you begin designing. This will ensure that the text flow you see on your screen will stay the same when we RIP (raster image process) the file prior to output. You can obtain a copy of our printer driver by calling us at *513-248-2121* for instructions. Alternately, you can create a PDF (portable document format) file using Adobe Acrobat prior to submitting the file to us.

Text boxes: organize the body copy in text boxes where it can flow freely. Link text boxes to enable text to flow from one box to the next on the same page, or across multiple pages throughout the newsletter. And remember – never use two text boxes when one will do. For example, put the headline and body copy in the same text box, not two different ones.

Graphics: when using graphics in your newsletter, we prefer EPS (encapsulated Postscript) or TIFF (tagged image file format). Photos from a digital camera in JPEG format should be at 300 dpi resolution in the size that is being used in the newsletter.

Also remember to link graphics by using the appropriate menu selection in the software program you are using rather than pasting them in the file. All placed graphics should be linked to the original external file and not embedded in the layout file.

Color specification: before you begin preparing your newsletter, set the correct color space (either CMYK or spot color). Specifically, do not design in the RGB color space as the file will have to be converted prior to RIPping. If you have embedded graphics, be sure the color names used in the EPS or TIFF files match the color names defined in the page layout file exactly, character for character. The best way to do this is to use the Pantone color library to specify colors rather than picking from a color palette.

Fonts: use a stylized font (*i.e.,* bold or italic) only if you have that font installed on your computer. Some programs may allow you to apply a style (bold or italic) even though the font is not

available; the style will appear on your computer screen and you may even be able to print it using your desktop printer. However, we cannot RIP a file if a font is missing. In addition, some fonts do not have a bold or italic version.

Submitting the file
Before you submit the file to us, we recommend you perform a preflight, either manually or using software such as FlightCheck by MarkZWare. Preflighting will identify missing or incorrect elements and increase the likelihood that you will submit a print ready file.

A newsletter is an effective communication and marketing tool. We hope these tips will help you make the most of your publication.

"A newsletter is an effective communication and marketing tool."

Style Sheet Tips

Here are some tips to use when you are determining the style sheet for your newsletter:

Tip 1: Type size
The point size for body type should be between 9 and 11 points unless your audience is over 65 years old. Always maintain the same point size for all text (body copy) in all articles. If an article won't fit the space allocated at the correct point size, edit the copy or change the space allocation rather than reducing the point size of the type.

Tip 2: Leading
Use a minimum of 20% leading. For a spacious look, or for wide columns or dense type, increase the leading slightly. If the line length exceeds 45 characters, set the leading factor at 25%.

Tip 3: Type faces
Use no more than three typefaces in the newsletter – one for body type, one for headlines and a third for special use. You can also use only one type family and create variation by using different sizes and weights. Generally speaking, serif fonts are preferred for running text while sans serif fonts are good for headlines and display type.

TRICKS **&** *tips*

"Always maintain the same point size for all text …"

Q. *What is a bleed and how do I indicate one in my file?*

We do not print to the edge of the paper; instead, we print 1/8th of an inch beyond what will be the final size of the newsletter, then trim off the excess ink and paper. This is called *trimming to the bleed*. Naturally, this means that the press sheet must be larger than the finished size of the newsletter.

If you want to include a bleed in your design, you must extend the image by 1/8th inch (0.125) and indicate the trim lines on your layout. Please remember that because we are trimming to the bleed, the press sheet must be larger than the finished size of the newsletter. If you want to use a bleed in your newsletter design, check with us to be sure we can accommodate an oversized sheet.

A. A bleed is any printed element on the page that extends beyond the edge of the page. A *full bleed* means the printed elements extend beyond all four edges of the page.

Q&A
questions and answers

"A full bleed means the printed elements extend beyond all four edges of the page."

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Anatomy of a Newsletter

Please Route to the Printing Buyer
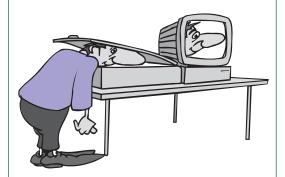

IDEA CORNER

"When complete, the scan should have an effective resolution of..."

Simple Rules for Scanning

If you have your own scanner and prefer to do your own scans rather than have us do it, please follow these simple rules:

- Scan images at the final size they will appear in the newsletter. This might require a test scan for you to establish scaling.

- For photographs, use a resolution at least 250% (2.5 times) the line screen we will be using. If you aren't sure what our

standards are, please call us at *513-248-2121*. When complete, the scan should have an effective resolution of approximately 300 dpi at 100% of printing size.

- Use EPS or TIFF format.

- Scan color images in CMYK color mode.

- For scans of line art, the resolution needs to be at least 600 effective dpi at 100% of actual printing size to avoid pixelation. Ideally, line art is scanned at the same resolution that will be used to output the negatives and/or plates. This is typically 1200 dpi, but it can be as high as 2400 dpi depending on the job.

- Include the original editable scan file along with the page layout file.