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## Extra! Extra!

E-newsletters are worth considering. Read all about it.

**E**-newsletters help keep your company top of mind with consumers and give you a channel through which to demonstrate your expertise. “Think of an [e-newsletter] as reaching out to flick your audience in the [fore]head and say, ‘Remember me,’” says Eric Groves, senior vice president of global market development at Constant Contact Inc., a Waltham, Mass.-based e-mail marketing provider.

When done well, e-newsletters are knowledge networks, brand awareness builders, relationship support systems, word-of-mouth generators and customer acquisition engines.

### SET THE TYPE

**Content:** Having a hard time coming up with a content plan? Ask yourself this, Groves suggests: “What are the most interesting questions that your customers asked you last week?” The trick is to share your knowledge and help your audience learn something.

If you’re a chef, write about how to correct an over-salting mishap; if you’re a landscaper, tell your readers which plants deer won’t eat, Groves says. That kind of information gets passed along, and suddenly your e-newsletter turns into a customer acquisition engine.

Also, write a compelling subject line. “Basically, your subject line is a headline. You want to say something intriguing like, ‘Five Things the IRS Doesn’t Want You to Know,’” says Michael Katz, an e-newsletter consultant who founded Hopkinton, Mass.-based firm Blue Penguin Development Inc. Katz writes his own semi-monthly *E-newsletter on E-newsletters*, which attracts 7,000 readers.

**Tone:** Katz tells clients to forego corporate speak in favor of a more conversational tone. Vary your sentence length and structure. Keep paragraphs short and readable. At times, use bold and italic text

### Marketing News has launched an e-newsletter!

Beginning this month, the *MN* staff brings you *Marketing News Exclusives*, a semi-monthly e-newsletter packed with breaking industry news, expert insights and more. Log on to **MarketingPower.com** and search “newsletters” to sign up for this and other e-newsletters from the **American Marketing Association**.



## Three Tips for Crafting a Successful E-newsletter

- 1** Build a high-quality e-mail list of interested recipients.
- 2** Be personable and informative—not strictly salesy. Katz suggests making your e-newsletter 80% useful information and 20% about your company.
- 3** Set a schedule you can stick to. “Without question, the biggest problem any of my clients have with their newsletter is actually doing it,” Katz says.

to add emphasis and inflection to your typed speech.

**Schedule:** The appropriate schedule depends on your purpose. For most companies, semi-monthly or monthly e-newsletters will suffice, Katz says. Set a schedule that you can stick to so that your readers will know when they’ll hear from you.

**Tactical considerations:** Use your house e-mail list or assemble a permission-based list of “friends and family” so that you’re sending your e-newsletter to people who want to hear from you, Groves says.

Be sure to identify yourself clearly as the sender in the “from” line. Include an unsubscribe link in every e-newsletter and clean your list regularly to abide by CAN-SPAM regulations. And include a feedback mechanism—either a link to a reader survey or simply an e-mail address—so that your readers can let you know what they think of your e-newsletter.

Also, archive your e-newsletters on your company’s Web site so that new readers can get a sense of what you have to offer and established readers can refer back to your many witticisms.

### PULITZER-LEVEL CONTENDERS

Daruma Asset Management Inc., a New York-based boutique investment firm and Katz’s client, began publishing an

e-newsletter called *On Daruma’s Watch: Monthly Small-Cap Insights for Investment Professionals* in September 2008. The goal is to build brand awareness, stay top of mind with its 50 clients and shorten the sales cycle by giving new clients a peek at the firm’s personality.

Each month Daruma founder and CEO Mariko Gordon writes about 1,000 words in informal yet informative posts under headlines such as “Disaster Management, the Green Beret and Lamaze Way” and “Alan Greenspan Abducted by Aliens.”

Gordon promotes her e-newsletter on her company’s Web site and has mentioned it in marketing collateral. She uses traditional e-mail metrics including registration counts—she has garnered approximately 1,600 readers thus far—and also measures her success by tracking positive feedback, and mentions of and links to her posts in other e-newsletters.

“Our newsletter is very atypical for people in our business” because it pushes beyond analysis to provide useful insights with a bit of humor, Gordon says. Some people might not like a funny money manager, but it’s “better to have a few people who really get you and like what you’re about” than to try to compile a broad but dispassionate customer base. “It’s good that people walking in the door already know us and feel comfortable with us,” she says. **m**