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## E-Newsletter Do's and Don'ts

Emailing a newsletter to your database can be a great way to keep in touch, build relationships and encourage referrals, but it can also be a colossal waste of time if not done correctly. Here is a checklist of dos and don'ts to help you connect and really engage your readers.

### DO

1. **Provide value.** Your newsletter should include a healthy mix of interesting content and solutions, along with special offers or product promotions. It's really important you don't use it to bombard readers with sales-type messages.
2. **Be consistent.** Be sure to send it out on a regular basis and commit to doing so. Ideally your readers should look forward to getting an update every month and this also establishes trust that you're here for the duration.
3. **Set up a template.** Have the same look and feel each month so all you need to do is drop in the content. Makes it easy for you to put together and easy for the reader to find what they are looking for. Include links to longer articles and your website and use an email program that gives you statistics on these so you can see what readers are clicking through on.
4. **Be personal.** Be sure to add merge fields to drop in the reader's first name. You may also want to target certain newsletters to identified segments of interest. This will make it more relevant and effective.
5. **Include a call to action.** Be clear in what you want your readers to do. If you include a feature on an event, service or product, also include a strong call to action that makes it easy for your reader to sign up or make a purchase.
6. **Be concise.** Don't assume people will read everything in your newsletter. Put the important things at the top, include a summary with links and be mindful of keeping it short and to the point.



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## DON'T

1. **Send without an unsubscribe or opt-out option.** Not only is this illegal, it's also annoying – we've all had this experience I'm sure. Also include an option to sign up on your website and keep your unsubscribe list up to date at all times.
2. **Send too often.** Set up a schedule and stick to it. Plan out what you want to highlight and when during the year and be mindful of not cluttering inboxes with too many emails. Try to send out information in the newsletter rather than in ad hoc emails.
3. **Forget to proof it first.** Nothing turns off readers more than mistakes and it reflects poorly on your business. Don't rush sending it out and have a couple of people read through it to check spelling, grammar and any offers you have included.
4. **Include too many things.** Set one specific goal to accomplish and plan your content around that. You can include an article, case study/testimonial, handy hint or promotion around one theme. Too many messages confuse people and it loses impact.