

5.1 Starting A Newsletter

Aim

- To help the practical trainee start a newsletter for a school or parish youth group.

Materials Required

- A computer with PageMaker or MS Publisher software and a printer

Procedure:

The students should solely design a newsletter, its content and format and have it published.

Input:

- Newsletters are specialized information to a limited audience on a regular basis. Most are four or eight pages long with a page size the same as business stationery (A4 size). They have short articles written in an informal style.
- Your most important need is to know what results the principal/parish priest and readers want from your publication. It is important to have goals, objectives and audience because they reflect desired results. They also shape decisions about content, design, printing and distribution.

Deciding the Purpose

- Either the student or the student in consultation with the principal/parish priest should establish the purpose of the newsletter. The purpose will be one of the following:
 - Marketing: Newsletters intended to sell ideas, products and services and include publications intended to raise money, increase membership or promote greater use of facilities.
 - Public Relations newsletters focus on attitudes instead of actions. A public relations newsletter helps people know more and feel better about its sponsoring organization. They build respect for content, support for causes and good will for sponsors.
 - Internal relations: The best internal newsletters help shape organizational vision and promote the feeling that "we're in it together". They establish direction, present agenda, build morale, inspire loyalty, and stimulate quality.

Define goals from the list below:

To advice	honour	praise
advocate	illustrate	predict
analyse	impress	prepare
announce	improve	prevent
assure	influence	raise funds
clarity	inform	recruit
condense	inspire	report
define	interpret	simplify
describe	justify	solicit
digest	lead	stimulate
evaluate	motivate	suggest
explain	notify	support
guide	persuade	teach
help	portray	train

Establishing Objectives

- Goals point to the direction of travel; objectives describe the destination.
- Quality reflects personality.

Making Financial Decisions

- Consider length, frequency, timing, schedule, quantity and distribution and develop a budget.

Select a name for your newsletter juggling the following key words:

- accents guide post

advisory	highlights	profile
advocate	horizons	report
alert	hotline	reporter
almanac	ink	resources
briefs	insider	review
briefing	interchange	scene
bulletin	intercomscope	
channel	journal	spotlight
connection	keynote	survey
context	letter	tab
digest	light	times
dimensions	line	topic
eye	link	trends
examiner	list	update
facts	log	viewpoint
file	monthly	views
focus	news	voice
forecast	notes	weekly
forum	outlook	wire
gram	perspective	world

Computers:

- You can produce a first rate newsletter with a powerful word processing program, such as WordStar, WordPerfect, and Microsoft Word. Even if you use PageMaker, Ventura Publisher, or another desktop publishing programs, write and edit using the word processor, then import files into the graphics program.

Content (story themes)

- Annual report (with summaries, photographs)
- Ask the expert (interviews with teachers and other experts)
- Awards (competitions and prizes)
- Board of Control (who are in control? Typical agenda)
- Bottom line: your most important values, how achieving success is measured.
- Break Time: how people spend work/study breaks
- Competition: who is your competitor?
- Computers (experts, its use and advantage for efficiency)
- Crisis Communication (official reactions and instructions)
- Customers/Clients (beneficiaries)
- Cutting costs/fees (benefits)

Department/Services

- Donations (fund raising for some project)
- Drugs (chemical dependency warning)
- Emergencies (hot line assistance)
- Energy saving activities/plans
- Ethics (proper use of phones, vehicles, tools and computers)
- Evaluation (services, staff and members)
- Growth (plans for growth, products and services)
- Health (health issues in your field)
- Insurance (unusual situations, policies and coverage you carry)
- Jargon (Prime examples in your field)
- Legislation (law/proposals affecting you).
- Long distance friends (feature their activities in the field)
- Maintenance time (things that need periodic check-ups)
- Neighbours (common interests of neighbours)
- New department/committee
- New supervisor/leader
- New technology
- New working conditions
- Organisations
- Parenting (help or activities for families)
- Politics (time, issues or other conflicts with job.
- Profiles
- Quality control (are you meeting standards?)
- Resources



Safety
 Scholarships
 Speaker programs
 Stress (among the staff/supervisors, students and teachers)
 Suggestions
 Suppliers
 Training opportunities
 Trends (how they affect you)
 Tours
 Volunteers
 Way to work or do better what you do.

Writing

- Headlines summarise and advertise a story. They must also relate to a story, use the present tense and be specific. i.e.
 Present tense Two girls raised by Miss Joan (NO)
 Joan raises two girls (YES)
- Specific Arts and Crafts displayed (NO)
 Craft fair heralds holidays (YES)

Writing Articles

- Style for newsletter articles should be informal and reflect natural speaking at its best.
- Use simple language. Write to express, not impress. Jargon drives out simplicity and separates you from readers.

Instead of	write
assist	help
obtain	get
ascertain	learn
attempt	try
communicate	say, write
facilitate	help, ease
implement	do
indicate	show
insufficient	not enough
numerous	many
terminate	end, stop
as a result of	because
in excess of	more than

Use Specific Terms

- Concrete words create images.
- E.g.: General – The annual meeting was well attended.
 Specific – Eighty-five people came to the meeting

Compact

Avoid clutter. Get to the point. Purge every useless word.

Strong Verbs make writing sparkle.

Weak verb	Strong verb
Inform	tell, say
reduce	cut
indicate	show
modify	change
endeavour	try
desire	want

Action builds interest

- E.g.: A candidate will be John Mark (NO)
 John Mark said he would run (YES)

Pronouns make sentences move briskly.

- E.g.: The sales manager informed the audit task force that projections were encouraging a reduction in personnel. (NO)
 She said some people would be fired because of falling profits. (YES)

Contractions You should not avoid one contraction where it sounds right. E.g. can't, won't etc.

Delete "that". Try crossing out every "that" in your article. Read the article aloud and replace "that" only when a sentence makes less sense without it.

Avoid bias. Don't risk offending readers with slurs, stereotypes based on gender, race, age, ethnic background, physical ability or sexual preference.

Parallel Language: If males are men, females should be women, no girls or ladies.

Equal Respect

E.g. John Rogers and Mrs. Thompson planned last year's annual picnic (NO)

John Rogers and Sally Thompson...(YES)

John and Sally (YES)

Generic Titles and Descriptions

NO	YES
businessman	executive, merchant
chairman	leader, moderator, director, head, chair
manned	staffed
man-sized job	big job, enormous task
middle man	liaison, intermediary, go between, agent
salesman	agent, clerk, representative
spokesman	representative, advocate

- There is no place for terms such as the better half, the fair sex, girl Friday, libber, old wives' tale, or the old man (for husband or father)

Copy Editing

- Copyeditors check and correct writing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and conformity to the requirements of a guide to style. It takes place while articles are still being shaped.

Proofreading

- Proofreaders examine final copy for errors in keyboarding. They verify accuracy, not style. It is the final stage of producing content.

One/two/three/four Column Format

- Design and layout
- Print according to your copy requirements.
- Immediate distribution must be assured.

Style Guide

A **style guide** or **style manual** is a set of standards for design and writing of documents, either for general use or for a specific publication or organization. Style guides are prevalent for general and specialized use, for the general reading and writing audience, and for students and scholars of various academic disciplines like medicine, journalism, law, government, business, and industry. Some style guides focus on graphic design, covering such topics as typography and white space. Web site style guides focus on a publication's visual and technical aspects, prose style, best usage, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and fairness.

Many style guides are revised periodically to accommodate changes in conventions and usage. For example, the stylebook of the Associated Press is updated annually. Certain style guides such as the Economist Style Guide and the Chicago Manual of Style are used as the basis for editing of major newspapers and magazines in Africa. However, they are usually modified to meet the audience written for and the values and goals of the media houses. It should be noted that not all in-house style guides advocate for correct grammar and punctuation as they do catchy phrases and subjective content and titles that ensure that the publication sells out. This is a major ethical issue in Africa.

Review

1. Newsletters are specialized information to a limited audience on a regular basis.
2. The major steps in creating a magazine are:
 - Deciding the Purpose
 - Establishing Objectives
 - Select a name for your newsletter
 - Making Financial Decisions



3. Headlines should advertise and relate to a story, use the present tense and be specific so as to be effective.
4. The style for writing a newsletter articles should be informal and reflect natural speaking at its best. It should also use simple language to express and not to impress and avoid because it drives out simplicity and separates you from readers.
5. While writing, you should use specific terms, compact words and strong verbs as compared to weaker ones. You should also endeavour to use action words because they build interest, pronouns because they make sentences move briskly and contractions when they sound right.
6. As a rule, you should express equal respect in your writing as regards males and females, avoid bias and employ parallel language whereby if you mention men for males, women should be mentioned for females. Avoids deviations from this such as girls or ladies for women. Also, give equal respect to both males and females in your writing.
7. Also, avoid the use of the word 'that' unless the sentence makes less sense without it.
8. A **style guide** or **style manual** is a set of standards for design and writing of documents, either for general use or for a specific publication or organization.
9. Certain style guides such as the Economist Style Guide and the Chicago Manual of Style are used as the basis for editing of major newspapers and magazines in Africa.

Reflection

'Not all in-house style guides advocate for correct grammar and punctuation as they do catchy phrases and subjective content and titles that ensure that the publication sells out.' What should be the basis of our writing as writers of the media? What should take prevalence: objectivity and truth, good writing or sensational writing?

Relevant Skills

1. Group the participants in groups of not more than 5 people and have them write articles for the magazine production project they will undertake for this chapter. Key points and guidelines explained in this chapter should be kept in mind.

Resources

BOSCOM-INDIA. 'SHEPHERDS' FOR AN INFORMATION AGE. Matunga: Tej Prasarini, 2000.

References

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_style