

Rising Up UPDATE:



June 2024

Newsletters - Why to write them & what makes people want to read them!

A great way to engage & retain members & volunteers is to make sure that they feel involved and a part of the organization. Newsletters can be one more way to do this.

A newsletter is a great way

- to keep your membership informed & up to date
- to engage with your members
- to give them opportunities to sign-up for volunteer opportunities and activities

Many of our Minto groups already write and share a regular newsletter with their members/volunteers. If you already have a regular newsletter, just thinking about starting one or if this is a new idea to your organization for consideration, the catch lies in creating newsletters that are interesting and valuable to your audience.

Getting Started

For those who are not already sending out a newsletter but might be considering it, here are some basic steps to start writing your Member/Volunteer newsletter.

1. Think of what you might want to include in your volunteer newsletter. (*see below for some help with that*)
2. Decide how often you would like to send the newsletter. (Weekly, monthly, quarterly?) You can easily create a “members newsletter group” in your email platform with all the emails of the members/volunteers you would like to include.
3. Pick a creative name for your newsletter! (neat tip - Think about certain things your members/volunteers may have in common, a pun with your organization’s name, or a play on words of what your newsletter delivers.)
4. Send a preliminary email to your member/volunteer base letting them know of the newsletter, how often it will come out, and what they can expect from it.
5. Design your newsletter, send it out, and ask people what they think!



Community Services
Recovery Fund



Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Community Services Recovery Fund

Canada

What to include in your Newsletter

What will your members/volunteers want to see in your newsletter?

Think about questions you often get that could be answered in a newsletter or topics you have noticed people needing more information about. Some suggestions might be: an event calendar; an update on the organization; a goal you are reaching towards, or even an introduction to different executive or other members/volunteers to feel more sociable.

Set the tone for your newsletter.

If your organization is quite a serious one, then it might not be a good idea to add games or puns into your newsletter. But, if you've noticed that your audience needs a bit of loosening up or might enjoy a newsletter as a fun pick-me-up, have some fun with it!

Call to action.

When you want your readers to act or respond to something in your newsletter – you may want to include something simple and fun such as a quiz/puzzle in or ask them to respond to a request for their participation in an organizational activity, such as signing up to work at an event or come to a social activity.

What purpose do your messages serve?

Do you want your newsletter to be educational/informative, fun/leisurely or engaging, or a combination of these?



Do you want your messages to be:

Educational & Informative

To train or inform your members.

If your members/volunteers want to learn more about a topic or if there is a need that they have information about a certain subject..

Such as:

- Provide information about projects or causes that your organization supports.
- Share information about topics that are of interest to your members.
- Event Calendar



Fun & Leisurely

Include fun information or activities to make your newsletter entertaining.



Such as:

- Crossword, regular puzzles, sudoku, hidden message games
- A fun recipe
- Recommended books, podcasts, movies

Engaging

An engaging newsletter includes features that you hope the reader acts on and completes, not just reads, or encourages them to engage with one another or with the organization!



Such as:

- Trivia questions or quizzes – you may even want to give a “prize” for the first correct answer emailed back or have a draw from all those who submit answers.
- Member/volunteer spotlight - if a member/volunteer reaches a milestone or is starting a new project, shine some light on them!
- Sign-Up - have members/volunteers complete a fun survey or incorporate your call to action in a fun way!

Write for Your Members & Volunteers –

People are typically motivated to join or volunteer for one of six reasons (or a combination of): values, social, protective reason motives, knowledge, career, and enhancement. When you write your newsletter, it is ideal to create content that speaks to those motivations.

Values

A way to express one's philanthropic & humanitarian values

Content suggestion:

A volunteer or member spotlight

Social

To develop & strengthen social ties

Content Suggestion: Add shout outs from the board & introductions to one another through the newsletter.

Protective Motives

A way of protecting themselves from the difficulties of life

Content Suggestion:

Self care tips

Increase Knowledge

A way to gain knowledge, skills & abilities

Content Suggestion: Training & education.

Articles on topics related to your organization's focus

Career

A way to gain experience & grow career prospects

Content Suggestion: Celebrate members/volunteer & professional successes, new jobs, promotions etc

Personal Enhancement

A way to help them grow develop themselves/their skills

Content Suggestion: Use members as guest columnist - encourage members/ volunteers to write stories for the newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Minto Volunteer Fair & Newcomer's Event
Clifford Carnival - July 13, 2024

Clary, E. Genet al., as cited by [Tobi Johnson](#) | November 26th, 2019 | [Pro Roundups](#)



Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Community Services Recovery Fund



Setting up and Writing your Newsletter

Now that you have considered what direction you want your newsletter to take, here are some tips on setting up and writing it.

1. Write an interesting and compelling subject line:

- Make it interesting and relevant to your readers.
- Keep the subject line short.
- Make it conversational and aim to connect.

2. Focus on one topic

- To maximize your readers' focus on what you want to convey to them.
- Try to avoid using industry jargon which might not be understood.
- Communicate value.

3. Stay consistent

- While you can send a newsletter as often or anytime you want, it's a good idea to be consistent on the time interval.
- Be consistent between your subject line and your newsletter content. Deliver what you promised.

4. Write to your audience

- Think about your typical reader and write as if you were conversing with that one person.
- Use a conversational tone.
- If you must use abbreviations or acronyms, explain them to help your readers understand.



5. Add visuals

- Pictures, (GIFs and videos if you are sending it out digitally) add interest to your newsletter as well as make it easy for your reader review the content. Your readers may not read every word in your newsletter, but a look at your visuals could help them understand the general gist of it, and recall it better.
- Keep the visuals appropriate to the text.
- Don't overpopulate your newsletter with visuals.
- Use colors throughout the newsletter for a pleasant flow.

General advice to keep in mind:

- Keep in mind readers have a short attention span, so trim the content of your stories and keep each piece in your newsletter to no more than 500 words (that's hard). Need to say more? Create a reader's digest for your newsletter and include a way for the reader to contact you if they want more information.
- If you cover a lot in your newsletters, create a table of contents so that readers can easily jump to the content they are looking for
- It doesn't matter how long or short your volunteer newsletter is - make it your best and you can always switch it up!
- If you have a member/volunteer who likes to write, have them help you and consider it volunteer hours!
- Create a running list of topics that you want to share; things that you find yourself repeating to different members /volunteers, or things you need to inform them about in your next newsletter. This way you don't forget what you want to include and you aren't stuck for topics when you need them.

Make sure the layout and design of your newsletter is visually appealing, on brand with your organization's standards, easy to follow, and not too cluttered.

In general, have fun with your newsletter so your readers will also have the fun of reading it. If it's not being read, then you are putting out a lot of time and effort that is not hitting the mark.

Happy writing!

References:

How to Craft Volunteer Newsletters People Actually Want to Read, [Tobi Johnson](#) | November 26th, 2019 | [Pro Roundups](#), Volunteer Pro, <https://volpro.net/>

5 Tips for Writing a Great Newsletter, Them You & Me, online blog, <https://themyouandme.com/>

The Volunteer Newsletter Guide - Tips, Tricks, Step-by-step guides and Examples!, Track it Forward, <https://www.trackitforward.com/Top of Form>