

Building the Perfect Newsletter

INSTRUCTOR NEWSLETTERS – BEST PRACTICES (AND PITFALLS)

by David Gould, Staff Editor

There's a memorable episode of "Seinfeld" in which Kramer decides to write a coffee-table book about coffee tables. In our salute to the classic sit-com, Proponent Group hereby offers you this newsletter article, about newsletters.

Of course, if that intro strikes you as clever and witty, so much the better for grabbing attention at the outset. Either way, communicating to current and prospective customers is serious business.

For starters, it consumes a portion of your valuable time, so you certainly want it to be time well spent. Secondly, the content you publish becomes part of your image. Thus, if Jane Doe has a reputation as a great teacher, and Jane's e-newsletter is clear, crisp and professional-looking, it's all good. The alternative? Jane's a great teacher but her e-newsletter is a hot mess.

Jane or John or any golf coach should have clear goals for their newsletter or news-blast email. The important messages it contains will include the following:

- I care about you, I care about your golf game and I want to help you have fun
- Whatever you need in your path to skill development, I can provide it
- Golfers who come to me for coaching improve their skills and love the experience
- **Right now I'm selling a certain program in a certain time period at XYZ price—buy it!**
- (Possibly) You and I are part of a golf community—here's something of common interest to us.

Video Via Email is a Tool for Success

A recent survey of companies with active marketing campaigns showed that no fewer than 93 percent were using video in some fashion, also that 60 percent were using video for email marketing. A study of consumers (visiting websites, not opening emails) by Diode Digital found that, before reading any text, 60 percent of visitors would watch a video if one were available—this undoubtedly translates to emailed content. A separate study, by the research firm Wistia, studied the key issue of running time and "retention," i.e., watching all the way to the end. It found that once people opened an email then clicked on a video, they were pretty likely to be interested. Videos under 1 minute, according to the report, enjoyed 80 percent viewer retention up to the 30-second mark, while videos 2-3 minutes in length still enjoyed 60 percent retention halfway through. Even 5-10 minute videos still saw over 50 percent viewer retention at the halfway mark.

MAKE THE TURN
Reveal Possibility

Golf Channel Academy
Want to learn more about how we can help you build a better game? Schedule our NEW Student Assessment at a special introductory rate of \$99 for an hour of performance analysis, game planning and strategy!
[Learn More](#)

Make The Turn

Negative Knockout
One of my favorite mental toughness mantras is, "In order to become different from what you are, you must first have an awareness of what you are."
[Watch Now](#)

Elevate Your Game. Activate Your Lifestyle.

MINDSET:
How To Eat Healthy On A Budget
Are you trying to eat healthier to lose weight, but don't want to lighten your wallet? Follow these 10 easy tips below to maximize nutritional benefits while keeping within your budget.
[Read More](#)

PERFORMANCE:
MTT Shop
This is the training T-shirt that started the "performance" revolution—quick-drying & insanely comfortable. See more of our Top Rated Products
[Shop Now](#)

THING GOLF
GAME YOUR BRAIN

JOIN FOR FREE!
DOWNLOAD NOW

SEE HOW IT WORKS!
JOIN FROM YOUR MOBILE DEVICE OR COMPUTER.
THE #1 MENTAL GAME APP FOR GOLFERS!

GOLF ACADEMY
Join The Movement!

Jeff Ritter makes the most of his newsletter emails with bold, easy to follow messaging.

Along with those basic and consistent messages, you are showing your logo, showing your picture, showing your contact info and providing a clear “how-to” for scheduling and booking. If some of this basic info is big and prominent, it can run “below the fold.” If it’s in the upper area of the email, it can run smaller.

Test what you send out by sitting alongside a friend when they first open your email. The friend should do his or her best to ignore your presence as they scroll around and absorb what’s in front of them. How long did they spend reading it? (Context: How much time do you expect people will spend with your e-newsletter?) Did what they saw on the screen appear as intended and scroll along properly? If the email was opened on a handheld device, did it appear as desired? Did the links work properly?

You might then ask your test reader: “What’s the first component of this newsletter you would delete if you were sending it, and why?” Also check into the sequence your test reader followed, as they read through the items. If they skipped over something, can they say why?

There’s a very good way to truncate an email newsletter or marketing email. Simply provide the headlines to your articles, plus a few lines of text, then build in “Click here” links that will take the reader to your website for additional information and a place they can sign up to participate. *Hint: Provide separate click-here lines, with links, for the additional info and for signup.*

Proponent member **Anders Mattson** consistently displays a fine touch with his email reach-outs to customers and prospects. The longtime director of instruction at Saratoga (N.Y.) National Golf Club sent a short, sweet email last fall that fired on all cylinders. Set up in two columns, it used the left side up top to congratulate a junior student who had made it to the Drive, Chip and Putt national finals. On the right was an offer for a well-structured program of late-fall, early-winter instruction—indoors and out—with a clear “call to action,” i.e., click this link and sign up now.

Through its periodic emails, Golftec displays its long experience as a giant marketer within golf instruction. Seldom will a Golftec email approach “newsletter” length and scale. Usually they are short—one or two screen-fulls on a laptop. Always there is an offer or promotion that calls the recipient to action. Every Proponent member who

The screenshot shows an email newsletter layout. At the top right is the Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate logo. Below it is a profile for Christie Tannler, including her phone number, email, address, and social media icons. The main content area features several article teasers, each with a small image, a headline, a short introductory paragraph, and a 'Full Article' link. The articles are: '5 Clever And Quick Wallpaper Projects', 'These Tricks And Tools Get Rid Of Annoying Backyard Pests', 'Can Homeowners Association Fine Some People, Not Others?', 'Millennials Finally Ready To Move Out, Buy Starter Homes', 'How Well Do You Know The Neighborhood?', and 'Local Entertainment And Events Calendar'. At the bottom, there are links for 'Update Your Information', 'Saved Articles', 'Comments and Feedback', 'Refer A Friend', and 'Your Privacy'.

To make it easier for readers to find the content that is of the most interest to them, simply provide the headlines plus a few lines of text, then have a “Click here” link that will take the reader to a page on your website with the rest of the article or information.

sends out marketing emails should try this short-form tactic, at least occasionally. Create a “non-newsletter” that greets the recipient, makes an offer, makes it easy to respond and then signs off.

From a purely graphic perspective, consider the following:

The sentence you are reading is “type-set” in 100 percent black. All of the so-called “body copy” in Proponent publications is black. By contrast, this one sentence is set in gray type—gray fonts are always some percentage of 100 percent black and this is about 65 percent. The look is popular these days, because gray type is pretty, even a bit elegant. It’s also quite a bit harder to read than black, especially when there’s a lot of it. Recommendation: Skip the gray and stick with black.

Text in publications is set up in columns. Every column has a certain width. We almost never see columns that are too narrow—columns that are too narrow create constant hyphenation and will irritate a reader due to generally choppy appearance. The excessively wide column is, by contrast, seen often. It causes a phenomenon graphic designers call the “long crawl.” A reader’s eye ends up crawling along from left to right, fighting to make sure it stays on the proper line. Long crawl is one of those you-know-it-when-you-see-it conditions. Set up columns to avoid this form of visual torture to the reader.

The club and the members can very clearly see that Tim wants to invest in them. He’s not saying “look at me” and how well I teach golf. Instead, it’s “look at them” and all the fun they’re having. A simple switch of perspective...

One way to keep the column width manageable is to set up two columns. If you go that route, you must be extra careful about keeping the headline, body text and photo arrangements extremely consistent. There has to be some form of symmetry between the two columns, otherwise the human eye and brain tend to throw in the towel. (See the example shown on the previous page.)

Finally, think about the process you’ve gone through with email marketing and e-newsletters as a repeat of the process you’ve gone through as a teacher. In the early days, you tended to talk a whole lot during a lesson, providing plenty of technical detail and generally making sure that the student recognized your impressive knowledge. Over time, you’ve talked less and less to students about technical nuances—keeping it to just what they need to know.

Try following that process in your e-newsletters and email marketing. It will save you, and your audience, a lot of time—and it will steer your email recipients toward further investment in their own games, and further investment in your business, as well. **PG**

Make Sure it Works on Handheld Devices

With a reported 53 percent of marketing emails being opened on a mobile device, email with mobile-friendly design is now essential. First rule for a mobile-friendly email is to keep the subject line down to 30 characters or less—anything longer gets cut off. Also, keep your copy short and sweet, centered on the screen in a single column. And forget about trying to deliver detailed technical information—even on a big screen it likely won’t get

read. Not all mobile devices display images automatically, so plan for an “images off” scenario, meaning your content still has to make sense if pictures don’t show. To ensure max clickability, make your CTA buttons at least 44 by 44 pixels. and leave enough white space around links and CTAs to make them clickable.

Remember to always place your call to action near the top of your email, to make it the most mobile-friendly.

