

# NEWSLETTERS 101: FIVE MISTAKES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

## 1. LACKING AN IDENTITY

INSTEAD: EVALUATE YOUR AUDIENCE, CONTENT, AND FREQUENCY

### AUDIENCE EVALUATION

- Broad audience = all alumni and chapter members in your area
- Is there a segment that's your priority audience?
  - For example: engaged members, casual alumni, future alumni, etc.?

### CONTENT EVALUATION

#### BIG QUESTIONS

- Why does this newsletter exist?
- What is its primary goal?
  - For example: To tell stories? Promote events? Recruit members?
- Why is this newsletter the best way to reach this audience?
- What does it add that our other communications don't?
- How does it fit into our overall communications plan?

#### CONTENT BUCKETS

- What types of stories/content support my goal?
- What types of stories/content are engaging to my audience?
- What are different ways to tell the story of my goal?

#### CONTENT SELECTION

- Does including this support my goal?
- Is this newsletter the best place for this?
- Have I shared this with this audience before? Where?
  - If yes, is it necessary to duplicate here?
    - If yes, how can I present it in a fresh way?

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## FREQUENCY EVALUATION

- What cadence is sustainable for me/my team?
- How often can I develop new content?

## 2. MAKING IT ABOUT YOU

### INSTEAD: ADOPT A READER-FIRST MENTALITY

- Present things in a way that are understandable to the “casual alum”
- Respect your readers time and keep things short
- Balance what you want to say with what your reader wants to hear by keeping your content fresh, interesting, and relevant

## 3. BEING A ONE-WAY STREET

### INSTEAD: INTRODUCE AN EASY ENTRY-POINT FOR READERS

- Seek reader feedback in ways that work with your content
- Be sure to follow up!

## 4. IGNORING DATA

### INSTEAD: GATHER WHAT YOU KNOW, AND USE IT

- Are you using each issue as an opportunity to learn?
- What data can you gather by observing your audience? For example:
  - Do you notice an increase of event registrations on the day you send your newsletter?
  - When you talk to your people, do you ask about your newsletter?
  - Do you receive responses to your newsletters? How many on average?
  - What types of Facebook posts do the best? What’s your average number of likes? Comments?
- Use data points to set goals, such as increasing reader
- Observe what types of content do well, and create more

## 5. PLAYING IT SAFE

### INSTEAD: TRY SOMETHING NEW

- If you try something new — that supports your publication’s identity, is something that has the readers’ in mind, and you check the data afterward — whether or not it works, it’s worth the exercise