

7 Tips to Help You Double Your Sales with Print Newsletters

Insurance Marketing *Made Easy*

Jim Whitaker

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Introduction

This year insurance agents are seeing fabulous results from print newsletters... some agents.

What differentiates the savvy successful agents from the rest is HOW they use newsletters to create excellent first impressions and then nurture clients, prospective clients and other centers of influence in order to obtain and maintain top of mind awareness and maximize referrals.

As you will discover below, your print newsletter is an extremely versatile marketing tool.

In addition to being portable and durable, your newsletter communicates practical, timely, important content *without selling*. These qualities make it a welcome guest in almost setting. Readers see your agency name on the cover, become familiar with your brand, trust you, perceive your authority and ultimately reward you for the valuable information you provide.

If you diligently practice just 2 or 3 of the following tips for the next 12 months, you will differentiate yourself from your competitors and likely double the amount of new business you usually get in a year.

Here are the 7 Tips...

1. Maximize Distribution

Send newsletters to your customers and prospects of course. But also take advantage of opportunities to widen your reach.

- a) Stay top of mind with your centers of influence, such as accountants, attorneys, real estate agents and others by including them on your mailing list. You might also want to exchange mailing lists with some of these people. Have them write you a letter introducing and endorsing your services to their client list and send it out with your newsletter, inviting them to contact you. And you would reciprocate of course.
- b) Place copies in your reception area.
- c) Include copies with presentations.
- d) Make sure everyone in your firm gets a personal copy, reads it and keeps it handy in case clients call and refer to it. Many agents tell us they and their staff learn a lot from the newsletters. Staff members may also want to refer clients to recent relevant articles. This engages clients and adds value as it builds client relationships.
- e) Use newsletters hand-outs at seminars and trade shows.
- f) Write custom feature articles about your clients and send them extra copies that they can distribute.

- g) Use them with telemarketing campaigns. Send them to prospects, then follow up. Ask if they've been getting your newsletters and would they like to continue getting them. Even if they say no, you've made a gesture to be helpful. Plus they might still say yes to getting a quote. This just wouldn't work at all if you were sending email newsletter. Print newsletters have that much more value.
- h) Be proud of your newsletter. Carry them with you and hand them out to people. They establish your authority and represent the culture of customer service that you want people to associate with your agency

2. Provide custom articles.

You can write the articles or we can write them for you. Here are some topic suggestions:

- Tell readers about yourself and others in your agency — your specialties, your accomplishments, even your failures and how you overcame them. The goal is to help people relate to you on a personal level.

- Present “thought leadership” positions by agency principals on insurance issues. You could discuss consumer-oriented changes you are working to advance as a member of a committee member of one of the associations you belong to. You could also offer “thought leadership” on non-insurance related community actions you are involved with. This material could also be re-purposed as news releases.
- Write about community events that the agency and its members support and participate in.
- Feature clients and their businesses. This is a great way to get pass along publicity, so give featured clients extra copies.
- Include articles by you and your staff, even if they are entirely unrelated to insurance or business. Write about a vacation, a favorite sport or hobby. Let your hair down. Be human.
- Create an editorial calendar. Decide how many upcoming issues you will feature custom articles in. Then decide which topics you’ll write about. For example, in January you might have a leadership article by the president. In March, you will profile one of your large clients. In May, you will feature a short vacation story by someone in the office with a call to action for clients to call if they want to buy travel insurance. And so on...

3. Give your newsletter a unique name.

Make it part of your branding. We have default names for the newsletters such as Employee Benefits Report and so on, but those can be easily changed.

Also, instead of the default color that we use for a newsletter, have us print your newsletter with the same color as your logo. Here is an example of how Group Insurance Services has done this:

Default Color

Custom Color

Employee Benefits Report

USI
www.usi.biz

Compliance June 2016 Volume 14 • Number 6

Compliance Dates, Deadlines and Changes

Employers have compliance requirements to meet or face possible fines. Two of the newest compliance challenges are the employee reporting requirements of the Affordable Care Act and employee classification for overtime pay.

This Just In

A **W**hile some of these compliance deadlines have passed for 2016, they should be on your calendar for 2017. Also, changes in employee exemptions are expected to be announced this year.

Employee Reporting Requirements

Applies to Any employer classified as an applicable large employer (ALE) which employs 50 or more full-time workers or part-time equivalents.

- **What:** Complete Form 1095-C for each full-time employee who has been covered under your health plan and is receiving minimum essential health coverage. File the forms with the IRS and send each employee a copy. This form lists the names, addresses and Social Security numbers of all employees and dependents who are covered under your medical plan and the number of months during which they had at least one day of coverage.
- **When:** By Jan. 31. Please note that the deadline this year was extended to March 31 for 2016.
- **What:** Submit Form 1094-C to the IRS. This form is basically a cover sheet for the 1095-C and provides information about your company, number of employees, contact person and how many 1095-C forms are being sent.
- **When:** The due date for mailing the 2015 Form 1094-C was changed from February 29, 2016 to May 31, 2016. If filing electronically, the due date was changed from March 31, 2016, to June 30, 2016.

Supporters say that without subsidies to insurers, they would have little incentive to stay on the exchanges because of low profit margins. UnitedHealth Group, Inc. recently announced it will exit most of the federal exchanges because it's losing money.

If Judge Colyer rules that subsidies should be eliminated, exchange insurance rates could increase by \$1,000 and the federal government will appeal the issue to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Employee Benefits Report

GroupServices
Benefiting you differently.

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We improve the profitability and success of organizations and people.

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4. Use inserts.

Place seminar, special event and product information flyers in your newsletter to capture attention. More agents should send client satisfaction surveys to customers. At least once a year get a reading on how you're doing, what improvements people think you should make, new products and services they would like to get from you. Be always improving!

Also, use business reply cards (BRCs). Magazines do this all the time. They do this to pull new subscribers. Our clients include them to promote engagement. The reply cards we provide are personalized for your agency and reflect the content of each issue so it's easy for clients to indicate what they want to discuss or get more information about.

You may not get a lot of responses, but you will get some. And simply including them is a thoughtful gesture that reminds customers you value their input and want to hear from them whenever they have questions — not just at renewal time. Even if someone doesn't return the card, it may prompt a phone call.

5. Don't expect newsletters to do all of your work for you if you mail to prospects.

“Send them and they will come” should not be your motto. Even if prospects read your newsletter and begin to have confidence in your expertise and access to coverages they need, most likely they will still not call you. You need to supplement your newsletters with good old fashioned phone calls and shoe leather. As a marketing tool, your newsletter is like a beautiful Ferrari — without an engine. Your follow-up provides the engine.

Most successful agents who use insurance newsletters as a marketing tool take a three-step approach: 1) identify prospects in those markets you feel you can serve best, 2) send them newsletters, and 3) follow up with a phone call after several months. Your newsletter gives you an automatic opening: "Are you getting our newsletter regularly? Is it going to the right person — and, oh, by the way, is there anything we can do for you? We'd love to quote your business."

6. Deliver it in person.

Take a page from a marketing tactic used by many of our title insurance customers. Every time they get a new newsletter, they take a stack and visit the real estate agents in town, using it as an occasion to pay a visit. So every now and then, deliver your newsletter in person. Then use it as an occasion to ask for a referral or get a testimonial. You can get more ideas about nurturing referrals and testimonials in our free

report, “7 Tips To Help You Double Your Sales with Print Newsletters.”

7. Be Consistent.

Add value and showcase your dedication to customer service by publishing your newsletter consistently. In the age of social media we are increasingly aware of the importance of relationships. You really don't want your customers to think that the only time you ever reach out to them is to collect a premium or renew their coverages. Everyone wants to be appreciated. You may not be able to afford to send all your customers a box of chocolates on special occasions, but sending them a newsletter regularly conveys your interest in them and is probably more professional anyway.

BONUS TIP:

Unlike email marketing where according to the misleadingly named CAN-SPAM Act, you need to have a business relationship with someone for permission to send them mail, this restriction does not apply to postal mail.

You can purchase mailing lists for any kind of target market and send them sales letters, special offers — or your client newsletter. This is a very profitable form of advertising for many agents and direct writers.

A list broker can help you identify lists appropriate for your target market. If your target market is employee benefits insurance buyers, for example, you could find a list of human resource managers, risk

managers and others involved in benefits decision-making at firms that fit your target market profile.

Start sending them your newsletter to build awareness and establish trust and authority in your brand.

After several months, call them, ask if they are receiving your newsletter and say you hope it's helpful. You know it's stressful providing benefits in today's heavily regulated climate. Then, ask the prospect what their number one problem is and schedule a meeting to discuss the strategies you think would work best.