

Region Gr8 Newsletter Competition

The Chapter newsletter is an extremely valuable tool for communication. Our publications reach out to members, potential members, and companies within our industry. It is the lifeline that kept us connected in the past and as we move forward with new technology it will take us even farther. Be informative but don't be afraid to step out of the safety zone to catch your reader's attention (within the bounds of professionalism). We should all strive to publish professional and informative newsletters.

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Greater Tidewater Chapter #137
Region 11 Newsletter Chair

Who: Region 8 Chapter Newsletter Editors, Chapter Presidents and all Region 8 Members

What: Newsletter Competition

Where: Region 8 Website

When: Region 8 Forum 2010 in Phoenix, AZ.

Why: To produce the best, informative, professional newsletters in NAWIC.

Competition Rules:

1. To be eligible, you must publish a newsletter each month starting in November and ending with the April issue.
2. Send a copy of your newsletter to diane@willowtreechd.com to be published on the Region 8 website so that other members can read and evaluate it.
3. Chapter members will access the Region 8 website (Chapter page) and read the latest newsletters for each chapter and give their input to their chapter president. In mid-April, chapter presidents will cast their votes (one vote per chapter per category) via email ballot for their chapter's choices. You can not vote for your own chapter. A tie will be determined by the Region 8 Director.
4. Judging will be based on the following criteria:

How professional is it? Does it promote NAWIC and display NAWIC goals and core values? Does it make referrals to or make use of national resources including NEF, NAWIC website, and NAWIC National publications.

Is it readable? Does it use correct spelling and grammar? Is the font style readable and consistent? Are the margins consistent?

Is it informative? Does it describe relevant NAWIC announcements, upcoming events and chapter projects? Does it contain information that is useful? Is it easy to find what you are looking for?

What is your first impression? How attractive is the layout, format and overall style? Would you be proud to display it in your place of business?

Winning Categories:

Best Overall Newsletter

Most Professional Newsletter

Most Improved Newsletter

Awards: To be announced when ballots are sent out in April.

Ten Steps to a Successful Newsletter

Effective newsletters are those that appear on time, are attractive and easy to read. On-time newsletters require careful editing and a format that can be easily prepared under last-minute conditions. The following ten tips can help you review the success of your current newsletter program or set up an effective newsletter to promote your chapter.

1. Commit to consistency

Commit to consistency. Consistency is the key to newsletter success. This is best achieved by setting a submission deadline date and an issue date for every month. Avoid overly-ambitious newsletter programs that require more time and money than you can comfortably invest. Disappointment is certain to result when you bite off more than you can chew. One of the most efficient and user friendly programs is Microsoft Publisher. This program is usually included in the Microsoft Office software or can be purchased separately and it has numerous templates for newsletters.

2. Choose a distinctive, benefit-oriented title

Newsletter success begins with the Newsletter Title. Choose a name that will stand out, stylish and fitting to the industry. Create a Newsletter title block that will appear at the top of the first page of your newsletter every month. The title block can be customized by font type and color and background color or picture but keep it simple. Remember the old saying—a little can go a long way.

Your newsletter's title should serve as an icon, or visual symbol, signaling the content of your newsletter. A title consisting of a few short words is better than one containing several long words. Short titles and words permit the use of a large type size. Instead of a long title, consider breaking the title of your newsletter into two parts; a short, key word set in a large type size supported by a longer subtitle set in a smaller type size which amplifies its meaning. Make sure that your newsletter title emerges as a distinct visual element, separate from the headlines and text that follows.

3. Choose the right margins and column layout

White space is the least-expensive way you can make your newsletters more attractive and easier to read. White space begins with generous margins. Always provide sufficient "breathing room" at the tops and bottoms of your pages. Consider leaving some columns blank. If you are using a three-column layout, omit text from the first column and devote it to photos, pull-quotes (a quotation or edited excerpt from an article that is typically placed in a larger typeface) and short topics. If you plan to include a lot of photographs in your newsletter make sure they following along with the articles and columns.

4. Make headlines easy to locate and read

Headlines are crucial to the success of your newsletter. Edit headlines to the bone, then edit again. Make headlines as short and "telegraphic" as possible. A two-line headline looks better and reads easier than a three-line headline. Use white space to make your headlines more effective and easier to read. White space acts like a magnet, drawing your reader's eyes to your headlines. White space above your headlines separates them from preceding text.

Be consistent. Choose a single typeface for all of your headlines and limit headlines to two sizes. Use one size for headlines of primary importance; another, smaller, size for headlines of lesser importance. This adds visual variety to your page and helps readers quickly identify the most important topics, yet avoids a disorganized image. Make your headlines stand out by choosing a typeface that forms a strong visual contrast with adjacent body copy. For example, use sans serif headlines (i.e. Helvetica) to introduce body copy set in a serif typeface (like Times Roman).

5. Choose the right punctuation and spacing

Prospective clients will gauge your professionalism and ability to satisfy their needs by the way you handle subtle details like punctuation and spacing. Avoid hitting the space bar twice after periods at the ends of sentences, as this creates distracting gaps—especially noticeable with justified text. Likewise, avoid hitting the Enter or Return key twice after paragraphs, as this creates distracting horizontal bands of white space between paragraphs. Instead, use your Paragraph formatting command to add Space After equal to one and one-half lines of text. Use the proper apostrophe symbol (') and open and closed quotation marks (" ") instead of typewriter-like foot (') and inch marks ("). Although your software may often automatically enter these appropriate punctuation, you should always double-check for accuracy. Instead of double hyphens, use a typographically-correct “em dash” (—) to indicate parenthetical expressions and shorter “en dash” (–) to indicate duration and compound words.

6. Align visuals with column boundaries

Avoid photographs that straddle two columns or extend into adjacent columns. This creates text wraps, narrow columns characterized by awkward word spacing and excessive hyphenation. Aligning photographs with column boundaries emphasizes the structure of your newsletter and makes it easier to read.

7. Provide meaningful and readable captions

After headlines, captions are the third most-noticed part of your newsletter. Accordingly, use captions to not only identify the contents and importance of each photograph, table or chart, but also explain their relationship to adjacent text. Captions should be as easy to read as body copy. Avoid long captions set in a small type size. Instead of using italicized type, consider setting captions in a contrasting typeface, which will help them stand apart from adjacent copy.

8. Use color with restraint

Exercise restraint when adding a second color. Concentrate color in a few key locations, such as the background of your nameplate or your organization's logo. Color often works best as a background element, rather than as a foreground element (i.e. text.). Avoid using a different color for each issue. This often confuses readers, (destroying issue-to-issue unity and familiarity), makes your job harder and increases printing costs. The different text and visuals on the front cover of each issue should be enough to differentiate each issue.

9. Detail your newsletter

Detail your newsletter by going through it, line by line, making sure that simple errors haven't crept in. Although today's word processing and page layout programs offer many advanced capabilities, programs differ in their ability to handle problems like the following:

- **Widows and orphans.** Widows and orphans refer to lines, or sentence fragments, isolated at the tops or bottom of pages or columns. The worst case scenario occurs when a subhead appears by itself at the bottom of a page, separated from the paragraph it's introducing at the top of the next page.
- **Separated first and last names.** If your software program permits it, insert non-breaking spaces to prevent first and last names from appearing on two lines. Likewise, avoid separating a month appearing at the end of one line and the remainder of the date at the beginning of the next line. Likewise, try to keep cities and states together.

10. Simplify your design

Strive for simplicity. Eliminate unnecessary boxes, borders and rules. Use a single headline typeface and type size throughout your headline and avoid the temptation to use too much bold or italics within your body copy. Clutter detracts from your message. Every change in typography, color or layout detracts from your reader's ability to concentrate on your message.

Conclusion

You can create and improve your newsletter's ability to generate new interest in your chapter by establishing realistic goals and working as efficiently as possible. Choose the least number of pages that offers you the space necessary to "tease" readers into contacting you for more information. Commit to simplicity and efficiency. Invest time up front creating a newsletter template containing a distinctive nameplate and a column arrangement that builds white space into each page. Create styles for headlines, subheads and body copy so you can work as efficiently as possible preparing each issue.

Additional Suggestions:

Format - Format refers to the actual structure of the newsletter. These characteristics make the newsletter look like a newsletter instead of a memo or letter.

1. The logo should appear on the cover or first page of the issue.
2. Chapter Name - The chapter name and number should appear somewhere in the newsletter heading at the top of the page.
3. Month/Year of Issue - The heading should contain the month and year. This should be a separate item from the meeting announcement. Using month, day and year is acceptable, but keep in mind that this makes it appear outdated after a week instead of a month.
4. Publication Name - The newsletter name should appear in the heading.
5. Use Bolding for Article Headings - All articles should have bold headings to make them stand out from the body of the newsletter.
6. Numbered Pages - Page numbering provides quick and easy reference, and is especially useful if the newsletter has a table of contents.
7. Good Overall Appearance - Newsletters should look professional and illustrations/pictures are recommended when possible.

Front Page - These elements should appear on the first page or cover of the newsletter in order to be easily found by your readers.

1. Table of Contents - The table of contents lets the reader know what is in the newsletter and offers an easy reference. Even if the newsletter is short, a table of contents should be on the first page.
2. Current Month Meeting Announcement - Because the meeting is an important function of the chapter, it should be highlighted on the front page. For example, the January newsletter would have information regarding the January meeting. The meeting announcement should contain information such as date, time, place, cost, and the reservation phone number.
3. The Chapter Board of directors includes the Chapter president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and board members.

General Ideas for your chapter Newsletter- The criteria listed in the general section help distinguish between a good newsletter and a great newsletter. These items make your newsletter more informative

1. Chapter Officers' Names and Phone Numbers/E-mails - This provides members with a quick reference. It is helpful for non-members who receive a copy to know who to call to become a member. Although it is not a requirement, it's a good idea to have this list located in the same place in each issue.
2. Article Describing Next Month's Meeting - A good descriptive article about the upcoming meeting will help promote and improve attendance. Many chapters are so large geographically those members may have to schedule time off from work to attend a meeting. The next month's meeting announcement is especially helpful for these members.
3. President's Message - The president's message is the place for the president to present his or her views on the industry or association, inform members of how the chapter is doing, and offer thanks and encouragement. Information buried in the president's message cannot be used for points in other items. For example, the president's message may mention that the chapter has 300 members. This cannot be used for points in the membership status report (Item #4).
4. Membership Meeting Attendance Report - This report is a list of members and guest in attendance at the monthly meetings.
5. Member Activities and Accomplishments - The information can be career oriented, such as a promotion at work, honors or awards received, or offices held in other organizations. Some chapters spotlight members with an interview including career highlights. Examples of information that doesn't count are birth announcements or lottery winners. Another suggestion is a member profile for various reasons (new members, members who have been in the chapter a while, etc.).
6. Chapter Activity Report Article - This article should explain what the chapter has chosen as its goals and how it is working to achieve them. This could easily be done in a series featuring the different sections of the activity report (timely plan, community affairs, etc.).
7. Career Development Section - One of the most important benefits of chapter membership is the opportunity to network with your peers. This section can consist of jobs-available ads from companies looking for an industrial engineer, jobs-wanted ads from your chapter members, a listing of your chapter's job hotline number, or articles about writing a resume or interview tips.
8. One Year Plan Submission - As with most projects, planning leads to a better product. Please include your newsletter plan for the coming year. It should include, but not be limited to, budget requirements with projected income from sponsorship and advertising, the number of newsletters that will be produced, and a general overview of goals you want your newsletter to accomplish.