

9 Tips -- Compose A Delightful Newsletter

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'Tis the season! Everyone's busy. Your challenge – compose a holiday newsletter your audience will thrill to read.

1. **Know your audience.** This is the cardinal rule in all communication. Tailor your message to their needs/interests. Litmus test: Does everyone on your list care that your baby is now potty-trained? Probably not. For that reason, here's Tip #2!
2. **Create two versions of the letter.** Santa has two lists: Naughty and Nice. You can have two lists, as well: Friends and Family. This is easy! The first letter – designed for friends – provides big picture news that everyone will enjoy. The second – designed for family – begins with that same information but follows with more personal detail, e.g., news about that potty training.
3. **Outline your holiday letter.** Now that you have the two lists, identify what stories to share with each group. The outline is a roadmap to organize your thoughts on the previous year's events.
4. **Triage your stories.** People are busy, especially during this season, what do you *most* want them to know? Start with that. Prioritize these tales – limit yourself to one page. Recognize that some items won't make the cut. And, that's OK!
5. **Avoid gibberish!** When writing, avoid extraneous detail of little interest to many of your readers. Litmus test: Are your readers familiar with people to whom you refer? If not, consider revising the draft. Here's an example:

BEFORE: "In July, my cousin Mary, her husband Jeff and their three kids (Jane—age 3, Harry—age 5, and John—age 7) visited us in D.C. for eight days. The next week, an old high school friend (whom I haven't seen in years) Mary Jane Henderson, her husband, and four kids spent a six days with us, too."

Yawn. Leverage that space to tell *this* story,

"We hosted many friends and family visiting D.C. in July. George Washington's home, Mount Vernon, was spectacular and, for the first time, we enjoyed a dinner cruise down the Potomac!"

6. **Avoid writing to "Dear Diary."** Don't use the holiday newsletter as a cathartic opportunity to unburden yourself of troubles, frustrations, or conflicts experienced in the concluding year. If you must share such information, do so in a separate correspondence. Remember, this is the gift-giving season. Compose a holiday letter that will bring joy to your readers.
7. **Make each word count!** Leverage space in that one-page letter *and* the reader's time. How? Revise the draft and apply Word Sculpting Tools to discard useless words, redundancies, gibberish, and words that hog space.
8. **Verbs are your friends – Rely on Them!** Verbs make your product sparkle, adding pizzazz, depth, color, and excitement. Verbs mesmerize, delight, horrify, and amuse. Use them and have fun. Examples: *extend an invitation = invite, make contact with = contact, and pay a visit = visit.*
9. **Conclude with a personal touch.** Include on the newsletter a personalized, handwritten note specific to the intended recipient. A sentence or two in the corner will suffice to deliver that special holiday greeting.

