

Newsletters & more

Full Spectrum Design, Production & Project Management

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Why should you read this newsletter?

Did you begin here? If you did, you're responding to visual cues purposely designed to attract you to the lead story. Bold contrasts of scale, weight, and color make the headline above and the large letter "D" at left (called a drop cap) stand out from the rest of the page. Placement, too, brought you here. Readers of English are conditioned to start reading somewhere near the upper left-hand corner of the page, underneath the nameplate.

This is a sample of the kind of information you can expect to learn in the next few pages.

Before beginning work on this newsletter I asked myself "What do I want you, the reader, to get out of it?" Based on the answer to this important question, I was able to plan, target, write and design it. Remember this question when you begin planning your newsletter.

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Sheila Hoffman and **Newsletters & more** is my business. I have a marketing and public relations background, a degree in design, and I offer excellent communications skills for facilitating your entire print project. I know how to get you the best printing prices as well as the nuances of choosing environmentally friendly papers and inks.

Since 1988 I've been working with non-profits and small businesses designing and producing effective, low-cost newsletters. Recently the "& more" has come to mean A LOT MORE!! In the last few years I've designed a wide variety of print materials from brochures and buttons to catalogs and web sites. Recently a client came to me needing business cards, letterhead, presentation folders, postcards and a banner, all in two weeks, for a trade show! Not only did we meet the deadline but we came in well under the anticipated costs.

That's why I've added the new tag-line: *Full Spectrum Design, Production & Project Management*. I do a lot more than design newsletters. I know my way around a wide variety of mediums. And, I know how to stretch your limited budget. Not only that, I provide fast turn around and I can help you stay on schedule. I am centrally located on Capitol Hill and have a FAX and modem for easy communications.

So whether you're new to creating print materials or an old hand, call me today to setup a free get-acquainted meeting.



My first goal is for you to learn readily useful information to improve an existing newsletter or begin a new one successfully. So I have included many of my own checklists and tips, as well as excerpts from other resources.

Next, I want to instill a sense of the scope of details and skills necessary to successfully execute a high quality newsletter.

And third, I would like you to recognize me as a newsletter specialist. I want you to turn to me when you need assistance with your next newsletter.



From inception to completion, Sheila transforms my written word into my business' most powerful marketing tool! She efficiently handles all the details involved in the production of my newsletter. Sheila is extremely creative and fun to work with!

—Tierney Salter, Medical Herbalist
owner of The Herbalist

Look inside for more examples of my design work and what clients say.

Why have a newsletter?

Dollar for dollar, newsletters are one of the most effective ways to reach your market. As publicity experts have pointed out for years, newsletters let you:



- ✓ communicate frequently with a highly specific audience;
- ✓ establish yourself as an authority and market leader;
- ✓ enhance your image and credibility; develop good service or product identification;
- ✓ and offer potential users, buyers or members a personalized contact.

Of course, these experts are talking about good newsletters. Good newsletters are successful if they get read. That's because they are always well planned, well targeted, well written and well designed.

Ask yourself these questions to evaluate your newsletter

In this high tech world, newsletters provide an opportunity for a personal touch. Here are some questions to help you evaluate the effectiveness of your newsletter.

- Is it consistent from page to page and from issue to issue? Are things easy to find (table of contents, page numbers, consistent placement of regular features)?
- Is there an adequate variety of topic and article lengths? Do front page articles jump inside?
- Are there adequate points of entry for the reader (bullets, drop caps, lists, sidebars, quotes, etc)?
- Is the quality appropriate to the image you want to project (not too slick/not too grassroots)?
- Does the design adhere to the 5 basic design principles: balance, unity, rhythm or repetition, proportion, and contrast?
- Is there one dominant visual element on each page? Does everything have a visual connection to something else on the page?
- Does it use good typography (see common mistakes on the back page)?
- Are headlines easy to read and clearly related to the article? Do they use action words and benefits?

I want to thank you once again for the consulting you did with us for our last newsletter. Your input was invaluable and your skill impressive. We're very pleased with the end product; it's a quantum leap over our previous newsletter, thanks to you.

—New Road Map Foundation

Before you begin your first newsletter

Here is a checklist of some important things to think about before you begin producing your first newsletter.

- ✓ What is your purpose? Know what you want to have happen as a result.
- ✓ Who are you talking to (demographics)?
- ✓ What are you talking about?
- ✓ What type/length of articles?
- ✓ Who will write it and edit it?
- ✓ What type of image you want to project.?
- ✓ Who will it go out to and how will it be distributed? (How many do you need to print.?)
- ✓ How often will it go out.?. Be sure you're prepared to maintain this frequency on a consistent basis.
- ✓ How many pages? This can affect weight, therefore postage costs.
- ✓ What kind of paper (color, weight, size, recycled)?
- ✓ Where will the graphic elements come from photos? copyright-free art?
- ✓ What is the budget? Remember to include: initial design, writing, editing, production, paper, printing, folding, mailing services, and postage.
- ✓ And lastly, who is in charge? Management by committee increases project time and costs.



The Taste of Health tabloid, above, is full four-color process printed on a web-press.

Guidelines for copy preparation on your PC or MAC computer

Don't let this section intimidate you. I've included it to help you when preparing your materials to submit to a designer. The guidelines can save you time and money.

1. DO create a separate file for each newsletter article or segment of a brochure. Do NOT put more than one article or segment in each file.
2. Use a descriptive name for the file, with an appropriate 3 letter extension. If you are using Microsoft Word, save documents with a .DOC extension. If you are using WordPerfect, save with a .WP6 extension. IF using any other software, save as an ASCII text file with a .txt extension. Please comply with this even if you're on a MAC.
3. Do NOT indent paragraphs. Do NOT use all UPPERCASE.
4. DO use only one space (NOT two) after a period. If you can't avoid this hangover habit from typewriter days, do a search and replace when you're done.
5. Always use one carriage return ONLY at the end of each paragraph. Even if it looks OK on your screen, there MUST be one, and only one, carriage return at the end of each paragraph. In other words you don't want it to look like when you put a second return in as in "skipping a line".
6. AVOID extra carriage returns at the beginnings and ends of articles and at the end of lines.
7. Do NOT include the date, word count or other extraneous information at top of articles.
8. Do run a spell check in your word-processing software and double check all proper names and telephone numbers.
9. Do NOT include article file name in file but DO hand write on hard copy (see #11).
10. Unless you're using Word or WordPerfect, do NOT use **bold**, *italic*, or underline as these codes may get lost in translation. In fact NEVER use underline anyhow! It cuts off descenders (the part of letters that extends below the baseline as in the letters g, j, p, y, etc.)
11. DO provide a printout of each article (or complete brochure) including hand-written file name at top of each, as well as any other specific preferences.
12. If you are using a MAC, be sure to save files on a high density (1.44 mg) disk. It has a hole in both corners. I cannot read low density MAC disks. I can read ZIP disks from both the MAC and PC.
13. Files can be e-mailed to: SheilaHoff@aol.com.

Tips for instant improvement

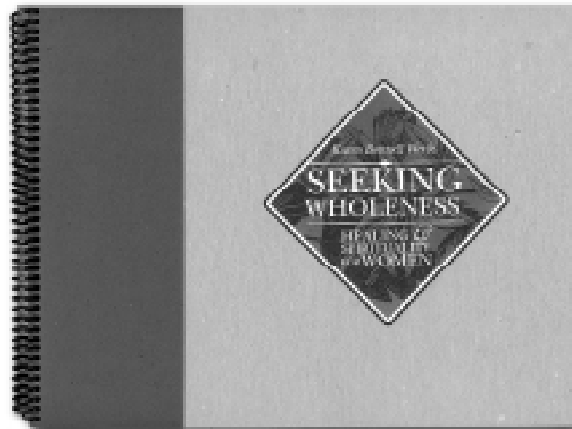
Lower the Fog Index (ie: increase readability) by using shorter sentences and words. Choose periods over semicolons, "use" over "utilize."

Apply the dollar bill test to assure that no overpowering blocks of body-copy turn off readers. Place a dollar bill anywhere on the page. If it touches only body copy, redesign it.

Before writing a story, ask yourself, "Who cares?" Keep in mind that the publication is intended for those receiving it, not those sending it.

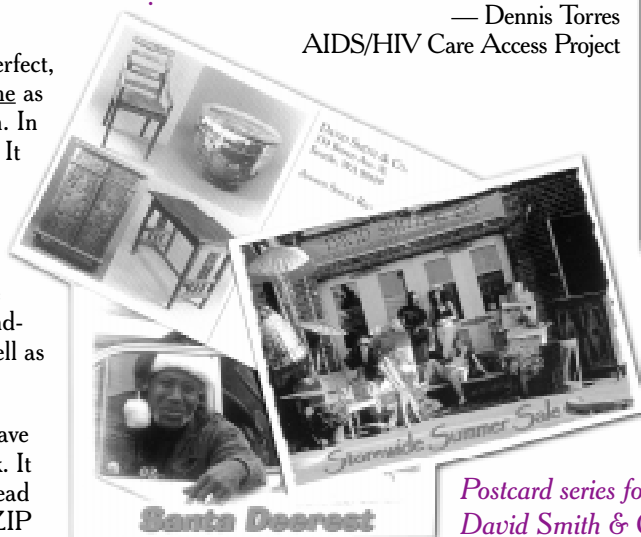
How wide should a line of type be?

There's a very old rule of thumb that says a line of type should not be any longer than an alphabet and a half in the same point size (font size x 2 or lowercase alphabet x1.5). A line with 55-60 characters (9-10 words) provides optimum readability. As line length increases, both paragraph indentations and leading (line spacing) should also increase. In addition, take into consideration the x-height and overall legibility of the typeface, ink color and paper to decide the best line length for your situation.



We've come a long way! I love our new look! Hope you like it as much as I do. It's been great working with you. I'm looking forward to working on the brochure.

— Dennis Torres
AIDS/HIV Care Access Project



Postcard series for David Smith & Co.

Thanks so much for your time and creative energy! I am pleased with the cards—they feel like an appropriate reflection of who I am, and what I'm currently offering.

—Julie Cauthorn

The feedback has been very strong regarding design and ability to "capture" how people experience me and my practice. A true success! Thank you.

— Karen Werth, MS
SEEKING WHOLENESS



The EarthSave International brochure, above, is 8.5 x 5.5" with 5 panels. The same look was used for the web site. Visit them at: www.earthsave.org.

F.Y.I.

Col•o•phon

from Greek Kolophon: *summit, finishing touch, an inscription placed at the end of a book, manuscript, or newsletter with facts about its production.*

The body-copy of this newsletter is set in Cheltenham 10/11 (that's 10 point type on 11 point leading, the space between the lines.) The headlines are in Gil Sans Condensed. The paper is 100% post-consumer waste recycled Genesis, Milkweed (the color). The ink color is PMS #266.

I use a PC computer and am able to read and write to MAC high-density disks and ZIP disks. The primary programs I work in are Adobe Pagemaker, Photoshop and Illustrator, as well as Corel Draw. I have all the tools and resources necessary to complete your job including a scanner, CD's of fonts, clipart and photography, a color printer for draft proofing and a high-resolution (1200 DPI) laser printer. I have a long term relationship with Seattle Image Setting for all your film output needs and work with a diverse selection of printers in the area.

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by Sheila Hoffman.

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Common typographical mistakes

If words like kerning, leading, tracking, serif, ligature, drop-cap, DPI and descender sound unfamiliar to you, you may be making one or more of the following common typographical errors:

- "inch marks" instead of "smart quotes";
- auto leading (the computer software default spacing between lines is often too much, especially in headlines);
- too many different typefaces (the ransom note effect);
- sans serif type such as Helvetica or Avant Garde as body-copy (it's great for headlines but the little serif feet make reading body-copy much easier);
- 3 or more hyphenated lines in a row;
- using all uppercase;
- no white space or trapped white space (white space is a planned element in your design and offers the eye a resting space);
- baselines not aligned across columns;
- drop caps that don't align with a baseline of type;
- reversed out serif text (white on black);
- too many boxes, lines and shading (you don't have to use all the options!);
- using underlining (this was a typewriter way to indicate italics; it cuts off descenders;)
- using two spaces after periods (this causes white rivers in the body-copy);
- and 300 DPI screened box with serif text (if you have any screens, final output should be done to linotronic film at high resolution.)

There are many good books on type. One I like is: *The MAC is not a Typewriter* by Robin Williams. And if your budget requires doing your own design, her book *The Non-Designer's Design Book* is essential.

Why hire a professional?

Everyone wants to look good. Your printed materials are your public face. If it's important for your newsletter to get read, a professional can help you get the job done.

Hiring a professional can save you time and money while assuring a quality product. In desktop publishing, many separate tasks that were accomplished by skilled artisans are now performed by a single person.

Non-profits and small businesses tend to try to do it all by themselves. You may have a powerful computer and specialized software for doing layout production work. But, do you have a staff person with all the necessary skills? Such skills include: writing, editing, proofreading, design, typography, and the ability to work with a printer. Staying on top of this fast-changing technology can be a full-time job.

When you need help, call a professional. I can design your first newsletter, evaluate an existing newsletter, or just be available when you have questions along the way. Call me at 206/726-0598.

Ways you can save money

Be prepared when you go to your designer. Consider the checklist *Before you begin your first newsletter* on page 2.

Keeping it simple can help save money: have fewer pages; publish less often; use fewer colors; have fewer photos; choose plain paper; use a standard size; use standard folds; don't bleed off page; avoid tight registration.

Do your own writing if you can. You know your audience and organization better than an outsider.

Hire a professional to design the template and then do it yourself. If you choose to go this route, retain the professional on-call for advice and consultation.

Plan ahead so you can print enough the first time. Look for ways to print different projects at the same time to avoid costly setup fees and ink-change charges. I can help you plan for this.

Prepare your articles on a computer disk using guidelines provided.

Use the coupon below! I can help you save money on all your design projects.

SAVE!

Free!

**1 hour consultation
or
15% off your first design project.
Call Sheila at 206/726-0598**

This offer good through: _____