How to Develop an E-mail Library Newsletter : a Cakewalk

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Abstract :

Email is a friendly and cost effective technology for communication. Libraries effectively making use of e-mail for marketing the library products and services. Library newsletters furnish with promotional and informative description of information products and services. Library newsletters furnish with promotional of Newsletter for libraries follow the same process as similar as similar to the business newsletter. But use Like any other promotional tools, success of email newsletter is depending on content presentation, layout, layout, quality of content and delivery time etc.

Keywords: Online Newsletter, E- mail Newsletter

Introduction :

E-mail is a user friendly and cost effective for communication, Libraries effectively make use of e-mail for marketing their products, services, arrival of the documents and intimation to the users on various matters. Brochures, promotional presentations, annual reports, contests, display signage and websites are other popular marketing tools used in libraries. The benefits of using email is library are for building relationships and developing branding loyalty by providing various services such as informing user of new products and services, seminars, event, etc and creating and maintaining one to one relationship with customers [1].

Email Library Newsletter :

Newsletter in e-mail is electronic of traditional newsletter distributing on Internet in the form of emai9l as part of marketing campaign. Email newsletter often furnish promotional and Informative description of products and services for the target audience. People

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need to be made aware of the services and products libraries proving and their comparative value. In addition to library must communicate with its customers and governing/funding entities for keeping them aware about the activities library is doing (2). Email newsletters are apt for the promotional and communicative purpose of libraries because of the following reasons:

1.   Ability to reach large number of audience
2.   Law cost compared to traditional promotional methods
3.   Easy to track user response (e.g. web counter to track users site visit)
4.   Round the clock service
5.   Instant delivery of massage and faster response from users.

Newsletter development for libraries follows quite similar to the process for the business newsletter. Only thing to be remembered while developing a newsletter is that it must reflect the libraries vision and goal in terms of service.

Newsletter Content :

Libraries can make use of the newsletter to deliver for information for various contexts and purposes. Some instances are, newsletter informing latest news library, arrival of new documents and Information alerts in various subject fields. Content of the newsletter depends upon the nature of library resources, services and users, services and user. Mostly following contents do appear in the library newsletter:

1.   Library news (e.g About library hour change, new branch opening, staff transfer, library guests, exhibitions, training programs etc)
2.   General interest articles
3.   Book reviews
4.   Schedule of forthcoming events and
5.   Reviews of nascent resources, information products and services

Library staff must be coordinating all the activities related to newsletter publishing. Various activities Involved in newsletter publishing I.e. content reporting, writing, formatting and sending can be pooled among other library staff keeping the timeline intake. The person blessed with the good to the final works to a freelance editor would be also a

good step towards the editorial process of the newsletter.

Newsletter content must be short and to the point, Content should be picked up in a manner that stays up to date with news from library. Each item in the library newsletter must be distinct and useful to know about activities in library. Decide in advance what amount of content appears in each issue of newsletter and it should be consistent.

Building E-mail List :

The target audience of e-mail newsletter would be library members and therefore collecting email addresses will not be a difficult task. The e-mail addresses of the library users can be collected from the membership desk that could be the simple way of building an email list for newsletter. Placing an online subscription from in the library website is another way of attracting an audience to the newsletter. Remember to place an unsubscribe form in the same webpage and a provision for subscribers to change their email address.

Saving the email addresses in a Excel sheet or in a text file and keeping it in a separate can act as a back up of the list. This back up list will be helpful migrating between email sending software and recovery of email addresses after accidental data loss.

Format of E-mail Newsletter :

Email Newsletter can be delivered in various formats. Popular email newsletter formats are:

-Plain text

-HTML format

-Post Document Format (PDF)

A newsletter In HTML format the advantage of formatting with different colors, fonts and graphics Features of Plain text newsletter are of small file size and compatible with any email services Newsletter in PDF format is easy to and manage as it can be attached or linked with email. PDF format of newsletter can be created directly from formatted word document. It is possible to create printer friendly format with PDF document.

Manual formatting of newsletter e-mail client at the time of sending out is time consuming either to seek the help of a webpage

designer for creating well-formatted template or to make use of newsletter templates available online. Newsletter templates are set of pre-designed formats for text and graphics on which newsletter can be created. OSWD.org is a good place to find free HTML templates licensed under open source license agreement. It is suggested to customize the suitable free template for requirements before use.

E-mail newsletters do not fill with much graphics. Subscribers with low speed Internet connection feel difficulty while loading images. If content for newsletter is less (e.g. list of new books in library) list the entire item in body of the e-mail. Another convenient way is to organize huge content in a webpage and include the link of HTML page in the invitation massage to the reader. Placing a table of contents inside the web page with hyperlinks is helpful is helpful to navigate the lengthy body. Header and footer space is space is essential to give volume, issue number and contact information.

Any word processor software with good spell checking facility can be used for data entry. MS word is the best available tool for this purpose. A WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) web page editor (i.g. Nvu) is helpful to transfer the content from word file to HTML page in a browser and check for code errors, working of image links and hyper links.

Select and copy the body of the content using 'select all' and 'copy' command from edit men of the HTML editor. Open the e-mail sending program and use the 'pasts' command to transfer the HTML formatted text. Email services behave diverse with HTML codes and before sending the newsletter; need to test the newsletter format compatibility with popular e-mail services (e.g. Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail). Scanning of the e-mail list of subscribers will help to get an idea of email services popular among library users.

Sending out e-mail Newsletter :

Sending e-mail newsletter to subscribers is different from sending ordinary e-mails. Email newsletter is to be sent to a large group in one instance and should address the reader individually by his name. A mailing list program allows sending out messages to everyone on the list of email addresses. It ensure distributing the copies to each address on the list. Libraries can choose mailing list softwares or online mailing list

services. Both free and commercial mailing list programs available and most of can be activated by payment. Group Mail (www.group-mail.com) is ideal e-mail list software and having both free and commercial versions. Following features should be considered while choosing newsletter-sending software for the purpose:

a.   Capability of sending both text and HTML format newsletter,

b.   Provision to create user groups (e.g. faculty, students etc, e-mail addresses in groups help to send occasional announcements to individual user segments),

c.   Facility of import e-mail addresses from various sources (e.g. importing addresses from outlook Express address book, CVS files or Excel sheets),

d.   Automatic deletion of bounced e-mail address from the list and

e.   Advance scheduling of newsletter delivery.

Archival of Newsletter :

Old Issues of newsletters can be archived in the library website for the convenience to browse by online visitors. Past issues in HTML, PDF or text format have to be kept in library website server and linked against issue names in newsletter archive page. Archiving old issue of newsletter also help to include in index of search engines and get list in search engines result page.

Collecting Feedback :

Conducting a survey among subscribers is applicable to know how much effective is the library newsletter. Collecting feedback once in a year is ideal. Online survey tools (e.g. result instantly. In addition to annual survey, give contact details in the footer space of the newsletter for collecting valuable suggestions from readers.

Conclusion :

Marketi9ng is a complicated problem for libraries because of their range of products and services from books to Internet access, and an extremely diverse audience [3]. Like any other promotional tools, success of e-mail newsletter is depending on content presentation, layout and on delivery time. Library newsletter should always emphasize services and not become simply a list of new acquisitions [4]. An e-mail

newsletter is a compelling tool for libraries to market themselves and stay in touch with the users.

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