

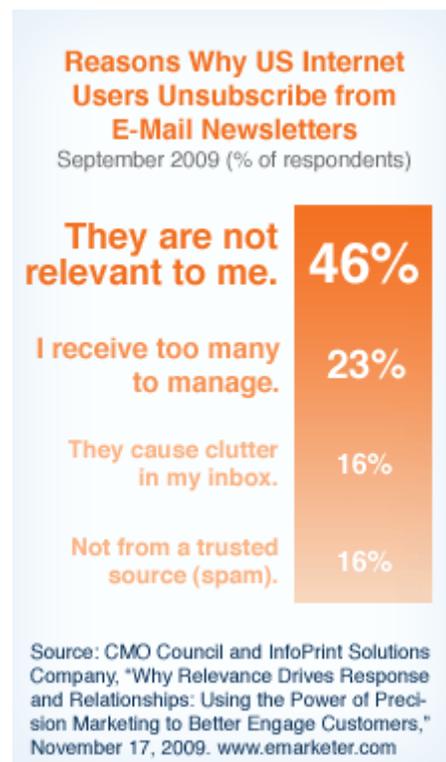
Marketers Sing the Praises of “R-E-S-P-E-C-T” to Improve eNewsletters

Crowdsourcing (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdsourcing>) is a great way to utilize the broader community for feedback, new ideas and solutions to problems. It's the “cloud” version of “putting your heads together.”

When Ennect reached out to the marketing membership of the Focus Community (www.focus.com) for tips on improving emarketing newsletters, what we heard back sounded strongly like the lyrics of an Aretha Franklin tune. Our marketer colleagues sang the praises of giving readers “R-E-S-P-E-C-T.” Even if your readers don't give you all their money, they do give you time and interest. Here are five tips for giving them back what they deserve:

1 - Respect Your Readers' Time

Jason Markow, who writes the *Think (here) blog* (<http://jasonmarkow.com>), says newsletter writers should understand that people are busy. “The most successful eNewsletter campaigns I ever had were extremely light on text, rich in content, and link heavy.” Jason's advice: “Don't use the newsletter to try to share everything at once. Use it as a notification. By changing your message from a ‘megaphone’ to a ‘memo pad,’ you will find that readers who click through to your content are going to read it.”



2 – Respect Your Readers' Interests

Chicago-based marketer Denice Shuty, owner of Writely Yours, says, “Don't tell people what YOU want them to know; give them what THEY are interested in. Let your subscribers' interests/issues dictate the content. If your eNewsletters are mostly about your company, your accomplishments, your products, etc., you'll see your 'open' rates decline pretty fast.”

3 – Respect Your Readers' Right-to-Know

Be clear about who you are suggests Michael Schmier, VP of research and media at Focus/Tippit. “If you don't have a good 'from' address and 'subject line,' you're already walking uphill,” says Schmier. Many writers overlook these components of the email header. For Schmier these are critical gates which, if not clearly marked, he – along with other readers – might just not open.

4 – Respect Your Readers' Willingness to Be Delighted

“Use pictures, especially when they are worth 1,000 words,” says Keri Ann Lutz, communications and marketing manager at FCIB. And, she says, “Don't be afraid to use humor. It's the best way to break down barriers and establish common ground.”

5 – Respect Your Readers' Opinions

This also from Keri Ann: “Ask for feedback and use it in a future newsletter. People appreciate not only being listened to, but also feeling like they are an equal participant in your publication. It is made for them after all, isn't it?”

6 – Respect Your Readers' Expectations

“Be consistent,” says Mari-Lyn who stopped publishing a printed newsletter because she never received feedback on its value. One day she ran into one of her former readers who asked about the newsletter since she hadn't received it in a while. “I told her that I wasn't publishing anymore because I wasn't getting any feedback from my readers. So, I quit. Don't quit.” Michael E. Dortch, director of research for Focus/Tippit, adds this: “As pedestrian as this may seem, I'd recommend that every eNewsletter producer adopt a consistent set of editorial rules and regulations, to make sure that, for example, no acronym not in broad use goes unexplained on first use, and that all appropriate references to companies and people include complete, accurate hyperlinks. Memorizing the *Chicago Manual of Style* isn't necessary,” says Dortch, “but a bit of consistency goes a long way towards greater readability. “