

So You Want to Win a Newsletter Award

Well, this page is definitely for you. But remember, the whole purpose of a newsletter is communication. You are trying to convey information to the families at your school. So even if you don't win an award, by using these tips and tricks, you will have a more effective newsletter ... and that benefits everyone!

Top 10 Tips

Tip #1

Always check the requirements for the award - and make sure your newsletter is including all required items. Failure to do so will cause your newsletter to be disqualified from judging. (See our sample.)

Tip #2

Name your newsletter - PTA News is not a name, it's a description. Give your newsletter a name! Alliteration can be very cool if it will work for your school like Seagull Scoop, Bobcat Banter, or Dolphin Digest. Or you can play on your school's mascot like Jaguar Growl, Pony Express, or Bulldog Bark.

Tip #3

Design a nameplate. Using your great newsletter name and a logo, make sure you have a distinctive and attractive nameplate. This is what readers will associate with your newsletter - make it stand out so when it comes home in the mail or through backpack express, it is noticed.

Tip #4

Make sure you have a masthead. This is a portion of your newsletter where you set forth the purpose of your newsletter and where you include most of the items that are required for the awards. The masthead should be on page 1 or 2 and always in the same location. Typically, your masthead will not change from issue to issue.

Tip #5

Be consistent. This may be tip 5, but it is Rule No. 1 when preparing a newsletter. Make sure recurring items (like the president's letter or a calendar) are in the same location from issue to issue - this helps your readers find what they are looking for. Use fonts and colors consistently. If you print on colored paper, use the same color for each issue - remember, you want your newsletter to be recognized when it gets home.

Tip #6

Proofread, proofread, proofread! Don't rely on just spell check - spell check won't tell you if you've used a wrong word. Always double-check the spellings of any names - especially student names. As excited as a child gets to see their name in print, they are 10 times as disappointed if it is misspelled.

Tip #7

Make sure your information is easy to read. Avoid script or other fonts that are difficult to read - remember the purpose is to get your families to read your information. If you print in color, avoid using light fonts on light backgrounds and dark fonts on dark backgrounds. If you print on colored paper, choose a pastel color as they are much easier to read than things printed on dark paper.

Tip #8

Use columns (2 or 3 are pretty standard). Columns immediately improve the look of any page, and believe it or not, you will actually be able to fit more on a page.

Tip #9

Ok, this is more of a rule rather than a tip. **DO NOT USE CLIPART AS SPACE FILLER!** Clipart can be your friend, but you don't want to overuse it and it must have a purpose on the page. When you place clipart, place it so that when it catches your reader's eye, they are drawn to your information. Embedding clipart in an article or using the clipart itself to convey information are great ways to get a reader's attention.

Tip #10

Use boxes and borders sparingly and to draw attention to a particularly important piece of information. (If every article has a box around it, you are defeating the purpose of trying to get your reader's attention.)