

How to write a newsletter article

Before you begin, you need to find out:

- Who is the audience?
- Who is the publication distributed or aimed at?
- What is the expected word count of the article?
- Are photos needed?
- Style of newsletter: ask for a few past editions of the newsletter and ask yourself is it:
 - chatty
 - academic
 - serious
 - light hearted

Choosing the style:

Once you have got some answers to the above questions you will have a good idea of what style of article to write. Don't just think there is 'one' way to write a newsletter article, in fact there are many different styles including:

- Personal story or personal reflection eg. *Years ago, I was treating a patient with severe asthma and discovered...*
- Chatty casual eg. *Our meeting program was excellent and I am happy to say it seemed well received by all delegates, well done to the organising committee!*
- Formal business writing eg. *The program aims to increase access to CPD by rural health professionals, in particular rural nurses.*
- Academic and research style eg. *The results found over 50% (34/60) of participants had considered medicinal cannabis use*
- Letter to the editor/ Opinion piece eg. *Dear Editor, I was concerned with the article in the November issue regarding workforce numbers*

Interviewing and arranging quotes:

You may decide that the article needs quotes from a few different sources to make it more interesting.

Before making contact, you should ask yourself some questions:

- what type of quote fits into my story?
- What would I like the person to say?

A good way to prepare is to write two or three questions to ask the person, this will also make the experience less nerve racking.

Another method is to write a quote and email it to the person asking if you could use it in your article, also give them the option of writing their own quote if they prefer. This is a good method of gaining permission to use a quote from busy people that are difficult to find time to conduct an interview.

It is always best to send any quotes to the person for final approval, so they feel comfortable with the final wording and will not feel they were quoted 'out of context'.

Ways of using a quote:

- "Research is a booming industry," Dr Ian MacDonald, Chair of ISAP said.
- "Research is a booming industry," according to the Chair of ISAP, Dr Ian MacDonald.
- Dr Ian MacDonald the Chair of ISAP recently said "Research is a booming industry."

Writing the article:

A lot of people think that articles should be in chronological order, like they are in many business reports. However, if you look at newspaper articles you will find that they are not ordered chronologically but in order of importance or newsworthiness.

Tips

- Put the interesting information and the 'real' story in the first couple of paragraphs, and then you can add in all the other necessary information after this.
- For example if you were writing about an IT trial in Dunedin for pharmacists that is part of an Australasian project funded by a number of corporate sources you **would not** start off with saying the year it was funded, who by, what the arrangements are and then put all the interesting information about the trial at the bottom. You **would** talk about the interesting part of the trial and include a quote from a pharmacist involved in the first paragraphs and at the end of the article talk about who funded it and what it is administered through.
- It is always best to use clear, everyday language. This can depend on the audience, for example an academic article may use the academic lingo of the audience, but a chatty or personal piece should be in simple language.
- Don't spend all your time worrying about the headline, most newsletter editors will decide on the headline themselves and this is often dependant on available space.
- Always ask a colleague that has not been involved in the preparation of the article to review it before you submit it to the publication. After you have read it numerous times, you may be oblivious to grammar or spelling errors.
- Some newsletters may want to edit and change your story to fit it into the space or style of publication. Always ask for any changes to be approved by you before the newsletter is distributed.