



the agency
for education

QUICK TIPS

CREATING POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE EMAIL NEWSLETTERS



THE AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

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Your email newsletters - making your effort really pay dividends

If you're the person tasked with compiling the school newsletter, it can seem like an awful lot of work for precious little reward. When newsletters work well, they become powerful communication tools, keeping parents and children involved and engaged. They can bring your school to life with stories that show the different activities and achievements of pupils that are difficult to tell in any other immediate way. On the other hand, when they don't work, they can feel like a dispiriting waste of time.

Here are our top tips for creating powerful school newsletters that fall into the first category...



TIP 1. Work out why you're writing a newsletter

If you haven't already done so, get together a team of teachers and school stakeholders and hammer out exactly who and what your newsletter is for. Who do you want to read it? What do you want it to achieve? What reaction would you like to inspire? Setting goals in this way will give you something to aim for. It might sound ridiculous but lots of school newsletters are written or compiled by people who have not undergone this process and are more or less working in the dark.

TIP 2. Create a timetable for content

In order to avoid the mad dash for content just before the fortnightly or monthly deadline, establish a content calendar with mini-deadlines so that you can ensure your newsletter comes together in advance of the final date. As with a magazine, having regular features makes it easier to generate new content.

TIP 3. Work on your subject headings

Email subject headings are like headlines in newspapers: they're very often the difference between being read and being ignored. A good subject heading lets your readers know what's in the email and then compels them to open it.

TIP 4. Make your newsletter mobile-friendly

Around half of all emails are read on mobile phones. If you want your email to be read, then make it readable. This means a responsive interface and no PDFs.

TIP 5. Make it personal

If possible, make the from address for the newsletter a personal email address as opposed to an institutional one. Both your recipient and their email software will prefer it. Also make sure that the salutation is the recipient's actual name and not 'Dear Reader' or something similar.

TIP 6. Look at your metrics

Your ultimate goal with your newsletter is to get the people on your list to interact with you in some way, so you absolutely need to be using software that tells you exactly how people are reacting. Are they opening your emails? Are they clicking the links? Is the newsletter driving traffic to your website or specific events? Keep a record of what works best and over time you can make your newsletters even more effective.

TIP 7. Get it checked

It may sound obvious, but nothing looks worse than content that has come from school that contains spelling errors or wrong dates etc. Even if you are under pressure to get it out, it's always worthwhile getting a fresh pair of eyes to give it a good look over – mistakes can easily be missed if you are creating the content yourself.

TIP 8. Always get contact details and feedback

You want your newsletter to be read by as many people as possible, therefore it's great idea that you ask people share it, and make it easy to share it far and wide.

You can do this by:

- Adding social share buttons throughout the newsletter itself;
- Make a web-based version of the newsletter for people not on your list;
- Promote and share your newsletter and its content on your social media channels, teasing where possible (e.g. What exciting events are coming up?, followed by link to the article on your website.)

TIP 9. Make it simple to produce and send out

To reduce the size of the task of producing your newsletter at regular intervals, the design, production and distribution process should be simple. There are many different email software providers including *MailChimp* and *Campaign Monitor* who are probably the best known names and you can choose the one that suits you best. The key is using the same template every time, creating the content to fit, then sending it out to a database that's already loaded and good to go. There's no need to re-design your newsletter each edition - this just takes time and effort for no reason.

In conclusion, plan, measure, experiment, measure, and learn. Probably most importantly, try to enjoy it! If you're not enjoying it, get help from colleagues till you do. Your enthusiasm will come across and will ultimately be infectious!

Who are The Agency for Education?

The Agency for Education are specialists in design, branding, marketing, graphic design, advertising and digital media for schools, academies, colleges and universities. We can produce everything you need to market your school, enhance your school's environment or communicate with pupils, students, parents and the wider world.

From a one-off project to a complete brand review, we can advise you at a strategic level, creating bespoke marketing and communications designed to deliver results.

Because we appreciate every school is different, we approach each prospectus design with a fresh pair of eyes. We always strive to produce a guide to your school that is different, vibrant and that really sets you apart.

We have produced many prospectuses that have hit the mark for a very varied collection of schools from large independent schools to academies. A few case studies are included here, but if you would like see more of our work visit www.theagencyforeducation.co.uk. Alternatively, if you would like a no obligation chat about any school marketing project, just contact us today on 0121 224 8300 or email info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk



Big ideas for George Dixon Academy

CLIENT

George Dixon Academy | Birmingham

PROJECT

Sixth Form Prospectus

SERVICES

Brand Strategy
Identity
Design for Print
Copywriting
Print production

George Dixon Academy (GDA) needed help to position the Sixth Form more effectively within the school community and address declining numbers. GDA want the Sixth Form becomes the natural pathway for pupils through the school, but a reduction in applications suggests that more could be done to improve perception, communication and profile within GDA.

The Agency were commissioned to develop the brand and communication material to give the Sixth Form its own character within the school. Based on the results of research we conducted with staff and pupils, we developed a brand and messaging structure that would form the basis for all future communications, internally and externally.

The concept we developed really told GDA's story. "The small sixth form that thinks big" reflected their huge achievements often against a very challenging backdrop. We created a fresh and vibrant new identity and a conceptual 'prospectus' that told their story in a compelling visual and physical way, with the large format style.



PS Sixth. In tune with the students.

CLIENT

Prior's Field School | Surrey

PROJECT

Sixth Form Prospectus

SERVICES

Brand Development

Identity

Web design

Design for Print

Copywriting

Print production

Prior's Field Sixth form was losing out to competitor colleges because pupils at the independent Prior's Field Girls School that traditionally fed the Sixth Form, felt that the competing colleges were much 'cooler' and more appealing. Prior's Field Sixth needed to make changes to brand perception and communicate their difference to retain and grow pupil numbers.

We choose music and Apple products as the source of inspiration for the brand strap line and the style of the associated marketing material as we felt that this would truly resonate with the intended audience. We created a mini prospectus that was done to resemble an iPod classic along the positioning line "In Tune With You". It folded out and focussed the key differentials that we had identified.

We didn't feel a full blown prospectus would be a good use of resources or as well received. Instead, we focussed on what was most relevant in the mind of the pupils from the research undertaken and succinctly presented the information. We created document folders that were designed to look and feel like Apple laptops, creating the windows on the 'screen' to house key school statements. These were incredibly well received and used flexibly throughout the sixth form.



St John's. In their own words.

CLIENT

St John's School | Essex

PROJECT

Junior & Senior Prospectus'

SERVICES

Brand Strategy & Development
Identity
Web design
Design for Print
Advertising
Copywriting
Direct Mail
Print production

St John's is co-educational independent day school founded in 1928 with a long and proud history by offering their pupils a blend of academic excellence in a caring environment. The school was facing a decline in pupil numbers to larger, better known schools locally. This was predominantly due to its perception and lack of visibility in the local area. The Agency created a brand and marketing campaign to combat both issues head on.

The repositioning of the school built on its core ethos of nurturing happy, individual high achievers formed the cornerstone of a compelling and powerful campaign. The prospectus' were based on a testimonials book in the bursar's office spotted during one of our many visits to St John's. The book contained numerous emotional, heartfelt thankyou letters and postcards from both parents and pupils some of whom had a very challenging time before they attended the school. The was the diamond we always look for, and became the foundation of the powerful prospectus where the story of the school is told "In their own words".





the agency
for education

Inspired
thinking.

Outstanding
creative.

Exceptional
results.

We are not 'just another design company'.

From strategic brand consultancy and marketing to compelling advertising campaigns that deliver results across all channels, we have the perfect blend of commercial acumen and creative genius to help you. Whatever it takes, we deliver – on budget, on time and always way above expectation.



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