



Building A Newsletter People Will Read

3 ESSENTIAL RULES TO FOLLOW WHEN CREATING AN EFFECTIVE NEWSLETTER

A Word From Our Founder

My name is Elisa, and I've been developing my own approach to Relationship Marketing for over fifteen years. In just two years, I helped one client reach a half million in revenue. I regularly get my clients 30% open rates on their email newsletters (that's more than 50% above the national average in their field). And I've helped them do this by creating a strategy that builds trust, fosters client loyalty, establishes you as a trusted guide, and leads to long-term engagement.

I know you didn't become an attorney to be a salesperson, but a certain amount of promoting your business comes with the territory. The good news is that these days, you can stop selling to people and start helping them through the wonders of content marketing. The development of content marketing has been a game-changer for law firms like yours. I hope this resource will give you more time, decrease your stress, and grow your business!



Elisa Cottrell
COTTRELL COMMUNICATIONS

68%

*of buyers who see a
personal value will pay a
higher price for a service*

71%

*of buyers who see personal
value will purchase a product*



3 Rules For Creating A Newsletter People Will Read

There are three essential rules that I follow EVERY SINGLE TIME I create a newsletter for a client. And I'm about to share them with you now.

I love content marketing and small businesses so much, I want to share these insider tips with you for free.

Why? Because everybody is so busy these days. You're busy. Your clients are busy. We need to respect how little time people have and how much content is being thrown their way.

Don't be part of the useless content churn! You don't want to be more white noise. You want to stand out with helpful, valuable information.

"Stand out to clients with helpful, valuable information."

Essential Rule #1

Create Client- Centered Content

Your newsletter topic needs to be centered around your CLIENTS (or potential clients) NOT your business. This may seem contrary to how it should be, but you definitely want the focus of your newsletter to be YOUR CLIENTS. Instead of starting with what YOU offer, start with what your clients NEED most.

Everybody is looking for ways to make their lives better, and if you can help them do that on a regular basis through your newsletter, then they will feel forever indebted to you! (Okay, maybe not FOREVER, but they will feel a sense of gratitude and want to give you their business.)

BUT... I want to add an important caveat. A lot of people use “canned” content for newsletters, and I get it. We’re all insanely busy as business owners, but today’s consumer is ultra-savvy when it comes to canned content. They can spot it from a mile away. Especially because the majority of it is not interesting to the average everyday person because it focuses on the wrong things! Content must be focused on problems your ideal clients want to solve.

The content in your email newsletter needs to be focused on the problems your ideal client is trying to solve.



Action Step 1

Walk A Mile In Your Client's Shoes

Picture your ideal client. Now write down your ideal client's top 3-5 problems related to estate planning. Maybe they don't have an estate plan at all. Maybe their estate plan isn't comprehensive enough. Maybe their plan won't accomplish what they think it will. Create this list based on your knowledge of your clients and your interactions with people in your area.

Now write down your ideal client's top 3-5 pain points. Pain points are unpleasant emotions they are trying to alleviate related to the services you offer. Maybe they're worried about paying for care for their aging parent. Maybe they have an adult child they fear won't handle an inheritance responsibly. Again, base this list on the pain points of actual clients you have helped.

Next, write down a few obstacles that might be keeping your ideal client from reaching out to you for help.

The three most common, well-documented obstacles related to working with attorneys are intimidation, lack of trust, and confusing language. You'll want your content to help alleviate these obstacles and any others you come up with. Sometimes you can even directly address the obstacles in your content.

Finally, with these problems, pain points, and obstacles in mind, identify some topics or frequently asked questions you could write about. Think about solutions to the problems they have, relief for their pain points, and ways to counter the obstacles. Imagine a client sitting right in front of you – what would you say to them?

Congratulations! If you can identify 12-15 topics to write about, then you've got a whole year's worth of content sketched out.



Essential Rule #2

Create "Scannable" Content

Today's **content must be optimized for digital delivery.**

If it's not visually scannable by the reader, it's not consumable in a quick amount of time. If it's written like a book – as much as I love books – people won't read it. We don't live in a book world anymore.

Especially online. People need to be able to grab on to quick, actionable sound bites from the flurry of information constantly being thrown in their face.

Action Step 2

Do A 'Scannability' Check On The Last Newsletter You Sent

Go to your last newsletter, identify all paragraphs with more than 3 sentences, and break them up. Not willy-nilly, but in a way that makes sense and moves the reader forward.

Sometimes you can even isolate a sentence in its own “paragraph” for greater emphasis.

(See what I did there?)

I find it helpful to have a very basic outline in my head when I’m writing scannable content. The outline should have 3 to 5 main points, and those main points should be easily ascertained from a quick scan of the material. People don’t read “start-to-finish” anymore. They read “big-to-small.” If they scan the content and like what they see, then they’ll read in greater detail.

Imagine your reader only has 60 seconds to “read” the newsletter. What are the most important points you want them to understand or walk away with?

Identify those main points or action items in your newsletter and make them stand out -- bold important phrases, italicize action steps (sparingly), and break chunks of content into bullet points or numbered lists people can quickly sweep.

Remember that this is not academic writing or legal writing. Writing content for quick consumption by clients means simplifying your writing style by using shorter sentences and words that are easy to understand quickly.

Re-read your newsletter and look for sentences that contain multiple clauses or are longer than two lines and break them up. Look for words that might not be understood at a glance and replace them with simple, easy-to-understand language.

And don’t worry – speaking clearly and simply will create more trust and reassurance than using impressive language or complex writing.



Essential Rule #3

Create Killer Headlines

Your headline is every bit as important as the rest of your newsletter. Your content should have a BuzzFeed-worthy headline without being salacious. Honestly, you should probably spend as much time writing the headline as you do writing the rest of the newsletter.

Your headline shouldn't be an after-thought! It is the doorway to the rest of your content. If readers don't get past your headline, they'll never see the newsletter you spent your time and resources creating!

I can't emphasize this enough – headlines are SUPER important – maybe even more important than your content.

Action Step 3

Improve Your Headline Game By Imitating Headlines That Work

Start taking stock and becoming aware of the headlines that get you to click when you're online. Find 3-5 headlines that make you want to click, and write them down.

Ask yourself, "How did that headline make me feel?" and, "Why did I want to click on it?" (You don't actually have to click on the headline...the exercise is examining your feelings about each one.) Write those answers next to each headline.

Revisit Essential Rule #1 on page 4 and choose 1 or 2 potential topics. For each one, create 10-15 headlines using some of the same emotions you felt that might get your clients to click.

Make sure your headlines aren't sensational or misleading. You're not BuzzFeed, and this isn't clickbait. The emotional appeal is real, but remember that you're offering genuine substance and value.

A newsletter that connects with people and builds trust is just one part of an effective Relationship Marketing plan.

If you'd like to learn more about Relationship Marketing and how it could help your business, email elisa@cottrellcommunicationsgroup.com. I'd love to learn more about your business and how I might be able to help!

