

KEY SOLUTIONS

KEY CLUB MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

Newsletter Production 101

One of your major duties as a leader is to communicate regularly with your club. Your correspondence will be one of the main ways in which to express goals, enthusiasm, and directives to the members. In order for the newsletter to be of value, it must be sent out at least once a month. Although the topics for each newsletter will vary, it may be helpful to include sections like “A Not to Members” or “Club News”. These specific sections can make your newsletter seem more personalized and interesting.

Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation are all important aspects of well-written correspondence. Many times you will find yourself writing the same way you speak, do not. Professional writing simply is not the same as spoken conversation. Additionally, although you may get away with poor grammar when you speak, it becomes obvious in written form. It will be helpful to have someone proofread your work before you copy it and send it out. Remember to utilize your computer spell check and grammar check.

Your image in all areas of correspondence is the image of yourself and Key Club International that will be projected to many people. It is, therefore, imperative that your utmost attention is given to accuracy, neatness, and timeliness. If your writing excels, so will your reputation. If your writing is weak, you may be perceived as a weak, ineffective leader needlessly.

How do I produce the best newsletter?

There are three stages of production for almost everything:

1. Drafting
2. Production
3. Final

Drafting

Make the title headline for your bulletin. The banner is on the front page of every issue. You should design the banner to look professional and aesthetically pleasing. Include the following in the banner design:

- Name of the bulletin (in very large and bold type)
- Volume and issue number
- Month and year
- Name of your district, and/or division number

Other information that might be included in every issue includes:

- District logo
- Key Club International logo
- Key Club International mission, vision and core values

Other Drafting Issues:

- Set a format and stick with it for the year, within reason. Great variations in format between issues are distracting to regular readers. Consider the printing process (offset, photocopy, etc.)
- Paper size
- Color of paper (not too dark or too bright)
- Pictures – How well will they reproduce on a copy machine? If the newsletter is to be posted electronically, be aware that excess pictures may result in extra difficulty in downloads for your readers.
- Clip art
- Layout styles (will it vary or stay the same each issue?)
- Write articles, edit, select clip art, and screen pictures. Remember, it is always better to have too much material to choose from than not enough.

Production

Edit the articles. Check the flow, spelling, style, grammar, and length. Boldly mark corrections with a red pen. Do not forget to give credit where credit is due: include a byline on every article. Also, list names of participants within the article wherever possible.

- Plan a layout: If using both pictures and text, work with both to create a balance. The first articles should be of greatest interest and the ones that you want to garner the most attention (place these on the front page or at the top of a page). Make it exciting: within the

bulletin, try putting articles of different interests together for a variety. That way, if someone is interested in one headline, his/her eye might be drawn to another article that might have been overlooked. Have an idea of what you want before you start typing. Leave room for pictures and clip art, and edit article length appropriately. Your first bulletin may be experimental – don't give up! Your work will improve as you gain more experience. You may wish to also include a table of contents on the side of your first page if you will be creating a multi-page newsletter.

- Proofread the bulletin. Check for mistakes, spelling errors, incorrect information, and any misquotes. Make sure it's ready to copy – have someone else read it to catch your mistakes.
- Reproduce the bulletin. Before you have 1000 copies run off, make sure the first copy looks okay. To save money on costs but to still have an attractive newsletter, consider using colored stationery for your first page but regular white sheets for the other pages.

Final

- Check the copies for errors and readability.
- Staple and fold
- Instead of using envelopes, try leaving part of the last page blank put the address on.
- Address and stamp the bulletins, and deliver them promptly! Timeliness is important!
- File extras and originals and clean up.

1. **Make your newsletter's name an attention grabber.** Focus on something that will catch the reader's attention.
2. **Write your newsletter article's objectively.** Although a newsletter can be an excellent vehicle for promoting Key Club, it should not read like a sales brochure. By nature, it should provide useful information to readers. A newsletter's stories should be written more objectively. Also, when you do insert opinions into your stories, make them into quotes and attribute them to the proper people in your organization, just like a newspaper would.
3. **Write to express, not to impress.** The purpose of a newsletter is to communicate, not to see how many times you can send readers scrambling to find a dictionary. Don't use big words when smaller words would do. Keep your writing casual, non-technical, and conversational. When you use acronyms don't assume readers know what they stand for. List them out in first reference.
4. **Proofread.** Proofreading, revising, and rewriting are the most tedious, mundane parts of putting together a newsletter – but they are absolutely necessary.
5. **Use the front-page articles to draw in readers.** Prospective readers do judge a newsletter by its cover. Feature the best articles on the front page. Sometimes the "Message from Your Lieutenant Governor" may seem significant to you, but to the reader, information about the upcoming convention is more important. Perhaps your personal message can be placed elsewhere.
6. **Use at least one graphic per page.** Graphics include photos, artwork, charts, pull quotes, or even a colored or shadowed box behind an article. Studies have shown that people are more likely to read an article if it contains a graphic such as a photo. Secondly, graphics within a story are important because they provide much-needed visual breaks from solid blocks of text.
7. **Use image-editing software to sharpen your photos.** If you scan photos for your newsletter, be sure to electronically touch them up before you insert them into the layout. Otherwise, they'll probably look "muddy" in the final printed product. Try Adobe Photoshop for options like contrast, color, and brightness levels of a scanned photo.
8. **Use accent colors and tints to make your newsletter more eye-catching.** Most people's budgets do not allow for multi-color newsletters. However, print your newsletter on colored paper. If you have an insert that is important, put it on a different, brighter piece of paper.
9. **Save originals to a disk.** Save, save, save. Then when you are ready to print, consider using a copy shop that specializes in duplication. Provide them with an electronic version via floppy disk or another portable storage device instead of a hard copy. This will make the duplications sharper and crisper.
10. **Use recycled paper.** A good public relations tip is to print on recycled paper. This makes your reader's happy as they feel the world's trees are saved. Just a tip: in finding out how recycled your paper is, ask your copy shop for the paper's post-consumer-fiber percentage. The higher the number, the more recycled paper was used. A common percentage is 10-50 percent post consumer fiber. Then, take the credit for your work. Type "Printed on recycled paper" in small type at the bottom of your pages or in the master head.

a Kiwanis-family member

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