

Five Tips to Help You

Write, Edit & Design Newsletters That Get Read

from Jane K. Cleland

www.janecleland.net

1. Objective:

- Promotion of your own events and/or authors (no)
- Information of use to readers, bookstores, and/or other authors (yes)
- Propaganda (no)

2. Delivery:

- Frequency (more is better)
- Length (4-8 pgs is ideal)
- Electronic vs. snail mail (a mess...snail mail, probably; also, post/archive on your website)

3. Call to action:

- At the end of each article (i.e., “For more information...” or “To register...”)
- In the masthead (i.e., “To change your address...”)
- In headlines (i.e., “Characterization Workshop Registration Now Open” is better than “Characterization Workshop Receives Acclaim”)

4. Content Development:

- Recurring columns (i.e., Legal Affairs, Ask the Editor, Breaking Out, et al)
- Significant relevant, timely information (avoid fluff or puff pieces)
- Captions (Captions get read more than body text. Answer *why* the photo is there, not merely *what* is shown)

5. Design:

- Text design (e.g., set end-of-article calls to action slightly differently from everything else so they stand out; use two fonts, one for headings, one for body text)
- Columnar division of space (e.g., one col = newsy feel; 2 col = serious; 3 col = relaxed; scholar’s margin = complex, et al)
- Percentage of art (25 to 33 percent)
- Style of art (photo vs. clip art vs. mix... hint: beware of clip art)