

Email Newsletter Guides and Best Practices

Minnesota Region

December 2014

Definition of Email Newsletters

- A regularly distributed publication generally about one main topic with optional secondary topics delivered electronically using email (i.e. e-newsletters) and subsequently through other digital channels such as social media.

Purpose of Email Newsletters

- To communicate NA news, information, programs, opportunities, and material.

Long-term Goals (from our Regional Guidelines)

- To be a reliable resource for information about Narcotics Anonymous recovery and about access to our recovery process.
- To build and sustain cooperative relationships with other organizations and entities that address issues of addiction in order to raise awareness of Narcotics Anonymous as a viable option for recovery.
- To be responsive and accessible, inviting involvement and dialogue, and ensuring efficient delivery of services.

Point of Accountability

- Editors volunteer to design, write, and distribute emails using Mailchimp. They are usually members of the Fellowship Services Team (FST). Willingness and follow-through are the most important considerations. The Editors are accountable to the Digital Project Team who are accountable to the Region.

What makes the e-Newsletters NA?

1. Practice the principles contained in NA's Twelve Traditions;
2. Only subscribe readers who have given us their permission;
3. Do not include pictures of recognizable individuals in our newsletters; use artwork that enhances the context of the communication;
4. Do not include last names;
5. Do not include our member's contact information, unless permission is granted and it is absolutely necessary for the good of NA.

Audience

- Focused audiences: Meeting List Updates or Fellowship Announcements
- Broad audience: both of the above
 - NA Members
 - Professionals
 - General Public

Schedule

- Emails are sent out, usually, twice per month. One email is sent at the beginning of the month typically to the entire audience. Another email is sent in the middle of the month to the meeting list update audience.
- Additional emails may be sent out for special occasions such as event registration deadlines or special announcements.
- See the reference section at the end for more information.

Email Marketing System

NA Minnesota pays a monthly subscription to Mailchimp as its email marketing system. Here are some of the benefits.

- Integrated subscription management
- List management including hard and soft bounce-back management
- Legal responsibilities, privacy policy, email address origination, copyright date, update subscription and unsubscribe links
- Easy to use templates
- Metrics and analysis

Content

- Be clear and concise;
- Be engaging, encouraging interaction;
- Write useful, relevant and well-written content;
- Be brief but still communicate effectively;
- Feel free to use material already written by NA Minnesota or NA to ensure accuracy;
- Drive readers to outside content (e.g. www.naminnesota.org or www.na.org) using links within our written material;
- If acronyms are used, they should be familiar to the vast majority of the readers.
- Don't over use jargon;
- Use an active voice (e.g.s. Active: Addiction beat me. Passive: I was beaten by addiction.)
- Write effective subject lines (NOTE: some subject lines are spam filter activated, see article in resource section below).
- Pay attention to the tone the email. E-communications tend to be more informal and conversational than print communications; it makes for a faster reading.
- Use "Call to Actions" such as "register for an event", "tell us what you think", "watch the video", find out more, download, find more information (i.e. encourage engagement outside the newsletter on our website.
- When driving readers to videos, use a screenshot of the video with a link to video rather than an embedded video.

NOTE: Links should open in a separate browser window. The reader's experience shouldn't end in the recipient's inbox but should drive them to content in other parts of your digital eco-system

Design

- Use built-in templates
- Use "link to view in browser" in all emails

- Design the newsletter to suit its purpose (e.g. announcement, news and information, promoting particular service or services). You may want to focus the newsletter on one primary item or on a major item and three to four lesser items.
- Make good use of images, numbers and colors. Use images to guide the reader to the most important content, illuminating the content. Numbers (particularly oversized numbers) tend to grab people’s attention, so make good use of them if promoting a “sale” on convention registration or “date” of a convention for example.
- Include links to our Facebook Page, Twitter, Email, and Forwarding.
- Always use “mobile friendly” templates

Editing and Testing

- Always preview and test your newsletter to at least one other person.
- Make sure it opens and displays accurately in a couple different browsers.
- Make sure ALL the links work.
- Preview your email on your mobile device

Distribution

- Send e-newsletter to appropriate list
- Post on Twitter and Facebook using #hashtags where appropriate to increase organic reach (e.g. #narcoticsanonymous #recovery #addiction)
- Invite recipients to forward e-newsletter

Analyses and Revision

- Monitor and analyze metrics of newsletter communications;
- Regularly refresh best practices to align with changing standards and practices;
- Develop best practices and share with NA worldwide.

References

See [NA Minnesota Newsletter Archive](#)
[SUBSCRIBE](#) to our newsletters

The content below is not NA approved but it serves as reference and an additional set of best practices in the industry.

- Non-Profit Tech for Good: [10 Best Practices for Sending Out Emails for Non-profits](#)
- Best Practices for [Email Subject Lines](#)
- Email [Marketing Research](#)
- Email [Marketing Benchmarks](#)
- Email [Newsletter Glossary](#)