



JOHNSON'S WORLD

Use General Interest to Target Markets

Newsletters are an unbeatable medium of communication. *By Steve Johnson*

We can talk until we are blue in the face about whether or not anyone reads anymore. I think the very fact that you are reading this article, whether in print or online, demonstrates that reading is alive and well. And is, I might add, a terrific way to get your point across.

Some correctly point to Twitter's 140 character-per-post limit as having a dumbing down effect on the mind. Technically true, but world has always been divided between those who crave knowledge and those who cannot be bothered to take the time to acquire it.

Twitter restricts posts to 140 characters but Facebook, which began with a 160 character limit, has progressively upped its character count so much so that it now rests at 63,206 letters per post. Our society made it clear that 160 characters weren't enough, so Facebook reacted by essentially putting an end to the limit.

Leaders know that knowledge is power, and you are one of those leaders. The mere fact that you read Johnson's World shows that you recognize reading as a path to enlightenment.

That is why newsletters are an unbeatable medium of communication between businesses and the people who operate them.

One sterling example of newsletter marketing is produced by Andre Palko of Technifold USA, best known as makers of the Tri-Creaser.

The postman brings me an issue of the *Bindery Success* newsletter every month or so. Subtitled "World Class Bindery Tech Tips & Product Updates," this four page newsletter is chock full of self-help articles, folksy wisdom, popular quotations, jokes and the occasional cartoon.

There is also at least one technical article in every issue addressing specific problems likely to occur in the bindery.

These aren't about problems unique to Technifold equipment. They are tips and tricks dealing with a wide range of issues commonly found in a typical bindery. Recent stories have included "7 Folding Machine Tips for Light Weight Paper" and "Pulling Double Signatures on Your Muller Saddle Stitcher Pockets?".

Of course there are also references specific to Technifold's Tri-Creaser product and usually a sales pitch.

The content of *Bindery Success* recognizes a basic truth of 21st century marketing. Established cult brands like Harley Davidson, Apple, and major market sports teams have followers because... well, just because. Printing companies, plumbers and makers of cleaning products aren't in the same league. Even your most loyal fans don't want to read only about you.

Newsletter credibility is established by offering content of general interest mixed evenly with content of interest to your target market. I estimate that about half of *Bindery Success's* content is enjoyable reading for anyone, even folks who know nothing about binding. That might include the CEO of a printing company who has never worked hands-on in his own bindery department but does approve all bindery equipment purchases.

Another 30 percent of the content is of particular interest to bindery professionals who comprise Technifold's target audience. That means less than 20 percent of the newsletter is pitching Tech-



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nifold products and services but that 20 percent is undoubtedly more effective than if the entire newsletter were one big advertisement.

Unlike a new flavor of potato chip, people don't buy your product on impulse. They only buy when a need exists. The key is to be sure they remember you when the need pops up. A well-written newsletter keeps your name in front of prospects.

A good newsletter program also crosses media. I prefer a printed newsletter, but if email is your thing you can receive the *Bindery Success Strategies* e-newsletter in your inbox every week or so.

Want more tips? Read the *Bindery Success* Blog. Or follow on Facebook, or LinkedIn, or Twitter, or even YouTube if you prefer your bindery tips in video format.

The new year is still young. What are going to do to this year to get (and keep) your name in front of your clients and prospects? **▀▀**

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