

Ten thoughts to sabotage electronic mailers

 By [Sid Peimer](#)

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Ezines (electronic magazines/mailers) have made an enormous difference to industries that have engaged this assertive medium in their communications mix. Its immediacy, cost and flexibility – when applied correctly – can make the difference between growth and stagnation for many brands. Here are 10 thoughts that will stand in your way to success in this virtual arena.

1. Spam I am.

Nonsense – a newsletter to your customers with an option to unsubscribe is no more invasive than a full colour insert into a newspaper. For some reason we feel that throwing away the unsolicited message in the paper is an acceptable practice, whereas unsubbing at a click is invasive. Humans are funny.

2. I will send out one every week.

Each ezine must have value to your client base. So, just sending them ‘something’ every week will maintain top-of-mind awareness, however your content will be bottom-of-bum. This is a wonderful intention, but if you don’t resource it properly (i.e. pay someone to do it), forget it.

3. I can do it myself.

Maybe you can. But then you could probably also make your own print ad. Or film your own TV spot. However, if funds are limited, a badly designed ezine is better than none at all. I admit that.

4. I will collect email addresses.

Good luck. In about 10 years you would have collected enough addresses to match any targeted list you could buy today for less than the price of a print ad. Far less.

5. I can send an email without a website.

Sure you can. However, you are building an online relationship, and the overall objective should be to get recipients to click through to further content on your site. People want to be taken somewhere – give them a lift.

6. I will put everything in the email.

The content that people read falls exponentially as you move further down the ezine. Even a naked woman at the bottom of a long ezine would be missed by the majority of young male readers. The type of disciplined writing we find in newspapers applies here.

7. I will send it out from my machine.

Telkom only allows 500 mails per hour from a server. You need a dedicated mail server for bulk emails today. Talk to me, I can get you one cheap.

8. Most people don’t have the ability to see HTML emails.

True, there are some anomalies out there – corporations with Lotus Notes struggle to send pretty pictures, and sometimes people have the graphics switched off for incoming mail. The idea is not to judge these visually starved souls, but simply to place a text line at the top of your ezine that tells them they can view it online.

9. The ezine is not as effective as my print/radio/tv ads.

They may not have the reach, but a strategic ezine can do more for sales than you ever imagined. Where TV and radio are passive media (right-brained), and print an active medium (left-brained), the ezine seems to engage the recipient in a unique way – perhaps even dual-brained (the non-involvement of the ezine as a whole, with the cognitive engagement of deciding to click for more). Who knows?

10. I am dying to tell people about us.

The 'Net is no different to a supermarket – people want value for money. In this case they want something for the attention they are giving you. It's seldom about the new environmentally friendly carpets in your offices, or the fact that John has been with the company for 50 years. Tune into wiiFM – what's in it for me.

ABOUT SID PEIMER

Sid Peimer is the strategic director of behp, a marketing communications company based in Cape Town. He once sent out an ezine to an entire country, complaining about a wall. Berlin is a wonderful place to visit, even from the East.

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