

the Newsletter Pro

May
2014

Creating Custom Newsletters, Mailed Directly to Your Clients, That Sound Like They Were Written by You, but Without You Having to Write a Single Word!

thenewsletterpro.com



2014 Marketer of the Year!

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Last May, I watched my friend, James Nicholas, win the GKIC Marketer of the Year award. The day after that he won that award, I sat around with James and a small group of friends and vowed to win the award in 2014. I didn't know it at the time (or maybe I did), but that Sunday morning in May started me on my own journey to win the title of Marketer of the Year.

Within days of getting home from the conference in 2013, I started to formulate a plan of attack with my key personnel; my wife, Mariah, and Kelly, my right-hand woman. Beth, one of my most talented graphic designers, made me a cool looking sign that read "Next Marketer of the Year at work, unless you are bleeding AND the building is on fire, do not disturb." I don't know how everyone else in the office felt about it, but I thought the sign was pretty funny.

So the work began. My team and I had meetings and made plans for the remainder of the year, and everything ran through the filter of "Would this be interesting or exciting enough for us to showcase at the Marketer of the Year competition?"

At the time I didn't realize how much more successful this competition was going to make us because of that "Marketer of the Year filter." Many times, when we were coming up with ideas, and we asked ourselves "Is this good enough for marketer of the year?" Our answer was "maybe" or "no." In those instances, we retooled the idea with



the intent of making it bigger and better. Ultimately, this gave us cool and exciting marketing campaigns, customer retention campaigns, and upsell/cross-sell campaigns. Many of those campaigns even worked out better than we expected them to! Which was a pretty cool bonus. Of course, a few campaigns fell flat on their proverbial faces, but that's just how it rolls sometimes.

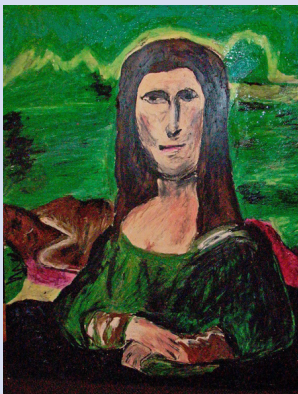
Like most things in life, not everything was perfect. A few times throughout the year, I started to have some doubts about running for the Marketer of the Year title and my ability to win. I think fear and second-guessing is human nature, but it adds a layer of difficulty I didn't expect when I decided to run.

By early March, I had powered through my doubts and put together a massive package of examples of marketing pieces as well as a DVD where I explained what each piece was and

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FIND THE WONDERFUL in the Weird

"Vacation" is probably one of everyone's top favorite words, but it means different things to different people. For instance, some people just want to relax—think coastal areas where you can hang out on a beach and spend time in the water, or resorts where you can be pampered and leisurely take dinner in your room, you know, the one with the view. Others seek adventure and long to get outdoors—think hiking, trail blazing, and tours. For them it's all about



where they can go and what they can see (if not "what can I climb?"). But whether you're looking for leisure or fun, we're willing to bet that you've never vacationed quite like this. America offers some of the oddest, weirdest, most awkward, and most outrageous places to visit...and this is only a couple of them:

Get yourself some culture.

Those of you who enjoy the arts are probably more than accustomed to browsing the local art venues in whichever town you find yourself. But have you ever checked the basement? Only in America can you find a basement that houses the Museum of Bad Art (MOBA), the first of its kind. Yes, that's right. Experience firsthand some of the



most wonderfully horrid art in Boston, Massachusetts. The museum is home to over 600 pieces of terrible artwork that will captivate you in a way no Monet ever has. It all started when Scott Willson pulled a painting out of trash can. That painting, Lucy in the Field with Flowers, is now the cornerstone of the MOBA—right next to Sunday on the Pot with George. I think you get my drift.

England's main attraction is in America. Big news! America has stolen Stonehenge! Well, kind of. You can now visit the closest thing to Stonehenge and save that expensive plane ticket to England. It's in Virginia and it's called Foamhenge... and yes, it is actually made of foam. The real Stonehenge took 1,500 years to finish, while this exact replica needed only six weeks and brings in a surprising amount of attention, including the beady eyes of the Discovery Channel, MSNBC, the Smithsonian Channel, and TBS. Come on over and see Foamhenge! After all, who knows how long it will last?

Resource of the Month

Never Miss a Thing! EventsInAmerica.com



When it comes to trade shows and conferences, how do you stay in the know? Sometimes it can feel impossible to keep track of all that's going on out there, but with this month's resource, you don't have to worry about missing anything! Get acquainted with Events in America. This interactive directory allows you to view, plan, and book your next appearance, or attendance, at the events that get you on the cutting edge of business. Events in America allows you to stay ahead of the game, and it places you where you need to be to promote yourself and your company, all while keeping things easy to use and find. You can even build a profile online to use in scheduling appearances and meetings. Don't wait for the invitation, explore Events in America to get your business front and center!



2014 Marketer of the Year! Continued from page 1

how well it worked or, in some cases, didn't work. In total, I sent over 100 lbs of marketing material, examples, and goodies for the judges to look over and snack on.

From there it was up to the judges to review the information and select three finalists. And just over a week before the competition, I got the call that I was selected! Once you're a finalist, you are given 15 minutes on stage in front of 700-1,000 people to pitch why you should be selected as Marketer of the Year. After all three finalists present, the audience votes, kind of like American Idol or Dancing with the Stars, and the winner of the audience vote determines the winner of the competition.

The order in which we would present was randomly selected—and I was picked to speak in the second spot... which is the worst spot, especially when there are only three people competing. I took the stage at approximately



8:30 AM, right after Dr. Opp, one of the other finalists, had given his presentation... It was a tough act to follow. I delivered my presentation, got off the stage, and realized I didn't convey nearly as much energy as I had planned. Next, Dr. Yu got on stage and delivered a

very good performance. Voting was open until lunch time, and I was very nervous. Both of the other competitors had done amazing things in their businesses as well.

The voting may have closed at noon, but the results were not announced until 4:00 PM. Why? I assume just to torture us. At 4:00 PM on the dot, GKIC brought us back on stage

and announced the winner... After Dave Dee, GKIC's Chief Marketing Officer, took what felt like 12 minutes to open the envelope, he finally said those two words I had been yearning to hear all day, "Shaun Buck." In that moment, all my hard work had paid off, I had won the title and prize of the 2014 Marketer of the Year!



I was overjoyed; I was living out a dream. I first saw someone win Marketer of the Year seven or eight years ago, and even way back then I dreamed of winning the prize and title.

The remainder of the night I took pictures with family, friends, associates, even complete strangers. I went out to a celebratory dinner with 20+ people and had a great evening filled with good food, friends, and drinks.

As I write this, the whole experience still seems a little surreal.

I am more grateful than I can express to family and employees who helped me through this process. I surely could not have done it without them.

The experience has been amazing and I am blessed beyond even my own imagination.

Shaun Buck

Notes From the Underworld

Shaun Buck, The Newsletter Pro, provides an introduction to the world of criminal newsletters.



As fond of them as I may be, newsletters probably aren't widely considered the most mysterious, exotic, secretive, dangerous, glamorous, or romantic affair. It's an understandable sentiment, they're pretty straightforward. But while the newsletter familiar to the average Westerner is no doubt deemed a harmless (though financially effective) creature, there are places where their character is far less simple and forthright. There are places where the innocent newsletter has a dark side. And it's this dark side that's historically been of interest to the Japanese Mafia, or "Yakuza."

The Yakuza

The Yakuza has around 103,000 active members worldwide; that's something like...1,000 times the size of the American-Italian Mafia. There are 70,000 or more Yakuza in Japan alone and they're worth billions, wielding enormous social, economic, and political clout.

In this era of globalization, however, the American "great recession" was felt all over the globe, and it seems that the crime syndicates were not immune. Of those syndicates, the Yamaguchi-Gumi is Japan's largest, with 36,000-plus members—nearly half of all Yakuza are Yamaguchi.

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Who Wouldn't Want This?!

Ctrl + Alt + Awesome!

You've done all you can to snazz up your workspace; you've plastered your cubicle walls with photos of your friends and family (and particularly amusing anecdotes from your daily desk calendar), you've changed the desktop background on your computer screen to reflect a landscape that's truly "you," and you've placed your signature "World's Best Boss" coffee mug front and center...but there's still something missing. Perhaps it's that boring old keyboard you have sitting in front of you? In the age of laser keyboards and touch screen technology, you'd think they could come up with something a little more unique than the standard "black keys, white letters." Well, it turns out, they have. Check out these three keyboards that are sure to spice up your workspace!

The Leather Keyboard:

Nothing says "manly" like a mahogany desk paired with a high-backed leather chair...complete with a leather keyboard (bonus points if you have antlers adorning your walls). The Gokukawa leather keyboard (made in Japan) is wrapped in rich, black, buttery-soft leather and (for an extra \$50) the letters are etched right into the hide. The base model (no letters—but that's all part of the fun!) goes for \$548, but if you want to use your keyboard for actual typing, you might want to splurge for the engraving.



The Golden Keyboard:

We can't guarantee that your work will be golden, but it'll sure feel that way when you're working with your brand new golden keyboard! Okay, the keys aren't pure gold—but they are plated with pure gold (which, surprisingly, can stand up to even the most enthusiastic of typists). It rings in at less than \$300 a pop—which makes this keyboard an affordable investment for even the plainest of cubicles.

The Rainbow Keyboard:

The Luxeed Keyboard's keys are made up of ever-changing colored LED lights—which have the power to brighten even the dullest of workdays. You can program the keys to carry one color or go crazy and create your own keyboard mosaic color scheme! It's the only surefire way to add some color to your cubicle...or, you know, your office—and at \$130, it's well worth the cost. Need something a little more professional? Don't worry, when the lights are off, the Luxeed Keyboard looks just like everyone else's.

Strawberry Bouquet



Celebrate Mother's Day with these candy-coated strawberry roses!

Directions

1. First, wash and dry the strawberries with a paper towel, otherwise the candy melt won't stick to them, because the water will change the emulsion.
2. Insert a skewer in the stem end of each strawberry, but not all the way through—just enough to secure it.
3. Put your "base color" candy in the microwave and melt it in 30-second intervals. You can choose any kind of color you want—red, orange, yellow or pink. The best is to pick your mom's favorite.
4. Dip the strawberries into the melted candy and then stick the skewers upright into the Styrofoam block. Wait until the candy melt is hardened.
5. Microwave the "decorating color" candy melts and put the melt in a Ziploc bag. Using scissors, snip off one of the corners of the bag and decorate each strawberry.

Ingredients

- Strawberries (as many as you want)
- Bamboo skewers
- 2 different colors of candy melts (the quantity will depend on the quantity of the strawberries)
- Styrofoam block

Employee Spotlight MEET TRACEY

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

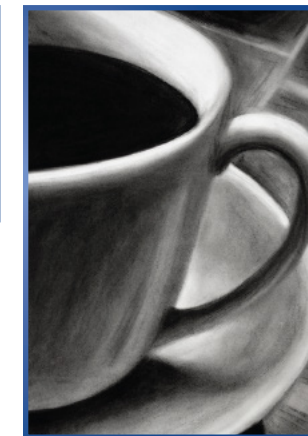


Meet Tracey, Graphic Designer Extraordinaire!

Farm Girl at Heart: Well, a mini-farm, at least! Originally a New York-native, Tracey and her family moved out West for some acreage and a breath of fresh air. While the little farm of days gone by is even smaller still these days (only a few chickens and a couple of dogs at the moment), it's the childhood home of Tracey and her three siblings.

Artistic Inspiration: Tracey has always loved to create beauty in her world, but advice from her art mentor piqued her interest in the digital arts. Once she was hooked, there was no going back, and now that she's here at TNP, she loves turning business into art. In her less-than-ample spare time, you can catch Tracey staying in touch with her artistic roots in the midst of a painting or two.

Always on the Job: While she's not exactly chained to her computer, Tracey is always working—but not exclusively with The



Newsletter Pro! She's happy to put her skills to task for nonprofit organizations, local causes, and church functions. Tracey's designs have been all over the town, advertising fundraisers and events to make the world a better place.

Quirky and Sweet: Tracey is a fabulous part of our team! While she seems quiet at first glance, she always has a smile for the rest of us. When she does start to chat, be prepared for a good laugh! She's had many food adventures (Tracey's allergic to everything, but nothing you'd expect) with her boyfriend of three years who can eat anything "human garbage can" style, loves to get dirty in the garden, and finds paradise in the cell-receptionless wilderness of McCall, Idaho. We love having her here at The Newsletter Pro, and we're always eager to see just what she can create for you!

To Grandmother's House We Go...

Over the river and through the woods—in the trunk of the car, of course! At least that was the idea 74-year-old Kay Brady had when she tried to ferret away her 28-year-old grandson, Nicholas Logan. It's a given that grandmothers will spoil their grandkids, but Kay was going a little far on this one. It turns out that her boy was running from the law—so she came up with what appeared to be a foolproof plan. Kay loaded up her precious grandbaby into the trunk of her car, tucked him in with a blanket, and put pedal to

the metal. Ideally, she was going to spirit him across the border and away from jail time, but things went awry when police saw a little old lady apparently talking to herself as she drove down the road. Worried that either a few screws were loose or something nefarious was being done to the woman, police pulled over the car and took a peek inside. When no one was to be found, they asked her to pop the trunk, which like any good granny, she did. Lo and behold, they found the nearly-escaped Nicholas huddled in the back—and back to jail he went!



HAVE YOU HEARD

The Good News?

Romans 15:13 (AKJV) Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Psalms 23:1-3 (CEB) The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing. He lets me rest in grassy meadows; he leads me to restful waters; he keeps me alive. He guides me in proper paths for the sake of his good name.

2 Peter 1:3 (HCSB) His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

Notes From the Underworld

...Continued from page 3

The Yamaguchi-Gumi Gazette

Even their size, however, didn't impart immunity to financial trouble, and between 2012-2013, the Yamaguchi-Gumi lost 3300 soldiers. Additionally, they'd just come away from a brutal seven-year gang war on the island of Kyushu in which "civilians" had been killed—a PR disaster and Yakuza no-no. The war, a resulting Japanese law enforcement crackdown, and even a threat from President Barack Obama to freeze all Yamaguchi assets in the U.S. had both membership and profits suffering. So, to bolster waning morale, Yamaguchi godfather Kenichi Shinoda masterminded, published, and subsequently shipped an inspirational newsletter to 23,000 of his faithful.

This newsletter was accurately, if not creatively, titled *Yamaguchi-Gumi Shinpo*, or "Yamaguchi-Gumi Newsletter." It was a slick, professional production, eight pages long, and featuring the gang's symbol on the front cover. And for a gang communique, the subject matter was hardly one-note.

That thematic variety included a message from Shinoda himself to the troops, a recognition that the recent anti-gang measures had made earning more difficult, but urging them to keep their chins up anyway. He encouraged members of the organization to perform good works and stay true to the traditional Yakuza virtues of loyalty, discipline, restraint, and pride. In these leaner times, Shinoda further affirmed, Yakuza could no longer count on the Yamaguchi-Gumi "brand" to do the heavy lifting.

The Shinpo featured light fare too—one page was dedicated to poetry, including a number of satirical haikus; there hints and tips on the board games Go and Shogi; and even travelogue-style fishing "diaries" from some of the senior chieftains. So it was pretty much like any other organization's newsletter...except produced by and for one of the world's largest, wealthiest, most powerful, and most dangerous transnational criminal organizations.

Sokaiya Scams & Embarrassed Execs

While the Yamaguchi-Gumi Shinpo wasn't exactly the most traditional in-house glossy, it was still pretty much a corporate newsletter: an informational and inspirational publication sent to an organization's employees from its leadership. However, not all Yakuza newsletters are so innocuous.

One of the most profitable provinces of organized Japanese criminal rackets is "sokaiya," or corporate crime. Many of these scams are culturally-dependent, relying on the Japanese cultural aversion to embarrassment—personal embarrassment and embarrassment to institutions.



The Poisoned Pen

The sokaiya newsletter scam is likewise avoidance-of-shame based. It involves a Yakuza digging into the lives of a corporation's executives, collecting as much dirty laundry as possible. The fruits of these investigations will then be compiled in a newsletter, often listed beside the picture of an executive with their accomplishments:

Kenji Inagawa - Chief Executive Officer. Kenji is an avid golfer and hiker. He oversaw a six percent company-wide profit increase this year. In his off-time Kenji enjoys spending time with his wife, Aki, and his mistress, Kayo Terada, whom he visits at least three times a week.

Hideo Nakahara - Chief Financial Officer. Hideo graduated from Keio Business School and has shrewdly used his education to streamline the accounts department. His education also likely contributed to the tidy profit he made paying local politicians for contracts, the bribes disguised as rent payments for a vacation home that doesn't exist. No doubt the creativity with which he filed his taxes made him even more.

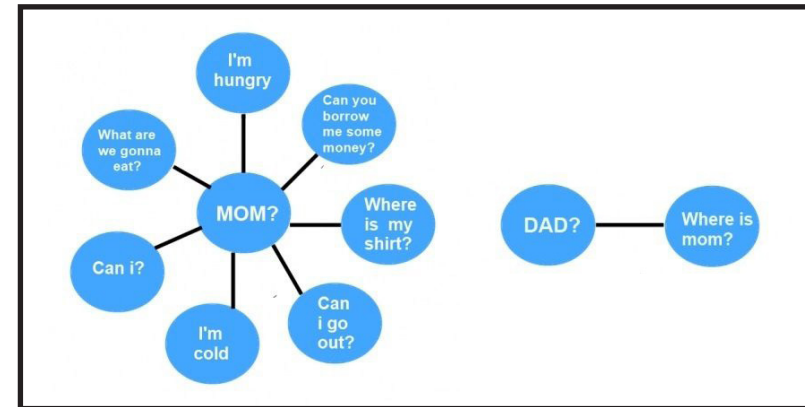
The executives would be shown a sample copy and cordially informed that a small run of this publication has been produced for company-wide distribution. If, however, they would prefer to have this very-detailed circular all to themselves, they were welcome to buy all three hundred copies for only \$1,000 apiece. Alternately, in some cases the executives would be informed that for a modest (or not so modest) sum, they could purchase the rights to the information in the newsletters before publication and choose to publish or not at their discretion.

The upside of these scams for the Yakuza, apart from the money, is that there was nothing technically illegal about selling or buying a newsletter for \$1,000 a copy. Fortunately for the Japanese executive community, in response to the sokaiya shakedowns, stricter blackmail laws have since been enacted.

While that legislation has no doubt proved a significant detriment to the future of the blackmail-based newsletter publishing industry, prospective fans of gangster newsletters need not fret—there's no indication that the intra-gang periodical won't continue to thrive.

Shaun Buck

Take a Break



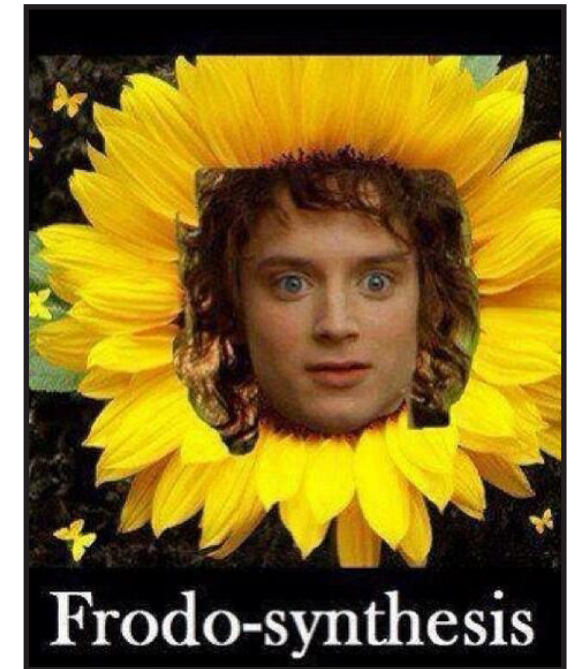
The Newsletter Pro PUZZLER

3				9		7	1	6
							9	5
		6						3
		9						
7					1			
	4				6		8	1
5		1					6	4
	7							
	3			8		5		7

Sudoku Basics:

- Use numbers 1-9 only
- The full grid is 9x9 cells
- The full grid is broken into 9 regions, 3x3 cells each
- Each region can contain only one of each number 1-9
- Each cell can contain only one number
- Each row and column should contain only one of each number 1-9

Solution on back cover



CD of the Month: **STRUMMING TO SUCCESS!**

Who doesn't dream of rocking out with an oh-so-cool guitar? For those of us who've accepted that musical mastery just wasn't in our bag, we're lucky if we can bang out the first few bars of "Smoke on the Water." Not anymore with Travis Perry's ChordBuddy! With the press of a button, you can be strumming your way to "instant guitarification," all while teaching you an introductory set of chords in the space of just two months (think training wheels for guitar, only much cooler). I sat down with Travis to talk about his amazing success following his invention. With millions of dollars in sales of ChordBuddy System and an appearance on Shark Tank (which he absolutely rocked, by the way), Travis's awesome product and business model is definitely something to take note of.

Here's the best part, Travis's winning sales are more than just numbers. While the ChordBuddy is fabulous for teaching brand new guitarists (Travis has even set up a program to get the device in school music classes), the ChordBuddy has also been a hit with older musicians. Rheumatoid Arthritis took away the tunes for Travis's mother, and for the last ten years of her life, playing the instruments she loved seemed beyond her reach. But, when Travis built the ChordBuddy, she was finally able to play her favorite songs once more. Music touches the soul, and Travis is giving that gift to new guitarists, and veteran musicians alike (no matter how many years young) with just the press of a button. Take a listen to this month's complimentary CD, and get to know more about Travis, and the music that drives him!



**For Our Clients:
Enjoy Your
Free CD!**

Welcome to the Jungle



As your business grows, you're bound to eventually reach one inescapable conclusion: you have to hire more people. This can be a lengthy process, and by the time your new hire is finally through your front doors, all you want to do is run through the basic skills and orientation and let them get to work. Sound about right? If this resembles your hiring process, it should come as no surprise that your newest employee, who passed through your interviewing process with flying colors, suddenly couldn't care less about your company. In fact, studies show that most new hires typically make the decision to stick around or stick it to 'em within the first six months on the job. And it's all based on first impressions. So, how can you and your business turn those first few months into a long and lasting relationship?

an employee questionnaire—once your new hire is finished filling it out, post it to your company website or at least email it around the office so that the other employees can start to connect as a team.

Anyone who has ever had a job before knows about the doldrums of orientation day, when you're likely to go over company policies and dress codes. But have you ever taken the time to discuss your business's culture, history, or values? If you answered, "No," or, "Kind of..." then it's time to add some organization to your orientation! Every new hire should know the dress code, but they might not know what your expectations are for them as the newest team member. Taking time to discuss your company's vision, mission, and values could be the key to locking your new hire into their new position.

Start by connecting with your new hire early on. It can be as simple as a congratulatory "Welcome" card from the other employees or as complex as an in-office scavenger hunt that is intended to introduce your newest addition. The goal here is to make your new hire feel accepted. Consider developing

Remember, a good first impression could lead to higher employee retention rates, shorter learning curves, and a stronger sense of commitment to your company. So whatever you do, just make sure that your welcome is more of a "Welcome Home."

PUZZLER SOLUTION

3	5	8	4	9	2	7	1
4	2	7	6	1	3	8	9
1	9	6	7	5	8	2	4
8	1	9	3	4	5	6	7
7	6	3	8	2	1	4	5
2	4	5	9	7	6	3	8
5	8	1	2	3	7	9	6
9	7	2	5	6	4	1	3