



When Should I Evaluate a Newsletter?

When introducing a newsletter with a new target audience, think about evaluating it in two stages. In the first stage, evaluate its acceptance with the target audience to make certain you are using your programming dollars wisely. Acceptance includes questions about whether the newsletter is being read, whether the information is relevant, and whether the language is easy to understand.

Later, in a second stage, evaluate for impact.

The rationale for evaluating in two stages is this: if you evaluated for impact first and the results were limited, you would not know if the barriers were due to aspects of your newsletter or because of something else, like characteristics of the audience. Doing the evaluation in two stages helps to eliminate the former, help improve the newsletter and gain better data about impact.

For an example of evaluating the first stage using a postcard, see Smith, S. S. and. Kiernan, N. E. "Newsletter Evaluation Yields Useful Information," *Journal of Extension* Winter, 1992: 30(4). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1992winter/iw2.html> (Current as of January, 2005)

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