Egardenseed.com’s Inaugural Newsletter and Seasonally Based Newsletter Template

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to develop a seasonally based newsletter template for egardenseed.com’s customers to have access to in store and online. After many discussions with the owner, Jessica Boian decided that a newsletter would be a great marketing addition to the company. The newsletter template was created after research was done on existing newsletter designs and contents. The newsletter template was constructed using ideas from egardenseed.com and outside sources. If the template should be used, egardenseed.com will have the opportunity to incorporate their products, advice, and expertise into marketing and educational materials that can be shared with the public.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Every company must market themselves in a way that will attract their target consumer. Marketing includes everything that an organization does to build a relationship between the company and consumer. It consists of advertising, community involvement, customer support, distribution, market research, media planning, product pricing, and more. Without marketing, a business may offer the best products or services in the industry, but no potential customers would know about it. Without marketing, sales may decline and companies may have to close.

Newsletters are excellent marketing tools that many places of business use to promote products and services. A newsletter has the potential to help increase business and make a sale. For example, the wholesale retailer Costco sends out newsletters to their customers, in which they keep their customers up-to-date with the products being offered during a period of time. Newsletters can be used to inform customers about new offers and products and upcoming events (Merisavo & Raulus, 2004).

A newsletter also serves the purpose of branding a company, making them more recognizable in public. A company can become more immediately recognizable to the public by establishing a unique look and message. A company can establish its brand by creating a unique logo, masthead, motto, and/or company color(s) to incorporate into its newsletter. If a company maintains a consistent branding theme throughout their promotional campaign, customers may recognize the company’s communication more readily (Trueman, Nelorine & Wallace, 2012).

Jessica Boian is the owner of egardenseed.com, an online heirloom seeds retailer in Lafayette, Colorado. She has been in the seed business for the past four years. Her company
currently runs a company website, Twitter page, Facebook page, and a blog called PlantingSeedsBlog.com that her customers have access to. Maintaining a company blog is a great marketing tool that provides personalized information to customers. She has also recently opened a new retail store called Sunshine and Rain.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem that needed to be addressed was egardenseed.com’s lack of a company newsletter. Transforming a blog into a pro-active newsletter is a logical step the company should make. There are still a number of people who do not rely on social media alone as a source of information. The business is failing to address the informational needs of people who rely on print media alone. These customers may not have access to the internet, and by providing them with a physical newsletter, these customers can still learn about the company, heirloom seeds and various topics of discussion placed in the newsletter.

**The Importance of the Project**

The importance of this project was to provide egardenseed.com’s customers with a newsletter available in print at the retail store and online. The newsletter acts as an education tool, educating customers about everything they can do with organic and heirloom seeds in their garden. The newsletter provided customers with recipes, popular seeds for the season, and tips and tricks for everything to do with gardens.

It is important to provide those customers who rely on print media an outlet in which they can learn about heirloom and organic seeds. Heirloom seeds are valued so highly because they have been passed down for generations because of their value. The value may lie in the seed’s
flavor, hardiness, adaptability, or productivity. The newsletter served the purpose of educating customers about the unique value many of the seeds available from egardenseed.com have.

One of the most important tasks a company has is to maintain contact with its customers. Providing customers of egardenseed.com with a newsletter allows the business to keep in contact with all their customers either electronically or in print. A company’s newsletter can be an integral part of its communication strategy that keeps everyone up-to-date.

**The Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the project was to create a seasonally based newsletter template for egardenseed.com to print and post electronically on the website. The newsletter can be easily updated as seasons and demands change.

**Objectives of the Project**

To accomplish the purpose of this project the objectives of this project included:

1. To create a seasonally based template for egardenseed.com;
2. To provide the seasonally based newsletter to customers both online and in print;
3. To create the inaugural newsletter to base further issues on.

**Definition of Important Terms**

Listed below is a review of important terms that have been, or will be, used throughout this project:

- **Masthead**: The newsletter for egardenseed.com contained a masthead on the top section of the first page. The masthead contains the title of the newsletter, who it is intended for, and
the publication date or season. The masthead usually takes up about two inches of the top of the first page.

- **Full bleed**- This refers to the newsletter having no trim or boarder, but rather having the color continued to the end of the page. The newsletter created for egardenseed.com was set up as a full bleed document.

- **Heirloom**- egardenseed.com sells heirloom seeds on its website. These are seeds that have been preserved and passed on from generation to generation based on their inherent value. This value is sometimes seen in the flavor, durability, color, adaptability, or productivity of the seed.

- **InDesign**- the newsletter was created using InDesign, a program in the Adobe Creative Suite family. The program allows one to create magazines, newspapers, flyers, newsletters, and more.

- **Template**- a computer document that has the basic format of something; such as a business letter, chart, graph, etc., and that can be used many different times (Merriam Webster, 2013).

- **Target market**- is a group of consumers who a company will center its marketing campaign around. A target market is usually made up of people who have similar demographics, interests, values, or beliefs.

- **Marketing**- the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising (American Marketing Association, 2013).

- **Pantone**- is a system for matching colors, used in specifying printing inks, each of which is specified by a single number (Pantone, 2013).
**Hypothesis**

The newsletter template for egardenseed.com will result in a seasonal based newsletter available to customers.

**Summary**

Through the development of a seasonal newsletter template for egardenseed.com, customers will gain knowledge about seasonal product offerings, educational resources, recipes, and planting and gardening tips. If the newsletter is implemented into the store and website, customers will have more of an understanding of the company. A newsletter will allow Boian to maintain contact with her customers throughout the year.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Jessica Boian, owner of egardenseed.com an online heirloom seed distributor, currently has a blog, Facebook page, website, and her recently opened retail store, “Sunshine and Rain.” The only thing missing was a company newsletter. After much consideration she decided that providing her customers with a print and electronic version of a seasonally based newsletter would be most beneficial. A seasonal template was created allowing Boian or another staff member to make edits as seasons changed. Developing a newsletter for egardenseed.com required knowledge about the software program InDesign, the basics of creating a template, a newsletter, and a background about heirloom seeds and egardenseed.com.

Using the Adobe Suite Program InDesign

InDesign is only one software program within the Adobe Creative Suite package. InDesign is specifically used for the creation and layout of materials for print. This includes brochures, newsletters, ads, business cards, books, and more. InDesign is virtually used to create anything that is made up of a combination of blocks of text, photos or other artwork. InDesign excels at creating projects that require multi-page layouts or master layouts where one theme reoccurs on multiple pages. The convenience of InDesign is that it packages everything, from fonts to images and everything in between (Kvern, Blatner & Bringhurst, 2012).

Other programs such as Microsoft Word can be used to design a newsletter. The only limitation to this program is the ability to layer easily. It is more difficult to layer documents in
Word than it is with InDesign. If a company does not have the resources to access the Adobe Creative Suit then Word is an easy alternative to use.

Photoshop can also be used in creating a newsletter, but this program requires a lot of skill in design. It is the leading digital image editing application for the Internet, print, and other new media disciplines (Hamlin, 1997). It is used by millions of graphic artists, print designers, visual communicators, and more. If this program is preferred a newsletter can turn out great with a lot of time and effort placed into creating the document.

**Creating a Template**

A template is defined as, “… a document that is preset with the various elements that make up a design- a model that provides a useful starting point for frequently published documents” (Barnhill, 2011). Today, with the invention of computers and desktop publishing software, templates are now being used in households and businesses worldwide to create types of publications.

Templates are important because,

First, they guide the placement of text and graphics, and provide a well-established starting point from which a publication can be easily created. Second, and most important, they save a lot of set up time, ensure design consistency, and significantly minimize the possibility for error. (Barnhill, 2011)

Types of templates include catalogs, magazines, newsletters, advertisements, posters, brochures, and more, each range in flexibility giving the artist more creative freedom or more rigid structures.
Elements of a Newsletter

Newsletter serve to inform, announce upcoming events, get people interested, reach targeted people, in other words- to communicate. A newsletter should have a goal. When setting this goal, consider two factors, “1. The purpose of your message can be described in a few words- it may be to teach, inform, announce, advertise, inspire, etc. 2. The nature of your audience can be described on a list and should be highly specific” (Mirza, 2011). Once these two factors have been considered a strong foundation to build a newsletter on has been created.

Newsletters provide readers with four specific types of material. The first is timely information. The content is always up-to-date and current. Second, they provide inside information about the company. Since the audience is specific, the information is directed to benefit them. Third, the information is trustworthy. Newsletters do not contain advertisements and the information provided is not strongly opinionated. Lastly, newsletters provide specialized information because it is usually the only source for a topic. With this in mind the content is up to the editor.

Newsletters are usually available in many sizes. Egardenseed.com’s newsletter was set to letter size, 8.5”x11”. Most newsletters are generally no more than 12-24 pages in length and some may be only 1-2 pages. Newsletters typically have the nameplate, the title of the newsletter, and one or more articles right on the front with no separate cover.

Every newsletter should contain an attractive subject line to grab the reader’s attention. It should also provide useful and well-written content that users would not normally research on their own. Newsletter content must be as relevant to readers as possible, whether through offers, products or images. Most of all, a newsletter must be kept simple and straightforward. As
reported by Nielsen Norman Group in its Newsletter Usability Report, the average reader skims a newsletter for 51 seconds (Nielsen, 2010). Make sure the content is not overwhelming by squeezing too much information on one page. When possible, use bullet points and short paragraphs. Make good use of images, numbers, and colors because users are drawn first to visually stimulating elements.

**Pantone Colors**

Pantone developed the first color matching system in 1963, which consisted of a large number of small cardboard sheets, printed on one side with a series of related color swatches. This system was referred to as the Pantone Matching System. Its goal was to allow designers to color match specific colors when a design entered production. This system was adopted by graphic designers, reproduction, and printing houses and is still used today to specify colors for a wide range of industries (Eiseman, 2000).

Today, Pantone is used because of its standardized color matching system. Each color has a Pantone number that identifies it. Different manufactures in different locations can all reference a Pantone number color, making sure colors match without direct contact with one another. Pantone also has Process, Textile, Plastic, and Geo palettes (Pantone, 2013).

**Background of Heirloom Seeds**

Heirloom seeds, vegetables, and gardening are becoming increasingly popular today. Many people are turning or returning to home gardening for a variety of reasons, and heirloom seeds are being used the most (Coulter, 2008). Some of these reasons include an interest in fresh,
local, and healthy foods, others may need to stretch their food dollar, and still others are in search
of the flavors they enjoyed when they were growing up.

An heirloom is anything of value to a person, family or group passed down from one
generation to another. It is generally considered something worth passing down. An heirloom
seed, therefore, is a seed from a plant that has been passed from one generation to another,
carefully grown and saved because it is considered valuable (Scott, 2011). The value may lie in
its flavor, productivity, hardiness, or adaptability. Some heirloom seeds have a history reaching
back 300 years or more.

Two of the better known benefits of heirloom seeds include adaptability and flavor. Some
varieties of heirloom tomato have been known to adapt to a specific growing location in as little
as two growing seasons. They showed better vigor, production, flavor, and increased disease
resistance. One of the leading characteristics of heirloom varieties is defined by the depth of
flavor that they produce. This is probably one of the biggest reasons for the resurgence of
heirlooms in home gardens in the past 10 years. Taste is once again becoming a viable
characteristic in variety selection for the home garden instead of only production quantity,
quality, uniformity, and disease resistance.

**Information About egardenseed.com**

Egardenseed.com is a small, family-owned and operated seed company that has been in
operation since August 2009. They are located in Lafayette, Colorado with a small retail store
located in old town Louisville, Colorado. They believe home gardeners are the key to
maintaining the vast genetic diversity of heirloom seeds and in ensuring their survival. They ship
throughout the country as well as internationally. When a grower is too small or not interested in
doing online business, Boian will inventory the product(s) and then ship the product(s) herself directly to the customer (J. Boian, personal communication, October 29, 2012).

They sell high quality organic seeds grown by local farmers and gardeners. They have a variety of fruit, vegetable, herb, and flower organic seeds for sale, including heirloom tomatoes, lettuce and salad greens, herbs and melons. Their most popular products are Ghost Pepper seeds, Camiana seeds, Valerian seeds, and Queen Anne’s Lace seeds (J. Boian, personal communication, October 29, 2012).

Whenever possible their seed line carries organic heirloom seeds. Organic heirloom seeds have gone through a strict certification process. This process includes inspections of farm fields and processing facilities, detailed record keeping and periodic testing of soil and water to ensure that growers and handlers are meeting the standards which have been set. The USDA sets the standards, and the criteria for meeting those standards (Scott, 2011).

When it is not possible to carry organic heirloom seeds, Boian carries high quality hybrid seeds. A hybrid seed is produced by artificially cross pollinating two genetically different plants of the same species, such as two different tomatoes or two varieties of corn (Scott, 2011). The cross pollination is done by hand, and the seed that is saved will not grow true to either parent. Hybrids are typically bred for commercial use to change the characteristics of the resulting plants, such as higher yields, greater uniformity, more even ripening, improved color and disease resistance.

Summary

Providing egardenseed.com with a seasonal newsletter template is essential for the business to stay connected with customers as seasons change. The features of InDesign provided
a foundation for making a multipage newsletter template for Boian to use and update for years to come. Having knowledge about InDesign, Pantone colors, elements of a template and newsletter helped in designing the layout of the newsletter. Knowledge about heirloom seeds and egardenseed.com helped to formulate the content that went into the newsletter. InDesign helped in creating a very professional document that she will be able to pass out to all of her customers. The newsletter provided information, based on the season, for her customers to benefit from.
Chapter Three
Methods and Materials

The purpose of this project was to create a seasonally based newsletter template that would be updated and used by egardenseed.com. Developing a professional newsletter required many elements to first be determined, collected, and then researched. These elements included interviews for feature stories, the targeted audience, and the specific purpose. The newsletter’s content was then created and organized based on the findings and research. This process was exercised when determining what content would go into a professional newsletter for egardenseed.com. Adobe InDesign software and a Mac computer were used to create the newsletter. A PC would also work for this project just as long as it has the right Adobe software. Below is an overview of how the newsletter was created and the materials needed for the project.

Designing the Newsletter

The first step in creating the newsletter was to set up the specific parameters of the document. Figure 1 shows the specific setup of the newsletter which contained two pages, six columns, and measured eleven inches high by seventeen inches wide. This is done so when folded in half it measured eight and a half inches by eleven inches.
The document orientation was set to landscape with quarter inch margins all around to prevent the font from going off the page when printed. The new document was set to full bleed in order to carry the color all the way off the page with no border. Figure 2 displays the specific margins and number of columns the newsletter contains.

**Figure 2: Margins and Columns**
Masthead

The second step in creating the newsletter was designing the masthead. The masthead is found at the top of the front page on most newsletters, magazines, and newspapers in order to catch the reader’s attention. The masthead contains information regarding the name of the publication, the date of the publication, volume number, and sometimes a subheading related to the readers it is intended for. In the case of egardenseed.com’s newsletter, its masthead contained the name of the company, the season in which it was published, volume number, and subheading. The fonts and colors that were used in creating the masthead were similar to those found on egardenseed.com. A new document in InDesign was opened to create the masthead for the newsletter. The masthead was later placed in the actual newsletter using the command called “place.” One benefit of using InDesign is the ability to layer objects on top of one another. Many different layers containing the title of the newsletter, the background image, the subheading, the date, volume, and issue number were placed on top of one another to create the masthead as seen below in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Masthead
The opacity of the background image was adjusted to make sure the font could be read. Once the masthead was saved, it was then placed on the first page in the top two inches of the original document created at the beginning. This step is shown in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: Masthead Placed in Original Document**

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**Content**

The next step in creating the newsletter was determining its content. The content of the newsletter is important, because it provides customers with important information about a company or organization. The content needs to provide readers with timely and helpful information about new products or about the company in general. An interview was conducted with the owner, Jessica Boian, to determine the content of the newsletter that would be most appropriate for her business and her customers (J. Boian, personal communication, December 17, 2012). Some of the content includes recipes for the products Boian carries in her online store, as well as a column containing her most recent blog update, any new seeds featured in her online store, and a coupon that customers can use when purchasing inventory online or in her store.
There is also a section in the newsletter that contains a feature story about a topic of interest to Boian and her customers. This feature story will discuss topics of organic pesticide use, “companion planting,” container gardening, gardening with kids, growing herbs for health, and more. In addition to the written content, the newsletter contains pictures of the company’s logo, new or featured inventory for the season or month, and images to go along with recipes and stories. Contact information for egardenseed.com is also provided, including the website, blog address, Facebook and Twitter page, and the location of Boian’s seed shop in Colorado. Figure 5 illustrates the layout of where the content was placed for pages one and four.

**Figure 5:** Layout of the Newsletter Pages 1 and 4

Figure 6 shows the newsletter content for pages two and three of the newsletter.
Color Scheme

The color scheme of the seasonally based newsletter template can be interchanged with the different color of the season. Pantone provides color patterns for summer, spring, and fall. These colors patterns can be used in the design of the newsletter when the owner or employee(s) update the newsletter. Figure 7 shows the fall Pantone colors for the season. This Pantone set of colors will be used to design the fall edition newsletter for egardenseed.com. Variations of these colors can be used to design the winter edition since Pantone does not produce a winter color set.
Figure 7: Pantone’s Fall Color Palette

Figure 8 shows the spring Pantone colors for the season. This Pantone set will be used to design the spring edition.

Figure 8: Pantone’s Spring Color Palette

Figure 9 shows the summer Pantone colors for the season. This Pantone set will be used to design the summer edition newsletter for egardenseed.com. Spring and summer Pantone sets contain similar colors, so variations to the colors can be made to differentiate the spring edition newsletter from the summer edition newsletter.
Summary

The newsletter for egardenseed.com provided customers with a new form of communication in which they could stay up to date with products, recipes, tips, and information about gardening. The newsletter was designed on a two page document in InDesign containing six columns with quarter inch margins all the way around. A masthead was placed on the first page in the top two inches. The content of the newsletter was placed throughout the pages making sure images were put in to break up large paragraphs of information.
Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this project was to create a seasonally based newsletter template and an inaugural issue for egardenseed.com. This chapter of the project includes a finished copy of the inaugural issue of the newsletter as well as the template with ideas for the newsletter contents.

The following is a copy of the newsletter template and inaugural issue:
eGardenSeed.com Family Favorite Recipe

Recipe for Heirloom Queen of Blue Squash Soup

Ingredients
- 1 heaping tbsps Heirloom Queen of Blue Squash
- 2 tbsps low sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 1 cup yellow squash, diced
- 1 cup zucchini, diced
- 1 cup yellow bell pepper
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 2 tbsps white wine
- 2 tbsps chicken broth
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 tsp fresh basil
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 tbsps fresh lemon juice

Instructions
1. In a large stockpot, sauté the onion in olive oil over medium heat until translucent.
2. Add the yellow squash, zucchini, yellow bell pepper, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth, chicken broth, and lemon juice. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 10 minutes more.
4. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Use a hand blender to blend all ingredients together until smooth.
5. Pour the mixture into a serving bowl and garnish with fresh thyme, basil, and black pepper.

Happy Holidays from eGardenSeed.com!
The Top 5 Seeds to Give as a Gift: Gifts of Meaning and Beauty

By M. Sullivan

The thought of someone else being happy and content can bring a smile to anyone’s face. Give them a reason to smile with the gift of seeds. Seeds symbolize hope and revival making them perfect for any occasion:

1. Lavender: Lavender seeds can be used to create a fragrant, relaxing ambiance. They are perfect for those who love the aroma of lavender. Use lavender seeds to create your own lavender perfume or soap.

2. Sunflower: Sunflower seeds are perfect for those who love gardening. They are easy to grow and will attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

3. Rosemary: Rosemary seeds are perfect for those who love cooking. They can be used to add a subtle, herbaceous flavor to dishes.

4. Borage: Borage seeds are a perfect gift for those who love gardening. They are a beautiful addition to any garden and attract bees.

5. Chive: Chive seeds are perfect for those who love cooking. They can be used to add a subtle, herby flavor to dishes.

Happy Gardening and Happy Gardening!
Discussion

The newsletter template as presented should be updated seasonally with information about recipes, gardening tips, blog stories, pictures and more. It should be used as often as the owner wishes. It is advised that every customer receives one via email, download, or hard copy in store.
Summary

The project has presented background information on the benefits of having a company newsletter and the purpose and history of Jessica Boian’s company, egardenseed.com. This information helped in the creation of a seasonal newsletter template for egardenseed.com. The newsletter template will allow Boian to formulated marketing and educational materials based on seasons that can be distributed to customers. The template can be altered to include important topics regarding: growing in different seasons, new technology advancements, ideal crops to grow based on time of year, recipes, etc. The newsletter should be shared with customers as it complements the seasons of the year and other online marketing materials Boian currently has.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the newsletter be kept up to date as seasons change. New stories, recipes, and specials can be added seasonally or as seen necessary. Upkeep of this newsletter should be performed by Boian or a qualified staff member who has exceptional writing skills.

The newsletter should be used as a marketing and educational tool that compliments the company’s website, blog, social media pages, and store. A printed copy should be available in store for customers to grab when they stop in or should be mailed to customers’ home address. An electronic copy should be available for customers to access from the website, blog, and/or emails. Images should be placed within the newsletter to make it more appealing to the customer.
Stories should be kept short and bullet points should be used throughout the newsletter. The newsletter is a valuable marketing and educational tool and should be used as such.

**Conclusion**

A seasonal newsletter template and inaugural issue has been produced as a result of this project and is ready for implementation in the store and online presence of egardenseed.com. Following the template created on InDesign makes it easy for Boian or another staff member to create a seasonally themed newsletter with marketing and educational materials ideal for each season. If the template should be used, egardenseed.com will have the opportunity to incorporate their products, advice, and expertise into marketing and educational materials that can be shared with the public.

One of the issues faced in the project was using the design program InDesign. It is an expensive program that requires the user to have knowledge and skill about the software and all its functions. As stated previously in the project, an alternative to using InDesign would be to use Word to design the newsletter. Hopefully this newsletter will continue to be updated, no matter which software program is used to edit it, with seasonal products and ideas as the company grows and sells in the years to come.
Works Cited


