



# design tips

## DESIGN BASICS

- Build on existing design ideas. Look at other newsletters. You could use a template.
- Keep it simple. Don't cram too much in. Use white space as part of your design, or to frame, isolate or draw attention to certain items.
- Choose your page size, number and fold. A4 (this size) is standard but not compulsory! You could fold A4 in half to make 4xA5, or fold three ways ('gatefold'). Use credit-card-size for information you want people to carry with them.
- Take time working out the best layout.

## NAMEPLATE

- The 'nameplate' is your newsletter's name, subtitle, origin (who has published it) and date.
- The nameplate is usually at the top of the first page, but could be along the side or at the bottom. It should look distinct, not competing with headlines and text.

## ARRANGING ITEMS

- Make important information larger than less important. Make your main article stand out, using position on the page and visual devices.
- Put some items in boxes. White-on-black boxes are effective, but don't use too many. Boxes can look good when rotated diagonally.

## MARGINS AND COLUMNS

- Use wide page margins (say, 1cm on an A4 page) to ensure that it prints better and that a reader's thumb does not obscure the content!
- Decide how many columns you want. On an A4 page, it is a good idea to use three columns.
- Set columns far enough apart that readers won't read across from one column into the next.
- Fewer, wider columns mean that the eye has to travel further, which makes text harder to read.
- Articles can span more than one column.
- 'Vertically justify' columns; each column's text lines up with the other's at top and bottom.

## HEADLINES

- Use different-sized headlines for different articles, according to their importance.
- Make headlines larger and bolder than text.
- Use the same font for subheadings as for your headline, only smaller. Leave more space above subheads than below.

## FONTS

- Use the same font – or 'font family' – throughout.
- It is better to use serif fonts (eg. Times New

Roman): they are easier to read than sans serif fonts (eg. Arial), because the serifs (the 'tails' on the letters) guide the reader's eyes along.

- Make sure your text is large enough to read. 9.5pt Times New Roman is about as low as you can go; and larger than that is better.
- Contrast headline font with text font – sans serif headlines to introduce text in a serif font.

## LAYING OUT TEXT

- It is usually best to left-align your text.
- Use one space only between sentences. Two or more creates distracting gaps.
- Don't leave a line break between paragraphs; instead, indent the first line of each paragraph.
- Avoid excessive hyphenation. Or don't use hyphenation at all!

## GRAPHICS

- Use cartoons, photos and other images – at least one per page.
- Where to get them:
  - Take photographs.
  - Use a scanner to scan in good photos, cartoons, newspaper headlines, etc.
  - Use clipart.
  - Use the internet. Google image search is useful; and there are several good lefty cartoon websites.
  - Use charts and graphs to present information.
  - If you can, find someone willing and able to draw cartoons about your workplace.
  - Beware of copyrighted images.

## COLOUR

- If you can print in colour, then do.
- If you can print in full colour, use colour photos and 'spot colour' (see below) elsewhere.
- A second (or third) colour as well as black is known as a 'spot colour'. Use the second colour with restraint, in the nameplate; charts and graphs; box backgrounds, in a lighter tint.
- If you can only print in black-and-white, that's fine. You could use coloured paper: pastel shades look good and make the text readable.

## LAYOUT SOFTWARE

- Use a decent layout programme (eg. PagePlus, Quark XPress) if you can.
- Convert the finished document to a PDF (portable document format), so you can distribute it by email and upload it onto a website in a format that most people's computer can read.

**These are guidelines. Break any of them if it really makes your publication look better.**