



# InGenius

## Review

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A review of  
great thinking  
from

INGENUITY  
MARKETING  
GROUP

*a marketing and training firm that works primarily with professional service organizations and small businesses. We offer strategic marketing planning and coaching, marketing program development, and curriculum and training mainly in the areas of consultative selling, professional service marketing, and customer service.*

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## *How to Write Terrific Articles for Your Firm Newsletter*

By Wendy Nemitz  
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*“ We want to start a newsletter because our industry associations say it is a good way to keep in front of people.”*

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I hear this from quite a few of the firms that call me. A newsletter is an excellent way to leverage your time by keeping your brand in front of people you do not see often, establish yourself as an expert, and cross-sell your services or products to your customer base. But ask anyone who has published a good newsletter, and they will tell you it takes a huge commitment of time and money. Before you start publishing a newsletter, think about the following options:

***Don't do it at all.*** If you do not like to write and do not want to pay others to write for you, put your resources into something else.

***Send out occasional updates or letters.*** A newsletter can have only one article. It can be a simple letter to clients. It can be a success tip or update printed on a postcard or sent via e-mail.

***Buy a prepackaged newsletter.*** Some of them are quite good. Ask to see at least four back issues to make sure you like the content. Make sure your firm's name imprint looks integrated into the design. Geographic exclusiveness is probably a good idea to make sure your clients do not get the exact same thing from your competitors.

Creating your own newsletter from scratch is time consuming but is probably the best way to continually show clients and prospects your expertise and philosophy of doing business. If you decide to go ahead and publish, here are ten tips for success:



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## 1. Use “You”

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Instead of using passive language such as, “Participants in this process gain exposure and credibility,” use active second person language such as “When you participate in this process, you gain exposure and credibility.” Speak directly to the readers and involve them in the information.

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## 2. Wrap the Facts in Stories

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Why do you think *The Diary of Anne Frank* continues to be popular? The story of what happened to one person is more emotionally powerful than statistics of what happened to millions. A good story lights up the statistics and makes them real and important. Rather than just telling the facts, be sure to include real or fictionalized stories about what happened to people when they do or do not follow your advice.

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## 3. Give Advice

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People read your newsletter because they want to find out what you think they should do. If they wanted the letter of the law or tax code, they could probably find it in a good library or online. They want you to tell them what you think and share the wisdom you have developed working in the field. They read the newsletter because they trust you. Tell them what you think they need to know and do.

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## 4. Call to Action

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Your articles should not only tell people what to do, but who to do it with: you! You can wrap this in a story with lines such as, “*we helped this client by...*” You can tell them about your expertise in the area and how you solved the problems. Always end the article with an invitation to contact you and your complete contact information.

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## 5. Be an Expert

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Always end your article with some brief information about yourself and/or your firm. While you might not want to mention your Harvard MBA in the body of the article, (“*Back in my Harvard days, we...*,” sounds a bit like bragging), you definitely want to mention your credentials at the end. Make sure your bio extols your credibility, credentials, and includes a photo if possible.

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## 6. Use Your Newsletter Strategically

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If you are passionate about opera or golf, you are welcome to mention it, but make sure the main articles are about services you want to sell. Having a dip in your personal injury practice? Make the case history of a client you helped be the lead story. Never just throw the articles in the file into a typewriter and give it to your printer. If you create an expensive newsletter, make sure it works for you. Make sure it is targeted at your “A” clients. Make sure it brags about your accomplishments and achievements.

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## 7. Be Allergic to Jargon

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Next time you have a group of your peers together, try to isolate words that are not used much outside your own field. Chances are you will not be able to because you are so immersed in your field. Ask your mother instead. Have an outsider isolate the words that your audience will puzzle over and make you a list. Have the new employee in your office keep a list of words that are new. Sounding so smart that no one understands you is not a way to bring people in as clients; it is intimidating.

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## 8. Hire an Outside Editor and Proof

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Even if you have great writers, a terrific proofreader, and desktop publishing, you need an editor. A good editor establishes writing standards for the newsletter, helps authors learn to write better, keeps strategy in mind, interviews and writes articles you don't have time for, nags nicely about the schedule, and always keeps the end audience in mind. Unless you want to do a terrific job on your newsletter, why do it? An outside editor is worth it.

I picked up a national child care magazine the other day and noticed a flag on the cover that said, "How to run a successful center." This made them look kind of dumb. Not that I have not published a few errors, we say in this business that doctors bury their mistakes, publishers print them for all to see. Make sure a great proofreader who has never seen it before proofs your newsletter last thing. When clients want to see you as an expert, perfect newsletters help them keep that vision.

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## 9. Go Electronic

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If you start to collect client e-mail addresses, you can convert your newsletter to an electronic version. Not only will it save loads of postage and printing dollars, but past issues are easily stored on your website, printed out for use in seminars, and easy to send to media outlets for their consideration.



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## 10. Leverage Your Content

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Why write an article for just one publication? Could it also be submitted to your local newspaper, industry newsletter, or talk radio station? Is there a website that published information like it? Once you have spent the time and sweat to create articles and a whole newsletter, think about who else you can send it to. Instead of only sending it to clients, consider sending it to:

- ~ Past clients
- ~ Past employees
- ~ Referral sources
- ~ Other tenants in your building
- ~ Targeted potential clients
- ~ Local chamber members and staff
- ~ Your local newspaper
- ~ Other media that might be interested in your areas of expertise

When people have been receiving your newsletter for a while, don't be afraid to call them and ask for feedback or appointments. Use your newsletter as a basis for starting or continuing a conversation instead of replacing a conversation. If you are thinking of starting a newsletter or other client communication system, call Wendy at 651 690 3358.

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Wendy Nemitz, President of Ingenuity Marketing Group, has been writing and editing newsletters since the dawn of the 1980s. Wendy has a degree in communications from the College of St. Catherine and is more than halfway through her M.A. in Leadership at Augsburg, where she is extremely grateful for her writing background.

Ingenuity Marketing Group helps professional service firms set strategic direction, implement effective marketing programs, and coaches and trains professional service providers to market and sell their services well.

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