

## KEEP YOUR TRAVEL BUSINESS TOP OF MIND

### *How to create a newsletter - for free*

Newsletters are a cost-effective and extremely valuable marketing tool for businesses to build relationships and maintain regular contact with clients, prospects and other stakeholders. Keeping clients up to date with the latest deals, regulations and hottest hot spots is a must for any travel business. Through sharing newsletters you are able to create awareness and understanding of what your business offers, demonstrate expertise through providing expert insight, promote your products and services as well as reach a wide target audience... for free! Here we provide you with a step-by-step guide to using this brilliant business tool.

#### **Sign up to a mailing service**

Although there are various online email marketing solutions available, one of the easiest and most affordable options is [MailChimp](#). The site offers a [Free Plan](#), which allows you to send up to 12 000 emails each month to 2000 mailing addresses. This is ideal for a small business that are watching costs. The service is easy to use and requires no advanced design skills – all you have to do is follow the easy steps.

#### **Create a base of contacts**

To start, capture all your client and stakeholders' email addresses in a Microsoft Excel list. Just be sure to get their permission first to avoid irritating recipients not to mention contravening [POPI](#).

#### **Import your contacts**

Next import your database to MailChimp. Simply save the Excel sheet of addresses as a CSV file and, once the doc is ready, click on the "lists" tab on the grey menu. This can be found at the top of the page and select "create list". To upload the CSV file click the "browse" option and choose your relevant lists then select "open" to upload. Ensure your columns are all named i.e. names, surnames and email address, and once complete, click "import" – your lists are now live!

#### **Grow your base through signup forms**

Don't add people to your base if you only chatted to them once. Instead insure that all recipients are clients, suppliers or people who will be interested in your business. By allowing your clients to sign up, it shows that they are interested in what you have so say. Rather have less yet more interested recipients than a long list of arbitrary people who won't even open the mail, or worse unsubscribe from your mailer.

To grow your base, use MailChimp's handy function where you click on "lists" – select the relevant "list" – "signup forms", and you're done. This nifty function enables you to create signup forms for both your website and Facebook page by following these easy [steps](#).

#### **Decide what to say and how**

The best newsletters use classic story-telling techniques. Adopt a conversational tone to draw your reader in by offering valuable content such as great deals and info on up and coming destinations. And don't be afraid to share your opinion on breaking industry news. You can even add a few trade secrets to the mix! Whatever you decide, keep in mind you're writing a letter, not an advert. No one likes to be spammed, so ensure you only send a newsletter when you have news, even if that limits you to one every month or two. To assist you with content ideas, we often share [blog](#) and [Facebook](#) posts that speak to relevant and shareable travel content including tips and special deals. These are

great for including in your newsletter. Just remember to add your mark-up wherever rates are involved! And as people have less and less time to read, opt for beautiful images to rather tell your story. Just make sure they are of a good quality and fit neatly into the mailer.

### **Design your newsletter**

The last step in sending out your newsletter is its design. Start by choosing the mailing list you want the campaign to be sent to and click “next. Then complete the campaign info. The subject line sets the tone for the rest of the newsletter and is often the reason for it to be read or deleted, so be sure to spend a little extra time on this. Once this is done, you’re ready to go!

### **Prepare to launch**

Select a “basic template” to start with for your layout. If you’re unsure and feel you need to make a few more changes, don’t worry because in “design mode” you’re still able to edit the newsletter layout and content. You can delete various elements, make additions, drag and drop images and edit the text. A good rule of thumb is to always test an email before sending to your subscribers. Do this by sending it to only yourself so that you can do one final check before sharing broadly. Once you’re happy, click “next” and your newsletter is sent!

If you struggle in the beginning just remember that the more you follow the steps, the easier it will become. For any further assistance feel free to contact us at [info@flightsiteagent.co.za](mailto:info@flightsiteagent.co.za) or call 0860 23 24 25 and we’ll chat you through it.

For content idea inspiration, follow our [blog](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

**ENDS**