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Kiss My Aster

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My Average Newsletter Open Rate is Over 80% and I Want to Talk About It

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I've been told that's a great number, but I'm always sulky that it isn't 112% because who doesn't want more of ME?

Actually, I don't want more of me. I'm super tired of me, that's why I only send out newsletters when I legit have something to say. THAT is my first of MANY helpful things I will say in this snappy column full of helpful hints.

I am Little Miss Unsubscribe for the newsletters I receive that only try to sell stuff so I don't ever do that. The newsletter I write must have something to say or I won't waste my time or the readers'. I aim to write one every two weeks and occasionally I can hit it more often.

I make sure I'm in a good mood and I have lots of time to write before I even sit down. I have a Coke Zero in place and I close the office door. They do take me about an hour, but I also get interrupted a lot.

I tend to brain dump on my way to and from work, in which I shout notes to my phone to inscribe starting with the word "newsletter," plus whatever thought was sprinting through my mind. When I go to write, I pull up all those notes. I make a bullet-pointed "In this Newsletter" section at the top and use it as a mini table of contents.

The bullet points are usually like:

1. Here's what's on my mind
2. Here's what's going on in landscaping
3. Here's the events calendar and a little about our current offerings
4. Here's some stuff we sell
5. Here's a Spotify playlist I made
6. Here's the most nuggety thing in this newsletter that you had to scroll all the way down to read, like getting milk at the grocery store
7. In The Ditch Report, I talk about something I see growing or flowering on my short ride home from the

shop. It's educational and I don't spend a lot of time on it. It's usually just a little more than a live link to more information, but it gets a ton of opens.

I don't know how to be opportunistic, but I'm a little stinker and love playing with gimmicks. Using the word "closing" or "pregnant" in the title is 10000% going to skyrocket your openings. It feels sneaky and gross, but then I include the reader in on the joke and the queasiness subsides.
I only share every third newsletter with everyone that subscribed and I keep two back just for my engaged followers.

I have QR codes at the register on business cards and on giveaway stickers that go to email registration. I also have a paper guest book that people can sign in on and I manually enter those four times a year. It's not as awful as it sounds; it's rather charming, honestly. I don't use pop-ups for newsletter registration on my website because that's annoying.

I celebrate every unsubscribe. It's one less "right" person for us. Also, I'm paying per address so scoot, go on, git. Except there's one semi-regular that unsubscribed and I asked her why and made her really uncomfortable and enjoyed every minute of that. Again, a little stinker.

I was a pretty good newsletter writer before I started listening to what Katie Elzer-Peters tells us all to do, but she has 110% raised my game. I have to admit that knowing she's probably going to read it has me dotting my Is and crossing my Ts. She's going to call me out for not justifying my text left and not having my photos linked to something (even if it's a Rickroll).

The best thing about my newsletters is that I'm writing them as a person and not as a business. I think we all get enough of those and it's madness. Once I'm done, I feel better, I feel like I've shared what's on my mind and, frankly, within two hours of sending I can count on making about $400 in classes or web sales. My next step is getting my newsletter up on the website and I hoped there was a toggle I could push or I could blink my eyes really hard and it would magically happen, but … alas. It's another thing to add to my to-do list. **GP**

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