

LEGAL SECRETARIES, INCORPORATED

ORGANIZED 1934

LSI – Educating California’s Legal Professionals



OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN WORKSHOPS

MAY 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BULLETIN EDITOR

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LSI® – Educating California’s Legal Professionals

BULLETIN EDITOR

MAY 2014

BULLETIN TIPS

MONTH OR PERIOD COVERED BY THIS ISSUE

VOLUME AND BOOK NUMBER

AS BULLETIN EDITOR

Your bulletin is a vital link between your association and its members and can be a powerful weapon in your marketing arsenal. As Bulletin Editor, it's up to you to keep members informed of all activities in your association and other local associations. Your association relies on the bulletin to announce its monthly meetings, speakers and educational updates. The bulletin can motivate, too. It recognizes individual members and makes them feel important. It projects the spirit and excitement of the association.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD BULLETIN EDITOR?

All newsletters are not created equal. In that same vein, neither are newsletter editors. As a newsletter editor, you have a responsibility to members in your association and others on your mailing list. In many cases, your newsletter is the only contact you have with them. You owe it to your members to provide them with actual news, educational opportunities and helpful updates.

Let your personality show through and allow your words to flow across the pages just like they would if you were sitting across the table from a friend. Use a "Message from the Editor" to convey extra messages or information you would like your readers to have.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of a bulletin is to communicate, not to see how many times you can send readers scrambling to find a dictionary. Don't use big words when smaller words will do. Keep your articles casual, non-technical and conversational.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You should review the Legal Secretaries, Incorporated rules for Annual Bulletin Contest. Be sure your bulletins contain what the judges are looking for.

BULLETIN EDITOR TIPS

Deadlines are sacred; build in a safety cushion to allow for unexpected delays.

Announce and stick to your deadlines. Organize your time and set aside enough time to produce your bulletin.

Any successful bulletin depends on plentiful and reliable sources. Involve your members – they are a great source of information and most are willing to help you. Assign members to write articles, help you proofread and/or edit the bulletin. Solicit their ideas and suggestions. Remember – the member that is willing to assist you today, may be your editor tomorrow.

Learn the distinction between simple information and a story. Information comes to life as a story when someone talks about it.

Read other magazines and newsletters as they come across your desk. They contain information you can share with your members. Keep a file of articles for use in future issues.

Make an ideas list. Whenever you get a bright idea, just add it to your list. After a short time, you will have a list full of creative ideas for upcoming issues. Whenever you are looking for article topics, you simply take a look at your list and choose an idea you feel like writing about.

Get permission from authors or publishers before printing an article from another publication. Identify the source and the person giving permission (author, publisher or editor).

Look for reader feedback. Watch to see how people scan your publication. Talk with a new sampling of readers after each issue. Do a readership survey on a regular basis. Track what's happening.

The true test of performance is behavior. You'll know you have an effective publication when your strategic audiences clip and save articles and when people are eager to write for it.

YOUR BULLETIN

A good bulletin is clean, attractive and easy to read. Lines and type should be sharp and clear. News items should be typed and spaced in an easily readable manner.

Keep in mind the following when typing and laying out your bulletin:

- Begin with good basics and build on good ideas.
- Decide how many columns on each page.
- Decide how you want the front page to look.
- Decide how you want the inside pages to look.

- Follow a consistent pattern in layout – develop a style and stick to it.
- Use only one or two type styles.
- Never put two spaces between sentences – use only one.
- White space begins with generous margins. Always provide sufficient “breathing room” at the tops and bottoms of your pages.

KEEP IT PROFESSIONAL

You probably wouldn't dream of sending out a resume to prospective employers that looks unprofessional, is full of typos and contains grammatical errors. That's because your resume directly represents your professionalism to prospective employers. In that same way, a bulletin represents the professionalism of your association to members and prospective members.

You'll want to make sure it looks impressive, has polished writing and is free of typos and grammatical errors. Proofreading, revising and rewriting are the most tedious, mundane parts of putting together a newsletter – but they are absolutely necessary. Always use the proper apostrophe symbols, open and closed quotation marks and use an Em dash instead of double-hyphens.

NEWS OR SNOOZE – HOW TO DECIDE?

One of the stickiest challenges facing editors is deciding what to include in their bulletins.

Many factors can affect an association's choice of news, and editors need to promote LSI and their local chapter, as well as serve readers' needs.

To determine a story's newsworthiness, ask yourself two broad questions:



- Does the information serve my association’s goals?
- Does our audience want to know about it?

If you answer yes to both, it’s a sure winner. Here are a few suggestions to help make the tough call easier.

- *Look at the whole picture.* Consider how the information fits into the context of your association’s activities and mission. Does the story call attention to a vital new law or service, or does it relate to your association’s goals?
- *Take a giant step back.* Be as objective as possible. If another association whose newsletters you receive published a story like this, would you read it? Is it a vital article because it is about the court or because it will further members education?
- *Check out your timing.* Is the story old and stale, or new and fresh? Is now the right time to publish the information, or would it be more effective in the next issue?
- *Look at previous issues.* Is the story about a product or new update you’ve covered recently? If so, does it genuinely add to what you’ve said before? Are you planning a themed issue that would be more appropriate for the topic or will it be old news by the next issue?
- *Put yourself in the reader’s chair.* Will your readers want to know about this? Do they need to know? Will it interest many readers or just a few? What effect will the story have on them?

Taking a few minutes to evaluate articles in light of these concerns will enable you to better meet

the needs of your association and your readers – and if you do it consistently, good news judgment will become second nature.

LAYOUT OF YOUR BULLETIN

A good front page has:

- A clear and bold masthead (name of bulletin and charter name of publishing association).
- Masthead should be large enough to be easily noticed, but not overwhelming.
- Month or period covered by the issue.
- Volume and book number of the issue. The volume number should be the year that your association started, or the first year your association sent out a bulletin.
- Front page should look the same for each volume.

Front page should also:

- Be representative of the bulletin.
- Have the current meeting announcement.
- Not be cluttered.
- Have legible print/type.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Create a table of contents that will properly identify the contents of the bulletin.
- List all major sections of the bulletin with page numbers.
- Table of contents should be large enough to be noticed.
- Table of contents should have a regular spot in each issue.

BULLETIN INSIDE PAGES

Include in each issue:

- Meeting announcements.
- Information on LSI annual and quarterly conferences.
- CCLS examination information.



- Legal specialization registration and workshop information.
- Administration rules and regulations.
- Announcements of changes in legal procedure.
- CCLS certification examination study aids.
- Law office product and management information.
- Parliamentary procedure information.
- Local court and administrative rules/regulations.
- Announcement reports of surrounding association meetings and activities.
- Names/telephone numbers of officers and chairmen.
- Information on benefits available through LSI and/or local association.
- The most basic bulletin should have a few lead stories, shorter educational items, and a message from your President.
- A message from the President should have a regular spot as the lead item.
- Court information and educational articles should have a regular spot on following pages.
- Learn from the best daily newspaper – people decide within seconds, whether or not to read an article.
- Be creative when setting up the layouts or columns.
- Headlines capture the attention of 70-90 percent of your audience. Effective headlines are informative, action-packed, and easy to read. Subheadings draw the reader closer to the actual text.
- Body text is read by only 75-80 percent of your audience. Make sure it's easy to read.



- Give proper credit to originator of articles and copy printed from other publications.
- If articles are continued on another page, identify article and include “continued from . . .”

AVOID CLUTTER BY:

- Leaving open spaces – avoiding overly cluttered pages.
- Planning the column design to avoid overcrowding.
- Using hyphenation.
- Careful editing.
- Placing graphics properly and appropriately.

WINNING BULLETIN TIPS

- Use only one or two type styles.
- Avoid “widows” and “orphans.”
- Use open and close quotes (“ ”).
- Use “accent marks” when needed (resume’).
- If space is needed, use only one space after a period.
- Know your grammar, punctuation, hyphenation, and word usage.
- Use the Thesaurus to avoid repeating the same word. One way you can check this, is to circle words that you have used more than three times. If you can change the word without changing the meaning, do so.

CHECK YOUR FACTS

Plain and simple, your readers are counting on you to deliver accurate facts in your news articles. Just as a lawyer reviews his case before pleading it, you must review your facts before printing them. Occasionally, however, mistakes will happen. If so, apologize in a timely manner and avoid making the same error. Most often, your members will accept your apology because they understand the time pressures of publication.

GRAPHICS

Use at least one graphic per page. Graphics include photos, artwork, charts, or even a colored or shaded box behind an article. Graphics are important for two reasons:

- Studies have shown that people are more likely to read an article if it contains a graphic such as a photo. That's because graphics, along with headlines, are the first things that readers' eyes are drawn to when they turn to a new page.
- Graphics within a story are important because they provide much-needed visual breaks from solid blocks of text. A page containing nothing but row after row of endless text does not look inviting to read. However, a story that contains strategically placed graphics that break up the text into smaller, less-imposing portions looks more visually pleasing and will attract more readers.

ACRONYMS

LSI CCLS

When you use acronyms (LSI, CCLS, etc.), don't assume readers know what they stand for. List them out in first reference, for instance, Legal Secretaries, Incorporated (LSI) and California Certified Legal Secretary (CCLS).

BEFORE SENDING EACH ISSUE TO THE PRINTER

Proofread, proofread and proofread – and then ask others to proofread your proofreading!

PRINTING

Good printing is essential to obtaining a clear, sharp appearance for your finished bulletin. Not all printers are created equal. Be sure to shop around for the best price for printing your newsletter. Once you step through the front door, ask to see samples of other newsletters

they have printed. More often than not, they will be proud to show off their work! Then, whatever you decide, be sure to get a detailed, written estimate or quote for the final product.



RECYCLE

Keep the world's trees and your readers happy by printing your newsletter on recycled paper. Even if you aren't a tree-hugging granola eater, I bet many of your readers are.

Unlike years past, there's very little cost difference today between recycled and virgin paper. So there really isn't any reason not to use recycled paper.

MAILING

Now you have a bulletin that presents a positive image for your association.

- Consider expanding your mailing list beyond your association membership.
- Be sure all prospective members receive the bulletin and send a copy to your local Bar Association, courts, judges and large law firms.
- The most convenient way to address your bulletin is using pre-printed labels from a computer.
- Most associations mail their bulletins First Class (standard letter rate). Some use a special class of mail for periodicals. You can save money using the Bulk Mail class, but you have to buy a permit and go through some extra paperwork. Contact your local post office for details.

E-MAILING

Benefits of an Electronic Newsletter:

Electronic newsletters cost far less and can be significantly more effective as they can be sent to a larger target audience. It is not necessary to pay the postage or printing fees on an electronic newsletter and it is therefore possible to send out more at less cost, making the electronic option budget-friendly. Another aspect of an electronic newsletter is that any business environment time is money. The production and distribution of an electronic newsletter cuts the amount of time spent by cutting out the need for printers and mail delays.

Builds Customer Loyalty:

Studies show that an effective newsletter can bond the member with the Association. By providing quality content in your electronic newsletter, you add value for your members and build loyalty that can last a lifetime. For long-standing members, the relationship that has been built over a period of time is strengthened through an interesting and informative electronic newsletter.

Improves Professional Image:

A professional newsletter elevates your Association image. Along with improving the professional image of your Association, an electronic newsletter is an excellent way to achieve brand recognition. With a well-structured and well-branded electronic newsletter, it is possible to regularly keep your Association's name in front of members and guests.

Creates Immediate Results:

E-mail marketing is timely. You can publicize meetings, promote events and seminars, and announce updates in the law. Print newsletters can take several weeks to put together, print and send out. By the time that these

newsletters reach members, much of the news and information contained in them might be out of date, or insignificant. An electronic newsletter can, however, be prepared, formatted and updated right up until the moment it is sent, thus making any information contained in it up-to-date and relevant.

VALUABLE INTERNET RESOURCES FOR BULLETIN EDITORS



www.lsi.org

Legal Secretaries, Incorporated website.

www.grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar
Guide to grammar and writing.

www.findarticles.com
Sorts through articles in magazines and professional journals – for free.

www.ehow.com
Offers how-to guides for just about everything.

www.genieknows.com
Searches 24 Internet search engines simultaneously.

www.usps.com
Provides you with all the information about mail you need.

www.usps.com/directmail
Offers complete direct mail services through the U.S. Postal Service.