

# FlexiDoc Tips & Tricks

May 2006

NativeWinds - Quality Software at Affordable Prices

www.nativewinds.montana.com

## FlexiDoc Designer...

Over 1,300 label formats supported for suppliers such as AE, AOne, Avery, Boeder, Devauzet, Durable, Formtec, HP, Leitz, and many others.

If you can't find the exact size you're looking for, you can even specify your own dimensions.

## What can you do?

The FlexiDoc Designer allows you to create, print and export your designs for:

- Business Cards
- Mailing Labels
- Flyers
- ID Cards
- Newsletters
- and anything else you can think of !

## Using Graphics...

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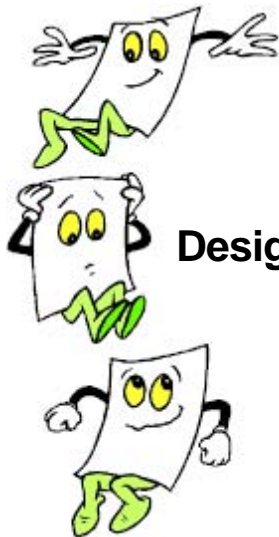
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## Publish Your Designs

Powerful vector graphics capabilities enable you to create complex designs and documents the way you want them!

This amazing program even lets you publish multiple designs to a single PDF file to create newsletters and multi-page documents!



Design your own

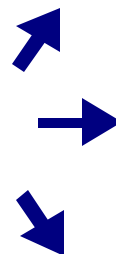
Mailing Labels

Newsletters

ID Cards

Flyers

Business Cards



## Using Graphics.

Photos and drawings will really give life to your publication. Consider getting a scanner, or just rent time on one at your local copy shop. Prices for flat-bed scanners can start as low as \$50 and climb way up into the stratosphere, depending on the quality of resolution. Again, CNET.com and Consumer Reports Online are the buyer's best pals here. You might also want to look into getting a digital camera so you can efficiently take pics, dump 'em into the computer, and plop 'em into your newsletter without bothering to scan. Prices for decent cameras start around \$250. (And where should you read reviews before buying? Right!)

Your graphics can help draw in the reader, but they have to help communicate your message, otherwise there is no point in using them. Too often pieces of art are just stuck in to take up space.

Both art and photographs have to be done well, otherwise they do more harm than good. If the photo is blurry and you can't identify the people in it, don't use it. It will make your whole newsletter look bad.

If possible, hire a professional photographer to take pictures for you. Sometimes this can be done for relatively little money. Good, crisp photographs can do wonders for your newsletter.

If you use a photograph, be sure to have a cutline or caption underneath. This explains what is going on in the photo. Well-written cutlines can entice the reader to read the entire article. If the photo is just a facial shot of someone, commonly called a mug shot, print the person's name underneath the photo. Don't assume that everybody reading your newsletter knows who that person is.

Original art may be difficult and expensive to obtain, depending on your access to commercial artists. However, ample books of clip art are sold. Unfortunately, much of the art in them is overused and outdated. Using it in your newsletter may detract from its appearance. So if you use clip art, use it sparingly and only to help communicate your message.

## Family Newsletters.

Family newsletters are a great way to keep your extended family close. You can include school and sports updates, cartoons made by the kids, family photos, Grandma's seasonal recipes, jokes, favorite quotations, birthday and event announcements, pictures of diplomas or awards, a report on what's going on in your hometown, a family tree, and Web sites of interest to the whole family. Have your kids vote on your best dinner of the week, enlist a cousin as a movie reviewer, or encourage a child to interview an elderly relative about his or her childhood memories. Include an editorial page, letting family members of all ages vent about everything from stem-cell research to why it's "rilly, rilly unfair for teenagers to have curfews."

Your first step is to decide how often your newsletter will come out and who the intended audience is. Producing a monthly publication is daunting—you might want to start off quarterly or just at holiday times, then expand. If you only want to brag about your own family's accomplishments, consider limiting your circulation to grandmas, aunts, and uncles. (You don't want distant cousins rolling their eyes at your endless boasting about your super-genius family.) But if you're willing to do a bit of extra work, solicit help from far-flung relations, asking them to contribute their anecdotes, vacation pictures, and family traditions. Not only will the newsletter become interesting to many more people, you'll also get more editorial assistance! It's a great opportunity to stay in better touch with relatives and learn what's going on in their lives, as well as share your own news.

# Newsletter Layout.

If you've taken the time to put together a newsletter, you want to be sure that people are going to read it. In today's information-saturated world, people are looking for information that is easily accessible and relevant to their lives. According to Newsletter Factory President Tondra Bowen, "When someone picks up a newsletter, they automatically skim it for information that's important to them." This information is found in several places:

1. Headlines are the most frequently read items, getting 70-90 percent of the readership. Because they are read the most, headlines should do everything possible to get people to want to read the article. Effective headlines are:

- Long. They should contain as much information as possible.
- Summaries of both the features and the benefits of the information. Features answer the question, "What is it?" Benefits answer, "What's in it for me?" You can't have one component without the other: Without the features, the benefits lack credibility; without the benefits, the features lack relevance.
- Action-packed. Make good use of verbs. Make people want to read the article – don't just summarize what's in it.
- Written in upper- and lower-case type. We use word-recognition to read, and we more quickly recognize the shapes of words when they are in upper- and lower-case type. "You want to make everything as easy to read as possible," suggests Bowen. As a general rule, The Newsletter Factory capitalizes the first letter of every word in a headline except for articles (a, an, the) and short prepositions (of, to, for).
- Flushed or aligned left. This tells the reader that the information is news, not an advertisement, whose headline would be centered.

2. Subheadings are the second-most read component of the newsletter. Keep in mind that subheads are subordinate to the primary information contained in the headlines. Don't misuse subheads by using a boring headline, then hiding the important information in the subheads. For instance, you don't want to use "President's Message" as a headline — no one, except the president, will read the article. Instead, create a catchy headline based on the information included in the president's article, then use "President's Message" as your subhead.

3. Like headlines, photos and photo captions should show action. People will read up to five lines of caption, so the caption can be as long (or detailed) as it needs to be in order to convey the importance of the photo. Pay close attention to the people in the photo:

- Are they doing something? Even "grip and grin" photos, in which the subject is receiving an award and shaking the presenter's hand, are preferable to those photos in which the subject is simply holding the award. Another way to avoid the impression of a static photo is to place the subject off-center.
- Can you see the faces of the subjects? Eyes gravitate to eyes, so shots of faces will draw attention to your article.

4. Once readers are drawn into the text of the newsletter by the headline, subhead, and photos, lead-ins are used as textual roadmaps to remind them where they are on the page; they serve as places for the eye to follow. Lead-ins typically look like abbreviated titles within the body text of an article. Other types of lead-ins are bold-faced or italicized proper nouns. For example, lead-ins in internal newsletters might be employees' names. Readers will be drawn to an article about someone they know.

5. As noted above, lead-ins serve to guide the reader through the bulk of the newsletter: the body text. A newsletter's body text is read by only 5-10 percent of your readers. So why bother writing standout articles? Because the body text contains 95 percent of the newsletter's persuasive impact. All the selling of the newsletter goes on here: The body of an internal newsletter sells employee loyalty, a sense of community, and employee involvement; the text of an external newsletter sells your product or service. A few tips to keep in mind when composing the body text of your newsletter:

- Set the text in serif type, which is easy to read.
- Don't double space between paragraphs. Double spacing will signal to the reader to stop reading. Instead, single space within and between paragraphs, indenting the first line of each paragraph.
- Don't justify the copy to the right. Doing so makes the text square and hard to read.
- Do away with widows and orphans (in the text, that is). A widow is a line containing only part of a word or short word; an orphan is a single line of type appearing as the first line of a page or column.
- Don't have too many hyphenated lines in a row. Broken lines make the text hard to follow.
- Limit paragraph length to approximately six lines.

Remember, readers prefer ease and relevance. The presence of these qualities will ensure that your newsletter is read and appreciated. Their absence will ensure that your hard work winds up

## About NativeWinds

NativeWinds is located near Whitehall, Montana in the Highland Mountain Range of the Rockies. Whitehall is situated in the southwestern part of Montana in the Jefferson Valley. Lots of mountains are nearby. To the southeast of Whitehall are the Tobacco Root Mountains, Bull Mountain is directly to the north and The Highland Mountains sit to the west. This is a small farm and ranching community of around 1,200 people where kids can still stop in at the local movie theater and catch the latest release (for us anyway) for a mere \$2 dollars. Adult prices are \$3 dollars. Travel through the town of Whitehall in the spring and fall can take awhile. You never know when you'll sit at a stop sign for 30 minutes waiting for a cattle drive to clear the intersection.

You have to travel a ways from here to find any large centers of population. The closest town with a population of 50,000 plus is 126 miles away in Great Falls, Montana. To reach a city with a 200,000 plus population, you'll have to travel 648 miles south to Denver, Colorado.

The home of NativeWinds Software sits at an elevation of 6,500 feet above sea level and near the top of the Continental Divide in the Highland Mountain Range. We are surrounded on all 4 sides by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. In addition to the standard fare you'd expect to find here at home - multiple computers in every room, bookshelves lining the walls, thousands of backup cd's and coffee cups within arm reach no matter where you stand; if you take the time to venture outside you'll see horses in corrals or pens to the north, east and south. Deer, elk, moose, coyotes, wolves and black bear are regular visitors who are kept at bay by 2 dogs of questionable decent who also consider this home.

Our split-rail lined driveway in the winter was once called 'the prettiest scene I've ever come across' by a visitor from back east. (Back east to us is anyone who lives east of North Dakota.) A photo of our drive under a blanket of snow now hangs in offices and living rooms from one coast to the other.



If you are looking for a large corporation filled with nameless people, we aren't what your looking for. The NativeWinds staff are real people, living in the real world, facing the same problems that you encounter.

## On the Web.

You can find the NativeWinds web site at <http://www.nativewinds.montana.com>. Stop by and check out our software selections. We think you'll be impressed!

Comments, suggestions and requests should be e-mailed to: [nativewinds@montana.com](mailto:nativewinds@montana.com)