

## Five reasons not to send a holiday newsletter this year

The winter holidays are a time when many of us feel all warm and fuzzy, yearning to reach out to others to share our good fortune and wishes for a holiday season filled with love, kindness and good will. Some will donate toys for tots, others will send holiday cards or bake cookies, and still others will send out a holiday newsletter. I'm all for donating clothes and toys, mailing Christmas and Hanukkah cards and sharing baked goodies with friends and co-workers, but please for the love of Santa, do not—I repeat DO NOT—send out another freaking holiday newsletter.

Saying I am not a fan of the holiday newsletter is an understatement. To be honest, I'd rather have my stocking filled with coal and get fruitcakes (low fat, please) from all of my friends for Christmas than receive another newsletter from someone I met on the bus six years ago and haven't seen or thought about since. Before you label me a Scrooge and use my column as kindling for your holiday fire, indulge me as I share with you the top five reasons I detest holiday newsletters.

### REASON #1: DO I KNOW YOU?

Every holiday newsletter I have ever received has come from someone I haven't heard from in at least a year. It could be that we've moved away from each other or grown apart or maybe we were never that close to begin with. I have been too busy to worry about it or to make my own attempt to reach out and, while I appreciate the effort with the sending of an oh-so-personal mass newsletter, it feels phony to me. I mean, after all, if I didn't merit a quick e-mail, text message or phone call during the year, why bother now? Is the sender that hard up for friends that he tossed me into the mix with his mail man, kindergarten teacher and third cousin on his dad's side twice removed? Save the stamp.

### REASON #2: THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

Most newsletters arrive with a photo of someone's kid(s) I have never met. I'm glad to see they are such happy, healthy, attractive children, but what's the point of sending a picture along with the newsletter? I don't know these children and will probably never meet them. However, because I feel guilty throwing away a photo (i.e., someone's documented history of existence), I have a drawer full of photos I can't identify.

### REASON #3: BETTER NEVER THAN LATE

Most newsletters are late. Have you ever gotten one that arrived before the holiday? I don't think I have. In fact, my theory is that people

are so let down after the gifts are unwrapped and the tree comes down that they feel the need to make up for all of the people they've forgotten in the past year. So they put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, to fill them in on all the juicy tidbits of their lives. I'd prefer they volunteer at a soup kitchen or recycle their tree instead.

### REASON #4: BORING!

Could the content be any less interesting? Granted, it takes a lot to amuse me, but I might try to stomach the newsletter if it was the least bit entertaining. Unfortunately, I nod off quickly when reading the details of every one of Timmy's winning science projects, Suzie making the cheerleading squad for the third year in the row, and the fabulous second honeymoon that Tom & Marge shared in the Bahamas. Oh, and there's the emergency surgery that the family dog Biff needed after swallowing a tennis ball and how sad it was moving Mother into the nursing home last month. I'm glad to hear you're doing so well—all except for Mother, that is—but puh-leeze, spare me the frame-by-frame.

### REASON #5: CHESTNUTS BOASTING...

Holiday newsletters sound more like a bragfest than a two-way "hey-how-was-your-year" communication tool. People I barely know—or have tried to forget—want to tell me how great their lives were this past year. Good for them! I'm thrilled they're so happy; truly, I am. But why gloat about it? Pat yourself on the back and move on.

Don't get me wrong. I love the holidays and it can be a good time to get in touch with far away relatives and friends, but no matter how you communicate, make it personal. Send a handwritten holiday card to your next door neighbor, your babysitter or your college roommate. Buzz her a quick e-mail or send him a text message to say "hi." Maybe even pick up the phone and call your Aunt Sandy. But whatever you do, don't send a holiday newsletter en masse to every Tom, Dick and Harry you've ever known. They'll thank you for it, and so will I!

— Dana Blozis

