

# BellaOnline<sup>sm</sup>

*The Voice of Women*

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## Dynamic Ezines Triple Your Impact!

Newsletters have been a part of company marketing for decades. The web has afforded a different approach to newsletters and the advent of ezines - electronically delivered mini-mags that deliver articles, news, updates and ads.

Smart web site owners realize that a regularly produced ezine can improve traffic, draw new viewers and get the word out there about their site and their services or products. It takes some work but once the process is set up, a monthly ezine can be produced with a reasonable amount of effort. The rewards make this effort well worth it!

**Design Ezine**  
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### Setting Up Your Template

The first step in designing an attractive ezine is to decide on your format, layout and column headings. Choose four content areas that you can target each month and stick to them. Ezines are done in both text and html format. Both have their advantages. Text ezines are easy to download and are accepted by all email programs. Html is rejected more and takes longer to view, but provides an appealing professional looking layout. Design a concrete [header](#) for your ezine - one you can use again and again with each issue. This header can be a graphic or strategically placed header font text. The key is to make it appealing and keep it consistent. Create your template and store it without any content - it will make each month's issue all that more easier to produce.

### Choosing Your Content

Make sure that the columns you have chosen reflect content that you can address on a consistent basis. Often, the first column in any newsletter contains an editorial covering news about your company or you, or news related to your company's field. At least one of your columns should contain valuable content for your reader - often articles are written to give your reader something substantial to read. You might also feature a Question and Answer column, especially if you are an expert in your field. Encourage your readers to ask questions that you can publish along with your expert opinion. Another column could feature new products or services, or describe exactly what you offer to the public. Frame this in the context of meeting your target customer's needs - how you can offer them quality and substance. You might also feature great web sites that offer information and data about your field (remember, your readers are likely to have some sort of interest in your company's line of service). Write your columns in crisp, friendly tones - aim for effective writing and grammar, and keep it

interesting and upbeat.

### **Gathering Your Readers**

Most web sites do two things with ezines. One, create a spot on your site for your ezine to be readable online. Archive each issue so they build up to a nice collection. It's smart to arrange them in Volumes and Numbers. Choose your timeframe - each year is a common one and number each month's issue, as Volume 1, Number 1 and so on. Secondly, ezine are distributed by email to interested subscribers. In order to facilitate the second method, you need to collect subscriber names. Put a small form on your ezine web page with fields for an email address and name. You can code the form to send the subscription data straight to your email or to your cgi bin. Some people like to use online services to collect this information for them. You can choose to use a [free](#) service (which means [ads](#) on your subscription information) or a [paid](#) service.

### **Make Your Mail List**

Your collection of subscriber emails will need to be collected and placed in a mailing list of some kind. If you only have a few subscribers, you can group them in an email folder and bcc the ezine directly to them. But once your subscription group grows, this method poses more trouble than it's worth. Most web hosting services include some sort of mailing list function for your domain site. You can feed the names into the mailing list control panel on your site then use your site email to send it out to the group. Check out your host's services and follow the instructions in your site manual. If your host doesn't provide a satisfactory setup there are many [CGI](#) scripts, [PHP](#) scripts and other codes available to program one into your site's work area and files. There are also several online free and paid services to have third party distribution of your ezine. Remember, if it's free - it probably means having ads on your ezine. Either way, if your mailing list is hosted on a free site, the address of your ezine is going to reflect that. It could be yahoo.com/MyEzine instead of locally hosted from your site.

### **Tell the World**

You can also spread the word about your ezine through a variety of advertising methods. Several ezine lists exist, which will feature your ezine amongst their [directories](#). It takes planning, organization, creativity, web know-how and endurance to launch a successful ezine. With talent and luck, you'll find the rewards are well worth the effort.

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