

Newsletter Magic

How to get 12 months of newsletters
in just 4 weeks

Class #4: Planning Your Editorial Calendar

Planning an editorial calendar may sound like a big, daunting task.

But it doesn't have to be.

We're going to break it into 2 separate sections for you:

- Looking at your coming year – Your Annual Calendar
- Planning month-by-month – Your Monthly Calendar

Your Annual Calendar

| Newsletter Magic How to get 12 months of newsletters in just 4 weeks | | Annual Newsletter Calendar | | CopyLuv |
|--|-----|----------------------------|-------|---------|
| JAN | FEB | MAR | APRIL | |
| MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | |
| SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | |

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Again, this one may sound like a lot of work... but you can do it fairly quickly.

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You can do this on the worksheet I've given you, or you can use whatever calendar system you already prefer.

The key is to make it super easy for you to glance at the calendar and have an entire overview of what's coming up that you may want to plan to write about.

Go through your Annual Calendar and mark down anything happening that month that may affect what you write about that month...

- holidays
- events (business events, industry tradeshow, speaking gigs you have booked, etc)
- your program or product launches
- other people's program or product launches you'll be promoting
- special dates (your birthday, your anniversary, your business anniversary, etc)

Do it now!

Your Monthly Calendar

You can plan your monthly calendar as far ahead as you like – 1 month, 2 months, 6 months!

I recommend planning at least 3 months in advance (you'll see why in a minute).

First – make some decisions:

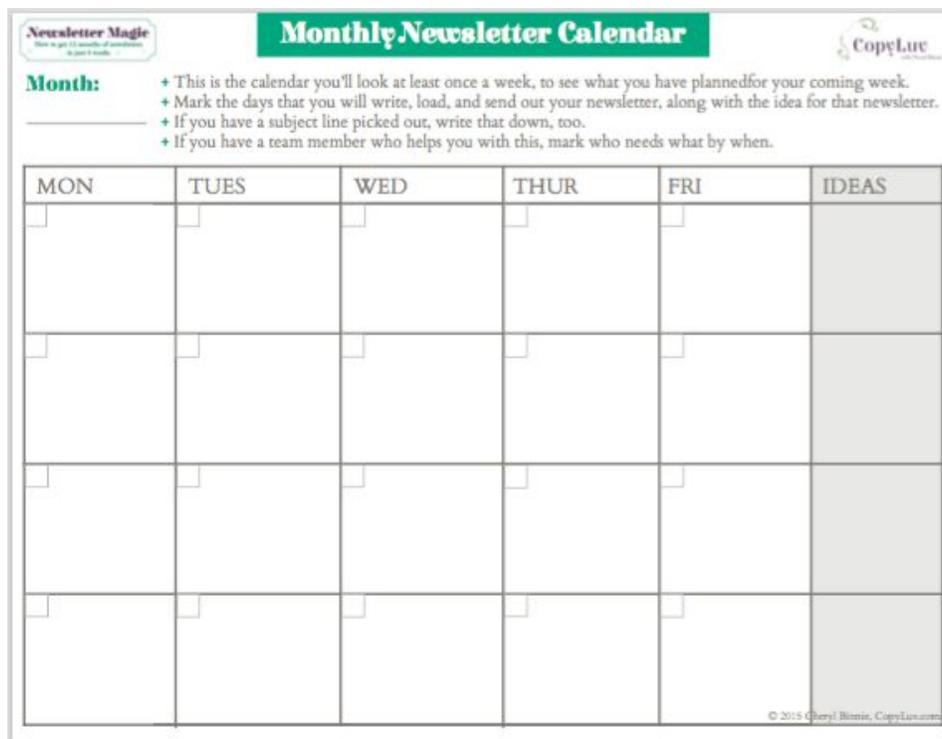
- Decide which day of the week you'll send out your newsletter.
 - Best days for open rates: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
- What time will you send it out?
 - Best times for open rates: varies!
 - Think about YOUR readers. When are they most likely to check their email? As soon as they get into the office? During a lunch break? Right after a lunch break? When they get home from work that evening?

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- When in doubt – send in the morning.
- What day will you load your newsletter into your email software?
(recommended: at least 1 full day in advance of sending it out)
 - Will you be loading it into your email software yourself?
 - Or do you need to get your copy to a VA to load it and test it for you?
 - If sending to a VA to load for you, how far advance do you need to get her your copy?
- Based on the above – what day of the week will you sit down to WRITE your article?
 - You may need to write it the week prior in order to get it to your VA in time.

Now, let's look at your Monthly Calendar...



The form is titled "Monthly Newsletter Calendar" and includes a "Month:" field with instructions. Below the instructions is a grid with columns for days of the week (MON, TUES, WED, THUR, FRI) and a shaded "IDEAS" column. Each cell in the grid contains a small square box for marking.

Monthly Newsletter Calendar

Month: _____

- + This is the calendar you'll look at least once a week, to see what you have planned for your coming week.
- + Mark the days that you will write, load, and send out your newsletter, along with the idea for that newsletter.
- + If you have a subject line picked out, write that down, too.
- + If you have a team member who helps you with this, mark who needs what by when.

| MON | TUES | WED | THUR | FRI | IDEAS |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | |

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Again, you can do this on the calendar I gave you, or you can do it in whatever calendar you already use.

Just as long as you WILL LOOK AT IT.

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Each month...

- Mark everything you decided above on your calendar: writing days, times, deadlines, send times, etc.
- Make note of any of the big things you marked on your Annual Calendar.
- Themes – you may want to have monthly themes, where all of your articles for that month fit into that theme.
- The “IDEAS” column – this is where you’ll make a note of WHICH article idea you’re going to write for that week.
 - To do this, refer back to your Ideas Repository.
 - Pick and choose which articles you want to write when.
 - Go ahead and assign them a week in your Monthly Calendar.
 - If you have different Categories in your Repository, consider rotating each week. For example...
 - week 1: actionable tip
 - week 2: personal story with a lesson
 - week 3: curated article
 - week 4: personal story with a lesson
 - As you assign your ideas to each week – make sure you pay attention to the holidays, events, etc from your Annual Calendar, or any themes you’ve chosen for that month. You may want to write an article based on those.

And don’t forget about the other sections in your newsletter!

You’ll want to make note of things you’ll be promoting each month in those other sections, too...

Newsletter Sections:

- **Header:** your logo / photo of you
- **Personal Note:** A short n’ sweet note from you, usually about **what’s happening in your life.** (150-250 words), preferably with a photo

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- **Featured Article:** (350 – 800 words) with a tip, idea, story, lesson or step-by-step process
- **Short Bio / About You:** (optional)
- **Success Stories / Rave Reviews:** (optional) You rotate through these each week. Keep a file where you or your assistant can just pull out a different one each week and copy/paste it into your newsletter.
- **Upcoming Events, Teleclasses & Travels / Where is Cheryl?** (advanced)
- **Recommended services + products / Cheryl Recommends** (advanced)
- **Would you like to use this article in your newsletter?**
 - This is the same blurb every week, telling people they can reprint or use your article, as long as they include your bio (or write out the
 - Don't forget the other sections in your newsletter!

While filling out your Monthly Calendar, go ahead and assign dates where you will be mentioning or promoting things in your newsletter. Otherwise, you may agree to promote someone else in your “Recommended Services” section on a week that you should actually be promoting your own speaking event.

(This is why I recommend planning at least 3 months out – because the busier you get, the farther out people will ask you to commit to promoting for them. Each time you add a new commitment to your main calendar, make sure to note it on your Editorial Calendar, too.)

Prepping Your List for a Launch (Advanced)

- Your Annual Calendar should have all planned launches already listed on it.
- Remember – when you're doing a launch, you will be sending both your newsletter AND your promotional emails each week.
- So when you look at your Monthly Calendar, decide which day of the week you'll send your promotional emails.

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- If you send your newsletter on Tuesdays, you may want to send your promo emails on Thursdays, or vice versa.
- A typical launch lasts about 8 weeks, so make sure to block those weeks out in advance – or else you may end committing to promoting someone else during your own launch!
- **Before your launch:**
 - 2-3 months before your launch: drop a teaser!
 - Tell your readers you're in the process of preparing a new program you'll be launching "this winter," and that you can't wait to tell them more about it!
 - Builds the suspense and excitement!
 - Invite your readers to take a quick survey. You're creating a new program, and what to make sure you design it to answer their most pressing questions around a certain topic.
 - When they feel "involved" in the creation of a program, they're likely to feel more excited about it when it comes to life!
 - (I've also seen marketers take this even further and ask their list for votes on program names or logo ideas.)
 - About a month in advance of your first promotional email, start "prepping" your list for the launch.
 - Look at the topic of your program (and any webinars or teleseminars you'll also be promoting in order to SELL the program).
 - Brainstorm 3-4 article ideas that warm up your list to the idea of that topic – so when you start your actual promotions, it'll be a topic that's already on your readers' minds.
- **During your launch** – your newsletters will also be related to the topic of the program.
 - That means – they'll get your "warm up" newsletter articles for a few weeks... then BOTH your promotional emails and on-topic newsletters at the same time.

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Sticking to Your Calendar

The biggest challenge is not creating an editorial calendar, but **sticking with it long enough to realize the benefits.**

So – when creating your calendar, you want to...

Understand what is possible for you.

Be aware of your limits.

If you commit to sending a newsletter every week, but have trouble keeping up with the schedule, you're likely to stop following your calendar.

If you under-commit to sending just 1 newsletter every other month, then you won't get much value out of the calendar (or from your readers!).

Try not to compare yourself to other people for now. Especially if they seem to be superhuman. (Because the truth is, they probably have a team helping them.)

You may have to experiment with this at first.

Commit to a schedule for 30 days and stick to it!

If, after 30 days, it's not working for you, try shifting it. Maybe you need to write in the mornings? Or so your writing on Friday the week before?

Just remember – the more it's planned out in advance, the fewer decisions you have to make each week!

Having an editorial calendar helps you work with guest writers and contributors to your blog. You'll know **WHEN** you have space for them – and you're able to schedule them far enough in advance to keep them from feeling stressed out about a last-minute crunch.