



*Welcome, friend!*

**Give yourself a pat on the back**—you have just taken a fabulous first step towards a newsletter that your customer friends are going to see as a “treat” to be opened.

It's time to turn this "chore" into the powerhouse sales it can be. There is no reason to feel like creating a newsletter is akin to visiting the dentist. Your newsletter is your chance to share your excitement and what you're learning with your stamping friends--and it should be contagious!

Turn your weekly email communication into a fun and interesting format with valuable content for your customers. Your newsletter will actually be opened instead of going straight to trash. **You'll be excited to send it out each week.** And you'll love seeing an undeniable weekly bounce in sales and interaction!

**But one word of caution before you begin...**

All the business advice in the world will not work unless YOU do.

You can have the best-looking newsletter in the world and still fail to make money, because you aren't consistent with it. Don't let your issues be haphazard and seat-of-the-pants unless you want your sales to be the same. I've given you the strategies--now you work it into your systems.

You can do it! And, girlfriend? **Good for you for investing in yourself.** My hope is that you'll consider this two week class some of the best business bucks you ever spent.

Happy stamping—AND happy newsletter creating!

*love, Lyssa*

# Newsletter Terms to Know

**Above the Fold** - in the days of newspapers, the most important stories were prominently placed right under the headline and above the fold where they would be seen. Your most important news should be placed at the top rather than buried in your issue.

**Audience** – your subscriber list in mail Chimp. Think of it as the people who have “come” to hear what you have to say. You can have multiple audiences (one for downline, one for club, etc).

**Automation** – the process by which an email or series of emails is automatically sent at specific points to subscribers. For instance, your welcome email will automatically be sent when new followers confirm their subscription. You can set it up to send a free gift, offer a catalog, or regularly remind subscribers of other resources you have available. Most newsletter platforms charge for advanced automation.

**Block** – Mail Chimp’s term for an article or segment of the newsletter. There are text blocks, text and photo blocks, action button blocks, HTML code blocks and many more. Blocks can be easily added, deleted and rearranged to completely customize your newsletter.

**Blog** – short for “web log.” This is your home base on the internet. Regular posts gain an audience and direct readers to your online store, to sign up for your newsletter or to come to your local or online events. Your main portal to subscribe to your newsletter will probably be your blog.

**Canva** - Canva is an easy-to-use design site online that allows you to add text and make alterations to your photos, Stampin’ Up photos, or stock backgrounds.

**Double Opt-In** – a way for subscribers to confirm that they signed up for your emails. Mail Chimp now requires this and it also complies with the data protection measures recently passed in Europe.

**Emoji** – a tiny graphic, often a smiley face or heart, used to convey an emotion on social media. Studies show that more people open newsletters when the subject line contains an emoji.

**Fields** – the boxes where you enter information on a form. For instance, when someone clicks to subscribe to your mailings, they will fill out a field with their email address. Depending on what you have required, other fields may be their name, birthday, country, etc.

**Footer** - a little blurb about yourself and your company that usually accompanies a headshot and is found at the bottom of your newsletter. Usually about one paragraph long, it should sum up your mission and “street cred.” There will also be legally-required contact information in the footers of any newsletter service.

**Graphic** – a photo or background with digitally-placed text and/or decorative borders. Use online services like Canva or Pic Monkey to add text to your own pictures or professional photos from Stampin’ Up to create fun images to draw eyes in your newsletter.

**Header** - refers to the large image displayed at the top of your newsletter. Sometimes called “banner.” This prime real estate (the first thing they see upon opening your issue) is a great place to display your branding. Make your background color match it for a cohesive, professional look.

**HTML** - a programming language for web pages and blogs that can also be used in newsletter services like Mail Chimp. Like any new language, it must be learned. TAMS ([thesearemystamps.com](http://thesearemystamps.com)) provides HTML code for demonstrators to add links to the catalogs and products in our online stores for free.

**JPEG** – a universal type of photo file that is easily shared on any platform. Many sites only allow photos of a certain maximum size. For Mail Chimp users, no more than 500 wide for a full-size photo and 300 wide for a half-size photo are best for viewing on mobile devices.

**Link** – the term for an electronic address that delivers anyone who clicks on it to a precise point on the internet (like a specific product in an online shop). Formerly known as a hyperlink. There are many ways to customize and shorten links for marketing purposes, like Bit.ly and TAMS.

**Platform** – the basic mechanics underlying a site or service. Examples of newsletter platforms include Mail Chimp, Constant Contact and AWeber. Mail Chimp is the only one of these three that has a free beginner level, currently up to 2,000 subscribers and 10,000 total sends in a month.

**Portal** – the ‘door’ through which your audience enters to join your mailing list. Examples are a link shared online, a pop-up message on your blog, a subscribe button on Facebook, etc. You want to have as many opportunities to join as possible. Never depend on just one portal.

**Sender** – that’s you! Use your name or first name and blog title to connect those two in subscriber’s minds. For instance, “Lyssa from Song of My Heart Stampers.”

**Subject Line** – the single-sentence teaser title of your newsletter that shows in your email inbox. Good subject lines convince people to open the newsletter to read more.

**Subscriber** – someone who has opted in to your mailings and will continue to get your newsletter until they unsubscribe themselves. Subscribers can be added by you (with confirmation from them) or they can add themselves.

**TAMS** – a fantastic site for demonstrators to make color-combo graphics, product tables, store links and more for their newsletters and blogs. Highly recommended. [www.thesearemystamps.com](http://www.thesearemystamps.com)

# Day One: Why Newsletters?

Why newsletters? Ten reasons to consider beginning a customer newsletter:

1. Newsletters can create a personal and intimate connection with your contacts and customers. A good newsletter doesn't sound like corporate wrote it, but has your branding, your face and your wording along with your projects.
2. Newsletters can keep you in front of your target market until they are ready to buy. Once a week they get a little gentle, no-pressure reminder that this is fun and just waiting for them to click. An SU newsletter should be a TREAT.
3. Newsletters can ensure people don't forget about you. I can't tell you how many times someone has told me they are not sure their demonstrator is still active. How sad!
4. Newsletters can give you a platform to display your expertise and establish yourself as an authority. They give you a chance to teach even when you don't have an event. Make yourself a valued source of knowledge.
5. Newsletters can help to generate customer loyalty, and there's no substitute for this! There are tens of thousands of demonstrators--your newsletter can give you a priceless voice to stand out from the crowd.
6. Newsletters belong to YOU-- there's no dependency on social media trends or terms of use. What would happen to all those followers if Facebook failed? What if some terrible glitch wiped all the customers from your SU database? You'd lose them in a devastating blow. Never depend on a single platform or site for your business.
7. Newsletter lists are one of the biggest assets your business can have. Used correctly they will result in a sales bump at the same time every week, in an excitingly measurable investment of time spent to return --"return on interest" or ROI.
8. Newsletters can give you the opportunity to really get to know your customers. When your email is right there, it's easy for them to hit "reply" and ask you questions or RSVP for events. Delve into the stats behind the scenes as well, for a secret peek into what they click on and what they don't open.
9. Newsletters save you time by "babysitting" contacts who haven't turned into customers yet, while allowing you to market to existing followers. These are people who have self-identified as WANTING to be marketed to! This is absolutely priceless and why it's so sad more demos don't put more effort behind their mailing list.
10. Newsletters let you tailor-make your offerings to your ideal customer by tapping into what they really want from you. Do they love the tips section? Make it a monthly feature! Do they respond well when you talk about a specific tool rather than a project? Schedule a class around that tool! You'll soon hit on unique things you can provide that no other demo is doing in quite that way.

I could seriously go on... I LOVE newsletters and am 100% convinced that, done well, you will get far more out of them than the time and effort you put into them.

## Assignment: Audience

Today's challenge assignment is to create a new audience in Mail Chimp or your current newsletter platform.

Log in, click on Audiences, then Create Audience.

Once you have named the audience (you can always change it later) fill out the rest of the form. Use your business email address and sign the "from" with your first name and brand name like this: "Lyssa at Song of My Heart Stampers."

Chose "double opt-in" and for the reminder about why they are receiving the emails, here's what mine says. "You are receiving this email because you have subscribed to Song of My Heart Stampers' emails sent by Independent Stampin' Up Demonstrator Lyssa Griffin Zwolanek, and confirmed your subscription via double opt-in."

The contact info (with a physical address) is legally required. Put your home address for now since this is just a dummy list. You can put a PO box there if you'd rather, too.

The last thing to do is click on one-by-one notifications (for now) for subscribes and unsubscribes, sent to your inbox. You can change this later when they are flowing in : )

DO NOT share the sign up link with anyone yet, if you are new. That will enable you peace of mind as we work on this draft over and over this week that no one else will see it but you until you are READY to hit send.

Great job! You have successfully completed the first step. Later we'll talk about how to get people to join the audience.

## Day Two: Roadblocks

What keeps us from starting and sticking with a newsletter? Many demonstrators know they need a newsletter, but are reluctant to start one. Let's talk about common reasons why so many demos don't do newsletters despite the overwhelmingly positive functions they can provide to a small business.

Sometimes demos are reluctant to begin because they have tried it in the past and failed to maintain a regular schedule. I have several tips for that. First; people often quit because their newsletter platform (service provider) was too complicated or they were not able to be consistent. It's a CHORE instead of a joy.

You must let go of past failures. Your customers will not think any less of you when you tell them you are switching providers or starting over. People like to know what they can expect. They'll welcome you sharing that you'll be sending them all the news and updates in one easy location, once a week.

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*Good newsletters are a SERVICE, not a sales pitch. That's what makes it ok to send them weekly, not just monthly.*

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Secondly, people often quit because they felt like they were always scrambling for content. I'd like to propose to you that that is actually a GOOD thing. You must continually create and stay on top of the news in order to publish an engaging newsletter. Why do we think that's a BAD thing?

It IS possible to have a weekly newsletter with NO original, handstamped content in it, however. We will be talking about this at the end of the week. Do not allow yourself to use content as an excuse for not starting a newsletter!

Once you have removed the physical roadblocks to starting and maintaining a newsletter, you have to tackle the emotional ones.

Are you afraid of starting and failing, AGAIN? Yes, it's true that might happen. But if you never start, then your only outcome is indeed failure. You might as well TRY and see if you can change that "for sure" outcome to a positive one.

Sometimes demonstrators don't want to start a newsletter because they can't see how they can add one more duty to their week. However--if you knew THIS duty would actually pay off in terms of engagement and orders, wouldn't you be more likely to take it on? Sign me up, right??!!

Newsletters WORK. Blogs and social media get all the glory, but the old workhorse newsletters never quit bringing it in.

But they only work if you send them out!

## Assignment: Set Up, Sign Up

If you have not already created your new or existing mailing list (Audience), please do that before continuing. I know it was a big leap. YOU CAN DO IT!

Today's post is quite long BUT it is step by step and all the steps are very short, I promise.

Now that we've set up our audience, we need to set up our sign-up form. This is what contacts will see when they click on your link to subscribe.

This very first form is a crucial step in building trust. It must be professional looking, or contacts will feel insecure about giving you their data. It should be SHORT, or they will weary of jumping through too many hoops.

Finally, this form is another chance to personalize your brand and "voice." Use it!

To set up your sign up form, go to Audience, and make sure it's your current audience, if you have more than one. Then click on Manage Audience/Sign Up Forms. Choose Form Builder.

You will see this is the area where we found our link to sign up from yesterday's challenge. Scroll down and you'll see the form builder with each individual "field" to fill out, and all the different options available on the left.

Right under the headline it says "click to add content." This is where you put a short personal message. Mine says, for instance, "This will only take a jiffy! Please fill out the form below to receive my fun weekly updates. You will need to CONFIRM your subscription via a link in an email you will receive. Then your FREE (file) will be emailed to you shortly!"

Under that is the email address box and their first and last names. Click on the first name box and on the left check the box that makes it a required field. Do it for the last name as well.

Underneath those is the address field. I remove this; it takes time to fill out, and I don't need their address until they are an actual customer, not just a contact. If they are already customers I already have it in Customer Manager. Don't ask for info you already have : )

When you click on the address field, a plus and minus sign will appear at the bottom. Hit the minus and a confirmation box will pop up. Mail Chimp is very careful about making SURE you intend to delete things. I appreciate that!

Same thing with phone number--many people hate giving out their number and I never ever make phone calls anyway, so no reason to ask for this.

When the basic builder is set up how you want it, you can click on the "design" tab and change the background colors, borders, font styles and sizes, etc. Change them to match your photo/color scheme/brand.

WHEW! Good work!!! Tomorrow we will tackle the welcome email that they will receive after confirming their subscription.

## Day Three: Weekly vs. Monthly

Let's talk about WHY I recommend WEEKLY and not monthly newsletters!

There are three main reasons demonstrators choose to do a monthly newsletter instead of the more optimal weekly update. The first and most often mentioned is because they think it annoys customers to do it more often.

Actually, if you're having customers annoyed by this (and ARE you? Have they actually SAID this? Or do you just think it?) then it is more likely because your "newsletter" is a solid sales pitch and not an informative, fun and educational resource that they cannot wait to open.

If you actually HAVE gotten complaints or KNOW FOR SURE that people have un-subbed because they are receiving too many communications from you, the first thing I would do is revamp the content of my communications, NOT cut them down. And I'm talking about a TREND of people saying this, not one cranky lady : )

A second reason some demos shoot for monthly instead of weekly is that they think it will be handiest for the customer to have all the info in "one convenient spot." This can actually work against you in a big way.

For starters, WE (as demos) do not even have "all the info" in one spot. We do not know all the specials and news that will occur spontaneously or on short notice over the course of a month. So of necessity, "all the info" will never BE in one convenient location. That's a myth!

A once-a-month newsletter is kind of like putting your eggs all in one basket. Emails quickly proceed down into the depths of the inbox and never resurface. Emails get deleted by people who think "they'll remember." Emails occasionally don't come through at all. I would never recommend hanging all your hopes on a single email per month.

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*People are human and they need reminders and prompts and regular contact. With a single missive, the entire last half of the month will be a wasteland of missed opportunities to connect (and sell).*

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A third reason some demos decide monthly is enough is a more personal reason--the time involved to make a good one. I would like to suggest that this is unfairly burdening to yourself. You are not going to hit it out of the park every week, no. Does that mean you shouldn't even attempt to connect with the ball? Of course not.

My friend, DONE IS BETTER THAN PERFECT. A slimmer, more educational, template-driven newsletter sent every week is going to get far better results than a single, over-stuffed issue once a month.

## Assignment: Customizing Forms

Couple follow up comments on the sign up form we created yesterday--

A common roadblock is TOO MANY questions on the sign up form. This is not the time or place for a survey. All you actually need is their email address. I also ask for first and last name so I can customize the emails to them. The only other thing I asked for years was whether or not they were a fellow SU demonstrator.

Recently I added a question to identify whether or not they live in the States. Some demos ask for their birthday, too. But in general, you should ask as few questions as possible so that their sign up is as close to “painless” as it can be. If it takes them more than 30 seconds to sign up, you’re going to lose them.

Let’s continue customizing!

Now that we have our sign up form built and designed, we’re going to work on making the other subscription-related forms match your colors/brand.

Go to the Audience dashboard, click on Manage Audience/SignUp Forms and Form Builder.

There is a drop-down box under Forms & Response Emails with different forms for each possible scenario during the subscription process.

Customize each one of those in both the subscribe and unsubscribe areas today. That might sound like a big chore but literally all you have to do is change the color to match your theme on some of them. Others you can edit a sentence or two. Inject your personality and brand wherever you can.

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*Seem like a time investment? It is! But remember, with a mailing service, every minute you spend setting up your systems and process and templates NOW pays off in hour upon hour of work saved over the course of the next year.*

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TAKE HEART--you are going to have a FABULOUS newsletter you LOVE to send out when we are done. And every day you are a bunch of small steps closer to that goal. Let's do this!!

## Day Four: When to Send

Let's talk about when to send!

Pick a day of the week that works for you! Ultimately, if it doesn't work for you, you will have a hard time keeping it up.

BUT as far as customers-- Studies suggest the middle of the week rather than Mondays or the weekend, when people are trying to identify their duties for the day or get ready to leave for the week, and don't have time to read or act on your email.

The earlier in the day, the better--BUT not before nine a.m. because it feels like an indulgence to read "fun emails" that early in the day. Do not send after three p.m. on a workday, either, when people are trying to clear their desks for the day.

I personally shoot for before lunch on a Tuesday. Sometimes it turns out to be Wednesdays, and that's ok. Make it a part of your weekly routine and attached to something permanent on your schedule. Mine is attached to the Current Updates on Tuesdays. That's all I plan to do on Tuesday. Anything else business-related I get done that day is gravy.

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*I suggest NOT telling people your newsletter will be out on a certain day each week; that way if your Tuesday issue arrives Wednesday, no one will even realize it.*

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Seems like a lot of "rules?" That's ok. Email service platforms allow timed delivery. If you get the newsletter done but feel it's not the optimal time to send it, just save it as a draft and make yourself a note to send it tomorrow. Mail Chimp and other platforms have scheduling options you can play with.

But if scheduling or "optimal" time of day is what you're letting yourself use as an excuse not to send a newsletter--I refer you back to "DONE IS BETTER THAN PERFECT."

The point is to identify all the roadblocks and excuses you have been clinging to and BLOW THEM AWAY so the path is clear to proceed with confidence and enthusiasm.

## Assignment: Template Creation

OK, we are READY to begin working on our newsletter template! This is the fun part!

Open Mail Chimp and click on CREATE, then email.

Name your newsletter (only you see this part, so you can use numbers or the date or whatever helps you)

Choose your audience (for now just use our fake one if you want; you can eventually change this to be your real audience if you already have a list going).

Personalize the "TO" field--since you have their first names from their sign up forms, click on the merge tags and select FNAME (first name). It's a nice personal touch!

The FROM field should already be filled in from what you set up on Day One when we created our audience. If not, fill it in now. Mine says "Lyssa from Song of My Heart Stampers."

The next area to fill out is the SUBJECT LINE. This is what will show up in the inbox. A good subject line is creative--catches their fancy and makes them want to click to open it--or direct--states the special offer or sale outright. Subject lines should never be misleading.

You can go back and change the subject line later, so just name it something for now, like "Fun Fall Crafts" or something generic. Once we get your content going it may spark a more creative headline.

When the SUBJECT line box is open, there is another area to add PREVIEW TEXT. This is a little tag line or additional tidbit about the sale, the date, the deadline--whatever you want. Stick a little something generic in there for now and we can change that later, too.

Sometimes I use quotes about creativity or crafting in the preview text line when I don't have much to say.

The next section in this area is DESIGN EMAIL. Here we go!!! Isn't this exciting?

For LAYOUT, it really doesn't matter which layout you pick, because they are all customizable, but I like the 1:2 column option (paid plan) because the option to have both one and two columns helps break up the newsletter visually. Again, you can change this later.

For today, we will quit here. Just hit save and exit or save and close. If you have time, go ahead and begin adding your header and colors. If you don't have a header, choose a nice SU photo and add text if you can.

See you tomorrow as we set up the basic outline of how our newsletter will look and personalize it to match our brand!

## Day Five: Consistency Tips

When you are having FUN, you forget you are working. When things are all set up in a pretty, organized template and you just change out content once a week with things you've been working on during the week, you forget this newsletter is supposed to be a dreaded chore.

So that's my first tip for staying consistent: get set up with a template you like, and just copy and rename it every week. It will save you from having to re-insert info that carries over from week-to-week, plus remind you what you've already shared lately so you can focus on newer things.

Secondly, when a tool consistently brings in as much engagement and sales as a good newsletter WILL do, it needs to be given a place of priority on your to-do list. That means it trumps everything but a family emergency.

Many of us are trying to be business people without ever placing a priority on our businesses. The truth is, there ARE moments when your business needs to temporarily assume prominence.

I promise, it will get easier to put the effort of a newsletter in context as your subscriber list grows and it becomes more obvious that it is a valuable sales too.

Another tip is a newsletter buddy! This is a like-minded, go-getter business demo who agrees to be an accountability partner with you. Subscribe to each other's list. This arrangement can be anything from a simple check-in once a week--"hey, I didn't see your issue yet this week--don't forget!" all the way up to someone who shares mutual content with you.

I do not recommend any organized newsletter "co-ops" at this time; the work is too inconsistent. It's better if you work with another demo whose style of writing is similar to your own so that the "voice" and consistency of the content seems more natural.

One last tip for staying consistent: if you fall off the horse one week, you **MUST** get back up on it again. You **MUST**. **This is the difference between a hobbyist and a business demo.** Falling off is no excuse for quitting.

If you miss your set day of the week, well, my dears, to quote my favorite movie, "tomorrow is another day." if you miss a week due to unavoidable circumstances, it's all the more important that your next issue go out and make a big splash.

And most importantly, if you do not see results right away, you **MUST. NOT. GIVE. UP.** If everything paid off immediately, everyone would do it. The things that don't have an instant payoff are often the most valuable activities you can be doing with your time: blogging (I call it "slogging," when you are waiting for it to pay off), newsletter faithfulness, little extra acts of customer service--those are all **LONG TERM** commitments.

Think of how you would advise a downline who came to you wanting to quit trying something because it hadn't paid off instantly. You'd snort with laughter (inside!) that she was expecting miracles. But we do the **SAME THING** in our own business, giving up far too early and often just before the payoff finally arrives.

# Assignment: Adding Blocks

Ok! Let's get going on that template that is going to save us soooo much time later! Open Mail Chimp, click on "campaigns", find the one you started yesterday, and click on EDIT.

We're going to start at the top (the header) and work our way down to the bottom (footer). Remember, this is all stuff you will do once to set up, then for the next issue, you just replicate this email, change out the photos and wording, and it's good to go. Time VERY well spent!

LOGO: this is your space to brand with a header image. Use your blog or FB cover or a bright, well-cropped SU photo that you add text to. It should be welcoming and cheerful. Click on LOGO, and on the right opens up an area to "replace" (insert) your photo.

When you go to insert or replace a photo, a new box opens up an area where (eventually) all your previously uploaded photos are stored. This is a time-saver when you need to use the same photo in multiple issues, or you have special headers you use in certain issues each month. Upload the photo you want to use, click on it and hit INSERT.

Mail Chimp will tell you when your photos are too large for their space. A good width is 500 for the full size photos and 300 for any half-sized or multiple columns. There are some basic photo editing tools right there in Mail Chimp, which is a time-saver when you just need to crop or add text.

The next "Block" is your headline or lead line. This can be your welcome message, the big news, or you may decide to delete this block (top right corner X).

Every time you edit a "block" on your newsletter, the editing is done on the right hand side, and you'll hit "save" at the bottom of the editing area to make the changes permanent. Then proceed to click on and edit the next block.

The screenshot displays the Mail Chimp design editor. At the top, there's a navigation bar with options like 'Give Feedback', 'Help', 'Preview and Test', 'Save as Template', and 'Save and Exit'. Below this, the editor is split into two main sections. On the left, a preview of the email template is shown, featuring a 'Logo' placeholder, a headline 'It's time to design your email.', and a text block. A 'Drop an image' box is also visible. On the right, a 'Content' tab is active, showing a grid of content blocks: Text, Boxed Text, Divider, Image, Image Group, Image Card, Image + Caption, Social Share, Social Follow, Button, Footer, Code, and Video. At the bottom, there's a navigation bar with 'Back', 'Template', 'Design', and 'Save & Close' buttons.

Let's practice adding a block!

As you can see in the screenshot, there are a wide variety of blocks you can add to customize your newsletter. Click and drag them one at a time to your newsletter. The little dotted grid at the top left corner of each block is where you can grab and drag it to a different location in your newsletter.

Try inserting a block with a photo and text right under your header image and/or headline text. Insert a photo using the same process as above. Change the text in the editing box on the right, saving it. Edit the text (bold, italic, font, centered, etc) right there in the editing area just like you would in Word or any other writing program.

The photo and text block is the one you will likely use the most. The next most valuable block is the button! This makes a great BRIGHT, obvious call to action. Add a button block underneath your photo and text by clicking and dragging.

In the editing box on the right, add a link and change the button text under CONTENT; personalize the button color and design under STYLE; and position it where you want it under SETTINGS. Then hit save.

The third most used block is the DIVIDER line. This helps keep your content separated and clearly marks where each "article" begins and ends.

Your LAST challenge for today is to customize the Social Follow block with links to your social media (Facebook biz page, Instagram, website, etc. When you click on the block, a nice simple editing area opens on the right for you to insert your links, delete any that aren't applicable, add others you think are important, etc.

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*Someday in the not too far future you are going to realize just what an incredible tool your newsletter has become, and you'll be so, so glad you persevered.*

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## Day Six and Seven (Weekend): Lead Magnets

In addition to being EASY to sign up, It also needs to be EXCITING!

Enter the "Lead Magnet."

A lead magnet is a gift with signup that draws attention to or causes the customer to be willing to join your email list. It's the little extra push that sends them over the fence.

It's also a tiny taste of the fun and value that is in store for them on your email list.

You can give away almost anything you have generated as a free, value-added gift. Class files, PDF instructions, even a link to a special, exclusive video or private gallery (available on TAMS) can be a gift.

With an email service like Mail Chimp, you can automate it so that the file is sent to new subscribers automatically, with zero extra work on your part.

Anything that you have to send to new subscribers one by one will eventually break down or back up, so it's crucial to automate everything we can.

I definitely recommend automating your lead magnet by including your freebie file or link in your final WELCOME email. It's as easy as adding a button block and uploading the file or link. WOW!

Research suggests that 90% of visitors to a site won't purchase anything the first time they visit. So to gain anything at all from these contacts, other than a click on your website counter, you need to get their contact information. and guess what--people don't like to give it out! However, customers are 40% more likely to agree to join an email list if they are getting something in exchange.

Enter the "lead magnet," an irresistible opt-in offer that gets them to join your mailing list. Good lead magnets are intriguing, with an element of curiosity. They contain value, something the customer needs or wants. And they can ensure that your new contact sticks around long enough to become a customer.

Examples of lead magnets:

- 5 Tips every Beginning Cardmaker Should Know
- Top Ten Tools for Serious Scrapbookers
- Identifying Your Unique Papercrafting Style
- 21 Ways to Use Up that Paper Stash
- One Hour to Awesome: Learn to Stamp Tonight!

These are all freebie special offers with newsletter signup. Don't those names just make you want to join that mailing list? The lead magnet is the push that causes someone to sign up for yet another thing to clutter the inbox.

Again--this is work up front, but it is going to pay off.

As your list grows, which is WILL, by leaps and bounds once you put a lead magnet plus easy sign up forms, and regular social media reminders in place, you will find yourself increasingly encouraged to be consistent and get that newsletter out each week.

## Assignment: Lead Generation

The Lead Magnet is one of the three TOP things I believe can utterly transform your subscriber rate from one or two a month to one or two a day (we'll talk about the other two things on another day!)

My current magnet is three sets of PDF files to help people with easy measurements and simple layouts (you got them if you subscribed to my emails in preparation for this class.) They appeared automatically through Mail Chimp as part of your confirmation and welcome emails. Spiffy, huh?!

Entrepreneur and social media trainer Melanie Duncan says, "Done right, a lead magnet is an opportunity to showcase what you do and the value you offer, and is an effective means of building trust with your potential customer."

She lists these five steps to creating an enticing lead magnet:

1. Identify your ideal customer. We're not going for quantity, but quality.
2. Figure out what the main need or problem is. What are they looking for?
3. Look at what subjects generate the most discussion on your blog or social media.
4. What type of support could you offer that would meet that need, or remove a barrier to purchasing? Do they need ideas? Do they need confidence? Do they need to use up what they have already?
5. Consider how your customer likes to consume information. Will this be a one-time PDF gift? A four-week e-course? Monthly emails? Instant access? Delivered via mail?

There is no one right answer as to what you should develop as a lead magnet. Just about anything can be your freebie. It can be a free e-book, free training, a quiz, printable resources, a coupon, exclusive content. Whatever it is, it is unique to you, and if you advertise it, you will see your mailing list grow by leaps and bounds.

Today, go through the five steps and write down five ideas for a freebie that you could include when someone signs up for your mailing list. You don't have to actually create the lead magnet this weekend, just think about it, kick around ideas and get them on paper. If you have time, however—go ahead and begin creating it.

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*The faster you get the lead magnet up and running, the faster the leads will start coming in.*

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## Day Eight: Content Creation

Let's create some content! Today will discuss generic content "filler" and regular features; tomorrow we'll talk about exclusive content to make your newsletter stand out.

Many demonstrators freak out at the thought of having to generate a newsletter EVERY WEEK! However, if you are being creative with where you find your content, a weekly newsletter does not have to be some huge and dreaded chore.

Any of these ideas can easily be added to your own pictures and the latest news, to beef up a "thin" newsletter week when you didn't spend much time in the stamp room—or just get the newsletter out the door, if you're short on time to actually create it.

- Video of the week: there are tons of videos on the Stampin' Up corporate YouTube channel, and more added with every new publication. You can feature a different video every single week and never duplicate!
- Product/Tool of the week: Use the corporate images taken straight from the catalog to show the tool itself and a project made with it. Add a short blurb or recommendation of your own, or a tip on how to use it.
- Featured Technique: link back to a past technique on your blog. Techniques NEVER go out of style and can be recreated with any stamp set, even if it's not current. Re-use your old content and make it pay again.
- FAQ's about Joining: answer their unspoken questions, one at a time, using this no-pressure way to gradually build up their confidence and compiling information about joining your team.
- Color Combining: inspiration is everywhere! Use TAMS ([www.thesearemystamps.com](http://www.thesearemystamps.com)) to quickly create a color combo from any photo (doesn't have to be a stamping project). You can do a weekly challenge OR boost participation in an already-existing color challenge, by including it in every issue.

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*Let's stop winging it every week and give ourselves some parameters to work within. Regular features are going to be a huge part of why you'll come to love putting your issue out every week!*

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Here are some other quick out-of-the-box “Of the Week” ideas for newsletter content:

- Featured Stamp Set of the week
- Sale-A-Bration item of the week
- From the Archives
- Pinterest find of the Week
- Pinterest board of the week
- Die-Cutting tip of the week
- Christmas card of the week

Wouldn't you LOVE to receive a newsletter like that? I know I would! 5-6 items/blocks per newsletter is plenty of content (some even recommend 2-3 items/articles as long as they are high-value content). Mine are a little bigger because I typically blog 3-4 times a week so have lots of content in addition to my weekly regular features.

**The more regular features your newsletter has, the faster it will be to put together every week,** because you'll already know what you're doing and you will find yourself saving ideas during the week. Swap the pictures out, change the text and it's ready to go.

## Assignment: Regular Features

It's time to come up with some regular features you'd like to include in your mailing list. I suggest you make an outline of what your newsletter template will look like!

Remember, better to have smaller amounts of content done really well and published and out there, than plan a huge newsletter with overwhelming amounts of info that never manages to get finished and out there.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when considering what to include in your weekly email:

- What regular features appeal to YOU?
- What have you done in the recent past?
- Is there anything you've already come up with you can utilize (tip sheet, technique PDF, etc)?
- What does SU provide that I can use weekly?
- What have customers asked for or mentioned they like?
- What can I do that won't take long each week?

One feature I suggest using is TAMS -- [thesearemystamps.com](http://thesearemystamps.com) -- or something else to create color combo graphics. I do mine using SU corporate photos and use TAMS to add the colors, names and turn it into a JPEG. Every issue has a color combo with a gorgeous professional photo. It takes less than 2 minutes to create and swap out this block every week. Color combos are an easy way to add value to your email.

One last note--the best regular features have nothing to do with selling. They are there to add value to your newsletter, value that makes people WANT to open and read it, even though they know it is for selling.

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*Make your regular features about added value, and then add in the salesy stuff around them.*

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## Day Nine: Exclusive Content

Let's face it--the majority of demonstrators have their hands full producing a project or two and doing their social media posts for the week. The last thing they have time to do is come up with a "newsletter exclusive" project that will only be shown to a handful of people and then never seen again.

Laboriously making up exclusive content for your subscribers, while it might sound like a clever thing to do, can seriously backfire on you as it becomes more and more of a chore and a time-sucker.

Instead, I like to offer sneak peeks and other easy "value-added" activities.

With a sneak peek, all you have to have is one photo about a project you'll be sharing next week. Just one little tease--a closeup detail or even a work-in-progress photo--and you have got them interested to come back for more, without any additional work on your part. All you have to do is snap a quick pic of something you're already working on.

Another way to offer exclusive content and value for subscribers is to offer tips and tricks. If you've been a demonstrator for more than a week you already know a bunch of little fixes and handy how-to's. People LOVE that sort of thing, and it takes next to no time to type one up each week. They don't have to be mind-blowing tips, either. Anything that makes their crafting experience more enjoyable or successful is helpful and thoughtful of you to share.

A third way to offer something exclusive just for subscribers is to have the occasional special offer or coupon. While you wouldn't want to over-use this, because it might call too much attention to our regular prices, this can be a tool in your toolbox.

I guarantee you, even if they don't redeem it, it makes the subscribers feel valued to know they are getting offers that aren't available to any but VIP buyers.

A final tip for adding exclusivity to your newsletter without have to come up with additional projects or tutorials: Remember the accountability partner we talked about? If you do want your issues to have private projects, trade off with a friend and create one every other week. Your work will instantly be cut in half.

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*In reality, while exclusive content is nice, it's not necessary--and if believing that you HAVE to offer it is what's keeping you from doing your newsletter, then pitch that idea right out the front door.*

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The best newsletters are the ones that are done and sent, period.

Tomorrow we'll discuss a bunch of ways to add personality and branding to your newsletter--we're getting ready to get this issue out there!

## Assignment: Just for You

Today's reading was about adding an exclusive to your newsletter, something to set you apart from other demonstrators and add spice to your regular features.

Your challenge task today is simply to create that block and add it to your issue-in-progress. Here's some tips to help it stand out:

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*Always add a photo or graphic to the block whenever possible. Blocks of plain text with no accompanying photo should be avoided altogether or used as sparingly as possible.*

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Create a graphic quickly and easily by adding text to a photo right in Mail Chimp. The photo editing skills there are limited but they work when time is short.

Place a divider line above and below your block to help it stand out.

NOTE: SU will provide sneak peek and exclusive info/photos/graphics from time to time. Double-check that they are able to be shared with the public, and dive in!

There is no reason to not have a bright and pretty photo with everything anymore, since SU provides us with a file of photos with every catalog.

Your newsletter should be close to shaping up at this point. If it's not, spend the rest of today's session working on steps you missed or didn't have enough time with previously.

## Day Ten: Personality, Please

There's a fine line between a newsletter that looks professional but is also personal, and it can be tricky to walk.

You'd think there would be no such thing as "too" professional, right? But in an industry like ours, where sales are based on relationships more so than other types of business, "too" professional can hurt you just as much as not being professional enough.

Our main tool to counteract being impersonal is ourselves.

This is why I write a little chatty blurb at the beginning of every issue--I want my voice to be the one they hear right off the bat. I want to remind them I'm a crafter just like them, love a good bargain just like them, have the same problems and time restrictions as they do.

If writing is not easy for you, that's ok. It doesn't have to be long, and maybe it doesn't need to be EVERY issue. Could you do it once a month? Could you try it for a month and see if it got easier?

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*If you're wondering what to write about, read some of Shelli and Sara's personal notes from the inside of our catalogs to get ideas. They have been writing (or someone is writing for them) those notes for YEARS now and always have something fresh to say.*

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Another way to preserve the personality within your lovely professional template and fancy branding and graphics is to add a statement of excitement to everything you write about.

- "I can't wait to see you" at such and such event
- "I've been addicted to making these" cute little project
- "My friend is going to be so excited to get this" card
- "Looking forward to stamping together" at club

We KNOW you are excited for these things and we are too, but we need to see and read it verbalized. If there is a motto or statement/phrase you use in real life, work it in online! Sha-zaam! Mic drop! Woot woot! Doesn't that make you smile?

A third way to express personality (remember, people want to do business with PEOPLE, not products) is your signature area. You don't have to say, "love, Lyssa" like I do, if it makes you squirm--but your sign-off should be warm and sincere.

Make it pretty large, too, so it can't be missed, as it's the last thing they'll read before clicking away.

## Let's talk about ourselves

Within the footer area of Mail Chimp is the ability to add photos. This is a great place for a family photo or your headshot so that your image is right there next to your signature line. Make sure you are SMILING.

TIP: if you don't have a photo you like of yourself, try turning one black and white. Sometimes it makes all the different by smoothing everything out. It's not quite as eye-catching but it's better than no photo at all.

The last part where you can keep it personal is your "about" blurb. This can be short and funny, or longer and serious, but it needs to be PERSONAL. They are curious about your life and you need to give them some info on it.

Here's mine for an example:

ABOUT YOUR DEMONSTRATOR FRIEND:

LYSSA GRIFFIN ZWOLANEK IS FROM WATERTOWN, WISCONSIN, AND A VERY BLESSED WORK-FROM-HOME WIFE AND MOM OF TWO SPECIAL TEENS. SHE IS A LIFETIME CRAFTER WITH ALMOST 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT DEMONSTRATOR FOR STAMPIN' UP, A RUBBER-STAMPING AND SCRAPBOOKING SUPPLIES COMPANY BASED IN UTAH. LYSSA HAS RECEIVED MULTIPLE AWARDS, INCENTIVE TRIPS AND NATIONAL COMPANY HONORS BOTH FOR BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS AS WELL AS HER PAPER-CRAFTING ARTISTRY. A TOP 100 GLOBAL DEMONSTRATOR FOR OVERALL PERFORMANCE, LYSSA'S BLOG HAS HAD OVER FOUR MILLION VISITORS SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED IN 2008.

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*Once you craft an "About" statement you like, it can be used all over social media, in your blog description, Facebook info, Instagram bio, etc. So it's worth taking the time to do it right!*

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## Assignment: Pre-Flight Check

Today we're going to comb through our template from top to bottom and make sure everything is set for our first (or new & improved) issue!

Double check the following blocks for accuracy, spelling and sense of excitement:

- Title of newsletter
- Sender
- Subject Line and Preview Text
- Header logo/photo
- Personal blurb from you
- Latest news/specials
- Regular features
- Something exclusive
- Signature line
- Footer area with blurb and photo

MAKE SURE there are NO random blocks with dummy text or photo blanks left in there--that would be embarrassing! Also make sure nothing is left over from last week's issue, if this is not your first newsletter.

Next, look over the template itself.

- Do you need more divider lines between blocks?
- Does your background color complement your header?
- Decide if you want all your buttons to be one uniform color, or if you will change the color to go with the corresponding photo.
- Are all your photos resized or do any still have warnings?
- Do you need to check any words Mail Chimp has underlined in red for spelling errors?

Are you getting impatient to get this show on the road? I bet! Tomorrow we'll discuss monetizing the newsletter with links and tactics to increase sales.

## Day Eleven: Call to Action

The ultimate, bottom-line goal of our newsletter is sales. We have to be getting sales from our efforts, or long-term, we will not keep it up.

There is a two-pronged approach to getting sales from your issues. We'll be talking about the second one, getting as many people subscribed as possible, tomorrow. Today, we'll concentrate on optimizing our newsletter so that it's as easy as possible for people to purchase.

**You best friend in a newsletter is that action button.**

No matter how cute your photo was or how great your wording was, it comes right down to that block at the bottom that sums up what you want them to do with that information.

BUY NOW, right?

Well, you wouldn't enjoy a newsletter FULL of BUY NOW buttons, and they won't either. So make sure you always change the wording and let them know specifically what they are clicking on.

- Learn More
- Let's Go Shop
- Shop with Lyssa
- Read about it
- All the Details
- Stamp set name/tool name
- More Photos
- Three more quick tips
- etc.... make them interesting!

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*Studies have shown that changing a button's color to something bright increases clicks by 80%. WOW! So whatever color scheme you chose, make sure your buttons fall on the bright side if they lead to your store.*

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If you have not been in the habit of adding those marvelous buttons to your newsletter--I promise your customers WILL appreciate them. **Everyone wants to be clear about their next step or where to go.**

Good directional call-to-action buttons are GREAT customer service!

## Let's Talk About Linking

Many demos find their newsletter revolutionized when they start linking to their products in the online store. This takes time (although it's super easy to do with TAMS) and LOTS of demos skip this. Business-minded demos NEVER skip this step.

The problem is, not providing links is like inviting someone to a party "somewhere" and only telling them once. You mentioning a product is not enough for them to go hunting for it. LINKS in effect take their hand and lead them straight to the party.

TAMS is my newsletter and blogging fairy godmother. For instance, I didn't just tell them there was a sale--I practically went and put items in their cart : ) That's what linking does.

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*If you're serious about monetizing your newsletter, you cannot skip the behind the scenes work to link it all up to your store.*

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Any successful blogger will tell you there is a lot more going on in the background that contributes to their sales than most people ever dream of. They would never dream of just throwing a photo and text out there without adding all the links and calls to action.

Yet soooo many demos are doing that with their newsletters--and then wondering why they're not seeing results. Is it any wonder why so many demonstrators get discouraged and quit?

## Assignment: Optimization

Today's assignment is to go through and optimize your newsletter for sales.

Here's a checklist to help you cover all the bases and think about each area that can be monetized:

- Button blocks after each main article leading to the specific item in the store or to a blog post that has been properly linked to your store.
- Change the color and default text of all buttons
- Whenever you mentioned specific products in the text of a longer article, link the products individually, or at least the main ones like stamp sets or new tools.
- Any hostess codes you are using are displayed in bold font and close to a link or button to use them

Use TAMS to create photo links or product lists that are all connected to your store. If you don't have a space for this in this issue, practice making one with the different pre-paid Paper Pumpkin subscriptions. It will help you get familiar with how to make this type of visually-appealing links for your blog and newsletter.

If you are worrying about how long this is taking--TAKE HEART! once you know this stuff, it will become second nature to do it right as you type up your issue. You'll soon know exactly where to go and what to click to get your links and **best of all, you'll KNOW how effective it is**, which will make it all worth it.

I can't wait for you to get to that point, but we all have to start as beginners, first! Persevere through the learning stage and it WILL pay off.

## Day Twelve & Thirteen (weekend): Opening Portals

No matter how great your newsletter looks, or how optimized for sales it is, it's not going to be effective unless it gets seen and read by subscribers. Many demos think their job is done when they produce an issue. In fact, the work has only begun!

Telling people you have a newsletter is not enough. Like with links, you must take their hand and lead them there.

Recently I read that the average value of a newsletter subscriber is about \$1 a month. So if you have a thousand subscribers, you can expect to see \$1,000 in sales from that avenue. That puts our lists into perspective--hundreds are good, thousands are better.

The reason we need to build our subscriber list above and beyond--literally into the thousands of subscribers--is that only a percentage of those subscribers will actually read any given issue. And only a tiny percentage of those readers will actually ACT on anything in the newsletter.

So how do we get those thousands? For starters, **don't pin all your hopes on a single subscriber portal.** There should be multiple locations through which to join.

Mail Chimp Sign up forms can be embedded in your blog posts, blog sidebars, and landing pages. They can be installed on Facebook easily.

Your link to the sign up form can be added on YouTube, shared on Twitter or Instagram, added to posts, and put on business cards. Even slips of paper in your order bags, a label on your catalogs, a handout reminder at class, while not a clickable link, is still a memory aid.

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*If your customers have to LOOK for or WONDER where to sign up, then you've got a roadblock that is keeping subscribers from being funneled into your list.*

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Customers also need multiple REMINDERS to join your list. When's the last time you did a blog post or social media push for subscribers? At minimum this should be a monthly thing.

MailChimp allows you to auto-post your newsletters to Facebook. Normally I am not a fan of auto-posting, but in this case, do it, because you can then pay \$5 or a small amount to have the post boosted. This is priceless CHEAP advertising online that so many demos are not using.

Everywhere your customers are online, there should be a portal. Make a list and systematically set them up!

Give contacts directions to the party! Don't just tell them you're having one.

## Let's talk about Pop Ups and Pop Overs

I know, I know--no one likes pop ups. So why do so many sites still use them?

Because they WORK!

In the week after I started using a pop up message on my blog, I got 400 new subscribers. Soon I had over 4,000. Pop ups are great for catching casual visitors from Pinterest, especially.

Here's my best tips for pop ups that won't alienate your site visitors:

- Eliminate the angst of a pop up by making it as un-annoying as possible. It should be just as customized, chatty and personal as the rest of your site.
- Remind them of your exciting lead magnet.
- Assure them the newsletter is free and their info is safe.
- Use a delayed pop-up time setting--don't hit them with it immediately as your page loads (mine is set for 20 seconds).
- Enable the option that won't show the pop up again for that visitor until one year has passed.
- Make sure the X or "close" button is obvious.

Concentrate on growing that list as large as possible, and you WILL soon see the averages working in your favor.

## Assignment: Subscriber Portals

Today's goal is to get as many subscriber "portals" (entrances to your newsletter list) out there as possible.

Start with the places you already see the most action, to gather up existing follower/customers, then proceed through this list and conquer as many of them as you have time to work on this weekend. Remember, we must EXPAND well past our existing circles to get those numbers into the hundreds and then thousands.

If you already have some of these set up, revise the wording to be more exciting, talk about your lead magnet, and personalize them with your colors and branding.

- Embedded or linked in Blog sidebar (MC)
- Pop-up form on blog, or welcome message (MC)
- Blog post once a month (schedule automatically)
- Facebook business page (FB)
- Facebook post (schedule automatically)
- Signature lines on various public forums/galleries
- Print labels for your catalogs with the link
- Add new lead magnet info to any existing portals
- Add link to your Insta and Pinterest bio
- Set MC to share your issues to FB & then boost
- Flyer or reminder slips for order bags

## Day Fourteen: Hit Submit

There are two things I want to address regarding actually sending the newsletter.

The first is practical: subscribe to yourself. You need to know what your issues look like in email and phone.

You can have them sent directly to a folder if you want to keep your inbox tidy. I love having all my previous issues on file (all the way back to 2014 when I started with MailChimp after years of struggling to stay consistent). They'll be on file with Mail Chimp or your service provider, of course, but it's very convenient to have them just a click away to refer back to and remember what you said!

The second is emotional.

I know it's hard to hit that send button the first time (and honestly, all the rest of the times, too). You're putting yourself out there, and you're open for occasional criticism, typos you never dreamed you'd make, and the odd mistake or wrong date now and again.

Please don't let that stop you from going for the newsletter of your dreams. You've worked so hard to remove all kinds of roadblocks and get this process automated. Stay strong! The fact of the matter is, we are all human and are going to make mistakes throughout life.

I can't tell you how many times I've hit that send button with satisfaction and thought to myself, "what a great issue. Good job, girl!" (I talk to myself, yes.)

**And then I start getting emails... but not the kind that start with "Online Order" in the subject line.** The kind that tell me I messed up something somewhere. And if I let it, my good mood evaporates instantaneously.

Accept right now that you are going to be somewhere in the range of GOOD-BETTER-BEST every time, but that you'll never be less than GOOD.

Because you know what? Just publishing anything at all with any sort of regularity at all is actually awesome. Like the quote, "No matter how slow you go, you're still lapping everyone on the couch."

And if people want to criticize that, well, maybe someday they'll learn themselves, the hard way, and be sorry they didn't give you more grace in the moment.

## Assignment: Carry On

You are all set, my friend! The rest is up to you.

Your audience is ready; your forms are set up. Your template is configured and your blocks are filled in. You've double-checked everything and linked it all for sales. Your portals are open and your offer enticing.

### **HIT SEND!!!**

You may think the hard part is over.

And in one sense, it is. It will never be this difficult to set up again. From here on out it's more like a "fill in the blank" game you play once a week.

But in another sense, the work is just beginning.

You hit send, and then next week you start over.

And next week you'll hit send, and then the next week you'll start over.

That's the hard part. When you get to the week where it's not exciting any more.

Some people are really good starters, but struggle to stay on course. Others are really terrible at starting up, but then proceed faithfully for years and years. I don't know which one you are, but you do. And either one—not starting or not staying—can make or break your newsletter.

I can't make you be consistent. I can't help you get those issues out. I can't force you to be excited, enthusiastic and energetic. You must come up with that energy and drive on your own.

I know you can.

**Create a newsletter you yourself would love to subscribe to, and you can't go wrong.**

All the best, my lovely, creative and successful friend!

love, Lyssa

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*"You must get up each morning with determination, if you want to go to bed each night with satisfaction." G. Lorimer*

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