Newsletters and Feature Writing

• Feature articles are different from news articles.
• Increasingly newsletters are adopting magazine-type layout techniques, rather than a newspaper approach.

Newsletters

• 50,000 corporate newsletters are produced each year in U.S.
• Most are internal.
• Types
  - Associations
  - Community Groups
  - Institutional (the most common, from organizations)
  - Publicity (fan clubs, politicians)
  - Special-interests
  - Self-interest (profit-making targeted to a market)

Why a Newsletter?

• They provide
  - Downward Communication
  - Upward Communication
  - Horizontal Communication
• Questions to ask:
  - What is the purpose?
  - What is the information to present?
  - Who is the audience?
  - How often should you publish it?

Newsletter Content

• 50% is about the organization
• 20% about employees
• 20% about competitors, community
• 10% small talk and personals

Newsletter Objectives

• Why write it? You need to know.
• To present management's objectives?
• Whatever the objective(s), make them measurable.
• Make the objectives realistic.
• Follow through on them.

Newsletters & Newsletter Articles

• Most are journalistic in style. They include both straight news and feature stories.
• Range from formal to informal.
• Almost always handled in-house.
• Usually written on 8 1/2 by 11 to 11 by 17 inches.
• Usually two to four pages in length.
• Most articles are 100-600 words.
• They need to be brief. They make use of graphics and photos.
• They should be entertaining.
• No need to use the inverted pyramid.
Where to Get the Stories
- Management
- Employees
- The Organization
- What does the audience want?
- Whatever the story, you have to research it.
  - Literature search (has it been written before?)
  - Background information

Feature Writing
- Almost anything that isn't straight news.
- An article that features something as its central point or theme.

Feature Style
- Less objective and provides less hard information than straight news.
- They generally take a point of view or discuss issues, people, and places.
- The style is more relaxed, more descriptive, and more creative than straight news.

Feature Style
- Feature Style
  - Quotes are used to add credibility and to add human interest.
  - Human interest is a key characteristic of much feature writing.
  - A profile: a feature story done on a person or on one aspect or issue relating to a person, individual companies or products.

Writing the Feature
- The Lead
- The Body
- The Ending

Writing the Feature
- The Lead
  - Your lead must tell the reader what the story is about—not too much, but don’t make your reader search for the point.
  - Lead with a quote, anecdote, analogy, metaphor, etc.
Writing the Feature

• The Body
  - The story must be elaborated.
  - The body must support your main point.
  - Focus on the people part.
  - Help readers hear, smell, and feel the story.

Writing the Feature

• The Ending
  - The most powerful parts of the article are the beginning and the end.
  - Choices
    - Summarize your main points
    - Refer back to the beginning
    - Make a call for action

Types of Features

• The most common type is the profile, written specifically about a person, a product or service, or about the organization itself.
  - Personality Profiles
  - Product/Service Profiles
  - Organizational Profiles

Editorial Considerations for Features

• Headlines, subheads, captions, and pull quotes.
• Headlines are for news stories, titles are for features.
  - Keep them short
  - Avoid vague language
  - Use short words

Editorial Considerations

• Subheads & Crosshead
  - Subheads are explanatory heads, just under the title.
  - Crossheads are transitional heads.
• Captions
  - AKA cutlines, appear below photos and other illustrations
• Pull Quotes