

Eblasts: One of the Most Underutilized—But Often Abused—Communications Tools

An AFSCME Council 57 Communications Guide

Eblasts are continually replacing print newsletters in the labor movement and nonprofit world. While putting together and sending out a physical copy of a newsletter from your Local does serve a role, it's mainly for nostalgia purposes. There is a critical need to communicate with our members on a more consistent basis, and what's the best way to reach members (besides talking to them, of course)? Through their inboxes.

By taking advantage of email marketing software (mostly for free), you will greatly improve the way your Local communicates with members. Here are some tips to follow.

Switch to an e-newsletter

If you're having trouble sending out a newsletter to members, or you're not getting good responses, consider creating an e-newsletter that goes out to members every quarter. Sign up for a free email marketing service such as MailChimp or Constant Contact. You can use Council 57's email template (below) to gather stories and design the newsletter (note: no design or coding skills required).



July 2017

Talking Union

Latest News from AFSCME Local 146

Jane Doe

- The Union has helped me in so many ways



The quick, brown fox jumps over a lazy dog. DJs flock by when MTV ax quiz prog. Junk MTV quiz graced by fox whelps. Bawds jog, flick quartz, vex nymphs. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex! Fox nymphs grab quick-jived waltz. Brick quiz whangs jumpy veldt fox. Bright vixens jump; dozy fowl quack. Quick waltzing zephyrs vex bold Jim.

[Read the full Q&A](#)

Free College Benefit

Earn an associate's degree online—for free



The quick, brown fox jumps over a lazy dog. DJs flock by when MTV ax quiz prog. Junk MTV quiz graced by fox whelps. Bawds jog, flick quartz, vex nymphs. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex! Fox nymphs grab quick-jived waltz. Brick quiz whangs jumpy veldt fox. Bright vixens jump; dozy fowl quack. Quick waltzing zephyrs vex bold Jim.

[Check it out](#)

Bargaining Update

Contra Costa Courts



The quick, brown fox jumps over a lazy dog. DJs flock by when MTV ax quiz prog. Junk MTV quiz graced by fox whelps. Bawds jog,

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Events

Member BBQ

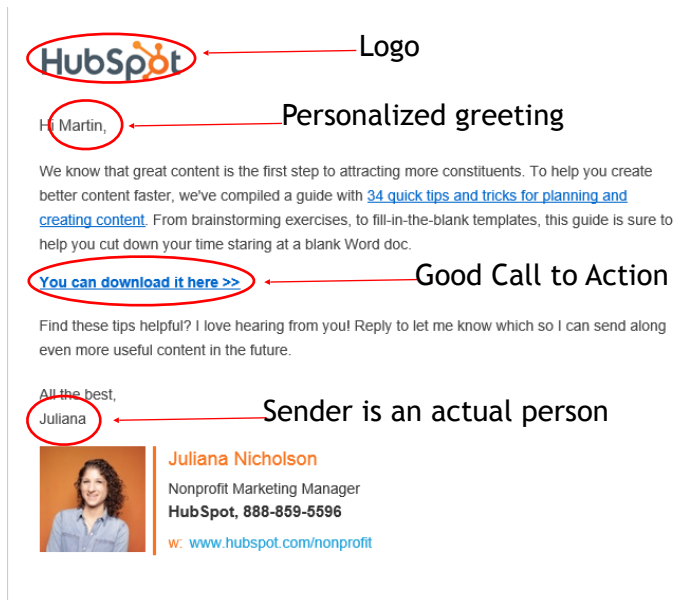


The quick, brown fox jumps over a lazy dog. DJs flock by when MTV ax quiz prog. Junk MTV quiz graced by fox whelps. Bawds jog,

[Read more](#)



If there is an urgent action, meeting or update you need to send to members, then consider sending out a simple update via the email marketing program. Make sure to include your Local's logo, the AFSCME colors, a good Call to Action, and keep the text under 400 words, if possible. It's also a best practice to personalize the greeting, make the sender an actual person from the Local and include links to your website and social media pages. Contact Council 57 Communications Specialist Martin Ricard for more details if you need any help.



Subject lines

Subject lines are one of the most important parts of an eblast. On average, people get 121 emails a day. So you can't assume that a member will open your email just because it comes from the Union. You have to make them feel like they want to open the email or else they're missing out. One of the first things you can do is avoid making your subject lines too vague. If you want people to open your important email, the subject line should reveal what the subject is. Keep it simple, direct and concise. Also, try to avoid all caps and too many exclamation points. They're unnecessary.

Wrong: "WE HAVE TO ACT NOW OR ELSE"

Right: "Tell Board of Supervisors: Hands off our pensions"

Wrong: "[Your Local Here] July 2017 Newsletter"

Right: "Get involved in your Union with these upcoming events"

Make the ask easier

Regular membership emails from Locals that offer opportunities for engagement and provide uncommitted members with an easier ask than "join a rally" or "attend a meeting" are key to connecting with individuals and demonstrating the Union's value and commitment to public service. Consider asking members to share a story about what the Union means to them. Or ask them to fill out a bargaining survey.

Always promote the Union Difference message

Each message to members should underscore that through the Union, AFSCME members:

- Recognize the power of each individual member and the value they bring to their communities.
- Fight to secure things like better benefits, better pay and job security that give members peace of mind as they work to support not just their communities, but also their own families.
- Ensure members are treated fairly and get the respect they deserve in the workplace.
- Make sure communities know the value that public service workers offer.

If you're wondering how to frame the message so that it stays on message, follow this process when writing the email:

- Introduce the main campaign/issue that the Local is working on
- Remind members that AFSCME is the champion for public service
- Rally the base by reminding members why unions are important and how the Local has won victories in the past by standing together
- Offer opportunities for ongoing engagement (i.e. encourage members to become stewards, join PEOPLE, etc.)

Good examples to follow

Looking for other good examples to follow? Check out these Council 57 eblasts that have been effective.

Subject: Thank you, AFSCME members!

From: Cynthia McCabe, AFSCME Council 57, getactive@ca.afscme57.org

Martin,

I have to be honest. I'm really anxious—as I'm sure many of you are —about the fate of working people under a Trump administration. Next year and the coming months will bring all of us new challenges and threats.

But instead of taking a "bah humbug" attitude about the political climate, I want to take a moment to celebrate something that is more important than the outcome of any election: our AFSCME sisters and brothers.

2016 has given us a lot to celebrate. In recognition of all our hard-fought battles up and down California, we're launching a series of memes on our social media pages to celebrate Council 57's victories. Here are just a few of the highlights:



We will be posting the highlights throughout the rest of the year. **Please like and share the memes** to show our communities that, in 2016, AFSCME made California happen.

Happy Holidays, and I look forward to continuing our fight for justice for all public sector workers in 2017!

In unity,

Cynthia McCabe, President

AFSCME Council 57

Subject: Join us for the Women's March

From: John Tucker, AFSCME Council 57, getactive@ca.afscme57.org

Martin,

More than 100,000 people have signed up to attend the Women's March on Washington on Saturday, Jan. 21, in what is expected to be the largest demonstration linked to Donald Trump's inauguration.



At the heart of the march is the demand for equal rights for women, who were continually attacked during the Presidential election and whose protection under the law remains in limbo now that a new administration is set to take office.

This will be one of the first big efforts being planned in the coming months to oppose Trump's anti-worker agenda, and we want AFSCME to be right in the center of the action.

Can't make it to Washington? Join one of the marches in California

A number of our members are participating in sister marches throughout the state, including in Oakland, San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, Walnut Creek, Los Angeles and Eureka.

"We will stand together for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health and our families," said the organizer of the march in Eureka.

We are asking all AFSCME members—women and men—to participate in a Women's March near you on January 21 to show that when it comes to equal rights, we're AFSCME Strong.

Will you join us?

In solidarity,

John Tucker, Organizing Director
AFSCME Council 57