USING FONTS AND SPACE EFFECTIVELY

Reading a newsletter is much like listening to a speaker. The quality of a speaker's delivery can interest an audience, turn them off or put them to sleep. The appearance and visual personality of a publication can do much the same by creating or diminishing reader interest through the selection of typestyles, graphics and photos or illustrations. To make sure your publication is read instead of being placed on the bottom of the pile of mail, take a moment to evaluate its appearance, with special attention to your selection and use of font sizes and styles.

Computers and desktop publishing programs make it possible for editors to add interest to their publications by using a variety of fonts, type sizes and attributes. Like any sets of tools, each is designed for a purpose and it is not appropriate to use them all at once.

What is a font? How are they used?

A font is a typeface that has specific visual characteristics. Fonts come in all shapes and each has a distinctive visual impacts. To use fonts effectively, consider the following tips and suggestions.

- The use of a single font, without variation of size or attribute (bold or italic) creates a monotonous appearance-one that will soon put a reader to sleep.

- Insert bold, uppercase letters or underlined text to get the reader's attention and break off the monotony. To grab attention, you can change the main font for a special article to add interest.

- Just because you have a wide selection of fonts and graphic elements doesn’t mean you should use them all at the same time. The publication with a confusion of fonts and graphics will distract the reader rather than hold his attention.

- A publication that presents its information in a readable format, with appropriate emphasis with font attributes and graphic elements, will attract and keep the attention of readers. Such a publication will reach its goal of presenting information effectively.

Take a moment to STOP and LOOK and evaluate the appearance of your newsletter. Take a close look and learn all you can about the tools in your design tool box. Put them to work in producing a newsletter that attracts and holds attention.
Text Attributes

Text can be printed in normal, bold, italic, underline and shadow. Obviously, many combinations are possible. **Bold** and/or **Italic** type is most often used to draw attention to words or phrases within text. It can be used in captions and headlines to provide a visual variety. Take advantage of changes in size of type.

**SPACE**
Don’t overlook the value of open space on the printed page. You should view space as an important visual element in your set of tools.

**INDENTION**
Paragraphs can be set apart either by extra line spacing or indentation.

**SPACE BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS, AFTER HEADLINES AND CAPTIONS**
The additions of space between text blocks and paragraphs is an essential design element. The amount of space added is at the designer’s discretion. For example, space between paragraphs adds variety to columns of text and sets paragraphs apart.

Take a look at newsletters and other printed materials and you will see the use of indentions and line spacing. Use right and left indentions sparingly, for lists and special emphasis.

*For a standard 8 1/2" x 11" page size, use the two column format.*

Try to avoid any columns that are 4 inches wide or more. The wider the column width the more difficult to read and to follow to the next line.

Space is the Key Element of Design

When we speak of spacing in relation to fonts, we are referring to type **SIZE**, the actual amount of space on the page used for each letter, and **LEADING**, originally the space between lines of type. Leading is now more commonly used to describe the space between lines of type plus the type size, which is also called line spacing

Size is one element that affects the readability of a font. Publishing programs and word-processors, in general, allow the use of fonts ranging from 4 point to 72 point. Many programs, such as PageMaker and WordPerfect, will allow manipulation to larger sizes as well as intermediate sizes such as 10.3 and 24.1.

The other effect on readability is leading. Most programs will set the leading automatically, but leading can be manually adjusted to achieve the readability you want. Leading is a basic element of spacing. Too little leading gets in the way of readability. Too much is equally disconcerting to the eye.

This is an example using 13 point line spacing and 12 point font size.

This is an example of improved readability achieved by increasing the line spacing to 15.

For the body of the text, you should choose a type size that is suitable for your readers. Use 10.5 to 12 point body text for the average USPS publication. (This text is set in Helvetica, Type size 12 point, auto line spacing.)