



Tell Your Story Newsletter (TYSN):

Specializing in Entrepreneurial and Organizational Storytelling

Let me tell your story!

Welcome Mid-February, 2019!

Another wintry day of unseasonable cold is brewing outside my office window, making me especially grateful to have a warm office and for the miracle of central heating.

I hope that this new year has begun well for you and that you look forward to future months of fulfilling projects and relaxing leisure pursuits.

In this month's issue, I explore why email newsletters (aka "enewsletters") like this one ARE NOT DEAD, with input from North American enewsletter specialist, Michael Katz, and from *Wall Street Journal* columnist, Christopher Mims.

In Storytellers' Corner, I share some jokes about writers that convey the trials and tribulations of writing life.

February is typically a difficult month of entrenched cold and biting winds. But may the lengthening of the days and your hopes for the coming months of 2019 bring you renewed health, personal growth and prosperity, valued readers.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

**Principal
Storytelling Communications**

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Article One: Email Newsletters Live On, Say Michael Katz and Christopher Mims

In the world of freelance copywriting, communications and marketing specialists often secretly hope that their skills will converge with market opportunity, so that doors will open, leads and prospects come bursting through, and the days of eating Kraft Dinner quickly come to an end.

And yet, experience tells us that for the majority of business writers there will be “no big bang,” that even successfully publishing books won’t keep our phones ringing for long.

Not Instagram or Facebook, not Messenger or texting, not phone calls or surface mail will make that happen.

Acknowledging that he may be viewed as “ol’ Grandpa” for saying so, North American Enewsletter expert Michael Katz (author of the genre defining book, *E-Newsletters That Work*) says, by contrast, that **Email** is **NOT Dead**.

Surely not, you protest! What a luddite (!), you may be thinking.

But Katz writes that no other format of communication works to achieve these four goals: Email (i) keeps you in front of the people you already know; (ii) repeats with a recurring strategy, as part of a larger pattern; (iii) optimally demonstrates what you know; and (iv) reveals your authentic personality.

Measuring all of today's social media and digital communication applications, Katz insists that only email satisfies all four of these criteria.

Email newsletters are a pivotal component of relationship marketing, since they help writers connect to readers who know, like and trust them. Katz acknowledges that no single marketing genre can tell us which writer or plumber or chef is better than another; however, email is terrific at establishing the one whom we most *like*.

“Email is *crowded, not dead*,” Katz writes, and those are “two very different things.” The content of your inbox “lingers longer than other methods and can be retrieved later.” Anyone who tries to retrace a forgotten message over social media these days, can’t dispute that. In fact, Katz writes, “Without email, all of the other methods stop.”

Email allows for personal comments, couched in conversational tone, and he concludes: “I’ve been waiting for more than 10 years for a marketing tool to come along that’s more effective than a regularly published, well-written, useful and engaging email newsletter. I’m still waiting.”

And therefore, while I recently rebranded my copywriting and editing business, I continue to write and publish a monthly email newsletter, and not merely to perpetuate unthinkingly the nearly seven year history I’ve developed with the format.

If you think either Katz or I am getting “a little long in the tooth,” consider Christopher Mims’ recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*: “Hot New Channel for Reaching Real People: Email.”

Mims writes that businesses and communicators, frustrated by social media and seeking an audience, turn to an “old standby.” While children think email is “fussy and archaic,” it remains the “medium of choice” to reach audiences by brands, creatives and businesses of all kinds.

Some 30 years after consumers started using email, writers say it’s “undiscovered country too long neglected by those who could benefit the most.” Email has become, Mims says, “a way to fight back against the algorithms that try to dictate what people see.”

Fed up with the latest machinations of SEO algorithms, the privacy breaches and increasing costs of doing business on the “duopoly of Google and Facebook,” email readers receive what they register for, “in neat chronological order, alongside missives from friends, family and their various communities.”

Email allows writers to connect with their readers personally (even intimately), and for businesses to attract influencers and to convert prospects into loyal customers.

But what about the anti-spam legislation in force in Canada (CASL) and other Western nations, you may ask?

Mims writes that the “unsubscribe” button reminds newsletter writers to produce “authentic, high-quality experiences, rather than superficially engaging ones, and to connect in ways that are deeper than what advertising-first media like Facebook generally allow.”

An email list of 1000 people can secure more sales than 100K followers on Instagram or Twitter. Email still has the highest ROI on our marketing dollars (says the US Data and Marketing Association) and a company owns its own list of subscribers. This contrasts social media outlets that capriciously change their rules on how to reach customers and what fees they will charge for it.

Furthermore, no government or company controls or even sees all of the world’s emails, even as the format shows “a steady 4% growth” in recent years, “with a record of 281 Billion messages per day in 2018.”

Mims concludes that email is successful for five reasons:

- 1) Like the internet, email is one of a few communication streams to have open standards. Unless criminal means intervene, “no one controls it and no company intrudes between a

sender and its recipient.”

2) More and more, people are becoming aware that social media is poor for our psychological health and for democracy, so that users are reducing participation or opting out. Email by contrast can feel healthy to read and so may be better and more purposefully motivated, than our reading of social media.

3) Email can provide a “creative outlet” to writers, such as journalists or copywriters. Writer and essayist Craig Mod says email requires no “terms-of-service,” and that “the future of the book could be serialization as an email newsletter,” reminiscent of the periodical publications of Charles Dickens’ days.

4) Email is cheap, with low subscription fees (if any) and yet can earn a writer a full-time income, if s/he has a large list of quality subscribers.

5) Email’s underlying technology has not changed since it started, 30 years ago, which is paradoxically its best and weakest attribute: Mims notes that we still cannot embed a video into email that will play on all of the major email applications. Yet emails also are less prone to privacy violating trackers that are so common to websites and applications.

While email is not destined to overturn social media and internet search technologies, marketers should not drop it. North American statistics show that consumers are more likely to read their email on mobile devices than on other devices or systems and that we do so “at our leisure,” as a polite, not-necessarily-intrusive, “slow-read companion.” Mims and Katz argue that this lies in stark contrast to how apps and social media monopolize our attention and rudely demand instant response.

Do you still use email, but tend to think of it as "passe," or "dead?" Please share your responses through the “Contact” page, here. I’d be delighted to discuss this further.

STORYTELLER's CORNER



STORYTELLER'S CORNER: Words, Stories, Riddles and Jokes on Writing and Editing . . .

(1) There was once a young man who, in his youth, professed his desire to become a great writer.

When asked to define great, he said, "I want to write stuff that the whole world will read, stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level, stuff that will make them scream, cry, howl in pain and anger!"

He now works for Microsoft, writing error messages.

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(2) "It took me 15 years to discover that I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous" (Robert Benchley)

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SHOP NEWS:



Special thanks in this month's issue to WESK CEO, Prabha Mitchell and WESK Business Advisor, Lori Jestin-Knaus, for the sponsorship and support they share with fellow organizers of "Shaken with a Twist"--Saskatoon's monthly, co-ed networking event held at Village Amp & Guitar. WESK has cultivated a generous atmosphere at the event that makes new and returning guests alike feel welcome. Don't forget to check out their spring conference [here](#).

Since I made the leap last July to join Praxis' entrepreneurial training program (startSMART), I've been reading, writing and strategizing about how to provide communications and marketing services that best serve you and my other prospects.

While developing services to write HR-style resumes and companies' legacy stories, I have also returned to teaching business communication modules within the startSMART program. Thank you to Praxis CVO Monica Kreuger for extending to me this opportunity.

And hearty congratulations are due to novelist and friend, [Lesley-Anne McLeod](#) for publishing her latest novel, *The Governess' Peculiar Journey*. Pre-ordering is available [online](#), Lesley-Anne has already begun work on her next novel! Her careful research into the social history of the Regency period brings to life the 19th century of Jane Austen . . . if you're looking for a mid-winter diversion, check out all of Lesley-Anne's books at <http://www.lesleyannemcleod.com/>

ABOUT US:

Between 2011 and December 2018, Elizabeth Shih Communications chronicled the stories of B2B

marketing and communications on the Prairies and across the country.

Effective January 1, 2019, I rebranded as "Storytelling Communications." I now help Canadian newcomers land their first or better jobs; I assist SMEs in closing more sales by communicating more effectively; and I write the legacy stories of major companies.

Interested in learning more? Please contact me through my CASL-compliant website (www.elizabethshih.com).

After I receive your message, I'll be pleased to discuss projects with you!

Please visit my website for more information (www.storytellingcommunications.ca).