

SOLUTIONS FOR GROWING BUSINESSES

Entrepreneur

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PHOTO OP: Vera Stewart's newsletter whets the appetites of her customers.

BUZZ

GET A TASTE OF THIS IDEA

If it's true that the camera doesn't lie, then Vera Stewart's newsletter, *The Last Bite*, could make you feel like you've put on a few pounds. Bucking the current trend of e-newsletters, which are inexpensive and text-based, the 48-year-old Augusta, Georgia, owner of Very Vera, a purveyor of confections, instead prints and mails a full-color quarterly newsletter packed with mouthwatering photos and recipes.

Showing is definitely better than telling when it comes to attracting customers, says

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The Last Bite editor Susan Ely. "We see a significant increase in sales of a particular product when we feature it in the newsletter."

Design maven Kim Brennan of Jackson, New Jersey-based Brennan Graphics, explains why this approach works: "Reading pages of text is more exhausting than looking at pages with graphics and photographs—and it may sound clichéd, but a picture really is worth a thousand words." In Stewart's case, it's worth thousands of bucks, too. Ely says the 30,000-circulation newsletter definitely returns on investment.

The blind test, according to Brennan, is to evaluate the visual impact of your product. After all, she asks, how well can you sell a gorgeous diamond necklace—or, in this case, a homemade chocolate layer cake—without a photo?

"How your product looks is a determining factor in the buying process, you want to

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show it to as many people as possible," Brennan says. "A great-looking print piece can help you do that."

EARLY WARNING

With wireless sales systems from companies like MarketSoft (www.marketsoft.com) and Siebel (www.siebel.com), leads, product updates, order status and the like can be sent to a sales force through PDAs. Though setup costs are still prohibitive, it's a trend to keep an eye on.