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## ACTSmart, American Computer Technologies Presents:

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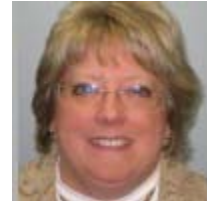
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Dear Pam,

I have a new "best friend!" Lynda.com is an subscription based educational site that includes such subjects as Photoshop, Flash, Dreamweaver, Illustrator, Office, digital photography, Web design, digital video, and many others. Lynda.com's team of trainers and teachers provides comprehensive and unbiased video-based training. Considering the speed at which technology evolves, the Online Training Library® is a great solution for keeping your skills current. Library subscriptions begin as low as \$25 a month, with no long-term commitment required.



Several years ago, our web department would spend an hour a week together watching videos on Dreamweaver, Photoshop or other program applications to stay current. Well, as we got really busy, that hour got eaten up and we dropped it. George or I would go in and use it as a resource tool if we had a technical question but we didn't use it on a regular basis.

I went on Lynda.com last week to look up something and started looking at new content - WOW! She has so much there that I felt like a kid in a candy shop! I spent 8 hours over the weekend learning all about Wordpress and Wordpress website construction. You'll hear more about it in a few weeks!

There are a few programs that I don't currently use that would be great additions to our services and I'm going to "dig in."

Remember the book that I spoke about a few weeks ago ***The Little Red Book of Selling by Jeffery Gitomer?*** It's as good as they said. In his list "The 18.5 Secrets of Success" #4 is "*Expose yourself to what's new. If you're not learning every day - your competition is. New information is essential to success. How much time are you spending each day learning something new?*"

Week 5 of our 12 Week Marketing Challenge may not be new but it is one of my BEST suggestions - have a newsletter. Other than personal referrals, it's our #1 source of new and repeat business. I hope you consider this newsletter part of your learning!

It only takes a minute to find a new marketing idea ~ Let's Get Business!

### Offer a Newsletter - Print Version



We have been champions of the newsletter for over 25 years! Almost 30 years ago I was the Director of the Artisans of Plymouth County. Sponsored by the Plymouth County Extension Service, we were a group of local craftspeople who would meet and share information about suppliers, business practices and other information and problems that we had in common. That was when we wrote our first newsletter; typed on a typewriter, it was very difficult to edit since it had to be retyped if we made a mistake or didn't plan our articles well. It was still a great resource and worth the time and trouble.

The newsletters at left are from 1995 and 1996 when our business name went from American Shareware to American Family Computers and we sold software as well as computers. We used to offer a free shareware disk monthly and reviewed it on the bottom

right corner of the front page. Other monthly articles were "Matt's Picks" where our son reviewed his favorite game program and "Woman at the Computer" where I talked about my "issues" like having to get up early to get my time on the computer since we only had one and David was on it all the time. Each "feature" could be found in the same area of the paper, making it easy for readers to find their favorites. We wrote the newsletter in AmiPro, a competitor of Microsoft's Word and a program that we miss due to its friendly functionality. Ah, Microsoft, you do pummel even the programs that are better than yours!

Today, we write our newsletter in Microsoft Publisher, a fairly easy to use program that allows you to choose from many styles and functionality. In the past, during extremely busy times, we have been sporadic in producing it and have seen business slide. This year, we made a solid business decision to produce this most valuable marketing tool monthly - no matter what!

### Offer a Newsletter - Email Version

Email newsletters are relatively new to us; we've actually been sending them out for a little over a year. We had a different service initially and switched to Constant Contact at the beginning of this year with great results. [Constant Contact](#) is very inexpensive and has tons of easy to use templates that you can personalize with your own branding.

One of the biggest benefits is, of course, no printing or postage fees. We spend hundreds every month to print and mail our Tech Tips newsletter. We also email it to those who have indicated that they prefer the email version. David also sends out a quick, one subject Tech Tip every Wednesday at 4pm. (We've read reports that say Wednesday between 3 and 4pm have the highest "open" rate.)

When you decide to start an Email newsletter, let us know. We'll help you get set up and give you a folder to store images on your website so you don't have to pay the extra storage fee. We can set you up with suggestions for articles and other information to help you make the most of this service.

### Print or Email - How Do You Choose?

Since we do both, we can give you excellent information and advice.

**Printed "Pros"** - Has "legs" Our printed newsletter gets saved as a resource, carried around as a reminder and passed around to get us new clients. We can leave it at offices as an introduction and proof of expertise and selection of services.

**Printed "Cons"** - COST is a big factor. Printing and mailing costs continually increase as well as the time spent folding and labeling.

**Email "Pros"** - My friend Ron Fedele of [Fedele's Chocolates](#) told me recently " I may not read

every newsletter I get but I think of you every Monday morning!" That's a great reason - every business wants to be thought about! And, of course, it's VERY economical and many people will forward it to their family, friends and colleagues.

**Email "Cons"** - Unlike a printed newsletter that will at least get a glance before being tossed, an email newsletter can be deleted unopened very easily.

My suggestion (if you can't do both) is to decide what job you'd like your newsletter to do. If you are offering information that is both timely and important, go for a printed newsletter. The very fact that you spent the time and money on a printed newsletter adds weight to its value to your customers and potential customers. Do the best job that you can afford - the best paper, color, if possible and use the most professional format you can achieve.

Choose email if your information is extremely timely and if you want to offer limited time specials. I have chosen to email MMM (Monday's Marketing Minute) because I feel that it is important to think about marketing right at the beginning of the week and I can control delivery with email. If money is a concern, any business can afford Constant Contact even if it means having to give up Dunkin Donuts and make coffee at the office or store.

With either version, be sure to keep your articles short, interesting and written in a casual, friendly manner. Include personal information so the reader looks forward to the next issue. It's also an excellent idea to spotlight clients. That way, readers feel that they have a vested interest in your newsletter and in your success.

I was editor and principle writer of Dr Brodil's *Smile Lines...* for almost 20 years. We held a contest with the patients to come up with a catchy name. It's still the best name for a dental newsletter that I have ever seen. You can do the same. There came a point where I was too busy to research and write every article so we used a dental newsletter service to produce the inside pages and we produced the personalized front and back pages. It was an excellent decision and one that they continue to this day. Look for the same services in your industry if you are short on time or inspiration.



Take the "12 Week" Marketing Challenge with us. Set aside a few hours to work on your marketing uninterrupted. Last week some of you who don't already have blogs called us to add a Blog to your website. That's GREAT! We look forward to reading your postings!

**Week 5: Start a Newsletter.** We have found that our BEST marketing source is our newsletters. If weekly or even monthly seems like too great of a task, go for quarterly to start. Choose between printed and emailed and go for it. Schedule a delivery date and block out some time. Once you get in the swing, you will find topics for articles everywhere. I keep mine in folders on my desktop and desk. I'm even adding a new monthly printed one next month.

We're on our way with our "12 step program to marketing health"  
Have a Happy, Healthy, PROSPEROUS week!

**MondaysMarketingMinute.com**



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