TOP 10 NEWSLETTER STRUCTURE

TOP 10 NEWSLETTERS, THEIR STRUCTURE, & WHY THEY WORK!

Below are newsletters that are well known, and how they format their issues consistently. I break down their structure + what makes them sticky.

#	Newsletter	Key Structure Elements	Why It Works
1	**James Clear – 3-2-1**	Fixed template: 3 ideas / 2 quotes / 1 question. Same subject line format ("3-2-1 Thursday").	Predictability + habit. Reader knows what to expect → lowers friction. You don't think "should I open this?" you just open.
2	**Morning Brew**	Daily digest style. Quick headlines ("Briefs") + small summaries + "Around the Web" links or fun tidbits.	Highly skimmable; multiple entry points (you may not read everything but there's something for everyone).
3	**The Hustle**	Hook at top + main story + "mini-stories" + some commentary or personality + CTA or sign-off.	Voice + tension. Feels like storytelling + news mixed. You stay for style as much as content.
4	**Moz Top 10**	Twice monthly; links to curated content with short commentary; "top articles" in SEO or marketing; concise.	Value + scope. People in SEO want to stay up to date but not drown in info. Moz gives "top stuff", curated.
5	**Marketing Examples (Harry Dry)**	Case studies / examples + copy tips + visuals. Always shows "why this works."	Actionable + concrete. Readers get both inspiration and usable lessons.
6	**TL;DR Newsletter**	Big topic → summary bulleted list. Different sections by theme (tech, science, startups etc.).	Perfect for quick consumption. If time is low, you jump in via section that interests you.

7	Content Marketing Institute	Regular article/essay + resources/events + link out to blog posts; sometimes with sponsor/advertorial bits.	Authority + depth. Good if you want to build credibility in a field. Also good for longer content.
8	Penguin Random House	Segmented content: personalized recommendations (books) + promos + curated reads.	Personalization + relevance. Because recommendations feel less random.
9	General Assembly	Clear sections: upcoming events/workshops + educational pieces + what's new + minimal copy.	People who want action & scheduling love this. If content has timeliness, this format sells.
10	New York Times – The Morning	Multi-article grid: top story, culture/opinion pieces, quick summaries + CTAs to full stories.	Big magazine/newspaper style. Works because of trust & variety. You get depth + breadth; pick how deep to go.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STRUCTURE –

From the above patterns, some recurring ingredients that tend to make newsletter structures successful:

- **CONSISTENCY**: Same format, same types of sections. Builds habit.

- **SKIMMABILITY / SCANNING**: Bullets, headings, short paragraphs, visuals.

- **CLARITY**: Readers know what kind of content they'll get (deep dives vs light summaries vs curated links).

- **VOICE / PERSONALITY**: Even in curated or summary formats, personality (tone, comments, quirks) keeps people reading.

- **ACTIONABLE VALUE**: Lessons, tips, or useful info (not just "this happened") so readers feel like time spent was worth.

- **SEGMENTATION / PERSONALIZATION** when possible (not all newsletters do this, but those that do tend to engage better).

HOW YOU CAN THINK THROUGH YOUR OWN NEWSLETTER STRUCTURE —

Here are questions + prompts to design a structure that works for *you*, given what you want to achieve:

1. **What promise do you want to make to your reader?**

   - E.g. "Every issue teaches one marketing lesson they can use tomorrow."
   - E.g. "A curated list of tactics + commentary + laugh."

2. **How often will you send?**

   - Daily, weekly, bi-weekly?
     More frequent = simpler, shorter.
     Less frequent = possibility of longer / deeper content.

3. **What type of content do you want to *always* include?** Pick 2-4 consistent sections.
   Examples:

   - a *Breakdown / Lesson* (your main content)
   - *Curated Links* or "what I'm reading"
   - *Personal reflection or update*
   - *Tool / tactic tip*
   - *Question or prompt* to engage

4. **What tone & personality will you bring?**

   - Snarky, playful, self-aware (as your voice).
   - Will there be jokes, memes, or sarcasm? Or more serious?

5. **How will you format for scanning?**

   - Use headings, short paragraphs, bullets.

- Maybe occasional visuals/screenshots to break text.

6. **What is your subject line formula?**

- Something repeatable, recognizable. (e.g. "Monday Breakdown: X", "Quick Hit: Y", "Your 59-sec Takeaway").
- Something that teases the content? A hook.

7. **What CTA or engagement do you want?**

- Reply, share, click a link, use something actionable.
- Where in the newsletter will the CTA go? End? In each section?

8. **How will you measure success / iterate?**

- Open rate, reply rate, click-throughs.
- Feedback loops: ask readers what they like/what they skip.

TRY THIS CHALLENGE –

Pick one structure. Repeat it for 8 weeks.
Let's see what happens.