



DIRECT MAIL LETTERS LAYOUT TIPS

Here are some proven layout techniques for letters—things that help grab the reader's attention and make it easy to understand your main messages.

RELEVANCY

To make your reader feel singled out, personalize each letter if possible. This means using their name rather than saying 'Dear Customer.'

JOHNSON BOX

Almost as widely read as the P.S., the Johnson Box is a rectangle made out of asterisks or other graphic devices. It's located at the top of your letter, near the salutation and includes the offer copy or another key part of your message.

SIDE BARS

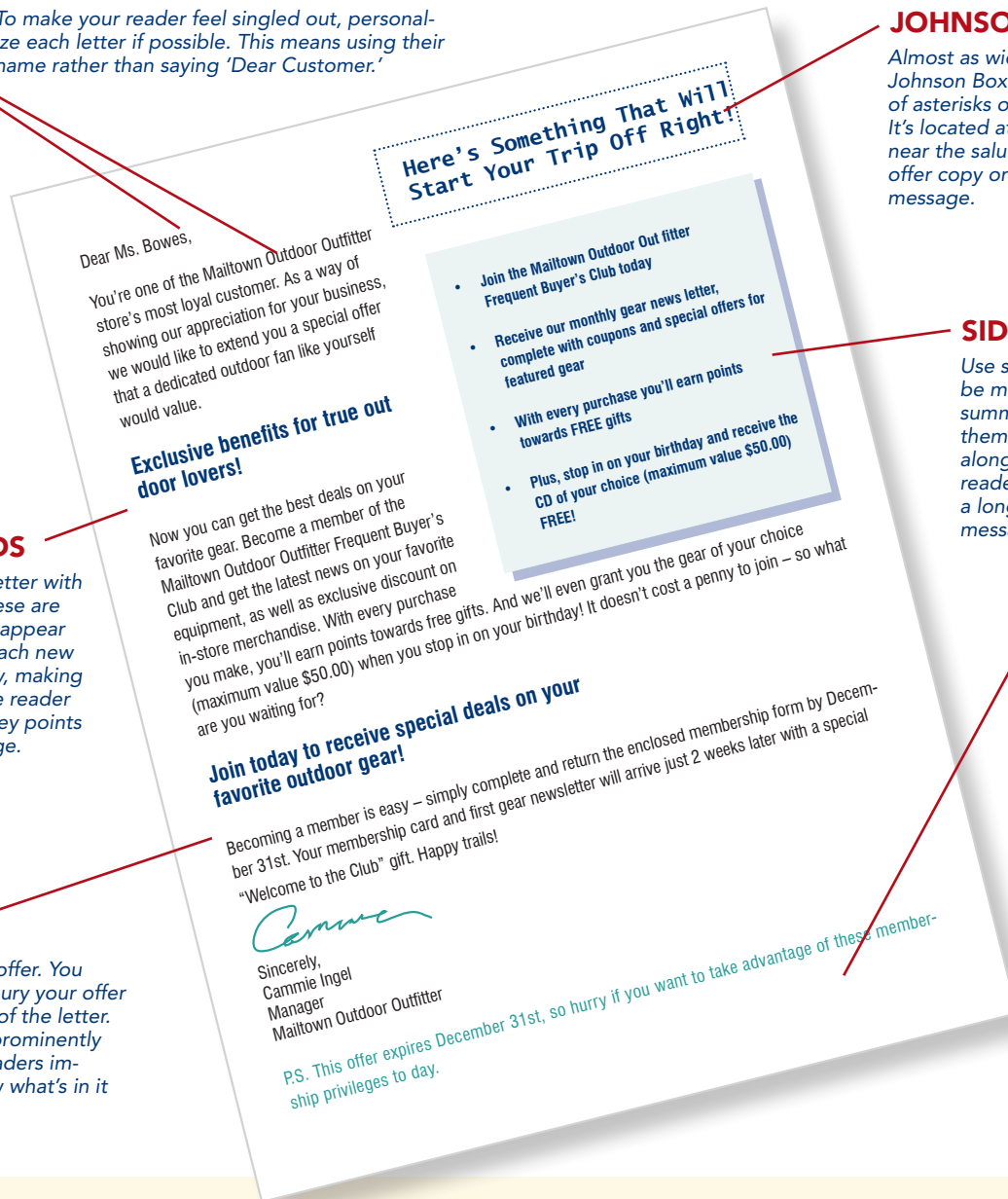
Use sidebars. Your letter will be more easily scanned if you summarize the key points and list them on the front of the letter, alongside the full copy. This gives readers the option to either read a long or short version of your message.

SUB-HEADS

Break up the letter with sub-heads. These are headlines that appear at the top of each new section of copy, making it easier for the reader to follow the key points of your message.

OFFER

Highlight your offer. You don't want to bury your offer within the text of the letter. Make sure it's prominently featured, so readers immediately know what's in it for them.



P.S. LINE

Always use a P.S. line. Research has shown that people usually read the P.S., even if they read nothing else. The P.S. line should reiterate the offer or main benefit. "Includes the offer, expiration date and bonus."

THE DON'TS OF LETTER WRITING

- Don't talk about yourself too much. Readers want to know what's in it for them—so be sure to use 'you' as often as possible.
- Don't use long, rambling sentences or words that sound like they came from a textbook. Keep word, sentences, and grammar at an easy reading level.
- Use humor sparingly and avoid being cute. Both approaches can backfire.
- Don't bury your benefits in the copy. Lead with them in the headlines and in the first paragraph of your letter – or you risk losing your readers interest.
- Don't forget to ask for the order – You should repeat your call to action at least three times throughout your direct mail package.
- Don't make any paragraph over five lines of information.

