

Core & Main — Newsletter Production Automation (Portfolio Case Study)

Transforming internal communications through process automation

Role: Internal Communications / Newsletter Production Lead (Owner)

Publications: *The Weekly* and *Manager's Memo*

Audience: Enterprise-wide employees and people leaders

Tools: Microsoft Copilot (workflow automation) and email rules/automation

Snapshot

I rebuilt production for two enterprise-wide newsletters by replacing a manual, email-heavy workflow with an automation-supported editorial operating model. The process became more predictable, reviews moved faster, and I got back time to focus on stronger storytelling and design. Engagement stayed strong, with read rates consistently above 80% (Staffbase).

The Challenge

As the lead for internal newsletter production, I owned two high-visibility publications—*The Weekly* and *Manager's Memo*—distributed across the organization. The process depended on constant cross-functional coordination with HR, IT, ERGs, and other contributors.

Key pain points included:

- Managing and triaging more than 50 emails per day for intake, follow-ups, revisions, and approvals
- Inconsistent submission timing, which created last-minute churn
- Recurring features that required repetitive outreach and manual tracking
- Bottlenecks that slowed production and reduced time available for content quality improvements

What I Did (Approach)

I implemented a process improvement and automation strategy that turned newsletter production into a streamlined, trackable, and scalable operation.

1) AI-powered content management (Copilot workflow)

I built a Copilot-based workflow to reduce friction by automating:

- Deadline reminders to contributors
- Submission tracking and organization
- Inbox triage and folder management
- Proactive deadline monitoring and follow-ups

2) Automated recurring feature workflow (CORE Pet)

I designed an end-to-end workflow for a recurring employee feature, including:

- Automated outreach to associates for story submissions
- Structured tracking of contact info, pet details, request and submission dates, publish notifications, and status
- A closed-loop process from request through publish confirmation

3) Standardized editorial work-back and governance

I created a repeatable operating rhythm to reduce surprises and speed approvals:

- Content due: 2 weeks before publish
- Weekly editorial meeting: Mondays (cross-functional)
- Review path: MarComm review on Wednesday; HR Director approval by EOD Wednesday
- Distribution cadence: Mondays at noon
- Metrics review: 2 weeks post-publish to guide improvements

4) Production tracking system (18-month horizon)

I built an editorial tracker to create visibility and reduce coordination overhead:

- 102 pre-planned editions (18 months)
- Automated status tracking and assignee management
- Calendar and board views
- A searchable archive of completed editions for reuse and continuity

Results and Impact

- Reduced manual triage and repetitive coordination, saving about 2 hours per day (about 10 hours per week)
- Improved on-time publishing through proactive deadline management and a consistent work-back plan
- Reduced approval cycle time with clearer handoffs and fewer last-minute escalations
- Reinvested time into richer content (video features, stronger visuals, and stronger storytelling)
- Sustained strong engagement, with read rates consistently above 80% (Staffbase), supported by ongoing metrics review and reader feedback

Why It Mattered

This approach created an internal communications system that scaled without a proportional increase in effort, was easier to transition to others through documented workflows and structured tracking, and stayed accountable to outcomes through measurement and continuous improvement.