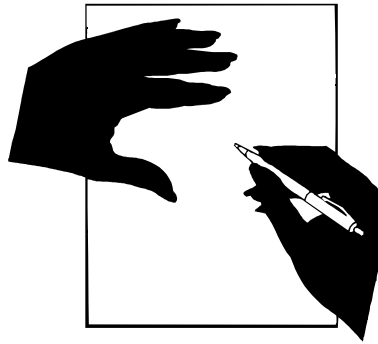


# *Writing For Publicity*



*Articles By Bonnie Jo Davis*

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# *Articles That Sell*

## Use The Best Kept Secret Of The Internet To Promote Your Business For FREE!

The power of the Internet as a marketing tool for small business owners cannot be overstated. However, developing a web site is only the first piece of this intricate puzzle. Driving traffic to your site is an ongoing, arduous process – one that is most effectively achieved when you employ multiple strategies.

One such strategy is contributing content to web sites, article archives, and “e-zines.” Because your URL will be included in your by-line, this is a very inexpensive form of on-line promotion from a number of perspectives:

- A significant percentage of readers will “click-through” to visit your web site
- The increased number of links “pointing” to your site improves its search engine rankings
- Because you have demonstrated your expertise in the article, you will generally be held in higher regard than if you were simply advertising or listed in search engine results

The first step in the article submission process is to determine your target audience, the web sites they visit, and the types of articles they enjoy reading.

Let’s assume, for illustration purposes, that you want to get the attention of human resources professionals. Visit a search engine such as <http://www.google.com>, and enter the phrase “human resources.”

Browse some of the resulting web sites to get a sense of topics that are currently “hot.” If you find that employee retention is a top concern for HR – and you have valuable insights to offer – you’re ready to start writing!

Here are some tips to guide you:

- Be sure that your content is informative and useful – not an advertisement for your services
- Keep the article length to between 750 and 1,000 words
- Include a four-line by-line that consists of a brief biography, your contact information (i.e., email address and telephone number), and web site URL
- Format your article in a text file with carriage returns inserted at 65 characters or less and create a version in Word or WordPerfect.

Don't overlook carefully proofreading your work. If possible, wait at least one day after writing the piece to proofread it and ask a friend, family member, colleague to review it as well. Also consider hiring a writing or editing specialist to perform a bit of "wordsmithing."

It's now time to identify appropriate venues for your article. The HR-specific web sites that you found earlier are a perfect place to start. These might include <http://www.shrm.org/> and <http://humanresources.about.com/>.

Next, identify professional and non-profit associations whose members may benefit from your content. A search engine or an association locator can help you do this, and there may be opportunities to publish your work in journals or newsletters at both the national and local (i.e., chapter) level.

Third, compile a list of highly ranked article directories that accept contributions in your topic area, such as <http://www.articles911.com/>, <http://www.expertarticles.com/> and <http://www.ezinearticles.com/>. Submit to only ten or fifteen directories.

Fourth, explore both on-line and offline e-zines and newsletters. There are several directories to help you target those to which your article is relevant, including <http://www.ezine-dir.com/>, <http://www.ezinesearch.com/search-it/ezine/>, and <http://www.ezinelocater.com/>.

And lastly, consider performing another web search, this time for your *specific* topic (e.g., "employee retention"). I would even recommend taking it a step further by utilizing the search phrase "employee retention articles," for example, to generate a list of web pages that are compilations of links to articles similar to your own. This is a terrific way to be "found" by individuals actively researching your topic.

It is imperative that you review the editorial and formatting guidelines for each site and customize your article accordingly. Most web sites that accept contributions include a page with submission information and requirements, or provide the editor's email address so that he or she may be contacted directly with questions.

If your article is accepted, it may take up to three months for it to "go live." Some web sites do not acknowledge receipt of your submission and may even publish it without notifying you. It is important, therefore, that you create a log to record, follow-up, and track your submissions.

Consider adding a page to your web site that lists where your work has been "featured," and update it each time an article is published or reprinted.

As mentioned in the opening of this article, on-line promotion is a continuous process. To keep the momentum going, it is recommended that you develop new articles as often as time allows and repeat the submission process at least once each quarter. Be sure to create a "Bookmark" (Netscape) or "Favorite" (Internet Explorer) file for the web sites you identify, giving yourself a "head start" when writing on similar topics in the future.

While submitting articles can be a tedious and time-consuming endeavor, the free publicity and client leads it generates make it well worth the effort. And if publishers value you as a consistent source of high-quality content, you may even be invited to serve as a columnist or regular contributor. Doing so will keep you in regular contact with the people with whom you wish to do

business – enabling you to position yourself as a problem solver, a strategic partner and, most importantly, permit you to remain “top” in the minds of your potential and existing clients.

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## *Reaping The Amazing Benefits Of Writing E-Zine Articles*

Marketing on a budget is tough. This is a universal truth that all small business owners face. The most effective small business frugal marketing strategy available is writing and submitting articles to web sites, e-zines, magazines and newsletters. Listed below are some of the amazing benefits you can gain by using this technique.

- 1) Article creation and submission is a totally free marketing method! The only cost is a few hours of your time to write an article and offer it for publication.
- 2) Well written articles position the author as an expert while increasing credibility and educating readers about their business, services and products. Many internet gurus started their careers by writing and publishing articles on the internet.
- 3) Article authors are granted a by-line with each article that will allow readers to click through to a web site where they can be converted to e-zine subscribers for paying customers.
- 4) A good article can be used over and over again when customized for different audiences thereby reducing the need for you to write new articles as often.
- 5) Many publications will archive your article on their web site giving you a lasting method of promotion.
- 6) Writing and submitting articles will help you obtain incoming links to your web site. These are not "link farm" quality links – these are the highest quality links available and they affect your search engine rankings accordingly
- 7) Your article can be published on your web site, optimized for search engines and submitted accordingly in order to increase your search engine traffic.
- 8) The more articles you write and publish on your web site the longer your visitors will stay and explore your site.
- 9) You can use your published articles to reach potential affiliates or joint venture partners who will, in turn, promote your business for you.
- 10) In addition to promoting your business, services and products you can write articles to promote your favorite affiliate program to supplement your income.

Even if you have little writing talent you can hire a ghostwriter to create an effective, informative article using your byline and then you can use that article to bring in more visitors to your web site, more subscribers to your newsletter and more paying customers to your business. The key is understanding that a well-written, entertaining and informational article is worth more than a

paid advertisement in any publication. As your marketing budget grows you can add emphasis to your article by purchasing a small e-zine ad in the publication for the same date your article will be published.

Writing and submitting articles is a free promotion tool, but it does take time. It will take several hours to submit an article to every available submission site and it can take six to eight weeks for publication. However, once your article is published it will create a long lasting stream of targeted visitors to your site that no other promotion method can accomplish. With each subsequent submission the process will be faster and easier.

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# *Anatomy Of An Article Submission Project*

Writing and submitting articles to publishers in order to promote your business, services and products is a wise choice for any entrepreneur. The only cost for this kind of marketing project is your time and, if you want the maximum benefits, the amount you pay your proofreader/editor. Many people are overwhelmed by the submission process and don't know where to begin. I have outlined below the ten steps I take with each article submission project. Having a process in place makes organizing submissions so much easier and removes the confusion of where of what to do first.

1. Start by having your article proofread and then add it to your website. Make sure you have a catchy title and a by-line that compels readers to take action.
2. Use a text to html tool to format your by-line so that your URL will appear live when your article is posted on a site. I recommend you use the tool at <http://thephantomwriters.com/link-builder.pl>.
3. Collect the information you'll need for most submission sites including: title, author name, address, phone number, e-mail, website URL, topic, two line summary of the article, word count, line count, article URL, auto responder address (if available), document file names and 10-15 keywords.
4. Make a list of the type of submission sites appropriate for your article. I use EzineAnnouncer to collect and keep track of my submission list and I always write down the categories that are a match for my article. My latest submission qualified for more than 400 sites but your success depends upon your article topic.
5. Begin submitting to sites that accept articles by e-mail. Never send an attachment unless asked. Incorporate the entire article into the e-mail and include an option for the recipient to opt-out of your list.
6. Your next step should be to sign-up for all new submission sites on your list that require registration. Typically, you have to wait for a confirmation e-mail before submitting. You can move on to the next step while you wait.
7. Submit to all sites you have registered for and to all sites not needing registration but offering a submission form.
8. Check your e-mail, confirm your new accounts and visit those sites to add your article. Keep track of your login and password for each site.
9. Update your submission list by removing or correcting bounced e-mail addresses and URL errors. You will also need to add your new submission sites to your list.
10. Create a report to keep on your computer with the name and URL of the sites you used for submission. Update this list when you submit your older articles to newly discovered sites.

Create your own submission process by building on the steps I have provided and you will find your submissions taking less time while helping you to become more organized.

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## *How Can I Market With Articles If I Can't Write?*

The shrewdest and most effective means of free advertising is through providing interesting and relevant information to your potential customers. You can do this easily by writing and distributing free reprint articles at various web sites around the 'net. There are literally thousands of e-zine and web site publishers actively searching for the interesting and informative articles you can craft in your area of expertise. Targeting the audiences of these publishers is an essential element of your cost-effective advertising and marketing strategy.

I am convinced that anyone with a web site can promote that web site along with its business, products, and/or services by implementing this basic marketing strategy. Sure, it sounds simple enough, but what if you aren't confident in your writing skills? Accurate written communication is the foundation of this marketing maneuver.

Can you write?

My initial experience involved submitting articles written by other people to publishers. I was so excited when I saw the response generated by this technique that I decided to use it when I began my own business.

One day I sat down with pen-in-hand attempting to begin writing my own articles and spent the next half hour staring at the blank sheet. In frustration, I eventually put down the pen and walked away, later complaining to a friend that I hated to write. I complained about lacking writing expertise and that my qualifications basically amounted to the good grades I earned in English classes long ago. My friend gently interrupted me pointing out that I had been writing on a daily basis at work. She also brought to my attention the fact that my education provided me with the necessary skills to write competently and effectively.

After kindly showing me the forest which I couldn't see for its trees, my friend generously offered an incredible suggestion. Her solution for my dilemma was that I should try begin again by choosing a topic and then creating an outline representing the points I wanted to cover about that topic in my article. Choosing a topic would give me a foundation upon which to build my article. Drafting an outline would allow me to address the issues that I saw as pertinent and relevant to my topic.

I took her advice, narrowed my possible topics, and selected one that I would reduce to writing. With that one topic in mind, I proceeded to create a comprehensive outline on that blank piece of paper. After completing my outline, I fleshed it out, added stories to illustrate my points, and Voila... I had right there before me a rough draft of my first article! That rough draft, after being carefully proofed and polished, became an article that was published in dozens of online publications. The positive result of my effort was that my article netted me thousands of web site visitors and rewarded me with a treasured long-term client.

## Can't get past the outline?

If you're absolutely certain you can't write there are at least three options well worth considering. The first option is to enroll in a writing class through your local university, adult education program or on-line. A couple of on-line options include Write101 Writing Tutorials at <http://www.write101.com/writewell.htm> or Writers' Village University at <http://writersvillage.com/>. Many local universities, community colleges and adult education programs also offer on-line courses.

Your second option is to hire a ghostwriter. Most ghostwriters will take your topic, conduct the research and write an article for your review. Upon your approval of the article the ghostwriter will add your by-line and release the article to you for distribution. Offering research resources or providing an outline for the ghostwriter to follow may reduce the ghostwriter's fees. You can post your article project and take bids from ghostwriters on-line at <http://www.guru.com> or you can seek a ghostwriter using any search engine. You'll find various options that will fit your budget. Freelance ghostwriters can negotiate regarding their fees since they work for themselves and often offer reduced rates to returning clients.

A third option also requires hiring a ghostwriter to write your article and add your by-line but going further to enlist that person to distribute the article for you. This is a convenient and time-effective way to have the entire writing and distribution project completed by the same individual.

Even if you honestly can't write you can certainly still educate your target audience, earn loyalty and establish yourself as an expert by using free reprint articles. You can invest a bit more in your advertising and promotional efforts by taking a writing course or hiring a ghostwriter. Whichever of the two you may choose, you are making an investment that will be well-returned many times over in beneficial results to both you and your readers. Be willing to go the extra mile in establishing your web site as the definitive choice of your targeted audience. You'll be pleased with the rewards of your efforts.

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## *Ignore At Your Own Peril – Article Submission Mistakes*

The most important task in the world of marketing with articles is to create relationships with editors. This is not to say that you need to invite them to dinner or even call them on a regular basis. You do have to be polite, reliable and submit quality articles. If possible, engage the editor in conversation via e-mail and let them know to ask you for additional articles when they have a need. Don't be one of those authors that drive editors crazy. If you do, editors are likely to make sure your articles end up in the "delete" folder. Follow the best practices below and editors will likely put you at the top of their "favorite authors" file:

- Be courteous and use professional language when approaching editors. Treat editors the way you expect to be treated.
- Using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation is vital. Experienced editors will throw out an article with even one of these mistakes.
- Format articles properly in a text editor. Never use a traditional word processing program when writing your articles or your format will be garbled.
- Avoid boring titles and boring text. Tell a story, add a twist and have some fun while writing. Editors love receiving something new and exciting.
- Write only about things you know. You are not an expert on everything.
- Submit only your own original documents. Don't copy from someone else.
- Read the guidelines and view archived articles to make sure you follow all the rules.
- Submit on-topic articles only. Today I wasted time getting rid of articles about diving, nursing and frugal living. My guidelines clearly state I only accept articles about article submissions!
- Fill out forms completely and include contact information with e-mails.
- Savvy article writers never submit articles that are thinly disguised sales letters or advertising.
- Some editors will send you an e-mail when they use your article and some don't. Never, never, never bombard an editor and ask when and if your article will be published.
- Remove editors from your list promptly when asked. If you continue to submit when told not to then you are in violation of spam laws.

- Submit only one or two articles per week to your list. I know writers who submit dozens of articles a week to their list. This is annoying and can be seen as “spamming” even if you follow all the rules.

Remember that editors are busy people just like you and me. Don't waste their time, be professional and let them know you appreciate the opportunity to work with them. Carefully cultivate your relationship with editors and your article submission efforts will bloom!

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# *Got Lingo?*

## *The Terminology Of Marketing With Articles*

Every field or discipline has its own specialized vocabulary and marketing with articles is no different. Understanding and using the lingo of marketing with articles will help you get the most out of this brilliant technique. Continue reading below for a set of terms and definitions for marketing with articles.

**Article Announcement Newsgroups/Lists** - E-mail lists that accept article submissions from subscribers. Some newsgroups only accept articles in one narrowly defined topic while others will accept any topic.

**Article Directory/Archive** - A web site that accepts article submissions in a large variety of topics and organizes them by category. A few of these sites require you to pay to have your article archived on site.

**Autoresponder** - An e-mail message that is sent automatically when an email is received to the email account address. It is also used by authors in automatically delivering properly formatted text article submissions to editors.

**Bibliography** - A list of web sites, books and articles referenced in an article or publication.

**Byline/Resource Box** - A four or five line biography and contact information for the author of an article.

**Copyright Notice** - A one or two line statement that should be included in every article that includes the copyright symbol, date and owner.

**Essay** - A short article on a single subject written from the author's personal viewpoint.

**E-zines** - Periodically published electronic newsletters delivered by e-mail.

**E-zine Directories** - Online directories of periodically published electronic newsletters.

**Ghostwriter** - An accomplished writer who researches and writes an article on an assigned topic under someone else's name.

**Paid Market** - A publication that pays writers for articles. Paid markets often require original, unpublished articles.

**Point of view** - The perspective from which an article is written.

**Query letter** - A brief letter often sent by e-mail to an editor that proposes an article topic and content for publication.

**Reprint guidelines** - A set of guidelines that are determined by the author that must be followed in order to reprint an article.

Style guide - A document specifying the details of writing style such as punctuation, spelling and capitalization, etc.

Syndication - The process by which a web site is able to share information, such as articles, with other web sites.

Synopsis - A general overview or summary of an article.

Writer's Guidelines - A set of guidelines determined by the publisher that outline requirements for articles such as topic, format, length, etc.

Learning these terms is required homework if you're just beginning to market your work. After all, this is our lingo... real words for real writers. Singing our ABC's fuelled us towards writing, knowing our lingo propels us towards success in marketing with articles that sell.

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# *Understanding Editorial Guidelines*

Editorial guidelines, also known as writer's guidelines, are the rules set forth by publishers for contributing authors. In order to have your article taken seriously you must review the guidelines prior to submission. It is also recommended that you review previous editions of the publication to get a better feel for the types of articles favored by the editor(s).

Outlined below are the typical issues covered in editorial guidelines along with their definitions and any additional information you should know.

**Length of article:** The minimum and maximum word count of articles considered for publication. Online articles are usually expected to be 750 to 1,000 words while off-line publications will often accept a longer article.

**Topics:** The subjects of articles accepted by the publication. Never submit an off topic article as this is very annoying and may result in further submissions from you being banned.

**Illustrations/Photographs:** Some publications require/accept illustrations or photographs and will usually specify the size and format required for acceptance.

**Editorial style:** Consistency and accuracy governs the use of a style selected by the editorial department of a publication. Many publications require the use of the Associated Press Stylebook which covers spelling, capitalization, grammar, punctuation and usage.

**Author Photograph:** Some publications require or accept a photograph of the author usually included with the submission of the article. Guidelines will often cover the size and format of photographs.

**Byline length:** Also known as an author biography or resource box. Some publications have certain requirements for length, characters per line and what or how much contact information can be included.

**Payment:** Your byline is often the only payment you will receive for your article. However, some publications (particularly those in print) pay for articles by the word or per article.

**Rights:** Governs whether or not the publication will accept original or reprinted articles, how long they plan to use the material and whether the article can be used elsewhere at the same time.

**Query requirement:** A query is a letter written to the editor that proposes an article topic and asks permission to submit. Some publications require that you query the editor (by e-mail, fax or mail) prior to forwarding your article.

**Submission methods:** Methods of submissions may include via fax, e-mail or hard copy sent by courier or standard mail.

**Editorial calendar:** It is not unusual for a publication to establish an editorial calendar for each year far in advance. The calendar will cover topics, themes, article types and required submission dates broken down by publication dates.

**Format accepted:** Each publication will accept articles in certain formats such as Word, WordPerfect, text or Adobe Acrobat.

**Audience:** Demographics such as number of subscribers, gender, educational level, age and income level.

**Notification:** When you will be contacted about your submission. Many publishers choose to contact only if an article is chosen for publication.

**Acknowledgements:** In some cases you will be required to sign (either electronically or on paper) an acknowledgement that you have read the guidelines.

It is very important to understand and follow the editorial guidelines of your target publications in order to maximize your chances of publication. Not all publications will include all of the above items in their editorial guidelines. Contact the editor if any of this information is not disclosed and you need it to refine your submission.

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## *Need Article Ideas?*

Writer's block...need I say more? Every writer experiences writer's block at one time or another. For a writer using the marketing with articles technique the block often starts with trying to generate a new article idea. There are many creative ways to discover article ideas no matter what your topic and we'll cover several of them below.

Your first step in finding article ideas should be to create a "swipe file." Copywriters initially used swipe files for collecting examples of outstanding copywriting techniques. Swipe files included clippings from magazines, direct mail pieces, copies of e-mails, web site copy, etc. For the marketing with article techniques our swipe file consists of a file in your favorite word processing program. In this swipe file you will collect article ideas for future articles. Begin by typing in any article ideas that you may have already. Then build your swipe file using the following suggestions:

Chat Rooms - Participate in these online forums where you can chat with others by typing messages, which are instantly displayed. Choose a chat room in your topic area that is frequented by your target audience and discover the hot topics everyone is discussing. You can find chat rooms by visiting <http://chat.yahoo.com/>, <http://web.icq.com/icqchat/> and <http://chat.msn.com/>.

Forums/Message Boards - Users communicate with each other in these web based message centers by posting text messages that can be viewed using a web browser. Some forums and message boards allow you to follow a topic by asking for e-mail notification when a new posting is made. Find threaded conversations on hot topics in your niche by visiting <http://messages.yahoo.com/index.html>, <http://www.ivillage.com/messageboards/> and <http://www.delphiforums.com/>.

Newsgroups/Discussion Lists - Classified by subject matter these communication driven groups are categorized by topic and can be read on-line or via an e-mail newsreader (often included in your e-mail software). Hot newsgroups and discussion lists can be found at <http://groups.google.com/>, <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and [www.topica.com](http://www.topica.com).

Article Directories - Sites that archive article submissions by topic are gold mines of ideas for article writers. Read articles written for your target audience to obtain ideas but never plagiarize the actual articles. Ideas can be gleaned from the list of the most popular or newest articles (if offered). My favorite article directories are at <http://www.opportunityupdate.com>, <http://www.goarticles.com> and <http://www.articlecity.com>.

Newspapers - You can obtain a wealth of article ideas by reading your daily newspaper. Keep a notepad with you while you read and jot down topic ideas. Many newspapers offer on-line versions that can be found by visiting <http://broadcast-live.com/newspapers/> and <http://www.localfreepress.com/>.

Calendars - There are hundreds of holidays and special occasions every year. Search through <http://www.holidays.net/dailys.htm>, <http://www.earthcalendar.net/> and [http://www.madmanmike.com/us\\_events\\_dates.html](http://www.madmanmike.com/us_events_dates.html). Using holidays tied to your niche will impress your readers and show that you are current and up-to-date with your article topics.

Surveys - Conduct surveys with your web site visitors or newsletter readers. Ask them what topics they would like you to cover and always have a field asking for questions. Surveys can provide you with a wealth of topics that are sure to please your audience. Use low cost survey generators such as <http://www.ezquestionnaire.com/> or <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>.

Hoaxes - There are enough hoaxes and old wives tales in just about any topic that can give you plenty of article ideas. Explain or dispute the hoax or tale and relate the story to your topic area. You can find hoaxes and old wives tales at <http://www.snopes.com>.

Conferences - Meeting planners are charged with the task of bringing in speakers and arranging roundtables on the hottest topics for their target audience. You can take advantage of their hard work by checking out conferences in your field and making note of the workshop and keynote topics. You can find conference listings organized by topic at <http://www.tsnn.com>, <http://www.allconferences.com> and by searching <http://www.Google.com>.

Get started today building your swipe file and add to it on a daily basis. This will help you become more organized and will ensure that you never run out of article ideas!

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## *Peddling Your Own Wagon Through Local Exposure*

I've shared the secret of marketing your business on the Internet in previous articles. If you've been active in your efforts, you've been writing and publishing free reprint articles.

Guess what? I've got another incredible marketing secret for you.

While online marketing has unlimited potential it often misses a valuable mark. This missed mark is your own local area. You could be missing out on immediate opportunities to market your expertise through your writing.

Take a discerning look in your own backyard. How many potential business allies do you meet yet overlook each day? Let's make this simple... begin your day tomorrow with a pen and pad handy. Make a note of each person you encounter throughout your day, whether in-person or by telephone and/or e-mail.

Home: spouse/partner and kids.

Coffee Shop: owner, staff, and business professionals.

Work: parking lot attendant, colleagues and clients.

Gym: staff and other members.

Miscellaneous: banker, attorney, charities and even your competitors.

You get the idea, I'll stop there. Each of these contacts, even your spouse and kids, presents a potential marketing opportunity. It all depends on your perception.

Let's examine the marketing value of these relationships.

**Spouse/Partner:** He/she has a career. Careers come with contacts and we all agree that face-to-face contacts are valuable. This is particularly true in the area of business, but also in the area of professional and social organizations of your own. Writing an article for an organization to which your spouse belongs increases your exposure.

**Kids:** Most parents are jumping through the hoops of soccer practice, dance lessons and parent-teacher conferences. What coach or teacher wouldn't love a parent who participates by contributing an article to the team, class or school newsletter? Kids don't always read these but their parents do. Writing for school-related publications can deliver your name to countless local readers.

**Business Associates:** Gaining exposure via peers in your own field can be tough, especially if yours is very competitive. Contributing an article to a competitor's business publication or newsletter creates goodwill. Business publications can be far-reaching and can create immediate recognition of your name within your industry. If you have an associate who is a small business owner with no publication offer your help in creating one. You're almost certain to be asked to submit an article or given appropriate credit for your expertise.

Waitperson and/or Coffee Shop Owner: These folks are in the trenches and know more business professionals than you may know. Coffee shops play as much a role in business as Board rooms. Regular customers often view the owners and employees as familiar friends. Select a busy coffee shop and frequent it regularly. Establish a friendly rapport with the boss and the staff so that they know you well. As a regular, you'll benefit if they know about your business as well as the fact that you write. Be personable, carry business cards and tip generously... and don't be surprised! You can't buy exposure for the price of a cup of coffee but you can gain recognition by genuinely interacting with others publicly. Never dismiss the potential of a contact who works in any service industry.

Charities/Community Service Organizations: While it's quicker and easier to write a check, taking your donation to the next level can create a definite presence for you. Since most of these groups are nonprofit offer to contribute a free article. Try one of these article ideas: a piece about the group's local efforts, a press release about a new fundraising effort or offer to write a regular column that covers the positive impact of the group's work from the viewpoint of a business professional.

Professional Organizations: You pay your annual membership fee but attend few meetings and/or functions. Sure there's prestige with membership but anyone bearing proper credentials can join. Treat your membership as an investment, a potentially profitable one by being active within the organization. Out of sight is typically out of mind, so make sure to let people see you regularly. Be the first one to volunteer your business expertise and/or writing services for any projects.

Adjust your focus to the potential rather than the immediate and don't forget to look in your own backyard for business contacts and opportunities. As your own local awareness increases you will receive reciprocating professional recognition. It's just a matter of fine-tuning your perspective.

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# Marking Your Territory

We all know the familiar adage "if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck..." it's nearly always a duck. The same is true with image, particularly when it comes to the images we portray of ourselves as writers.

My e-book "Articles That Sell", teaches the how-to's of effectively marketing your business by writing and publishing articles. These ideas will help you literally take your marketing act to the street by presenting yourself as a professional writer.

A professional writer? Of course...the last image that you want to convey is that you're an amateur. If you want to brand yourself and your business professionally, then you've got to conduct all your marketing efforts with the perspective of a skilled and accomplished pro.

First, you'll need to erase any stereotypical images of writers. They aren't all philosophical types in glasses and black turtlenecks. Writers are real people, just like you. They come from all walks of life and have their own mortgages to pay. Very few writers are able to boast successful careers based only upon the words they have authored. In fact, most of the prominent writers we read today all have certain elements in common.

What are the marks of a professional Writer?

**Business Cards** - Does yours make any mention of the fact that you're a writer? If it doesn't, then you're sending an alarming signal that you write as a hobby.

**Resume** - Does yours note the names and dates of the publications that have featured your work? No listed works, no credibility.

**Portfolio** - Do you have a beyond-your-hard-drive collection of the articles you have written? All writers should have a hands-on cd or floppy portfolio. If possible, you should also have a physical portfolio containing your work, particularly any work that has been published in print.

**Current Contact List or Database** - Can you put your hands on a complete list of contact information? We're not talking sticky-notes here. This should include the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and web site addresses of any publications to which you have submitted an article. Ideally, you should also include the contact information for any new publications about which you learn. Make certain to include the name of the article you have submitted and whether it was published. If you sold an article, list the price for which you sold it. Review your information regularly and follow-up with each publication periodically.

**Letterhead and Envelopes** - Think it's too expensive? If it's a business expense then it's tax deductible. While it's true that editors are primarily interested in the content of your work, unprofessional correspondence sends up a red flag that you're trying to break-in to writing. You probably have a software program on your computer that you can use to create an impressive letterhead for yourself. Visit your local office supply store to find a quality paper to print it.

**Editor** - Now, we're talking some real money, aren't we? As I've said before in a previous ATSU Newsletter, there are affordable editors out there. You can even find one at a local college who

might be willing to work for a nominal fee. If using a "for-pay" editor isn't an option, you should at least have all your work proofed for grammar, spelling, and flow of content by someone who is qualified and is objective. It's important that you be open-minded to constructive criticism.

**Library Card** - Who has time to read? The best way to learn to better express our own thoughts and further develop our writing is through reading the thoughts of others. Ask anyone whom you consider to be a professional writer. That person will always tell you that they have either always been or have become an avid reader. In the area of reading, venture out and read beyond your normal scope of preferences. You'll be amazed at how expanding your horizons can truly fine-tune your own writing skills.

Success in marketing with articles is a reciprocating enterprise. The more you write and publish articles to market your business, the more exposure you will gain as an author. Presenting yourself as an across-the-board professional in your area of writing will propel your success even further. Maximize the mileage you can earn through your writing!

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# *Hooked On Books?*

## *Write A Book Review For Your Target Audience*

If you are burned out with writing how-to articles to promote your business then consider writing a book review. I recommend you write a review about a book you enjoyed that is related to your products or services. Your review, of course, will be capped off with your 5-6 line byline that includes your contact information and web site URL. Many of the article directories, e-zines and web sites that normally accept articles will accept book reviews too. In addition, you can find and submit to the many sites featuring book reviews.

To begin a review, I start with the format required by Midwest Book Review. I then adapt the format and word count to what is required by each submission site. Midwest Book Review recommends the following format (examples of paragraphs are enclosed in parenthesis):

Book Title:  
Author:  
Publisher:  
Publisher Address:  
ISBN:  
Price:    Publication Date:    Page Count:

Reviewer Contact Information:

Name:    Address:    E-mail:

**First Paragraph:** Include information about the format of the book. A nice touch is to comment on the cover design, table of contents structure and/or glossary at the back of the book.

(Sample: This beautifully laid out trade paperback has a gorgeous and practical design both inside and out. I recommend you read this book with a highlighter and a pen, ready to take copious notes in the blank pages thoughtfully provided between chapters.)

**Second Paragraph:** Detail the recommended audience and note why they should read the book.

(Sample: Manners That Sell: Adding The Polish That Builds Profits should be required reading for high school and college students and for anyone already in the business environment. Once upon a time, good manners were taught in school and at home, but that time has long since passed. This book provides the perfect refresher course for those of us who learned manners but no longer remember the finer points of etiquette.)

**Third Paragraph:** Write about the book structure and layout, number of chapters and topics covered.

(Sample: While reading this book, I discovered that the author, Lydia Ramsey, covered every conceivable point of etiquette including many that I'd never been taught. Each of the twelve chapters covers one main topic broken down into digestible bite sized chunks of rules and guidelines to enhance credibility and professionalism. Topics include first impressions, greetings and introductions, the art of conversation, dressing for business, telephone courtesy, electronic etiquette, correspondence in business, etiquette in the office, gift-giving in business, etiquette out of the office, dining for profit and doing business internationally.)

**Fourth Paragraph:** Give a brief biography of the author including their name, name of their business (if applicable), business or personal expertise and if available, include titles of their other books.

(Sample: The author of this delightful book, Lydia Ramsey, is a business etiquette expert with over thirty years of experience working with non-profits, corporations, colleges and universities. She is a frequently published author who presents workshops, seminars and keynotes on all aspects of business etiquette.)

**Fifth Paragraph:** Recommend the book and offer some ideas of its practical use by individuals or groups. If applicable, mention that it would make a good gift book and wrap up the review with a positive summary of the book.

(Sample: I recommend businesses buy this book in bulk and present one to every employee from the frontline up to the top management. In this ever-changing world of so many consumer choices, the bottom line is often affected by the simple courtesies that can and should be afforded to customers. You need this book if you want your employees to succeed and your business to thrive.)

Add your copyright statement and byline to the bottom of the review and, as usual, have the review proofread by an editor before you begin submission. Your book reviews can be very effective marketing tools that will generate considerable exposure for you.

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## *Effective Collaboration - Working With Your Ghostwriter*

Using a ghostwriter to craft your free reprint articles and marketing materials is an excellent way to maximize your time and profit.

If you've already posted a writing opportunity, you've probably received several proposals and/or bids from interested writers. Whether you're already working with a ghostwriter or still considering potential candidates, you want to develop a working relationship that is both professional and congenial as well. This will allow you to maximize the benefits of having your own ghostwriter.

Working with your ghostwriter should be an easy and productive experience. After all, removing the pressure of not having time to write and still gaining exposure through marketing with articles is your purpose for even considering a ghostwriter. It may take a few projects and a little time to develop a good working relationship with a regular ghostwriter, but there are several ways that you can help the process along from your end.

- Your ghostwriter is not your employee, at least not in the traditional sense. Remember, freelance writers offer their services on a contractual basis. You can't expect your ghostwriter to drop all other projects to work on yours exclusively, without prior notice. By developing a good working relationship with your ghostwriter you can be assured that they will give your projects priority.

- Be open to suggestions from your ghostwriter. He/she may have powerful ideas that can help you target your audience more effectively. Don't be afraid to ask for his/her ideas or opinions, especially if he/she has been writing for several years. While the subject of an article is always your decision, your ghostwriter may have an article idea that could be very productive for you.

- Offer ongoing and/or continuing opportunities. One of the best ways to guarantee that a professional is always enthusiastic about writing for you is to offer projects on a regular basis. You'll often be able to receive a less than standard rate for services once you've established yourself as a recurring client.

- Mix it up a bit in your writing opportunities. Here's where you get to expand your work and also increase your exposure in marketing with articles. If there are related subject areas in which you are involved offer your ghostwriter opportunities to help you with these as well. Remember that you can ask your ghostwriter to rewrite sections of your web site, proofread your correspondence or write proposals. This helps keep things fresh for the writer when you allow him/her to focus on other subjects or other areas of writing.

- Be flexible. If your ghostwriter delivers an article with which you are truly displeased allow him/her to do some editing before you completely reject the piece altogether. When making directives for specific editing requests try to explain why you are making your request. This can help your ghostwriter learn your particular preferences and help further develop his/her ability to write from your perspective.
- Be reasonable regarding timeframe for delivery of your article. All work takes time and as you already know, so does writing in particular. Try to offer new projects far enough in advance that your ghostwriter has time to produce his/her best work for you. Even if your ghostwriter is an expert in your subject and works well against short deadlines, he/she can usually produce a better article for you if not pressed for time.
- Money talks, but not always the same language. You may be surprised to learn that many professional ghostwriters are more drawn to regular work than a one-time-shot larger payment for writing an article. As I often say, writers are real people with real lives and financial commitments like everyone else. In offering your projects to a different writer each time you'll definitely receive a variety of work, but you won't have much security. By working with one or perhaps two ghostwriters you'll have the benefit of knowing what to expect in their work.
- Don't keep your ghostwriter's name a secret. Sharing the name of your ghostwriter with other people who may have a need for his/her services goes a long way in maintaining a successful relationship. Not only is it the most genuine compliment you can offer, it is also one of the most effective ways of ensuring that you're a valued client. Even freelance writers who have built a regular client base are almost always accepting new opportunities, if only as filler projects during slow times. Sharing your ghostwriter's name demonstrates your value of their work. You can be the first name to whom your ghostwriter likewise makes referrals in your area of business and/or expertise.
- Pay your ghostwriter's fees promptly. Many ghostwriters charge a deposit or in-advance payment on projects that they accept as a standard for doing business. However, some do accept work without a deposit. Whichever agreement you reach with your ghostwriter, it is important that you honor that agreement just as any other contract for professional services by making payment upon receipt of services.

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## *Four Tips For Getting More Mileage From Your Articles*

It has become common knowledge that the smartest and most effective free method of advertising your business and services is to write and submit articles to the over 400,000 e-zines currently on the 'net. There are even several e-books written on the topic, including mine, that will help you take advantage of this effective technique. What do you do next after you've invested the hours necessary to research, write, proofread, edit and submit your article to thousands of e-zine publishers?

I recommend several methods of recycling articles to clients who utilize my article submission services that I'm going to share with you today:

1. Publish each of your articles on a separate page on your web site. Then take the keywords from that article that you used in the title and text and create a set of meta tags for that page. Use a free meta tag generator like <http://www.anybrowser.com/MetaTagGenerator.html> to make sure your meta tags are properly formatted and all inclusive. Next, submit the article page to all of the free search engines. Once that page is indexed those keywords will attract searchers to visit your site where you can convert them to loyal customers.
2. Take the article you've written and customize it for an industry you want to target. For example, I have a client who writes internet promotion articles. After submission she customizes her articles for real estate agents, accountants, ophthalmologists, home health care companies, etc. I then offer the customized articles to the industry associations representing those groups. This tactic has resulted in hundreds of thousands of fresh, new visitors to her web site when an association prints her customized article in their newsletter or magazine.
3. Choose an article you've written that outlines several key points on a particular topic. Write an in depth, expanded article on each key point. Contact all the publishers on your list and offer them the expanded key point articles and ask them to run them as a series. A series of articles is much more effective than a single article because each potential customer needs to be exposed to you and your business several times before becoming a customer.
4. Take the original article and the expanded key point articles and offer them as an e-course to people who visit your site and sign up for your e-zine. Use a free autoresponder like <http://www.sendfree.com> to deliver the articles in sequence. This gives you the opportunity to capture e-mail addresses for your e-zine and allows you to use a different by-line highlighting your services and products with each article delivery.

Use these four tips every time you've finished submitting an article and you will get thousands of additional targeted visitors to your web site with just a little extra effort!

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# *Craft Your Article Submission Strategy*

Make the most out of your time and effort by creating a submission strategy for your articles. Both beginners and experts can and should use a submission strategy that will evolve over time. Your strategy should brand you as an expert in your field, define your target audience and help you measure your results. Use your word processing program to develop a strategy and keep it front and center when writing and submitting your articles.

To begin creating your article submission strategy answer the questions below:

1. Your target audience.  
Who is your most desired reader?  
What size business does your reader own or work for?  
What needs does your desired reader have that you can fulfill?
2. Submission goals.  
Are you submitting in order to receive incoming one-way links?  
Do you hope to “expertize” yourself and prove your capabilities?  
Are you hoping to increase sales of a particular product or service?
3. Search engine benefits.  
What targeted keywords will you use in your title, article and by-line?  
How will the one-way links from sites publishing your articles increase your search engine rankings?  
Will you agree to a reciprocal link if asked by a publisher?
4. Submission formats.  
Which of these formats will you offer when submitting your articles?  
PDF  
HTML  
Doc  
WP  
Text
5. Submission list.  
Will you be submitting your articles in print and/or online?  
Do you have an existing submission list that targets topics of interest to your target audience?  
How often will you search for new submission sites to add to your list?
6. Stand out in a crowd.  
What will you do enhance your relationships with publishers?  
Will you offer customized versions of your articles for free or for fee?  
Did you consider allowing publishers to insert their affiliate link in your article or your by-line?

7. Tracking your results.

Have you asked publishers to notify you when they use an article?

During what time intervals after submission will you search Google for your article name?

How often will you check your website metrics to see traffic driven by your article submissions?

You will be ready to forge ahead with a submission strategy after answering these questions and recording your answers. There are many excellent marketing strategy checklists on-line that you can use to consider any other questions you should be answering for your strategy. Continue updating your strategy as your business changes over time and you will be miles ahead of your competition!

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## *Stop Undermining Your Article Submissions*

Your web site plays an integral role in your article submission strategy. If it isn't up to par, your article submission projects won't produce much in the way of results.

To support your efforts in writing and submitting articles, you need a solid workhorse, which is the job of your web site. It's not just for looks, but rather serves the purpose of offering something of value to your target audience and converting browsers to faithful readers, loyal newsletter subscribers and committed buyers!

On the Internet, just like with bricks-n-mortar businesses, appearance is critical. Use these strategies to elevate your web site giving it literal curb appeal and improving your business, which translates to more article acceptances and more exposure in your target market!

- Cut the Pomp and Circumstance

As with so many elements of the Internet, the use of a *Splash Page* featuring fancy graphics and an *Enter* button is obsolete. Most people find them irritating and won't even venture past this point to see the rest of your web site, so delete your splash page now!

- Professionalism

If your web site looks the *Internet Amateur Hour*, you're probably turning off prospects. Quality clients/customers won't do business with you if your image is unprofessional. Make sure that pages are neat and organized featuring content that's easily readable. Be consistent in formatting from page-to-page to prevent a thrown-together look.

- Focus

Just like your articles, your web site needs focus. No business fills every need for every consumer, so direct your web site to the prospective clients/customers in your target market. Be clear about the products/services you offer and engage prospects in your specific market by catering to their needs exclusively and *better* than your competition.

- Presence

Online businesses have to overcome the hurdle of not having face-to-face contact with prospects. Make interaction with you a simple process by providing a contact form, listing a phone number and including an e-mail address on every page.

- Stick to Business

Does your web site look reflect you as a business professional or does it blast prospects with a variety of hard-to-read fonts and excessive graphics? Limit the number of fonts and colors used

throughout your site. Use graphics judiciously avoiding slow-loading designs that frustrate prospects.

- Content

They call it *king* for a reason, so don't dethrone your efforts by featuring the same old content. Give prospects and search engines, plus your regular clients/customers, fresh content that fits your theme and offers value to your target audience.

- Accentuate

Pay special attention to your *Articles Page*. Include reprint details with your required guidelines above your articles. Use inviting language in your guidelines encouraging publishers to take advantage of your material. Make it convenient for publishers by listing articles alphabetically by title and include a three-line description. Link titles to the actual article page with offer versions in html, pdf and text files.

- Courting Publishers

Publishers are very busy people, so make it easy for them to publish your articles. Offer a separate *publisher's only* subscription notifying them when you have a new article available.

- Show Your Smile

Potential clients want to know who you are. Include a photo on your *Article Page* for publishers/editors to use when they reprint your articles. Prospects also appreciate being able to actually see a person because it makes doing business online much more personal.

- Call-to-Action

You're wasting time, effort and valuable space with web pages that don't give clients/customers the opportunity to do business with you! Each page, even your individual article pages, should always include a call-to-action. *Strut your stuff* by offering prospects your newsletter and/or subscriptions to your exclusive members-only offerings. Streamline the process and gain more clients.

- Testimonials

Share client/customer testimonials with prospects instead of keeping them to yourself. Add at least one testimonial per page including article pages letting prospects know just how valuable others find your products/services.

- Respect Clients/Customers

More than ever, people are concerned with the security of their private information. Establish a clear privacy policy and publish it on your web site and linking to it from each page.

- Guarantee It In Writing

Decide your return/refund policy *before* your web site goes live! No matter how good your product or service is, at some point, you're going to have an unsatisfied customer. Create a consistent refund policy up front and update it immediately on your web site if you change it.

- Polish The Final Product

Grammatical mistakes like misspellings, improper punctuation, and capitalization errors signal prospects that you're not attentive to detail. Have someone proofread your entire site including your articles to make sure all text is error-free.

So, what's your curb appeal? Your web site is your online office and showroom. Does it make you look like a professional or more like an amateur with a sideline hobby?

Remember, marketing with articles is about generating exposure. Although publishers need articles they may not accept them if your site is poorly designed, disorganized or filled with grammatical errors and outdated content. Put your best foot forward to prospective publishers and clients who come to you through your article submissions. If, despite your best efforts, your web site still needs work consider hiring a professional. You'll quickly recoup the cost of hiring an expert with more sales and increased exposure!

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## *The Skinny On Article Directories*

Article directories (also known as article archives) are searchable on-line databases of articles contributed by multiple authors. The goal of an article directory is to collect articles on certain topics and offer them to publishers to place on their website, in their e-zine or in print. Each article directory has unique guidelines for both authors and publishers. The benefits of submitting your articles to directories are numerous and include:

1. Most directories give you a separate page for each article and some publish your photograph along with your articles. This allows an author to promote their articles without needing a website of their own.
2. Directories are a magnet for publishers. Most publishers are looking for specific articles on a specific topic and they are more likely to find such articles in a directory rather than in an individual e-zine that offers reprintable articles.
3. Many directories allow you to edit your articles and change your by-line as many times as you want.
4. Some directories offer a news feed that automatically adds your new articles to dozens of websites.
5. Article directories may have a good search engine page rank that makes them ideal for providing a one-way link to your website.

There are hundreds of article directories on the internet. I am constantly searching the internet for new directories to add to my list but I have found that I receive the most benefits from older directories. Over time I have discovered a few directories that I absolutely love that I visit for submission and for research. A few of these are:

[Alumbo! Magazine](#) – This on-line magazine doubles as an articles directory and offers a free membership that allows you to submit articles in some very interesting categories such as ecology & environment, love relationships, paranormal & divination in addition to the normal business and career topics. Alumbo permits you to choose more than one topic for your article and often suggests additional topic pages where your article would be a good fit.

[Article Alley](#) – Allows you to register as an author for free and submits your articles across a network of sites. Allows for update of author profile, editorial access to your articles and a unique web page listing all your articles.

[BPubs.com](#) – Although this is a business site only it does accept articles in a wide variety of business subcategories. Google™ visits often because it knows that BPubs.com adds fresh content from many authors every day.

[Constant Content](#) – This is a unique article directory that allows you to sell or give away your content. You must register prior to submitting your articles in many different formats – all of which are editable at any time.

[EzineArticles](#) – Owned and operated by one of my favorite article submission experts, Christopher Knight. This directory offers more submission topics than other directories and much of the enhancements done to the site are based on author and publisher feedback. When I submit an article to this directory I receive more attention and traffic than I do from any other submission site on my list.

[IdeaMarketers](#) – You absolutely must register for a free author's account at Idea Marketers. Topics covered include business, holiday, lifestyles/self-help, technology, Christian, home/family/parenting and marketing. You are provided with a professional looking author's profile that includes your by-line and your picture after completion of a lengthy form.

Establish yourself as an expert in your topic area and take advantage of the many benefits of adding your content to every established and credible article directory. You are guaranteed to be delighted with the response you will receive from publishers who find your articles in the directories they frequent.

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# *Article Marketing Snowballs Into A Mess*

Have you fallen for the article marketing trap? Sending out second rate articles, worrying too much about word count and ignoring all the things that would make your effort more successful?

Article marketing has swept through the internet like an avalanche. Virtually everyone knows about the technique but very few are doing it well. Many people are actually ruining their reputation by ignoring article marketing best practices.

As an article newsgroup moderator and article marketing expert I am in the trenches everyday. Increasingly, I reject more articles than I accept. More and more often I hear complaints from publishers that the articles submitted to them are pure crap. Many of these publishers complain that article submission software is to blame. I have to disagree. Here is what I think is causing the majority of problems:

- \* People who want to use the technique without learning how.
- \* Private label articles flooding the market.
- \* Plagiarism and copyright violations.
- \* Lousy articles with no redeeming values.
- \* Off topic articles driving publishers crazy.
- \* Articles that are too short or too long.
- \* Writers who won't divulge their identity and only use their by-line for advertising a website.

Can you connect the dots to find out where the article marketing problems lie? With the article marketer. The article marketer, like myself, loves the technique but is often strapped for time. Instead of writing unique articles or hiring a ghostwriter to write for them they get lazy. Stupidity and carelessness is also a factor but I bet being lazy causes most of the problems.

I believe that laziness is the root of all evil in the article marketing world. Any type of marketing will not work unless effort is expended and techniques are repeated regularly and reliably. Please do me a favor. If you can't make the effort then don't use the technique.

Article marketing done badly is far more damaging then not using the technique at all. It only works when you create quality work and follow submission rules. Don't blame the publishers for your shoddy articles and don't spend hours on forums complaining that the technique doesn't work. It does work. It has worked for me and for many others but it won't work for you if you insist on being lazy and irresponsible.

Make a commitment today to write well, submit only on topic unique articles and to hire help if you need it. Your best efforts will be the catalyst to better results and will support the growth of the article marketing community. Let's use the technique wisely so that it remains a viable part of internet marketing.

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Bonnie Jo Davis is an internet and article marketing expert who takes great pride in helping small businesses exploit the power of the internet to promote their businesses, products and services for free. If you are using article marketing or want to learn how to use the technique then you need to visit <http://www.ArticleSubmissionSites.com>. You'll find great advice and an updated submission list you can use for yourself or your clients.

# *Tossing The Box - Writing Beyond Your Usual Subject*

Been thinking that maybe it's time to spread your writing wings a bit and pen something new? More specifically, you may be thinking about writing an article or several articles about a topic that is totally outside your usual subject area.

If you are, then Congratulations! This is a phase of the natural evolutionary process that writers experience ... it simply means that you're moving forward in your work. Writing articles about different subjects is an effective way of gaining even more exposure for yourself and your business.

Besides, marketing with articles doesn't limit you to being an authority on only one topic. All you need to do choose a new subject area in which to focus your writing.

Sure, you can always hit the Search Engines and reap the return of hot keywords up for grabs ... or, you can pick a topic off the top of your head ... maybe something you heard on the news... some new-age subject or relatively obscure concept about which you can write, provided you can research it well enough to do a credible article.

Or, you can stick with what you know.

Huh? But you're chomping at the bit to expand your writing into different areas. How is writing more about what you know going to offer a new challenge or more exposure for you?

As writers, we sometimes develop tunnel vision. In other words, we can't see the actual forest for the proverbial trees. Writing what you know isn't necessarily writing about the same subject.

That is, unless you only know that one topic about which you've been writing articles.

Lucky for you... you're a walking encyclopedia!

Sure you are, take a stroll through your own variegated alphabet of personal interests, those beyond your professional and/or career knowledge. You'll be surprised to realize that there are several subjects for which you already have the knowledge and expertise to produce incredible articles.

A     airplanes - antiques - aquariums - art - autos  
B     ballet - baseball - birds - boating - building  
C     camping - cats - coins - cooking - crafts  
D     dancing - dating - decorating - dining - dolls  
E     ecology - eclipses - electronics - environment -ethics  
F     fencing - fishing - fitness - folksongs - figure-skating  
G     gardening - genealogy - golf - graphics - gymnastics  
H     hardware - history - hobbyhorses, hockey, hunting  
I     imaging - inns - insects - inspiration - investing  
J     java script - jazz - jewelry - jogging - jujitsu  
K     kayaking - keyboards - kids - kiting - knitting  
L     languages- lanterns - lapidary - laptops - lithography

M magic - martial arts - movies - museums - music  
N nature - nightclubs - nostalgia - numerology - nuts  
O occasions - ornaments - organization - outdoors - outfits  
P painting - pets - picnics - photography - puzzles  
Q quartz - quatrains - quiches - quilting - quotes  
R racing - racquetball - recipes - retirement - robotics  
S snorkeling - skiing - software - stenciling - swimming  
T theatre - toys - trading cards - travel - trucks  
U UFO's - umpiring - unicycles - urbanism - utilities  
V vacations - vases - veterans - videos - vineyards  
W wallpapering - waltzes - weight-lifting - wines - woodworking  
X xenophobia - xylophone - x-ray astronomy  
Y yachting - yard designs - yoga - yo-yo's - yodeling  
Z zip files - zodiac - zoos - zoom lenses

It's okay if you don't see one of your particular interests or hobbies in the above list. In fact, that's even better.

Now, this is where you get to carve out your niche for writing articles. The hobbies and interests listed aren't meant to limit you, they're meant to inspire you!

Airplanes for A may not have struck a cord with you, but now autos that's a different story. You've been into classic cars for as long as you can remember. There's your niche!

If the b in ballet stands for boring as far as you're concerned, consider what it means to you in building. Yes, you, the one who's always sporting a carpenter's apron and hammer every Saturday. Another niche nailed down!

Moving right along to the letter C, scratch the cats-coins-and-crafts and that's your category. Camping is one of your passions. And when it comes to cooking you grill a mean steak, if you do say so yourself. But wait... that comes under G for grilling. How about combining it with outdoors from O and recipes from R? Looks like you've cooked up your own niche article ideas in Outdoors + Grilling + Recipes = Savory Campsite Cuisine. You could do an entire series of articles on that topic!

As a writer, it's essential to remain genuine in order to be effective. Writing about what you know and on subjects about which you are truly passionate is one of the best ways to distinguish yourself. It's the feeling that comes through naturally as you write about certain topics, which is apparent to the reader and reflects you as an authority.

While research is indeed a part of writing, it does have its place. Hours invested in research will never replace what is written from within. If a subject is not in your heart, it will never be in your head ... and certainly not in your writing.

Call it old-school or back-to-basics, but being genuine is what separates real writers from those who are merely content generators. Unplug for a while to rediscover your own true interests and passions, but keep a pen and paper handy. A breath of creative fresh air breeds countless intriguing ideas... you can rely on your collective notes and inspirations when you return to your keyboard. Rest assured ... they will serve your writing well!

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## *Fueling The Ideal – Marketing With Articles*

It's that time of year again ... pages of backpacks, notebooks and back-to-school clothing fill every circular that hits your mailbox. And you're off to the races ... the races being the mall, plus every other store in between.

You're in the same spot you were last year this time, getting ready to head off to work while your kids head off to school. Back to hugging them goodbye in the morning and seeing them just long enough in the evening to say I love you and tuck them in.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if the easier schedule of the summer lasted all year long? No more spending all your hours away from your kids just to earn enough money to cover the essentials and pay daycare?

Take it from someone who knows both sides of the deal here and believe that there's no time like right now to make the transition from the regular grind to working from home. As the proud Mom of a 2005 honors graduate who's heading off to college soon, I know first hand what a major impact working from home has had on his success.

When my son was very young, I worked a full-time job away from home, plus at least one part-time job on weekends. This meant that my son was in daycare while I worked. As a single parent who didn't receive child support (for years) though, I had no other choice.

A few years later in the 1990's, I decided there had to be a better way so I started a part-time medical billing service from my home. This allowed me to give up the outside part-time job and gave me the practical means of earning the much-needed income. Best of all, it gave me the priceless opportunity to take care of my son while I worked. I quickly saw that I was onto something great here ... what a concept!

I moved from the east coast to California with my son in 1995 where my first full-time job was with a consulting firm co-owned by a professional speaker. After some negotiations with my boss, we entered into an agreement by which I would work mornings in the office, leave to pick up my son from school in the afternoons and work from home the rest of the day. It worked out incredibly well ... so well in fact, that in 2000, I decided to leave the consulting firm and start my own full-time home based virtual assistant business.

Starting from scratch, I knew that gaining exposure for my business was essential if I wanted to be successful in my new venture. I also knew that traditional forms of marketing are very expensive and quickly gobble up the profits, particularly in the early stages. However, I also remembered a technique that I used successfully for my former employer.

Besides being a consultant and professional speaker, he was also an author, so his goals included increasing his number of speaking engagements and selling more copies of his books. He hoped to accomplish these goals by establishing himself as an expert in his industry, which meant having his work published by every major magazine in his field.

Committed to accomplishing his goals, he gave me a list of those publications, so I drafted a query letter based on one of his story ideas and e-mailed it to the editor of one of the

magazines. The editor responded in short notice and offered my employer an article assignment. They published my boss's article soon afterwards and featured it on the cover of the magazine, producing an onslaught of calls to the office!

Writing and submitting that one article produced several paid speaking engagements. This new marketing intrigue fascinated me, so I fine-tuned my article submission process creating logs and checklists, and within a few months, my boss had accomplished his goal of publication in every magazine on his list!

Even online and in-print publications we hadn't contacted began calling and e-mailing in request of articles. The results of writing and submitting articles was so successful that we put other major marketing techniques on hold so my boss could travel to his paid speaking engagements.

As my interest and experience grew in this area of marketing, I knew that if it worked for my boss that it would work for other professionals as well. Soon, I was earning over half my income handling article submissions for other professionals.

Then I realized that if this technique worked for other professionals that it would work for me too in building my own business. And it has worked for me!

This same marketing technique, which I call marketing with articles, has been the success behind my own business. I've used it to expand my client base and build my virtual assistance business into a solid income-generating company, which has allowed me to work full-time at home for the past five years. As my son is getting ready to leave for college, my personal goal now is to help other parents be successful in achieving their career goals while living the dream of staying home with their children.

The concept of marketing with articles does not require a professional writer. Anyone can be successful in building their business and gaining credibility as an expert in their industry or area of expertise by writing and submitting free reprint articles to online and in-print publications. The key to success is in reaching your target audience with resourceful information that is valuable to them.

Editors of both online and in-print publications are in constant demand of quality content for their readers. They have a continuing need to publish content that appeals directly to their target audience, which is where you come in. By writing and submitting free reprint articles to publications that reach readers in your market, you have the opportunity to establish yourself as an expert and gain a generous amount of exposure for your business.

True, you aren't earning money for actually writing the articles, but you are earning a huge payoff here. Not only do you establish your credibility as an expert in your industry or area of expertise, but you also earn significant exposure for yourself and your business. Most editors will include your byline with your articles, which gives you the opportunity to include your name and contact information, plus the URL of your web site. Readers come to recognize your name and relate it with certain topics. The more articles you write and submit, the more exposure you gain!

The marketing with articles technique helped turn my dream of working from home full-time into a precious reality that has made a positive impact for both my son and me. As he goes off to

college, he'll be leaving with all the benefits of having had a mom who found a way to support him financially without the high cost of being away from him all day. Me, I'll have the benefit of knowing that the bittersweet wind I'm putting beneath his wings comes from my deepest desires for his complete success!

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## *Article Marketing Blues: Why Isn't My Article Making Me Rich?*

What's gone wrong when you put forth your best efforts in submitting your top article to dozens of sites and yet the results are lackluster? You've followed all the generic advice offered by article marketing experts, including writing about a riveting topic, tweaking the catchy headline and paying good money to an editor to refine your jewel.

Despite this all your efforts seem wasted. You aren't seeing the results you expected despite your hard work. Unfortunately, there are multiple steps to maximizing the results of article marketing and a great deal of advice fails to go deep enough to give you the edge in winning the game. Many article marketers don't realize that two-thirds of the work involved should be done prior to submitting your article. Ask yourself these questions to determine if you've truly laid the groundwork for success.

### How's Your Aim?

If your current clients are medium to large sized companies, you should target the same audience with your articles. You can't expect great results from an article submitted to sites targeting entrepreneurs unless you actually have something valuable to sell to entrepreneurs. It is essential that you target the right audience.

### Annoying pop-ups?

First impressions are everything. Don't reference a web site in your byline unless you have your own domain with no pop-ups. Invest a few bucks for your own domain and host to help establish your credibility.

### Playing cat and mouse with visitors?

You should always feature your contact information in plain view on every page. Hide your contact information and none of your marketing efforts will work very well.

### Optimizing your landing page?

If the page you publicized in your byline is sub-standard, you have wasted your time. Impress your first time visitor with a professional looking and resourceful page that includes information about your company. Always include a call to action at the bottom of the page. Use testimonials from current and/or past customers at the top and bottom of the page.

### A unique name for your landing page?

Your byline should always contain a landing page that has an original name. For instance, you could name a page on your site such as <http://www.YourURL.com/XXX.htm> The "XXX" keywords should be replaced by words in your article title. Yes, this can still be a version of your

home page but you can track article readers more accurately by using a unique URL in your byline.

A human voice or voice mail hell?

It is impractical to put your phone number in your byline if you aren't willing to actually answer your phone during business hours. New customers aren't likely to leave a message if they can't reach you. They assume that if answering your own phone isn't a priority with you, then calling you isn't a priority for them.

Is it time yet?

Article marketing efforts take a minimum of three months to hit critical mass. Some e-zines are written so far in advance that it could take six months to get them to use your article. Don't submit an article and race to Google the title unless a reasonable amount of time has passed.

Betting on one article to save your business?

If you are struggling with your business and desperate to make some quick money then article marketing is not for you. Article marketing only works when you put forth a driven effort, write articles regularly and submit often. This is not a one-shot marketing technique and one article will not save your business from bankruptcy.

As you can see, there is a great deal of upfront work needed before your article submissions come into fruition. It is never too late to make a good impression. Tweak your site as much as you can and make changes to your unpublished articles. Do something every day to improve your article marketing results. You'll be humming happily instead of singing the article submission blues!

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# *Article Marketing Is Not Dead... If You Know How To Revive It*

Change in life is inevitable, and that includes article marketing. Used by millions, this marketing technique has made money for many, but for others, it just plain hasn't worked. Article marketing must be done responsibly and consistently over time in order to deliver results. It isn't a "get-rich-quick" technique, but those who follow the trends in article marketing can prosper.

In order to get the most out of your article marketing, you'll want to stay aware of changing techniques and hire someone to help you with writing or submission if needed.

To help get you started, I have listed the top ten changes that have taken place in article marketing over the years:

1. Create – or have someone create for you – original articles for your web site and do not use them for submission. This will draw search engines to your site and you can advertise this fresh content in your byline to entice readers to click your link.
2. Pay more attention to titles. Do your keyword research first and use your top three keywords at the beginning of the title. Use power words such as “daring,” “remarkable” and “urgent.” Ask an engaging question or use a top seven or top ten title.
3. Do not submit articles too often – or not often enough. Article directories have less restrictions, but keep in mind that individual publishers can get easily overwhelmed. Submit two to four articles per month and keep doing it.
4. In the past, article marketers were told to educate their readers. While this still holds true today, you will get more responses when you identify the problems of your potential audience and then solve these problems.
5. It is now common to find article marketers rewriting their title, article body and byline partway through their submission list. This is a reliable way to get published more often, but realize that it can be time-consuming. Get help rewriting if needed.
6. Some new article marketers are offering publishers customized articles to fit their audience, or giving permission for publishers to edit the article so long as the byline remains untouched and all links are made live.
7. In the beginning, article marketers submitted their articles to thousands of article directories. Now, savvy article marketers submit their article to the top ten or twenty article directories that provide more traffic than a thousand low-quality directories.
8. A submission list used to consist of article directories, e-zines, newsgroups and individual sites. The new submission list should also include blogs, social networking sites, niche topic sites and news sites (turn your article into a tipsheet).

9. Once your article is included in a well-ranked article directory, submit that page to social bookmarking sites where you have accounts. Do the same for the original articles on your site.
10. Consider offering an original, exclusive article to target sites with a large audience who will relate to you and what you have to offer. Ask to be paid or negotiate advertising space in their newsletter or on their site.

Some things about article marketing have remained unchanged. Never use document spinner software, mass distribution to thousands of sites, a submission list that isn't targeted and automated submission tools.

Article marketing is not dead, but it *has* changed. To be a successful article marketer, you must keep informed and stay up to date on changes in the technique. Keep an eye on blogs and web sites dedicated to the subject so you can keep reaping the benefits of article marketing.

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## *About The Author*

I am an internet marketing and article marketing expert. My talents helps entrepreneurs and small businesses exploit the power of the internet for free. Article marketing is my absolute favorite technique I use for myself and clients.

Following is the story of how I discovered this free promotion technique.

Years ago I worked for a professional speaker, consultant and author. His goals included increasing the number of his direct speaking engagements and selling more copies of his book. His dream was to be published in every major magazine related to his field.

He gave me a list of those magazines and I decided to start with Training Magazine. I crafted a query letter based on a story idea by the speaker and e-mailed it to the editor who quickly responded and agreed to give my employer an article assignment. The article was published shortly thereafter, featured on the cover of the magazine, and the phone began ringing off the hook.

That one article resulted in several paid speaking engagements and a long-term training contract. Thus began my fascination with using interesting and well crafted articles for free publicity in print and on-line. I refined my process, created logs and checklists and in a matter of months my speaker was published in every magazine on his list!

Off-line and on-line magazines and newsletters we hadn't even contacted began calling and e-mailing the office asking for articles by the speaker. I even learned that a new article was not needed for every assignment. Editors were often happy with a reprint that was customized for their audience.

This technique worked so well that we put other expensive marketing projects on hold so that my speaker could travel all over the world on paid speaking engagements.

Over time I discovered this amazing technique will work for people who do not consider themselves writers. It will work in print and on-line. It will work if your topic is spirituality, hobbies, family, the internet, marketing, business, etc. You name it, the possibilities are limitless! I went on to make more than 50% of my income by handling article submission projects for other professionals.

My dream is to teach as many people as possible how to use this technique to attain their dreams. I wrote an e-book named "Articles That Sell" and it morphed into a [membership site](#) including the e-book, newsletter, original content and submission sites.

## *Article Submission Sites*

If you submit articles for yourself or clients then you need Article Submission Sites. This membership includes:

**The e-book "Articles That Sell"**. Includes instructions and tips for both new and experienced article marketers.

**Over 1,500 submission sites updated weekly on the topics of:**

- Article Announcement Lists
- Article Directories
- Business/Work
- Human Resources
- Health
- Internet
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Miscellaneous
- Pets
- Real Estate
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