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I'M BUILDING A PROFITABLE ONLINE BUSINESS WITH TOOLS
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INTRODUCTION TO ARTICLE WRITING

The power of writing is unlimited. Having that power and potential on your side is vital to your marketing. No matter what it is that you're marketing, article writing has the power to entice your readers to learn more about your topic. In addition, a well-written article can give you the appearance of being an expert in a field, even if you know very little about the subject. The key is to write well and correctly market your articles.

Writing has been a part of our history for a very long time. The written word commands a lot of respect and attention. Learning how to use this power can only benefit you and your needs. A well-written article can command the attention of your readers and increase your market recognition and branding efforts.

The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the writing field, putting the power of the written word in the hands of anyone with a word processing program. A number of marketing programs have been based around article writing. The sheer volume and diversity can sometimes be confusing. Understanding how these programs work will help you decide if they are appropriate to your needs.

Article writing is something that anyone can do, with the appropriate tools. Thankfully, the Internet can serve as a promotional tool, as well as a tool for creating better writing. The process of writing well does not need to be mysterious, or daunting. Anyone can write articles and receive incredible results from their marketing, if handled properly.

Chances are that you have seen some excellent examples of how effective and engaging writing, as well as some examples of truly horrible writing. Knowing how to tell the difference is the first step toward developing your own successful writing style. There are a few common elements that apply no matter what you are writing. Understanding these will get you on your way.

CHAPTER 1

WHY WRITE ARTICLES?

Promotional material online usually comes in the form of articles. There are commercials, flash format advertisements and even promotional movies, of course. However, articles are the single best means of getting noticed online, and many companies have noticed this. There are several reasons for this:

- First, they can be easily reproduced on any website or article directory.
- Second, they can be written quickly and are far less time-consuming to produce than other forms of online promotion.
- Third, they can be produced very cheaply, especially if you learn how to write them yourself.

The sheer number of promotional benefits of article writing should be enough to entice anyone. There is no better way to promote your skills, products, services, or company. As mentioned, article writing can be used to set up a feeling of expertise. This means that with a well-researched and well-written article you can gain the reputation of being an expert in almost any field.

How are these articles used online? There are numerous uses for these articles. They can be written for simple informational benefit. In addition, they can be used for SEO purposes. That doesn't mean that the quality has to suffer for the sake of keyword insertion, either. A good article can be a launching platform for an amazing marketing campaign, resulting in greater market share and greater recognition.

The obvious use of article marketing is to draw traffic to a website. Using articles for that purpose is much better than many other marketing methods, simply due to the ease of creation and dispersion inherent with web based articles.

Particularly good articles can go "viral" and have a dramatic effect on your website's traffic. Articles can easily be posted on Digg, FaceBook, or Del.icio.us.

Do not discount the benefit of cross-promoting with social sites like these. There are millions of consumers on each, sharing information and helping to increase the reputation of websites around the world. Harnessing the power of article writing can help you harness social websites and effortlessly (and cheaply!) increase your recognition.

ANYONE CAN WRITE!

Anyone can write. Yes, you read that correctly. However, it takes knowledge to write well. An intelligently written article may sound out of reach, especially if you have to write it yourself and have no experience in the area. This is actually a misconception held by many people around the world. Writing is one of those arts that can seem shrouded in mystery and enigma. How do you create clean, compelling copy if you are not an expert?

The first thing to understand is that you do not have to be an expert to write like one. Anyone can write expert material if they have the correct research tools. With the advent of Web 2.0, there are numerous educational resources available online to help you create clean content for your articles. Using these tools is a great way to get accurate information. However, you should never discount print materials, such as books and magazines. The library can be your best friend when it comes to research.

Learning the secrets behind popular articles is also a good way to help your own writing. You can find examples of optimum article structure, paragraph and sentence length, as well as many other tools. Use these tools to your advantage. Determining the right layout and structure is just as important as the quality of the content. A high quality article set in the wrong format, with the wrong font size and incorrect placement, can be just as disastrous as a poorly written article.

The largest factor to remember about writing articles is that you are creating your reputation as you write. Your readers will remember incorrect information and

poorly worded articles just as easily as they will a high quality-article, perhaps more so. With each word you write, you cement your reputation as an expert or a wannabe, so choose your words and structure with great care, especially when it comes to web writing.

There are several differences between print and web writing that you will need to know, as well. Anyone can write effectively, if provided with the correct tools to do so. The single most important thing to remember when you are writing is that you must provide solid information that is accurate and not outdated. The Internet provides vast informational resources; however, you'll need to sort it for relevance and choose the tidbits that you wish to pass on to your readers.

There are several other aspects to the business of article writing that will be covered in the next few chapters.

WHY WRITE UNIQUE CONTENT?

It has become somewhat common for articles to pull double duty. That is, they serve their purpose within article directories or ezines, and also serve as website content. While this may be an accepted practice, it is not recommended. Why not use website content as an article, or vice versa?

First, it can be detrimental to the health of your website. Google and other search engine giants are stepping up their efforts to stamp out duplicate content. While it is not known exactly what they consider duplicate content, being banned or blacklisted for it is definitely not something you want to happen.

Second, duplicate content can appear to be plagiarism. That single word is one of the worst words a writer can hear. Dictionary.com defines plagiarism as "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." Even if the writing is your own, readers may receive the impression that it has been stolen

from somewhere else. Plagiarized content is a quick way to lose credibility with readers.

Another reason to write unique content is that it gives you a chance to exercise your writing skills and influence readers on your own. Whether you are talking about plagiarism or simply using article writing as a source of website content, the results can be bad for you. Duplicate content can also give the impression that you are lackadaisical about providing information to your readers and would rather take the easy way out than write a new piece.

As you can see, duplicate content is a bad thing for all involved. By far, the best option is to simply write original content, regardless of the application. It makes a much better impression when a reader follows the link from your article and finds additional, fresh content, rather than the same text that they just read. In addition, the more relevant and accurate information you supply to your readers, the greater their opinion of your efforts those readers will have.

CHAPTER 2

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL ARTICLES

Highly effective articles all have several things in common. Understanding what those elements are and how to implement them will greatly enhance your own efforts. Below, you'll find a list of these elements.

- Consistency of voice
- Consistent style and tone
- Grammatically correct
- On topic
- Concise
- Written directly to consumer set
- Expert tone
- Direct and authoritative
- Industry correct phrasing
- Appropriate use of humor

Now that we know what the elements are, let's talk a bit about each so that you can understand what they actually embody, as well as how to implement them in your writing.

THE BREAKDOWN

Consistency of Voice: The voice of a written piece is distinct from the tone or the style of the writing. In this case, it refers to whom the article is written. For example, a first person voice would be written as "I believe that you understand," while an example of second person would be "You can find more information by going to..." Third person voice is used mostly in professionally written pieces designed for specific industries and would appear "If the consumer desires to change the available options..." Maintaining a consistent voice of the piece is vital. For instance, switching from second to third person and back is a quick way to lose your audience.

Consistent Style and Tone: The style and tone of an article directly affect how readable the writing is, as well as its applicability to specific uses. For instance, conversational writing is very laid back, while professional style offers industry specific phrasing and terminology. Professional style pieces are also usually somewhat rigid in structure, though not always. There are three main styles in use: conversational, personal and professional. Each has unique benefits to specific applications and should be consistent throughout the entire article.

Grammatically Correct: Correct grammar is essential to the impact of your writing. Incorrect grammar will instantly reduce the efficacy of your writing. For instance, using “*grammer*” in place of “grammar” may seem like a trivial mistake, but your readers will catch it. Remember, no spell checking program or grammar-editing program will catch everything. Invest in a grammar guide if you do not have the skills required.

On Topic: This is especially applicable to web writing. If you change topics in the middle of an article or use a subject in an area that it is not applicable, you will lose your readers. This is actually relatively easy to avoid, especially if you do your research on the subject. Simply carry the same subject through the entire article.

Concise: Online readers have a very short attention span. You must make your point immediately. Usually, the meat of the matter should come in the first paragraph, or the very beginning of the second paragraph. This also implies a lack of “fluff” within the article. Use direct phrasing and make your point. This does not mean that you should cut out all explanation and simply state facts, but you should aim for an even balance. Ideally, your article should be interesting, informative and engaging.

Write For Your Audience: Few things will make readers stop reading than feeling like an article does not apply to them. The best example of this would be a highly technical article about industry processes submitted to a general interest format. Most consumers do not have the time or interest to read this type of subject matter. However, industry professionals would find it interesting. Keep your intended audience in mind when writing and gear the piece toward them.

Expert Tone: If you write as an expert, you can gain a reputation for being one, even if you don't know a single thing about the topic. There are thousands of places to get accurate, on-topic information. Using these sources to flesh out your writing will result in that expert tone that you need. Consumers are much more willing to accept facts from an expert than they are from an amateur.

Direct and Authoritative: If your article rambles or has an indirect tone, it can adversely affect the quality of your writing. Use direct sentences, as opposed to indirect. In fiction, writers are encouraged to always show action in their writing. This applies to article writing as well. Direct writing, where there is an identifiable subject and verb, rather than an inferred subject, will help your writing have more impact. Write with authority, as an expert would.

Statements made with an active voice instead of a passive voice convey authority. Note the difference between these two sentences:

- Most of the students are reading the book.
- The book is being read by most of the students.

The sentence makes more of an impact when the subject (most of the students) performs the action, instead of receives the action (being read).

Industry Correct Phrasing: Writing industry-specific pieces requires industry-specific phrasing and terminology. For example, if you were writing about shoe construction, you would not refer to the shank as "the metal bit in the sole." Instead, you would call it a shank and underscore that it supports the foot and the stability of the shoe. Keep your writing clean and professional, using jargon that industry experts understand and expect to see in such a piece.

Appropriate Use of Humor: Humor is a wonderful thing; if you can include it in your writing, then you are doing better than many professional writers. That said, humor is not always needed, or even wanted. This can be a touchy area. When in doubt, leave the humor out and try for purely informational content.

CONSTRUCTING THE RIGHT ARTICLE

After you have digested the elements required to create a compelling article, it's time to look at the construction of your article. While quite a few people feel that web writing should resemble writing for print, this is really not the case.

STRUCTURE

Structure is just as important as content, perhaps more important. Without the right structure, readers have a hard time focusing on your text and will move on if it is too difficult. While some of this will be controlled by the site your article is submitted to, it begins with you.

For instance, web-based writing should use short paragraphs. Traditional writing for print outlets uses larger paragraphs, usually between three and five sentences, though they can be considerably more. For web articles, you should consider two to three sentences per paragraph, depending on the length of the

sentence. Doing this breaks the text up into manageable chunks for the reader to digest.

The font and font size used are also important. Forgo flowery scripts and obscure fonts in favor of something that is readable. The font size should be sufficient that a reader sitting in front of a computer monitor can easily read the words without having to squint.

Line length is another factor you must take into consideration. When we read text on a page or a screen, our eyes tend to lose interest after about 60 to 65 characters across, so shorter line lengths make it easier for the reader to absorb your words.

PARAGRAPH HEADERS

Paragraph headers are simply a form of title used to identify the topic of each paragraph. These are an excellent tool to use when you have a large amount of information covering different elements of a single topic. Use these headers in your writing where appropriate. If it can be used to grab the reader's attention, then that's even better. Paragraph headers also serve to break up the text and provide direction for the reader. Readers can also use these to find portions of the text that most interests them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A TITLE

In many ways, the title of your article is the most important part of the article. If it lacks the power to grab reader's attention, it will be passed over. Frequently, the title is the only tool that you will have to draw your readers in and actually get them to look at your article. So, how do you create a good title? There are several elements that go into making a good title. Let's take a look.

Concise: Long, rambling titles are like a creepy uncle; no one really wants to be around them and will avoid them at all costs. Make your article a catchy, powerful reflection of the content found within.

On Topic: Topic: Your title absolutely must reflect the content in the article. Giving it something catchy, yet doesn't have anything to do with the content, is a quick way to anger your readers and alienate your audience before you even begin. Basically, don't make it sound like a technical manual, unless it is.

Catchy: Your title should be catchy enough to grab the reader's attention, immediately. Avoid using all capital letters, as well; words like of, a, the, and, etc. are not capitalized.

THE WRITER RESOURCE BOX

The writer resource box at the bottom of your article is one of the most important components of an online article. This is often the only place that you can put an outbound link, depending on the article directory you submit to. Making the most of the resource box is important and can be more difficult than you think. Many article directories severely limit the amount of text within the box.

Most of the time, the writer's resource box is placed in the article by the article directory. In order for someone to use the article with permission, the resource box must remain intact, regardless of where the article is used. This box provides vital information about the author, as well as the link to the appropriate website.

There are several elements that must be included to make the most of this valuable tool. What, exactly, should be included in this box?

First you should include one to three sentences describing what you have to offer. You should think of this like a sales pitch. Make sure to start the pitch with your name!

Second, make sure to include a link to your website. This will have to be in complete URL form, including the http:// portion. This is where the majority of your traffic will be generated.

Your call to action also goes in this section. This is the part where you tell your readers how to get more of whatever product it is that they need, how to take care of their problem or get that loan. Whatever it is that you are offering, make sure that you include a succinct, compelling call to action.

Here is an example of a good call to action:

"Fabian Tan is the author of the free 51-Page Report:

"Murder Your Job: How to Build Cash Sucking Autopilot Businesses in 30 Days or Less!"

Head over to <http://www.MurderYourJob.com> to get your free copy now before it's gone."

This example is short, sweet, and to the point. The title is just enough over the top to make you wonder what it might offer. Plus, the ever popular "free" is employed to great benefit.

You can also include contact information in the resource box if you like, though your website address is often the best contact method. Above all, make the resource box compelling. This is the part where you get rewarded for sharing your information free of charge. Your reward will be in the form of increased traffic, if you have done your job correctly. Remember, also, that the resource box should not be large and obtrusive; a size of 10-15% compared to your article is more than sufficient.

A SAMPLE, IF YOU WILL

Here are a few samples of effectively written articles. The first is an abstract from an article about hydrology, taken from www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com, written by Murugesu Sivapalan.

"Catchment hydrology is presently operating under an essentially reductionist paradigm, dominated by small-scale process theories. Yet, hydrology is full of examples of highly complex behavior, including strong nonlinearities and thresholds, and paradoxes that defy causal explanation through these small-scale process theories.

There are strong interactions and feedbacks between processes, leading to apparent simplicities in the overall catchment response, yet the laws governing these feedbacks are not well understood. Routine measurements and specialized field experiments have been valuable for observing catchment responses and understanding the underlying process controls, but there has been little progress in extrapolating the local knowledge and understanding gained from these well studied (or gauged) catchments to ungauged catchments."

This is an excellent example of an article written for a specific industry. It uses industry specific terminology that speaks directly to experts in the field of hydrology. While you may never need to write anything as exact as this article, it serves to show the point.

Here is an abstracted example of a conversational-style article. This is an article from www.practical-sailor.com.

"In olden days, landlubbers used tons of putty to caulk and seal. The putty was made of whiting (calcium carbonate) and boiled linseed oil. Substitute red or white lead for the whiting, throw in a little hair (any old kind) and you had something called "lute" for pipe fittings. Lute can mean

a musical instrument that looks like a bulbous guitar, something valuable, or, as used here, pipe-joint packing.

Sailors always scorned the putty that was used ashore, mostly because it's not very substantial. It dries out and cracks, even when carefully painted.

For ships, sailors used oakum, which was pine-tarred rope or cotton waste, and a caulking (or chancing) iron and mallet to drive the oakum into the seams and cracks."

Here, you can obviously see the casual style, combined with correct terminology. The result is an eminently readable article that is interesting and imparts information important to the reader. Note the moderate use of humor and laid back tone; these are indicative of a casual style, while the rigid structure of the first article is very common in professional style pieces.

Here is a sample of a keyword article that uses good keyword density without feeling "stuffed." It was written by Zac Parker and found online at www.keywordarticles.com.

"So you've thought long and hard about getting a tattoo and you've decided that yes, you're definitely going to 'get inked'? If so, the next logical question to ask is, "What design do I choose?"

If you have absolutely no idea about what sort of design you'd like superimposed onto your body, it's going to take you many hours of careful consideration. You will need to view as many designs as possible, ensuring you make the right decision.

Making the right decision is critical - so we'll help you find free tattoo designs! Making the right decision is really important when it comes to choosing a tattoo design, because deciding to have a tattoo is a lifelong commitment. It's not like

buying something at the store, and taking it back because you've changed your mind.

A tattoo - unless you undertake expensive, painful laser removal procedures - is for life. That is why we advise you to view as many different tattoo designs as possible, so you make the right design decision. If you've already been researching designs, chances are you have heard all about free tattoo designs and galleries online where you can view and download individual designs of interest.

It's an absolute maze online, because there are just so many galleries to check out, so to make the process a little easier and a whole lot more time efficient for you, we're going to introduce you to four good websites - membership-based and totally free- that are jam-packed full of free tattoo designs!"

Note the appropriate use of the keyword "Free Tattoo Designs" combined with the use of complementary keywords such as "tattoos." Also, note the fact that this author broke the paragraphs up into easily managed pieces, making reading easier. This particular piece uses a conversational tone, is error-free and offers real information in addition to using the keywords.

CHAPTER 3

SUCCESSFUL SEO WRITING – THE MYSTERY REVEALED

SEO, or search engine optimization, is a phrase bandied about with abandon, today. SEO writing is the process of using keywords and keyword phrases to help gain better placement in search engine results. There is much more to the SEO procedure than writing, but content plays a dominant role in the process.

Can SEO articles be written by just anyone? Yes, they can. How does SEO help your articles? The use of keywords will help you get more readers and more traffic to your website, if done correctly.

Search engine optimization does not have to be a mysterious process. In fact, the process behind it is very understandable, once you know a few key pieces of information. To understand the role of SEO in your writing, you will have to understand what keywords are, how they are used by searchers, and how they change your writing. If you are a beginning to intermediate marketer you will want to learn SEO from true marketing experts. Mastering SEO can make you a fortune, and [Empowerism](#) can help you get there.

WHAT ARE KEYWORDS?

Keywords are words and phrases used by consumers to search for online information. Any phrase or word entered into the search box of a search engine constitutes a keyword. These are usually words related to an industry, product, or service and are frequently combined with a location, such as "lawyers San Diego" or "cookware stores New York."

Misspellings can also be useful keywords, in their own right. Search engines scour their archives, looking for the closest match to the word or words used in the search.

Keyword articles are written with a specific word or phrase appearing throughout the article. Many companies use an artificial keyword density in their articles to gain higher page rankings in search engine results. For instance, some companies require that the keyword or keyword phrase appear up to 15 times in 300 words. In truth, this is somewhat excessive; a lower density will suffice.

NATURAL KEYWORD DENSITY VS. ARTIFICIAL KEYWORD DENSITY

There are two schools of thought in SEO writing, both of which offer results. Artificial keyword density creates articles that feel stuffed and unwieldy, but they get results. These do show up more often in the top ranks of search engines.

What are the drawbacks to this method? While an artificial keyword density will provide results, they are often not the long-term results that you really want. Many consumers also have a negative opinion of articles written in this style, feeling that they are a paid advertisement (which they are).

Natural keyword density is something altogether different. This method uses the natural occurrence of a word or phrase in the writing. It offers slower results than keyword stuffing, but they are long-term results that offer visitors real information as opposed to often sub-par articles created with the other method. Natural keyword density implies a low keyword count (usually around 1 time per 100 words) and offers readers a much more readable article.

As you can see, the best option is not to stuff your articles full of keywords. Instead, rely on quality writing, natural keyword usage, and good submission practices. If you can manage to hit the right combination of these factors, you will be pleasantly surprised by the results.

SEO AND YOUR WRITING

Can you write SEO articles on your own? As mentioned before, yes, you can. However, before you start jamming keywords willy-nilly into your work, take the time to consider whether you want short-term or long-term results. The more often your keyword appears, the more your article resembles spam. Readers have no tolerance for spam; especially when it's masquerading as informational reading.

However, a well-thought-out article, combined with natural keyword usage can be a great solution for your needs. It can serve on article directories as well as web content (don't do both, though!). This style of article will provide the needed number of keywords for search engine recognition, while remaining readable and full of informational content for your readers.

Your usage of SEO practices will be dictated by your needs, ultimately. The "quality vs. quantity" question will have to be answered by the type of results that you expect, what you are marketing, and your intended readers. Regardless, the first step will be to determine the keywords and phrases that you should write about. You can come up with your own list of keywords, pay a company to develop a list for you, or you can use the user-friendly keyword suggestion tools [Empowerism](#) offers free to members.

Developing a list of viable keywords should be the first thing that you do, whether you pay for it or do it on your own. You'll want to avoid single words if at all possible. Single words, such as "wedding" or "loan" cover far too much territory to get any sort of relevant hits from them.

Instead, use related keywords to form keyword phrases; "wedding dress manufacturer" or "loan application online." These will give you much more relevant results and much more traffic.

Using appropriate keywords and phrases, combined with appropriate keyword usage will result in a well-written article that has the power to attract web traffic.

SEO AND ARTICLE SUBMISSION

So, how do keywords affect your article online? Keywords in your article operate much the same as they do in a website. They serve as identifying information for search engines. When a user queries your keywords and phrases, relevant results are displayed to the user, hopefully containing your article.

This is the main draw for ezine owners and websites to get content from article directories. Truth be told, the majority of articles found in article directories are keyword optimized to some extent. However, the results of this optimization will be based on the skill and the method chosen by that particular author. Most article directories have a vetting process that will kick out the majority of the poorly optimized articles.

So, is it a good thing to optimize your article, whether you decide to submit to an article directory or not? The short answer is, yes. Make sure that you use the right keywords, though, or all of your effort will be for naught.

Though you may be able to come up with your own list easily enough, you will want to consider using the 24 SEO tools in the [Empowerism](#) member center to maximize your options and focus your list on exactly what your article needs. Just remember, the more specific your keyword phrase, the more relevant the traffic your article will receive.

CHAPTER 4

IF YOU JUST CAN'T DO IT...

While it is true that anyone can write articles, not everyone has the time to learn. If you are crunched for time, you can take advantage of writing companies, freelance writers and SEO companies that offer writing services.

Remember that a good writer is worth their pay; while you will not be making money directly from the article, the traffic generated by the article should be more than sufficient to make up for the expense of having it written.

There is a myriad of companies from which you can choose. However, make sure you look at their track record to find out if they are on the up and up. A reputable writing company will offer free samples, as well as a list of current and past clients.

You can also hire a freelance writer. There are thousands of them listed online. The same rules apply to a freelance writer as apply to a writing company: inspect their product, as well as their reputation and references. Many freelance websites allow you to view feedback from clients who have hired the writers' services.

Finding the right person is of paramount importance to your finished product. If you choose the wrong writer or writing company, your results will be somewhat less than spectacular. The right writer, though, can make your topic shine.

PLACES TO LOOK

There are, literally, thousands of web companies offering writing services, today. To make your search somewhat simpler, here is a brief list containing some of the most popular:

- Elance.com
- AllFreelance.com
- FreelanceWriting.com
- iFreelance.com
- Guru.com

There are many more options available, especially if you choose to go with an individual writer, rather than a writing company. There are also freelance writing job boards where you can post your job offer and sort through the results. There are benefits to each form.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

If you choose to go the route of paying for your article writing, never underestimate the importance of communication. It is essential that you are clear with your writer about your expectations and the quality of your content.

Now that you know what goes into creating a good article, you are in a much better position to communicate with your writer, as well. Ensure that the desired style, tone, voice, and subject matter are adequately understood. At best, this will result in exactly the article(s) that you need. At worst, you will have endless revisions that cost you precious time and energy.

SENSITIVE INFORMATION

If your article requires the use of sensitive information to complete, make sure that your writer understands this. Drawing up an NDA (Nondisclosure Agreement) is also a good idea. This will ensure that no problems arise from sharing your information with the writers or writing company. [Empowerism](#) members can access a generic intellectual property NDA in the member center.

SPELL IT OUT

Never assume that your writer understands what you mean. What may be crystal clear to you may be clear as mud to them. Give them exact instructions as to what you expect from the project. Be as detailed as possible, down to the word count, keyword density and number of paragraphs if necessary. If you are paying for the article, make sure you get what you pay for.

Another item that you'll need to discuss is the number of revisions included in the fee. While you may assume that a writer will revise until you are happy, that is most often not the case. Keep it simple, spell out your expectations, and remain in communication with your writer and you'll be much happier with the finished product.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

If you are outsourcing your work, you should pay attention to several things. One of the most important things is the language spoken by the writer. No, this doesn't refer to vulgarity; we're talking actual language. While outsourcing to another country may well save you some much needed cash, it is vital to consider the language issue.

Many of the issues that crop up on internationally outsourced articles are due to the difference of language patterns and word usage. Put simply, this just means

that people speak and write in different ways in other languages. It might not be ideal for your article. Generally, when this is the case, you get revisions; however, those revisions are time consuming and can be costly if the writing company doesn't do it for free.

While outsourcing your articles to an international writing company might be a good idea, it is not a decision to be taken lightly.

ONE STOP SHOPS (ARE THEY WORTH THE EXPENSE?)

Several writing companies have realized that article submission can potentially pay well. While not all of them offer this service, many of them are beginning to do so. What can you gain from such an arrangement and is it worth the expense? How does the process work and why do people use it?

THE PROCESS ITSELF

The process itself is no more tedious for you than having the company write your articles in the first place. The writing company takes care of the article creation, as well as the article submission to various article directories. If you have specific directories that you would like to submit to, you can request it. In all, the process leaves you free to concentrate on other aspects of your life and business.

You can control the keywords used to create your articles, or request the writing company to create a list (this usually costs more, though). You can also stay as involved in the process as you wish, though many companies will send you a first draft of the article or article set for your approval on completion.

In general, the length of the entire process will depend on several factors. First, the number of articles, as well as the length of the articles will affect the final price. Second, the size of the writing company, though this factor can vary with

the work load of the companies, as well. Finally, revisions and additions will also add to the amount of time it takes to get your articles submitted.

WHO USES THESE SERVICES?

These writing services are ideal for a number of people, but especially for those that have too much to do for them to concentrate on writing articles. If you simply cannot write your articles (for whatever reason), this is a definite plus. As mentioned previously, this frees up time for other pursuits and takes the sometimes onerous task of article writing and submitting out of your hands completely.

Business owners, private individuals in need of articles and content, as well as anyone who finds they are unable to create articles use these services on a regular basis.

THE COSTS INVOLVED

Of course, the drawback to using these companies is that you will have to pay them for their services. However, this is the best option if you find that you cannot write your own articles.

The costs involved will vary greatly depending on the company involved and the number of articles you request. Most writing companies charge by the word; it is very rare to find one that charges by the page.

Additionally, extra services, such as article directory submission and keyword generation, will increase the final cost of your articles. That said, the cost is well worth it if you can't create your own content.

CHAPTER 5

YOU HAVE YOUR ARTICLE, BUT NOW WHAT?

However you may have gotten to this point, you now hold in your hand a finished article. That's great! Now what? Now you have to decide what you are going to do with said article. How are articles used on the Web? How do they get to their website, blog or directory that ultimately houses your precious words?

There are quite a few options open to you at this point. However, you have to know what you're doing to get real results.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION DIRECTORIES

Article submission directories comprise possibly the most popular option for your articles. These exist simply to house articles, nothing more, nothing less. There are several notable directories online, though there are hundreds of smaller ones. Submitting to an article directory can have a dramatic effect on your traffic, but each directory has a different submission process. Beyond simply being read by visitors and found through search engine results, websites and ezines routinely get content from these directories; that means free advertising for you.

Manually submitting your articles to these directories is the best option. You can control every aspect of the submission, as opposed to using submission software where you can only control a few aspects of it. Prepare to spend some time doing the submitting, as well. Generally, it takes between 10 – 15 minutes to submit an article. During the submission, you will fill out the author resource box.

Each article submission directory has its own rules and policies about submissions. These are usually posted in a prominent place within the website. Read and understand everything that applies; not adhering to their requirements will result in your article being declined. That means that you will have to start the entire submission process over again, which is not an attractive prospect.

TOP THINGS TO AVOID WHEN SUBMITTING TO ARTICLE DIRECTORIES

As mentioned previously, not adhering to an article directory's terms of service or guidelines is a quick way to get your article booted back to you. While article marketing is a valuable tool, directories are becoming ever more strict about submissions. In order to market effectively and maximize your potential, you'll need to know a few things about how the reviewers and editors look at your articles.

Contact Details:

Your contact details are one of the first places an editor will evaluate. Here are the guidelines:

- Never use a pen name that is not an actual person's name. For instance, "ArticleGuy" might be a fine name for use in a forum, but it will not fly with article directories.
- Your pen name should contain only letters, unless you have a hyphenated last name
- Always use an established email address that you check on a regular basis.

Placement of Your Article:

Choosing the correct topic, category or subcategory is vital. If you submit to the wrong category, don't be surprised to see the article come back to you. Editors and reviewers are very busy and do not have time to do your job for you.

Never submit your article to a broad category. Choose subcategories or subtopics below that category. The more specific your subcategory, the more likely your article is to be accepted.

Title of Your Article:

As mentioned previously, your title is one of the most important aspects of your article. The single most common mistake made when submitting articles is to stuff the title with keywords. Keyword placement in your title is a valuable tool; use it sparingly, however.

For example, "The Steel Industry has been Revolutionized by New Steel Industry Standards" is a little keyword heavy. "Revolutionary New Standards for the Steel Industry" is a better option.

In addition, you must capitalize your title properly. Never write a title in all capital letters. In the example above, the nonessential words are not capitalized.

Here are some other no-no's when it comes to title creation:

- No quotation marks
- Use only letters and numbers (no special characters)
- Never end your title with punctuation
- Titles must be concise and interesting

In addition, here are some other tips that will help your article be accepted the first time:

- Your article summary must be an original creation (never use a paragraph from your article as the summary)
- Do not exceed word count limits for titles, summaries, or other portions of the article
- Do not make your article an advertisement (blatantly, at least)
- Press releases are not submitted to article directories (there are special sites for press releases)

- Keep your article informative, interesting and on topic
- Read the TOS before you add images or links to other websites
- Use your resource box correctly (read the TOS and guidelines!)
- Always submit original work
- Investigate the other articles that have been submitted on your chosen topic to ensure that you are submitting fresh content
- Use proper paragraph spacing (usually one blank line)
- Use correct formatting for your article (this should be covered in the TOS)
- Ensure that any hyperlinks work properly
- Ensure that you use correct punctuation
- Do not put any email addresses in your article
- Avoid using affiliate links unless the directory specifically allows them
- Any hyperlinks must be related to the topic (if you are writing about dog training, do not link to information about buying domain names, etc.)
- Never exceed the number of allowed external links
- Use the correct number of words in your anchor text
- Do not rush the submission process. Once again, read all the TOS (Terms of Service) and any submission guidelines.

When you follow these rules of thumb, you'll find your articles are accepted on first submission. This allows you to move on to the next article, without having to spend needless hours editing and resubmitting one article. If you want to maximize the amount of exposure your article marketing generates, do it right the first time.

BLOGS, WEBSITE CONTENT AND MORE

Besides article directories, where can you submit your article? Blogs make an ideal place to host your article, especially if the blog receives a large amount of traffic. These can also be used to generate more traffic for a blog, especially if the article is properly optimized for search engine spiders. Websites also make a good home for your article, but make sure you don't put up duplicate content or you risk being penalized (See Chapter 1). There are also a number of other options that will be discussed a little later.

SPECIALTY WEBSITES (NICHE MARKETING)

Chances are that your article falls into a specific category, or niche. That is, unless you have written on an incredibly broad topic without getting into specifics on any single item. Specialty websites can be a great way to market your articles. These can be as effective as marketing through ezines and article directories.

Most specialty websites have a pretty dedicated readership, especially if the website is updated on a regular basis. If you feel that your article fits the niche covered by the website, query the owner or webmaster and find out if they accept content. You may be somewhat taken aback by the results that this simple process can provide.

In addition, many niche websites maintain a link exchange (what's come to be called a blogroll in the blogging world). These can be an excellent source of other potential websites to approach about hosting your content within their pages. Offer website owners on-topic articles that are well-written and keyword-optimized for the best acceptance ratio.

THE DIFFERENCE WITH BLOGGING

Blogging is a somewhat recent phenomenon. Almost everyone has a blog, today, from consumers to high powered corporations seeking a way to enhance their advertising. Blogging is unique in that it is a very personal means of communicating with a large audience. If you are going to post an article on a blog, make sure that it uses at least a conversational tone.

Blogs can also be created specifically to host your articles. This makes them a great promotional tool, in themselves. Using blogs is an excellent way to put your writing to use for yourself. You can even monetize the blog to get some additional revenue, though this might not be the best option for a business. Monetizing your blog with Google Ads brings content targeted advertisements to your page, but it can detract from the number of click through customers that actually make it to your product or actual website. While monetizing your blog can be a great thing, you'll have to determine if it will take away from your potential customers.

WHERE TO POST, EXACTLY

So, where are all of these article directories and other sites located? How do you find them? Below, you'll find a list of directories. Every one of these directories has somewhat similar guidelines; few of them allow affiliate linking; each stipulates that you must be the copyright holder of the article, etc.

- ArticleDashboard.com
- ArticleDirectory.com
- GoArticles.com
- ArticleCube.com
- ArticlesArea.com
- Buzzle.com

- ArticleBasement.com
- ArticelAlley.com
- ArticleSphere.com
- ArticleSnatch.com
- ArticleBlotter.com
- EzineArticles.com
- WebProNews.com
- Isnare.com
- ArticlesFactory.com
- Amazines.com
- [Article City](http://ArticleCity.com)
- ArticleBiz.com
- IdeaMarketers.com
- EasyArticles.com
- ArticlePros.com
- Articles888.com

The above list is by no means complete; a simple search through your favorite search engine will yield thousands of results. Not every directory is worth your time, though. Some are not updated on a regular basis; others only cater to niche interests and topics. Of the list above, the top three are EzineArticles.com, GoArticles.com and ArticleDashboard.com. There are other places to post, though, that few people think about.

WHERE ELSE IS THERE?

There are some other sites that accept articles. Some will even pay you for them, though there are restrictions and a somewhat lengthy approval time with some of these options. Be aware that these options are not article directories, meaning that their content is not free to use. Once you submit your article to these sites, they own it and all the rights thereto. While that may sound like a bum deal, they offer tremendous marketing and a small bit of profit on the side. Your articles can be ranked by users, marked with Digg, posted to FaceBook and StumbleUpon, as well.

AssociatedContent.com – This option allows you to submit your original article to a variety of topics. You can select whether the content will be exclusive or not (exclusive articles are bought and not published elsewhere). You can also develop a steady inflow of cash through this company, through their "Performance Bonus" plan. You can also choose to sell your article or submit for free.

After submission, there is a somewhat lengthy waiting period while the article is reviewed by the editors. You will then be offered a dollar amount or told that you need to fix your errors and resubmit. This company is very particular; make sure that your article is properly edited and spell checked prior to approval.

Helium.com – This website is somewhat similar to Associated Content, though it does operate on a different principle. You must submit to a particular area, or topic within the site. If your works are up to snuff and your skills sufficient, you can be ranked as an expert within an area and earn a nominal fee.

Gather.com – This is actually a social networking site, though it does allow you to post articles with links and is much more focused on writing than on socializing. You can also post tidbits on your page to lead people into your articles. This site offer RSS feeds and other options that can be used to increase your marketing scope.

As a note, social networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook can be used for this purpose, though they will have limited results. MySpace offers a "bulletin" feature that is somewhat similar to a blog, however, people must subscribe to it to be able to receive it. Blogs are much better for this type of marketing. However, if you want to try the social networking sites, MySpace, FaceBook, Gather and PerfSpot are all viable options.

Blogger, WordPress, and Other Blog Hosts – Blogging has already been covered, though it remains an option that many people do not think about. Blogger and WordPress are the two leading blog hosts, though other hosts exist, as well. A well conceived blog campaign can pay off with huge dividends.

Ezines – Ezines are content hungry creatures, thus the reason that they make use of article directories on such a regular basis. Submitting your article directly to a related ezine is an excellent way to gain some free promotion. Make sure that the ezine's theme is related to the topic of your article prior to submission.

Sending a query letter to the editor is more than polite; it is the best way to get in the door. Do not expect to be paid for this; the ezine gets free content and you get free publicity.

Specialty ezines are pretty much the rule online, though you'll find some broader-based formats drifting through cyberspace. As with any other niche market, make sure that you target their audience and you can almost always get published.

Don't limit yourself to one niche, though. Each niche is part of a larger genre or topic, with other related niches. You can just as easily write articles for these related niches as you can for your original one. This gives you a much broader range of ezines to which you can submit as well.

TAKE IT OFFLINE

Even though your article was written for the web, it doesn't have to stay there. In fact, print sources can be a good way to get some additional exposure.

Publishing your article in physical publications is very different from submitting to an article directory or posting to a blog.

First, the content must be of very high quality. Second, you need to have something to say that readers want to know. Third, you have to find the right publication.

Niche publications and small press publications are frequently an excellent option. Chances are that you can relatively easily find a physical publication that covers your topic of choice. Most publications will take you up on your offer, especially if you offer it free of charge.

Local papers are a good place to seek publication. These publications are frequently in need of "filler" for their papers. That is, content for the inside of the paper. This can be opinion pieces, press releases, and general articles that do not make the front page of the paper.

If your article is of sufficient quality, you may be able to submit it to a magazine for publication, as well.

SPECIALTY MAGAZINES

Specialty (or niche) magazines are almost as content hungry as their online brethren. You can find a large number of specialty magazines, from quilting-related prints to knife collecting and finance-related magazines. All of these are constantly on the lookout for new content. If you offer something targeted to their interests, is written well, and you ask for no fee, you'll probably be picked up.

Do not limit yourself to the nationally circulated magazines, either. You'll find that there are many more privately published magazines that will publish your content, especially if they don't have to pay anything for it. College campuses, large and medium cities and many places that you might not think about are home to these publishers. For instance, San Diego County, alone, boasts more than a dozen of this type of magazine.

One other note: Don't ignore the possibility of international publication. International ezines and magazines are looking for content as well. This area poses special problems of its own, though, in the form of a language barrier. Unless you want to invest in a translation service, stick to countries that publish in English (assuming that's what you're writing in!). As with other options, do not expect to be paid for your publication. All of the rules still apply to international publication, including a targeted and high quality audience.

CHAPTER 6

GENERATING INTEREST WITH PUBLISHERS AND READERS

Of course, the entire point of writing an article is to generate interest; you want publishers to publish and readers to read. You want that little article to generate enough interest from the reader that they are compelled to click the link in your resource box. How do you accomplish this? There are a few things to remember, as well as knowing what publishers and readers will look for in your article.

THE PUBLISHERS

There are several types of publishers that you may encounter in your article marketing efforts. The first (and type you will most frequently encounter) are those faceless, nameless folks that dictate whether your article makes it into an article directory. Generating interest with this type of publisher is not terribly difficult. The keys are good, solid content and following the submission guidelines to the hilt. If you do not follow the submission guidelines, you can count on a quick rejection. Make sure you follow the suggestions in Chapter 5.

Another type of publisher that you will encounter is the ezine owner. Generating interest here is also relatively easy. Make sure your content matches the theme of the ezine, though. It's a good idea to read through some of the past issues to make sure your topic hasn't been done to death before you query the editor.

Website and blog owners are another sort of publisher that you may encounter. Once again, content is king. Make sure that your content is relevant to the site or blog. Also, you'll want to entice website owners with a good keyword density. Website owners are hungry for content that will draw traffic.

Wait a minute! Don't all of these people pull content from article directories? Yes, they do; however, leaving your article's future solely in the hands of an article directory might not be the best idea. There are thousands of other articles that yours must compete with for the interest of content seekers. Bringing your article to the attention of potential publishers on your own is a faster, surer method to get your content out there.

There are three areas that any self-respecting publisher will look at: content quality and topic, grammar and punctuation, and title. Ensure that you have done a good job on these three areas and you'll be rewarded.

THE READERS

So, how do you interest those sometimes fickle creatures called readers? Actually, you can accomplish that in much the same way that you pique the interest of publishers. However, the importance of the title is even greater where readers are concerned. A good title will draw in the readers that you want. Make sure your title is on-topic and not misleading, though.

Your readers also want something else: quality information. Your content is king with your readers, as well. If you can manage to provide relevant, on-topic information, you are almost guaranteed. Make it interesting, easily readable, and targeted toward the audience that you want to attract.

While your readers are definitely interested in the whole package, it's the wrapping that will draw them in. Without a strong title, your readers have no reason to choose your article over the 500 other articles on the same topic.

Remember that you are marketing, so your entire article must be geared to drag your reader's eyes to the bottom of the page. Your resource box (and the all important link within it) should be the logical place that your reader winds up and the only way you can do that is with a great article that informs, entertains and moves the reader along.

CHAPTER 7

EBOOKS AND ARTICLES: MAKING ONE FROM THE OTHER

eBooks have grown in popularity at an astounding rate. Not very long ago, you would have been hard pressed to find more than a handful on the Internet. Today, though, it seems like everyone has one to hawk. Why the enormous interest? If properly marketed, eBooks can be enormously profitable, as well as providing even more promotion for you. So, can you create eBooks out of your article? You certainly can, but there are a few things you'll need to do before you start.

DEFINE YOUR TOPIC

The first thing that you need to understand is that all the articles in the eBook should be related. Don't look at eBooks like an article directory, full of articles on disparate topics. This is not a "Best Of" style anthology.

Packaging your articles into an eBook will take careful planning and consistency on your part. So, start deciding what topic you want your eBook to cover. This should be a rather broad topic, allowing you to include several differently themed articles all under the umbrella topic.

Make your topic broad enough to accommodate your articles, but not so broad that it garners no interest from the public. Remember that you will still have to market this book, and marketing means salability. No one will buy the book if it is not sufficiently focused as to provide them with an idea of what they can find in the book.

The same rules apply to the title of the eBook as apply to your article titles; that is, keep it interesting, powerful, and catchy. Long-winded, rambling titles do you no good in the online market. However, too brief a title and your audience will have no idea what your book is about.

You will have to tailor some of your articles to fit the format you have chosen. Invariably, something will have to be changed to make it work better, to make the content flow or simply for the sake of continuity. Be prepared for this.

CHOOSING YOUR CONTENT

Now it is time to choose your content. This is where being consistent and planning ahead really pay off. If you have consistently written articles with the same tone and voice, on related topics and with good quality, your job will be much easier.

However, you will still need to plan your book carefully. Each of your articles should be on a different topic. Make sure you do not include duplicate content in the eBook. It is perfectly fine to reference subjects already covered, but do not cover them again. Redundancy is a quick way to lose your readers.

High-quality articles that provide vital information to your readers should be chosen to go into the book. If possible, choose articles that can be formatted sequentially; this will save you time if you need to add content to the book. It is also a good idea to choose around the same amount of information for all the topics you will cover.

CONTENT CREATION SERVICES VS. ARTICLE INCLUSION

You may find that you lack the information required to make a complete eBook. If that is the case, you are faced with the decision of writing more articles for content or using a writing service to create the book. Both methods have their benefits.

Writing the articles yourself is a good way to keep complete control of the project in your hands, as well as to keep your costs minimal. Depending on the amount of information that you need, this may also be the quickest way to a finished product.

If you find that you need a substantial amount of information to make your eBook workable, writing services may be the faster way to go. You'll get professional results, a good format, and you won't have to do the work yourself. Many reputable writing services offer eBook creation, so you won't lack for options, either.

LENGTH, STRUCTURE AND OTHER VARIABLES

So, one way or another, you now have your content. Now it is time to put it all in book form. How long do you make the eBook? What format should you use? What font style and size works best? The answers to many of these questions are the same given for your article writing.

LENGTH

Ideally, your eBook should be long enough to cover the subject in depth. However, remember that your readers do not have the luxury of holding your volume in paperback form. Online readers have less time than other readers, so keep it substantially below 100 pages, if at all possible.

You will want to cover the information sufficiently to answer your reader's questions, but not so exhaustively that your book reads like an instruction manual. Leave that to the "how-to" folks, unless that is what your book is intended to be.

STRUCTURE

The structure of your book is just as important as the structure of your articles. Begin with the title page and make sure you include a table of contents that clearly lists the subject and page number of each chapter.

Ideally, each chapter should include roughly the same number of pages. That will not always work, but should at least be attempted. This supplies your readers with a feeling of being well-informed.

Different topics within the same chapters should have their own subheadings to identify what the reader will find there. Structure your eBook like a road map, using your chapter names and subheadings as road signs.

FONT STYLE & SIZE (SIZE DOES MATTER!)

Remember the emphasis placed on font style and size when writing your article? (See Chapter 2 for a refresher!) Well, that is just as important in your eBook as in your article. Avoid garish or script fonts in favor of something that people can actually read.

While that neat little font you found might make you think the book looks better, most people won't have the patience for it. Worse, many non-standard fonts can't be read correctly by some browsers, so your words may turn to gibberish on some computers.

After choosing your font, you need to choose a size that works well. Too small and your readers leave with a headache; too large and their eyes get tired. Causing pain to the ocular orbs of your readers is a bad thing! Pick a font size that offers easy reading; 11 & 12 pt in several fonts is a good place to start looking.

PROMOTING YOUR EBOOK (CAN YOU GIVE THESE THINGS AWAY?)

Promoting your eBook is vital to getting it out there into the hands of readers. There are a couple of ways that you can do it.

First, make sure that it is displayed prominently on your website so your visitors can purchase or download it.

Second, if you continue your article submission practices, you can use the link in the resource box to direct your readers to your book. You can get a decent amount of traffic this way, at no additional expense to you.

Another option is to network with other websites on the condition that your eBook is displayed on their main page somewhere. You can also promote it with your blog and the blogs of affiliates if you have them. User forums are also a good place to get free promotion; put a link to your eBook in your signature.

Setting up a webpage specifically for your eBook(s) is another great idea. Link to this page through your articles and other promotional efforts and you may be surprised by the results.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the power of writing can be enormous. Harnessing that power is something that anyone or any company can do quite easily. Whether you choose to learn how to write your own articles or outsource your content to professionals, the impact on your business can be tremendous.

There are a number of different applications, from blogging to articles to eBooks that can be used as effective marketing tools if you know what you are doing and take the time to do it right. Choose the right words and the benefit will come back to you over and over again. Consider subscribing to [Empowerism](#) today and learn the fundamentals you need to make money online.

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