



How to Create Articles

A great way to begin the promotions process is to write short articles that can be submitted to article banks and used by ezine compilers. These articles are often used immediately, allowing for feedback and recognition for the speaker's work. The articles themselves are not a source of income, but they do allow for a resource box with a bio and the speaker can include product URLs and an offer to get traffic to the speaker's site.

.....

VSAs Writing Articles

VSAs will not necessarily be writing articles - that is up to the relationship you have with the speaker and your own skills and interests. But over time, it is a good skill to have. We will give you some of the tools here in case you are called upon not only to submit articles written by the speaker or others on the speaker's behalf, but to write (or edit) an article yourself.

The key to writing a great article is focusing not on you and whether you got the words right (at least not at first), but focusing on helping other people. If you really find a way to stop thinking about yourself in the process you will forget all about your fears of whether you are good enough, know enough, can write well enough, whether your ideas will be laughed at and all the other ways we convince ourselves not to write articles.

Finding Article Topics

Ever hear your speaker resent his or clients because of their stupid questions and requests? Start to write down the most common questions with answers. Speakers can blog about these same issues. This can become a great brainstorming technique if you are able to think of all the common questions asked. If you can't think of any, just start keeping a log next to your phone and computer or electronically so every time a client asks a question about how to do something or needs advice, that goes into your article brainstorming list. People who are recognized as experts on television just say what they think and freely tell what they know and they get a lot of clients by seeming like they are the go-to resource.

Here are some other great places to get article ideas:
Look at article databases for articles already written.

You may get an idea to write a whole article on just a small point one of the authors may have touched on. Or you may think the author is wrong and you can use your article to set the record straight.

Also:

- Look at magazines and newspapers – people want to read a new slant on the big news stories or current trends
- Look at blogs that are related to what you do
- Look at the titles of teleclasses, seminars, conference sessions of other hot speakers
- Do a Google search on the topic. You don't want to copy what someone else has done, just see what your reaction is to the article – maybe they are missing something, maybe there is something they covered in a sentence that deserves a lot more explanation. Maybe it will just spark some new ideas for you.

Article Types

There are four typical types of relatively short articles:

1. Top 7 or 10 tips
2. Case studies
3. Interview of an expert
4. Industry trends or changes

A great technique, both in writing an article and for the finished article is to create a list, especially a list of the top 5, 7, 9 or 10 items. This type of article is both easiest to write and media gives it the most interest. There are also a special places to submit top 7 or 10 articles:

www.ezinearticles.com, www.Top7Business.com,
www.TopTenz.net.

Writing the Article

When you are using this article writing method, I suggest you actually create the article in this order:

- #1: Write the list of 7, 9 or 10
- #2: Write short explanations for each item on the list
- #3: Write a conclusion
- #4: Write an introductory paragraph
- #5: Write the title
- #6: Include the resource box

Let's say you want to write an article on the top 7 ways to check out a potential professional you want to hire. Your first task is just to brainstorm what might be some of the top 7 ways. Ideally, you would like to create a list of maybe 20 things if you can think of them and then narrow it down to the best ones.

When you have your list, you will want to really think about the words you are using to express each idea on the list. It is best if the items on the list are 5 to 7 words long and start with verbs. If you were writing an article on hiring a professional, you could title it, *Top Five Ways to Check Out a Professional to Hire*. It might say:

- Do a Google Search.
- Check out his or her website.
- Look at his or her credentials.
- Check out social networking, especially LinkedIn testimonials.
- Call someone who might know him or her, maybe through a LinkedIn connection.

The next thing to do is to **create a short explanation for each of these points**. To start this, you need to know first how long you want the final article to be so that you know how much to write. We know most articles are typically either 500 words, 1,000 words, or 1,500 words, and most commonly approximately 1,000 words. So for our example, let's say that you are writing an article of 1,000 words and you have a 7-point list. If you are writing an intro and a conclusion, plus the 7 points, you have 9 elements. While it won't work out exactly like this, each of the 9 elements would have to be about 110 words to get you to 1,000 words.

So we might assume each point will be 100 words and the intro and conclusion a little longer. Therefore the explanation for each point should be short, but packed with powerful words and practical or unexpected information.

More writing tips to create great articles:

- Know the audience/solve their problems
- Use examples
- Use short paragraphs/bulleted lists
- Don't use passive voice, use strong verbs
- Don't try to cover too much in one article
- Cover what is most important first
- Edit out "in my opinion", "I think", "most of the time", "maybe"
- Don't rush – take time to rewrite, edit and proofread until you've got it right
- Consider perennial content – content that stays current for a long time or is current at the same time every year
- Don't include links in the article
- Don't use any sales content – don't mention your product or service directly

Next you will write the conclusion. The conclusion is simply a quick wrap-up or last overall piece of advice that ties it all together and leaves the reader inspired to go out and do what you suggested. Example: "If you follow these tips you will be able to enjoy your backyard barbeque safely for years to come."

Then it is time to write the introduction. The introduction is a short paragraph giving your viewpoint and getting the reader excited about reading more. You will see when we get to article submission that you are often asked to submit a summary separately from the article that they can use to market the article – maybe just 30 words. Try to write the introduction paragraph so you can also use it as the summary.

Finally, you will title the article. This is probably the most important single element, so as with the introduction, it is important to do it after you have the article done so you can create the most appropriate title. One advantage with a top 7 or 10 list is you have the beginning of the title – "The top 10" ways, strategies, steps, etc. Don't make titles cute, but make them energizing, active and surprising where you can. People will be searching for your work by the words they commonly associate with this topic, like Hiring a Graphic Artist, so make sure what they would search on gets into your title.

Keywords

Whenever you read about writing articles, you will always see keywords discussed. Keywords are the most common words that people put in the Google search box when they are looking for something on the Internet. For example, keywords like “business plans” and “self publishing”. You would like to use these keywords in the title and in the first paragraph of your article, but don’t worry about it beyond that.

Too many people try to use these keywords in every other sentence and it just makes it into a very oddly worded article. The idea is that your article is more likely to be picked up by search engines like Google when you use these keywords and people are more likely to find it and get to your web site. It may or may not be obvious, depending on your topic, what the right keywords are for your article.

There are a couple of good places to look where you can enter in the terms you think might be keywords and see if they are searched on a lot and what other related words might be better. To find the right keywords: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> and www.freekeywords.wordtracker.com

Rewriting, Editing and Proofreading

Just because you are writing a short article doesn’t mean you can neglect what professionals do. The typical article is rewritten about 8 times and then edited and proofread by someone other than the writer. It is very difficult to catch your own errors, and an error in grammar, punctuation or a typo will give the reader the idea that you don’t do your homework – which is not very good for your credibility as a subject matter expert.

Many speakers will write articles on the fly - in airports or while waiting in a lobby. They may think the article is great as is and hand it or email it to you “ready to go.” You can give it a fresh pair of eyes and ask the right questions. Besides finding grammatical and spelling errors, you can take on the role of the reader and ask, “Does this make sense?” You can weed out jargon that subject matter experts sometimes use and help make the article more understandable and easier to read.

Article Placement and Submission for Syndication

Many speakers don’t know all their options for distributing their articles and need help in this area.

What do you do with the article now that you have created it? Four main things:

1. Post it on the speaker’s web site. This is a great place to start. Then you can alert industry bloggers to the link so they can comment and link to their posts. This is a great way to help the speaker go viral.
2. Submit it directly to an appropriate magazine or newsletter, online or in print if it is right for the publication. They want original content, so only submit it one place at a time, and go to the next if it is not accepted.
3. If you don’t get any takers with #2, then submit to an article databank for syndication, or you can just start with this.
4. Submit it to the speaker’s favorite industry association. They are always looking for content and a well-written article can turn into an invitation to blog or facilitate discussions.

You can also create more generic articles for syndication and special articles to submit to specific magazines and newsletters. Syndication means getting your articles out so they can appear in multiple web sites, magazines and newspapers, in print and online. You can create one article and it can be used many times. If this seems odd to you, think of newspaper columnists who write what they call a syndicated column. This just means that “Dear Abby” or another column like that appears in many local and national newsletters. It is perfectly fine to have multiple sources print the same article. There are many places where you can submit an article once and have it appear in multiple places. These are called article syndicators or ezine article banks. Here are some of the better article banks with the largest subscriber bases available for submission of nonfiction articles. Check out the individual sites for their article length requirements, and so on.

www.Articlecity.com

www.Ideamarketers.com

www.ezinearticles.com

There is one article bank that has more articles than any other and it is the only one you really need to submit to, and that is www.EzineArticles.com. Submit your article online and then you wait to see who decides to use it. They agree to use your resource box with your contact information but they don’t get in touch with you about using the article. By submitting it to the article bank, you are agreeing to allow anyone to use it if they give you credit. You still own the article

and you can use it anywhere you want. You are doing what is officially called creating a nonexclusive license for anyone who wishes to use the article.

EzineArticles.com

This is how EzineArticles.com works:

1. The first thing you see when you go to the site is a list of categories, so that people who need article content can go right to the topic category they need.
2. Click join now on the top right box. It is free to join. You fill out a simple form to create an account and then you are ready to submit articles.
3. One of the things you can do once and then use over and over is the author resource box. The resource box is a short paragraph of information that is “About the Author” and gives your contact information, preferably with a call to action – telling the reader to go to your web site for a free special report or to sign up for a newsletter. You can include a link in your resource box, but only include one or you can distract the reader and they won’t do anything.
4. You can also upload a photo.
5. Now you are ready to submit one or more articles. You want to write the article in Word or other word processing software and then cut and paste it into the submission box on the site. There are separate boxes for the title, a summary, the body of the article and then the author resource box. If you use boldface type in your article, that won’t transfer when you cut and paste, but you can use their editing tools to boldface words again. You also get to select a category and subcategory for each article. There is an extensive category list up front on the home page and you can click on “expand all” at the top right of the list and look at a full list of the categories and subcategories. Use the ones you think would be where readers are most likely to look.

A couple of final points:

- Whenever you create an article for syndication or for submission to a specific magazine or newsletter or newspaper, it has to be 100% your own content – do not use quotes or statistics that belong to others, unless you have specific written permission.
- Since anyone who uses your article won’t be emailing you to let you know, you need to have your own way to find this out. Set up a Google Alert with the speaker’s name and web site URL so that any time Google picks up on their use, they will notify you. - www.google.com/alerts
- Once you submit articles, ezinearticles.com keeps statistics so you can see how many people clicked on your article. It is great to review which of your articles were popular and which weren’t and to try to do more on the topic or of the type that were popular.
- Wherever you submit articles, make sure you check terms of service – this is true even with newspapers or magazines. In most cases you want to retain ownership so you can use the content over and over, especially if the speaker might write a book with this content one day. The article is automatically copyrighted and owned by the writer unless you give away or sell those rights in writing.
- Think about the readers. When you write an article, think about the people or organizations that go to an article bank to find great content for their own newsletters and ezines like www.ezinearticles.com. What are they looking for? They are looking for great content that will appeal to their specific readers. They want fresh viewpoints, practical information, well-written material, someone positive and optimistic and articles on topics that are of current interest or recently in the news.