

Writing Articles

10 Top Tips To Help You Turn Words Into Profit!

Angela Sherman, professional copywriter from Content Creation, highlights the key things to remember when writing articles...

Articles are one of the most powerful parts of your marketing toolkit. A good article can last long into the future, drive more traffic to your website and send clients to your door. They're easy to write, they're low cost and they set you up as an expert in your field. Plus, by offering good value in your articles, you build trust and credibility.

1. Choose your topic

Your article might convey news about something to do with your business. Or you might write a useful 'top tips' piece offering the reader a solution to a problem. Alternatively, focus on a topical issue, a recurring problem for your readers or a perennial question in the reader's mind. Include interesting insights and helpful solutions. Address things your clients say, observe things people do - and then address common myths and misconceptions.

2. Use your article in print and on the web

Whatever your topic, make the most of your article. Print it, upload it onto your website, use it on your blog, send it to online publishers, include it with your proposals, use it as a handout, use it in a newsletter, email it to your clients and contacts, submit it to a magazine, post it on an 'articles website' (see Top Tip 10), send it to your alliance partners for inclusion in their own newsletters... There are all sorts of ways to make an article your best marketing friend!

3. Research what people are looking for - and what they really want

In business people often want to read something useful and practical - something that speaks their language. By writing articles like this, you become their trusted adviser. Scour the trade press, search engines, relevant blogs, forums and newsgroups, etc. On the web, what 'keywords' will people use to search for the topic in your article? Make sure you include these words in your article. Do your research.

4. Brainstorm ideas around your topic

If you're not sure where to start, try this: Use an egg timer or other time-limiting device. Write down words related to your topic - just words. Keep writing - don't stop. Then, expand each word or idea with other single words or phrases and then explain those words with additional ideas or phrases - and so on. All ideas are good! Now, decide what your key issue/argument is and put your thoughts into some kind of numerical order.

5. Create a title or heading

Your title is CRITICAL both for humans and search engines. The title gets your article read by both. If writing for the web, include an appropriate search engine keyword in your title. Example: If you're an image consultant, the title "10 easy ways to look great and win your next promotion" is good for human beings, but the title "Corporate attire for men - 10 easy ways to look great and win your next promotion" is much better for search engines,

because it's more specific and would be picked up by people using the keywords "corporate attire for men".

6. Draft your introduction

Why this topic? Why now? Tell your reader what you're going to tell them and highlight the key insight you'll explore. Perhaps start with an anecdote. Imagine you're talking to a friend - that will set a good conversational tone. Add your name and position between the heading and the introduction, e.g. "Jo Smith of ABC Co. Ltd explains..."

7. Write your body text - and break it up with subheadings

Take the points you've brainstormed, develop them and take the reader step-by-step through your article. Keep it punchy. Add keywords, as appropriate. Perhaps use a quote from a relevant person - perhaps one of your peers or a client or an acknowledged expert in your field. If you're writing for the web, link to a specific page of your website to help generate traffic. The content of your article must be interesting enough for someone to click on the link - so make sure you use a good keyword as the link text. If you're sending your article to someone else to publish, check how many words they need. Leave the reader wanting more. If you've written a long article, could you break it up into a series of shorter ones? That would be ideal for a blog or for a magazine.

8. Make it readable

Use more "you" words than "we" or "I". Vary the pace by varying paragraph lengths and sentence lengths. Use one idea/subject per paragraph. Read it aloud to check that it flows.

9. Conclusion/summary

Tell them what you've told them - and leave the key point or a key question in their minds. Include a 'call to action', i.e. tell people what to do next. This encourages people to contact you and shows them why it's worthwhile. Add your credentials and contact details at the end. If your article is for the web, include a link to a specific page of your website - and always include the 'http://' if you're mentioning your actual URL. Alternatively use your best keyword as a link. Once you've written your article, sleep on it. Then cut down the number of words and get someone else to read it!

10. Consider posting your article on free 'articles websites'

Write a useful article and post it on an articles website. These are essentially directories of articles on all sorts of topics. Articles posted on these sites will show up in general search results for your topic, as long as you've included the appropriate keywords. Link the article to a specific page of your website or blog - or to a separate sales page if you're promoting a specific product. Then send your article to just a few articles websites initially (see below) - and measure the results! Browse some of the following sites* and see who else is writing in your field and how they structure and link their articles:

www.EzineArticles.com
www.ArticleDashboard.com
www.ArticleCity.com
www.Buzzle.com
www.IdeaMarketers.com
www.ArticleAlley.com
www.ArticleCube.com
www.FindArticles.com

www.Amazines.com
www.ArticlesBase.com
www.EasyArticles.com
www.GoArticles.com
www.SearchWarp.com
www.ArticlesFactory.com
www.ArticleBiz.com
www.iSnare.com

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If you'd like some help creating powerful articles to drive traffic to your website and clients to your door, contact Angela Sherman at Content Creation on 01908 582231 or email angela@content-creation.co.uk now.