

Article Writing In 5 Basic Steps



By Debbie Allen

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THE METHODS EXPLAINED ARE THE EXACT METHODS THAT I USE REGULARLY TO GENERATE AN INCOME. HOWEVER, THE EARNING POTENTIAL IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THE PERSON USING THE IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES.

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THE DEGREE OF SUCCESS YOU HAVE WITH THESE METHODS WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON YOUR FINANCES, KNOWLEDGE, VARIOUS SKILLS, AND THE TIME YOU DEVOTE TO THE NUMEROUS STRATEGIES.

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Writing Basics

Articles are essentially the backbone of internet marketing. They are used for web content, backlinks that provide traffic and increased page ranks, all of which lead to more sales. Obviously writing good articles is a skill that every Internet Marketer should develop...if not he will need to outsource the task to others.

Some freelance writers provide excellent articles but this can get rather expensive over time. On the other hand, there are writers willing to work very inexpensively but the work is seldom up to the standards desired.

I've always said that anyone can write – but there have been times that others have said that is not true. Well, let me explain, when you are writing an article you are writing as if you are talking to someone – not just anyone, but like you're talking to a friend – someone you know.

Some of the usual objections that I hear are based on the fact that the writer doesn't know what to say. The major reason that a writer can't come up with something to say is because the research was not completed.

That's right – I'm sorry but research is essential when it comes to writing. Good research is the key ingredient to good articles. Do research until you feel you have overdone it. This will ensure that you will not run out of things to say.

But there may be times that you are at a loss for the right words. I suggest that you take a break from your writing for a while. A short exercise break – especially in the outdoors can work wonders in refreshing your body and mind.

Articles can really be compared with a salescopy. Think of a title in the way that it compares with a headline. Article titles should be written in title format, which in most cases either way is accepted as long as you are consistent, i.e., capitalization of pronouns.

Your title should make the reader want to read the introduction – which is like a sub-headline.....and always include keywords in the title. By the way, titles shouldn't be too short. If they are publishers may pass them by.

An article should work just like your salescopy in that each sentence should make you want to read the next. There should be a nice flow to the article. Articles should inform and entertain.

Submission rules vary from one directory to the next but if you keep your articles between 400 and 600 words you should be okay in almost every case. Be careful about using contractions and special characters because in many cases those will not convert well and the directories may not accept your article.

I usually use “Times New Roman” font, size 14 for the title and size 12 for the remainder of the article. I do not center the title, my lines are spaced at 1.5, just as they are here, and I keep my paragraphs to about 3 lines of text. Paragraphs are not indented, and I double-space between them.

I try to write in the first person whenever possible – remember, I am talking to someone I know. As you write you want the creativity to flow. Don’t stop to correct each and every little thing. Save your editing for last. It’s actually best if you can put a little time between the completion of your article and the editing process. You will have a fresher take on things then and it will be easier to spot any errors or omissions.

Dissection of an article:

- **Title - Should be catchy and contain keywords**
- **Introduction – Approx. 100 words**
- **Main body – 2 to 3 paragraphs that expand on points presented in introduction**
- **Final paragraph – Conclusion or summary; opportunity to recommend that the reader follows a particular course of action**
- **Author’s Resource Box – Keeps that flow going**

Okay, so now let’s talk about research.

STEP 1: Research

As I mentioned, research is vital if you are going to do a good job at writing. After all, you have to know what you’re talking about before you

can discuss it, right? I mean, have you ever been out with friends and they were talking about a movie you haven't seen. You really couldn't join in the conversation now could you?

Or what if you happened to miss a Presidential debate and everyone else is discussing it? How can you really express an opinion if you don't know how the candidate feels about an issue? In situations like this you can feel awkward and hesitant to speak because you may not speak intelligently.

On the other hand, if you had seen the movie and the debate you would be in the midst of those conversations with plenty to say, right? Because your research was done you would feel competent to discuss the topics. You watched and listened and you are now able to discuss with friends your take on what you saw.

Article writing is much the same except that your research will be handled differently. In most cases it will be done online. However, there could be times that you will gather information from other sources such as TV, movies, personal experiences, etc. The choice is yours really. The important thing to remember though is that you will need to share this information.

I usually start by putting a search for my topic in Google. To be honest, I can usually find everything I need there. Other sources include other search engines and article directories. Never discount the value of Wikipedia.

Now if you happen to have a great memory I'm in complete awe of you. But I'm more simple minded than that so I need to have a note-taking method. Since writing should be a fun and creative process your note-taking techniques should not confine your creativity.

Let me explain. If you – for example, label your paper or notes as step 1, step 2, your mind will find it more difficult to creatively expand on that when you begin the writing process. Use a free-form style of note-taking if at all possible. The most restrictive form of note-taking is probably an outline.

While an outline does put things in order for you it puts so many limits on what your mind could do with the knowledge it has. I use mind-mapping.

I simply put the main topic in the center of the page, circle it, and then draw lines out from it with ideas in little circles. When I feel like I have exhausted the topic I move on to another.

I use that as a guide as I write. Seeing those ideas will prompt new ideas for me to write about and I never have to worry about using anyone else's words. This strategy works well for me. Give it a try, you might like it also. Another tip is to keep your notes so you can re-use them the next time you write on the same topic. It's okay to use the same research again and saving that time will mean – well, saving that time! 😊

Beginning The Article

Always keep in mind that article writing is a creative process and all creative processes should be fun. Don't limit yourself. Learn to let the words flow. It's true that this may take some time and practice but believe me, you can do this. It's easy. Just write like you talk!

Yes, you do need to be concerned with grammar and punctuation and spelling – but the good news is your spell check will catch most of those types of problems for you. Writing is a way of expressing yourself – go with it – make money with it!

Okay, back to the more boring stuff.

STEP 2: The Title

You should already have some keywords in mind. Now remember, I said you should write your article like you're talking to a friend – keep that in mind. If you were talking with your friend you would not feel it was necessary to continually use the words 'bass fishing tackle' even if you happen to be affiliated with a bass fishing product and you are discussing bass fishing.

But, there may be times in the course of the conversation that the term 'bass fishing tackle' fits in perfectly. That is when you stick it in. Of course it is possible to manipulate the sentences in order that you can use the keywords and phrases more often but don't stuff the articles with keywords.

With that being said I will stress that you should include the keywords in your title. Okay – end of rant.

Your title should be catchy. Many times I begin with my key terms followed with a question. For example, “Bass Fishing Tackle, Is It Really Necessary?” A title like that will spark interest among bass fishermen because of course tackle is necessary – and it can be expensive.

The reader already has a good idea of what the article will be about and my keyword phrase is front and center. It’s also important to use a title that is neither too short nor too long. If the title is too short it is likely to be overlooked by publishers and if it’s too long publishers may choose to overlook it.

You should be consistent when writing your title. Choose either to capitalize all pronouns or not to. Some directories are stringent with their regulations but most will accept article titles in either format as long as the title is written in a consistent style.

I find that it is not uncommon for me to change the title of an article after I complete it. Why? Well, sometimes as I write the article takes on a life of its own and evolves into something that I hadn’t originally intended....so the initial title no longer fits.

“How To’s”, “Tips” and “Lists” are among the quickest and easiest articles to put together – and so are the titles.

STEP 3: The Introduction

Your article will begin with an introduction. But let me explain that if you are submitting an article to a directory and you are asked for a brief description – that is not and should not be your introduction paragraph. Instead, this is another opportunity to introduce the topic and build interest.

Be very brief and to the point – consider asking a question about a need or desire that the reader may have. The next sentence may hint that the solution can be found in the article.

The true introduction to your article will do much the same...it will introduce the topic and the key points. It should grab the reader's attention and entice him to read the body of the article.

STEP 4: Article Body

Believe it or not, when you've reached the point of working on the article body the hard part is over. Really! 😊 Most of your work is in the research – see, you're already on step 4!

Now that you have the introduction finished you need to expand on it. You need to describe any advantages that may be associated with this particular topic. Maybe there are specific benefits to owning whatever it is – or perhaps there are disadvantages to having or using it.

This is your article and you are talking with a friend. Be frank, if there are problems with a method of doing things etc., then perhaps you can identify a better way – and offer it in your Author's Resource Box! 😊

Try to limit your paragraphs to approximately 3, maximum 4 sentences, or about 100 words each. Remember that your reader is in a hurry and if the article appears that it is not easy to read or that it will be too time-consuming he may decide to pass on it.

Try to keep your flow of creativity going. Let one sentence build on top of the one before it. Always expand on subjects you introduce. I like to think of articles as metaphorically having a diamond shape. Well, I like jewelry so maybe that's why I like that comparison. 😊

Here's what I mean:

You begin with a little bit of information and you build on that. You expand on point after point until eventually you come to a point of exhaustion – exhaustion of your information, your space, whatever the case may be, there comes a time that you have to start zeroing back in to a finer point.

It's now time to make recommendations and give a call to action. Your final paragraph should be a conclusion or a summary. I like to use a sentence that links my concluding points back to my introductory points. This next point is very, very important.

You have worked to build a person up with a desire for a new product of some kind. He has read the article and has found that there is indeed still some new bass fishing tackle that he does not have and that is why he is not catching those big fish – but what should he do now????

Don't leave him hanging!!!

If this is to be used on your site you will direct him to use the PayPal button to order the newest bass fishing tackle, right? But if you are using this article for submission you will have an Author's Resource Box. Keep reading.

STEP 5: Author's Resource Box

Begin your resource box with something like this: “To get the newest bass fishing tackle visit my website at: BigBassFishingTackleXXXXZZZZZ.com”

If you feel compelled to tell your readers about yourself do it after you have told them where they can find whatever it is that they need. Hopefully they are in the buying mode now – don't change it!

You should be very specific about what the reader should do. Tell him exactly.

Quick Review

Writing Basics

- **Write as if you are talking with a friend**
- **Do complete research**
- **Compare articles to salescopy**
- **Keep articles between 400 – 600 words**
- **Use simple fonts, 1.5 space lines and double space paragraphs**
- **Keep paragraphs short and easy to read**

Research

- **Don't stop short**

Article Writing Basics

- Use search engines
- Article directories are good sources
- Use a free-form note taking method (mind-mapping?)
- Save research notes

Beginning The Article

- Use keywords in title
- Don't overstuff article with keywords
- Begin with introduction – key points, grab reader's attention

Article Body

- Expand on key points introduced
- Describe any advantages or disadvantages
- Express any personal experiences
- Explain a better way or method
- Should end with a conclusion

Author's Resource Box

- Keep the flow going
- Call to action
- What to do & where to go
- Then you can add information about you

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Article Writing Basics

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