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7 Formulas for Writing Articles That Get Read!

By Alexandria Brown

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Many of us have been asked to write an article at one time or another. Maybe it's a contribution to the company newsletter. Or a promotional article to gain publicity for ourselves or our companies. Some of us write articles regularly for clients.

No matter why you're writing an article, it's your responsibility to make it be interesting – otherwise no one will read it. (Except you.)

So how can you make your article interesting and engage your reader? It's all about the ANGLE. First pick your topic. For example, let's say your topic is something boring ... "car wax." Now, here's where many people start writing.

Stop! You need an angle! What aspect of car wax do you want to write about? Is there anything new or sexy in the world of car wax that people are interested in? Some ideas: how the new generation of car waxes helps protect your paint job for twice as long, OR, an overview of the best five brands of car wax on the market, OR what the best type of wax is for your particular car. Get it? These are all angles. (By the way, I've never even waxed my car, so please take these ideas with a grain of salt! ;))

Ready to brainstorm your angles? Here are seven article "formulas" to get you started. Some elements of each may overlap with each other, but each formula is truly a distinct animal.

1. The How-To

People love how-to articles! They lead the reader step-by-step through how to reach an objective. They also sometimes offer resources the reader can contact for more information.

What expertise do *you* have to share? Turn that subject into an interesting how-to for readers. Examples: "How to Make Your Employees Stick Around Forever," "How to Find the Best Dress for Your Figure," and "How to Promote Your Business for Free."

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2. The List

This is one of the most basic formulas and the easiest to write. Give a short one or two paragraph intro, then launch right into your list. Keep each item to a few sentences max. People love numbers, so number your list and give your total number in the title! Examples: "31 Ways to Organize Your Office," "15 Tips for Pain-Free Feet," "Five Reasons Management Won't Be the Same in 2001"

3. The "Straw Man"

Here you set up a premise and knock it down, showing the benefits of your alternative view or approach. This is ideal to use when you're discussing the drawbacks of a new practice or method that's controversial right now. Here's a great example we often see on the covers of health magazines: "Are High Protein Diets the Key to Fast Weight Loss?" You get all excited, thinking you've discovered an amazing dieting revelation. But the article reveals, point by point, that high protein diets are unsafe for the long term, and that of course the only reliable way to lose weight is through diet and exercise. Oh

well! Back to the treadmill....

4. The Mini Case Study

Raise a provocative question and then answer it with three or four real-life examples. Example: For an article titled, "Should You Quit Your Job and Go Freelance?" you could begin with a few stats on how today's workforce is leaving the corporate world in search of solo bliss. Then you could feature a few real cases, each with different outcomes to show all sides of the issue.

5. The Interview

Choose a credible expert to interview for your article. For example, if your topic is the latest trends in banking, you could interview a top banking industry analyst. Present it in either a traditional article format or do a Q&A format.

6. The Trend

Trends aren't just for fashion! Whenever a trend sweeps a certain profession, you'll suddenly see dozens of articles covering the topic. From the latest hairstyle to the latest tax shelter, people want to know all about these trends – their origins, benefits, and drawbacks.

7. The Study Finding

These articles report the results of a study or survey. If you do a bit of research, you can probably dig up a recent study on which you can base your article. Examples: "Blue Chip Companies Cutting Marketing Budgets Across the Board," "Armadillos Now Deemed America's Favorite Pet," and "More 20 Somethings Finding Love Online."

Hope these ideas got your juices flowing! Let us know if you need any help developing angles for *your* articles.

Alexandria Brown is president of AKB Marketing Communications. Her FREE monthly e-zine gives "how-to" tips on writing compelling copy for Web sites, brochures, and e-zines. Learn how to attract new clients and strengthen your customer relationships! Subscribe today at <http://www.akbwriting.com> or by e-mailing AKBMarCom-On@lists.webvalence.com

Writing about 'writing'.

By Liana Metal

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Writing about `Writing'!

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What am I going to write about?

Which topic is the best?

Who is going to be interested in my article?

You can ask yourself endless questions on `what' is going to be the subject of your article. Don't despair! This is not a problem . Any topic will do, and a lot of people will read your article as far as you pay attention to the top rule of the internet: Give away information.

This is the reason why people read articles, and that's why you are reading this article in the first place! Think for a moment: Why am I reading this article?

Of course, you might say it's out of curiosity, but the most popular answer would be: To get informed in this field.

The best way to start writing straightaway is to think of an experience of yours. It could be any experience, good or bad, on any subject. I have started my writing career by writing about `writing'. Sounds funny? It may be , but it has helped me sort out a lot of `writing' related issues and find my way through them. Before starting writing articles for the web though, I read a lot. I practically read anything I came across online , from ads to news items, and from book reviews to ebooks. I became a reviewer to get into the `things' faster, and I joined a lot of online communities as well. Then I started writing How-to articles.

One of my first ones focused on the Cover Letter, how to write a smashing letter fast and easily and then send it off to an editor/publisher. You can read this article for free at my site, <http://lianametal.tripod.com> , or <http://liamet.tripod.com>. In a short time I had produced a lot of articles on `writing' , and then I came across the `ebook' device. I said: Why not? It's free and now I can try to create my own ebook.

So, I did and that was just the beginning. But, creating ebooks is another story.

If you are interested in ebooks, all the instructions are included in my first ebook , Writing Basics, along with a lot of useful tips and information on writing, as well as markets to submit your work to.

You can get Writing Basics from my site at: <http://liamet.tripod.com>

If you are a new writer or new with the internet as a means of getting published online, you should read it. In Writing Basics I wrote down my own experiences on writing , but there are also other writers' articles included ,as well as interviews that will help you in your writing career.

The odd thing is that a few years ago I did not even know how to operate a computer, and now I am

creating e books! Isn't it amazing? And know what? Publishers want books about writing , and articles about writing are always very popular. So, why not give it a try yourself?

Liana Metal is a reviewer and writer living in Europe. She has written fiction and non fiction, and at the moment she is creating ebooks on a variety of subjects. Visit her at <http://lianametal.tripod.com> and become a contributor.



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