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Case In Point: Article Promotion Is Not Just For Ezines

By Karon Thackston

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by Karon Thackston © 2002
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Almost everyone on the `Net is familiar with ezine article promotion. However, Business Essentials subscriber Steve Watson (of Watson's Streetworks <http://www.watsons-streetworks.com>) has found a way to get some "free ink" in national paper magazines, too. No... not press releases - full-length articles.

KARON: Hi Steve. Thanks for your time today.

STEVE: Sure, Karon. Glad to do it.

KARON: If I understand you right, you're getting some excellent coverage in national trade magazines... free.

STEVE: That's right.

KARON: I'm all ears. Tell me what you're doing.

STEVE: The magazines that appeal to our customer base and feature our product line (street rod and custom car parts) focus on two basic types of articles: vehicle features – where a car or truck is photographed, described in detail, etc.; and informational pieces. It's the informational pieces that are a potential gold mine.

KARON: "Informational" pieces? You mean like "how-to" articles?

STEVE: Exactly! Info articles can be installation "how-to" pieces, new product introductions, shop tours, etc. These are very important articles for magazines.

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KARON: Yes, I'm sure they are. But - traditionally - paper mags have been very protective of their writers. Even professional freelance writers have had a hard time getting ink. How are you breaking into that group?

STEVE: Well, the editors are continually caught between a rock and a hard place; that is, at least 20 percent of the magazine space must be editorial (non-advertising) material. At the same time they have limited resources for editorial material – their own writers, who are becoming few and far between, and paid-for pieces that group managers would prefer not to have to fit into their budgets. Enter the do-it-yourself article.

KARON: So you've found, at least with the auto mags, that they are willing to "sacrifice" their principles rather than hire freelancers?

STEVE: Pretty much!

KARON: OK, tell me how you get your pieces through the maze of management.

STEVE: We take a product that we would like to have featured; we install it; we photograph every step; we write the article including photo captions; and we submit it to the editor of a magazine. Voila! It gets used. Why? Because it is free for the editors taking. They didn't have to pay staff or an outside writer. It eases their burdens. And, as long as it's well written and comes across as informational and not as advertising, it will probably get used.

KARON: Pretty much the same basic premise as ezine articles, except on paper. So... how are you doing with it?

STEVE: Every article that we have submitted has been used. That includes shorter one pagers up to a recent article that included 36 photos and ran about 4-1/2 pages... free, in national publications.

KARON: Super! So tell us what to look out for - the do's and don'ts.

STEVE: OK... here's the short list of secrets to success:

1. You must be able to do it well. The photos must be of good quality. The text must be well written and interesting and be able to tell a story. Study the articles in the magazine you wish to target – how are they put together? See if you can detect a formula for the articles and follow it.

2. Have a good relationship with the magazine editor. Don't know the editor? Then get to know him/her. Target a magazine in which you advertise. Call the editor and mention that you have an article that you think they might find interesting. Or offer to donate product for one of their projects in exchange of ink (but don't say that right up front).

3. Find out in what format they like to receive submissions. Are they still hard-copy photo and printed text, or are they digital and email? This can often be difficult and will vary by magazine.

4. The hardest part is to find the time to do–it–yourself. It can seem like a risk with no guarantee of success. But our experience has shown it to be the best form of advertising, both for the low expense and the high response.

5. Don't be surprised if the editor wants one of their writers to rework the piece, even a little, so that they can take credit for writing the whole article. Who cares as long as your company gets mentioned predominantly and/or listed as the source (frequently at the end of the piece)?

KARON: Steve... I really appreciate you sharing your experiences with us. This is excellent information, and it opens a whole new window of advertising opportunity.

STEVE: Always a pleasure, Karon!

7 Power Packed Tips To Increase Your Ezine Publishing Success

By Ken Hill

1. Use autoresponders to publish and promote your ezine.

Autoresponders with a broadcast feature are a low cost way to begin publishing your own mailing lists including your own text based, HTML or web based ezine that increases your sales.

Your autoresponders can also be used to successfully promote your ezine by delivering sample issues of your ezine to your visitors, or you could use your autoresponders to create an archive of all your past issues.

In addition your autoresponders can be used to effectively get more subscribers to your publication by delivering a bonus for subscribing to your publication such as an email course or multipart report.

2. Swap ads with other ezine publishers.

Swapping ads can be time consuming to set up but can prove to be well worth the effort as you will be able to get very targeted promotion of your ezine at no cost to you.

To get the best results from your ad swaps try to swap ads for at least 3 issues in a row as repetition will increase the number of subscribers you get.

Also track your ad swaps so that you will be able to tell exactly which ezines give you the best response and which ad copy gives you the best results.

3. Swap "thank you" page ads with other ezine publishers.

Use the page your subscribers are taken to after subscribing to your ezine to advertise other ezines in exchange for those ezines doing the same for you.

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This can provide you with profitable ongoing promotion of your ezine for as long as the other ezines continue to be published.

When picking ezines to swap with, select ezines that offer related, complimentary content but not ezines that compete directly with you.

4. Swap welcome message ads with other ezine publishers.

This works much in the same way as swapping "thank you" page ads. The main difference is that not everyone that subscribes to your ezine will read your welcome email.

However, this type of swap is much easier to set up with other ezine publishers than a "thank you" page swap and will still provide you with good, long term promotion of your ezine.

5. Swap recommendations with other ezine publishers.

Swapping recommendations with another ezine publisher who has the trust and respect of her subscribers can be very effective in increasing your subscriptions.

Keeping this in mind, be careful when choosing ezines to recommend. Make sure they are ezines that you can honestly vouch for because recommending an ezine that isn't up to par can cost you the trust of your subscribers.

To create your recommendation swap, you could recommend the other publisher's ezine in your own words while she does the same for you.

In addition, you could create a recommended ezine section, if you have several other ezines you would like to swap recommendations with.

6. Write articles.

You could write "how to" articles that show your readers step by step how to do something, or you could write articles that provide your readers with a valuable list of tips.

You can also write articles that focus on a current hot topic, or you could conduct interviews and provide these to your subscribers as highly informative articles.

In addition, to helping you to increase your subscribers' trust in you, your articles can also help you to get more subscriptions to your publication.

Add a resource box to your articles that advertises your ezine and then submit your articles to other ezine publishers, article announcement lists, and to article directories.

Also post your articles on your site and let your visitors (as well as your subscribers within your ezine) know that they can reprint your articles in their ezines or on their websites.

7. Swap articles with other ezine publishers.

You could swap an article that you have available for reprint in other ezines while publishing an article that the other publisher has available for reprint in other ezines.

This can provide both of you with excellent promotion of your ezines, but runs the risk of lowering the value of your content if that publisher's article is published in lots of other ezines.

To get around this, you could create a swap where you write an article to run exclusively in another publisher's ezine while that publisher writes an article to be published exclusively in your ezine.

This will help you to successfully gain more subscribers while providing your subscribers with content that can't be found anywhere else.

In addition, you can create an article swap where both you and the other publisher exchange articles that will be first run in each other's publications and afterwards allowed to be reprinted in other ezines, on websites, etc.

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