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How To Write A Mini-Course

By F. Terrence Markle

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Do you use mini-courses in your online marketing? If not then maybe you should! Mini-courses are an important part of Internet marketing. A mini-course is a tool that enables you to provide valuable content to your subscribers and promote your own or affiliate products at the same time.

A mini-course is fr*ee information on a specific topic. It is normally distributed as multiple articles in e-mail format over a defined period of time. The mini-course also goes by the name eCourse, free report or autoresponder course.

Before attempting to write your mini-course, identify a "niche market" that has a unique need for information. A niche market is a small segment of the total general market. It is a group of individuals with a common interest that have specific wants and needs. Individuals in a niche market may also have a common problem that needs a solution.

Creating a mini-course is similar to creating an ebook but on a smaller scale. You need to select a "killer" topic that is of interest to your niche market and satisfies a want or need or solves a problem.

There is an unlimited amount of information that can be used in a mini-course. The key is to know what information to use. What information do most people want? Individuals look for informational products that satisfy their most important wants or needs. This includes information on: how to do something, money, time, work, health, self-improvement, entertainment, hobbies and sex.

How can you find your killer topic? Listen to your customers. Look for problems they are experiencing when they communicate with you. Conduct a survey of your customers and the visitors to your website and ask for comments. Join niche discussion boards and chat rooms. What items are discussed on a repeating basis? Subscribe to article announcement lists in your niche and identify the key topics being published.

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Next, look for common issues or problems in the information you have collected. Can you solve any of them? If not, locate an expert that can help you.

Identify creative and useful solutions to the issues or problems. Develop an outline to be used as a guide in writing your mini–course. Perform the necessary research to obtain the information you need for the mini–course. Present your information in a manner that satisfies the wants and needs or solves the common problem of your niche market.

You need to have a killer title to grab the interest of your visitors. Select a title that compels your visitor to want to see your report. You want your visitor to request the report, download it, read it and purchase your product offerings.

All of your work in creating the mini–course is of no use if nobody reads it. You want a title that reaches out and pulls the individual into downloading your course. Instead of using a title like "My Report on

Golf " use something like "How to Take Strokes Off Your Golf Game." Which title is more likely to grab the interest of the high handicap golfer?

Once you have the attention of your audience you want to be able to keep them. The opening paragraph must excite your reader and make them want to know more. Use an opening sentence that pulls them into your report like "Everything you ever wanted to know about improving your golf game and more!" Your opening paragraph also needs to define the main objective that will be presented in your mini–course.

The course content is the most critical part of your mini–course. Make certain your information is presented in an organized and meaningful manner. Content can be presented to your readers in many different writing formats.

Some of the most common formats include: How–to–do something tutorial List of ways or tips to accomplish a desired objective Interview of one or more experts regarding your topic Narrative discussion of the issues at hand.

Whatever format you select, it must be easy to read and understand. Do not use difficult words or long sentences and paragraphs. Write in a straightforward manner. Let your personality show in your writing. People that are comfortable with your writing are more likely to buy from you.

Be careful in promoting your own products or affiliate products in the mini–course. The products and services promoted need to relate to the content you are providing. Blend the product or service promotions into your content so that it supports the content. Find ways to weave your product or affiliate program information into your content in a low–key manner.

Avoid outright blatant advertising except in the top sponsor, bottom sponsor and other designated areas of your articles. Blatant advertising in the wrong section will be a quick turn–off. Your mini–course will be viewed as a sales letter and probably not read. Keep your audience in focus. They are reading your mini–course primarily for the valuable content you promised to deliver in the

beginning.

The last segment of your mini–course needs to provide a conclusion or closing section. Pull together what you have presented in the course and present your findings. It should satisfy the original objective of your course or provide a solution to the stated problem. Finalize the mini–course with words of value to your readers. Direct your readers to utilize the information you provided. Instill in them the desire to get involved and follow through with your conclusions or implement your solutions.

Organize the information into article segments of roughly 700 to 1,500 words per segment. Keep the length of the mini–course in the range of 3 to 8 segments. Try to avoid information overload and unnecessary padding in your articles. Determine the distribution cycle of the articles. In general, one segment should be delivered each day or every 2 days. Personally, I prefer once every 2 days to avoid overloading the recipient with too much information if they don't check their e–mail on a daily basis.

The best way to distribute your mini–course is by autoresponder. Set up the autoresponder to automatically distribute your articles according to your defined time schedule.

Use the mini–course to promote yourself, your business and your products. It is fr*ee advertising. You

can use the following methods to promote your mini–course: Include in the resource box of an article you wrote Include in your newsletter Include in your signature file Provide as a fr*ee bonus on the purchase of your product Place in an advertisement Provide as a promotional tool for your affiliates to use.

In conclusion, your mini–course should deliver valuable content to your audience with the side benefit of promoting your ezine and products. Create your mini–course with a clear picture of wants and needs of your audience. You have wasted your time and effort if the report has little or no value to your reader. Produce a quality mini–course and both you and your subscribers will benefit.

Best of success in your online business activities.

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Copyright © 2003 – F. Terrence Markle has worked for over 20 years with public and private companies. He has an MBA in marketing and finance. He has been involved with Internet–related businesses for over 3 years. His primary focus is the marketing of affiliate programs.

Dog Agility Equipment – New Mini Contacts And Mini Jumps

By Brad Carlson

Dog Agility competitions are seen frequently on television. The eyes of most pet owners have seen

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this amazing sport and would some how like their dog to be introduced to the equipment for fun and for exercise. The competition size equipment may be larger than the pet owner needs or wants to invest in so, many are introducing their dog to "mini" equipment.

Mini-agility equipment still provides lots of mental and physical stimulation to your dog, but without bulk of competition sized equipment. Almost all types of obstacles are made in a "mini" size. There are mini-A-frames, mini-dog walks, mini-teeters, mini-tire jumps, mini-jumps, mini-tables, and mini-weaves.

The mini-A-frame can be in different sizes, but is often made with two, 4-foot sides, instead of two, 8-foot sides. Mini-dog walks are often made with three, five-foot planks instead of three 12-foot planks. Similar is the mini-teeter, made from a five-foot plank instead of a 12-foot plank. These changes in size make shipping and delivery easier and less costly.

Mini equipment is safer for the beginner handler and dog because the equipment is lower to the ground. Dogs and puppies can learn and use the equipment with greater ease and confidence.

In addition to pet owners, breeders, kennel owners, and dog parks are purchasing mini-agility equipment. Breeders purchase mini equipment to stimulate their puppies mentally and physically. Some breeders add railings to their dog-walk for added puppy protection. Kennel and Doggie Day Care owners use the equipment to keep their clients happy and busy all day long. Dog parks are selecting mini-equipment because it is safer to use by the untrained owner.

Competition agility owners are also selecting mini-equipment for training specific behaviors, using them as training aids, and for indoor training in the wintertime. A contact trainer is a combination of a mini A-frame side attached to a pause table with a mini-dog walk plank attached to the opposite side. Agility competitors often use this apparatus for back chaining their contact behavior.

Brad Carlson is a dog trainer at Agility by Carlson. For more training details, visit our website at

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