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**How to Write an Attention–Grabbing Op–Ed in Five Steps**

**By Rusty Cawley**

**How to Write an Attention–Grabbing Op–Ed in Five Steps by Rusty Cawley**

There are few better ways to attract new clients and customers than by becoming known as an expert in your field. And the fastest way to establish your expertise is by writing op–eds for newspapers, magazines, trades and the Web.

An "op–ed" gets its name from the fact that it usually appears on the page opposite from the publication's editorial page. Quite simply, an op–ed is a highly focused opinion piece that aims to stir the reader's emotions while presenting facts that support the author's point of view.

Be forewarned: Op–eds are not for the timid. To write an effective op–ed, you must be willing to seize an issue and to take a strong stand. This is what separates experts from generalists.

If you are unwilling to give a strong opinion, and thus risk creating opponents to your ideas, then the op–ed is not for you.

Keep this in mind: All great experts have opponents. It is by waging war on the battlefield of ideas that experts become well known and, in some cases, revered.

With all that said, here's the PR Rainmaker's five–step process for producing an attention–grabbing op–ed.

Step 1: Seize an issue.

Look for an issue that straddles the line between the public good and your self–interest. You must either be or become an expert on this issue. Don't try to fake it. You'll get caught and lose credibility with the media and the public.

Check and double–check your facts. Make certain you have the knowledge, the background and the supporting data to qualify as an expert on this issue.

## How to Write an Attention–Grabbing Op–Ed in Five Steps

Seek an issue with a long shelf life. There's little point to become a well–known expert on a problem that will be solved next year.

Step 2: Identify a significant problem.

Within the context of your issue, search for a problem that clearly threatens the general public or at least some large segment of that public.

Focus, focus, focus. Clearly identify the problem, the audience it affects and how you might go about solving it.

Step 3: Make a bold statement.

Open your op–ed by making a bold statement that forces the reader to read on. This is no time to ease into your article. Punch the reader in the face, then explain why you did it.

The opening statement is everything. It will dictate the headline. It will determine the focus of your article. It will dictate the evidence you offer to support your statement.

Spend a lot of time honing your first paragraph. Ask yourself, "If I read this paragraph for the first time right now, could I resist the urge to continue reading this article?"

Step 4: Defend your statement.

Your op–ed will total between 500 and 700 words. Your opening statement will take up about 25 words. Your conclusion will take up another 100 or so. The rest will be devoted to defending your opening statement.

Use facts and statistics, but only those that apply directly to your statement. Don't go off on tangents. You don't have space for that. Stay very, very, very focused.

Introduce quotes from third parties. These would include documents, studies, surveys, public statements, white papers, books, articles and the like.

And don't forget emotion. Facts provide the reasons to agree with the statement, but emotion provides the impetus to take action. No emotion, no action. That's just how the human mind works.

Step 5: Propose a solution

Wrap up your story by proposing at least one clear, bold solution to the problem you have identified. The proposal is what will brand you as an expert. Sidestep proposing a solution and you will lose your audience.

Let's talk a moment about format:

## How to Write an Attention–Grabbing Op–Ed in Five Steps

- A. Use a common typeface, like Arial or Times, in 10 to 12 point type. Double space.
- B. Write in short sentences.
- C. Speak in a bold active voice that leans upon nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
- D. Avoid jargon.
- E. Put your name, address and phone number at the top of the page.
- F. Suggest a headline based upon your lead paragraph.
- G. Include a paragraph at the end that explains your qualifications.
- H. Place a "####" at the bottom of the last page to indicate the end.
- I. Enclose a brief cover letter that summarizes the op–ed and your expertise.

To study examples of well–written op–eds, visit <http://www.prrainmaker.com/opeds.html>.

### **Attention Grabbing Web Design Will Kill Your Sale!**

**By Per Strandberg**

In the of–line marketing world it is all about trying to get the attention of the potential consumer to a commercial message.

The primary goal is to get noticed by the public.

It doesn't matter if it is for radio, TV, magazines, newspapers or posters.

It all comes down to getting noticed.

On the Web this doesn't work!

The reason for this is that on the web, the net surfer is actively searching and looking for information from this gigantic data repository and database that we call the Internet.

They are scanning and reading text on web sites and they are mostly blind to graphics and pictures.

In the of–line world the potential target is mostly passive and experience ads in a state of relaxation among other stimulations. Here you must scream out your message to market your product or service.

Off–line people are passive!

## How to Write an Attention-Grabbing Op-Ed in Five Steps

On the Web people are active!

What does this mean for your web site?

For one thing, when anyone visits your web site, you at that moment already have their full attention. So, there is no need to get visual attention to attract your visitors.

They are on your site, already!

But, you normally have their full attention only until they have decided if your site is what they are looking for or not.

If your site is not what they are looking for or they don't understand that your site is what they are looking for they quickly leave your site, never to return.

The time between they arrive at your site and decide to stay or leave is very short.

Normally around 10 seconds!

If you use flash or large graphics, which take to long to load, most people leave without figuring out

what your site is about. The attention span on the Net is short!

The web surfers don't look at graphic so much as they are reading the information you present.

When they arrive you need to keep their attention and inform them about what your site is all about and describe its benefits.

You need to keep their attention, but not by an attention grabbing web design!

Instead, use attention grabbing text!

The most important attention grabbing text is the headline!

The headline will break it or make it!

Does this mean that the web design can look sloppy or amateurish?

No!

It just means that the design of a site should not be made with extensive graphics or flash presentation. This will just confuse and take to long time to download.

If you make a clean and easy navigational web site you are much better off!

## How to Write an Attention–Grabbing Op–Ed in Five Steps

Yet, what one see on the Internet is to often sites with advanced web design that to often leave you asking what its all about and what its creators are thinking!

If website owners and webmasters concentrated much more of their effort on text information and less on design they would see much better response from their potential customers.

There is no need to hire a web designer and pay them several 1000 of dollars to make a site attractive and to make it commercially viable.

In most cases this is contra–productive.

The web designer often will kill your sale by creating attention grabbing web design.

Instead, put your effort on the text information on your site!

Per Strandberg is a software designer and web site maker! He has a web site which offer data backup information at

. Visit his site with web traffic generating tips at

**Attention Grabbing Web Design Will Kill Your Sale!**

**The Art Of Writing Profitable Classified Ads**

**10 Recession–Busting Sales Letter Tips!**

**Your first job is NOT to get your customer Your first job is NOT to get your customer**

**"Achieve Maximum Exposure!"**

**Profit Pulling Reports**

**Power Profits Autoresponder Course**

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