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Tips are Perennially Tempting

By Marcia Yudkin

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Techies love them. Young and old technology haters love them. Most importantly, editors love them. Tips -- neatly packaged, numbered nuggets of advice -- are always appealing to those whose job it is to fill up publications with entertaining and illuminating information. They can therefore represent a lucrative route to publicity for you or your organization.

The content of tips that earn you media coverage doesn't have to be original, exclusive or startling. You can offer up things most people in your position know. Their charm is mainly in the writing and packaging.

Start with an irresistible title, usually including a number, such as "Seven Steps to a Summer Without Bug Bites," "Four Secrets Real Estate Agents Don't Want Homebuyers to Know" or "11 Ways Not to Ingratiate Yourself to The Boss." Then brainstorm ideas and choose the best and second best and so on, until you have the number you'd chosen.

Rewrite each item so that it begins with a brief phrase summarizing the idea, which might appear in boldface in a magazine or on the Web. For example, here's a crisp, properly formatted item #1 for the first-mentioned set of tips:

1. Inform yourself. Ask about buggy seasons and areas before finalizing your vacation plans. For instance, some beaches are more mosquito-infested than others. Your first-choice

time slot for a holiday might be black-fly season up at the lakes.

A good way to set up a tips press release is to sandwich the tips between a lead paragraph introducing the topic in a timely way and a final paragraph about your organization. Include the URL of your Web site, where people can go for more information. If you have a longish set of tips, use the press release as a tease, presenting only a few of your items and specifying how readers can get the whole set, such

as by calling, faxing on their office letterhead, sending an email request or visiting a certain Web address.

Tips can help you generate product orders or client leads or targeted Web traffic when you associate the tips with a new product, an ongoing service you provide or features at your Web site. By mentioning a specific URL only in your press releases, your traffic logs will reveal which traffic arrived because of media publicity.

You can increase the timeliness and odds of getting tips published when you tie them to holidays, particularly minor ones. If you run a dieting program, why not gear some tips to recovering from Fourth of July picnic binges rather than Christmas dinners? Editors love tips the year round, but they love them most when they need a holiday tie-in and yours shows up.

Don't forget to post your tips at your Web site. Make sure your text includes the phrases someone looking for advice on that topic would type into a search engine. Easy-to-read practical tips are some of the most popular pages on the Internet. The catchy title you slaved over will help attract search engine traffic, too!

Wedding Gowns: A Guide For Making The Right Choice

By Melissa Burton

Marriage is - ideally - an once-in-a-lifetime event. There isn't much leeway to practice or make mistakes. So to make the bride's entrance down the carpet perfect and memorable, one must take great pains to ensure that everything is done correctly - down to every little detail on the wedding dress.

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>From watching fantasy-like weddings on TV, or reading about them in books and magazines, or hearing about them from other people, many brides-to-be form an image in their minds of the kind of wedding dress they would like to wear on their wedding. Many people take a watch and learn stance as they formulate, plan and dream up their ideal wedding dress.

If your time has come, and you are shopping for the perfect dress to make your wedding dreams come true, then you have come to the right place. Here are a few tips to help you get over the wedding dress hump with less sweat.

1. The Dress Comes First

Although it may go both ways, the theme of your dress should follow your desired theme - or vice versa. Some couples choose a theme before choosing a gown, and in effect, they make the gown fit the theme they have chosen. But for some people, the choice of gown comes first, and the theme of the wedding follows the gown's theme. So if the gown that catches the bride's fancy is ultra beaded and formal, then the wedding may tend to be more formal. If the bride chooses a less formal dress, then the wedding may follow a less formal route.

2. Don't Overwhelm Yourself with Choices

Yes, it may be tempting to try every gown that comes your way. But what if you find yourself buried under a pile of 20 or so gowns you think you really like and can't make a decision? That sort of scenario will prove to be a terrible headache - not to mention a great source of stress.

To avoid this, try making decisions in stages. You could try an `American Idol' style way of choosing a gown. You could vote off the least liked one and then reevaluate the remaining gowns.

Another method is trying 5 gowns and then choosing two of the best. These `champions' will be pit against 5 more new gowns. Continue the tournament until you get to the perfect gown.

It may become tempting to say, "Aw, but that other gown might have been better." Try to make sure you make your final decision among 5 gowns. If you end up with too many to choose from you may get overwhelmed and end up choosing an inferior gown, or choosing the perfect gown but forever asking yourself whether you made the right decision or not.

Choose Wisely

And choose a wise companion; take along one or two of your closest friends or confidants who know a thing or two about wedding dresses and style. Their advice will come in handy when choosing a gown.

Also, make sure you check the durability and quality of the gown, the material and the accessories. You don't want your gown falling apart on you during the ceremonies.

Download our excellent discount wedding planning mini-course absolutely FREE at



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