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Understanding Editorial Guidelines

By Bonnie Jo Davis

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Editorial guidelines, also known as writer's guidelines, are the rules set forth by publishers for contributing authors. In order to have your article taken seriously you must review the guidelines prior to submission. It is also recommended that you review previous editions of the publication to get a better feel for the types of articles favored by the editor(s).

Outlined below are the typical issues covered in editorial guidelines along with their definitions and any additional information you should know.

Length of article: The minimum and maximum word count of articles considered for publication. Online articles are usually expected to be 750 to 1,000 words while off-line publications will often accept a longer article.

Topics: The subjects of articles accepted by the publication. Never submit an off topic article as this is very annoying and may result in further submissions from you being banned.

Illustrations/Photographs: Some publications require/accept illustrations or photographs and will usually specify the size and format required for acceptance.

Editorial style: Consistency and accuracy governs the use of a style selected by the editorial department of a publication. Many publications require the use of the Associated Press Stylebook which covers spelling, capitalization, grammar, punctuation and usage.

Author Photograph: Some publications require or accept a photograph of the author usually included with the submission of the article. Guidelines will often cover the size and format of photographs.

Byline length: Also known as an author biography or resource box. Some publications have certain requirements for length, characters per line and what or how much contact information can be

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included.

Payment: Your byline is often the only payment you will receive for your article. However, some publications (particularly those in print) pay for articles by the word or per article.

Rights: Governs whether or not the publication will accept original or reprinted articles, how long they plan to use the material and whether the article can be used elsewhere at the same time.

Query requirement: A query is a letter written to the editor that proposes an article topic and asks permission to submit. Some publications require that you query the editor (by e-mail, fax or mail) prior to forwarding your article.

Submission methods: Methods of submissions may include via fax, e-mail or hard copy sent by courier or standard mail.

Editorial calendar: It is not unusual for a publication to establish an editorial calendar for each year far in advance. The calendar will cover topics, themes, article types and required submission dates broken down by publication dates.

Format accepted: Each publication will accept articles in certain formats such as Word, WordPerfect, text or Adobe Acrobat.

Audience: Demographics such as number of subscribers, gender, educational level, age and income level.

Notification: When you will be contacted about your submission. Many publishers choose to contact only if an article is chosen for publication.

Acknowledgements: In some cases you will be required to sign (either electronically or on paper) an acknowledgement that you have read the guidelines.

It is very important to understand and follow the editorial guidelines of your target publications in order to maximize your chances of publication. Not all publications will include all of the above items in their editorial guidelines. Contact the editor if any of this information is not disclosed and you need it to refine your submission.

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Bonnie Jo Davis is an experienced shoestring marketer and her favorite technique is providing content for publishers. Her latest venture is the moderator of the Article Submission E-Gazette Yahoo! group which provides a spam free exchange for writers and publishers. To join the group visit

The Work Flow Cycle of the Editorial Industry

By Yuwanda Black

As an editorial professional, I'm sure you're aware of the market slump right now. What you may not be aware of is that this is due to more than just the economy.

Editorial work is a seasonal profession. From mid-June through Labor Day and from Christmas through the end of January are usually pretty slow.

If you are a regular reader of a newspaper, ever notice how thin it is during the summer — especially the Help Wanted section?

What is the point in bringing this to your attention? First, to get you to relax and not worry.

And second, focus on preparatory work during down times. For example, rework your resume; order new supplies; take care of administrative paperwork, etc. FYI, there are some great resume tips geared specifically toward the editorial industry on Inkwell Editorial's site at

I hope you find them helpful.

May be reprinted with inclusion of the following: Yuwanda Black is an entrepreneur, author, speaker and syndicated small business columnist whose focus is controlling your destiny through small business ownership. Her most recent e-books, *How to Really Make a Living as an Editorial Freelancer* and *Advice from Successful Freelancers: How They Built Their Careers & How You Can Too!* are available for immediate download at

Visit her on the

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