

# Articles ... The Best Form Of Free Advertising

By Elena Fawkner

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Those of you reading this who run your own online businesses know that the aim of the game is traffic - qualified, targeted traffic - and lots of it.

There are a number of ways to drive qualified traffic to your site - some of it costs you money, some of it costs you time. Some of it costs you both and doesn't work.

This article is all about the best form of free advertising - writing articles.

How can writing articles give you free advertising? As you probably know, there are hundreds of thousands of people publishing an ezine (electronic newsletter) on a regular basis. For some of these people, publishing the ezine is the central plank of their business - they set out to create a business involving, primarily, the publishing of the ezine. Others, however, publish the ezine only as an adjunct to their website - a way to get their site in front of their ezine subscribers in the hope that this will generate repeat traffic.

Both types of ezine publishers have one thing in common. The need for great content. If you've spent much time online you'll no doubt have signed up for more than your fair share of free ezines. You'll have come across some that are really good, some that are OK and some that are nothing short of woeful, with content that looks like the publisher has picked up the first piece of regurgitated whatever he happened to come across today to fill up the

space between the ads for his numerous affiliate programs.

Your site may include links to your affiliate programs. After all, that's how you make money, right? But rather than go the road of the ezine publisher who thinks she can serve up any old porridge to her subscriber base and they'll eat it up, spend the same time writing just one good article on a subject matter relevant to your target market and invite publishers of ezines with complementary subject matter to publish that article, together with your resource box at the end (the four or five line blurb you see at the end of articles that give a little information about the author and the author's website together with a link to the site).

Now, here's the important point if you expect others to publish your work. Your ad is your resource box, it is NOT your article. Your article is content. Your article should not mention your product, your site or anything related to it. Your article must stand alone as an independently useful piece of work (and when I say useful, I mean it must be useful to the READER, not the author!). Don't insult your readers' intelligence by dressing up an ad as an article. They're not stupid - they'll see through it and you immediately, they'll put you on their blacklist for insulting their intelligence and no publisher worth their salt will run your articles anyway.

The whole purpose of writing the article is to make it such a worthwhile piece of work that many publishers will want to put it in front of their subscribers. Get a good article published in an ezine with 10,000 subscribers and see what that does for your traffic when hundreds of those subscribers click on the link to your site that you've included in your resource box.

Beginning to see how this works? And the best thing of all is that it only costs you time - maybe an hour, two tops to write a decent article. Commit to writing one a week and getting them published and you'll have a nice little traffic flow going, believe me (AND, if you make sure that you write about subject matter relevant to your site, that traffic will ALSO be targeted, qualified traffic - so much the better).

OK, so now you can see the power of writing articles as a method of generating traffic to your website. How the heck do you find other people to publish your work? Thanks to the fact that so many publishers out there don't have the time or (so they believe) ability to write their own articles, or are looking for articles to supplement their own, you have a ready-made market of thousands of publishers who are always on the lookout for quality

content to present to their readers. You just have to find them.

Here's a partial list to get you started:

Yahoo Groups (submit from the Yahoo Groups website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/> - you'll need to subscribe to these groups first):

aabusiness  
aageneral  
aainet  
article\_announce  
ArticlePublisher  
articles\_archives  
epub  
hersmallbusiness  
Free-Content  
publisher\_network  
PublishInYours  
and these ...

<http://www.ideamarketers.com>  
<http://www.marketing-seek.com>  
<http://www.womans-net.com>  
<http://www.boconline.com/sub-art.html>  
<http://www.connectionteam.com/submit.html>  
<http://www.certificate.net/wwio/ideas.shtml>  
<http://www.mailbiz.com>  
<http://www.UltimateProfits.com>  
<http://www.atozines.com/content/subartic.htm>  
<http://opportunityupdate.com/articles>  
<http://www.selfgrowth.com>  
<http://www.internetday.com/submit>  
<http://www.marcommwise.com>  
<http://www.vectorcentral.com>  
<http://www.goarticles.com>  
<http://www.hotlaunch.com>  
<http://www.ezinearticles.com>  
<http://www.webmasterslibrary.com>

When submitting your articles to the above websites, be sensitive to the types of articles the site is looking for. Some accept articles on any subject under the sun, others are looking for articles on specific subjects such as internet marketing, for example.

Over time, you will be able to add to this list. If submitting to individual ezine publishers, don't be surprised or offended if you don't receive a response. Most ezine publishers of any size receive dozens of article submissions a day. Time normally doesn't permit a response to each submission. Also, try and find out from the publisher whether they even accept

article submissions. Many don't (me, for example). I receive many article submissions a day which just get deleted unread.

The point is, just work up your own list, write articles consistently and submit consistently. Over time, you'll develop your own style of writing and attract a following.

Although it may be slow to start, you'll start getting a trickle of new traffic from people who have come across your article somewhere, some place and were interested enough to click on the link in your resource box. Over time, that trickle will become a stream, then a river, and then a flood.

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Elena Fawkner is an attorney and editor of A Home-Based Business Online ... practical business ideas, opportunities and solutions for the work-from-home entrepreneur. She offers discounted, fixed-rate legal services to her ezine subscribers and site visitors within the United States.

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