

# Case In Point: Article Promotion Is Not Just For Ezines

By Karon Thackston

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Almost everyone on the 'Net is familiar with ezine article promotion. However, Business Essentials subscriber Steve Watson (of Watson's Streetworks <http://www.watsons-streetworks.com> ) has found a way to get some "free ink" in national paper magazines, too. No... not press releases – full-length articles.

KARON: Hi Steve. Thanks for your time today.

STEVE: Sure, Karon. Glad to do it.

KARON: If I understand you right, you're getting some excellent coverage in national trade magazines... free.

STEVE: That's right.

KARON: I'm all ears. Tell me what you're doing.

STEVE: The magazines that appeal to our customer base and feature our product line (street rod and custom car parts) focus on two basic types of articles: vehicle features - where a car or truck is photographed, described in detail, etc.; and informational pieces. It's the informational pieces that are a potential gold mine.

KARON: "Informational" pieces? You mean like "how-to" articles?

STEVE: Exactly! Info articles can be installation "how-to" pieces, new product introductions, shop tours, etc. These are very important articles for magazines.

KARON: Yes, I'm sure they are. But – traditionally – paper mags have been very protective of their writers. Even professional freelance writers have had a hard time getting ink. How are you breaking into that group?

STEVE: Well, the editors are continually caught between a rock and a hard place; that is, at least 20 percent of the magazine space must be editorial (non-advertising) material. At the same time they have limited resources for editorial material - their own writers, who are becoming few and far

between, and paid-for pieces that group managers would prefer not to have to fit into their budgets. Enter the do-it-yourself article.

KARON: So you've found, at least with the auto mags, that they are willing to "sacrifice" their principles rather than hire freelancers?

STEVE: Pretty much!

KARON: OK, tell me how you get your pieces through the maze of management.

STEVE: We take a product that we would like to have featured; we install it; we photograph every step; we write the article including photo captions; and we submit it to the editor of a magazine. Voila! It gets used. Why? Because it is free for the editors taking. They didn't have to pay staff or an outside writer. It eases their burdens. And, as long as it's well written and comes across as informational and not as advertising, it will probably get used.

KARON: Pretty much the same basic premise as ezine articles, except on paper. So... how are you doing with it?

STEVE: Every article that we have submitted has been used. That includes shorter one pagers up to a recent article that included 36 photos and ran about 4-1/2 pages... free, in national publications.

KARON: Super! So tell us what to look out for – the do's and don'ts.

STEVE: OK... here's the short list of secrets to success:

1. You must be able to do it well. The photos must be of good quality. The text must be well written and interesting and be able to tell a story. Study the articles in the magazine you wish to target - how are they put together? See if you can detect a formula for the articles and follow it.
2. Have a good relationship with the magazine editor. Don't know the editor? Then get to know him/her. Target a magazine in which you advertise. Call the editor and mention that you have an article that you think they might find interesting. Or offer to donate product for one of their projects in exchange of ink (but don't say that right up front).
3. Find out in what format they like to receive submissions. Are they still hard-copy photo and printed text, or are they digital and email? This can often be difficult and will vary by magazine.
4. The hardest part is to find the time to do-it-yourself. It can seem like a risk with no guarantee of success. But our experience has shown it to be the best form of advertising, both for the low expense and the high response.
5. Don't be surprised if the editor wants one of their writers to rework the piece, even a little, so that they can take credit for writing the whole article. Who cares as long as your company gets mentioned predominantly and/or listed as the source (frequently at the end of the piece)?

KARON: Steve... I really appreciate you sharing your experiences with us. This is excellent information, and it opens a whole new window of advertising opportunity.

STEVE: Always a pleasure, Karon!

Most buying decisions are emotional. Your ad copy should be, too! Let Karon write targeted copy

and ezine articles for you. Visit her site at <http://www.ktamarketing.com> , or learn to write your own copy at <http://www.copywritingcourse.com> . Don't forget to subscribe to Karon's free ezine!  
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