

"Write An Article - Get Noticed!"

By Peg Bastin

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Last year someone suggested I write an article. Who me? What do I write about, I'm a 'newbie' for heaven's sake! How do you write an article? Why should I write an article?

Let me try to answer these questions. There are lots of reasons to write an article:

1. Get your name and your business noticed
2. To help others
3. To teach others
4. To share experiences
5. Free advertising for your business

What do I write about? First, I write whatever thoughts come into my head on a sheet of paper. I make a list, then put it into some sort of order. Then I expand on each thought. Where do ideas come from? I don't know. When I try to think of a subject for an article - nothing happens! Just a bunch of unrelated thoughts - then all of a sudden an idea pops into my head and voila! the words come pouring forth faster than I can write them down! It's a fascinating experience!

Usually I wake up sometime during the night with ideas running through my head. I write them down as they come - in the dark - try reading THAT in the morning! It's no use trying to go to sleep, it won't let me alone. If I didn't write these thoughts down as they occur - they would be gone in the morning - lost forever. My best ideas seem to come after lights out! This article was no exception! So far, my articles have all come from my own experiences. I guess that's what I know best.

How do I write an article? Once I have my thoughts on paper, I organize them so the ideas flow naturally.

Next, I type a rough draft in TextPad. I never submit the first draft, I rewrite, recheck, retype, spell check, then proofread a zillion times.

When it's finally the way I want it, I count the words. I usually try to stay around 500 words and format to 60 characters per line. It's easier to get published if the article is not too long and is correctly formatted. Also, more people will read a shorter article than a much longer one.

After I'm satisfied with the final draft, I'll write a short cover letter to each editor, personalized with their name. I tell them the title, word count, and a short two to three sentence description of the article. I then copy and paste it into the email below the cover letter. I do NOT send it as an attachment. Attachments do not get opened due to all the viruses we have. I always send as plain text, never HTML format.

Next, I get my list of editors that I submit to and start submitting to them individually, according to their guidelines. Some editors prefer you to request to submit an article, and when I do, I tell them the title, word count and brief description of the article. Most will let you submit the article at once with "Article" in the subject line of the email. I usually receive an acknowledgement from the editors with a personal comment on my article, and the date they expect to publish it.

And that's all there is to it! I'm always surprised to see myself in print. I never thought of myself as a writer, (except email!) And now I've received several requests for weekly or monthly articles.

Guess I'd better get busy!

Written by Peg Bastin
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