

# Just Write an E-mail

By Stephan Miller

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How did you sell your last product? Imagine that I am a newbie writing you an e-mail after reading your ebook. How would you answer the question? I bet you could send me a 300 word reply in no time. Words would flow from your keyboard as fast as you can type. You have just written your next article. Don't think so? Too easy? Read the next paragraph.

Robert Allen has written you an e-mail. He needs you to write a chapter in a new book that he is putting together and he needs it in a week. Are you up to the task? Can you have it done in time? The theme of the chapter: the unique way that you sold your last product. Okay, start writing. How long did it take you to write the first sentence? A hour, two. Remember, millions of readers will be viewing the results.

If you want to, do both exercises above and compare the results. Which piece reads better? Which one sounds like a high school textbook? Read them aloud and I bet the answer becomes clearer. You would be proud to let anyone read the e-mail addressed to the newbie but create a pen name for the book chapter. Why is there a difference here? Both of the subjects were the same. The same person wrote both pieces. Or was it the same person?

In example one, you were yourself. You were just answering a question. You were more than happy to explain your knowledge to someone who just casually wrote you an e-mail. In example two, you became "the author". Maybe you had to outline the chapter first, make notes, research it. In other words, do as many things as possible to put off what you really sat down to do. Just write. After all, with thousands of readers critiquing your work, everything has to be perfect. There is no room for mistakes. And yet the e-mail reads better.

So why not write an e-mail. The next time you have a great idea for an article, turn that idea into a question and e-mail it to yourself. Well, you don't actually have to go that far, but if it helps, do it. Then all you have to do is reply to it. Don't worry about grammar. Don't worry about going off on a tangent. That tangent may be exactly what you need to make your article, oops, "e-mail" stand out. Just explain everything you need to in order to get your point across. If you need to, click "Create" in Outlook and start writing. Try it. And don't follow the instructions in the next few paragraphs until you are done with your e-mail.

When you are done, read it out loud. Any time you slow down or stumble over the words, cut those word out. Any part that sounds like your sixth grade English teacher instead of you, chop it. Take no prisoners. You will know your own voice when you hear it. Just listen for it. Your readers want a new perspective just as much as they want information. You are not writing for the New York Times and

you definitely don't want to become Joe Friday. Slip the facts in with your personality and your readers will be flocking to your web site in search of more info. Or for that matter, they will be flocking just about anywhere you want them to flock.

Don't forget to make sure you covered everything that you needed to cover. If you need add a word here and rearrange paragraphs there, do so. Once the idea is alive in your e-mail, it is hard to kill it. Don't worry about that. Just make your e-mail complete. You will know when it is. You will get that feeling that is hard to explain, but involves printing your article out, sticking it to your refrigerator, telling your neighbors, and rehearsing for your Pulitzer Prize acceptance speech. If you notice any of these symptoms, you can now safely begin to refer to your "e-mail" as an article without killing it or triggering writer's block.

Use this method as described and I promise you will become a much more productive writer. So how did you make your last online sale? Write me an e-mail.

P. S. I did write this in Outlook and addressed it directly to you.

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Stephan Miller is a ebay seller, freelance programmer,  
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