

How to Get Ideas for Internet Articles

By Susan Dunn

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I wrote hundreds of articles for the Internet last year. This year I plan to double the output.

I write in two areas: Internet marketing and personal development. I write to promote my own practice, but I also offer an article-writing service, and I ghost write, so “ideas” is what I do, and they have to flow. Last year I was asked to write articles about mufflers, animal communicators, a special kind of insulation, palm trees, how to present on a cruise ...

How do you come up with ideas?

1. See this for what it really is – personal and professional development and life skills.

What you are doing is developing your emotional intelligence. One of the EQ competencies is creativity. Generating topic articles requires creativity, but – and this is far more important to your Real Life – so does problem solving. You have to be able to generate options and alternatives. So develop your emotional intelligence – take a [href=http://www.susandunn.cc/courses.htm](http://www.susandunn.cc/courses.htm)courses/A, work with an EQ coach. Work on developing your creativity. Then a lot more than your articles will benefit!

2. Be curious!

Anything you’re doing for another and more fun reason turns out better. I happen to be a very curious person. I get on a search engine and chase rabbits. I read a phrase I don’t understand and I go look it up. Happened just the other day. I was researching another topic and ran across the phrase “anodyne therapy.” I stopped right there and went and looked into that and came up with about 10 new article topics. This is NOT what your teacher told you to do. Your teacher told you to focus and “stay on task.” You’re a grown-up now. The way you become creative is to become curious.

3. Listen to personal anecdotes.

People like to read about other people more than anything else. If you listen to people with that in mind, you’ll have all the material you can possibly use. I’m lucky in that respect because I talk to clients all day long. They feed me material. They give me “proof” and concrete examples of everything I talk about in an article. They give me metaphors!

4. Not in a pipeline? Create your own.

By that I mean, call up someone and interview them. When you read an interesting article, call the person who wrote it, interview them, and turn that into an article.

5. Whatever you just learned, turn around and teach that. Write an article about it.

People are entering the Internet for the first time every day, and there's a long continuum of knowledge. If you just discovered article syndicates, there are a million people out there who've never heard of one.

6. Think topical and work 6-8 weeks ahead.

January 1, you should be thinking about Valentine's Day and tax time, whatever your field. There are web publishers looking for relevant articles. If your field is organizational coaching, tell people how to have an organized Valentine's Day, or how to organize their taxes. If your field is Internet marketing, tell people how to make use of events and holidays. I'm writing this on January 16th. Right now I'm through with Valentine's Day and Super Bowl and thinking about "spring." (Yes, I "used" Super Bowl – in various ways, actually.)

7. Think cross-categories.

One of my specialties is emotional intelligence. As you can see I've just applied it to article content, for which it is eminently applicable. I have also written the following: articles on "How to Have an Emotionally Intelligent Valentine's Day;" "How to Manage in an Emotionally Intelligent Way," for the business audience; "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child," for parents; and an ebook titled "How to Write for the Internet Using Your Emotional Intelligence," just to name a few.

8. Your time is the scarcest commodity. Take every topic and chew it to the bone.

When you read a landmark book, for instance, and come across a new "idea", write a book review. Then write an article about the ideas in the book relating it to management, personal life, marketing, sales, self help, family life ... every way it's applicable. There are sites dedicated to all these topics. Then write a Top Ten. Then write a Business Top 7. Then go and review the book on amazon.com (yes, I've gotten clients that way). Then write "tinies" for the ap-shorts yahoo group. Then extract quotes from it and submit them to coachville. Milk it for all its worth. The "serendipity" if you're in a professional field such as coaching, is that by the end you are going to KNOW that topic, and your clients will benefit.

9. Go where your people go and find out what they're interested in.

If your target market is working moms, continually cruise those sites and see what topics are current.

10. No matter how tired the subject, you have something new to say about it because it's coming from you.

11. When you're stuck, look right under your nose.

What problem are YOU dealing with right now? For instance, the plague of my life right now is I'm a coach and I can't find a headset that works. Now surely there are 10,000 coaches out there struggling with that same problem who would like me to research that topic for them and help them out. Excuse me, I gotta run. I've got an article to write!

12. Hypnagogic time.

That's a big \$5 word there. It's the time just before you drift off to sleep. Tell your brain you'd like to have some article ideas. Maybe in the shower the next morning, or later that day something will "pop" into your mind as if by magic ... when actually it's because you invited it to! Remember to keep it positive, i.e., "When I wake up tomorrow I'll have lots of great ideas for articles." USE your brain; that's what it's there for.

13. Lucky number13 - if you don't love what you're doing, don't do it.

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