

# E-zine Advertising vs. Article Writing : A Marketing Comparison

By Will Dylan

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In the face of such conflicting advice, what should a small businessperson do to promote their on-line venture? The answer : take a balanced approach to promoting your business through e-zines. There is a place for both advertising and publication in your business plan. Consider the following comparison to determine what's right for you:

## Time Investment

Advertising requires very little time investment. Most e-zine ads are just a few lines long, eliminating the need to develop a load of copy for your ad. A catchy headline and an intriguing one-line ad will do the trick. The e-zine publisher will do the rest.

Article Writing requires a much greater time investment. E-zines generally prefer articles of about 500 words in length, considerably longer than the 30 word ad that you could place in the same e-zine. Generating topics, writing and editing your article, and distributing it requires a considerable effort.

## Cost

Advertising is not free in the on-line world. Any ezine with a decent subscriber base will charge you a placement fee depending on the size of the ad you place. Solo ads in which you get an exclusive top line ad placement are the most expensive, down to the inexpensive 3 line classifieds that appear at the end of most e-zines.

In contrast, article writing and publication is generally free. There is no cost to you to have one of your articles published. In exchange for your valuable article, e-zine publishers will place a resource box at the bottom of your article, with a brief description of your business and a link to your site. That link can be very valuable, as e-zine readers that find your article interesting can visit your site with one click of their mouse.

## Placement

Ad placement is guaranteed. If you pay for ad space, you will get it. This allows you to track your advertising results, as you will know exactly where your ad is running and when.

Articles come with no guarantees. While most article banks encourage publishers to contact the author when they use one of your articles, this does not always happen. Without knowing where and when your article might be used, it's very difficult to determine which articles are working for you and which aren't.

## Results

Advertising can be highly successful if targeted to the right audience and if the ad presents the reader with a compelling reason to visit your website.

Articles published in e-zines carry a high level of credibility. Readers believe that the author is an expert on the subject due to the quality of information put forth in the article. So a small business marketing company that prepares an informative article about search engine placement will be regarded as an expert on the topic by e-zine readers. These potential customers may click on the URL at the bottom of the article to learn more about the company's expertise.

Clearly, a balance is required between these two promotional tools. The immediate guaranteed placement and ability to track results make advertising a popular choice. However, the cost effectiveness and credibility of e-zine article writing also offers benefits. The best approach is to focus on article writing and use advertising as a traffic driver to promote special events on your website such as a sale or the launch of a new product.

One last word about combining an ad and an article...don't do it! If you look to some of the countries largest marketers, you'll notice that they never place an ad anywhere near an article that mentions their business. The reason: credibility. Placing a paid ad in an e-zine above or below your article gives the impression that you somehow "bought" the article space. It reduces the credibility of your article, as readers may believe that your article was selected not on the basis of its quality, but rather in exchange for your ad placement. If you receive an offer from an e-zine publisher who wants you to buy an ad in exchange for publication, buy an ad in the next issue of the e-zine and NOT in the issue that will feature your article.

Will Dylan is the Author of "Small Business Big Marketing" a powerful e-book for small businesses available through his website <http://www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com> . Will also offers article and news release writing services. You can contact Will at <mailto:askwill@marketingyoursmallbusiness.com>

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