

Special Report

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Press Releases and Articles

How you can utilize press releases and article submission to build your retirement plan business.

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Press Releases and Articles

What you need to do

Press releases and articles are important to building your retirement business. Frequency breeds familiarity. The more frequently you position yourself as the authority in your area the more familiar both the media outlets, and more importantly, your prospects will become with you.

What is an article and why write one?

Article writing is something that is useful to you on a couple of fronts. First of all an article will make you seem like an expert in your area. Secondly, an article will get your name and firm recognized by key retirement plan decision makers in your area.

An article is just basically a few paragraphs on a subject that you believe will be of interest to others. The length of an article should be between 500 and 1000 words and it is very important to keep it tight to a subject so that people will be interested in reading it.

Well researched and written articles would also boost your credibility with editors and reporters. You will be regarded as well informed and an expert on the subjects that you tackle. When you have gained their trust, they will always come for you for their needs on that subject.

You should also put a copy of your articles on your website. Provide links on your home page and include links in your e-newsletter. It not only helps build your credibility with web site visitors but will also help improve your search engine listing.

Start Simple – Write a letter to the editor

One of the best ways to gain credible visibility is to submit an opinion piece to a major newspaper and have it published.

In an op-ed, you essentially state your conclusion first. Make your strongest point right up front, and then spend the rest of the op-ed building your case, or "back-filling" with the facts.

Done right, its persuasive writing at its best. You'll gain high-quality publicity, and you will be reaching that elite audience of opinion-makers who regularly read the op-ed pages.

Here's a checklist to keep your op-ed on track:

- * Focus tightly on one issue or idea -- in your first paragraph. Be brief.
- * Express your opinion, then base it on factual, researched or first-hand information.

- * Be timely, controversial, but not outrageous.
- * Be the voice of reason.
- * Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point.
- * Have a clear editorial viewpoint -- come down hard on one side of the issue.
- * Don't equivocate.
- * Provide insight, understanding: Educate your reader without being preachy.
- * Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action.
- * Don't ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay.
- * Use clear, powerful, direct language.
- * Emphasize active verbs.
- * Forget the adjectives and adverbs, which only weaken writing.
- * Avoid clichés and jargon.
- * Appeal to the average reader.

Clarity is paramount. Write 750 double-spaced words or less (fewer is always better). Include a brief bio, along with your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the bottom.

While it's tempting to fire off your op-ed to The New York Times, remember that there are many other major newspapers to consider.

That 'Times' receives more op-eds daily than any other paper in the United States, so competition is fierce. It's better to be published in another excellent paper than to be not published in The New York Times.

Embrace Controversy

You probably see them all the time on TV news shows and Cable Networks such as CNBC and MSNBC. People who offer a contrarians viewpoint go against the grain of public opinion.

The next time you watch a network news show and they interview a supposed expert, take a close look at the title superimposed on the TV screen for that person. You will notice 9 times out of 10 that that person is no more knowledgeable about that particular subject matter than most business executives.

Media outlets love these people. It's not surprising since the media love to rile their audience and spur debates.

You can get your turn in the media spotlight by making startling statements:

- * Take issue with a survey result.
- * Disagree with a common belief or counteract a stereotype.

- * Champion an underdog.
- * Reveal common misconceptions.
- * Make surprising predictions.
- * Expose flaws in something assumed to be beneficial.
- * Describe the underside of something popular.

Bob Baker and three colleagues in the music business collaborated on a release titled "What's Wrong with American Idol?" criticizing the popular U.S. talent show for misleading aspiring musicians and the public about what it takes to succeed in music. Baker's reward for stirring up controversy: five radio interviews that highlighted his status as an expert on careers in music.

How to Create an Outline for All of Your Articles

We've done it through junior high, it expanded longer through high school, then on college it became chapters. No matter how many times a person has done it, writing articles has proven to be a task many have continuously avoided. Now at a time when writing articles could help your job or work, facing the job at hand can be still faced with unfriendly behavior.

While there are a great number of people who do not have the same attitude in article writing as others, there are still those who would rather walk in piping hot coals than do some article writing. What set other people apart from other towards article writing is that they are prepared and has some methods and procedures in writing articles.

One of the methods you can use to prepare yourself when tasked to write in article is creating an outline first. Creating an outline for all your articles makes you prepared. You have an idea of what to do first and make a plan for your succeeding steps. Being prepared makes the job easier and faster. Being organized will allow for disorientation to be shunned away.

An outline can act as the design or blueprint for your article. This will guide you in creating the introduction, body and conclusion of your article. Here in this point, you can write down some of the ideas and sentences that you feel will look good in your article. This could be some of the focal point that could help make your article creative, interesting and appealing to a reader.

A carefully planned and fully prepared project would guarantee and ensure a problem and worry free procedure that can virtually go without any hassles. Creating an outline for all your articles will get you ready and breeze through writing an article in no time at all.

Do a couple of brainstorming and jot down your brilliant ideas first. Think of some ways to attract the interest of your reader. Designate a time frame where you can

write down all the ideas that you can use for your articles. By this time you should have done all your research and information searching. Review and reread your ideas and notes, gain mastery and sufficient familiarity with your topic so that writing them down later on would be easy for you.

The next step is to discover your sub topic and sub titles. As you would provide a first sentence for your article, one that would immediately grab the attention of your reader, you would need some as well for your sub topics. To be concise, you would need to get all the facts that will support and go against your point.

These are the frames or skeleton of your article, now its time to add the flesh and the meat of your article. You will need to connect all your paragraphs and sub topics. This will form the body of your Article. While the introduction will usher in the ideas of your paragraph, you will need a conclusion. The conclusion will wrap up your points and drive in what you are saying in your article.

The outline for your article would also require you to write a draft first. This may take more than one attempt but remember that it is called a draft for a reason. Your outline shall be perfected as each draft is written and this draft is meant for your eyes only so there's no reason to feel ashamed.

As you go on, you will clearly see the bigger picture and write an article that will perfectly suit what is demanded of it.

Read and reread what you have written down. Always refer to your outline so that you won't drift away from what you had first written down. It's not hard to be caught in the moment and get lost in your writing frenzy.

Your outline will help you keep in track. All the time spent in outlining your article will not go to waste. This will serve as your guide in writing articles. Trust and rely on your outline because this will prove to be a very helpful tool in writing all of your articles.

What To Write To Get Your Articles Read

There are many people who dread having to write articles. Making a good article doesn't have to be strenuous and straining. There are just some points needed to be reminded of, and some guides to follow. Once you get the hang of it, writing articles could be fun, as well as profitable for you and your site.

Of course, writing articles must be about something you know about, that's why if you own a retirement practice, you probably are knowledgeable about that certain topic and theme. When you write about it, you won't have a hard time because you already know what it is and what it's about. It's just a matter of making your articles creative and interesting.

To make sure that your articles get read and enjoyed, here are six tips to get your articles read. These tips will make your articles readable and interesting.

1. **Use short paragraphs.** When the paragraphs are very long, the words get jumbled in the mind of the reader just looking at it can get quite confusing

and too much of a hard work to read. The reader will just quickly disregard the paragraph and move on to much easier reading articles that are good to look at as well as read.

Readability doesn't necessarily involve any "dumbing down." Microsoft Word has a built-in readability checker, or use this readability calculator:

<http://resources.aellalei.com/tools/writer/sample.php>.

In the 1930s and 1940s, newspaper circulation plunged. Then readability pioneers Rudolph Flesch and Robert Gunning worked with the Associated Press and United Press to make news writing more readable. When the average reading level of newspapers dropped from the 12th to the 9th grade, readership rose 45%. The same would happen today.

2. **Make use of numbers or bullets.** As each point is stressed out, numbers and bullets can quickly make the point easy to remember and digest. As each point, tip, guide or method is started with a bullet or point, readers will know that this is where the tips start and getting stressed. Format your bullets and numbers with indentations so that your article won't look like a single block of square paragraphs. Add a little bit of flair and pizzazz to your articles shape.
3. **Use Sub-headings to sub-divide your paragraphs in the page.** Doing this will break each point into sections but still would be incorporated into one whole article. It would also be easy for the reader to move on from one point to another; the transition would be smooth and easy. You will never lose your readers attention as well as the point and direction to where the article is pointing.
4. **Provide a good attention-grabbing title or header.** If your title can entice a person's curiosity you're already halfway in getting a person to read your article. Use statements and questions that utilize keywords that people are looking for. Provide titles or headers that describe your articles content but should also be short and concise. Use titles like, "Tips on making her want you more", or "How to make her swoon and blush" .You could also use titles that can command people, for example, "Make her yours in six easy Ways". These types of titles reach out to a persons' emotions and makes them interested.
5. **Keep them interested from the start to the finish.** From your opening paragraph, use real life situations that can be adopted by the reader. Use good descriptions and metaphors to drive in your point, just don't over do it. Driving your examples with graphic metaphors and similes would make it easy for them to imagine what you are talking about. Making the experience pleasurable and enjoyable for them.
6. **Utilize figures when necessary and not just ordinary and insipid statements.** Using specific facts and figures can heighten your article because it makes it authoritative. But do not make it too formal, it should be light and easy in them and flow. Like a friendly teacher having a little chat with an eager student.

Writing the Resource Box

A resource box is what you usually find at the end of an article. They will contain the name of the author, a brief description of the author, a brief description of the sponsoring site and a link.

If a reader likes what they read, they would have the tendency to find out where the article came from to read more. The resource box will be their link to the source of the article and this will entice them to go to the site and do some more reading or research for the subject or topic they are interested in.

But like the article itself, the resource box must also be eye-catching to demand the attention and interest of the reader. While the resource box encompasses only a small space, providing the right keywords and content for your resource box will provide more prodding for the reader to contact you.

You only get a small space for your resource box so you better make the most of it. Try to catch the attention of your reader with resource box content that can make them give a second look. Unlike TV ads, you don't have visual aids to drive your point in. But you do have the power of imagination of a reader. With the right content, you can make them think and intrigued.

Another tip is to use keywords that should be related to your site. Do not mislead your potential website visitors. Build your credibility so that more people would get enticed to visit your website. You only get one chance to wow them and hundreds of chances to repulse them.

Never underestimate the power of the resource box. It may be small in size but they will provide a significant aid. A boring resource box will never get a job done. Be fun and creative but at the same time show that you have a great deal to offer.

Is it too much to ask for something that couldn't fit in a paragraph? Yes and no, there are many tips and guides that can help you in doing this. The first step is realizing how important a resource box could be in making people want to contact you.

What are Press Releases?

What is a press release anyway? Well a Press release usually is some kind of a new story that can be picked up by newspapers and other offline journals. I think that the best example of a press release is something that will affect everyone in a given market.

Here are some examples of great fodder for press releases: Website changes that help plan sponsors and their participants, market analysis for the last month, legal or regulatory events for the retirement industry that can affect local companies.

The real power of a press release is that your local newspaper can pick up the press release and viola you are in the paper with all the accolades and good press that go along with it. This can also work for magazines, TV, radio and just about any other form of media.

Where to submit your Press Releases

The places to make sure that you submit your press releases to is local newspapers and magazines as well as to online distribution services. With most of the online services you can get syndicated across the country. They can also help with article submission but you will have to pay more to get it promoted properly.

PR Distribution Services

PR Web www.prweb.com
PR Newswire www.prnewswire.com
Business Wire www.businesswire.com (my personal favorite)

Online Media Directories

Contacts on Tap www.cornerbarpr.com (they offer a free 14 day trial)

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Doug has 21 years direct marketing experience and is considered by many as one of the nation's leading authorities in direct response advertising and behavioral marketing.

Plan Sponsor Lead Generation. TMS Direct offers a cost effective, proven lead generation program for advisors to reach out to CEO's, CFO's and HR Managers. The results are immediate lead generation while creating and building brand and market awareness like no program you've ever seen. For more information contact Doug Hall at 704-543-7070 or email him at doug.hall@tms-direct.com.