

Lesson #24

The 31-Day Guide To Article Marketing Part 3 of 4

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Day 17: How to Write Story Articles

So far we've talked about fairly straightforward types of articles, such as the tips article or the presell promotional. In this lesson you'll discover how to write a "story" article, which can be used to inspire readers, share information in a memorable way, share a case study (social proof), or even presell a product or service.

Story articles work well for the following reasons:

- They engage your reader's emotions and allow the reader to identify with the main character in the story. This works especially well if you're trying to presell a product or service.
- People like stories... so they'll keep reading, all the way down to your byline.
- You can use stories to make a point. And a point made with a story is far more memorable than just offering tips or examples in a straightforward way.

Here's an example of an inspirational story article that's used as a presell for a product. (Note that this is a fictional example.)

Title: How a Former Kindergarten Teacher Made \$48,837.21 in Just 24 Hours

Introduction: Talk about how this former teacher barely scraped by on \$17,000 a year. And that as much as she loved teaching, she couldn't survive on that wage. In other words, make the reader identify with the pain of living paycheck to paycheck.

Body (about 2-4 paragraphs): Now tell the story of how this teacher used her summer vacation to create a product and a website. Explain how she had no technical knowledge, but how she followed a step-by-step product-creation and marketing course to learn the ropes. Give a brief overview of the steps she took.

Then share her success, such as what happened on launch day, how much money she pulled in, etc. Share her relief at being able to pay all her bills, go on a vacation, etc.

Conclusion: Finally, wrap up the article by noting that if a kindergarten teacher with no tech knowledge can do it, anyone can do it. Create a call to action telling readers that they can duplicate this teacher's success if they follow the link.

Note: If this article is posted in an article directory that doesn't allow promotional material, then your article needs to be just inspirational without being promotional. That means you can't include a call to action in the final paragraph.

Byline: If you post this article on your own blog, then no byline is needed since your conclusion creates your call to action. Otherwise, reiterate your call to action here and include a link to the product.

In sum, while you can use story articles for a variety of purposes, they do work well to presell a product (since you can engage your readers' emotions and offer proof that the product works).

If you'd rather use a more direct way to sell a product (without actually creating a hard sell pitch), then you'll love tomorrow's lesson!

Day 18: How to Write Product Review and Comparison Articles

Back on Days #12 and #13 you learned how to write presell informative and presell promotional articles.

You can also presell a product (or service) by doing product reviews or product comparisons.

Here's the key to making this work: You need to list both the product flaws as well as the strengths. That's because your readers know that the product isn't perfect.

So if you write a "review" that doesn't include any negatives, your readers aren't going to entirely trust you. And that means your conversion and click-through rates will plummet.

Instead, be honest and share the product weaknesses too. Your readers will appreciate your honesty and they'll feel you're trustworthy. And that means more sales for you.

Here's an example of how to do a product review:

Title: The Truth About [Product Name]

Introduction: Give a brief overview of the product and what it does for the customer (e.g., the main benefits of the product).

For example: You can quickly and easily improve your conversion rate using this headline-writing software.

Body of the article: Here you list the pros and cons of the product. You may list strengths and in the first paragraph and weaknesses in the second paragraph.

Example strength: The software is intuitive and easy to use. In just five minutes I created a headline that I later tested and found to double my conversion rate!

Example weakness: This product is not without its problems, however. For starters, the software doesn't work on Mac computers.

Conclusion: Finally, you wrap up in one or two paragraphs by clearly stating whether you recommend the product or not. If you do recommend it, then provide a link along with a call to action. (Example: I strongly encourage you to get a copy for yourself by clicking here...)

Tip: Why would you write a product review about a product that you don't recommend? Because it builds trust with your readers. So while you won't make any money for this product since you're not even linking to it, you WILL make money the next time you do recommend a product. And that's because people buy from those they know, like and TRUST.

Byline: No byline required if this is posted on your blog. Otherwise, you can use the byline to reiterate the call to action. Alternatively, you can point the byline to your squeeze page, where you encourage people to join your list to receive more product reviews.

If you're doing a product comparison instead, then your outline will look something like this:

Title: [Product name 1] Or [Product name 2] - Which One is Right for You?

Introduction: List the two products and let the readers know up front which one you feel is better. Then tell readers to read on to discover why you think this product is superior.

Body of the article:

- Paragraph 1: Product 1 strengths
- Paragraph 2: Product 2 strengths
- Paragraph 3: Product 1 weaknesses
- Paragraph 4: product 2: weaknesses

Conclusion: Mention again which product you think is superior and list the overall reason why it's superior. Alternatively, you may recommend both products, but for different audiences.

For example: If you just need to lose 10 pounds, then go with [Product 1]. Otherwise, I highly recommend you choose [Product 2] because...

Finally, provide a call to action along with a link for BOTH products. However, if you wouldn't recommend the inferior product at all, then say so (and don't provide a link).

Byline: No byline required. Otherwise, create a byline as described in the product review article template.

In sum, your readers are actively seeking out product reviews and comparisons in your niche. You can make money by providing this valuable service.

Next up, you'll learn how to write a press release...

Day 19: How to Write a Press Release Article

A press release is a little different than the other articles we've talked about, since your intention is to get the media to reprint your release.

As such, your press release shares "news" and shouldn't be directly promotional.

Tip: Alternatively, you can create a "tips" or "how to" article and send it to print publications that accept these sorts of submissions.

Let me give you a sample press release that is adapted from a tips article.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Your name, address, email address and phone number]

Headline

Example: Number of Dogs Suffering from Heat Exhaustion Skyrockets as Mercury Climbs

City, State, Date - [press release opening paragraph]

Note: The opening paragraph should give the "who, what, where, when and how" details. That is, someone who just reads the first paragraph should have a good idea of what the article is about. In this example, the first paragraph would talk about how heat exhaustion affects dogs and how to recognize its symptoms.

[Body of release]

Note: In continuing with the dog example, you might now provide 3-5 tips about how to keep a dog cool and what to do if the dog shows symptoms. Here you should also include a quote from yourself or your company. For example: "Jack Johnson from yourdomain.com says that one of the best ways to keep your dogs cool is to [add tip here]"

[Conclusion]

The final paragraph would summarize the main point of the article.

[Byline]

Different media accepts different types of bylines. In some cases, you only be able to provide your name and web address. In other cases, you may be able to provide a call to action (such as "visit yourdomain.com for more summer safety tips for your dog...").

To find out what you can do, read back issues of the publication to see what they allow.

The best way to get published is to read issues of the publication and model your release after those that are already printed.

So if you want to get published in your local paper, then spend 30 minutes or so reading as many past issues of the publication to see what kind of releases and articles the editor prefers.

Tip: While you can submit press releases to certain article directories and place them on your blog, you'll also want to submit them directly to the proper editors of publications in which you'd like the release to appear. You can also submit it online using PRWeb.com.

If you've been writing an article for each lesson, you should have at least eight articles ready to go. Tomorrow I'll give you tips on submitting and posting these articles, and then you'll soon discover dozens of places to distribute them!

Day 20: Rewriting Articles Before Submitting to Multiple Directories

There may be times when you want to rewrite an article before submitting it someplace else. In this lesson you'll learn how to rewrite your articles quickly and easily.

Here are just few reasons you might want to rewrite an article:

- To turn a "how to" article into an article that's optimized for the search engines.
- To turn an optimized article into an article that's optimized for different keywords. For example, an article optimized around the keywords "flatten your belly" could be instead optimized for "flatten your stomach" or even "lose weight around the middle."
- To turn a presell promotional article into a "tips" article so that you can submit it to EzineArticles.com.
- To turn one article into five or six different articles, simply by expanding on the tips in the original article.
- To create two articles – one to post on a third-party site, and the better article to post on your blog.

Obviously, your purpose for rewriting the article is going to affect the process of rewriting. Nonetheless, here's how to rewrite an article to turn it into a slightly different version of an article on the same topic.

Tip: You can also use these tips to rewrite PLR (private label rights) articles to create unique content. See Day #30's lesson for more tips on how to rewrite PLR.

Step #1: Change the title. This one is self-explanatory. If you're using new keywords, then be sure to include those keywords in the new title.

Step #2: Rewrite the introduction. Ideally, you should write a completely new introduction. So for example, think up a new story and include that in your introduction. Then tell your readers what they're about to learn.

Step #3: Add or change the examples. If you have a "tips" or "how to" article, then add in new examples and/or replace the existing examples. This is an easy way to make the article fresh while still keeping the basic structure and the same tips or step-by-step process.

Also:

- If you have a "tips" article, then you can add tips, delete tips and/or reorder the tips to freshen the article.
- If you have a "how to" article, then you can elaborate on some of the steps to freshen the article.

Step 4: Rewrite the conclusion. Finally, create an entirely new concluding paragraph. However, the purpose is the same in that you should summarize the article and, when applicable, call the prospect to action.

Note: If your current byline has a good click-through rate, then you don't need to change your byline at all.

It only takes a few minutes to rewrite articles. Indeed, you can take one article and turn it into four or five (or possible more) new articles in about an hour!

Now that you have all these articles, you probably want to get start getting eyeballs on them. You'll learn how to do that starting in tomorrow's lesson...

Day 21: Submitting to the Top 20 Article Directories (Part 1)

Today you start submitting your articles to the top article directories!

You can get internal traffic from these sites, external traffic from the search engines, and links back to your site. You may even have publishers reprinting your articles, meaning you have a chance to get more traffic, links and exposure!

Below you'll find the first half of the top 20 articles. Tomorrow I'll share with you another ten directories.

Tip: You can submit manually if you'd like. Once you set up your accounts at each of these places, it only takes a few moments to copy and paste an article. However, you can find several software solutions that will help you submit to many of these directories (as well as directories not mentioned here). Check out tools like UniqueArticleWizard.com or ArticleProSoftware.com.

1. www.EzineArticles.com

If you only submit to one directory, submit to this one. That's because it not only gets a lot of internal traffic, Google also adores it. And that means you can rank well for your longtail keywords.

Please note, however, that all articles are reviewed by Ezine Articles editors. As such, be sure to follow their guidelines carefully or risk having your article rejected.

2. www.IdeaMarketers.com

IdeaMarketers is not just an article directory – it also allows certain service providers to advertise their services. As such, it's a good place to submit articles if you're in a service business (like consulting or copywriting).

3. www.WebProNews.com

This site is good if you're writing business-related articles. However, this site also doesn't accept every article that's submitted, so read their guidelines first.

4. www.Buzzle.com

This site continues to gain in popularity, traffic and Google Page Rank (PR), which is good if you're trying to rank well for your longtail keywords.

5. www.GoArticles.com

This one is quickly becoming a favorite among article marketers since it's easy to submit your articles and it seems to get a lot of love from Google.

6. www.Helium.com

Helium considers its writers "stakeholders," and thus it shares revenue with you on the articles you write. The more traffic your article gets and/or the more popular (highly rated) it is, the more you can potentially earn. This is a good site if you're looking to build your brand and establish name recognition or establish yourself as an expert on a certain topic.

7. www.isnare.com

Isnare is an article directory in its own right. However, you can also use Isnare to submit your article to other sites and directories.

8. www.Amazines.com

This article directory gets a lot of traffic relative to other directories.

9. www.ArticleAlley.com

Here's another directory that gets a good amount of traffic and is consistently ranked in marketer's top 20 lists of favorite directories.

10. www.ArticleCity.com

Good traffic, good Google PR, and it allows you to submit articles in bulk.

Note: At the time of this writing, the bulk article feature is temporarily disabled due to spam.

Go ahead and register for accounts at these ten sites now and then start submitting your articles. Tomorrow you'll get the second half of the list.

Day 22: Submitting to the Top 20 Article Directories (Part 2)

Yesterday I shared with you the first half of the Top 20 list. Here's the second half...

11. www.ArticlePool.com

This one gets plenty of traffic and has a good PR, yet it's still a fairly small directory. And that means you have a chance to get more exposure.

12. www.a1articles.com

Good traffic, good Page Rank and top authors get listed in a premium place on the front page (which is good exposure for you).

13. www.ArticleSnatch.com

This site is considered an authority site by Google, so it's a good place to submit your search engine optimized articles.

14. www.ArticleWarehouse.com

Here's another directory that's currently small but growing. Get exposure now before too many new authors discover this site.

15. www.ArticleDashboard.com

I'd consider this a "Top Ten" site. If you only submit to a handful of sites, be sure this one is on your list.

16. BusinessKnowHow.com

This is a niche site that accepts submissions for business-related articles.

17. www.ArticlesFactory.com

Like many directories, recently submitted articles are listed on the front page of this site. Since it's a smaller site, your articles will stay on the front page a little longer (thus getting more exposure).

18. www.ArticleManiac.com

Another solid directory with good traffic and PR.

19. www.WebArticles.com

Another niche directory (focused on family, crafts, parenting and similar).

20. www.article-idea.com

Pretty typical article directory. Please note that your articles must be over 400 words long, however.

There you have it – the top 20 article directories. Take a few minutes now to register for accounts on these sites and start submitting your articles.

In the next lesson you'll start learning about other popular places to distribute your articles!

Day 23: Using Your Articles to Create Squidoo Lenses

[Squidoo](#) isn't an article directory. Instead, it's a social media site that allows users to create a lens (a page) around the niche topic of their choosing. And because Google gives this site a lot of love, you can use it to get your content ranked well in the search engines.

Here's how to use the site...

Step #1: Register for your free account.

This is a social site, meaning other users want to get to know you. As such, take the time to fill out your profile and add a picture. In addition, you get to link to all your other social site pages (like Twitter and Facebook) as well as to your website.

Step #2: Write your (SEO'ed) articles.

Usually, it's not enough to put just one 400 word article on your page. As long as you have the room, you can put multiple, highly related articles.

For example, let's say you're creating a weight loss lens. You can put a 500 word article on nutrition, a 500 word article on cardio exercise, a 500 word article on supplements and a 500 word article on strength training.

As already mentioned, you can and SHOULD optimize your lens for the search engines. Indeed, you can optimize each lens for multiple sets of keywords.

Also, Squidoo allows you to create multiple links leaving your Squidoo lens and pointing to your own website (or another website). If you're pointing to your own website, then be sure to optimize your links by using your keywords as your link's anchor text.

Tip: Create an informative "how to" or "tips" lens, and do any promotions indirectly (e.g., weave recommendations into your solid content). The reason is because other people will rate your lens, and lenses with good "how to"

information will always get rated higher than those that look like promotions. The higher your ratings, the more internal traffic you'll get.

Note: You should create a "call to action" on your lens where you specifically ask people to rate your lens.

Step #3: Promote your Squidoo page.

To help with your site rankings, you can promote your Squidoo page. You don't want to do this to the exclusion of your own website.

However, if you're doing something like bookmarking your own site on Digg.com or StumbleUpon.com, then you can take a moment and bookmark your Squidoo lens too. Or you might mention your Squidoo lens on your blog, for example.

Step #4: Get active on the Squidoo network.

Finally, get active on the Squidoo network by building your network of onsite "fans." The more fans you have, the more people who're likely to drop by and rate your lens... and that means the more traffic you'll get.

In addition, be sure to comment on other people's lenses, especially those that are related to yours. You can even link to your lens in your comments, which will help drive traffic to your lens.

Go ahead and get your Squidoo lens set up today. Tomorrow I'll show you another site where you can set up a similar page!

Day 24: Using Articles to Create Hub Pages

[HubPages](#) is very similar to [Squidoo](#), in that you can set up a page around a niche topic and interact with other HubPages users (AKA "hubbers"). And like Squidoo, HubPages gets a lot of love from Google, so you can use this site to rank well for your longtail keywords.

There is one difference, however: HubPages.com is more strict about your outgoing links and about what it considers "spammy" Hubs.

As such, you need to focus on create informative articles such as high quality tips or "how to" articles.

Don't use this site to post presell articles, press releases, product reviews or other promotional pieces.

The steps in creating your Hub Pages are similar to creating a Squidoo lens, so refer back to yesterday's lesson for more information. Here's the process:

Step #1: Register for your free account.

As usual, fill out your profile so that other Hubbers can get to know you.

Step #2: Write your (SEO'ed) articles.

Like Squidoo, your HubPages hub is set up in a Google-friendly way. For example, the name of your hub becomes the file name as well as the title for your page. And that means you can rank well for your longtail keywords if you sprinkle them throughout your page.

Tip: HubPages only allows two links pointing to the same website. Be sure to follow their publishing and linking guidelines or risk getting your account suspended.

Step #3: Promote your Hubs.

Here again, you don't want to spend time promoting your Hub Pages when you could be promoting your own site. But you can certainly promote your hubs alongside your own site.

Step #4: Network with other Hubbers.

Finally, you can and should build a "fans" list by networking with other Hubbers. Focus on networking and developing relationships with those who have hubs in your niche. You can exchange links with these folks, comment on each others' hubs and rate each others' hubs. All of this will increase your respective traffic and ratings.

Tip: You can and should link your hubs to one another. You may also create a mini network of links by linking together your hubs with your lenses, your blogs and your other third party pages (such as your [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) account).

Get started immediately by creating your first hub today. Tomorrow you'll learn how to combine article marketing with forum marketing!

To Be Continued Next Week