



Article Marketing: Beyond the Basics

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The Potential of Article Marketing

I am sure that if you have been marketing products or services online, for any length of time, you may have already heard about Article Marketing.

Many people have experienced great online success utilizing Article Marketing as a promotion method. I have generated in excess of \$10,000 in new sales several times, as a result of articles I have written and distributed. Many of my [article distribution](#) customers have reported similar results.

My most productive, single article generated \$38,000 in new sales over a three-day period, within just a week of having written the article.

In this particular case, one of my ghost writing customers wanted me to write the article on his behalf, and then to sign my own name as the author of the article.

I am very careful about putting my name on any article that I have written for a customer. I choose to do this on a very selective basis. If the article is not consistent with my online writing personality, then I won't put my name on it. For example, I would never put my name on an article about raising beef, because I write about online marketing.

In this particular case, I had told a story regarding different methods of online advertising. My client's website was only one website mentioned among eight websites. It is a fact that I presented a strong case for the client's website, but so that you know, I had used the client's service and I continue to use the service to this day.

The client called me three days after the publication of the article in a major online newsletter. He asked me if I made any money from the article. I shared that I had generated \$16,000 in sales. Then I asked him if it delivered sales to his site. The answer was a resounding, “Yes!”

This article generated \$16,000 in sales for my website, and it generated \$22,000 for my client’s website. By far, this was my single greatest success in Article Marketing.

Isn’t That Story Just Too Good To Be True?

I have talked to a lot of people who have tried Article Marketing who feel this story is a big bag of hot air, but I assure you that it is not hot air. The story is true – 100% true.

When talking to people online about Article Marketing, I have heard from a lot of people, *“But I tried Article Marketing, and I did not achieve any success at the level you are talking about in your story...”*

I hear you...

By the time you have finished reading this ebook, you will better understand how to write articles that will produce real profits for you and your websites and how to market those articles to a larger audience.

Quick Intro To Article Marketing

In a nutshell, the concept of Article Marketing is nothing more than Information Marketing, adapted for the Internet.

“Information Marketing” has been defined in a book written by Dan Kennedy, Bill Glazer and Robert Skrob, called “[The Official Get Rich Guide to Information Marketing](#)”. The following definition of “Information Marketing” has been taken from the above title:

Identifying a responsive market with high interest in a particular group of topics and expertise, packaging information products and services matching that interest (written/assembled by you or by others or both), and devising ways to sell and deliver it.

Article Marketing follows this same basic premise.

In Article Marketing, we package information in article format that people in our target market should want to read, and then we offer the article to online publishers for publication, at no cost to the publisher. We provide our articles to publishers for free, so long as the publisher agrees to keep the *About The Author* information (also known as, the *Author's Resource Box*) with the article, with live links to our websites.

If you are packaging your information for sale, you are in doing “Information Marketing”.

If on the other hand you are writing content to give away to publishers, as a method to advertise your business, you are using “Article Marketing”.

Using Information Marketing To Sell More Boxes

Many people are confused about the “how” and “why” of Article Marketing.

People tend to think, “Article Marketing is about advertising my business.” As a result, **people tend to make the mistake of trying to turn their articles into a sales pitch for their products, services and websites.**

I will cover the error of this strategy in greater depth as this ebook progresses, but at this time, I thought it could be helpful for you to see how a few offline businesses utilize Information Marketing to sell more boxes.

With the following real world examples, I hope to stretch your brain a little bit, so that you can begin to appreciate all of the possibilities of this marketing method.

Real World Example #1

My first “real-world” example is the Guardian First Funding Group, as advertised on television by Robert Wagner (*the actor from the 1970’s hit TV show, “Hart to Hart”*). Perhaps you remember from its ads where Wagner said they would be happy to send you an information package, which would explain in detail how “Reverse Mortgages” work.

When I started noticing the commercials on TV, I had no idea what a “Reverse Mortgage” was, and if I was interested in using the Guardian First service, it would be helpful for me to understand what this product was and how it could benefit

me. The company was willing to help me do that with its brochure – one that would answer all of my important questions about “Reverse Mortgages”. (*You can also [get this information](#) from Guardian First’s website.*)

In the case of the Guardian First Funding Group, they utilize Information Marketing to help people understand the product they sell, enabling them to capture the interest of more people, who may be interested in using its financial product.

Real World Example #2

This next example is one that only the ladies in the audience will appreciate. There is a company called [Red Heart Yarn](#). As you would expect, they sell yarn for knitting purposes.

On the inside of their yarn packaging, they provide patterns for their customers – patterns that their customers can use to make interesting and attractive blankets, sweaters and pillow cases.

Not only are they selling you the supplies for your next knitting project, they are giving you patterns to help you complete more attractive projects using their products.

Anyone who buys their yarn products will have a pattern to try, but also anyone who wants to dig through [their website](#) will also have dozens of additional patterns to choose from for any knitting project.

By showing their customers how to make more designs and products, they are increasing the demand for their products.

Real World Example #3

When you think of Rice Krispies® – the cereal – what else do you think of? Rice Krispies Treats®, perhaps?

Rice Krispies has become more than just a breakfast cereal. It has also become an integral component to snack food cooking, through the company's publication of the recipe for Rice Krispies Treats.

Directions:

1. In large saucepan melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat.
2. Add KELLOGG'S RICE KRISPIES cereal. Stir until well coated.
3. Using buttered spatula or wax paper evenly press mixture into 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan coated with cooking spray. Cool. Cut into 2-inch squares. Best if served the same day.

As you know, Rice Krispies is a breakfast cereal and most people eat it only for breakfast. But now that Kellogg's has given us a reason to eat its cereal in the afternoon and evening, we sometimes do.

This one example of Information Marketing has enabled Kellogg's to sell more of its "breakfast cereal" and to attract a larger following of customers, than perhaps it could have as just a breakfast cereal. (*My wife and I would never purchase this cereal, if it were not for the Rice Krispies Treats we feed to our children at parties.*)

This model has been so successful for the company that they have created other recipes in which its breakfast cereal could be used. [At its website](#), you will also find recipes for:

- Rice Krispies Treats® on a Stick
- Banana Pops
- Choco P' Nutty Bars

Real World Example #4

Another example from the food industry is Kraft Macaroni and Cheese®. On the back of any box of Kraft Mac & Cheese, you will find at least one recipe that will help you prepare a more tasty meal for your family, using the Kraft Mac & Cheese product. You can also get Mac & Cheese [recipes from the Kraft Foods website](#).

These recipes enable Kraft's customers to find more reasons to cook the Kraft Macaroni and Cheese product, more often, enabling the company to ship more boxes to grocery stores.

Real World Lessons

I could have literally given you hundreds of examples in connection to the food marketing, as the food marketing industry is perhaps the most savvy in the field of Information Marketing.

For the record, I am not gaining any financial compensation from the Real World example companies. I simply provided their information to show how a few offline companies utilize Information Marketing to help sell products.

With Information Marketing, you can literally sell information, or more to the point of this ebook, you can give away information that will help you sell more products and services.

When done correctly, Information Marketing can be very profitable to those who utilize it well.

The Most Common Article Marketing Mistake

The most common mistake people make in Article Marketing is to assume that since Article Marketing is a method of advertising that they should try to sell their products or services from within the article.

This is the reason that I spent the 2nd and 3rd chapters of this ebook discussing Information Marketing.

Let us take a look at the television industry real quickly. With more than 100 channels to choose from, we have a wide array of choices in the television programming we enjoy.

Pay channels such as HBO and Showtime have customers who pay for their services directly, so that they can focus completely on providing content. HBO has 38 million subscribers, and Showtime has 13 million monthly subscribers.

Regular channels give us the content for free, and they find advertisers willing to pay for advertising, as the desired method of covering the cost of content development.

Then we have Direct Marketing channels such as the Home Shopping Network, where they present their viewers a variety of products through the day, and they make their money when consumers buy the products they are selling on the air. In a typical year, the Home Shopping Network sells and ships 50 million products, direct to consumers.

The Pay Channels are not actually relevant to our point, but the regular television channels and the Direct Marketing channels are.

Regular television stations have had more than 70 years to perfect the content-to-advertising ratio. Since the television media companies make money by presenting advertising to their viewers, it should be obvious that they would want to present as much advertising as it is possible to do.

Interestingly, all of the regular television media companies present programming content (*educational & entertainment content*) for 42-minutes of every 60-minute time slot. On a 100-base percentage, this is “70% content” anchoring “30% advertising”.

If viewers wanted to watch all advertising – all the time, they should be flocking to the Home Shopping Network, but they are not. HSN sold 50-million products in 2008. Contrast this to the 97.5 million people who watched the 2008 Super Bowl – in its entirety, or the 9.6 million viewers who watch new Family Guy episodes every week on Fox.

The “all advertising – all the time” format is profitable for HSN, but it pales in comparison to the reach of content-based television that sells advertising to pay the bills.

Whether online advertisers want to believe it or not, the Internet is as popular as it is, because:

Lesson #1: Consumers have an insatiable appetite for useful information and entertaining content.

Consumers are not flocking to the Internet to read my advertising or yours!

People are flocking to the Internet to learn what they want to learn. When people are not online to learn, they are seeking to be entertained.

If you and I want to get our advertising seen by consumers in our target market, then perhaps we need to develop the kind of content consumers want to read or enjoy.

Television companies set advertising rates, based on the number of viewers actually watching a program – the content. The more people who may see an advertisement, the more valuable the ad slot will be to the advertiser.

Since television media companies have accepted the advertising ratio of 70% content and 30% advertising, they strive to create better content in order to increase a show's ratings and the price they can charge for the advertising.

At this juncture, we have arrived at the second lesson I desire for you to take from this ebook:

Lesson #2: To get more readers, you need to improve the quality of your content.

(If at some point, you have read from some great online marketing guru that the quality of your content does not matter, please keep reading, because I will address that argument later in this ebook.)

As the television media companies demonstrate to us, it is not enough to simply produce good content. We must also let people know that content exists, and how people can see that content.

During other programming, television companies show us a preview of upcoming programs, in an attempt to entice us to watch more of their programs. TV companies understand that to make more money, they must provide better content AND attract more viewers.

Lesson #3: *It is not enough to create better content.
We must also strive to reach more readers.*

To reach more readers, there are actually three factors that affect how frequently an article is published:

1. The number of online publishers who will have the opportunity to consider your article for publication.
2. The quality of the article content.
3. The perceived value that online publishers believe their readers will put on the content.

Increasing the Publication Rates of Your Articles

The first factor that affects the usage of your article is the number of online publishers who will have the opportunity to consider your article for publication.

We will take an in-depth look at Article Distribution companies later in this ebook, but for now, I need to touch on the topic real quickly.

In a nutshell, to have your articles considered by publishers, those online publishers (*webmasters and online newsletter publishers*) must be able to find your article in the places where they expect to be able to find them.

The Article Distribution companies have simplified this task for you, by building lists of online publishers, who are looking for articles to use in the publishers' websites or newsletters.

Most Article Distribution companies have private lists of publishers they can reach by email and through other channels, to notify the publishers of the existence of your article.

The four Article Distribution companies I recommend are:

1. [The Phantom Writers](#) (*Owned by me, and in business since 2001.*)
2. [Article Crooner](#)
3. [Submit Your Article](#)
4. [Isnare](#)

If you utilize these four Article Distribution companies in conjunction with one another, you will discover that all four have different distribution channels, and therefore, they will have little if any duplication in reach.

Many of my own [Article Distribution customers](#) use more than one Article Distribution Company, so that they can extend the reach of their articles.

When selecting more than one Article Distribution Company, it really is not about “who is better than another”, but rather, “how do I get my article considered by more and different publishers?”

Later in this ebook, when I take an in-depth look at Article Distribution and Article Distribution companies, I will also explain the differences in the four afore-mentioned companies. I will also tell you about a couple other Article Distribution companies as well.

I will also discuss in a more comprehensive manner the **two primary channels in the Article Distribution process:**

1. For their consideration; and
2. Auto-placement of articles on websites.

Most Article Distribution companies tend to have at least one distribution channel that sends articles to publishers, “For Their Consideration”. Each publisher has “Free Choice” to decide whether the distributed article is one that they would want to publish, when and where.

The second Article Distribution channel is designed to send your article to a specific list of websites, with the anticipation that the publisher will approve the article for publication.

“Free Choice” still enters the equation, in most cases, even with the auto-placement of an article. A few publishers will approve every article sent to them; other publishers are more selective and manually approve all articles sent to them.

This second channel of Article Distribution – the auto-placement of articles on websites – is set up in advance by agreement between the publisher and the Article Distribution Company. There is always a programming solution to make the insertion of an article into a specific website possible.

The second factor that affects the usage of your article is the quality of the article content.

I do realize that some guru may have told you that the quality of the article content does not matter. As I have mentioned before, I will address that issue in greater depth, further along in this ebook.

For now, I need you to understand something of great importance to your future success as an article marketer.

As I have just pointed out, it is a fact that most online publishers have “Free Choice” in considering which content they will reproduce in their websites and newsletters.

Given that most online publishers exercise a certain amount of “Free Choice” in their selection of articles to publish, it becomes **essential for you to make sure that publishers will want to publish your articles!**

This is why the quality of your article content – REALLY DOES MATTER!

So long as there is a person making a decision to publish your article or not, then it should be obvious that your articles need to appeal to the wants and needs of the publisher.

Yes, it is true that there are a lot of online publishers that will publish any crap article that is sent to them.

But the lack of regular visitors and the lack of profits will soon drive those who accept all content out of business. Nearly every website that lacks any quality standards will be out of business within two years, unless the website is underwritten by another website.

You will know that you have what it takes to be successful as an article marketer, when people go out of their way to thank you for having written the article.

Publishers are people too... The only difference between the publisher and the consumer is that the publisher will thank you for writing your article, by sharing it with his or her readers.

The third factor that affects the usage of your article is the perceived value that online publishers believe their readers will put on your content.

If you have been in business for any amount of time, you will very likely understand what your website's visitors will want to read. You will understand what topics you need to cover to earn a repeat visit from your target audience.

Successful webmasters and online newsletter publishers also tend to have a real good idea of what their readers and visitors will want to read.

When a publisher has enjoyed reading your article AND the publisher feels that the article is a good match for his or her audience, then your article's chance of being used by that publisher is greatly increased.

Online publishers – both webmasters and newsletter publishers – are keen to give their readers and visitors the kind of information that will retain the reader's loyalty and to encourage the reader to return to them in the future for more quality information.

Lesson #4: *When you begin to appreciate that most online publishers want to give their readers good quality information, you will find yourself producing better content and getting published more often.*

If you would like to learn the technical aspects of writing great articles, I recommend you to purchase my other Article Marketing ebook, "[Article Marketing: How To Break The Rules and Profit From Breaking The Rules](#)". At \$97, you will find it to be money well spent.

What You “Need” To Hear About Article Marketing

Those gurus, whom I have mentioned in previous chapters, who say, “The quality of your content does not matter”, are selling you a bill of goods.

I was listening to Ron LeGrand a few months back. If you don’t know who he is, he is a self-made millionaire, who made his money by flipping houses. *(I am not going to argue for or against LeGrand’s business model – that is not why I am mentioning him here.)*

Listening to him speak, I was inspired by a few of his ideas.

One thing he suggested struck me in such a way that it deserves mentioning here.

He said that the best way to contact potential home sellers is to pick up the phone and call them.

He then paused and mimicked an argument that he has heard from his students previously, “But Ron, that other real estate program I attended said the best way to contact prospective home sellers is by post card. What’s up with that?”

Ron LeGrand said that those other real estate guru’s are telling you “what you want to hear”. Those other real estate guru’s know that you are intimidated by the idea of picking up the phone and asking someone to sell you their house.

Rather than telling you “what you need to hear”, those other real estate guru’s are telling you “what you want to hear”.

Those other real estate guru’s know that your fear of picking up the phone could prevent you from purchasing their real estate training materials, so they are reducing your resistance to their package, by telling you “what you want to hear”.

That statement intrigued me, and then I found renewed confidence in what I am ready to tell you now...

Have you ever considered that perhaps that online marketing guru, who told you, “The quality of your content does not matter”, was simply telling you what you wanted to hear?

Could it be that your guru told you that quality did not matter, because he instinctively understood that the process of writing intimidates you?

Now is not the time to bow out of this ebook. I am on the verge of showing you something that will be really important to you as you move forward with your Article Marketing activities.

As far as I am concerned, there are two goals in Article Marketing:

- 1.To be published in online newsletters; and**
- 2.To be published on websites.**

I have read some of those gurus who insist that the quality of an article does not matter.

I find it curious that the gurus who are making such suggestions always quantify that statement with the suggestion that “the only thing that matters in Article Marketing is improving one’s search rankings.”

Ha!

If you believe that the only thing that matters in Article Marketing is improving one’s search rankings, then perhaps the quality of your content does not matter...

Before I argue against this point, let us first look at a hypothetical.

Consider this. If you write articles ONLY to influence your search engine rankings and your search engine rankings go nowhere, then what have you accomplished with Article Marketing? Nothing?

I know I am stating the obvious here, but there are only ten web pages that will ever be on page one of Google for your target keyword phrases.

While Article Marketing can help you in the search engines, your success will be determined more by what you do, as compared to your competition, than by any other factor.

- If your competitors develop more or higher quality links than you do, then your Article Marketing will fall short.
- If your competition has the age factor on its side, it will take extra effort to unseat that competitor’s ranking.
- If ten or more of your competitors continue to outrank you for your target keywords, then you will see very little traffic from the search engines. (*Less than 30% of search*

engine users will look beyond page one of the search results.)

Someone contacted my SEO firm one day, suggesting that they wanted to rank #1 in Google for “making money online”. They asked me if I thought I was capable of doing that.

My answer was, “Sure, if you have a lot of money to invest into the process and years to wait for those results.”

The example that I like using to explain the “competition factor” in Google’s search rankings is the keyword, “travel”. The top ten listings in Google for the search word “travel” (*September 2009*) are:

1. Expedia
2. Orbitz
3. Travelocity
4. Priceline
5. Hotwire
6. Delta.com
7. TripAdvisor.com
8. Kayak.com
9. Travel.Yahoo.com
10. The Travel Channel

Since the last time I used [this example in an article](#) (August 2008), there have been a few changes in this list. This is what the list looked like in 2008:

1. Expedia
2. Travel.Yahoo.com
3. Orbitz
4. The Travel Channel
5. CNN

- 6.Travelocity
- 7.Lonely Planet
- 8.USA Today
- 9.The New York Times
- 10.The U.S. Government

The one factor that rings consistently true throughout Google's listings for the search word "travel" is that all of the players have multi-million dollar advertising budgets – then and now.

Let's be honest – if your website's niche is in a competitive market, it may take a lot of articles (*links from articles*) to break into the top 10 or even the top 200 listings in Google.

Lesson #5: *One article, ten or even one hundred articles may or may not positively influence your rankings in Google, or any of the other 50+ alternative search engines.*

With 803 million results found for the search term "travel", it is certain that 802,999,990 pages will not rank on page one of Google for that search word!

In our hypothetical situation above, we have looked at what could happen to your Article Marketing campaign, if you follow the wisdom of the gurus who are quick to tell you only what you want to hear.

Now, I am going to tell you what you "need" to hear.

Within the two goals of Article Marketing (publication in newsletters and websites), there are three types of traffic you will receive, as the result of your Article Marketing:

1. Publication in a newsletter could result in a few hundred to tens of thousands of visitors over the course of about three days.
2. Publication on a website may enhance your search rankings, and it may not. There are a number of factors that could prevent your articles from helping you to achieve top search engine rankings for your website.
3. If your article convinces readers to visit your website, your article published on a website may send you a few extra visitors on a monthly basis.

In the third case, I have articles that were published on certain websites that send me up to about 50 visitors per month, and have done so for at least 7 years. Other copies of the same article on other websites do not send me any traffic at all, and other copies send a couple visitors here and there. Other articles send dozens of visitors to my website each month.

Ten articles that are published on third-party websites may – if the content is good – send an extra 350 visitors per month to your website. One hundred articles may send an extra 3500 visitors per month to your website – maybe even more.

Your results may vary widely, up and down from these examples.

To put these numbers into perspective:

- **+98% of my own advertising is accomplished through Article Marketing.**

- I have just over 150 articles in the wild, promoting my website.
- My website serves +22,000 unique visitors every month.
- Only 45% or about 10,000 of my visitors arrive at my site via the search engines.
- Google only accounts for about 80% or 8,000 of my monthly visitors from the search engines.
- The remaining 20% of my search engine traffic – roughly 2,000 monthly visitors – is received from another 50+ smaller search engines.
- Although I have dozens of #1 listings in Google, and hundreds of page one listings in Google, I receive relatively little actual traffic from Google. One of my most important #1 rankings in Google only delivers about 60 visitors to my site each month.
- The remaining 55% or 12,000 monthly visitors my website receives arrives as a result of my articles in newsletters and on websites, as well as a bit of traffic from third-party referrals, forum postings, and through bookmarks people have set up for my site.

You may rightly assume that Google is probably my #1 source of traffic, although it only accounts for 1/3rd of my overall traffic.

If Google were to change its algorithms tomorrow and suddenly all of my top 10 Google listings vaporized into thin air, it would cut my monthly traffic, but it would not destroy my business. My website would only have its monthly traffic cut by about 1/3rd.

To reiterate, the three forms of traffic I will receive from the publication of my articles online are:

1. Traffic from newsletters;
2. Traffic from the search engines; and
3. Direct clicks from the articles, on websites.

As we have discussed in previous chapters, **quality counts when you are writing for a newsletter audience.**

When published in a newsletter, your article is delivered directly to a captive audience of a few thousand to a few hundred thousand readers, who are interested in your topic material. This often translates into a few hundred or a few thousand visitors to your website in a day, and often, it can also translate into thousands of dollars in new sales.

Since newsletter subscribers have busy lives, the throng of traffic to your website will frequently arrive over a 3-5 day period, with the majority coming into your website on the day of publication.

As we have also discussed in previous chapters, **quality counts when you are writing for website publication.**

While it is true that not all webmasters will manually approve an article, the webmasters of better quality, higher trafficked websites will always check the quality of an article before publication.

Those webmasters who don't review articles tend to operate websites that will be unprofitable – leading to the early demise of those web properties. Most of these websites survive for only two years, because the

Webmaster purchased the domain for two years, when the domain was registered. When it comes time to renew these domains, the owner will seldom do so.

Webmasters, who tend to maintain quality standards for the content they reproduce, also tend to have more traffic and a longer lifespan.

One of my articles was published on the AddMe.com website in 2002. The article was called, “*Autoresponders Are A Publisher’s Best Friend*”. It can be seen [here](#). This particular article, published on a better quality website with staying power, has consistently sent 50 visitors per month to my website for the last 7 years – 88 months.

When the article was originally published in the AddMe newsletter, my website received 1,200 visitors in the days following the publication of this issue. In the 88 months since publication, the copy of the article in AddMe’s online archives has sent me an additional 4,400 visitors.

Because AddMe.com is still a going concern, chances are that it will continue to send me 50 visitors per month, until the website finally closes down for good... in God only knows how many years from now.

The 5,600 visitors I have so far received from the AddMe.com website are visitors that I have received as a result of Article Marketing, AND more to my next point, visitors that I received, because I focused on quality so that I could reach audiences that were not using Google or any of the other search engines to find me.

Whereas some of the online marketing gurus are willing to tell you “what you want to hear” – I am not one of those people. Whether you want to hear it or not, I am going to tell you the truth about Article Marketing and the Search Engines.

When we are talking about Article Marketing and Google’s search engine rankings, **quality does count when you want your articles to affect your search rankings.**

- If the websites that have no quality standards are going to go out of business in 1-2 years, you will have to redo this marketing process again in a couple of years to recapture your top Google rankings – if you ever had them to begin with.
- Websites that do have quality standards and they do publish your articles – those websites could continue to deliver traffic and search engine link popularity to your website for many more years to come.
- If a website is of poor quality, due to its lack of quality standards, then traffic to that website will be light, and your article on that site may not deliver much traffic to your website, if any at all.
- If no one ever sees your article on a particular website and no one links to your article on that website, chances are that your article on that website will not have any real link popularity to pass to your website to influence Google in a positive manner.

A Quick Tutorial on Google PageRank, a.k.a. Link Popularity

It must be noted at this juncture that ALL ARTICLES begin life on the Internet with no link popularity – no Google PageRank.

PageRank or PR is Google's measurement of link popularity. "PageRank" defines the popularity of a single page on the Internet – as noted by its name, measured by the quality and quantity of links pointing to the web page.

If a publishing website has a PageRank of 5 on its front page, that does not mean that you will have a PR5 on your article.

Because your article is always placed on a brand-new web page on a website, your article will always have a PR0 when it is placed.

However, if your article is a good one and people appreciate your article's message, people will link to your article, giving its' page some link popularity. If your article content is good, it is not unreasonable to assume that one day, your article may have some real link popularity or Google PageRank to pass to your website.

An article may generate substantial PageRank in as little as a few weeks to as much as a few years – depending on how many people find the content and consider it useful enough to be shared with other people.

The more people who see your article, the more likely the copy of your article will gain link popularity at the web page where it resides for public consumption.

Measuring The Value of an Article

In the previous chapter, I discussed at great length the three kinds of traffic one would receive as a result of writing and distributing an article to online publishers.

In this chapter, I am going to discuss specifics as to measuring the value of the article, once it has been distributed.

To help keep this information in context, I will show you the three kinds of traffic you will receive from an article once again:

1. Traffic from newsletters;
2. Traffic from the search engines; and
3. Direct clicks from the articles, on websites.

This is why I have such an issue with the so-called online marketing gurus, who tell you that “quality does not count, because Article Marketing is only about influencing the search engines.”

Lesson #6: Traffic from Google and the other search engines is simply “one source” of three potential traffic sources – derived from Article Marketing.

Traffic from Google and the other search engines is the only traffic source, where the quality of content does not necessarily matter.

The other two sources of traffic will require a foundation built on good content to ensure publication and Article Marketing success.

Newsletter Publication Expectations

Newsletters have a captive audience of consumers who will likely be interested in your content, and by extension, interested in visiting your website if you make a compelling case for your website in the Author's Resource Box.

Some newsletters have just 1,000 subscribers – others have 15-20,000 subscribers. There are also premium newsletters that have a subscriber's list in excess of half a million targeted readers.

Subscribers do not necessarily read every issue, but for the publications they love, they will make an effort to never miss an issue.

Not all subscribers will read the issue on the day it is released, although a majority will. When an article is published in a newsletter, one can typically expect traffic from that newsletter for a period of 3-5 days following the release of the newsletter to the public.

Few newsletter editors write their own content. Most get their content from the Free Reprint Article market.

In exchange for having permission to present your articles to their audience, they are willing to give you an advertisement for your website at the bottom of your article, in the Author's Resource Box.

Through polling I have done with newsletter publishers:

- 42% will use an article within 2 weeks.
- 50% will use an article between 2 weeks and 3 months, from receipt of the article.
- 8% will hold the article for at least 3 months, before using it.

I view publication in newsletters to be the Holy Grail of Article Marketing.

Why?

Because I understand that publication in a newsletter can lead to lots of sales **today!**

I can write an article, have it distributed tomorrow, and within just a few days, I can start racking up sales as a result of the publication of my article in a newsletter.

I know from past experience that my article being published in a premium newsletter can lead to a few thousand extra dollars to a five-figure sales week.

I don't know about you, but I am in business to make money! And now money is always better than tomorrow money.

With publication of my article on a website, I am only going to get a few dozen visitors per month from that article. It is steady traffic, but the traffic numbers are typically really small.

While publication of my articles on a website can also influence my rankings in Google, it may take some time to

reap the Google rankings benefit, and even when I get that cherished #1 spot in Google, Google does not deliver as much traffic as I want it to deliver.

Publication of one of my articles in a newsletter is my #1 priority when I write an article. That is because my article has the potential to drive thousands of visitors to my website over a 3-5 day period, and my copy is good enough to convert enough of that traffic to customers, so that I could literally earn \$10,000 in the next week.

Website Publication Expectations

The expectations for an article on a website varies widely from website to website.

Some websites are high traffic, while others barely see any traffic at all. Regardless of the traffic level of a particular website, a visitor to that website must be able to navigate the website to find your article. As newer content is made available, your article will be harder and harder to find on the website, by the very nature of the fact that many websites will eventually have thousands of pages of content.

On websites that publish only a few new pages per month or year, it may be that your article will remain easy to find for many years to come.

On websites that publish dozens of new pages per month, then your article may only remain easy-to-find on that website for just a few days.

Depending on the traffic level of a website and how easy it is for its visitors to find your article among the pages of the

website will influence how much traffic you may receive from that website on a monthly basis.

The best that can be said about publication on a website is that when your article is new on the website, your article could develop hundreds or thousands of visitors right away. Down the road, your article on that website could potentially send a few dozen visitors to your site every month for the remainder of the existence of the website.

The placement of your article on websites may also help your search engine rankings...

Search Engine Rankings Expectations

I could literally write an entire 300-page book on this one topic alone, but I am not going to do so at this time. That will be for another time and another ebook.

It is true that your articles could make a serious contribution to your rankings in Google and the other search engines, for very specific keywords that you wish to compete.

I know articles can help your search rankings, because I have done it for my own websites and for the sites of many of my SEO customers, through my [SEO firm](#).

Some keywords, like the afore-mentioned example “travel”, can be extremely competitive. In those cases, it may literally require hundreds or thousands of articles to positively influence someone’s ranking in Google.

Low quality articles can get published, but on a limited number of websites. Because the sites that publish articles without manually reviewing the content frequently go out-of-

business within two years, your low quality articles will need to be replaced every couple of years.

Higher quality articles can actually land publication on websites that will be around for years, and if the website has a lot of traffic, the copy of your article on that website can attract its own inbound links and link popularity, making it much easier to influence the search engine results towards your website in a positive, long-term manner.

Even if you are able to achieve a top ranking in Google, you may be disappointed by the amount of traffic you will actually receive as result of your top listing. I was truly disappointed when I learned that one of my premium #1 listings in Google is only delivering a measly 60 visitors per month to my website. *(I can get more traffic from a single article being published in the right newsletter or newsletters.)*

If you are starting your Article Marketing campaign from scratch, it may take weeks, months or years, before you start seeing your web pages improving in Google's search results for specific keywords.

Overall Traffic Expectations

Publication in newsletters is **today money.**

Publication on good quality, high traffic websites is **steady, over-the-long-haul money.**

Publication on low-quality, low-traffic websites may provide **occasional money or **no money** at all.**

Publication on websites for the purpose of influencing the search engines is **tomorrow money.** Unfortunately,

“tomorrow” in this case is really hard to define. We could literally be talking about tomorrow, but more likely, we could be talking about several months or several years from now, and in some cases, “tomorrow” may actually mean “never”!

Those Who Specialize In Bad Advice

I know that in the last chapter, I suggested that those who say that “quality does not matter” are probably telling you “what you want to hear”, instead of “what you need to hear”.

But honestly, I think there is more to it than that...

If you think about it, most of the people telling you that quality does not matter are the same people who are trying to sell you their flavor of article-spinner software.

To date, no one has written a good software package that can enable you to write a good article, because computers are incapable of understanding word meaning or nuance.

Article Spinners are either semi-automated or they require a lot of hand’s on effort to make them work.

With the semi-automated Article Spinners, you simply need to put text into the box and hit “Spin” to get a “unique article” back out of the system. One such application can be found [here](#). *(It should be noted that I recommend against Article Spinners, but some people are going to do it anyway.)*

The semi-automated Article Spinners have built-in rules that the software uses to automate the process of changing one article into another.

The rules of the software usually include changing synonyms and nouns inside of an article, perhaps even adjusting some word order, with the express purpose of making content appear different – to the search engines, than every other article on the Internet.

The more manual version of the Article Spinner requires for you to either establish the rules that the software will use to create your “unique article”, or it has you make changes in the article by including special characters with your content to define where and what to change in the content.

An example of the text coding used in an Article Spinner looks like this:

```
{One|Another} combination of {an article|your article|
your content} will use one of the defined sentence
{fragments|pieces|parts} to construct {an article|your
article|your content} {for publication|for display|for
distribution}, etc.
```

In essence, the {} brackets say that the words in the middle of the brackets are fluid, and the word combinations will be separated by the | bar. In other words, the | is used as an “or” command.

The truth is that Article Spinners produce really crappy content.

So, in order to sell you their crappy software, the Article Spinner companies tell you things like “quality content does not matter”, because Article Marketing is only about “influencing one’s rankings in the search engines.”

The sellers of this software also use nice little phrases like, “Google’s Duplicate Content Penalty” to convince you that you should use their software.

Personally, I know for a fact that the “Duplicate Content Penalty” is a SEO Myth. I can even prove it to you that this Google penalty is a myth, if you would care to read [this article](#). In that article, I quote top SEO Professionals, Google employees – including Google guru [Matt Cutts](#), and I provide information so that you can prove the myth to yourself.

If you think I am full of crap about the “Duplicate Content Penalty Myth”, then you should go right now and buy the Article Spinner software found behind [this link](#).

If on the other hand you believe that I am not leading you astray, then by all means necessary, you should avoid using Article Spinner software to develop your article content.

Even if you have never written anything before in your life, or if you feel that you just cannot write, I will show you a strategy – in coming chapters – that will teach you how to develop good quality content for your Article Marketing campaigns.

Tracking Your Article Marketing Return-On-Investment

To justify the time and expense that you invest into your Article Marketing campaigns, you must be able to measure your Return-On-Investment (ROI).

Fortunately, there are several ways in which we can uncover the value of an article in the wild.

At the end of the day, the only metric that matters is how much money Article Marketing puts into your bank account.

Until we find that number, we have several metrics we can look at to determine the value of an Article Marketing Campaign:

- Exposure** – How many people had the opportunity to read your article?
- Traffic** – How many people visited your website as a result of having read your article?
- Sales** – How much money was generated from the people who visited your website, as a result of having read your article?
- Link Building** – How many links to your website have been made as a result of your article being distributed?
- Link Popularity** – How many copies of your article on third-party websites have picked up link popularity, through which your website can derive additional link popularity value?
- Search Engine Rankings** – How many search queries does your website rank for and how well do they rank, as a result of your Article Marketing activities?

In the following section, I will outline some techniques from which to measure each of these metrics.

Exposure: I generally measure exposure in terms of how many newsletters and the size of those newsletters to determine how many people have had the opportunity to read my article.

Most online newsletters publish at some location their subscriber numbers. Some include subscriber numbers in each issue, while the majority will place that information on their advertising sales pages.

Find the newsletters that published your article, then add up their subscriber numbers to get an idea of how many people potentially had the opportunity to read your article.

Traffic: Determining the number of people who visited your website as a result of your article is an inexact science.

You can use a redirect URL, like the ones you can get for Free at <http://bit.ly/> or you can buy a [tracking tool / software](#) to put on your own website to track the number of visitors to your website that came directly from an article.

Even using Bit.ly, I find that it is not always accurate. Somehow, Bit.ly misses counting some clicks, and at other times, it over counts the traffic I receive.

Using software on your own website for tracking clicks is often much more accurate, but if you are using some kind of tracking software to measure the number of visitors you receive from your articles, you are throwing away all search engine value that you might have received from your articles.

Either you can count your clicks or get the link popularity value to enhance your search engine rankings. You simply cannot do both through automation.

If you keep your links pure for the purpose of maximizing your link popularity for the search engines, you will need to do manual counts of your traffic to get an idea of how well your articles are performing for you.

Most everyone who has a website (unfortunately, not every one) has some kind of statistical software installed in the back office control panel of their website. One of the most common website tracking tools installed in most web hosting accounts is called, AW Stats.

For those who have access to AW Stats or a comparable statistical software, you can count visitors to your website based on a couple of factors to determine the value of your articles.

If you check your Referring URLs (*Links From An External Page*), you can see which URLs sent traffic to your website, and you can visit those URLs to see if your articles reside on those pages.

If your article was published in a newsletter, it is much harder to track those clicks. AW Stats offers a section described as, "Direct Address / Bookmark / Links In Email". A portion of that traffic may have come from your article when it was published in a newsletter. Since most newsletters are sent as an email, you have to look at bumps in your average numbers in this category to get an idea of where a published article may have influenced the traffic to your website.

Sales: Unless you have Google Analytics installed or a similar software package installed on your website, it is hard to track how many of your sales were derived from the placement of your article online.

The best way to determine this information is often to simply ask new customers how they found out about you. If they remember, they are usually most happy to share the information with you.

You can also try to match bumps in sales to bumps in traffic as the result of your article being published somewhere.

Link Building: Many people make the mistake of only tracking this data through a generic Google search.

Sure, I understand that most people who do Article Marketing for the purpose of affecting their rankings in the search engines only care about Google rankings.

But Google has made it clear on numerous occasions that they will not show ALL of your links in their public display of your inbound links, achieved by typing the following into Google:

link:YourDomainUrl.com

Google does not want to show the full extent of how a particular website got its rankings in Google, because they do not want to show your competitors how to mimic your linking activities.

If you want to get a better understanding of how many links you have achieved in your Article Marketing Campaign, it is best to [open a Google Webmasters account](#).

Once you open your Google Webmasters account, you will find a much more honest assessment of where your articles have been published online, but it is still not going to be a full accounting.

From the public side of the search engines, I like to look at Google's link: operator and to use the same operator at Yahoo. I review those links and ignore all links derived from groups.Google.com and groups.yahoo.com.

By looking at both search engines and eliminating the links from the Google and Yahoo groups, I can get a real good impression of how well my article did in the wild.

Long ago, I stopped wanting to count every single link I acquired for my website through my Article Marketing Campaign. These days, I only want to get a general idea of how well one article did as compared to another. (*But that is just me.*)

When checking the search engines, I run the title of the article through the search engines, with the title in quotes, to find specific copies of my article. Once again, neither Google nor Yahoo provides an all-inclusive list of where my specific articles were published, but they do give a general assessment, so that I can measure the essence of an article.

Do keep in mind that the numbers you get from this process will not be fully accurate, because some pages will appear in the search results that actually only link to your article at another location.

Link Popularity: This information is accessible to the person who really wants to take the time to dig through the data.

I don't worry about it myself, but you might.

You can go to the pages where your article has been published and check Google's little green bar in your Google Toolbar to get an idea of how Google values the particular page.

As I noted in a previous chapter, all article placements begin on a PageRank 0 page, because new pages are created to house the article.

Google only updates the PageRank in the Google Toolbar once every 3-4 months, so it may be some time before your article copies begin to show PageRank.

Generally, if you want to understand this information, it is best to search for the title of the article six months down the road, and then check the individual copies of your article on the various websites to see how many of those copies eventually earned some PageRank.

What you will find in this kind of search is that only a portion of your article placements will have gained some PageRank. Maybe more than one placement of a particular article will gain PageRank, but seldom will all copies have real link popularity to share with your website.

Of course, you can help enhance the chances of a particular copy of your article gaining some PageRank, because you

can locate copies of your article then apply a link to that page via social bookmark systems.

Search Engine Rankings: Once upon a time, there was a tool that I used to uncover this information. Then that tool went away, and I have yet to find another service that accurately presents this kind of information to me.

I don't remember what that program was called, but I used to check it on a weekly basis. Now that that website is gone, I sure do miss it.

On my last check of thePhantomWriters.com, I had nearly 1500 top 20 listings in Google, of which over half of the listings were in Google's top 10 listings.

These days, I could not even venture to guess how many top 10 and top 20 listings I still have in Google. Honestly, I imagine that the number has gone up, but that is just an educated guess based on my past track record in that department.

Doing A Proper Measurement Of Article Marketing ROI

About one year ago, I was talking with a SEO Professional who was being really nasty to me, because I have an Article Marketing service.

This SEO guy was trying to convince the members of the forum that I was a fraud, and I should not be trusted at all. Of course, **he did not know me from Adam and he wasn't singling "me" out** as a fraud, but the Article Marketing industry in general.

His words, not mine: *"I tried Article Marketing once, and it was an utter waste of my money! Article Marketing does not work!"*

I felt compelled to ask questions to figure out why he failed with his Article Marketing.

My earnings from my Article Marketing endeavors had been strong, and I knew that there must be an explanation as to why this other guy failed so miserably with his Article Marketing.

I only needed to ask one question to get to the root of the problem. *"How many articles did you write and distribute?"*

I am always shocked and amazed when someone, who criticizes Article Marketing, says that they only wrote and distributed ONE article!

You may be surprised how many people tell me, “One article”, after a rant about how Article Marketing does not work.

Unbelievably, many people seem to believe that they should see success on their first and every article. **But, I live in the real world of marketing. I know that not every article will be a winner, but if you write enough articles, enough of them will be winners to make it worth your while.**

Any marketer who tells me that they tried something “once” and it did not work loses a bit of credibility with me.

When I learned that this guy had only written and distributed one article, **my response to him was, “It was not Article Marketing that did not work for you... It was YOU that did not work for it!”**

Just think about this story for a minute...

Let’s put this scenario into a couple of analogies that clearly shows the fallacy of this kind of thinking...

How many times did you ask someone on a date, before the answer was “Yes”? Once! You must have been the luckiest person on earth.

I got three no’s, before I got my first yes. Then I dated a couple dozen women, before I wanted to get married. I was turned down once for marriage, before I actually got a yes from my current wife.

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” ~ Frederick Maryat (1792-1848)

How many batters hit every ball thrown to them? Not many, right? But some online marketers seem to think that every article written should deliver massive sales.

Lesson #7: *In the real world of Article Marketing, not every article is a grand slam!*

What I have always explained to my Article Distribution clients is that if they write great content, then in most cases, they only need to do ten articles to see the real potential of Article Marketing.

One customer – one time – told me after ten articles that she was starting to see some success, but she was not seeing enough success to make it a worthwhile endeavor for her.

She was seeking assurances from me that she was writing good content, and I told her that I thought she was. She decided to try ten more articles with me, before making her decision.

Long before she reached her 20th article, one of her articles was a grand slam.

She earned enough new revenue from that one article to keep writing and distributing articles for the next year. Needless to say, she is still on my active customer list today.

Perhaps you have heard of ***the Marketing Rule Of Seven?***

In a nutshell, *the Marketing Rule Of Seven* states that your prospective customer will need to see or hear your name seven times, before they start to pay attention to your message.

[Yanik Silver](#) puts it another way. He says that a person is most likely to buy from you on your 2nd to 9th contact with that person. He says that 82% of people will buy between the 2nd and 9th contact.

As an article marketer, if you only write and distribute one article, you are only 1 person in the pile of 100,000 quitters.

As an article marketer, if you step up to the plate and write a second article, you have left the 100,000 quitters in the dust.

As an article marketer, you actually have two sells that you must make. First, you must sell yourself to online publishers. Second, you must sell yourself to your target audience.

Once you get one of your articles published, selling yourself to your target audience is made much easier, because the online publisher has vouched for your credibility.

Your first and most important leap is to get yourself noticed by an online publisher.

You have to stand apart from 100,000 quitters. You also have to stand apart from another 10,000 writers who believe that quality content does not matter.

It may take ten, fifteen or twenty articles, before one of your articles finds a high-quality publisher who wants to publish it.

It really does not matter that the first ten articles were of the most awesome quality. What matters is that one-day; a publisher is going to recognize your name among the avalanche of writers. That name recognition will serve you, enabling you to get your article opened and scanned.

Of course, the name recognition is one thing, but the title of the article must also be attractive to the publisher. If the publisher has a website about medicine, he or she certainly will not care if your article is about getting better fuel mileage from a car.

But if that publisher recognizes your name, and the title of your article is attractive to him or her, he or she will open your article and take a quick look at it.

If that article gets opened, read, and enjoyed, you will have likely found your first publisher.

Once a publisher has found one of your articles and used it in their newsletter or website, two things will transpire:

- 1.They will know in the future that they trusted your content once, so they will likely explore content from you in the future.
- 2.They will start looking to see if you have written other articles that they may want to publish.

On the surface, you might be thinking that if no one notices you until you have written your 14th article, you might think that your first 13 articles were wasted. But that is not the case at all.

Publishers will go back to see what else you have made available, and the publisher may use one or more of those articles as well.

Each individual publisher will have his or her own threshold as to how many times they must see your name before their brain signals “name recognition”.

If a publisher has read one of your articles on another website or in another newsletter, you may beat the averages, by acquiring name recognition and publisher interest well before you have reached your tenth article.

I write under a number of pen names, as well as under my own name. I only have one pen name that hit gold on its first strike. In this one case, it was the article title that triggered interest right out of the gate. That article earned \$1800 for a site that had been live for only one week.

The rest of my pen names needed to write and distribute several articles, before they started hitting gold.

I have several pen names that write articles in specific niches that have name recognition in the marketplace. I have had great success with my articles in a number of niche topics, including: online business of course, SEO, home improvement, real estate, automotive, dating, economics, and travel.

People come to me frequently and say, “Hey Bill. If you will discount my first article, then I will try your service out. If my article is successful, I promise that I will come back to you again and again forever.”

If you have read this far, then you know that I know that this is an offer made by someone who doesn't have any sense as to what it takes to be successful as an article marketer.

Lesson #8: One article is NEVER a good measure of the value of Article Marketing as a promotional tool or an Article Distribution service.

Is There A Writer Buried Within You?

This is the part of Article Marketing that scares the hell out of most people.

Unless you are already writing your own articles, I need to confess to you that I know that I believe something that you do not necessarily believe yourself.

I believe, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you have everything that you need to be able to write your own articles.

I believe that you do not need to hire a ghostwriter to help you to write articles.

And no matter how strongly I might believe this to be true, you likely have started to doubt my sanity and my expertise. But that is okay.

Walk with me through this chapter, and by the time we have finished, then you may have started your journey towards believing as I do. You may begin to believe that you really can write your own articles.

And with time and practice, you will know that I was right – you will know that you have had a writer buried deep within your soul, yearning to break free.

A few years ago, in the Burger King commercials, BK was searching for Herb – the one man in America, who had never eaten at Burger King.

I was here all along, and yet, they never succeeded in finding me. At that time, I had never eaten at Burger King. Since then, I have eaten there a couple of times, but honestly, I just cannot stand their food.

As you begin this journey, you will realize that your “Herb” is that writer who resides within your soul. But in time, with a little bit of effort on your part and a sound strategy to guide you, you may find Herb, so that you can let him out of his cage.

With some effort, you will find Herb. If after that time you decide you don’t like Herb – that will be okay too. Even if you do not do your own writing, you will learn what you need to learn to be able to get better content from your ghostwriters.

Herb needs you to understand two basic concepts, so that you can free him from his prison:

- 1.If you can communicate an idea, and you can write as you speak,** then you can become your own writer.
- 2.If you can put it on paper (in a text document on your computer), and you can afford a few dollars for an editor, your editor will be able to clean up anything you write yourself.

I have been offering ghostwriting services for a number of years now, going back to the spring of 2000. In my years as a ghostwriter and as an employer hiring ghostwriters, I have learned a lot about how to develop better content using inexpensive labor.

The three things that I feel is important for you to understand is that:

1. Writers are a dime a dozen;
2. Editors are worth their weight in gold; and
3. Good editors are not expensive to hire.

It took me years of trial-and-error to figure out this formula. For the longest time, I considered the writer to be the most important element in the equation. But I have since realized that the editor is the one I need to be successful in developing quality content for the Internet.

You can hire writers all day long for \$3 to \$10 an article. It is sad to say, but paying your writers more money is no assurance that you will get better quality content.

I used to pay my writers more money, quite a bit more actually. I have paid as much as \$180 to get an article written and then still got worthless, crap content that I could not use. In the end, I had to write it myself.

The \$180 that I wasted, as mentioned above, was my attempt to encourage better performance from my writers, by offering more money. That was a money pit. It was my fault for expecting more from writers than they expect from themselves.

Lesson #9: *The quality of content that one produces is more a reflection of the writer's character, than the amount of money you pay them to do the work.*

Good writers tend to charge way more than the \$3 to \$10 articles mentioned above. If I were to write an article for you,

it would cost you \$95. I don't work for cheap, but as you may have realized by now, I don't write crap articles either.

So in my nine years of managing ghostwriters, I have realized that writers are cheap to hire and offering more money will not guarantee me better content.

I have learned that I only want two things from my writers:

1. **Some basic research** thrown together to serve as the foundation for an article.
2. **I don't want the submission to be stolen** from someone's website. (*40% of all of the writers I have dealt with over the years have tried to sell me stolen content.*)

Lesson #10: *To uncover the content thieves, you only need to pull a couple sentences from the middle of an article, put each sentence into quotes, and run the sentence through Google to see if you can find another article using that sentence. You will usually only need to search 6-8 words in Google to eliminate false positives.*

I actually pay my editors two- to three-times more than what I pay my writers. I have finally learned the most important lesson – I have learned that my editor will be able to turn any crap content into a good article, provided that he or she has a good solid foundation of research and factual information from which to work.

I have also learned that if I post a job opening for an editor on [Craig's List](#), then I can get a dozen qualified applicants in only 24 hours.

The average qualified editor can turn a crap article into a good article in 15-30 minutes. Keeping that in mind, you can offer your editor \$20-\$40 an hour, based on how quickly they can edit articles. Your applicants will not have a problem getting paid by the article, because that enables them to set their own hours and work at their own pace.

Since you know your industry better than anyone else possibly could and you have the capability of writing your ideas into a text document, you are the best person for the job of writing the outline or foundation of your articles. Once written, you can send it to your editor for fine-tuning.

If you can communicate an idea to a friend, co-worker, or prospective customer, concerning something of importance to your business, then you can put your ideas into a text document.

If you write conversationally, you may just discover as I did that your readers will often appreciate the conversational writing style.

In some cases, your editor will only need to check for spelling and the occasional grammatical error. In other cases, your editor will be able to refine your conversation so that it will read better for your target audience.

If you really want to find cheap writers, you can go to:

- <http://www.elance.com/>
- <http://www.guru.com/>
- <http://www.mturk.com/>
- And many other websites where freelance writers hang out looking for work.

But I honestly encourage you to be your own writer and to have an editor fine-tune what you have written, for public consumption. (*In the next chapter, I will tell you more about guiding the work of cheap writers.*)

To find editors, go to <http://www.craigslist.org/>

It is recommended that even if you are a skilled writer like I am that you should at least consider employing an editor to review your articles before they are distributed to the public.

We all make mistakes and usually your editor will catch mistakes that you just simply cannot see.

I had two really embarrassing spelling errors in articles that I had written.

In the first article, after it was published in a major newsletter, hundreds of people wrote me to tell me that “mother lode” is not spelled as “mother load”.

In the second article, I was educating the readers as to a common misspelling, and in the following sentence, I misspelled another commonly misspelled word.

You simply cannot trust software spell checkers to catch all of your mistakes. According to Microsoft Word’s spell checker, “mother load” is spelled correctly. The spell checkers see that “mother” is correct and “load” is correct, and it does not know to look for “lode” as an alternate spelling.

If you do take up my challenge to become your own writer, I encourage you to purchase a copy of my ebook called, “[Article Marketing: How To Break The Rules and Profit From Breaking The Rules](#)”. The \$97 you spend to buy that ebook will be money well spent, since it will teach you the technical aspects of how to write articles that will get published more frequently, and it will teach you how to use article marketing to enhance your search engine rankings in a more reliable manner.

I do offer a money-back guarantee on this ebook, if for any reason you are unsatisfied with it.

Other books that will teach you how to become a better writer are as follows:

- “[Write An Article-A-Day, The Easy Way](#)” - Georganne Fiumara spent 22 years transforming complicated business information into easy-to-understand concepts. Georganne said she was, “just plain tired of seeing the writing ‘elite’ give everyone the impression that only a chosen few can be great writers. Anything is easy when you are shown how to do it.”
- “[How To Write Special Feature Articles](#)” - Keith Choy has written a “handbook on how to write and publish your own special feature articles successfully... no matter what topic you write on!” Keith will teach you how to write feature articles that newsletter editors and webmasters will actually WANT to publish.
- Eventually, **once you have learned the art of writing articles that people will want to publish**, it may be helpful to learn how to speed up your writing, without losing the quality of your content in the process. “[Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed](#)”, written by Jeff Bollow, will be

an excellent addition to your own personal library of writing handbooks.

For most people, the only thing they lack to becoming their own writer is the confidence in themselves and the guidance to show them how. In the next couple chapters, I will be sharing with you the guidance you need to become a writer, whose work is worth reading.

The only other reason why someone may not want to write their own articles is because they simply do not have the time.

If you are one of these people who simply do not have the time to write your own articles, you should at least give a sentence or a few bullet points to your writer to guide them in their journey.

It is also recommended that if you have someone do your writing for you that you at least read the final product for accuracy of facts and ideas, before you make the content available to the public.

Defeating Writer's Block

Even professional writers some times run into Writer's Block. We sit and stare at a blank screen, sometimes for hours, wondering what we should write about in our next article.

I have found that one of the best ways to defeat Writer's Block is to read articles, written by others in my industry or a similar industry.

It never fails that when I am reading content created by others, I will often have that little light bulb go "on" in my head, showing me the inspiration I need to write 1,000 words quickly and easily.

My inspiration does not come from copying the words of another person, but from new inspiration that was achieved while reading the work of another inspired writer.

Sometimes – although rarely – I will see an article that I consider perfect for my cause that has its own list of bullet points. I will jot down notes for my article outline by looking at the other author's bullet points, and writing my own little cheat sheet of the same basic bullet point ideas – in my own words. Because I wrote down their ideas in my own words, I have created a situation where when I expand on their ideas, my article will be 100% unique and always in my own words.

Interestingly, the last time I did this – for a travel article – my final article outranked the article that was the source for my ideas, for the same keywords that I used to find the first article.

It is important for you to understand that you never ever want to take someone else's words as your own. You may or may not get caught, but if you do get caught, it could lead to a copyright infringement lawsuit and potentially a loss of trust in the minds of your target audience.

Ideas are somewhat different in that most of us are writing our own interpretations of a different idea each time we sit down to write an article.

As Solomon said in the Bible, *“There is nothing new under the sun.”*

The point I am trying to make is that you and your competitors are writing about the same topics, although your discussion of the topic may offer a unique and clever twist to an old idea. Your interpretation of a subject may be new and interesting, but I bet you that when completed, it is just a new twist on an old idea.

Lesson #11: Never copy the words of another writer, but don't be intimidated by ideas or inspiration that you discover while reading someone else's articles.

Another method for defeating Writer's Block is one that I find very useful to me: **Repurposing Content.**

Ironically, it seems to lend credence to the idea that “Repurposing” should be a new word in the English language, although I cannot take credit for creating this word. I just added the word “repurposing” to my Microsoft Word dictionary, because although it is not an official word, there isn't another word that so succinctly tells this story.

If you write something, it is your intellectual property.

Because the content is your intellectual property, you can do with it whatever you would like to do with it.

The concept of “repurposing content” is to create information for one purpose, then change the content to meet a new purpose.

There are several ways in which I “repurpose” content in the context of my business.

Lesson #12: If a customer asks me a question, chances are that other people have the same question.

When I respond to a question posed to me, I respond directly to the question, and then I clean up my initial response to create a new entry in my FAQ (*Frequently Asked Questions*) page.

Once I have turned a Q&A into a FAQ, then I will take that same concept to develop a new blog post for my blog, based loosely on the FAQ entry. Usually the blog post will be a little bit more detailed and lengthy than my FAQ statement.

After I have turned the original Q&A into a FAQ entry and a blog post, I will take the blog post and expand on it even further, turning the original Q&A into the foundation of an article that will answer the same question for a much larger audience – hopefully for an audience numbering in the hundreds of thousands of people.

As a slight variation on this concept, I cruise forums from time-to-time – not looking to have questions answered, but

to find questions I know I can answer in an intelligent and interesting manner.

Once I have answered the question in a forum, I will copy my answer from the forum into my new text document.

Once I have the original copy in my text document, I will expand on the original answer, turning an expanded Draft #2 into a blog post, and a further expanded Draft #3 into an article.

Lesson #13: *By repurposing content, I can answer questions that thousands of people potentially have, and I can do it in such a way as to develop unique and interesting content in a number of formats.*

Writer's Block is simply a mindset of trying too hard to grasp something tangible to hang on to.

In order to defeat Writer's Block, one simply needs to relax the mind, to make it easier for the mind to take in new information. While absorbing new information, ideas may come fast and furious.

I recommend that you carry with you a small notebook to jot notes into, when inspiration strikes. When you conceive of a new article idea, simply write down a sentence or two or a few bullet points, so that your brain can grasp the idea when you finally get the chance to sit down and write.

Not all of your notes will find their way into a full article, but enough of them will, so that you will never find yourself at a loss for ideas ever again.

Tips For Writing Good Quality Content

This chapter could potentially have a different title for it, in that it will discuss also tips for guiding your ghostwriter to developing good content for you.

When you are hiring writers or writing on your own, the absence of a clear strategy in the writing process leads many people to write articles that no one will want to read.

Lesson #14: *A good quality article is always an article that the reader feels happy to have read, once the reader has finished the article.*

Most writers make the process of writing a good quality article more difficult than it needs to be. As the person directing the creation of the content, you are in a prime position to make sure that either you – or the writers you hire – will create a good quality article for the public to read.

The reason why most writers fail to write good quality articles is because they are “afraid” to say anything of real value. Maybe they don’t know anything of real value to contribute to the story – although that can usually be fixed with a little research.

Lesson #15: *Most hired article writers spend 500 words beating around the bush on whatever topic they are writing.*

Great writers never beat around the bush.

This is the primary reason why most “keyword” articles read as if a second grader wrote them. When you give a writer “keywords” to write about, the writer will include many generalized statements about the keyword, but will never actually say anything of real value to the reader.

Great articles tell a story, utilizing information, facts and figures, and the writers of such articles never fear making a specific declaration to the audience. Great articles have character, and those articles demonstrate the robust character of the author who has the courage of conviction in his or her words.

Lesson #16: Great authors are not afraid to demonstrate a certainty of belief in the words that they share with the reader.

Most writers, who are willing to tackle the “keyword” articles that are so prevalent in the SEO industry, simply do not have the knowledge of the subject material or the courage of conviction to tell any story that readers will appreciate.

This is why it is so very important – if you are using hired writers – to make sure that your writer has better guidance from you to help him or her write a better article.

If you are working with a great writer, then a two-sentence description of what the article should be about will be enough guidance to help the writer bring forth a great article.

However, if you are working with the average writer online, you will need to give more detail to your article description to bring forth the content that you would like to see produced.

When I write articles, I approach the article differently than even my customers think I should. But I have courage of conviction to know that my way of writing articles is better than their way. <wink>

Lesson #17: *A great article always begins with an idea and an approach to sharing the idea in a story format. When the article has been refined to perfection for the reader, then and only then should one consider the inclusion of “keywords”.*

If you are working with a good writer, then you can look at “keywords” from the outset, but good writers are a rarity on freelance websites.

Before I conclude this thought, I am going to introduce a new terminology to you. The following definition is pulled from [Wikipedia](#):

Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI): *An indexing and retrieval method that uses a mathematical technique called Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) to identify patterns in the relationships between the terms and concepts contained in an unstructured collection of text. LSI is based on the principle that words that are used in the same contexts tend to have similar meanings. A key feature of LSI is its ability to extract the conceptual content of a body of text by establishing associations between those terms that occur in similar contexts.*

For those of you who are writing articles for the purposes of influencing your search engine rankings, I pull heavily on the conceptual premise of LSI to write articles that attract a lot of attention from the search engines.

The best way to demonstrate my thoughts on this is by example. If writing an article that is about “websites”, I try to employ a “**Family of Keywords**”, rather than a “singular keyword”.

A Family of Keywords related to “websites”:

- Website
- Web site
- Web sites
- Domain
- Domains
- URL
- Web property
- Website property
- VRE
- Virtual Real Estate
- Home page
- Homepage

In this sample of a “Family of Keywords”, it must be noted that MSN and Yahoo tend to merge the singular version of keyword into the same data set as the plural version of the keyword.

Google is different though – Google treats the singular and plural as two different words, as it rightly should – unless you are using the Google Adwords keyword research tools.

By merging a “Family of Keywords” into your article, you are in effect telling Google that your article is

related more strongly to “websites” than another keyword that might appear in the article.

If on the other hand you utilized the same keyword multiple times throughout the course of the article, all you have managed to convey to Google is, “Look at me. I am trying to game your search engine.”

So we are back full circle to where we started this sidebar.

If you take care to write a story people will be happy to have read, then and only then should you take the time to enhance your article with your target keywords.

Read your story to see where you can weave keywords into the storyline, without detracting from the overall message conveyed to your reader in the story itself.

You should employ the “Family of Keywords” for two very important reasons:

- 1.To satisfy the search engines as to the true nature of your topic material; and
- 2.To keep from annoying the reader, by overusing particular words in the storyline.

When people go online to find information, they want to find specific information that helps them solve specific problems. If you make the mistake of letting your writers beat around the bush for 500 words, you will not only miss the mark with publishers, but you will also miss the mark with your readers.

It must be said again, **Quality Counts!**

Building Your Articles Around Your Goals

When I speak with people by phone about the type of content that they should write about to promote their online business, I typically ask three questions to get to the heart of the answer:

1. What do you sell?
2. Who is most likely to buy what you sell?
3. What do those people most likely want or need to know?

“**What do you sell?**” helps us to understand the product or service.

“**Who is most likely to buy what you sell?**” helps us to target the best prospects to offer the product or service.

“**What do those people most likely want or need to know?**” helps us to get into the minds and habits of those people who are our best prospects. It also helps us to target the right websites in order to put us in the “line of sight” for those people most likely to buy what we are selling.

If you sell cars, it may be useful from a “branding” perspective to teach people how to get more mileage out of their current car. But in the end, you really want to sell the car, so it is better to provide content that will get the reader into the state of mind that would encourage them to look at “buying a car now.”

In our car sales analogy, the people looking to buy a car now are more interested in learning about different models, the

benefits of owning such models, reviews of various models, and how they can get their car purchase financed. So the car lot should provide the kinds of information that would help the reader to get closer to a buying decision and to ensure that the reader would visit the particular dealership to make the buying decision.

As a plumber or someone who sells plumbing supplies, **one of the best article strategies is to [show someone how to do something themselves](#)**. What will frequently happen is that although you have shown them how to do it themselves, they may come to you to have you do the actual work for them, because once they have learned to do it on their own, they may decide it would be easier and more sensible to have you do the work for them.

Take this ebook for example. Although I will have shown you how to write and distribute your articles, by the time you finish reading this ebook, many people will come to [my article marketing website](#) or [my SEO site](#) and hire me to do the work for them. Why? Because in understanding what is involved in the process of doing the work, many people will decide it is just too much work to do themselves and that hiring a professional may be a better solution.

Another example could be that of my customers. He owns a nursery and sells plants and seeds around the world. He released a string of articles that could literally be seen as an encyclopedia of everything you want to know about specific kinds of trees. He covered everything from the history of the tree to the best planting procedures and the best climate in which to grow the trees. He even covered gardening tips for the average do-it-yourself gardener. You can see a sample article here, about the [history of the cherry tree](#).

Lesson #18: *At every step in the article writing process, it must be remembered that people go online to learn about what it is they desire to learn about.*

As an article marketer, it is your job to be the person people turn to for answers.

When your articles answer people's questions to their satisfaction, then the reader will want to learn more about the author.

As a satisfied reader of your article, people will want to read your Author's Resource Box. If you are able to provide your reader with a compelling reason to visit your website, your reader will usually visit your site, so as to learn whether your website can help them to solve more problems.

If you have selected your topic well, then chances are good that the person reading your article is also a person who is very likely to want to buy what you sell.

Within your Author's Resource Box, it should not be your purpose to get the reader to buy what you are selling. Instead, your goal within the Author's Resource Box should be to get the reader to visit your website, then let your site do all of the selling for you.

Lesson #19: *The more successful you are at answering the questions being asked by the people in your target market, the more successful you will be at getting the people most likely to buy what you sell to your website.*

Beware of Self-Indulgence

Through the process of giving away information that people want to know, in the form of an article, you are able to show people why they should be interested in what you sell, and more importantly, why they would want to buy from you.

But don't be led astray by this advice.

When writing articles, we must walk a very fine line between what is in OUR interests and what is in OUR READERS' interests.

A lot of people seem to think that they need to build a half dozen links from within the body of their article to their website. **This is a self-indulgence that you cannot afford to make.** This self-indulgence will prevent you from getting published in as many places as you would like to be published, and it will annoy your readers.

Unless the article is being published on your own website, you don't want to build a lot of links from the body of your article to your website. In most cases, you don't want to provide any links to your website from within the article body – save your links for your Author's Resource Box.

Remember what we were talking about in an earlier chapter about the **quality of your content**, and providing **the kind of content that publishers and webmasters will want to publish?**

Publishers and webmasters need content to use, and they strive hard to provide the kind of content their readers will appreciate. As payment for providing them great content for

free, they are willing to give you a small ad at the end of your article.

Lesson #20: *If you give publishers what they want, they will give you what you want. But if you try to take more than what you are due, you will lose the loyalty of the publisher and the opportunity to see your article in front of a large audience.*

Herein rests another opportunity for error.

When you write your Author's Resource Box, you need to tell the story that needs told, but you need to tell that story in as few words as possible.

Many publishers limit the amount of space they are willing to give an author as a "thanks" for the article.

I talked to a publisher one time, which will only publish author's who ask for one sentence in the Author's Resource Box.

The guidelines on the length of the Author's Resource Box vary widely from publisher to publisher.

But few publishers will allow you to indulge an Author's Resource Box that is nearly as long as the article itself – and believe it or not, I have had customers who insist on presenting a Resource Box that is as long as or longer than the original article.

If you use [Isnare](#) for article distribution, you are allowed 300 characters in the text version of your article's resource box. For the HTML version of your resource box, you can utilize

up to 500 characters. These limits are based on the average guidelines given by Article Directory owners.

If you use my service, [The Phantom Writers](#), we strongly recommend a maximum resource box length of 585 characters for the text resource box. Our version of the HTML resource box recommends that the visible text of the HTML resource box does not exceed the described 585 text characters.

When we submit articles to [GoArticles.com](#), we are limited to 300 characters with the HTML for the links, so we trim the resource box down to fit it into the form for GoArticles.

Our Article Distribution system at [The Phantom Writers](#) is the only one that we know of in our industry that allows for some flexibility in the author's resource box, but it is our recommendation that our customers should always aim for the shorter resource box, so that you can get the best reprint results for your article.

Our recommendation for the structure of the author's resource box is:

- One short sentence that briefly tells your personal biography.
- Followed by 1-2 sentences designed to get the reader to your website (call-to-action).
- If you are linking specific keywords in your resource box, those linked words should appear to be a natural part of your call-to-action, i.e. the wording should appear as a natural part of the sentence.
- The final element of your resource box is a plain text copy of the URL of your website.

Many people balk at the plain text copy of the URL, but that should always accompany your resource box **to protect you** from the web publishers who have yet to understand about HTML source code.

If someone sees an article on a website that they want to republish – *even on an Article Directory* – sometimes the new publisher will copy-and-paste the visible text on the web page, without realizing that the copy-and-paste source code of the article is available to them. If someone does a “Select All – Copy – Paste” of an article from the display of the page on a website, a lot of times, the embedded link information will be lost, when the article is republished on another website.

Lesson #21: *If you protected yourself by providing the plain text copy of your URL in your resource box, you will always be able to show your readers where to find you – even when the publishing webmaster did not know how to give you the kind of credit you wanted to get – hyperlinked keywords.*

Keep the Bio portion of your resource box short, and keep the resource box focused on the reader.

Some authors want to believe that readers will want to know all of his or her credentials.

This is a self-indulgence that takes away from what the author actually wants to accomplish, which is to drive new visitors to his or her website.

The publisher does not care whether you want to list every degree or award you have won in your author’s resource

box, so long as you follow his or her other guidelines for the resource box.

Where this matters in the grand scheme of things is with your readers.

Your reader has reached your resource box, happy in the knowledge that you have provided information to them that they are happy to have received.

When the reader reaches the resource box, they are looking for a short personal bio, but more importantly, they are looking to discover if the author can help them with other information they would like to know.

But when the reader is confronted with a long list of degrees and awards, the mindset is quickly changed from, “Wow, what a great article,” to “This person is a bit full of themselves, aren’t they?”

Your goal with writing and distributing the article should have been to get the reader to your website to buy what you are selling.

Ironically, it seems to be the smartest people among us, who make this devastating mistake. It is the people with the most degrees on the wall, who seem to think people will listen more to what they say based on their list of degrees – forgetting that the reader was already listening, up until the point where they realized the author only cares about him or herself.

People pay attention to what we say in our resource box, when our articles are good enough to receive the readers’ blessing and thanks.

If you have degrees on the wall, resist the temptation to brag about what you have done in your past.

If you have won awards, for whatever reason, resist the temptation to provide us a list of your credentials.

If your article is good, then it does not matter what you have done before today, because you will have won the loyalty and interest of your reader through the process of giving the reader what he or she wanted in your article.

If people really want to know more about you and your credentials, degrees and awards, they will visit the “About Us” page on your website to learn that information.

Lesson #22: Readers do not care about you. They only care about what you can do for them.

You should strive in your articles to give to others what they want, so that you can get in return what you want.

You should strive to give publishers what they want, in the form of content that they will be proud to have published.

You should strive to give readers what they want, in the form of content they are thankful for having read.

If you give others what they wanted from you, you will get what you want. But you must always resist the temptation to be greedy. You must resist the temptation to take more than what people are inclined to give to you; in exchange for an article that publishers can share with their readers and readers can enjoy reading.

Reaching A Larger Audience

We have finally come to the point in this ebook where it is time to talk more about Article Distribution and Article Distribution companies.

I mentioned this topic briefly in an earlier chapter, but I am going to take the story a bit further at this juncture.

If you have heard somebody say that distributing an article is a bad idea, due to “Google’s Duplicate Content Penalty”, please [read this article](#) so that I can dispel that myth for you.

I am going to move forward as if you agree that “Google’s Duplicate Content Penalty” is a myth, as I believe it is.

You can have the best show on television, but if people aren’t watching it, then your show will not be renewed for another season.

You can have the best restaurant in town, but if no one knows it is there, then you will soon have to close its doors, because you will not be able to afford to keep it open.

Lesson #23: The same thing applies to your articles. Unless people are reading your articles, then your articles will fail to deliver the desired results.

As covered in the “Google Duplicate Content Penalty Myth” [article](#), Article Distribution is no different than what a news organization does when it syndicates news content to other news agencies.

Lesson #24: *News agencies write news stories, and then sell those stories to other news agencies. The only difference with Article Marketing is that we “give” the stories to third-party publishers with the requirement that the publishers give us an advertisement at the end of the article, which points the reader back to our website.*

The goal of Article Distribution is to find publishers – who operate newsletters or websites – who will be willing to present your article to their audiences.

Through reaching the audiences of another publisher, you can find the level of readership that you desire for your articles.

While you can generally do Article Distributions on your own, Article Distribution companies can make the job of getting your articles to publishers much easier and in a more productive way for you.

Lesson #25: *There is no such thing as FREE. You must either swap your time or your money to get the job done. You can either give up your time to do the Article Distribution yourself, or you can spend some of your money to have a professional do the job for you.*

The more publishers you can reach with the offer to publish your article, the more places you may inevitably find your article published.

Each Article Distribution Company typically has its own Distribution channels, allowing them to get your articles to more and more publishers.

As you may recall, the four Article Distribution companies I recommend are:

1. [The Phantom Writers](#) (*Owned by me, and in business since 2001.*)
2. [Article Crooner](#)
3. [Submit Your Article](#)
4. [Isnare](#)

In the previous chapter of this ebook, I also discussed at some length the different channels of article distribution available through the Article Distribution companies.

A few Article Distribution companies utilize private mailing lists to send targeted articles to newsletter publishers and webmasters, who are seeking articles to use in their newsletters and on their websites.

Nearly all Article Distribution companies also have a more “automated” process of putting articles directly into websites.

Regardless of what you may have believed, there is “Free Choice” with all publishers who choose to receive content from the Article Distribution companies – even with the sites that accept automated submissions from the Article Distribution companies.

Many of the Article Distribution companies that auto-submit articles to websites are actually sending those articles to “article directories”, such as those like [Article Beach](#), [Article Dashboard](#), and [Article Friendly](#).

Websites that “automatically” receive articles from the Article Distribution companies frequently do “manual approvals” of the articles received by the website.

Each website has its own Editorial Policy, which guides the kinds of content they will accept and the level of quality they expect to see, before they publish an article.

There are webmasters who simply do not care about quality of the content they publish, which means that many writers can get by with sending absolutely anything to the website, and they can be assured that their content will be published on those websites. But there are not as many of these websites as you might expect.

I have been working in this industry since 2000. During the past several years, I have learned that many of the sites – that do not have any quality control set up on the content that they receive – will not survive more than two years, due to a lack of reliable visitors and traffic.

It is hard to earn the loyalty of visitors, when the visitor cannot trust the website to provide consistent, good quality information to its readers. It is also hard for a Webmaster to make a profit from their website, without consistent and reliable flow of visitors to their website.

There are a few websites out there, which do accept any content that is submitted to them, that have survived for years and will continue to survive for many more years. Those sites tend to be operated by companies that can afford to underwrite the cost of running the website, because they have income from other sources.

It is generally the people with one or two websites, who will eventually dump their websites, because there was not enough profit in them to justify the continued operation of the site.

A few years ago, I considered building my own Windows-based article distribution software. I had what I believed was a really good idea. My idea was that the software would report back to a central server when the individual article directories in the database approved articles for my customers.

Those people who had paid to use my software would be shown the article directories in the order of the last article approved, in real-time, so that my customers would know which article directories were known to be approving articles now. This would have enabled my customers to focus their attention on submitting articles only to the article directories that were most likely to approve their articles quickly.

The software had been completed to the point where we were using it in-house to hand-submit articles to article directories. We used the software for six months, while it was under development.

We abandoned the project when we realized the truth of the statistics. Out of the 1584 article directories we had in our central database, less than 100 of those directories were approving articles within 180 days of submission and fewer than 40 article directories were approving articles within 30 days of submission!

Given that so many article directories were simply inactive, we figured that many people would feel cheated after buying our software package, so we abandoned the project.

While it is true that we abandoned that software project in late-2007, I believe that the situation has very likely not changed all that much in the past two years.

We have actually taken the time to compile a [list of Article Directories](#) that were live at the beginning of 2009. It must be noted however that although these sites are live, we are unable to make any guarantees about whether those sites are actually currently publishing new articles from the public or not.

If the situation is the same now as it was in late-2007, then I would not expect to see more than 100 of the 1217 article directories in the list to be actually publishing content from the public.

This is the reason why I snicker when I see ads about how so-and-so's service can send your article to umpteen thousand websites. My response is, "*Oh really. Now are you going to tell them how many of those websites are actually approving articles right now?*"

With my service, I refuse to suggest that I will get your article onto thousands of websites, because I know that just is not true.

I am sure that they can "submit" your article to thousands of sites, but the important number to understand is how many of those sites actually "publish" articles?

While I can send your article to tens of thousands of online publishers, **I acknowledge in no uncertain terms** that the number of people who will publish your article relies entirely upon the topic of the article; the quality of your content, and how many people will "choose" to publish your article.

It is never important how many sites and publishers we can “submit” your article. What is important is how many publishers may “publish” your article after it has been distributed.

The exposure you receive as a result of your Article Marketing is only one metric. The number of links developed, the amount of traffic you receive, the link popularity your website gains, and your search engine rankings are other metrics to look at to measure of your Article Marketing activities.

As I have even mentioned earlier in this ebook, the number of websites and newsletters that reprint your article may not be that important and the above-mentioned metrics may not be important either. **In the end game, the only metric that really matters is how much money you can earn back as a result of your Article Marketing activities.**

On some days, I only need my article to be published in one newsletter to make my article profitable. If my article being published in a single newsletter can generate \$1800, \$10,000 or \$38,000 in a week, then it really doesn't matter how many links I got from that article, does it?

Of course, the links will come. Most newsletters publish an online archive of their newsletter, so I will get a link from the newsletter's archives. And when my article is exposed to tens of thousands of readers in a day, it is not uncommon for a few of those readers to also publish my article on their website.

I will get my links from my articles, and I will get traffic from my articles. With traffic to my website from my articles, a

certain number of those visitors will become customers once they reach my website.

So many people measure the success of their Article Marketing campaign by only one metric – links. If you are someone who thinks that links is the only metric that matters, let me know how that works out for you. ;-)

In the meantime, I will continue to measure my own success by the only metric that matters to me – dollars.

In my world, the other five measurements simply show me my pulse. And if I continue to have a pulse, I am happy.

If you choose to only measure your business by the “links” metric, then so be it. That is your choice to do.

But ask yourself honestly whether those links on those web pages are going to add to your bottom line.

Here is something interesting for you to play with:

I have a couple of Article Dashboard sites that I set up to play with. One of them is [Tech Central Publishing](#) (PR2). According to my database numbers, it has 54,000 articles. But it has a “Google footprint” of only [4,110 pages](#).

This is an interesting analysis I have been playing with for a few years. (*Until now, I had only shared this with a few people.*)

What I mean by a “Google footprint” is how many pages Google actually acknowledges on the website.

No article directory has only “article pages”. There are article pages and navigation pages through a variety of methods, including topic pages, author pages, most recent, etc.

When I look at the “Google footprint”, I would like to see Google documenting at least as many pages, as there are articles on the site.

(I acknowledge in advance that many of the pages documented in the “Google footprint” will not contain articles, so the exercise is only organized to gain a basic estimation of how many articles there are on a site that Google may actually be acknowledging.)

My other Article Dashboard site is Articles4Reprint.com (PR2). It has 30,000 articles and a “Google Footprint” of [1,920 pages](#).

On ArticleFriendly.net (PR3), there are 26,000 articles. But its’ “Google footprint” is only [3,250 pages](#).

ArticleCity.com (PR5) has more than 78,000 articles and a “Google footprint” of [29,800](#).

Then there are article directories a bit lower on the Google food chain.

Take for example, ArticleDude.com that has a PR4. It has 148,000 articles on it, but its “Google footprint” is only [441 pages](#).

The PR5 article directory at [Article Directory Online](http://ArticleDirectoryOnline.com) has 158,000 articles, but a “Google footprint” of only [4,260 pages](#).

The [Articles Galore Info](#) article directory has nearly 97,000 articles on it, but its “Google footprint” is a measly [602 pages](#).

Then there are article directories that are a bit higher on the Google food chain.

[The Phantom Writers](#) has 6,598 articles on it and a “Google footprint” of [9,120 pages](#).

[Article Base](#) has 1.1 million articles and a “Google footprint” of [1.03 million pages](#).

[Ezine Articles](#) has 3.05 million articles and a “Google footprint” of [3.7 million pages](#).

There are some notable article directories that are not mentioned here; because we cannot really do this exercise if they do not make their article counts public.

(The above numbers were accurate when they were tabulated on 10-11-2009.)

The point of this demonstration was not to show how much better of a “Google footprint” [The Phantom Writers directory](#) has. I am not that self-absorbed. Actually my site is actually doing better than it was just a few months ago, in the “Google footprint” department.

The point of this demonstration is to show you that if you get your articles into many of these article directories – that is no guarantee that Google is going to acknowledge your links within the article directory.

As I said when I was discussing Article Distribution services in a previous chapter, **many of my Article Distribution customers use more than one distribution service in order to reach even larger audiences.**

That is not to say my service lacks the oomph to get the job done or that my competitors don't do a good job either.

Those clients of mine who utilize more than one service do so, because they acknowledge that I can reach publishers that my competitors cannot, and vice versa, my competitors can reach some publishers that I cannot reach.

If my customers can reach a few more publishers whom I am not reaching for them, then more power to them. I am happy to see them find even more success than what I can bring to them.

After my experience in 2007, when I found out that most of the article directories were inactive, and after I ran the "Google footprint" scenario the first time, I made the determination that I would not worry about article directories. I am probably the only company in this industry that does not chase article directories to "submit" articles to them.

Does that make me a bad guy? No, it just makes me different.

I have long considered Article Directories to be the **redheaded stepchildren** of the Article Marketing industry – even before I learned how many were inactive and how many of them do not get any real respect from Google.

My #1 issue with Article Directories has always been that they are a passive method of advertising the availability of an article.

It is true that Article Directories may give you a few more Google links now, but consider this:

Once your article is placed into an article directory, you have to wait and pray that someone is going to visit that article directory, navigate the thousands of articles on the website until they find your article, then do the copy-and-paste to get your article to their website.

My goal has always been to offer a more active approach to Article Marketing, by taking the article directly to the publisher, rather than to wait for the publisher to come to the article.

As you may have gathered from this chapter, I consider most article directories to be of little or no value in the Article Marketing process.

In my mind, the real value is when a newsletter publisher or a Webmaster (*that does not have an Article Directory*) publishes your article.

I have a couple competitors out there who are quick to point to my higher prices as a reason not to use my service. After all, I don't give you a bunch of Article Directory links to justify my higher pricing.

Yes, my Article Distribution prices are higher, but my service is nothing like any of my competitors – not really.

With my competitors, you have to put your article into their system. If they don't like something about your article, they will kick it back to you for correction.

I talked to one guy who said he submitted the same article to one of my competitors 7 times and each time the article was declined. He finally gave up on getting the article published, until he found me.

We don't make you figure out how to get your article into our system. You give us your article in any format that is most convenient for you, and we will make sure that your article gets into our system the way it needs to be in there.

Ah... you have heard this one already. "Newsletters don't matter."

I make it my business to reach newsletter publishers, webmasters AND bloggers. I don't pooch newsletter publishers, because as you are well aware by now, I rely on newsletter publishers to help my customers and I make money from our Article Marketing efforts.

We strive to get traffic from newsletters, websites and the search engines.

Because we instruct our customers to focus on quality content above quantity distributions, we are able to reach more reputable web publishers.

In the list below, you will see a small sampling of the websites that have published content we have distributed for our customers:

- Wall Street Journal Online - **PR8**
- Yahoo Answers (*full articles*) - **PR8**
- About dot com - **PR8**
- Web MD - **PR7**
- Experience dot com - **PR7**
- Street Directory (*travel*) - **PR7**
- Zimbio - **PR6**
- Self Growth - **PR6**
- Health Central - **PR6**
- Mental Health Matters - **PR6**
- Non Stop English - **PR6**
- Translation Directory - **PR6**
- National Business Association website - **PR6**
- Apollo Hosting - **PR6**
- SiteProNews - **PR6**
- SEO-News - **PR5**
- Web One UK - **PR5**
- Site Reference - **PR5**
- Small Business Brief - **PR5**
- 401k Help Center - **PR5**
- Hardware Hell (*computers*) - **PR5**
- Impact Factory - **PR5**
- K-12 Academics - **PR5**
- MD Junction - **PR5**
- Bella Online - **PR5**
- Family Resource - **PR4**
- Why Bike (*motorcycles*) - **PR4**
- Grief Loss Recovery - **PR4**
- WE Magazine For Women - **PR4**
- Aspire Magazine For Women - **PR4**
- the Video Professor website - **PR4**

- Council on Chemical Abuse - **PR4**
- The Keltly Patrick Dennehy Foundation - **PR4**
- Developer Shed - **PR4**
- Christian Homemaking - **PR3**
- Athens Mental Health org - **PR3**
- Veterans Today - **PR3**

How many of my competitors can brag about getting articles into such websites?

Yes, my prices are higher than many of my competitors. If the only measure of the value of a service is the price you pay, then my [Article Distribution service](#) may not be the right one for you.

But if you are happy to look beyond Article Directories as a method to find people to publish your articles, then my Article Distribution service may provide you a better return on your Article Marketing investment, than some of the other available Article Distribution services.

Outside of my own service, the other Article Distribution services that I am going to show you below all still chase Article Directories for the publication of your articles.

So, if you want to see your articles in Article Directories, you should also use one or more of my competitors to get your articles into those directories.

It should be noted that you should not worry about any of the Article Directory submission services putting your articles on the same directories more than once. Most of the Article Directory software packages have built-in

systems to prevent one of your articles from being placed inside the Article Directory on more than one page.

Here are the most well known Article Distribution Services and a bit of information about each:

[The Phantom Writers](#) (*Owned by me, and in business since 2001.*) – I submit to newsletter publishers, webmasters and bloggers. I have hundreds of private, niche-topic, targeted mailing lists to send articles, as well as some semi-automated website distribution.

[Submit Your Article](#) – Based in the UK. They submit to Article Directories, blogs and they have several private mailing lists in which they can use to distribute your articles. (In business since 2004.)

[Isnare](#) – Isnare is based in the Philippines. They have some private mailing lists, and they submit to Article Directories and blogs. (Operating as an Article Distribution service since 2005.)

[Article Crooner](#) – Based in the U.S. They submit to Article Directories, blogs, and they operate some private mailing lists. (Since 2009. Article Crooner has come from the ashes of Article Marketer.)

[Fast Submit Articles](#) – Is based in Singapore. They do hand-submission to about 350 Article Directories. (In business since 2008.)

Several of my long-term customers use only Submit Your Article and my service.

Quite a few of my customers use Submit Your Article, Isnare and my Article Distribution service.

A few of my customers use my service in conjunction with Article Marketer (now [Article Crooner](#)) and Submit Your Article.

The only customers of mine, whom I know to utilize Fast Submit Articles, to my knowledge, are the ones to whom I suggested the service.

As to who is the cheapest on the list, I think it will be Isnare, then Article Marketer, Fast Submit Articles, Submit Your Articles, and then my service, [The Phantom Writers](#).

If you come to acknowledge that sometimes it is better to spend more money to get better results, I would like to introduce you to another company in the Article Marketing industry.

[PR Leads](#) is a company that offers top-tier Public Relations services. As one of their companion services, they offer an Article Marketing Service as well.

Just as I described my service as being different from that of my competitors, the PR Leads Article Marketing Service is very different than mine, as well.

At \$495, their service is considerably more expensive than even my service, but through the [PR Leads Article Marketing Service](#), they are going to be able to reach even higher authority websites than I am able to reach. By using their

established relationships with targeted authority websites, they will be submitting your article and then following up with their connections at the desired sites, to ensure that your article will reach the desk of the appropriate decision makers.

When you are willing to spend the extra money to get the hands-on attention that the [PR Leads Article Service](#) will give you, you will find your articles turning up in places your competitors will only dream of being able to reach.

Final Thoughts

This has been quite a journey.

I have wanted to write this book for years, but I finally just sat down and did it.

There is a lot of myth surrounding the Article Marketing industry, and I hope this book has gone a long way towards dispelling those myths that have kept people from undertaking Article Marketing as a promotional method.

I hope that you have come to appreciate the potential of Information Marketing and that **Quality Counts** in Article Marketing.

It is true that you can write crappy content and see some search engine ranking success from your endeavors, but crappy content will not carry you to the next level.

Writing great content is easy, when you understand what it is that you need to do to make articles that publishers will want to publish and readers will want to read.

I hope that with what I have shown you that you have acquired a belief that you can write good articles on your own, without the assistance of a writer. More importantly, I hope you have realized also that most writers will leave you flat, by writing content that no one will want to read.

I have tried to give you the knowledge and the strategy that you will need to be successful in writing great content. I have even tried to point you to how to overcome writer's block, to help you get your ideas "down on paper".

In the end, I tried to give you a complete education on what you can expect from an Article Distribution service, and how that may help you in your quest to find publishers to reprint your articles.

Along the way, I have shared with you 25 individual lessons that will help point you to success with Article Marketing.

As we reach the end of this ebook, “*Article Marketing: Beyond the Basics*”, I have one final desire:

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this book as much as I have enjoyed writing it.



My name is Bill Platt. I reside with my wife and three kids in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

I produce daily marketing tips on Twitter [@contentmanager](https://twitter.com/contentmanager)

I can be reached by phone at:
405-385-7038 9am-6pm CST, Mon-Fri

I own the following domains:

<http://thePhantomWriters.com/> for Article Marketing

<http://LinksAndTraffic.com/> for Pay for Performance SEO

<http://TwitUsers.com/> Marketing Help for Twitter Users

Additional Recommended Reading

- I have mentioned several times in this ebook my other ebook called, "[Article Marketing: How To Break The Rules and Profit From Breaking The Rules](#)". That ebook gets more into the technicalities of writing content that people will want to read. It also addresses that concept from the standpoint of maximizing your advertising value with Article Marketing. At \$97, it is a good value, because what you earn from the knowledge could literally be a few extra thousand dollars per year. Most of my customers, who have purchased that ebook, have suggested that they have read the book several times in order to digest all of the information included in it.
- "[The Clash Of Titans: Article Directory Owners Vs. Automated Article Submission Services](#)" – This article defines the Article Marketing industry from the standpoint of what is actually required to manage an article directory. In understanding the challenges of the article directory manager, you can better understand how to get your articles published in more article directories.
- "[Article Marketing Success Secret: Give Them What They Want](#)" - Those people who have found the greatest success utilizing article marketing as a promotional tool are those who understand that article marketing is best-used as a tool to communicate "one human to another." I managed to get quotes from some well-known online marketing professionals to complement this article.
- "[Article Marketing Secret: How To Identify and Write For Your Target Market](#)" – This article will help you develop your strategy for writing articles that will get published more often and read.
- "[Successful Article Marketers Help Readers Solve Problems](#)" is another article that helps you get to the root

of how to write an article people will want to publish and readers will want to read.

- [“How To Inspire Yourself To Write Articles Others Will Want To Read”](#) – This article was originally written to help people overcome the common problem of Writer’s Block.
- [“How To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Article Marketing Campaigns”](#) – If you are going to try Article Marketing as a promotional method, make a commitment to see it through to success.
- [“Successful Internet Marketing Without Search Engines”](#) – You should focus on getting your links into the reach of your potential customers’ mouse. You should try to get your links where the person most likely to buy your products or services will be.
- [“How Print Editorial Standards Differ from Online Standards”](#) – Offline publishers have much higher standards for their content than what online publishers have. But if we online writers step up to the plate, we may be able to convince the cash-strapped offline publishers to incorporate the use of Free Reprint Articles into their publishing model.
- [“Have We Really Seen The Death Of Article Marketing?”](#) – Many people were declaring the death of Article Marketing in 2007. Yet, Article Marketing remains a topic that generates a lot of interest. If this news simply means that a few writers have quit article marketing for good, then you and I will have fewer people to compete with to get our articles seen and published.
- [“Article Directory Managers Take Stand Against Private Label Content”](#) – How much should you pay a professional writer to write for you? The simple answer is that you should always pay him or her what they think they are worth to you.

- [“Article Marketing for Links”](#) – This article addresses tips for creating a more effective Author’s Resource Box, also known as the About The Author information.
- [“Article Marketing Is More Than Just Search Engine Marketing”](#) - Article marketing IS MORE POWERFUL than Search Engine Marketing, because search marketing is only one of the potential benefits of article marketing.
- [“Google Is Everything! Or Is It?”](#) is a tongue-in-cheek poke at my critics who say, “Without Google, one has no chance of success.” With facts and figures, I show that if I had focused ALL of my energy on Google as “the only reliable source of website traffic”, then I would have had to turn away 275,000 visitors from my website in the 20 months leading up to when I wrote the article.
- [“Masters Of The Google Universe: How To Achieve Top Google Rankings”](#) – This article discusses the role of Article Marketing in the process of improving one’s rankings in Google’s search results.
- The “Masters Of The Google Universe” article was built on the foundation laid down in the article titled, [“What Does Your SEO Linking Portfolio Look Like?”](#)
- [“Successful SEO Begins With Keyword Research and Analytics”](#) – Before spending money on SEO, one should have a solid understanding of which keywords will produce successful transactions for the website. Spending money on the wrong keywords is a sure road to failure.
- [“The Mythical Google Sandbox And How To Escape It”](#) – This article contains more proof as to the effectiveness of article marketing to help a page rank in Google’s search results.
- [“Article Marketing and the Duplicate Content Penalty Myth”](#) – Google’s “Duplicate Content Penalty” is a myth, promoted by people who are trying to cover up the fact that they can’t always help people rank well in Google.

I have written a lot of articles in my time, so if you read those mentioned above and feel a desire to read more of my articles, [click this link to review all of my reprint articles](#).

You can also [read my blog](#) to find many more articles on the topics of Article Marketing and SEO.

Additional Article Marketing Resources

In this prologue, I will provide once again links to resources we mentioned inside the ebook, as well as some additional Article Marketing resources that did not bear mentioning in the ebook.

Automated Article Scripts for your Website:

If you operate a WordPress blog, and you would like to receive targeted articles from The Phantom Writers Article Distribution Service, please go to the [Backlinks Magnet](#) website to download our [Backlinks Magnet WordPress plugin](#).

Books Designed to Help You Be a Better Writer:

If you would like to buy our ebook, “Article Marketing: How To Break The Rules and Profit From Breaking The Rules”, please [visit our website to get your copy](#). In this ebook, we will teach you the technical aspects of writing articles that online publishers will want to reprint. It will also show you how to ensure that your articles get the respect you want from the search engines, so that you can increase your search rankings.

“[Write An Article-A-Day, The Easy Way](#)” - Georganne Fiumara spent 22 years transforming complicated business information into easy-to-understand concepts. Georganne said she was, “just plain tired of seeing the writing ‘elite’ give everyone the impression that only a chosen few can be great writers. Anything is easy when you are shown how to do it.”

[“How To Write Special Feature Articles”](#) - Keith Choy has written a “handbook on how to write and publish your own special feature articles successfully... no matter what topic you write on!” Keith will teach you how to write feature articles that newsletter editors and webmasters will actually WANT to publish.

Eventually, once you have learned the art of writing articles that people will want to publish, it may be helpful to learn how to speed up your writing, without losing the quality of your content in the process. [“Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed”](#), written by Jeff Bollow, will be an excellent addition to your own personal library of writing handbooks.

Making Money With Information Marketing:

[“The Official Get Rich Guide to Information Marketing”](#), written by: Dan Kennedy, Bill Glazer and Robert Skrob

Article Distribution Services:

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When you are willing to spend the extra money to get the hands-on attention that the [PR Leads Article Marketing Service](#) will give you, you will find your articles turning up in places your competitors will only dream of being able to reach.

A Comprehensive List Of Article Directories, Where You Might Be Able To Submit Articles:

As of October 2009, this list contains [1217 Article Directories](#).

Freelance Websites:

<http://www.guru.com>

<http://www.elance.com>

<http://www.mturk.com>

Professional Article Ghost Writing Services:

[The Phantom Writers](#) – We offer two kinds of ghost writing services at two different price points:

1. Inexpensive ghostwriting from writers we hire online.
2. Articles written by Bill Platt.

[Pro Content Writer](#)

[Best Instant Sites](#)

[Article Content Provider](#)

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My name is Bill Platt. I reside with my wife and three kids in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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Feedback About This Ebook

Bill Platt can be contacted directly through his website at:

<http://thephantomwriters.com/contact/form.php>

Bill Platt can also be reached by phone, between 9am-6pm CST on most days, Monday-Friday.

This book can be downloaded on our blog, [located here](#).

I have chosen to give away the “*Article Marketing: Beyond the Basics*” ebook for free. The only thing I ask in return is that if you have enjoyed this ebook; please go to my blog and [Leave Your Comments or Testimonial](#) about my ebook.

Thank you.

My family and I wish the very best to you and your family.

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