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Introduction

Let's Face it...

Search the internet and you'll find plenty of people claiming that article marketing will turn your business into a traffic magnet and generate thousands of inbound links practically overnight. While some proclaim it to be a quick fix, the truth is, article marketing is more of a "slow and steady wins the race" sort of approach to online marketing.

Now I know some of you may not like hearing this, but let's face it... it's the truth! We could tell you that article marketing will drive thousands of visitors to your site after writing just a few articles and posting them on a few article directories, but this would only set you up for major disappointment down the road.

The Good News!

Now its time for the good news! While article marketing is NOT an overnight solution, it IS a proven, time-tested, affordable, and FUN way to build back-links, and generated lots of free traffic to your site. With such a wide variety of different online marketing techniques out there, it's a relief to know that there's at least one method that's a sure deal. Article marketing works... we know because we've done it for ourselves, as well as hundreds of others out there, and we have seen dramatic results over time.

What is it?

Article Marketing refers to the development of industry-specific articles that are geared toward a specific audience, and aims to inform them, answer their questions, and solve their problems. These are articles are keyword optimized to rank highly in the search engines.

At the bottom of each article is a **Resource Box** that identifies you or your company as the expert author of the article, and contains a link back to your website.

Once the articles are written, article marketing involves ***publishing*** them to various high traffic article directories out on the web. The most popular article directory out there is a site called www.ezinearticles.com These sort of article directories allow publishers to take your articles and

publish them on their websites, newsletters, or other publications. When people take your article, they usually will leave the link to your site, giving you an additional link back to your site from their site.

Sites like ezinearticles.com have high PageRank and tend to rank well in Google and other search engines. This means that when your article is added to their site, it has a good chance of ranking for the keyword you optimized it for. This can drive free traffic, and provides a good solid back link to your site from a reputable, targeted page. Over time, all these links help increase your own site's link popularity, causing you own site to rank higher in the search engines!

Why Article Marketing?

With search engines dominating how online traffic is directed, content plays a more important role than ever in determining which websites show up in the top search results. Therefore, search engine optimized articles offer an affordable, effective method for companies to compete in this increasingly competitive landscape.

Throughout this ebook, you'll learn all about the many benefits article marketing offers businesses and how to leverage it for your own business purposes. You will also learn what the advantages and disadvantages are of posting articles to directories vs posting them to your own website.

Understanding article marketing and its benefits is just the beginning. Of course, you must learn how to write effective articles. An effective article by definition would be one in which captures the attention of a large online audience and, in which effectively elicits a response from the reader which results in a lead or a sale for your business. This ebook will outline for you, step-by-step, how to write effective articles.

Keyword Optimization – Don't Bother Writing Without it

One particular area of article marketing that receives a good amount of attention is keyword optimization. Search engine marketing techniques focus on leveraging specific keywords and keyword phrases within the content you create. Why is this important? Because when a business uses relevant keywords for their industry or niche, they're increasing the opportunity for their website to appear higher in the searchers, resulting in a greater quantity of website traffic.

The final portion of this article marketing course discusses article directories. Why are article directories beneficial? Which article directories should you submit your content to? How many article directories should you submit content to? Should you submit content manually or automatically using software tools? All of your questions regarding how to leverage article directories will be answered in the final portion of this course.

Once you complete the next few pages, you'll have all the background information, and all the tools necessary to implement this powerful technique for your business. Within no time, your business will experience an increase in website traffic... and if you stick with it over the long haul, you will join thousands of others who are getting thousands, or even *millions* of hits per month as a direct result from their article marketing efforts.

Why You Should Be Leveraging Article Marketing

The well recognized phrase, “Content is King” has never been more true than today. With a click of a button, search engines allow people to find information on any topic that exists out there. This gives your business an opportunity to **GIVE PEOPLE THE INFORMATION THEY’RE LOOKING FOR**. Once people read your articles, they will see you as the expert, and will come to you when it’s time to order your product or service.

Here are the primary benefits of article marketing:

- Generates qualified traffic
- Builds natural back links, increasing your page rank with Google
- Establishes yourself as an expert within your business niche
- Generates affiliate income when you incorporate links and information into the articles
- Helps to pre-sell products and services

Leverage Other People’s Marketing for YOUR Benefit

When you submit your articles to top sites like ezinearticles.com, you are piggy backing on their previous marketing and link building efforts. These top sites have high link popularity (PageRank), which means any content that’s added to them tends to rank very well in the search engines. If you put the content on your own site, since your PageRank is lower, the content would not rank as high.

Obviously, in the long run, you want the content on your site to rank high, not just content that is on someone else’s site. However, when you put your articles on these article directories, they will contain a link back to you, which will serve to do just that!

Writing Effective Articles

Writing high quality articles is not as hard as it sounds, even if you are not a professional writer.

The first thing to keep in mind is that all article content must be 100% unique., in other words, you cannot copy content already posted by other companies, or your competitors and claim it as your own. In addition to being unique, all article content should be focused on relevant, timely information. After all, who wants to read outdated information?

If you want to get more mileage out of your articles, you can leverage an article marketing strategy called ‘evergreen’. The term evergreen refers to articles which will always provide value, which don’t include newsworthy information or dated material, and which provide value to readers on a year round basis. Evergreen articles do not become outdated over time.

If you want to create evergreen articles, consider these tips in mind:

- Avoid time or date references
- Avoid specific price references for products and services
- Avoid slang, as it can date an article or narrow the target audience too much over time
- Avoid cultural references
- Avoid articles which cover celebrities or current events

- Write How-to articles

These articles are great choices for static website content, as they can remain online long term, allowing your business to get more bang for its marketing buck.

Elements of Creating a Good Article

How can you write an article that will serve its purpose? There are several key elements to a good article, including headlines, the article body, the formatting and the resource or bio box.

Article Headlines

The first thing that most web surfers look for is the headline or title to a blog posting, news story or article. If it does not grab their attention, they are moving onto the next item in their search. If you are focusing on specific keywords, they should start the title of the piece. For example, if your keyword phrase is “Online Education Degree”, effective titles could include “Online Education Degree- Your Key to Changing Careers”, “Online Education Degree-Increase your Marketability in this Competitive Job Market”. Both of these titles incorporate the given keyword phrase, and tell the reader what they are about to learn. We will discuss more about the importance of keywords later in this course.

One more tip; be sure to capitalize the primary words within your title as well, as again, visually attractive articles are read more often than the rest of the field. You can see this tip executed in the 2 title samples above.

Body of the Article

Once you develop a powerful and catchy title, you must focus on the article’s body. Writing articles for use online is completely different than everything you were taught in English class. Online articles must be designed for quick scanning and are as a result, formatted differently.

Here are some must-do’s when it comes to the body of an online article:

- Paragraphs should be short- focus on 4-6 sentences in length, not long, hard to read paragraphs which people tend to skip over.
- Break up the text with bullet point lists or numbered lists where appropriate to make the text more visually appealing.

- Use bold subheadings within your articles to break up paragraphs. Include at least one subheading within every article, but more where appropriate. These bold phrases are typically what an online reader will scan for either when determining whether to read an article, or when just scanning over the content. If your article is focusing on specific keywords, it is also recommended to include those keywords within these subheadings to increase your page rank with major search engines.
- Create crisp, concise content- focus on an article body size of between 400-1000 words. People tend to have a short attention span when scanning online material. Most articles average 500 words, which also happens to be the minimum word count for many of the more popular article directories. So, when creating an article of this length, you are not limiting your directory posting options.
- Include live links only when allowable by chosen article directories or when posting content directly onto your website. Each article directory will have slightly different guidelines on if you can include links, how many and which type. Most directories will not allow html tags within the article body. So, before including any type of tag or link, review the specific site's rules to ensure you are compliant.
- Depending upon the purpose of your article and where it is placed, consider including a call to action within the piece to elicit a response from the reader. If you are including a resource or bio box, you may want to include your call to action there instead to appear less 'salesy'. Examples of a call to action would include statements such as, "For more information, click here", "To learn more about how article marketing can benefit your business, send an email to," or "Click here to view a demonstration. A call to action can include anything which elicits a response from the reader of the article.
- Include a resource or bio box at the end of your article. This is a 1-3 line communication allowing you to describe yourself, your business, your products and services, to post direct links to your website or to an affiliate product you are marketing and is typically where the reader of the article heads when they are looking for more information about the article's source.

The Article Summary

Most article directories request or even require that you submit a short article summary along with the article body. An article summary is considered a teaser, and is used to describe the article to potential readers. When an individual is searching for content online, these summaries or descriptions will pop up. Therefore, to entice more people to read your specific articles, your summaries need to capture someone's attention. The first sentence should make a bold statement, ask a question, or offer a thought. The next 1-2 sentences should give the potential reader a snapshot of what they would find within the article's body. Overall, you are selling someone on why they should click to read your article, so keep that in mind as you are writing this piece.

Keyword Research and SEO Strategies

When creating article content, keywords or keyword phrases, should almost always come into play for your business's marketing purposes. Keywords or keyword phrases are those terms that an online searcher would type into a major engine when they are looking for the products and services that your company offers. When you utilize keywords and keyword phrases on your website and within content posted online, you are utilizing a marketing concept called search engine marketing (SEO).

When your articles include these relevant terms, content containing these terms will rank on search engines when the person types them in. So, when your company is looking to boost its visibility online, it should leverage targeted keywords.

There are several methods available for determining which keywords and phrases are best for your business. Keyword tools (Google Adwords Keyword Tool, Wordspot.com, Goodkeywords.com, Compete.com), software programs (Word Tracker, Keyword Elite), SEO consultants and manual techniques can be utilized individually or in combination to identify which terms to target in your marketing campaign. Most professionals recommend brainstorming manually for keywords when initially beginning the process. Then, as you build your SEO strategy, most marketers turn to tools such as Google for keyword assistance.

Choosing Keyword Combinations

For any given business, there could be 100s of possible keyword combinations. For example, relevant keywords for a weight loss company could include:

- Rapid weight loss
- Weight loss
- Easy weight loss
- Weight loss tips
- How to lose weight

The keywords and phrases should include any and all combinations of relevant terms. If you wanted to focus on a specific geographic region such as Texas, you may also want to consider including the term with the phrases. Using the same keyword phrases above, you could focus on Texas by including these terms:

- Texas Rapid weight loss
- Weight loss in Texas
- Easy weight loss
- Weight loss tips
- How to lose weight in Texas

In addition to focusing on keywords and considering your target locations, you also want to give thought to variations of phrases. The reason for this is that individual searchers will type in the same set of words in different variations. For example, if someone were searching for a chiropractor in Dallas, they may search “Dallas chiropractor”, “chiropractor in Dallas”, “Dallas chiropractic”, or even “chiropractic Dallas.” Your business may choose to focus on only one, or all of these combinations.

Keyword Density Rules of Thumb

Once you have identified the keywords that your article marketing campaign will focus on, it is time to discuss how to properly incorporate these terms into your content. Incorporating keywords into content is often referred to as density. Keyword density refers to how often the word or phrase was utilized within the content, and is typically expressed as a percentage. For example, an article with the phrase “Texas realtors” appearing 5 times within 500 words would be described as having a density of 1%.

Most article directories place limitations on the allowable density for posting. The standard for density is 1% for given keywords, although some sites will allow a higher number, so be sure to check before creating your content.

In addition to article directory restrictions, keyword density is also important when it comes to search engines. Articles containing too many keywords are referred to as ‘stuffed’ and as a result, may be banned by major search engines, defeating the purpose of your marketing campaign.

In addition to the primary keyword the content is being created around, you should also work to naturally incorporate secondary keywords and other term variations. Again, it is important to focus on limiting total keyword content to avoid ‘stuffing’. And, more importantly, you want the articles you create to provide value to the readers. If they are difficult to read, or utilize strange keyword combinations, readers may turn toward other content.

When in doubt about keyword rules, visit Google’s resource center (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>). Even though they are not the only search engine online, their rules tend to set the standard online, and if you are compliant with their rules, you are most likely compliant with every other major search engine.

Article Marketing Tips

Here are some things to keep in mind when creating articles:

- Stay away from Private Label Rights Articles-This form of article has a high incidence of plagiarism, and re-sale to other buyers, and as a result, this can significantly damage your page rank online.

- Stay away from advertorials or salesy material within the body of your articles, as most online searchers are looking for value from the information that they choose to read. When readers are not happy with the information, they certainly will not come back for more, and will not be clicking on any targeted links that you have included within the article itself.
- If you are placing the same article on both your website and within article directories, make sure that you place it on your website first to assist with your overall page rank. Internet marketing professionals caution against using repetitive content in any circumstance however, so when you can, use new and completely original content when you distribute articles on different sites.
- Check your article for grammatical and spelling mistakes before publishing. Read through the entire article, even if you used a spelling or grammar check program, as things can easily be missed.

Article Directories

Now that you understand how to write effective articles, you need to consider where and how you will distribute the information. Article directories provide the ability to distribute your content to a large audience, get your site syndicated to many other sites, drive traffic, and gain targeted back links all at the same time.

More Benefits

- Many article directory sites are ranked by Google, meaning that content posting on the sites is automatically indexed by Google. When an online searcher is looking for specific content, your articles are more likely to appear in the first few pages of their search. And as a result, your business is likely to gain higher volumes of traffic.
- By placing your content on directories, you're increasing your potential readership.
- Many article directories offer the ability to post a basic level of content free, providing you with an affordable online marketing option for your business.
- Most major article directories offer their members detailed tracking information, allowing users to determine if their articles are producing the levels of traffic results desired.

Should I Submit the Same Article to Multiple Directories?

There are many sites and software programs out there designed to help you submit your articles to multiple article directories automatically, with minimal effort on your part. This may sound good, but we don't recommend it.

When the same articles are submitted to multiple directories, the content is considered and treated as 'duplicate content' by search engines like Google. You could spend time and money buying and learning how to use submission software, but why bother? The same article on more than one site will just be discounted and will never rank.

We recommend submitting one article to one article directory. Always submit UNIQUE content to each one. This is a better approach and will look more natural to the search engines.

The simplest, easiest, safest, and most effective way to start your article marketing effort is to simply submit your articles to ezinearticles.com. They have the highest PageRank, and the highest traffic.

Standing Out From the Crowd

Article directories often have many similar articles on the same subject matter posted. So, it is important to distinguish your piece through formatting, great title selection and by providing quality content. By distinguishing your content from the other similar pieces, your business is more likely to gain high volumes of click throughs to your website.

Finding the Best Article Directories to Submit To

Ezinearticles is the best place to start. In fact, it would be truly fine if you submitted no where else but here. If you are wondering how to find the best article directories to submit your content to, simply search online for an updated list of the top sites. Be sure to consider the Google PageRank of the site, since that is a good way to gauge whether or not your content has a chance at ranking once its placed on their site.

Top 5 Article Directories

- EzineArticles.com
- Articlebase.com
- Buzzle.com
- Goarticles.com
- ArticleAlley.com

Squidoo

Squidoo offers a platform for sharing targeted information to users. While Squidoo is similar to other content distribution platforms, its focus is primarily on segregating content into content modules, or 'lenses', in an attempt to make it easier for online searchers to locate relevant resources, answers and informative content on particular subject matters. These information portals offer a proven method for business owners to establish credibility as a subject matter expert, which in the long run, works as a method for driving targeted, qualified traffic.

Creating Squidoo pages is free, simple and easy. And, you can create multiple lenses, providing you the ability to market multiple products and services simultaneously on the same website platform. Once you establish your Squidoo lenses, you need to market them in order to build a strong online following, and ultimately, traffic to your website.

Here are several marketing techniques which have proven effective for Squidoo lenses:

- Search for other Squidoo lenses which are similar to your own. Then, post comments, or ask questions. If readers of that lens enjoy your comments, many of them will click through to view your lenses.
- Send an email blast to your current network or lead base to inform them when you establish new lenses.
- Look for Squidoo groups which would likely have members also interested in your products and services. By joining groups, you are leveraging the social networking component of the platform.
- Post new article content onto your Squidoo pages to increase your site's rank.
- Leverage popular social bookmarking icons and sites so that when a reader likes your lens or content, they can mark it for future viewing.
- Review the top Squidoo pages and implement some of their format, posts and general ideas into your own lenses.

Squidoo individually offers an effective marketing platform for your business. But, when leveraged in combination with articles you have written, its results increase exponentially.

Summary

If you're searching for a proven method of generating website traffic, look no further than article marketing. If you're willing to invest a little time and money up front to create compelling content on a regular basis, the rewards can be great in the long run. While it may not be an overnight solution, if you remain confident and committed for the long term, one day you will reap the benefits of having your own, permanent source of targeted, high quality, and FREE traffic and leads to your site.

Article Marketing Services by Interact Media

Interact Media is a well-known article marketing authority. With the largest network of certified copywriters anywhere on the web, we can find the best writer to develop remarkable, search engine optimized content for your articles. Then, using our sophisticated Content Marketing Platform, we submit those articles to directories such as ezinearticles.com and goarticles.com – all for one low cost that our competition can't match.

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