

# The Benefits of Regularly Publishing Articles

By Michaela St. Onge

Many people are under the assumption that, in order to write an article for publication, you need to be a professional writer. This is not the case. Though you do need expertise in whatever subject area you plan to write about, virtually anyone is capable of this feat. That said, why aren't more business professionals seeking the benefits of publishing articles and actually doing it?

Frequently the thinking goes like this:

- "The process is too overwhelming and I don't have enough time."
- "No one wants to read anything I have to say."
- "I'm not going to get anything out of this."

These common worries and misconceptions must be cast aside, because writing and publishing articles is one of the most significant things people can do help their business. Being regularly published in professional business journals and trade and industry magazines can not only boost sales and publicity for your firm, but also offer you an invaluable level of credibility

So how can you go about doing it? Contrary to popular belief, the road to regularly publishing articles is uncomplicated. "The

hardest thing was to commit to what is (to me) a relatively expensive process in 'blind faith,'" admits Jim Edholm, President of Business Benefits Insurance, a consulting firm focused on planning employee benefits. "If I hadn't published before, I might not have taken the step, which would have been a terrible error in judgment." Though committing to the process may seem a daunting undertaking, Edholm explains that failing to do so can represent a missed opportunity, as a dedication to writing articles for publication can deliver continuous positive results.

But before such results come your way, specific steps must be followed. "After deciding to commit, you need to be absolutely positive that you have multiple subjects about which to write," Edholm says. "You also need to think about your business from your customers' perspective in order to develop articles that will ring editors' chimes," says Renate Rooney, CEO/Founder of RCR Associates, Inc., a strategic management and operations consulting firm that helps businesses implement breakthrough strategies. Rooney, like Edholm, understands this importance, and advises new writers to seriously think about



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their target market and focus on getting published in journals read by their customers. "Being able to relate to the audience for whom you are writing is crucial," she says, "so you must make time to do it; the effort can only help your business."

Since writing can be undeniably hard work, you need to be ready for all that it entails. That includes preparing to mercilessly edit, and to understand that "editing takes a thick skin," says Chuck Dennis, Vice President of Knowledge Associates, a consulting firm focusing on the intersection of

marketing, sales and customer service. Helpful here is to remember that you don't have to be on your own: "It's useful to work with someone who has [written articles] before," advises Steve Lipka, President of Avatar Strategic Partners' Business Technology Practice, specialists in "making technology work for you."

Once your article is published, your hard work will pay off as you'll undoubtedly begin to see results. A result may be something as simple as a congratulatory email from a colleague, or a 'Wow this article is pretty interesting' from a client, but it could also be as great as the formation of a new business partnership. No matter the extensiveness of the feedback you are given, every bit of recognition stemming from your published article affords you credibility as an expert—something that is otherwise not easily attainable. Shelley Hall, Founder/President of Catalytic Management, a firm that specializing in business performance and growth consulting, calls credibility the single most important result she receives from writing and publishing articles. "Deciding to do articles has been one of the best things I've done for my business. When people see you in print they instantly place you among the top in your field. Publishing is a great way to inform people of how you approach a business challenge and how you would creatively solve the problem," she explains.

Similarly, Vin D'Amico, Founder and President of Damicon, where consultants "turn businesses from fragile to agile," recalls a time when he spoke with a prospect by telephone, then e-mailed him a copy of a published article. After the prospect read the article, the two set up an appointment which led Vin to land a new client. "Having that article available helped the sales process enormously by establishing my credibility and eliminating the need for reference checks," he says. Once you've written an article, you need to take advantage of it.

"I always load my briefcase with all my published articles before going out on a sales call. At the right time in a meeting, I pull out the right article, and it always helps to solidify the prospect's interest," says Dave Vogel, President of Intertech Engineering Associates, which provides the medical device industry with product development and validation, project management, and building internal expertise. Carol Bergeron, President and Founder of Bergeron Associates, practices organizational performance consulting and coaching, and has also learned to use her published articles to her advantage. "It has been great to send published articles to business associates, prospects and clients as another way to communicate my expertise. They can operate as a prelude to being referred to prospects, and even winning business from new clients," she says.

In addition to specific proactive techniques, you may also experience positive results without much extra work at all. Jim Edholm, for example, recently published an article on how businesses need to reevaluate their company dental plans. Within two weeks following publication, he was contacted by two different businesses looking for dental reevaluations, as well as a fellow broker looking at the possibility of jointly cooperating on a new product, and even a documentary producer requesting an interview with Jim, the now-published healthcare expert.

For some, however, the most important thing is *not* having a prospective client contact them due to the publication of a recent article. Vin D'Amico recommends people publish articles "to accumulate material that can help position them as an expert, not to attract people to contact them." The steady production of diverse articles is the precise marketing material that has established those working at Damicon as credible "agility experts," continuously delivering solutions that work. Initially, he "wanted to get [his] name recognized as authority," Vin explains, and regularly publishing articles (and a column) has allowed him to do just that.