

by Bob Lewis

# Savvy Business Promotion



Through  
Writing and  
Distributing Articles

# Savvy Business Promotion Through Writing “How to” Articles

By Bob Lewis

Jeff Crilley is a TV reporter for Fox News Dallas, and one morning when he woke up, he was amazed by what he saw on TV. There, on the Today Show was a friend...a Dallas area travel agent named Tom Parsons. Tom was talking to Katie Couric about a travel story.

A few minutes later Jeff switched over to ABC, and there was Tom again, talking to Diane Sawyer and Charlie Gibson. A little while later on CBS, Jeff saw Tom again.

The folks at Fox News had used Tom through the years for holiday travel stories, and kept going back to him whenever they needed someone who talk about related topics.

Suddenly, as Jeff put it, “the national media dogs found out where the bones were buried.”

And every time Tom’s face appeared on camera, the networks put a caption below him showing his name and identifying his website, [www.bestfares.com](http://www.bestfares.com)

Tom, of course, didn’t have to pay a penny for what amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of free advertising on three network morning shows.

Nice work if you can get it, huh?

Jeff told this story during one of my recent teleseminars. It’s a great example of how positioning yourself as an expert in a certain field can lead to huge profits through positive—and positively free – exposure in the media.

But how to you do that? How do you get the national media to come looking for you, wanting your comments and insights on hot topics in the news?

Writing “How to” articles is one of the best ways.

Newspapers, magazines, trade journals, and newsletters are always on the lookout for articles to “feed” their readers. Anything that will help people find more time, save money, feel better, look better, and enjoy life more will get their attention—and can get you attention in the form of free advertising.

“How to” articles give you an excellent opportunity to not only get immediate publicity when your article is published, but it also positions you to get even more in the future because you’ve established yourself as an expert.

And best of all, “How to” articles give you enormous credibility with the people who count most: your customers and potential customers. When they see your name in a newspaper or magazine byline, they know the publication CHOSE you because of your expertise. You didn’t have to pay the publication in the form of advertising.

But you might be saying right now, “Hey, I flunked high school English. I could never write an article.”

Don’t worry. You don’t have to. You can get other people to do it for you. Some will even do it for free. More on that later.

But if you are willing to sit down at your computer and take a crack at it yourself, here are some tips.

### **Pick a Topic**

If you know your field, this is pretty easy. Make a list of the three biggest problems your customers and prospects face. You can answer all three in one article, or better yet, write three separate articles.

And this is very important—make sure the topics tie into a service you provide or a product you sell.

Once you’ve done that, it’s time to select a title. It should read like a headline, and should entice the reader to want to learn more. Here are several contributed by “The Publicity Hound,” Joan Stewart of [www.business-advertising-promotion.com/publicityhound](http://www.business-advertising-promotion.com/publicityhound). Just fill in the blank.

A New Way to \_\_\_\_\_ That Has Never Failed

A Part-Timer’s Tactics for a Full-Timer’s \_\_\_\_\_

A Quiz: Test Your \_\_\_\_\_ Smarts

Cash in on \_\_\_\_\_ Trends

Chasing the Right \_\_\_\_\_

Cool Tools for Today’s \_\_\_\_\_

Common Errors That Kill \_\_\_\_\_

Discover the 7 Essential Elements That Guarantee \_\_\_\_\_

Finding the \_\_\_\_\_ That is Uniquely You

Good News for \_\_\_\_\_

How to Bounce Back from \_\_\_\_\_

How to Get Other People to \_\_\_\_\_  
 How to Handle \_\_\_\_\_  
 How to Make \_\_\_\_\_ Work for You  
 How to Make Your \_\_\_\_\_ Dreams Come True  
 How to Turn \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_  
 How to \_\_\_\_\_ - But Should You?  
 Mastering the Art of \_\_\_\_\_  
 No More \_\_\_\_\_  
 Part-Time \_\_\_\_\_, Full-Time Success  
 PSSSSSSST! Ever Wonder About \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Questions and Answers About \_\_\_\_\_  
 Straight Talk from a \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Great \_\_\_\_\_ Dilemma  
 The Most Beginner-Friendly \_\_\_\_\_  
 The \_\_\_\_\_'s Most Valuable \_\_\_\_\_ Tool  
 The Last Word on \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Amazing Solution for \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Best and Worst Ideas for \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Complete Guide to \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worst Mistakes You Can Make When \_\_\_\_\_  
 Top 10 \_\_\_\_\_ Do's and Don'ts  
 What ALL of Us Can Learn from \_\_\_\_\_  
 What's HOT and NOT in \_\_\_\_\_  
 What You Need to Know About \_\_\_\_\_  
 When Not to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Must-Know Guide to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ with Pizzazz!  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and Grow Rich  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and Your Business - Are You Being Left Behind?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ on the Cheap  
 5 Ways to Get More from Your \_\_\_\_\_  
 5 No-Fail Strategies for \_\_\_\_\_  
 6 Secrets to Successful \_\_\_\_\_  
 7 Ways to Keep Your \_\_\_\_\_ Dreams Alive  
 7 Ways to Avoid the Most Deadly \_\_\_\_\_ Mistakes  
 8 Ways to Avoid the Worst \_\_\_\_\_ Mistakes  
 9 Formulas for Fantastic \_\_\_\_\_  
 10 User-Friendly Facts for \_\_\_\_\_  
 10 Tips to Jump-Start Your \_\_\_\_\_  
 11 Questions You Must Ask When You're \_\_\_\_\_  
 12 Tactics to Open Up \_\_\_\_\_  
 13 Tips That Will Make a \_\_\_\_\_ Smile  
 10 Time-Tested Tips for Becoming a \_\_\_\_\_  
 25 Quick \_\_\_\_\_ Tips to Use Now  
 26 Holiday Gifts for \_\_\_\_\_

## Joan Stewart's "Publicity Hound" Website

Joan offers a huge website with a vast number of resources, including many free articles and tips for publicity-hungry savvy business owners. Also featured: dozens of inexpensive but information-packed audio programs and ebooks.



Joan Stewart  
Speaker/Trainer/Consultant

**Click here to visit the *Publicity Hound* website**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Write the Lead**

After the headline, the first sentence of the article is the second most important element. It's got to "grab 'em."

One way to do this is to let readers know you feel their pain, frustration, or anxiety. Think of how they feel when they're baffled by a problem. Humanize the problem by telling a story, or presenting a hypothetical example.

### **Things they need to know, things they like to know**

Ask yourself the question, "Why would the audience need to know or like to know how to \_\_\_\_\_?"

Write one or two paragraphs that explain why solving the problem is important. Can they save time, money, or aggravation.

Always write directly to the reader. Use the word “you” a lot to make it more personal and conversational.

Don’t forget to slip in a sentence or two about yourself and why you’re qualified to help them solve their problem. For example: “In my 20 years as a professional landscaper, I’ve never found a technique that produces healthier begonias than \_\_\_\_\_.”

## **Nothing Beats Bullet Points**

If you’ve written a good headline and a good lead sentence, your reader will probably scan down the page quickly to see if they want to read more the article thoroughly.

This is where a list of bullet points will probably “close the sale” for you—and lead to sales after the reader finishes the article.

Bullet points provide the real substance of the article.

Make sure you keep them consistent. If the first word of the first bullet is a verb, make sure the first word of every paragraph is a verb.

Put the first sentence of each tip in boldface type. The sentences that follow should elaborate and expand on the first.

If your article is relatively short (say, around 500 words), keep sentences and paragraphs brief.

If your article is longer, you can expand and elaborate more on each point.

You can also use numbers, checkmarks, asterisks, or a small empty box.

## **Summarize**

Close with a summary paragraph encouraging readers who follow your advice. You don’t need a grand ending featuring magnificent prose or imagery. You’re not going for the Nobel Prize in Literature here. On the other hand, avoid closing abruptly by ending with the last sentence of the last bullet point.

## **And Don't Forget to Tell Your Readers about Yourself**

This is the whole point of the effort you've gone through writing the article.

Make it easy for readers to find you or contact you by including a paragraph with your name, company, what you do and how readers can reach you (phone number, e-mail address, or both). Don't leave this to chance, or to capricious editors.

Insist that anyone who publishes your articles include the identifier paragraph (also known to some as a "Resource Box").

If editors won't agree to do this, don't give them the article unless they agree to pay you. Identifier paragraphs are your "fee" for providing content to the publication.

You have some leeway to brag on yourself in this area. Plug your web site, or offer a free report or a list of tips to entice people to subscribe to your newsletter or ezine. You can also offer readers a tip lists, a free chapter from a book, or even other "how to" articles.

## **Submit Your Photo**

A lot of writers skip this step and it's too bad. A photo that accompanies an article makes the article itself more memorable—and it makes you more memorable...which is the point of doing the article in the first place, right?

For less than \$100, you can usually get a good-quality black and white or color photo and about a dozen prints.

Wallet-size is sufficient—you don't need big 8X10 glossies at first--but keep one or two 3-by-5 prints. Have the photo taken in color, even if you only want black and white print. You can always go back and order color prints later.

Stick a label on the back of the photo that includes name, address and telephone number, email address or url. Do not write on the back of the photo with pen or markers, and don't ask the media to return photos. Most publications prefer to keep your photo on file in case they use another one of your contributions in the future.

## **Do the work once...**

Where "How to" articles are concerned, I have a slogan:

"Do the work once, use it over and over again..."

"How to's" are easy to tweak, re-edit, and recycle. So when you offer an article to someone, be absolutely sure you maintain all reprint rights. This allows you to "circulate" the article among other publications.

If someone wants exclusive rights to your article, they should be willing to pay you.

## **Make Reprints**

Reprints are a fantastic weapon for recycling your publicity because they can be used in so many ways. Here are just a few:

- \* Include them in your media kit.
- \* Include them in your handouts if you are presenting at conferences and seminars.
- \* Place them at your booth at trade shows.
- \* Make them available in your lobby or store.
- \* Mail them to clients in case they missed the original article.
- \* Send reprints of weekly newspaper stories by and about you to editors at dailies.
- \* Send reprints from dailies to national publications. Send articles in trade publications to editors anywhere.
- \* Frame them and hang them in your lobby, or where there's a lot of traffic.
- \* Put them up on a bulletin board in your company cafeteria.

By the way, if you're reprinting articles at Kinko's, keep in mind that they're sticklers about copyright. They'll want some kind of permission form from the publication before they'll make the reprints for you. They'll provide their own written permission form that you can have the publisher fill out and fax back to you.

## **Finding Publications**

First, let's talk about the offline world.

A great resource for finding print newsletters is the *Oxbridge Directory of Newsletters*, categorized by subject. Most major libraries have the print version.

Peruse magazines and reading materials when you're in the doctor's office.

Check out trade publications when you visit clients. Ask them what they read. If many of them mention the same magazines or newsletters, ask them for a copy, then contact the editor. Before you start writing, ask the editor for the word count, the deadline, and how they want the article submitted (hard copy, e-mail or on disk).

There are seemingly limitless publications online.

One of the best is the Gebbie Press *All-in-One Media Directory* by at <http://www.gebbieinc.com>. It's a fantastic online resource for finding newspapers and magazines is the

The SRDS Media Kit Link at <http://www.srds.com> gives you instant access to the largest compilation of online media kits and web sites for business publications and consumer magazines. It contains listings for over 6,300 business publications and 3,200 consumer magazines.

Do an Internet search for "ezines" or "electronic newsletters." To narrow your search, also add a topic.

Jason Potash, creator of ArticleAnnouncer software at, offers the specific sites listed on the next page:

## **Article Directory Top 20:**

<http://ezinearticles.com>  
<http://www.certificate.net/wwio/>  
<http://www.ideamarketers.com>  
<http://www.marketing-seek.com>  
<http://www.goarticles.com>  
<http://www.netterweb.com>  
<http://www.isyndicate.com>  
<http://www.articlecentral.com>  
<http://homeincome.com/writers-connection>  
[http://www.web-source.net/syndicator\\_submit.htm](http://www.web-source.net/syndicator_submit.htm)  
<http://www.clickforcontent.com/writersadd.htm>  
<http://www.aracopy.com>  
<http://www.dime-co.com>  
<http://www.zinecast.com>  
<http://www.writebusiness.com>  
<http://www.etext.org>  
<http://www.zinos.com>  
<http://www.addme.com>  
<http://www.makingprofit.com>  
<http://www.vectorcentral.com/ezine-question-answer-form.htm>

## **Here is the Ezine Directory Top 15**

<http://www.directoryofezines.com>  
<http://www.ezinehub.com>  
<http://www.bestezines.com>  
<http://www.ezinesearch.com>  
<http://ezine-universe.com>  
<http://www.ezinedepot.net>  
<http://jogena.com>  
<http://www.ezinewizard.com>  
<http://www.ibiznewsletters.com>  
<http://www.list-resources.com>  
<http://www.marketing-seek.com>  
<http://www.netterweb.com>  
<http://www.newsletteraccess.com>  
<http://www.ezinelocater.com>

\*\*\*\*\*

**Recommended Resource**

**ArticleAnnouncer**

**Article Marketing System**



[Click Here](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

ArticleAnnouncer automates the submission service for you—once it's set up, you simply 'click and submit' to 38 article directories, 23 article announcement lists, and blast out your article to 1200 or so ezines that accept article submissions. For more information, [click here](#).

Don't forget, you can also post your articles to internet chat rooms, discussion boards, blogs, web portals, and a variety of forums.

### **Finding Someone to Write For You If You Can't Write for Yourself**

If the thought of actually writing something intimidates you, don't worry. The internet has made it possible to find good writers who will research and write your articles for you at extremely reasonable rates.

A service called Elance at [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com) even allows you to post projects online and take bids from freelancers.

You can sometimes find freelancers who are already regular contributors to publications you'd like to be mentioned in

Rather than pitch editors and reporters yourself, watch publications to see who uses freelance writers or "contributors" for some of their content.

Then pitch the freelancer about writing an article about a topic that features YOU as the expert.

Some freelancers will even accept fees for writing such articles for you—then offer to try to place them in magazines where they've contributed before.

If the magazine pays them a fee for contributing an article, this is an even more attractive possibility. They get paid twice for the same amount of work, and they don't even have to do much research themselves—the information comes from you.

Not all freelancers work this way, but it never hurts to ask.

So don't worry if you don't feel confident enough to sit down at the keyboard and pound out 500 words or so yourself. There are plenty of people who are ready, willing, and very able to do it for you.

## **Final Thoughts**

Professional editors, especially in bigger publications, are sticklers for deadlines. And you only get one chance. Miss one deadline and you're H-I-S-T-O-R-Y as far as that editor is concerned.

If there's anything editors hate more than missed deadlines, it's running a correction. Be sure of your facts.

Follow up with editors regularly. Several months after an article appears, offer another one.

As you get more articles published, especially in the online directories, you'll notice a snowball effect. You might even be invited to become a regular contributor or columnist, which will lead to increased visibility, higher traffic—and more sales.

Who knows? You might even wind up on the Today Show one morning.

# Highly Recommended Resources

## Joan Stewart's "Publicity Hound" Website



Joan Stewart  
Speaker/Trainer/Consultant

Click here to visit the *Publicity Hound* website

\*\*\*\*\*

## ArticleAnnouncer

### Article Marketing System



[Click Here](#)

