

Insider Commissions: Lesson #6

The Affiliate's Best All-Around Promotion Tool

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You Also MAY NOT Give Away,
Sell or Share the Content Herein

Introduction

Writing your own original ezine articles is **mandatory** if you are an affiliate marketer.

Mandatory. Part of your standard operating procedures. A basic staple. Something you can't do without. You get the picture.

Ezine articles can be used in so many ways that I'd need to write an article just to explain all the ways you can profit from articles. ☺

More on that another day.

But, ezine articles really are your “*multipurpose*” traffic generator. You can (and will) use them in so many ways that they are your “best all-around” promotional tool.

We're going to cover today's lesson in two sections -

Section 1: Writing An Ezine Article.
Section 2: Distributing An Ezine Article.

Without any more buildup, let's get right into it..

Section 1: Writing An Ezine Article.

In this section I'm going to show you how to write an incredibly easy ezine article that is specifically for beginners within your market. (We'll talk about the experienced segment of your marketer in an upcoming lesson).

The idea in a nutshell is this -

Answer a set of three basic questions related to a topic relevant to your target audience.

If you can answer just three simple questions, you can crank out article after article for newbies in your particular field of interest or expertise.

These three questions are -

1. What is _____?
2. Can you show me an example of _____?
3. How can I get started with _____?

Let me walk you through writing an article with these questions as the backbone of your content.

Before we get into the 7 very easy steps, let's take just a quick look at the schematics of your article. In order to write an 800 word ezine article, your basic needs for the various parts of the article would look something like this...

Opening (100 Words)
Question #1 (200 Words)
Question #2 (200 Words)
Question #3 (200 Words)
Closing (100 Words)

Total = 800 Words

Now, on with the show...

1. Determine Your Title.

Most people don't spend much time on their title and that's a no-no. It's a flagrant foul in basketball. A bounced check. A driver cutting you off in traffic. Things that are mindless.

As with everything I ever say about ezine articles, your title is important. Very important. Imagine this scenario...

You're searching through articles at your favorite directory in hopes of finding some useful tips for selecting curriculum for your upcoming homeschooling year.

Which of these would you take a closer look at...

- ➔ The Easiest Way To Choose Your Curriculum
- ➔ Making Your Curriculum Choice
- ➔ 5 Questions To Ask When Choosing Curriculum

- ➔ Homeschool Book Decisions
- ➔ Choosing Your Homeschool Resources

While all of these are related to choosing your homeschool curriculum, "The Easiest Way..." and "5 Questions To Ask..." probably have more appeal. If you're pressed for time, you probably aren't going to read all five ... you might read two.

And the title is going to determine which two gets your attention.

So, first things first, it's important that you create an appealing title. We'll talk more about this in another lesson, but three simple "rules" that I go by in crafting titles that I'd like to pass on to you are...

- 1) Be specific.** It's not "Questions To Ask", it's "5 Questions To Ask". It's not, "Lose Pounds", it's "Lose 3 Pounds in 7 Days".
- 2) Make It Simple.** Who would ever read an article, "7 Extremely Hard Ways To Lose Weight"? Or, "Top 10 Most Difficult Ways To Find A Date For Valentine's Day"? Offer SIMPLE solutions. EASY ways to accomplish a desired result.
- 3) Speak To A Group.** If your article is intended for a specific group (I.E. Beginners, WAHMs, Christians, Senior Citizens, College Students, etc.) then say so in your title. Rather than "How To Write An Ebook", go with "The Beginners' Guide to Writing An eBook" or "How To Write a Christian eBook".

So, determine your title and then begin the writing process.

Hint: Go to EzineArticles.com and review the titles of other articles (paying particular attention to which articles are viewed the most - indicating their popularity) and then use those titles to model your own after. I.E. If you see the popular title, "The Easiest Way To Lose 10 Pounds And Get In Shape Fast!" you could easily entitle your own article, "The Easiest Way To Learn Guitar And Play Songs Fast!"

2. Write Your Opening.

You've got about 30 seconds to get your reader's attention if you're going to get them to consume your entire article. That's not much. It's important that you get them interested quickly. I'm going to share three to get you started...

- **"There must be some reason why some _____ outperform others."** . This opening is all about informing the reader that some people have an advantage over others. And, in order to level the playing field, they need to follow the advice in your article. Example: "There must be some reason why certain tennis players win more matches than others. Said another way, if two equally skilled tennis player compete ... why does one get to go home a winner and the other a loser?"

- **"I've always been impressed with those who could _____."** . This opening allows you to mention a specific result that is desired to, not only you, but the reader as well. Your article teaches the person how they too can experience the desired result. Example: "I've always been impressed with those who could hit a backhand winner on the run. It never came easy to me and I have marvelled many times when others seem to hit that shot so effortlessly. Then, I figured out their secret..."

- **"Do you find yourself _____?"** This opening is a good one because it allows the reader to identify with what you're writing about. When they say "yes" to your question, then they know the article is for them ... and they'll read on to discover what they can do about the problem they face. Example: "Do you find yourself double-faulting a lot? For years I gave away point after point - usually in critical times during my matches - by hitting into the net or just beyond the service box. Finally, I paid for a lesson from the local pro and this is what he taught me..."

Choose one of these openings (or one from the related article coming tomorrow) and write approximately 100 words as your introduction to the article. Be sure to transition from your opening into your first question.

You can do this in one of two ways: (a) Specifically mention that you'll be answering the three most asked questions from beginners, or (b) Simply answer the questions without ever actually posing the questions in the text of your article.

3. Answer Question #1.

If you'll recall from earlier, question number one is...

"What is _____ ?"

Simply plug in the topic of your article into that question ... and then answer it in approximately 200 words.

- ➔ What is tennis strategy?
- ➔ What is podcasting?
- ➔ What is virtual real estate?
- ➔ What is forex trading?
- ➔ What is retinopathy?
- ➔ What is a VoIP phone?
- ➔ What is Tai Chi?

Give a brief explanation of the topic in your own words and then move on to the next question which builds upon the first question.

4. Answer Question #2.

That question again is...

"Can you show me an example of _____?"

Now the article is taking shape. We go from an introduction to an explanation and now we have an illustration. You've explained what it is and now you'll explain what it looks like. Provide an example. A case study. An illustration. A method. Something the reader can identify with to better understand what you're saying.

- ➔ You've explained what tennis strategy is ... now give a scenario in which tennis strategy is at work.
- ➔ You've explained what virtual real estate is ... now give an example piece of VRE property.
- ➔ You've explained what Tai Chi is ... now share one of the key moves of the discipline.

After providing some sort of example, move on to question number three...

5. Answer Question #3.

From earlier in our lesson, the final question is...

"How can I get started with _____? "

It all climaxes with 1-3 simple steps the reader can follow in order to begin practicing your teaching.

By this point the reader knows WHAT the topic is about and they know a basic use or function of the topic. Now, they need a simple explanation of how they can get started with application. How can they use the information?

You can either give the reader ONE action step to take in order to get started (I.E. The first thing you'll want to do is enroll in a class.) or you can provide them with a simple set of THREE steps to put into practice as a sort of mini-system (I.E. Step One is... Step Two is... Step Three is...).

6. Decide Upon A Close.

To complete your article, you'll want to use your final 100 words (approximately) to close out your content. There are two components of the article close that I think are necessities if you want to see any results from your efforts.

- **The Spark.** You want to leave the reader with a desire to get started. You want them excited. You want them motivated. You want them to take action. I'm not necessarily talking about giving them a rah-rah pep talk (although that might not hurt either!). I'm speaking of getting them to realize that they can get the desired results they want if they'll get busy doing something. Your job at the close of the article is to encourage them (gently or blatantly) and challenge them to achieve.

- **The Segway.** The other thing you must do during your close is to lead into your resource box. Your article is for the reader. Your resource box is for you. Your content is to provide useful information for the reader. Your resource box is to get the reader to a point where you present an offer. And the closing of your article is the place where the two roads meet. Lead the reader to a decision to make a positive change in their life - to take action. And then use your resource box to provide a means to do just that.

Then, it's off to the final step...

7. Create a Resource Box.

Most people use a STANDARD resource box with each of their articles. In other words, it's the same resource box regardless of what the article is about.

That's a big mistake in my opinion.

With an ever-changing audience reading articles about ever-changing topics why would you want to use a never-changing resource box?

Your resource box - in order to be truly effective - must be a continuation of the article itself. It must offer something more that is directly related to the content of the article. I mean, think about it: the reader has warmed up to you at this point. You've shared something useful. They like your style. They are pumped up and ready to take action. Why blow that moment with a resource box that does nothing to really enhance or continue or build upon where they are at this moment in time?

Let me give you an example:

If I've just explained what tennis strategy is about, pointed them to an example of tennis strategy and briefly outlined how they can create their own tennis strategy - which is more effective at this point...

- 1) Jimmy D. Brown is the publisher of Tennis Tips, a free weekly newsletter full of informative helps for tennis players of all skill levels. For your free subscription, drop by <http://www.JimmysTennisTips.com> today.
- 2) Jimmy D. Brown is the author of How To Outplay Your Opponents By Outsmarting Them, a free strategy report for tennis players of all skill levels. Grab your complimentary copy at <http://www.JimmysStrategyReport.com> today.

Obviously, having just read the article on tennis strategy, you'd be more likely to take action if resource box #2 was in place ... because it's a continuation of the article. It's part 2. The sequel. The rest of the story.

Note: And, upon visiting my site and registering for the free report, you're automatically going to receive my free newsletter as well anyway.

The point is this: a carefully crafted resource box -- one that is specifically relevant to the article itself -- will outperform a standard resource box. You'll get more results by using a resource box that builds upon what's been shared in the article it is attached to.

So, that's an incredibly easy way to write an ezine article.

You can crank out an entire series of these articles for beginners. All you need to do is answer three simple questions.

1. What is _____?
2. Can you show me an example of _____?
3. How can I get started with _____?

It works for any niche. Any topic. Any person.

In fact, you can use this model to write ezine article after ezine article for the same niche to promote your site. Let me walk you through some ideas on this...

How To Write Multiple Ezine Articles For The Same Niche Using This Model

Let's suppose you've created your site (blog and newsletter) as a tool to promote my Affiliatenaire.com site as an affiliate. Here are half a dozen article ideas you could write to market the site...

➔ How To Start A Money-Making Business In 30 Minutes Or Less.

In this article you start by answering "What is affiliate marketing?"

➔ How To Increase Your Affiliate Income In One Easy Step.

In this article you start by answering "What is affiliate link cloaking?"

➔ Getting Lots Of Traffic To Your Affiliate Site.

In this article you start by answering "What is affiliate

traffic?"

→ The Secret Weapon Of Super Affiliates.

In this article you start by answering "What is affiliate list-building?"

→ A Simple Way To Make More Affiliate Cash With Less Work.

In this article you start by answering "What is residual affiliate marketing?"

→ Getting People To Buy From YOUR Affiliate Link Instead Of Others.

In this article you start by answering "What is an affiliate incentive?"

This represents six different ezine articles that could be written using this simple formula ... all of which could promote your site (blog and newsletter) which in turn builds your list and funnels traffic to your affiliate link for my Affiliatenaire.com site.

There are DOZENS of possibilities for this.

The key is to simply think about the many, many "topics" within your niche. Write an article using this strategy for each of them over time.

Below I've included a **sample article** written with this formula to give you an example to model.

Sample Article Written With This Formula

751 Words

The Easiest Way To Beat Your Tennis Opponent
By Jimmy D. Brown

There must be some reason why certain tennis players win more matches than others.

Said another way, if two equally skilled tennis players compete ... why does one get to go home as a winner and the other as a loser?

Is it simply a random occurrence - the proverbial, "that's the way the ball bounces"?

Is it simply whoever played better on that particular day?

Is it simply that one player had a greater desire to win than they other?

To be sure things like luck, opportunity and desire contribute to the outcome of most club level tennis matches, but there is another factor - often unseen - that plays a huge role in determining who gets the "W" when two equally skilled players take the court.

And that factor is "tennis strategy".
That is -

In a high percentage of matches between two equally-skilled players, the one who plays "smarter" will win the match.

In fact, by playing "smarter" not only will you win most of your matches against equally-skilled players, you'll win a number of matches against players who are "better" than you! (I.E. 3.5 players can beat 4.0 players.)

One thing that I've been guilty of over the years - and a trap I've seen almost every player I know fall into as well - is devoting time, energy and money to improving technically, but not strategically.

In other words: we try to improve our shots without improving our use of them.

I'll give you a perfect example -

Dave has been taking lessons to improve his forehand. He's now able to hit it with precision and pace. It's a thing of beauty. He hits the courts and waits for an opening to rip a winner. He waits some more. And he keeps waiting. While he's waiting, his opponent beats him like a drum. Dave walks off court with a beautiful forehand and a 6-2, 6-2 defeat.

Why? His opponent out-smarted him. His opponent watched Dave during warm-ups and saw that his forehand was a powerful weapon. Because of what he saw, Dave's opponent never gave him a chance to hit his scorching forehands.

So, that's what we're going to talk about during the remainder of this report. I'm going to quickly share the mental strategy that I've developed after 20+ years of playing and watching tennis.

I call it the "How to B.E.A.T.™ Any Tennis Player At Your Level" system. I use the acronym B.E.A.T. to illustrate the four critical steps of this winning system. Each letter "B", "E", "A", and "T" represent one of the four steps...

B - BE systematic in your play.

In other words, come to the court with a gameplan. Have a basic idea of what shots you want to hit - both where and when you want to hit them. Know your opponents strengths and weaknesses - and have a plan in place for the specific player you are facing.

E - ESTABLISH control of the points.

It doesn't matter what "style" player you are, nor does it matter what "style" player your opponent is ... what matters is which of you is going to get to play your kind of game. It's important that you stay in your comfort zone and get your opponent out of his.

A - ATTACK your opponent's weakness.

Every club level player has a weakness. Your job is to determine what your opponent's weakness is and exploit it as often as possible. Does he have a weak backhand? Hit as many shots to that side as possible. Hates to come to the net? Hit drop shots to bring him forward. Out of shape? Run him side to side.

T - TRANSITION as needed.

Gameplans are great to have - and oftentimes they work like a charm. But, what happens when they don't? You go to Plan B, of course! Prepare in advance what to do if certain things are happening. I have a list that includes such entries as, "If my opponent is killing me with a big kick serve, move inside the baseline to take it on the rise."

The important thing to learn is this: if you outsmart your opponent, you'll usually outplay him. Especially if he's at an equal skill level. And even if he's mechanically better than you in many cases.

Head to the courts today, but don't just take your racquet with you. Take your strategy as well. That's your real secret weapon.

Jimmy D. Brown is the author of How To Outplay Your Opponents By Outsmarting Them, a free strategy report for tennis players of all skill levels. Stock your tennis bag with your own complimentary copy at <http://www.BeatAnyTennisPlayer.com>.

End Sample

So that's one way to write an ezine article. Then what? Then you learn all about...

Section 2: Distributing An Ezine Article.

You've already learned how to write engaging articles and bylines that compel your readers to click on your links. The next obvious step:

**You need to get your articles in front
of as many prospects as possible.**

The more people who see your article, the more clicks you'll get on those links, and the more money you'll make!

I'm going to give you a couple of my favorite ways to distribute ezine articles in this lesson (and we'll talk about even more in the future), but before I do I need to mention this...

You'll always want to begin distribution through your own channels. Publish one of your articles as the featured content in your newsletter. You should take your articles and post them on your blog for starters. While this isn't going to get traffic to your site when people read them (because they'll already be at your site!) it's good to have them all posted for search engines and for visitors to your site to be able to read them all.

Having said that, let me give you my two favorite ways for affiliates to distribute articles (which ultimately gets traffic to your site where people can join your list, read your blog posts and click on your affiliate links)...

1) Submitting to Article Directories

The first way to get more readers to your article and more clicks on your links is by submitting your articles directly to article directories.

If you search Google, you'll likely find niche-specific article directories. However, you'll also want to submit your articles to the biggest and busiest directories online, including:

- EzineArticles.com
- GoArticles.com
- ArticleCity.com
- AssociatedContent.com
- IdeaMarketers.com
- Buzzle.com
- ArticleManiac.com
- Article-Idea.com
- Amazines.com
- WebArticles.com
- ArticleDashboard.com

Each of these sites (and others like them) have their format for submission which generally consists of you...

- *Opening a free account.*
- *Creating an author profile.*
- *Developing a description of your article.*
- *Submitting your article for approval.*

Visit the above mentioned sites and add every new article to their databases in order to begin getting exposure. Make note of any special "rules" or "guidelines" they have prior to submission.

This can be a bit time-consuming at first setting up all of the accounts, but it pays off in the end.

Or, there's an even quicker way...

You Can Save Time by Using a Distribution Service

If you don't have the time or inclination to submit your articles to directories and publishers yourself, then you can get someone else to do it for you (for a small fee).

One way to this is by hiring a distribution service. Two of the most well-known services include:

- **[iSnare.com](#)**: This service not only submits your articles to many of the top article directories, but it also sends your articles directly to their opt-in list of article publishers. At the time of this writing, they distribute your article to over 1000 article directories.
- **[ArticleMarketer.com](#)**: Article Marketer submits your article to content publishers and article directories. At the current time, they submit to well over 170,000 people and over 3700 sites.

Tip: Another way to submit your articles is by using article-submitting software. Here you manually set up accounts at all of the places you want to submit articles to. Then you load up your articles into the software and hit submit.

While this does save time, you may run into problems. Namely, some article services are seeking to block automatic submissions (to cut down on spammers). If they don't block your software, then you may find their submission requirements changing - and the software doesn't keep up with the changes.

As such, using software isn't always the best choice. If you want to pursue it, however, search Google for "article submission software."

If you want to mass-submit your article to thousands of article directories, then the above two services will easily meet your needs.

SIDEBAR: Alternatively, you can hire a freelancer to do this for you. If you're already planning on hiring an article writer to create your content, then search around for a writer that also submits articles (some do, some don't - those who do will obviously charge you a little extra).

If you create the content yourself (or already have a good writer), then you can still outsource this task. Go to Elance.com, Guru.com or similar to post projects.

2. Swapping Articles With Other Marketers

Another way to get your article in front of more people is to submit it directly to content publishers.

Example: You may notice that certain ezine publishers or bloggers in your niche regularly accept articles from guest authors. If so, go ahead and submit your articles.

And just so you don't get confused, an "ezine" is an "email newsletter". The articles you are writing are called "ezine articles" because originally they were primarily published in "ezines" --- email newsletters.

Where can you find these publishers? There are a few ways...

→ Search Google.

Visit the world's largest search engine and look for ezines (email newsletters) in your market. Search for "keyword + ezines" or "keyword + newsletters". Example: If you're promoting something related to affiliate marketing, you would search for "affiliate ezines" or "affiliate newsletters" or "affiliate marketing ezines" or "affiliate marketing newsletters". Visit the sites listed and contact the publisher of the ezine to see if they accept guest articles. (Look at their site for details on this prior to contacting them and even considering joining their newsletter) This way is tedious but in time you can build a nice network of publishers to submit your ezine articles to for publication.

→ Explore Ezine-Dir.

There is a small ezine directory at <http://www.Ezine-Dir.com> which has an index of a little over 1,000 ezines (email newsletters) in a variety of categories. This is a free site to explore, so click on a category related to your market, visit the sites of the ezines listed and inquire about submitting your articles to them for potential publication. Again, look at their site first to see if they have noted whether or not they accept articles. You don't

want to ask if they've already specifically mentioned it at their site.

→ **Join Directory Of Ezines.**

Another option is to join DOE at <http://www.DirectoryOfEzines.com>. This is a PAID site but can be worth the small investment because the index of newsletters here already has done the "research" for you. The entries in this database will say "yes" or "no" to the question of whether or not the newsletter accepts articles for consideration. In most cases there will also be information for learning the submission process for the ezines that do accept articles.

→ **Access Ezine Editors List.**

I'm not sure how often this list is updated, but Michael Green has a resource available at <http://www.ezine-editors-list.com/> that specifically targets "business" newsletter publishers who DO accept articles for publication consideration. This is a PAID resource and I'd recommend contacting Michael at his site to ask how "fresh" the list is prior to joining.

However, even if publishers don't directly accept guest author articles, sometimes you can get them to accept **yours**.

How?

By asking them to do a joint venture with you, where you swap articles and links instead of just links to your blogs or websites.

Example: You can each print the other person's article in your respective newsletters. Or you can be a "guest blogger" on the other person's blog. Either way, the point is that you each get more exposure for your content and links.

This is especially true of BLOGGERS. Because active bloggers are regularly posting to their blog, they are always on the lookout for quality content to share. And when you offer to post their content on your site in exchange, this is a "win-win" situation that gets their attention.

There are a lot of Blog Directories available such as...

- <http://www.blogarama.com/>
- <http://www.blogcatalog.com/>
- <http://www.bloghub.com/>
- <http://blogs.botw.org/>
- <http://www.bloggeries.com/>
- <http://www.bloguniverse.com/>

You can find even more by searching for "blog directories" at Google.com.

So, how do you use these blog sites to find bloggers who potentially might publish your article at their site? Here's a quick look...

- 1) Visit a blog directory.
- 2) Click on a category related to your market.
- 3) Click on a listing for a blog that sounds relevant.
- 4) Visit the blog site.
- 5) Make contact with the blog owner. (Look for a CONTACT button)

When you make contact with them, use a modified version of this sample email...

Subject: Question about your blog article

Hi **<Insert Blog Name>**,

I was surfing the web this evening (if I only had a dollar for every hour I spend browsing!) and found your blog.

I also have a blog about **<Insert Topic>** which is at **<Insert Your URL Here>**. Your post **<Insert Title Of Post>** really resonated with me. As I was reading it I kept thinking, "People who visit my site would really find this useful".

That got me to thinking even more.

Would you be open to an exchange of content for our blogs? You'd be a "guest blogger" at my site and I'd be a "guest blogger" at your site for a one-time exchange of articles?

If you visit my blog, you'll see my writing style and the content of my articles. Specifically, I'd be happy if you would reprint **<Insert Title Of Your Article>** which you can read at

<Insert Blog Link To Your Article>. In exchange, I'd be happy to reprint the post I mentioned earlier from your site.

It should benefit us both in terms of getting new visitors to our site, getting more links in the search engines and overall ranking criteria ... as well as some extra good content. ☺

Let me know if you are interested and we can go from there.

At any rate, love your blog.

Best regards,
<Your Name Here>

You can use this same strategy for contacting ezine publishers as well. Instead of exchanging content to be published on blogs, you both would reprint each other's content in issues of your respective newsletters.

By using these two methods (distribution at the ezine article directories and getting others to reprint your articles in their newsletters and/or blogs) you'll be able to get visitors to your site as people who read the articles click on your link in the accompanying resource box.