

Affiliate Classroom

A young woman with shoulder-length brown hair is looking down at a laptop screen. She is wearing a brown ribbed sweater and a black jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and buildings.

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The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices

How to Write Money Making Articles

Article Writing Basics **Submitting to Article Directories**

Choose the Right Domain Name

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PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Top 5 Affiliate Programs

Sponsored By AffiliatePrograms.com



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Featured Program

WebRoute

<http://www.webrouteservices.co.uk/affiliates.php>

With a dedicated affiliate program and sophisticated tracking system, Webroute is hugely successful. With the option to play in real-time with other live players, this site offers a unique gaming experience. Joining their affiliate program will reward you with commissions up to 40% of your player's revenue, and you'll make the most of your site traffic to generate unlimited profits. By placing links or banners on your site to direct traffic to WebRoute, you will receive commission for every player you refer who plays with real money. Earnings are unlimited.

Top 5 Programs for February 2008

LeadPile

<http://www.affiliateprograms.com/WebsiteRedirect.aspx?lid=StudentLoanConsolidationLeadpile>

LeadPile's affiliate program will allow you access a central, exclusive lead marketplace. Leadpile provides its sellers with fast and technologically advanced platforms, and allows you to have multiple buyers bidding for your high quality leads. With an efficient marketplace in order, Leadpile makes it simple to reach the highest number of potential buyers. As an affiliate you can decide the price point for which you are willing to sell each lead.

ChiliPoker

<http://www.sharethechili.com/>

ChiliPoker's program is designed to be one of the highest converting programs in the industry. With their players in mind, Chilipoker offers more than \$12 million a month in tournaments, as well as super satellite packages for high-profile tournaments. Access to fresh and creative marketing material will allow you to enjoy a strong partnership with the program. The partnership will also provide you with earnings of up to 40% on all your referrals. A dedicated affiliate account manager will be assigned and can be contacted by email, live chat or telephone.



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PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

SkillGround Partners

http://www1.skillground.com/sg/index.do?REFEREE_TYPE=1&REFEREE_CODE=87860

As a partner for SkillGround, you will have access to pre-made ads and banners to promote a site which operates within the legal gaming framework in 39 U.S. states and Europe. This online skill gaming arena offers a place where players can download real video games and play head-to-head with other online players. The more players you refer, the higher your commission rate becomes. Commissions are as high as 35% of revenue generated from the Active players you refer. Sign up online and get access to a creative and powerful set of tools to manage your referrals and revenue.

Sloto'Cash

<http://affiliate.slotocash.com/get/a/189147>

Sloto'cash offers state-of-the-art software allowing players a distinct game experience. As a partner for this program, you will earn 30% commission for all active players referred, plus you will have customer support which is never automated. The program offers no carryover of negative balances and accurate real time stats. Sloto'cash claims to be one of the most honest affiliate programs out there - if you don't agree, they are more than willing to listen.

32Red

<http://www.32redaffiliates.com/?BTag=32RedBanAff61881>

Becoming a partner for this site allows you access to competitive commission levels, comprehensive stats, and marketing packages to promote on your site. 32Red has been named "Casino of the Year" for five years in succession, and allows its partners commissions of up to 40% based on earnings. You will have access to unique tracking codes for your site through 32Red's renowned customer service.

Until next time...

Check us out in our Industry Watch Newsletter Check us out in our Industry Watch Newsletter:

http://www.affiliateprograms.com/newsletter_archive.aspx

In our newsletter you can find all the latest industry news, tips, and tools. Communicate with our team of experts through in-depth articles and free online resources. These resources will help you to dramatically increase your knowledge of affiliate marketing. Here is a place where you can receive the guidance and support you need to reach your full potential.



COVER STORY

Article Marketing

Clever Ways to Find Topics and Write Perfect Money-Making Articles

by Evelyn Grazini

<http://www.bestaffiliateniche.com>



I love article marketing! If for no other reason that it's FREE! But regardless, if it didn't work, even free wouldn't be worth the effort of writing and posting articles. I've now done enough research to be convinced that writing articles and submitting them to article directories should be a part of every affiliate marketer's efforts.

One reason that I find article marketing so effective is that I'm a writer – not a numbers person. Constant tracking and statistical analysis is the key to setting up a profitable PPC campaign. But with article marketing, I can write an article once, submit it, and watch the profits come in for many years later.

I realize, however, that writing doesn't come easy for everyone, so I'll give you a few tips on how to decide what to write about, as well as where to find the best resource (s) for your articles. Then, I'll show you the results of a little experiment I did last year that proves how using articles is a very important marketing technique that just keeps on giving.

What Should the Article Be About?

Your article should be of extreme interest to a targeted niche audience. People are very needy. You want to help them get what they want. Therefore, you should write about how to solve a problem, eliminate pain, or help someone in some way. The best types of articles are those that solve the three basic needs of people:

1. How to save time
 2. How to save money
- How to save on frustration

Notice that these are all focused on the "How To." The best articles — those that will become viral and get circulated around the Internet — are based on How To information. After you've decided on a subject, break it down into smaller chunks to make sure you've covered everything.

State the problem first. Then give some limited information on how to resolve the issue. Always be sure you are very calculating in what you say about the product. Make the article interesting and informative. Then, leave the most important thing

Your article should be of extreme interest to a targeted niche audience. People are very needy. You want to help them get what they want. Therefore, you should write about how to solve a problem, eliminate pain, or help someone in some way.

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out — this way, they will have to go to the merchant's site to find out more.

For example, I decided to write an article about a new anti-aging cream to get people to come to my health site, <http://www.ahealthstop.com/>. I started with the frustration factor of having to use so many products on my face at night. Then I wrote about *why* this cream is better than others (you only need this one product), stated my opinion, then added research about the ingredients and my personal experience with the product. I touted all of the advantages of the product, and told everything except the price. For that, they would have to click on my link.

The Article Resource Box

When you use article marketing, the resource box you use is one of the most important things about the article. If you are distributing your articles to article directories, you want to get people to visit YOUR website first — so you can entice them to sign up for your newsletter. If you just refer them to the merchant's site directly, you will never capture their names for future contact.

Also, consider this. After you've spent all the time it takes to write an article and distribute it, what if the merchant changes the links for the product? If you've sent the reader directly to the merchant's site, they now may be sent to a page that no longer exists! However, if you've sent them directly to your own website, or used a redirect link from your site, it's very easy to change this one link to go to the new, correct page. Otherwise, you may be faced with the task of signing into every article directory to which you sent your article and changing the links. Ouch!

So, write a good article, and make sure you always have control over the landing page of the resource box. You want your article to be so good that the reader prints it out, and/or forwards it to his or her friends to read. Eventually, they'll all be on your mailing list.

Smart Ways to Find Article Topics

There are quite a few places you can look to see what others are writing about, and what's selling in the online world.

Blog sites are an excellent way to get new ideas. Search <http://www.Technorati.com> or <http://www.blogsearch.google.com> for some interesting blogs. You are bound to find an endless stream of ideas for things that you can elaborate on.

Once you have decided on a niche, do a little more research to make sure there is at least some competition in that market. If there is no one else marketing or writing about the same thing, chances are it is already a proven loser.

In writing the article, state the problem first. Then give some limited information on how to resolve the issue. Always be sure you are very calculating in what you say about the product. Make the article interesting and informative. Then, leave the most important thing out — this way, they will have to go to the merchant's site to find out more.



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Then search Google and MSN directly to find websites that could be your competition. Also search through the article directories, most importantly EzineArticles.com. What you're doing here is getting a feel for what others are writing about, what keywords they are focusing on, and what is possibly selling in the marketplace today.

The easiest way to write an article is to use the merchant's website. All the information is there for the taking. You can then put it in your own language, using the merchant's product specifications as your selling points. Just don't copy the merchant's information word for word. Your job is to presell the visitor. Make them click on your affiliate link, and let the merchant's site close the sale. When they get to the merchant's site, they should be presented with new information. If all they see is what you copied from the original site, it lessens your chances at becoming the "expert" on that subject.

In order to get some good action from your articles, you should try to write at least four articles for every affiliate program you are enrolled in. Then, when you submit your articles to the article directories, you will get lots of links back to your site, which will give your search engine ranking a boost.

Coming Up with More Ideas

There are actually quite a few great methods you can use to create an article. Here are the top three methods for developing articles:

Create a list of things. For example: "Five Ways to Access Your Intuition," or "The Top Ten Ways to Relieve Foot Pain." Then list the ways using a numbered list or paragraph format. It will probably take you about a half-hour to develop a list of 10 items, then explain them and add a headline and a conclusion. And you have your article!

Develop an FAQ. Since you want to write about how to solve a problem, you list all of the questions a reader might have about your product, tell them what to do about it, and then drive them to your site through your resource box for more information on how to do it (by buying your recommended solution). The FAQ is really the easiest thing to do if you have writer's block.

Do a short interview with an expert. The expert could even be a close friend of yours who has knowledge in the subject. Or, you can ask someone from a newsletter you receive, or a website you visited. If you do it right, the information from your interview could be broken down into many short articles. Or, depending on the value of the information you collect, it could be sold as a product itself!

The resource box you use is one of the most important things about the article. If you are distributing your articles to article directories, you want to get people to visit YOUR website first — so you can entice them to sign up for your newsletter. If you just refer them to the merchant's site directly, you will never capture their names for future contact.

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Proof

I did a short study last year where I submitted four articles to what I believe to be the top five Ezine directories, as follows:

1. Ezine Articles
2. Idea Marketers
3. iSnare
4. Go Articles
5. Article City

The articles were informational in the “For Sale By Owner” market.

I made sure my headlines were enticing by using a little tool called “The “Emotional Marketing Value Headline Analyzer.” You can find it at <http://www.aminstitute.com/headline/>. I did my research, submitted to the article directories, and waited for the traffic stampede!

Well, I didn't exactly get a stampede. Article marketing works a little slower than that. But I did receive over 250 new visitors from these articles in a one-month time period. More importantly, over 30 other websites related to that niche picked up my article and posted it on their site — all with my Author Resource Box attached, all leading people back to my site!

I have not done anything more on this site for over eight months, and it is still consistently getting over 150 visitors a month from those four articles. That amount of traffic may seem small to some, but remember, this is not a site that I am actively marketing. It gets traffic only from those little articles that I put out there long ago. And it's definitely targeted traffic, because the site is still making sales — and that's what really counts!

Articles stay on the web forever. And, even though they may move down in ranking over time, if you've done your keyword research correctly you will be found by those searching. And the best thing? If I were using PPC to market this site, I would be paying over \$1.00 for each click. So those 100 people visiting my site would be costing me over \$100 a month if using PPC.

With article marketing, it's not costing me a thing! I'm pocketing ALL of the affiliate sale profits.

And that's why I think of article marketing as the “gift that keeps on giving!”

About the Author

Evelyn Grazini is an affiliate marketer and writer on a variety of subjects. She has been involved in Internet Marketing for over 5 years, and has been marketing as an affiliate for over two years. Find her Blog on affiliate niche marketing resources at: <http://www.bestaffiliateniche.com> and her GoldenCan Data Feed Gift Site at: <http://www.heartfulofgifts.com>

In writing your article, don't copy the merchant's information word for word. When visitors get to the merchant's site from your site, they should be presented with new information. If all they see is what you copied from the original site, it lessens your chances at becoming the “expert” on that subject.



FEATURE STORY

The Basics Of Article Writing

by Mark Thompson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



Your article resource box should read like a mini sales letter and be interesting. Don't just write the first thing that comes into your head – take the time to get it right. Usually it contains a little bit about the author of the article and the website. Most importantly, it provides links to the site.



Without a doubt, the two most efficient methods of promoting your affiliate blog or affiliate site are Article Marketing or Pay Per Click advertising. The problem with using Pay Per Click advertising is that you almost inevitably make a loss before you start to see a profit. Additionally, the cost of advertising reduces your profit margin considerably. This is why more and more people are turning to article marketing to promote their sites.

The great thing about using article marketing is that you can write one article as site content, then spend a bit of time changing things around and rewriting it, and you can then use the same article to distribute to article directories and blogs as a promotional article.

As you will have seen elsewhere in this magazine, there a number of different types of articles that you can write. You can use articles as a presell for a product, or you can use them to give the reader more information about the product.

Put It This Way...

It is important when writing your articles that you know in advance which type of article you should be writing. Generally speaking, if you are selling a product for which the vendor has a sales page that the client must go through to purchase the product, then your article should be of the informative kind. On the other hand, if the vendor of an affiliate product you are selling has provided you with direct links to a shopping page where buyers can add products to a shopping cart, then you will need to ensure that the article presells the product.

You will find that products sold via ClickBank or similar sites invariably need articles that are either informative or in a review style. Review-style articles can either be a straight review of the product, or a comparison of two similar products.

Do I Keep It, or Give It Away?

When you start writing your article, you need to consider whether you will use the article on your site or for distribution. Articles for use on your site will just need to have a title and a main body. Articles for distribution will also need an article resource box that tells the reader about a product. This is required as many article sites do not allow links within the article.

The distribution of articles to article directories works on two levels. It will get you click-through traffic, in which people click on the links in your resource box and are taken to your site. It also helps generate backlinks to your site, which in turn add to its popularity and therefore helps you to achieve a higher search engine ranking for your site or blog.

When you are writing an article for distribution, the whole process should be looked at

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as a sales pitch. Just like the salesman trying to sell to the customer, you need an opening sales pitch, a main sales pitch, and most importantly, a close. The thing that separates good salesman from great salesman is how they close the sale in your article — this relates to the article resource box.

Your article resource box should read like a mini sales letter and be interesting. Don't just write the first thing that comes into your head — take the time to get it right. Usually it contains a little bit about the author of the article and the website. Most importantly, it provides links to the site.

It is important that you make sure that the links are clickable so that your site gets the benefit of the backlink. As well as having a clickable link, ensure that the full URL is included in case the link stops working for some reason.

It is important that you drop any sense of ego in your resource box. Readers aren't interested in what you have done or who you are. Hopefully they are reaching for their credit cards and looking for a link where they can find out more information.

For instance, if you were looking to buy, say, Blue Widgets, which of the following resource boxes would you be most likely to follow?

“John Smith is an expert in Blue widgets you can find out more at his website, www.BlueWidgets.com”

“John Smith's obsession with Blue Widgets started at a young age and has resulted in probably the best online Blue Widget resource. For more information and details of the most amazing Blue Widgets visit www.BlueWidgets.com”

I would even go so far as to say that it often makes sense to drop your name from the bio box and focus on the benefits of the site, so an alternative to the two resource boxes above could be.

“Now that you've read all about the latest Blue Widgets find out how you can buy your new Blue Widgets at 25% off of the list price. Visit www.BlueWidgets.com”

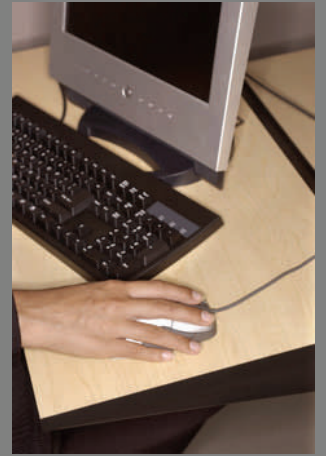
Maintain a Structure

It is important that you approach article writing in the right frame of mind. If you sit down and think, “I have to write a 500-word article and I don't want to do it,” you'll immediately be in the wrong frame of mind. Instead, just think to yourself that you need to write the opening paragraph; from there, everything else will flow.

If you keep the same structure for each article, you'll soon find yourself writing 500-word articles in 20 minutes without having to think about what you'll write in the next paragraph.

To start with, try to structure the article as follows (before you start to write the article, write down a few notes and facts relating to the subject you can then build the paragraphs around these):

1. Opening paragraph: Introducing the subject and containing the keyword you are targeting.



It is important that you approach article writing in the right frame of mind. If you sit down and think, “I have to write a 500-word article and I don't want to do it,” you'll immediately be in the wrong frame of mind. Instead, just think to yourself that you need to write the opening paragraph; from there, everything else will flow.

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When writing your article, the keyword(s) should be as close to the beginning as possible, and it should also appear in the last paragraph. Other than that, try not to include the keyword again unless it naturally appears.

2. Paragraph 2: add more details to what you have said in the opening paragraph plus add a few new facts.
3. Paragraphs 3 and 4 (if you need a fourth paragraph): same as paragraph 2, only adding more details to something you covered in the opening paragraph or the second paragraph.
4. Final paragraph: summary and/or conclusions, including the keyword again.

You will notice that the keyword appears in the first paragraph. Generally it should be as close to the beginning as possible, and it should also appear in the last paragraph. That is usually the only time you should purposely include it and try not to include it again unless it naturally appears. Keyword stuffing is frowned upon by the search engines and will have a negative effect on your articles performance.

In the other paragraphs and throughout the article you should use related terms, so for example, if the article is about golf balls you should make sure you include words like putter, green, drive, fairway, caddy, etc. all the time making sure you are keeping things as natural as possible.

If you structure the article as above, then as you write the first paragraph, you will be mentally preparing the second paragraph, as one will flow to the other.

Informative articles can be written as either conversational articles, or as fact-based articles. You will probably find that you naturally write one style better than the other.

Below I've included the opening paragraphs of two articles written in the differing styles. Each article goes on to say exactly the same thing but in completely different ways.

Choosing the Right Office Chair

One of the most important decisions an employer will face when setting up an office for his employees to work in will be the sort of office chairs that they will be using. What any employer must remember is that while their staff are at work, most of their time will be spent sitting at their desks, and therefore the office chair needs to be as comfortable as possible.

How to Choose Your Office Chair

I am prepared to wager that most people reading this in their office didn't choose their office chair, or if they did, they didn't try it out before buying it. If your office is anything like the one I used to work in, then choosing the chair went something like this.

"Hi welcome to the company. Grab that desk over there, and I think there should be a spare chair in that office in the corner."

Many people are daunted by the thought of writing articles. They think back to all those essays they wrote at school that came back covered in red highlights and decide that they can't write. Believe me, it really isn't that difficult. Like most, things once you have a bit of practice, you can produce lots of articles in a short amount of time. Give it a go — you'll be glad you did!

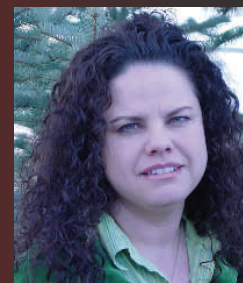
About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004 he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain where he now pursues a variety of online ventures. See: <http://ww.income-academy.com>



Finding The Right Domain Names For Your Affiliate Business

by Roxanne McHenry
www.adsenseaccelerator.com



For any online marketer or webmaster, a good keyword domain name creates the basis for better search engine placement, higher pay-per-click (PPC) ad click-thrus, and the potential visitor's instant recognition when they see the name on their screen.



As affiliates, we have a lot to think about as we run our businesses and look for opportunities that will carry us financially forward in the coming months and years. Finding our niche, working on development, and creating original content that develops a money-making traffic stream is enough work to keep us off the theoretical beach with mai tais, and behind the computer screen into the wee hours of morning day after day.

In putting together the pieces of the affiliate marketing puzzle, maybe it's time to revisit a critical part of putting our plans in place — domain names. For any online marketer or webmaster, a good keyword domain name creates the basis for better search engine placement, higher Pay Per Click (PPC) ad click-thrus, and the potential visitor's instant recognition when they see the name on their screen.

For me, buying domains for an affiliate website used to be almost an afterthought. Once I had a plan in place, and even sites built, I would look for a domain to fit the niche I targeted. It didn't seem like a difficult endeavor, and there were still plenty of names available to just brainstorm some domain possibilities and then register a name that fit the bill. However, in the last year or so, some affiliates are starting to feel the crunch as many of the best keyword domains are registered.

What's in a Name? A Lot!

Affiliates are finding their top domain choices are available for sale by the current owner, but not at a \$9.99 registration fee! Why is that? Well, as we diligently worked on our plans, webmasters and other online professionals were also diligently registering hundreds of thousands of domain names every day. According to DomainTools.com's Internet Statistics data, on March 2, 2008, alone, 373,621 .coms were registered! In fact, since 1997, a whole industry of professionals dedicated to buying and selling domains, who refer to themselves as "domainers," quietly developed. Now the domain market demand is coming to the forefront, as other online and offline businesses, like affiliate marketing, see the scarcity and value in a good domain name.

In the domain name aftermarket, including domain auctions and sales to private individuals, registered 1–3 generic word names have a definite monetary value. While a single keyword .com is the Rolls Royce of domain names — for example, Photograph.com sold for \$195,000 at live auction in January 2008 (courtesy DNJournal.com) — many 2–3 keyword domains can be valued in the tens of thousands of dollars as well. At the very least, a recently hand-registered, 2–3 word "dictionary" domain in a high-demand keyword niche can have a resale

FINDING THE RIGHT DOMAIN NAME CONTINUED....

value from \$1,000–\$2,000 and up.

Still Looking for a “.com” Name?

Are all the best domains, especially .com names, already taken? The answer, in my experience as an affiliate marketer since 2002, is no. With the right tools, and some planning, it's possible to find a domain that will fit your affiliate plans, whether it's developing a website for search engine traffic and landing pages for PPC traffic, or using a keyword domain name to redirect to a long, obvious affiliate link from an affiliate network. To prove this point, I will find a 2–3 generic keyword .com domain, right now, as I write this article. I'll give the details on the name I find and how to check up on the result this later in this article.

The first task is to decide the niche I want to target, based on the affiliate programs I already promote that I know convert to sales. I've been a CandlePeople affiliate since May 2003, with a site at <http://www.wholesalecandlemakingsupplies.com>. The traffic I send to that affiliate program has dwindled from neglect, and it's time to get things back on track with a fresh start — and a new, and hopefully valuable, domain.

I've had good luck finding a quality available domain name simply by brainstorming, especially in hard-to-find niches. For example, I registered TermLifeInsurers.com just by changing “insurance” to another lesser-used, plural noun, “insurers.” Certainly changing keywords from one noun to another or a noun to a gerund — like “baker” to “baking” — can find you a domain gem. It's not the fastest, most effective method, in my opinion, and figuring out how to transform words grammatically (ack!) for new ideas just isn't for most people, so bring on the secret sauce — keyword tools!

Bustaname.com

The first online keyword domain tool, Bustaname.com (<http://www.bustaname.com>) is a must for finding unregistered domains. Fairly new, and in beta, Bustaname requires you to enter a keyword or keyword phrase, after which the tool finds related 2–3 keyword domains that are available to register. You have the option of searching on related keywords for each single word you enter, and sorting results alphabetically or by quality, length, or number of syllables.

I am targeting candles, so to start I entered the single keyword “candles” to see what available domain names come up. For very broad keyword topics, it may be more appropriate to start your search with two keyword phrases. Nothing came up with just the word “candles,” so I added “candlemaking,” “discount,” and “cheap.” The results generated by Bustaname in its search included:

CandlemakingCandles.com
CandlemakingCheap.com
CandlemakingDiscount.com
DiscountCandlesCheap.com
DiscountCheapCandles.com

I like CandlemakingDiscount.com and DiscountCandlesCheap.com, but at this point, I am still hoping for a natural-sounding, two-keyword phrase .com domain. I add

Finding a quality available domain name simply by brainstorming, especially in hard-to-find niches, is not the fastest, most effective method, and figuring out how to transform words grammatically for new ideas just isn't for most people. That's where keyword tools come in.



FINDING THE RIGHT DOMAIN NAME CONTINUED....

Bustaname requires you to enter a keyword or keyword phrase, after which the tool finds related 2-3 keyword domains that are available to register. You have the option of searching on related keywords for each single word you enter, and sorting results alphabetically or by quality, length, or number of syllables.



“candlemakers” and “online” to the first box on Bustaname. Hmm...I do get “OnlineCandlemakers.com” and “WholesaleCandlemakers.com” and over 600 other available .com domains I can register immediately, although some are obviously better quality names than others.

Domain Suggestions

Another domain keyword tool is the Domain Suggestions tool from DomainTools.com (<http://domain-suggestions.domaintools.com/>). Simply enter a single word or keyword phrase with spaces in the search field, and Domain Suggestions gives results that look more like brandable domains, or keyword domains that include generic phrases like “best,” “the,” “free,” and “world.” Domain Suggestions also seems to pull in related phrases to the searched phrase; for example, I entered “candles,” and the domain results included domains with the words “soy candle” and “scented candles.”

My favorite domain in the Domain Suggestions results after typing in “candles” is “AllSoyCandles.com.” It’s an option I didn’t think of myself using the other domain tools, and I know soy candles are a fantastic narrow niche in the candle category. I also got “CandleSuppliesDiscount.com,” which is similar to the kinds of domains I found earlier through Bustaname.

I really like Domain Suggestions as a complementary domain keyword tool to Bustaname, but be forewarned: if you do too many queries as a “Guest” (i.e., not a registered member), your IP is temporarily banned. I estimate I did about 15–20 separate search queries before Domain Suggestions shut me off their tool for the day with this error message: “Security: Client may be too resource intensive. You have reached your daily lookup limit.” You can extend your search time by signing up for a free membership.

The Envelope, Please

It’s time to pick the winner in this candle keyword domain search. I’ll list the names I found so far and my personal opinion on each domain’s specific qualities. Can you guess the name that will make the final cut?

CandlemakingCandles.com — Well, it’s technically two words, but not a phrase. It has appeal to both candle hobbyists and candle buyers, but a blah name for me. Not at the top of the list.

CandlemakingCheap.com — Cheap is always popular, but I would prefer that the words be reversed to sound more natural, as in CheapCandlemaking.com.

CandlemakingDiscount.com — Again, I prefer the words reversed; but in a pinch, either of these domains would work. Candlemaking caters more to the hobbyist than a retail purchaser, but it’s still a profitable candle niche.

DiscountCandlesCheap.com — Three words, but I like that it can read as “discount candles” or “candles cheap.” I’ll think about this one. It does sound a little low quality — like buying seconds or overstock.

FINDING THE RIGHT DOMAIN NAME CONTINUED...

DiscountCheapCandles.com — Again three words, and the phrase sounds completely unnatural. Not a first choice.

OnlineCandlemakers.com — I like this, but the truth is, “candlemakers” isn’t the most popular keyword in this category. Now if it were Online Candle...

WholesaleCandlemakers.com — I like this better than OnlineCandlemakers.com because “wholesale” implies a bargain price from an offline or online wholesaler or manufacturer.

AllSoyCandles.com — Three words, but if the two-word SoyCandles.com were available, it would be a great name worth at least \$20,000 right now. (AromatherapyCandles.com just sold on February 25 at the Affiliate Summit Live Auction for \$22,000!) I normally don’t like extra generic words like “all” attached to a phrase, but in this case, I like this name. Great niche, and for a soy candle enthusiast, this site sounds like a find.

CandleSuppliesDiscount.com — This one is similar to the Candlemaking names, but it covers the bigger candle market of retail and hobbyists. I would prefer seeing “discount” at the beginning of the name.

And the Winner is (so hard to pick just one)...CandleSuppliesDiscount.com.

In the end, practicality wins by covering both candle buyers and candle makers looking for a good deal. Value on this name is maybe \$500–\$1,000 in the domain sales aftermarket, but not bad for spending only \$8 to register. If the word “discount” were at the beginning of the phrase, I would give this domain a \$1,000–\$2,000 value. I must confess I couldn’t resist, and registered my personal favorite, AllSoyCandles.com. Who knows — this niche name may prove to be the best one for conversions and sales commissions!

How I Claimed My Prize

I used the “Buy” button on Bustaname.com’s site to order my domains to save \$1.85 per domain registration at GoDaddy. The final names I chose were from Domain Tools, so once in GoDaddy, I did a normal domain search, and the domains were still available. I added them to the checkout cart and still got the discounted price at the end of the purchase. To confirm that I did buy the names on March 3, 2008, go to GoDaddy’s Whois search (<http://who.godaddy.com/whoischeck.aspx>), enter either domain name in the search box, and type in either name.

Finding relevant affiliate domain names may seem more difficult than ever before. But with a couple of very useful domain keyword tools to speed up the process, it’s still easy to pinpoint and acquire great affiliate domain names for your business, and all for just the cost of registration. Not a bad first step toward developing a revenue

About the Author

Roxanne McHenry is an experienced SEO consultant and an expert in keyword arbitrage and analysis. Her SEO clients have included more than 200 companies and Fortune 500 corporations. In 2005, Roxanne founded CashKeywords.com with co-owner Stephen Juth, and they released a real-time, top paying keyword tool in January 2006, AdSenseAccelerator.com. She has written a step-by-step, definitive book on AdSense Arbitrage: “Build Your Own AdSense Cash Cow – 10 Steps to Tip the Scales on Your AdSense Arbitrage Earnings”



Enter a single word or keyword phrase with spaces in the search field, and Domain Suggestions gives results that look more like brandable domains, or keyword domains that include generic phrases like “best,” “the,” “free,” and “world.”

How To Submit To Article Directories Successfully

by Kathy Jackson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



Remember that while your objective in writing articles is to promote your site or product, your reader's objective is to learn something — not to be sold to. Save the promotion for the author's resource box.

As an affiliate marketer, you probably already know that article marketing is one of the most effective forms of advertising on the Internet that is either low in cost or free. Typically, the only cost associated with article marketing is having the articles ghostwritten, but there may also be a cost involved if you pay someone to submit those articles for you.

It is true that article submission can take a little time, and if you don't really know what you are doing, it can turn out to be a fruitless exercise as well. However, if you know exactly what to do, you really can submit your own articles quite efficiently and effectively — without paying someone else to do the work for you, and without spending too much time on it. Here are some guidelines to get you headed in the right direction.

Start with a Good Article

Starting out with a good article is the first time-saver. You would be surprised at how many people try to write their own articles, when they have little or no writing skill or experience. When this happens, it never turns out very well. Simply put, if you don't really know how to write an article, either take the time to learn, or hire a ghostwriter to have it done.

Pay special attention to spelling and grammar. Use a good word processor that will point out your mistakes, and recommend corrections that you can make to your words and sentences. Also, remember that while your objective is to promote your site or product, your reader's objective is to learn something — not to be sold to. You are not writing a sales letter. You are writing a real article that will help to inform your target market. Make sure that your articles have value to the reader above all else.

Write an Outstanding Author's Resource Box

Again, your purpose for writing an article is to promote your site, service, or product. Unfortunately, in most cases, this really can't be done in the article content, as it turns the article into more of a sales letter and less of an informative article. Save the promotion for the author's resource box.

If you don't know what an author's resource box is, it is simply a block of text used to provide information about the author. It is included at the bottom of the article when it is distributed, and it remains with the article when others reprint it. Again, this is your opportunity for a bit of promotion, but it cannot be blaring promotion.

Overall, the author's resource box should state who the author of the article is, give a little information concerning their background — particularly what makes them an authority on the topic discussed in the article, and a link to the author's website for more information on this topic. It is always great to promote the website in the author's resource box, but promoting a specific topic is not always ideal, as your article may appeal to a market that seeks many different related products or services. Overall, the author's resource box should be no more than one paragraph in length, and many article directories will have a set number of characters that they will accept for the author's resource box as well.



ARTICLE DIRECTORIES CONTINUED....

Find the Top Article Directories

There are literally thousands of article directories. What you need to understand is that you have no need to submit to all of them. In fact, you only need to submit articles to a few of them, and certainly no more than the top 10.

Overall, the article directories that you do not want to miss include Article Pros, at <http://www.articlepros.com>, Go Articles, at <http://www.goarticles.com>, Article Cube, at <http://www.articlecube.com>, ISnare, at <http://www.isnare.com>, Buzzle, at <http://www.buzzle.com>, Article Basement, at <http://www.articlebasement.com>, Articles alley, <http://www.articleslley.com>, Article City, at <http://www.articlecity.com>, Article Directory, at <http://www.articledirectory.com>, and Everyone's Articles, at <http://www.everyonesarticles.com>. And don't forget everyone's favorite article directory, Ezine Articles <http://ezinearticles.com/>.

These directories are the ones that are top-ranked, and submitting to each of them does not take a great deal of time. The truth is that you are just as well off submitting to these few article directories as you would be submitting to thousands of article directories that don't rank well. In fact, you are better off.

The Art of Using Pen Names

There are many good reasons to use a pen name, and there are many good reasons not to. Ideally, if you are promoting yourself and your website, you will use your own name, as this gives you the opportunity to build name recognition as well as trust and credibility. However, in some instances, you need a pen name. For example, some article directories only allow one submission per week, per author, and you may need a pen name to make more submissions.

Many affiliates also use pen names when they are directly promoting a product, instead of their own website, but this would be the only good reason to use a pen name, and if possible, you will always be better off promoting your own name, rather than a name that people won't recognize in the long run. If you do use a pen name, however, make sure that you use one that sounds real.

Write Article Descriptions, Headlines, and Subheadlines

There is much more to an article than just the article itself and the author's resource box. You must also create great headlines, subheadlines, and descriptions. Typically, the title of your article is the headline. For distribution purposes, you may need to compose a subheadline, even if the article doesn't originally have one.

For the description, you can use an excerpt from the first paragraph, or write a new paragraph. Your description should contain the keywords that you wish to target, and your headline, of course, should do the same. Don't use bland headlines. Remember that other than search engine optimization, you benefit from the article only if people read it, and at article directories, they have many fine articles to choose from that cover your topic. Make your headline stand out from the crowd.

Know Your Word Counts

Most article directories only allow a certain number of words or characters for each section of your article. For example, there will be a limit for the title, for the subtitle, for the description, for the article, and for the author's resource box.

It is a good idea to go look at the limits for each site where you intend to submit articles before you write them. Get an average acceptable count across all of those sites, so that your article is ready for distribution to all of those sites, without having to make changes. The easiest way is to



The author's resource box should state who the author of the article is, give a little information concerning their background — particularly what makes them an authority on the topic discussed in the article, and a link to the author's website for more information on this topic.

ARTICLE DIRECTORIES CONTINUED....

Not reading and following the article directory site's guidelines for submissions will usually result in your article not being published. In some cases, it results in never being allowed to post another article to the site in the future either. Do yourself and the site owner a favor — read and follow the directions!

go with the lowest possible counts among all of the sites. With these numbers in mind, you are ready to write a great article that won't exceed any of those numbers. This is a great time-saver.

Read and Follow the Guidelines

The worst mistake that you can make is not reading and following the guidelines for article submissions at each of the sites to which you submit. This will cost you a great deal in terms of time, and it usually results in not having your article published. In some cases, it results in never being allowed to post another article to the site in the future, either. Every site will have guidelines that must be followed. Do yourself and the site owner a favor — read and follow the directions!

Rinse and Repeat

Writing and distributing articles is a process, and this is one process that you actually want to document and repeat over and over again. Ideally, you should be writing and submitting at least one article per week to the article directories that you have chosen. Your process may go something like this: Write the article, check the article, paste in your author's resource box. Write your headline, subheadline, and description. Check your word and character counts for each portion of the article. Load the directories up into your browser, and start copying and pasting in the articles.

For submission purposes, try using a tabbed browser. Load up all 10 sites, copy one section of your article, such as the headline, and paste it into all 10 submission forms before copying the next section. This goes very fast. Once you have a process, you will find that writing the article to perfection, and distributing it to 10 sites won't usually require more than a couple of hours of your time.

Once you get the hang of it, article marketing is very easy. However, there is one issue that few people talk about. The issue is search engine penalties for duplicate content. If you are submitting the same exact article to multiple sites, you may find that those pages that have your articles posted won't rank as well in the search engines as they might have had each article been different. This is easily avoided by writing the same article by using different words — but of course, this does require more of your time.

With that said, however, writing and distributing articles will be time well spent in your marketing endeavors, and this is definitely a promotional outlet that you should not ignore. When you write and submit an article, you are essentially setting up a promotion that will be running itself, in a viral way, for years to come.

About the Author

Kathy Jackson is a Texas Rancher and freelance writer. She is also a contributing author for several farm and ranch publications. Internet marketing is one of Kathy's burning interests and she is just "tickled pink" to write for AC Magazine and Anik Singal, her marketing hero. On the Affiliate Classroom Blog (<http://blog.affiliateclassroom.com/>), you will find several articles by Kathy on various aspects of affiliate marketing. See: <http://www.income-academy.com>

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