

Write for More Revenue

By Caterina Rando

All entrepreneurs, since the first baker and candlestick maker, have faced the same challenge--how to get the word out to people who might want to do business with them. We all know that no matter how good your product or service is, no one can utilize it if they do not know it exists. Unless you have a huge advertising budget, you are probably wondering what you can do to effectively draw clients to you. The answer is simple: All you have to do is sit down and write. Writing is very valuable because people keep articles, newsletters and cards with "10 Ways to..." while they will immediately throw out flyers, brochures and glossy direct-mail pieces. People keep valuable information; you will be called on by clients weeks, months or even years later because they still have an article you wrote. Write about the topics and issues that answer the challenges your potential clients are addressing, and watch your phone begin to ring.

There are two other reasons to write. The first is that providing people with helpful information is a way of giving people something for nothing. This creates a good feeling about your business among the people who read your information. Also, by sharing your expertise in writing, you are establishing yourself and your company as an expert. Everyone wants to work with someone they know is an expert at what they do.

Follow these ideas to get your ideas down on paper and watch your profits go up.

Pay Attention to Your Clients

Even if you know writing can serve you and your business, you might not be sure what to write about. By listening to the questions that your clients ask over and over, you can identify the issues that everybody wants to know about. Keep a list; and when you are ready to write, review it for ideas.

Start with Quick Tips

If you do not think you are much of a writer, you may want to start by writing a helpful list of something that you know about but your clients might not. I call these quick tip sheets. You might title your sheet "25 quick tips to organize your office" or "10 ways to lower your mortgage" or "16 ways to reduce your stress." Underneath your title you simply write out your ideas.

Articles

To turn a quick tip sheet into an article, all you need to do is write an explanation or an example underneath each quick tip. Add an opening paragraph that states what problem your article solves, then add a paragraph at the bottom that tells the reader to apply what they have read--and you have a completed article.

Edit It

Always use a professional editor or a freelance librarian to review your articles once they are written. You want to be confident about everything you send out. Especially in the beginning, this professional support will make a difference.

Get Ink

Identify newspapers, magazines, and other publications that your clients and potential clients read. Start by simply asking your clients what they read. You can also do a search at <http://www.writersmarket.com>. There is an annual fee involved; it is worth it. Send an email to appropriate publications and ask for writers' guidelines--this will tell you what they are looking for and not looking for, and how the publication likes articles presented (including how many words). By reviewing the writers' guidelines, you can determine if your article is right for a particular publication. To get articles placed, start with lesser-known publications, such as small-town newspapers, association newsletters, trade magazines.

Your Website

Even if you have difficulty getting publications to run your articles, you certainly have one place to put them--your website. By adding helpful articles to your website, you will create more interest and get people to come back over and over for answers. Also, you can list each topic of an article as a separate item for search-engine placement and increase your hits and possible business.

Other Websites

Websites are always looking for fresh content. Email the editor, ask for the writers' guidelines, and send that person some of your articles. Make sure on all articles that a brief bio about you is included at the bottom, and include your contact information so people can get hold of you.

Ezine

Put brief articles into an email and send them off to your list of contacts each month, and you have created an ezine. Make sure they are not too long--under 500 words is good--so they get read.

Quarterly Newsletter

Add a nice layout, glossy paper, some printing and stamps to your articles, and send out a quarterly newsletter to your contacts. This is a nice way to stay in touch that again establishes you as the expert.

Use Articles Over and Over

Once you write an article or a quick tip sheet, you want to use it over and over. Send it out to other publications that might be interested in it. Send it to members of the media, current clients and potential clients with a cover letter that says, "In case you missed my article in XYZ publication, here is a copy for you." Articles give valuable information to the reader and can do more for your business than advertising, publicity, direct mail or networking. An article lives as long as it continues to be accurate and as long as people continue to read it. Get writing, and watch your revenue soar.

Caterina Rando, MA, MCC, is author of "Learn to Power Think," a keynote speaker, success coach and trainer. She helps people invigorate their professional and personal lives and create the results they want. To find out about her book and other resources, visit <http://www.caterinar.com>. Caterina can be reached at 415-668-4535 or by email at

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