



Article Magic...

The Past, Present, and Future
Of Article Marketing

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What Is Article Marketing?

Article Marketing is essentially writing and distributing short articles to a variety of outlets, including article repositories, which are also called article directories and article banks, forums, and newsletter publishers. Article marketing is one of the most effective types of marketing that one can do – it is also one of the least expensive ways to market a business. In fact, it can even be free, costing you nothing more than your time.

There are many benefits to article marketing. Because articles become viral, your message literally travels far and wide, increasing traffic to your website and increasing newsletter signups. Article marketing is also used to make sales and to build credibility. Anyone who wants to establish themselves as an expert in their niche should take advantage of all that article marketing has to offer.

Here is how it works. Let's say that you are in the weight loss niche, and you sell various weight loss products, whether they are your own products or products of which you are an affiliate. You write a weight loss article, preferably one that is closely related to one of your products – but you don't want to necessarily advertise the product in the article.

Instead, you want to address a problem that the product can help to solve in your article – without mentioning the product. For instance, if you sell a cellulite cream, you can write an article about what cellulite is, what causes it, and the various methods used to get rid of it. The article should be no more than 750 words, and have a compelling title.

At the bottom of your article, you include an author's resource box. This is basically a block of text, made up of one paragraph that is anywhere from five to seven lines long. In this paragraph, you might say something like this:

John Doe is a weight loss expert who has helped hundreds of people get and keep weight off. You can find more valuable weight loss information and help at his website, John Doe's Weight Loss Secrets, located at <http://www.johndoe.com>. You can find specific information for getting rid of cellulite at <http://www.johndoe.com/cellulite.html>.

Once you have written your article, ensured that you have made all of the points that you wanted to make, and checked the article for spelling and grammar mistakes, you are ready to distribute it.

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Distributing an article can be a very time consuming task. Many people outsource this work, and pay a fee for someone else to do the distribution work. Other's do it themselves using software that automates the process. You should note, however, that a large number of the best article repositories do not allow or approve articles that are auto submitted – and they can tell when this is done. Manual submissions – whether done by you or someone else – is always best.

The article is distributed to the article repositories first. There are hundreds of these in existence, and some are better than others. For these repositories, you will need your article, the title, possibly a sub title, your author's resource box, your website Url, your email address, a short description of your article, and a list of keywords, separated by commas, for your article.

Essentially, you visit each article repository, either sign up for a new account or log in, and copy and paste all of the information into a form that is provided for article submissions. Most article repositories have a manual approval process, so it may take a week or more before your article appears on their website.

Once you have submitted to the article repositories, you will want to distribute your article to ezine publishers that cover topics within your niche. You can build your own database of these publishers. You find them by visiting the ezine directories.

Look first for ezines in your niche, and then check each ezine to see if they accept articles. Load those article submission email addresses into your autoresponder, and each time you write a new article, send it to these publishers, asking them to publish the article.

Next, you visit forums that are of interest to your target market. If your niche is weight loss, you visit weight loss forums, and look to see if they have a place for articles. If so, submit your article there. If not, post the article on your own website, and then become an active member in the forum. If your article is about cellulite, look for posts concerning cellulite.

It is perfectly acceptable to make a post and say that you have an article about this on your website, and leave the link directly to the article. Just make sure that your post is relevant and on topic, and that your article provides useful information that is also relevant.

All of this is essentially what article marketing is, and how it is done, however, there is a great deal more to learn and know about article marketing in order to become successful at it.

The History of Article Marketing

Article marketing has been around almost as long as the Internet has been around – even though it wasn't meant for actual marketing purposes. Many years ago, back in the 90's, people actually shared information with each other. This was termed 'the spirit of the Internet' way back then, and that spirit still exists today, even though it isn't as obvious.

The Internet was designed for the free and fast exchange of information. People wrote articles on a variety of topics, for the purpose of sharing information and educating others. At first, there really weren't any article repositories. In fact, newsletters, also called ezines, came into play long before article banks did.

So, when you wanted to share an article with the Internet community, you posted the article on your website, in a Usenet newsgroup, or in your ezine. Eventually, people started allowing other ezine publishers to use their articles as well – and the author's resource box was born.

Because articles had such an impact in each niche (niche being another word that wasn't used at that time), intelligent marketers saw the potential for writing and distributing articles – freely – in order to promote their businesses. They started writing and distributing articles on a regular basis – and article marketing was born – even though it wasn't necessarily called that then. It was simply called 'writing and distributing articles.'

Those articles were formatted much the way that articles are formatted today, except html tags were not used. The articles were all text, just as many are today. However, while links in the article are hyperlinked today, they were not hyperlinked back then, in most cases.

In case you don't know, when a link is hyperlinked, the reader can simply click on the link to visit the webpage. When it is not hyperlinked, the reader must copy and paste the URL into their web browser, or type it in.

Over time, people learned that some measure of copywriting skills were needed for article marketing, for the purpose of writing outstanding, attention getting headlines, and in order to create an effective author's resource box.

Even though writing and distributing articles was turning out to be an effective and cost effective way to market a business, the articles that were written and distributed were of very high quality. The spirit of the Internet was still very visible and in full swing.

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The articles were written more for the purpose of sharing information, and less for the purpose of marketing a business – yet business owners who were doing this were thriving because of it.

At that time, we were not inundated with information. There was no information overload, and nobody would dare write a sales letter and try to disguise it as an article. That's what solo ads in ezines were for – sales letters. Articles, on the other hand, were helpful to those reading them.

Over the years, newbie marketers came on the scene and saw article marketing as an opportunity – but really did not fully understand or pay attention to the spirit of the Internet – the free exchange of information on a global scale. This is when salesy articles started appearing. Those newbie marketers soon learned that they wouldn't get anywhere with this type of article marketing. Some gave up; others changed their ways and started doing it right.

It's hard to say when the first article repository was born. Before that, however, articles were just sent to ezine publishers directly and posted to newsgroups. However, article announcement email lists came into play – where people could more easily get their articles into the hands of ezine publishers and web publishers.

Those announcement lists were very good, for a very long time, but they eventually played out, just as FFA Link sites played out. People were participating only for the purpose of distributing their own articles, but were not actually reading or using other people's articles. However, those announcement lists did have a nice long run, and many people still use them today just for the small results that they get.

For the most part, however, article marketing is done today just as it was in the beginning, with very few differences. Article marketing is one of the few types of Internet Marketing methods that have remained the same, without losing any of its effectiveness.

Furthermore, article marketing is also one of the few marketing methods that have been able to stand the test of time, regardless of changes that have been made to search engines, the way people buy on the Internet or even laws that have changed – such as the spamming laws. None of the changes that have been made have had any impact, and there is no impact expected in the future as well.

Article Marketing Today

Again, article marketing hasn't changed much. What worked in the area of article marketing in the past, still works today – except that the announcement lists aren't as effective for getting your article out.

There have been many attempts, however, to change article marketing, in terms of writing and distributing. Some of those new methods are successful, while others are not.

For instance, in recent years, automated submission software has come into the picture. This worked for a while, greatly speeding up the submission process, but most of the top article directories now block such software, and reject articles that are auto submitted. The owners of those directories understand that such software could eventually make article marketing a thing of the past.

There has been software created to help one write articles. While this is useful software, what people don't realize is that it still takes some degree of writing skill to produce a quality article. This software is not 100% effective. What most people do now, if they don't have the writing skills that article marketing demands, is to hire ghostwriters to write their articles for them.

Unfortunately, not everyone who calls themselves a writer actually is. Some of the so-called writers out there have worse writing skills than the person seeking the help! Many don't even speak English.

Hiring a ghostwriter is perfectly acceptable. First, nobody knows that you did not write the article yourself. If you choose a good ghostwriter, you will have quality articles that do what they were meant to do. You will also find that the cost of a ghostwriter is quite reasonable.

Most people hire a ghostwriter and then have the writer write a couple of articles to see how well they do, and then stick with the ghostwriter long term when they see that the ghostwriter can accomplish the task effectively.

In the past year or so, numerous new article repositories have popped up around the Internet. This is due to the release (and sale) of article directory scripts. You see, owning and operating an article directory can make you money. People come to your site to submit their articles to your directory.

While they are there, they may view AdSense ads or other ads that are on your site. Since they register for your site to be able to submit articles, you are also now able to send them emails as well.

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If the article directory site is promoted properly by the owner, he or she makes additional money by placing AdSense or other ads on all of the article pages. This does not hurt the author of the articles in any way.

The key here is that the site must be promoted by the owner in order for it to gain in popularity. While submitting to these newcomers may not be very beneficial to the author of the article at the moment, it will be beneficial in the future – once the site has aged and become popular.

There are numerous courses available now that teach the art of article marketing today as well. In the past, it was something that you had to figure out on your own. Today, there is help to be had. There is free information, as well as paid information.

If you need to learn, the free information will give you the help you need to get started in the right direction, but the paid information is what you will need in order to succeed and get the most benefits out of article marketing.

As in the past, there are still newcomers to Internet Marketing who don't understand the spirit of the Internet. You will still see articles, from time to time, that are nothing more than sales letters. Thankfully, however, the people who run the most authoritative article repositories don't allow such salesy articles to make it into their database. Articles are still usually manually viewed and approved before they are published on these sites.

Article theft, where someone takes your article and removes your name, trying to pass it off as their own work, has become a small problem. But for the most part, this problem doesn't have a large impact on the Internet community. Usually, when the offender is called out and informed of the legal ramifications, the article is removed.

No matter what new methods come into play, one thing will always remain the same. In order to be successful at article marketing, you must turn out quality articles that serve to help, inform, or educate people. This is the only way that you will be rewarded for your efforts, because the spirit of the Internet really does exist – and it's here to stay.

The Future of Article Marketing

As stated, article marketing is here to stay. It is a stable method of marketing that simply is not going away, no matter what changes may occur in the online world. Because article marketing is here to stay, it is something that will benefit you today and in the future.

The article marketing that you do today will still be benefiting you ten years from now. Article marketing is viral, and it's a virus that can't be killed. You see, when you take the time to write and distribute an article, other people, such as web publishers, bloggers, and ezine publishers, will use your articles on their websites, in their newsletters, and on their blogs.

People who read their websites, blogs, and newsletters will also use your articles on *their* websites, newsletters, and blogs, as will *their* visitors. The process just keeps going and going, for as long as the information in your article remains relevant to the current trends or the information does not change. Believe it or not, methods may change, information, however, rarely changes.

While many of the new article repositories may not be around in the future, there are those that have been around since the first article repository made it's appearance. The longevity of an article repository depends on how well it is promoted, and how long the person who owns the article repository decides to stay in business.

When you submit to one of these article banks, your article will remain on that site for as long as that site exists. But even if the site doesn't exist ten years from now, you still benefit from the article that you submitted there when it did exist – because other people visit, read your article, and use it elsewhere.

Even with the abundance of information on the Internet, and the information overload that exists, people still need and use articles – and people still read them every day. While personal computers are in millions of homes, each day, more and more people purchase their first computers and surf the Internet – looking for information about their interests, problems that they are experiencing, or things that they want to learn.

They find the information that they are seeking on websites, blogs, and in newsletters – all of which are publishing articles. The key to article marketing is to find your niche and to hone in on it. Often, people don't pay attention when submitting articles.

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For instance, an article that fits into the weight loss niche really has no place in an article repository that was set up solely for web design articles. While many repositories accept articles in a large variety of topics – some only accept articles that relate to a specific topic. Usually, the people who are submitting articles to the wrong directories are also the people who are writing sales letters, calling them articles, and then using automated software to distribute those sales letters.

As in the past, marketing methods will come and go. It's getting harder to send email. It's getting harder to get listed in the search engines. It's getting harder to use Pay-Per-Click search engines. The rules are constantly changing – and they change so incredibly fast that most marketers can't keep up with all of it.

But article marketing will remain. The changing rules that affect other methods of marketing will not affect article marketing, for the most part. There may come a time when it is no longer safe to email ezine publishers – but even if that happens, another method for getting your articles in the right hands will come along to replace that method.

Some people wonder about the influx of article writers, and what part that will play on the effectiveness of article marketing. For the most part, it won't have any impact at all. You see, because we now have the Internet, and we live in a global society, we still crave information – and even with information overload, we still can't seem to get enough!

We are a species that is capable of thought – intelligent thought – and therefore, we understand the importance of hearing or reading varying viewpoints on different topics. We thrive on it. Few people read articles within a specific niche that are written by just one author – we want to hear what other experts say as well – just as we get second opinions for medical diagnosis, and often third and fourth opinions as well.

This is why the influx of people who are using article marketing for their businesses won't hurt the effectiveness of article marketing. As long as there are people in the world, information will be needed...even if it is information that has been published time and time again.

Again, article marketing may change – but it will only change in ways that make it better. There may be gimmicks that come and go that are designed to make article marketing better, faster, or easier – but anyway you look at it, what works today will work tomorrow where article marketing is concerned, and for all intents and purposes, the results that people see from article marketing will also remain just as they are today – and just as they were in the past.

Article Marketing For Your Business

If you are not already using article marketing for your business, you are missing out on sales and signups that could be garnered from this time tested method of marketing a business online. Anyone who isn't already marketing their business with articles should get started on it right away.

Remember, your article marketing efforts of today will continue to pay off for years to come. You can't say that about any other type of marketing that exists. For the future of your business, this is an area of marketing that you need to learn – and you need to learn every aspect of it as soon as possible.

You may shy away from article marketing because you can't write well, or because you don't think that article marketing is right for your niche. These are valid reasons – but they are wrong. Even if you can't write well, you can pay someone who does. Having articles written is surprisingly cheap. In fact, you can have one article written each and every week for less than ten dollars.

You can also take one of the many free writing courses online to learn how to write articles. Once you get the hang of writing articles, you will find that you can write a short article in less than half an hour. If you are slow at typing, or your article will require more research, you can knock one out in about an hour.

As for article marketing not being right for your niche – wrong again. Article marketing works for all niches. Have you been to a search engine lately? No matter what you think of to type in, you will find web pages on that topic. Where there are webpages, there are readers, and where there are readers, there is a need for articles.

Go ahead – try it. Visit your favorite search engine and try to think up something off the wall and type it in. Bet you find webpages that have content – aka articles – on them! Web content comes from articles – whether they are articles that were written specifically for that website, or articles that were found in the article banks.

You may not think you have time for article distribution. You can pay someone to do this, but the fact of the matter is that even if you just submitted your article to ten article banks each week, you will still benefit. You will benefit even more if you submit to more article banks, publishers, and forums – but just ten will work as well. Doing nothing at all, however, won't get you anywhere at all. It takes less than one hour to submit to ten article directories.

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So, if you have an article written for you, and you submit it to ten directories, you are looking at half an hour of work a week. If you write the article yourself and submit it, you are looking at about two hours per week. If you outsource all of it – writing and distribution, you are looking at ten minutes a week or less – and this includes sending an email to your writer and paying them once the work is done, once you find a ghostwriter that you want to work with on a continuing basis.

You have everything to gain from article marketing, and nothing to lose – as long as you are doing your article marketing in the right way. Even if you did it in the wrong way, the most you stand to lose is your time. Frankly, article marketing is something that is hard to fail at.

The process is incredibly simple: write an informative article, include a resource box that has a call to action, distribute the article, and reap the benefits for years to come. That's all there is to it – and this is a marketing method that is available to everyone – even if they are new to Internet Business. You don't have to be a guru to write articles. You become a guru by writing articles.

You don't even have to own a business to start writing articles and profiting from them. Affiliate marketing, where you promote other peoples products and services for a percentage of each sale, can easily be done through article marketing – and this is where many gurus got their start.

If you aren't article marketing, you are leaving money on the table. It is as simple as that – and you can start article marketing today. Right now. If you can write, write. If you can't, hire a ghostwriter, pay eight to ten bucks for the article, and start distributing it. All of that can be done now – TODAY.

Don't let another day go by that you are not benefiting from the uncontested and unrivaled effectiveness of article marketing! The future of your business, as well as your own financial future, could depend on it.