



WRITING ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

Making editorial work for you

Editorial works best when the writer understands *who* they are writing for, *and* has something genuinely interesting to tell the reader. The fact that you've got a brand new office, two new plants and five new staff is exciting for you, but it isn't to the average reader. Fact is they couldn't care less. What they want to know is what you can do for them and if you have something to say that will matter, or make a difference to the way they think or work.

When someone offers you an article about your business - usually in return for advertising with them - it's tempting to cram in as much information as you can about who you are and what you do. But good editorial is not about telling people how brilliant you are. A great article informs, amuses and makes people think.

So before you launch into your 600 or 800 words work through this checklist and see if you've covered the essentials first.

1. Have you read the publication? Work out their tone and approach. Is it humorous, lighthearted, serious, informal - or informative and factual? Trade or general?
2. Who reads it? If you can't work out the readership, ask them. Every serious magazine or newspaper knows the answer to this
3. Don't just think in general terms about possible readers. 'Business people' is not enough. Who *exactly* are they, what kind of businesses do they run, what do they want and what are their concerns?
4. Ask yourself if you know your own target market as well as you should. What do you want to say and how do you intend to reach your key audience?
5. What do your customers think about the service you offer? What is the competition like? Have you done your research? What bugs them and what are their major concerns? Can you offer them a better service? Why and how?
6. Do you have case histories you can use to prove your point, rather than just telling people you're better? Can you prove how good you are?
7. Have you got good quality photographs to add to your article? This is important and makes life a lot easier for the publisher. The easier you make it for them, the better they'll like you.

Once you have all this information you should have a far better idea of what you want to say and to whom. When you know who you're talking to you can adapt what you say to share something useful, explain how a product works and how it may make their life easier. You can demonstrate how it's worked for one of your clients.

Use direct, jargon free and informal language. Add humour if you can. Never patronise, over-explain a point, or underestimate your reader's intelligence. Avoid clichés and jargon – they're dull to read and say nothing useful. 'Tailor-made to fit your requirements' is a killer, as are expressions like 'cutting-edge' and 'state of the art'. They've been done to death. Keep it honest and straightforward.

Good editorial is worth its weight in gold, so it's worth doing well.

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