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# Demonstrate Expertise with Bylined Articles

*By: Jennifer Marsnik*

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A key piece of public relations is managing the spread of information between your company and your target market. One of the best ways to control the message is by generating and delivering the information directly to your audience. When this is done in an educational or informative manner, the company is positioned as a respected authority on the subject matter or a “thought leader,” which helps to build trust and credibility in a competitive landscape.

Promoting thought leadership can be among the most affordable and impactful strategies in creating fresh leads, nurturing existing leads and even converting new sales. And one of the best ways to demonstrate your expertise is by writing bylined articles.

Bylined articles position the writer as an authority on the subject matter, indirectly bringing recognition to the company he or she represents. This creates a positive perception not only in the eyes of existing and new clients, but also among prospective employees, competitors and the market at-large.

## **Where to begin?**

As with all marketing and PR-related activities, having clearly defined goals and objectives will help you develop a meaningful strategy around promoting thought leadership and getting articles published in particular. You must know whom you are trying to reach and what your key messages are.

Once you have identified your primary audience(s), research media calendars for publications that reach those targets. These schedules often include topic features for each issue, which will help to determine where your areas of expertise align with subjects being covered.

Next, familiarize yourself with the publication’s writing guidelines. Know the general writing style and type of content typically published, and make sure you are clear on the editor’s requirements for word count, footnotes/references and especially deadlines.

## **Writing**

When writing for industry publications, limit the use of jargon or buzzwords. And never promote your own company or products in a bylined article. Editors want to share valuable knowledge rather than infomercials. And if the editor does not cut such references up front, the entire piece may be seen as self-promotional, rather than educational or informative, and both the author and the company will lose credibility rather than gain it.

Not everyone enjoys writing, and not everyone has confidence in their writing ability even when they know the subject matter inside and out. Ghostwriters are commonly used when the bylined author has the necessary expertise but not the time or desire to put pen to paper.

If allowed to include an author bio, keep it brief and focused on recent experience or achievements most relevant to the topic you are covering.



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### **Follow-up**

When selecting outlets to which you will pitch articles for placement, prioritize those that provide authors with a complimentary or low-cost reprint of their bylined article. Share the article on your company website, through email campaigns and via social media channels. If the content is good, it may be shared by your network and beyond.

Finally, be patient! Most thought leadership activities take time to generate measurable results. A single demonstration of your knowledge or expertise may not make the phone ring, but once the audience sees a pattern of authority and credibility on a given subject, you can expect their perception to improve, which can eventually open doors to new business.

### **About the Author**

*Jennifer Marsnik is a senior account manager with Edge Marketing, Inc. Leveraging more than 20 years of experience working in professional services industries, Jennifer consults with clients to develop and implement strategic marketing plans that complement and support their overall business goals.*



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