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More Media Coverage

Online Exclusive Column: MarketingWorks

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A key strategy to any accounting-related marketing and public relations program is to position a person at a firm or company as an industry thought leader. This approach not only builds trust and credibility with readers; it creates interest in the person's abilities, which, in turn, drives business.

Authoring articles is a good way to make this "positioning" a reality, although the road to being published in print and online requires patience, perseverance and time. However, the best part of this approach is the cost; other than the time it takes to write an article and secure placement, there are no other costs involved.

One note: Many practitioners want to know if they should pay for advertising space in order to secure bylined content. I lean toward not working with publications that require an advertising contract because of the bias involved. However, you should keep in mind that this philosophy doesn't work in all situations; there are exceptions, and it really just depends on the situation. Carefully weigh your options.

STEP #1: START WITH THE BASICS

What is your area of expertise? Start by understanding your limitations.

For example, if I were asked by a publication to write an article about estate tax, I would realize that I'm not the best person for this assignment

because I don't have the technical background required. Sure, I could

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STEP #2: AVOID THE FIRM COMMERCIAL AND STICK TO THE CONTENT

Authoring an article is a subtle exercise because there's a fine line between positioning yourself as an expert and having the article become a blatant advertisement for your firm or company.

Don't worry about the name recognition back to your firm; any article you write will have some kind of bio component with it in which you can provide a few sentences on your background and employer. The mere fact that your name is on the article is proof enough that you know what you're talking about ... or, at the very least, readers will believe you know your stuff.

STEP #3: WRITE LIKE YOU SPEAK IN TONE AND VOICE

Is it any wonder that academics write like they talk?

You'll want to write as if you're having a discussion with a friend or colleague, not as if you were in a lecture hall and the entire world surrounding you is esoteric. You'll feel better about what you're writing if it's in your own voice.

Avoid colloquialisms or the desire to use slang. It's okay in some cases, but you don't want your tone to be too folksy or familiar. Again, a fine line is walked. Above all, be yourself.

STEP #4: YOUR TOPIC SHOULD BE SOMETHING YOU CAN RE-MARKET

If you're a forensic accountant, you'll want to drive business to yourself and your firm or company accordingly, so why would you write about something you can't re-market at a later time?

The beauty of being published is to repurpose the material to your clients, prospects, friends of the firm and even to your mom, if you still need her validation.

Seriously, getting published is just the initial strategy; finding ways to get

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Spread the word with the PDF. Attach the PDF to an e-mail whenever you approach a prospect or follow up with someone you meet. There's nothing wrong with blowing your horn a bit by letting others know you are an expert in this area. Say something simple, such as, "I thought you might be interested in an article I just wrote on forensic accounting. Let me know if you would like to discuss this content or talk about anything related to the topic."

Spend some money and send it by snail mail. Okay, so this one has an associated cost, but digital printing is cheap. You could print this on your office printer/copier if the resolution is clear, and postage is less expensive in bulk. Try it. Send your article out by snail mail; I guarantee the recipients will remember you sent it. How often, nowadays, do you get snail mail like this? Everything is mostly electronic!

Take copies of your article with you to meetings. If the point of the article was to position yourself as an expert, then what better way to demonstrate your abilities than to show others what you've done? You're not bragging or boasting, honestly! You're simply offering advice and guidance to your clients and prospects.

In the bag of tricks we have come to know about marketing and public relations' strategies, writing content and getting published is one way to get some great exposure and generate business. It's worth the time and effort because it creates "buzz" about you and your firm.

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Technology

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