

How To Write How-To Articles

Contributed by Steve Gillman
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To write "how to" articles for online distribution, include almost (but not quite) everything the reader needs to know.

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Learn how to write "how to" articles and it is easy to promote your website. They are one of the most popular types of articles online. Some people will read articles just for entertainment or to learn general information, but everyone wants to know how to do something.

{bot_wrgoogle}Before you start cranking out those "how to" articles, though, you need to know a basic principle and a few tricks. First, an online article is not the same as an article in a print magazine. In the print world, the writer is paid to be purely informative and entertaining. Online articles are informative as well, but since you give them away, they have little value to you unless they get readers to come to your website.

Keep that important principle in mind. Make sure you know how to create a good "authors resource box" that will motivate the reader to click on that link and visit your website. You also have to get the reader to read that far, which you can do by using the first tip below. Since it's on-topic and relevant to this article, I can simply tell you that you're going to like what you see in my own resource box below. (That's an example of using curiosity to "hook" the reader.)

How-To Articles - Three Tips

1. Tell the reader almost everything she needs to know. Almost, but not everything. The point here is to give real value, but leave her wanting more. This keeps her reading, to see what else there is, and finally, it gets her to look at the author information at the end of the article, where hopefully she clicks through to your website to learn more.

It is easy to use this technique. For example, two paragraphs ago I mentioned that you need to know how to create a good "authors resource box" to make a reader into a visitor. Of course, how to do that isn't covered in this article, so the curious reader will hopefully click through to my site to learn how. Another way to do this is to have six tips on how to do whatever, and then mention in the resource box that there are ten more tips on your website.

2. If you sell products, mention them relevantly. You can't use an article as a sales pitch, but what if the things you sell are relevant to your article? Mention them specifically, but don't mention in the article that you sell them. Keep that to the resource box.

For example, suppose you sell scrapbook materials, and your article is on how to create the perfect scrapbook. Go ahead and mention the specific materials and even the brands you recommend. The reader will wonder where he can get these things, and in the author's resource box he'll see that you sell them on your website. There is nothing wrong with this technique. A woman who reads an article on "How To Tie Fishing Flies" also wants to know the best materials and where to buy them.

3. Have something new to say. You are telling the reader how to do something, but so are many others. Try to have your own unique angle or a "special" tip that isn't found in other writings on the subject. You want the reader to know that you are the expert and your website is the one to visit.

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