

Writing Your Optimum Article

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Your mission for today is to magically pluck an idea for an article out of your head and make it interesting and succinct so that the people you really want to reach with it get hooked immediately and then rave about it to some friends, pass it on and keep looking out for name the next time you are published.

Sounds easy enough right? But the reality for many of us is that our writing easily gets off track, rambles on a bit and we loose more readers than we keep. It's so important for many of us to master this and here's an easy way to really nail it, time and again.

Start with a blank piece of paper, and draw up three squares down the side, with the letters POW in each. These are your Points of Wisdom - three key points you will address in your article. Then, across the page from each POW square, draw three circles... ie nine in total. Each of these will represent a fact, example, story, statistic within your article about the corresponding Point of Wisdom.

Let's say - your title represents the topic of *moving to a new town*. Your first POW might be Finding a New Home and your circles will be:

1) Finding a realtor, 2) Determining your needs for your location such as schools, stores etc, 3) Writing a checklist before you go looking at houses.

Your second POW might be about physically moving - and the first circle point might be about packing and unpacking, the second one about meeting your neighbours, the third might be the funny story about accidentally packing the keys in one of the boxes. You then approach your third POW and create three minor points to write about relative to that point.

This gives you a very basic framework for your article which ensures flow of information and a good mix of facts, stories, examples and allows you to write to each point easily. At the top of the page with your format on it, create a rectangle - this is for your introduction, and the matching rectangle at the bottom will be for the summary. Tell the reader what you are going to write about and why, perhaps tell a brief story or give an example to paint the scene clearly in the reader's mind. At the end, write a brief summary of the three points you addressed and then create a powerful opening and closing statement that somehow wraps up each end of the article.

For example, you'll notice at the end of this article, I'm going to repeat my reference to writing an article being a mission.

I promise you that once you get the hang of using this formula style to write your articles from, you'll find it much quicker and easier to map out your words, and get the flow right - which will definitely take the hard work out of editing and reviewing your work too.

You can also use this formula to create keynote speeches and workshops from too. In fact, I first discovered the idea from top speaker coach Patricia Fripp www.patriciafripp.com who used something very similar in a speaker workshop I attended several years ago. I've been using it for writing ever since I worked out that the formula is the same whether you are creating a written or spoken piece of work. You need the start, middle, end, or three key points to address so that you don't over complicate things. It also helps to ensure you cover the key areas you *really* want to address. Most importantly, it helps to keep you on track with the information you have, without going off on tangents that need a lot of extra research and therefore time input. If you are already

an expert in your field, apart from checking facts, and coming up with anecdotal stories, you should be able to write a 2000 word article on your topic from your existing knowledge.

Finally, you can take each of your main points of wisdom, and go deeper into your knowledge bank to take each one and turn them into individual articles or chapters for a book using the same system for working out your subheadings. Using our earlier example of writing about moving house, this would look like:

Chapter 1: finding a realtor, with subheadings about checking success rates and references, working out a plan for the task ahead, what happens if you don't like him/her...

Chapter 2: Determining your location needs, and

Chapter 3, Checklists. Each small part you may have written about for an article can be stretched and explored a lot more - and easily turned into a bigger piece of work.

So, now that you know how easily your mission could be accomplished today, why not explore some of your recent topics and turn them into more in depth articles and maybe even see if you can identify what could be developed into a book by going deeper into your subject.

Maybe you'll discover your mission is actually a lot bigger than simply an article!