

How to Write a Credibility- Building Core Issue Article

The Purpose, Uses of and Structure of a Core Issue Article

An article or report is one of the most important tools for marketing success.

Once you get attention from potential clients, the next thing they want is *more information* about how you can help them.

And one of the easiest ways to do this is to provide what I call a "Core Issue Article or Report" that gives your prospects reasons to do business with you.

The tricky part is what to include in this article and what not to include. A Core Issue Article should give a concise overview of your business model – in other words, what you do for your clients that gets results.

This article will give you everything you need to write a Core Issue Article successfully.

Part 1. Purpose and Uses of a Core Issue Article

Educate and Demonstrate Expertise

The purpose of a Core Issue article is the same as any other marketing material created for your business: to educate your clients about your subject area and to demonstrate your expertise in that area.

A good article also positions you as the preferred provider for your service. It shows that you not only know your stuff but that you've helped your clients with your knowledge and expertise.

The second purpose of an article is to get the contact information from anyone who requests the article. You don't want to just give away the article. You want to trade the article for someone's name and email address. A Core Issue Article enables you to grow your email list in three primary ways:

- 1. As something you offer on your website to get prospects to opt-in on your e-list.** They request your article by giving their name and email through a form on your website connected to your email management program (Aweber, Mail Chimp, Constant Contact). They are then added to your list and you continue to educate, inform and build credibility by sending more articles in the form of an email newsletter.

2. As something you offer anytime you give a talk, teleclass, podcast interview, or webinar (to those not on your list). At the end of your presentation you hold up (or mention) your article and ask who wants a copy. Then get business cards or point people towards your website to get their free copy.

3. As something to offer anyone if they show interest in your business. If someone shows interest in your business, simply say: "I have an article that gives a good overview of "X" (whatever your services is about). I think you'll like it. Can I send you a copy?"

So you need to think of an article as an attention-getting tool that then goes beyond this and provides valuable information and establishes your credibility. It should also make them want to know more about this area and open to reading your ongoing emails.

Offering an article on your web site is the primary way of organically growing your email list. You are not coercing people to sign up; you are giving some real value in the hope that at some point they will be interested in hiring you and paying you to help them.

This has been extraordinarily effective in my business. The Core Issue Article starts the process; the eZine continues the process, and stand-alone emails prompt subscribers to learn about services and programs you offer.

If you don't have that article to begin with, your marketing process never really starts.

The good news is that it really isn't very hard to write an article like this, and in the next part we'll go into detail about the structure of a Core Issue Article, starting with topics and titles.

Part 2. Structure of a Core Issue Article

Topics and Titles

Every Core Issue Article starts with a Topic and a Title.

The topic and title are key because they are what get attention and draw someone to the article. You want a topic and title that are relevant to your business and that focus on a primary issue, challenge or outcome that your clients are interested in.

You always need to be thinking about what your clients needs are. What do they want? Where are they stuck? What do they want

to know? What problem do they need the answer to? What are the confused or uncertain about?

Integrate your Marketing Messages into your article title. For instance, my marketing message tagline is “Get Your Marketing Unstuck and Into Action.” I could use something very close to that for my title: “7 Ways to Get your Marketing Unstuck and Into Action.”

Articles that start with How to... or X Ways... are often effective because they arouse curiosity and promise something tangible.

Your article might be “problem-oriented” or outcome-oriented.”

Problem: “7 Common Mistakes Managers Make that Kill Productivity”

Outcome: “7 Communication Secrets Successful Managers Use to Multiply Productivity”

Both of those are pretty good, but it’s hard to know which one will work the best. I honestly couldn’t tell you. If you use this as the article you offer on your website opt-in, try one for a month and then the other for a month and see which works better.

Nobody can tell you exactly what will work. It depends on so many factors. This is why testing is the *ultimate marketing truth*. If you never test article titles you'll never really know the one that will get the best results.

Again, you need to choose and then test which kind of article attracts the most attention. I recommend you write one of each and run them past some of your associates and see which one they react to the best. (you are looking for *reactions*, not *opinions*!) Again, there are so many variables, that you really need some testing and reactions to know which title will get the most attention.

For help with this: Go to Google and enter: "How to Write Attention Getting Headlines"

Also Google: "Subject Lines that Get Your Emails Opened"

The several articles you'll find on both of these pages will give you useful ideas for titling your articles and then writing attention-getting subject lines or other emails.

Core Issue vs. Single Issue Article

How is a Core Issue Article Different from a single-issue article? A single-issue article is like an article for an eZine or blog.

These kinds of articles focus narrowly on one topic or issue relating to your business and expertise. Topics for these articles can start with questions your clients always ask you, problems they've experienced or issues they've found solutions to. There are endless possible articles like this for every business.

But a Core Issue Article focuses on the bigger picture. They're about the big things, the main things your clients deal with. For instance...

My Core Issue Articles have often focused on the key parts of my 7-part marketing model:

1. The Game of Marketing
2. Marketing Mindset
3. Marketing Messages
4. Marketing Conversations
5. Written Marketing Materials
6. Marketing Strategies and Plans
7. The Selling Process

Since virtually everything in marketing can be included in that 7-step model, it gives a big overview of how I help my clients with their marketing. After reading it, they understand the essentials of marketing and what they need to do to be more successful in their marketing.

Many of my clients have also written “X Mistakes Articles” that summarize the primary issues a typical client struggles with. This might include stories and examples from actual clients and also a brief outline of how to address those problems.

These are not the only ways to write a Core Issue Article, but for now, I'd start with one of these formats as it's simple and very accessible to the average reader. You are not trying to emulate an in-depth article as you'd find in the New Yorker as written by my Malcolm Gladwell! Those kinds of articles can take dozens, if not hundreds of hours to research and write.

How to Outline Your Core Issue Article

Whether your article is problem- or outcome-related, you can outline it pretty much the same way. There are five main sections to every Core Issue Article:

The Introduction

Overview of what the article is about -

The Main Content

Problem or solution #1

Problem or solution #2

Problem or solution #3

Problem or solution #4

Problem or solution #5

Problem or solution #6

Problem or solution #7

The Wrap Up

A neat summary of the ideas in the article.

The Biography

Information about you, qualifications, expertise.

The Call-to-Action

Tell the reader what to do next and how to contact you.

Section 1. Introduction

This introduces your readers to the topic, explains why it's important and gives your readers an idea of what they'll get from the article. Let me give you an example.

“So many Independent Professionals are confused about marketing. They're not sure where to start or what to do. What marketing strategies are the most effective and which ones are wastes of time? You might wonder how much time, money and effort to put into your marketing and what works and doesn't work. What about blogs, social media, speaking, networking and webinars? It can all be quite overwhelming can't it?

“In this article, I’m going to remove some of the mystery and confusion about marketing your professional services by outlining the 7 most important areas of marketing and why you should pay attention to these first. Once you’ve read this article you’ll know more about what actually works in marketing than about 90% of Independent Professionals. You’ll know what to do and where to start to achieve marketing success faster and easier.”

In this introduction I start with the problems, how the average Independent Professional is confused about marketing. I bring up a lot of questions they may not know the answer to. Then in the second paragraph I promise to clear up the confusion and share ideas that are most likely to work. This really draws the reader into the article.

This basic introduction format can work with almost any article whether it is problem or outcome-oriented.

Section 2. The Main Article Content

This is the bulk of the article and each article will typically have five to seven key sections for each of your problems or solutions.

This is the first problem from a problem-oriented article about playing a bigger game. This includes a case study. By Patti Cotton.

NUMBER ONE: YOU AREN'T ASKING

"Learn to say 'no' to the good so you can say 'yes' to the best." John Maxwell

You are not getting because you are not asking. Over a woman's lifetime, it has been estimated that she will earn \$1 million less than her male counterpart (cite Babcock's research). Many might conjecture that it is due to gender discrimination. Yet, when Linda Babcock (title, location) and her associates asked the question, they discovered that it was much simpler – and perhaps more profound – than discrimination.

Their findings were this: the women in their study did not receive – because they did not ask. This was proven over and over again, with men enjoying expanded access to benefits and resources, higher work positions, greater salary, and more opportunities, than their female counterparts. Over a career lifetime, the additional value of what the men received amounted to an average difference of \$1 million.

There are even more far-reaching implications of not asking.

The difference in income is just one of them. In fact, if you were to poll most women, they would first choose as outcomes feeling

fully empowered, standing up for themselves, being able to define life on their own terms, getting what they want out of life and work, and ultimately, living a life of no regrets.

So why don't women ask? The answer is simple: We are not taught to do so. Culturally, this is not something that is prized, or for which we are acknowledged. As a result, we are not comfortable negotiating for ourselves, because we don't know how. Even if we ask for better jobs, higher pay, promotions, or even a better love life, we tend to accept what is proffered in return, instead of considering if what is offered is really what we want.

When we limit income and career opportunities because we do not stand up for ourselves and ask, we must become comfortable with the results of this compromise. Over time, this decision will erode our self-esteem and the understanding of what we deserve. Ultimately, what can transpire is that in an effort to stay in touch with our true capabilities, while we struggle to reconcile our present self-imposed limitations, we can actually lose a sense of self. "Who am I, anyway?" is a common question I hear. And often, it is a result of this compromise and accommodation over time.

What can be done? A first step is to step back and assess what it is you really want out of life. Take a walk on the beach, or sit in a

quiet corner with a journal, and ask yourself the following questions: Are you where you want to be? And if not, where? What does that ideal state look like? And what gets in the way of your being there?

Erin's Story

Erin is a prominent executive director for a large non-profit providing enrichment programs for at-risk children in three counties. She first came to me because her job responsibilities had recently changed and she was now required to solicit large donations from wealthy individuals. "I am frankly afraid to ask for money," Erin said. "I've never done it. I'm not used to asking for what I want. And I will have to do this to succeed in my work."

As we talked together, it became apparent that fear of asking had other significant implications in Erin's life. She was unable to say no when others asked her to help. As a result, she sat on too many boards, volunteered for too many tasks outside of her job and home, and was suffering burnout because her stress levels were high from working too hard at her own responsibilities to catch up. She was overweight and unhappy with the quality of her marital relationship. "I'm pleasing everyone else but myself and running on steam- I feel miserable."

Her first breakthrough came when we identified the reason behind her inability to ask for what she wanted. During a

difficult childhood, Erin was taught that it was selfish and unattractive to ask for anything more than she received. “‘Take whatever you get and be grateful’ was the mantra at our house,” she said. As a result, Erin felt undeserving of anything she personally desired, and feared that others would reject her – would not love her anymore – unless she pleased them by giving them what they wanted, while sacrificing her own needs.

Erin and I focused on breaking through this old emotional immune system, shifting her mindset to one of being deserving and worthy. Her behaviors needed to align with this new mindset, and so we identified three key areas where asking for what she wanted would make the biggest impact in her life. As a result, she was able to negotiate important personal time with her spouse, to let go of volunteer demands that interfered with work-life balance, and is now soliciting philanthropic gifts with ease. Recently, she called me to share that she has asked for an administrative assistant to take over the clerical work she was formerly doing, and she is now being considered for a promotion.

Here’s a section from a shorter, problem-oriented article, by Scott Malloch

Mistake #4: Giving Too Much Attention to Financial Media

Have you ever noticed when you turn on the news on TV the media is panicked because the markets are down big that day only to have the same commentators gleefully happy the next when it bounces back? This play by play commentary from the “talking heads” serves as good entertainment but plays to emotions which are dangerous when investing. The media uses sensationalism to sell time but by the time it is on TV it is after the fact. Many experts say it is going to go up and others say it is going to go down.

What is a part time investor with a day job to do?

Professionals hone their strategies over time to filter out the noise levels and emotions and rely on rules-based discipline using state of the art technology. When to buy and sell is programmed in advance and acted upon when their systems trigger trades. This discipline is not perfect but works well over time.

Why? News is late. Capital markets efficiently price in all widely known information. As soon as news is available to the public, it becomes reflected in share prices. So looking at the same things as everyone else doesn't give you a leg-up on other investors.

***Solution:* Turn them off.**

Spend less time watching financial shows on TV and reading newsletters. Spend more time creating - and sticking to - your investment plan. But since we are can't do this 100% it is helpful to

thinks of the media in terms of a large funnel. All of the news goes into the funnel and comes out with three outcomes- buy, sell or stay on the sidelines. Ultimately, having a system in place will allow you can act accordingly with a lot less emotion. Don't get emotional from the media.

Are you a wonderful saver but greatly affected negatively by the news? It takes training to tune out the media noise levels and focus on your long range plan. It is tough to do. With a little coaching you could feel less stress from media influence, be happier and look forward to retirement.

Section 3. Wrap up

This section of the article gives a brief wrap-up:

"I hope you've found this report useful and that it's given you a good overview of what therapy is all about and how to get the best results from therapy. If you are having issues in your life that you haven't been able to deal with successfully on your own, seeking out the right therapist for you can be one of the most important choices you make in your life."

Section 4. Biography

Include a short bio at the end to establish your credibility.

Paul Boston is the Founder of Actus Performance Inc. and the lead performance consultant. Paul's first exposure to high level performance came at the early age of 12 when he was a competitive cross-country skier in Canada, skiing annually in a national level two day stage race event. Paul continued to build on his high-level sports performance experiences to develop a passion for organizational performance improvement by studying performance psychology, adult learning and development. Paul has applied his unique high-performance background to develop performance solution initiatives in several senior management and leadership roles he has held over his career giving him a solid platform to help his clients with all their performance challenges.

Section 5. Call-to-Action

Accelerate Your Sales Results

Can Ron help your sales organization reach out and make more effective sales calls? Definitely! His unique approach to sales training includes live calls to actual prospects in the classroom. Sales people learn what to do, actually do it and then get feedback and coaching on the spot. No other sales training company does this.

And our results speak for themselves.

To learn more about Ron and his training program please give him at call at: 120-564-0978 or email him at ron@better sales.com

OK, that's it! That's what you want in your article. You'll find links to some articles on the program page.

Assignment

Do your best to write a Core Issue Article for Your Business.

Don't stop until you've done at least 3 drafts, fine-tuned the text, formatted it, read it out loud and would be proud to present it to a prospective client.

Then send me your article on Slack and I'll give you some feedback.

Cheers, Robert