



Promote Your Book Through Articles

By Patricia L. Fry

Congratulations! You are the proud author of your first (or twenty-first) book. Before you start celebrating, you should be planning your marketing strategy because that wonderful book that you dedicated months of your life to write won't bring in enough money to buy a roll of stamps unless you promote it. And that's true whether your book is self-published or you have a traditional publisher.

There are numerous ways to promote a book. Authors must think beyond Oprah Winfrey's Book Club and sales through the mega bookstores. One of my favorite promotional tools is the magazine article. Just imagine how many people you can reach through magazines, and articles are free advertising. In fact, you can even earn money writing informative, useful articles for print and web magazines.

Many popular magazines excerpt books. Of course, they generally want excerpts from books that relate to their magazine---a cooking magazine wants excerpts from cookbooks, a travel magazine will quote travel books, and a poetry magazine wants to excerpt poetry books.

Use your imagination to come up with more possibilities. If your book features Native American art, for example, a California history or travel magazine might be interested in publishing your chapter on California tribes. An excerpt from a book on tax tips for home-based businesses might provide a good article for a writer's magazine.

Submit articles on topics only remotely related to your book and still promote it. I wrote a book called ***Creative Grandparenting Across the Miles: Ideas for Sharing Love, Faith and Family Traditions***. Now I'm considered an expert on grandparenting issues. I've sold articles featuring storytelling techniques for grandparents, how to teach grandchildren money awareness, how grandparents can uphold family traditions, and tips for helping grandparents bond with their new grandbaby. But I can also plug my book even if I'm writing an article about snails, caregiving, the empty nest syndrome or scrapbooking.

For the snail piece, I might mention that when I was writing the grandparenting book, I met a grandfather who paid his 5-year-old grandson a penny for each garden snail he collected and placed in a bucket. Likewise, I could draw a relating story from the book to use in the caregiving and empty nest articles. For the scrapbook article, I could suggest that scrapbooking is a great way for grandparents and grandchildren to bond and then, of course, I'd introduce my book.

I've also used articles to promote my book ***The Mainland Luau: How to Capture the Flavor of Hawaii in Your Own Backyard***. There are the obvious articles:

- » "Eight Ways to Roast a Pig,"
- » "Recipes for Your Backyard Luau,"
- » "Fresh-Flower Lei-making,"
- » "The Family Reunion Luau" and
- » "Tips for Learning the Hawaiian Language."

And there are the obscure: How about a piece on early culture comparisons for an ethnic or history magazine, flower arranging for a floral or gardening magazine, examining the lost continent of Lemuria (now the Hawaiian Islands) for a travel, history or New Age magazine or the mechanics of writing a how-to book for a writer's magazine. Do you see how I could promote the luau book in any of these articles?

You can almost always get a tag line at the end of an article. Use this as an opportunity to promote your book. I often write, "Patricia Fry is the author of several books including ***Creative Grandparenting Across the Miles: Ideas For Sharing Love, Faith and Family Traditions*** (Liguori Publications, 800-325-9521)." If the topic of the article more closely relates to the luau book, the metaphysical book or one of my local history books, I promote those instead.

Of course, the most effective articles for marketing your book are those relying on your expertise. I've written articles as an expert on the importance of grandparents in a child's life, how to be a better grandparent, tips for traveling with your grandchildren, long-distance grandparenting, how parents can help strengthen the relationship between their child and the grandparents, how grandparents relate to their grandchildren today and how to choose gifts for grandchildren. Anyone interested in reading one of these articles will most likely want to read my book.

Many magazine editors reject articles that blatantly promote a product, so keep your article from sounding like a sales pitch for your book. Simply write a useful and informative article suitable to a particular magazine and mention your book where appropriate.

Expect to be paid anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000 for an article based on your book, depending on the magazine and how the editors view and choose to use your article. You might also be asked to give away some of your promotional pieces. And why not, if it means having them published in a national magazine that's read by 20,000 to 500,000 people?

By now, you probably have dozens of ideas for marketing your book through articles. To come up with even more, try the following:

- » Study a variety of magazines from cover to cover.
- » List as many topics related to your book as you can.
- » Brainstorm with your friends and family.

Do articles sell books? I believe so. I've sold (and given away) dozens of articles based on the luau book and have, as a result, made a lot of book sales. Less than a year after self-

publishing *The Mainland Luau*, I reprinted it. A year later, my stock was running low again and, because of my good sales record, I had an offer that I couldn't resist from Island Heritage Publishing Company in Hawaii. Now they publish and distribute this book.

Before you start madly writing articles and sending them out to magazines far and wide, do some research. Develop a plan. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. Study the market. Use *Writer's Market* to learn which magazines are looking for articles on what topics. *Writer's Market* also offers guidelines for writers: how to submit the article, whether the magazine wants the complete manuscript or a query letter, contact person, address, etc.
2. Research the magazines. Request a copy of the magazine and study it. Notice what type of articles they publish, the slant and tone. Request a copy of their writer's guidelines and follow them in preparing your article or query.
3. Write a query letter. Most editors want to see a query letter first, which should include a brief synopsis of the article idea, why you think readers would find the topic interesting and important, a list of experts you plan to interview, your qualifications for writing the article, and your writing credits. Keep the letter to one page if possible.
4. Keep good records. Record every transaction with each magazine.

Writing a book is fun. Promoting it can be terrifying and intimidating. That's why I recommend that authors start their book promotion efforts doing something they love---writing.

Patricia Fry has been writing for publication for 28 years, having contributed hundreds of articles to about 130 different magazines, including *Writer's Digest*, *Freelance Writer's Report*, *Canadian Author*, *Writer's Journal*, *Entrepreneur*, *Woman's Own*, *Cats*, *Teaching Tolerance*, *Kiwanis Magazine* and many, many others. Fry is also the author of ten books including *A Writer's Guide to Magazine Articles for Book Promotion and Profit* and *Over 75 Good Ideas for Promoting Your Book*.

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