



Effective Opinion Writing

Promoting Your Expertise

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INTRODUCTION

You have specific knowledge and expertise in a topic or an industry, and writing strong opinion pieces can promote your services or your brand and offer real value to your clients. It will help personalize your business or your organization and introduce your mission. Since the strongest opinion pieces and narratives that promote tangible ideas and offer real solutions are written in the first person, you are in the driver seat.

What sets persuasive writing apart from all other copy writing is that the writer speaks from personal experience or describes something s/he has witnessed first-hand. The article then analyzes another opinion or a long-held assumption and finally offers a clear alternative or a solution.

If you are writing the copy for your own webpage—as a business owner, personal brand or nonprofit—or as a guest writer on someone’s blog, the subject has to be near and dear to you to sound authentic. You write in your capacity as an industry expert and should take full advantage of the spotlight and the platform you’re given.

Then follow these steps to ensure that your copy and the structure of your writing will have the most impact on your readers and entice them to learn more.

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THE TOPIC

YOU ARE THE EXPERT

Write about something that you consider your turf and that you are passionate about. That said, be aware that the piece needs to come to a point that is of broader concern. And whereas a blog post can be solely a comment on a topic or a previous post, even a rant, a strong persuasive article has to be structured and always backed up by documented facts.

SHORT AND COMPACT

As a rule of thumb, aim for about 650 words: The shorter the better and the more effective. Too long, and your readers will tune out or read by quickly scanning only the first sentences of each paragraph.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CRITICS

Always present other viewpoints as objectively as possible to make your point. Acknowledge—even if you strongly disapprove—opposing views to stay credible. Then bring your counter point.

CLEAN, SIMPLE COPY

Write in plain language and avoid clichés. Think like your audience, who is not an expert in your topic. Check your ego at the door. Use short sentences.

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Back up your claims with solid facts, data, evidence or personal experience. Use active tense. Avoid categorical overly dramatic words like *always, never, only, best, worst, most*. Don't introduce too many topics at once.

WHY WE SHOULD CARE

You can drive home the urgency of your point by taking a long-term view or by describing general trends, especially since many of your readers might not be directly affected by, or have experience in, the topic.

CAPTURE ATTENTION

Intrigue your audience with new thoughts, point of views and unique experiences. Don't just rehash what you've heard or read or seen. Your readers may have heard, read or seen it too. Give them thought-provoking and challenging points of view that are different, bold and new. Say something. Avoid dry analysis. And most importantly, you don't want to preach to the converted but rather change the minds of those who oppose or dismiss your views, or worse, are indifferent.

PACE YOURSELF

Don't get overheated. Stay credible and don't get carried away by door-pounding, head-banging rage. Follow *New York Times* columnist Gail Collin's advice that strong feelings for a topic should not distort a writer's thinking. It is possible to be outraged without being paralyzed and overwhelm your readers.

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THE STRUCTURE

THE LEAD

Start with a strong lead (a few sentences at most) that grabs your readers' attention and entices them to continue reading. A strong lead assures that even readers who quickly scan your article will catch the gist of your point of view. Write the lead short and get to the point. Use personal experience and what you've witnessed or find a news peg to address a current issue. Employ strong quotes, anecdotes, even a joke. After the first paragraph, the readers need to know why this topic is important and why it affects them as well.

YOUR POSITION

State your point of view with at most two to three claims—and back up each by arguments, solid facts and evidence. Reveal your sources and identify your quotes.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Rebut counter arguments by acknowledging them. Don't just dismiss them or make fun of them. You will come across as bitter or petty. Only use reputable sources and identifiable facts to counter any critics. At the end, the readers need to understand why they should adopt your point of view.

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YOUR CONCLUSION

Finish your line of thought on a strong note. You can pick up the thread from the lead, use a memorable quote, state your prediction, add food for thought, give a short summary or offer a clear call-to-action with a personal appeal.

But most importantly for writing a strong finishing paragraph or a punch line: Don't be overly dramatic and theatrical or use fear mongering, exaggerations or empty threats.

You are a reliable expert that shares a compelling opinion or your proven expertise with your readers. Don't let them down.

**Tell a great story, analyze counter arguments
and offer a better solution.**

Then engage your readers' help to take action.

ABOUT CONTENT + DESIGN LLC

Hi, I am Tekla Szymanski, founder of Content + Design LLC, your one-stop shop for content strategy and WordPress development for nonprofits and personal brands.



You have a small team and even less time. I hear you. And since your website deserves an editor, writer and web designer who understands how to leverage your unique content and adapt the right design to it, I can help you.

If you have a story to tell, a mission to share or a service to offer, I will help you find the right platform and create a compact website that is built around your unique content needs.

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DISCLAIMER

This guide provides recommendations on how to write effective opinion pieces and promote your expertise. These guidelines are by no means complete. Effective writing depends on the time you devote to the suggestions I have shared with you and the story you have to tell.

These factors vary. Success or outcomes cannot be guaranteed, nor can I be held responsible for the performance and conversion rates of your specific approach in your writing.

What I *can* offer you is a helping hand if you need it.

[Schedule a FREE 20-Minute Consultation Call](#)

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