



## **Everydays And Evergreens Make Article Writing Easy**

**by Bonnie Boots**

As a working writer, my income depends on my ability to quickly generate article ideas and deliver entertaining copy. In this business, lack of ideas is not an option.

And guess what? The same applies to you.

You're not a working writer, you say? News flash: doing business on the internet is mostly about writing. Whether it's content for websites or newsletters or free articles to promote your site, a big part of your business is writing. And in this business, lack of ideas is not an option.

So you sit down to write and –gasp!–the worst happens. You don't know what to write about! Are you done? Is your business dead? Of course not. You simply use one of the tricks of the trade that professional writers resort to.

Yes, even born writers have tricks and techniques they use to spark ideas and create content. Writers sometimes call these techniques “ticklers,” because they tickle the mind into generating ideas.

Let me introduce you to the ticklers I call Everydays and Evergreens. They're simple to understand and easy to use. In fact, once you hear them, you'll never again ask what

to write.

I call the first type of tickler “Everydays” because the answer to the question “What should I write about?” is all around you, everyday. It's in the letters in your email box, in the pile of papers on your desk, in the conversation you have with the cashier at the grocery store and the news your family and friends bring home at the end of the day. The best thing to write about is what is personal to you.

When you write about what is personal to you—what you're enthusiastic about, what you're challenged by, what problems you have and what solutions you've found—you'll write with honesty and conviction, two things that make writing fascinating even when it's not letter perfect.

Of course, in order for your writing to be truly interesting to others, you have to show your readers how it relates to them and their lives. You do this by framing your stories around a single topic. You can write about virtually anything you do, think or come across as long as you relate it back to your single, central topic.

For example, if the topic of my web site or newsletter was pet care, I could write about anything from global warming to the latest shenanigans in Washington D.C. as long as I related it back to pet care.

I could start out ranting about Paris Hilton, for example, relating how much I resent the amount of time big news stations waste reporting on the Hilton's hijinks, then reign it back in at the end by saying, “Of course, we've all noticed how often Paris is seen with a pet in her purse. This illustrates what many studies have already demonstrated—that pets are a great stress reliever, especially for people with mental and emotional issues such as ADD or claustrophobia, both conditions Paris is reported to be suffering from. Pets have an almost magical ability to calm and soothe jangled nerves and troubled minds.”

In this example, I took something that was part of my day-- my recent EXTREME impatience with CNN and MSNBC who dumped solid news stories to report on the heirhead's release from jail—and kept in on topic by bringing pets into the picture.

Once you get used to the idea of relating everyday thoughts and events to your central topic, you'll find your mind delivering up an almost endless stream of ideas for you to write about.

The second trick of the trade is called Evergreens. All newspaper and magazine writers everywhere use Evergreens. They're the old standbys, the topics that are

always current because people are always interested in them.

Evergreens come in two styles. They can be seasonal or they can be topical.

Seasonal evergreens are stories that relate to the season. For instance, January Evergreens are New Year resolutions and weight loss.

Think back. Can you remember picking up a magazine in January and NOT seeing something about resolutions and weight loss?

I don't care what magazine you pick up, what its topic is or who its targeted readers are, in January you will find some mention of New Year resolutions and weight loss. It may be as short and simple as the editor of a trade magazine complaining about his need to lose weight after the holidays, but in some way, shape or form, it will be there.

February Evergreens revolve around Valentine's Day, with stories about love and relationships. They may take the form of recipes for a romantic dinner or a psychologist's advice on forming lasting love relationships, but in some way, shape or form, they will relate to Valentine's Day.

As summer approaches, the Evergreens are lawn care, family activities and keeping cool. As winter arrives, Evergreens are family celebrations, surviving family celebrations, gift giving and other topics related to the big holidays of Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Those are seasonal Evergreens. Topical Evergreens are those stories that relate to topics people are always interested in. Building wealth and reducing debt are Evergreens. Scribes in ancient Babylon probably chiseled cuneiform tablets with advice on how to build wealth. It's a topic the human race has always and probably will always be interested in.

Other topical Evergreens, topics that are always in demand, include advice on relationships, careers and health. These are things everyone, everywhere and at every time has learn to manage.

The main themes of human life—birth, death and everything in between—do not change. The same topics the Victorians were writing about are being written about today, and I can say with absolute certainty that our descendents will be writing about them a hundred years from now.

You can probably think of a list of Evergreens right now, off the top of your head. But

if you're ever at a loss for an Evergreen idea, stop at any newsstand and look at the stories being highlighted on the magazine covers. With the exception of current celebrity names the majority of what you see, including that fascination with celebrity, is an Evergreen subject.

All you need do is make a list of story titles that grab your attention, then find a way to relate that Evergreen to your own theme. Again, using a pet care web site as an example, I could take a cover story off the June issue of Good Housekeeping on “Cool Summer Treats” and write an article about how to make homemade, cooling ice treats that are safe for dogs and cats.

Newspapers and magazines use Evergreens as a sort of skeleton, the framework they fill out with current news and local events. Many editorial calendars are made up of nothing but lists of Evergreens. They give the year a shape and form, a place to start working from.

Everydays and Evergreens can do the same thing for you. Evergreens can help you give a shape and form to a year's worth of blog posts or newsletter articles, which you can make current by relating them to Everyday events, thoughts and activities.

With Everydays and Evergreens in your bag of tricks, you'll never again wonder what to write about.

#### About the Author

Bonnie Boots is the publisher/editor of The Internet Wizards Magazine, a lifestyle digital publication providing tips, tools, techniques for people doing business on the internet. For a no-cost one year subscription, visit <http://www.theinternetwizards.com>

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