

BUSINESS

Writing to expand professional horizons

by Victoria Rayner, Contributing Image Editor

Writing for a trade publication is a worthwhile investment of your time. It can help you increase your visibility and improve your professional image. However, you **may** feel you are not capable of putting your thoughts on paper to successfully complete a professional article. It is possible for anyone to share knowledge in the form of an article with a thorough understanding of the subject matter, preparation, and the proper information.

The reward greater recognition of your expertise, new job possibilities, greater admiration for your work by your clients, lecture opportunities, teaching offers, overall, strong applause for your efforts.

The **first** article I wrote for a trade publication was for *Les Nouvelles Esthétiques* in the spring of 1987. The subject was camouflage makeup, and I was so excited about sharing the information that it never occurred to me that it might be difficult to present it.

I wanted to share my **experiences with** other **estheticians** who might be interested **in** working with physicians. That goal overshadowed all **fears of writing**. Strong emotions elicit strong reactions so I was very emotional in my writings about people **with** abnormalities.

I focused on recreating thoughts **and** feelings I **experienced** while working with patients who were severely disfigured, **and** on how cosmetics could offer them hope and in some instances even could **change** their lives. By sharing this insight, I formed a bond with my readers.

Choosing a topic

Without even **realizing** it, I had chosen a topic that had interest potential. Letters of encouragement **from** readers led me to continue writing articles about how they could interact with dermatologists and cosmetic surgeons.

We can learn from one another. Each of us has a lot to contribute. We need to share our **experiences and encourage each other by sharing ideas and insights with writing.**

If you can deliver a message by **speaking**, and know the elementary principals of sentence Structure, then **you** have the basic skills to write. **Writing** is just a record of **daily** experiences; what we see, **hear, and** how it affects us. travels **through** us and emerges in written **form**.

If approached properly, **writing can be an** enjoyable learning **experience**. But go into it with realistic **expectations**. **Writing** is demanding and requires **time** and **self-discipline**. You must isolate yourself, session **after** session, day after day until completion **in** order to perfect your **craft**. It can take days or weeks to complete **an** article.

Outline

I have personally found **that** it is easier to unite if I draft an outline of what I **want** to cover **and** then break it down into segments. The outline is a checklist of points that need to be covered. Each point is a component of the **puzzle** and therefore essential to the overall composition.

Research

Another suggestion is to spend as much **time** as possible reviewing how other professionals express themselves in different venues-for example in press **releases**, editorials, articles for trade journals, meeting and conference reports, etc. Each one in itself is very special and distinct in its category You will **find** it **helpful** if you **familiarize** yourself with these different areas of **writing**. Learn to recognize the writing styles of different authors. Note how they **link** their thoughts together.

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Editing

When you are ready to start wiling. **find** a good copy editor. It should be someone who recognizes your unique style but will not spare you from constructive criticism. Good writing requires that you be tough enough to endure criticism and **learn** to recognize your common mistakes.

When I write, I am alone with my thoughts quite alone and far away from **everyone** and everything. During this period of solitude, I rarely take into account the impact that the information I share will make on the lives of others. Yet, every once in a while, I receive a letter or phone **call** from someone who **tells** me that what I wrote impacted their lives, and then I realize that when words are committed to paper they can hold a serene power and serve as a genuine inspiration to others.

Tips for professional writing

- **Find** a topic-choose a topic about which you are knowledgeable and that excites you.
- Discuss the topic with other **estheticians** who have published articles. They can offer constructive feedback, and their support **will** give you confidence.
- Organize. Professional writing requires organization- knowing how to organize your thoughts on paper separates the **amateurs** from the professionals. Once

you have decided on a subject, develop an outline, **defining** your points and collecting data. An outline **will** provide the framework for the piece.

- **Plan—analyze** the project to avoid chaos and disorder that can disrupt creative thinking. Write **during** the time of day when your mind is the sharpest and you are the most alert. Choose a quiet, peaceful environment in which to work.

- Research--make sure **your** facts are accurate by documenting them. All enough time for this. Otherwise, you could lose credibility

- Maintain a tone-You have the options of approaching the reader in a serious, light, assertive, easygoing, or **formal** tone. Selecting the right tone **will** depend upon your subject manner and your readership.

- **Don't** focus on the length-don't **worry** about the length of your article. A piece of writing should be as long it takes to say what you need to **say, and** no longer.

- Be yourself-The power of originality makes for a great writer. Allow who you are, what you **are**, and what you believe to shine through every sentence.

- Proofread--Always proof your work and be **self-critical**. If your first draft is not heavily edited, you may not be discriminating enough. Each time you edit, you can take more time to focus on the content, sentence structure and word usage.

- Read it aloud, **first** to yourself, and then to someone else. When you listen *to your own* language, **it** will make you aware of its design and stylistic rhythms.

- Rewrite and edit-Make several drafts until you are satisfied. Edit your material for **spelling** and grammatical errors. *After typing, proof it again.*

- Keep it simple-Do not exaggerate or belabor a point. Avoid terminology that maybe unclear to the reader.

- Be accurate, precise, consistent, brief, and keep a steady tone.

- Provide the required output-submit the work on a computer disk, if required. ■



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Victoria L. Rayner lectures on personal growth, stress management, image development and motivation and wrote "The Survival Guide For Today's Career Woman" and "Clinical Cosmetology: A Medical Approach to Esthetic Procedures." A contributor to several professional and consumer publications, she's

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