

Syndication

BY GARY MICHAEL SMITH

You've written an article or a series of articles, and you'd like to see your work published not once but many times over. However, you have neither the time nor the patience to solicit dozens of publications to find the right venue. Syndication can take several forms, beginning with the easy way—using a syndication service, or syndicate. The drawback of this method is the cost. Syndicates often take 40 to 50 percent of your income as a commission. However, they offer established contacts, reputation, and distribution.

Why syndicate? On the other hand, say you're doing just fine selling an article here and there for \$200, \$500, \$1,000, or more. Your article gets printed or appears in an online journal for the run of that partic-

ular issue and is read by that specific audience. You bank your earnings, feeling gratified, as always, that someone has actually paid you for something you wrote. Now, imagine for a moment that you were paid only \$20, \$30, or \$50 tops for this same piece. Not so inspiring, right? Not unless your article appears hundreds of times or more in many publications without your having to resubmit or perform any edits. You've now earned thousands of dollars for the same article, which is going viral and spreading across the Net. And higher paying venues are *asking* you to write for them!

This is not an unlikely scenario with today's online technology. By syndicating your articles, you're putting your name out there while establishing yourself as a subject matter authority and effective writer. And if ►

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◀ you've written books or given lectures in your areas of expertise, you've just gained free publicity—once a term considered to be an oxymoron. (Just be sure to always include your company name and URL in your byline.)

Yet another aspect of increased visibility is that important search engines such as Google pick up on it. Google counts a site's importance by the number of links pointing to it; if your article is syndicated by a number of sites by referring to your site instead of publishing the article on their site, the number of links pointing to your site increases, increasing your ranking with Google.

The downside, however, is that such "site mirroring" is not looked upon kindly by search engines. In an attempt to keep its numbers accurate, the search engine may give a page rank of zero to a site that seems to be a mirror—preventing the mirror site (yours) from even showing up on initial page searches. So be sure that your site does not just contain your articles—include various additional content to prevent it from being perceived as a mirror of other sites that publish your articles. Or, better yet, submit your work only to sites that publish on their own site instead of pointing to yours.

Selecting syndicates. Many syndicates exist, so narrow your search by checking out the Editor and Publisher Syndicate Directory (editorandpublisher.com/eandp/resources/syndicate.jsp). You'll find contact information on syndicates that handle submissions from outside writers as well as some that are self-syndicators—that is, they represent only a few writers. Next, target the syndicates that are interested in the type of articles you write. While this seems like a no-brainer, remember that you're competing with many others who may already have established relationships with the same syndicates and had articles published on the same topics as yours.

Should you use large or small syndicates? Here's where your free writing comes in handy. Ideally, you want the bigger syndicates, since they have more subscribers and higher-profile writers. But without any star power, you may find it difficult to elicit their interest. If you work with smaller syndicates for a year or so and have some clips to your credit, you can increase your chances of being picked up by the big dogs.

Do it yourself. Say you just want to write, mostly on spec, hoping that someone will want your pearls of wisdom—for free if you can't find a buyer. In this case,

a plethora of sites are just waiting for you. For instance, Helium (helium.com) is an online free market venue that encourages people to write on their favorite topics, to serve as editors for others' articles by rating them, to peruse more than 300,000 articles, and to earn a percentage of Helium's ad dollars. A similar user-generated online content publishing service is Triond (triond.com).

You need to discover which sites publish reprints and which are interested only in first rights. See mikesmoneymakingmission.blogspot.com for a list of Web sites that syndicate articles. Some solicit writers, while others simply present a forum for readers. Be sure to read and adhere to each site's submission guidelines. Here are a few:

- Amazines (amazines.com)
- ArticleCity (articlecity.com)
- Articles Factory (articlesfactory.com)
- ArticleGeek (articlegeek.com)
- Articlesbase (articlesbase.com)
- Article Trader (articletrader.com)
- ArticleWorld (<http://articleworld.net>)
- Ezine Articles (<http://ezinearticles.com>)
- Free Articles Directory (articlecircle.com)
- Free Articles Zone (free-articles-zone.com)
- Geckoe Articles (geckoe.com)
- IdeaMarketers (ideamarketers.com)
- Lady Pens (ladypens.com)
- The Syndicator (web-source.net/syndicator.htm)
- SubmitYOURArticle (submityourarticle.com/articles)
- Talkinmince (talkinmince.com)

Self-syndicating software. If you are reasonably computer savvy, you can use tools to syndicate yourself. Software such as Will Master's Master Syndicator V4 (<http://willmaster.com/master/syndicator>) allows you to add your own JavaScript code in your own Syndicator form to automatically update all syndication sites' pages. The Master Syndicator V4 program encodes your content for JavaScript compatibility and updates the correct master files without your having to hand code and insert characters for manual upload. If you prefer to paste in a plain text file, Master Syndicator V4 will insert the appropriate HTML paragraph tags at your command.

Whether you contract with a syndicator, send articles to as many syndication or free-article sites as you can, or set up your own syndication Web site, the potential is there to be published, publicize yourself or your organization, or simply enlighten others with the fruits of the research and writing that bring you joy. ♦

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