



PYRAMID POWER: WRITE YOUR WAY TO MORE BUSINESS AND INCOME

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If you're like most speakers, you are probably looking for new ways to increase sales, boost profits, and enhance your brand. Writing is not only a powerful way to demonstrate your expertise, promote your business, and generate significant income—it can enhance your credibility, increase your knowledge base, and position you as a leading authority in your field. While writing is a challenging endeavor, the process can be simplified with the Publishing Pyramid, which is a tool you can use to develop a wide variety of publications.

THE PUBLISHING PYRAMID

The Publishing Pyramid (see p.56) is a seven-level sequential model based on a simple principle: Content written at lower levels of the model can be used to develop content at higher levels of the model. These levels progress from easiest-to-write to hardest-to-write in ascending order. For example, website publications (e.g., tips, stories, and case studies) form the foundation of the pyramid, because they tend to be short and relatively easy to write. They are also published on a fairly infrequent basis, so there is little time pressure involved. More important, content posted to your website can then be used to develop newsletters and blogs, which in turn can be used to create booklets, articles and book chapters.

The pyramid methodology provides you with three benefits. First, it makes it easier to produce high-level content such as book chapters, manuals, and e-books.

Rather than develop a 200-page book from scratch, you can create a series of lower-level publications, such as articles or white papers, that form the chapters for your book. Second, the pyramid provides you with a variety of resources you can use to market your business. For instance, newsletters and blogs offer an excellent means to demonstrate your expertise and promote your speaking brand. Third, the pyramid provides you with potential revenue streams—especially at higher levels, such as booklets, articles, manuals, and books.

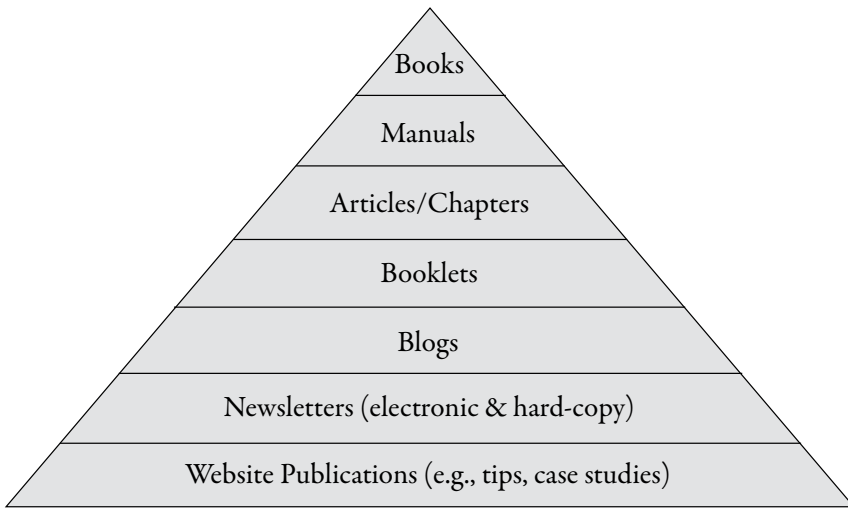


Figure 7-1

Using the Publishing Pyramid is a relatively simple process. It starts with answering two questions:

What does my Publishing Pyramid look like right now? Take a quick review of your writing and publishing history. What have you written in the past few years? Have you developed website publications, such as case studies, tip sheets, stories, or frequently asked questions? Do you publish a newsletter? Do you have a blog? Have you published any articles or book chapters? If you have, this content can be used to jump-start your progress on higher-level publications. If you haven't, no worries—just start your writing journey at the bottom of the pyramid.

Based on the current status of my Publishing Pyramid, what is the best place for me to start? If you have a newsletter, you can use it to create blog posts. If you have published a series of articles, you can use them to develop a manual,

book, or e-book. Of course, you can also use the pyramid in reverse. If you have published a book or manual, that can help you create a newsletter, write a series of booklets, or start a blog.

The key is to consider how you can use every publication you create as the foundation for additional publications. For example, if you want to write a book that describes marketing strategies for small businesses in the health care industry, you need to make sure your lower-level publications are specifically geared to this topic. It won't help to have a blog or newsletter that discusses customer service in healthcare or marketing strategies in the automotive industry.

YOUR FIRST THREE STEPS UP THE PYRAMID

1. **Using Tips to Create Tips Booklets.** Your website is a powerful marketing tool for your business, providing information about your company, your background, and your brand. More significantly, it can house helpful resources that encourage visitors to return on a regular basis and purchase your goods and services. Website publications allow you to demonstrate your expertise, and provide your visitors with information, tools and suggestions that can enhance their performance.

Tips are among the easiest and most effective website publications. They consist of a series of recommendations designed to improve performance in a specific area. For example, a diversity expert can create a series of tips that help organizations reduce bias and create more inclusive environments. A leadership expert can create a tips series that helps managers and supervisors resolve conflict more effectively. A wellness authority might develop a sequence of tips that help readers lose weight and live healthier lifestyles.

Start with an action statement and use three or four sentences to describe that statement. For example, our wellness speaker might use the following tip to improve the eating habits of her clients:

HEALTHY TIP: Eat Breakfast Every Day

Eat a healthy breakfast within two hours of waking each morning. This will help boost your metabolism while reducing hunger. Studies have consistently shown that eating breakfast on a daily basis is the one behavior that most healthy-weight people have in common.

One of the most powerful aspects of tips is their ability to form the foundation for higher-level publications. Tips booklets, which occupy the fourth level of the pyramid, offer detailed tools, techniques, and ideas readers can use to improve their performance. They are concise, relatively small (3.5" x 8.5" to fit in a standard envelope), and typically describe specific steps one can take to accomplish a particular task. Booklets allow you to market your business, promote your brand, and generate income through individual and bulk sales—as well as licensing for distribution through client organizations. (See *How to Promote Your Business with Booklets* by Paulette Ensign for some terrific, practical ideas on the subject.)

You can easily use your website tips to develop tips booklets. Simply create a new tip in a particular series on a regular basis; once you've developed about 50 tips, you have the foundation for a booklet. For example, our wellness speaker might create a booklet titled "50 Ways to Lose Weight and Keep It Off Forever." Likewise, a customer service speaker might create a booklet called "75 Tips for Improving Service in Diverse Settings."

Tips on Tips

Develop tips for your website around a common theme (e.g., improving service in diverse settings, losing weight and keeping it off permanently, dealing with difficult employees).

- Update your website with a new tip on a consistent basis (e.g., weekly, semimonthly or monthly). The more often you add a new tip, the less time it will take you to create the content for a booklet. In addition, frequent updates can increase traffic to your website.
- Once you've accumulated enough website tips, put them together in a booklet format. Use a very specific title with a number, such as "101 Ways to Deal with Difficult Employees."
- Make sure you include information on your background, speaking business, products, and services. Place your product information on the back of the title page, and your biographical data on the last page of the booklet.

2. Turning Your Newsletters into Paid Articles

Articles and book chapters occupy the fifth level of the Publishing Pyramid. Creating articles can be an excellent way to demonstrate your expertise and to distribute valuable information to your readers. It can also be a great way to generate income. Many magazines and journals pay for high-quality, timely articles that offer unique perspectives on a specific issue or topic. The key is to develop valuable content that addresses the needs of your particular audience.

One way to do this is to use your newsletter as the foundation for your articles. Because most articles are between 500 and 1,500 words, you don't need a great deal of newsletter content to create a powerful article. Two or three issues will generally suffice. In addition, your newsletters do not have to be written in a serial format to serve as an effective foundation. For example, a business speaker might have an e-newsletter that is geared toward engineering consultants. He could develop a variety of articles on topics such as marketing trends for consultants, selling engineering services in a weak economy, and creating multiple revenue streams for an engineering business.

The first step in this process is to identify periodicals for your articles. *Writer's Market*, edited by Robert Lee Brewer and published annually by Writer's Digest Books, is a useful tool. It provides extensive information on consumer magazines and trade journals that accept queries from authors, including contact people, pay rates, and article requirements. You'll also find helpful information on topics such as feature article writing, developing a successful query letter, and using social media.

Once you have identified several magazines and journals that might be good fits, take the following steps to increase the likelihood of getting your articles approved for submission:

- Familiarize yourself with a few issues of each publication to get a sense of writing style and content.
- Request a copy of the submission guidelines (or find them on the publication's website) and make sure you follow them.
- Write an article that provides tangible benefits for the reader. Your goal is to provide valuable content for your target audience. This will enhance your credibility and increase reader interest in your services.

- Once published, order reprints of the article and distribute them to clients and potential clients. This is a very powerful marketing practice that clearly demonstrates your knowledge base and expertise—far better than your brochures can. You should also obtain digital copies of your articles and post them on your website.
- As you send out queries to various periodicals, include digital copies of your past articles as an example of your writing ability.
- If you have a blog, put links to your articles in your posts.

3. Blogging Your Way to a Book

A published book makes a powerful statement about your credibility and expertise. It positions you as a thought leader, increases your brand recognition, and boosts your speaking fees—which is why so many speakers want to write a book. It can be a formidable task, but the Publishing Pyramid can facilitate the process.

One way to develop book content is through your blog. An effective blog offers an inexpensive means to promote your speaking business, demonstrate your expertise, and bring people with similar interests together. Blogging can also facilitate content development, because it requires frequent updates, relatively short posts, and the ease of developing content in a serial fashion. This final point is critical if you want to develop book content from your individual blog posts. To be successful, you have to create posts that connect to one another in a systematic fashion.

For instance, an expert on motivation can develop a content stream that offers specific tips on motivating employees in the workplace. If she posts a new tip on her blog each week, she will have more than 100 tips in just two years—easily enough content for the foundation of a book on employee motivation. Likewise, a diversity expert could develop a book that offers advice on improving communication in diverse settings. He could develop two posts each week that provide readers with communication tips, tools, and suggestions. A year later, he would have tremendous amount of content for the development of his book.

Take the following steps to enhance the quality of your blog and boost the effectiveness of your content development process:

- Start with an end in mind by developing a detailed outline of the book you want to write. Your outline should include a working title, description, target market, outstanding features, and benefits for readers. Most significantly, it should include a description of each chapter.
- Use your chapter descriptions to identify topics for your blog posts. This allows you to develop book content through your blog over an extended period of time.
- Update your blog at least twice a week. This will increase your followers and allow you to develop book content more quickly. Feel free to include blog posts that are not connected to your book. This will enhance the overall quality of your blog.
- Keep your blog posts to 300–400 words. Your readers want to receive useful information in a concise manner and are more likely to read brief posts, while writing a minimum of 300 words will maximize the benefits of search engine optimization. It is also easier to create a series of short posts than one long post.

FIVE MORE WAYS TO REPURPOSE YOUR CONTENT

As they say in the infomercials, “But wait! There’s more!” In addition to the aforementioned examples, here are five relatively simple ways to repurpose your content with the Publishing Pyramid:

- 1. Make comments and use them for your own website publications.** Offering comments on blog posts, e-zine articles, and other online publications can give you a head start on becoming an author. You can use these comments to develop website publications, as described earlier in this chapter.
- 2. Turn your LinkedIn question responses into blog posts.** One of the benefits of LinkedIn is that it allows you to respond to member questions, which is a great way to demonstrate your expertise and share your knowledge. You can repurpose your answers to these questions by turning them into blog posts.
- 3. Turn your blog posts into white papers.** A white paper is an expert article designed to solve a particular problem or address a specific issue. Since

many blog posts offer tips, recommendations, and advice on a specific topic, you can use a series of posts as the foundation for a white paper in your particular area of expertise.

4. **Use a series of white papers to create a manual.** A series of white papers around a particular topic can serve as the foundation for a manual, which is a document that teaches readers how to carry out a particular task or achieve a specific goal. Manuals can be an excellent product for speakers because they are shorter and less expensive to produce than books, and they sell at a higher price point.
5. **Create lower-level publications from your book.** I mentioned earlier that you can use the Publishing Pyramid in reverse. Specifically, you can use high-level publications such as books, e-books, and manuals to create newsletters, blog posts, and articles. For example, you can create a series of articles from a book. You can also create a series of booklets, which you could then use to market your book and generate a separate stream of income. You can even create blog posts that could be used to promote your book. The possibilities are virtually unlimited!

Writing can be an extremely powerful tool for demonstrating your expertise, promoting your brand, generating multiple revenue streams, and establishing your credentials as a thought leader. The process can also enhance your ability as a speaker, because successful writing requires you to organize your thoughts and articulate your points in a coherent fashion. Put simply, writing improves your ability to think.

So, what does your Publishing Pyramid look like right now? What's the best place for you to start? Choose a simple publication, pull up a chair, power up your computer, and embark on your writing journey!

Tyrone A. Holmes, EdD, CPT, is a business and writing coach who helps his speaking, coaching, and consulting clients maximize income potential and write their way to more business. He has used the Publishing Pyramid to create two successful blogs; to develop a series of newsletters; to publish articles, booklets, and book chapters; and to publish two books: *Training and Coaching the Competitive Cyclist* and *Developing Training Plans for Cyclists and Triathletes*. Visit his websites at www.DoctorHolmes.net and www.HolmesFitness.com.