

# You want your name in print with the leaders in your field?

You want to instantly establish and strengthen your reputation in the field where you want to empire build? Then get in print with your field's top leaders!

I'm presuming you can ask questions, share answers, and write usable copy—you can even hire out the writing part.

It starts by identifying one key question that your audience wants answered. Let's say you want to position yourself in the ink-on-paper printed booklet market and there is a new binding that looks like it could replace the old saddlestitch (or stapling) process. Let's call it zip binding.

Form the operating (or key) question: "When should you start zip binding your booklets?" Then expand it to "Five industry experts answer, 'When should you start zip binding your booklets?'"

Now make a list of the specific printing or publishing magazines or newsletters that ink-on-paper bookletfolk read. Put them in order by where your name with the leaders will do you the most good, since it's unlikely you will be paid for the prose!

Get the editor's name and address from the last issue, guesstimate the length of an average article on its pages (you may have to reduce it to "three industry experts" if the pieces are small), and send a well written one-page query letter that gently sells your idea, what zip binding is, why the readers would benefit from knowing about it, and (if you have credentials) why you should write the item. (If you are still building credentials, keep mum. The editor wants solid

information, not you.) Then ask, if the editor is interested, would they please suggest an ideal or maximum length and a delivery deadline, plus any other guidance they can offer.

As for the experts, if indeed you know the field and topic, you might suggest that you plan to interview X, X, X, X, and X. But if the editor has other preferences or feels uncomfortable with any of your choices, you'd be grateful knowing that before you set to the task.

Will the experts let you interview them? I've had 1,700+ articles in print, with about three people interviewed for each, and as long as it was clear what I was asking, where the copy would be used, a ballpark date, and I kept it to a few questions and not much time, I can't remember more than a dozen rejections. It should be obvious to those being interviewed why their thoughts in print would benefit them. That's why they are experts!

You are a conduit, a scribe making solid, needed information available. Usually only your by-line will appear. But at the same time you are meeting (if only by phone or e-mail) those in the know. So you become a person in the know too, and a valuable contact for the editor for future articles. And all that top-level contact (if only the association as the writer) can be invaluable as your empire starts growing.

Some day (soon) another soul will be asking to include you in an interview of top experts!

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. This is the kind of stuff I talk about here at the blog and at my free, monthly [newsletter](#). Join in—and please tell friends!