

# Leading your idea in print down its most profitable path...

So you've got an **article** or **book idea** that you want to turn into both **big money** and widely-seen **expertise presence**. That's the way to think! I'd also add that the copy needn't be completely rewritten again and again, so also think **reprint, rewrite, reprint of rewrites, and more...**

Let's say you want to write about the 2016 Chicago Cubs and their playing in the coming National League baseball playoffs—and perhaps for the pennant, of all things! But, if you can't tell, or wouldn't want to tell, a baseball from a ball of wax, your idea and copy to sell again and again could be about the Trump-Clinton presidential election, kumquat delicacies from the kitchen, or driverless autos driving nonetheless on the streets!

Alas, I've been a baseball fan from/in Chicago almost since the Great Fire and the hapless Cubs haven't won a pennant for 107 years. You know us by the fetching blue, red, and white "C" hats that we have had to hide in our cupboard for generations. Alas, this is our year, so we dusted them off and wear them on our heads for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and almost all the hours between—until October when we will know if the hex of the billy goat is true. **So I'm picking the Cubs for this empire-building article writ long...** (But if you're reading this in the Philippines, on the Pyrenes, or in Peru, kumquat delicacies might be easier to understand...)

Let's start with an **article** about the "plight of the Cubs" (or any fetching topic) for an American magazine. You do the usual

things: some basic research to find the most interesting angles or slants, pick the best approach, and subject that idea to a two-pronged **feasibility study**—is it feasible to write and is it feasible to sell? (Go to the search box in the upper top right corner and type in **feasibility study** to see how the magazine approach works. The blog copy comes from either [How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing](#) or [The Travel Writer's Guide](#). To read those books, used and sold for a pittance, check the [Amazon catalog](#).) The feasibility study tells how to test magazines vs newspapers, who are the most likely readers, the querying process, and (for magazines), should you get a “go-ahead,” how you best present the copy for sale. (If it fits newspaper freelance buying fields too, submit the written article in final form, without a query and sent in ready-to-go fashion.) If the idea is a “go” as feasible to write and sell, send your articles to the best markets in both categories.

If the **magazine** buys your submission, you can use much of the article's contents again (at least slightly rewritten) two ways: as a **reprint** or a **rewrite**. Then if a rewrite is bought, you can send that off to a still-virgin magazine as a reprint. With cunning, you can have several of each of these three partially-completed masterpieces filled in (completed) and in print, all paying you! (Again, go to the Search box above and write in reprints or rewrites to see step-by-step blogs with more details.)

With **newspapers**, there are two paths: (1) you can literally sell the first copy to as many newspapers as will buy it as long as they aren't “national” newspapers (like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*—sell them one at a time, and, after it is sold, thoroughly rewrite the piece before selling it to another “national”) and (2) don't simultaneously sell it two or more regional newspapers within 100 miles of each other (“distribution ranges”). Otherwise, you can sell the very same newspaper article(s) to any other

newspaper (except the “nationals”) as long as they don’t overlap. Just tell the newspaper editor yours is a simultaneous submission and you are selling it outside of their 100-mile circulation orb.

What more can you do with reams of unused copy parts shouting to be read? Throw all the used copy into a cauldron, add the unused gems, mix them up again, and “**topic spoke**” them to find as many of the other potential eager buyers as will shriek and pay, delightfully, to use your genius and make you rich. Check the blog search for items about “topic spoking” in the 400+ blogs waiting to be used!

How many **books** can you pluck from that cauldron (adding in other sources still untouched)? You could write/publish a book for all kinds of Cubs’ *aficionados*: one for kids/young adults, one for the regular folk, another for seniors (some praying for the Cubs to win, others incredulous that they are anywhere near the top), another for the Cubs fans focusing on this year and the past two, another putting all 107 years in perspective, and so on.

And because each book requires a mound of research, interviews, anecdotes, photos, and more, you can turn this into new wealth of found and reworked copy and pluck out more **articles**, and thus more **rewrites**, **reprints**, and **reprints of rewrites**. You can also sell related **photos** where you sell copy (check photos in Search), often the same photo repeatedly since they are almost always sold on one-time rights.

Lost in this pile of print are the **directly related spin-offs**, like **audiobooks** of any or all of those books just mentioned; **focus books** about specific elements of baseball for the truly absorbed, of the past year or two or of all time, like the pitching, the records set and broken, ERAs, a projection of future years and records of new(er) players emerging in the 2016 excitement; even **videos** and **movies**, all being in print before being converted to other media. Then using the most

visible of the platform builders, authors speaking about their (new) specialty from the platform: see **rallies, speeches, how-to workshops, seminars, talks**, and so on...

Every time your champion copy has your by-line attached to your super writing in a newspaper, magazine, or book, you are solidifying yourself as an **expert** in that field, building a following, and making yourself more wanted by **information and product producers**. They want to get more good items from you, a recognized “valuable and prolific source” of, in this case, baseball, Cubs, and sports ideas, information, and articulation.

The point here is that **almost any word or idea has lots of legs (and ears) and can be multiplied very profitably many times by many means**. The trick is to create interesting copy about ideas that others want to know more about that is spelled properly and has the facts, quotes, and anecdotes artfully blended into more good ideas. Most exceptional writers don't stray too far from what others want to know, and they churn a fair amount of interesting text into many articles, then books, rather than just making one sale or two before wandering off to find unrelated subjects for articles that are also sold a few times. **It's wiser and fills your coffers faster by turning your related ideas and copy over and over.**

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[ More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm). ]

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# A very new format for a seminar workbook...

In a now very long past—decades—I must have literally copied and carted 40,000 seminar workbooks (sometimes a half mile, too often up stairs). Most of those workbooks were 12-20 pages long! Too late to complain: that was the way it was done. But yesterday technology finally removed my shackles—and perhaps my blinders!

Some fact-setting now, then a detailed explanation copy of the new format that you may be interested in modifying and using. Explaining the 40,000: I have given more than 2,000 four-hour seminars, most as college/university extended ed offerings, almost all in California. They rarely had less than 20 participants, which meant 24 or so workbooks in case last minute registrants were waiting at the door. Ugh.

But yesterday a different request opened my eyes. I spoke to the **NSNC** (National Society of Newspaper Columnists) in L.A. about "[Publishing for Profit](#)" and, even though I myself had been a columnist several times, I had no way of knowing what other writing experiences the veteran audience had nor which of the dozen or so suggestions I would offer and expand upon they might wish to pursue.

Nor did I want to schlep any workbooks nor published books to sell BOR. (The airlines made that impossible anyway by charging for baggage—and rubbing in more salt by starving me en route!) But I did slip a copy of eight different books into my suitcase to display on a side table so they could see that they actually existed!

I know, I could have run copies off of the workbooks once I reached L.A. But I'm doubly convinced now, the day after, that the new format is many times better and smarter for the

future, it gives the audience more options, and it reduces or eliminates the burdensome task of hauling products for sale. That's why I'm sharing it now, while the fire burns, in case it would help you too. (If you have already discovered this "new" workbook process, congratulations! I'm sure you double agree! Why didn't you tell me?)

**The rationale:** I knew that all of my attendees were writers, they used computers daily, understood how to find websites, blogs, and could figure out the free-book code. Therefore all I had to do was explain the media or means needed, where the items could be found, the links or addresses for each, and what the resource references referred to. I gave them the instructions needed in the first two paragraphs, where the program was going in the next two, and the broadest of explanations of what the four sections to be covered in the text that followed.

That took a minute or two to re-explain at the beginning of the presentation, but then I could focus on the most important ways columnists might earn more and live happier. When appropriate, I could direct them to one or several of the references and, in some cases, tell them the best subtitles to the critical step-by-step details. There must be 600+ printed pages in the three free books and 200+ in the other items. Thus, by knowing where the information is at hand, almost immediately, they can pick, select, or reject it as they wish—or go back later, if they change their minds.

**The workbook:** The two-sided page *is* the workbook. In this case the program was designed to show U.S. columnists how else they can share, market, and expand their written gems (now or later) into other lucrative venues or ventures. That is what I talked about. If they need the application guidance, the resources would then send them to the "how-to" support material.

Enough explanation. What follows is the "workbook" they

received.

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## **Workbook as delivered to the NSNC presentation:**

### **Welcome!**

I'm Gordon Burgett. It's 2016, we're all experienced writers, and the airlines won't let me schlep boxes of handouts as baggage anymore, so I'm going to use the Internet to let you pick what specific information you think will be useful to you later. At that point, you can download what you want or need, if anything. The most important material is free, there's no shipping or tax, and it'll be in your hands almost immediately!

Thus you have no workbook or piles of paper to lumber through. Just sit back for the first hour and let me explain a sort of strategy and ways that should help you considerably increase your writing income, then I'll answer any questions you have during the remaining 15 minutes. If you have more questions later, please email me at [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com).

My task is to help you fill your coin bags and increase your second-life options by doing more of what you already do very well—and make even more money (heavens!) by doing it.

I think the more-mullah quest starts with you strategizing at whatever point you are along your moneymaking-by-writing trail. I'll address that.

The rest of our oral trek today roughly follows the other four sections on these pages. I've posted lots of backup resources here that you can download if/when you want or need them. The most important material is free—three full core books, three helper reports, four website articles, and 400+ blogs to pluck from. To download most of that information, use our order page

at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm)

Here's how to download or see the resources: (1) find and separately order each **free book** on the order form—but *before* you submit each order write the coupon number [        ] in the coupon code box on that order form. Then submit the form, the price will drop to zero, and follow the download instructions that follow! (The freebies expire on 8/20/16.) Other items, unless noted, are from the order form and can be ordered separately or together at any time. They are also available from Amazon but if you want the three books free you must follow the instruction in (1). How to get the three **free reports** is explained below. See [blog.gordonburgett.com](http://blog.gordonburgett.com) for the blogs listed. Once there, find the SEARCH box, upper right corner under the Twitter logo. In that box enter either the topic you want to see more about (like query letters or niche) or the word I will give you. The **website articles** are from the direct website link location.

(I) **WRITING—[Travel Writer's Guide](#)** (free ebook)

Explains how to sell 75%+ of your freelance writing (mostly newspaper and magazine articles), how to triple your income by topic-spoking, how to earn more with sidebars, and how to organize profit-packed copy-, quote-, and anecdote-gathering trips...

Related resources:

“4 Proven Ways to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing” Go to **blog**, enter 4 proven ways

“How to Sell 75% of Your Travel Writing” (2 cassette program), \$20 + shipping

“25 Professional Query and Cover Letters” (ebook), \$4.99



“Reprints, Rewrites, Reprints of Rewrites, and Resales” (ebook), \$4.99

“The magic of topic spoking.” Go to **blog**, enter topic spoking

(II) **PUBLISHING–Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time** (free ebook)

A huge percentage of the risk-free, market-guaranteed book money is found here. We made \$2 million from dentists and are now following the same path from K-12 school administrators, supers, principals, and school boards. That process and business plan is explained in this book. If you write and publish, almost all the niche profits are yours. If you find experts in the field, you direct/edit, they write, and you publish, most of the profits are still yours but the fame is theirs.

Related resources:

“12-Step Pre-Test for Niche Publications” (ebook), \$4.99

“How to Test Your Niche Book before Writing or Publishing” (ebook), \$9.99

“How to Get Niche Articles in Print 75% of the Time” (ebook), \$2.99

(III) **PUBLISHING–How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days** (free ebook). If you’re not niching, use the “open press” revolution plus Create Space/Kindle [Amazon] and Lightning Source as your first or major paths to building your own empire. Publish here, then (perhaps) try the major publishers.

Related resources:

“Open Book Publishing: Almost a Miracle! (ebook), \$3.10

“When Would I Always (or Never) Self-Publish My Book?” Go to **blog**, enter self-publish

“12 More Ways to Turn Your Book into Many More...” Go to **blog**, enter more ways

“Focus books and Selling a Book by its Parts” Go to the **blog**, enter focus

“Sample Focus Book: Rights and Responsibilities of School Principals” (ebook), \$3.99

“Sample Focus Book: How to Create the Best Staff Possible” (ebook), \$3.99

(IV) BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER—Empire Building (O.P., no replacement book yet.) Ultimately, for big money, expand the perception of your expertise through related information dissemination means, like speaking, seminarizing, giving workshops or retreats, audiobooks, classes, consulting, social media venues, radio-TV, guest performances, and so on. Or create/sell little empires along the way. Or align your writing, researching, interviewing, and publishing skills with others’ empires. Or do it all.

Related resources:

“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar” (4-cassette seminar), \$40+shipping

“Six Special Tools That Get Speakers Booked First” (ebook), \$9.99

**MORE FREE REPORTS:**  
*Lifelong Wealth by Being  
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Just subscribe to my newsletter (seldom sent) at <http://www.gordonburgett.com/free-reports> and all three reports are immediately downloaded. Nobody else ever sees your address. Then if you want to escape my elist, just email me to be removed. I'm not offended—I forget names instantaneously.

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That's it. If it helps, go to it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## [Emceeing: a Barbershop St. Patrick's Day script](#)

Welcome!

Here is another Barbershop presentation script—for those eager to read Barbershop presentation scripts. Enjoy!

I'm Gordon Burgett, blogmaster of my own blog, which you are now reading. 90% of the posts here refer to writing, editing, publishing, speaking, and related commentary about selling one's ideas and information.

The other 10% discuss emceeing, which is an extension of my speaking activities, which are in turn linked to the 2000+ paid presentations I've offered in the past 30 years. Still, the scripts shared here are to a special group I have been part of for about 16 years: barbershopping, first in Santa Maria, CA; more recently in Marin County (north of San Francisco), CA. Through these blogs I have exchanged scripts written and techniques learned with other script writers for

their barbershop groups. (You may see the other emceeing script info by writing in "emceeing" in the search box upper right on this page.)

So this is a short script when the Marin County Golden Gate group sang at a St. Patrick's day gathering which I found in a box of past (but shamefully unblogged) emceeing material. I think it took place in about 2013. Sadly, I don't recall anything more. I suspect it was in the middle of a speaking tour across CA when I came home that day to emcee and sing, and in the rush to get back out to complete the tour I forgot to leave any more details. That's it. You can see that I'm a real person at [www.gordonburgett.com](http://www.gordonburgett.com)!

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Here, from the depths, is the script of this mysterious presentation:

Good evening, we are the Marin Golden Gate Barbershop Chorus, directed by Phil DeBar. I'm Gordon Burgett, and this dapper fellow is our Associate Director, Paul Wren, who Phil is about to ask to lead the group in "Danny Boy."

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[I've lost the actual text here but I must have introduced Phil DeBar, our Director, and he gave a short, audience-involved demonstration of what barbershopping is about. He had the audience sing one of the four voices in a short song, to try their talents at harmonizing!

Then I asked Phil to lead the Chorus in "Amazing Grace."]

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I continued:

"We've already heard some of our favorite Irish music and we're enjoying St. Patrick's Day festivities and food, so maybe a few Irish jokes would be in order.

Father Murphy, infused by religious fervor, swept into a bar in Donegal.

He grabbed the first man he saw and said, "Do you want to go to Heaven?"

"I do, father!" the man replied, so the priest told him to stand by the door.

Father Murphy turned to a lively lass and he asked her the same question.

"Oh yes, father, I do." So he pointed at the door and suggested she join the other man already there.

Then Father Murphy saw Billy O'Toole shrinking in a corner, trying to be invisible.

"O'Toule," he said. "What about you? Do you want to go to heaven?"

"Oh no, thank you, Father. No I don't!" came a fast reply.

The priest looked bewildered and said "Are you telling me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?"

O'Toole replied, "Oh yes, Father, I do—but when I die. I thought you were rounding up a group to go right now!"

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Are you ready for some more music? But let me ask you first,

Does anybody have a birthday today? If so, would you raise your hand?

(If a hand went up, I'd ask them to stand up and tell us something about themselves because we had a gift for them.)

(If nobody responded, I'd ask, "If any of you had a birthday in the past year, would you raise your hand?" The moment the

hands went up, the chorus broke into "Happy Birthday!"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! I wished them all when the music ended, then I suggested they give themselves a hearty round of applause for having lived so long!

—

When the chorus sat I asked, "How about some grand quartet singing?"

Not only can our first group make great sounds, they are international imports brought here today for your merriment. They come from four places, all hot beds of melody: fellows, raise your hands when I tell where you are from: our bass, \_\_\_\_ from Uruguay; \_\_\_\_ , the lead from England; \_\_\_\_, the baritone, from Texas, and \_\_\_\_\_, our tenor, from the Bronx. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Opus IV!

—

Our second quartet has lesser pedigrees—they come from Fairfax, San Rafael, Mill Valley, and Point Reyes. Let's welcome \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_ (they stepped forward when I gave their names). They are called the MarinTones...

—

You surely heard about Poor Paddy and his life of sorrow and pain. But things finally changed for Paddy—and it happened on St. Patrick's Day too. He had found the love of his life, and had promised to mend his ways, particularly about not forgetting about their dates and that he would never again be as much as one minute late.

So you can imagine his distress when he arrived at the restaurant to dine with his sweetheart and he couldn't find a parking spot!

Around the block he drove, then two blocks. He was in a panic

when he pulled over and prayed: LORD, take pity on me! If you'll find me a parking place I'll go to MASS every Sunday of my life, I'll quit drinking Irish whiskey, I'll...

Just then the car parked in front of him pulled out.

He looked to heaven and shouted as loud as he could, "NEVER MIND! I've found one!"

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How about two more songs from the Marin Golden Gate Barbershop Chorus, directed by Phil DeBar?

Get ready to "Turn Your Radio On...", then a favorite oldie, "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad."

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It's surely unfair and unkind to mix an Irish holiday, an Irishman, and some of the best brewed Gallic grog in the same joke, but I've been given special permission from old Saint Patrick himself—because when I told it to him even he too couldn't stop laughing...

It's about Muldoon who had been out drinking into the wee hours, and one suspects it was not his first time either.

So he kicked off his shoes and crept into his house so he didn't awaken his true love, Kathleen.

He was heading up to the bedroom but only made it up two steps before he fell backward on his rump.

Unfortunately, he had a bottle of whiskey in each back pocket!

But he was so afraid he might have made too much noise for Kathleen, he fumbled back on his feet, found a light, turned around, and dropped his pants. There in the hallway mirror he saw his own rear end cut and bleeding. So he found a box of Band-Aids, and put one on each place where he saw blood.

Then he crawled up the stairs, fell into bed, and was barely asleep when he saw that the sun was up—and he felt his lovely Kathleen pulling on his big toe.

“Muldoon,” she said, “you were out drunk again last night!”

“Oh,” he groaned, “Have mercy. Why would you say such a mean thing?”

“Because when I went downstairs the front door was wide open, there was booze bottle glass all over the floor, and there was a trail of blood from the glass right into this very bed!”

“But mostly it was because of those Band-Aids stuck on the hallway mirror!”

—

I suppose there’s been a Muldoon in every house. Let’s sing two more songs to lift Muldoon’s holiday spirit. There’s no home on any holiday more forgiving than the HOME ON THE RANGE...or a promise more joyous than being “Once in Love With Amy...”

—

Finally, what day would be more appropriate for a miracle than a Saint’s Day? And who would be better equipped to shake loose that miracle than a local Irish priest driving back to Marin County from San Francisco after perhaps over-enjoying just such a celebration?

Father Timothy had just crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and was creeping down the hill when a cop pulled him over. The policeman leaned in, smelled the sweet aroma of alcohol, and saw an empty wine bottle on the car floor...

“Have you been drinking, Father?”

“Ah yes, officer, but just water.”



The trooper asked him, "Then why do I smell wine?"

The priest looked down, saw the bottle, and shouted "GOOD LORD! He's done it again!"

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Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of all of the chorus, we thank you for being such a welcoming audience. Let me once again acknowledge the MarinTones, Opus IV, and our director, Phil DeBar... [who asked Paul Wren to close the show with "America the Beautiful."]

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## Writers: how to find more people to interview...

Sometimes you're writing an article or story and try as you may you can't think of or find another person to interview, other than your kids or some shlunk on the street corner. So what do you do?

Let's start with an expectation that few new writers know about or think they might be able to tiptoe around: that **almost every paying editor expects you to interview at least several (think three or four) people for your article**—and what the interviewee is asked or says is directly related to what the article is about.

After I say that in my seminar about interviewing a rather bizarre question usually pops up: "**Must the interviewee be living?**" I imagine they are really asking if they can use quotes from someone who has passed or, perhaps, can they include interviews with aliens or ghosts or the like? In the

second case, no. But quotes from the defunct, yes. Still, the quotes must come from a source that did once live—and the words must have been “captured intact” at that time, preserved, and passed down. Also, they can’t be “helped” to directly pertain to the subject at hand.

**An example where this worked.** I sold several articles about Dom Pedro II and his visit to the U.S. to open the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. All of the quotes came from a detailed diary that the King of Brazil kept during the visit that was published a few years after his death. I sent the editor a copy of the relevant phrases from the diary that I had translated from Portuguese. No problem.

Thus historical comments from the living or dead might provide background information and, sometimes, direct quotes that apply as said.

The best way not to get caught without interviewees is to read many other articles or accounts about the topic and note all vital information you can about their speakers or authors. The challenge is finding those publications. Your librarian will show you the “trace” books, if needed. “Google” will too, as will the company or college they work for.

Another way, if the topic is being actively discussed in the media, is to find all of the related interplay in print: who is taking part, their position, the group or association they represent, anything else that gives a clue. And if you only have one side of the topic, ask the speaker defending that viewpoint the names of the three most frequent (or best) speakers on each side of the issue—plus for phone or mail contacts.

Or delve more deeply into the topic. Specifically: a cure for Parkinson’s disease, how to get ahead (and stay ahead) of road deterioration, one-world currency, age-based income equity? Focus as much on the best brains and problem-solvers in each

field. Mine their expertise. Ask who you should contact to get a solid exchange.

Said another way, **ask the best informed expert(s) on the topic** if they could (or would) identify the top minds in their field, the top three or so best informed people who would identify the most important questions that must be asked, then offer their thoughts about possible answers or solutions to each. Sometimes that works. Sometimes they laugh uncontrollably, step back, and stare at you like you've just overdosed on your own brew!

Another way is to simply ask the chosen person after you finish interviewing them, "Would you point me to another expert as well informed as you that I can interview so my editor will have two points of view for his/her pages?"

**Or just ask the shlunk on the street corner and take your chances.** I did just that in a piece about the huge Schloss in Heidelberg. Seems there was a giant crack in a wall large enough to march an army through. So I asked a fellow just standing next to me if he knew anything about that crack and why the wall didn't just collapse or slide down? He smiled, then gave me an eloquent, point-by-point response! When finished, I applauded his knowledge (and clarity of expression). He smiled even more, then told me that he was a professor of architecture at the University of Heidelberg!

If in this somewhat rambling blog there is guidance that helps you, great.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. You can't just interview yourself, sadly. Such wit and erudite articulation untouchable! But if you have solid quotable comments in an article, book, or publication about the topic, you can say something like: "...in my 2016 book about

... I mentioned that ..." A bit awkward, alas, but better than just saying, "Somebody once said ..."

I will be writing a book about interviewing soon. If that interests you, please stay tuned.

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## **Selling one article topic to 5-8 different publications!**

"Could you sell the same text, unchanged, to both magazines and newspapers?" is the most often asked question at my writing seminars!

I suppose you could, but I wouldn't because I wouldn't know how to unravel the rights issues. Anyway, it'd be far more profitable with a lot less work just planning five to eight sales from the same fact (and photo) pool.

**Here's how I might sell one topic** (in this case, the Chicago River on St. Patrick's Day) **as widely as possible for the most yield and the least amount of additional research, composition, and jpg taking?**

1. I'd first query the idea to the **highest paying magazines** (in order, one at a time). Then I'd write my lead article for the first editor giving me a "go-ahead." This article might focus on a St. Patrick's Day special, a big deal in the Windy City because at 9 a.m. that morning the Chicago River turns orange for a few minutes until (it's said) the leprechauns switch it to green so lush it puts tears in every O'Brien eye—and stupefies much of the rest of midland America as it

flows in reverse to the Illinois River and the Mississippi to and past New Orleans! Some 400,000 visitors a year line the downtown Chicago bridges, then watch the St. Patrick's Day Parade march through the city that day at noon, rain or shine.

2. After that magazine article (sold first rights) appears in print, **I could sell it exactly as is to any other magazine as a reprint.** (If you sold the photos first rights too—or for one-time use—you could also sell them to the same [or other] reprint buyers!)

3. But since I've got a box full of facts and quotes, why not query, then write another main article about a similar happening that takes place the same weekend: the Flower and Garden Show at Navy Pier (nearby, on the same verdant river as it reaches Lake Michigan)? This is **a loose example of a rewrite** since you can slip in the key points about the concurrent St. Patrick's Day festivities. All you have to do is rewrite that used text, which you'd have to do anyway because it must be in a different layout for both publications. Or you could call this rewrite "Chicago's Greatest Gift: the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Flower and Garden Show Side by Side!" (What a title!) Since this magazine piece is a first-rights sale, **why not sell this distinct offering to other magazines seeking reprints?**

4. **We've still not sold to the newspapers!** I would significantly rewrite either of the magazine articles (or mix and match) in newspaper fashion, give the result a different title, and maybe try for a national newspaper sale first. Since this is a major set-date activity (like Christmas or Easter), most major newspapers look for event-related special articles. So I would query here several months earlier so it can get scheduled, then work out the special submission process with the travel editor.

5. Or if the national newspapers aren't enchanted by the Chicago Journeyman Plumbers' river magic, I'd **send it**

**simultaneously to all of the Midwest newspapers** 100 miles away from each other to see if I can spin the special event one last time (this year), before the emerald is long gone.

6. And, of course, **I'd handle the photos myself so I could sell them as widely as possible** without messing up their rights!

By March 1, 2016 I will release **a brand new book** about this topic where each of the **resale means to magazines and newspapers** are explained in detail. Those are simultaneous submissions, reprints, rewrites, reprints of rewrites, rewrites of reprints, modified reprints, sidebars, overseas sales, and shorts. Check Amazon Books under Gordon Burgett for the still-undecided title and release date—or email [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com) for specifics and cost.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## **Origin of the phrase "out in left field"**

Chicagoans gave birth to the term “out of left field” about 100 years ago. The left field in the pre-Wrigley playing grounds butted up to a many-storied insane asylum, and when the crowds made too much noise the lunatics screamed out the windows and banged on pans. Their comments truly were “out of left field.”

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# Stretch one skinny article into five with minimal effort

How would you like to design one article to appear in five different magazines or newsletters that explains the benefits, through example, of **your firm's specialization** and why they may want to know more about your services? The best thing: it's pretty much the same article with a similar message, and the five articles will probably take far less than 40% of the time and effort!

Let's say you consult in the first-contact field, to help improve relations and create more business follow-through between receptionists and front-desk employees in small to medium-sized businesses. You can outwit your competitors by using the same basic idea five times through a popular **reprint and rewrite concept** familiar to journalists.

Perhaps your consulting would work well for offices that deal in insurance, real estate, loan processing, titles, and interior designing. What you must do is **create a master article** that will work well in publications to each of those five fields. Let's say the creation of a telephone answering approach and basic script that would make all who phone (1) feel welcome and reassured by the professional message content and tone, (2) would be promptly directed to the person best prepared to answer their question or give advice, (3) or would be sent to the department or desk that handles their needs, and (4) would experience the properly directed pass-off smoothly and courteously.

That master article (probably about 650-900 words long) would give an example of how the greeting program you would design

would function, with now-and-then examples and benefits clearly visible. But it would be niche-tailored to meet the needs in the five fields just mentioned. To do that you might **interview a first-contact person** or two in firms in each field, so the article has the right tone and vocabulary, and meets the unique needs in the different niches.

For example, you might call the office manager in, say, a loan office nearby and tell that person that you are \_\_\_ and you are writing an article about greeting solutions in the loan field and could you interview her/him for 15 minutes in person or by phone to have a better understanding of how greeting is handled in the loan office field. **It's surprising how eager others are to be interviewed.** You could do the same to the other four fields too. What you need for all or most of the niche articles is inside, hands-on, how-to information from an experienced practitioner.

Later, you might call the same person again, thank them once more, and ask if they could suggest the three niche magazines in their field they think might be interested in sharing the short article—that you will handle the placement but thought it prudent to see what is most read right now.

Since you already know how positive greeting programs can be designed, you can then take the problems mentioned in the interview and design a program that would **provide significant benefit.** (And do the same in the other fields too. The second article will be much faster; the fifth, about as fast as you can type.)

Then you use the usual submission procedures to the target magazines, in this case a **query letter** suggesting the article or a **direct submission** of the finished article with a cover letter. When accepted and submitted remember to include a "**bio slug**," a 20-35-word short that tells about you, the author, or the firm, plus the address/phones/email info so the readers can contact you for business!



**Why would you do this?** To make local contacts through the interviewees, get your firm's beneficial suggestions in front of readers nationwide in five different fields, and to have copies of in-print articles to use for your p.r. or direct promotions. **What I like best is doing five while you do one.** As long as you are thinking this way, why not think a bit deeper and get a much better return?

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. To see other blogs about **reprints, rewrites, query letters,** and **selling freelance writing,** just type those words in the **search box,** upper right, and the other blogs will appear after this article.

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## Some thoughts about interviewing...

*This is an excerpt (part of a chapter) from my coming book, **Interviewing.** I talk about tools and means used to interview:*

Interviewing is mostly you asking questions to a person or, rarely, a group, and receiving an intelligible response in return. When you record what you asked and what they replied, that is the thinnest skeleton of a completed interview.

That's a bit simplistic but most of the rest just adds bulk and hope to the process.

A huge percentage of my interviews have involved direct communication with my target person. **More than half were done eye to eye (really mouth to ear),** and most of those were done

when I was learning how, usually on the road last century gathering travel material. I asked and they responded, and I translated and wrote what they said into a notepad, in a kind of shorthand that spontaneously evolved (nouns mostly, other key words underlined.) It was give and take, staccato fashion, one question/a reply, segues... My goal was about five minutes, which was a long time for them and for me. It rarely lasted 30 minutes; an hour interview never happened.

Well, that sense of brevity may be somewhat misleading because many "interviews" became conversations, and ended when it was comfortable or necessary to do so. If the other person wanted to keep talking I was usually game to do so (unless I absolutely had to be somewhere else right then—sometimes we resumed the exchange later over lunch or coffee.) Other times they just wanted someone to talk to, or were lonely, or were proud of what they had done or seen and wanted to share more of it. That was fine. Often it gave me more, better information and a deeper interview.

Occasionally I was drawn to an interviewee. I wanted to know them better, and (hard to believe) that seemed mutual. They were interesting, often passionate about some cause, and they almost always bubbled or bristled with humor. What they said was worth sharing; it was fun; they were worth knowing. A few of those contacts became lifelong friends, particularly those still living.

But mostly interviewing is fast and focused. It's kind of a dancing duel: you extracting what you need (and hoping for more); them telling you what they want you (and your readers) to hear, hoping they didn't say too much.

In my mind, first interviews should be courteous, painless, and fairly fast, leaving open the possibility of a later follow-up. But I don't mention that before or during the first interview other than asking them how I might later contact them should I run into a fact or a phrase that needs

clarification and asking for or verifying an address where I would send them a copy of the printed article. (If you offer, do send it.)

Most of my interviews not done eye-to-eye were done by **telephone**. Those weren't as satisfactory because you couldn't tell how much of what they were saying was true, a greased lie, or something in between. Nor did you ever know if the voice you were hearing belonged to the actual person you had called. (I don't think I ever interviewed a stiff or a stand-in, but surprisingly often they grilled me to make sure I was the journalist they were supposed to be talking to and that I was writing an article for such-and-such a publication. Everyday people took me at face (or voice) value, happy to be the one being interviewed. The higher ups were more likely to have their assistant or caretaker vet or check me out first).

Another telephone problem: the tenuous connection between you and the person you are interviewing—one wire—almost invites the other person to simply hang up or disconnect when they have said what they think you should (or need to) hear. It's a true test of your interviewing (and inventive) magnetism to be able to keep the other person focused and actively responding. Some of that is created before starting the actual interview by getting the respondent's buy-in to the importance of the exchange so what they say can reach their target listeners' or readers' ears.

My restraint to interviewing by phone was personal—and, in my dotage, still is. I grew up weaving waggish humor and pun-riddled, antic wordplay into my everyday conversation. It drove my few friends crazy. But all of that tomfoolery had to be excised when phone interviewing strangers for print, particularly when they envisioned sparks or bolts of radiated global fame emanating from the article (or even book) they would be in. It was their big moment and they didn't expect mirth or frivolity—any humor at all—then, particularly over the telephone where smiles are never seen and barely heard. So

half of what I normally might have said, or how I might have said it, was verboten and probably dumbfounding. However funny, they never, ever would have laughed. They were expecting to be asked to share gems of wisdom, poignant observation, Christian guidance, and household tips. Out the telephonic window flew my witty high jinks, which left the interviewer, me (or you), nearly speechless, jocularly disarmed.

Alas, nothing is incurable when regular eating is at steak. I immediately reverted to my telephone high school date-getting scheme of imploring (or interviewing) by script. My first 100 or so interviews (it may have been 500) were very, very tightly structured, almost every word written or typed. It looked something like this, although where you see ideas below I had complete sentences, short sentences to give them time to respond:

- \* wee introduction
- \* reminder of why I was calling and where their words would be shown to the world
- \* a question
- \* a second question—these were the most important answers in case something else interrupted the call—it happens often—and there would be no chance to finish... [more on this later]
- \* [if something relevant in their reply to my questions was said or hinted at I would ask more, prodding queries about it, to provoke more facts or brilliance]
- \* a third question
- \* [if they verbally wandered off and what they said would also interest my imaginary readers I let them wander. I only reherded them back into my imaginary readers' corral of interest when they wore out or I still had a final question to ask]
- \* fourth question (or more) if needed. See above.
- \* anything else, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, that I should have asked but didn't?"

- \* “is there a phone number I could use to reach you if I find something I need to verify later?”
- \* “I’ll gladly send you a copy of the printed article as soon as it appears—remember, printing can sometimes take months”
- \* “is \_\_\_\_ the address where I should send the article, in your name?”
- \* “thank you again, Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, for the information and your time”
- \* “it sounds like a very interesting article. I appreciate your kindness and your sharing”
- \* (hang up softly, breathe deeply, wipe brow, hydrate rewardingly, and type out the whole interview then or before nightly repose)

Interviewing by **email**, or even by **social media**, is fast, sometimes too public too soon, and a whole lot less expansive. Combined with **Skype** or other computer-to-computer linking, it’s fairly easy and much faster to talk with others now—if they agree to talk with you.

For example, ...

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This is an unedited extraction of part of **an early chapter of a book called INTERVIEWING**. Check future blogs for more copy about the topic.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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# Author of Self-Publishing Manual, Dan Poynter, has died...

The author of the best-selling **Self-Publishing Manual**, Dan Poynter, has died. We were “in the trenches” writing friends and I already miss him, in part because it was Dan’s turn to buy lunch. So will thousands more whose lives he touched and changed. He had been quite ill for a while, seemed to be improving, but, instead, Dan passed away a few days back.

Poynter wrote almost 100 books but he was best known for his **Self-Publishing Manual**, now in its 14th edition. Many of us exploring the hinterlands of “doing-it-ourselves” publishing, with our starter books (rarely sought, even more rarely bought), pounding away on clunky typewriters and wading in rubber cement, wandering through the last days of the past century, when up popped his how-to gift. The **SPM** was a light from heaven. It answered questions we didn’t even know we should ask. As Dan learned more, the book kept getting better and bigger. In short order his grateful fans, hat in hand, too often bruised by the titans from Gotham and other bookstore bulk buyers, turned his manual into a huge seller..

Dan was a close friend of mine for lots of decades. We’re a few weeks apart in age (he would never admit it), I lived about 20 miles away, and we seemed to wander into the same ersatz gatherings and adventures, befriending many of the same odd people, and we quietly joined the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)—Dan helped birth it—and the National Speakers Association (NSA).

He was a tall, quiet fellow who gave freely of his knowledge. Many know that he was President of the Parachutists Assn as well. He joked that he married the thrill of descent (he was a

life-long bachelor), and was faithful to the end.

In fact, rather than using his law training Dan set up and ran a loft in Oakland. His publishing career (and life) started when he couldn't find a book about parachute knotting that his clientele needed, to get licensed. "I knew as much about publishing as some poor soul tapping rubber trees for a living," he told me. So he contacted every company however involved with knotting and made copies of the diagrams and instructions they sent back, pulled them into a \$40 three-ring instruction manual, wrote the conjunctive copy, then bought a dandy house near Goleta (Santa Barbara) from the profits. It overlooked the Pacific Ocean east of the UC Santa Barbara. From his front porch you could see the only American mainland target attacked by the Axis in World War II, an oil tank sighted by the misdirected Japanese Navy.

I first met him at a free lunch where Xerox was showing their brand new copiers to a bevy of hungry writers (becoming publishers). We passed on the street a couple of times but we didn't really meet again until he tried to kill himself (inadvertently, he claims) by falling 100+ feet straight down and almost impaling himself on a volleyball net pole on East Beach. He had written (or was writing) a book about Parasailing (or was it Paragliding? He also wrote a pile of other weird books). There was a slack in the tow rope and he found himself stalled in midair! Alas, the pause was miraculously timed—a gaggle of bone doctors taking a break from a convention happened to be playing volleyball when he dropped in on them! He was nearly killed. A few days later, in the weakest voice hearable, he called and asked if I'd take his newest book to the ABA in Los Angeles the next week. I did (when I found out what the ABA was), and that started a long string of lunches, Gold Coast meetings (a sort-of branch of NSA), and so on...

Dan had a sense of humor, much of it hoarded internally. He didn't have time (or much patience) for editing would-be books

sent for his help by adoring fans. He threatened to farm them all off to me, and rarely he couldn't help himself: I would get a DOA bundle (with a spine) in the mail with a note daring me to make sense and save the soul of the hapless scribe of the offending manuscript. The note usually mentioned that I was the only person who could get the author in print since the bundle was so much like my own books!

A final story. Dan gave weekend gatherings for book creators at his palace. The couple of times I spoke there he would hold up one of my early books and tell the attendees that it was certainly not how to design your own cover—and that he had bought a couple of copies of the book so he wouldn't run out of such a pitiful display. I told him I was hunting for some hole in one of his books, the table of contents lost in the index, upside-down chapters, or something equally egregious for revenge. But I never found anything out of place—and now he's left before me and the fun is gone.

Dan Poynter was a smart fellow and already is a much missed friend.

Gordon Burgett

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## **A visible punctuation error that gets writers unbought!**

You want to get paid for your wordsmithing by some deep-pocketed, eagle-eyed editor who refuses to rewrite your mistakes, here's something that can keep you poor and quickly rejected. Even worse, it's easy to spot before the editor reads a word.



**Learn how and when to use the “en” and “em” dashes right every time.**

Worse yet, do you know that there are em dash, 2 em dash, and 3 em dash decisions too? And do you put a space before and after it or snug it up to the type every time it is used?

The dashes all get their names from their girth and volume. The “en” dash is the size of a hyphen and is the width of the letter “n”; the “em” dash is twice as wide (but all in one dash) because it’s the size of the fatter letter “m.”

**“Look at me, I’m a simple en dash!”**

The easy dash is the skinny brother, en.

You use the en dash all the time. It even has its own key on the keyboard, above and to the right of the letter “p.” And there are never blank spaces before or after it. It usually means “to” when you connect numbers in ranges, like dates (2001-2013), or months (June-July), or miracles, like the Cubs won the pennant game 9-1.

But you don’t use the single dash when the number or word is preceded by from or between (from...to, or between...and). Two examples: “The zoo is closed from November to February” or “It’s most comfortable when the temperature is between 65 and 77°F.”

The most confusing is when the en dash is used when joining compound modifiers where at least one of the words is an open compound (meaning not hyphenated) or is already hyphenated. Like, the Chicago-Rome connection, bridesmaid-approved dresses, or pre-election polling restrictions.

**“No, look at ME, I’m a bewildering em dash!”**

The em dash should look like —, but it still appears (in earlier typed text) as two hyphens without a space between (because that was your only choice on old-fashioned

typewriters.) The em dash is so common that it is what most mean when they say “a dash.” It’s used primarily in informal writing in place of a comma, colon, semicolon, or parentheses to provide emphasis.

You most often see it used to set off parenthetical expressions like “When I hit the high C—or tried to hit, or at least reach, the high C—the students broke out laughing!” I could have substituted with parentheses, but not a comma because commas cannot be used to set off parenthetical expressions when there is internal punctuation (commas inside the expressions.)

Two uses where the em dash, usually used in pairs, might appear alone:

“Betty, How could—Why would you do such a thing?”

“Can I finish my—,” the husband pleaded.

It can also be inserted, alone, in place of an unknown value in a table.

Where do you find em dashes on a keyboard? Go to “Insert/symbol/special characters” and both the em and en dashes will appear. But most software programs let you type two consecutive hyphens (no space between) and as you type the next item the double hyphen will also convert into an em dash.)

**Don’t forget us: we’re double em and triple em!**

**I’m double** and you see me used to indicate missing letters in a word, either because material is missing or illegible, or to conceal a name. Like Sister M ——. Or “Two of the players, —— and ——, got thrown out for fighting.” (Notice that in blogs and computer text the spaces between the en dashes still appear? Imagine here they are joined, two in one.)

**I’m triple em** (didn’t you notice?) and I am much more formal.

I am used in bibliographies when the author's name is repeated, like

———. Adventures in Dashes. New York: Big House Publisher, 2015.

Finally, do you insert a space before and after an em dash? It depends. They seem to do so almost all the time in England, and some U.S. newspapers (and a few magazines) do too. I don't nor do I see it much where I publish (articles and books) and I think the trend is to join the em dash on both sides, like: "this is an example–albeit a bad one–of what..." I'd just be consistent throughout the piece and the editor will recognize and usually correct your weird style. But inconsistency, at least here, may drive the editor daft–or dafter. That will leave you–broke(r).

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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