

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. CONTENT QUALIFICATIONS

As part of our commitment to making article writing an effective platform, we've outlined guidelines to better serve our authors, users, and publisher. This is important for a few reasons:

- Your credibility as an expert author in your niche is important, as is our credibility in being your platform. The higher the quality, the more positive the user experience.
- Readers come back when you've earned their trust. This is done by providing value every time.
- Writing unique quality content time after time is how you lead the pack. Don't skim to break even. **LEAD.**
- It decreases the likelihood that your article will be rejected.
- Original and informative articles are the foundation of a positive reader experience.

#### 1. Original and Informative Content

Original and informative are two characteristics that define quality. *Original content* is:

- a) All content that is published on NLCR must be originally published in the NLCR. It may be republished and/or reprinted with attribution.

#### 2. Informative content is:

- a) Defined as written material that offers tips, strategies, techniques, case studies, analysis, opinions, or commentary on topics within your area of expertise. This content must provide real value to the reader beyond common sense tips and general information.
- b) Not a rehashed version of tips and information provided in prior articles. Each article must provide new content not discussed in your previous articles.

A positive user experience can only be obtained when your primary focus is to deliver quality, original content in all your articles.

## B. ARTICLE CONTENT

### 1. Must have proper English, which includes proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

All submissions must be in English. While we know there are variations in what is considered "proper English," usage within each article must be consistent to reduce reader confusion. All articles must be worded naturally and in a manner that allows for easy understanding. This improves both the user experience and your credibility as an author, and it also encourages readers to seek out your other articles.

If English is not your primary language, we strongly suggest you have articles proofread prior to submission by someone who has English as their native tongue.

In order for an article to be accepted for publication, the grammar of the article must adhere to the following guidelines:



a) **The NLCR standard adheres to the Chicago Manual of Style. In addition:**

- (1) **Punctuation**—Place one space after all periods, commas, colons or semicolons. Periods should always be inside quotation marks. Ellipses (...) must be three dots. There is never a space before a period or before a comma.
- (2) **Spelling**—Both American and British variations of certain words are accepted. However, spelling must remain consistent within each article. Using alternative/incorrect spellings for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) purposes is NOT allowed, as it jeopardizes your claim as an expert. Use only commonly accepted spelling variations.
- (3) **Grammar**—Use proper sentence structure and ensure subject-verb agreement in tenses. Try reading your article out loud; it's a good way to find awkward sentences that need revision. Use any standardized spelling/grammar software to locate errors prior to submitting your article.
- (4) **Formatting**—Visually attractive and easy to read articles are the best way to deliver information to readers. The most commonly accepted article format includes two or more short paragraphs containing five to seven sentences. Place one vertical space between each paragraph. Bulleted or numbered lists must be properly formatted to look neat and orderly. All extra vertical spaces must be eliminated.
- (5) **Word Use**—In English, there are many words whose meanings change depending on usage. Spelling and grammar software may not recognize misuse of these words, so be sure to have a native English speaker proofread your articles prior to submission. Be especially careful when using the following commonly misused words: "loose" and "lose," "their" and "there," "your" and "you're," "effect" and "affect," "its" and "it's," "too", "two", and "to."
- (6) **Brand and Company Names**—All brand names or the unique capitalization of words must be properly used and remain consistent throughout all parts of the article, including the title, article body, and Resource Box (e.g., eBay, iPod, PayPal, AdSense). If you are unsure of the proper capitalization for the brand you're using, find their official page online to verify the brand.
- (7) **Abrupt or Unnecessary Breaks**—Ensure that no part of your article is abruptly or unnecessarily cut off. Unfinished sentences or incomplete thoughts anywhere in the article cause confusion for readers and leave them wondering what they're missing. This problem most often occurs when copying and pasting the article content from another application, such as Microsoft Word. To prevent this error, re-read the entire article before submitting. Articles with incomplete paragraphs or sentences will not be accepted.
- (8) **Page Format**—The article **must be submitted in WORD**, Times New Roman 12 Font, single space, one inch margins, with no headers, footers, or unique formatting. *Articles submitted in other formats or on letterhead will be returned.*

2. **Must not be a Private Label Rights (PLR) article or contain unattributed content to which the author does not have exclusive rights.**

NLCR is committed to providing unique article content to our users. UNIQUE means each article **must be** attributed to only ONE author or co-author and NOT belong to multiple parties or the public domain.

Private Label Rights article packs are content available for anyone to purchase and place their name on. This goes against our philosophy of exclusive rights. Do not waste your time or ours by buying article packs that have non-exclusive licenses as we reject those articles and they are poor quality. Additionally, do not submit re-written (even "by hand"



rewrites) or spun versions of this content. It is neither unique material nor your own original content.

Why do we do this? 1) Submitting non-exclusive content makes you look like a fraud because you're putting your name on someone else's work that may already have hundreds or thousands of other authors who also put their name on the exact same content, and 2) We do not want more than one copy of any article in our directory.

In addition, we do NOT allow PLR article content to be promoted in article submissions OR on associated links.

**Exclusive Rights:** You MUST have exclusive rights to ALL content you submit. Taking credit for another author's work is a serious offense and is responded to accordingly. We verify exclusive rights for articles based on the author name associated with the article. Any replicated content that is found elsewhere listed under any other name will be rejected. All efforts are made to find a connection between the author and the content, but ultimately it is the author's responsibility to provide proof of ownership.

To help in preventing your original article from being rejected for this reason, review the following common content ownership problems (and tips to avoid them) below:

**a) Original Source Validity**

You must be the original source of the article content. Loosely paraphrased or re-written content is also considered stealing someone else's work. Be careful of relying on outside information for content, even when properly cited. Prove your status as an expert in your niche to your readers by never using more than 3-5 lines of sourced material in your article.

**3. Must not be written as a press release, news article, or be time sensitive.**

**a) Press Release**

A press release promotes a specific event, product, or person and typically contains time-sensitive information. We do not publish press releases. Articles should be educational and informative and should not promote one event, product, or person.

**b) Time Sensitive**

Ideal articles are "evergreen." They provide valuable information to readers for years to come.

Tying a current event into your article can be an effective way to draw in readers and show them how your topic applies to the situation. If you choose to use this article-writing technique, show the reader how the current event you're writing about applies to your niche. Provide reasons why it's important and examples of how it applies to your niche.



**4. Must not contain self-serving or promotional content in the article title, body, or summary.**

Promotional articles are one of the most common problems authors struggle to understand and avoid. To ensure your article is not promotional, keep the article body primarily informative in nature. The article body is your GIVE to the reader. It should include:

- a) Non-promotional tips
- b) Case studies
- c) Strategies
- d) Commentary
- e) Opinions
- f) Techniques
- g) Analysis

Do not include information on your company or services, yourself, or your colleagues. Focus instead on delivering quality informative content that will show your expertise to the reader, rather than using promotional language to tell them.

Include all promotional content within your bio at the end of the article. The bio—your TAKE—is the appropriate space to include promotional information about you, your company, and your services.

Here are some common reasons articles are flagged as promotional and some tips to help you keep the author (TAKE) in the bio where it belongs:

**a) Author Name in Article Body or Title**

Your author name belongs in the article title and bio only. Self-referential material should not be present anywhere else in the article body or title, e.g., stating in the article body that "the author of this article, Joan Doe, has published other articles on this topic" is considered promotional.

**b) Company Name in Article Body or Title**

Readers are looking for information about the topic in your article title, not for content about your company or services. Keep all references to your company inside the bio. It is also not permissible to talk about "our services" or "we provide." The use of "we" or "our" is considered self-referential and is too promotional for the article title or body.

**c) Using a "Sales Pitch" Tone**

If your article sounds like an infomercial, it probably is. Avoid using testimonials and listing exact sale prices as they usually make articles promotional rather than informative. Be sure to remove any 'pitch' or 'hard sell' in your tone prior to submission.

**d) A "Review" of a Product is Entirely Positive and One-Sided**

For product, service, or book reviews, a quality review will talk about both the pros and cons of a product, service or book. It will give a non-biased opinion and informational content about the product in question. A review that only raves about a product and then links to a place to purchase it is considered too promotional for our



platform. However, information as to where to obtain the product. Service or book as well as price should be included at the end or in a footnote.

Product reviews are intended to provide the reader with a neutral review of a product that is relevant to your niche. There is trust in relevancy.

Be careful to avoid reviewing products which appear spammy, you know nothing about, or do not relate to your area of expertise. Major credibility points are lost when you review products simply for SEO purposes. Articles that fall into these categories or facilitate risky or unethical online practices will not be accepted.

**5. Must not contain negative content towards any product, company, individual, or group.**

We reserve the right to restrict publication of any article we feel does not fit our stated guidelines or intentions.

Do not submit articles that contain defamatory, insulting, obscene, or degrading language in reference to any particular product, company, individual or group. This includes articles containing religious and racial intolerance, hate or violence-oriented discussion, or content advocating against any individual, product, company, or group as they will be rejected.

Additionally, we will not accept content discussing court cases or investigations that could be considered defamatory by one or multiple parties involved, even if the case is decided. Articles should focus on solving general issues or problems, rather than citing specific people or groups in correlation with those issues.

**6. Must not contain illegal or overly controversial content.**

We reserve the right to determine what content is suitable for publication. We will not accept content determined to be overly controversial, having a questionable legal status, or anything not consistent with the nature of the NLCR or NACVA.

**7. Must not contain rehashed content, or material overly similar to your prior submissions.**

Derivative content is **NOT allowed**.

Here are some tips to avoid having an article flagged as derivative:

- a) Derivative content is not 100% unique; therefore, it delivers no new value to readers because it is only providing rehashed information found in already written articles. Whether the original article belongs to the author or not, if the reader can find the exact same information elsewhere, the content is derivative. Focus on providing readers your *unique* expertise. How do you see things differently within your niche? Give readers a new perspective in *each* article.
- b) If you look back over old articles for inspiration, **DO NOT** simply re-word or rearrange the content and submit it as a "new" article. Instead, respond to the information in the old article. Ask yourself: Does all of this information still apply? How have things changed? Give the reader something new.
- c) It is your responsibility to track information provided in articles to ensure the tips and information are not repeated across multiple submissions.



Each article should discuss and explain a NEW idea, concept, or present a new refreshing angle, not rehash the same information already presented in prior articles. If you are searching for new information to offer readers, consider researching an area of your niche you are less familiar with and providing new insight, or dig deeper into areas of your niche you feel are commonly neglected by other experts.

## II. FORMAT

### A. ARTICLE TITLES

The title is responsible for the first impression readers have of the article. It gives the reader a set of expectations: what the content will be, how it will be useful to them, the tone and style of the writing, etc. Readers will use these expectations to determine what value they are going to get from the article and whether it is worth reading or not. Titles can draw readers to your article content or drive them away.

Your article title is more than just an accurate description about what the reader will find in your article body; it's a promise you make to build a relationship with your readership (prospective and current clients).

#### 1. Title Do's and Don'ts:

- a) The following characters are allowed in titles:
  - (1) , ? ! \$ ( ) + - = ' " % / \ : [ ]
  - (2) Periods (.) are allowed ONLY when used in product names or numbers, e.g., "Web 2.0" or "10.5mm Lens"
  - (3) \* will be allowed ONLY when preserving a brand, e.g., E\*TRADE
- b) Titles Should be In Upper and Lower Case Letters with the First Letter of Each Major Word Capitalized
- c) Each title must have two unique words to be accepted. (e.g., "Location, Location, Location" is considered a one-word title.)
- d) The article body must deliver on what is promised in the article title. Below are specific details on this guideline:
  - (1) **Numbers**—If the article promises a specific number of tips or steps, the body MUST clearly define and provide that number of tips or steps.
  - (2) **Cover All Topics**—Each WORD in a title needs to be talked about in the article body.
  - (3) **"How-To" Articles**—If your article title promises a "how-to" or states that the article will give directions, the body must provide these details.

#### 2. What to Include in Your Titles

Do Include:

- a) **Keyword Rich Language**—The first few words of your title are vital to its SEO success. Use keyword rich (NOT keyword stuffed) language to draw readers and search engines to your article.
- b) **Proper Grammar**—Every title must make sense grammatically. As the "preview" for your article, the title demonstrates your writing talents. Readers will be turned off by errors.



- c) **Topics Specific to the Article Content**—Titles should inform the reader of what they will find in your article body. Be clear about what you're offering.

## **B. ARTICLE SUMMARY—OPTIONAL BUT ENCOURAGED**

The purpose of the article summary is to give an abstract or teaser copy of the corresponding article, highlighting benefits and drawing potential readers to your article.

The article summary must have 2-5 sentences and should not exceed 200 words. The summary must be error-free, grammatically correct, utilize proper sentence structure, capitalization and punctuation.

## **C. ARTICLE BODY**

The article body is the place where an author shares their unique and informative content with the reader.

### **1. Do Not Sell**

The purpose of an article is to educate and inform, not to promote. Reserve promotional content for the bio, where you may promote yourself, your company or organization, and your website.

### **2. Articles in a Series Must Stand Alone**

You may write a series of unique, interrelated articles known as an article series or article set. Each article must be able to stand on its own in terms of original content; it cannot contain teaser content, and cannot continue in another location.

## **D. BIO**

The bio is the appropriate place for authors to promote their link, product, business, or website. All self-serving content within the submission should be located in the bio found at the bottom of your article.

Tips and Recommendations:

### **1. Length**

The length of a bio should not exceed 300 words

### **2. Author Names Must Match**

The author name listed in the title heading **MUST** be the same as the author in the bio. The bio should make it clear as to who wrote the content in the article body. To avoid reader confusion, do not list another person or company in the bio without clarifying who wrote the article itself.

To avoid reader confusion, please ensure the gender of the author name in the byline of the article clearly matches the pronouns used in the bio, e.g., "Ralph Johns wrote this article about finance. He has a lot of experience in this area."



### **3. Listing a Co-Author**

If two authors are listed in the bio, two authors must be listed in the byline of the article.

### **4. Transparent Ownership**

Be proud of your content! Take ownership by avoiding language that states the article is "written by," "sponsored by," or "presented by" a company, website, or e-mail address. Ownership of the content must be transparent to the reader.

### **5. E-mail Addresses and Phone Numbers**

You may include your email address and/or phone number in the bio.

### **6. Do Not List Private, Third-Party Contact Information**

Avoid listing someone else's name, phone number, email address, or other contact information in the bio.

### **7. Promotional or Self-Serving Content**

Any promotional content and self-serving material (e.g., links, About the Author content, etc...) you wish to include can be placed in the bio.

### **8. Must be Relevant to the Article Body**

The most effective way to keep the reader's interest in the bio is to ensure the content in your bio is relevant to the content in the article body.

## **E. TOPICS OF INTEREST**

### **1. Feature articles**

Should focus on practical approaches to practice area problems and hands-on solutions. Wherever possible, citations should be given for specific court cases or other evidential material that supports the writer's position or point.

With respect to business valuation topics, readers are looking for specific techniques relative to closely-held business, and real-life "how-to" tips. In general, however, save BV articles for the BV column.

There is interest in additional coverage of valuing losses in personal injury, wrongful death, and wrongful termination matters. Specific approaches to economic damages, lost profits, business interruption, etc. remain areas of interest. Case law analysis is of particular interest. In seeking out contributing authors, do not overlook practicing litigators who can write from their perspective of the role of the financial litigation consultant/expert witness.

### **2. Practice Tips and "I Solemnly Swear"**

Should continue to focus on real-life experiences of the writer and offer practical "how to" tips.





### **3. View From the Bench/Bar**

Generally should focus on attorney/judges views of issues faced by testifying and consulting experts.

### **4. Book/Product Review**

Should be based on your experience with a current publication, software, or “Cloud” SaaS.

Content can be financial/accounting/valuation issues in fraud, matrimonial, bankruptcy, civil, criminal, etc.

***Remember, the readers are primarily MAFFs, lawyers, and judges, so the content should not be basic.***