



Cost saving 101: How SMEs and Start ups can get Shs. 4.9m (\$2,000) worth of FREE advertising

Article Summary

Tips on how an organization (particularly a Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME)) can save costs and increase sales the same time by taking advantage of “article marketing” to get FREE press coverage.

About the Writer

D E Wasake (FCCA), Principal. With a combined experience of over 30 years, the team at inachee.com is passionate about helping Ugandan businesses to succeed.

What is article marketing?

Article marketing is a form of advertising where businesses write short articles about themselves, their products/services or their expertise. I first heard about its importance from [Chris Cardell](#).

Chris Cardell is according to many sources the UK’s leading marketing expert. Simply put, I cannot at present afford him (such experts often charge at least GBP 5,000 per hour). He however occasionally hosts free telephone seminars. I once attended such a seminar. It was eye opening.

He stated boldly that one of the ways to DOUBLE the number of customers is: *to set a target of getting FREE Press coverage.*

As a result of his tips, one of our recent clients is a world leading supplier.

How did article marketing work for us?

In 2012 we wrote an article on [pig farming in Uganda](#). About two months later, we received an unsolicited email. The regional sales manager of a Multinational corporation had read our article online (we submit our articles to a high traffic article website).

They wanted to get into Uganda. It turns out Uganda is Africa’s highest consumer of pork. They had read our article and they wanted to know more about its pig industry. They didn’t know who to contact to start. We had provided them with the solution- information on the market as well as a name and email!

A few months later we are now their advisor for their Uganda Pig strategy. We are not the biggest or longest established advisory firm in Uganda but we have employed a few innovative strategies. We believe SMEs and start ups can do likewise.

Why is Article marketing such a cost saver?

A half page advert in the *New Vision* costs at least Shs. 4.9m (approx \$1,900) ((Almost similar cost for *Monitor*)). Not many start ups or Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) can afford this.

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When you submit an article to the newspapers the word limit they give you is typically between 400 and 700 words. This is the equivalent of about half a page.

News flash: So a 700 word article is worth Shs. 4.9 million of FREE advertising!

In our case, how much would it have cost us to reach out to this multinational? Well we would have had to advertise in German newspapers for a start, perhaps lobbying as well as flights. The pig farming article was to us therefore a lot more than Shs. 4.9m.

How do you get this free coverage?

Newspapers, magazines and online journals are always looking for articles on topical issues to fill their pages. Determine your ideal audience or potential clients and then speak to the relevant editor and understand what they look for in articles and how you can work with them.

Tip: *Do not be careless and provide false or unverified information to customers. Just as they will reward you for innovative, eye opening information, they will punish you for laziness through incorrect information.*

Hopefully realizing the worth of these articles will help you give them the relevant attention.

Tip: *Thinking of the \$2,000 saving rather than of the 6 hours of hard work and research will mean that you pay attention to the articles and perhaps prioritize them.*

How is article marketing free advertising?

When you write the article, the newspaper (or magazine) in return allows you to include a brief summary about you, something like below:

An example

Moses Golola is a tempering temper Kick boxer. He develops his strength by fighting Chuck Norris and kicking strong walls that are only available at Nakulabye gym. Contact Tel 0771234567

If someone reads your article and loves the concepts you present, they will most likely go searching for you (in this case call Nakulabye Gym), and you have instantly got a potential customer for FREE.

The advantage of article marketing, particularly for providers of services is that it:

Proves to customers that you are an expert and understand exactly what you selling.

The sales logic is that every time a customer wants to buy something from you they want to know two things:

- That you (or the product) can do the job
- That you (or the product) are good i.e experts (or effective if a good)

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What if I cannot write?

Outsource. It is understandable you might be too busy or don't have the skills but there is usually someone in your organisation or who you know who loves writing.

Enter into an arrangement with them. For example that you will pay them Shs. 30,000 per article. What is Shs 30,000 if the value you will generate is worth Shs. 4.9m of Free advertising exposure? Peanuts!

TIP: Alternatively, if you know no one, there are many journalists and online bloggers who will willingly write you an article on a regular topic. For example Node six's blog spirit which is an aggregator of Ugandan bloggers is a starting point. Find one whose style you write and contact them.

Does it work for sale of goods as well including basic goods?

Whilst article marketing is especially effective for providers of services as it show cases their expertise and experience, it can likewise work for goods.

An example

You are a mushroom grower and you are keen to expand your sales. You write an article on the benefits of mushrooms for the nearby school in advance of their Parents Teacher Meeting (PTA):

"Mushrooms develop and strengthen the immune system of humans. They are rich in protein value (19-35%) even more than milk and contain all the nine essential amino acids. They are also low on calories but contain other nutrients like fat, phosphorous and iron thiamine among others.

In fact a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) [2010 Uganda report](#) mentions that mushrooms are increasingly being considered as a substitute for meat. This is particularly key in Uganda where owing to a large population below the poverty line, the inexpensive option of mushrooms could greatly improve health and reduce food insecurity." Polly Pontius Kalangala, Scientist. www.kalanqalamushrooms.com

Imagine how you can potentially increase your sales when customers read and appreciate that you are not merely trying to sell to them but also looking out for their interests (in this case good health).

Conclusions

There are many other marketing strategies a company can employ and Chris Cardell suggests a company has at least 7 different ways of DOUBLING your customers. Article marketing and FREE coverage is just one of them.

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