

*“What Every Article
Marketer Needs to Know!”*

How to Get the Highest Article Click-Thru Rates!

By Jason Fladlien

Secrets to High Article Click-Thru Rates

Obviously, I am a huge fan of speed writing. If it takes me the same time to compose 5 reasonably well written articles as it does to write one super-duper awesome killer article, I'll usually choose quantity over quality.

There are exceptions, of course. There are times when your best article writing effort is required. Perhaps you got someone with a high traffic blog to allow you to write a guest article for their readers. Knowing you have 50,000 eyeballs that are going to see your article, you reason it's wise to spend the additional time writing your best effort.

In situations where the choicest articles are required, here's what you should do:

Spend 90% of your time on your headline, opening paragraph and your call to action.

Your headline is 80% of your article, statistically speaking. In other words, 4 out of 5 people will read your article because of the headline.

If you absolutely *had* to write an article that would make you money, and you only have 15 minutes to do it, you damn well better spend at least 5 minutes on the headline. A good headline has a “big idea” that intrigues the casual browser so much that they can't resist taking a peak at your article.

The great thing about a big idea is that once you have it, it's easy to write the article. So the headline is king of the article. It has accomplished the most important thing:

Getting people to actually look at your article!

However, that's not the final goal. We want people to go to our website, buy our products or perform some sort of action that will end up making us money. So once he have their attention, we must keep it.

You'll lose almost all of your readers within the first 50 words. After that, readership drop-off is so small it's not even worth being concerned

about. To help you best understand this, here how general Joe article reader approaches each article:

1. He evaluates the headline. If it's good, he'll read the article.
2. Joe is still skeptical, though. So his final test is to read the first paragraph. Win him over here, and you almost guarantee he'll read the rest of the article.

So the 1-2 knockout punch to getting your article written is a killer headline followed by a sweet-as-hell opening paragraph.

I've already shown you how to write a killer headline with the Digg.com headline technique, and have also include several headline tempaltes for you to use.

So the first focus on this report is the often-neglected...

The opening paragraph.

There are 9 different techniques I use to create a compelling opening paragraph. They are:

1. The Big Idea
2. Scary Larry
3. The Blood Boiler
4. Mr. Controversy
5. Interesting fact
6. Story Primer
7. The News Lever
8. Fortune Teller

Let's break each one down.

The Big Idea

Many of the great copywriters will tell you to collect National Enquirer headlines. But they don't really explain WHY you should. So I blindly followed their advice, and had a stack of note cards with enquirer headlines but no application for them.

Then one day, while aimlessly flipping through them, it hit me...

Each one has a “twist”, a “hook”, or what I refer to as the big idea. When I really dug through them, I realized that most hooks were just a way to reframe an idea.

For example, you could start an article saying,

“Recently, a group of expert self-help writers got together to decide the real reason why people aren't successful. Here's what they found”.

That's not a bad intro. But here's how you punch it up:

“A hand-picked group of 'mind scientists' have quietly been working on discovering what stops people from becoming successful. Now they are ready to go public with their results...”

The big idea here is “mind scientists”. Everybody else is a self-help expert. But these are freaking *mind scientists!*

For the rest of the article, you could sum up their first five main points, and then entice the reader to go to your website for the last 4 points, as well as for a free report.

Get it?

It's not that hard to come up with these big ideas once you get the hang of it. You just have to ponder your main topic, and then figure out a way to use a little word crafting to present the main point of your article with a new phrase or concept.

For example, you can be industry leader, or you can what Rich Schefren refers to us a “Maven”.

You can create persuasive marketing and advertising, or you can practice what Frank Kern calls “Mass Control”.

The big idea is really about dressing up the fundamentals and making them sexy. It's giving your reader another way to look at the same thing. It works because it differentiates your article from all the other articles they have probably read. That will hook them into the rest of your article.

Scary Larry

If I came up to you on the street and asked you for \$100, would you give it me? Probably not. What if I shoved a gun in your face and demanded it?

That's what the media does everyday. They control the masses through fear. And I don't *hate* the media for doing this. They just go with what works. People are conditioned to respond to fear. If you want to separate yourself from the masses who live lives of quiet desperation, you must learn not to be controlled by your fear.

But you can use fear to get someone's attention, and to have them read every word of your article. Consider this opening paragraph:

“If you want to succeed in business, you must follow these five principles.”

What if you lead with this:

“There's a good chance that you'll fail in business in the next five years... unless you follow these principles.”

I think I like this one even better:

“95% of people who read this will fail... because they don't know these five simple principles.”

Broadcast Journalists have a saying: “If it bleeds, it leads”. Meaning the story that is most likely to top the broadcast is one that is focused around tragedy, horror and fear. Make your lead paragraph bleed to grab the reader's attention.

Before writing your opening paragraph, ask yourself this question -- “What keeps my intended audience awake at night, wide-eyed and staring at the ceiling in fear?” Then open with a statement that addresses that fear.

Blood Boiler

There are several groups of people who just piss me off. For example, as a person who sells information products to teach people to improve their financial positions and abilities, I get angry at people who cry about recessions.

When I was a wrestler in high school, and we were sucking down weight and working out, we'd look over at the basketball players, and hate them because we felt they had it so much easier.

Hate is a strong emotion. You should leverage it whenever possible.

Know this - every niche has a general figure they hate. If you're in debt, you hate bill collectors. If you're an entrepreneur, you probably hate loan officers, bankers and the IRS.

It's not just people you hate, but places and things as well. I live in Iowa. *I hate Iowa Weather.* I hate when I'm trying to write reports like this and my next door neighbor is playing some loud bass music (like right now). In fact, I just want to go over there and choke him...

Sorry, I got off point. Here's what you need to do - figure out what really gets your target audience enraged, and then create an opening paragraph about it.

Let's say you're targeting a group of new car buyers. What do they all hate? Car salesman! So in this case, I would try an article where I open with a story about how a car salesman suckered my friend. Then I'd build that story to show how I got the last laugh by sticking it to the car salesman and how you can do the same.

By the way, that's a damn good formula. First you get them angry at your villain, then you position yourself as a hero.

Mr. Controversy

I am not a big fan of controversy for controversy sake. Nor do I like contrived controversy such as "I'm going to share with you all the secrets the Guru's don't want you to know!". No, you're not. You're going to rehash some crap about affiliate marketing, and you're just trying to get my attention.

However, there are many legitimate reasons to use controversy. For example, let's say you writing an article around the topic of weight loss. A very controversial study is the use of low-carb diets. There is little gray, you either believe in them or you don't. So what you do for the opening paragraph is you take the main argument from both sides and you pit them against each other.

You ever watch law and order? Sometimes the defense will call an expert witness to strengthen their argument. So what does the prosecution do? They call their own expert witness. The result is two well credentialed experts disagreeing with each other.

You'll find this to be true in every topic. So find the two main arguments, and put them head to head in an article battle royal.

Here's another technique to incite controversy. Take a widely held belief and opening challenge it. For example:

“Most people think running 30 minutes a day is a good way to lose weight. Unfortunately, those people are mis-informed. Here's what you probably don't know...”

Or

“In school you were taught to invest for the long term, usually with IRAs. Unfortunately, this is dumb advice, give by teachers who usually retire broke. Here's the real truth of the matter - IRAs are usually poor investments. Here's why...”

If you were interested in either of the two topics, I guarantee you wouldn't stop reading after that first paragraph. And you can do better than those two above examples, which only took me about 20 seconds to write.

Interesting Fact

Bill Bowerman, co-founder of NIKE, got his first shoe idea after staring at a waffle iron. This gave him the idea of using squared spikes to make shoes lighter.

By similar "accident", scientists have discovered a new way to lose weight. If you've been struggling to keep the pounds off, or if you desire to look thinner, then check this out...

See what I just did? I took something completely unrelated but interesting, and figured out a way to tie it to the topic of my article.

People are drawn to interesting stuff. Just look at YouTube. People feel compelled to share ridiculous videos made by strangers just because those videos feature interesting things.

For example:

"The world is full of contradictions. Do you know who Bill Gates is? He is the richest man in the world, and owner of MICROSOFT. But the house he currently lives in was designed using a MACINTOSH COMPUTER!

A similar contradiction is happening right now in the stock market..."

Or, how about this one:

"Little hinges swing big doors. For example, in 1987, American Airlines saved \$40,000 by eliminating one olive from each salad served in first class. Similarly, there is just a few tiny modifications you can make to your golf swing that will have massive results. Here they are..."

Pepsi was originally called Brad's drink, Bayer once sold heroin, 75% of pencils sold are the color yellow, an average business document is copied 19 times, and so on. All useless facts that you can twist to create a compelling opening.

You can find these useless facts with a quick search for "useless facts" on Google. One of my favorite resources for these facts is from snapple.com.

Heck, I have a stock pile of interesting facts that I have used over and over again because they can easily be adapted. Not only do I use them for openings, but they are perfect to segue from one point to the next.

The bottom line is to start becoming a collector of interesting facts. Just don't get stressed out about article writing, or you'll have to purchase some antacids.

Speaking of which, Sales of antacids increase by as much as 20% the day after the Super bowl...

Story Primer

We all know that stories sell. However, when we perceive the author is using stories to try to sell something to us, their selling power vanishes. We think to ourselves, “Oh god, here we go again with another story...”

Equally as bad is starting stories with “cliff hangers”. You know the type:

“It was a dark Friday night, and it was raining outside. Ordinarily, I would've been worried but...”

What the hell are you talking about? Are you trying to build suspense? That's fine if you're writing for entertainment. But when people want to lose weight, gain muscle, get rich and be happier, they have very little time to wait for you to get to the point.

A better way to go about getting attention when writing articles is to prime the story first. Usually it's big fat benefit followed by a story. Or it's a way to avoid pain, followed by a story. Sometimes, it's simple, like this:

“Your ideas can make you millions of dollars. I found this out two years ago when I found myself broke and desperate...”

Stories are an excellent way to get your reader's attention. But first you should get permission to tell them your story. You either do this with a large benefit, or by using one of other examples as a lead in. For example, you can use the “blood boiler” technique to set up a story, or you first create controversy, which then allows you to launch into a story.

The News Lever

Robert Collier said you should enter into the conversation that is going on in the mind of your prospect. Almost all of us have a bunch of “current news” that is floating around our brain. Remember when Elliot Spitzer, a New York governor, was implicated in a prostitution scandal? Tell me that the water coolers weren't abuzz about that. (He's no longer governor either).

Here's something fun to do: go to yahoo.com, and check out all of the current news stories. If you can't get an idea to tie a news tid-bit into an article you're currently working on, you should consider a new profession.

Right now, here are some of the headlines I am seeing:

Stocks surge ahead of Federal Reserves expected rate cut

Lloyd's insures wine maker's nose for 5 million euros

Prices up, housing construction drops

I'd aim the first article at stock investors, the second at wine connoisseurs and last at realtors. Just search quickly scan each story, pick the most interesting aspect of that story, and lead with that for your article.

If you can't use "new" news, use old news. Leverage a historical event that would hold significance to your target audience, and start there.

Fortune Teller

At this school, only 1 out of 3 in the freshman class end up graduating. So look to your left, and then to your right. Only one of you will still be here in four years...

If you were a college student, would that get your attention? You bet it would. In general, we are fascinated with predicting the future. And even though past performances are no indicator of future results, we still love to try to manipulate statistics to try to predict our outcome before it occurs.

Being a fortune teller is real easy. For example:

"If you are reading this, there is a 95% chance you will retire destitute. Don't want to have to depend on your children to support you in your old age? Here's what you need to be doing now..."

It's a statistical fact that 95% do not save enough to retire comfortably.

Here's another example:

“A recent study indicated that 63% of workers in your industry will lose their jobs in the next five years. Are you one of them? Check out who is and isn't at risk for getting canned...”

One more, because these are fun:

“If you're over 85 and live in a nursing home, there is a 45% chance you will experience dementia. If that doesn't sound appealing to you, here's what you should concern yourself about...”

Here's the best way to use each of these techniques. First, do your research, and look for things in your research that would make your prospects angry, scared or experience any other dominant emotion that you can use to increase readership.

Also, keep on the lookout for compelling and interesting facts as well as predictive statistics. Finally, before you sit down to write your article, quickly check with the check sheet below to determine the best course of action.

The 8 Opener Techniques at a Glance

1. **The Big Idea** - Take a fundamental and put a twist on it... self-help gurus become “mind scientists” effective marketing becomes mass control, etc.
2. **Scary Larry** - What scares your audience the most about the topic you're writing? Think in terms of danger, lack of preparation, emotion insecurities, threats, etc.
3. **The Blood Boiler** - Is there a person, place or thing that angers your audience? Become their friend by showing you hate the same things, and they will be more interested in what you have to say.
4. **Mr. Controversy** - Take two expert opinions and pit them against each other. Or take a conventional point of view and challenge it.
5. **Interesting fact** - gather interesting but otherwise useless facts, then twist them so they are relevant with your topic. Snails breath through their feet.

6. **Story Primer** - Set up a story by first selling it with a big promise of pleasure or avoidance of pain
7. **The News Lever** - Fire up your favorite news website and do a quick headline scan before you sit down and write an article.
8. **Fortune Teller** - Find compelling statistics that try to predict the future. If it's a desirable future, show your audience how to align themselves with it. If it's not, show them how to buck the trend.

A final note - these are not mutually exclusive. You can start with an interesting fact, follow it up with a story, and close with a “fortune teller” as a warning of what will happen if your advice isn't followed. These 8 opening techniques I have shared with you are great for ANY part of your article because by their very nature they are compelling.

Once you master these techniques, you should be able to increase the quantity of your click-thrus dramatically. However, there is still one more skill you need to master to get the maximum amount of traffic.

The Call to Action

Every article writer needs to follow the Triple A formula - **Always ask for action**. Check this out. Let's go to EzineArticles.com, and find an author's resource box. Oh, here's one:

“The author just celebrated her one year anniversary and sports a beautiful ascher cut ring. She and her husband put together the website: <http://www.ultimate-engagement-ring-guide.com> to help you find the perfect ring.”

***Source: <http://www.ezinearticles.com/?Diamond-or-Ziamond?-You-Be-the-Judge&id=757344>*

She violated rule number one - she didn't ask for action! At the very least, if you do nothing else, you must ask them to perform some sort of action. Always.

Now, it's time to clear up a few misconceptions. Almost everything you have read about creating a compelling author bio or author resource box that

gets the maximum amount of people to click thru to your your site is wrong. Why?

Because they focus to much on the actual mechanical process of writing the call to action instead of working on the OFFER.

There are three components that make you call to action successful. Here they are:

1. **40% of your success will come from attracting the right reader.**
2. **40% of your success comes from what you offer in your call to action.**
3. 20% of your success will come from how you write your call to action.

Let's break each component down.

Targeting the Right Reader

If your headline and article content doesn't attract the audience that desperately wants the solution you provide, your call to action will fail.

For example, let's say you ran a website on how to make money by grooming dogs. You want people to visit your website and buy your book, titled "How to make 6 figures per year as a dog groomer".

However, your article is titled "Want to make some easy money?" And the content of your article centers around general, basic money making principles.

The first problem with this approach is that you have attracted too broad of an audience. By trying to appeal to everyone, you're going to get a lot of people reading your article that hate dogs. A much better approach is to create an article titled "How Dog Lovers can Turn Their Passion Into Money"

Now you have singled out your audience: People who love dogs who are also interested in making money. Thus you have matched your offer to your audience.

The best written call to action with the greatest offer in the world will fail if it's aimed at the wrong audience.

Seducing the Reader

This is the most important part of creating a compelling call to action. Most people understand the basic concepts of targeting the right audience. They also know to at least *ask* their readers to do something, even if it is just to visit their website.

However, few know how to seduce the reader with an irresistible offer. Let's look at this offer,

“James McInnes is a professional share market trader and investment entrepreneur, with many years experience trading the Australian Share market. You can visit his site at <http://www.freedvd.com.au/> for further information on trading the Australian Share Market.”

Further information is not exactly irresistible, is it? But it's not bad. If you're writing an article and you offer good information, the reader may want more of that information, and will go to your site. But if the only thing you're offering is more information, you'll miss out on a lot of traffic that an irresistible offer would generate.

I will give you the best way to make an irresistible offer. Then I will give the most practical way, because the best way requires serious dedication and most people simply won't do it, even though it will double (or triple) their article writing results.

To create an irresistible offer, you must first figure out what your audience perceives as having high value, and that large portions of your audience are already paying for. Then you create a product of equal perceived value, only you offer it for free.

This is without a doubt the simplest way to create an irresistible offer, because it's like you're giving away money. This means you don't even have to write a well worded call to action or split test to death in order to be successful.

But here's the problem with this approach: it requires work. Most wannabe internet marketers I know have been in the game for years and still

haven't even created a single product, much less one that they can give away for free!

Instead, they go the “cop-out” route. They create a “newsletter”, or a report/guide that is disguised as promotion material. Here is the problem with this: most people *don't* pay for online newsletters. Therefore, there is hardly any perceived value.

Newsletters can work. They can be effective if you can write excellent copy to sell your audience on signing up for them. They can be quite successful if you test your landing pages everyday to fine-tune your copy so you get the maximum amount of visitors signing up for your website.

But a much better approach is to hit the ball out of the park from the get-go by creating an excellent product, widget or service that your audience is already paying for, or would pay for, and then give it to them for free.

Then you can tweak the copy and other aspects to improve upon it.

Nudging the Reader

I say “nudging” because most of your success from writing a call to action will be your offer and a good headline to single out your target audience. If you have a good offer, the call to action will practically write itself. For example, check this one out:

“What Twntey Dllors for fere? Vsiit My Wbsiete: www.freemoney.com”

Talk about making it hard and confusing for the reader. However, the offer is so powerful that I would bet this be more successful (in terms of getting your readers to take action) than a perfectly worded call to action with a weak offer.

Here's another example:

“I'll give you \$20 dollars if you let me call you an idiot. Sound good? If so, go to my website, www.ihateyou.com”.

Get it?

The actual writing of the call to action is not very important. I know I'm bordering on redundancy, but it's such a common misconception that I just had to drive the point home.

With a well written call to action, you'll get the extra little “nudge” that will pull in a few more readers and make it worth your efforts.

A well written call to action is:

1. Clear
2. Easy to respond to
3. Motivating

When I spelled all of those words wrong in the above example, you had to work a bit harder to figure out what I asking you to do. Anytime you don't make your offer clear, the amount of readers who follow you call to action will go down.

Also, if you make me jump through a lot of hopes in order to get what you are offering, then I am less likely to do it. Even if I want it. Word your offering in such a way that it makes it easy to respond to. Use words that imply not effort, like automatic, instant, effortlessly, simple, etc.

Finally, you want to spark action in your readers with your words. If your audience is predominately greedy, motivate them by writing a call to action that best taps into their appeal to greed. If they are fearful, write a call to action that explains what they might lose if they don't take your offer.

Extra tricks for motivating your reader with your call to action: Offer a deadline, sweepstakes, discount or premium for early response, penalties for late responses and limiting your offer.

Now that I have elaborately broken done the steps for creating a compelling call to action, let me now confuse you:

Don't take any of the above as gospel.

What I have outline are principles and fundamentals of good “calls to action”. However, everything in marketing is speculative until the results come in. What you may have thought was an irresistible offer actually wasn't. You won't know until you test it. Thus, if you offer the wrong thing, your call to action will suffer.

Sometimes I have used limited offers and have met with success, and other times when I made a limited offer, my call to action flopped.

It is very rare you will create an effective call to action for your article the first time you try it. What I have shown you above is the best way to increase your chances of meeting with success. Honestly, if you come up with a good offer, you should get better than average results.

The real trick for creating a good call to action is to test it constantly. The first week, it might be:

“For a limited time you can visit my website and instantly download, for free, my **Interview with 7 millionaire Entrepreneurs**. Just go to www.my-site.com.”

Your results indicate that 13% of the people who read your articles clicked on your link from this call to action. Next week you might try:

“I interviewed 7 millionaire entrepreneurs, and made them spill their guts and give me their wealth secrets. Want to find out what they said? Go to www.my-site.com and you can instantly download these conversations for free.”

You might find that now 17% of your readers are clicking on your link. What accounts for the difference? Who knows.

Finally, let me do you one giant favor: Set a target goal for how many readers you would be happy attracting to your website from your article marketing.

If there is one thing that will kill your success in IM, it's too many options. Think about it. You are supposed to test your call to action, your headlines, your opening paragraphs, the copy on your website that sells your offer. Oh, and we're not even talking about how you market your articles, what directories you use, how many articles you submit, the length of the articles, etc.

Don't lose the forest for the trees. If your goal is to make \$5,000 a month, figure out the right combination to make that happen. For example, you sell a product for \$50. You reason that with decent marketing, you can get 2 out of 100 people who visit your website through article marketing to buy your product. Thus, for every 100 people you bring to your website, you make \$100 (a dollar per visitor).

To make \$5000 a month, you'd need to sale, on average, \$166 of product per day. To reach that, you'd need 166 visitors per day. Let's say you plan to get 100 of those visitors from submitting to article directories.

If your article and call to action were good enough to get 20% of your readers to click on your link, you'd need 500 visitors a day from article directories to reach your target. Is this do-able? Maybe, maybe not.

But at least you have your goal. So you tweak until you get you get your articles to bring 20% of your readers to your website.

So your approach would be like this:

1. Determine your goal for your article marketing.
2. Focus on creating a compelling headline, hot opening paragraph and enticing call to action for each article.
3. Test each of these individual elements until you reach your goal.
4. Set a new goal or work on other aspects of your marketing.

By swiping from the headlines I have given you and from using digg.com, writing opening paragraphs using the 8 examples above, and following the fundamentals of creating a solid call to action, you position yourself to most easily and quickly reach your goal with article marketing.

Now get out there and kick butt!

Resources:

If you enjoyed this report, here are some other products I might you might like:

“How to Create an info product in less than 48 hours that you can sell for \$47-\$97”. You can find that at <http://www.48hourreport.com>

Also, for article writers I have “How to Write An Article in 7 Minutes or Less” at <http://www.instantcontentcreation.com>

Also, discover how I write winning sales letters in one sitting at <http://www.3hourad.com>

To check out a swipe file I created of Gary Halbert Ads, and to see 55 videos of ad analysis of Gary Halbert's best copywriting strategies at work, go to <http://halbertswipefile.com>

To learn all my time management secrets, go to <http://imtimemanagement.com>

And “How to Become a \$40 an hour internet ghostwriter in Less Than 7 Days” at <http://www.ghostwritingsystem.com>

To learn a simple system I used to go from \$0 to over \$50,000 in under six months, go to <http://www.internetmillionairerecipe.com>