

How to create a top-performing sponsored article

Here is the secret formula for creating a sponsored article that performs well and attracts your target audience's attention.

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Sponsored articles are a core ingredient of a successful content marketing campaign and a must-have for any digital strategy.

The reason is simple - articles are the most trusted form of online advertising in South Africa.

The 2022 Digital Marketing Report revealed that online articles and reviews are key resources for people looking to buy products and services.

The challenge for many marketing professionals is that it is not trivial to create an interesting article that attracts the reader's attention.

Another challenge is distributing the article to ensure it reaches the right audience and gets read.

To assist you with creating a top-performing sponsored article, here are a few rules to follow.

Keep it short

The first rule is to keep the article short.

Many businesses believe that longer articles which cover many different ideas offer the most value. This is a mistake.

Research shows that most readers only read the first few paragraphs of an article – typically between 100

and 140 words. Anything after that is basically lost.

Readers prefer short articles – around 200 to 300 words are good - that are easier to consume and quick read.

Pick one idea per article

It is important to only pick one idea per article. Do not try to cram as much information into an article as possible.

When you use more than one idea or product in an article, you dilute your message, and the article will be less effective.

Use an attention-grabbing headline

The headline of an article has an immense influence on the article's performance.

Pick an attention-grabbing headline, but make sure it is accurate and reflects what the article is about.

Do not use click-bait headlines where the reader does not get what they expect. It will make readers angry and be counterproductive.

Add a great headline image

A good headline image is one of the most important elements of a sponsored article because readers are more likely to click on an article if its headline image catches their attention.

Valuable information about effective headline image practices is available through the [Taboola Trends resource](#).

Headline images which perform the best, including those with at least one human face.

Pick the biggest website in your field to promote your article

To ensure your sponsored article reaches as many people as possible, pick the biggest online publication in your market to publish your article.

Here is a list of the biggest South African publications in prominent fields.

- General news – News24 with 11 million readers
- Business news – BusinessTech with 5 million readers
- IT and telecoms news – MyBroadband with 3 million readers
- Motoring – Cars.co.za with 1.6 million readers

Social media promotions are crucial

Make sure the article is published on your own social media channels, and the publisher's Facebook and Twitter feeds.

The publisher may charge more for social media promotions, but it is worth it.

Include the article in newsletters

Email newsletters are another great way to get more eyes on your sponsored article.

You should promote your content in newsletters your company sends out and the online publication which you partner with.

Examples of successful sponsored articles

It is educational to look at sponsored articles that performed well. It will give you a good idea of the types of articles that resonate with your audience.

Here are three examples of sponsored articles that have performed well.

[How to extend vehicle engine life \(by Motus\)](#)

[Kloppers birthday sale – Amazing deals on the best tech \(by Kloppers\)](#)

[Premium Free TV now available on Hisense TV App Store \(by Hisense\)](#)

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