

Advertising Age: Guidelines for Outside Submissions

THE PITCH

Tell us in conversational language and concise fashion what your piece is about and why we and our audience of hundreds of thousands marketing, agency and media executives will care. Tell us for what AdAge section or section(s) you are pitching it and how long it will likely be. The pitch should be exclusive to AdAge and should not have been shopped elsewhere. Canned pitches will almost always be summarily rejected.

THE COMMISSION

--Length will be determined by the commissioning editor and can vary greatly from fewer than 200 words for a blog post to over 1,000 for an op-ed piece. You should try with all your might to obey the word limit.

--Acceptance doesn't guarantee publication. Particular publication dates and the section in which the piece appears won't be guaranteed either. The commissioning editor may also have specific requirements relating to the section he or she edits.

--Deadlines should be honored and, when they're not, the editors should be given as much advance notice as possible.

THE CONTENT

-- The article has to be reflective of the individual's opinion, view, expertise and NOT that of the company, which after all is more a legal construct than a being with opinions and feelings. Which brings us to our readers: They appreciate content that's conversational in style, accessible, and comprehensible. While it's important to pick the right topic, there is value in the writer who cares enough to write the piece and in his/her credentials/expertise/credibility.

--The writer needs to take a clear position, be willing to go out on a limb with his/her perspective and invite disagreement. There should also be a clear takeaway for intended audience. The writer should include real-world marketer (or agency) examples to support points.

--Jargon should be avoided at all costs. Here's an example of a sentence that shouldn't have been allowed into print:

*"This was a **multibrand and multiplatform negotiation** to drive a portfolio of game properties, and we initiated it to secure seamless integration in the right environments and to **leverage** their budgets for **maximum impact**."*

That's jargon, if you were unsure.

--There should be no footnotes, though links are appreciated. As are ideas for how we can add a service aspect to your piece. Are there five things a readers should know about a topic? Are there websites or telephone numbers they should have?

--The content should not be self-promotional (even subtly) or construed as such, and any potential conflict of interests that would cast doubt on the credibility of your article or Ad Age must be disclosed up front. They may result in anything from a disclosure in the published piece to a decision not to accept the article. These pieces should not be veiled ads for a company; they should be attempts to grapple with important marketing and media issues.

EDITING

Ad Age editors will have final say-so in the shape the piece takes. Writers should strive to have pieces turned in polished and ready for publication. In the instance of extremely heavy edits by Ad Age editors, contributors will get one read-back after first edit. All other editing/copyediting decisions (including headlines, length, captions, etc.) will be made by Ad Age. Once an item is live on the site, stylistic changes and tweaks to the copy will not be made.

LEGAL

All writers need to acknowledge the following: "I understand and accept that Crain Communications will, upon initial publication, own my contributed content and may at any point re-purpose the content for publication in print or online in any of Crain's magazines and web sites."

POST-PUBLICATION

You are encouraged to promote your AdAge contribution as much as possible. Feel free to blog about your story, link to it on Facebook, alert your Twitter followers about it and so forth. Send the link to all of your social networks and to you colleagues, staff, peers, family and friends.