

# How to Create and Profit from **Special Reports**



*with*  
**Melissa Ingold**

**InternetMarketingSweetie.com**

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## About the Author



Melissa Ingold is the Internet Marketing Sweetie.

She's a savvy marketer who believes in designing a business around who you are as a person, and making a connection with your target market for long-term, repeat buyers.

Melissa has built a successful *and* profitable business through affiliate marketing, membership sites, and information products simply by being ethical, kind, and treating her prospects and customers like real people.

She believes that there's no reason to lose your soul in the process of trying to earn a really good living online, and by tuning in to your market, you can create a powerful, long-lasting connection, and sell more products in the process.

*Melissa Ingold*

The Internet Marketing Sweetie

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## Table Of Contents

Blow Your Competition Away With These Special Report Secrets.....	5
What is a Special Report? .....	5
How to Use a Special Report.....	5
Idea #1: Entice New Clients .....	5
Idea #2: Pre-Sell a Teleseminar Series .....	6
Idea #3: Mastermind Groups.....	6
Idea #4: Building Your Email List.....	7
Idea #5: Bonus Products .....	7
Benefits of Special Reports .....	7
What Tools Do I Need To Create a Special Report? .....	8
How to Create a Special Report .....	9
Outlining Your Special Report.....	10
Sample Outline for Special Report on Article Writing .....	12
Writing Your Report .....	14
Titles/ Subtitles .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Editing Your Special Report.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Read Out Loud .....	15
Read it Backwards.....	16
"That" .....	16
"But" "However" and "Therefore" .....	16
Delivering Your Special Report .....	16
Marketing Your Special Report.....	17

## **Blow Your Competition Away With These Special Report Secrets**

Special reports are a great way to create a quick and easy downloadable product you can sell, use as an incentive to collect email addresses or giveaway as a bonus. A special report can be an extremely profitable item to add to your product line to generate money, traffic and subscribers for your website.

### **What is a Special Report?**

A special report is a document usually consisting of several pages highlighting a particular industry, practice or procedure or some other proprietary information. In order to be most effective, a special report should contain useful information not easily found elsewhere on the Internet. It should be information your readers can put into practice in their own life (or business) to create greater success. The primary purpose of most special reports is to drive traffic to your website where you can show the reader the products and services you provide.

### **How to Use a Special Report**

You can use a special report in a number of different ways, but they all have two primary purposes: marketing your business and selling your products or services. The beauty of a short report is you can use it for a variety of purposes, depending on your goals. You can use your special report to pre-sell another information product be it your own product or an affiliate product you promote. Because the report can and should contain links throughout, you can link to your own website or use your affiliate link to direct your readers to the sales page of the product you're selling on commission. You can find new clients, build your email list or simply establish yourself as an expert in your field with the help of these handy-dandy reports.

Here are some of the ways a special report can be utilized in any business model.

### ***Idea #1: Entice New Clients***

If you run a coaching business, for example, you can create a special report designed to draw in new clients. Highlight the specific points of your coaching and offer some tips and hints spread throughout the report so the reader knows you are the ultimate source to connect with for coaching. A big key to creating a successful report is to let your reader know YOUR unique selling point- without sounding like your all hype. While you want them to know your work is fabulous, writing a special report that is little more than a sales page won't bring you the results you desire.

### ***Idea #2: Pre-Sell a Teleseminar Series***

Teleseminars are a hot commodity in marketing nearly any type of information product or service. People love the interaction and the human touch and teleseminars provide both in one convenient package. Teleseminars can be used as a stand-alone moneymaker or you can use the teleseminar as a free promotional tool for a high-end product or service. Teleseminars are particularly effective when they are used to market an ongoing subscription based service or a coaching service. You can also use teleseminars as a component in a subscription based membership product.

You can use a special report to promote a teleseminar series in one of two ways. You can use it as a short-term product you only make available for a limited time prior to the teleseminar or you can record the teleseminar series on mp3 or CDs and sell them. If you are selling the recorded event, then you will be able to use the special report as a perpetual product. Your special report can be a synopsis of your teleseminar. Use bullet points throughout to draw attention to the most important points the teleseminar will address. Share tidbits to entice the reader to attend the teleseminar. Be sure to include links to the sign up pages

### ***Idea #3: Mastermind Groups***

Mastermind groups are another popular way people create recurring income. A mastermind group is usually limited to a fairly small number of people, although that's not always the case. Mastermind members have special access to a particular expert or teacher and they are given in-depth information not provided through other sources.

You can use a special report to promote a mastermind group or as a component of one. If the group is structured to take new members or begin new sections on a regular basis, you can promote it with a special report in the same way you would promote a teleseminar series.

Many people also use the special report as a component of a mastermind group. By creating 10-15 page documents covering the hot topics of the month, the group leader can deliver a downloadable version of information to distribute to all the members of the group at one time. Examples can include, an overview of a seminar, a transcript of an mp3 or original material not covered in other formats. The mastermind group will often include a forum where members can discuss the special report, offer feedback or ask further questions.

#### ***Idea #4: Building Your Email List***

One common use of special reports is to give it away as an incentive to capture email addresses for your mailing list. Building your email list is an important part of building your business. When you have an email list to correspond with regularly, you have an ongoing opportunity to establish trust and build a relationship with the members of the list. You also have the opportunity to keep your brand name in front of your potential clients. This kind of familiarity increases the likelihood they will eventually buy from you. Once they buy one product, they are more likely to buy again in the future. Your email list is one of the most valuable assets your business can have.

People are often hesitant to hand over their email address. Providing an informative, useful special report solving a pressing problem for your prospects is a great incentive to persuade your prospects to share their email address with you.

You can even use your special report as a giveaway in a joint venture with other marketers and collect hundreds, even thousands of email addresses in one event.

#### ***Idea #5: Bonus Products***

Special reports are terrific to use as bonus products. They are a wonderful add on product, whether you are selling you own product or offering a bonus as an incentive for someone to purchase through your affiliate link.

### **Benefits of Special Reports**

There are several benefits to using special reports as an information product to market your business. Special reports allow you to do the work once and get paid indefinitely.

- **Passive income:** Once your report is complete and you've set up some effective marketing tools, you've moved into the world of passive income. Your special report truly will make you money while you sleep. Because it is set up on your website to download at the click of a mouse, you don't have to worry about tending to it. Everything takes place through the magic of the Internet.
- **No Cost Delivery:** One way special reports are great profit makers is there is no cost to deliver the product. There are no handling charges, packaging costs or shipping costs.
- **Time Efficiency:** Creating a special report can be very time efficient. A report like this is a great return on your investment. You can literally do the work once and depending on how you use it; the report can circulate the Internet over and over again for years to come creating profit over and over again.

## What Tools Do I Need To Create a Special Report?

You don't need any special tools to create a special report. In you are in business online, you probably already have everything you need.

Obviously, you will need a computer with a word processing program. Ideally, you should convert your finished document to a PDF document so everyone can access it regardless of their word processing software.

You need a domain name and hosting so you have a place for your report to reside. If you already have a website, you've got this covered. If you are selling the product as an affiliate product or a product you purchased resale rights to, you may need to purchase a new domain name and/or hosting. These are both inexpensive, with a domain name costing about \$10 per year and hosting costing less than \$10 a month.

You'll also need a shopping cart program of some type. If you create a webpage with sales copy and include your special report as a download there, you can use PayPal or a similar product to collect your revenue. Other shopping cart programs allow you to set up your download within their program so your customer can use the shopping cart software to purchase the product and download it directly from their servers.

Finally, you may want to create an affiliate program to help sell your special report, especially if it is being used as a pre-sell to a higher-end product. Affiliates can increase your income a great deal, so if you create an affiliate program, be generous with the commission you pay. After all, if you are selling an information product you have already created, then 50 % of a sale you wouldn't have had otherwise is a whole lot more income than 100% of no sale at all.

## How to Create a Special Report

Once you've realized using a special report can be a great way to promote your business and drive traffic to your website, you're ready to begin creating the report.

To begin, you need a hot topic to attract interest in your report. Begin by examining your area of expertise for a single issue people want to learn more about. No matter what industry you are in, there are hot button issues. Choose one you can tackle from a unique angle. Find something you can teach or demonstrate from a new perspective or on a different level than everyone else is doing. The way you set your special report apart from the thousands of others available is to make it unique for those you will be marketing it to.

Once you've chosen the topic for your special report, you need to do some market research to determine a need for your product. Regardless of how much you believe - or even KNOW - your product is important. That being said, you're wasting your time and effort if other people don't see a need for it as well.

You can do market research in several different ways. You will get the best results if you choose two or three methods in order to get a variety of information. Here are a just four of the many ways you can determine if your report will generate interest.

- I. Forums and Message Boards** – Start with forums dedicated to your industry. There are forums and message boards available for nearly every type of business you can imagine. Forums are an excellent source for researching your target market and what they need most.

Many people use forums as a primary source of information when it comes to researching for reports, eBooks, products and mores. Browse through several high traffic forums in your niche and pay attention to what questions people are asking. You will likely find several key questions about your topic being asked repeatedly by different people. These hot topic questions can be prime content for a special report.

(You will also find a lot of research information in the answers provided on the forums.

- II. Research** – Keyword research can help you determine your market for your product. You may wonder why you need to do keyword research for a report intended to be a download rather than web content. You'll be pulling strategic phrases from your special report for your sales page, blog posts, site content and social media postings you use to promote it, so the wisest thing to do is optimize your report for keywords. If you are already optimizing your website for certain keywords, you can likely use the same ones in the report. You may, however, need to do some keyword research specifically for the report.
  
- III. Amazon** – Amazon.com can be one of your biggest finds as a source for research. Head to the book section and type in your general topic. Look through the titles pertaining to your topic or niche. Check the magazines as well. Browse through any that allow you to peek inside and look at chapter headings or article titles. Print magazines do a lot of research to ensure they are on top of the trends. If you see a theme or topic repeatedly, it's a great sign your topic has an audience. At the same time, if you don't find anything in the ballpark, you may want to go back to brainstorming ideas.  
  
Some topics are so narrow you won't find an entire book on the idea, but generally, if it's hot, someone is publishing print items about it.
  
- IV. EBay** – Much like Amazon, EBay is a great source of what's selling and what's not. Keep an eye on auction products within your niche and see if they are receiving lots of bids or not.

## Outlining Your Special Report

Before you begin to write your special report, you need to make an outline. No need to worry about the Roman Numerals and proper placement of your ABC's and 123's, but if you want to write clearly and concisely, you need to begin by making a plan. Start with your hot topic. Ideally this should be a common problem without an obvious solution for your target market. After all, the point is for YOU to provide them with the solution.

The best problem to solve is one with enough depth so you can't completely solve it in a simple 10-page report, but one where you can offer some useful tips the reader can put into place right away, yet be intrigued enough to check out your website or your upsell product. You always want to include some honest, helpful information in a special report, but leave your readers hungry for more. Your report is a teaser to show you have the goods to be useful to its readers in the future.

Outlining doesn't need to be complicated. Lay out your introduction, your top three to five points and your conclusion. Then go back and break each point down into details, line by line. You don't need a special format, full sentences, grammar or even proper spelling for this step.

No one will ever see your outline - it serves as a guide to keep you on track. That's it! You can create an outline for your report in a word processing program, on paper or with a mind-mapping software program. It doesn't matter what you use. The outline is meant to help you get your thoughts straight.

By breaking each point down into several details, you'll find much of the writing process is finished. When you begin your actual document, the details will lead in logical progression from one point to the next. If you are stuck, try asking the question "Why?" "Why does the reader want to know/do/ask/say?" Another good kick-start question is "Now what?" After you make a point and explain it completely, ask yourself, "Now what does the reader do?" What is the next step? That step should be your next main point in your outline.

The number of points you use depends on the length of your article- and vice versa! If you have six main points of interest, you will have a longer article than you will if you have three main points. Don't belabor a point just to create a longer document. Say what needs to be said and move on. Above all else, write something your reader will find interesting to read.

Once you have your outline finished, read through it carefully, looking at the flow of the report. Does each point lead naturally into the next one? Does everything fit together under your topic or are there things better suited in a different report? You shouldn't try to address too many issues in a single report. It's better to pare it down and keep it clear, rather than pouring too much information into one document. If your reader feels overwhelmed or confused, they aren't going to move on to your upsell- whether it is a teleseminar, coaching, an e-book or a physical product.

It you aren't used to writing longer documents, it may be tempting to skip the outlining process and assume you can just "wing it." Don't do it. Taking the time to create a detailed outline before you begin will save you a great deal of time and frustration once you begin writing the report.

To help you see how easily you can create an outline, even a detailed outline, we will create one here as an example. For the purposes of this report, we will create an outline for a special report on how to use article marketing to promote a website.

Article marketing can be explained in a straightforward manner. You write an article about some aspect of your business or industry and publish it to online article directories, e-zines and other spots where people look for information for their newsletters, blogs and email campaigns.

It's plain to see article marketing in a nutshell isn't going to fill the needs of a special report. Instead of simply explaining what it is, use your outline to make a list of the different components needed to write a quality article that will generate page views and publication by other webmasters.

## **Sample Outline for Special Report on Article Writing**

**TITLE:** Five Easy Steps to Article Writing

### **I. What is Article Marketing?**

- A. Article Marketing involves writing articles to be submitted to content sites for promoting your business.
- B. Article marketing is quick, easy and cost effective way to drive traffic to your website
- C. Article marketing allows you to have permanent links spread across the Internet

### **II. Before You Write**

- A. Choose a topic you can easily explain in three to five paragraphs
- B. Do keyword research to optimize your article

1. Use online keyword research tools to ensure people are searching for your topic
2. Use your keywords in your headline, first and last paragraphs
3. Don't stuff keywords. Quality content is most important thing

C. Create an outline for your article

1. Outline can be as simple as three-four word phrases per line
2. Outline 2- 3 main points for article

### **III. Writing the Article**

A. Create a compelling title

1. Title should use keywords
2. Title should catch attention
3. The title should run from five to seven words
  - a) 5 - 7 words is typical, but not a hard and fast rule
  - b) Titles with "How to" or "Easy Steps" are extremely effective

B. Each main point has separate paragraph

1. more than one paragraph if necessary
2. keep paragraphs short- four to five sentences average
3. Vary sentence length so article doesn't sound choppy/ too long and confusing

C. End with conclusion summarizing the article

D. Proofread the article carefully

E. Take advantage of resource box to provide short bio and link to site.

### **IV. Submit Completed Article to Online Directories**

As you can see from this quick outline, some points are more detailed while others are simplistic, each point leads into the next and the outline follows a consistent form and topic. This outline was created in less than ten minutes, but will save as much as 30 minutes or more when writing the article.

**Tip:** The outline above also offers some excellent tips you can use when writing your special report. Following a general outline similar to this example will help you write your report in a clear, concise format. It will save time and help you create a better product in the end.

## Writing Your Report

There are a few simple tricks to help you produce the best report. These points were actually introduced in the outline sample above, but they're important, so we'll touch on them a bit more in detail once more here.

### Titles/ Subtitles

Your title is critical to the success of your report. A title needs to grab the attention of the reader or they won't bother reading the rest of the report. Effective titles aren't always about catchy cute phrasing or buzzwords. Researched keywords should definitely be used in your title, but as part of a strong headline, announcing the subject matter of the report.

People love to read "how to" type reports or steps to success kinds of titles. It's important, however that your report delivers what your title advertises. If your title says "7 Steps" your special report should have seven key points - no more, no less. If your title says "How to" do something, your report should indeed teach your reader how to do something.

Using subtitles in your report is also important. They help break up large blocks of text, which can appear overwhelming to a reader. They also help to categorize your writing into bite-sized packets of information, making your report easy to understand.

Paragraphs should be kept reasonably short. Each paragraph should express a single thought, or extremely related thoughts. If your paragraph contains more than five or six sentences, you should try to break it into two separate paragraphs.

To keep your report from sounding choppy make sure you vary the lengths of your sentences. Avoid long, run-on sentences as well. Long, rambling sentences get confusing for a reader. You don't want anyone to have to stop and begin again in order to understand what you are saying. Keep each sentence clear and complete.

Pay attention to your word choices in your document. Although you may be tempted to use technical words or industry specific jargon, it's better to avoid it. People will be far more impressed with your writing if they can understand it easily than if they need to pull out a dictionary to follow along.

Finally, make sure your report contains links to your website or sales page. Many people choose to place a link at the bottom of each page of the report. Other people like to include an introduction at the beginning and then a website promotion at the end.

## **Editing Your Special Report**

When you finish your first draft of your special report, you'll feel its time to celebrate. Give yourself a pat on the back, but then it's time to realize the work is far from finished.

Welcome to the joys of editing. It's important to put your document away for awhile before you begin the editing process. In fact, you may want to wait a day or two before you start to edit. The editing process can be difficult. After all, you sweated over every word and this is possibly the longest document you've written - at least since college!

The bottom line is this. Yes, they are your words, but they will be much more effective once you add a little polish and shine.

You can start the editing process with the spell checker in your word processing program, but don't expect that tool to do the full job for you. Spell checkers will catch the most obvious spelling errors and some grammar errors as well, but it's important to know this. Not every error your spell checker highlights, nor will every suggested answer it offers, be correct. You need to follow the basic rules of punctuation and grammar to edit your report properly.

### ***Read Out Loud***

One effective way to edit your report is to read it out loud. When you hear your words, it is easier to find the places where it sounds jumbled, choppy or just plain confusing. There is another benefit to reading your work out loud.

When you read, especially your own words, your eyes will automatically correct mistakes and you may not even notice them. Studies have been done where every fourth or fifth letter in a paragraph has been replaced with symbols and participants could actually read the text almost as easily as they could when the text was written correctly. Imagine, then, how easy it is to miss an incorrect word or a misplaced comma when you simply read the text on a screen.

### ***Read it Backwards***

Another trick to help catch spelling errors is reading the document backwards. This will force you to look closely at individual words, as your mind cannot assume the rest of the sentence and gloss over the errors.

### ***"That"***

Use the find feature in your word processing program to search for the word "that." We often use the word "that" far more than is actually necessary. Find each instance of the word "that" and see if the sentence reads properly without it. If it does, delete the word for a smoother, more professional document.

### ***"But" "However" and "Therefore"***

Again, use the search feature for these three words at the beginning of your sentences. It is easy to over-use these three conjunctions. Try to avoid starting sentences with these words.

Careful editing will help your finished report easier to read and look professional. If editing isn't your strong suit, it is definitely worth spending the small amount of money it costs to hire a professional editor.

## **Delivering Your Special Report**

Once your report is finished, all the next step is to make it available to your clients and prospects. It works out best if you convert the document to a PDF file. If you don't have the capability to convert to PDF with your word processing program, several online websites will do so at no cost. PDF documents are preferable because anyone can open them with a free copy of Adobe Reader. Adobe Reader comes pre-installed on most computers and is a free download for anyone who doesn't have it.

Once you have your report converted to PDF, you simply create a file on your server and upload the special report to that file. You can upload the file the using a FTP application- the same way you upload pages to your website. If you are giving away your special report, you simply provide a link to the file on your sales page or your blog or anywhere else you want your special report to be available.

If you are selling your special report, the shopping cart application you use to charge your customer can re-direct your client to your download link after their purchase is completed. Everything is handled automatically, so you don't need to do anything other than monitor the link to make sure it is working properly.

## **Marketing Your Special Report**

You're in the home stretch now! You've researched your topic, outlined your report and written it. You've proofread the material carefully and made all the necessary changes. You've converted the file to a PDF document. You have it uploaded to your server, ready to download and your payment methods are all in place. The only thing left to do is market the report.

You can market your special report the same way you do your other marketing.

- Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are excellent resources to market your product. You can provide links to your download page on your social media profile
- Include the link for your download in the signature line of your emails
- Blog about your report and make it available in the sidebar of your blog
- Include the link when you comment on blogs and forums
- Write articles and submit them to article directories. Include your link in the resource box
- Advertise in e-zines with articles including your link
- Send out an email blast to your mailing list
- Include your special report in joint venture giveaway programs

- Create an affiliate program to sell your special report

Special reports are an excellent way to promote your business and sell your products. They are easy to create and take only a few hours of your time. They can create passive ongoing income. They can build your mailing list and drive traffic to your site. If you aren't using special reports as an important weapon in your marketing arsenal, the only question left is, "Why not?"

Warmly,

*Melissa Ingold*

The Internet Marketing Sweetie

### **"Get Your FREE Giveaway Reports Success Kit!"**

- 4 Easy-to-Follow Video Tutorials
- The Complete Workshop Blueprint
- Printable Reference Guide
- Handy Swipe File
- Exclusive Q & A with Alice Seba
- Mp3 Audios of the Workshop
- Resource Guide
- Giveaway Reports Toolbox



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