A Structure for Writing Articles

By Roger Chevalier

As I look back on the 21 articles I have published in the *Performance Improvement* journal, I realize there is a structure that guides the way I approach each topic. Perhaps sharing this structure will encourage others to publish what they have learned for their fellow ISPI members. You may decide to bypass some of the steps, but understand there are probably trade-offs.

- Pick a topic that interests you and has value to others in ISPI.
- Identify journals that have published articles on similar topics; start with ISPI but also look for other journals that have published articles related to your topic.
- Visit the websites of those journals and download their author guidelines; for the *Performance Improvement* journal, visit [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)
- Review articles from those journals that have published articles on topics related to your topic.
- Research the subject; identify other written works that will add credibility for what you will say; be sure to reference the original work of these authors so that you can be “standing on the shoulders of giants” (Sir Isaac Newton).
- Develop an outline for the article; your goal should be to share your ideas in a format that others can easily read and understand; too many articles appear to have been written to impress rather than inform others.
- Have others from your target audience review the article outline.
- Write a draft of the article following the publication guidelines.
- Develop a presentation of the article for a local professional group.
- Present to a local ISPI, ATD, SHRM, or other local professional organization.
- Recd questions and feedback learned during these presentations.
- Revise the article taking into account what you learned as you presented your article.
- Have the revised article reviewed by professors if you are a student or by other performance improvement professionals.
- Prepare your final draft, add an informal copyright (such as Copyright 2021 by Roger D. Chevalier) and submit the article for publication.

My best articles are ones that start with an idea, structure that idea with a model, and present a tool for putting the idea into action. Perhaps the best example of this is my 2003 article that updated Tom Gilbert’s behavior engineering model. My final
draft of that article and several of my other articles can be downloaded at http://www.aboutiwp.com/articles.htm.

Articles can be used as building blocks for a book. With a few adjustments you can align the various articles into book chapters. There is very little in my book, A Manager’s Guide to Improving Workplace Performance, that didn’t appear first as an article.

Articles are the cheapest form of marketing that you can do. Your ideas are sent to thousands of others in our field for free. Readers are exposed to your ideas and can make an informed decision as to whether to hire you. My articles have been the starting point for many professional relationships and perhaps your articles will do the same for you.

About the Author

Dr. Roger Chevalier, CPT, is an independent performance consultant who specializes in integrating training into more comprehensive performance improvement solutions. He presently consults with various companies and government agencies within the United States and around the world. Roger was selected by ISPI as the 2016 Honorary Life Member for his professional achievement. With over 30 years of experience in performance improvement, Roger is the former director of certification for ISPI, a former vice president of Century 21 Real Estate Corporation’s Performance Division, and a former training director for the U.S. Coast Guard’s west coast training center. He can be reached at rdc@sonic.net.