

In her quick-witted, conversational style, Jill Pertler provides a step-by-step process for self-syndication. Packed with practical information and useful tips on topics like finding and approaching newspapers, building relationships with editors, self-promotion, organization, resources and getting paid. It's all here.

## **The Do-It-Yourselfer's Guide to Self-Syndication**

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at  
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4693.html?s=pdf>



# THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER'S GUIDE

## TO SELF-SYNDICATION

*Using Secrets, Shortcuts, Strategies & Psychology to Get Your Column in Print*



**BY: JILL PERTLER**

Copyright © 2010 Jill Pertler

ISBN 978-1-60910-181-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.



*in conjunction with*  
Booklocker.com, Inc.  
2010

# **THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER'S GUIDE TO SELF-SYNDICATION**

## **Table of Contents**

Chapter 1: My story.....	1
Chapter 2: Syndication basics.....	7
Chapter 3: Column basics.....	12
Chapter 4: Why (self) syndication? <i>Long-term goals</i> .....	24
Chapter 5: Compensation considerations .....	29
Chapter 6: Getting a headshot .....	34
Chapter 7: Finding publication sources .....	51
Chapter 8: Approaching your sources.....	61
Chapter 9: Relationship building after you press “send”.....	69
Chapter 10: The business end: .....	80
Chapter 11: Time management:.....	89
Chapter 12: Other opportunities for exposure and promoting your column .....	95
Chapter 13: Miscellaneous - Copyright, vacations, fans and more.....	113
Chapter 14: Resources .....	123

# 4.

## Chapter 4

### Why (self) syndication? *Long-term goals*

**B**efore ever syndicating your column, you need to know why you want (dare?) go down this treacherous road. What do you hope to accomplish? Are your goals monetary? Are you working to establish a fan/reader-base? Is a column part of a bigger platform you are building? Will you use the column to establish yourself as an expert in a certain area? Build on a secondary business? Are you looking for fame and fortune? Have you always liked the name Erma? Your goals for the column will impact the way you approach and work with publication sources, so do some soul-searching, and get a straight view on where you are coming from and why.

It seems like an obvious goal choice: a syndicated column should earn you money. We all need to buy groceries. The significant feature of a

syndicated column over a traditional article is that you have the potential to be paid over and over for one 600-word essay. Ka-ching! I like the sound of them bananas! Being paid is a great thing. I opt for it whenever I can and money was definitely part of my goals when I decided to syndicate my column.

I have found, however, that not every newspaper has money in its budget to pay columnists. This is a sad, real-world truth. A happy, real-world truth is that the rewards of a syndicated column don't have to come solely in the form of a paycheck. There are many benefits to writing a column and lots of them can lead to a money trail. It just may not be a direct trail; that is, you may gain business and income because you write your column, but not directly from newspapers paying you to write that column. Sounds complicated, but it isn't, really.

A column can help you establish a fan or reader-base. If people read your words week after week, they come to know you – and hopefully like you. When you publish your book, guess who is going to be first in line to buy it? You've got it, your faithful readers. If you already have a book out there, your column can draw readers to it.

A column can establish you as an expert on a certain topic or help you build your platform. You write about home remodeling projects. People read your advice and use it themselves. Pretty soon, your expertise is recognized and you are asked to speak (for a fee) at the home and garden show. Someone sees you at the garden show and you are asked to be a guest on a local morning cable talk show and this leads to a radio interview. Your success there leads to more radio and TV appearances throughout your state – and beyond. And to think that it all started with your column.

A column can serve as free advertising space to help build a secondary business. In addition to my syndicated column, I have a copywriting and marketing business that I run with a partner who is a graphic designer. I note this information in my bio at the end of each column, with an invitation to readers to check out my website, which

*Jill Pertler*

showcases many of the marketing projects my business partner and I have completed over the years. Readers see this, and hopefully think of me when they have the need to create a brochure, annual report or newsletter. If I were to take out an ad in each of the papers that runs my column each week, we'd be talking thousands of dollars. I get all this exposure at no cost.

Some people write a column because they are looking for fame and fortune. This was not one of my goals, but it is something that can come out of the whole process of gaining a fan-base. (And it is sort of fun when strangers see you at the supermarket and point and whisper and you know it's not because your zipper is down or that you have a piece of spinach stuck between your teeth.)

Be prepared. Because you will have a photo that accompanies your column (more on that later) people – strangers – will recognize and approach you. Some may even feel like they know you. When this happens, it can be intimidating and overwhelming. Many writers (me included) are much more comfortable hiding behind their words, not speaking in public (to strangers, nonetheless). But, once you get used to it, having people approach you because they enjoy your work can also feel flattering, humbling and downright amazing.

While a syndicated column has a potential for fortune and fame, I believe a fair amount of passion has to be at its base. Some of your rewards have to be intrinsic. For me, it is like knowing that my heart is beating or that I have to breathe. My passion for writing is just there. I don't have to summon it from deep within. It just is.

I've always wanted to write a column. I've always wanted to have people read my words. That passion is my starting point.

Do I want money in my bank account? Sure I do. But, my main reason for writing is to see my words in print. It's hard to describe without sounding like a starving artist. I get off on having people read my words. I really get off when they like what they read. Paychecks? Yeah, they've started to come in, but readers are the real reason why I write.

*The Do-It-Yourselfer's Guide to Self-Syndication*

In all honesty, a syndicated column is tough business. I wouldn't advise getting into it simply for the cash. There has to be more.

The cash may come eventually – and I think it is more likely to come for those who write out of passion. If you love what you are doing, keep doing it. Money is likely to follow passion, but it doesn't often work the other way around.

Your reasons for wanting to syndicate a column will be personal, and can only be decided by you. But, this is something you should think about – honestly. Why, really, do you want your face, words and name out there? For most of us, there is more than one answer to this question. For me, it's a little bit about money, a little bit about self-promotion and a lot about the passion of having others read my words. Thinking about your own personal whys can impact your overall approach as well as the way you look at your outcomes and successes.

Have a pen and paper handy when you do your soul-searching and jot down your thoughts. Assess your goals as well as your passion. Both are important. They should work to balance each other (in the best of circumstances). Passion for writing is good; and it's even better when accompanied by real-world goals. You can set your goals based on income that your column brings in, but just as important (and rewarding)



*It is sort of fun when strangers see you at the  
supermarket and point and whisper and you know it's  
not because your zipper is down or that you have a  
piece of spinach stuck between your teeth.*



*Jill Pertler*

might be setting goals involving number of newspapers that publish the column, overall circulation of the column, speaking engagements you receive as a result of the column and/or an increase in jobs and income from a secondary business that you “advertise” each time your column is printed.

Make your goals short-term (one month, three months, six months) and long term (one year, five years). If you only focus on the five-year goal, you may feel discouraged, and it may start to feel unattainable. It’s important to see the small picture as well as the big one.

### **Measuring your progress**

When I first started syndicating my column, it was distributed only in my home state of Minnesota. I got a large map of the state, framed it and hung it right next to my computer. Each time a new paper emailed to let me know they wanted to use my column, I placed a small round sticker on the map where the newspaper was located. On the days when I felt discouraged, and perhaps questioned the whole self-syndication labyrinth, I only needed to look up at the map and the growing group of little round stickies to remind myself that not only was I headed for success – I was already there.

Goals are good, and they can help you see progress over time. Self-syndication can be a gradual process that’s completed in baby steps. Keeping track of your goals helps you see those tiny steps and gives you knowledge that you really are moving forward, and that’s exactly the direction you want to be going.

In her quick-witted, conversational style, Jill Pertler provides a step-by-step process for self-syndication. Packed with practical information and useful tips on topics like finding and approaching newspapers, building relationships with editors, self-promotion, organization, resources and getting paid. It's all here.

## **The Do-It-Yourselfer's Guide to Self-Syndication**

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at  
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4693.html?s=pdf>