

Take Time for Titles

Abstract

In "Take Time for Titles," I talk about the importance of taking time to craft effective titles and provide a number of examples. In "June JOE," I highlight articles dealing with research as a topic in and of itself; with not only knowing your audience, but also using that knowledge to actually inform your outreach methods; and with the role of stories in Extension work.

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Take Time for Titles

One of the "Tips for Writing for the *Journal of Extension*" <http://www.joe.org/pdf/joe-write.pdf> is, "Develop an effective title, one that's brief, that 'catches the eye,' and that indicates the content of your article."

More authors should take this tip to heart. More authors should take time to craft effective titles. It increases the likelihood that their articles will be read by more readers, and it's a good writing "best practice."

Here are some examples of articles with effective titles.

In this issue, among others are: "Whatever It Takes: A Comparison of Youth Enrollment Trends in the 4-H Livestock and Non-Livestock Programs" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/rb2.php>; "Popcorn and a Movie—Opening Diversity Conversations Across the State" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/iw1.php>; and "LEGO Parts Organization—UGH!!!" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/tt9.php>.

From the April issue, there's "It's the Latest, It's the Greatest, It's [Financial Education at] the Library" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013april/iw4.php> and the indisputably eye-catching "Caught with Your Plants Down? There's an App for That!" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013april/tt3.php>.

But good titles aren't a recent phenomenon. Among the effective titles I recall from past issues are:

"More Than Cows & Cooking: Newest Research Shows the Impact of 4-H"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2002august/a6.php>; "Why They Come, Why They Go, and Why They Stay:

Factors Affecting Volunteerism in 4-H Programs" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2003august/rb5.php>; and

"Understanding What Rocks Their World: Motivational Factors of Rural Volunteers"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2009december/a3.php>.

See what I mean? While it's not always appropriate that a title be funny, it's always appropriate that it be interesting and arresting. So spare some time to come up with a title that both reflects the contents of your article and "catches the eye."

June JOE

Research as a topic in and of itself is the focus of several articles in the issue. We have "Using Mixed-Mode Contacts in Client Surveys: Getting More Bang for Your Buck"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/a1.php> (another effective title, this one with the "eye catcher" at the end) and "Using R-project for Free Statistical Analysis in Extension Research"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/tt3.php>. And "Research Use by Cooperative Extension Educators in New York State" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/a2.php> takes a different tack, discussing the extent to which Extension staff use research.

Three Features deal with the importance of not only knowing your audience, but also using that knowledge to actually inform your outreach methods: "Using Stakeholder Needs Assessments and Deliberative Dialogue to Inform Climate Change Outreach Efforts"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/a3.php> ; "Researching and Communicating Environmental Issues Among Farmers and Ranchers: Implications for Extension Outreach"

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/a4.php> ; and "Reaching New Forest Landowner Audiences: Impacts of Wisconsin's Learn About Your Land Program" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/a5.php> .

And stories are given their due in "Improving Extension Programs: Putting Public Value Stories and Statements to Work" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/tt1.php> and "Assessing Program Impact With the Critical Incident Technique" <http://www.joe.org/joe/2013june/tt2.php> .

The June issue is indeed yet another good one.

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