

## [Client Development: Really Important Tips on Writing Articles](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 20th, 2015

As you likely know, I wrote a column for [Roads and Bridges](#) magazine for 25 years. I have told the story here many times.

I was speaking at an industry event and when I walked off the stage I was approached by a man who said he was the editor of Roads and Bridges magazine and he asked if he could interview me.

In possibly the fastest and most important thinking I ever did, I responded:

Instead of interviewing me once, why don't you have me write a monthly column for your magazine.

Thankfully he agreed and within a month or so I published my first Law: The Contractor's Side column. I have no idea how long they will still be available on line, but I can search my name on the Roads and Bridges website and still find some of my columns.



Every quarter the magazine did a survey of the most read articles/columns and every quarter my Law: The Contractor's Side was the most read. I think the contractors were interested in legal issues that might impact their business.

If you ever get a chance, write a column or article for an industry publication. I think you will find it to be the best return for the least investment of time. But, there are some really important tips when you write.

1. Do not try to overtly sell your services in the article. If readers think you are trying to market yourself or your firm, they will turn you off. Instead try to educate readers.

2. Don't write in lawyer speak. Write for businessmen and women.
3. Don't make the article too long. Business readers don't want to know the history of Swiss Watch Making. They just want to know the time. My columns were around 675 words all on one page in two columns.
4. Demonstrate your industry knowledge. Only a few readers will be able to judge your legal skills, but almost all readers will be able to judge your industry knowledge.
5. Pick a title for the article that someone in the industry doing a Google search would find.
6. If you are writing about litigation, your business readers are more interested in how to avoid the litigation.
7. If you write about a case, explain what might have been done differently, either how the dispute could have been avoided, or how the side you care about might have done better.
8. If the article will both be in hard print and on-line make sure the on-line version is easy to read on a computer, tablet or even a phone.
9. Put a link to the article on LinkedIn, Twitter, Google Plus and other social media sites.
10. If you write a column like I did, consider printing a yearly review with your 12 columns.

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, [www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).