

# NATP AUTHOR GUIDELINES



## **Reader Profile**

The NATP *TAXPRO Journal* and the *TAXPRO Monthly* are published by the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP), and are written specifically for association members.

Around 20,000 professionals currently belong to NATP. Members represent the tax profession in the following areas:

Individual.....	54%	Attorneys.....	1%
Enrolled Agents.....	32%	Financial Planners.....	4%
CPAs.....	15%		

## **Editorial Concept**

The intent of both publications is to inform members of current trends and developments within the tax preparation profession. Since their levels of expertise range from relatively inexperienced to highly adept, our goal is to publish a wide variety of articles that focus on practical situations and applications, and yet maintain a broad level of appeal.

These professionals have no interest in academic studies, research reports, theoretical discussions or highly technical material. They do, however, appreciate articles that point out the opportunities and/or set-backs in the areas being discussed.

Such articles might include “how-to” approaches on practice management, assisting clients, increasing their bottom-line, applying the tax code, diversifying a tax practice, increasing tax knowledge, marketing a business, or negotiating with the IRS.

We encourage writers to submit material that focuses on approaches to the treatment of unusual tax problems, or service-oriented articles that offer hands-on advice to our readers. These are most useful when based on the author’s own experience.

In addition to articles of this nature, the *Journal* will contain six or seven regular departments. These will feature short articles dealing with more topical issues such as industry trends, view points, and IRS updates. The *Monthly* typically features only one practice management article per edition.

## **Choosing a Subject Matter**

When choosing a subject, keep in mind that you should only write about the topics you know best. Members are interested in reading more on the following:

Roth IRAs	Consolidations, Mergers & Acquisitions	Office in Home
Liabilities	Bankruptcy & Insolvency	EA Status
Practice Management	Stress Management	Interim Reporting
Estate and Financial Planning	Tax Law Application	Insurance & Small Business
Auditing Issues	Offers in Compromise	Significant Others
Computers/Technology	Budgeting	Corporations
Accounting	Passive Activities	Collections
Pending Legislation	Client Representation	Partnerships
Professional Development	Amending Returns	Leases and Leasing
Small Business Practices	Extensions	Leadership
Pension Plans	Research Gathering	Volunteer Experiences
Government	Increasing Clientele	Meeting Needs for Future Generations
Marketing	Training Employees	Preparing for Tax Season
Consulting	Cafeteria Plans	Success Stories
Electronic Filing	Negotiating with the IRS	Case Studies
Professional Ethics	Divorce Issues	Web Marketing
Processing Procedures	Social Security Benefits	Trade Tips

## **Writing Style**

Proper organization is the most important key to writing a good article. By organizing your material and preparing an effective outline, you will eliminate some of the frustration usually involved in starting a new project. You will also be able to pinpoint the areas that may need researching to better support your ideas.

Once you have an outline on paper, you can begin your rough draft. It is not necessary to start with the introduction. Instead, begin with the easiest topic on your outline. Write down everything you know about the subject and then proceed to the next. Don't be too concerned about style, punctuation, and grammar for now. You can apply these later.

Once you have covered each topic on your outline, develop the first draft. Work on proper sentence structure, grammar, and style. Use the following three principles to help you in writing your first draft: (1) Use short words, sentences, and paragraphs. Avoid pretentious words, complicated terms, and technical jargon. (2) Write the way you talk, using the active voice. Instead of writing "the amendment was ratified by Congress," say "Congress ratified the amendment." (3) Use strong nouns, verbs, and phrases. For example, "Proposal bombs in Senate" sounds more exciting than "Proposal fails to win approval in Senate."

Next, go back and write the introduction. The opening paragraph should indicate exactly what the article is about and how an individual can benefit from reading it. Include any vital background information that pertains to your main theme. The final paragraph should mirror or summarize this, at the conclusion of the article.

Edit your manuscript a few days later. Define any weak areas and eliminate any irrelevant material. Cross out all the words that are not necessary. By doing so, you will make your article more concise and easier to read.

Here are some additional tips for more effective writing: (1) Avoid citations and footnotes. (2) Avoid lengthy discussions about the topic's background. (3) Write "punchy" lead paragraphs that will grab the reader's attention. (4) Never assume the reader knows as much as you do. Explain complicated items in finer detail. (5) Write a conclusion that sums up your major points and explains why the article should be of interest to the reader. (6) Submit sidebars that contain resources, references, or tips that relate to the topic.

## **Manuscript Requirements**

Although there are no length requirements, most feature articles in the *Journal* run around 1,500 to 2,500 words. We'll consider publishing anything longer than that in two parts. Departmental columns tend to be approximately 600 to 1,200 words. *TAXPRO Monthly* articles are about 800-1,000 words. Include a brief biographical sketch (approximately 100 words). Keep in mind that these are only guidelines. Write what you feel is necessary to efficiently cover the topic. When you have completed your manuscript, please e-mail it to [vcindyvb@natptax.com](mailto:vcindyvb@natptax.com) as a Microsoft Word attachment. Contact us if there is a problem with this, as other formats are acceptable.

## **Editorial and Review Process**

We assign deadlines to articles based on their anticipated date of publication. Normally, you will have six weeks to research your topic and write your manuscript. If you would like to submit an article at any time for review or consideration, we encourage you to do so, and we will contact you if we decide to use your article for one of our publications or on the website. Some of the things we look for when considering an article for publication include: (1) Originality and timeliness of topic; (2) Technical soundness and readability; and (3) Practicality and applicability.

We will carefully review your manuscript to determine whether it contains all of these elements. If it does not, yet we feel your article would be a worthy contribution to our publication, we will make every effort to assist you in revising it.

After the editing and review process, we will e-mail you a copy of your formatted article as it will appear in print. Please review it carefully and notify us of any essential changes by the date specified.

Manuscripts are accepted on a gratis basis. In turn, being published will provide name recognition for you. Brief advertising for your business is allowed in the biography, as well. In appreciation, we will send you ten complimentary copies of the issue in which your article appears.

If you have questions regarding your manuscript or our editorial policy, please contact Cindy Van Beckum at 800.558.3402, extension 1119 or at [vcindyvb@natptax.com](mailto:vcindyvb@natptax.com). Again, thank you for your interest in writing for NATP's award-winning professional tax publications. We hope this will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for you.