FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

In October 1932 the Bureau of Investigation began publishing the magazine *Fugitives Wanted by Police*. This publication marked the first time a list of fugitives was compiled and disseminated nationwide.

In 1935 the Federal Bureau of Investigation was created, and the magazine was renamed the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.* For over 80 years, it has featured articles written by law enforcement experts. The last printed copy was the December 2012 issue. At that time, the magazine reached an estimated 200,000 readers in over 150 countries.

In January 2013, the *Bulletin* became exclusively an online publication offering readers worldwide a more dynamic, expansive Web experience. As always, the *Bulletin* accepts articles on virtually any topic of interest to the criminal justice community. The magazine does not publish articles previously featured or currently under consideration by other magazines. The *Bulletin* does not accept articles that advertise products or services.

PREPARING ARTICLES

To better accommodate our revised online format, articles should contain approximately 1,200 to 1,500 words, or total about 4 to 5 pages, double-spaced. We will continue accepting longer articles based on the previous guidelines, approximately 2,000 to 3,500 words, for the time being, but longer articles may be published in two or more parts over a period of days.

For proper endnote citation format, authors should refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations,* 7th ed., by Kate L. Turabian. For grammar and style issues, authors should follow *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage.*

Author Guidelines

Bulletin staff members and FBI subject-matter experts judge articles according to relevance to the audience, factual accuracy, analysis of the information, structure and logical flow, style and ease of reading, and length. Personnel edit all manuscripts for length, clarity, format, and style.

Relevance to the Audience

The *Bulletin* provides a forum for information exchange throughout the criminal justice community. Readers consist mostly of midlevel to executive managers in agencies of various sizes worldwide.

These individuals have various levels of English language comprehension and reading abilities. Further, most of them have limited time for reading articles. Therefore, authors always should present material in clear, concise, and understandable terms, keeping several questions firmly in mind.

- Are readers familiar with my organization or profession?
- How much do readers know about my topic?
- Will readers find this information important?
- What do I want readers to learn from or do with this information?
- What can I do to make the article easy for readers to understand?

Authors should write with an appropriate tone, never talking down to readers, writing over their heads, or using inappropriate humor. They should avoid biased language (e.g., *he, manpower*), remain sensitive (e.g., *offender with paranoid schizophrenia,* not *paranoid schizophrenic*), and avoid clichés.

Factual Accuracy

Authors should support their articles with accurate, concise, and appropriate details, providing sufficient background information, detailed explanations, and specific examples. Also, they should limit jargon (i.e., technical or specialized language) and provide in-text explanations for any terms that readers might find unfamiliar or confusing.

Source citations must accompany facts, quoted or paraphrased ideas or works, and information generally not well known. Unlike newspapers and other commercial publications that regularly quote experts, the *Bulletin* prefers to paraphrase speakers, usually without naming them directly, then give credit to them in endnotes.

Analysis of the Information

Authors should analyze the information they provide, make appropriate recommendations for its use, and explain its benefits to readers. For example, an article on a new shift schedule could emphasize cost savings and improved morale.

Also, authors should check their articles for missing material or confusing elements and provide necessary clarification. To this end, a subject-matter expert, a grammarian, and someone unfamiliar with the topic could offer valuable assistance. Authors also should try reading their articles out loud to help uncover problem areas.

Structure and Logical Flow

Articles on worthwhile topics but without organization or a unifying theme generally do not receive favorable consideration. To develop a central thesis to guide the presentation, which helps to avoid such problems, authors should answer four questions.

1) Why am I writing this?

2) Who are my readers?

3) What do I want my readers to do?

4) Why should my readers care about this?

Answering these questions can help authors focus their thoughts, decide how much information they will require, and tailor documents to fit readers' needs. In turn, these answers will lead authors to their main point or central thesis.

Author Guidelines

Authors should begin their articles with an intriguing scenario, interesting statistic, fascinating fact, quotable quote, or some other attention-getting device. Next, authors will want to explain the article's content, why the material is important to readers, and how it will benefit them.

The specific strategy chosen for logical article construction largely will depend on the subject matter. In some cases, chronological order will prove appropriate. Articles that present topics readers will be receptive to may call for starting with a general thesis before supporting it with specific facts. However, when introducing subjects that readers might resist, authors may want to begin by citing specific evidence before revealing their general arguments.

Articles should feature a balanced approach of the topic. Authors should devote similar amounts of attention to all areas and cover opposing viewpoints. Then, a strong, carefully planned conclusion should wrap up the article (without introducing new information), restate the article's main points, give readers a sense of completion, and leave a lasting impression.

Style and Ease of Reading

Authors should maintain a straightforward, direct writing style, favoring concise language and avoiding unnecessary words (e.g., *to develop,* not *in order to develop*). Further, authors should write in active voice (e.g., *they developed the strategy,* not *the strategy was developed by them*), which conveys information directly, powerfully, and clearly.

The *Bulletin* generally prefers to publish articles in the third person (e.g. *the department employs 300 officers*)—a neutral vantage point. However, in other instances, the second person (e.g., *you may employ 300 officers*) or the first person (e.g., *we employ 300 officers*) prove appropriate.

Most important, authors should present their ideas in a positive manner, rather than pointing out only the negative aspects. Berating readers does little to endear authors or their topics to the very people they wish to reach with the message.

To further enhance readability, authors should avoid long sentences and paragraphs. Effective sentences generally contain fewer than 30 words and comprise no more than 2 lines. Authors should keep paragraphs as short as possible while addressing ideas completely.

Linking paragraphs together by using transitional words and phrases can help readers follow an article's flow and present a clear relationship between ideas. Finally, brief, informative, relevant, and parallel (i.e., using the same parts of speech) headings help to create logical sections and guide readers through the main points.

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Authors may submit a query letter with a detailed 1- to 2-page outline; however, this does not guarantee acceptance of any article. Those submitting completed manuscripts will be notified of the receipt of the material. Further, the *Bulletin* accepts full-face, passport-style photographs of authors, as well as images that visually depict subject matter. After reviewing queries or articles, *Bulletin* staff members will advise authors of acceptance or rejection.

The editor receives all materials at *leb@ic.fbi.gov*. For additional assistance, authors can contact *Bulletin* staff members at 703-632-1460.

Author Guidelines