



January 28, 2009

Dear Sample,

This letter is an invitation to be a founding Contributor to *The Mark*, Canada's new online forum for news and opinion.

The Mark is founded on the idea that thousands of credible Canadians have important things to say but cannot reach a national audience. Many have never tried to publish their ideas simply because they do not think of themselves as writers. Two million Canadians live abroad and have a deep understanding of the countries and organizations within which they live and work, yet no publication collects and shares their insights— until now. *The Mark* is launching the largest systematic writer recruitment campaign in Canadian history.

The Mark hand picks accomplished Canadians working in all professional fields, living in Canada and all over the world, and provides them with the tools and support to write short, smart articles to be read nationwide.

Our goals are (1) to create a network of 10,000 innovative Canadian thinkers and doers, and (2) to disseminate their ideas to 1-million readers every month.

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to be among the Founding Contributors. A wide range of extraordinary Canadians have already signed on: a UN negotiator in Africa, the Dean of a Canadian Law School, a nominee for the Nobel Prize in Literature, a PhD candidate at Oxford, a water management executive for a major US city, a man who fought to the Supreme Court and won, and many more.

At its core *The Mark* is a national movement to record Canadian ideas and propel the people behind them. It is an independent news publication that focuses on analysis and insists on bias, but is not ideologically oriented itself. For all the prominent Canadians who have signed on to participate as writers, advisors, managers and investors, *The Mark* is an opportunity to bring new voices, new opinions and new ideas to the national discussion.

Attached to this letter is a description of *The Mark* and how it can be used as a tool to communicate with the most exciting minds in the country.

Thank you for considering this invitation, we hope to add you to the growing roster of Contributors. I will follow up with you by phone in the coming days. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Warmest wishes,

Jeff Anders
CEO, *The Mark*



What is *The Mark*?

The Mark is Canada's daily online forum for news and opinion. Every day it publishes 10-20 two-sentence briefs of the day's most important news stories and associates related multimedia content to each summary: commentary and analysis written by subject matter experts; audio conversations and interviews with and between experts; video footage from conferences, speaker events and book launches; documentary films; links to other websites and more. Independent of the day's news, *The Mark* will also feature the ideas of 5-10 thought-leaders through written, audio and video pieces. *The Mark* is a digital meeting place for the exchange of ideas.

Why become a Contributor to *The Mark*?

The Mark is a free platform for credible Canadians to reach an influential and engaged audience. Prospective Contributors include every politician with a platform, author with a new book, academic or scientist with research; every entrepreneur with a great idea and business professional with industry insight; every celebrity with an important cause, student leader, union leader and NGO executive director; all are candidates to have a voice in the pages of *The Mark*.

Contributors can write as frequently or infrequently as they like. No obligation. Submit one short article to get inducted and then write whenever inspiration strikes. Cover your area of professional expertise or any other topic that inspires you. Break a news story, offer a different perspective, and make people laugh. Put your ideas down and send them in, our team of copy editors will review your work and send it back to you for approval before it is posted on the site.

For some Contributors, writing for *The Mark* means access: attend press conferences, secure back-stage interviews, and engage with industry leaders. Writing an article for *The Mark* is a valid reason to request a meeting with just about anybody.

The Mark maintains an array of technological tools to empower the Contributor. A host-your-own talk-radio tool allows you to assemble panel discussions that are broadcast and recorded for podcasts. You can email your articles to custom distribution lists and track who reads them. An algorithm directs readers back to your writing whenever it relates to a current news story or article. So your writing doesn't die the day after it is published; it lives on for posterity. Finally, every Contributor has a profile page that includes a bio, links to the Contributor's blog or other website, and, where applicable, a widget that offers readers the option to buy the Contributors' books or music.

Our media relations team pitches stories about Contributors to journalists and editors worldwide, and it works to get Contributors' articles re-published in newspapers, magazines and trade journals. Of course, you maintain full rights to your written work. *The Mark* encourages Contributors to publish their articles on their own blogs, repurpose them into a book, or sell them to other publications.

As a Founding Contributor, you will also have the opportunity to invite extraordinary Canadians from your own network. They will receive all the benefits of membership, thanks to you.

What do you need to do?

1. Accept this invitation
2. Choose the great Canadians you want to recommend to be Founding Contributors
3. Email us your professional bio and a high-resolution photograph of yourself

Congratulations, Canada looks forward to reading about you.



Who is behind *The Mark*?

Jeff Anders, CEO

Jeff started his career with five years at strategy consultancy Mercer Management. Later as an independent consultant, he was retained by Hewlett Packard in India to launch a team of local PhDs to perform marketing analytics for Western clients. Subsequently, he worked with a software provider in Beijing to raise capital and plan its international expansion. Jeff's first international engagement was as a volunteer in Kosovo, where he worked on economic reconstruction after the conflict there. Jeff holds a Bachelor of Commerce from McGill University, a MBA from MIT, and a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University.

Ali Rahnema, Publisher & COO

Ali has over fifteen years of experience in the media industry. He was a senior executive at The Globe and Mail for six years. During that time he held several positions including Vice President Strategy and Marketing and he had responsibility for all non-editorial components of globeandmail.com. Ali also served as Vice President, Marketing Communications, Consumer & Business at Bell Canada. He's the former Managing Director of the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, the industry's international trade organization, representing over 18,000 newspapers on five continents. Most recently, he held the role of Corporate Development Director at The Irish Times Group, where he led the Irish media group's digital strategy.

Joshua Knelman, Editor

Joshua served for four years at *The Walrus* magazine, as associate editor, fiction editor, and head of research. His writing has appeared in *Toronto Life*, *The National Post*, and *The Globe and Mail*, among others. Joshua has served on the National Magazine Awards judging committee for the last two years and is on the board of the international Summer Literary Seminars. He is the editor of *Four Letter Word*, a collection of fictional love letters, published in ten countries and translated into eight languages, featuring some of the most prominent writers in the world.



A Guide for Writers

Getting your article to *The Mark*

- Send your article to write@themarknews.com.
- Expect a confirmation from us immediately.
- An editor will be in touch within 1-3 days.

Conversational tone

- We encourage you to write in a conversational tone; write as you would debate and argue with your smartest friends.
- We believe that smart and witty writing is a great way to engage with readers.

Subject Matter

- *Topics*. Write about whatever moves, inspires or upsets you: your professional expertise, an inspiring person, a news item that jarred you, the charity you support, something that made you laugh or angry.
- What do you know that we don't? What doesn't the media report? You go to work every day and see trends, data and have conversations the rest of us aren't privy to. Intrigue and inform us.
- *Analysis*. Dig in. *The Mark* aims to get beyond the newswire and deliver insight.
- *Background*. In 700 words you don't have room for background context, so focus on analysis. Readers of *The Mark* are curious by nature and if they don't know the background, they know how to find it.
- *Expats*. You live abroad and "get" the country you work in. Educate us.
- *Factual Accuracy*. *The Mark* does not fact-check. Accuracy is your responsibility, and *The Mark* community will call you on inaccuracies.

Self-promotion vs. Ideas

- You have ideas and we want to hear them, but *The Mark* is not a library of advertorials.
- Talk about your industry sector, but not your company. Explore the policy issue, not your organization's platform or activities. Talk about film, not your upcoming movie.
- For shameless self-promotion, use your bio page. That's what it's there for.

Links and references

- *The Mark* aims to be a launching pad for the best content on the web, so include links to other great stuff, or at least reference what inspired you to write

Length

- 700 words or less. The shorter the better.
- Longer-form articles are accepted but categorized differently.

Bias

- Objectivity is for journalists. *The Mark* readers want your assessment, interpretation, and expectations related to any topic—they want your opinion.
- What you believe matters to us all.

Rights

- Contributors and *The Mark* have unrestricted rights to use the content published on the site. What this means is that you can republish it, sell it, or repurpose it in other ways. Use it however you like.

Images/Video

- Images and video add colour and texture to any story. Bring your article to life by including photos and links to YouTube videos. An article with a photo or video is far more likely to be read.
- Make sure that you have the right to use the photos you include or we won't be able to publish them.

Editing

- Our editors are tasked with keeping the writing on *The Mark* to a standard.
- Editors address spelling, grammar and structure, and try to do as little manipulation as possible.
- You have the right to final approval of your story before it is published on the site.

Unacceptable content

- There is no place on *The Mark* for hate. Articles that are slanderous, libelous or express anything resembling hate speech will not be published.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated. *The Mark* is a place for debate. Evaluate the ideas, not the person behind them.

Have Fun and Inform Us

The most important thing to remember is to have fun and write about what's burning up your mind this week. The country is looking forward to reading about what you're thinking. Thank you for writing for *The Mark*.