

Defense AT&L Magazine Author Submission Tips

Defense AT&L magazine receives many inquiries about how to compose an article that will have the best chance of being accepted for publication and need the least amount of editing. In addition to a careful read of the “Writers’ Guidelines in Brief” (elsewhere in these pages), here are a few additional suggestions:

DO NOT begin with a quote unless it is pithy, surprising, and from a truly famous speaker. (That means historical figures, Nobel laureates, and well-known literary authors—not management gurus.) The purpose is to spark curiosity or impart a historical perspective, not supply a secondhand patina of legitimacy. Starting with a quote is so overdone that it’s usually not a good idea.

DO NOT begin your article with a discussion of what your article is going to be about. This might make sense in a verbal presentation, but in a written piece, just get to the point.

DO NOT structure your article like a research paper (Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusion). *Defense ARJ* is a research journal; *Defense AT&L* is a magazine of feature articles and first-hand accounts.

DO NOT insert graphics or photos into your article. Send them as separate e-mail attachments.

DO NOT indent paragraphs. Skip a line between them.

DO NOT insert lengthy URLs into the text. A brief URL (i.e., short enough that someone could type it into a browser window from memory with ease) is permitted. Better yet is a brief instruction (e.g., “...is available via the Acquisition Community Connection website”).

DO NOT capitalize any word or phrase you regard as important. You’re not writing a mortgage document. It doesn’t matter if there is an acronym for the phrase. If it’s not a proper noun, it shouldn’t be capitalized. E.g., “test and evaluation” does not get caps, but “Office of the Secretary of Defense” does, because it’s the official name of a specific office.

DO NOT quote your boss. Or his/her boss. It’s obsequious. (If your boss wants to be a coauthor of the paper, fine. But there can be no more than five authors.)

DO NOT include reference citations. Quoting from previously published works is discouraged. (Brief quotes from published documents are fine if they are truly critical to the article.)

DO NOT include a “summary” section. If you’re summarizing what you’ve already said, you’re repeating it. Conclusions are acceptable, but summaries are redundant.

DO use your article to tell a story. Think of the other readers as your fellow acquisition professionals, sitting around trading stories and learning from each other.

DO write about failures and challenges, as well as successes. How you handled a problem is vastly more instructional than is the trumpeting of a success. Writing about a failure—even a mistake you made—shows confidence and openness.

DO include specific examples to back up your assertions, whether they be data, personal career anecdotes (program names expunged if need be), or events from history.

DO give your opinion *if* you back it up with evidence. Using first-person is OK!

DO be sure to include your e-mail address and a two-sentence bio (including your current title) at the end of the text in the same document.

DO supply relevant figures and high-resolution photos, each e-mailed as a separate attachment. (If you send photos, do include captions.)

DO feel free to supply a very brief blurb for the table of contents, describing your article in one or two sentences. (This may or may not be used, at the managing editor’s discretion.)

DO feel free to suggest callout quotes. (These may or may not be used, depending on space limitations.) 