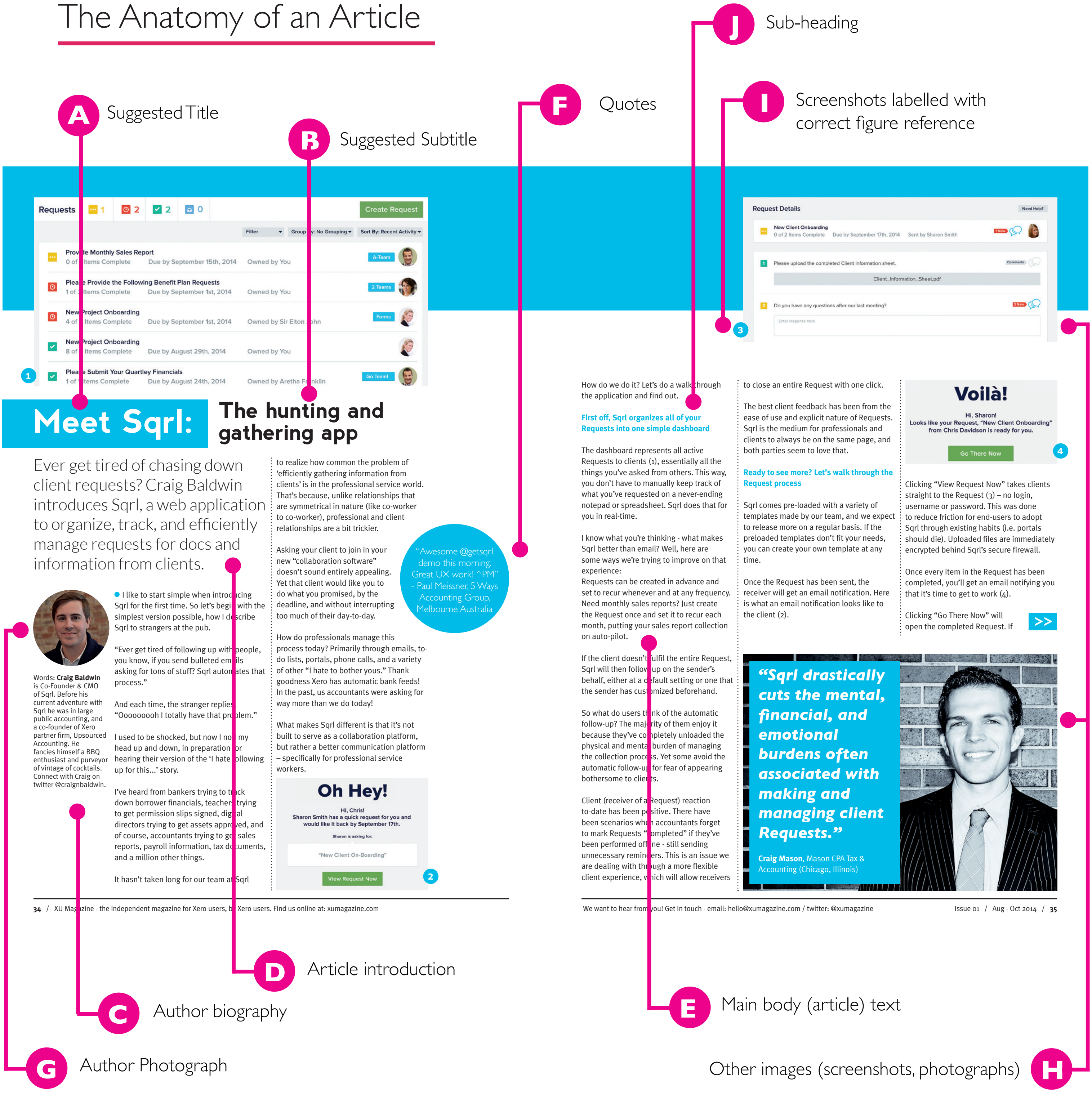
Editorial Guidelines

XU Magazine is the independent magazine by Xero users, for Xero users. We want the content to be the best that it can be. We want it to be both interesting and informative, but most importantly it needs to be Xero-centric.

With that in mind, it is necessary to have a few guidelines for the submission of articles to the magazine.

The Anatomy of an Article



Meet Sqrl: **The hunting and gathering app**

Ever get tired of chasing down client requests? Craig Baldwin introduces Sqrl, a web application to organize, track, and efficiently manage requests for docs and information from clients.

Words: **Craig Baldwin** is Co-Founder & CMO of Sqrl. Before his current adventure with Sqrl he was in large public accounting, and a co-founder of Xero partner firm, Upsourced Accounting. He fancies himself a BBQ enthusiast and purveyor of vintage of cocktails. Connect with Craig on twitter @craignbaldwin.

I like to start simple when introducing Sqrl for the first time. So let's begin with the simplest version possible, how I describe Sqrl to strangers at the pub.

"Ever get tired of following up with people, you know, if you send bulleted emails asking for tons of stuff? Sqrl automates that process."

And each time, the stranger replies, "Oooooooooh I totally have that problem."

I used to be shocked, but now I nod my head up and down, in preparation for hearing their version of the 'I hate following up for this...' story.

I've heard from bankers trying to track down borrower financials, teachers trying to get permission slips signed, digital directors trying to get assets approved, and of course, accountants trying to get sales reports, payroll information, tax documents, and a million other things.

It hasn't taken long for our team at Sqrl to realize how common the problem of 'efficiently gathering information from clients' is in the professional service world. That's because, unlike relationships that are symmetrical in nature (like co-worker to co-worker), professional and client relationships are a bit trickier.

Asking your client to join in your new "collaboration software" doesn't sound entirely appealing. Yet that client would like you to do what you promised, by the deadline, and without interrupting too much of their day-to-day.

"Awesome @getsqrl demo this morning. Great UX work! ^PM" - Paul Meissner, 5 Ways Accounting Group, Melbourne Australia

How do professionals manage this process today? Primarily through emails, to-do lists, portals, phone calls, and a variety of other "I hate to bother yous." Thank goodness Xero has automatic bank feeds! In the past, us accountants were asking for way more than we do today!

What makes Sqrl different is that it's not built to serve as a collaboration platform, but rather a better communication platform – specifically for professional service workers.

Oh Hey! Hi, Chris! Sharon Smith has a quick request for you and would like it back by September 17th. Sharon is asking for: "New Client On-Boarding" View Request Now (2)

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How do we do it? Let's do a walk through the application and find out.

First off, Sqrl organizes all of your Requests into one simple dashboard

The dashboard represents all active Requests to clients (1), essentially all the things you've asked from others. This way, you don't have to manually keep track of what you've requested on a never-ending notepad or spreadsheet. Sqrl does that for you in real-time.

I know what you're thinking - what makes Sqrl better than email? Well, here are some ways we're trying to improve on that experience:
Requests can be created in advance and set to recur whenever and at any frequency. Need monthly sales reports? Just create the Request once and set it to recur each month, putting your sales report collection on auto-pilot.

If the client doesn't fulfil the entire Request, Sqrl will then follow up on the sender's behalf, either at a default setting or one that the sender has customized beforehand.

So what do users think of the automatic follow-up? The majority of them enjoy it because they've completely unloaded the physical and mental burden of managing the collection process. Yet some avoid the automatic follow-up for fear of appearing bothersome to clients.

Client (receiver of a Request) reaction to-date has been positive. There have been scenarios when accountants forget to mark Requests "completed" if they've been performed offline - still sending unnecessary reminders. This is an issue we are dealing with through a more flexible client experience, which will allow receivers to close an entire Request with one click.

The best client feedback has been from the ease of use and explicit nature of Requests. Sqrl is the medium for professionals and clients to always be on the same page, and both parties seem to love that.

Ready to see more? Let's walk through the Request process

Sqrl comes pre-loaded with a variety of templates made by our team, and we expect to release more on a regular basis. If the preloaded templates don't fit your needs, you can create your own template at any time.

Once the Request has been sent, the receiver will get an email notification. Here is what an email notification looks like to the client (2).

Voilà! Hi, Sharon! Looks like your Request, "New Client Onboarding" from Chris Davidson is ready for you. Go There Now (4)

Clicking "View Request Now" takes clients straight to the Request (3) – no login, username or password. This was done to reduce friction for end-users to adopt Sqrl through existing habits (i.e. portals should die). Uploaded files are immediately encrypted behind Sqrl's secure firewall.

Once every item in the Request has been completed, you'll get an email notifying you that it's time to get to work (4).

Clicking "Go There Now" will open the completed Request. If >>

"Sqrl drastically cuts the mental, financial, and emotional burdens often associated with making and managing client Requests."

Craig Mason, Mason CPA Tax & Accounting (Chicago, Illinois)

We want to hear from you! Get in touch - email: hello@xumagazine.com / twitter: @xumagazine

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Reference	Description
A	Articles should have a suggested title. Multiple suggestions are encouraged.
B	Articles may optionally be sent with a suggested subtitle. Multiple suggestions are encouraged.
C	The following should be given:- The author's first/last name and the full name of the company, as well as the names of any other contributors to the article. A short author biography written in the third person and be a maximum of 75 words.
D	The article should have an introduction, written in the third person.
E	The main body of text should be between 350 - 1,500 words. Please check with your XU Magazine contact to see which length is appropriate for your article. The article must not be a sales pitch and no advertising is allowed within the article.
F	Quotes are allowed within articles - a maximum of three, short and properly attributed. Twitter quotes are permissable, must include the quoted Twitter handle (profile user name). Please ensure you source permission to use quotes.
G	A photograph of the author should be supplied. This should be a minimum of 300dpi, CMYK, with a caption clearly identifying the author's name/company.
H	Any other images or screenshots supplied need to be of the same specification as the author photograph. They should be owned by you or copyright free. Any people or companies featured in the image should have a name supplied. Please use narration such as L-R top/bottom where appropriate.
I	If a screenshot relates to text, it should have a label (eg. Figure 1) which should be married to the relevant text.
J	Articles should include sub-headings where appropriate to the length of the article.

Other considerations

- Usually articles should not have been previously published or submitted elsewhere.
- A PDF of your article will not be made available.
- All articles should be submitted electronically. We cannot accept paper submissions.
- The editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed. All articles submitted for publication are subject to editing. The editors decision is final.