

RUSTY MONKEY



Writing your blog

The anatomy of a blog post

How to write a blog post everyone wants to read

TITLE

Reach more people, grow your audience and improve your ranking by reading our blogging tips.

SUMMARY

Everyone knows how important it is to post new content on your site regularly. But it's equally important to prioritise quantity over quality.

Posting lots of low-value content will only bog your site down with useless content no-one wants to read, and this will damage your readership as well as your search engine rankings.

INTRODUCTION

Instead, it's vital to get your content right every time, so that each post you create brings real value to your site, both in terms of SEO and in terms of the value you're bringing to your audience.

Include sub-headers

SUB-HEADER

Big blocks of text can be off-putting, so break your blogs up with sub-headers so that the reader can navigate through digestible sections.

It's also a great idea to use images to make your articles more visually appealing. Adding alt tags to your images is an easy way to get an SEO win.



IMAGE

Include lists

Properly formatted bullet point or numbered lists are great tools that help the reader digest your content, and they tick another SEO box.

- Break as much complex info as you can into list items
- This makes the info easier to read and remember
- And also scores SEO points

LIST

Add relevant internal and external links

Adding links to your article helps you reader to find [related content](#) so that they can do wider reading. It also helps to validate your content, in a similar way to citations on a [Wikipedia](#) page. If there are links from your content that support what you're saying, it makes your content feel more authentic and trustworthy.

LINKS

It's good practice to link to other pages on [your website](#) (internal) and also to content written by [other people](#) (external). Never include links just for the sake of it though - make sure they're relevant and adding value to your content.

Give people the option to share

Make it easy for people to share your articles by adding social media and copy link buttons to the page. Content sharing is one of the best ways to reach new people, and is also a good incentive to make sure your content is interesting / entertaining / useful enough for people to want to share it.



SHARING BUTTONS

**Getting your
content right**

Start with your audience

Valuable content has to be relevant to your audience. Think about the audience you want to attract. Think about the people who believe what you believe. Write for them.

The goal of your brand is to appeal to a specific audience. If you communicate with them in the right way, they will become loyal ambassadors for your brand. **Your blog is a part of your brand**, and therefore needs to perform the same task.

Remember that your aim is not to appeal to everyone. SEO techniques are great for getting your article into search engine results, but if you're attracting all the wrong people then those leads won't go anywhere.

Use SEO as a tool to get your article in front of the people you want to see it - the people who are asking certain questions, who have certain values and interests. Don't try to appeal to everyone.

Equally, make sure you're appealing to **someone**. Your content should be engaging and benefit-driven. Use your 'why' statement to tap into those values your audience holds dear. Ensure that every article you write ties into that message in some way.

Use Google AnswerBank

One of the best ways to improve visibility of your website is to get some of your content featured on Google's Answer Bank segment. This appears at Position Zero and is designed to immediately answer questions that people ask.

Research what kind of questions your target audience asks of Google, and try to answer those questions better than anyone else.

Provide real value

Don't make your articles all about you. Ensure you're bringing real value to your audience, in the form of information, entertainment or practical advice. Your audience will appreciate that you are giving them something for free, and this will improve their feelings about your brand, making them more likely to try your products or services.

Types of content

Evergreen content

Value-driven content that holds its value for a long period of time.

Evergreen articles are primarily designed to inform and/or entertain. They are typically longer than news articles (3,000+ words), and cover a topic in plenty of detail in order to bring the most value to your audience.

Evergreen articles are a great way to feature on Google's Answer Bank, as they can be tailored to answer specific questions being asked about your industry.

Evergreen content doesn't last forever - nothing does. No matter how relevant it was when you wrote it, this content will eventually go out of date. When it does, update it, or write a new version of it, in order to stay relevant.

When writing evergreen content, always keep the **value for the audience** at the forefront of your mind. This should take priority over SEO considerations. If no-one wants to read or share your article, it doesn't matter how much Google likes it.

News content

Content that informs your audience about something new that's happened in your business or industry

This kind of content is typically shorter (500-800 words), and will be a quick update on what's going on. You might want to announce a new contract, a new board member or a new product line. Whatever it is, remember that it's not all about you. Your audience will only engage with your content if it brings them value of some kind, so **lead with how your news will directly benefit them.**

**Come up with an
appealing topic**

Be relevant, be valuable

The whole purpose of your blog is to generate engagement, bring people to your website and get people to buy into your brand. If your content doesn't appeal to your target audience, you're going wrong somewhere!

The most important thing to remember when conceiving your article is your company's 'why' message. As with the rest of your brand, your article should reference this in some way. That's not to say you literally need to write 'We believe X' in every article, but ensure that your article resonates with that 'why' message.

Remember that you are writing for people who believe what you believe. In order to get their support, you need to tap into that belief, even in your articles. So if your 'why' statement is to give consumers a greener choice, ensure your articles reinforce this message and highlight your commitment to this endeavour.

If you need some inspiration for article topics, try these tips:

- Find out what other people are writing. Stick some relevant key phrases into [answerthepublic.com](https://www.answerthepublic.com) and see what's out there.
- Find out what's trending. Use [Twitter Moments](#) to see what other people are talking about right now. There's no shame in jumping on a bandwagon if it's getting traction.
- Think about how your product or service relates to [Zeitgeist](#) topics such as mental health awareness, the environment or human rights. You may want to steer clear of overtly political stances, but there are still ways to tap into these massive topics.
- Follow people and pages in your industry to keep up with their [news](#). If your competitor posts a high-ranking post about a product you also produce, make sure you write your own version - and make it even better.

**Do your
research**

Be authoritative, be accurate

There is no meaningful policing of the truthfulness of content on the internet (fake news, anyone?) but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to police it ourselves.

Once you've settled on a topic, spend a few hours researching it as thoroughly as you can. Use [Google](#) and [answerthepublic.com](#) to see what other people are writing about your topic, and use [Wikipedia](#) and other relatively trustworthy sources to validate all your claims.

Don't publish anything unless you're sure it's true, because audiences can be unforgiving if they feel like you're misleading them.

Useful websites for checking your facts:

- [Wikipedia](#)
- [Fullfact.org](#)
- [Snopes.com](#)
- [Factcheck.org](#)

As much as possible, [link](#) to external pages that back up your claims. The best sites to link to are obviously those that are fact-checked themselves, so avoid anything that looks like it might be click-bait. Peer-reviewed articles and journals are usually the safest bet, although many require a subscription to access their content.

Also use reputable news sources such as the BBC, Time Magazine, Forbes, and so on. You will know the best publications for your own industry.

**Do a brain
dump**

Get it all on the page

Don't worry about crafting the perfect article for now. Spend some time collating all your resources, copying and pasting key passages from other sites, and drafting your titles and intro.

People work in very different ways, but here's how we go through the brain dumping process.

We usually use a simple word processing app like Google Docs. Open two docs in separate windows and arrange them side-by-side on your screen.

In the first doc, dump absolutely everything that's related to your topic. Copy and paste sections of text, write down all your title ideas, drop in pictures and links - whatever might be useful. Don't worry about making it tidy.

In the second doc, start to organise and ratify all the content from the first doc. Arrange sections of text into some kind of order, break paragraphs up into lists, add in sub-headers, that sort of thing.

Top tip: You can use the comment function in Google Docs to mark where you plan to insert links.

Leave all the stuff in your first doc so that you can come back to it in case you want to add more - name it 'research' or something like that, so it's easy to tell them apart.

Once you're happy with the basic structure of your article in the second doc, it's time to move on to the rewriting stage.

**Rewrite
everything**

Use your own voice

It's vital both for SEO and ownership purposes to rewrite all the non-original content you're using in your article.

Hopefully by this stage you'll have started drafting your own bits and pieces, but a lot of your content will probably have been copied and pasted from other sites. Before you progress your article, you're going to need to rewrite all that copied content in your own words.

This is for two reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, it's unethical and often illegal to copy someone else's work (unless you're actually quoting them, which is fine, but you will need to provide an accurate reference in this case).

Secondly, search engines hate duplicated content. This applies to pages on your website, too. If you've lifted a load of content directly from someone else's site, Google will be able to tell, and it will rank your page down as a result.

When rewriting, remember your **tone of voice**. This is a great tool to help you in the rewriting process, because you might want to frame statements in a totally different way to another company. Ensure that the tone and content of your writing is consistent with your brand's tone of voice. Remember that your article is part of your brand.

Rewriting stuff isn't always easy, but here are some tips.

- Try changing the order of information in the sentence. Start at the end and work your way to the start.
- Use a thesaurus to find alternative words.
- Break sentences up in different places so that word strings are interrupted.
- Weave your own words into the content so that it's broken up with original sentences.

**Edit
everything**

Tailor it for your reader

Cut all waffle, cut all repetition, cut all jargon, and make it reader-friendly. Reinforce your 'why' message; use your tone of voice.

The goal of the editorial process is to make your article as readable as it can be. This involves ensuring all the information is in the correct order, there is no unnecessary repetition, and any jargon you have used is explained where it needs to be.

At all times, remember your audience. You are taking a raw composite of ideas and information and turning it into something that will engage, entertain and inform.

Make sure it reads well and is **not boring**. Cut out any waffle, repetition and baffling jargon. Remember the level of knowledge your audience has and write appropriately. Polish everything. Remove every unnecessary word.

Really hammer home the **benefits** of what you're saying to the reader. Why are you telling them this information? Why are you giving them this news? Why should they care?

Maybe you've won an award and you want to tell the world about it. Well, that's great, but it's not enough to just say that. What does winning this award mean for your audience? Does it mean you can guarantee great products and services? Does it mean you're committed to improving your green credentials? There's a **benefit story** in there, so make sure you tell it.

Remember your **tone of voice**. You should have something in your brand guidelines that helps you ensure a consistent tone of voice across all your assets. That includes articles! If your blog is authored by numerous people, it can be hard to retain that unified voice. The job of the editor (whether that's the author or someone else) is to ensure your writing is on-brand and on-message.

Remember your **'why' statement**. Everything in your article should relate to that somehow. If your 'why' statement is to tackle the energy crisis, explain why this article is important for and relevant to your goal. If your 'why' statement is to help people feel and look good, make sure your article helps them to do this.

**Proofread
everything**

Read, read, and re-read

This is the stage where you can focus on eliminating typos, spelling errors and other mistakes.

- Use spell-checking software, such as [Grammarly](#).
- Read everything three or four times.
- Get someone else to read it. It's easy to miss your own mistakes.
- Search for double spaces, double full stops, repeated words, mistakes you know you often make, etc.

Insert links

Link internally and externally

Link building is a great way to boost the SEO value of your page, and also helps your reader to explore the topic more widely.

Go through your article and highlight any places where you think you can add a link (where you haven't already done so). This can involve a bit more research and searching around for decent content you can link to.

Also remember to include internal links (links to pages on your own website). This not only helps your reader to navigate to relevant service pages, it's also good for SEO.

For example, if you're announcing that one of your products has recently won an award, make sure you link to that product page. It's an easy win.

If you're featuring content from a contributor (someone you have approached for a direct quote), link to their website or blog.

If you can, contact industry professionals who might be interested in linking **to** your blog post. Inbound links are a great way to divert traffic to your site. There are **huge** SEO benefits to cultivating relevant inbound links, too.

Use images

Make it visual

Using images in your blog article makes it more engaging and easier to read. There are also SEO benefits.

Depending on the format of your blog, you'll probably need a cover image that sits right at the top of the page. You may also need a thumbnail version of this image, which features in your blog digest.

You can add more images to break up your text and add interest. They might be there just to introduce some points of interest, but they can also be informative.

Using stock photography

This is an easy way to quickly get some image content for your article. But there are some pitfalls to using stock photography sites.

- Ensure the image is relevant. Don't just use an image for the sake of it.
- Remember your brand guidelines. Ensure the image you choose is consistent with your image style.
- Optimise the image for web. Stock photos are often very large, which can cause loading issues when they're uploaded to a website. You may need to resize the image so it's suitable for your blog (see later).
- Check the usage rights. You can't just grab images from a Google image search, as they will be protected by copyright. Instead, use a licensed stock provider. [Shutterstock](#) is a great resource, but requires payment. Decent free stock websites include [Unsplash](#) and [Pexels](#).

Using diagrams and infographics

This type of content can add even more value to your blog, and can be great little things to share on social media.

- Create them in-house, or commission someone to create them for you. Don't steal other people's work!
- Ensure they are of good quality. Draw diagrams and infographics in an app like [Illustrator](#) to create scaleable vectors. This will help you ensure your image is the right size for your blog and won't lose any detail or definition.

**Use images
(continued)**

Scaling and tagging

Use these guidelines to ensure your images are the optimal size for your blog. Use alt tags to improve your SEO rating.

Resizing images

Images may need resizing before they can be used on your website. If images are too small, they will appear grainy and pixelated. If they are too large, this can affect page speed.

Additionally, your blog template will have fixed sizes for the cover image, thumbnail and in-line images. Using images that don't fit this template can result in your image being cropped in an undesirable way.

The optimal size for your image will vary depending on a range of factors, including what platform your blog uses, what type of browser the blog is viewed on, and so on. For best results, consult your web development and SEO teams, as they will understand the specifications of your individual blog.

Once you know what size image is best, use apps like [Photoshop](#) and [GIMP](#) to resize images. [ImageOptim](#) is a great tool for applying the necessary amount of compression (thereby reducing file size) without affecting the quality.

Using alt tags

Your blog editor should give you the ability to add alt tags to your images. These tags will make your images appear in Google image searches when people search for those descriptors. This can lead people to land on your blog page.

Alt tags also help people with visual impairments to understand the content of your page.

Simply describe the image using simple language. Imagine what people might search for if they're looking for this image.

Write the title

Make the right statement

The title of your article may be the most important component, as it will determine if people click on your link or not.

As you've been writing, you may well have put together several working titles for your article. Now it's time to polish it so that it does as much work to attract people to your article as possible.

- Put the benefit first. Make it clear what benefit the reader will get if they read your article. Instead of titling it 'We've won the award for lowest emissions', write something more like, 'Bringing you a greener, more efficient option: our award-winning product'.
- Including a number can make your post more attractive. For example, '5 ways we've made our product greener'. However, this isn't always relevant to your topic so don't crowbar it in.
- Don't try to trick the reader into clicking. Ensure that whatever you promise in the title is delivered by the article. Don't write, 'You'll be amazed!' if there's nothing amazing about what you're going to say. Instead, use truthful 'trigrams'. These are strings of three words that are proven to attract more clicks. For example, 'How to make...', '10 ways to...', 'This is why...' etc.
- Ask a question. 'Are you looking for a greener alternative to X?' Asking questions is a great way to pre-empt what your reader is looking for, and will whittle out those who have no interest in your topic. Remember your 'why' statement. You're appealing to people who believe what you believe, so ask questions that trigger that response.
- You can make your title longer than you think. Academic headlines often have several sections to them, giving the reader as much information as possible about the article to come. This is not the time to evoke mystique - you want to be really explicit about how your article is going to help/entertain/inform/improve. Put your benefit statement or question first, then answer it briefly in the second half of the title. Research shows that headlines with around 15 words perform best. 'Are you looking for a greener alternative to X? We've just won an award for our product.'

**Publish and
promote**

Get it out there

Writing the article is just the beginning. Now you need to promote and share it everywhere you can.

Once your article is published, don't rest on your laurels. Share it on all your social media platforms. Ensure it appears on your homepage. Link to it from other relevant articles. Send it to people who might feature it in editorials. Link to it from your newsletter. Research relevant hashtags and use them. Offer it to groups who are interested in that topic. Refer to it in your vlogs. Link to it from relevant product/service pages on your website.

[Get it out there.](#)

THANKS FOR READING

