

The Content Creation Handbook

70 Tips for Online Content Writing

CustomContentFactory.com





CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Becoming A Content Creator	6
Steps In The Writing Process.....	8
Who Are Your Readers?	9
What Problem Are You Trying To Solve?.....	9
Brainstorming.....	10
Research Your Subject	10
Create An Outline	11
Start Writing.....	11
Developing Your Content.....	11
Write Your First Draft Free From Doubts Or Insecurities	12
Web Article Tips	15
1. The Core Five W's To Writing Are: Who? What? Where? Why? When?	15
2. The Double Check.....	15
3. Give Your Article's Title Some Punch – And The Right Hook.	16
4. After The Hook, There Is The Sinkers.....	16
5. Structure Your Article For 'Scan-Ability'.....	17
6. Be Yourself.....	17
7. Use Examples, Analogies, Or Tell A Story.....	18
8. Do Not Tell Your Readers You're Writing The Article Because You Want Their Business.....	18
9. Revise! Then Revise Again!.....	18
Blog Post Tips.....	19
1. Know The Ins And Outs Of Your Blogging Platform.	19
2. Establish Categories And Stay On Topic.	19
3. Use An Editorial Calendar.....	20
4. Create A Meta-Description.....	20
5. Create A Good Design For Your Site.....	21
6. Keep Track Of Your Blogging Performance.	21
7. Make Yourself Identifiable And Easy To Contact.	21



8. Publish And Promote Your Site.....	21
9. Extract New Blogging Ideas From People’s Questions.....	22
10. Make Your Work Stand Out.....	22
11. Write User-Centric And Valuable Content.....	23
12. Make Sure Your Content Is Straightforward And Easy To Understand.....	23
13. Make Your Content Actionable.....	23
14. Don’t Let The Quantity Of Words Dictate The Quality Of Your Post.....	24
15. Determine What You Are You Willing And Able To Share About Yourself With Your Readers.....	24
16. Create A Time And Place Where You Can Get Into The Zone For Writing.....	25
17. Begin With An Ending In Mind.....	25
18. Write Short Sentences.....	25
19. Stick To Only One Idea Per Paragraph.....	25
20. Use Action Words In Your Writing.....	25
21. Include Internal Sub-Headings.....	26
22. Make Your Links Part Of The Copy.....	26
23. Put Your Readers At Ease.....	26
24. Don’t Be Afraid To Share Your Trade Secrets.....	26
25. If You Are A Business, Emphasize The Benefits Of Your Product Or Service.....	27
26. Give Your Readers Resource Information.....	27
27. Get A Second Opinion.....	28
28. Be Truthful And Straightforward.....	28
29. Write What You Know.....	28
30. Enjoy Yourself When You Write; Have Fun!.....	28
31. Be Consistent With Your Postings.....	29
32. Re-Purpose Your Content.....	29
Ebook Tips.....	30
1. Don't Let Anyone Tell You How Hard It Will Be, Or That You Can't Write.....	30
2. Break It Down Into Manageable Tasks.....	31
3. Figure Out A Good Working Title.....	31
4. Work Out A Solid And Well-Supported Thesis Statement.....	31
5. Be Sure There Is Good Reason To Write Your Book, A Niche For It To Fill In Society.....	32
6. Give Up On Writing The Book That Will Please Everybody.....	32



7. Write Down Your Publishing Goals Before You Write 32

8. Use A Consistent Chapter Format. 33

9. Make Sure To Keep Your Writing Engaging..... 33

10. Back It Up!..... 33

11. Give Yourself A Bit Of Insurance. 33

Video Tips..... 34

1. Remember That Success Is Relative..... 34

2. Invest In A Quality Webcam Or Handheld Camera 35

3. High Resolution Will Result In Higher Quality..... 35

4. Purchase A Quality Microphone. 36

5. Light Up Your Scene Correctly..... 37

6. Set Up Your Scene Correctly..... 37

7. You Only Have About 15 Seconds To Get A Viewer's Attention. 37

8. Always Practice And Review Yourself On Video..... 38

9. Don't Over-Complicate Things..... 38

10. Stay On Topic When You Record. 38

11. Make An Effort To Be Energetic And Fun. 39

12. Crack Some Jokes, Include Some Slapstick, Or Be Witty..... 39

13. Give People Something To Look Forward To. 39

14. Give Your Viewers A Reason To Send Your Video Links To Their Friends..... 40

15. Don't Let Them Go Without Knowing Where You Are..... 40

16. Ask Your Audience For Feedback. 40

17. Make Sure Every Video Can Stand By Itself, As If It's The Only Video A Viewer May Watch..... 41

18. Use Annotations And Tags, Sparingly. 41

Conclusion..... 43

Your Website Is An Ongoing Project..... 44



INTRODUCTION

If you're a copywriter, blogger, Internet marketer, or an information product creator, you've no doubt struggled with the question of **how to create better content**, the kind of content that moves people and gets a reaction out of them. You may have the best ideas, but if you don't know how to put these ideas together into a quality piece of content, then you can't grow your business and promote your offers.

When it comes to your website, each part of it matters: the layout, the colors, the calls to action. Sure, you want to have a beautiful design, with the right fonts, colors, formatting, and so on, but the most important part of your website is your content. Without high quality content, your website is worthless. Keep in mind: **content is everything!**

Today, if you don't have a website for your business, it's almost like you don't exist. But with so many bells and whistles, it's hard to know where to begin when it comes to building an effective website. There are many variables to consider and so many arbitrary choices to make, so it's no wonder that there thousands of pretty but ineffective websites all over the Internet.

Getting all the right pieces together can be intimidating and truly overwhelming. By the time you get to the content creation part, you may feel drained and confused. And when you finally begin to think about the content, you may ask yourself, **"What do I write about?"** or **"Where do I start?"** If this is you, then this handbook is going to be a big help.

You only have one chance to make that first impression. If you take your content seriously, then your audience will, too. You want your readers to return to your site over and over again. If you continue to feed them quality content time and time again, they will keep coming back to your site, interact with your content and share it within their communities.



BECOMING A CONTENT CREATOR



Getting started is the most important step. If you have a knack for writing, you are already 90% of the way there. Writing for the web requires a different set of skills than those covered in most school writing courses. If you've never been much of a writer, beginning to write as an adult may seem difficult at first. The upside of that is that as an adult you may have more experience, skills, and knowledge that you can share with others. This knowledge, as well as the skills and experience, can be valuable to you and to your readers.

Writing an article, a series of articles, or blog posts can be an excellent way to share with your audience what you know and what you've experienced. Even though you can pay professional writers to do the writing for your site, it is very possible, and definitely more personal, for you to take it on yourself. That's what the tips in this book are intended for. Professional content writers are professionals, but they are not you. They can get the job done, but they don't have your ideas, insights and experience.

They are not in sync with your feelings and passion. In other words, **they don't have your heart**. They can write in the way you tell them to, but they can't write the content you desire. They can provide information, but only through their own perception.



They can't provide the reader with a sense of who you are and can't share your personal experiences with the same passion and drive that you feel.

Writing your own content can also be a very rewarding experience. It can help you make a personal connection with your readers. It gives them a sense of who you are, because you will be sharing your knowledge, thoughts, and feelings in everything you write. Writing content that connects to your readers is what you want to do. If you've never written anything for a website before, don't worry—you're not alone. That's why you're reading this book. The information here will help you create the quality content you and your audience need.

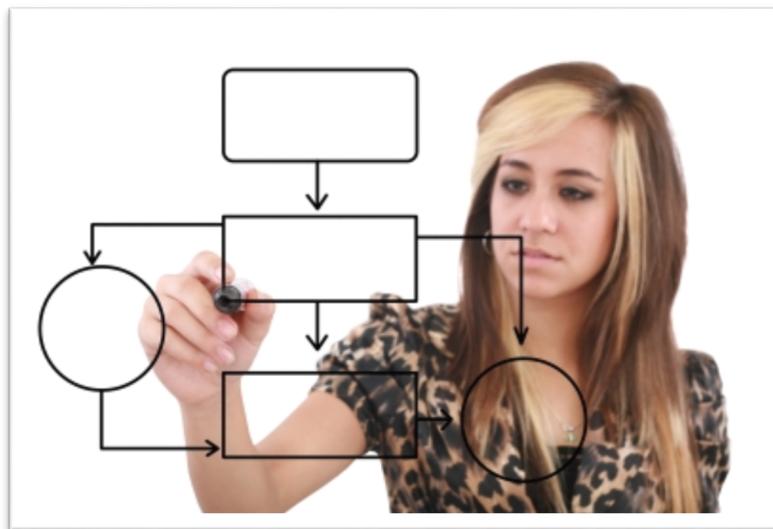
For your convenience, the book is structured into four main areas: articles, blog posts, eBooks, and videos. Together, they provide a collection of 70 great tips to give your website that **WOW factor** you're looking for!



STEPS IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Before you begin writing anything, it is important to understand the writing process. Writing is more than simply putting words on paper, it takes thought and planning to produce quality content. Never has the phrase, “Anything worth doing is worth doing right,” been more relevant than when creating content for your website.

Benjamin Franklin understood that the real power of persuasive writing depends heavily on the **outline**—the part that you DON'T see. He found that his earlier writing was confusing. His ideas weren't communicated clearly and were jumbled. To fix it, he created an outline, took his original paragraphs and copied them onto separate pieces of paper. Then he reassembled them in an order closer to the original outline.



This process produced persuasive copy that he used successfully in his advertising when selling the Franklin stove and also in editorials that convinced head of states all across Europe on the concept of America. Of course, as an online marketer, you can do the same. Writing doesn't need to be a complex process that would make you bang your head against a wall or pound your laptop in frustration.

There are a few steps that you can take to get your juices flowing much like Ben Franklin. Once you've settled on a topic, you must ask yourself a series of questions that will help you build an outline.



First, ask yourself these two questions:

WHO ARE YOUR READERS?

Who is your potential audience? If you think about movies, they're rated for a reason. People don't begin a movie for a "G" rated audience in an "R" rated format. Having an understanding of your audience will allow you to set a suitable tone and create content the audience finds value in.

Will your readers be adults, children, or teenagers? Will they be male or female? Will they be educated or perhaps high school dropouts? All these things are important when you decide what you want to write about and how you will go about writing it. You want to write to your audience in such a way that they can relate to what you've written and understand it.

WHAT PROBLEM ARE YOU TRYING TO SOLVE?

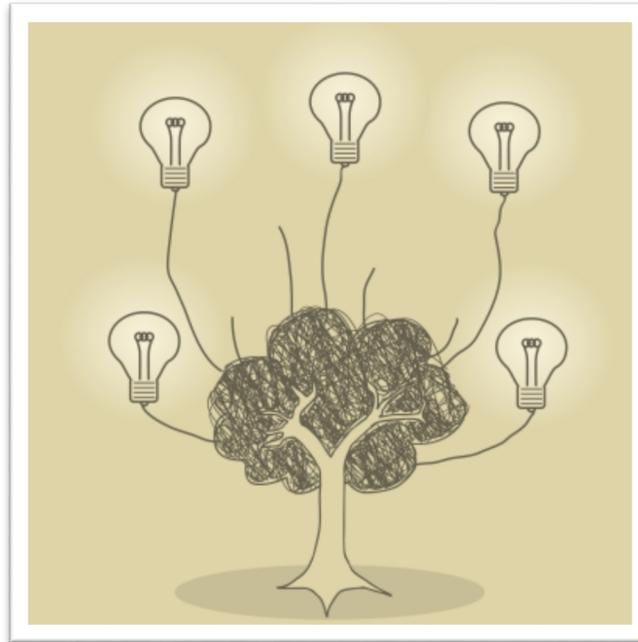
What are their pain points that you're going to solve with your content? Why should they read it? If you've done your demographic and psychographic research earlier, you'll uncover areas where people are desperately looking for answers. For example, if you're targeting runners, you may realize that an eBook on the best stretches for running can help them get the results they want.

Settle on a topic, and start planning. When you prepare to write an article, a series of articles, blog posts, or even a video script for your site, ask yourself what you are going to write about and how you are going to address it. Think about the final use of the article and tailor the content to suit that purpose. Ask yourself these questions: is your article promotional in nature, or is it meant to be informative? Will it be persuasive, or is it purely for educational purposes?

There are many different ways to write and many approaches you can take. Look at all the ways you can approach your topic and select the most appropriate angle for your intentions.



BRAINSTORMING



After you pick your topic—brainstorm. This means simply writing down **uninterrupted ideas** and thoughts about your subject. Jot down all of the ideas you can come up with. Initially, they may seem silly or lacking in direction, but keep on writing! Simply put down everything that comes to mind.

You may find it helpful to keep some writing ideas with you at all times; keep a record either on paper or digitally. Whichever method you choose, you'll be able to put down the ideas as they come to you. You don't have to use them all; you can decide on that later. Just get your creative juices flowing and come up with anything relative to your topic.

RESEARCH YOUR SUBJECT

Research the topic you want to write about in detail. Make sure to provide information that is not common knowledge. The more knowledgeable you are about a topic, the easier it's going to be to write about it. However, there are many resources you can use to do your research about subjects you might not know much about.



You may even find new information about an already familiar topic. You may want to pull in information from several different sources for one article. Just remember, when using these resources, it is important to rewrite the information in your own way. Do not copy information from other sites or you'll be guilty of copyright infringement.

CREATE AN OUTLINE

Now it's time to take your ideas and structure them into an outline for your article, blog post or eBook. Creating an outline will help you stay focused on the main purpose of your content and provide the information in a cohesive and hierarchical way. It will keep you and your readers focused and on track. An outline helps you create a logical order and flow to what you write and helps you focus on creating content that will be easily digested, liked and shared.

START WRITING

Once the outline is complete, you're ready to begin writing. Follow the outline and use your research information to fill in the blanks. If you remember the 'fill in the blank' tests from school, you'll know that this is an important part of the writing process. If you don't put the right words in the right blanks, you fail the test. If you don't fill in the blanks in the right way, your writing will fail. Filling in the blanks properly, however, will encourage people to click onto your site repeatedly.

DEVELOPING YOUR CONTENT

As you go through the writing process, consider the following sections that any written material should have:

- Introduction (the hook)
- First point and supporting facts
- The second point and supporting facts
- Conclusion with a call to action



You should always start with a captivating introduction that draws in readers' attention. Then you can bring in your main points with their supporting facts, which is the meat of the material. Last, but not least, is the conclusion, which summarizes the key points of your writing, in brief. The conclusion is important as you want the reader to perform an action that pertains to your content.

In the **introduction** you will take the opportunity to present an issue to the reader, and draw them in. Give them a reason to continue reading. It's important that you give the audience a brief preview and breakdown of the article you're going to present. A great way to bring them in is starting with a personal story that resonates with the reader. List out in paragraph form the key points you will talk about without going into too much detail. Keep it simple.

Remember that paragraphs are used to relate common ideas, while keeping them separate. This helps the reader keep digest the **meat** of the information more efficiently. Your readers will appreciate an article that has flow. The next paragraphs should contain the key points you want to introduce to the reader. These points provide solutions to the pain that your readers have. Make sure that you provide descriptions and stories that help readers connect.

The **conclusion** is where you summarize and present any conclusions that the reader should have come to once they've read your material. The conclusion is the last impression you will make on your readers, so you always want to go out in style. Let them finish the article with a sense that having read your article was worthwhile.

WRITE YOUR FIRST DRAFT FREE FROM DOUBTS OR INSECURITIES

Let the words flow out naturally. In your first draft, you're essentially getting all your information down on paper in a fairly logical format. Then you go back and revise the draft in a more critical manner. You're not just looking for issues in grammar or spelling.



The most important part of the review processes is to look at your article objectively, as if it's your first time reading it. In doing this, you will identify issues with structure and flow. Ask yourself, "What do I want the reader to take away from this article? Is there a path from start to finish that accompanies the reader through the ideas and conclusions I'm trying to put forth?"



It often helps to read the article aloud. As you do, make an effort to fully pronounce every word. This will help you find grammar errors and inconsistencies in your article. It will also help you keep a good, steady flow to your writing that is clear and simple. If you stumble over words when you read it, so will your reader.

Once you've completed reading the material and any errors have been corrected, you'll probably repeat the process again and again, until you're happy with the results.

You may find that you need to:

- Rearrange paragraphs to make your ideas flow better. You may sometimes need to change the order of your paragraphs completely, so as to present your ideas in a better sequence.
- Reword awkward and complicated sentences. Nothing annoys readers more than sentences that are poorly constructed. While the grammar and punctuation might be correct, there are alternative ways to write sentences and present the same ideas more clearly.



- Remove extra words, repetitive sentences, or even whole paragraphs. You'll be able to make your articles easier to read, hence more accessible, by keeping them lean. You can do this either by streamlining your ideas with fewer words and sentences, or taking out certain lesser points to your argument by removing paragraphs completely. Remember, keep it lean and clean!

You need to realize that no one is perfect. Learning to write articles, blogs, or eBooks takes time, creativity, patience, and practice. You may feel you have something great only to find out that it wasn't so great after all. Don't be discouraged if you have to change your draft several times before you get it right. Just remember, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, and try again."

Once you have that article, blog, eBook, or video that you feel is 'just right', it will be worth it. Not only will you feel great about yourself, you'll have quality content that is fit to reign. You'll be surprised! Once you'll go through the process of writing and do a few rough drafts and editing, you'll get used to all of these elements of writing.

It will become automatic, unconscious competence writing and you'll wonder why you ever thought it would be so difficult to start with. If you follow all of the above steps, before you know it you will find yourself turning into a competent writer. Being a competent writer is the first step to creating that dynamic content you need for your website.

Now you know the writing process. It's time to take the information you know, follow the process and begin creating content fit for a king. Below are 70 great tips (separated into their respective categories) to help you create that content you can be proud of. It will be the type of quality content that will keep your audience returning to your site for more.



WEB ARTICLE TIPS

Writing a web article can be very similar to almost any kind of traditional writing. It is very much comparable to writings found in magazines, newspapers, or books—it depends purely on your personal style and how you choose to express your ideas.

However, web articles do have their distinct advantages to articles found in traditional media. Smart devices allow for on the fly accessibility. They enable dynamic interaction with your article, including videos, links, animated images, high resolution photos and galleries, as well as social media integration and sharing.

There is nothing wrong with keeping to a more traditional style in your article. However, if you'd like to integrate some of the advantages of online articles into your work, you'll have to adapt them into your style. With that said, writing web articles requires an approach that adapts both traditional writing skills as well as more modern guidelines.

The following tips cover both:

1. THE CORE FIVE W'S TO WRITING ARE: WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHY? WHEN?

If you answer these questions, you are already well on your way to writing a good article. You've no doubt read newspaper articles; journalists always use this type of format. Practice reading news articles and identifying these five elements. You'll see how journalists use them to create quality content for their newspaper. Then write your article in a similar fashion answering these questions.

2. THE DOUBLE CHECK.

Go over your grammar and spelling as you write AND also after you have finished the article. Nothing shows lack of effort and professionalism like an article full of typos and poor grammar. Be sure to check for homophones that spell check won't correct like: they're, their, there—to, two, too.



You'll want to make sure you use the right form of each when you write. Sure, some people won't notice or even care, but those who do notice won't take your information seriously if it's riddled with grammatical errors.

Examples of common homophone mistakes:

- **Affect** (verb - to alter, change) vs. **Effect** (noun - result, consequence)
- **Then** (reference to time, or consequence) vs. **Than** (for comparing and contrast)
- **Elicit** (verb - to bring out, induce) vs. **Illicit** (adjective - illegal, unlawful)
- **Climactic** (adjective - acting as a high point in a series of events) vs. **Climatic** (adjective - relating to meteorological conditions)

3. GIVE YOUR ARTICLE'S TITLE SOME PUNCH – AND THE RIGHT HOOK.

The title is the first impression the reader will have of your article. You could write the most fantastic, helpful article ever, but if you give it a weak title, it won't stand a chance. This is one of the worst things that can happen to a great piece of writing. The trick is to have a good hook. Make it something that catches the readers' attention. Readers want to know that if they're going to spend time reading your work, it's going to be worth it. The best titles express exactly what the reader will take away from your article. A good hook in an article will reel your audience in again to see what you write next.

4. AFTER THE HOOK, THERE IS THE SINKER.

Boxing and fishing analogies aside, once you have your nifty title, your introduction is the second impression you make on the reader and it is very important. If a reader sees a captivating title, clicks on it, and starts reading the first paragraph only to find it irrelevant or uninteresting, they're not going to waste another two seconds reading the second paragraph, let alone the rest of the article. Give them **a reason to continue reading**. Write something bold or controversial. Use a famous or entertaining, relevant quote. Tell them what they're going to learn from you and then jump right in.



5. STRUCTURE YOUR ARTICLE FOR 'SCAN-ABILITY'.



Reading an Internet article is considerably different than reading one in print. Generally, online, people tend to skim rather than actually read, regardless of what the content is. This makes **organization and readability** two key factors to consider when writing any online content. You can use subheadings, numbers, and bullets. Create bold subject headings or bulleted points throughout your article to guide your reader's eye and help speed-readers grasp the concepts quickly and more effectively.

6. BE YOURSELF.

This doesn't mean that you have to write like you talk, but learn to write in a language and style that expresses your personality. Try not to use too much technical jargon and refrain from unnecessary use of a thesaurus. Fancy and ambiguous words are great, but if they're not implemented appropriately and relevantly, then you risk looking pretentious.

Depending on your target audience, there may be times when it's important to use technical terms or 'fancier' words. However, more often than not, you shouldn't have to use the dictionary to read an article online. If people have to do that, they will not only click off of your site, but won't even care about the information you have to share.



Just be yourself, and express who you are. Sure, you want your work to impress your readers. They can't be impressed, however, if they can't understand it. Just talk to them in a style you feel comfortable with and you'll be surprised to find that there are readers out there who are, in fact, intrigued by your unique style.

7. USE EXAMPLES, ANALOGIES, OR TELL A STORY.

Articles with examples get their points across more effectively than those without them. Stories and examples help you engage the reader by putting the topic at hand in **context** and allowing them to see how the takeaways may be applied. Sometimes you read an article and you think you understand the concepts, but you're not sure how to use them. If the writer tells a story or gives examples, then the reader won't have to wonder if they got it right. They'll see how those concepts can be used.

8. DO NOT TELL YOUR READERS YOU'RE WRITING THE ARTICLE BECAUSE YOU WANT THEIR BUSINESS.

This is one of the worst things you can do. Simply share your information and show them that what you have to offer can apply directly to their business. If you do, they will begin to trust you and turn to you when they are ready, as you have already proven that you are a valuable resource.

9. REVISE! THEN REVISE AGAIN!

Checking spelling and grammar is important, but it doesn't get everything. Read and reread your article to make sure everything is correct. Make sure the flow is good and it will make sense to the reader. Present the ideas in the most logical and easily-digestible order.



BLOG POST TIPS

Blogging has changed the way the Internet presents online writing. It has attracted the likes of journalists, marketers, educators, entertainers, experts, networkers ... you name it. Everyone wants to blog—and so can you! Now, creating a successful blog that pulls in a sizeable audience can be quite a challenge. Aimlessly writing and publishing posts simply won't cut it.

Establishing yourself as a blogger requires a deep understanding of the blogging environment and even the Internet as a whole. It will require you to develop some technical knowledge, or at least an understanding of it, and more importantly, you must consider how to effectively promote your blog through social media and networking.

These tips will ensure you have a good base to expand upon, and, through experience, you can learn to quickly adapt to the exciting and rewarding world of blogging.

1. KNOW THE INS AND OUTS OF YOUR BLOGGING PLATFORM.

This helps ensure that your posts look as good as they can. Take the time to master the visual editor (or raw HTML, if you prefer) so that you know how to format a post, insert an image and embed a video or podcast. If you're not comfortable with the more technical aspects of blogging, try to find someone who can be a resource for you to answer questions as they arise.

2. ESTABLISH CATEGORIES AND STAY ON TOPIC.

Whether your new blog post is a stand-alone post or part of a series you're writing, it should fit into your blog categories, as well as your overall content strategy, meaning that you want to stay on topic and have your posts fit into the categories you've established. When selecting your categories, ask yourself if they make sense and whether or not they fit into the objectives of your business. Having clearly defined blog categories will help you continue generating meaningful content and topics for your blog.



3. USE AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR.

Most bloggers find it helpful to use an editorial calendar for scheduling and organizing topics for posts. Some people use their calendars to track more elaborate details. This will help you produce content consistently and meet deadlines.

CUSTOM CONTENT FACTORY		TOPIC	CONTENT	KEYWORDS	AUDIENCE	CTA
MONDAY						
Author						
Due						
Publish						
TUESDAY						
Author						
Due Date						
Publish Date						
WEDNESDAY						
Author						
Due Date						
Publish Date						

Example of a simple editorial calendar template made in Excel

4. CREATE A META-DESCRIPTION.

Most search engines will use a maximum of 160 characters for your post description on their results pages. If you don't create a meta-description, which is a **concise summary** of your page's content, a search engine will often take the first 160 characters it finds on your page instead. This means that you'll miss the chance of giving your readers a full sense of what they'll get from reading your post. A planned description will give them an idea of why they should read your post, and make them want to read it.

*Example meta-descriptions
on Google*

Content Marketing Services: Custom Content Factory ...
www.customcontentfactory.com/ ▼
Custom Content Factory is the leading web content development firm in North America. We offer web copywriting, blog posts, articles, press releases, web ...
 You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 10/08/14

<p>Contact Us Custom Content Factory is the leading web site content writing ...</p> <p>Portfolio Custom Content Factory is one of the leading online content ...</p> <p>Website Copywriting ... quality online content development, offering website ...</p> <p>More results from customcontentfactory.com ></p>	<p>Site Map Site Map. Company About Us · Creative Content · Careers ...</p> <p>Terms and Conditions Terms and Conditions Fluide Media /Custom Content Factory ...</p> <p>Our Services Our web content writing services helps you convert prospects into ...</p>
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Custom Content Factory | LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/custom-content-factory ▼
Custom Content Factory is a custom provider of web content solutions. We serve small businesses, ecommerce sites, magazines, web designers, to name a few, ...

Custom Content Factory - Industrie Canada
www.ic.gc.ca/app/ccc/srch/nvgt.do?lang=eng&prtl... ▼
 We are a **content** marketing agency that provides **content** services for websites. We provide Website **content**, Whitepapers, Blog Writing, Newsletters, Editing and ...

WANT TO GET A 30% DISCOUNT ON ALL BLOG WRITING SERVICES? [LEARN MORE HERE.](#)



5. CREATE A GOOD DESIGN FOR YOUR SITE.

In order for people to want to read your post, they have to stay on your site. The design is the first thing visitors see and it significantly influences bounce rate, page views and conversions. If your site has a professional look to it, they'll take you more seriously and be more apt to stay on your site and read the quality content you produce.

6. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BLOGGING PERFORMANCE.

Identify five **metrics** to keep an eye on how your blogging is going, such as: visitors, leads, subscribers, inbound links and social media shares. This will help you keep track of your viewers and give you a greater sense of when you get it right, and when you don't.

7. MAKE YOURSELF IDENTIFIABLE AND EASY TO CONTACT.

Be sure to include your name, title and a way readers can contact you. Readers are not only interested in the content in your blog post, they also want to know who wrote the post and their role within your organization. Sometimes you'll come across a thoroughly researched and well-written post only to find an attribution of "admin." Even if the blog is only written by you and you're the administrator of the blog, let the readers know who you are.

8. PUBLISH AND PROMOTE YOUR SITE.

Publishing and promoting are important stages of creating a successful blog post. One thing you want to do during the publishing stage is to make sure that your post includes some kind of **call to action**. Whether you want people to share your post or subscribe to your email list, you need to tell them what you want them to do next.

Also, promoting a blog post can involve a fair amount of thought and strategy. Use blog commenting on other blogs and direct message influencers in your niche via social media to see if they'll help spread the word. Take the time to build a good foundation before you expect to execute a successful blog promotion.



9. EXTRACT NEW BLOGGING IDEAS FROM PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS.

One effective way to get content ideas for your blog posts comes from reviewing web analytics for the kinds of questions people type into search engines like Google or Bing. If you come across a recurring question, giving people the answer they're looking for can help increase your audience. You can also ask your readers to leave questions in the comments. When they do, you can take the answers to those questions and use them for future posts.

10. MAKE YOUR WORK STAND OUT.



When you've been blogging for a while, chances are you'll see other bloggers writing about the same things that you are. It shouldn't stop you from addressing the topic completely. Instead, you can see what works for them and what doesn't and then use this information to create something even better or from a **different angle**. You may find a few articles that have good *parts*, but they fail to have a good *whole*. If you use the information from the good parts of several articles to create your own article, yours will stand out. It will be good in its entirety.



11. WRITE USER-CENTRIC AND VALUABLE CONTENT.

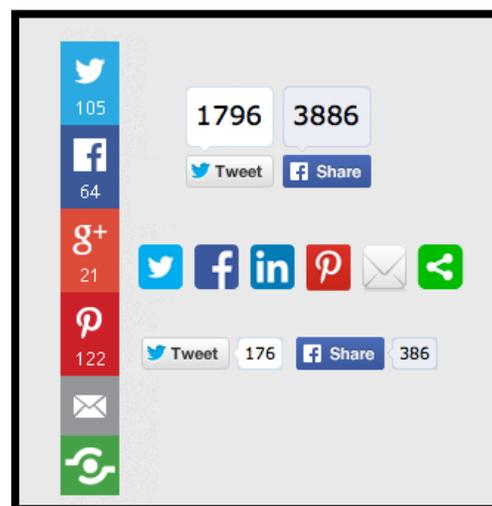
One big mistake you can make as a blogger is to miss the mark in being able to speak directly to your potential readers and forget who they are and what their needs and interests are. If your content is user-centric and knowledgeable, it will be of greater value to the reader. You may begin with one target market in mind and later find out that a different market is reading your articles. Change direction and focus your blog posts on the needs and interests of those newly found users. Give people what they want and they'll come back to your blog again, and again.

12. MAKE SURE YOUR CONTENT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND.

Consider and respect the readers' character, context and reading level; articulate an old idea in a new way. If you want to give very technical information to an audience that isn't really educated, break it down and present it in terms they can understand.

13. MAKE YOUR CONTENT ACTIONABLE.

This means you should include a call to action, a place to comment, social media accounts to follow, an invitation to share, links to related content and a direct summary of what to do. If they can participate in your blogging, they'll feel like they're part of it. It will make them want to return.



Examples of various social media 'follow' and 'share' buttons



14. DON'T LET THE QUANTITY OF WORDS DICTATE THE QUALITY OF YOUR POST.

Some blogs have set parameters for optimal length and assign a value on whether a post is short or long. Instead of focusing on word count, focus on whether posts are optimized for mobile platforms, use adaptive formatting, communicate in a clear manner and outline the points you want to cover. If you're restricted to shorter posts by the parameters set up in advance for your blog, you can link to long-form content you've developed around the topic. Remember, quality content will always reign over quantity.

15. DETERMINE WHAT YOU ARE YOU WILLING AND ABLE TO SHARE ABOUT YOURSELF WITH YOUR READERS.



Readers like to get to know about the writers they are following and often appreciate hearing a few personal details and insights from the person who has taken them on a blogging journey. Business blogs shouldn't be thought of as personal journal entries, however, you can tell your readers a little bit about how you operate and perhaps even your own personal ambitions pertaining to the business.



16. CREATE A TIME AND PLACE WHERE YOU CAN GET INTO THE ZONE FOR WRITING.

While it's true that ideas for blog posts will come at all times, chances are that the actual writing of the post will happen in multiple drafts and revisions. Once you're in the zone, you can use those inspirations that came to you when while commuting, sitting at your desk, or even late into the night and get down to the actual writing process.

17. BEGIN WITH AN ENDING IN MIND.

Think of an inverted pyramid when you write. Get to the point in the first paragraph. Let readers know what they're going to take away from your post and then expand upon it. Pretty much like doing a puzzle—start with the end in mind.

18. WRITE SHORT SENTENCES.

Sentences need to be concise. Use only the words you need to get the essential information across. Long, wordy sentences can make a post difficult to read, especially for readers who tend to scan articles quickly.

19. STICK TO ONLY ONE IDEA PER PARAGRAPH.

Make your web pages concise and to-the-point. As with articles, most people usually scan web posts, so having short, meaty paragraphs is better than long, rambling ones.

20. USE ACTION WORDS IN YOUR WRITING.

Tell your readers what to do. Avoid the passive voice. Using action words will help you keep the flow of your pages moving and make it more exciting for your reader. Suggest the actions they need to take in order to fulfill a purpose and then tell them what they can achieve by doing it.



21. INCLUDE INTERNAL SUB-HEADINGS.

When you use sub-headings, you make the text easier to scan. Readers can move from one section to another, based on what they consider to be most useful to them, and internal cues make it easier for them to do this.

22. MAKE YOUR LINKS PART OF THE COPY.

Links and anchor text will also help your readers scan pages. They stand out from normal text and provide clues as to what the page is about.

23. PUT YOUR READERS AT EASE.

You are not writing for a medical journal or literary society. You're writing to your peers on the Internet. Write in a simple style. If you introduce new terms, define them for your readers. Make them feel comfortable reading your material. Everyone enjoys a good read. Make your visitors feel comfortable when they come to your site and they'll feel your post is worthwhile.

24. DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHARE YOUR TRADE SECRETS.

The more you tell, the more demand you will create for your goods and services. The more information you give, the more likely people will understand that you really are an authority in your niche. "Give and it shall be given unto you." *Give* readers the information they want and they'll give you their business.



25. IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS, EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS OF YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE.



Benefits are what sell, not features. The benefits may be that people can get these items in one place without shopping around, that they can save time and money, etc. You should mention the benefits that you offer to your potential customers as often as you can, where appropriate.

Everyone wants to know, “What will I get from this?” Emphasize your answer to this, because that’s what’s important to them, and they will want your product or service because it’s a means to get that benefit. You already know what your customers are curious about and what they need to make their lives easier. Use that knowledge to create web content packed with new information and help them find what they are looking for.

26. GIVE YOUR READERS RESOURCE INFORMATION.

Let your readers know where they can get more information on the subject that you are talking about. These can be your own websites or they can be other resources. Don’t worry about losing customers. Good outgoing links from your website are also helpful to your site’s page ranking and positioning in search engines.



27. GET A SECOND OPINION.

Getting another opinion isn't only necessary when it's a medical issue. Get another opinion on your article. Show it to your friends and colleagues. Don't worry if they criticize you. It is better that your friends find the mistakes rather than your readers. A good editor is a writer's best friend.

28. BE TRUTHFUL AND STRAIGHTFORWARD.

Use your writing as a means of *talking* or reaching out to your reader. Write in a style that sounds just like you are chatting directly with them. This will engage their interest. Imagine you are sitting over a cup of coffee with them and write. That way you should avoid being too long-winded.

29. WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW.

Knowledge is power. Choose subjects you are familiar with. If you do, writing will be less of a chore when you feel comfortable with the subject. If you know your topic well and you're passionate about what you're writing, that passion will show through. It will help the reader feel your passion while they read.

30. ENJOY YOURSELF WHEN YOU WRITE; HAVE FUN!

You've probably tried to read a book and soon enough dropped it. It's almost impossible to read books or articles we don't enjoy, so it figures that writing books and articles becomes more difficult when we don't enjoy what we are writing about. Since posts are written regularly, they can sometimes feel like a chore. Even as children we learn to hate chores. Writing about things you enjoy will make it more enjoyable to write. This way, you'll be writing because you WANT to ... not because you feel you HAVE to.



31. BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR POSTINGS.

This is extremely important to creating quality content, either for your blog, or for your social media accounts. Oftentimes, writers start projects with enthusiasm and energy and if they don't see results right away, they stop. Readers want some expectation of when they will see a new post from you, so be consistent.

You don't have to post every day, but if you decide to write once a week, don't skip. Let the reader know when they can expect the next post from you. You can add lines such as, "Come back next Thursday for more great tips on how to..." If they like what they read this time, they'll make a mental note to visit your site again on that day for more information.

32. RE-PURPOSE YOUR CONTENT.

You can use a good video you've made and create a post from it, get the video transcribed, or create a slide show version, audio/podcast version, etc. You can also take your good posts and make short related videos. Not everyone likes to read, while some would rather read than watch videos. This way, you're getting your content out there in many formats, so you can reach a wider audience.



EBOOK TIPS

If the shorter forms of online article writing and blogging don't appeal to you, or you simply have a lot of information you'd like to share in one package, then consider writing an eBook. The huge popularity of eBooks is largely due to the increased use of tablets and eBook readers, as well as other smart devices.

While many readers may not have the time or patience to go through long-form writing, there are still many out there who can go through words like a bag of chips. Some ideas and concepts may also require more space and time to develop, as well as needing more attention to detail. Writing an eBook can be a daunting task, given the larger scope and time-investment, but it can prove to be quite rewarding in the end.

Start with these tips and you'll soon find that you can start writing page after page on the fly.

1. DON'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU HOW HARD IT WILL BE, OR THAT YOU CAN'T WRITE.

This will discourage you and keep you from doing something you really want to do, especially for a longer format such as an eBook that requires a much greater investment of time and energy. If you're preparing to write your first eBook, this is the most important tip. Some of the most famous writers couldn't put a period or comma in the right place. It is more important to get those words down so that they can materialize and become more real to you. This is the biggest step you can take. Editing can come later.



2. BREAK IT DOWN INTO MANAGEABLE TASKS.



Remember, a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The hardest part of writing is the title, first sentence and a potential ending line. Breaking it down makes each task seem smaller and more manageable. When you look at the whole project, it seems like an impossible task, but if you can get the project started, even if not perfectly, at least you have taken the first step and put the words down on paper.

3. FIGURE OUT A GOOD WORKING TITLE.

Don't just pick one out of thin air and say, "This is the name of my book." Write down a few different titles and eventually one will start to grow on you. Titles help you to focus writing on your topic. They guide you in anticipating and answering your readers' questions. Don't pick a title and then write about something that doesn't go with it. The title should let the reader know what the ebook is about.

4. WORK OUT A SOLID AND WELL-SUPPORTED THESIS STATEMENT.

Your thesis is a sentence or two stating exactly what problem you are addressing and how your book will solve that problem. Your thesis will keep you focused while you write. Each chapter should pertain to and be derived from your thesis statement. Once you've got your thesis statement fine-tuned, you'll have your foundation. You build your book on that foundation chapter by chapter.



5. BE SURE THERE IS GOOD REASON TO WRITE YOUR BOOK, A NICHE FOR IT TO FILL IN SOCIETY.

The Internet is a great place for niche content, because your potential audience is global, not local. This will increase your odds of connecting with people who want what you have to offer.

Make sure your book will:

- Present useful, timely and relevant information
- Positively affect the lives of your readers
- Be dynamic and keep the readers' attention
- Answer questions that are meaningful and significant

6. GIVE UP ON WRITING THE BOOK THAT WILL PLEASE EVERYBODY.

It won't happen. You will be writing to your targeted audience and they should dictate many elements of your book. They will help determine things such as style, tone, angle and even length. The more you narrow down your target audience, the greater the chance your eBook will have of success.

Determine the following:

- Expected age range of your readers
- Typical gender
- Readers' main interests
- Socioeconomic group and subculture

7. WRITE DOWN YOUR PUBLISHING GOALS BEFORE YOU WRITE.

The more you know up front, the easier the actual writing will be. Do you want to sell your book as a product on your website, or do you want to offer it as a free gift? The more you know about how you plan to publish it, the more you can write toward that goal.



8. USE A CONSISTENT CHAPTER FORMAT.

Use the same formatting throughout the book to give readers a sense of unity. Perhaps you plan to use an introduction to each chapter topic and then divide it into four subheadings for each subtopic. You may plan to divide it into five parts, each one beginning with a relevant story or experience. Whatever format you choose, make sure to be consistent with it throughout your book and build on a theme.

9. MAKE SURE TO KEEP YOUR WRITING ENGAGING.

Usually, anecdotes, testimonials, little stories, photos, graphs, advice and tips will go a long way in keeping the readers' attention. You can also use sidebars, which are useful for quick, accessible information. This will help break up the density of the page.

10. BACK IT UP!

Take heed of this next and likely most important tip: when writing anything—make backups of all your work. There is nothing worse than having your book almost finished only to lose it due to a hard drive crash.

11. GIVE YOURSELF A BIT OF INSURANCE.

Have anyone you let read it initial and date a hard copy. In the Internet world, plagiarism and copyright infringement are a big problem. If you have someone do this, it provides some confidence that, if it happens, you will have some record of the fact that you wrote it and when you wrote it.



VIDEO TIPS

Some like reading, others like watching. You can cater to both and integrate video into your blogs or online articles, or you can even specialize in producing videos. Thanks to the emergence of YouTube and its integration into social media, as well as its advertising incentives, video blogging (vlogging) and web shows are fantastic ways to not only fulfill that passion for reaching out to an audience—but to make money from doing it, too!

You may still need to integrate your writing skills if your show requires some form of scripted presentation. Even if it's improvised, you'll still need to put your ideas down on paper (or digitally), in order to keep a flow and structure. Furthermore, a new element comes into the mix: visuals. Obviously, videos rely on this, so you'll have to begin familiarizing yourself with both the technical and stylistic aspects of video creation.

Start with these basic tips. They will provide a solid platform for you to springboard off of.

1. REMEMBER THAT SUCCESS IS RELATIVE.

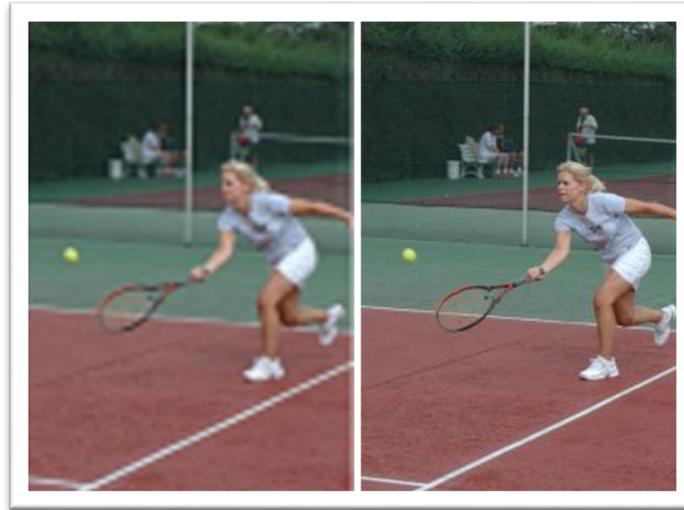
Your idea of success can be something completely different from someone else's. If you start judging your own level of success by the standards of others, you're setting yourself up for failure. Have your own success goals and metrics to achieve. Set your own heights, and then begin to climb.





2. INVEST IN A QUALITY WEBCAM OR HANDHELD CAMERA.

You may be surprised at the number of videos on sites or YouTube that sting the eyes. Buying a good camera should be a no-brainer, but some people don't realize how important it is. You'll probably experiment with a variety of devices and always be looking at newer, better solutions for your business. When you make your camera choice, remember: people will complain about bad video, but people never complain about a video looking too good.



Video quality makes a difference. Resolution affects clarity, and frame-rate affects the smoothness of motion.

3. HIGH RESOLUTION WILL RESULT IN HIGHER QUALITY.

If you can record your videos in high definition, do it. High definition by YouTube standards starts at 720p (1280×720 pixels) and goes up from there. This is not a very high standard to fulfill. Most modern smart devices will record video in this resolution. Also, consider what it is that you're recording. Some things don't need to be in a higher resolution than 720p.

Ask yourself if the video has many small details, such as in strategy video games with lots of small details on screen. If you're recording a live scene, you might want your video to be clear enough so that viewers can see objects in the background, or perhaps you'd simply like your video to look fresh and crisp.



Keep in mind, the higher the resolution, the larger the file size! Regardless of the scenario, if your recording device and Internet upload rate allow for it, record and publish in the highest resolution possible. YouTube will scale it for different types of viewers, that way you can accommodate viewers on their smartphones with low Internet bandwidth, and viewers on desktops who want to view your video in full HD with high Internet bandwidth.

4. PURCHASE A QUALITY MICROPHONE.

The microphone embedded into your headset or webcam simply won't cut it. These microphones are implemented as an afterthought to these devices and are made with really low production value and costs. You could go all out and get a USB audio interface and semi-professional analog audio equipment, but that is entirely unnecessary.

Many audio companies now offer simple plug-and-play condenser microphones, which offer very high audio quality for voice recordings, similar to radio and TV broadcast quality. Search for 'USB condenser microphones' and seek out your options depending on your budget; expect to pay anywhere between \$50 - \$150 for something reasonable. Some of the most popular of these are made by Blue Microphones, the 'Snowball' is its lower end model, and the 'Yeti' for the higher-end.





5. LIGHT UP YOUR SCENE CORRECTLY.

This is especially necessary if you are doing a product review or demonstration. People need to see what it is you are showing them. You probably won't need stage lighting, but using sufficient light to show the details within your scene is crucial to producing a good video.

The rule of thumb in lighting is to make sure you have a light source behind the recording device projected towards your scene. Even this simple rule is violated time and time again. The result of breaking this rule will usually be darkened faces or objects in the foreground, with a very bright, high-contrast background.

6. SET UP YOUR SCENE CORRECTLY.

Don't just randomly hit the record button. Think before you begin. Know what you're going to say and de-clutter your surroundings the best you can. It's hard to take someone seriously if behind them is a sink full of dirty dishes or junk scattered all over their dresser or desk. It's distracting to viewers. Take note of your foreground and background. You may be a beginner in video marketing, but it doesn't mean you have to look unprofessional.

7. YOU ONLY HAVE ABOUT 15 SECONDS TO GET A VIEWER'S ATTENTION.

Don't waste time with lengthy introductions. Save your calls to actions ('Like this video' and 'Subscribe to my channel') for the end. If you don't make the effort to infuse your personality into the video, you might as well not do it. You need to let the real you shine through. If you're not very energetic, maybe you should consider sticking to the written content or maybe do audio podcasts. If a viewer clicks on your video and it doesn't catch their attention within the first 15 seconds, they'll just click out. So make sure you do it because you want to, not just because you can.



8. ALWAYS PRACTICE AND REVIEW YOURSELF ON VIDEO.

Watching other people's videos isn't going to make you better. Practice your video content and try recording some samples and upload them as private videos. You can send the links to your friends and family and ask them for feedback. It will probably take several takes to get it right. Watch every one of your takes and select the one you like most.

9. DON'T OVER-COMPLICATE THINGS.

If your effort is overwhelming you, it's not going to be fun. If it's not fun, then you're not likely to stick with it for long. This rule also applies to your viewer. If what you're presenting is overwhelming to them, they won't watch it. Simplify your message, so people can understand your idea without having to think too hard to get it.

10. STAY ON TOPIC WHEN YOU RECORD.



It's easy to ramble on without realizing it. You and perhaps your friends are accustomed to conversational ramblings, but viewers who don't know you won't have the patience for it. This may happen if you're nervous or simply lack a plan or outline for your video. You may also tend to ramble because you're comfortable with your knowledge, but keep in mind that your viewers may not know as much as you do about your topic, so break things down for them and keep a good pace.



If you ramble, try to keep it relevant to the reason you're recording your video. You may need to refer to notes, when you first start recording. If you do, that's fine. Just stay on topic. No one wants to hear about your Great Aunt Sally's hernia surgery in the middle of your 'How to' presentation just because it pops into your head. If you're not doing the presentation on 'How to overcome surgical procedures', it's simply not relevant.

11. MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE ENERGETIC AND FUN.

You don't want to put people to sleep or lose their interest. If you have no energy in your voice, you're not going to keep people listening for long. Keep your video lively and energetic and people are more likely to stick with it through to the end. You can include music if it's appropriate, just make sure it doesn't overtake the audio of your content, or voice. You probably remember a teacher or college professor who spoke in a monotone voice that caused you to nod off a few times. You couldn't click out, because you had to be there. Online, however, they can click out—and they will.

12. CRACK SOME JOKES, INCLUDE SOME SLAPSTICK, OR BE WITTY.

Comedy has worked for generations. Why? Because funny is relatable. If you can establish a link with your audience through humor, they will connect with you. What you may consider funny, however, is relative, so don't push it. Lightheartedness in videos breaks down barriers. A controlled amount of silliness can be fun and entertaining. There's no need to be a comedian, in fact, cracking jokes every few seconds will be redundant and detract from your content.

13. GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

If you have a regular schedule for something to happen, like a live giveaway on Saturday, people will be in the live chat waiting anxiously for that giveaway. It's something they can look forward to each week. Giveaways might not be your thing, that's okay. Whatever you do, however, you need to have a routine people can put on their calendar and make a habit out of.



14. GIVE YOUR VIEWERS A REASON TO SEND YOUR VIDEO LINKS TO THEIR FRIENDS.

There are a lot of people who don't use YouTube's search tool, but who do rely on the opinions of others. If someone comes across your video and finds it interesting, helpful, or funny, your chances of having them send it to someone they know increases.

This is also true if you are creating useful content. These things help others want to **'Favorite'** your videos, embed them in their blogs or social profiles, or share your creations with their friends via instant messaging or email. You can even say, "If you like this video and know someone who will enjoy it, be sure to send them the link." It will make them think, *Oh, I bet Bob would like this*, and they'll pass it on.

15. DON'T LET THEM GO WITHOUT KNOWING WHERE YOU ARE.

Don't rely on descriptions and tags for everything. Everything you want to convey must be within the video itself. Tell the viewer who you are. Chances are, if they're watching the video, they would rather watch it than read it. Content in the description of the video should always be referred to in the video. For example, if you want to link your audience to a document or file, include the link in the description and mention it in the video.

16. ASK YOUR AUDIENCE FOR FEEDBACK.

You're already presenting a call-to-action in every video. Ask your viewers for feedback. It may not always be positive, so be prepared for both positive and negative remarks. Take pride in the positive ones and learn from the negative ones. Use these comments to create your future videos with even more quality content.



17. MAKE SURE EVERY VIDEO CAN STAND BY ITSELF, AS IF IT'S THE ONLY VIDEO A VIEWER MAY WATCH.

Often, people want to do a series of videos. That's great, however, someone may only catch your video on the third episode. It should be complete, from beginning to end. Those who watch numbers one and two will know what three is about, but this new viewer won't.

Give a **brief review** of one and two before you go on to three. This way, that video will be complete and they'll know to watch one and two so they can understand the whole process and be eager for number four. You'll know every viewer will have heard things like your signature sign-on/off, but use them each time to make each video complete within itself.

18. USE ANNOTATIONS AND TAGS, SPARINGLY.

You can use the annotation feature to place call outs or hyperlinks to any other page on YouTube, or other videos you've created. They'll display over your videos on YouTube and in all embeds. That's all the more reason to use the 'note' annotation, which allows for the insertion of YouTube URLs.

Tags will help people to find your videos through searches. They are nothing more than keywords, linking people to videos that also contain the same tags. Not only will this help you attain more views from YouTube searches, it'll also help classify your own videos on YouTube.



Avoid putting in too many annotations. Use them effectively.



Keep in mind not to overuse annotations. They can get quite annoying. Annotations are better used as an afterthought to your video. For example, if you upload video A, and then a few weeks later upload video B that relates to video A, you can add an annotation to the original video A saying, "For more information on this topic, check out this new video."



CONCLUSION

We are living in the age of technology and information. If you don't have a website for your business, you need to get one. Hopefully, these tips will guide you in creating quality content for your articles, blogs, videos, and so on. But quality content includes other things, such as an 'About' page or a Mission Statement. You need to write a brief introduction of your business and what it has to offer. You may want a biography section that informs the reader about yourself.

Each of these sections of your website should be written with care and give your audience quality information about you and your business. If you choose to include these sections on your site, be sure to use objective language to build credibility, rather than exaggerated claims or overly promotional words like "great", "tremendous" etc. Online readers are skeptical. Credibility is a major factor in retaining reader interest on the Web. One way to help build credibility is to use hyperlinks to the sources of your information or to related information.

While you're writing, keep in mind that, on an average workday, people already suffer from information overload. They have a lot of emails in their inbox to deal with and several documents and memos to read. They don't want to spend time and energy reading content that is of no use to them. So be respectful of their time and give them content that provides valuable insights and solutions to their problems.

Choosing the right keywords and phrases for your website is an important part of search engine optimization. It helps make your site more visible to search engines and searchers alike. Try to have one to three related keyword phrases that are site-specific.

To use keywords effectively:

- Be creative, but selective as well. Stuffing your pages with too many keywords can throw off search engines and won't narrow down the subject of your content.



- Try not to target keyword phrases that are too competitive. Instead, try to address certain niches if you can. This will increase the chance that your site is singled out in a certain market.
- If there are unusual words associated with your content that you think people might search for, or misspellings, include them sparingly.

Keywords added throughout your content will help increase traffic. Increasing your website traffic may be time-consuming, but search engine optimization today is primarily focused around providing a great user experience—that's why quality content is so important. Always think before you publish or post anything on your site and make sure it serves a specific purpose.

A lot of people trust the opinions and information they read online. Don't pretend to be an expert on subjects if you can't validate your claim. Some people will take the information as gospel. Don't mislead people with junk information. Instead, stand out from the crowd and rise above other sites with helpful suggestions, insights and facts.

YOUR WEBSITE IS AN ONGOING PROJECT





You should never assume that your work on your site is ever going to be 'complete'. This is an ongoing process. If you want it to survive in the online world, you need to treat your site like a 'living' entity that will change and evolve with time. It's something that will grow as you grow in knowledge and experience. It will grow as your business grows. In its infancy you will find many things you want to change; over time, you will discover what works on your site and what doesn't. You will eventually grow it into a mature platform with quality content and a large audience that proves it.

And we finally made it to the end of this book. It wasn't intended to turn you into the next Hemingway. You may not win a literary prize, but if you follow the steps in this book, you will be able to create quality content for your website that could become the key to success in your Internet endeavors. In other words, **your content will be king!**



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