

How to Write A Blog Post That Boosts Your SEO

A great blog post takes time, patience, and practice. So it's worth it to take a few extra steps, and make sure your hours of painstaking edits will get you the most SEO value possible.



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Choose Your Topic

Your primary goal is to offer up a solution to a common problem or question. You'll want to choose a topic that people are already researching in order to increase the chances that they'll stumble across your page.

For maximum SEO benefits, choose a blog topic that meets all of the following guidelines.

Relevant to your customers.

You have lots of knowledge to share, but the key is to write about a topic your customers are interested in.

If you plan to blog on a regular basis (and you should), here's a pro tip to start collecting topic ideas: set up an "FAQs" Outbox in your email, where you can save your responses to customer questions. When you're at a loss for ideas, check out your folder for inspiration, and simply re-purpose that content.

By doing this, you'll always have a collection of relevant topics that your customers care about.

Address a specific question or problem.

If you go too broad with your topic, your audience won't know what they're getting out of it. Plus, you'll have to compete against many more pages ranking for that same subject.

Instead, address a specific problem or question your customers have.

Choose Your Topic

Write about something that interests you.

If you're not personally interested in your subject, you'll likely end up with a half-written post that never leaves My Documents. Or, you'll labor through it only to publish something that's just not enjoyable to read.

Make sure you're motivated to offer your own, personal spin on whichever topic you choose.



Pick A Keyword

For a high-ranking blog post, choose one or two closely related keywords that you expect your post to rank for. You'll want to be strategic, and choose search terms that are likely to bring in traffic.

Before you start writing a new post, try to make sure your target keywords meet the following criteria.

Target long-tail keywords.

It's more realistic to shoot for specific search terms. If you own a surf shop, for instance, you'll have much fewer pages to compete against if you choose a keyword like "how to buy a surf board" vs. simply "surf boards."

Use tools like the Keyword Planner in Google Ads to discover different variations. You can also use Google's automated suggestions (the list of related search queries found at the bottom of any search results page).

Likely to convert.

Of course, any focus keyword you choose should be very closely related to the content of your blog post. But take it a step further, and choose a keyword that signifies the user is likely to convert (whether that means making a reservation or signing up for your e-mail list).

Consider why someone would type this keyword into a search bar. Are they browsing for inspiration, or just trying to get a quick answer? Ideally, you should focus on a search term that someone would use if they're researching prior to purchase. This user is willing to spend some time reading your content, and there's a good chance they'll become a customer.

Try to avoid keywords that imply a short, straight-forward answer (such as any phrase that includes "pricing" or "reviews"). There may be a ton of people searching for that information, but your blog post won't give them what they need - so it probably won't rank well.

Pick A Keyword

High search volumes, low competition.

The perfect keyword has a high average search volume, but low or medium competition. This means that a lot of people want to know more about your topic, but there are relatively few pages ranking for it. So your blog post has a fair shot at the first page of search results, and is likely to bring in some good traffic.

You can install the Keywords Everywhere extension, free for both Firefox and Chrome, to automatically see volumes and competition metrics for any search term you type in the Google bar. This is an easy way to pick the ideal variation of your keyword.

Your definition of a “high” search volume will probably depend on your industry, so use your best judgment. If you’ve chosen a niche topic that doesn't have much published content yet, then a keyword with a relatively low search volume might still be valuable. As long as the competition is low, you’ll probably get most of that search traffic.

Now that you’ve done some keyword research, you can hone in your topic and start writing.

Different variations of your keyword will probably pop up organically in your blog, which is fine. Even though you want search bots to recognize your chosen keyword, you still want your writing to flow naturally - and that doesn't happen by repeating the exact same phrase in every paragraph.



Start Writing

Write as you would normally speak: using clear, familiar language.

Forget about SEO, at least for your first draft. Plan out your key points, and write as if you were explaining things to a co-worker over coffee. Not too formal or technical, but not casual enough to be slang-y either.

Ultimately, if your writing is correct and easy for humans to understand, the search robots will love it, too.

Add headings throughout your text.

Headings within your text serve two vital purposes: they make your post easier to read, and tell search engines what's important about that page. Read through your draft, and look for places where it makes sense to add a heading. (While you're at it, look for your longest paragraphs and break those up, too).

If you can use a close variation of your focus keyword in a heading, go for it! Just make sure it doesn't sound forced. You should never sacrifice readability for some perceived SEO value. (Especially since SEO is now, largely, about readability).

If it makes sense for your topic, frame your sub-headings as questions. Google results increasingly include "featured snippets": a brief portion of text that directly answers the query within the search results page. Since a featured snippet takes up a lot of space on the screen and is positioned above the rest of search results, it's one of your best shots at earning organic clicks.

For featured snippets, Google typically highlights text that includes the query itself. So if your blog post answers a common question, include the question itself as a heading. This format makes it clear to search engines that your page addresses the exact query being searched.

Start Writing

Organize information with lists.

Bulleted lists draw the eye, and break up your content. They also make a long post easier to read. (Hence the ever-popular “listicle” format.)

But here’s the best part: lists or numbered instructions improve your chances of making it into Google’s coveted featured snippets: the short portions of text that show up at the top of certain search results. Google is looking for ways to serve relevant information directly within the search results page, and easy-to-read lists are often favored over long paragraphs.

Add images with alt text.

Every post you write should have at least one associated image (probably 2 or 3, depending on the length of your text). For obvious reasons, a striking photo or graphic make the page itself look more appealing.

But there are also real SEO benefits associated with photos and videos. The more media you have that’s related to your focus keyword, the better.

When you add photos to your post, make sure they signal to search engines that they’re closely related to your content:

- Change the actual file name of your images to match your subject (for example, “surfboard sale” instead of img 30678”).
- Add alt text (preferably containing your focus keyword). You’ll be able to customize the alt text in the Content Management System used for your website.

Avoid the temptation to make your file name or alt text super long so you can repeat every variation of your keyword (“surfboard sale surf board sale surf boards surfing”). This is called keyword stuffing, and it’s no good - search engines recognize this as spammy and could actually penalize your page.

Final Edits

Now that your blog is starting to look more complete, make your final edits.

- Do a final “Ctrl F” search for your focus keyword. It should pop up at least three times in a short post, and several times throughout longer posts. Don't worry about adding it in to every other sentence (see note above about keyword stuffing).
- Re-read your work a few times to make sure everything flows logically.
- Be sure to spell check, take a glance at the grammar suggestions, and correct anything that wasn't a conscious, stylistic choice. (Like this!)

High quality content is one thing that sets you apart from competitors: the finished product belongs only to your brand. So make sure you're getting all the SEO benefits your work deserves.

By taking these extra steps in your blog writing, you'll produce a post that's likely to rank well in search engines, attract your target demographic, and give your website a lasting SEO boost.

