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# **How to Create Engaging Web Content**

We live in the world of the 5 minute attention span. It's a sad reality that consumers are no longer taking the time to browse the web. If they can't find what they want in a matter of moments, they move on.

To ensure that your readers do *not* head to your competitors' websites for the information they're seeking, you'll need to create content on *and off* your site that enthralls and interests anyone that comes across it. Here's an insight into how to create engaging web content that serves a valuable purpose.

## Different types of onpage content

The content that you add to your website helps to create an impression of your company, so it is essential that whatever you write is reflective of your ethos, your culture, and, most importantly, the value of the service that you provide.

Web content comes in many forms, but the most common types of onpage content are **web pages** and **blog posts**. It's important that we explain the difference between the two.

**Web pages** are typically used to provide more information on your products or services. They sit on the site permanently and are instrumental in illustrating exactly what your company can offer. You should not need to update the content on your web pages very often (unless your product or service changes regularly).

**Blog posts** are used to provide an insight into a particular topic. They can inform and entertain whilst adding personality and integrity to your brand. Companies generally use blog posts to talk about industry developments, announce company news, and discuss ideas and innovations that affect their service.

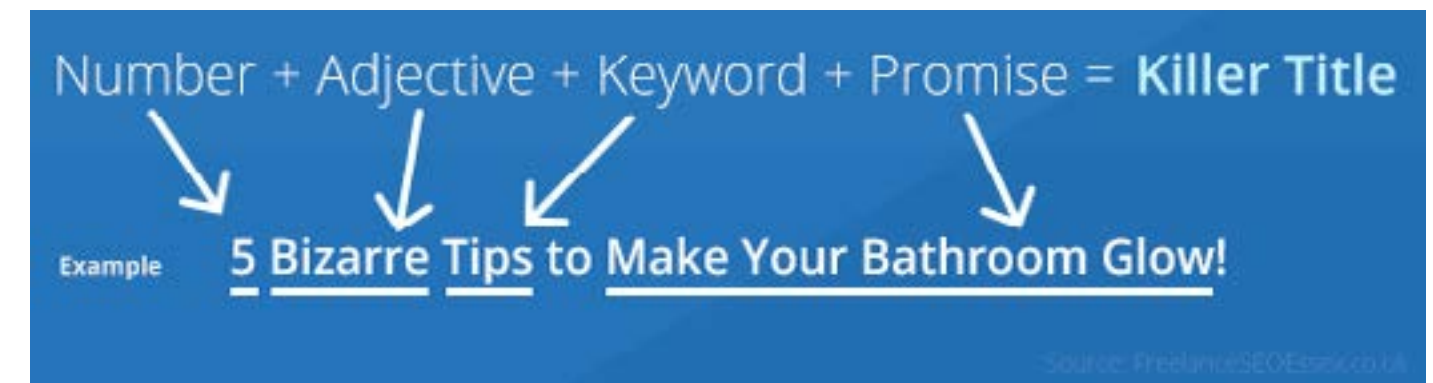
Here, we'll talk you through some tips that will help you develop excellent content for your website.

The following advice can be applied to both **web pages** and **blog posts**.

## Write a memorable title

Although writing a title would seem like the perfect starting point, it is common practise for many writers and creators to finalise the title after the content is written, so don't worry if you need to leave this part to the end.

When you do eventually get round to it, knowing how to craft a compelling title will help you to attract your reader's attention and encourage them to click through to your website. But don't try to trick your reader into clicking through to your site by using a title that's way off the mark – if they don't find what they're looking for, they'll leave immediately. Use this formula to help you create engaging titles time after time.



## Plan ahead

The second step to creating engaging content is to ensure that you've planned what you want to say. In doing so, you will be able to structure your arguments coherently (and you won't be tempted to go off on a tangent, particularly if it's a topic you're passionate about).

Start by creating a list, or a spider diagram if you're a visual learner, which contains all the points you'd like to cover. Think about relevant pieces of data that you need to include, or maybe a quote you'd want to use.

Consider the purpose of writing this particular piece of content – is it to **inform**, **persuade**, **advise** or **describe**? Create a brief, and stick to it.

Contemplate your audience, too – are they likely to be **young**, **old**, **male**, **female**, **active** or **inactive**?

Once you've got a plan, start to group ideas together into sub-headings and paragraphs. We would recommend starting with an introduction, moving on to your main body, and finishing with a conclusive paragraph which will summarise the main points mentioned and reiterate your key piece of advice.

If the content is more of a sales pitch, you'll need to include your calls to action at the bottom of the piece. This could be as simple as listing your phone number or email address.

## **Include relevant data**

It may sound obvious, but you need to ensure that what your content is relevant and interesting; try to find cutting edge, hot off the press information that offers a new perspective on a current topic, particularly if you're writing regular blog posts. You don't want to be commenting on the same news piece that has been circulating the web for the last few months.

Being quick to introduce or offer your expert opinion on a topic will make your site stand out, and you'll also become known as a business that's current and well-versed in current affairs. It's particularly important to give off this impression to readers if you operate in a fast-moving industry, such as the technology sector.

Although it is important to write content that is relevant to what you do, don't feel as though you're restricted to a very narrow set of topics. If you're an insurance company, you don't *always* have to write blogs that detail the ins and outs of holiday insurance. You could, for example, capture the imagination of your readers by writing an article about how beautiful the South of France is in summer. Naturally, you'll want to tie the piece in with your company's offering, perhaps reminding them at the end of the article that they'll need adequate insurance if they want to enjoy their trip with full peace of mind.

## **Do your research**

You'll need to ensure that your content is well-researched and that all data is correct. When collecting research, use reputable sites and sources with good citations. [Google Scholar](#) can help you to find academic literature and [Intel](#) can help to provide market research data. There's nothing worse than finding bad reviews that refer to the quality of your writing.

Remember, don't leave room for error, only for a discussion about what you've written!

## Define who you are targeting

Another tip to creating engaging content is to know *who* you're targeting. By having your key audience in mind from the very start, you can ensure that your content is tailored to their specific needs.

For example, if you're writing for teenage girls, you'll need to write in a different manner than you would if you were targeting middle aged men.

Think about your **language** – will you connect more with your readers by using friendly colloquialisms, or do you need to take a more formal tone? For teenage girls, for example, you may want to talk generally about pop culture and write in a more informal way, scattering contractions and slang throughout your writing. But if your audience is comprised of middle aged business men, your content needs to attract their attention with formal, eloquent language (and lots of statistics from credible reports to back up all of your information).

Even the structure and formatting of your article can be used to appeal to different audience types. Consider using headers to break up the text, and adding in media such as photos and videos to brighten up your content and illustrate your main message.

Remember, varying audiences will respond differently to alternative forms of media.

## Be persuasive

By being assertive and confident through the tone and language you use in your content, you're more likely to encourage the reader to take a particular action.

Make it clear that you are the expert in your field, and write authoritatively.

The use of repetition is a crucial stage in the psychology of learning. Repeating your main message at appropriate intervals will ensure your content is persuasive.

Many psychological studies have proven that the repetition of an action will lead to the learning of this behaviour. It is this kind of contagious behaviour that explains why the response of one human will trigger the same response in another human. By repeatedly stating your opinion in a post, you will bring home your point of view and leave a lasting impression on the reader.

## Consider your language

It goes without saying that your choice of language can make or break your content.

The use of comparative writing is important. Metaphors, similes, analogies and idioms are your best friend. If your reader can make relative associations, then it will be easier to convince them to follow a certain path or thought pattern. Try to paint a picture in their mind with the language you use.

And instead of using modal verbs to convey a point, use assertive words to strengthen your point. Here's an example of a modal verb used in context:

"You should stop smoking."

Taking an assertive stance would transform the sentence into:

"Stop smoking."

Using persuasive techniques will fully engage the reader, leaving them convinced by your writing and with faith in your brand.

## Write with integrity

When it comes to finding your own unique writing style, don't be intrusive or overzealous; remember that your site is a reflection of your business, and image is everything.

## Post content at peak times

Try to send out your content regularly and at appropriate times to make sure your pieces are exposed to the largest audience possible.

Try to post two to three times a week at points in the day when most people have a little downtime – for example, if you're writing for a business audience, consider sending out your newest post just after office hours in time for the readers' daily commute.

## Optimising your content for the search engines

In addition to being reader friendly, your content must also appeal to the search engines. You could create a perfect post, but if it hasn't been optimised, it will never be found!

More information on optimising pages and posts can be found in our whitepaper titled [how to optimise your web pages](#).

## Additional tips for writing blog content

Although there are many similarities to writing content for blogs and for your own site, these types of content differ in their intent. Aside from being a great promotional tool, blog posts can be used to expand your audience and increase visits to your website.

By writing for a blog, you're trying to persuade new visitors to learn more about a particular topic from an authoritative industry voice. If the visitor likes what they see, they could convert into a customer.

As well as writing for your own website's blog, you could also create guest blogs for external websites. By contributing your own content to another relevant site, you're introducing yourself to a new readership and strengthening your brand in the right kind of online circles. More often than not, you can also ask the webmaster for a link back to your website at the bottom of your piece, which will add value to your SEO campaign.

## Guest blogging – what to bear in mind

Guest blogging offers a great way to share your content and to build links to your site, but there are rules to follow if you want to make the most of the content you create.

## Word count requirements

Many bloggers require that you keep your article within a word limit. If they don't want the piece to exceed 600 words, keep it short. They've set this limit for a reason. Or, if you're creating a video, stick to the 5 minute limit – viewers will get bored after this time, especially if they aren't particularly invested in the topic to begin with and are just looking to kill some time.

## Referencing and citations

You'll need to provide appropriate recognition for any images, quotes or data you have used, and this means learning to reference or cite correctly. Sites like [RefMe](#) can help you to do so.

## Be honest and find your own voice

There are so many blogs and articles out there that will feed you what you want to hear, not what you need to hear. So write honestly and openly – you'll be surprised by how many people will find this approach refreshing and appealing.

## Promoting your blog content

Regardless of whether you've created a blog post for your own site or for another site, you'll need to promote them if you're going to reach your relevant audience. There are a number of ways you can boost the popularity of your posts, but here are just a few ideas to get you started.

## Build links to your posts

Backlinks are used by search engines as an indicator of the popularity and, in turn, the importance of a web page or post. The links between pages and posts are noted by Google to be 'votes' for its content, and the more votes you have, the more credibility the content will have in the eyes of the search engines.

Tread carefully when it comes to link building, though. Google frowns upon guest blogs that have been solely created for link building purposes, so your main priority should be making sure that the content itself is credible, well-written and engaging – if it meets all of these criteria, it's more likely to be shared around the web organically anyway.

To learn more about how to build effective, long term backlinks to your site, take a look at our whitepaper titled [how to build links to your website](#).

## Social media

Social media is a major facet of marketing, as a vast majority of online users have one if not more social media accounts. By incorporating social media links into your author's profile, you'll prove you're a real entity (and readers always appreciate being able to put a name to a face).

An author profile is useful way to build your online status within your field, become a reliable voice and to get your content seen within the search listings. An author profile is your individual billboard on the internet and is the perfect way to market yourself as a writer and an industry expert by portraying yourself in a positive light. You can link your profile to your content to add weight to your brand.

Advertising your blogs via social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is also a very effective way to boost visitors to particular posts. You can easily target individuals based on a number of factors that they have self-divulged, such as their location, gender, age and setting preferences, among others. By tailoring your social media targeting to types of users who are likely to be interested in what you have to offer, you'll be able to find appropriate traffic.

## Social bookmarking

An extension of social media is social bookmarking. Social bookmarking sites such [Pinterest](#) and [Reddit](#) allow you to find and collect the best content and save it for use on social media sites at any time. Bookmarking is a great way to organise and manage interesting content so you can find what you want, when you want it – and so can other web users who are looking for similar pages. Be sure to add your posts to as many different social bookmarking sites as possible.



## So what now?

This guide should have given you some great ideas that you can put into practice when creating your own engaging website content. But if you don't have time to write, or you simply want to outsource this work to the experts, feel free to [contact Freelance SEO Essex](#) for more information on our copywriting and content distribution services.



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