A .How to write Google friendly content in 4 easy steps

The key objective is to write content that your target audience reads and at the same time is seen by Google as **relevant** and of good **quality**. To Google the key factors in deciding whether to rank content can be expressed as **Relevance + Quality = Ranking.**

Let me set out how you can achieve this in a few easy steps.

1. **Before you start**
   First thing is to decide on an **idea or topic** you want to write about. Choose a subject that you already know about or have researched in advance. Do not 'wing it'.

   Think about the <u>audience</u> that you want to reach and make sure that you write with them in mind.

   Plan the structure of your content and be aware that some parts of your content are more critical than others:
   - **Headline (crucial to getting the reader engaged)**
   - **Body**
     - First paragraph of body
     - Image
     - Rest of body
     - Conclusion (which should include a call to action)
   - **Tags or Keywords**

I have addressed each of these areas in turn below and I hope you find them helpful!

2. **Title**

   Once you have decided on your idea or topic, try writing down a headline which will become the title. You want a title/headline that will draw the reader's attention and should encourage them to read the rest of the content. Research suggests that 80% of people will read a headline but only 20% will read the rest of the article to the finish, so you have to capture their attention with the headline.

   Ideally the best headlines include some of the following elements, preferably with an **emotional appeal**;
   - A surprise
   - A question
   - Curiosity- something everyone wants to know
   - Something negative / positive
   - How to guide or tips
   - A trending subject
   - A clear benefit to the reader

You may consider trying some of the following free online tools which will help with your headline generation.

- **Headline Analyzer at http://coschedule.com/headline-analyzer**
- **Emotional Marketing-Headline Analyzer at http://www.aminstitute.com/headline/index.htm**
- **Blog Topic Generator at http://www.hubspot.com/blog-topic-generator**

Sometimes I also use a checklist of Emotional words to help to develop a good positive headline. Here is a sample of 'power words' you could use in your headlines!

sale	remarkable	confidential	lavish
new	surging	wonderful	terrific
professional	unique	secret	emerging
special	daring	strong	luxury
focus	hurry	unusual	quickly
wanted	pioneering	energy	miracle
interesting	destiny	rare	proven
challenge	genuine	edge	delighted

Once you have fixed on your headline, you are ready to write the body of your content.

3. Body

I have looked at the body in four sections because this is the reality of getting people to read your content. I have started with the First Paragraph and then looked at the rest of the body.

(A)First Paragraph

You have written a great headline and now the reader want to read more. The first paragraph is the chance to draw them in. You could try some of the following ideas for the first para:

- Tell a success story and tie into your idea
- Ask a question that your audience will want to engage with (or multi-choice question!)
- Share a secret/ shocking fact/ statistic that will surprise
- Share something personal
- Tell the reader what the article is all about
- Quote someone relevant

Based on research using heatmaps to show what readers look at online, it is clear that the first and second paragraphs of content are the focus for readers (Source: Nielsen Norman Group). Put the really engaging content in the first and second paragraph because the chances are that your audience may not read further!

You must not lose track of your original idea and ensure that what appears is relevant to it. Write with your own style, using simple language (and technical language where appropriate).

(B) Image/ Video

It is important to make the content visually appealing. As a minimum, insert a 'Featured photo' which should be an image relevant to the title. (Note: make sure that you have the legal right to use the image first). This should help your audience to understand what you writing about and help to engage them.

You can add further images in the main body if you think that they will enhance the content and are relevant to the idea that you are expressing. You might also consider adding a YouTube video (See box for adding videos). Remember that Google owns YouTube so it should help the ranking of your content.

(C) Rest of body

Complete the rest of the body and set out the remainder of your idea. A couple of guiding principles

- There is no ideal length- Longer (more than 1000 words) is ok but you will need to insert an index.
- Use the KISS principle- 'Keep is Simple Stupid'
- Where you insert verifiable facts- quote your source
- Use your spellchecker but read it through thoroughly as well to check for good English
- Keep sentences short and easy to read
- Write as if to one person
- Include helpful links where necessary

(**D)Conclusion**

The conclusion should offer something clear to the reader who can put it into action immediately.

A call to action is created. (eg share, comment, download, follow or something else)

Social media sharing is encouraged

4. **Tags/ Keywords**
Once the content is written, you need to decide on 5 or 6 keywords (also called Tags) and insert them in the Tags box. This helps Google to identify the search terms that you content should be found under.

If you follow these guidelines, Google should see your content as 'Great' because it passes the some of the key tests.

- Content is **Relevant** to the subject being written about
- Content Is of **high quality**
- The overall **content experience** is good

Further reading

1. Writing Killer Headlines -See http://www.jeffbullas.com/2016/08/10/7-unique-seo-tools-help-write-killer-headlines/

2. How to open a blog post- See http://www.michaeldpollock.com/open-your-blog-post/

3. This is your brain on Viral content- What psychology says you will click on! -See http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/viral-content-psychology#sm.000ssliu112mseb5ziy22gqj9q48s