



# Succeed with Social Media

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## Blog Post Writing - Best Practices

### Best Practices for Blog Post Titles

Once you've chosen the topic for your blog post, it's time to write! First, consider the title of your post. Your blog's title is crucial, since it is the first thing visitors see when they come to your blog. In order to be effective, blog titles should be catchy, accurate and concise. As a general rule, your title should be no longer than **10 to 12 words**. When possible, it's also a good idea to **include a keyword** naturally in a blog title.

### A blog title has the following two main functions:

1. Accurately represent what the blog post is about. The worst thing you can do is not deliver what the blog title promises, as it could lead web visitors to leave your blog and possibly your website.
2. Make people want to read the rest of the blog post.

Here are some ways to make a blog title catchy:

- Use phrases that tend to grab readers' attention, such as:
  - How to
  - Top 10, Top 5, or Top 3
  - Mistakes to avoid
  - Do's and Don'ts
  - 101
  - Basics
  - Amazing
  - New
  - Surprising
- Make the title a question (that the blog post will answer).

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- Use numbers to show that your blog will contain a list of information, such as '5 Ways to...'

### Best Practices for Blog Post Content

After you have picked your topic and done your keyword research, you're ready to write the content of the blog post. However, how do you know what a 'good' or 'bad' blog post looks like? Follow these blog post content best practices to help guide you through the writing process.

### Unique Content

Unique means that the blogs you publish are written in your own words—not copied and pasted from other articles or sources. Not only is copying and pasting considered plagiarism, but it can also hurt your overall search engine optimisation (SEO), since search engines can penalise sites for having duplicate content, or content that is also found on other websites outside of your own.

What exactly counts as duplicate content? Content is duplicate when you publish something on your website that has the following characteristics:

- **An insurer has given you permission to use it.** Insurers often send brokerages content to post on their site. However, what they don't realise is that this could create a major duplicate content issue for you and any other brokerages who post it.
- **You may have written it for another website, industry journal or online newsletter.** Even if the words are your own, the search engine will consider it duplicate content if it's somewhere else online.
- **It has already published by a news source or other website.** If it's written and posted by someone else, make sure you're paraphrasing.
- **It is not completely in your own words.**

In order to avoid duplicate content issues, all you need to do is make sure that your brokerage's blog posts are original. For example, if you come across an article that you find interesting, simply summarise the article in your own words, or offer your own tips and insight on the topic rather than copying it directly. It's perfectly fine to reference the work of other authors, and many of your blog posts probably depend on it. However, copying and pasting the text of another article will not reflect well on the overall quality of your blog. For example, if you wanted to reference an Associated Press piece, you could reference the source and author, while also providing a link to the article.

### Keyword Research

Believe it or not, the actual words and phrases you use in your blogs can help your content gain exposure. A way to help get traffic to your blog post is to do keyword research, which means using programs like Google Trends to find

words that will achieve better rankings with the search engines. Then add those keywords to your posts. In most cases, all you have to do is enter your blog's title or topic into the tool and you'll be given a number of keyword ideas to choose from. To get more in-depth instructions on how to perform keyword research, check out our [Blog Post Writing Advanced Practices](#) guide.

### Length

Blog posts are designed to be a resource for web visitors, so the post needs to offer adequate information. To ensure that the basics of the topic are covered, it is considered a best practice to have a minimum of 300 words per post. This will help the search engines understand your page better and can increase the chances of a user finding your website in their search results.

If you write a single paragraph that only includes 50 words, have you addressed all aspects of the topic? Not likely. The more in-depth the blog post, the more opportunities the post will have to attract search queries, because the content will fulfil the searched topic. In order to get the most benefit out of your blog strategy, make sure you are reaching the 300-word minimum.

### Linking

Adding hyperlinks into your blog posts is another way you can 'optimise' your article for SEO. There are two types of links, internal and external. Internal links bring readers to another page on your website, such as a product page or one of your other blog posts. External links take users away from your site to another website or resource.

When should you link?

- When mentioning a product offering in a blog post, provide a link from your blog to the page of your website featuring that product. For example, if you are writing a blog about motor insurance, you can provide an internal link from the term 'motor insurance' directly to the motor insurance page of your website. This makes it as easy as possible for a user reading about a particular insurance product to go from your blog to your product page, and hopefully to fill in a quote form!
- When you are writing a blog that is expanding on or is somehow related, a previous post, it's a good idea to provide a link to that blog post as well. For example, if you are writing a blog about how to create a home inventory, it may be a good idea to link to a blog you have already written about filing out a home insurance claim, which mentions a home inventory. This practice makes it easier for your readers to find more information about topics they are interested in, and easier for you to get more traffic to the other pages on your site.
- If you are quoting statistics, articles from reliable external sources or other materials, link to the external source. Whenever possible, avoid linking to sites that are not well-known or credible. For example, it's



best to link to reputable sources and websites, especially those that end in .gov.uk or .ac.uk, since these sources can help add credibility to your content and information. You also want to make sure that you're setting your external links to appear in a new window, so the user doesn't leave your website completely when they click on a link.

Keep in mind that you don't need to link in every blog post. Some blogs may have no links at all, while others may have one or two. Remember to link naturally, avoiding any type of pattern or practice that may come off as spam. For example, adding in too many links to product pages can actually work against your SEO efforts, since Google may consider it to be 'over-optimised'.

### Format

Utilise bullet points, numbered lists, and short paragraphs in blog posts, since these elements create a format that makes posts easier to read. While it may help to make some terms bolded or italicised within the blog content in order to stress certain points, you do not want the formatting to get in the way of the point you are trying to make. Instead, format your blog in a way that makes it as easy as possible for someone to get the information they're looking for.

### Images

Articles with images are not only more visually appealing, but they can also be easier to read, since images help break up large chunks of text. While it's great to include an image in your blog post, make sure you are not taking photos off Google Images, or you could get into legal trouble with copy right issues! Instead, utilise free stock photo websites (such as thinkstock.com or gettyimages.com). Or better yet, upload your own images!

### Editing Your Blog Post

After you've written the first draft of your blog post, reading through it to make sure it is organised well and is easy to read, as well as proofreading it for typos and grammar mistakes are a must. Typos can include: misspelt words, missing or extra words, incorrect words, incorrectly capitalised words, and missing or incorrect punctuation.

Once you've written and published your blog, you want to get people to read it! Check out the next guide, 'Blog Promotion Strategies', to find out how you can drive traffic to your blog.