

Lesson 1: Website content

This PDF will cover three main elements:

- The Basics: grammar, spelling, word count, keywords
- The Essential pages
- Fresh content, updates, algorithms

The Basics

It is always worth mentioning the dos and don'ts of content writing because although most people know them they sometimes get lost in the execution of a digital marketing strategy.

Here is a list of the basic rules of content writing you should always stick to:

- Proof read everything twice to avoid spelling mistakes, typos, grammatical errors and clumsily phrased sentences
- Write quality – this means professional, informative, and interesting content whether it is a product description or a white paper
- Short paragraphs and sentences – avoid lengthy blurb that isn't properly broken up with punctuation as this will be problematic to read and easier to ignore
- Be authentic – too much sales talk will just put people off. If you wouldn't talk like it to someone in person do not use that phrasing in written content either
- Avoid jargon and write something that everyone will be able to read and understand

It is all common sense but you do need to make sure you keep going over the basics so that you present the most professional and slick version of yourself possible to the world.

The Don'ts

It is always a good idea to arm yourself against worse practice before you attempt to create something special. Trust me when I say these methods do not work and will rapidly weaken your content strategy if used. When writing content for all five pages,

Don't:

- Fill them full of cheesy sales talk that will turn off consumers almost immediately
- Fill them full of keywords as this will only sabotage your page ranking by diminishing your importance to search engines
- Be boring for obvious reasons – people will lose interest in your site completely
- Write long drawn out paragraphs – people want short snappy content to digest quickly
- Be too formal because people like to know that there are faces and personalities behind the business they are buying from
- Be too informal because people like to know that their money is in safe hands and that they are buying something of quality
- If you can avoid doing each of those points then you will already be on your way to creating good content.

The next thing to bear in mind when you create content for your five pages is this:

“Quality, relevant content can't be spotted by an algorithm. You can't subscribe to it. You need people – actual human beings – to create or curate it.”

— Kristina Halvorson, Content Strategy for the Web

Part of this quote is no longer true as Google is becoming better and better at discerning relevant content from irrelevant. This just makes content even more crucial. These pages will be an extension of your business and of course you – or somebody that can capture your vision in words on your behalf. As you write your content ask yourself two questions:

1. Would I be interested in these words if I was reading them?
2. Am I writing like one human being talking to another human being?

The Big Five

Now we can look at what each of these pages needs to make them a little exceptional. In fact maybe while you are on it you want to make them a lot more exceptional!

1. About Us

This is the first page a buyer is likely to browse if they are wanting to find out a bit more about you. This is where you introduce yourself. Imagine what you would say if you had just met this person face to face. You would tell them a little bit about yourself and why you are in this particular line of work and then you would mention your ambitions and what it is that motivates you to deliver great service or good quality products.

This page breaks down the barriers between you and your customer but at the same time they don't want your life story! Tell them what they need to know, what you would like them to know and do it in a concise and quirky paragraph or two. You need to add enough detail so as to secure the buyers trust but hold back on flooding them so you do not come across as a waffler, a boaster, a chancer, or an arrogant salesperson. It's amazing how many people write as though they have one of those personalities just because they think they need to. Be yourself because that is who they want to meet.

2. Contact Us

This needs to be your most accessible page. Have the contact information near the top so they do not have to trawl down to it. There is nothing worse than businesses that hide their contact information. Show your customers/consumers that you are happy to take their call or email no matter what their enquiry.

Ensure the information is nice and clear. List your physical address, email address, phone number and then add any social media icons you may have. Do not just add social icons for the sake of it, make sure you are active on them so they can reach you. You should also include when you will be available so they are not ringing your office when no-one is there.

For extra pull the ideal contact us page will include a live chat button. This is not feasible for everyone but if you can hire a team to deal with real-time chat then this is definitely the way forward.

3. Why Buy from Us?

What makes you and your company special? This is your chance to highlight your greatest strengths and convince your customer/consumer why your service or product is worth their investment. Make sure you are confident and use images to get your point across.

The strongest Ecommerce sites tend to use price comparisons and zoom in on the quality of their products using video and image media. Ultimately, this page is the one that has to stand out the most. There may be hundreds of sites on the World Wide Web selling exactly what you do – so what puts you above your competition?

4. Legal Information

A necessity these days to protect you and your consumers. Legal information pages should simply include a clear 'terms and conditions' document as well as a 'privacy policy'. There is no content magic to be sprinkled here – just create a clear and legally binding document to cover everything from returns policy through to delivery disclaimers.

5. Testimonials

The testimonials page can be as creative as you like and the more creative it is the better. Testimonials are essential because the driving force behind all retail is, and will always be 'word of mouth'. If people buy from a site they want to make sure other people have bought from it before them and had a good experience when doing so.

How can you spice up your testimonials page? Try these ideas:

- Add video testimonials
- Slide back relevant images to reveal the testimonial

- If you have a lot then organise them in a chronological timeline
- Have them attached to a diagram that links to your product area (hanging off branches for a gardening store, on different wall backgrounds for a painting and decorating firm, on the body of lorries for a transport company)
- This page is proof of your good and reliable service. It will encourage the customer/consumer to trust you and go on to buy your product.

When approaching a new site build make sure these core pages are put into place before you think of adding others to them. Get these right and you will be telling your customer/consumer what they need to hear in a way that shows them what you are all about. Be bold, be relevant, and above all else, be human.

The last thing to say is that Google loves fresh content which is why we advocate the setting up of a blog. You could also change the content of your site on a six month basis just to keep everything up to date and relevant. The more consistent content you can put for Google to find the more of an authority they will view you as.