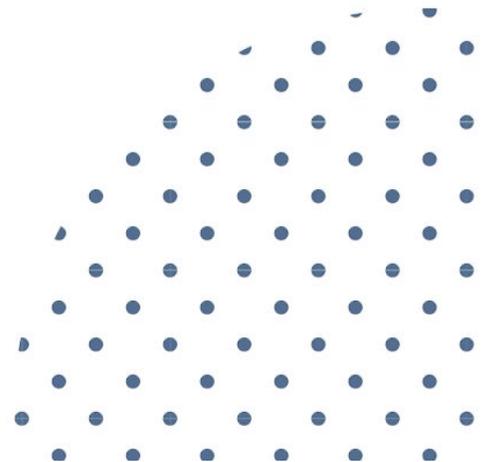


CLIENT DOWNLOAD

Blog Post Optimization Checklist



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matt Ryan'.

Blog Post Optimization Checklist

Blog Post Optimization Checklist

Before we dive into the Blog Post Optimization Checklist, you need to understand just how important blogging is to the success of your website. Publishing new blog posts on a regular and consistent basis keeps your brand in front of your audience, keeps your brand top of mind, and keeps providing search engines and social media with new reasons to send traffic to your website.

Blogging For Business

Yes, blogging is the fastest way to expand your real estate online and build brand equity you can tap into for more sales and more money. But, if you're just not sure if you want to commit to publishing new, valuable, original blog content on a regular basis, check this out:

- Every time a new blog post is published, a new searchable URL is added to your website.
- Publishing a new blog post just once each week for a year, will add 52 new indexable, searchable URLs to your website.
- That action creates 52 new ways people can find you online — that's 52 new chances you have to appear in the search engines results when someone is looking for what you do.
- Publishing twice a week, adds 104 new indexable, searchable URLs to your website, which is the same as adding 104 new opportunities for a potential client or customer to find you online in a single year.
- Publishing three times each week, adds 156 new indexable, searchable URLs to your website, which is the same as adding 156 new opportunities for a potential client or customer to find you online in a single year.

The Problem With Blogging For Business

There are a lot of business owners who think blogging for business is a waste of time, because they tried blogging and it didn't work, or someone else told them that they tried blogging and it didn't work.

I often hear stories like this:

"I read all this stuff online about how blogging is great for building a business. I even went to an event to learn about how blogging can help me get more clients. But I tried it for a few months and wrote a lot of articles — at least one or two a week — and it didn't generate any new leads for me, so I gave up."

Business blogging gets a bad rap because there are a lot of "experts" preaching about how awesome blogging is and how it can be the key to generating lots of quality leads, landing an abundance of ideal clients, and making you tons of money. Unfortunately, they don't teach the tactics you need to know and understand before you start blogging, so you get the most bang for your buck.

Even if your content is great, your blog could flop miserably if you don't:

- Plan a comprehensive content strategy for your website and blog
- Define the target keyword or key phrase for the content
- Create content people are searching for
- Learn how to optimize your content for SEO and for people

How to Optimize Blog Posts for Maximum Results

If you're going to expend the effort of writing and publishing a new blog post, it's critical that you also put in the extra effort needed to completely optimize the post for humans and search engines, and ensure you get the best possible results and the most traffic possible.

But what do you need to do to make sure new blog posts get the most eyeballs on them as possible? Here is a checklist of how to optimize your blog posts — also referred to as on-page SEO tactics:

- **Select a focus keyword**

To increase the effectiveness of your post and the probability it will gain traction in the search engines, focus the post content around one primary keyword or key phrase that you want your post to rank for and don't forget to use it in your content.

- **Use related keyword variations**

Many beginning bloggers make the mistake of keyword stuffing, which is just a fancy way of saying they use their focus keyword way too many times, often in an unnatural way. The best practice is to write in a natural, conversational tone, and instead of repeating your focus keyword over and over, use variations of the keyword or key phrase or other related keywords and phrases.

- **Keep the content on topic**

The more focused your content it, the better it will work for you in terms of SEO. Be careful to avoid long tangents or fragmented content.

- **Style the post content**

If you want people to read your content, it must seem easy to read. Nothing makes readers click away faster than a giant block of hard-to-read text. Use short paragraphs separated with a blank space, bold and italic formatting, and bullet lists and number lists. Break up long posts into sections using subheadings — Set all primary subheadings as an H2 and all secondary subheadings as an H3. Typically, the H4-H6 are unneeded.

- **Write a compelling headline**

Just as you would ignore a book with an ugly cover, most people across social media and those reviewing search engine results lists will ignore an article, blog post, or link with a boring, vague, or general headline. People click and buy based on emotions, so be sure the headline has a strong emotional value. It also needs to be accurate and persuasive. The headline must convince people to click on it and visit your website. Try using the [CoSchedule Headline Analyzer](#) to get tips to improve your headlines.

- **Confirm the call to action**

Make sure that every blog post you publish includes a call to action. At the end of the blog post

ask your reader to do something, to take some type of action. Do you want them to subscribe, opt-in for a free gift, sign up for a free download, register for a webinar, click a link, read another post, purchase an item? It doesn't matter what your call to action is, just be sure to include one and get your readers used to taking action.

- **Add at least one image and optimize it**

Interesting images enhance written content and posts with images receive more clicks on social media and are read more often by visitors than text posts alone. Every blog post should have at least one image, but the best performing long posts include an image every 300 words — this helps break up the text and makes it feel like a shorter, easier read. Just remember to optimize every image for search engines by adding a descriptive name, appropriate ALT text (alternative text), and whenever possible, a compelling, keyword-rich caption.

- **Add optimized links**

Links are the roads humans and search engines use to travel through the internet and discover more content. Further your SEO efforts by adding optimized internal and external links. Internal links are links to other pages and posts on your website about the same or a similar topic. Each link should use keyword-rich anchor text (the text of the actual link) and if appropriate. External links are links to other websites. External links demonstrate to the search engines that you're helpful and knowledgeable by helping them find and index more relevant content.

- **Add a unique HTML page title**

The HTML page title is like the sign on the outside of a building telling people what's inside. It's a sign for humans and search engines that tells them what your blog post is about. Make sure your HTML title is relevant to the blog post, highly focused, and includes your focus keyword. Limit it to 55-60 characters in length otherwise some search engines will cut it off. The HTML title is typically the text that is used for the link displayed in the search engine listings.

- **Add a unique HTML meta description**

The HTML meta description is exactly that — a unique, short description of what the blog post is about. It should include your focus keyword and be written so it convinces, encourages, and persuades others to click your link and read the post. Limit the meta description to no more than 300 characters in length otherwise some search engines will cut it off. The meta description is typically the short two line description that is displayed under the link in the search engine listings.

- **Define the category**

Your blog is like a giant file cabinet for your website, and the categories are like the large drawers inside the file cabinet. Use your blog categories to organize posts by primary content topic. Ideally your categories would match either the top 5-10 keywords you are targeting with your site, or the primary topics your income streams are built around.

- **Define the tags**

Staying with the file cabinet reference, tags are like the individual file folders inside the big drawers that separate content into smaller groups. Tags are secondary keywords and key phrases that further breakdown the primary ones used as categories. Be sure the tags assigned to your post are relevant to the content and stick to no more than 3-5.

Bonus Tip!

- **Review and test your content**

The very last thing you should do before pressing the publish button or scheduling your blog post is a thorough review. Read the blog post out loud to identify language that may need to be simplified and sentences that may need to be shorter. Look for typos or grammatical errors and fix them. Test every link and the call to action.

A One Page Checklist

By following these on-page optimization tips every time you write and publish a new blog post, you can ensure that your post is ready to attract visitors, and that it is optimized for search engines.

Jump to the next page for a simple one page checklist you can print and keep next to your computer for easy reference.

Blog Post Optimization Checklist

SELECT A FOCUS KEYWORD

- Focus the post content around one primary keyword or key phrase that you want the post to rank for.
- Use the keyword or key phrase in the post content.

USE KEYWORD VARIATIONS

- Write in a natural, conversational tone.
- Do not use your focus keyword too many times.
- Use variations of the focus keyword or key phrase and related keywords.

KEEP THE CONTENT ON TOPIC

- The more focused the content, the better it will perform.
- Avoid long tangents or fragmented content, as well as content that is too broad and general.

STYLE THE POST CONTENT

- Use short paragraphs separated with a blank space, bold and italic formatting, and bullet lists and number lists.
- Break long posts into sections using H2 for primary sub headlines and H3 for secondary sub headlines.

WRITE A COMPELLING HEADLINE

- The headline must have emotional value.
- The headline must be accurate and persuasive to convince people to click on it and visit your website. Do not mislead your audience.

CONFIRM THE CALL TO ACTION

- Confirm a call to action has been added and that it is powerful and compelling.
- Use action verbs and strong button text.

ADD AN OPTIMIZED IMAGE

- Add at least one image.
- Consider adding an image every 300-400 words for long posts.
- Optimize images by using a descriptive name and appropriate ALT text.

ADD OPTIMIZED LINKS

- Add internal links to other posts and pages on your website.
- Add external links to other relevant websites or web pages.
- Optimize each link with keyword-rich anchor text.

ADD A UNIQUE HTML PAGE TITLE

- Add a 55-60 character page title that is unique to this post.
- Include the focus keyword or key phrase.
- Make it compelling and interesting.

ADD A UNIQUE META DESCRIPTION

- Add a 160-300 character meta description that describes what the post is about.
- Include the focus keyword or key phrase.
- Make it persuasive.

ASSIGN THE POST A CATEGORY

- Assign the post to one primary category. This is a content vertical that is ideally tied to a revenue stream or area of focus for your business.

ASSIGN THE POST TAGS

- Assign the post to 3-5 tags in the primary category. These are more narrow content verticals of the category.

