

COMPANY Blog

Writer's Guidelines

July 2022

Table of Contents:

1. Writing For Search Engine Optimization (SEO) And Reader Engagement

- a. [Keyword Selection](#)
- b. [Keyword Optimization](#)
 - i. [URL](#)
 - ii. [Page Title](#)
 - iii. [Meta Description](#)
 - iv. [H1 \(On-Page Blog Title\)](#)
 - v. [Opening Paragraph](#)
 - vi. [H2/H3 Subheads](#)
 - vii. [Image Alt Text And Captions](#)
 - viii. [Body Copy](#)
 - ix. [Internal Links And Outbound Links](#)
 - x. [CTA Button](#)

2. Tone And Style

- a. [Make Posts Scannable](#)
- b. [Use Active Voice](#)
- c. [Omit Needless Words](#)
- d. [Use Short Sentences](#)
- e. [Define New And Obscure Terms](#)
- f. [Use Timeless Language](#)
- g. [Nix The Biz Lingo](#)
- h. [No Boasting](#)

3. Grammar And Mechanics

- a. [Commas](#)
- b. [Colons](#)
- c. [Em-dash](#)
- d. [Gerunds](#)
- e. [Numbers](#)
- f. [Title Case And Capitalization](#)

4. Images And Graphics

- a. [Header Images](#)
 - i. [Naming Convention For Header Images](#)
 - ii. [Alt Text For Header Images](#)
- b. [Inline Images](#)
 - i. [When To Use An Inline Image](#)

- ii. [When Not To Use An Inline Image](#)
- iii. [Where Do Inline Images Come From?](#)
- iv. [Alt Text For Inline Images](#)
- v. [Captions](#)
- vi. [Naming Convention For Inline Images](#)

5. [Common Terms And Spellings](#)

[One-Page Checklist For A COMPANY Blog Post Submission**](#)**

Writing For Search Engine Optimization (SEO) And Reader Engagement

Keyword Selection

What would someone type into the Google search bar to find your post? And do people search for it often? These questions should drive our pursuit of long-tail organic traffic. It's our job to help bots and people find our content now and in the future.

If you have access to a keyword research tool such as Brightedge or Ahrefs, use it to identify search terms for your post that accurately represent user intent. Target terms with a search volume of over 100. If you don't have access to these tools, ask Karen Solomon to help you with keyword research.

It's always a good idea to pop that keyword into a Google incognito window to see what content surfaces, and by whom, on pages one and two. Get ideas for page titles, H1s, and metadata that perform well to help our page rise to the top. It's worth noting that keywords are dynamic, and their value and search intent can change over time.

Keyword Optimization

To drive the most organic search traffic to the post, please include keyword-focused copy for each of these elements with your post submission.

URL: URLs should not be more than five words long, and they should contain (or just be) the target keyword. Do not include numbers, dates, or punctuation. The **slug** should be unique for every post; please check to make sure that each new URL we create is not already in use. (Blog editors: Please DO NOT use the default URL that HubSpot suggests.)

Example: <https://blog.COMPANY.com/toxic-productivity> (this is the slug)

Page Title: Note that the page title is different from the H1 on-page title. The page title is what you see when you hover your mouse over a page tab in your browser. More importantly, it's also the title of your post that shows up in Google search. Page title is very important for both human readers and for the Google search bots because it **lets everyone know the contents of the page before they click in** to read it. The page title needs to include your target keyword, and that keyword should be frontloaded in the copy. This will help our page to rank. The max character count should be around 60. And the page title should end with “ | COMPANY” for uniformity and branding. (Note to editors: Please DO NOT use the HubSpot default.)

Example: What Is Toxic Productivity? And 5 Tips To Overcome It | COMPANY

Meta Description: Nickname: “meta.” This is the small bit of copy underneath the page title that shows up in search results. Like the page title, this copy is very important because it **helps human readers decide if they want to click through to our page**, and because it helps the Google search bots decide if the content of this page is worth surfacing. When writing your meta, please frontload the keyword into the copy. It should also be a call to action that entices readers with the benefit they will receive if they read this page. Max character count is usually 160.

Example: Learn what toxic productivity is, and read expert tips on how to beat it. Get work-life balance strategies for physical and mental health.

H1 (On-Page Blog Title): Once a reader has decided that clicking through to our post is worth their time, **this is the title that will greet them on the blog post page**. This is also the title that will display in social media. This title has to accomplish a lot.

- It has to include the target keyword frontloaded in the copy.
- It has to promise the reader a benefit or some win for reading the post, such as a solution to a problem, a tip or trick to perform faster, do more with less, or gain more of what they seek.
- Numbers are always a win here and perform well with readers (especially listicles with odd numbers). Percentages or dollar amounts are always welcome.
- Simple and straightforward is better than clever, but if you are going to be clever, do so at the end of the title rather than at the beginning.
- Write to appeal to a reader's emotions, whether that's fear, humor, or humanity.
- Unique to blog content, an H1 title does not have to encapsulate or summarize the entire post. A startling stand-out figure, an amazing stat, or an emotional play are all great ways for the H1 to do its job: Bring the reader into the copy and get them reading.
Piquing interest is far more important than writing a summary.
- Only one H1 is allowed in any post, and it should be at the top.
- Max character count: usually 70

Opening Paragraph: Think of this as the hardest working portion of the post copy. Feel free to sketch out your opening graph anytime during your writing. But it should get more writerly love

than any other part of the copy, and it is often best to fine tune it after the rest of the post is written. To prolong reader engagement and appease the Google search bots, the all-important opening graph should follow these guidelines:

- Include the target keyword. Google bots will look for this and it will help our organic ranking.
- If you can, include a stat, a dollar amount, an expert quote, or a research stat that demonstrates or substantiates any claim that we're making. This builds credibility as a source and as a brand.
- No "throat clearing." Get to the point. Draft it to get it out of your system and help you narrow your thoughts, but please edit it out of your final draft. Broad generalities about the way we work today, the pressure to succeed, COVID, or anything else aren't engaging, and they don't give our busy readers a reason to keep reading. Think of this: Our readers' time is valuable, and we have about a billion other pieces of content to compete with for their attention. State what the post is about, why it's different than any other post, what the reader will gain from reading it, and why they should give us their time immediately, else they will be gone.

Example of a solid opening graph: Like Siskel and Ebert, Sigfried and Roy, peanut butter and jelly, there's another dynamic duo that just got even better: Slack and COMPANY. If you've heard the news, you are now able to activate the Slack Power-Up. This Power-Up streamlines the tools your team is already using, and subsequently improves communication.

Example of "throat clearing": The end of the year is suddenly near. Projects with loose ends, ship dates loom, key meetings (or maybe virtual parties) are in flight, and planning a productive start to 2022 is on your mind.

Oh, and for many of us, we're still working on projects with teams who are rarely together under one roof.

You might've noticed the sheer number of projects you're involved in, tasks you're managing, milestones or due dates to hit. And you're not alone (we're feeling it, too.)

But good news is already in view... with COMPANY's views. Launched early this year, we've been learning from you how you're using views to visualize all the work you and your team are doing. (Congratulations on some great work this year, by the way.)

With a couple quick clicks (with Premium or Enterprise plans), views can reduce the amount of shared spreadsheets, timeline conflict, static gantt charts, sticky notes, poorly mapped routes, and project calendars blinking red. More specifically, views can help you close up a lot of windows by rearranging all the details of COMPANY boards you're already using to a single, useful visual resource.

H2/H3 Subheads: Please make sure the target keyword appears naturally in at least one of the subheads. More than one is ok, as long as the language feels casual and unforced.

Image Alt Text And Captions: Include copy for the header image alt text that uses the target keyword. For inline images, please also include copy for captions and alt text. In all cases, natural language is always best. What's the difference between alt text and captions? Alt text is how you would describe the image to an unsighted person. A caption can be any copy that accompanies the image. Note that alt text does not require punctuation, and captions do not use ending punctuation.

Example of alt text: illustration of a character using their mobile phone
screenshot of a COMPANY board template for project management

Example of a caption: Card labels make it easy to quickly identify app status

Body Copy: The target keyword should appear at least two or three times in natural language throughout the copy. Keep it real, and keep it conversational. The Google bots will know that your page rings true if the keyword is incorporated. Do not cram it in to the point of overuse. If the algorithms suspect spammy intentions in the copy we will be demoted accordingly.

Internal Links And Outbound Links: Links are essential for building a more trustworthy reader experience and for better SEO. Linking to our own existing COMPANY and XXX content, especially our own COMPANY blog posts, gives us a huge boost in "SEO juice." Please add logical, helpful links to every post you write.

- Link to quality global research from sources like Harvard Business Review, Forbes, McKinsey, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.
- **Link to our own blog posts whenever it's logical to do so.** We get a huge benefit from internal linking. Please do the research on our blog to find linkable, relatable content. There's no magic number here; please include as many logical links as you can.
- Please do not link out to any of our competitors. This includes Asana, Monday, Smartsheet, Click-up, Wrike, Notion, Scoro, Todoist, etc.
- Please inspect all of the COMPANY blog links for clarity and remove anything wonky in the URL. For example, in this URL, <https://COMPANY.com/en-US/teams/team-management>, the "en-US/" needs to be removed. And in this URL, https://blog.COMPANY.com/why-you-cant-focus-on-anything-plus-how-to-fix-it?hs_amp=true, the "?hs_amp=true" should be removed from the link in the GDoc.

CTA Button: HubSpot has limited CTA functionality, but we need to do the most with what we have. Every post should end with a gentle nudge to The Next Step for our reader. Most likely this will be a related blog post. Enterprise posts will often end with a link to the sales page. Please write some segue copy in the post, and then include the button copy and link. *For example:*

Keep Your COMPANY Board Private

COMPANY boards are infinitely flexible, and they're always ready to share or protect your team's information as needed. Lock it down as much, or as little, as you like.

[BUTTON]

[Learn to add more security with COMPANY board authentication](#)

All of these content elements combine to help the page rank and get read.

Tone And Style

COMPANY's tone is *relatable*:

- We help readers optimize their productivity.
- We're smart, but not a know-it-all.
- We're kind, encouraging, non-judgmental, and humble.
- We're that helpful friend or colleague on top of new trends who wants to share our wisdom.
- We support and speak to teams of all industries, sizes, experiences, and locations.
- We speak factually about our competitors. Bad sportsmanship is a no-no.
- Our tone adequately addresses small business and personal productivity users, as well as tech managers and the C-suite. We reach out to those new to the brand and old friends.
- We avoid first-person narratives.

To borrow from the XXX voice and tone guide: The COMPANY voice is *practical, but with a wink*.

Use these strategies to keep our content accessible and readable:

Make Posts Scannable: Great blog copy follows this philosophy: **PDR (People Don't Read)**.

Rare is the reader who is going to read a single blog post from top to bottom. Instead, readers tend to buzz through a post, scrolling down, occasionally back up, looking for that nugget of information that landed them there in the first place. Help them find what they're looking for quickly and easily.

- **Include a table of contents** for a longer post with multiple subheads to help them get where they want to go.
- **Pay attention to the architecture/outline of your post.** Readers should be able to get the gist of the copy by reading the H1s, H2s, and H3s. Sometimes this may be all they read. Make sure the structure of your post makes sense. (Google will reward your post with a higher ranking for good organization as well.)
- **Add bulleted or numbered lists** whenever possible. They are easy to scan and they're a great way to break up large copy blocks.

- **Ask questions, and answer them.** Questions are great for search, and great for readers. If you ask a question, make sure the answer follows it immediately.
- **Pull quotes** are a great way to break up large text blocks and pull a reader into the post. Be on the lookout for great quotes, stats that make your eyes pop, or some other copy standout and use it for a pull quote.

Use Active Voice: Active voice makes copy vibrant and engaging. Passive voice makes it snooze. Here's the difference:

Passive voice: The dogs are chasing the ball.

Active voice: The dogs chase the ball.

Passive voice: Special pricing is being offered by COMPANY Premium.

Active voice: COMPANY Premium offers special pricing.

Omit Needless Words: Live and die by the grammatical genius of Strunk and White's [The Elements of Style](#). Eliminate every extraneous word in your post. Remove three words when one will suffice. They write, "Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts." The result is copy that is thrifty and respectful of our reader's time. ~~Be on the lookout~~ Look for wasted words and remove them.

Use Short Sentences: To improve reader comprehension and engagement, break up long sentences and paragraphs.

Define New And Obscure Terms: If you introduce a technical, industry, or little-used term, such as "shadow IT" or "COMPANY Workspace" or "context switching," link out to a source and define it on first use in the copy. COMPANY users include wedding planners and small teams who run a plant shop. Make them feel smart and included.

Use Timeless Language: Blog posts rarely die. Chances are that what you're writing today will still be live months and years from now. We have plenty of live posts from 2018 that are forever "introducing" a new product. And posts from 2017 that say "four years ago." Omit these vague time-specific terms or swap them out for exact dates, such as "back in 2015."

Nix The Biz Lingo: Spare us all the indignity of marketing jargon and business language. Don't say "utilize" when you can "use." Don't "empower" when you can "help." Keep it clean and simple.

No Boasting: Readers run away at the slightest whiff of marketing promotion in a blog post striving for authenticity. Of course we will write about COMPANY's abilities, but we should state the facts without judgment about our greatness.

Grammar And Mechanics

Commas: We observe the Oxford comma. No if's, and's, or but's.

Colons: Words after a colon are capitalized: No lie.

Em-dash: We use em dashes (—) with no spaces on either side of the dash.

Example: An em dash is great—for emphasis.

Gerunds: Remove as many words that end in “-ing” as you can. For one, gerunds are often a sign of passive voice that clog up the works. And two, many of our posts are translated into multiple languages, and gerunds are an English convention that do not translate well. Avoid gerunds whenever possible.

Numbers: Spell out all numbers zero through nine with words (except when they appear in page titles or H1s). Use digits for numbers 10 and above. For “million” and “billion”, write the word and do not use the digits. *For example, “\$23 million”*

Title Case And Capitalization: Write page titles, H1s, and all subheads (H2s, H3s, etc.) in sentence case, no punctuation. We do not capitalize a letter after a number. We do capitalize after a colon. *For example:*

11 reasons your productivity is falling behind

Meet your maker: How to hold effective meetings for non-managers

Images And Graphics

Header Images

Header images are the large illustrations atop every COMPANY blog post. These images are created either by an agency or internally, and they are requested and added to the COMPANY card for each post by Emily from Aimal. Editors will make sure the image is provided and ensure that the image provided is the right size for blog; not more than 150K.

Naming Convention For Header Images: For better SEO and for a more organized collection of data assets, please change the name of each header image to the slug of the blog post, separated by a dash.

Example:

If the URL of the post is <https://blog.COMPANY.com/personal-user-manuals>

*Then the title of the header image should be **personal-user-manuals.png***

Always Include Alt Text For Header Images: Writers or blog post editors need to include alt text for images added to the blog. What is alt text? It's a small bit of copy that describes the image on the page for a person who can't see it. It is factual and descriptive. It is not visible to

most readers; usually it's read by robots or screen readers, but that does not mean it's not important. It should be under 125 characters including spaces. And ideally, if you can swing the language naturally, it should include the target keyword for the post. Why do we use alt text? Another zinger! It performs a few tasks for the post:

1. It makes the image accessible for blind or low-vision readers (or anyone using a screen reader).
2. It provides another opportunity to enrich the post with more SEO juice from a keyword mention.
3. It signals to the Google bots that our content is quality and that it should be given a slightly higher ranking because of how thorough and thoughtful we are.

Inline Images (also called Body Images)

Any image that comes beneath the header image in a post, often a product screenshot, webpage, or data visualization, is an inline image. This does not include any of the templated or decorative graphics on the whole page; inline images are specific to visual elements added to the body of a single blog post. Inline images share many of the same requirements as header images, but some needs and best practices are a bit different. **Just like header images, inline images should not be larger than 150K.**

When To Use An Inline Image: Graphics are a great way to break up large blocks of text, but don't add an image simply because it's pretty. (Subheads, bulleted copy, pull quotes, and other content tricks can help long copy breathe.) Inline images should add to the understanding of the post, help the reader, and explain visually what's harder to show with words. They should serve a real purpose in the post. Here are a few use cases for inline imagery:

- **Product Screenshots:** By far, this is the most common use of imagery on the COMPANY blog. These demonstrate how or why to perform a task, sign up for a service, or perform a trick on a COMPANY board. COMPANY is such a visual medium; a good product screenshot can also help show off the beauty of, say, a great photo on a card cover. Keep in mind that it's not imperative to thoroughly show every single step of a process. Rather, only include the images that are necessary to help the reader get the job done.
- **Charts, Graphs, And Other Data Visualizations:** Business readers love a good chart. If you want to show progress or track data over time, this is a useful visual aid.
- **Maps:** This does not pop up very often, but like a visualization, a map can be the picture that's worth a thousand words.

When Not To Use And Inline Image: Animated GIFs tend to be very large and slow a page's load time. It's probably best to avoid them. The blog is a global platform; memes aren't always understood by readers who speak different languages, or who just don't understand spicy meme culture. These should probably be avoided as well. Decorative, distracting images that don't add

to the understanding of the copy should not be included in a post. And to shield COMPANY and XXX from the potential for legal repercussions, don't use images from Star Wars, Sesame Street, Friends, The Office, or any other source of copyrighted content.

Where Do Inline Images Come From? For the most part, the blog post writer is responsible for providing their own screenshots or other inline images. However, if you need help or if you have a specific request, please ask your editor. While you may include inline images in your Google Doc to show where you'd like them to appear, please post each image as an attachment on the COMPANY card for your post. Make sure that each image follows the right naming convention (below) and sizing requirements for the blog (under 150k). Hint: If you need to resize an image, [TinyPNG](#) and [ImageOptim](#) are great free resources for anyone not blessed with Photoshop or Photoshop skills.

Always Use Alt Text For Inline Images: Alt text is a small bit of copy, invisible to most casual readers, that describes the image on the page. It is factual and descriptive. It should be under 125 characters including spaces. And ideally, if you can swing the language naturally, it should include the target keyword for the post. Alt text makes the image accessible for blind or low-vision readers (or anyone using a screen reader), and it provides another opportunity to enrich the post with more SEO juice from a keyword mention.

Very Often, It's A Good Idea To Add A Caption: While alt text on an image is not visible to most readers, a solid image caption is both visible and helpful. Don't let your busy, skimming reader have to figure out what you're showing them—especially when you're showing off product or process. An image caption should be specific and descriptive. Tell 'em what you're showing 'em, and why. Here are a few examples of effective image captions:

- *Portraits of team members with their pets, made possible with COMPANY card covers, can be a fun way to add personality to personal user manuals.*
- *Example of a COMPANY board with a list of meetings for today, this week, and this month.*
- *Manage workload distribution with COMPANY's rule automation tools.*

Naming Convention for Inline Images: The title of each inline image should include the post slug, separated with dashes, along with "body". If there are multiple inline images, add an increasing number to the image name. This is easier to show than to describe.

Example:

If the URL of the post is <https://blog.COMPANY.com/personal-user-manuals>

Then the title of the header image should be **personal-user-manuals.png**

The first inline image for this post would be **personal-user-manuals-body.png** (or this could be a .jpg if it's a photo rather than a screenshot or an illustration).

If there are multiple inline images in the post, follow this format:

[personal-user-manuals-body.png](#) (for the first image to appear)
[personal-user-manuals-body2.png](#) (for the second image)
[personal-user-manuals-body3.png](#)
[personal-user-manuals-body4.png](#) (etc., adding a digit value as you go)

Common Terms And Spellings

<u>Capitalized</u>	<u>Not capitalized</u>
XXX Cloud Dashcards COMPANY board Butler Calendar (view) Custom Field Dashboard (view) COMPANY Standard COMPANY Premium COMPANY Enterprise Table (view) Timeline (view) Workspace Map (view) Mirror card Power-Ups	template lists card checklist work-life board impostor

CHECKLIST FOR A COMPANY BLOG POST SUBMISSION

- Keyword research was completed before writing
- Suggestion for URL slug is under five words and includes the keyword
- Copy for page title includes the keyword and the “ | COMPANY” tail (60 characters max)
- Copy for meta description includes the keyword (160 characters max)
- H1 title copy follows guidelines
- Opening graph follows guidelines
- Subheads include the keyword at least once
- Every image has alt text; inline images have alt text and captions
- Keyword is mentioned at least twice in the body copy
- Numerous links have been added to COMPANY/XXX content and to external sources
- Suggested copy and link for a CTA button are included
- The post has been reviewed for active voice
- Long sentences and text blocks have been broken up
- Unnecessary words have been omitted