5 keyword research steps for winning blog post titles | Search Engine People | Toronto

Tweet[1]

You've heard that blog titles are important. Jeff Quipp makes a strong point #6 in his 12 blogging mistakes[2] article. Ann Smarty[3] also talks about the importance of titles in her point #3 here "before you publish your post[4]". To stress the importance of post titles even further here's a few places where your blog post titles appear:

Therefore it's key to create strong titles that not only generate clicks but also are optimized for better search engine rankings. This post will outline a process of building strong blog post titles.

As with any keyword research we'll go through some standard steps. Blog titles starts with a blog post substance. So you should have your post ready before starting the work on your title (that's what works for me). Start writing with a working title, complete your post and only then spend time creating a winning post title.

Brainstorm some keywords

So, you've written an article and want to create a great blog post title. First, you start with a simple brainstorm. Think of what your post is about:

- How your potential readers may look for this post?
- What keywords will they use? i.e. SEO[5]
- Is your post educational?
- Does your post include a list of items?
- Is it an infographic?

Think about your target audience. Who are they and what they want to find? At the end of this step you should end up with a 10-12 terms.

Use tools to expand your list

At this point there will be a few tools at your disposal. Check a short list of keyword research tools[6]. However, don't try to look at the numbers yet. We'll get into it in the next step. At this point we're still at a brainstorming stage, just adding some tools to our arsenal.

So, use the list of terms you've just created and run it through tools like UberSuggest[7], Google Keyword Tool[8] or WordTracker's Free Keyword Tool[9]. If you have a paid subscription to a keyword research tool, even better. But remember, the goal of this stage is to generate a more complete list of keywords for your blog post title.

Sidenote: UberSuggest has become one of my favorite tools recently as it gives some really good suggestions of what related terms people are searching for. Please note that it's a great tool at a brainstorming stage, not the keyword analysis.

Looking at the lists you will notice that there are some terms that are more relevant to your article than others. Keep those and remove those that don't belong here. At this point you should end up with a list of 30-50 terms that are very relevant to your article.

Check the keyword numbers

Now that we have the list, let's look at some numbers. Run your list through a Google Keyword Tool to gather search volume and competition information. Feel free to use WordTracker too for longer tail keywords. I prefer to use MS Excel to work with keywords but you may choose another data processing tool. The goal is to choose terms that are:

1. Descriptive of your article / blog post
2. Are not too competitive (low to medium)
3. Have decent search volume (over 300, but depends on the industry and terms)

Construct and implement

By now you should have an idea on the lucrative keywords that you'll use to construct your blog post title. So, let's look at some common elements of a post title:

- Key phrase: I like to start a title with a key phrase. For example, for the term "Calgary SEO" I'd create a press release title such as "*Calgary SEO* specialist launched new service to simplify SEO management". Having your key phrase at the beginning is not a-must, but try to fit it in where you can.
- Questions are a good way to grab reader's (web scanner's) attention. For example, "How can you save 30% on your next [insert your product] purchase in Calgary?". This example includes a promise / offer, a description, and a keyword
- Promises are a great way to grab people's attention. *Just make sure you keep the promise*. For example, "Save up to 40% on your next purchase. Learn how."
- Make sure your title is descriptive enough to get people interested, but not as descriptive to give them the whole story. For example, "Here's how I ordered 10 widgets at the price of 7". This example also gives a good vibe of a

personal tale, story.

- User numbers and specifics where you can. Nobody clicks on vague titles even if those titles are in CAPITALS or include a lot of exclamation marks. So, it pays to use specifics such as numbers, percentages, dates, cities, etc. For example, "6/10 visitors to Calgary stopped at one of our hotels, read their stories here."
- People love lists. So if you've written a list-based article, make sure your title leads with that. For example, "Top 10 things to do in Calgary", or "25 WordPress SEO addons for a winning blog".
- Sound natural. People like human language, fewer people enjoy advertising speeches, slogans, or anything that's pushing them to buy. Create a title that speaks facts from personal experience. For example, "30 tools I used to gain my top Google rankings".
- Be provocative. Challenge common knowledge. For example, "10 things Apple can do better", or "10 reasons I hated Steve Jobs' business style", no offence though.

It seems that this should be the last step in our process. But it's not the case. One more to go. We're almost done…

Check and optimize

One of the most common mistakes bloggers make is "forgetting about their past articles". The fact that you've just created a winning blog post titles can only be proved by time. So, here's what I'd like you to do in a month (or so) after you created your blog title:

1. Check Google Analytics' content section.
2. Find posts with high bounce rate (these will be posts with great titles, but lower quality content)
3. Find posts with low bounce rate AND low pageviews (these will be strong content posts with under-developed titles)

Looking at your Content section in Google Analytics will help you see how your blog articles compare to each other in terms of visits from search engines and other traffic sources. This last step is crucial to help you learn from mistakes and optimize your past articles.

I hope this guide will help you build stronger blog post titles. By no means I say this is a definitive answer on the topic. That's why I wanted to share other great resource below. Also, if you feel that something is missing or is not right based on your experience, feel free to leave a comment below and share your experience.

Good resources on the topic

Interact With This Post:

References

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6. ^ keyword research tools

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