



THE SEO CHECKLIST

Best Practices for Content Creators

You want to produce quality content, but you also want to guarantee it's seen by the right audience. Fortunately, SEO doesn't have to distract or hinder your creative process. FM's SEO team compiled a checklist of four important tips that any content creator can apply to place your content in front of the most relevant audience.

Incorporate Relevant Keywords

You probably knew this one already, but we'll break it down for you. Including relevant, high-volume keywords and terms is necessary for getting your content discovered. The higher up on the page the words are, the better. We've found keywords are most effective in the title or within the first few sentences. Keep in mind that keyword relevance is just as important as the inclusion of keywords themselves. If it reads unnaturally or doesn't fit the context of your content, adjust or remove the word or term altogether. When in doubt, choose quality over quantity, and don't worry about forcing "exact match" keywords.

Write First, Optimize Later

It may sound counterintuitive considering the useful optimization goodies we've provided, but one of the best ways to write for SEO is to not write for SEO. As a content creator, your primary focus should be to provide quality material that gives readers an engaging, informative, and otherwise valuable experience. This focus is especially important with Google's 2015 introduction of RankBrain, an algorithm favoring natural language and content that meets the needs of disabled users who use their voice to search. Aside from using keywords for topic inspiration, remove thoughts of SEO from your mind as you write. Focus on your craft, your message, and let your creativity do its thing without restrictions. Create first, optimize later.

Use Keywords for Topic Inspiration

Keyword research doesn't have to be dull. Use popular searches or trending topics as fuel for inspiration and gain valuable insight about user behavior. Through keyword research, you can begin to answer important questions related to what people want, need, and prioritize. And if you know what people are searching, you can create content that's compatible with their queries. Long tail keywords can provide not only topic ideas but also nearly-completed titles or subheaders for your posts. Additionally, they allow the page to show up for related searches that aren't exact.

Optimize On-Page Elements

Filling in custom metadata can have a significant impact on your content's visibility. Before publishing, incorporate optimized titles, descriptions, and heading tags in your platform's meta fields. Note that content containing images or other media has proven to perform better than content without, and optimizing the image alt tags and file names will help your images rank for relevant searches.

Internal links are another simple yet important on-page element to include. Link relevant pages, posts, and content on your site within the text of your content. We recommend limiting internal links to no more than three per piece of content to avoid diluting the "link juice" of each link.