



Blogging Process?

I recently had a client ask me if there was a document that described a disciplined process he should follow to create all of his blog posts. He wanted general guidance for maximizing search engine optimization and lead generation effectiveness. This may take the fun out of blogging but it's a worthwhile exercise and thought I'd include it for you all here. **This is for those of you that want to sap every ounce of SEO juice out of each business-oriented blog you write!**

1. Determine your business goal for the blog post (not for your site as a whole). Choose one or two specific keyphrases to maximize for this individual post. Forget about the big picture, think small scale for now.
2. Put yourself in the shoes of your target audience - try to step outside your own knowledge set and think about what they might actually type into the search engine if they were looking for the information you are offering. Base this brainstorm off your selected keyphrases and come up with a few different versions of what you think people might type. Make a list.
3. While you follow this exercise make sure you focus first and foremost on providing value to the reader from your article. Optimizing for SEO is great, but it won't help you if your article is just a bunch of keywords that no one wants to read. Instead of being a 'writer', think about being an 'educator' - it often makes creating the blog post easier.
4. Use that list of varied keywords as a basis to 'optimize' your post. Make sure there are keyphrases in your title, your article in several places (and toward the top is beneficial -spiders read from top to bottom), as tags, and potentially even as a category.
5. Use the keyphrases contained within your article body as active link text to pertinent pages on your website or to previous blog posts you've already written on the subject. Try to create at least two links from within your article that serve this purpose.
6. Create meaningful calls to action that are easy to follow and understand. Try to customize them so that they fit the goal of your article. If you are talking about a listing in a specific neighborhood, change your "Search the MLS" link to say "FREE access to all available properties listed in X Neighborhood". If you can offer a specific link to only properties available in that neighborhood, great - if not, it still helps to say this - they will in theory be able to perform a search for that neighborhood from your generic search tool. If you say "Search the MLS" then make sure you send readers directly to that search page URL, NOT to your website homepage. You want to make it as easy as possible for your reader to get exactly what they want and quickly.
7. Consider mixing up your calls to action - create two or three and have them on hand for insertion. Make them interesting - perhaps a few sentences that tell people what they can expect if they fill out your form. Honestly goes a long way when it comes to getting people to dole out information.
8. Use your tags and categories and most importantly don't forget to make your titles specific (often times this means including your geographic location)! Well written titles will make a HUGE difference. Don't make those posts work harder for you than they need to! If they aren't specific you force yourself to compete on a much larger scale in the search engines than you need to - strive to compete at your local level.