**The Ultimate Editing Checklist**

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**Topic Selection**

Consider these high-level questions at the beginning stages of the editorial process. *(Tip: Ask contributors to run a working title/brief outline for the piece of content by you before they start writing so you can steer them in the right direction and save writers' time.)*

  Does this topic align with our content strategy? Will our readers/personas care about it?

  Have we covered this topic comprehensively in the past? Will it add anything new and interesting to the noise created by all the content on the web?

  Can the angle be tweaked to be *more* interesting?

**Article Structure & Formatting**

The way the writer presents and organizes their content and ideas is an important part of the editing process. Ask yourself these questions to determine whether the content is structured and formatted in an optimal way.

  Is this the right format for the content? Does this topic work better as an ebook or a blog post. If it's a blog post, should it be formatted as a [list post](http://blog.hubspot.com/9-reasons-you-cant-resist-list) vs. [yin and yang](http://blog.hubspot.com/inverted-pyramid-business-blogs) vs. [the LEGO](http://blog.hubspot.com/inverted-pyramid-business-blogs), etc.

  Is the flow of the content logical? Are chapters/headers/points organized in an order that makes sense and naturally guides readers through the content?

  Are big chunks of text broken up with headers and paragraph breaks so it's easier on the eyes and [readers can scan and skim](http://blog.hubspot.com/inverted-pyramid-business-blogs)?

  Are the headers interesting, compelling, and clear?

  Are all major points associated with the topic covered in the post?

  Are headers formatted consistently -- not just within this piece of content, but also with other pieces of content? Are different header styles (H2 vs. H3 vs. H4) being used to denote content hierarchy?

  How is the formatting? Does it make it easy for readers to skim/scan?

  Are important points/stats/ideas called out in bold to catch readers' attention?

  Are images and visuals included where appropriate?

  Are these visuals and images high quality and interesting?

**Writing**

This section is pretty important, for obvious reasons. Here are the important things to consider as you're evaluating the writing in and of itself.

  Is the content well-written?

  Is the writing interesting, entertaining, and easy to read?

  Does the content tell a story?

  Do the transitions make sense and flow well?

  Is grammar correct?

  Does the intro capture the reader's attention? Is it interesting enough to get the reader to keep reading? *(Tip: Keep in mind that*[*10% of readers*](http://blog.hubspot.com/most-people-arent-reading-to-the-end-of-your-posts)*don't scroll through articles at all.)*

  Does the intro tee up the rest of the content well and indicate the value the reader will get out of reading it?

  Does the tone of the writing align with the content being presented?

  Does the tone and terminology used align with the persona being targeted?

  Does the content's voice jibe with the overall voice of our content and company?

  Yet, are we still allowing the writer's individual writing personality to shine through?

**Supporting Elements**

These are some additional considerations to make that can take your content from okay to awesome.

  Did we include examples (real or hypothetical) to illustrate our points?

  Did we use data, statistics, and quotations to back up our points?

  Are there other supporting elements that could enhance the content? (e.g. a SlideShare, a video, a visual, etc.)

**Attribution**

Any good editor makes sure he/she is giving credit where credit is due. Here's what to think about.

  Are statistics, data, quotes, ideas, etc. properly attributed to the original source?

  Is the data interpreted correctly and not lost in translation from the original source?

  In quotations, do we have the right spelling of their name and job title/company?

  Did we link back to the original source within our citations? *(Tip: Give 'em some link love to help build relationships.)*

  Are we actually [allowed to use those images](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33098/How-Not-to-Steal-People-s-Content-on-the-Web.aspx)?*(*[*Here's a cautionary tale*](http://blog.hubspot.com/internet-copyright-law-failure)*.)*

**Title Selection**

[The title/headline](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/28689/How-to-Master-the-Art-of-Exceptional-Blog-Titles.aspx) of your piece of content is often the first impression someone has of your content (think social media shares, search results, etc.), so it's important to put some time and careful thought into its selection. Here's what to consider.

  Is the title compelling and interesting enough to get people to click through and read on?

  Does the title accurately reflect the content within? Is it overly sensational or bombastic?

  Is the title brief and concise? *(Tip: Keep in mind longer titles will get cut off in search engine results.)*

  Is the title keyword-conscious without being keyword-heavy and sacrificing user experience?

**Style Guide Alignment**

[Written style guides](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33575/Introducing-the-Internet-Marketing-Written-Style-Guide.aspx) serve as the commonly acknowledged authority when questions of grammar and punctuation come up in writing. A style guide answers questions like, whether you use title case for article titles and headers; whether you capitalize the word *internet*; or whether you use the Oxford comma. You can either adopt an already-established style guide, like the AP Stylebook, or create an in-house version that enables you to borrow from different schools of thought and address any nuances specific to your industry or company. The important thing is to be consistent across all content you publish.

  Does anything contradict our style guide? *(Tip: If you don't have a style guide, you can* [*download HubSpot's and customize it as you see fit*](http://offers.hubspot.com/the-internet-marketing-written-style-guide)*.)*

**Finishing Touches**

You're almost done! But don't overlook these finishing touches.

  Are there internal links to other resources, landing pages, or blog articles?

  Were those links tested to confirm they work and send readers to the right place?

  Is the content spell-checked?

  Are any company names referenced spelled and styled correctly?*(Tip: Pay particular attention to CamelCase, lowercase, one vs. two words, etc.)*

  Does the content contain any sensitive or controversial information that we need to get anyone's approval on before publishing? (e.g. our legal or PR department)

  Have any stats cited or quotes used (etc.) been fact checked?

  Is the article well researched?

  Is there a catchy, concise, and clear meta description? (when appropriate)

  Is it tagged with the appropriate tags? (when appropriate)

  Was the publish date/time double-checked so we're not accidentally scheduling for 9 p.m. instead of 9 a.m.?*(It happens. We've done it.)*

  Are there opportunities to make the content more social? (e.g. adding ['Pin it' buttons](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33849/How-to-Add-Pinterest-s-Buttons-Widgets-to-Your-Website.aspx) to proprietary images/infographics/visuals/charts, adding [tweet links](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/29544/The-Ultimate-Cheat-Sheet-for-Creating-Social-Media-Buttons.aspx), [social sharing buttons](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/29544/The-Ultimate-Cheat-Sheet-for-Creating-Social-Media-Buttons.aspx), etc.)

  Are there relevant calls-to-action (CTAs) included where appropriate?

**Final Sanity Check**

Now that all the nitty-gritty edits have been made, sit back and take a look at the content holistically. Then ask yourself these final questions.

  Could anything be potentially harmful to any of our partners, stakeholders, audience, or our company itself?

  Could this offend certain people in our audience? If so, is it worth it?

  Did we double-check any mathematical calculations we made ourselves?

  Is the content at all at odds with our company's mission, philosophy, goals, etc.?

  Did we miss any opportunities to build a relationship with influencers, industry thought leaders, etc.?

*Feel free to add your own to customize this editing checklist for you!*