

9 Tips For Writing Headlines That Deliver

Writing a great headline is no easy feat. It's a delicate balancing act that requires a good grasp of the data, intimate knowledge of your audience, an awareness of cultural nuances, and a lot of creativity.

Check out some of these tips for creating headlines that people will want to click on.

Keep It Short & Sweet

As internet users, we know all too well that most readers are simply skimming through content at a glance.

Between short attention spans and limited space to play (in areas like search results and social feeds), overly long headlines are not the way to go – they're often either ignored or cut off.

For this reason, you must keep your headlines concise and to the point. As a best practice, we recommend trying to keep your headlines somewhere between 50 and 60 characters so they're not cut short.

So, instead of this: "Check Out Our Comprehensive Guide To Understanding All The Intricacies Of Modern Home Gardening Techniques In Urban Environments."

You want something more like this: “Master Modern Urban Gardening With Our Essential Guide.”

Consider The Nuances Of Your Audience

Not all audiences are created equal or have the same preferences.

For example, while you might want to emphasize subtlety and sophistication for a UK audience, you might leverage bolder, more flamboyant headlines to reach an American readership.

Here are some examples of how that might look in practice:

- **U.S. Audience:** “10 Game-Changing Tips To Turn Your Home Into A Plant Oasis”
- **UK Audience:** “10 Proven Strategies For Masterful Urban Gardening.”

It’s important to cater your headline to the specific audience you’re trying to reach, and align with their cultural touchpoints. This might change based on your audience’s geography, demographics, interest areas, or more.

Address A Pain Point Or Need

What drives you, as a reader, to click on a headline and read more?

I'm willing to bet that you're more likely to take the time to engage with content if it speaks to a problem you're facing, a question you might have, or a specific need you're experiencing.

Powerful headlines are those which identify something your target audience is interested in, and then position your content as a solution or pathway to that interest.

An example of what that might look like: "Struggling With City Air? Try These 5 Air-Purifying Plants!"

Remember The 5Ws

You might already know about the 5Ws, which are a well-known principle among writers and journalists.

The idea is that when writing something, you should include the 5Ws – who, what, when, where, and why – as early as possible, to provide people with the necessary information.

When creating headlines for digital marketing and social media, we don't often have much space. So, you might want to focus on the most critical three: who, what, and why.

This doesn't necessarily mean you need to include specific words for each of these. It simply means making it clear who your content is for, what the premise of your content is, and why they should engage with it.

An example of a headline that considers the 5Ws: “What To Grow & When: LA’s Urban Garden Must-Haves.”

□ Use The 4 U’s Framework

The “4 U’s” is another useful technique to help you craft great headlines. The idea is that every headline you create should incorporate these 4 U’s:

- **Urgent:** Your headline should convey a sense of immediacy, and encourage readers to act ASAP.
- **Unique:** Your headline should convey that your content is different from other pieces of content.
- **Useful:** The headline should make it clear that your content will offer value to the reader.
- **Ultra-specific:** The reader should be able to understand exactly what they’ll find in the content.

Here are some examples of what this looks like:

- **Useful & Ultra-specific:** “10 Vegetables You Can Harvest In Just 30 Days In City Spaces.”
- **Urgent & Useful:** “Start Today: 5 Quick Steps For Urban Gardening Success!”

It isn’t always possible to incorporate all four of these elements in one short headline, so a best practice is to strive to include at least

two of them. This will make the headline much stronger than it would be otherwise.

□ Try Numbered Lists

Ever noticed how many listicles there are floating around the internet? Feel like you're seeing a lot of numbered headlines lately? It's true – and for good reason.

Research from Buffer and CoSchedule found that list posts are the most highly shared kind of headlines on social media.

Why? They're easily skimmable; they carry the promise of quick tips and pointers; and they leave a little bit of room for curiosity – what could those 10 tips be?!

Utilizing numbered lists is a great way to reach today's busy internet users and let them know exactly what you're going to provide for them.

Here are two examples of strong numbered list headlines:

- “10 Essential Tools Every City Gardener Needs Today”
- “5 Surprising Benefits Of Modern Rooftop Gardens”

And here's a hot tip: According to BuzzSumo, the most engaging number to use in a list post headline is 10, followed by five and 15.

Tap Into Your Reader's Emotions

Just like the best content appeals to the emotions of its readers, the same is true for headlines.

A headline that makes you laugh, touches your heart, surprises you, or piques your curiosity can help encourage you to take action and learn more.

Our emotions propel us to action in all areas of our life, and they're a useful tool for content marketers.

How can you elicit an emotional response from people quickly – whether that's empathy, shock, or even anger?

Some examples:

- “Garden Therapy: 6 Plants To Boost Mental Well-Being”
- “Lost A Plant Friend? 5 Tips To Ensure The Next One Thrives”

So, keep these ideas top of mind as you craft your headlines.

Leverage Power Words

Using powerful adjectives and verbs can go a long way in encouraging people to click your headlines.

Descriptive and powerful words can help connect with people's emotions and create a sense of urgency to take action – important things we have already touched on.

Examples of impactful words are terms like “essential,” “must-have,” “secret,” “surprising,” and so on.

Here are some examples:

- “5 Critical Mistakes Every New City Gardener Must Avoid”
- “10 Insider Tips To Help You Revitalize Your Urban Garden”

You want to focus on getting people excited about your content and making them feel like they're missing out on something big if they don't click through.

Ask Questions

The question is another tried-and-true technique for compelling headlines. Why?

Well, think about it. When you're confronted with a question, the first thing you do is consider what the answer might be. By asking a question in your headline, you're inviting readers to think about something and creating an incentive for them to find the answer.

You're also making it clear that they will find the answer – or at least an exploration of the topic – within your content.

The other great thing about questions is that they allow you to tap into trending conversations, giving you an edge of timeliness and zeroing in on what your audience cares about right now.

Here are two examples:

- “Why Are Urban Gardens The Future Of City Living?”
- “Are Rooftop Gardens Truly The Solution To Urban Heat?”

Next time you’re crafting a headline, try leveraging some of the information we’ve shared above. This should help you reach readers where they are, and start driving more traffic to your content