Shawn Can Write

Content Article Writing <u>Mini</u> Guide

Free guide from:

ShawnCanWrite.com

by Shawn Forsythe

What Is This Guide?

This is a condensed version of Shawn's proprietary 19-page content article writing guide. He created that guide in 2009 and has continually updated and revised it since then. Shawn also has a Content Article Tiny Guide, and a Content Article 1-Page Guide.

→*This* Mini Guide is double the size of the Tiny Guide.
→The Tiny Guide is double the size of the 1-Page Guide.

The items in **fuscia** denote AI tools that can be used to assist with those particular items.

The guide is meant to be used with several other documents: Piece Prep Notes, Piece Writing Elements, Key Copywriting Rules, and Headline Writing. These free documents can be found on **www.ShawnCanWrite.com**.

Shawn is the creator of **Shawn Solutions** group of websites. Currently he focuses on content writing for websites and professional social media accounts.

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Stage 1: Topic & Approach. *Piece Prep Notes*

Stage 2: Headline Title. Refer to the Headline Writing document. Optional: create a Dek (hook). *Piece Prep Notes*
→Check the title on Google, using quotations, to ensure uniqueness.

Stage 3: Research report on the Topic or Topic Question, based on the Piece Type, with up-to-date info.
1. Your own ideas.
2. LLM Tool, NotebookLM.
3. If trying to rank:
   o *Piece Prep Notes*:
     ▪ SERP analysis
     ▪ Top 3 posts (eyeballs, NeuronWriter, SurferSEO, Detailed, Thruuu Free Keyword Frequency Checker).
   o Ask LLM Tool or NotebookLM how to improve the top 3 results (specify criteria as desired).
4. Google search.
5. Sub-topic generating tools.
6. Other – video transcripts, product content, course content.

Stage 4: Outline focused on **Topic Question** – more important than keywords, LSI, & entities. Outline Structure: Try to structure each section the same, e.g. what, why, how, show. Order the headings top down: importance, interest, or compulsion. Structure it according to the Piece Type & Outline Structure. 1st heading: Overview or "Key Takeaways".
1. If trying to rank for SERPs, AI Overviews, or AI Snippets.
   o Gather LSI words and entities, to use now and later, plus the keywords found in the SERP analysis. LLM Tool / NeuronWriter / SurferSEO
   o Combine top 3 SERP pieces' outlines + content gaps – NeuronWriter/SurferSEO, Chrome extension + LLM.
2. If not trying to outrank top SERPs, get LSI words & entities. LLM Tool / NeuronWriter
3. Revise/Extend it. new word or concept, expected questions, logically related topics, other info people might want to know.

Stage 5: First Draft Core Text – imagine talking to someone. Base on the research-stage information.

1. Concise overview or "Key Takeaways" – if doing AI SEO.
2. Introduction – every sentence specific (numbers, data, facts, proof); nothing obvious or unmeaningful. Refer to the 'Introductions' document for words and phrases to draw from.
   - Standard Method.
     - Paragraph **1 if no Dek.** 1-sentence human-drive hook related to the problem or benefit, no bolding: to evoke "Wow" or "I need to read this".
     - Paragraph **2.** 2-3 sentences, no bolding, with the keyword used in the first 100 words.
       - Why this content matters – solve problem, obtain benefit. Or, give amazing encouragement. Content pump – question, provocation, fascination.
       - Why you are the one to provide info, your experience or success (optional).
     - Paragraph **3.** 2-3 sentences,150-300 characters, bolded: answer to **Topic Question** that obviously begs the question and ends search.
     - Paragraph **4.** 2-3 sentences to demonstrate audience understanding.
       - If problem focus: stoke, my qualifications and experience as an expert (if applicable), how I or others got the problem, how I found the solution.
       - If benefit focus: how I or others came to seek the benefit, how I found the benefit.
     - Paragraph **5.** 2-3 sentences of enticement.
       - Content's **Promise** preview plus optional **Deliverable** to solve the problem or provide the benefit (especially transactional pieces) – the content itself, download link, info link, or training link.
       - Motivation – stoke problem again or pump the benefit, ego soothing ("not your fault", "you are right"), arousal (bold claim, easy, save time, shortcut, complex made simple), mental wheel turner (story for longer intro, vision, analogy, metaphor, quotation), pop culture piggyback.
     - Paragraph **6.** optional for a series – which part this is, series promotion.
   - Short Method – especially if there is a Dek.
     - Paragraph **1.** 1-2 sentences, no bolding. Begin with a hook sentence if no Dek. Say why the content must be read to solve a problem or provide a benefit, and optionally why I am the one to do it – knowledge, experience, or success.
     - Paragraph **2.** 2 sentences, 150-300 characters, bolded: answer to **Topic Question**, with keyword in the first 100 words of intro.
     - Paragraph **3.** 2-3 sentences audience connection: stoke the problem or pump the benefit, how I or others came to be in the same situation and obtained the solution or benefit, **Promise** (with **Deliverable**, especially transactional pieces) – the content itself, download link, info link, or training link.
     - Paragraph **4.** Optional for a series – which part this is, series promotion.
   - Adaptive Method – to fit the style of a website. Employ the principles as able: Hook sentence if no Dek, pump importance, why me writing it, answer to the Topic Question, stoke problem or pump benefit, elaborate on the **Promise** (with **Deliverable**), motivate to read further.
3. Body – in one go without stopping. 1-3 sentences per paragraph unless formal.
   →Things to keep in mind while writing:
   - For AI SEO, write conversationally.
   - Write about the readers and their benefit.
   - Let thoughts flow and personality show, without thought of SEO words at all.
   - Entertain alternative views as necessary.
   - Put positive spin on negative topic.

- o If the business is YouTube-focused, leave the content incomplete.
→Optional Opening Explanatory Section to explain a new concept or the topic importance.
→Promise Fulfillment Section in last 3rd – usually present, especially for transactional pieces.
  - o Fulfill the **Promise** – solution or way to obtain the benefit (information, link, download, freebie, content upgrade, etc.)
  - o Provide a quick win: infographic, checklist, template, pdf file, etc. – if a specific 'thing' was promised as a Deliverable.
  - o Pre-sell product/service/video if applicable – to learn details and exact application or execution of the solution or benefit, or the way to receive expert help in applying or executing it.
    - ▪ Emphasize desirable results.
    - ▪ Provide evidence – personal experience, case study of self or others, testimonial-story, etc.
    - ▪ Address skepticism/objections – "You may be wondering", "I know what you feel; I feel it too; I found the solution."
  - o Tell the reader what to do, and why: promote the link. (No price or offer.)
4. Conclusion in 2-4 paragraphs. So what? Now what? (Conclusions are flexible.)
  - o Paragraph 1. 2 sentences: restatement of the main point, stoking the problem or pumping the benefit.
  - o Paragraph 2 (optional). 2-3 sentences. For long pieces: summary. For short pieces: alt view, alt solution, or view of the future.
  - o Paragraph 3. CTA 1 – Optional: Repeat CTA for **Deliverable**. How to get it + why now. CTA 2 – Always, unless automatically appended on posts: email opt-in.
  - o Paragraph 4. 1-2 sentences: final thought – tip, encouragement, assurance.
  - o Paragraph 5 – if a series. Tease the next part, or close the series. Link to all parts.
  - o (Use an adaptive method employing the above principles, to fit a website's style.)

Stage 6: First Draft Depth, Spice, & Humanization. LLM Tool
1. Completeness/Thoroughness.
  - o **Contents section** at top for 2000+ word pieces.
  - o **Related personal experience** – mandatory, if possible.
  - o **My experiences, qualifications, expertise**
  - o **Unique research** such as case study – mega analysis, data table, etc.
  - o Story – hero, resonating goal (have, accomplish, be like), obstacle, mentor, moral.
    - ▪ Mine
    - ▪ Other's
  - o More sub-points.
  - o More examples – real life, hypothetical.
  - o More content for "why" and "how".
  - o Fact or statistic.
  - o Content box – tip, hint, emphasis/repetition, encouragement, warning/caution, common mistake, etc.
  - o Reference citation – "full article", "read more", name of site, name of org.
  - o Comment/quotation from person in the piece.
  - o Quotation or Proverb.
2. Copywriting Elements.
  - o Power Words.
  - o Emotion Words (for general content, or for sales content).
  - o Links & Transitions.
  - o Standout single-sentence paragraphs.
  - o Bold or Hilighted text.
  - o Bullet or Ordinal lists.

3. Embedded Content – for all pieces, but more & higher-level types for pillar posts.
    o   <u>Unique</u> images – photo, chart, screenshot, etc. LLM, AI tool
    o   Video – especially YouTube, and best with "How To" and keyword in title.
    o   Audio.
    o   Infographic. LLM tool, AI tool
    o   Data/Concept visualization. LLM tool, AI tool
4. Marketing Elements.
    o   Brand name for new method/strategy.
    o   Influencer name mention – build on their idea.
    o   Audience comments – from website or social media.

Day 3

Stage 7: SEO Text Revision – both Normal and AI-focused
1. Body snippet and mini snippets.
2. Keyword use.
    o   Topic Keywords in title, some headings and sub-headings, first paragraph or first 100 words, first third of body, middle of body.
    o   Body Keywords and Content Theme keywords.
    o   Keywords in meta descriptions, image titles, alt tags.
3. LSI/NLP words + Entities – headings, sub-headings, text. (NeuronWriter, SurferSEO, LLM)
4. SEO score. NeuronWriter, SurferSEO
5. SERP analysis – compare to top results and try to improve. LLM Tool
6. CTAs related to the **Topic Question** and the **Promise** – middle of body, stand out (color, bolding, box).

Stage 8: Standard Text Revision.
1. Provision of the **Deliverable** – information, link, download, freebie, content upgrade, etc.
2. Topic awareness.
3. Coherence – logical flow, scanability, heading or sub-heading every @200 words, bullets, bolding, underlining, hilighting.
4. Readability – variable length of sentences and paragraphs, links & transitions.
5. Clarity – key takeaway, ultra-specific information, concrete ideas, enough examples, difficult/unclear things explained, specific steps in a process.
6. Content value.
    o   Compared to the top Google search pages, does the piece improve on the <u>kind of information</u>, the <u>quality of the content</u>, and the <u>kinds of media</u> included? And all while being <u>unique</u>.
    o   Depth of info, personal experience/takes, usefulness, entertaining/interesting,
    o   Un-necessary, redundant, or off-focus things – or lots of questions?
7. Author perception – authentic, helpful tone, unique point of view, trustworthy, likeable, credible, personality & passion, authoritativeness through facts/tips/warnings.
8. Word count.
9. Fact check.
10. Key Copywriting Rules (see document).
11. Editing – spelling, grammar, punctuation.

Stage 9: Final Analysis
1. Mobile friendliness.   2. Reading level analysis.
3. Plagiarism detection. (Grammarly)   4. Origin

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Find me on **LinkedIn**:

https://www.linkedin.com/in/dsforsythe

Want Other Useful Materials?

I want to help as many people as possible with my free no-nonsense materials.

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