

Operations Manual

The main focus of the operations manual is to create quality content.

Zepho Inc

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Elevator Pitch for clickplan.info

clickplan.info helps digital self publishers succeed

Duct Tape Marketing - Talking Logo

I teach self publishers, how to optimize marketing effectiveness.

Blog Questionnaire

1. What is the objective of this blog? To be a useful resource for self publishers
2. What is your core area of expertise? Programming
3. Why would readers want to read your posts and not get their information elsewhere? Objective review of products and services. Not paid by the company or individuals selling those products.
4. Describe your brand.
5. Who is your typical reader?
6. What is your that reader's current opinion of your blog? (Unaware, suspicious, loyal customer, indifferent)
7. Do you know of any barriers to subscription / loyalty / trust?
8. Why should readers trust you?
9. What style are you aiming for in your posts? (Formal, informal, casual, funny, conservative, cutting edge) Informal, casual.
10. What will your readers NOT want to see in your posts? Slang, cliches, criticism of competitors

About Me Page Checklist

Objectively assess your About page on these points, does it :

- Introduce you?
- Include an image of you?
- Tell the reader what your blog will give them?
- Meet any other objectives you might have set for the page (for example, encourage visitors to sign up for your blog's newsletter or rss feeds, to follow you on a social network, provide testimonials from respected peers, etc.)?
- End with a call to action? (invitation to check out the latest posts, link to your homepage etc)

Generate Ideas for Pillar Content

Pillar content is foundational or basic content that is essential knowledge for anyone in your niche. It's evergreen content – it never dates or loses relevance – and it's the kind of information that people within your audience would search a search engine.

Find a topic and create a pillar content mindmap. Use Google keyword research tool to find themes.

1. On your mindmap, identify a basic or elementary aspect of your topic that fits the “pillar content” description above.
2. Spend ten minutes brainstorming around that topic. Break it down into its component parts and consider it from different angles.
3. Finally, draw up a list of pillar content ideas that you could create as individual blog posts, or a series.
4. Save this list to your ideas folder for reference in the coming days and weeks.

Writing Guidelines

1. Make your intro easy to read

Start with a short sentence, keep the majority of your sentences relatively short, use short, easy-to-understand words, and make the intro paragraph as short as possible.

2. Write as much as you need to but no more
3. Address the reader as ‘you’
4. Write effective headings
5. The most effective headings usually possess one or more of four qualities:
 1. Self interest e.g. “Pay 50% less on PCs”
 2. News e.g. “PCs now 50% cheaper: World first e-commerce site”
 3. Curiosity e.g. “Half-price PCs: You won’t believe how they do it!”
 4. A quick, easy way e.g. “Get a half-price PC in just 5 minutes!”Obviously there’s a bit of overlap between these example headings. For instance, it’s likely that they’ll all pique the reader’s curiosity and engage their sense of self-interest.
6. Tell a story. This is not applicable to all type of posts.
7. Answer the questions your reader will probably ask Anticipate those questions and use the post to provide answers. Consider using those questions as headings.
8. Provide a call to action Read a related post? Post a comment? Ask them to do it.
9. Be open and honest
10. Use short sentences for impact
11. Promise an outcome What the reader will learn, laugh at, improve, remember, etc. You don’t have to make an explicit promise, mind you; implicit is fine. E.g. “The funniest video you’ll see all year”.

12. Ask questions to which you know the answer will be ‘yes’. E.g. We’d all like to earn a little more money, right?
13. Use active language. Eg. You’ll learn how to . . . not, I’ll teach you to. . . What the reader will learn, laugh at, improve, remember, etc. You don’t have to make an explicit promise, mind you; implicit is fine. E.g. “The funniest video you’ll see all year”.
14. Provide closure. Make sure you tie up all loose ends and summarize. E.g. If you’re posting about the merits of jogging at an aerobic pace, the discussion will be fairly complex. Make sure, when you get to the end, that you summarize your argument and how it leads to your conclusion.
15. Be positive. Many people will be put off by this: “If you’re tired of being overweight and hate how you look at the beach, try this intense workout routine.” But if you put it like this, it’s much more palatable: “If you want to be slim and look great at the beach, try this dynamic workout routine.”
16. Link with active language Use active language, useful detail and key-phrases in the anchor text. E.g. Don’t say, “there’s a **great post by John. . .**”, say, “**read this great post by John. . .**” Better yet, make it active, informative and search-engine friendly: “**read this great tractor post by John. . .**”
17. Be rhythmic, but not repetitive Partial rhythm is good in blogging. E.g. This is too rhythmic: “Take the new Toyota Corolla, for example. It’s quiet, economical and environmentally friendly. It’s also stylish, bold and surprisingly spacious. And, of course, it’s safe, speedy and technologically advanced.” Three lists of three closely matching descriptors is just too much. Even two would have been too many. By mixing it up, we can make it far more engaging: “Take the new Toyota Corolla, for example. It’s quiet, economical and environmentally friendly. Not to mention surprisingly spacious. It’s a bold — yet stylish — speedy car, that’s also safe and technologically advanced.”
18. Use emotive language E.g. Talk about how they’ll feel when they do something. “You’ll be surprised. . .” or “You’ll laugh out loud, I promise.” And use emotional descriptors, or descriptors that are closely associated with emotions: “It was a daunting morning. . .” or “It seemed

the day got a little brighter. . . ” or “It was the same smell as Grandma’s kitchen. . . ”

19. Use contrast Sometimes the most effective way to explain what something is, is to explain what it is not. (Or to combine both.) E.g. On a parenting blog: “Parenting isn’t something you do; it’s something you are.” Or on a surfing blog: “Jono made all the other boys in the heat look like long-boarders.”
20. Use repetition E.g. “This really is a camera to get excited about. A camera to drool over. A camera to save up for.”
21. Use metaphors Metaphorical language is when we say something is like something else, or that it is something else. I E.g. On a body-building blog: “Like you, I’ve been body-building for years, and I’ve seen a lot of big boys. But, I tell you, this guy was a gorilla! Scratch that; he was King Kong!”
22. Use incomplete sentences for emphasis Sometimes rules just get in the way. For example, a sentence is supposed to express a complete thought, and have a subject (the thing the sentence is about) and a predicate (something about the subject). Usually, complete sentences are hunky-dory, but occasionally, something a little less orthodox is called for. Used appropriately, incomplete (grammatically incorrect) sentences can convey certainty and confidence. E.g. “She played her part convincingly. With heart. With soul. With gusto.” The second, third and fourth sentences, here, aren’t grammatically correct, but they do their job beautifully. (i.e., they reinforce the first sentence. There’s absolutely no need to say, “She played her part convincingly. She played it with heart. She played it with soul. She played it with gusto.”
23. Issue a challenge When you issue a challenge, you’re making your post interactive, which is exactly what a conversation should be. You’re also invoking the natural competitive spirit. Just as importantly, you’re conveying your confidence, your open-mindedness, your objectivity and your willingness to be proven wrong. E.g. “I’m in no way affiliated with Sony, and I can honestly say, these headphones pump out the best bass I’ve ever heard. Try them. And if you’ve heard better, come back and let us all know.”

24. Suggest Further Reading and Give Examples. Provide some suggested links at the end of your post on the topic at hand.

Check List for Each Article

1. What do you want to get out of this post?
2. What will your readers want to get out of this post?
3. What problem, need, situation, interest has led them to read this post?
4. Why would readers want to read this post rather than get their information elsewhere?
5. What points, claims do you want to make in this post?
6. Can you validate these points / claims? If so, how? (E.g. Asics running shoes help prevent injury, and here are the studies that prove it)
7. What style are you aiming for in this post? (E.g. Formal, informal, casual, funny, conservative, cutting edge youth)
8. What will your readers NOT want to see in this post? (E.g. Slang, clichés, 10-tips, discussion of last night's dinner, criticism of competitors)
9. What do you want the reader to do after reading it? (E.g. Comment, visit another page on your site, visit the Buy page of an affiliate product)

How to Give Good Title to an Article

Here are some proven headline formulas. Take these fill-in-the blanks templates and complete them to create your own compelling, click-getting headlines.

Get What You Want (Health, Wealth, Relationships, Time and Lifestyle)

1. 10 Money/Time Saving Tips for _____
2. The Secret of Getting the Best Price for Your _____
3. How to Find the Best _____ Deals on the Web
4. Top Gadgets for _____
5. Are _____ Worth the Money?
6. Everything You Need to Know About Getting Cheaper _____
7. Top 10 Tips For Hassle Free _____
8. Best _____ For Under [Price]
9. Unusual but Achievable _____
10. 5 Ways to Boost Your _____ Without Spending More _____
11. Ways to _____ on a Budget
12. 5 Ways to _____ and Profit!
13. 21 Audacious and Creative _____ Ideas
14. Who Else Wants to _____?
15. Now You Can _____ for Free!
16. How to Get _____ in Half the Time
17. 10 Stars and their _____

18. _____ Life Styles of the Rich and Famous
19. How to Look and Act _____
20. Now You Can Have Get More and Better _____ With Less Effort
21. _____ like a Movie Star
22. 9 Ways You Can _____ Better Than You Deserve
23. How to _____ in 10 Seconds
24. Have a _____ You Can Be Proud Of
25. 21 _____ Conversation Tips
26. Finding Your Perfect _____
27. Plan a Perfect _____
28. What _____ Really Want
29. 7 Signs You Are/Can _____
30. Get _____ Now

Crystal Ball and History

31. The History of _____
32. How _____ Will Impact _____ in [Year]
33. _____ Then and Now
34. 40 Predictions on the Future of _____
35. The Modern Rules of _____
36. __ Lessons from History
37. The _____ Story

Problems and Fears

38. Are _____ a Dying Breed?
39. How to Beat the Fear of _____
40. 10 _____ Scams and How to Avoid Them
41. How Secure Are Your _____?
42. 7 Most Frightening _____
43. Top 10 Scary _____ Facts
44. Outrageous _____ and How they Could Impact You
45. Get Rid of Your _____ Once and For All
46. Could Your _____ be a _____?
47. What Your _____ is Not Telling You About _____
48. Beware _____ and How to Spot them
49. 10 Good Ways NOT to _____
50. How to Safely _____
51. The Unseen/Biggest Dangers of _____
52. _____ Do's and Don'ts
53. 21 Ways to Screw Up _____
54. 10 Reasons Not to _____
55. 7 _____ Danger Signs
56. 7 things _____ Should Never Do

Fact, Fiction, Secrets, Truth and Lies

- 57. What Everyone Ought to Know about _____
- 58. _____ Personality Test: What Your _____ Says About You
- 59. _____ Lies and How to Spot them
- 60. _____ Facts and Myths
- 61. The Real Truth About _____
- 62. 21 Secrets the _____ Experts Don't Want You to Know
- 63. 101 Most Popular _____ Myths
- 64. 10 _____ Facts You Need to Know
- 65. The Secret of Successful _____
- 66. Little Known Ways to _____
- 67. Truth and Lies in _____
- 68. All You Need to Know about _____
- 69. 10 Lies We Tell Our _____
- 70. 101 things Not to tell _____
- 71. Revealed: Why _____
- 72. How to Spot a Fake _____

How-To Tricks of the Trade

- 73. When is it Smarter to _____ or _____?
- 74. Little Known Ways to _____
- 75. 10 Reasons it's Better to _____
- 76. How to Plan the Ultimate _____

- 77. How to _____ Like a _____
- 78. _____ Jobs You Can Do Yourself
- 79. Here is a Method That is Helping _____ to _____
- 80. Here's a Quick Way to _____
- 81. 7 Creative Ways to _____
- 82. How to be a _____
- 83. 9 Surprising Things You Can _____
- 84. _____ Like an Expert in 10 Easy Steps
- 85. 21 Expert _____ Tips
- 86. 5 Reasons You Should _____

Best and Worst

- 87. Top 10 Worlds Cheapest/Best/Most Expensive _____
- 88. The Worlds Best _____ You Can Actually Afford to Buy
- 89. The Worlds Worst Ever _____
- 90. The World's Most Unusual _____
- 91. Funniest _____ Stories
- 92. Sexiest _____ in the World
- 93. The Top 10 Best and Worst _____ in the World
- 94. Top 19 Most _____ Friendly _____
- 95. 100 Useful or Beautiful _____
- 96. 5 Reasons _____ is Better than _____
- 97. The Worlds Top 10 Most Important _____

- 98. Top 20 Clips About _____ in Films and Television
- 99. 10 _____ We Don't Want to See _____
- 100. 21 Most Hilarious _____
- 101. The Worlds Worst _____ Advice
- 102. 10 Reasons _____ is the Worst _____

Scan-ability Guidelines

1. Lead with the important stuff

Make sure visitors who scan can quickly understand what your post is about, and what it offers them. Lead with that information. E.g. If your post is about how to cook healthy, delicious meals with whole wheat pasta, you might start as follows: Post title: Whole wheat pasta: How to make it yummy, not just healthy Post body: I know whole wheat pasta is healthy. But I never knew it could taste great. Until I met Angelo. He showed me some guarded Italian secrets for making it taste every bit as yummy as the white stuff.

2. Segment with sub-headings

Use headings frequently as a way of summarizing what would otherwise be long blocks of text. In fact, you can use sub-headings every paragraph or two.

3. Front-load your headings

When readers scan your post, they pay a lot of attention to the first two words in your headings, and not a lot of attention to the rest. So you have to make sure your sentences start with the important meaning words. E.g. “German Shepherds: Malicious or misunderstood?”

4. Use lists instead of long sentences

Even if you’re not writing a list post e.g. ‘10 ways to improve your love life’, lists are an excellent way to break up a page, visually, so readers aren’t overwhelmed by big blocks of text. They’re also great for scan-readers, who are likely to glean a great deal of information from a list, but would glean very little if you constrain the same information to a regular paragraph.

E.g. Don’t say this: “There were three main participants in the search engine workshop: small business owners, with zero search experience; marketing managers, looking to expand their search engine experience and make better use of their search budget; and search engine marketing (SEM) managers, looking to update their knowledge with the latest research findings.”

Say this, instead: “There were three main participants in the search engine workshop:

1. small business owners, with zero search experience;
2. marketing managers, looking to expand their search engine experience and make better use of their search budget; and
3. search engine marketing (SEM) managers, looking to update their knowledge with the latest research findings.”

5. Signal when the reader can stop reading

Readers don’t want to read your whole post. If they can glean everything they need without reading right to the end, they will. So signal where the meat of your post ends. E.g. For a simple numbered list post, without a trailing discussion, the stop-reading signal is the end of the list. For other posts, a ‘Conclusion’ sub-head is a good idea.

6. Use sentence case for headings

Sentence case is where you capitalize the first letter of only the first word and any proper nouns. Just as you would in a sentence. Title case, on the other hand, is where you capitalize all the words in the heading.

E.g. This is sentence case: The German influence is obvious These are title case: The German Influence is Obvious

7. Bold the important bits Highlight key meaning elements.

8. E.g. If you’re debating the merits of a new clinical drug trial, bold the main claim(s) in each paragraph. Then readers will be able to scan the post to see which paragraphs they’d like to read in detail: “For almost two decades, doctors have been advising parents to avoid exposing babies to common allergens (like eggs, peanuts and milk) for as long as possible. The belief was that this would reduce the chance that those children would develop allergies. However, over the past two decades, there has been no corresponding reduction in the number of kids with allergies. So allergy experts now agree that **avoiding allergens is not an effective way to minimize the risk of allergy development** in children.”

9. Link to related posts & pages

10. Use key-phrases in links

E.g. If you're posting about home beer brewing methods for tropical regions, and your primary key-phrase is "home beer brewing", you could link out to a helpful related site with a link like, "Great home beer brewing recipes for the tropics". And you could link to a related post on your blog with a link like, "Home beer brewing in sub-tropical climates".

11. Run the article through a spell and grammar checker.

12. Create one or two useful links to other articles within the blog.

Publishing Articles and Establishing Relationships

1. Set up free Google Alerts at www.GoogleAlertsTool.com to email you daily updates on the top companies, personalities, products, or issues important to the people in your target market.
2. Publish on your blog short summaries of the best articles and blog posts that the Google Alert emails send you each day. Link back to the original articles and give credit.
3. Demonstrate expertise in your posts and help people in a friendly way on your blog, on your Facebook page, on Twitter, and on Linked In and Google +, as appropriate for your industry. Then ask for comments and feedback to build your brand, traffic, and an audience community.
4. Reach out personally to 20 top people from your target community. Contact them through email, Facebook, Google +, or relevant community forums to politely invite them to read your new blog, participate by leaving comments and questions, or even submit their own guest posts for you to publish.

Types of Articles

1. Recruit industry contacts to act as guest bloggers.
2. Interview people who have successfully self-published.
3. Review products.
4. Quoting, filtering, linking to, summarizing and rewriting content from other professionally produced sites. Eg: <http://blog.flippa.com/facebook-enters-the-search-arena-what-you-need-to-know/>

The Week's Best Links. . . Enter Facebook search. Zuckerberg's "missing third pillar" was unveiled during the week. How is this different to Google? What does this mean for page administrators? and could this give Bing a leg up against Google? We've got the answers.

What really constitutes value in a website? You might be surprised. Already given up on your new year resolutions? All is not lost. We've found 10 simple and easy Analytics resolutions you can adopt.

5. Deliver timely, topical information that helps your readers do their jobs better.
6. Serving the information or community needs of people who share your niche interests.
7. Create lists. 21 Tips for . . . 10 xyz tools that help you . . . The Self Publishing Process from Start to Finish
8. Build a Resource on a Topic — pick a topic in your niche and then spend some time reading what other bloggers in your niche have written on that topic previously. You'll probably end up with a list of posts from other blogs all on the one topic. You could present them simply as a list of links, or you could state the main points from each post or even use quotes from each one. Gather a large list of helpful resources on the topic.

Published Articles Spreadsheet

Article Title : Author : Article Type : Interview, product review, guest post etc Source : Amazon reviews, blogs, books etc Topic : Category : Theme : Date published :

This spreadsheet helps to avoid duplicate content and to avoid assigning same work to multiple authors.