



**TREKKSOFT**

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# **WRITING HANDBOOK**

**for tour and activity providers**



# Content

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# INTRODUCTION

Each time you update your website, write a tour description, or post on Facebook, you're creating content. And each piece of content contributes to your company's brand and how customers perceive you.

To help you navigate the world of writing as a tour operator, we've put together our best writing advice.

Work through this ebook in a way that suits you: you might read it from start to finish, or alternatively scroll to the sections that catch your eye first.

Regardless of your reading style, try to think about how you can apply the writing advice over the next few weeks, months, and beyond. The ebook's checklist format should help make it as practical as possible.

We want to dispel the myth that you have to be born a good writer to write well. To help you realise this, we'll share some simple and actionable tips that you can easily apply to your tour or activity company's content.

Enjoy your writing - it's a more important part of your job than you perhaps think!



# Here's why tour operators should make time to write

## 1 Customers find you through Google

When a potential customer is searching for tours and activities in your area, you want to appear at the top of Google searches. For this to happen, you need to have a website. And, of course, you need to have text on your website.

In order to improve your chances of appearing in Google searches, there are two things you can do: one, improve the quality of your website, and two, create more content.

## 2 Words are persuasive

Would you buy a product if there was nothing but a photo to sell it? Probably not. A well-crafted description of your tour or activity has the power to convince a potential customer that you will provide them with an unforgettable experience.

Similarly, with a brilliant "About us" page, you can provide an insight into who you are and why you started your business. Sharing equals trust!

## 3 The more you write, the better you get

Writing is a skill that benefits all of us, regardless of our job or hobbies. By strengthening our writing muscles, we can communicate more effectively and work more efficiently, ultimately improving our business skills and professionalism.

Writing skills, as with verbal communication, will always be relevant and useful, even if we change fields. These days we might pick up a pen less often, but we're still communicating and crafting content on our phones and laptops. If anything, businesses and marketing are becoming a lot more content-centric!





# If these are your excuses, think again



## **“But I’m not a good writer”**

No one is born a writer. The best writers write every day, even if it’s low-quality to start with, and slowly get better at it. The best writers want to write.

Follow our golden rules for great content and you’ll have no reason to doubt your writing ability.

## **“But I’m really busy”**

Your tours or activities are the most important part of your business. However, with all there is to gain from creating content, it’s worth setting aside the time.

Try to work out when you have time to spare during the day.

**Work out how much time you really have, then make good use of it!**



**With five minutes:**

- Improve your company's description on Facebook: a great summary of your tours or activities can equal more bookings.
- Make sure your Twitter bio accurately and concisely describes your company and check you've included your URL and location in the spaces provided.
- Google your company and check that your page title and description appear the way you want it. Will your target customer want to click on your website?
- Post a social media update.



**With half an hour:**

- Create a brilliant about us page for your website and build trust with potential customers by introducing you and your team.
- Ask a friend to proofread the most important pages on your website (i.e. your homepage, tour and activity descriptions, about us, pricing pages).



**With an hour:**

- Write a blog post and increase your chances of being found in a Google search.
- Improve the automated email that customers receive when they make a booking (this feature is included with booking software such as TrekkSoft).



**With a free morning:**

- Improve the existing content on your website and be perceived as more professional.
- Create a follow-up email for customers to receive after your tour or activity. This could include links to your social media profiles, your TripAdvisor page, or even a feedback form.



# The most important content you can work on



## Your homepage

People tend to see your homepage first, so it deserves a lot of attention. An especially important part of your website is your “above the fold” content: this is what people see straight away before they scroll down. You can:

- Improve your headers and subtitles: make them clear and customer-centric.
- Show what people will gain from your tours or activities. Why should they book? Why should they choose your company over others?
- Do some serious editing: cut out all the unnecessary words and details that clutter the page.
- Add a clear “book now” button to make booking a tour or activity as simple as possible.

## Your about us page

When you visit a company website, do you often click on the “About us” or “Team” page? A lot of us do: as humans we’re curious and like to see the faces behind the brand!

## Your social media descriptions

When one of our Facebook friends likes a page, we might check it out and see if it interests us too. To capture the interest of new audiences, make your company description on social media profiles as clear as possible. Sum up in a few words what tours or activities you offer, where they’re located, and why they’re worth booking.



# How to improve the content on your website

A good way to start improving your web content is to work with what you already have. Set aside some time to go through your website, then go through these steps for optimisation.

## Identify your most important keywords

Start by thinking about the obvious keywords for you to use, including:

- your tour or activity (e.g. paintballing, kayaking, helicopter rides, food and culture tour)
- your location
- any other unique selling points of your tours or activities (e.g. cultural, free, historic, expert)

The idea is to keep this as simple and to-the-point as you possibly can. For instance, “paintballing company near London” or “free walking tour in Budapest”.



## Check that you’re using these keywords naturally

Nowadays, you won’t rank higher in Google searches if you stuff your website with keywords. **The key to success is writing naturally and matching your wording to what your ideal customer is searching for on Google.**





## Tidy up your writing and add keywords where necessary

When optimising your content, keep an eye out for this flaw: **text that rambles on without really explaining anything.**

Clear and natural writing is always better than flowery and descriptive language. Lay off the adjectives and make it clear what tours or activities you offer. After doing this you can spice things up a bit.

Check for clear writing and natural use of keywords in these places:

### 1. Your website title

This is the title that comes up above your website in Google searches.

### 2. Your meta description

This is the 150-160 character description of your website under the title and URL in Google searches. While your meta description does not have a direct impact on your SEO ranking, it does help people to understand what they're about to click on (and decide whether it's relevant to them).

If you choose not to input your own meta description, don't worry: Google extracts its own snippet that includes the keywords and surrounding phrases that the user has searched for.

### 3. The header on your homepage

Your headers draw a lot of attention. It's worth proofreading and optimising the headings and subheadings across the rest of your website too.





### Double check for spelling and grammar mistakes

Don't undermine your customers: they'll spot a spelling or grammar mistake if it's on your website! It's not always easy to notice our own mistakes, so **ask someone else to give the important content on your website a proofread.**

[In a HubSpot blog article on historical optimisation](#), they recommend aiming to achieve three main goals—accuracy, freshness, and comprehensiveness. Keep this in mind with your content!

## Be your own editor

**Read your own work aloud.** It helps you to identify areas in your writing that don't **flow** or to iron out sentences that just don't make sense. It also gives you a new perspective on your work. You can also spot your mistakes more easily if you **view your content on a different device from usual**, say on a tablet or phone instead of your laptop.



# 5 golden tips for writing great content

- 1 Write about what you care about
- 2 Write about what your readers care about
- 3 Imagine you're writing to one person
- 4 Keep it as simple as you can (cut out all the crap, seriously)
- 5 The most important point goes at the start of the sentence







# Your writing checklist: How to approach everything you need to write

## 1. Define your goal

What are you trying to achieve by writing this? How does it fit in with the wider goals for your business?

## 2. Know exactly how your writing will benefit your readers

How does your writing idea relate to your readers? Why does it matter to them? Why should they bother reading it?

## 3. Use the “so what?” strategy

In [\*Everybody Writes\*](#), Ann Handley recommends that you keep asking “so what?” to define how your writing will service your reader. The idea is simple: you keep asking “so what?” until you exhaust sensible answers, or run into philosophical stuff.



# SO WHAT?

A tour guide might go through the following thought process before creating a blog post:

**“I want to announce I’m starting a walking tour of the best coffee shops in London.”**

So what? Because there are loads of great coffee shops in London.

So what? I know from my other food tours that lots of my customers love coffee.

So what? They want a tour that shows them the best coffee shops.

So what? I know about coffee, and I think I’m the person to run these tours.

So what? These walking tours can make people happy!

With the “so what?” strategy, you can make sure that your reader—or customer—is part of your idea and you’re not just writing for yourself. It’s worth the time!



### **Clarify your idea in one sentence**

The coffee walking tour idea could be summarised as so: “My new tour shows coffee fiends where to find the best espresso in London, complete with a chance to sample some beans, learn about the brewing process, and hear about my experience as a lifelong caffeine ambassador”.

### **Put your clarified idea at the top of your document or piece of paper**

It will help you stay focused.

### **Think about how your experience and knowledge adds to your idea**

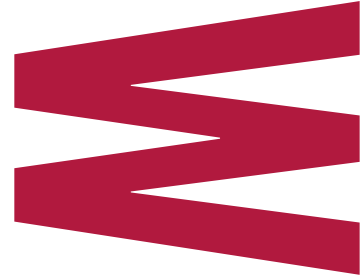
What can you add to your piece of content that’s relevant to your reader? What would your reader like to know about you? Jot these ideas down as they come.

### **Decide how to structure your piece of writing**

It may be a list, guide, case study, or a quick announcement to post on social media. Write down your main points and rearrange them into the most compelling order.

### **Write to one person**

As you write, imagine what you need to say to your target reader and focus on how to help them.







# The secret of a winning tour description

The best advice for writing a great tour description is to keep it simple! Remember to:

- Use as few words as possible.
- Write down what your customers will experience during your tour or activity. What will they see or do?
- Now that you have outlined the basic details, you can jazz things up a bit. You want to allow readers to imagine being on your tour: if they can visualise enjoying it, they'll be more encouraged to book it. To do this, you can choose words and a tone or writing that match the experience of the tour.
- Create a list of words that describe your tour or activity. For instance: fun, energetic, adrenaline, relaxing, indulgent, luxury, unique, adventure... the list really goes on. You can add some of these to your content.
- Think about what customers will take home from your tour or activity, and the memories they will gain. Will it be a fun, relaxing, or energetic experience? Your tour descriptions should convey this.

**Choose  
your words  
wisely**

If you have a relaxing wine tour directed at newlyweds, **you should choose words and a tone that matches this.** For instance, “indulgent”, “luxurious”, and “an experience for couples” are appropriate here. Words like “adventure”, “adrenaline”, or “family-friendly”? Not so much.



# How to publish top-quality blog posts that get you more bookings



[We've written before about the benefits of blogging](#) on our TrekkSoft blog, but to summarise: blogging allows you to reach new customers, keep previous customers engaged, and to help your website appear higher in Google searches.

If you're interested in the research, 81% of online consumers in the U.S. trust information and advice from blogs ([BlogHer](#)), and small businesses that blog get 126% more lead growth than those that do not ([ThinkCreative](#)). It's worth it!

## 1. Provide your customers with content that's useful to them

Whether it's by creating a city guide or posting a list of the best restaurants in your area, think about how you can help your customers. Focus on being helpful and your customers will not only share your content, they'll have great things to say about you.



# You could create a city guide PDF for your website that shares the best things to do, places to stay, and food to eat in your area.

If you want other ideas to use content to help out your customer, you could:

- 1 **Combine knowledge by creating your guide with another local business**, especially if you cross-sell your tours or activities with them using the TrekkSoft Partner Network.
- 2 **Include discounts or voucher codes** for your business and other local restaurants, attractions, and places to stay.
- 3 **Share a list of useful contact numbers and tourist information points.**
- 4 **Chat with locals to compile a collection of tips about the area.**
- 5 **Make a short list of useful phrases in the local language or dialect** to help travellers communicate better with locals.





## 2. Teach yourself a little SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)

SEO, or search engine optimisation, is what you need to do to increase your rankings in search results. As a tour operator or activity provider, you want your website to appear at the top of Google when your ideal customer searches for things to do in your area. Therefore, it's worth putting a bit of time into it.

The most important part of SEO is writing naturally rather than shoehorning keywords into your content, but you can make an effort to:

- **Publish content regularly on your blog.** Use every 2-3 weeks as a guideline, but you can find what works for you and your schedule. Publishing content regularly tells Google that your content is fresh, and it also provides more opportunities for people to find you in searches.
- **Make your website easy-to-navigate to prevent a high bounce rate** (users leaving your website after only viewing one page).
- **Improve your site design and encourage users to spend more time on your website** (this signals to Google that your website is high-quality and can improve your ranking).
- **Avoid linking to low-quality websites, and try to prevent them linking to you.**
- **Write about what your ideal customer is searching for.** To find this out, you can keep an eye on organic search terms (although this is increasingly difficult to find due to Google privacy changes). You can also see what Google suggests when you start typing in a relevant phrase (e.g. walking tours in London), and write content around this.





### 3. Get into a routine of publishing great content

It's not enough to publish five blog posts in a week then forget about it for three months. Think about how much time you can dedicate to blogging, create a routine, then try to stick to it.

Our TrekkSoft team publishes 3-5 blog posts per week, which we find works for us. However, it's about doing what's manageable for you, and more than one article a week might be too much. Aim for 1-3 blog posts a month, but remember that one blog post a month is better than nothing!

One of the biggest challenges that comes with blogging is deciding what to write about. To help you out, you can read on for a bit of inspiration.



# Colm Hanratty's 10 TIPS to generate blog post ideas as a tour operator

1. Brainstorm ideas with a friend
2. Ask Google: see what suggested searches come up when you type in your tour or activity focus and location (e.g. canyoning in Interlaken)
3. Use Google's Keyword Planner, if you're a Google AdWords user
4. Answer your customers' questions on your blog
5. Dissect your business to find new topics to write about
6. Think up blog titles you can easily tweak to create new content
7. Think of questions to ask your customers
8. Post photo essays
9. Share tips in your blog posts
10. Showcase your team of guides

You can read Colm's full blog article [here](#).



# 20 blog ideas for tour operators and activity providers

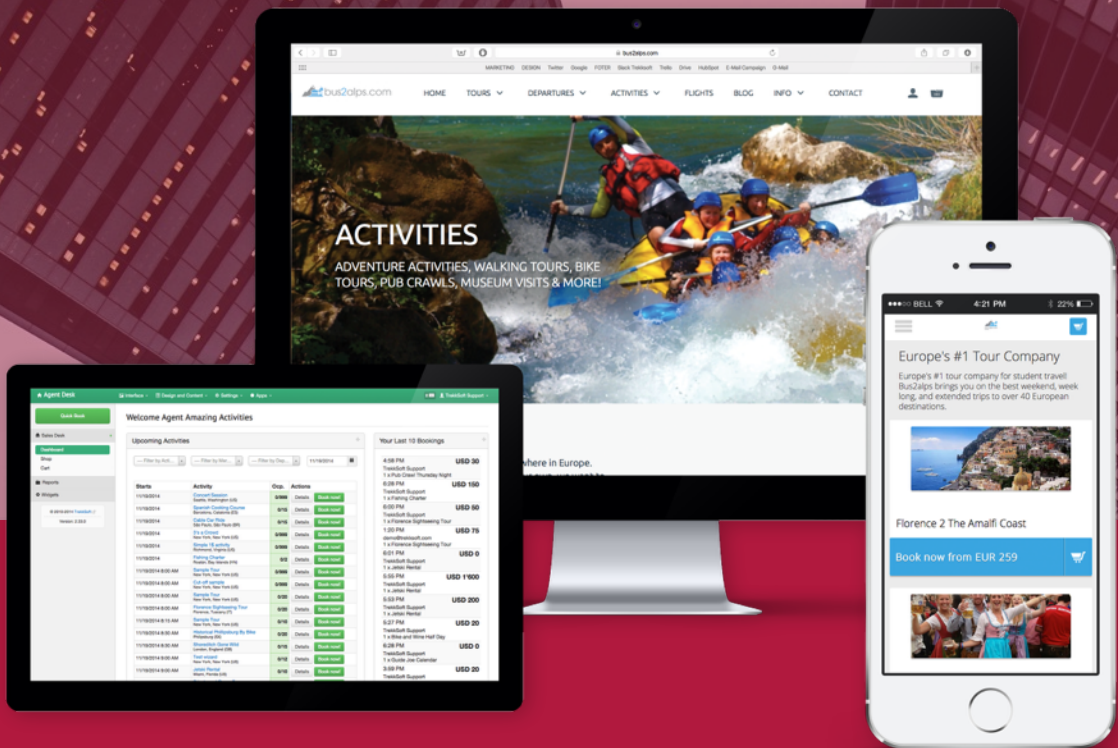
1. 10 sights you can't miss in [your city]
2. 15 rainy day activities for [your city]
3. Meet the team behind [your tour or activity company]
4. 5 of the best things to do in [your city] during [month or season]
5. 10 things I love most about living in [your city]
6. Why you should book [your tour or activity] during [season or month]
7. 20 of the most memorable moments as a tour guide at [your company]
8. 10 of the funniest moments as a tour guide at [your company]
9. How to make the best of your next [tour or activity]
10. Happy [year] anniversary to [your company]
11. 10 little-known facts about [your city]
12. 5 of the best restaurants in [your city] I always recommend
13. 15 reasons why you should visit [your city] this [season or month]
14. What I've learned about running a business as owner of [your company]
15. 10 pieces of advice I'd give to budding tour operators or activity providers
16. A day in the life of [you]
17. What to pack on a trip to [your city]
18. What to pack and wear for [your activity]
19. How to prepare for [your activity, e.g. a canyoning trip]
20. 5 tips for your first [tour or activity, e.g. paintballing day]

Take your tour or activity company to the next level by accompanying great content with online booking software. TrekkSoft offers a popular online booking, rental, and payment solution that's used by tour and activity providers in 112 countries.

Find out more about us and our team in Interlaken, Switzerland by visiting [TrekkSoft.com](https://www.trekksoft.com).



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