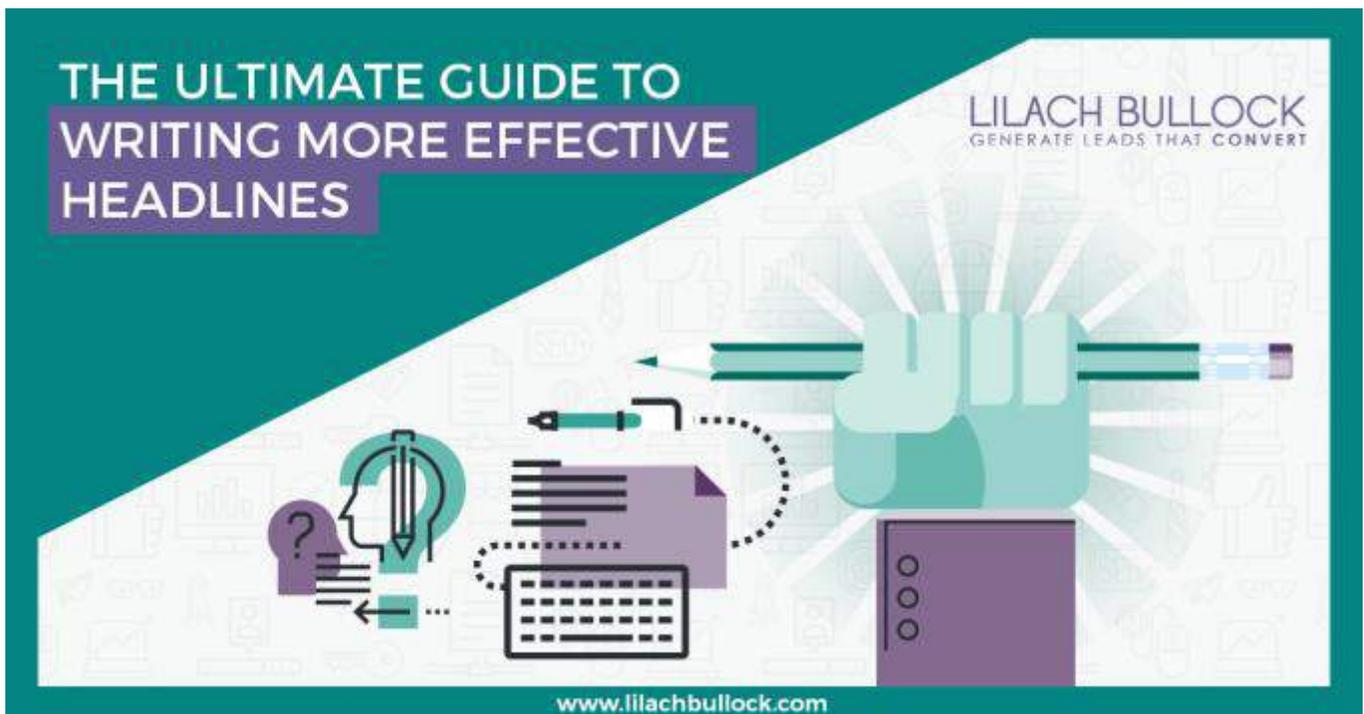# YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WRITING MORE EFFECTIVE HEADLINES

When you open your inbox in the morning how do you pick which emails to read first? The chances are that you choose the one with the subject line that catches you eye, or grabs your attention. Subject lines on emails, and headlines on blogs or social media are what draw us in to click the link or read the article. You could write a really valuable article, that would be super helpful for your audience but unless you get the headline right your article is never going to be read and get the attention it deserves. It will just sit unopened in an inbox, or ignored on social media.

WHAT MAKES A STRONG HEADLINE?

Choosing the best headline for your article may take a few extra minutes but it is worth investing the time. A good headline has to stand out from the crowd. Social media and email inboxes can be crowded places. People are often short on time. They will skim the page and pick out the one or two subjects that jump out at them. A strong headline must draw the reader in. They must want to know more, or it must promise them that they will benefit in some way from reading the blog.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEADLINE, AND WHY THEY WORK

1. Make sure your title matches your content

It sounds obvious, but your chosen title must reflect the content of your article. It can be tempting to write a title that sounds more enticing, or exciting to try to pick up a few extra clicks (commonly known as "click bait") but while that may work for a while in the end it will seriously damage your blog and your reputation. Your readers won't trust you, and search engines will lower you ranking, or even stop indexing your site if your content has a low relevance to your titles.

Example: If you are writing a post about basic website design try:

Designing your first website in under less than an hour

rather than

Designing the perfect website in under five minutes

2. Start the headline with "What is" or "How to"

These are popular search engine queries. Most people use Google because they want to know something. These same people are also reading your post because they want to know something. Starting a headline with "How to" or "What is" not only attracts search engines, but also readers scanning a page looking for information.

Example:

How to design the perfect website

rather than

Designing a website

3. Don't forget adjectives

Dull, boring, titles aren't going to hold your readers attention. Try adding as much colour as you can. Think of some adjectives which add detail, and encourage the reader to think about the subject.

Example:

How to design a high-ranking, SEO friendly website

rather than

How to design a website

4. Include numbers in your title

Readers love lists. Lists are quick to read, and straightforward to digest. Always write the digits instead of writing the numbers out.

Example:

5 Steps to the perfect website

rather than

Designing the perfect website or *Five steps to the perfect website*

5. Include keywords

Including keywords in your post titles is always advisable for SEO purposes. Think about what someone searching for your content might type into a search engine, and include those words in your title.

Example:

If your post is about websites built using Wordpress then try:

*How to easily create Wordpress website*s

rather than

How to create a website

6. Be specific

The more specific you are about your subject the better. Not only does it give your reader more information about how valuable the post will be to them, but it improves the likelihood of your post ranking highly in search engines as there will be less competition for the terms you use.

Example:

Quickly create Wordpress websites using free templates

rather than

Creating websites quickly

7. Keep your headlines short

Keep your headlines as short as possible, while still being descriptive. Don't use ten words if you can say it in five words. Google limits titles to 70 characters so you should always try to keep titles below that number. If you are writing email subject lines then ideally it is best if the reader can see the whole subject displayed in their inbox. Emails that need to be opened before their subject is revealed are less likely to be read.

Example:

Try

How to design websites fast

Rather than:

Designing and building wordpress websites by using templates commonly available over the Internet from free.

Below are some more examples of effective headlines in each of these categories. Simply fill in the blanks to customise the headlines to your own particular niche.

HOW TO HEADLINES

How To Tell If ____

How ____ Increase Your ____

How To ____ The Quickly

How ____ Can Inspire Your ____

How To Stop Getting ____

What To Do With ____

Where To Find ____

How To Get More ____

How To Generate A ____

How To Quickly ____

How To Deliver

How To Use ____ To Stand Out

How To Really _____ That Drives _____

How To Get _____ in 5 simple steps

How To _____ in

How I Made _____ in _____

How To Find _____

How To Build _____

How To Create A Strong _____

How To Totally Change _____

How To Create _____ That Brings _____

How To Unlock _____

A variation of the 'How to' headline is the 'Guide' headline. It holds the same basic idea. You are providing your reader with valuable information that will show them how to do something that they don't already know.

Advanced Guide to _____

A Beginners Guide to _____

DIY _____

An Experts Guide to _____

A Complete Guide To _____

What to Look for when _____

The Ultimate Guide: _____

LIST HEADLINES

I've used the number 5 in each of these examples, but of course you can change that to anything that fits your format.

5 Secrets To _____

5 Resources to Create a _____

5 Ways to Build _____

5 Proven Tips To _____

5 Signs You Might be _____

5 Amazing _____ To _____

5 Surprising Facts About _____

5 Essential Lessons For _____

5 Key Benefits Of _____

5 Examples Of _____ That will Inspire You

5 -Point Checklist: _____

5 Lessons to _____

5 Rules For _____ You Should Break

5 Things your _____ Can't Tell You

5 _____ Trends For 2016

5 _____Every _____ Should Own

5 _____ to Try For _____

5 Exciting _____ To Try Right Now

5 Crazy _____ That Will Give You _____

5 Styles of _____

5 Questions You Must Ask Before _____

5 Tricks That Will Make You _____

5 _____Habits to kick

5 Things You Must Know Before _____

5 Ideas To Kickstart Your _____

5 New Trends You Should Know _____

5 Great _____ To _____

5 _____ We All Love

5 _____ To Motivate You Today

5 _____ Ideas

5 Reasons You Didn't Get _____

'TIPS FOR' HEADLINES

Everyone likes tips that provide quick, simple solutions to everyday problems your readers are struggling with.

5 Foolproof _____ Tips To _____

5 Ways To Supercharge Your _____

5 Fast Ways To _____

5 Crazy Ways To _____

5 Unique Tips To _____

5 Greatest _____ Hacks For_____

5 Things You Didn't Realise About _____

5 Superb _____ To _____

5 Surprising Things To _____

5 Outrageous _____

5 Odd But Effective _____ To

5 Things You Should Not Do _____

5 Wearable _____ For _____

5 Unusual _____

5 Proven Tips _____ For _____

5 Quick Ways To Grow _____ Without

5 Tricks _____

5 Ways To Ensure Your _____ Is Not _____

5 Mistakes You Won't Want To Make

5 Tips For _____

5 Smart Strategies For _____

5 Most Effective Tactics For _____

5 Easy Ways To _____

5 Essential Steps To _____

5 Wrong Ways To_____

5 Creative Ways _____

5 Tips For Stressed _____

5 No-Nonsense Tips For_____

5 Tactics To _____

5 Tips That Work_____

5 That Will Help You _____

5 Mistakes You Don't Want To Make Again

5 Ways To _____Like A Ninja!

The Best Tip Ever: _____

The Only Tip You Must Have: _____

Pick of the Day/ Week / Month

Editor's Pick Of The Month

Readers Pick of The Week

INTRIGUING QUESTIONS OR FACTS

Not everything is as it seems. It is always fun to read blogs with a unique take on a topic, or which go against the way we think the world operates. Catch your readers attention with headlines that suggest the unexpected.

What No-one Tells You About

Is _____ Stopping You _____

Quiz: _____

Today's Big Q: _____

Why Does _____ Matter?

Why You're Doing It Wrong:

Are There ____?

Why Are The ____?

Who On Earth ____

5 Things That Are Stopping You _____

You Won't Believe

What a Real _____ Looks Like

Why I Never _____

Who Else Wants _____?

___ VS ___ : Which One Works For You?

___ VS ___ : Which Is More Effective?

Why ___ Beats ___

Amazing Secrets

I Wish Someone Had Told Me

5 Myths About

Why Would You Want to _____?

Is Your _____ Designed To _____?

Should You Build _____ To _____?

Why You Must Have _____ For _____

Why Should You _____

EMAIL SUBJECT LINES

Most of the rules for headlines can be applied to email subject lines as well, but there are some subtle differences. The most effective email subject lines are short enough to be fully visible in your inbox, and provide readers with an incentive to open the email. With email a personal approach works best. Try to use You and Your wherever possible. Remember you are talking to an individual, and trying to establish a connection with them.

Short catchy titles can work well. Sometimes even a single word is enough. Back in 2012 Barack Obama famously sent out a fundraising email with the one word subject *"Hey"*. That email earned him lots of donations for his Presidential campaign, but he had the advantage being a well-known name. If your name is always going to be familiar to a reader then you can get away with some things that the rest of us can't. If your name may be unfamiliar, or you don't want to risk your email being relegated to the spam folder then it is better to stick to more specific subject lines. It is also worth mentioning that you will normally get a better response rate from an email where the sender name is a real person, rather than using a company name.

Some general examples would be:

How To_____

Forgotten Secrets of _____

Who else wants____

Warning: Don't _____

How I made _____

If You Can Do _____ Then _____

Each of these suggests that the reader will be better off in some way by opening your email and gives them a reason to want to open the email.

Examples of subject lines which promise to reveal information:

"Warning: Don't Do This If You Want More Clients"

"How Doing This One Thing Made Me A Lot Richer"

"3 Ways to Get a Six Pack (Without Exercising)"

"Revealed: The Secrets to Filling Up Your Webinar"

"How to Get People to Buy More From You"

"Are You Making These 3 Common _____ Mistakes?"

One strategy that can be highly effective is to demonstrate how the content of the email applies to the reader personally. Suggest to them that their life will be improved in some way. Try to tap into the dreams and desires of your readers and find a way to tie your content to their aspirations.

"5 Risk-Free Strategies for Financial Independence"

"5 Minutes to Your _____ "

"[VIDEO] Here's what I promised you "

"Do You Love serving your clients, but hate selling?"

"YOU too can be a _____ Rockstar"

"Access Your Free Webinar Replay"

"Build Your Business Without Selling"

"3 Words That Let You Charge More"

"Create profitable product using Your expertise"

"Learn How to Build Your Business Fast…"

"Launch your _____ in 2016"

I found these FREE tools for your business"

Suggest to your readers that you are offering them something new and exciting that has never been seen before:

"Be one of the first to _____"

"[BRAND NEW] _____

"Free _____ to the First 500 to reply"

"Revealed: The 5 Most Important _____"

"10 Posts to Treble Your Blog Traffic"

"Hot off the press: Free _____ to _____"

Showing your reader that they are part of a larger group, all interested in the content you are sharing works well. No-one likes to think that they are alone, by building a group mentality you spur them forward to take action.

"Why will 1500 Coaches be Joining Us Today?"

"We are starting now. Are you coming?"

"Will you be joining us?"

"2 Strategies that Tripled Sarah's ____ Business"

"This Is what they are saying..."

"Everyone is here waiting for you..."

"The 3 Habits Every Successful Leader Has"

Piquing the curiosity of the reader by asking a question can encourage them to open your email to find out the answer.

Try questions, such as:

"Why did I decide not to _____?"

"Do you know the Easiest Way to _____?"

"Where is the Hidden Profit in Your _____ Business"

"Have you discovered the amazing secret to _____"

"Are you making this _____ mistake?

"Could you use a free _____?"

"Are you tired of working on Your Boss's dream?"

"Why doesn't _____ work for me?"

"Gain You Gain 10% _____ in 30 days"

"Want to work on your business?"

"Why do most authors make no money from their blog?"

"Do You Think Your _____ Will Sell?"

Readers often need a reason to act. Everyone has a busy schedule and it's easy for things to be pushed to the back with the intention of acting on them later. Later rarely comes, by giving your readers an incentive to act NOW rather than later you can greatly increase the response rate of your emails.

Try suggesting that if they don't respond right away they may miss out on a time limited offer, or that there is only a limited quantity of places or product available.

Headlines like:

"[REGISTRATION ENDS TODAY] Will you be joining us?"

"_____ Closing at Midnight"

"X Offer is almost over"

"Only 12 Places Left"

"LAST CHANCE to _____"

"ALMOST SOLD OUT: Final places _____"

SUMMARY

Writing headlines can seem daunting at first, but by thinking about it from the readers point of view, and why they might want to read your blog post, it is possible to come up with an almost endless supply of headlines. All of these example headlines have been tried and tested in real-life situations. You can take them and adapt them for your own purposes. By following these simple steps you will be on your way to writing more effective headlines, and dramatically improving your results across email, blog posts and social media.

If you find this content valuable, don't forget to share it with your friends and followers.

About Lilach Bullock

Highly regarded on the world speaker circuit, Lilach Bullock has graced Forbes and Number 10 Downing Street with her presence! In a nutshell, she's a hugely connected and highly influential serial entrepreneur – the embodiment of Digital Intelligence.

Listed in Forbes as one of the top 20 women social media power influencers and likewise as one of the top social media power influencers, she is one of the most dynamic personalities in the social media market and was crowned the Social Influencer of Europe by Oracle. A recipient for a Global Women Champions Award (by the Global Connections for Women Foundation, GC4W) for her outstanding contribution and leadership in business.

After launching her first business within three years of becoming a mother, her financial success was recognised by being a finalist at the Best MumPreneur of the Year Awards, presented at 10 Downing Street. Following a resultant offer and wishing to spend more time with her daughter, she sold her first business to focus on social media, developing a multi-site blog and online marketing portfolio that generated in excess of 600,000 + visitors per month.

Lilach is consulted by journalists and regularly quoted in newspapers, business publications and marketing magazines (including Forbes, The Telegraph, Wired, Prima Magazine, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, Social Media Today and BBC Radio). What's more, her books have achieved No 1 on Amazon for Sales and Marketing and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

When Lilach isn't working she enjoys spending time with her family and is an avid fan of Zumba.