

Listicle – a portmanteau word derived from: list and article. They are, as they are named: short form pieces of writing presented in the whole, or as a part, in the form of a list with enough extra copy to be considered an article.

Listicles are everywhere from: ‘7 incredible ways to transform your old jeans to, ‘5 things you never knew you needed for the bedroom.’ You can barely open a social media page or glance across a row of magazines without seeing listicles.

But, by their very own success, they have also become the creators of their negative image. Often seen as clickbait and cheap regurgitation of old copy, they have been sullied, which is unfair.

A listicle which has been thought out and presented carefully can be a really useful and interesting way of connecting with an audience. And the fact that they are hugely consumed shows that we are not done with them yet. But why is this?

- 1) **The Holy Grail:** Listicles are alluring because they promise to give answers quickly and within a limited and certain number of steps. As humans we are incredibly averse to uncertainty and as such will seek to find resolution swiftly.
- 2) **Time:** in a listicle we know how far we’ve come and how far there is left to go. In a specifically numbered article we can gauge exactly where we are in the piece and therefore how much longer we will need to keep reading to reach our holy grail and be in possession of the knowledge we want.
- 3) **Relevance:** a listicle always has a title that tells you exactly what the article is about. This means that we can make a judgement immediately as to whether the piece is relevant to us and therefore, make a decision on whether or not to go ahead and read it. You know what to expect, and that’s what you get.
- 4) **No commitments:** listicles are guilt- free reading, they are easy to skim, to dip in and out of and to abandon before the end without feeling like we’ve offended the author or cheated ourselves out of a great piece of literature.
- 5) **Structure:** listicles give us a sense of order, clarity and tidiness and the comforting idea that the world and its problems can be organised into easy-to-negotiate blocks.
- 6) **Simplicity:** listicles make the world a simpler place. They take subjects, no matter how big or small, and condense them down into a seemingly much smaller challenge that can be tackled one step at a time. By the simplicity of the construct of listicles – a list – they are easy to read and do not feel such an onerous task as a large feature article can.

Listicles can be excellent ways to give and receive information. But they are great for your business in other ways too. They present the perfect opportunity to increase your SEO ranking through the use of keywords.

Don’t let your business be viewed as fishing with clickbait through the use of a bad listicle. These small pieces of writing can be useful, informative and enticing for the reader and a powerful keyword tool for you.

A good copywriter will understand your needs, as of those of your audience, and will create a good quality, effective listicle that works for both the reader and you.

If you think your business could benefit from professional copywriting help, please do get in touch with me and we can make our own list of how I can help you.