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How To Write Attention-Grabbing Headlines: 14 Strategies



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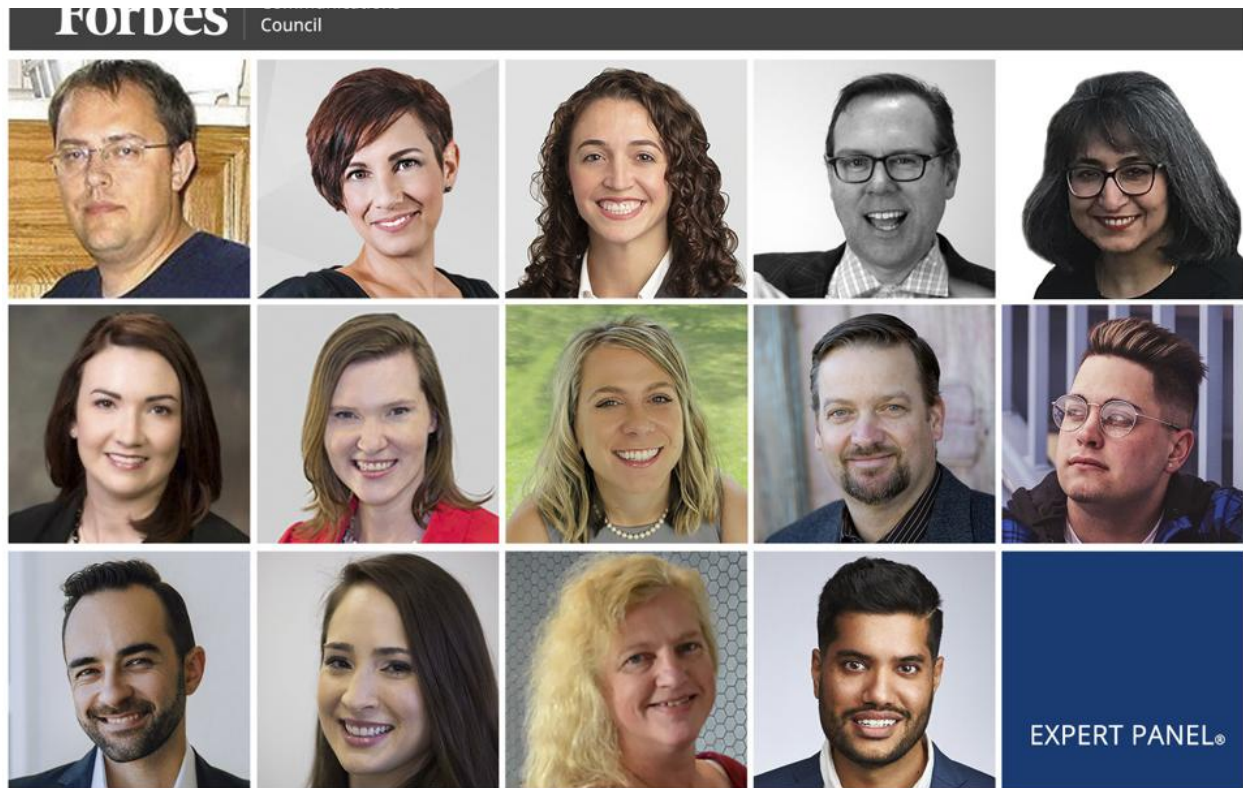
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If you regularly use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Reddit, you may have noticed how many people will share a published article after reading only the headline.

For this reason, it's in publishers' best interest to make their headlines as engaging and "clickable" as possible. However, it's also important to get the gist of the article across accurately and succinctly.

Below, a panel of [Forbes Communications Council](#) members share 14 of their best tips for crafting attention-grabbing headlines. Try their strategies to pique your audience's interest right off the bat, even with limited characters in your article title.



Forbes Communications Council members share strategies for writing attention-grabbing headlines.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

1. Fill A Curiosity Gap

While a headline is meant to capture attention, crafting one that piques readers' interest will buy additional attention that can invoke action where they may go beyond a title. Incorporate aspects that are useful, emotional, sensational and somehow irresistible. They should aspire to incite inspiration,

fear, anger, shock or awe, but most of all, to fill a curiosity gap. - [Mark Nicholson](#), [Match Financial](#)

2. Connect With The Reader

You only get seconds to grab a reader's attention, and that's why engaging headlines are so important. A headline needs to deliver quality content in a short sentence, so it's important to connect with the reader, give a visual and convince your audience to click. It's equally important that the headline is relevant to the content. Otherwise, you will quickly lose the reader. - [Ami DeWille](#), [Perform\[cb\]](#)

3. Start Backwards

Before writing your headline, think about what you want news outlets to say in their headline. For example, if a journalist were to pick up your story, ideally, what would their tweet be? Then, write your headline based on that. - [Brittney Manchester](#), [Catholic Charities of Oregon](#)

4. Write Truthful Headlines

Don't be a clickbaiter. Sharing stories without reading or verifying that they are truthful only leads to the deterioration of social media. As communications professionals, we need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Let's commit to giving consumers the truth, and then let the clicks fall where they may. - [Mike Neumeier](#), [Arketi Group](#)

[Forbes Communications Council](#) is an invitation-only community for executives in successful public relations, media strategy, creative and advertising agencies. *Do I qualify?*

5. Be Crisp, Concise And Catchy

Crisp, concise and catchy headlines make for vivid stories. Be artfully challenging and innovative. Headline crafting is most critical if you want the media to pick it up as close to your version as possible. - [Arati Mukerji, Tata Communications Ltd](#)

6. Resist Including Product Or Brand Names

Except for big brands, most readers won't necessarily know your company's product names. Focus on the "aha" of your story and boil it down into a few words; that's your headline. - [Emily Hardie, Lindsay Corporation](#)

7. Keep Your Audience In Mind

You should always write your headline with your audience in mind. What's in it for them? What will entice them and make them want to read more? - [Kathy Sucich, Dimensional Insight](#)

8. Consider What Will Evoke A Strong Reaction

Think about the readers of your article and how they will relate to its content. Then, make sure the headline will evoke a strong reaction in your audience. Many times, your only chance to engage the reader is purely by headline! - [Kris Pugsley, ON Semiconductor](#)

9. Use Specifics Instead Of Buzzwords

Use specifics versus very high-level, general buzzwords so that people know what they'll be getting in the content. At the same time, make the headline short and sweet, not a long sentence explaining every detail of what the content is about. Lastly, show that you've distilled the key insights for them, which is most easily done with headlines such as "5 Lessons," "3 Key Steps" or "5 Examples." - [Tom Treanor, Treasure Data](#)

10. Make It Captivating And Interesting

This allows the reader to get sucked into the article on first glance. Think from the reader's perspective and brainstorm possible eye-catching titles, which usually help too. - [Christian Anderson, Lost Boy Entertainment Company](#)

11. Have Enough Words To Create Interest

The mistake people make is writing short headlines. Headlines should be long. You need to have enough words to grab attention and create interest. Why should a headline be long? Most often it's the only thing people read! - [Andrea d'Agostini, American Power & Gas](#)

12. Experiment And Track Results

Focus on the reader and don't be afraid to think outside the box. Keep in mind that not all readers are the same; some audiences may prefer shocking headlines, while others may be turned off by them. Getting to know your audience by experimenting and tracking results is the key to gaining attention through headlines or other copy. - [Lyndsi Stevens, Celerium](#)

13. Back Up Claims With Proof

For a technical or engineering audience, the headline has to be something that grabs their attention without causing an immediately cynical reaction. It's best to make a claim, but also ensure that the claim is backed up with proof in the article or release. Otherwise, it's simply propaganda. If it offers an engineer a chance to learn something new, it will also be attractive to that audience.

- [Rachael Dalton-Taggart, Dyndrite](#)

14. Don't Write A Headline Just To Get Clicks

You might get more clicks that way, but people will bounce when they realize the headline has nothing to do with the article. Summarize your entire article into a sentence, then see if you can make it even shorter. If it makes sense to add a number, do so, as that has been shown to increase the number of clicks an article receives. - [Haseeb Tariq, Disney, Fox, Guess](#)

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