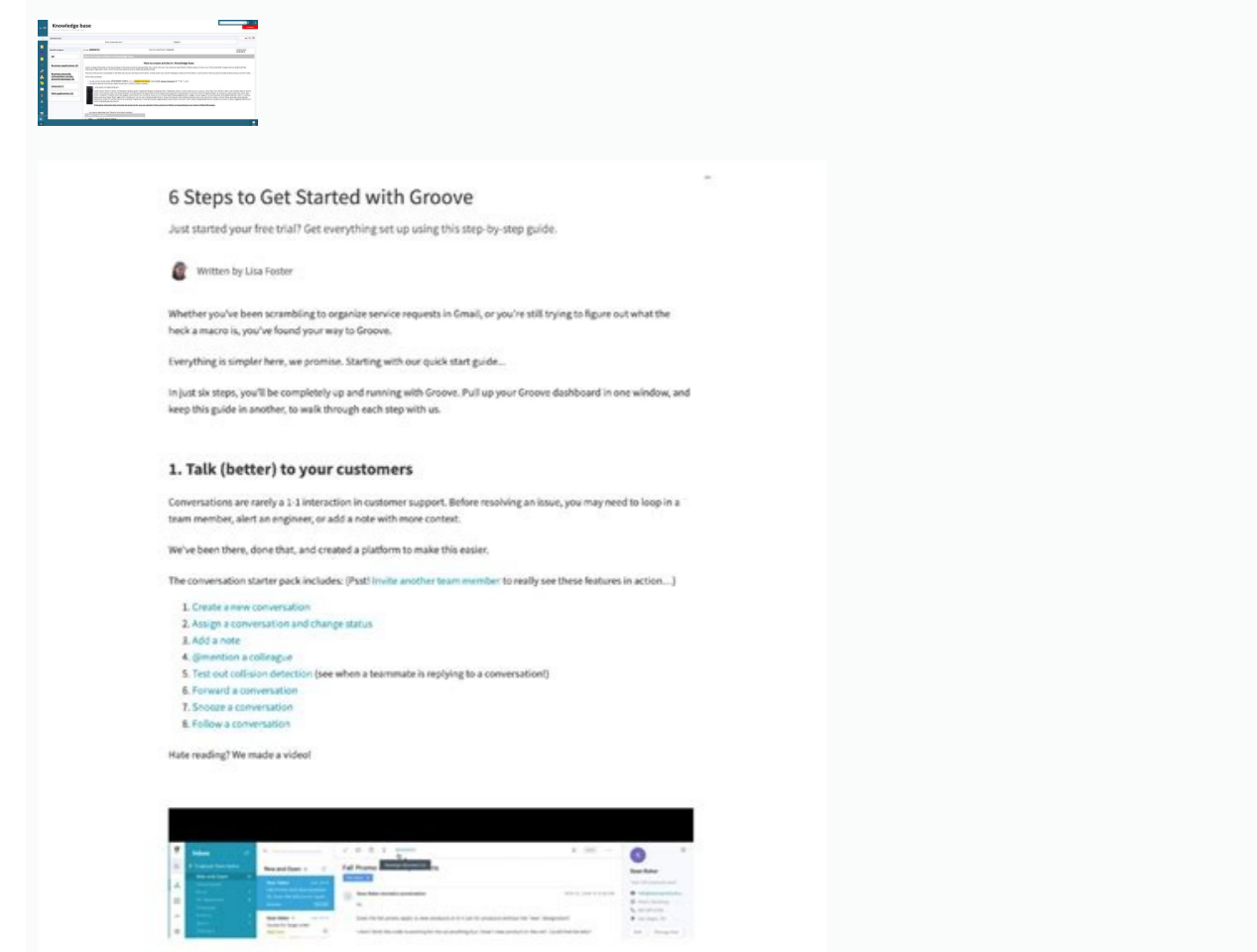
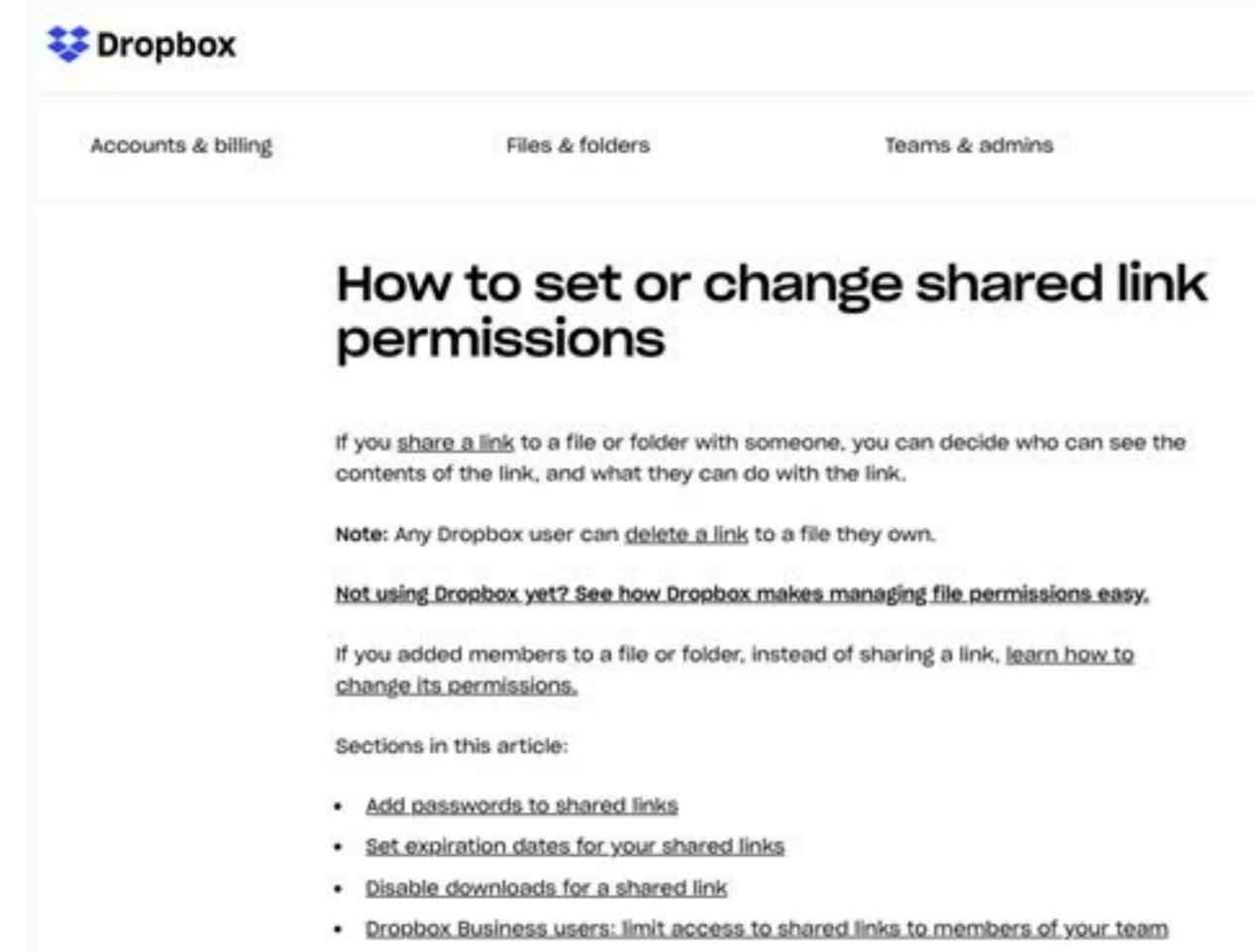
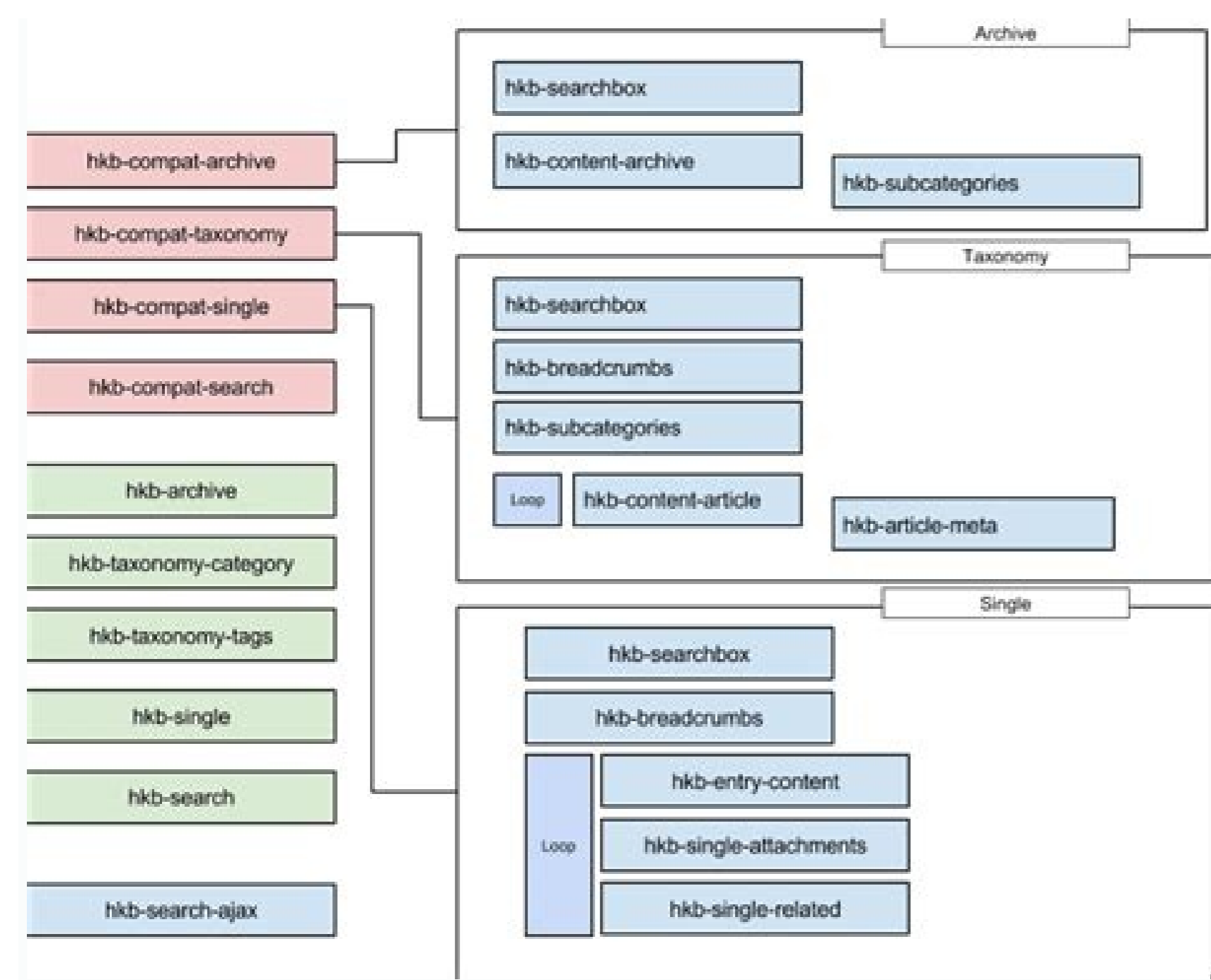


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Cut your writing time in half with these knowledge base templates for help center articles and resources. You've decided to create a knowledge base. You want customers to start finding answers to support questions on their own (without having to email you). Now what? How do you actually create knowledge base articles for your help center?

Answer: Pick a knowledge base tool and set it up (you can do this in as little as 15 minutes)Start publishing support articles. Easy, right? Well... Except for that pesky bit about actually writing those support articles. Note: Every Groove account includes our easy-to-use knowledge base at no additional cost. Try it today—free for 7 days (no credit card required). Use templates to rapidly create articles for your knowledge base. It may seem intimidating to put together a database of help articles. Fear not. If you can answer support emails, you can write knowledge base articles too. And, if you use the templates we're about to show you, you can create many of those articles in just a few minutes. Just pick the knowledge base template you need, then fill in the blanks. Here are the templates we'll cover: Illustrated How-to/Video HybridGetting Started GuideProduct OverviewUser Basics Template #1: The Illustrated How-to This template is perfect for the vast majority of support articles. An illustrated how-to article answers one question in detail, giving the reader illustrated steps for how to solve that one problem. The article will closely resemble a response you would write as an answer to a support email, but with additional screenshots and illustrations included in the text. A great starting point is to take an email you've already sent to a customer on this topic, then convert it into an illustrated how-to article that anyone can find and read on their own. The template goes like this: Title: Topic of the article.Introduction: 1-3 sentences.Body: Steps the user needs to take, including images to illustrate what the user needs to do. Example from Groove's Knowledge Base: Editing the Role of a User. Template #2: The Video Hybrid A video hybrid mixes a video into your help center article. Importantly, a video doesn't replace the text-based instructions you have in the article. Instead, it gives people a choice to take to find an answer or watch a video to get the same information. We do this because we know that not everyone has the same learning style. For example, a typical U.S. school classroom "will have around 29 percent visual learners, 34 percent auditory learners and 37 percent kinesthetic learners with around 30 percent students of mixed learning styles." In other words, some people prefer to read to find an answer to their problems. Others prefer to watch a video or try to figure out a solution on their own. Mixing a video into your help center article increases the chances that people will find the solution to their problem without having to contact you directly. The video hybrid knowledge base template goes like this: Title: Topic of the article.Introduction: 1-3 sentences.Body: Written description of the steps the user needs to take, including images to illustrate what the user needs to do.Video(s): Embedded within the article. Can be one video or multiple videos. Example from Groove's Knowledge Base: Creating and Using Canned Replies. Template #3: The Getting Started Guide What do you send new customers after they've signed up for a trial or made a first-time purchase? Instead of sending a lengthy how-to email, we send new users a link to a getting started guide on our knowledge base. Getting started articles are usually much longer than a normal help center article. Instead of answering one question in detail, you're giving people a list of steps to take to get the most from their purchase or free trial. We liberally include videos and animated GIFs in our getting started guide for the same reason we do in a video hybrid article—to give everyone reading the article the choice to read or watch—or both. Title: Topic of the article.Introduction: 1-3 sentences.Body: A list of illustrated steps that will help the new user get started.Video(s): Multiple videos included throughout the article. Example from Groove's Knowledge Base: 6 Steps to Get Started with Groove. Template #4: The Product Overview Most knowledge base articles are designed to answer questions from current customers. Some—however—are designed for prospects—people who are considering your product or service and want to know more. For this, we use a product overview article—a lengthy article that highlights key features and benefits of our products. A product overview article is designed to support the sales process. It's one of the resources we can send people when they reach out asking for more information about our products. And since this type of article is a sales asset, we include a call to action at several points within the article: Title: Topic of the article.Introduction: 1-3 sentences.Body: High level features and benefits of the productVideo(s): Embedded throughout the video showing the best features of the product Example from Groove's Knowledge Base: Groove Inbox Overview. Template #5: New User Basics Finally, what happens when a customer needs to add a new employee to their account? For example, in Groove's case, we're a B2B software solution, so we often have account admins who need to add users. Users have different needs than admins or account owners. They don't need to know all the ins and outs of account management. They just need a guide for using our product, so we've created an article just for them. A new user article will be helpful to anyone new to the product, but it's written for regular users, not for admins or the owner of the account. It's designed to get your employees into the tool quickly and help them understand what they need to do to be successful with it. Title: Topic of the article.Introduction: 1-3 sentences.Body: Written description of the steps the user needs to take, including images to illustrate what the user needs to do.Video(s): Embedded within the article to show the same steps described throughout the article. Can be one video or multiple videos depending on the length of the article. Example from Groove's Knowledge Base: New User Basics. Tools we use to create images and videos Knowledge base software lets you easily add digital media resources directly into your articles. As you can see in the above examples, we do this often to make our articles as helpful as possible. The following resources can help you create and host images and videos to add to your knowledge base articles: CloudApp: A free tool for easily taking and sharing screenshotsNimbus Capture: a browser extension for taking screenshots of a full webpage, including what's "below the fold"Loom: An easy way to record videos while sharing your screenCamtasia: A full-featured video editing tool that we often use for screen recording and to create animated GIFsPhotoshop: For professional-quality image editing.Wistia: Professional video hosting How to get started (in 15 minutes or less!) A knowledge base is a tool to reclaim your time. The point is to empower customers to find answers to their questions without emailing you for help. You don't need thousands of articles covering every last problem a customer might have to see a positive ROI. Even just 5 to 10 well-written articles can dramatically reduce the number of emails you receive through your support inbox. If you want to reclaim some of the time you spend replying to support emails, we invite you to try Groove's knowledge base software—100% free for 7 days. Setup takes less than 15 minutes. And with the above templates to help, you could be publishing your first few articles within the hour. In this guide to the ultimate knowledge base article template I'll show you how to create a profit-boosting, customer-retaining, support-request-reducing, overall awesome knowledge base. Read on to find out how... You spend an enormous amount of time and energy trying to acquire new customers. But do you put the same effort into retaining the customers you already have? Creating a killer knowledge base might not be sexy, but it will go a long way towards helping your paying customers get the most from your product. And the more value you can give your customers, the more likely they'll become return customers. Create a Knowledge Base - The Easy Way! Build a knowledge base and help your customers help themselves. Get the Theme Let's start at the beginning - your title. A thought-out title is essential because it's how customers will actually find the answers to their problems. The fact of the matter is this: If your customers don't know the knowledge base article can solve their problem, it doesn't matter one lick how good the rest of the article is! So make your title count. Avoid jargon. Explain the problem in simple English using the same terminology that you use in your interface. Look how MailChimp's article titles are all simple and tied to interface items (e.g. "Email Beamer"): Getting the title right is vital for search - most of the traffic to an article comes from a search - either from a Search Engine such as Google or your own site search. Ensure customers searching for help can quickly find relevant results rather than having to trawl through your entire knowledge base. Start With the Problem At the top of your article, start by succinctly discussing the actual problem that you'll be solving in the article. This lets readers know they're at the right place to find answers and properly sets their expectations for what they'll get from the article. Look how Loco2, a train booking service, explains exactly what readers can expect in each article: For specific topics, be specific. For example, if your article is about solving an error message, discuss the error message in the first paragraph. Quickly explain why your customer is receiving the error message before you jump into solving it. Look how Yoast quickly explains exactly why an error is occurring: If your article is especially long, it's a good idea to include a table of contents so that readers can skip to the exact section that they need. Whenever possible, it might even be a better idea to break up the article into separate, shorter articles. But if long content is unavoidable, slap a table of contents on it. Check out how MailChimp does it, even on their shorter articles: And if you've ever used the HeroThemes knowledge base, you might've noticed that we do something similar with our Table of Contents widget: If you're familiar with your product, writing instructions can be surprisingly difficult. You know the ins and outs, so it's easy to forget that your readers lack the same level of expertise. Don't do that. Keep your instructions simple. One step should only cover one point. What do I mean by that? Look at how Dropbox writes instructions: Isn't that simpler than writing: "1. Sign in to Dropbox, click on your name and choose Settings"? I think so. Separating your instructions into clear points makes it easier for your readers to follow along. Similarly, if you're writing FAQs instead of instructions, you should keep each question and answer to a specific topic. Break Up Content With Headings Use intelligent headings to break up your content into easily digestible chunks. If one article requires readers to complete two different sets of actions, it's a good idea to stick them underneath separate headings. For example, look how Canva uses headings to break up different sets of instructions in the same article: Sometimes you'll need to add more information to your instructions or FAQs. That's fine. It's unavoidable. But when you do add extra information, make sure you format it so readers know it's an aside. For example, look how we use Heroic Shortcodes to style asides in our KnowAll knowledge base theme: Readers can quickly distinguish between instructions and the additional information contained in asides. Similarly, Asana uses bullet point icons and borders to differentiate their "Asana Tips" from regular instructions: Properly formatting the different types of information in your knowledge base articles goes a long way towards enhancing your readers' comprehension. Link Your Knowledge Base Articles Together Here's what the best knowledge bases do: They don't just solve the current problem a customer is facing. They also solve the next problem before the customer even knows they need help. What do I mean? Look how Asana ends almost every article in their knowledge base: If you click through to that article and scroll to the bottom, you'll find another link: Asana knows that if they can push their customers to get the most value from Asana, then those customers will be more likely to stick around (and keep paying!). To accomplish that, they use the conclusion of their knowledge base articles to drive customers to learn even more about their product. For instance, what if a customer didn't know it was possible to invite teammates to Asana? Without the link at the conclusion of the article, they might never know about that essential function in Asana. So, use your knowledge base articles to drive engagement and retention. Push people towards the next logical step so that you ensure your customers get the most value from your product. Standardize Your Knowledge Base Article Template Last but not least, you need to put these principles into developing a standardized template for your articles. Using the same template over and over allows your customers to develop cognitive fluency. Essentially, it makes it easier for them to navigate your knowledge base because they're already familiar with how things work. They know that bullet icon means it's an aside, while that other bullet icon means it's an essential instruction point. Tips for Writing Knowledge Base Articles Ok - you know the template. But how about actually writing your knowledge base articles? Here are a few tips to start you off on the right track: Show Don't Tell - "A picture is worth a thousand words" might be a cliché at this point, but it is true for your knowledge base. Whenever possible, add screenshots, animated GIFs, or even videos to make it easier for readers to follow along.Start with the Easiest First - If readers need to complete multiple steps, always start with the easiest step first if possible. This allows readers to get at least one accomplishment under their belt before they move to the hard stuff.Use the Right Tone - Be straightforward and avoid jargon whenever possible. Remember, your main goal is to communicate information. And always consider your readers' moods - if you're writing an article on a frustrating error message, you probably shouldn't be cracking jokes.Avoid the Curse of Knowledge - I touched on this above - but always remember that your readers don't have the same depth of knowledge as you do. Try to put yourself in a beginner's shoes when writing knowledge base articles. Wrapping Things Up Putting time into the structure of your knowledge base articles will pay off in the form of a more easily comprehensible knowledge base. Remember to follow this template: Choose an easy-to-find titleDescribe the problem and set expectationsKeep your instructions and FAQs to specific pointsUse proper formatting for the table of contents, headers, and asidesPush readers towards other knowledge base articles that help them get more value from your product And then remember to use that same template for all of your knowledge base articles! Need suggestions for your own knowledge base? Leave a comment below and I'll do my best to help out!

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