

5 STEPS TO AVOID FAILING (AGAIN!) ON WIKIPEDIA

Editing Wikipedia articles tempts companies. As the fifth most visited website in Switzerland, and the 12th in the world, it's hard to resist. While many try to do this, almost all of them fail. So how to go about it?



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Wikipedia was created 19 years ago, and now is available in over 300 languages that anyone, at any time, can edit. The English version alone has an average of 8 billion page views a month and more than 6 million articles.

Wikipedia articles, including those dedicated to companies, are always shown on the first page of Google results

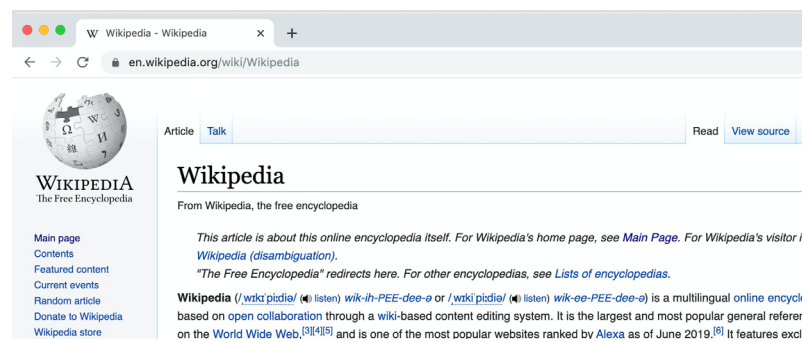
Most content on Wikipedia is updated by a small percentage of users. In fact, not all of them are active users. The presence of errors or outdated content is therefore commonplace.

Furthermore, Wikipedia articles dedicated to companies are among the most neglected since they often refer to firms that are not particularly well known to the general

public. That is the reason why, most of the times, members of the Wikipedia community do not spend their time on them.

Wikipedia can be edited by everyone. Therefore, many company representatives try to update, correct or add information.

Almost always, however, the changes made are reversed by other users and the profiles that made them may be blocked.



The Wikipedia logo is an incomplete globe made up of puzzle pieces showing a "W" in 18 different scripts. It represents the encyclopaedia's continuous evolution and linguistic richness.

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- This article **relies largely or entirely on a single source**. *(October 2013)*
- This article **may contain excessive or inappropriate references to self-published sources**. *(October 2013)*
- This article **needs additional citations for verification**. *(March 2012)*

Many articles about companies feature alerts that convey messages such as the one above. In this case, issues have been reported since 2012 without being resolved.

Why then is it so difficult for company representatives to edit articles if everyone can do so? Our answers lie in the following five steps that, based on our experience, can help companies be more successful on Wikipedia.

1 For companies, the rules are more severe. And so they should be

A neutral point of view is fundamental for Wikipedia. For this reason, anyone with even a slight conflict of interest should not intervene directly on a page.

Corporate reps who write about the company they work for are a clear example of this.

Tip: It is vital to declare your conflict of interest.

2 Wikipedia may appear simple, but it's actually far from being so

To edit an article on Wikipedia, users can just click on the "Edit" button. Anyone can do it, even without registering as a user. But what makes the difference is how much that change is able to endure over time. Swear words, offensive language or promotional content, for example, will be cancelled after a few minutes or even

seconds. The validity of an edit must first be discussed with the community. There is no editorial staff, in fact, nor a head with decision-making power, only conversations.

Tip: Always talk to the community and do not be afraid to ask for help.

3 Information is not relevant until it becomes so for Wikipedia

Wikipedia is an encyclopaedia, not a corporate website. What could be relevant for Wikipedia could be negligible for a company and vice versa.

For instance: an entire paragraph about company-related controversies is not that interesting for the company in case. It is, however, potentially important for the neutrality of the Wikipedia article.

The company's strategic plan over the next three years could be considered vital by a company. It is, however, irrelevant for Wikipedia since nothing included in that document has happened yet. Therefore, this content is not eligible for an encyclopaedia.

Tip: The contribution you can make in improving the article dedicated to your company is offering content which resonates with Wikipedia. If it does not resonate, it will not be pertinent to the encyclopaedia and will be rejected.

4 On Wikipedia, companies are mere guests

Due to conflicts of interest, company representatives should not make direct edits to the article about their company. Even in the case of correcting a factual error, how the community is approached becomes fundamental.

On Wikipedia, we are all guests. No one has more rights than others and everyone's contribution is welcome as long as it is done with respect.

Tip: Act without imposing your point of view. Respect and listen to the other members of the community, all of whom are volunteers and who work every day to make Wikipedia what it is today.

5 Wikipedia needs companies perhaps more than companies need Wikipedia

Many Wikipedia articles over the years have reached a truly remarkable level of quality. On Wikipedia, numerous scientific, historical or simply “popular” themes enjoy a certain spontaneous following, which pushes editors (all volunteers) to invest time in improving them. On the contrary, some companies, especially those operating in the B2B space, fail to achieve the same popularity, even though they are large and may be leaders in their market.

This is the reason why most of the articles dedicated to companies lack the same levels of quality and therefore why more people are needed to improve them.

But the community does not care about this being done by anyone whatsoever, because the integrity of the Wikipedia project is held to be more important than an updated page.

Tip: Learn to respect Wikipedia by learning the rules. Only in this way you can earn the trust of the community and make a real difference: for you, for your company and for Wikipedia.

This is what companies on Wikipedia can aspire to. They can contribute significantly in drafting the content that concerns them as long as they are ready to earn the community's trust, learn the rules and accept its advice, without ever imposing their point of view.

Because, let's not forget, companies on Wikipedia are at the end of the day only guests.

Lundquist Wikipedia Lab

For 12 years we have successfully trained and supported companies that choose not to take risks but rather to work responsibly on Wikipedia.

We do this thanks to our approach whose effectiveness has also been acknowledged by Wikimedia Italy.

Through our Wikipedia Lab we study, monitor and evaluate articles dedicated to major companies in Switzerland, Italy and Europe.

Thanks to this tool we are able to frame the situation of an article dedicated to a company or a top manager, identify issues and provide an improvement plan together with a well-established and tested method.

A new Swiss edition of our Wikipedia research is planned for early 2021.

