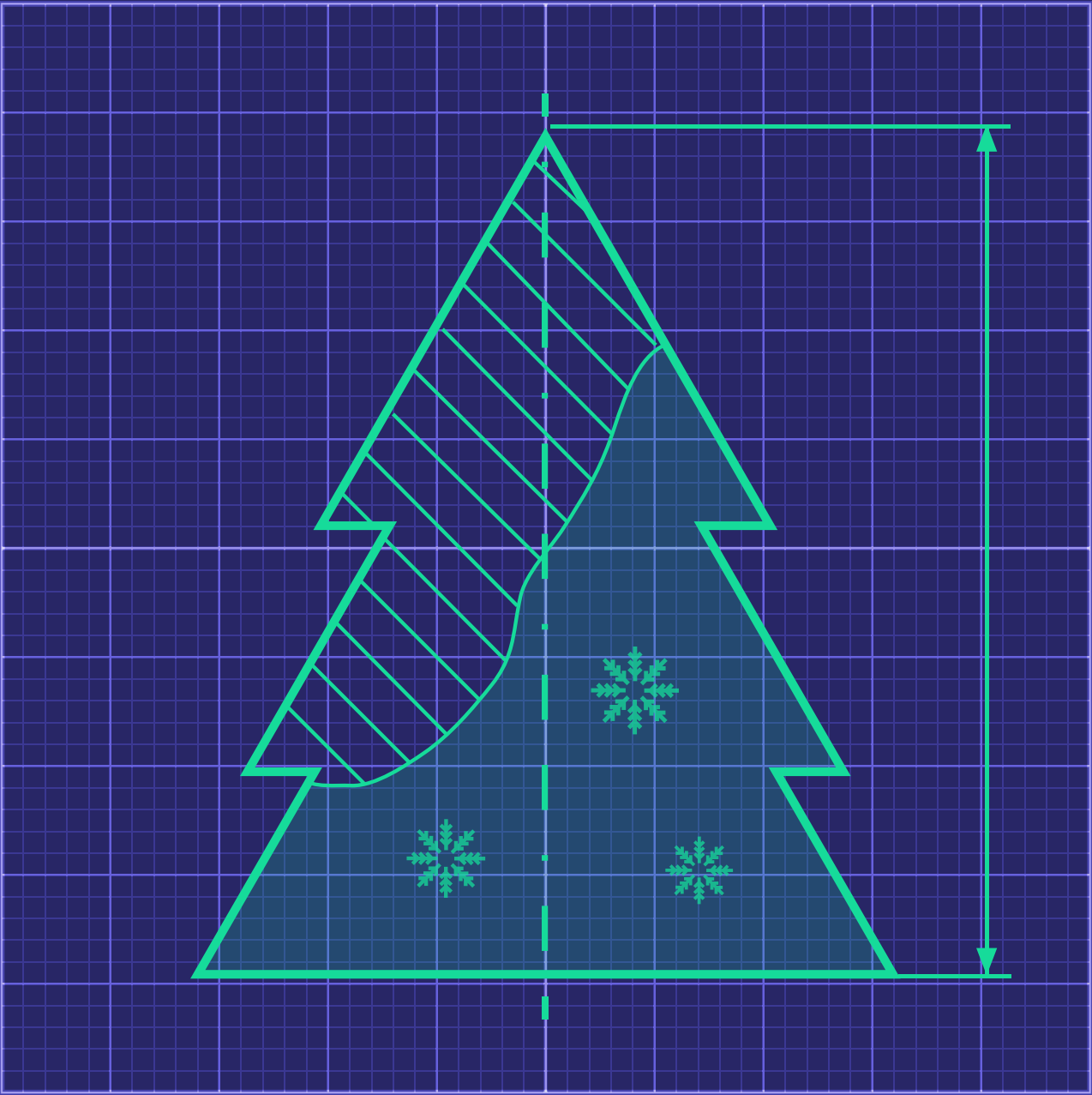PracticeWeb

Self-assessment at Christmas

Persuading your clients to act now as self-assessment looms

This quick tutorial and template will help you build and publish a topical blog post on self-assessment in 30 minutes.

We've given you a skeleton, facts and figures, and guidance on grabbing the attention of your clients so they'll do what needs doing.

Get this right and you'll not only save their Christmas, but make yours a lot more relaxing too.

It was the night before Christmas...
The opening is the most important part of the article

01. Headline
Use SEO keywords, and try to give it a hook. Aim for between 50-70 characters, or around 9-15 words.

02. Featured image
People love pictures and will click away from posts without them.

Give it SEO-friendly alt tags such as "Business person completing their self-assessment tax return".

(And remember – make sure you have the rights to use the image. Most images you find online are under copyright.)

03. Intro
This is your 'elevator pitch'. Get to the point and make the reader want to keep reading.

This is also a good place to mention your town or region, or any sectors you specialise in.

This Christmas, swerve the ghost of self-assessments past.

by Ray Newman | Nov 27, 2018 |

The stockings are on the mantelpiece, the fairy lights are on the tree, but there's something weighing on your shoulders: that self-assessment tax return you've been putting off.

Around 11 million people are obliged to complete self-assessment in the UK, primarily the self-employed, but also people with substantial savings.

In 2017, an unbelievable 8,623 of those completed their return on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, with 92 tax returns arriving at HMRC between 11pm and midnight on Christmas Eve – the most wonderful time of the year indeed.

In addition, 1.3 million taxpayers left it until after Christmas to submit their returns, with 30,348 of those waiting until the very final hour.

Headers, bullets and calls to action

Avoiding the dreaded wall of text

04. Header Tags | H3
Give each section its own heading. This helps massively with SEO and breaks up the text.

05. Bullet points
These are a good way to break up the text and make information easier to absorb, especially on a screen.

06. Call to action
Finish by telling people what you want them to do next.

TIP: Think of concluding the sentence "I'm ready to…"

Those stinging fines in full

If you fail to submit a tax return before midnight on 31 January 2019 you'll face a fine of £100 straight off the bat, with interest charged on any late payments.

That applies to returns which are up to three months late. If you let your return slip later again, you could see the fine rise by £10 a day, up to a maximum of £900.

If after six months you still haven't sorted it, you could land yourself with a further penalty of 5% of the tax you owe, or £300 – whichever is more.

And there's a further penalty of 5%, or a £300 charge, if you still haven't reached a resolution after a year, while one-off fines of 5% of the unpaid tax can be charged after 30 days, 6 months and 12 months.

Appealing to HMRC

There are limited options for appealing a fine. HMRC treats the following as legitimate reasons to reconsider a penalty:

- if your partner or a close relative died shortly before the deadline
- if you've been seriously unwell
- you got rushed into hospital

We can process your return for you but need your authorisation to do so, and time to get that authorisation recognised by HMRC.

If you give us plenty of room for manoeuvre we will also be able to claim any tax reliefs to which you might be entitled, reducing your overall tax bill.

To take the pressure off contact us now for help with your self-assessment.

Checklist
In summary

01. Headline

- ☐ Fifty to seventy characters, or nine to fifteen words.
- ☐ The most important place to use SEO keywords and phrases.
- ☐ Clear statement of the article content with a hook or creative angle.
- ☐ Use an appropriate header tag.

02. Featured image

- ☐ Relevant to article.
- ☐ Large – 650 pixels wide or more as a rule of thumb.
- ☐ Optimised for a small file size and fast loading.
- ☐ Don't forget SEO-friendly alt tags.

03. Introductory paragraph

- ☐ Attention grabbing, capsule summary.

04. Video

- ☐ Use video to show your firm's personality and show your expertise

05. Section headers

- ☐ Use H3 tags.

06. Break up the text

- ☐ Bullet points, pull quotes, tables.

07. Call to action

- ☐ What do you want people to do next?

Let's talk

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