

HOW TO WRITE GREAT BLOG POSTS

Tip #1: Clear Targeting

The first rule for creating effective content for your business blog is to completely understand why you're blogging. Have a thorough understanding of your ideal reader's (your customer's) profile and of your core message as it relates to your business. If you have a really clear idea about who you're writing for, it's going to be easier to write. Your blog posts will be on target and on purpose. You won't be meandering off into subjects that are irrelevant to your audience.

Tip #2: Know What Your Readers Want

Always write with your reader in mind. Write as if you are answering the question "what's in it for them?" Your readers are asking themselves all the time whether this blog is worth their time to read. You're more likely to keep them interested if you're "walking in their shoes." Address your readers' major issues and concerns. If you don't know what they are, ask.

Tip #3: Edit Often

So many blog posts start off with, "The other day, I was thinking about..." or "You know, summer's almost over and..." A blog post is not an essay and it's not poetry. Get to the point right away. Follow the rule of KISS = Keep It Simple, Sugar! (or Keep It Short and Sweet). That means you can actually write less.

Write short, declarative sentences and omit all unnecessary words. This means read and reread your posts before you publish. It doesn't matter if you haven't been trained as a journalist or taken a lot of writing classes. If you can write an email, you can write a blog post. However, your blog writing will improve when you reread before publishing to be sure you have taken out all unnecessary words.

After you click the 'publish' button, read your post again. Often this is when you will catch typos or grammatical errors you didn't see before. Show respect for your readers by having clean copy. It doesn't take much for readers to abandon your blog; some might unsubscribe simply because your spelling is sloppy. In the online world, your words are all you've got.

Tip #4: Create Keyword-Rich Headlines

Write compelling headlines by using strategic keywords that are relevant to your topic. Keywords are often touted as gold by search engine optimization experts who want to charge you an arm and a leg for their services. But let's make a complicated issue simple. Put yourself in the shoes of your ideal reader. If this reader was searching Google for information or solutions to a problem, would she find you? Make a list of all the words or phrases she might use to search for you, your business, and your solutions. Those are the keywords and key phrases that you want to use frequently on your blog. When you write a headline for your blog post, use these keywords. This alerts the search engines as well as your reader about what's important in your post.

Headlines should be as descriptive as possible. Don't be vague. You can be cute (but not too cute), as long as what you're putting in the headline clarifies what you're really writing about or what the reader is going to learn.

Remember, it's all about your readers. It's about helping them find and use the content you are giving them. Blogging is going to be a fruitless exercise if your readers can't get what they want out of reading your blog.

Tip #5: Write Great First Sentences

Write an optimized first paragraph using the same keywords you used in your post headline. Make your point right away rather than leading into it. Use clear keywords in the first sentence of the first paragraph, and then summarize them again before you close your blog post. Always close by asking readers for their comments.

Tip #6: Keep it Short and Spacey

When writing, keep paragraphs short. They should be one or two sentences at most, and then break for a new paragraph. White space is your friend. Sometimes just one sentence can be as effective as a paragraph. You want lots of white space between paragraphs on your blog.

Remember, most readers are in a hurry. Text on a computer screen is also harder to read than text on paper. You want to make it as easy as possible for your readers to grasp your message quickly.

Tip #7: Use Bulleted Lists

Use bullet points and lists as often as possible. This makes your post easy:

To read

To scan

To understand

To remember

Research shows that people prefer things to be easily digestible and chunked down for them. It's easier for them to remember your message if you've given it to them in a list of three to five items. Some online writing experts also recommend keeping lists to an odd number of bullet points, but the important part is to use lists whenever you can.

Tip #8 Invite people to comment and join in the conversation.

People that comment and feel part of it are more likely to come back again and read more of your articles. I tend to say "*I really value your comments, please do leave them below.*"