

14 Tips For a Better Blog post

In this week's installment of the Go Digital Free Training we are exploring blogging, specifically Blog Posts and how to make them better.

Now there is a tonne of content out there about this and I'm not going to inundate you with too much too soon. This will be a starting off point and I'll also link to some other great content with more information if you want to dive in further.

No videos this week - because this is a post about blogging, it will be covered in written / blog format. If you have any questions - get in touch or ask me over in the [Facebook group](#).

You can get a PDF copy of this post to keep and refer back to - [click here](#).

1: Know Your Audience

First up - Blogging is a form of communication and to communicate effectively with your ideal client or customers you need to know them, how they think, what they like, don't like, what are their everyday struggles, or concerns. What keeps them up at night?

The better you know your audience, the easier it will be to create meaningful content that will connect with them.

2: Watch your language

You probably think I'm talking about swearing - but that's not what I mean.

Blogging is not the height of journalism - although journalism and rules thereof definitely can help improve your post.

Forget the stresses of high school English. If you weren't great at English in school - that doesn't mean you can't write a blog. In fact, it kind of puts you ahead of those people who are constrained by proper grammar rules and trying to make their blog posts perfect.

In most cases, writing like you talk will connect better with people and have them really understanding what you are trying to say.

Consider the language that your ideal customer uses. Do they use slang like 'hard yakka' when they talk? If so, include similar language in your posts. Are they highly educated? Then use the words that they will respond to. So long as it feels natural, of course. If slang isn't comfortable for you then don't do it otherwise it will feel unnatural and people reading will pick up on that.

Talk like a person - don't use Industry Jargon - break it down for people. Remember the person who needs your product or service is a few steps behind you and might not know any of the 'key' terms.

To help keep your language feeling natural - pretend you are writing to your best friend who also happens to be your ideal client. You can see them struggling and want to help. How would you talk to them if you were sitting down over a coffee? What might you tell your best friend about yourself?

A slightly more advanced tip - Use the Active Voice over Passive Voice - I know this sounds like one of those high school English classes, but very quickly:

Active: [The boy walked the dog.](#)

Passive: [The dog was walked by the boy.](#)

3: It doesn't have to be huge

For Google and ranking on search engines, a minimum of 300 words is all that is required.

That's 12 sentences of 25 words each.

You can definitely do longer, and there is a use for longer form blog posts but don't overwhelm yourself.

Start small, keep it consistent and then grow it.

Don't forget the value of doing a series of posts around a topic - a lot of short posts can be great to get readers clicking through to different posts and hanging around on your site longer.

4: Break it Up - White Space and Headings

Reading on screens is very different to reading on paper. Don't have large blocks of text - hit enter to add space, even if it is in the middle of a paragraph. Having white space makes it easier for the reader to scan and read quickly online.

Use Headings to help readers scan and find the info they need.

Also, make use of the headings while drafting your post. It will help you organise your thoughts and work out a logical order to what you are writing about.

5: Make use of Images and Videos

Having at least one image with a post is a must. Having multiple is better. It can help break up the content and assist with the communication.

Make sure you have the rights to use whatever image you plan to use.

Pexels.com is a great place for free images that you can use in your posts.

Better quality images from Stock photography sites like Getty Images, iStock, Shutterstock and similar (just search 'stock photography' on google) will mean you pay a small amount but you can use the image without violating copyright.

Using images without proper license can have your website passed over by Google for searches so it is not something to be ignored.

Look out for 'Creative Commons Licensing' information or try to message the owner of the image for permission.

Adding Videos is another great way to communicate your message and increase the interaction with your reader. They don't have to be videos of yours, they can be other people's videos that you add to your post to demonstrate something or add value to the post.

If the video is freely available on youtube, you can grab the link and add it to your post without violating copyright.

6: Do Your Research and Link to Others

Don't just assume you know everything about a topic you are writing about. Take the time for a quick google search to see what else is out there. Things change rapidly in a range of industries, you never know that quick google search could save you from looking like you don't know your stuff.

Take this post, for example, I've been working in Marketing Communications and Online Business for over five years, but I still did a google search to see what I might have missed or if anything had changed when it came to blogging, before writing this post.

Show your readers that you have done your research by linking to the posts of others, if they gave you great ideas. You can include this in your paragraphs or add a list of sources at the end of the blog post.

It will also help establish you as an authority and those people you link to might link back if you've contributed something worthy to the discussion of the topic.

7: Have a Point

As Shane Powers over at [Powers Business](#) says - 'Have a Point'.

Before I explain that further, see how I used my 'Research' in tip 6 above and I discovered this item which I hadn't thought of as I do it intuitively - and then I even linked to the post where I found it.

Back to tip #7 - Have a Point to your post. If you can shrink the overall aim of your post down to a sentence or so - it will help you get focused and improve the quality of what you write in that post.

You might even consider it as the 'why' am I writing this post. Why is it important and what's the one sentence I want people to take away from it after reading.

This will also prevent you from mixing two different topics into one post as well.

The point of this post is to show you a number of ways to write a better blog post so you will attract and maintain readers.

Also, you can apply this to any paragraph - what is the point of the paragraph? It will help you trim down words and help the reader take in your message more easily.

8: Have a Point of View / Show Your Personality

Choose a side, take a position, dare to upset some people.

Now, I know being 'controversial' just get views on your content is a common tactic and I'm not suggesting this at all, but having an opinion and including that in your blog posts will show your readers that you are a person, a human that they can identify with.

It will show your personality, what you stand for and the people who stand for the same things (hopefully also your ideal customers) will love you for it. The people who disagree probably will never buy anything from you anyway, so it's generally best to build a stronger connection with those who love your stance on whatever topic you are discussing.

Make sure you really know your ideal client / customer before doing this though. You can start out small with something like 'Daisies are the best flower as far as I'm concerned' even if you sell car tyres. I don't think too many people will get too upset over a strong opinion on daisies, and it will allow you to build this skill without worrying about losing customers.

Let your personality shine through over time and it will help you build a loyal fanbase.

9: Put yourself in the reader's shoes

Show that you can empathise with struggles of your client / customer - whatever those struggles might be.

You can talk about these struggles if you once suffered the same yourself (maybe before you discovered your own product or service) or even unrelated struggles like with kids and family etc.

You can also write in the second person sometimes.

For example:

Remember when you were so hungry yet so exhausted from a long day that you just made a piece of toast for dinner?

Remember the sound of your tummy growling as you tried to go sleep?

Using the second person like the above two sentences can be a great way to connect with your readers and allow them to connect with a story or a scenario - it helps them imagine themselves in the situation - so long as you know your ideal client and what they really struggle with. Otherwise, they won't keep reading if it isn't a struggle they experience.

10: Don't be defined by Your Competitors

'Comparison is the Thief of Joy' - Theodore Roosevelt

Yes, you can take a look at what your competitors are doing, but run your own race (oh wow how many cliches can I fit in a post) don't let them define you.

Your competitors may have been doing this for a lot longer than you so their blog posts might be very polished. They might have assistants helping them.

If you have your eye on your competitors all the time, then you won't be able to be yourself with your own audience. You will feel like a copy of everyone else out there.

Be Yourself, Do your own thing and be genuine and people will connect with you and your posts.

11: Headlines can make or break

Once you've mastered the basics, you can turn your attention to your headline for your post. This can be a defining factor in whether or not someone reads your post.

I'm not going to pretend that I'm an expert on headlines. What I do though, is follow a few basic templates for creating headlines for posts.

Here's some great resources for blog post headlines:

<http://www.twelveskip.com/guide/blogging/1247/blog-post-title-templates-that-work>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/a-simple-formula-for-writing-kick-ass-titles-ht#sm.00004raos1umpejtud13dkhfawoe>

12: Nail the opening sentence or paragraph

The beginning of your blog post can have a huge impact on whether or not people will keep reading, or so they tell me.

In my own experience, I look at the title and then start scanning the headings for information - then I delve deeper once I know the post covers what I need.

Not everyone digests content the same way.

In a lot of cases, your opening sentences might be what comes up in a google search - so it can be really useful to get them right and or interesting to keep someone reading further.

Here are some great posts on how to improve your opening paragraph for your post.

<http://www.michaeldpollock.com/open-your-blog-post/>

<https://coschedule.com/blog/blog-post-introductions/>

<http://neilpatel.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-writing-blog-post-introductions/>

I tend to use Michael Pollock's 'Be Short and Direct Method' (link above).

13: Kill Your Darlings - Some thoughts on editing

The key to getting your blog post out there and especially out of your mind - is giving yourself permission to write a horrible first draft.

Don't criticise yourself while writing.

Stephen King says 'Write Drunk, Edit Sober' and while I'm not saying you have indulge in alcohol but I always use this phrase to unlock my creative, no holds barred, no inhibitions side - while drafting a post.

Then I take a break - a couple of hours or overnight, whatever works.

Then I get into the editing mode. And it's a different way of thinking. It's looking at everything and thinking 'Does it make sense? Does it flow logically? Can I say this in 5 words instead of 10?'

One of the best ways to edit your own work is to read it out loud. You will soon know if something is hard to read while you read it out loud.

Here are some great tips from ProBlogger on self editing your work:

<https://probblogger.com/9-crucial-tips-for-self-editing-your-blog-posts-that-every-blogger-can-use/>

Also, a little extra for the perfectionists out there (I'm a recovering perfectionist myself) - set yourself a time limit for editing. Edit what you can in that timeframe and then know that over time you will catch more and you will improve. Overall, it's important to get your message out there rather than keeping it perfect and sitting in draft mode forever where no one will see it.

14: Don't try to add all of these tips at once



Depending on where you are at with writing blogs - don't feel like for your next post you have to incorporate every single tip here.

Start with the easy ones like white space, headings, 300 words and an image. Once you are comfortable with that, come back to this post - or download the pdf so you can find it again later.

Then pick another tip and add it in for the next four posts.

Build these skills slowly, over time. Don't feel like you have to do everything all at once.