

BLOGGING FOR BUSINESS

TURNING
WORDS INTO
REVENUE



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLOGGING

In early 1993, the first blog was started by Rob Palmer. He started the blog for a communications company he'd been hired by in London.

That first blog was only text. There were no graphics and the formatting wasn't great, but it

did help spread ideas that the communications company wanted to express.

It wasn't until 1994 when an adventurous 19-year-old named Justin Hall began sharing all the details of his personal life on his website that the personal blog was created.

The actual term blog didn't come about until about 1997. **The word blog is actually short for weblog; prior to that, they were called online journals or online diaries.**

In 1998, the first blogging platform was launched which allowed everyday internet users to share blog posts across the internet. This platform was called Open Diary, and it provided a space for users to blog and for readers to comment.

In 1999, new platforms started to emerge in the blogging world. Livejournal and Blogger both came to fruition.

In 2003, more platforms came on the scene, notably Typepad and WordPress. WordPress went on to become the most popular Content Management System (CMS) in the world.

Also in 2003, Google bought Blogger, the largest blogging platform at that point, and began working on launching AdSense and AdWords. With these products, people were able to monetize their blogs with advertising from relevant products and services. This was a big step in the history of blogging.

In 2004 Merriam-Webster reported that the most looked-up word of the year on their online dictionary was *blog*.

Blog became the word of the year for 2004.

Fast forward to today and you'll find that most businesses, and even a lot of people have their own blogs. These blogs serve many purposes. They can provide income through affiliate marketing and advertising, they create a space for people to express their thoughts, and they

allow businesses to promote their products, increase brand awareness, and drive traffic to their websites.

Today, blogs generate millions and millions of dollars in revenue. For many people, blogging is their full-time job. Businesses use blogs for things like thought leadership and reporting on industry trends.

There is a science to blogging. There are ways of writing your content that will attract people to your website, and keep them coming back every time you post.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the science of blogging. We'll talk about the different types of blogs, getting people to read your blog, and different promotional strategies.

Let's get started.



DIFFERENT TYPES OF BLOGS

There are many different types of blogs. People start them for a myriad of reasons and they serve many different purposes. Let's look at some of the most popular types of blogs.

BUSINESS BLOGS

A blog is an effective marketing tool that can help you gain more online visibility. It's a channel, like social media or email marketing, that can support the growth of your business.

If you own a business and are not utilizing a blog to drive traffic to your website, increase your rankings on search engines, and/or convert customers, you are missing out on one of the least expensive and most effective ways of marketing your business.

Here are just some of the benefits of blogging:

1. Driving traffic to your website

Blogs are an outstanding way of driving traffic to our website. By showing up in search results and sharing your content on social media, you can get your brand in front of a large audience.

Of course, there are other, less effective ways of trying to get traffic to your site. You can hope that they've heard of you and go directly to your site from the address bar, but the odds of this are pretty small.

You could purchase an email list and blast the people on it with spam emails to try to get more visitors, but that can be expensive and it's not usually very effective. Additionally, it is also illegal.

Another option is to buy ads on search engines and social media which is legal but can be very expensive. And, once the ads stop, the traffic stops too.

The best way to get traffic to your site is through organic search engine results. This is when someone types something into the search bar and clicks on one of the results.

By optimizing your blog posts for search engines, you can better your chances of being on the first page of the results, increasing the

odds of a potential customer clicking on the link for your website.

2. Blog content can be shared on social media

Blog posts can provide you with the perfect content to share on social media. You share a post and then your followers share it and so on. Sharing on social media helps to expose your brand to new audiences. It's basically digital word-of-mouth advertising.

3. Convert traffic into warm leads

Once the traffic starts rolling in, you can begin to convert that traffic into leads. And these will be *warm leads*, which are the best kind.

All you need to convert traffic to leads is a lead magnet and a call to action. Here's how it works.

- A visitor arrives at your website.
- The visitor sees a call to action offering them a free lead magnet.

- The visitor clicks on the CTA and arrives at a landing page where they enter their information, including their email address, in order to get the free offer, thereby giving you permission to email them.
- Now you have their email address and a way to continue to nurture them, hopefully to a conversion.

Not everyone who visits your blog will convert and that's okay. No one is *that* good at blogging. Just put that CTA and free offer on every blog post.

Pay attention to how many visits your blog generates and how many people sign up for your offer. If you're not getting the results you want, try changing up the offer.

4. Blogging has long-term benefits

The best bloggers know their target audience and give them the information they're looking for. **If you consistently provide your visitors**

with quality content that resonates with them, you will become an industry leader, which builds trust and leads to more conversions.

Becoming an established authority within your market is an effective method for driving more sales. Visitors will come back to your site again and again. If they don't convert the first time there will be other chances to turn them into customers.

5. Blogging helps with link building

As you put out more and more quality content for your audience, other bloggers will link back to it, using your information in their own blog but giving you credit for it.

Backlinks are one of the things that search engine algorithms use to rank your page on the search engine results page. Each link is basically a vote of confidence from another site, and Google likes that.

Many marketing experts believe that backlinks are one of the top three most important things that Google is looking for when it ranks your page. So, they're a pretty big deal.

6. Blogging is passive marketing

Blogging allows you to constantly be driving traffic to your site, even if you're not actively working on your business. That means that you can take a vacation or sleep in and you're still bringing in new prospects.

Even long after that content has been published, it can bring in new traffic. This is why it's important to make sure your content is evergreen, which means it doesn't become outdated.

PERSONAL BLOGS

The other type of blog is personal blogs. These include blogs focused on:

Lifestyle	Music	Fitness
Travel	Product	Finance
Sports	reviews	Politics
Fashion	Cosmetics	Parenting
	DIY	

Personal blogs have exploded in recent years with the development of more ways to monetize them through ads and affiliate marketing.

Personal blogs are easy and inexpensive to start but, much like business blogs, generating traffic is the name of the game. If there's no traffic, there's no one to click on the ads or affiliate links and there is no profit.

And there is money to be made with personal blogs. **However, many people don't understand the level of commitment required to make blogging profitable.**

Many people start blogs with illusions of making seven figures, but after a month of

really working, they realize that they just don't have the time or level of commitment needed to keep it going.

Most bloggers are able to make between \$200-\$2500 in their first year and can climb up to \$15,000 a month with continued, consistent work. Top bloggers can make seven figures and beyond.



GETTING PEOPLE TO READ YOUR BLOG

You can have many blogging goals. You may be trying to drive more traffic to your site, get more subscribers, or build your email list. Whatever you're trying to get out of your blog, **it all starts with having content they want to read.**

Every post you publish is an opportunity for someone to find your business and discover what you have to offer. By creating content that answers the questions that your key demographic is asking, you create an opportunity to build a relationship with them and assert yourself as a leader within your industry.

DETERMINE YOUR BLOG AUDIENCE

If you want to grow your blog, you have to know who your target audience is. Once you know this, it's much easier to create the content that your potential customers want to read.

Blog audiences are composed of reader personas. These are fictional, generalized depictions of your ideal readers whom you want to convert to customers.

By creating reader personas, you can better understand your readers and tailor your blog posts to your target audience. When you know who's reading your content, you better know what you should write about.

You can develop reader personas using market research and the experience you have with your actual reader base. You may already have several personas, but if you're just getting started, focus on creating a few main personas and save the niching down for later.

Another thing to consider is negative or exclusionary personas. There are the people you don't want as readers or even customers. This may be because they require too much work to get them on board.

You'll also find that some visitors are only looking to use your content for their own research or knowledge, and they have no interest in ever becoming a customer.

Here are some approaches for assembling the information you need to develop your own reader personas.

- **Interview current readers.** Ask them why they read your content and what they like and/or dislike about it. Find out what specific blog posts they enjoyed more than others. While you're talking with them, pay attention to their vocabulary, the references they use, and their overall personality.
- **Follow the data.** Look for trends on how visitors or customers find and consume your content. Did they find it through organic search? How long did they stay on the page?
- **Use form fields to gather information.** You can gather information about what industry they work in, what their interests are, or where they live.

Remember that your personas are meant to represent real people. Over time, personas may change - do your market research regularly to keep your personas current.

CREATING CONTENT THAT ATTRACTS READERS

Once you have your personas in place, you can use them to guide every part of your blog content creation process. If you want to drive more organic traffic to your blog, you'll have to write about things that your target audience is looking for.

From your research, you'll know that your readers are searching for certain keywords and phrases. You should write your content based on what they're searching for so your blog post will come up on their search engine results page.

When the reader sees your content in their search results and clicks on it, you get that organic traffic.

Let's break this process down into actionable steps.

1. Create a list of content and keywords

Start by choosing topics that will interest your reader personas. These may or may not specifically relate to your product or service. Choose topics that are important to people who would typically be interested in your product or service.

Once you have a good list of topics you can work with, work on creating a list of keywords within that topic. Keywords are what people type into search engines to look for whatever topics they're trying to get information about.

Ask yourself: If I wanted to learn about [blog topic] what would I type into the search bar?

If you're unsure about what you choose for your keywords, you can use some of the great free tools for finding keyword trends like:

- [Google Trends](#)
- [AnswerthePublic](#)
- [Keyword Surfer](#)
- [Ahrefs](#)

You can also use these tools to determine content ideas if you're having trouble getting started.

2. Determine the types of content your readers prefer

Not all blog content has to be in the form of the written word. **Try experimenting with different types of content and see what your audience prefers.** Pay attention to post views, shares, comments, and the amount of time spent on the page. Based on this data, you should be able to ascertain what your readers enjoy the most.

There are lots of options when it comes to content types.

- Infographics
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Slide shows
- Data and research
- Discussion and opinion articles

No matter what type of content you create, be sure to keep in mind what your personas are searching for, what problems they're trying to solve, and what makes them more likely to engage with the content. The personas should always drive the content you produce and the way you present it.

3. Develop your brand voice

All successful brands have their own personality that is communicated through content. Having a brand voice is important because people are drawn to brands they can relate to. Readers and subscribers will be more

likely to consume content from a brand that they can connect with.

The tone you use in your content should align with the personality of the people you want to consume the content.

OPTIMIZE YOUR POSTS FOR INCREASED TRAFFIC

Optimizing your blog is really the key to increasing your blog readership. Just creating content that your readers want to read isn't quite enough to push you into growth mode.

The first step in getting more traffic to your posts is to **optimize the structure** of your blog posts.

- **Customize your URL.** One of the first things that the search engine is going to crawl is the blog post URL. By customizing each URL so it includes

the main keywords from the post, you can increase your ranking in the search engine results. This step is relatively easy to do and well worth the bump you'll get in rankings.

- **Create an engaging title.** When your blog post title is well written and particularly engaging, it will be attractive to both the people searching it and the search engines. Title headlines should naturally contain the keywords and phrases that you've already determined your readers are looking for.

It's not a good idea to make clickbait titles that don't have anything to do with your article. Not only will this be a real turn off to your readers, but search engines will devalue it and your ranking will drop.

If your title sounds intriguing but your article isn't relevant to it, readers will bounce back to the search engine

results page, and the search engines pay attention to that.

- **Use section headers to make skimming easier.** This will be hard to hear but about 50% of readers are only going to skim your content. That's okay - don't take it personally, but do make it easier for the skimmers to skim your content.

Make your section headers bold and bold the important ideas of the article. Headers also help to organize your content and create some structure for the readers.

- **Create a hyperlinked table of contents.** This goes back to the skimmers and the readers who are only looking for a couple of key points in your article. Having a hyperlinked table of contents makes it easy for them to navigate the piece and find what they're looking for.
- **Use a responsive design.** When you're designing your website, make sure

every single part is responsive. This means that it is optimized and easily read on any device, including both mobile and desktop.

If a reader clicks on your article from their smartphone and what comes up is a bunch of garbled words that don't seem to go together because it's not formatted correctly, they will bounce right off your page and move on.

The next part of your optimization process will be to **optimize your content**.

- **Include target keywords.** Here's another place you'll want to include those keywords you researched early on in your process. Keywords are a critical part of your content because they help you to rank on search engines.

Ranking on search engines is what drives traffic to your blog. Try to use your keywords *naturally* within your

content, along with other relevant terms. Avoid keyword stuffing though - you want your content to flow naturally and be easy to read.

- **Learn the art of copywriting.** Content on your blog should sound like a conversation between friends. Avoid being too formal or strictly adhering to the grammar you learned in school.

Use a simple, conversational style of writing so that the information seems more accessible. You want your reader to feel like they are chatting with you like a friend, not being lectured. Also, avoid using a lot of industry jargon. It just doesn't work in a blog post.

- **Break up text with shorter paragraphs.** In your blog posts, your paragraphs should only be 3-4 lines. It's much easier to digest a lot of smaller chunks of text than lengthy paragraphs. Also, this works much better for the skimmers.

- **Include some internal links.**

Sometimes, a visitor's first interaction with your website will be through a blog post they've arrived at after an internet search.

In order to encourage them to stick around and explore your website, include some internal links throughout your post. Not only does this help the reader find additional useful information, but it also helps to boost your SEO. Be sure your hyperlinks are set to open in a new tab so the reader can easily return to the original blog post.

- **Input alt-text for images.** Search engines will crawl the images in your post just like the content. Your images may actually rank higher than your article, but in order for that to happen, you need to include alt-text with your images.

Alt-text is the written copy that tells the

search engines what your image is and allows you to insert some strategic keywords so they can crawl the content and display it when relevant.

Once you've optimized your content as far as the copy and images, you can **optimize for engagement**. A really successful blog post is one that the reader engages with in a meaningful way. Make it easy for them to do so.

- **Include share buttons right on the post.** To make it super easy for readers to share your content to social media, place sharing buttons right on the content. Social media is a great way to gain new readers and that happens when your current readers share your content.
- **Let them comment.** Your reader's feedback can be very helpful for creating future content and ensuring that you're hitting the mark with the reader personas you've created.

Comments also allow you to interact with your audience, which also builds engagement. Be committed to interacting with readers by answering questions or starting discussions based on their comments.

- **Strategically use CTAs.** Using a call to action with your content will make your readers much more likely to engage and convert. If they are already on your website, reading your blog post, the odds are good that they will be interested in your offer, so be sure to make it.

Whether your blog is part of your business content marketing strategy or a stand-alone business, you need readers. By optimizing your blog posts, you give your blog the best possible chance of getting noticed by readers.



GETTING SUBSCRIBERS

The key to having a successful blog is email subscribers. Once they hit the subscribe button, they have offered their email address to you and have become a captive audience to all of your marketing efforts.

When a visitor converts to a subscriber, they become a warm lead for your offer.

Additionally, you can send them updates about your offer, as well as any specials you run.

While marketing on social media can be pretty difficult these days, no one can take your email list away from you.

And email marketing is another tool you can use to grow your business.

In order to convince readers to return again and again, and eventually subscribe to your email list, you need to make the value of subscribing clear.

Let's explore some ways you can entice your readers to become subscribers.

OPT-IN FORMS

Opt-in forms allow readers to receive something from you. In this case, you would

like for them to subscribe to your blog. You provide them an opt-in form which basically says, *I like this blog and I'd like to receive it in my email or receive a notification that you've published new content.*

Opt-in forms can be placed virtually anywhere on your website. Here are some popular suggestions:

- **The main blog page or the home page** of your website is a great place for an opt-in form. You never know when the reader will begin to be interested in subscribing, and you want them to have lots of opportunities to subscribe.
- **The bottom or sidebar of each actual post is another terrific place.** Try placing one above the fold on the blog page so the reader has the opportunity to subscribe after they've skimmed the first part of your content.
- **The *About* page of your website is also good.** Some readers will explore your

website upon reading a blog post, and if they see that your story is aligned with their values, they may decide to subscribe.

- **A pop-up or slide-in form is also a great idea.** You may think they seem annoying to the reader but they actually work quite well. You can set these up to appear when the reader reaches a certain point in the content or after they've spent a certain amount of time on the page. Just be sure to provide a way to exit out of it and don't have it keep popping up, because that *will* get annoying.

Opt-ins will also keep you out of trouble. There are laws pertaining to email marketing, and the top one is having permission to send emails to a person by getting them to opt-in. You also need to provide them with a way to opt out. Be sure to research these laws before beginning any email campaigns.

LANDING PAGES

A landing page is a web page that a visitor lands on that serves a specific purpose. Generally, a person might go to a landing page after they've clicked on a CTA from your blog or social media.

On the landing page, they might enter their information in order to take advantage of your lead magnet or subscribe to your blog.

Landing pages are useful because they provide an entire page where you can brag about how awesome your blog is and convince them that they should subscribe.

CALL TO ACTION

Another way to get readers to subscribe is when they are reading the content. A strategically placed CTA within your content that leads to a subscription landing page is a great way to get subscribers. A natural and

well-crafted CTA will nudge readers in the right direction without being pushy.

You can also consider adding a CTA in your social media posts. If your readers are following you on social media, the odds are good they'll be interested in subscribing to your blog. Give them the opportunity to do that directly from a social media post.



PROMOTING YOUR BLOG

Growing your blog readership and subscribers is a continual process, and as you get further into it, you'll develop new and better ways of driving traffic to your blog.

Let's dive into some proven ways to promote your blog.

PUT YOUR BLOG EVERYWHERE

Put links to your blog everywhere. Your website homepage should have a link, as well as the signature for your email. These are subtle, but powerful ways to share your blog with potential readers.

Another great place to promote your blog is on social media. People who come across your social media pages may visit your profile to learn more about your business. Be sure to include a link to your blog in your bio.

UTILIZE OTHER CHANNELS

Every time you create content for your blog, share it on social media channels. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are great channels for sharing blog content.

You can also post your content on public forums. Reddit, Quora, and Medium can be

great places to contribute content and expertise you may have. Answer questions and make comments on articles and information relevant to your blog.

Be sure and contribute value to the users of these forums. This will establish you as an authority on the subject matter and when you then link your blog or website, the other users will click through to see what else you have to offer.

If you have an email list, be sure to mention your blog and provide a link in your marketing emails. These customers may already have a relationship with your company and may be very interested in keeping up with your content.

CREATE OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

By creating content for other, more well-known blogs, you can introduce yourself to a new

audience. This is called “Guest Blogging”. When readers enjoy your content, they may travel to your blog to find more. Also, you’ll be helping your SEO by having a link back to your site from another site. Search engines see this as a *vote of confidence* from the other website, thereby increasing your ranking.

Influencer marketing can work just as well for blogging as it does for social media. Find an influencer with whom you share an audience and ask them to share your content with their followers.

You can also feature other experts within your field in your articles with quotes, backlinks, or actual interviews with the expert themselves. When you publish the article, it’s likely that the experts will share it with their audience.



JUST BLOG IT

If you're looking for an easy but effective way to drive traffic to your site, get new leads, and make conversions, starting a blog may be a perfect fit. Creating consistent, quality content will establish you as an authority within your market, build trust with your readers, and ultimately get you all kinds of new customers.