

Successful Content Marketing with Blogs: How to Publish a Blog Post

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Slide 1 – Successful Content Marketing with Blogs: How to Publish a Blog Post

Hi, I'm Dr. Patsi Krakoff of the Blog Squad and author of WritingOnTheWeb.com. I'm also a contributor to the Content Marketing Institute.

Slide 2 – Untitled

A few years ago some smart geeks created blogging software, and suddenly web publishing became accessible to everyone. **Now, I proclaim a blog to be the best darn marketing tool on the planet but only if you know how to use it and you don't waste time and energy.** I help busy professionals create a strong online presence through blogs, e-newsletters and web pages and social media so that they can get found, get known, and get clients. Over the years I've taught a lot of blogging classes, and I've developed some shortcuts, so I'm going to give you some guidelines and tips to make blog posting easier, faster and more effective.

Slide 3 – What are the Steps to Publishing Your Blog?

So the question of the day is **"What are the steps to publish a blog post so that you don't waste time and get maximum results?"** For me, **it's easy to spend time writing on my blog and tweaking the content but that's not enough.** Business bloggers must look at all four key areas to create a successful blog that works, to get content marketing results and I call this your **"Blog COAD"**.

- **Content:** You have to have good content, always write with reader's interests in mind, what is most useful and relevant to them. What will entertain them while educating them?
- **Design:** How your blog and your blog posts look will determine if it gets read and if people will trust you.
- **Action:** What do you want people to do?
- **Outreach:** How will you share your blog with social sites? Where will you leave comments on other blogs?

So keep this COAD in mind when you want to review your blog and each time you publish.

Slide 4 – What are the Actual Steps that Need to be Done to Publish Your Blog?

Here's an overview of the main steps involved in blog publishing, and we'll cover them each in more detail.

- **Content:** You have to write the post, pick a good topic and write a good headline.
- **Design:** You have to format the post.
- **Action:** Optimize it for reader response.

- Outreach: You also have to optimize it for search engines and share it on social sites.

Slide 5 – What are the First Things to Think About Before You Start?

You may already have picked a topic, and you know what you want to write about. In that case, before you start writing, **review your idea to see how it fits in with your overall goals**. Align your content so it makes sense for your business. Now, sometimes you may get a brilliant idea on the way to the office but still, it's always a good idea to review it for how it aligns with your business, your overall content marketing plan and your editorial calendar.

Slide 6 – What are Resources for Choosing a Blog Post Topic?

What if you don't have a clue about what to write about? These next suggestions will put you in a place to get inspired, and I know this is a little small, but we're going to cover it in detail later. **The three main sources for inspiration: inside, global and outside.**

These are all 3 sources where you can get good ideas:

- Starting with external sources of ideas, this means your readers, your customers, your clients, prospects, everything you publish, must appeal to them.
- Then, look at what's going on in the world that might be affecting your readers, look at global things, the news, the internet.
- Inside your company, what's new and important with company products and services? We'll take a look at this as we go along.

Slide 7 – Where do you Find Ideas and Inspiration?

What will readers find most interesting, most useful, and relevant to their challenges and issues? You have to ask them to find out, so explore what their biggest problems and challenges are, what they might be reading, find out what they're saying on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. What are the controversies?

Slide 8 – External Sources of Ideas

There are **several resources you can call upon within your company that will give you ideas**. Some of the best are **frequently asked questions, client emails, and customer services requests**. Another is to run a survey and ask them to share and rate their problems and challenges. This will provide plenty of blog fodder and will be invaluable in many other ways. Keeping in touch with what readers want and need will create trust with them.

Slide 9 – Internal Sources of Ideas

Internal sources refers to what's going on in your company. Think of how your products or services and programs, solve your customers problems and provide solutions for your readers. Now there's a trap in this and that is you can write and be too company centric. If you write with a focus on your business and what's going on with you, readers are actually attracted to content when it finds answers to their questions and their solutions to their problems. **So use your products or services as an inspiration for blog posts but always frame it in what readers need, want or desire.**

Slide 10 – What’s Going on in the World?

Global ideas: what’s going on in the world that attracts reader’s attention? Major news events can be used in ways that relate to your company, your business, your solutions. Internet buzz will give you clues as to what people are seeking out on the web, and again, the trick here lies in **using popular snippets of news and tying them in with your services in a way that is genuinely helpful to your targeted audience of readers.**

Whatever business or field you’re in you can be sure that there are other blogs actively publishing good content, so find out what people are talking about and **a good resource for this is to use Alltop.com**, that’s a blog aggregation site where you can find blogs in just about any field. **Also use Google Alerts and Twitter Keyword Alerts**, to find out what the buzz is in your field.

Slide 11 – How to Begin Writing ... And Avoid Blogger Block

I’ve found that an **easy way to get started quickly is by asking readers a key question**, something that my post is going to answer. **I haven’t had bloggers block since I started using that trick**, so after asking a key question I usually go on to identify the problem and maybe expand on it a bit. I’ll give you an example from a client email or tell a story from, maybe one of my own situations, a mistake I’ve made and then I’ll write out 3-5 suggested solutions to the problem.

Now everyone’s got their formulas, but I find this one a timesaver and having a writing plan like this one is a surefire way to be able to get your blog writing accomplished quickly.

Slide 12 – The 4E’s of a Good Blog Post

If you want quality posts that really connect with readers your posts should strive for at least three out of four of what I call, the 4 E’s. **You must educate, entertain, engage and enrich your readers.**

Slide 13 – The 4E’s of Quality Blogging

It’s actually easier than you think to achieve education, entertainment, engagement with readers and to enrich their lives. For example, it doesn’t take much to entertain readers. **Anytime you tell a story, you are entertaining them.** The brain is wired to pay attention to stories and we naturally want to know what others have experienced. The other thing is, **the brain loves pictures, and graphs, and drawings and this can also be a way to engage readers and to entertain them.** Now the trap here is in thinking that humor is the only way to entertain people. **Humor online can easily backfire and be misinterpreted.** There are much better ways to entertain readers, of course, if you’re really a funny guy and do a good job of it, why not. You engage readers when you ask them questions.

A note about enriching your readers, **you enrich their lives anytime you can save them time, money, or energy.** Another thing to do is to connect with their hearts and minds. Appeal to their sense of charity, to their values and to respect good causes.

Slide 14 – Ask a Question, Define a Problem, Tell a Story

This flow chart is a reminder of key elements to include in my writing. **Once you’ve picked a topic and you ask your readers a key question, this focuses their attention and gets them thinking, because the**

brain doesn't like unanswered questions. So in their own minds readers are already thinking about the question and how it applies to them. It invokes curiosity because they want to know more about it and what your answer to the question is, to see if they're not far off the mark.

Expanding on the problem is your opportunity to bring in your personality and strong words, unusual metaphors, emotional words, try to connect with persuasive trigger's, **people are hardwired to pay attention to problems, disasters and dangers.** So don't be afraid to go there. Everyone has their own writing style, however and it's **important you remain authentic and true to your own style.** You can't go wrong by sharing stories, and especially client experiences, and revealing mistakes is also a great way to be transparent and show your humanness.

Slide 15 – Stories, Connection, Solutions: Invite Your Readers to Respond

People love reading stories, and because we're social animals we want the validation that other's experience the same things. So, you need to write about client experiences and show them that your company deals with people just like them.

- Solutions and suggestions can often be delivered in bullets and lists.
- Flow charts and visual images are also great and they keep the reader's attention.
- Always include a 'call to action' in your blog post. It can be to ask them to subscribe, or leave a comment, or suggest that they do something. It doesn't have to be a big thing like 'click on this link here and go buy this', it could also be an invitation for something like 'if this has stimulated your thinking, I'd love to hear from you' 'share your thoughts' 'leave a comment' 'and also, if you like this blog, be sure to subscribe to get email updates in your inbox'.

Slide 16 – If You Get Stuck, Use This List as a Checklist

Here's a checklist, again, for when you get stuck writing a blog post:

- Do I ask a question?
- Do I solve a problem?
- Have I identified keywords and phrases?
- Am I connecting with readers, having a conversation?
 - Use pronouns
 - Use emotional or strong words
 - Consider various learning styles of readers (audio, video, graphs)
- Do I either entertain, engage, educate, enrich readers' lives?
- Do I include a call to action, other questions, an invitation to do something?

The reason it's good to identify keywords in your post is because it will help you write a better headline and keep your focus. Notice checklist #4 'Am I connecting with readers', it needs to have one other point added to it. If you can, **try to tie your blog post to something I call universal human values.** We all want to feel as though we are contributing to the greater good of the world, so **answer the 'So what' question as you write, tie into the big picture, a higher purpose, to values.** And the last point on this checklist also needs to be mentioned. I always close out a blog post with another question for readers and it's usually an invitation to comment. If you don't ask readers to comment, they probably won't.

Slide 17 – What’s Next?

The writing is over, but, there’s more to do. **If you want readers to actually read your posts from start to finish, you should format it for easy viewing and easy online reading.** Let’s face it, not everyone’s a thorough reader and online people are in a hurry and scanning. You’ve got to grab their attention and hold it, for maybe a minute and a half. So this is a **checklist to use before you hit publish:**

- Add an image
- Short paragraphs
- Bulleted lists
- Bold keywords and phrases
- Subtopic headings for longer posts
- Break up longer post with “Read more”
- Use parenthesis and post-scripts for added emphasis
- Link to previous posts, website, sales pages, authors, expert definitions on Wikipedia, books, etc.
- Ask questions

Slide 18 – What’s the Most Important Part of a Blog Post?

Save writing the headline until last since you may not have clarity until the post is finished. Writing headlines is extremely important. Often, it’s the only part of your post that will ever get seen or read. It certainly is the portion that gets feed into feed readers and email subscription emails and many won’t even get opened if your headline isn’t compelling. Now writing a good headline is a whole course in itself. This list suggests something some basic tips:

- Find a hook
- Use keywords
- Combine clarity and cleverness
- Use numbers: 5 Ways to . . . 3 Reasons . . .
- Evoke curiosity
- Odd comparisons
- Study magazine covers to learn effective headlines
- Remember: your headline may be the only thing that gets read

Slide 19 – Content, Formatting, Headline ... Then a Little Techie Stuff

Blogs make it easy for search engines to index and categorize your posts. They’re a key way for creating the kind of volume of content that you need in order for your site to come up high on the first pages of search results. Now, **even though blogs are naturally search engine friendly, you do need to do a couple of things to help them out and I recommend a few plug-ins and tools.**

By far, **the most useful plug-ins I’ve found for a WordPress blog** are:

- YARPP, which stands for ‘Yet Another Related Post Plugin’
- ‘All-in-One SEO Pack’
- ‘Scribe SEO’ which comes with a monthly fee

I’m going to show you an example of some of these in a minute.

Slide 20 – Review and Optimize for Readers AND Search Engines

This is the flow chart diagramming the steps to optimize a blog post for both readers and search engines. If you look at it carefully you can see all four key elements of a blog post and of your blog, your blog COAD:

- Content: Edit for quality, write a good headline.
- Design: format it for easy reading, add images and links.
- Action: Make it easy for readers to share with others and to read related posts.
- Outreach: make to make it easy for the search engines to index your post appropriately.

Slide 21 – Before you Publish

Before you hit publish, save your post as a draft and review it.

Look for common grammar mistakes.

Look for opportunities to add links to previous posts and to outside resources. A great source is Wikipedia where you can always define a term, authors of books, other experts, news items. Don't forget to link to your own services and product pages. You won't believe it, but people do this all the time, they'll publish a post with no reference to the very things that they're trying to sell or get hired for and this often happens on blogs that are considered 'thought leadership blogs.' Now that's a wonderful thing to establish your credibility and expertise but why not link to your landing page, your product pages and other resources while you're at it?

Slide 22 – What? Not Done Yet?

You're almost done. The next steps are to ensure that your posts are feed to your principle accounts on social media sites. For example, I use Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn but there may be others, more specialized niche ones where your people hang out. Some actual live person participation is useful and necessary in order for social media marketing to work.

Slide 23 – Ongoing Blog Marketing Tasks

If you remember your blog COAD, a big part of making a blog work for business results is being proactive with blog outreach, so **you need to be making comments on other blogs in order to bring new visitors back to yours. Being responsive to commenter's on your blog will also encourage others to leave comments.**

Slide 24 – Let's Illustrate With an Example

Let's review a recent post on my own blog, just to illustrate how these checklists can work for blog posting.

Slide 25 – Untitled

This is a recent home page showing a post with a headline. **Notice how the keywords ‘Content Marketing Results’ are upfront, in the headline.** It’s so that if the complete post title gets cut off in an email or a feed reader, at least the most important words will get shown.

Slide 26 – Untitled

Here’s a closer shot of the actual blog post. **Notice I’ve added a photo to draw the reader’s eye in, to read the text.** Notice I **start with a question** to engage reader’s attention and to focus them on the problem. Then, I expand on the problem and tell them why this is important. In this example I give the answer to the question right away, focusing the reader’s attention on the topic. I expand on the issues and I tell them why they should care. I also **give a landing page definition formatted into a bulleting list for easy reading.**

Slide 27 – Untitled

Scrolling down, I use **conversational language in an informal tone.** I write as if I’m having a conversation with an ideal reader. Now, in the middle of the post I’ve inserted another image, a graphical flow chart to show readers what I want to tell them. **Using diagrams, and cartoons, or video is a great way of keeping reader’s attention,** and it appeals to them in different ways. Some people like to read, some people like to listen, some people like to watch. I definitely see a trend online. My blogs using drawings, mind maps, and illustrations, for their text do well. Since images are easy to look at and quick, readers aren’t scared off by long blocks of text and I always **use the ‘read more’** function to split up longer posts, but you can’t see that here.

Slide 28 – Untitled

Now this is the end of the post, notice, I ask readers another question and **I’ve added a p.s. because this also grabs reader’s attention in case they scan down to the end of the post.** Here I’ve put **my call to action** right in it and asked them to link to find out more about the product I’m selling.

Now, **“Share the Knowledge”** is a plug-in called Sexy Bookmarks, which anyone can set up on a WordPress blog. The same is true for the related post, free plug-in called ‘YARPP’, so if you don’t have these plug-ins, do try them, I think you’ll like them. Giving **people the option to follow related posts,** if they’re interested in learning more about a topic is a huge way to create a loyal fan base. People really appreciate having fast access to topics.

Slide 29 – Now, Let’s Go Check Your Blog, a Recent Post...

Here’s a repeat of the checklist and I want you to use this to review your own blog post, you might want to print it out:

- Check headline for keywords, attraction factor
- Opening question?
- Image
- Bulleted lists
- Use of emotional words

- Explore the problem
- Offer solutions
- Invite to do something
- Social bookmarks, tags, categories, related posts

Slide 30 – Was This Useful and Relevant to You?

Was this helpful to you? I hope so. I've had a lot of fun blogging over the years, and I've had amazing results from consistently posting quality content. In the 5-6 years I've been publishing content on a blog, my business has extended its reach to a global audience and frequently I get emails or comments that really make my day. Also, people hire me for my consulting and writing services. I'm easily found on the web, whereas before I started blogging, I was one of those 'best kept secrets'. I believe anyone can get better at blogging with a few tips, consistent practice and persistence. Again, I always say, a blog is the best darn marketing tool on the planet but only if you use it right. If you have questions, let me know, I'm at pkrakoff@gmail.com, and, I always say "Blog On."

Slide 31 – Untitled

I've included a few free resources available to you:

- [Content Marketing for Online Profits](#): an online e-course with lots of valuable tips there.
- [Content Marketing with Blogs](#): a digital e-book and pdf all about your blog COAD
- [Content Marketing Quiz](#) : a quiz that will give you a score on how savvy you already are with online blogging strategies.
- [How to Create Great Sales Pages in WP](#): a free audio and transcript of a tele-seminar I did on creating landing pages with WordPress.

If you like these, Blog On!