

# **Blogging Best Practices**

By *Antonio Blanco*

Blancomedia

A blog can be a fantastic way to connect with your customers, express yourself, and build an effective marketing base for your company. Below I have compiled some things to keep in mind while writing posts to your blog. These general principles will keep you on track to get the most out of your time invested as well as keep your readers coming back for more.

**1. Focused.** When writing posts try to understand that your users are probably looking for the information that was presented as the title of the post. Drifting off onto another topic, even if it's a great tidbit, only dilutes your message at best, and at worst can make the viewer feel as if you're wasting their time. It's much better to simply start another post focused on the side topic. One great thing would be to tie the post together, using a link, that way the user has a choice as well as providing you with another post topic.

**2. Simplicity.** The writing style should attempt to state your message in as few of words as possible. Unfortunately, there are no real points for great elaborate creative writing skills, only for using small words creatively.

**3. Scanability.** Think from an outline mode backwards. State your thesis, then support it with short phrases, using alpha numerical notation (A.B.C. or 1.2.3.) if possible. Then explain these supporting concepts using focused and simple language. Paragraphs should be short, no more than 5 sentences max. Adding images can also help add visual information to the message.

#### **Serve their interests**

In addition to the principles above, one must consider the reason for the investment of time into posting blogs. Assuming this blog is related to their business, blogging for maximum marketing impact is an important consideration as it represents some effort to undertake. With this in mind one's post topics should **always** be created to serve the interests of their customer demographic. In this way, any time a customer ends up on the blog they will find information that is useful or at the very least that they can relate to.

#### **How to start**

The type of information that typically users respond well to is educational (tips and tricks), opinion (which widget is better than the other), or entertainment (you need to be very interesting and a great writer to pull this off..). The best choice for new bloggers is to stick to the first two, pick the low hanging fruit, and write about things that you are **sure** that your users will appreciate. To start off, write out a list of categories that would define your users interests, then create a subset of titles that would cover many of the bases within those categories, finish by writing the question or **search term** that would be best answered by this post.

#### **Relevancy**

It is important to point out the **quality of your posts** are determined much more by the **relevancy** of your content, that is, how useful it is divided by how much time it took the user to read it, than how creative your writing style is. So just because you got good grades in writing class doesn't mean that you're a shoe in. Conversely, just because Mrs. Wigglebottom gave you C's in her writing class, doesn't mean you can't deliver great pointers and tricks that keep them coming back for more.

#### **Marketing Impact**

So where does the marketing part come in? Well, aside from keeping your users happy and interested in your company. The **Real** reason to blog is to produce fresh and relevant content that will be indexed and associated to your company by the search engines. When you are creating answers for questions that your user may be searching for, you are in essence creating a pathway

to your front door for other potential users that fit your demographic user profile (read: NEW CUSTOMERS!). Yes! We are talking about bringing people that would most likely use your service or buy your product if they only knew you existed. Well the best way to make friends is to do the things you love to do and you find like minds, right? The same idea holds in blogging, write about things that are important to your typical customers and other potential typical customers will follow. Please understand this is much like rowing to the middle of a big lake and starting to put fish food into the water, not all the fish are going to know your there immediately. It's going to take time, and **results** are going to be directly related to the competition (other fisherman), amount of potential customers (amount of fish), effectiveness and relevancy of your content (attractiveness of your fish food), and quantity of post (how much food), and time on the lake.

### **Titles**

Finally, the topic of titling your post. Search engines zero in on this part, so good clear "answer" oriented titles are the key. For example: If your blogging about playing basketball and how some lessons you've learned apply to life, instead of titling it, "Lessons I've learned while playing basketball", it's better to say "How to keep focused in a stressful situation". This is focused on condensing the **message** of the post, as opposed to describing the situation. This is a very important concept when attempting to meet your users expectations. In the first title situation, users are going to have arrived on the post while searching for and "expecting" answers to: "basketball lessons" and get a story about dealing with life challenges, say goodbye to them! In the second title, a user may be searching for "How to deal with stress, and although they don't play basketball, they may still find something useful, potential conversion!